*Saviours of Islamic Spirit Series*

# SAIYID AHMAD SHAHID

His Life and Mission

*By*

MOHIUDDIN AHMAD

INTRODUCTION

*By*

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# Introduction

I have much pleasure in introducing this memoir of the life and achievements of the greatest Muslim reformer and *mujāhid* of the early nineteenth century, written, perhaps, for the first time in English language, after critical examination of the vast material existing on the subject. The need for such a work has indeed been felt for the past one hundred years. The extant materials in Persian and Urdu on the life of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, are not meagre nor always one-sided. These are so extensive, as far as my knowledge goes, as not to be found about any other Muslim social or religious reformer of even the twentieth century. A glance at the bibliography of this book will convince the reader about the plentifulness of this material. In the recent times, the writer of these lines had written '*Sirat Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*' in two volumes, covering about a thousand pages. The four-volume biography of the Saiyid comprising 1,921 pages by a well-known Pakistani historian, Chaudhri Ghulām Rasūl Mehr, is an impressive work which marks a new stage in Urdu historiography.

For reasons political, as well as academic, the reformatory movement of the Saiyid has been attracting an ever increasing attention of the scholars both in the East and the West, and a large number of articles and dissertations have of late been produced from time to time. Yet, there is still a craving to know more about the man who summed up in himself so wide a sweep of his contemporary society. The background, objectives and characteristics of the movement built up by him, the way he vitalised the Muslim society and the reasons for his success or failure are some

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of the interesting features of the Saiyid's movement to modern scholars ; for, the subsequent development of the Saiyid's ideals constitutes the story of aspirations and ambitions of the present-day Muslim community in the Indo-Pak sub-continent. The Saiyid's comprehensive programme for regeneration and reform of the Muslim society covering its intellectual, religious, moral and social aspects coupled with his armed struggle for redemption of the fellow Muslims in distress are a few characteristics of his movement which make it unique among the revivalist movements in Islam started during the preceding centuries. Still, the unforgiving vindictiveness of certain chroniclers of the Saiyid's movement has so beclouded the horizon that it has become difficult to find out the true facts about this great reformatory movement.

It is not extravagant to assert that of all the worthies of the world, excepting, of course, the blessed Prophet of Islam, no man has ever been so maligned by the western writers and historians as was the Saiyid. It seems that the chroniclers never wanted to ascertain the true facts : they gave credence to every groundless rumour without evaluating the relative evidential value of the reports reaching them. Some perhaps wanted to concoct history rather than depict the correct train of events. The emphasis on freedom of thought, rejection of irrational beliefs and inclination towards experimental investigation of the truth were the great gifts of European renaissance. The conflicts steeped in blood between the traditional beliefs and the expansive force of human intellect had drawn on a daybreak of intellectual curiosity which had benefited not only the West but the entire humanity. It was, therefore, expected that the orientalists and historians of the later half of the last and present century would at least prove themselves to be more enquiring and broadminded than their predecessors who had been brought up under the shadow of narrow-spirited uncharitableness bequeathed by the Crusades, and for whom it was difficult, if not impossible, to deliver themselves from the mental climate of that age. But, man is a bundle of contradictory complexes. for one often comes

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across examples of human behaviour least expected of persons professing to be rationalists.

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was not a legendary figure taken out of the pages of the *Arabian Nights*. He was born and brought up during the closing decades of the eighteenth century in that part of the northern India which was the cultural centre of Muslim India, and was later known as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was the descendant of a well-known Saiyid family of Oudh which enjoyed the esteem of his co-religionists because of a number of saintly figures born in that family during the past five hundred years. Their nobility of blood, temperance, ascetic selflessness and zeal for religion had made even the Moghul Emperors to render honour to them. Not a few Persian chronicles written during the period possess irrefragable evidence about the services of this family. The Saiyid first established contact with the famous family of Shāh Walīullah which had held aloft the banner of reform and regeneration of Indian Islam. Thereafter, he joined the army of Amīr Khān, the well-known ambitious Afghān hailing from Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh. The dutiful regard and devotion bestowed by Amīr Khān on the Saiyid is no secret, nor is the life of this Afghān chief an enigma. Several works exist about him which show how very different was he from the Pindārīs with whom he is so often equated.

After his sojourn with Amīr Khān began the period of Saiyid's reformatory endeavour during which he stirred a hurricane of religious enthusiasm and zeal for moral uprightness and piety, not among the masses alone, but also in the learned and nobility of the country. During his missionary tours in the then North-Western Provinces and Oudh people flocked round him in thousands, in a way unheard of in the country earlier, to take oath of allegiance to him. They repented of their past sins and solemnly promised to give up all un-Islamic customs and practices and to betake the path of virtue and goodness. The Saiyid then undertook the journey for pilgrimage to Mecca with a retinue of about seven hundred and fifty persons. This triumphal pilgrims' progress of the Saiyid, inconceivable in

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those days, was a feat unsurpassable by any sovereign or religious leader of the time. From his home town in Rae Bareli to Calcutta he sowed the seeds of righteousness and moral and spiritual betterment. All along the route through which his caravan moved cities after cities enrolled themselves as his disciples and undertook to carry on his message of social reform and moral uplift.

The reverential regard and honour extended to the Saiyid in Mecca was unique for any non-Arab religious leader, for none had been held in such a high esteem for a long time in that metropolis of Islam. This was the time when Wahābī power had been completely shattered in Arabia and nobody could dare to preach its doctrines without putting himself into peril. No documentary evidence or authoritative proof exists of the Saiyid's coming into contact with any Wahābī preacher. Far from being treated as a heretic, the collection of his discourses, *Sirāt-i-Mustaqīm*, was rendered into Arabic on the request of the religious scholars of Mecca. The Saiyid had, in fact, already finalised the blueprints of his socio-religious reforms before undertaking the journey for *haj* and unfolded its practical details, based on his own understanding of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, during his reformatory tours in India.[1] On his return from *haj*, the Saiyid gave practical shape to his concept of *khilāfat* which could unite the whole of the Muslim world from India to Central Asia and Turkey for the service of Islam. Nothing that Saiyid did was not premeditated. He chose the hilly tract of independent tribesmen in the Frontier for launching the *jihād*, for which he had to traverse a vast tract of mountainous countries and deserts over Sind, Baluchistān and Afghānistān. Records of his itinerary give the details of his every stopover and the distances covered as well as the social customs and habits of the people along his route more or less in the same way as can be expected of an official diary of any escort of armed

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1. *Sirāt-i-Mustaqīm*, the compilation of Saiyid's discourses showing the way of social and moral reform to the Indian Muslims, had been completed early in 1818, three years before he went for the pilgrimage.

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forces moving in the modern times.[1] The Saiyid maintained contact with the missionary centres in India, sent circular letters to the *ʿulamā* and religious leaders from time to time and got the happenings in the Frontier recorded by his amanuenses. Several collections of these writings are to be found in different libraries and private collections in India as well as in the British Museum.

The arrangements made for recording the events pertaining to the Saiyid's life, after his martyrdom in May 1831 at Bālākot, were also unprecedented. I would better mention two of these here. One is the voluminous account compiled at the instance of Nawāb Wazīr-ud-daula, the ruler of Tonk, who called upon the associates and comrades of the Saiyid to reduce into writing their reminiscences and experiences with him. This was thus the first eye-witness record of the Saiyid's life story. Compiled in four bulky volumes, this is known by the name of *Waqāiʾ Ahmadī* of which several copies exist at different places.[2] Another authentic biography of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was written under the title of *Manzooratus Soʿadā fi Ahwāl il Ghozāt was-Shuhadā*[3] by Maulvī Saiyid Jʿafar 'Alī Naqvī, a Persian scholar of distinction belonging to a reputed family of the Saiyids of Gorakhpur.[4] Saiyid Jʿafar ʿAlī Naqvī not only participated in the Frontier campaigns of the Saiyid but was also his official correspondent. Thus, he had the unique opportunity of obtaining first-hand information of all happenings and events in the Frontier. Besides these two, there are several other Urdu and Persian compilations,[5] written

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1. *See* the letters of Munshi Saiyid Hamid-ud-din preserved in manuscript form in Nadwatul ʿUlama library.
2. A manuscript copy of *Waqāiʾ Ahmadī* is available in the Nadwatul ʿUlama library.
3. Manuscript copies of *Manzooratus Soʿadā* are available in the District Library, Tonk, Mahmūd Shirānī Collection of the Punjab University, Lahore, and the Nadwatul ʿUlama Library, Lucknow.
4. His home-town now forms part of Basti district.
5. Two of these, *Makhzan-i-Ahmadi* by Saiyid Ahmad ʿAlī, the Saiyid's nephew, and *Sawāneh Ahmadi* by Maulvī Mohammad Jʿafar had

*[ Continued on next page*

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subsequently by different persons some of whom were associates of the Saiyid.

Everything about Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, from his birth to death, is in the light of the day. Only he can plead ignorance of all this material who has wilfully decided to shut his eyes to these factual details. To be content to take Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd as portrayed in the fabricated chronicles of certain inimical writers, despite all the phalanx of trustworthy details satisfying the modern criteria of historical criticism, is perhaps an intriguing phenomenon of modern scholarship. I shall give here only a few examples of these irresponsible allegations made by some of our western scholars who are otherwise too meticulous in putting everything on the grill.

As a member of Indian Civil Service, Hunter possessed adequate means to ascertain the true facts about the Saiyid's life, but he writes :

> "Syed Ahmad was publicly degraded and expelled from the town (Mecca)."[1]

Another reputed orientalist of the nineteenth century, Thomas Patrick Hughes, writes in his article on "Wahhabi" in the Dictionary of Islam[2] :

> "And so it came to pass that when a restless spirit from India was endeavouring to redeem a lawless life by performing the pilgrimage at Makkah, he fell in with teachers who had imbibed Wahhabi doctrines and were secretly disseminating them amongst the pilgrims. Saiyid Ahmad, the freebooter and bandit having performed the sacred rites of the Pilgrimage, returned from Makkah (AD 1822), resolved to reclaim the whole of North India to the Faith of Islam."

Modern scholarship is not very different in its rancorous attitude to the Saiyid. Olaf Caroe, who had been the

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been printed by the closing decades of the last century and were fairly well known among the educated circles in India. The first was published from the Mufid-i-ʿĀm Press, Agra, in 1881-82, and the second one from Delhi in 1891

1. *Indian Musalmān*, pp. 60-61
2. p. 661

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Governor of North West Frontier Province during the last two years before the transfer of power in 1947, is on record in his scholarly book entitled 'The Pathans'.[1]

> "Saiyid Ahmad Barelvi had been the follower of the notorious Amīr Khān, a leader of the mercenaries in the campaigns waged by the British against the free-booters of Central India known as Pindārīs. He lost his employment when Amīr Khān's force was broken up at the end of the campaign, and Amīr Khān was recognised as Chief of Tonk in Rajputana."

In a recent monograph entitled "The Muslims of British India"[2] Dr. P. Hardy presents his research in these words :

> "Saiyid Ahmad was born into an obscure family, possibly in minor official service.....From about 1809 to 1818 he was a trooper under the Pindārī chieftain, Amīr Khān, later the *nawwab* of Tonk ; probably there was nothing to distinguish him outwardly from other Pindārī freebooters."

These are the few examples of modern scholarship which bear witness to its capricious ways in dealing with certain matters not to their linking. This was least expected from European scholars who are otherwise thoroughly proficient in the collation and critical examination of relative evidential value of historical data. Chroniclers of the Orient, particularly those belonging to Middle Eastern countries, who have had an occasion to pen treatises on Wahābism, Mehdawī and *Jihād* movements of India have also not fared better than their European counterparts. They too, have been content to repeat the reports which were neither faithful nor complete as regards the Saiyid's movement of *jihād*. A noted Egyptian scholar and penman, Dr. Ahmad Amīn, who has written brilliant dissertations entitled *Fajr-ul-Islām* and *Dhuh-al-Islām* on the subject of Islamic history, has simply reproduced the peccant reports of the European orientalists about the Saiyid and his

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1. p. 301.
2. p. 51

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endeavours in his *Al-Mahdawiato-wal-Mahdiyūn* which displays a complete lack of sense of responsibility.

Of late, the subject has begun to attract attention of research scholars in India and Pakistan who have mostly treated the matter in brief articles or as a part of their dissertations on related subjects. Many of them have, undoubtedly, taken pains to find out the truth about the Saiyid's movement. However, there was still need of a full scale study to reconstruct the life story of the Saiyid and assess the achievements of his reformatory endeavours on a fresh, original and exhaustive basis by delving into all the primary and secondary sources comprising the Persian and Urdu manuscripts and published materials, official records and private collections of letters and related documents. I am glad that my learned friend, Saiyid Mohiuddin Ahmad, offered to undertake this onerous task. He is well-versed with the subject and eminently suited to embark upon this work of great labour on account of his deep understanding of the Islamic revivalist movements. Besides his other works, the English rendering of my *Tārīkh-i-Dʿawat-o-Azeemat* by him, which has been published as 'Saviours of Islamic Spirit' in two volumes by the Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, has been well received in the Indian sub-continent as well as Europe, America and Africa. He had also the advantage of making full use of the vast material available in the library of Nadwatul ʿUlamā and had access to the family records of the Saiyid's decendants. The author spared no pains in going through the material available in other libraries and official records as well as recent researches published abroad having a bearing on the subject. I had the whole manuscript read out to me and also gave certain suggestions to the author. I allowed him to use my family collection of old records and manuscripts to his advantage and I am happy that he has acquitted himself well of the task undertaken by him. This is perhaps the first work in English which presents a full-scale study of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd's momentous career in a trustworthy yet sympathetic manner. This book, thus, fulfils the long-felt need for an

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authentic disquisition on the life and work of the founder of the greatest religious revivalist movement known to Indian history. I hope that this work will be welcomed by all truth loving persons who possess the openness of heart to accept the sober truth. Gratifying as it is, no country and no age has ever been found wanting of such candidly upright souls.

ABUL HASAN ALI NADWI[1]

Dā'ira-i-Shāh ʿAlam Ullah,[2]
Rae Bareli,
9th Rajab, 1395 ĀH/19th July, 1975.

1. President of the Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, Rector, Darul ʿUloom Nadwatul ʿUlamā and Member, Academy of Arts and Letters, Damascus and the Advisory Committe, Madina University.
2. The home and birth-place of Saiyid Ahmad Shahid

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One

# Muslim India in the Eighteenth Century

BY the beginning of the eighth century of the Christian era the Arabs had conquered the frontier province of Sind and made it a part of the Islamic empire. The Arabs, however, never carried the standard of Islam far beyond the Indus, and India, in general, remained untouched by the faith of the Prophet. The Muslim impact on Northern India came over from the north-west, in the beginning of the eleventh century. But, by that time the faith had lost its political unity as well as its original simplicity, pure morality, contentment and the spirit of justice and generosity—the corner-stones of Islamic polity. The conquests were now not meant to rid the humanity of the serfdom of man and to bring it within the kingdom of God, as an Arab envoy had once told the Persian General; but, for extending the frontiers of powerful kingdoms which had sprung up after the caliphate turned into monarchy. Close to the western borders of India, the kingdom of Ghaznī was founded by the Turk Sabaktagīn, which was then a flourishing centre of Islamic culture and learning. Mahmūd, the son of Sabaktagīn, made his first expedition into India in 1001, and defeated Jaipāl, the Rājā of the Punjab. Ghaznavids were succeeded by the princes of Ghor. The Ghorids, under Muhammad of Ghor, were the first to extend the permanent rule of Islam beyond the

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frontiers of the Punjab and Sind. Bengal was rapidly conquered and frontiers of Islamic kingdom extended towards the south under the Turk rulers, who also defended India against the successive onslaughts of the Mongol hordes. The Moghul rule was finally established in India by Bābur in 1526, which lasted, but for a brief interval during the reign of Humāyūn, for more than three hundred years.

The sultāns of Delhi prior to the Moghuls, recognised Islam as the state religion but they occasionally departed from the law to suit their convenience. The sultāns enforced *sharīʿah*[1] as the law of the land, appointed *Sadr-us-Sadūr* and *Diwān-i-Qazā* to supervise the working of *sharīʿah* courts, to keep a watch on the public morals and to extend financial assistance to the Muslim divines, scholars and men of piety. Yet there was never a truly Islamic State, nor did the sultāns constantly strive to make the state policy conform with the *sharīʿah*. Barnī, who closely observed the working of these monarchies, noted that *duniādārī* (worldliness) of which the kingship was the climax in those days was absolutely opposed to *dīndārī* (religiosity). After tracing the process by which the pagan institution of monarchy had crept into Islam, he reached the conclusion that sovereignty was never possible without practising non-Islamic customs and usages. The common people thought that the sultāns really existed for protecting the faith and upholding the *sharīʿah*; but, in reality, the decisive factor in the policy pursued by the sultāns was the law of force and expediency. Barnī says that very often capital punishment to the Muslims for political offences, which was contrary to the sacred law, was resorted to. Similarly, the law of inheritance, the strict distinction between *halāl* and *harām*, between the permissible and the disallowed, and many other well-known injunctions were violated; the ecclesiastics protested but were very frequently constrained to put up some excuse for such practices. The well-known prohibition of the *sharīʿah*

1. The path to be followed: The totality of religious-moral law of Islam.

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regarding usurious transactions was openly disregarded. In fine, to suit the sultāns' convenience even the religious duties were sometimes sought to be confined for them to such matters as leading the prayers, making endowments for the religious establishments and dispensing justice, while the most flagrant breaches of the *sharīʿah* rules were condoned.[1]

Upon the heals of Muslim invaders, specially after the Mongols had overrun the Muslim lands from Central Asia to Syria, innumerable poets, artists, theologians and *sufī*[2] saints sought refuge in the safety of Islamic realm in India. The influx of refugees from Irān, Turkistān, Irāq and several other lands continued unabated for a long time, which, in due course, made Delhi the central metropolis of Islam, a seat of Islamic culture and learning, art and architecture, surpassing even Baghdād and Cordova. Barnī has given a long list of erudite scholars and men of piety who had come down to India, settled in smaller principalities, and engaged themselves in spreading learning and righteousness amongst the people through educational institutions, mosques and monasteries established by them in far off places.[3] These learned men, a number of whom were initiated into one or the other mystic orders, were loved and respected not only by the populace but they also exercised considerable influence on the autocratic rulers, kings and provincial governors. Historians have given many instances of the salutary effect produced by these doyens of spirituality on the state policies and public morals. Sheikh Nasīr-ud-dīn Chirāgh Dehli approved the election of Fīroz Shāh (1351-1388) as Sultān, after the demise of Muhammad Tughlaq, only when he had solemnly promised to rule the kingdom with justice and mercy.[4] Similarly Sheīkh Burhān-ud-dīn refused to take an oath of allegiance to Sultān Muhammad Bahmanī I (1358-1375) unless he gave up drinking, reformed his conduct, and enforced *Sharīʿah* as the law

1. A. B. M. Habibullah ; *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 348-50.
2. A Muslim mystic.
3. Barnī ; *Tārīkh Fīroz Shāhī*, pp. 111-12.
4. *Ibid*, p. 28

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of the land.[1] Yet another instance, showing the strong influence of Khwājā Nizām-ud-dīn Auliya over the kings and the populace of Delhi is the detailed description given by Barnī. -"Sultān ʿAlāʾ-ud-dīn Muhammad Khiljī (1296-1316) along with the members of his household was devoted to the Sheikh. The nobles and the laity had betaken the path of righteousness, and during the last few years of ʿAlāʾ-ud-dīn's reign nobody even talked of wine and beloveds, immorality and laxness, gambling and wantonness ; in short, the major sins had come to be regarded as almost synonymous with infidelity."[2]

By the time the Moghul rule had set its foot firmly on the Indian soil, Akbar (1556-1605) promulgated his new religion, the *Dīn Ilāhī* or "Divine Faith". The king had suffered himself to be flattered by the courtiers like Sheikh Mubārak, Mulla Shirāzī, Hakīm Abul Fath and Abul Fadhl[3] into the belief that Islam had had its day, after a thousand years of its inception, and that it was the duty of the King to assume his place as the spiritual as well as the temporal sovereign of his people. He concocted a seemingly eclectic creed likely, as he thought, to syncretize all religions but it ended up in the emergence of just one more religion. As Wolseley Haig says : "Islam was the one faith excluded from the benefits of *Sulh-i-kull*, or 'Universal toleration', on which Akbar continually descanted. The names 'Muhammad' and 'Ahmad' were disused and one foolish ordinance required that all words containing letters peculiar to Arabic, the sacred language of Islam, should be misspelt, the nearest equivalents of such letters being substituted. For the ordinary Muslim salutation, 'Peace be on you', and the reply 'And on you be peace', the disciples of the new faith were required to substitute *Allāh Akbar* (God is most great) and *Jalla Jalāluhū* (May His glory be extolled),

1. Firishta ; *Tārikh Firishta* Vol. I, p. 560-62
2. Barnī p. 346
3. Abdul Qādir Badāūni ; *Muntakhab't Tawārikh*. Vol. II, pp. 214 and 310-11

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and the cavillers were not slow to note that each formula embodied one of Akbar's names."[1] The prayer,[2] fasting[3] during Ramazan, *haj*[4] and other religious observances[5] were discouraged. Study of religious sciences was banned,[6] drinking of wine was made lawful,[7] hogs were to be revered[8] and numerous mosques were closed down for service or even ordered to be demolished.[9] It became quite customary in those days to speak ill of the doctrines of Islam and even revile against the Holy Prophet.[10] "The whole gist of the regulations was," according to Dr. Vincent Smith, "to further the adoption of Hindu, Jain and Parsi practices, while discouraging or positively prohibiting essential Muslim rites. The policy of insult to and persecution of Islam, which was carried to greater extremes, subsequently, was actively pursued, even in the period from 1582 to 1585."[11]

There are certain historians who hold the view that Badāūnī took every opportunity to rake up the notion of Akbar's apotheosis for the purpose of renewing attack upon the great Emperor. There is, however, overwhelming evidence left by Akbar's contemporaries to show that the rediculous vanity of the Emperor had caused unbearable miseries to the followers of Islam.[12] Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindī,

1. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol V, p. 131
2. *Muntakhab't Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, p. 325 .
3. Rafi-ud-din Shirāzī ; *Tazkirātul Mulūk* p. 231; Ubaid Ullāh ; *Muballigh ur-Rijāl*, p. 258
4. *Muntakhab't Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, pp. 246 and 316
5. *Ibid., p. 284, 286, 313, 317*; *Muktūbāt Imām Rabbānī* Vol. I, letters no. 46, 65, 82, and Vol. II, letter no. 92 ; *Ruqqāt-i-Abul Fadhl* Vol. I, p. 62
6. Abul Fadhl, *Ain Akbarī*, Vol. I, p. 250 ; *Muntakhab't Tawārīkh* Vol. II p. 317
7. *Muntakhab't Tawārīkh* Vol. II p. 349
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 303-4
9. *Maktūbāt Imām, Rabbānī*, Vol. II, letter no. 92 ; Ẓahiruddin Farīrqi, *Aurangzeb and His Times* p. 563, *Firishta* Vol. II, p. 291
10. *Muntakhab't Tawārīkh*, Vol II, p. 277 (for details see *Dīn-i-Ilāhī aur uska Pas-i-Manzar*, by M. Aslam)
11. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. V, p. 131
12. Muhammad Aslam ; *Dīn Ilāhī aur Uska Pas-i-Manzar*, pp. 121-142, 211-225

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a contemporary of Akbar, wrote in a letter that during the reign of Akbar "the infidels promulgated anti-Islamic laws in the realm of Islam, while Muslims were not allowed even to express the rules of *sharīʿah*, and if one ever did so he was put to sword. Alas! what a pity! What a plight! Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of God be on him) was loved and adored by God but his followers were humiliated and crushed, and his detractors were honoured and praised! Muslims bemoaned the fallen state of Islam with a heavy heart while infidels used to poke fun at them for adding insult to injury. The sun of guidance had been beclouded by the veil of irreligion and the light of truth enshrouded by gloom of falsehood."[1]

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindī (d. 1624), better known as Mujaddid Alf Thānī (Renovator of the second millennium), strived to rehabilitate Islam in India. The energy with which he controverted the un-Islamic practices and tried to bring back the influential ruling circles back to the path of Islam rendered him particularly odious to certain Shiʿa Chiefs who represented his activities as dangerous to the State. Jahāngīr (1605-1627), was, however, soon reconciled to Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindī, ordered his release from confinement in the Gwalior fort and awarded a robe of honour to him. It was chiefly owing to the persistent effort of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindī that the government's attitude towards the religious injunctions gradually became tolerant and respectful. The reformatory endeavour of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindī was not confined to the ruling circles alone. Although he was connected with a prominent *sufī* order, he avoided the extravagance of the mystics of his time and opposed their pantheistic tendencies exhibited through a wrong interpretation of *Wahdat-ul-Wajūd* (Unity of Existence), by presenting the alternative doctrine of *Wahdat-us-Shahūd* (Unity of Manifestation). The benign influence exercised by the Sheikh and, after him, his son Khwājā Muhammad Mʿasūm Sirhindī, brought up Aurangzeb in the best of Islamic traditions, who later rose to become the

1. *Maktūbāt Imām Rabbānī*, Vol. I, letter No. 47.

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preserver of true faith. The religious experiment of Akbar was bound to fail, as it did, but only after inflicting a severe wound in the body politic of Islam. The respect for religion and its observances had suffered a lot during this interregnum. It was easy to destroy; but rather difficult to restore the moral health of the masses.

Indeed, it was due to Akbar's immaturity, who had nearly destroyed Islam that Aurangzeb had to adopt certain measures for the reassertion of Islam which alienated the sympathies of his non-Muslim subjects. Personal virtues, simple and saintly life and reformative zeal of Aurangzeb cannot be denied even by his worst critics; nevertheless, his rigid dogmatism—which included its saving merits as well as its defects—earned a bad name for him. Akbar, on the other hand, failed to realise that Islam and Hinduism were not only religions in the ordinary sense of the term; but that the social, economic, spiritual and political lives of their adherents were intertwined with their religious beliefs and practices. These were not merely cultures but different ways of life, based on different ideologies. It was just not possible for such cultures to coalesce to produce a unified culture as Akbar had in view. On the contrary, the most practicable way to achieve integration and unity among the two communities lay in genuine tolerance and respect for each other's religious beliefs and taboos, modes and manners.

After Aurangzeb (d. 1707) the central political authority gave place to court intrigues, and ceaseless wrangle for succession. The emergence of three independent provincial chiefs—Āsaf Jāh Nizāmul-Mulk in Deccan in 1713, Saʿadat ʿAlī Burhān-ul-Mulk in Oudh in 1723 and ʿAlīwardī Mahābat Jung in Bengal in 1740—sealed the fate of the great Moghul empire by the close of the eighteenth century. The disappearance of the central authority enabled three more predatory powers to raise their heads which were often utilised and strengthened by the mutual rivalry of the provincial governors. Of these, the Marāthās were the first and the foremost who made endless encroachments; and,

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by degrees, seized upon several districts in the provinces of Agra and Allahabad and plundered even the imperial capital of the great Moghuls, The second were the predatory tribes of Jāts who ravaged the country between Delhi and Agra; while the third, the Sikhs in the Punjab, united as a separate sect to establish a kingdom under Ranjīt Singh. In 1738, descended Nādir Shāh like a hurricane, seized the imperial treasure and effects, destroyed Delhi through indiscriminate massacre and pillage and returned to Afghanistan after detaching all the provinces to the west of Indus from the dominion of the Moghuls. The Emperor still ruled at Delhi but without any power except over the imperial capital. The whole of India appeared now about to be swallowed by the Marāthās. Then came down Ahmad Shāh Abdālī, who, joined by the Rohīlā chiefs, Najīb-ud-daula, Sʿadullah Khān and Hāfiz Rahmat, crushed the Marāthā power in the third battle of Panipat fought in January 1761. Had Ahmad Shāh Abdālī, whose empire was in its youth and vigour, not left India like Nādir Shāh, he might have extended his dominion from Afghanistan to Bengal. But, his hasty retreat from India, with innumerable princelings warring amongst themselves paved the way for gradual emergence of the British as the supreme power in India.

In this period of travail and transition, when every Indian chief was trying to consolidate his own power and prestige at the cost of others, the only Indian prince who had the foresight to correctly gauge the increasing political power and ambition of the British was Tīpū Sultān of Mysore. He endeavoured to organise his '*Sultanat-i-Khudādād*' on the Islamic principles of social justice, trained and equipped his armies on the Western lines, warmed the blood of his soldiery with the fervour of *jihād* and attempted to secure alliances with the Marāthās, Nizām and the French in order to expel the British from India. He sent emissaries to Kabul, Constantinople, Versailles and Mauritius to enlist the help of powerful allies against the British. Lord Wellesley, however, got the scent and started preparations for final assault. His martyrdom on the 4th May, 1799, brought about through treachery and intrigue, sent General

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Harris, the British Commander, to take a sigh of relief and remark exultantly : "From today India is ours."

The Muslim masses had, by that time, lost the sense of border lines demarcating the spheres of Islam and un-Islam : undue veneration of the saints and their tombs, ostentatious and wasteful expenditure on the occasion of births, deaths and other ceremonies, ban on the re-marriage of widows and numerous other customs and usages interwoven with polytheistic cults prevalent amongst them were as irrational as economically ruinous. No longer actuated by the spirit of true faith, the people had fallen a prey to the 'strong passions with unrestrained appetite for sensual pleasures for the gratification of which they could incur any hazard." Saiyid Inshā's *Daryā-i-Latāfat*[2] vividly depicts the dissoluteness of Muslim artistocracy of the time. The *mathnavīs* of Shauq (1783-1871) reveal that the 'search for delights of love were not unknown among the women of respectable families.'[3] A number of Muslim women like the famous Begum Samrū (1751-1836) of Sardhānā and Hayātunnisā Begum of Benaras had married the Europeans. Intoxicants like opium, wine and hemp, then in common use, had undoubtedly contributed to idleness and other bad habits. All this was because the then political system, in particular, undermined the possibility of planned, frugal living.[4]

Internal decay of the ruling powers and latitudinarian attitude of the masses were not a peculiar feature of Indian Islam in the eighteenth century. The entire world of Islam had, it seems, absorbed numerous innovations, accretions and exotic beliefs and practices which had sapped its vitality and capability to cope with the changing times. The stage it had reached everywhere—as in India—has been graphically described by Lothrop Stoddard :—

By the eighteenth century the Moslem world had sunk to the lowest depth of its decrepitude. Nowhere were there any signs of healthy

1. Malcolm ; *The Political History of India*, Vol. II, p. 168.
2. Written in 1808.
3. M. Mujeeb ; *The Indian Muslims*, p. 512.
4. *Ibid*. p. 201.

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vigour; everywhere were stagnation and decay. Manners and morals were alike execrable. The last vestiges of Saracenic culture had vanished in a barbarous luxury of the few and an equally barbarous degradation of the multitude. Learning was virtually dead, the few universities which survived had fallen into dreary decay and languishing in poverty and neglect. Government had become despotism tempered by anarchy and assassination. Here and there a major despot like the Sultan of Turkey or the Indian 'Great Moghul' maintained some semblance of state authority, albeit provincial pashas were for ever striving to erect independent governments based, like their masters, on tyranny and extortion. The pashas, in turn, strove ceaselessly against unruly local chiefs and swarms of brigands who infested the countryside. Beneath this sinister hierarchy groaned the people, robbed, bullied, and ground into dust. Peasant and townsmen had alike lost all incentive to labour or initiative, and both agriculture and trade had fallen to the lowest level compatible with bare survival.

As for religion, it was as decadent as everything else. The austere monotheism of Mohammad had become overlaid with a rank growth of superstition and puerile mysticism. The mosques stood unfrequented and ruinous, deserted by the ignorant multitude, which, decked out in amulets, charms, and rosaries, listened to squalid fakirs or ecstatic dervishes, and went on pilgrimages to the tombs of 'holy men', worshipped as saints and 'intercessors' with that Allāh who had become too remote a being for the direct devotion of these benighted souls. As for the moral precepts of the Koran, they were ignored or defied. Wine-drinking and opium-eating were well nigh universal, prostitution was rampant, and the most degrading vices flaunted naked and unashamed. Even the holy cities, Mecca and Madina, were sink-holes of iniquity, while the 'Hajj' or pilgrimage ordained by the Prophet, had become a scandal through its abuses. In fine: the life had apparently gone out of Islam, leaving naught but a dry husk of soulless ritual and degrading superstition behind. Could Mohammad have returned to earth, he would unquestionably have anathematized his followers as apostates and idolaters.[1]

The fundamental malaise of eighteenth century Islam in India was clearly perceived by Shāh Walī Ullah[2] (1703-1762) who saw the empire of the Great Moghuls crumbling before him. The Shāh had drawn up not only detailed plans

1. *The New World of Islam*, pp. 20-21.
2. Born in 1703, Shāh Wali Ullah received early education at Delhi. He set out for *Haj* in 1720 where he studied under Shāh Abū Tāhir Madni for some time. On returning to India he rose to become the moving spirit of reform and renovation of Islam in India. It was he

[ *Continued on next page* ]

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for social, fiscal and political reforms but also strenuously endeavoured to restore a central authority in India in order to curb the forces of disorder and strife tearing the country apart. It is erroneous to assume, as does Wilfred Cantwell Smith, that the Shāh's political ambition was to restore Muslim power in India more or less on the Moghul pattern.[1] Shāh Walī Ullah had, no doubt, invited Ahmad Shāh Abdālī to India before the third battle of Pānīpat, and also urged upon Najīb-ud-daulā to put an end to the unbridled confusion then prevailing around Delhi, but that was primarily to save the Muslims undergoing unbearable hardships at the hands of predatory powers raising their head on the heels of vanishing Moghul empire and, secondly, because there was no power left in the country which could stem the tide of rising chaos and establish law and order on a firm footing. Nevertheless, the letters and treatises of Shāh Walī Ullah leave no doubt that he had clearly perceived that the days of kingship were gone for ever. He accordingly pleaded that political stability and economic prosperity of the country depended on a political set-up based on wider principles of humanitarianism, social justice and economic well-being of the people.[2]

Shāh Walī Ullah condemned the autocractic kingship, the luxurious living of the nobility and the oppressive social order which saddled the peasantry and artisan classes with unbearable financial burden[3]. Shāh Walī Ullah believed that whenever any section of the society was reduced to the

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who invited Ahmad Shāh Abdālī to crush the power of Marāthās in 1757. He succeeded his father as the Sheikh of *Naqshbandiyah* order. He wrote 23 books and a number of treatises discussing economic, political, social and religious issues. On these the *Hujjat Allah-il-Bālighā*, *Izalātul Khifa*, *Al-Fauz-ul-Kabīr*, *Fath-ur Rahmān*, *Tafhimāt-i-Ilāhiya* and *Sat'at* establish him as the greatest scholar and thinker of his age. His thought pervades all the later movements of regeneration of Islam in India.

1. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, *p. 52*, Khaliq Ahmad Nizāmi, *Shāh Walī Ullah aur Unke Siyāsī Maktūbāt*, pp. 46-49
2. Ubaid Ullah Sindhi, *Shāh Walī Ullah aur Unki Siyāsī Tahrīk*, pp 26-29.
3. K. A. Nizāmī-*Shāh Walī Ullah ke Siyāsī Maktūbāt*, pp. 35-37

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position of beasts of burden by an inequitable social order, God invariably paved the way for a revolution signalling the death of that oppressive system.[1] He advocated to get rid of the parasites like poets and mendicants who lived by sponging on the kings without performing any useful work, to reorganise the armed forces and to make regular payments to the troops, to reduce the number of *jāgīrs* or fiefs and to abolish the system of farming out agricultural lands to assignees (*Ijārādārs*) at fixed rents by the proprietors.[2] Shāh Walī Ullah also advised to promote economic well-being through cooperative effort[3] and to develop the means of producing wealth like agriculture, irrigation and animal husbandry.[4] Shāh Walī Ullah declaimed against the evils to which different sections of the Muslims had fallen a prey in his time. To the *ʿUlamā*, his criticism was directed against their excessive dogmatism and lack of independent thinking, particularly, their refusal to reinterpret the *sharīʿah* in a way more suitable to the changing circumstances. Although initiated in the *Naqshbandīyah* order, he rejected the over-emphasis of the then mystic thought on other-worldliness. He appealed to the Muslims to discard their ignorance, indolence and selfishness as well as all accretions and innovations so as to build up a vigorous and united society on the basis of fundamental purity of Islam. He gave the call to his co-religionists to shake off their languor and resist the oppressors. He advocated the use of *'ijtihād'*[5], rising, if necessary, above the four juristic schools, to re-interpret the *sharīʿah* laws afresh in accordance with the Qurʾān and the *sunnah*[6]

Shāh Walī Ullah presented the Scripture and Prophetic Traditions as eternal sources of guidance in the changing world, as the living guides for humanity and not lifeless

1. K. A. Nizāmi, *Shāh Walī Ullāh ke Siyāsī Maktūbāt* pp, 35-37
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38
4. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
5. To form an opinion as to a rule of law according to Islamic legal criteria.
6. The practice of the prophet.

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models or rituals. He maintained that there was nothing unintelligible in the creed of Islam or the injunctions of the *sharīʿah*. He translated the Qurʾān for the first time in India into Persian which was looked with horror by the theologians of his time. He was also one of the few scholars who endeavoured to spell out the wisdom behind the different religious injunctions to satisfy the intellectual curiosity set in motion during the eighteenth century, as a result of Western impact, in the world of Islam. Shāh Walī Ullah, thus based his concept of reform and regeneration of the Muslim society on intellectualism of the *sharīʿah*, but he did not discard the humanism or spiritualism of mysticism. And, this was, perhaps his unique contribution to modern Islam in the Indian sub-continent. It can be asserted that all the later fundamentalist reformist movements, like those of Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz and Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd and the Deoband and Nadwatul ʿUlamā schools, as well as the ilberalist currents represented by Saiyid Ahmad Khān have drawn inspiration from him. Shāh Abdul ʿAzīz, his son and spiritual successor, initiated Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd in his mystic order ; the writings of Shāh Muhammad Ismaʿīl bear the imprint of Shāh Walī Ullah's style and thought ; the founders of Deoband and Nadwatul ʿUlamā movements, Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Nānotawī (d. 1879), Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī, Maulānā Muhammad ʿAlī Monghyrī and Maulānā Shiblī Naʿomānī, all were connected with his school ; while Saiyid Ahmad Khān, too, unmistakably showed traces of Shāh Walī Ullah's influence[1] in his commentary on the Qurʾān and *Athār-us-Sanādīd*.

1. Bashir Ahmad Dar, *Religious Thought of Saiyid Ahmad Khan*, pp. 51 and 84. (In his commentary on the Qurʾān Saiyid Ahmad Khān quotes Shāh Walī Ullah in support of the interpretations given by him almost after every six or seven pages but only to interpret it in terms of his own rationalist exegesis. In his another work, *Athār-us-Sanādīd*, first published in 1845, Saiyed Ahmad Khān related with great fervour the reformist zeal of Saiyid Ahmad Shāhid and his companions. But, in the second edition of the book brought out in 1854, he was compelled to delete, perhaps, owing to the changed political situation, the whole chapter dealing with the Saiyid and his disciples).

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The eighteenth century Muslim society in India was thus marked, on the one hand, by internal decay and external threat and, on the other, by the resurgent thought of Shāh Wālī Ullah pleading to discard latitudinarian indifference to the Islamic creed and to build up a healthy society which could forge ahead with renewed vigour and enthusiasm. Strange though it may seem, another marked phenomenon of the eighteenth as well as nineteenth century Islam in India was the efflorescence of intellectual and literary endeavour, unmatched by the days gone by, in the surrounding gloom of lax public morals at the bottom, and political confusion, at the top. Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz (d. 1824) author of *Fath-ul-ʿAzīz*, the famous commentary on the Qurʾān and a collection of juristic opinions (fatāwā); Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl (d. 1831), the renowned reformer and author of *ʿAbqāt*, *Taqwiatul-Imān* and *Mansab-i-Imāmat*; Qāzī Thanā Ullah of Panīpat (d. 1810), writer of *Tafsīr Mazharī* and *Mālā Budda Minhu*; Shāh ʿAbul Qādir (d. 1814), the famous exegete who penned *Mūzeh-ul-Qurʾān*; Maulānā Salām Ullah Muhaddith (d. 1813), the author of *Muhalla*; Maulānā ʿAbdul Haʾī Burhānwī (d. 1827), the author of *Fatāwā Sheikh-ul-Islām* and Shāh Is'hāq Dehlawī (d. 1845) are some of the religious scholars who need be mentioned here.

In discursive sciences valuable contributions were made by Maulānā ʿAbdul ʿAlī Bahr-ul-Uloom of Lucknow (d. 1810), Shāh Rafʿī Ud-dīn of Delhi (d. 1817), Maulānā Fazl Imām of Khairābād (d. 1827) and Maulānā Haider ʿAlī of Rāmpūr (d. 1856). In the science of mathematics, *Shurūh-i-Makhrūtāt* and *Rasāiʾl Jabr-o-Muqābilah* were written by Nawāb Tafaddul Husain Khān ʿAllāmā (d. 1800), *Al-Sittata-ul-Jabriyah* by Qāzī Najm-ud-dīn of Kakorī (d. 1813), *Fawāīd-ul-Afkār* and *Tuhfah-i-Nʿumāniyah* by Khwaja Farīd-ud-dīn (d. 1828), *Shams-ul-Handisah* and *Sitta-i-Shamsiyah* by Nawāb Fakhr-ud-dīn of Hyderābād (d. 1862). The famous lexicographers of the age were Muftī Ismāʿīl Landanī, Maulānā Auhād-ud-dīn of Bilgrām (d. 1834) and Maulānā ʿAbdur Rahīm of Safipur (d. 1850). *Nafāiʾs-ul-Lughāt* and *Maftāh-ul lisān* by Maulānā Auhād-ud-dīn and *Munʿha-al-ʿArab* by

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Maulānā ʿAbdur Rahīm are still deemed as authoritative works on the subject. Another learned man of the time was Tafaddul Husain Khān, the *Vakīl* of Nawāb Āsaf-ud-daula at Calcutta (1788-1792), who knew Latin and Greek besides oriental languages. He had translated Newton's *Principia* from Latin into Arabic. He had also translated several works on Algebra, Mechanics, Conic Sections and Logarithms.[1] Mirzā Abū Tālib Khān of Lucknow had undertaken an extensive tour of western Asia and Europe during 1799-1803 and written an intelligent and entertaining account of the countries visited by him. The book, which was later rendered into English by Charles Stewert,[2] gives a picture of the English society in his time, its complex legal system, freedom and equality enjoyed by the women and commonalty as well as the limitations under which the two suffered, in comparison to their counterparts in India, under the veil of apparent freedom enjoyed by them.

We also come across reputed pedagogues like Mullā Mubīn Firangī Mahlī (d. 1810), Maulānā Nūrul Haq of Lucknow (d. 1822), Maulānā Haider ʿAlī Sandīlawi (d. 1810) Maulānā ʿAbdul Bāsit of Kannauj (d. 1819) and Maulānā Ghulām Jīlānī (d. 1819); prolific authors like Maulānā Bāqar of Madrās (d. 1805), Muftī Ilāhī Bakhsh (d. 1829) and Maulānā Rashīd-ud-dīn Khān (d. 1827); the doyens of Urdu classical poetry like Mīr Hasan (d. 1886), Mīr Taqī Mīr (d. 1810), Salyid Inshā' Allah Khān Inshā' (d. 1817), Ghulām Hamdānī Mushafī (d. 1824), Sheikh Imām Bakhsh Nāsikh (d. 1838), Khwājā Haidar ʿAlī Ātish (d. 1846), Momin Khān Momin (d. 1851), Sheikh Ibrāhīm Zauq (d. 1854) and Asad Ullah Khān Ghālib (d. 1869); and also several celebrated saints and men of God diffusing moral health and godliness among the people. Some of them, worth mentioning, were Shāh Ghulām ʿAlī of Delhi (d. 1824), Maulānā Naʿīm Ullah (d. 1803) of Bahraich and Shāh Murād Ullah (d. 1832) of Thānesar at Lucknow, Shāh Muhammad Āfāq (d. 1835) at

1. Bashir Ahmad Dar; *Religious Thought of Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, pp. 63-64.
2. *Travels in Asia, Africa and Europe*, tr. by C. Stewert (London, 1814).

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Delhi, Shāh Husain ʿAlī Makānwī in the Punjab, Shāh Dargāhī Naqshbandī (d. 1811) at Rāmpūr, Shāh Raʾuf Ahmad Mujaddidī (d. 1833) at Bhopāl and Maulānā Ahmadī Kursawī, Shāh Amīn-ud-dīn (d. 1837) and Qāzī ʿAbdul Karīm and his disciple of the same name in Oudh. Besides mystics of *Mujaddidiyah* order, the torch of *Chishtiyah* order was held aloft by Maulānā Qutb-ud-dīn (d. 1817), Sheikh Sābīr Bakhsh (d. 1821), Shāh Mīr Muhammadī (d. 1826), Shāh Niāz Ahmad (d. 1834), Shāh ʿAbdul Bārī Amrohwī (d. 1811) and numerous others in the Punjab, Bihar and Oudh. These mystics exerted benign influence over the masses and their monasteries attracted hundreds of devotees from far off lands, such as, Samarkand, Tāshkent, Bukhāra, Qandahār, Kābul and Ghaznī. Likewise, educational institutions capable of affording a high degree of intellectual training and polish turned out thousands of scholars every year but in the absence of any central political authority and confusion and disorder then prevailing in the country, the stray and uncoordinated efforts of the ecclesiastics, scholars and mystics had failed to produce any appreciable impact on the masses who could not be galvanised to fight the forces of evil and decadence.

Medieval India was what the Muslims had made it. They had attained a stage of civilization higher and to a certain degree unique, in this part of the globe. Persians and Turks coming from the western part of Asia possessed an elegant dialect, were celebrated for prosecuting the sciences, and had evolved a sociological structure which was egalitarian in its make up and productive of moral virtues like courage and manliness, graciousness and decorum, deference for religion, rectitude and integrity. Kingdoms and dynasties had come and gone but the social structure built by the Muslims had sustained their rule for eight hundred years. It looked to the Muslim rulers for its

1. For the Biographical notices of the personages mentioned see *Nuzhatul Khawātir* by Maulānā ʿAbdul Haiʾ, Daʾiratul Maʿarif, Hyderabad, 1947.

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political unity but was guided by the *'ulamā'* and the pure-hearted mystics in its intellectual and moral pursuits. With the confusion and disorder prevailing everywhere in the eighteenth century the links that coordinated its material, cultural, intellectual and spiritual moorings had been suddenly rent asunder leaving the people perplexed and abashed without any sense of purpose or a higher ideal. Nevertheless, the average Muslim had not entirely lost the qualities of his forefathers. He still had reverential regard for religious institutions and moral precepts. Even those who had fallen a victim to the failings of human desire had not lost the shame to flaunt their misdoings and very often expressed feelings of humiliation excited by consciousness of their guilt. Independence and manliness, courage and valour marked their character and manners, but their efforts not being directed to any higher ideal, these qualities were normally pressed into service for the defence of personal or family honour, or for the achievement of petty personal ends and, not infrequently, for personal aggrandisement. The more lofty in spirit oftentimes embarked upon spiritual travails and self-mortification under the influence of mis-guided mystics. The Muslims were also not bereft of creative zeal and finer instincts but these were misdirected towards niceties in food and dress and poetic extravagance in the form of *ghazals* and *mathnavīs*. Last, but not the least, the Muslims had still not lost their enthusiasm, their warmth of spirit, nor had the sense of pride and self-confidence gone out of them and they were, thus, still capable of being aroused to make a final effort for regaining their lost glory.

Emergence of a mercantile nation as a formidable force on the political scene of India posed as much threat to the age-old economic system of the country as to the values cherished by the Muslims of India. Many of the higher posts, in the army, in the administration and in the learned professions had been in the hands of the Muslims. Closure of these avenues of employment had begun to sink the Muslims into poverty and to submerge their higher

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classes in the lower social strata. The demobilization of the armed forces of Indian states, mostly manned by the Muslims, meant not only the loss of livelihood but also seemed to diminish their martial spirit. In the judicial and revenue departments, where the Muslims held their own, the reforms of Warren Hastings introduced in 1772, gradually replaced the qāzīs, *mīr-ʿadls*, *nāzims* and *diwāns* by magistrates and deputy collectors of revenue.[1] Jagīrs were not abolished, but the *jagirdārs* or land-holders found themselves under the British, subjected to "critical scrutiny, detailed inquisition and frequent resumption and commutation to pension."[2] Another class of land-holders who suffered greatly under the British rule was the holder of revenue-free lands granted by the Muslim rulers to support learning and education. In order to maximise receipts from the land revenue the East India Company issued, from 1793 onwards, regulations for investigation and resumption of such holdings as did not possess unimpeachable title-deeds properly registered with the Collector. Muslims of Bengal where the East India Company acted as the revenue farmer for Shāh ʿĀlam were worse hit than others by these resumption proceedings.[3] Then, the Permanent Settlement in Bengal virtually closed the doors to landlordship for the Muslims. But this was not all. The Muslims had in their hands many of the finer and more skilled industrial arts which were ruined by the fiscal policy of the East India Company. These measures of the new rulers of India had the effect of reducing the Muslims of the higher and middle classes into beggars ; educational standard of the *madarsās* began to contract both in quality and quantity ; Muslim nobility began to be caught in the moss of harmful influences ; and, their intellectual and religious leadership began to show signs of deterioration. The baneful effects of the changing socio-political pattern of the country were visible even to the common man in the street ; a seething discontent

1. P. Hardy ; *The Muslims of British India*, p. 36-37
2. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
3. W. W. Hunter ; *The Indian Musalmāns*, pp. 181-83.

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filled the air, but there appeared to be no one who could take the revolutionary message of Islam to the masses, rid them of their sorry plight, make their lives more meaningful and awaken them from the deep slumber of sloth and indifference in order to shape their destiny once again. Indian Islam in the eighteenth century was thus in search of a hero, a man of the hour, who could impart it again the sense of its role and identity, and it did find him in Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, at the turn of the century when it most needed him.

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Two

# Saiyid Ahmad Shahid—Ancestors and Early Life

MUHAMMAD Zun-Nafs az-Zakīya, who fell down fighting at Madīna on the 7th December 762, in an action against the Abbāsid Caliph Mansūr (756-775), was the son of ʿAbdullah al-Mahaz, whose father, Hasan Muthanna, was the son of Hasan bin ʿAlī, and mother, Fatima Sughra, a daughter of Husain bin ʿAlī. Twelfth in the line of his descendants, Saiyid Qutb-ud-dīn Muhammad al-Hasanī,[1] was one of those elects who are doubly blessed with the beauty of holiness and heroic intrepidity. From Baghdād, he migrated to Ghaznī, and then moved onwards with a retinue of his dependants and followers to India in 1211. Sultān Shams-ud-dīn Iltutmish (1211-36) had, by the time, gained the remnants of Qutb-ud-dīn Aibak's wide dominion by his victory over Ārām Shāh. The Sultān received Saiyid Qutb-ud-dīn with great honour but the latter preferred to settle down somewhere in the eastern part of the country rather than be enlisted as one in the entourage of the King at the capital. He marched on to Kannauj where he gave battle to Raja Jai Chand and conquered Kannauj; the latter sought refuge in the fort of Karā, on the Ganges above Allāhābād, and his brother Manikchand in that of

1. Born in 1181, according to *Bahr-ul-Ansāb*.

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Mānikpūr. Qutb-ud-dīn sent a detachment under Qawām-ud-dīn, his son, to subdue Mānikpūr while he remained besieging Jai Chand at Karā. After a two months siege the Rājās of both the places abandoned their forts and fled to Kantith in the mountains of the Vindhya range.[1]

It seems that Saiyid Qutb-ud-dīn was later recalled by the King to be appointed as Sheikh-ul-Islam[2] of the realm at Delhi for Barnī writes about him : "Of the Saiyids, one who can be described as the prince among the pure-hearted souls of the time, was Qutb-ud-dīn, the progenitor of the Qāzīs of Budāūn."[3] Several other writers confirm the statement of Barnī about the great respect enjoyed by Saiyid Qutb-ud-dīn on account of his piety as well as due to his being a direct descendant of the Prophet.[4] Saiyid Qutb-ud-dīn died in 1230, leaving three sons, Nizām-ud-dīn, Qawām-ud-dīn and Tāj-ud-dīn, who were all noted for their spirituality and scholarship. Saiyid Tāj-ud-dīn remained, for a long time, the Qāzī of Oudh and then of the province of Budāun[5] while Saiyid Qawām-ud-dīn was betrothed to Qatība, one of the daughters of Iltutmish. Not much is known about Saiyid Nizām-ud-dīn who does not appear to have accepted any office under government, but his son Saiyid Rukn-ud-dīn later adorned the office of Qāzī of Kara. Ziā-ud-dīn Barnī, who happened to meet Rukn-ud-dīn speaks highly of his sanctity, selflessness and generosity.[6] The progeny of Saiyid Nizām-ud-dīn continued to live as the elites of Karā for about a hundred years after which one of his descendants, Saiyid Qutb-ud-dīn II, migrated to Jāi's in Rae Bareli district. Thereafter, in 1385, Qāzī Saiyid Mahmūd, the grandson of Saiyid Qutb-ud-dīn II, took residence at Nasīrābād, another town in Rae Bareli at a distance

1. Gazetteer of the Province of Oudh, Vol. II, Allahabad (1877), p. 460
2. A title given to the chief religious dignitary of a Muslim state.
3. *Barnī ; Tārīkh Fīroz Shāhī*, p. 111
4. c. f. *ʿUmdatul Matālib* by Saiyid ʿAlī Hamadānī; *Tazkirat-us-Sʿādāt* by Sheikh Ahmad Akbarabādī and *Mambʿa-ul-Ansāb* and *Bahr-ul-Ansāb* by Saiyid Hāmid Bukhārī and Saiyid Murtaza, respectively.
5. *Barnī*, pp. 348/49
6. *Barnī*, p. 349

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of four miles from Jāi's. Qāzī Saiyid Ahmad, son of Qāzī Saiyid Mahmūd, was another zealous believer who left Nasīrābād for Rae Bareli simply because in a law-suit presented before him one of the parties expressed resentment over the judgment given in accordance with the *sharīᶜah*.[1] However, his sons and grandsons remained at Nasīrābād.

Shāh ᶜAlam Ullah, born on Monday the 27th December, 1623, was a grandson of Qāzī Saiyid Ahmad. His father, Saiyid Muhammad Fuzail, had died two months and a half before his birth and his mother expired a year or two thereafter. His maternal uncle, Saiyid Abū Muhammad, one of the nobles of Shāh Jahān, brought him up with loving care. Saiyid Abū Muhammad wanted ᶜAlam Ullah to take up some employment in the imperial army, but he never agreed. Shāh ᶜAlam Ullah stayed with his maternal uncle for two years, undergoing the hardships of the trainees, but he ultimately gave up all his belongings to join a reputed saint of the time, Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī, the spiritual successor of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindī Mujaddid Alf Thānī. It did not take him long under the guidance of his Sheikh to attain the heights of sanctity. Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī was so impressed with his talented disciple that he awarded him his own turban as well as the headgear of his spiritual mentor, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindī. Then, bidding farewell to Shah ᶜAlam Ullah he said: "Saiyid, now you go back to your home town well contented. You would be like a sun among the stars."

Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī later migrated to Arabia. The devoted disciple also wanted to accompany his mentor, to which the latter agreed but instructed him that he would not reject the request, if made by anyone, to break his journey for good in the way. Shāh ᶜAlam Ullah returned to his home and set out to leave the country along with his family. When he reached near Rae Barelī, another saint, ᶜAbdus Shakūr by name, insisted that he should settle down at a

1. The path to be followed; the totality of the divine law upheld by revelation and practice of the Prophet.

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place, about three miles west of the city, on the left bank of river Saʾī. Shāh ʿAlam Ullah had to accept the suggestion and this is the place where he enjoys a blissful sleep to this day. Twice he went for pilgrimage in 1664 and 1671. A year after the second pilgrimage he constructed a mosque[1] by the side of the river on the model of Kaʿaba.[2]

A man of simple habits, Shāh ʿAlam Ullah always led austere life; to perform the household chores or to carry the fuel-wood on his own head, he never demurred. He was ever mindful of following the example of the holy Prophet to the minutest details and expected the same from his family members and dependants. Nobody, whatever his rank or authority or kinship with him could dare to flout, without incurring his displeasure, the rules of *sharīʿah* or precepts of the Prophet. Once, Dalel Khān, a noble of Shāh Jahān, came to pay his respects to him. Shāh ʿAlam Ullah took a pledge from him to follow the righteous path of religion in future and to repent for his past sins. Thereafter the noble made a present which was graciously accepted by Shāh ʿAlam Ullah. Dalel Khān took leave of the Sheikh, but then the latter heard the drumbeat announcing departure of the noble. Shāh ʿAlam Ullah immediately returned the gifts presented by Dalel Khān.

Another time, after a flood in river Saʾī, when his house had been badly damaged, one of Shāh ʿAlam Ullah's disciples presented five hundred rupees for the repairs and raising the plinth of the house. Shāh ʿAlam Ullah, however, collected his sons and family members and told them that the amount received for repairs could better be earned by them by carrying on the repairs themselves instead of employing labourers. The repairs were carried out by all including the Shāh, who took the same wages as other labourers.

Shāh ʿAlam Ullah never accepted a present from anyone if there was the least possibility of its having been

1. The chronogrammatic name of the mosque, indicating its year of construction is *Qiblatus-Shan*, engraved on the southern gate of mosque.
2. *ʿAlām-ul-Huda*

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earned through means not permitted by the *sharīʿah*. Aurangzeb whose piety was proverbial, always avoided spending even a shell on himself from the state exchequer. He was even free from the more innocent pleasures of the rich. Once he ordered two hundred rupees to be presented to Shāh ʿAlam Ullah out of his own earnings, but the Sheikh flatly refused to accept anything from the Emperor.[1] Shāh ʿAlam Ullah solemnly entreated God, more than once, to grant sustenance to his progeny only enough to keep their body and soul together lest they should become heedless in recollection of the Lord.[2]

In his private life, food and dress, habits and manners, Shāh ʿAlam Ullah closely resembled the companions of the Prophet of Islam. He had attained the stage of sanctity where gaining the good pleasure of God remains the only desire held dear by man. His son, Saiyid Abū Hanīfah died at the age of thirty-two. Shāh ʿAlam Ullah performed the dawn prayers with the usual repose as if nothing had happened, and then informed others that arrangements for the burial of Abū Hanīfah had to be made who had expired last night. After the burial he remarked : "Praise be to God. Abū Hanīfah left this world with his faith intact."

Shāh Ghulām ʿAlī relates that the Emperor Aurangzeb once had a vision of the holy Prophet's demise in dream. Extremely perturbed, the Emperor made enquiries about its significance but he soon came to know that Shāh ʿAlam Ullah had breathed his last in the night he had had the vision. It was the early hours of Monday, the 26th of October, 1685 when Shāh ʿAlam Ullah passed to his heavenly abode at the age of sixty-two years and nine months[3].

Many among the sons and grandsons of Shāh ʿAlam Ullah, blessed with the internal illumination continued, in succession, to keep alight the lamp of spirituality. His second son, Saiyid Muhammad Huda, who was destined to

1. *Natāʾij-ul-Harmaiʾn*
2. Muhammad ʿAlī ; *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, p. 42
3. Shāh Ghulām ʿAlī ; *Al-Maʿārif*

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become the great-grandfather of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was particularly noted for his chaste and pious life and generous disposition. He lived a life of extraordinary abstinence, heedless of everything save the worship of God. There were several occasions when he gave away all he had to the poor and the needy and himself endured the pangs of hunger. Once he received twelve thousand gold mohurs from one of his fiefs, but he distributed all before returning to his house. Saiyid Muhammad Nūr, the eldest son of Saiyid Muhammad Huda and a favourite of his grandfather, was not less careful in following the precepts of the Prophet than Shāh ʿAlam Ullah who had taken special pains for the moral and spiritual discipline of his grandson. Once his father sent him to seek the employment of Prince Muhammad ʿĀzam. His request was granted but he agreed to serve the prince provided he was not required to comply with the un-Islamic rules of Imperial court's etiquettes. Although the Prince paid due regard to Saiyid Muhammad Nūr, he gave up the employment after a short while.

Saiyid Shāh Abū Saʿeed, the grandson of Shāh ʿAlam Ullah's eldest son, Saiyid Āyat Ullah, was the maternal grandfather of Saiyid Ahmed Shahīd. A man of God, known for his piety and righteousness, he had the honour of being the spiritual successor of Shāh Walī Ullah. He was also too lavish in entertaining guests and helping the poor. Once he received one lakh of rupees. He distributed the amount to the last rupee before he went back to his house.

Saiyid Muhammad Nūr had two sons, Saiyid Muhammad Noʿamān and Saiyid Muhammad ʿIrfān. Like his father, the latter was also a pious soul. While returning from Lucknow, in 1800, he fell seriously ill in the way and expired before reaching Rae Bareli. Bībī Najīya, the mother of Moulvi Saiyid Muhammad ʿAlī, Saiyid Ahmad ʿAlī Shahīd, Saiyid Hamid-ud-dīn and Saiyid ʿAbdur Rahmān, was the only child born to the first wife of Saiyid Muhammad ʿIrfān. After the death of his first wife he had married the daughter of Shāh Abū Saʿeed, to whom were born three daughters and three sons, Saiyid Muhammad Ibrāhīm, Saiyid Muhammad Is'hāq and Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd. Saiyid Muhammad Is'hāq was widely read

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and an erudite scholar who received education, first at Lucknow, and then studied *hadīth*[1] at the feet of Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz at Delhi. He was also initiated in the spiritual order of Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz. An eloquent speaker and a poet, Saiyid Muhammad Is'hāq has left several poetical works in which he has explained the intricate problems relating to mathematics, rules of inheritance and grammar.

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was born at Rae Bareli on 29th November, 1786.[2] The young Saiyid Ahmad began his education, as was the custom among the Muslims in those days, at the age of four. But, unlike his brothers, he took little interest in his studies. It is related that during the first three years, he learnt only a few chapters of the Qurʾān and could write but a few words. His elder brothers, Saiyid Muhammad Ibrāhim and Saiyid Muhammad Is'hāq appeared to be much worried over his lack of interest in the studies, but his father asked them not to fret for him. Said he, "Leave him to God. He would do whatever is best for him. There is no use worrying about him."[3]

It might be true that the Saiyid showed little inclination towards his studies in the initial stages, but he subsequently learnt enough Persian to speak fluently in that language. He often quoted verses of Bedil and Hāfiz in his discourses. Mehr has also quoted *Amir-ur-Rawāyāt* to show that he studied a few text-books of Arabic under his brother Saiyid Muhammad Is'hāq and took lessons in Traditions from Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl later on at Delhi.

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was, however, very fond of sports, particularly those which involved exertion and contest. He often used to divide his playmates into two

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1. An account of what the Prophet Muhammad said, did or tacitly approved.
2. *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī* gives only the month and year of his birth. Ghulām Rasūl Mehr has, however, given the date from a manuscript of Waqāiʿ Ahmadi, he received from Tonk. The place where the Saiyid was born was his ancestral home, Dāira Shāh ʿAlam Ullah, now known as Takia.
3. *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, p. 12

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parties, each of which tried to vanquish the enemy in mock-battles.[1] The young Saiyid had attained proficiency in wrestling, swimming and archery and had developed a robust physique. He took such a keen interest in wrestling and other athletic exercises that, according to his nephew Saiyid ʿAbdur Rahmān, he could practise these exercises continuously for hours without showing any sign of fatigue. He had several dumb-bells weighing twenty, thirty and forty seers[2] for gymnastic exercises. The result was that he had acquired such a physical strength that once he lifted a heavy stone lamp-post and carried it about twenty paces. Then he threw it with such force that it got itself embedded one cubit deep in the ground. As other wrestlers had only been able to lift it with great difficulty, people found it difficut to believe that the pillar had been moved from its place by a single person. Similarly, in swimming, archery and other sports, he could easily beat his companions. Maulvī ʿAlīm Ullah was a noted swimmer of Delhi. Once he happened to see the Saiyid swimming up-stream and acknowledged that it would have been difficult for him to swim against such a swift current.[3]

The Saiyid was, from his childhood days, infatuated with a desire to wage war in the way of God. His enthusiasm was, however, taken by his elders as a childish fad except, of course, by his mother who had never had any misgivings about the capabilities of her son. Once he wanted to take part in a local skirmish which involved the defence of the Muslims' honour. He stood awaiting the permission of his mother while she was performing her prayers. In the meantime his foster-mother tried to dissuade him from joining the conflict, but as soon as his mother had said her prayers she said : "Ahmad, go ahead with the name of God on your lips. But, see, you do not turn your back in the fight. In that case I shall not see your face again. But if the other party sues for peace, do not reject the offer." Then, turning to

1. *Sīrat Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, Vol. I, p. 79
2. A seer is equal to 0.933 kilograms.
3. *Waqāiʿ Ahmadī* and *Manzooratus soʿada*.

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the foster-mother of Ahmad, she said: "I know you love Ahmad, but not more than I do. It was not the time to discourage him."[1]

As the Saiyid grew older, he developed a passion for two other callings. One of it was spending long hours in prayers and remembrance of God. He often spent the whole night in vigils recollecting God and contemplating over the injunctions of the Qur'ān. Similarly, social service had also caught his imagination so ardently that he never hesitated in performing the toilsome jobs of his neighbours nor was there any work too low for him. He would regularly visit the widows, old and invalids to perform their household chores. As most of these neighbours held the Saiyid's family in reverence, they felt embarrassed in taking his assistance. Some of his relatives, too, like the blue-blooded gentry everywhere, felt the newly acquired craze of the Saiyid as below their dignity, but unmindful of what others thought or talked about him, the Saiyid fetched water, carried fuel-wood from the forest or attended to the household works of the poor and the crippled without a blush.[2]

Belonging to a family with a long-standing tradition of zealously following the precepts of true faith, the Saiyid avoided, from the very beginning, doing anything which could be construed as an innovation in religion or superstitious accretion to the teachings of the Qur'ān and sacred Traditions. The Saiyid thus led a chaste and unblemished life from his childhood days.

During 1803-4 when Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was about 17 or 18 years of age, he set out for Lucknow with his seven companions, mostly relatives, to seek some employment. They had to cover 79 kms. but with only one pack-horse being available, every one in the party enjoyed the ride when his turn came, while others walked with their luggage on their heads. The Saiyid, however, never availed himself of his turn and always withdrew in favour of someone.

1. Ja'far 'Ali Naqvi ; *Manzooratus So'ada'*.
2. *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, p. 12

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When they had covered about half of the distance, almost every one was too exhausted to carry on the journey with his heavy baggage. No porter was available either. At last, the Saiyid offered to suggest a solution provided every one in the party agreed to accept his suggestion beforehand. This done, he packed the whole luggage in a blanket and carried it on his head; and, at the same time, thanked his companions for giving him an opportunity to be of some service to them.[1]

Nawāb Saʿādat ʿAlī Khān then ruled at Lucknow. He was a competent administrator who attempted to reform the revenue administration and enforce financial discipline. He had, however, to carry on his government in difficult circumstances. In 1798, he was obliged to cede the fort of Allahabad and also to promise payment of 76 lakh rupees annually to the East India Company which, on its part, undertook the responsibility of the defence of the Nawāb's dominions. Three years later, faced with the threatened attack by Sindhia, and anarchy prevailing in Rohilkhand, he found himself unable to pay the accumulated arrears of the tribute payable to the Company. He had to execute a fresh treaty with the Company giving up Gorakhpur division, most of the Bareilly division, and the districts of Allāhābād, Kānpūr, Fatehpūr, Etāwah, Mainpurī, Etah and Farrukhābād, the south of Mirzāpūr district and the Tarai region of Kumaun division. This left with him only the territory called Oudh, surrounded on all sides by the British dominions except the north.

When Nawāb Saʿādat ʿAlī Khān ascended the throne on 21st February, 1798 his dominion had still not recovered from the ravages of the great famine of 1783-84 owing to the apathy of his predecessors and disorganised local administration in the districts.[2] His efforts to reorganise revenue administration, specially resumption of grants by previous

1. *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, p. 14
2. W. Crooke ; *The North-Western Provinces of India*, p. 169

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rulers, were met with resistance and, occasionally, with interference by the British Resident. The demobilisation of forces consequent on the shrinking of the Nawāb's dominions and transfer of defence liabilities to the British, coupled with the stringent economy measures to achieve financial stability, caused widespread unemployment and discontent. Also, the absence of effective power in his hand exposed him to Wellesley's arbitrary and overbearing conduct towards him, but he had no option except to take a conciliatory attitude.

A patrician of the city who held the Saiyid's forefathers and other elders of his family in reverence, took the Saiyid as his guest while his other companions had to earn their daily bread through calligraphy, tailoring or some other manual labour. It was not unoften that one or the other of the Saiyid's friends was unable to earn a penny, but Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd always shared the victuals sent by his host, and sometimes he even went without food to satisfy his friends' pangs of hunger. Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd and his friends spent four months in this manner at Lucknow. The host of the Saiyid was by this time ordered by the Nawāb to recruit a hundred cavalry for which about a thousand candidates with their arms and colts had turned up. The Saiyid's host asked him to select two persons from amongst his companions. He offered both the appointments to two persons not related to him and asked his relatives to have faith in God who would solve their difficulties too. Very much impressed by the Saiyid's selflessness, his host promised to make some arrangements for his remaining companions in the near future.

After four months of the Saiyid's arrival in Lucknow, the Nawāb asked the host of the Saiyid to arrange a hunting expedition. Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd and his friends accompanied his host on safari in the hope of securing some employment during the expedition. Three more months, however, elapsed in the hilly tracts in the north, during winter season, without any opening in sight for any one. The Saiyid had, however, given up all hopes of getting employed by now and

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was incessantly pleading with his comrades to abandon their illusive quest of the worldly gains and go with him to Delhi. "Brothers", said he, "all this toil and trouble to make a living has been in vain. Why not abandon it and go to Delhi ? Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz is there now a sign among the signs of God." None, however, took him seriously. At last he took Saiyid Muhammad ʿAlī[1] aside one night and said, "I shall leave for Delhi in a day or two. I want you to accompany me." Muhammad ʿAlī replied. "We dont' have anything except the clothes we are putting on. You might have the courage to undertake such a long journey empty-handed, but we can't dare." Then, after two or three days, the Saiyid disappeared without notifying his departure. His friends made a search for him since the forest where they happened to be at the time was very dense and dangerous. Wild beasts like lions, tigers, bears and hyenas sprawled in the thickets and not a day went by when a man or two was not mauled by them. The Saiyid's mysterious disappearance without a trace for several days convinced his friends that he had fallen a prey to some wild animal. After a few days, a man returning from Muhammadī forest told one of the Saiyid's friends that he had seen a young man accompanying an infantryman with a pitcher on his head. "As the young man did not appear to be a porter," continued the man further, "I enquired from the soldier why had he forced that poor man to undertake that undignified task. But the footman had a strange story to tell. He said that he had engaged an old and weak porter who found it difficult to carry the load. Then, this man came and asked me to pay the wages to the porter and offered to carry the pitcher himself. I agreed to the proposal on his insistence for he would not allow the porter to carry the load any more." Listening to the story the Saiyid's companions heaved a sigh of relief for the young man could have been nobody else except the Saiyid.

1. Author of *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, who was with him in the trip to Lucknow and on the Safari All these details have been related by him.

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Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd had only a few paisas[1] which he had decided to spend when absolutely necessary. When the pangs of hunger became unbearable, he purchased a little of *gur*[2] and *sattū*,[3] but he had hardly begun eating when a beggar came forward saying that he had not had anything to eat for two days. The Saiyid parted with his provender and spent the night in recollection of God. Way-weary and exhausted, with blisters on his feet, he decided to spend a few days in a mosque in the way to regain strength before resuming the journey again. However, a man who had come to say his prayers enquired about his where-abouts. On coming to know that he was the son of Saiyid Muhammad ʿIrfān, his spiritual guide, the man took the Saiyid to his home. He allowed the Saiyid, despite his insistence, to leave only after his blisters had been treated. He also provided the Saiyid with necessary transport for the rest of the journey. It was in this way that Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd arrived at Delhi to become an eye-witness to the miserable condition of the once greatest metropolis of Islam in the world.

1. Copper coins
2. Unrefined sugar
3. Parched gram and barley, grinded and made into a paste

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## Three

# The Wayfarer of Mystic Path

ON reaching Delhi Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd went straight to Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz[1] who enquired about his family, home and his purpose of visit to Delhi. On coming to know that the Saiyid's maternal grandfather was Saiyid Abū Saʿeed, and his uncle Saiyid Noʿamān, Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz once again shook hands with the Saiyid and embraced him. He remarked, "God willing, you shall have the patrimony of your ancestors." Thereafter Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz asked a servant to take the Saiyid to his younger brother, Shāh ʿAbdul

1. Shāh Abdul ʿAzīz, the eldest son of Shāh Wali Ullah, was born in 1746. He received his early education from two eminent disciples of his father, Khwāja Muhammad Amīn and Sheikh Muhammad Is'hāq of Phulat. Then he entered the seminary, Madarsa Rahmāniya of his father and made a thorough study of the *Masābih*, *Sihāh Sittah*, *Sharh Muwattah* and other text-books of Tradition. He possessed a prodigious memory. After completing his education under the guidance of his father he succeeded to the chair of his father at Madarsa Rahmāniya in 1763. People came from far and near to learn at his feet. He carried the ideas of his father to a wider circle than his father had been able to do. He wrote on various topics, some of his books being *Fath-ul-ʿAzīz*, *Bustān-ul-Muhaddasīn*, *Ujala-i-Nafia*, *Tuhfa-i-Athnā ʿAshariya*, *Zikr-us-Shhādatain*, etc. He died on the 5th June, 1824.

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Qādir,[1] in Akbarābādī Mosque[2] and tell him that he should extend every facility to the honoured guest. Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz also ordained three persons to look after the needs of the Saiyid.

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd began studying Arabic and Persian under Shāh ʿAbul Qādir and Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz. The Saiyid did not distinguish himself as a scholar; but he had a powerful and cultivated intellect, and as his later discourses and letters show, he knew enough Arabic to acquire a deep insight into the true content of faith and wrote lucid and chaste Persian.

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd took the oath of allegiance on the hands of Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz, shortly thereafter, in 1804. The Shāh guided his disciples, desirous of spiritual ascent, on the path of the *Chishtiyah*[3], *Qādiriyah*[4] or *Naqshbandiyah*[5] order, in accordance with the desire expressed by his disciples. To the Saiyid, however, he started teaching all the three systems. After the Saiyid had gone through the initial stages, like recollection of God, subduing of egoism, denial of everything other than God, affirmation of God, etc. he was instructed by Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz to practise *marāqibah* or concentrated contemplation on the image of his Sheikh.[6]

1. Brother of Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz, who was a learned scholar and first to translate the Qurʾān in Urdu. He died on the 12th February, 1814.
2. The mosque, built in 1650, by Nawāb Aizāz-un-nisā Begum, one of the wives of Shāhjahān, was in Faiz Bāzār. It was an imposing edifice of red sandstone and marble with rooms around its spacious courtyard for boarder students. (*Athār-us-Sanādid*, pp. 284/87). No trace of the mosque is left now as the British government converted the place into Edward Park after the upheaval of 1857.
3. The order of mysticism taking its name from Khwājā Moʿin-ud-din Chishtī of Ajmer.
4. The order founded by Sheikh Pir Muhammad (d. 1319)
5. The mystic order known after the name of great mystic Sheikh ʿAbdul Qādir Jilānī (d. 1165)
6. The practice is known as *Shaghl-i-Barzakh* in the language of mystics. It implies contemplation on the figure of one's spiritual mentor, prior to fixing one's gaze upon the abstract which, according to their experience, is considered effective in purifying the heart and dispelling diabolic suggestions from the mind.

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Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, however, asked : "Sir, how does it differ from idolatry ? One has an image carved in stone or painted on paper, the other has a conceptual figure upon which the mental gaze is fixed."

Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz recited a couplet of Hāfiz in reply :

"Soak the prayer-mat with wine at the mentor's bid,
For nescient the guide is not, but the journey's goal."

The Saiyid submitted again : "I dare not associate anything with God. I only want to be satisfied that the concentrated contemplation on the image of Sheikh is not identical to idolatry. I would be convinced if there is anything to throw light on it in the Qurʾān, hadīth or the consensus of the jurists."

Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz was much pleased with the reply of his disciple. He hugged the Saiyid and kissed his forehead saying, "My son, you have been blessed by God with the prophetic enlightenment." Asked to elucidate what he meant by prophetic enlightenment, Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz explained : "Mystical sainthood is propinquity to God which is marked by a passionate attachment, seated deep in the heart of the lover. In that condition one becomes dead to the world and all that it stands for ; progeny, riches, honour and human desires, all are effaced from one's heart. Then, with all his heart and soul, the mystic desires the pleasure of God...But those who soar in the domain of prophetic enlightenment are so completely lost in the love of God that they answer the descriptions of God-moved souls given in the Qurʾān.

"Ye will not attain unto piety until ye spend of that which ye love."[1]

"Lo ! in Our sight they are verily of the elect, the excellent."[2]

In their habits and actions such persons are a replica of the Prophet about whom God says :

"But righteous is he who believeth in Allah and the last Day and the angels and the Scripture and the

1. Q. III : 92
2. Q. XXXVIII : 47

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prophets ; and giveth wealth, for love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free ; and observeth proper worship and payeth the poor-due. And those who fulfil their pledge when they make one, and are patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress. Such are they who are sincere. Such are the God-fearing."[1]

"Such men of God attain an affinity with the Prophet in character and demeanour ; detach their souls from all desires and affections ; spend their time in guiding the people and weaning them away from vices ; enforce the commandments of God and revive the practice of the prophets ; fight the infidels and mischief-mongers ; and, they are ever willing to diffuse the ways of true faith among the Muslims, through their haranguings and discourses, whether people pay attention to them or not. This, in the parlance of mystics, is called *Qurb-ul-Farāi'z* or duteous proximity. Such an enlightened soul always acts on the express injunctions of the Qur'ān and those who attain that stage should be deemed to have reached the highest domain of spirituality. And, *that is the bounty of Allah ; which He giveth unto whom He will* "[2]

Later on Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd explained why it was dangerous to practise the contemplation on forms and figures although it formed an essential tenet in several mystical orders. It was an innovation in religion, the Saiyid explained, because of its resemblance to the worship of idols, and that the practice was likely to lead the traveller of spirit to pay divine regards to inanimate images and symbols which was considered heretical by Islam.[3] In preference to the other mystical orders, the Saiyid laid emphasis on a new method which he called *Sulūk-i-Rāh-i-Nubūwat* or the mysticism according to prophetical method. The distinguishing feature of this new method is that the mystic

1. Q. II : 177
2. *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, pp. 20-21
3. Saiyid Ahmad Shadid ; *Sirāt-i-Mustaqim*, pp. 368-391

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should first turn away from all sins and make all his actions conform strictly to the Law given by the Prophet before taking to remembrance and contemplation. The *dhikr* or remembrance of the prophetical method comprises recitation of the Qur'ān and prayers handed down from the Prophet with intense humility, restless yearning and a heartfelt realisation of the awe of God. The *fikr* of the method consists of, first, contemplation on the Goodness and Grace of God which is profusely spread all over the universe and, secondly, making one's will completely subservient to the Will of God, realising His Omnipotence at every moment, and abandoning everything which comes in the way of concord between one's desires and the Will of God. The new mystical order puts moderation and sobriety above spiritual intoxication, social service above solitude and *jihād* above musical recitations resorted to by the mystics belonging to other schools of mysticism for attaining spiritual trance and ecstasy. The Saiyid's method of spiritual ascent demands abhorrence of every innovation in religion and punctilious devotion to the Law of Islam.[1]

"The ultimate goal of mystic endeavour is to secure a concord between the inner self of an individual and the Divine Will," explained the Saiyid dilating on the significance of *bi'at-i-tarīqat* or the oath of allegiance to tread the path of mysticism. "And the pleasure of God can be had," he added, "only by following the luminous *sharī'ah*, for, every path other than that of the Prophet leads the traveller astray to the blind valley of infidelity and denial of God. Hence, anyone making a claim to the contrary is a perverse liar.....Whereas, *bi'at-i-Imāmat* (oath of allegiance to follow an *Imām*) is meant to fight for the sake of God and dominance of the *sharī'ah*. This, if attempted without the least trace of self-gratification or love for power, honour or riches is known as *jihād* in religious parlance, and is the highest form of a man's submission to the Will of God as none of the religious observances and forms of prayer can be equal to it in attaining the spiritual possibilities of the

1. *Sīrāt-i-Mustaqīm*, pp. 465-536

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human state."[1]

During the period Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd remained at Delhi, he engaged himself in mystical exercises, remembrance and contemplation, in order to attain perfection of spirit. He also avoided every act which could be regarded as unwholesome by the *sharīᶜah*. Once, a few of his friends insisted upon the Saiyid to visit a fair held on the banks of the river Jamuna. The Saiyid went with them, albeit unwillingly, but he did not reach there as he fell unconscious in the way.[2]

Nawāb Wazīr-ud-daula writes that during the first few years after his *biᶜat* to Shah ᶜAbdul ᶜAzīz, the Saiyid used to spend long hours in litanies, contemplation and prayers. It was not unoften for him, in those days, to pass the whole night in prayers so that sometimes his feet used to swell up.[3] The Saiyid was rewarded with the grace of God which raised him to higher planes of mystical consciousness known as the gnosis or '*mᶜarifat*' and intuitive certainty or '*yaqīn*'. Blessed with the inward light of certitude and his heart illuminated by the light of God, the Saiyid widened the dimensions of his spiritual experience by attaining even higher stages yet untraversed and unknown by other mystics. Commenting on the rapid progress made by his disciple, once Shāh ᶜAbdul ᶜAzīz remarked: "This angelic Saiyid is so clear witted in spiritual apprehension of truth that a mere suggestion is sufficient for him to understand and attain that stage."

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd is reported to have had several visions of the Prophet, ᶜAlī and Fatima in those days.[4] Many of us are likely to dismiss such esoterical experiences as of trivial importance, but in the biographies of eminent *sufis* the dreams, auditions, visions and similar other ecstatic experiences not only find a prominent place but they

1. MSS. *Maktūbāt*, pp. 70-72
2. *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, pp. 25/26
3. Nawāb Wazīr-ud-daula ; *Wasāya*, Part I, p. 256
4. *Sirāt-i-Mastaqīm*, p. 164 ; *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, pp. 22-23

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have also caused them to enter a more profound and richer spiritual life. Modern scholars have tried to discover some psychological basis for such mystical experiences but the fact is that it is not possible to give any verdict on them, merely as an onlooker, without accompaying the travellers of spiritual path to their dizzy heights. How can anybody affirm or deny the existence of a thing he does not know? We can only plead our ignorance of such impressions and experiences for the mysteries of mute reality cannot be proved or disproved by purely scientific means we possess at present. Although the naive optimism of the eighteenth century scientists has given place to a more sober realisation that the mysteries of the universe become more mysterious and more complicated as our knowledge advances, we have yet to discard the habit of denying everything not realisable through scientific methods. Truly speaking, there need be no better proof of the validity and genuineness of beatific visions and illuminations than the sublime conduct of those who lay a claim to it and their ability to revive spiritual-moral consciousness among others.

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd returned to Rae Bareli by the end of 1807 or in the beginning of 1808.[1] Reaching his home, he went straight to the mosque. When he had set out for Lucknow, he was just a boy without moustaches and beard, but now he had a full-grown beard and therefore his family members had difficulty in recognising him.[2] For a time he donned the habit of mendicants but gave it up after some-time on the insistence of his mother.

In 1809, he was married to Bībī Zuhra. Her father Saiyid Muhammad Roshan was at first unwilling to give his daughter's hand to the Saiyid owing to his ascetic ways, but was prevailed upon by the near relations. Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd's first child, a daughter named as Bībī Sārah, was born in 1810.

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was now about 23 years of age.

1. Mehr ; *Syed Ahmad Shahīd*, Vol. I, p. 97
2. *Manzooratus-Soʿada*

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Once, in those days, when he had gone to Nasīrābād to visit his wife's relations, he had a minor scuffle with a celebrated wrestler ʿAbdullah. As usual, the Saiyid advised ʿAbdullah to offer the prayers but he indignantly replied: "What, if I don't?"

The Saiyid calmly said again: "You will be tortured by God's angels in your grave."

"I will punch their head, if they dare come," retorted ʿAbdullah with anger.

The Saiyid tried to convince him again, and said: "Such a sacrilegious talk can make you an infidel. Even if all of us were to combine we won't be able to face an angel of God."

ʿAbdullah got enraged and lifted his hand to hit the Saiyid who caught hold of ʿAbdullah's hands and pushed him to the side of a wall. ʿAbdullah, defeated in the combat, immediately repented.

Now the Saiyid was again thinking of taking up some profession. After sometime he decided to leave his home-town again in search of an employment.

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# Four

## Sojourn with Nawab Amir Khan

SAIYID Ahmad Shahīd undertook the second journey to Delhi in 1811. After a short stay at Delhi, he resumed the journey to join Amīr Khān in the Central India where he was engaged in consolidating his power to pursue the objects of his ambition. Before resuming our narration of events that followed, a glance of the actual condition of the principal Indian princely States, at that time, will be a useful preliminay to find out the causes that led Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd to take up the service under Amīr Khān.

By the time Marquess of Hastings arrived in India in 1813, with the authority of Governor-General, the East India Company had firmly established itself in Bengal, half of Oudh had been annexed and the British resident at Delhi exercised all authority in the name of the Moghul Emperor, Muhammad Akbar II. In the south, Mysore of Haider ʿAlī and Tipū Sultān had been reduced to a protectorate and the Nizām had been forced to enter into a subsidiary alliance with the Company. After years of plottings and intrigues, Wellesley had succeeded in destroying the political independence of Peshwā, the head of the Marāthā Confederacy and symbol of its solidarity and power, who was forced to sign a treaty at Bassein on 31st December, 1802. However, death of Tukoji Holkar in 1797, followed by internecine warfare between his sons, had provided the British another opportunity to fish

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In troubled waters. In an armed clash between the two legitimate sons of the Holkar, Kashī Rāo and Malhār Rāo, the latter was supported by his step-brothers Jaswant Rāo and Vithoojī. But Kashī Rāo was helped to victory by Daulat Rāo Sindhia. Malhār Rāo was killed in action and Jaswant Rāo fled to Nāgpūr, the capital of the Rājā of Berār. From Nāgpūr he fled to Dhār, where he was kindly received by Anant Rāo Pawār, who furnished him with a few horses and a little money, with which slender commencement, by enterprise and pillage, he soon collected a band of marauders, and united to his fortunes Amīr Khān, a Pathān adventurer, at the head of a well-mounted body of his countrymen, who, because of his abilities and resources, was a fit auxiliary for the schemes which Holkar meditated.[1]

Amīr Khān was the grandson of one Tālah Khān, who, in the reign of Shāh ʿAlam, had left his home in the Buner country and took service in Rohilkhand with ʿAlī Muhammad Khān, a Rohila of distinction. His son Hayāt Khān became possessed of some landed property in Morādābād, and to him in 1768 was born Amīr Khān. Beginning his life as a soldier of fortune, he rose in 1798, to be the commander of a large army and an ally of Jaswant Rāo Holkar, and was employed in the campaigns against Scindhia, the Peshwā and the British, and in assisting to levy the contributions extracted by Jaswant Rāo Holkar from Rajputānā and Mālwā. It was one of the terms of the union between Amīr Khān and Holkar that they should share equally in all future plunder and conquest[2], and accordingly in 1798 Amīr Khān received the district of Sironj. To this Tonk was added in 1806, Numbahara in 1809, and Chhabra in 1816.

During the war between the English and Jaswant Rāo Holkar, the former made overtures to win over Amīr Khān. On 2nd March, 1804, General Wellesley had written to Major Malcolm from Poona : "Mercer is in treaty with Meer Khān ; and if he should draw him off with Holkar, there is an end

1. *James Grant Duff* ; *History of the Marāthās*, p. 552
2. *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XXIII, Oxford, 1908; *Memoirs of Muhummud Ameer Khan*, p. 98.

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of the latter." Amīr Khān, however, did not desert his ally and the English had to suffer repeated reverses and retreats. After gallant fights and spectacular victories in the beginning, Holkar had at last to beat a retreat and was forced to sign a treaty with the English on 24th December, 1805,[1] which was confirmed by the British Government on the 7th of January, 1806. Amīr Khān was, however, not pleased with the treaty which reduced Holkar from an independent chief to a protege of the British. Charles Metcalfe had been deputed by Lord Lake, a few days before the treaty was signed, to visit the camp of the vanquished chief in order to give assurance to the Holkar's people, weary of the prolonged war, that the peace they desired was at hand. Metcalfe was received in the full Durbar, with every mark of satisfaction and respect. "There was but one gloomy face —one moody spirit in the conclave. Amīr Khān had reluctantly attended the meeting, and was now little inclined to do honour to the representative of the British Government."[2] The insolence of Amīr Khān was fully a match for the pride of the British Government's envoy. Metcalfe later wrote in one of his letters to his friend Sherer that Amīr Khān "affected on the occasion of his reception to be particularly fierce and had the impudence to ask from him his name although it must have been known to him."[3] Amīr Khān never deemed himself bound by the treaty signed by by Jaswant Rāo Holkar ; endeavoured to establish his ascendency at the latter's court who became insane soon after his return to Mālwā in 1806 ; and then left it with the large army he commanded to pursue the separate objects of his own aspirations. His force was reported to consist of 12,000 horses, several corps of disciplined infantry, and between two and three hundred pieces of cannon. His artillery, according to Malcolm, was far more formidable than that of any other native power in India.[4] Amīr Khān's

1. *James Grant Duff*, p. 602
2. Kye ; *The life and correspondence of Lord Charles Metcalfe*, Vol. I, p. 134.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 135. Letter dated Jan. 26, 1806
4. Malcolm, *The Political History of India*, Vol. 2, p. 298.

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muster roll once exhibited, according to another historian, a strength of fifty thousand foot and twelve thousand horse, well provided with ordnance.[1] In his letter dated 17th July, 1817, to Marquess of Hastings, Malcolm writes "the whole conduct of this chief since 1806 certainly gives us the right which Lord Minto assumed to consider him as distinct from the family of Holkar."[2] The English were more than once compelled to make preparations against his threatened attacks on their subsidiary states and considered him such a potential danger to their own existence that the ultimate dispersion of Amīr Khān's force was considered by them as essential to their interest. When Amīr Khān threatened the territories of the Rājā of Berār, the English deemed it essential to mobilise their forces, although unsolicited, to succour the Rājā. In recording his opinion on the course proper to be pursued on this occasion, Lord Minto observed[3] "that the question was, not simply whether it was just or expedient to aid the Rajah of Berār in the defence or the recovery of his dominions, (although in point of policy, the essential change in the political state of India, which would be occasioned by the extinction of one of the substantive powers of Deckan, might warrant and require our interference) ; but whether an interfering and ambitious Mussalman chief, at the head of a numerous army, irresistible by any power but that of the Company, shall be permitted to establish his authority, on the ruins of the Rajah's dominions, over territories contiguous to those of our ally the Nizām, with whom community of religion, combined with local power and resources, might lead to the formation of projects probably not uncongenial to the mind of Nizām himself, and certainly consistent with the views and hopes of a powerful party in his dominions, for the subversion of the British alliance." "Of such a question," suggested his Lordship, "there can be but one solution."[4]

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1. *Mill & Wilson* ; *The History of British India* ; Vol. VIII, p. 177.
2. *Malcolm*, Vol. I, p. 298
3. Vide Lord Minto's Minute dated October 16, 1809
4. *Malcolm* Vol. I, p. 222

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So, this was the man, Amīr Khān, who possessed the courage and ambition as well as prowess to expel the English usurpers from India. According to his own account, his reputation had extended so widely, that his assistance was earnestly implored by Shāh Shujᶜā of Kabul, by the widow of a dispossessed chief of Baluchistan, and by one of the Talpur princes of Sindh, who was at variance with the rest[3]. However, it seems, what Amīr Khān lacked was an objective nobler than personal aggrandisement. That Amīr Khān possessed the qualities of conquerors and founders of empires has been acknowledged even by his greatest enemies. This is borne out by the letter Sir John Malcolm wrote to the Marquess of Hastings apprising him of the condition then obtaining in the Central India.

"The state of Amir Khān's power in 1809 has been already mentioned; he was then at the head of a predatory force, of between thirty and forty thousand men, and compelled the British Government to adopt the expensive measure of forming (as has been noticed) an army in the Deccan, and a considerable corps in Bundelkhand, to keep him in check. The Pindaris who had joined this chief, from the same feeling they would any other, because he promised to lead them to plunder, fell off from allegiance as his views became more limited. This certainly was the zenith of Amir Khān's greatness, and had he possessed that genius and ambition which numbers believed he did, he might have made a great effort for power; but he showed on this occasion, as he has on many others, that he is merely a brave partisan chief. The crisis, however, that gave him the chance of being greater, evinced in a most possible manner the danger to which we are hourly exposed, from the rise of a leader of higher qualities and more daring enterprise. A Shevaji, or Haider ᶜAli, would, with the means which he at that moment possessed, have carried fire and sword to the farthest regions of our possessions in India. The life of Amir Khān since this period has passed between efforts to maintain his authority over the distracted councils of the family of Holkar, expedients to satisfy the clamours of his army, attacks on the country of Jaipur, and the establishment of his influence and power over the court of Mān Singh, Rājā of Jodhpur. The latter appears to have been throughout his leading object; and as he not only exacts a considerable tribute from that prince, but has obtained valuable grants of territory, which he desires to render hereditary in his family, the greatest proportion of his troops is generally in that country; and it is evident

3. *Mill & Wilson*, Vol. VIII, p. 177n; *Memoirs of Muhummud Ameer Khan*, pp. 425/426.

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from every account, that nothing but their presence maintains his oppressive authority. The utmost jealousy exists between him and the Rājā, and it has been conjectured that he means to depose Mān Singh and put his son on the throne; and the recent murder of one of the principal ministers at Jodhpur, shows that he will hesitate at no measure, however violent, to maintain his interests in that quarter."[1]

In order to render the character of Amīr Khān more clearly, it appears necessary to offer a short remark on the epithets like 'freebooter', 'plunderer' and 'Pindārī' with which he is often referred to by the historians. During the unsettled conditions of Indian states, produced by the policy pursued by the East India Company, many of the irregular horse of the Indian chiefs, on the extinction or reduction of the governments they served, were compelled to join, if only to earn a livelihood by plunder, if possible, the Pindārī chiefs among whom Hiroo, Karīm Khān and Chītū were the principal. It is true that Karīm Khān was once compelled to throw himself upon the mercy of Amīr Khān but he promptly delivered him over to the Regent Tulsī Bā'i. On another occasion Chītū made repeated entreaties both to Sindhia and Amīr Khān to let him and his chiefs have some place of refuge for their families lodged in the vulnerable ranges of Vindhya mountains; for, once this was assured it would rest with him 'to carry to the garrison of Calcutta rapine and destruction.'[2] These demobilised troops of Indian States subdued by the British sought, not unoften, the service of Amīr Khān, or, for that matter, of any other enterprising prince, under whom they hoped to share the booty of war. But Amīr Khān was so very different from a Pindārī chief that, to quote Malcolm again, "his ascendancy has taken a more settled shape, and he possesses resources that are, in a certain degree, competent to meet his expenditure, consequently is not forced, as they are, to make incursions upon us or our allies for his support."[3] Another historian, Grant Duff expressing a similar view

1. *Malcolm*, Vol. II, pp. 296-97
2. *Ibid.*, p. 302
3. *Ibid.*, p. 298

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attests that Amīr Khān's troops were "distinguished from Pindarees by having a fixed rate of monthly pay, though it was seldom punctually received."[1] However, being too bountiful whenever any tribute was received by him, Amīr Khān never cared to save even what he was required to pay his troops. His propensity to give freely with both hands very often landed him in difficult situations when his troops clamoured for their dues. Another weakness of Amīr Khān was to rest content with the tributes paid to him by the surrounding chiefs, for, he never cared to consolidate his power in the territories captured by him and to extend his dominions. Had he the foresight to utilize his resources in a judicious manner he could have built up a formidable force even stronger than that of the East India Company.

With all his faults and follies, Amīr Khān was then the only chief who could be relied upon to deliver India from its serfdom. Neither the Nizām, nor the Marāthās, nor even Ranjit Singh possessed the courage and enterprise to undertake the job. The last mentioned, at one time, conveyed the impression of entertaining hostile designs to the British, but the march of a corps to Ludhiāna coupled with a warning by Lord Minto asking him not to cross the Sutlej had brought him to a just sense of the relation in which he stood with the East India Company.[2]

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd had already attained proficiency in the art of warfare but he had never had the practical experience of participating in any battle which was necessary for embarking on *jihād*, the goal cherished by him from his childhood days. There is another reason which must have been uppermost in his mind while deciding to join Amīr Khān. Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd knew that it was only the enthusiastic spirit of religion which gave strength and union to the Muslims, and enabled them to make sacrifice for a nobler cause. Amīr Khān's forces contained numerous

1. *Grant Duff*, p. 637
2. *The life and correspondence of Lord Charles Metcalfe*, Vol. I. pp. 209/11

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Pindārīs, who, like the vast majority of Muslims in those days, not only lacked the fire of true faith but had also joined their creed to several polytheistic beliefs and practices. His presence in the camp of Amīr Khān, he would have thought, would afford him with an opportunity to carry on his mission of reform and renovation of religion amongst those wayward people. However, there is little doubt that the Saiyid's choice fell upon Amīr Khān because he was then the only Muslim independent chief in India who possessed the courage and power to cross arms with the foreigners threatening to become the supreme power in the country. It is also probable that the Saiyid might have thought that if Amīr Khān could somehow be persuaded to consolidate his power instead of frittering it away purposelessly, as he was doing, he could change the course of India's history.

Hordes of plunderers moved over the face of the country south of Delhi like swarms of locusts, but Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd set out alone to meet Amīr Khān, as related by Saiyid Muhammad ʿAlī, author of *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, without the least diffidence.[1] According to his own statement, Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd met Amīr Khān while his forces were besieging the fortress of Dhamkola[2] in the country of Shāhpura. Amīr Khān raised the siege of the town after exacting a tribute from the local chief.

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was in the beginning a complete stranger to the troops of Amīr Khān. Only a few persons knew him as a pious man belonging to a Saiyid family.[3] But, he soon won the admiration of the people around him by his unblemished character, upright behaviour and zeal for religion. Amongst the people who always talked of fights and forays and had their eyes fixed on booty and plunder, Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd led a simple and frugal life and ever engaged himself in prayers and litanies. It was

1. *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, p. 32.
2. Also known as Dhankola, it was a populous town between Bundi and Karoli.
3. *Waqāiʿ Ahmadī*, p. 10

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not long after that Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was revered as a man of God, possessing miraculous powers, whose prayers were answered by God. The arid deserts and mountainous terrain in which Amīr Khān led his campaigns in those days, put his forces to severe hardship and, occasionally, to privations too, but Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was seen always contented and cheerful, and shared whatever he had with others. This made the credulous among his companions believe that either he was endowed with a supernatural source of sustenance or he was lavishly provided with funds by the Nawāb. Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, however, used to tell them that the secret of contentment lies in temperance, self-denial and absolute faith in God.[1]

During his stay with Amīr Khān, a number of persons used to approach Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd with the request to entreat God on their behalf for solution of their personal difficulties and problems. Once a footman who was suffering from ulcer came to Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd and requested him to pray God for him. The Saiyid promised to supplicate for his recovery provided he solemnly repented of his sins and promised to offer prayers regularly five times a day in future. The man did as he was bidden and he recovered from his ailment. On another occasion a grocer, Madār Bakhsh, implored Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd to invoke divine blessings for him. The Saiyid accepted to pray for him but asked him first to change his name to Allah Bakhsh,[2] offer the obligatory prayers regularly, give up telling lies and be scrupulously fair in his business dealings.[3] The keepers of horses and elephants are generally a dishonest lot who try to save something from the rations provided for the animals in their charge. Whenever one of them approached the Saiyid for offering prayers on his behalf, he invariably asked him to be religiously honest in feeding and upkeep of

1. *Waqāi' Ahmadī*, p. 27
2. The name Madār Baksh meant one gifted by Madār, a saint, which smacks of polytheism. Hence he was asked to rename himself as 'one gifted by God'.
3. *Waqāi' Ahmadī*, p. 35

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the poor beasts looked after by them. A number of such instances cited in *Wagāi' Ahmadī* and *Amīr Nāmah* show that Saiyid Ahmad was successful in creating an atmosphere of religiosity and virtuousness among the people around him.

Amīr Khān, too, developed a reverential regard for Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, not only for his saintly demeanour but also because of his sound advice and courage exhibited in times of crisis. Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd stayed with Amīr Khān for about six years prior to his becoming a tributary chief under the British. These were the days when Amīr Khān was almost constantly on the move, at the head of a large army between the Rājasthān deserts and the regions of Arāvalli and Vindhyā ranges. Forced marches through a rough country consisting of arid tracts, steep and abrupt elevations and deep and precipitous ravines, with insufficient means of supplies, now for launching an offensive to intimidate a recalcitrant chief, then beating a retreat in defence was almost his daily routine. His troops consisted of fierce Pathāns, hardy and valorous. But Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was gallant enough to throw many of them into shade. Fearless in battlefield, spending his nights in vigils and remembrance of God, he was also pre-eminently human, ever willing to help others and intercede on their behalf with the Nawāb.

In the middle of 1812, relates the historian Wilson, the absence of Amīr Khān in Jodhpur, whither he had been summoned by Rājā Mān Singh, and the reduction by mutiny and desertion of the divisions in Jaipur under his colleague, Mohammad Shāh Khān, encouraged Chānd Singh, the commander of the Rajput forces to resume the offensive. Falling unexpectedly upon Mohammad Shāh, Chānd Singh defeated that officer, and compelled him to seek refuge in Tonk, a town which belonged to Amīr Khān, and where he had constructed a fort, named after him, Amīr Garh, to which Chānd Singh laid a siege.[1] Chānd Singh captured Mālpūra,

1. *Mill & Wilson*, Vol. VIII, p. 175

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ravaged the outskirts of Tonk and inflamed rebelllon against Amīr Khān in different parts of Rājasthān. No sooner did the intelligence reach Amīr Khān than he hastened back to pursue the Rājpūts, who retreated into the Jaipūr territories. The army of Chānd Singh retired to the shelter of his capital leaving the rest of the country undefended, which was occupied by Amīr Khān's forces. Amīr Khān, true to his settled disposition, refrained from capturing Jaipūr and agreed to accept an annual tribute of twelve lakhs of rupees. Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd accompanied Amīr Khān during this expedition.

Amīr Khān returned to Jodhpūr where he was received by the Rājā as a friend, for he sought the help of the Khān in connection with a domestic intrigue, which threatened the authority and life of the Rājā. From Jodhpūr, Amīr Khān led his forces into the Shekāwati territory, exacted tributes, and then turned towards Jaipūr, where the grandees of the Rājā had grouped themselves into powerful factions. The ex-Diwān, Chatur Bhuj, and the nobles allied to him were opposed by the Purohit Mānji Dās, the family priest of the Rājā, who had recalled Chānd Singh to the capital contrary to the assurance given earlier to Amīr Khān. Chatur Bhuj repaired to Amīr Khān to seek his help, but, in the meantime, Mānjī Dās and Chānd Singh had made arrangements for vigorous defence by collecting a respectable force. Mānjī Dās divided his forces into three divisions, posted each on three sides of the city and erected a powerful battery of guns on the top of Moti Dongra, a range of rocks of considerable eminance. On one occasion Amīr Khān ordered a detachment commanded by one of his officers, ʿUmar Khān, to establish an advance picket in a dry ditch of the Motī Dongra hillocks. ʿUmar Khān showed hesitation to advance towards the ditch with his cavalry, as it could be easily spotted and wiped out by the enemy guns. Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd promptly offered to lead the party but Amīr Khān preferred to have the Saiyid with him. The Saiyid persuaded ʿUmar Khān who advanced to take position in the ravine with a detachment of infantry and artillery. In the meantime the scouts brought the intelligence that Chānd Singh had

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taken position in front of the Mānjī Garden with a force of thirty thousand. Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd offered to proceed ahead for reconnaissance of the enemy position and asked Amīr Khān to come behind him with his detachment. Amīr Khān tried to dissuade Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd from the hazardous task, but the latter went ahead with six cavalrymen. After locating the enemy position Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd signalled Amīr Khān to advance with his troops but Chānd Singh immediately retired to the citadal. The enemy opened a heavy fire of shot and shell, which was effectively replied. Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd offered the evening prayer at the battle-front undaunted by the enemy shelling.

On another occasion a shell exploded so adjacent to Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd that everybody thought that he had been hit by it. The Saiyid, however, stuck to his position unscathed, which made the superstitious believe that he was saved because of his superior sanctity. Nevertheless, Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd corrected them by declaring that it was not due to any spiritual powers possessed by him, but owing to grace of God that he had remained unhurt by the shell.

After several attempts to carry the fort by storm, the siege was converted into a blockade, which lasted for nine months, when the British Government interfered to put an end to the sufferings of Jaipūr.

Unmindful of the changing political situation in the country Amīr Khān continued to fritter away his powers by interfering in the affairs of the princely States around him. On the other hand, Marquess of Hastings, ever since he assumed charge of the government of the British India from Lord Minto in October 1813, engaged himself to set right the defective nature of the political arrangements concluded in 1805-6 and the suppression the Pindārīs and Amīr Khān. Metcalfe propounded to the Governor-General—with no misgivings—a scheme for the settlement of Central India which the latter was not slow to recommend to the Board of Directors. "At length, in 1816 the long delayed permission came," writes Frazer. "that there should be no failure. The largest army up to then assembled in India under the

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Company's rule was drawn round the haunts of the Pindārīs. From October, 1817, a force of 1,20,000 men and 300 guns closed in from Bengal on the north-east, from the Deccan on the south and from Gujrat on the west."[1] In Nagpur, Appa Sahib applied to the British Resident to be admitted to the defensive alliance, which was promptly acceded to, and a treaty was signed on 27th May, 1816.[2] Sindhia was also compelled to sign a subsidiary treaty communicated to him, along with an ultimatum, towards the end of October,[3] which bound him to employ his forces with those of the British Government. Tulsī Bā'i had placed herself and the young Holkar under British protection, only to be soon murdered by her own troops.[4] Bāji Rao II, the Peshwā who ruled at Poona and was acknowledged as the head of the whole Maratha confederacy, tried to resist the British demands, but was deprived of his sovereignty, granted a pension of £ 80,000 annually, with permission to reside at Bithūr, near Kānpūr, and his name disappeared from history.[5]

As for the Pindārī chiefs, Karīm Khān and Wāsil Mohammad, they were compelled to abandon the direct road to Gwalior, and turn off to the north-west in the direction of Kota, and thence to Nīm Ghāt across Prabhātī river. But they could not be completely annihilated so long as there was any hope of Amīr Khān coming to their assistance. Amīr Khān had twice scornfully turned down the offer of a large State in Aurangābād, accompanied by a grant of Rs. 13 lakhs, communicated to him by General Lake in 1806.[6] His ambition then being the conquest of the whole of Hindustan he had replied, "Never entertain the hope that I shall be thus regained." He had then sought the help of

1. Frazer ; *British India*, p. 191.
2. *Grant Duff*, p. 639
3. *Mill & Wilson*, Vol. VIII, pp. 247-48
4. *Frazer*, p. 196
5. *Ibid.*, p. 196
6. *Amīr Nāmah*, p. 323 ; (*Memoirs of Mohummud Ameer Khan*, pp. 235 and 239 )

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Ranjīt Singh[1] to turn out the British from India,[2] opposed the treaty of friendship with the British signed by his friend Holkar, and, even expressed the wish to summon Shāh Sujᶜa from Kabul or to enlist Yūsufzaʾī Pathāns to wrest the empire from the British.[3] The existence of his power was, in the eyes of the British Government, "incompatible with the preservation of the tranquillity of India" and "had to be destroyed by dispersion or attack before that great object could be secured."[4] No chances could be taken; it had to be a war to the knife, and so was it planned. In 1816, Amīr Khān was laying siege to the fort of Madho Rājpūrā, whose chief had put under chains Muhammad ʿAyāz Khān and a few other relatives of the Khān. "In the meantime," writes Wilson, "General Donkin, with the right division, had quitted the Chambal, after leaving a guard at the fort of Dholpūr, and, after a circuitous march, placed himself between the Pindāris and Amīr Khān. At the same time, the reserve of the grand army advanced to the south of Jaypur; and General Ochterlony encamped in such a position as to separate the two principal divisions of the Khan's troops, who were thus intimidated into acquiescence in their being disbanded. A loan of money was made to Amīr Khān to enable him to discharge their arrears, and an arrangement was authorised for reorganising a considerable portion of the force by taking it into British pay. By these means, Amīr Khān and his chiefs were deprived of all excuse for longer delaying his ratification of the alliance with the British, and the annihilation of his battalions extinguished the hopes which the Pindarīs had continued to cherish of the assistance of the Pathāns."[5]

1. Agents from Amir Khān continued to press Ranjit Singh for years to unite the forces of Punjab and Deccan against the stranger conquerors. (Sir D. Ochterlony to Government, 16th Oct. 1809, 5th. 6th, and 7th December 1809, and 5th and 30th Jan. and 22nd, Aug. 1810. *Cunningham*, p. 145)
2. *Amīr Nāmah* p. 364; *Memoirs of Mohummud Ameer Khan*, pp. 281-283.
3. *Ibid*, pp. 553-56
4. *Malcolm*, Vol. I, p. 318
5. *Mill & Wilson*, Vol. VIII, p. 255

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Now, Metcalfe, the very man who had planned destruction of Amīr Khān was asked by Lord Moira, since created, for his services, Marquis of Hastings, to act as the arbiter of Amīr Khān's fate. Not very long before Metcalfe had written to the Governor General that the "power of Holkar, if considered unconnected with that of Meer Khān, is very much reduced;"[1] but now he was rated not more than a tributary chief of Holkar entitled to the lands which he had held under the latter.

The compiler of *Waqāi' Ahmadī* has given a graphic description of what was transpiring in Amīr Khān's camp. He writes, "Hazrat (Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd) was not at all disposed to accept the offer to cease hostilities. He forcefully pleaded that the war should be continued. The Nawāb, too, personally held the same view but the dilapidated condition of his forces and the discord and selfishness of his chiefs, he said, had left no option for him. He expressed the view that he would accept a few lakhs of rupees from the British and fight them again after setting his forces in order. But the Hazrat replied, "You won't be able to do anything once you have signed the treaty." The Nawāb, however, appeared to be bent upon accepting the offer made by the British, and proceeded to make arrangements for it. Therefore, the Hazrat said, "Alright, if you have decided to sign the treaty, I would beg leave from you." The Nawāb remonstrated with him but the Hazrat did not agree and left with a few of his companions for Jaipūr. Before leaving the camp, he met Amīr Khān and once again tried to dissuade him from betaking the ruinous course. "Nawāb Sahib, nothing is yet lost; you still have the authority to act as you like", said he. "I remind you again that you would be powerless after signing the treaty. Have courage and fight these infidels. They are crafty crooks. The most they would do for you is to allot a small fief and some paltry pension, but you would lose your independence." The Hazrat went away after that. Once he returned, after the treaty had been signed, to settle some of his private affairs.

1. *Malcolm*, Vol. I, p. 314

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He also met the Nawāb, who said with tears brimming in his eyes, "Hazrat, it all happened as willed by God. Now, that you are going to Delhi, please take prince Muhammad Wazīr Khān with you."[1] The Hazrat accepted the request of the Nawāb. Before leaving for Delhi he wrote to Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz in a letter: "All has been ruined here; the Nawāb has gone over to the British. Now I cannot live here."[2]

Metcalfe's negotiations with Amīr Khān were brought to a favourable conclusion. On the 9th of November, 1817, the agent of the Rohilla chief signed at Delhi, on behalf of his master, a treaty, by which he stipulated to disband his Pathān levies, and to restore all territories which he had wrested from the Rājpūts. On the part of the British government, it was conceded that a sum of money should be paid to him, to enable him to disburse the arrears of pay to his followers; and the land which he had held under Holkar, as the price of his military support, shall thenceforth be secured to him under British guarantee.

Destruction of the Pindārī chiefs was then deemed as an accomplished fact: they were driven from their haunts; their numbers greatly diminished, reduced to a few scattered, feeble and dispirited bands, hopeless of escape or help from any quarter, they were hotly pursued and decimated. Holkar's mutinous troops were easily subdued and he was forced to accept a subsidiary treaty of alliance with the British, resigning all his claims over Rājpūt chiefs, by the 6th of January, 1818. Thus ended the powers, by their own folly and shortsightedness, whom Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd sought to utilize through Amīr Khān for the emancipation of India.

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1. There was an understanding though not mentioned in the treaty concluded by Amir Khān with the British, that his son, Nawāb Wazīr-ud-daula Muhammad Wazir Khān, should reside for some time at Delhi, where Metcalfe was the Resident. (*Memoirs of Muhammad Ameer Khān*, p. 480).
2. *Waqaiʿ Ahmadī*, pp. 82-85 (Summarised)

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Five

# The Servant of God

SAIYID Ahmad Shahīd returned to Delhi in 1818. Although young in years, he was ripe in experience and profound in knowledge, and was fully capable of guiding others on the path of spiritual journey. He had already attained the higher stages of mystical experience which had illuminated his heart with the certitude of knowledge. He could in fact, be reckoned amongst the tallest figures of mystic experience, since, in *Sirāt-i-Mustaqīm*, a collection of his discourses and sermons compiled in 1819 by Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl, we find a wealth of information on essential sufistic teachings and practices and a lucid exposition of the doctrines, methods and spiritual virtues of the *Qādiriyah, Naqshbandiyah* and *Mujadidiyah* orders. The Saiyid had fully grasped the spirit and principles underlying these orders and reached the conclusion that only by living according to the sacred Law of Islam can that equilibrium be gained which is necessary for entering upon the mystic path or *tarīqah* leading to the inner essence of religious experience. He knew that neither mysticism breaks the mould of the sacred Law nor the *sharīʿah* stifles the *tarīqah*. For both are complementary to each other, both constitute an integral part of religious traditions ; they together contribute to spiritual vitality essential for creating a moral-religious society free of all social ills which debase and

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enervate the *ummah*.[1] Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, therefore, formulated, as mentioned elsewhere, his own mystical order which laid emphasis on following the scripture and the practice of the Prophet and rejected every innovation in religion. His exposition of the new doctrine was complete with operational techniques and spiritual virtues, the states and stages through which the traveller of spirit has to pass and its wider impact on the religious life of the Muslim masses who stood in need of immediate reformatory endeavour in order to be saved from complete de-Muslimisation.

There had been a galaxy of Muslim reformers in India whose call had always been to go 'back to the example of the Prophet' and 'back to the Qurʾān'. Some of these, in the earlier times, exercised great influence both over the rulers and the ruled. Most of them were, in the earlier phase, pure-hearted mystics like Khwāja Moʿin-ud-dīn Chishtī (d. 1230), Khwāja Farīd Ganj Shakar (d. 1265) and Nizām-ud-dīn Auliya (d. 1325) to whom people flocked of their own accord for moral and spiritual guidance. Later on, Mujaddid Alf Thānī (d. 1624) and Shāh Walī Ullah (d. 1763) endeavoured to restore the religious bases of Muslim society and the government through their epistles and writings, but their appeal was confined only to the elite and literary circles. The life-long effort of Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz was to diffuse the teachings of his renowned father through his writings, juristic opinions and bi-weekly public lectures on Tuesdays and Fridays.[2] In the meantime another puritanical reform movement was initiated in Bengal by Hājī Sharīʿāt Ullah[3] in 1802, which became quite popular under

1. The Muslim community conceived as a corporate unity on ideological grounds cutting across the territorial, racial and linguistic barriers.
2. ʿUbaid Ullah Sindhī ; *Shāh Walī Ullah Aur Unki Siyāsī Tahrīk*, pp. 72-73.
3. Hājī Sharīʿat Ullah (1764-1840), born in village Bahadurpūr of Faridpūr district of Bangladesh, founded the *Frāizī* movement in Bengal

*[ Continued on next page*

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Muhammad Muhsin (1819-1860), commonly known as Dādū Mian. Later on, drawing inspiration from the capture of Peshawar by Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd Dādū Mian merged the movement in the wider *jihād* organisation and built up a strong anti-British movement in Bengal around 1831.[1]

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindī had written letters to the nobles of Akbar and Jahāngīr, Shāh Walī Ullah had looked to Ahmad Shāh Abdālī and Najīb-ud-daula to save Islam but the Saiyid aimed at creating a truly Muslim society by appealing not to the higher but to the humbler people, the peasants, landlords, artisans and minor officials to establish Islam as a public way of life. Thus, the Saiyid was first, among the reformers of India, to give an inspired call to the people to go forward with a programme for active implementation of the popular goals. It would, however, be incorrect to assume that the call to give up exotic culture and irreligious practices was negative in character as certain writers appear to believe. The call to go back to the pristine purity of Islam gave the society an integrated vision and inspiration to sweep aside social and moral degeneration interlocked

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in 1802 which aimed at sweeping away the superstitious beliefs and customs to restore the purity and glory of Islam. When eighteen years of age, he went on a pilgrimage to Mecca and stayed there for 20 years as a disciple of Sheikh Tāhir as-Sunbal al-Makki, the head of the Shafeʿi sect at Mecca. On return from *haj* he started preaching socio-religious reform among the villagers and artisans who were exploited by Hindu landlords and British indigo planters. He declared India to be *Dar-ul-harb*, but he acted with great prudence and caution and did not declare a war against the British. Hāji Sharīʿat Ullah discontinued the use of terms like *pīr* and *murīd* and replaced these by *ustād* and *shāgird*. His son, Muhammad Muhsin, better known as Dādū Mian (1819-60), was a man of great talents, under whom the movement became aggressive. The unity and discipline brought about by Dādū Mian was visited by the fury of landlords and indigo planters. Later on Tītū Mīr (1782-1831) stirred the Muslim peasantry to take up arms against the oppressive landlords and the British authorities. He died fighting in November, 1831. The awakened peasantry of East Bengal later rallied round the banner of Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī and Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī and played a memorable role in the Saiyid's *jihād* movement.

1. W. W. Hunter : Indian Musalmans, pp. pp. 44-45

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with individual corruption. This was, in fact, a condition precedent for restoring the accepted moral standards and religious idealism so essential for achieving concrete objectives. The greatness of the Saiyid lay in clearly conceiving the need for building up a mass movement which could alone achieve the desired ideals in the changed social and political conditions and in resorting to means which did succeed in producing the mass enthusiasm for reform and rejuvenation of the Muslim society.

In Delhi Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd stayed at his old residence in the Akbarābādī mosque. Shāh ʿAbdul Qādir had since died and the Saiyid now occupied his room. First of all he went to pay a visit to his Sheikh, Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz, who, it is told, had already had a premonition in a dream about the Saiyid's arrival and the massive reformatory effort he was about to begin.[1] In those days Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz used to direct everyone who approached him with the request for spiritual guidance to take an oath of fealty at the hands of the Saiyid. One, Mulla Bukhārī, a learned man from Bukhārā, came to Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz and was directed by him to go to the Saiyid. The old man showed diffidence in accepting the proposal and began to ask questions about the Saiyid's educational attainments. Feeling irritated, Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz said to him: "There is no use asking irrelevant questions. Mulla, you would attain the stages under him in 12 days that would take 12 years under me."[2] The Mulla set himself earnestly to meditation and contemplation under the guidance of the Saiyid and was soon rewarded with spiritual illumination. Many others belonging to the family of Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz consented to become the Saiyid's disciples. Of these, Maulānā ʿAbdul Haʾī[3] and Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl[4] were among the foremost religious scholars of India who commanded considerable respect for

1. *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, p. 22
2. *Waqāiʾ-Ahmadī*, pp. 90-93
3. Son-in-law of Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAziz
4. A grandson of Shāh Wali Ullah and nephew of Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz

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their erudition. The veneration with which these learned men belonging to a family of theologians pre-eminent in the country treated the Saiyid soon attracted the attention of the people in Delhi.[1] Hundreds of people belonging to the city and from surrounding areas began to come daily for taking the oath of fealty to him. Many of these intending disciples invited the Saiyid or brought invitations from the learned and elites of their towns to visit those places.

In the meantime, the Saiyid's elder brother, Maulānā Muhammad Is'hāq came to see him. The two brothers met after eight long years. Maulānā Muhammad Is'hāq expressed the desire that the Saiyid should come back to his home town where the members of his family were anxiously awaiting his return. The Saiyid promised to come back to Rae Bareli but after visiting the places from where he had already received invitations.

Before setting out on his first missionary tour the Saiyid sought the permission of his spiritual mentor, Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz. The permission was graciously granted and the Shāh also sent his own apparel to the Saiyid. The tour undertaken by the Saiyid with some 20 disciples lasted for about six months, from November 1818 to May 1819, during which he went round Ghāzīābād, Murād Nagar, Meerut, Sardhanā, Kāndhlā, Phulat, Muzaffarnagar, Deoband, Gangoh, Nānautā, Thānā Bhawan, and Sahāranpūr. The Saiyid was received with the highest marks of distinction at every place he visited and thousands of people turned up to listen to his discourses. In Ghāzīābād two hundred persons came out of the town to receive the Saiyid's party. The Saiyid stayed there for five days during which several hundred people repented for their past sins and were initiated into his spiritual paternity. In Meerut, Qāzī Hayāt Bakhsh and Maulvī Ahmad Ullah along with fifty persons welcomed the Saiyid four miles outside the city. The number of visitors coming for *biʿat* at Meerut was so large that the Saiyid had to prolong his stay in that town for fifteen days. At several places in the way people from the nearby villages

1. *Indian Musalmans*, p. 52

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were found waiting for several days to invite the Saiyid to visit their homes. In Nānautā the gathering was so large that it was not possible to administer the oath to each man separately. The Saiyid had to unroll his turban which was held by the vast multitude taking the oath. At several places Hindus not only attended his discourses but also insisted on acceptance of their hospitality. At Sahāranpūr, a revenue officer, Tahsīldār Dhaukal Singh came to invite the Saiyid's party for taking their meals at his house. He refused to sit down until his request was acceded to by the Saiyid.

The sermons of the Saiyid swept a large number of persons, at every place, off their feet, and became a dynamic social and religious phenomenon of the lives of the people accepting him as their spiritual guide. He asked the people to shake off their superstitious beliefs, challenged their irrational customs and usages, urged them to take to the path of righteousness—the way shown by the apostles of God. In Deoband a man named Imām Bakhsh came to take *biʿat* at his hand. As the name of the man smacked of undue veneration to saints and holy personages, the Saiyid changed it to Imām-ud-dīn. In Sahāranpūr the Saiyid asked Maulānā ʿAbdul Haʾī to address large gatherings to explain to them how the excessive veneration showed by them to the saints and their tombs and the taking out of *tʿaziā* processions amounts to associating partners to God—an act unpardonable according to the writ of God. The Saiyid told the people that true and undefiled religion consisted of the observance of all the religious devotions and complete adherence to the practice of the Prophet. The people were everywhere moved to tears, they repented for their sins, their lives were changed, as if they were re-born in Islam ; the *tʿaziās* were burnt or destroyed ; un-Islamic customs practices were given up ; mosques began to attract an ever-increasing number of worshippers, and the artificial barriers of high and low began to crumble down.

The Saiyid taught the ways of practical morality by personal example which is, as a rule, always more

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efficacious than a hundred sermons. At Sardhanā a group of people invited the Saiyid and his companions for meals. The Saiyid accepted their hospitality but asked them to serve only breads of maize and pulses in their meals. A non-Muslim youth had offered himself for conversion to Islam at Sahāranpūr to one of the Saiyid's disciples, Maulvī Shāh Ramdhān. When the young man was brought to the Saiyid, he was re-named as Karīm-ud-dīn. A few persons present at the time objected to it as several respectable persons in the locality were known by that name. The Saiyid said, "Alright, let this young man be known by my own name, Ahmad." Then, turning to the gathering he said, "Quite a few superstitions of the pagan past have so firmly planted themselves in our hearts that, I fear, they would lay open our faith to peril. When a child dies and God gives his parents another son, they do not give the new-born the name of the deceased child lest he should also die. No poor and lowly person is allowed to give the name of any prominent or well-to-do Muslim in his neighbourhood to his own son. We also feel ashamed of accepting the hospitality of our poorer brothers and want to have better and sumptuous victuals at the feasts which the poor cannot afford. We do all this merely to show that we are bloated plutocrats, very much different from our brethren in narrow circumstances."[1]

The persons who had objected to the neo-Muslim youth being named as Karīm-ud-dīn were all in tears. They were not only penitent of their earlier remark but even thought it necessary to renew their oaths of fealty at the hands of the Saiyid.

The Saiyid did not leave the people taking his *bi'at* at different places unattended, like other itinerant preachers, to go back to their evil ways again. He charged some of his disciples to teach the new entrants of his spiritual order the fundamentals of faith and to guide their religious and moral life. The potent influence thus exercised and strengthened by the Saiyid in the areas visited by him took

1. *Sirat Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, Vol. I, pp. 138-39

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such deeper roots that it would be no exaggeration to claim that salutary effects of his reformatory efforts could still be seen in those districts.

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd took the road back to Rae Barelī, accompanied by about sixty disciples, by the end of May, 1819, after taking leave from Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz. At Ghāziābād he received the news of the death of his elder brother, Maulānā Muhammad Is'hāq, who had expired on 3rd April, 1819. The Saiyid did not inform anyone except Shāh Ismāʿīl about the breavement suffered by him, else the people who were preparing to take food would also not do so. However, as his disciples refused to touch the food without him, the Saiyid took a few morsels with others.[1] The next morning he set out from Ghāzīābād and with brief bivouacs at Hāpur, Garh Mukteshwar, Amroha, Morādābād, Rāmpūr, Bareilly and few other places, reached Rae Barelī in the night of 23rd June, 1819. At many places during his sojourn back home, a large number of people integrated themselves into his spiritual order. Also, with a number of persons joining the company of the Saiyid in the way, their numbers increased to seventy by the time he reached Rae Barelī.

Ramadhān set in on the first day of the Saiyid's arrival at his home.[2] Now, about a hundred persons had to be fed and looked after, but the Saiyid was passing through straitened circumstances and the foodgrains had become dearer owing to drought conditions. Sometimes only a few lumps of boiled gram was all that he could provide to his companions for *iftār*[3] and *sahūr*.[4] But, filled with spiritual emotion, none of his disciples ever demurred or complained about inadequate provisions available at the time. Maulvī Muhammad ʿAlī has stated his own experience in

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1. *Waqāiʿ Ahmadī*, pp. 158-59
2. *Ibid.*, p. 182
3. Breaking of fast at sunset
4. Dawn meal taken an hour or so before day-break

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*Makhzan-i-Ahmadī* in these words :

I distinctly remember that not a morsel of edibles had gone down my throat for two days. The downpour continuing for several days, appeared to be inundating the whole area. I tried, unsuccessfully, to go to sleep, and at last betook myself to the mosque. It was dark inside, without a lamp there, but I could see the Hazrat[1] sitting there with a few persons. Making my way towards him, I asked, "Friends, how are you ?

Hither you come," replied Shāh Ismā'īl, "and partake in the divine blessings."

"I was astounded to find everyone there without the least trace of anxiety on his face, sitting in a state of joyous exaltation. The Hazrat took me by hand and asked me to sit down by his side. Weepingly I caught hold of his garment and appealed to him, "You are armed with endurance and fortitude but I have no words to describe the pitiable condition of women and children. They are not animated by the same spirit of sufferance to bear every hardship uncomplainingly. Beseech God, for their sake, to send down sustenance for us."

The Hazrat smiled and said, "Muhammad 'Alī seems to be too distressed by hunger. Come, let us entreat God to provide some nourishment for us.' "

Everybody then joined him in the supplication and fell down in prostration before God. In a few seconds the rain ceased and we saw the moon shining in its full splendour. Instantly, we also heard certain people calling out from across the river which was in spate at the time. The Hazrat came out of the mosque and enquired who they were and what errand had brought them there. On coming to know that Muhammad Yāsīn, a gunner in the British army, who was also a disciple of the Hazrat, had sent them to pay their respect, a boat was sent to bring them. Muhammad Yāsīn had sent some gold sovereigns and rupees as a gift to the Hazrat. Arrangements were immediateiy made for satisfying our pangs of hunger.

The next day the Hazrat lovingly caught hold of my ears and said, "Are you still hungry ?"

"Now we have', I replied, "enough provisions to last for a week. Why should I care any more."

The Hazrat said, "What to speak of a week, I have complete confidence in the Provider of all sustenance. Even if I were in the deserts of Sind or Arabia where nothing is to be had at all, and people of the whole world were with me, our Lord shall verily arrange to send us food even there."[2]

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1. Meaning, the Saiyid
2. *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, pp. 40-42

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The Saiyid and his disciples resided at Rae Barelī for a time drinking deep in the cup of divine grace. This period was spent by the Saiyid in the training of his disciples in spiritual disciplines, hard manual labour and social service. The disciples included a number of persons distinguished for their knowledge, such as, Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl, Maulānā ʿAbdul Haʾī, Maulānā Muhammad Yūsuf, Hājī ʿAbdur Rahīm Vilāytī, Sḥāh Abū Saʿeed Mujaddidī and several other young men belonging to aristocratic families. Everyone of them cheerfully led a frugal and austere life at Rae Berelī.

During the period of his stay at Rae Barleī, the Saiyid undertook two missionary tours of the neighbouring districts for the reformation of Muslim masses who had gradually fallen under the influence of animistic atmosphere in the midst of a numerically superior Hindu population. They acknowledged absolute submission to the Heavenly Master, and yet in tolerating the practices directly opposed to or departing from the rules of the *sharīʿah*, their conduct differed but little from the followers of polytheistic cults. They followed the rule to circumcise their sons or to abstain from pork and some even attended the mosques, yet they clinged to the worship of a *devī*[1] or some tutelary deity of the village or had a local martyr or saint as their divine protector. Marriage ceremonies were performed not by the *qāẓis* but by some *dafālī*[2] hedge priests, in accordance with the omens of Brahman astrologers. The low caste converts to Islam even retained their Hindu names, simply replacing the Singh by Khān, shaved the beared, kept the Hindu top-knot, and observed their old scruples in food and drinks.[3] The long processions of *tʿazias* of paper and tinsel representations of the tomb of Imām Hussain, joined by all without distinction, screaming out their lamentations and beating their breasts until the blood flowed, had become the most

1. A Hindu goddess
2. Belonging to a caste of professional performers
3. *North-West Province of India*, pp. 250-260

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impressive religious spectacle aasociated with Islam. Wandering ascetics and religious guides, known as *pīrs*,[1] ignorant and rapacious, exercised the authority of lightening the burden of their faith. A local *pīr* whom Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd came across during one of his tours, exempted his devotees from the performance of obligatory prayers and from keeping the fast of Ramadhān on payment of a stipulated amount to him.[2]

The first tour undertaken by the Saiyid was in the direction of eastern districts of Allāhābād and Banāras. The first stop-over after leaving Rae Barelī was, perhaps, at Salon, a town in the same district known for the tomb of a seventeenth century saint, Shāh Pīr Muhammad (d. 1688). His tomb had become a place of reverence where thousands of people gathered on the occasion of the *ʿurs* or the death anniversary of the saint. Shāh Karīm ʿAtā, a descendant of Shāh Pīr Muhammad was then the chief vicegerent having charge of the shrine, who held the *ʿurs* with the usual fanfare consisting of musical recitations and other customary observances looked with disfavour by the puritans. Shāh Karīm ʿAtā was advised by the Saiyid to give up irrational practices not enjoined by the *sharīʿah*, since the indulgence of the people like him in such rites clothed these rites with an aura of sacredness. Shāh Karīm ʿAtā agreed that many of the rites performed during the *ʿurs* were mere usages lacking sanction of the *sharīʿah*, but implored the Saiyid to pray God who may give him enough moral courage to renounce them.[3]

From Salon, the Saiyid went to Allāhābād, where he stayed in Dāiʾra Shāh Ajmal.[4] Sheikh Ghulām ʿAlī, a grandee of Rājā Udit Narain, Maharaja of Banāras, paid a visit to the Saiyid. He was so impressed by the Saiyid that he instantly offered himself for the *biʿat*, repented for his

1. *Lit.* a spiritual guide
2. *Waqāiʾ Ahmadī*, pp. 276-82
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 263-65
4. The locality known after the monastery of Shāh Ajmal (d. 1821) b. Shāh Muhammad Nasir of Allāhābād. He was a famous sufi saint distinguished for his piety and learning.

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past sins and threw away his musical instruments and gold and silver vessels in the river. Hundreds of other persons, filled with a spirit of contrition, pledged to turn away from their sinful ways and to follow the precepts of the *sharīʿah*.

The Saiyid had taken more than a month to arrive at Allāhābād from Rae Barelī although the distance covered by him ordinarily took only four days. At numerous places in the way, multitudes used to gather from surrounding villages entreating him to visit their homes so that their wives and children could also get an opportunity to integrate themselves into his spiritual paternity. From Allāhābād the Saiyid took the road to Banāras where the sermons of Maulānā ʿAbdul Haʾī attracted large crowds. More than ten thousand persons are reported to have taken the oath of fidelity at the hands of the Saiyid at Banāras. Thereafter, the Saiyid returned to Rae Barelī by way of Sultānpūr, where Ghulām Husain Khān, the Governor of the district and hundreds of persons belonging to the royal troops of Oudh joined his spiritual order. The Saiyid spent about two weeks at Sultānpūr exhorting the people to take the path of righteousness as enjoined by the Qurʾān and the *sunnah*. In all, about three months were spent[1] by the Saiyid in this missionary tour.

After a brief stay at Rae Barelī, the Saiyid set out for Lucknow with one hundred and seventy followers. Nawāb Ghāzī-ud-dīn Haider (1819-27) then reigned at Lucknow, who, according to Henry Lawrence, was persuaded by Lord Hastings to assume the title of Shāh or King with the object of 'exciting a rivalry between the Avadh and the Delhi families.'[2] Ghāzī-ud-dīn Haider had taken a vow not to touch wine or indulge in the pleasures of flesh. Mʿotamid-ud-daula Āghā Mīr, however, beguiled the King to spend his time in easy vices and he soon began burning the candle at both ends. He squandered away four crores out of 14 crores of rupees left by Saʿādat ʿAlī Khān, salaries of the royal troops and state functionaries fell into arrears, justice

1. *Waqāʾi Ahmadi*, p. 267
2. *The Kingdom of Oude, Calcutta Review*, Vol. III, p. 415

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became unknown, administration became a disorderly mess, maladministration and nepotism became rampant and these evils of native growth were aggravated by the presence of a disreputable class of Europeans most of whom were adventurers as destitute of character and principle as they were of property. Culturally, the extravagant court life at Lucknow had given rise to an urbane nostalgia which rated highly the cultivation of senses; poetry, dancing and singing came to be regarded as hallmarks of cultural attainment.

The reformative endeavours of the Saiyid were met with even more success at Lucknow than at Allāhābād or Banāras. From morning till late in the night a stream of visitors continued to crowd the house of Imām Bakhsh, a palatial building near the Tīla Mosque of Shāh Pīr Muhammad, where the Saiyid was putting up. The sermons of Maulānā ʿAbdul Haʾī, delivered in the mosque, were always attended by vast multitudes. The concourse coming daily to take the oath of fidelity at the hands of the Saiyid included laymen as well as scholars, Shiʿās as well as Sunnīs, criminals as well as the state functionaries. A large number of persons, mostly Kandahārīs, enlisted in the royal army along with Faqīr Muhammad Khān[1] entered in the fold of Saiyid's spiritual order.[2]

Maulānā Muhammad Ashraf of Kashmir, then teaching at a religious centre and seminary of Lucknow, had certain doubts about the educational and spiritual attainments of the Saiyid. Once he called upon the Saiyid, during his stay at Lucknow, along with his favourite student, Wilāyat ʿAlī[3] of

1. Faqir Muhammad Khān, an Afridi Pathān, was acquainted with the Saiyid since the days both were in the camp of Amīr Khān. Later on, he took up service in Oudh, and, during the time of Ghāzi-ud-dīn Haider, was appointed a commander of 1,500 cavalry and 2,000 foot-soldiers.
2. *Waqāiʿ Ahmadī*, pp. 285-90, 381-88
3. Maulvi Wilāyat ʿAlī (1791-1853) and his younger brother Maulvi ʿInāyat ʿAlī (1794-1858) later on played a prominent role in the Saiyid's revivalist movement and *jihād*. Belonging to a well-to-do and respectable family of Patna, the two brothers were descendants of the famous *sufī* saint, Makhdūm-ul-Mulk Sheikh Yahyā Maneri of Bihar.

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Patna, and asked the Saiyid to throw some light on the Quranic verse: And We have not sent thee (O Muhammad) save as a Mercy for the world.[1] The Saiyid expounded the significance of the verse for two hours so effectively that both the teacher and the taught expressed regrets for having put the Saiyid to test and enlisted themselves as his spiritual disciples.[2]

The popular enthusiasm of the masses evoked by the Saiyid's piety and Maulānā ʿAbdul Haʾī's haranguings, who often preached against taking out *tʿaziā* processions and passion plays, was looked with disfavour by the ruling circles. Āghā Mīr sent a message to the Saiyid asking him not to administer *biʿat* to the Shiʿās, many of whom had accepted the Sunnī faith after entering the fold of his spiritual order. The Saiyid, however, expressed his inability to comply with his orders, for, he said, he could not desist from spreading the message of God. Another courier was sent by Āghā Mīr to the Saiyid informing him that in the case of any tumult againt him the administration would not take the responsibility of his protection. This warning, too, was unavailing and finally Faqīr Muhammad Khān was deputed by Āghā Mīr to convey the threat that in case he persisted in defying the orders of the government, his residence would be battered by guns. The Saiyid calmly replied, "Faqīr Muhammad Khān, you know me for a long time. I can never desist from saying what I think to be right. Tell Mʿotamid-ud-daula to do whatever he likes. I do not fear his guns for God is my protector. If He does not mean ill to me, no harm will ever be caused to me." The parleys between the Saiyid and Āghā Mīr continued through Faqīr Muhammad Khān for several days. In the meantime, the Saiyid's disciples enlisted in the royal forces offered their services to defend him in case of military action being taken against him, but the Saiyid assured them that nothing untoward was going to happen and they should stay in their cantonments unperturbed. The Saiyid also permitted Faqīr Muhammad

1. Q. 21 : 107
2. *Tazkirah-i-Sādiqa*, pp. 148-49

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Khān to take whatever action his employers ordered him to take against him. He, however, added that the Mᶜotamid-ud-daula could have asked him to leave Lucknow which would have been complied with by him as a law abiding citizen of the State, but nobody had a right to preclude him from diffusing the word of God among Shiᶜās and Sunnīs, both of whom were Muslims. At last, Āghā Mīr realised his folly and invited the Saiyid to a banquet at his residence. The next day, the Saiyid paid a visit to Āgha Mīr along with his disciples. Before the meals were served, Maulānā ᶜAbdul Haᵓī, delivered an impassioned speech delineating the essential pre-requisites of faith. Āghā Mīr, impressed by the Saiyid, presented five thousand rupees to him and also requested for a private audience which were gracefully accepted by the latter.[1]

The Saiyid remained at Lucknow for a few days more. Before leaving the city he went to see Āghā Mīr and both remained closeted together for two hours. Āghā Mīr expressed penitence for the wrongs committed by him but the Saiyid remarked: "Repentence over one's past sins is commendable but you should first make up your mind never to grab the houses and lands of the poor as you have been doing so far. Atrocity is the worst of all sins." Āghā Mīr promised to be cautious in future and declared that he would never acquire anybody's property in future without paying adequate compensation to the owner. He also ordered to suspend all such proceedings already ordered by him. Āghā Mīr presented a mare to the Saiyid before bidding farewell to him.[2]

A few days after the Saiyid had returned to Rae Barelī a letter was received from Āghā Mīr expressing the ardent desire of the King to meet the Saiyid. The Saiyid consulted his companions but it was decided that no useful purpose was likely to be served by the Saiyid's visit to Lucknow again. A reply was, however, sent saying that it would not be possible for the Saiyid to come down to Lucknow again,

1. *Waqāiᵓ Ahmadi*, pp. 418-19
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 424-25

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but Maulānā ʿAbdul Haʾī and Shāh Ismāʿīl were being asked to reach Lucknow after about a fortnight to see the King. Both these lieutenants of the Saiyid arrived at Lucknow along with twenty-five other companions and were lodged as royal guests. They remained at Lucknow for sixteen days but some of the intrigant and self-seeking courtiers, like Subhān ʿAlī Khān and Tāj-ud-dīn Husain Khān managed to keep the King dead-drunk during the whole period, and Maulānā ʿAbdul Haʾī and Shāh Ismāʿīl had to return without having an audience with him.

On return from Lucknow, the Saiyid stayed at Rae Barelī for a year or so.[1] He had all through been emphasising the need for a holy war, which according to him, was the highest form of service one could offer to God, but we find him even more insistent on it during this period. Not unoften he came out armed with a sword, carbine or matchlock in order to encourage his disciples to use arms although most of the mystics of his time, recluses as they mostly were, looked down upon the arts of war as unbecoming of a religious man. Once, in Lucknow, he had presented a carbine to one of his disciples saying, "Make up your mind to take part in *jihād*, learn the use of arms for that purpose and try to build up your health. God willing, we shall fight the infidels. The trades of mendicity and monasticism can never excel the virtues of fighting in the way of God." Another time, one, ʿAbdul Bāqī Khān, on witnessing the Saiyid carrying certain arms had remarked: "Sir, I like everything you do except, of course, one thing never indulged in by your forefathers. It behoves you to follow your forefathers in this matter too."

"What's it?" asked the Saiyid.

"You carry arms, swords, shields and matchlocks. Are these not the ways of ignorant folk?" replied ʿAbdul Bāqī Khān.

"Khān Sāhib, what should I say in reply," retorted the Saiyid indignantly. "God allowed His prophets the use of

1. *Waqāiʾ Ahmadī*, p. 464

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these means in fighting the unbelievers. Did not our own Prophet take up arms against the infidels to diffuse the light of Truth ? Had he not done so, we would not have been believers today."

The Saiyid was always pleased when young men capable of bearing arms called upon him. Four persons, Shamsher Khān, Allah Bakhsh, Sheikh Ramzān and Mehrbān Khān came to pay a visit from Unnao. Expressing his delight on their visit, he told them, "Young men like you are needed by me. I don't want the weak and sickly sons of the *pirs*." Then turning to Mehrbān Khān, he said, "God has earmarked you for a special work. Your companions would do something else, but all of you would undertake jobs that would be pleasing to God."[1]

Once a few disciples of the Saiyid compiained about his decreasing interest in guiding them in the ways of meditation and contemplation. Hājī ʿAbdur Rahīm, who had been a mendicant before joining the Saiyid's party replied, "I had been myself a Sheikh leading my disciples to spiritual enlightenment before I met the Saiyid. Now, I make bricks, grub up grass, hack firewood and perform similar other chores, but I have never had the blessedness I am experiencing now. It is better for us to do whatever the Saiyid wants."[2]

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd also embarked upon to reform a social evil widely prevalent amongst the Muslims of India. As related by Khāfī Khān, the nobility during the reign of Muhammad Shāh (1719-48) had begun to look down upon remarriage of widows with contemptuous disrespect. They held the second marriage of any woman as an affront to the family honour and as an act against the fidelity of the remarried widow towards her late husband. The custom, although against the precepts of Islam and practice of the

1. *Waqāiʾ Ahmadī*. pp.440-41. Later on Mehrbān Khān and his friends joined the Saiyid in his *jihād*. Mehrbān Khān was left in Sind to look after the family of the Saiyid while the other three met a martyr's death fighting gallantly at Akora.
2. *Waqāiʾ Ahmadī*, pp. 448-54

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holy Prophet, had become such an established usage that certain doctors of law even issued juristic opinions[1] against the re-marriage of widows. Anyone who dared to get his widowed sister or daughter re-married was sneered at and had very often to face a social boycott by his friends and relatives. Besides Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz, several other theologians had declared the practice as un-Islamic and sinful, but the custom had so deeply rooted itself in the Muslim society, specially amongst those who belonged to aristocracy or claimed a noble descent that the speeches and writings of the ulāmā[2] had merely proved to be academic rulings without any effect on the prevalent practice. Maulānā ʿAbdul Haʾī invited the attention of the Saiyid towards this un-Islamic practice of the Indian Muslims and requested him to make a special effort, beginning from his own family, to eradicate this irreligious usage. The Saiyid solemnly promised to allow no shame or disgrace to stand in the way of re-establishing a *sunnah*[3] of the holy Prophet. He accordingly requested his aunt, who also happened to be the aunt of the widow of his late brother Maulānā Muhammad Is'hāq, to persuade the latter for re-marriage with him. The widow of Maulānā Mohammad Ish'āq agreed, albeit with some hesitation. After setting a personal example, the Saiyid sent letters to Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz and his disciples informing them of the event and asking his followers to re-marry the widows in their families without the least compunction or feeling of shame. The letters received in reply show that the Saiyid's call evoked a successful response[4] among his disciples and it went a long way in re-establishing the practice of the re-marriage of widows among the Indian Muslims.

Another notable incident of the period relates to the peace-making effort of the Saiyid in a local dispute at

1. *Fatāwā-i-ʿAzīzī*, Vol. II, pp. 128-31. Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAziz has quoted one such *fatāwa* before giving his counter juristic opinion. Also *see Sarwar-i-ʿAzizī*, pp. 302-308.
2. Plural of Ālim, meaning one learned in religious sciences
3. A practice or precept of the holy Prophet of Islam
4. *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, pp. 44-45

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Nasīrābād, his ancestral town, between two Muslim sects. The town had a mixed population of Shiʿās and Sunnis. As Saiyid Dildār ʿAlī, the first Shīʿā *Mujtahid*[1] appointed by Nawāb Saʿādat ʿAlī Khān belonged to Nasīrābād and Shiaism was the State religion of Oudh, the Shīʿās of the town had come to wield considerable political influence. During the Muharram, which fell in October, 1819, the Shiʿās decided to recite *tabarra*[2] publicly in their *tʿāzia* processions of the eighth Muharram. They asked the Sunni population of the town to keep out of the place for a few days if they had any objection to it. Receiving an intimation of the conflict, the Saiyid immediately set out for Nasīrābād with some of his followers. The Shīʿās suspended their processions as a protest against the intervention and the matter was ultimately reported to Mʿotamid-ud-daula, Āghā Mīr and King Ghāzī-ud-dīn Haider. Saiyid Dildār ʿAlī himself presented the matter before Āghā Mīr on behalf of the Shiʿās, but the latter decided that the processions should be taken out strictly in accordance with the previous practice. Āghā Mīr also deputed Faqīr Muhammad Khān with a detachment of royal troops to maintain law and order at Nasīrābād and punish those who were responsible for creating the trouble. The Saiyid, however, forbade Faqīr Muhammad Khān to take any action against the Shiʿā population or their leaders and told him that both the parties had already resolved the dispute by an amicable settlement[3].

1. A learned scholar capable of pronouncing juristic opinion
2. Deprecatory remarks about the first three Caliphs
3. *Waqāiʿ Ahmadī*, pp. 487-97, 518-23 and *Manzoorat-us-Soʿāda*

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Six

# The Haj Pilgrimage

FOUNDED upon express religious injunctions in the Qur'ān, the performence of *haj* pilgrimage is incumbent upon every Muslim, once in his life time, if he is an adult, free, sane, well in health, and has sufficient means for undertaking the journey and for the support of his dependents during his absence. This annual congregation provides an opportunity to the Muslims of far-flung lands to gather in the House of God, with a definite aim and conviction and in a rare religious and spiritual atmosphere, effacing every distinction of colour and race, dress and language, rich and poor, high and low, to draw fresh inspiration and spiritual vigour in order to diffuse the same among their brothers who cannot make the pilgrimage owing to poverty, illness or for any other reason. Islam attaches so much importance to this institution that any Muslim possessing the means but refraining from its performance is liable to be declared as an apostate. The Indian Muslims have been known from the earliest times, for their genuine feeling of religious enthusiasm for the *haj*, and their numbers at the pilgrimage have almost been equal, if not more, than those coming from other countries having a Muslim majority. However, during the eighteenth century the Muslims of India, who, like the Muslims in other countries, were losing leadership of the world were fast sliding into intellectual stupor, lethargy

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and loss of religious enthusiasm. Anarchy and despoliation of the eighteenth century were not the real challenge to Islam in India; it came from the ignorance of the Muslim masses and insidious infiltration of pagan beliefs and customs, and the willingness of corrupt and self-seeking hedge priests to acquiesce in every usage adopted by the Muslim laity. There was no dearth of the so-called theologians who were ever agreeable, in defiance of the *sharīᶜah*, to waive obligatory religious duties found irksome by the misguided masses.

In the second half of the seventeenth century the Indian seas were infested by a most formidable breed of European pirates, chiefly English and Portuguese. During their raids they practised fiendish cruelty on the people, men, women and children. Chittagong was annexed to the Moghul empire in 1666 to break the power of Magh and Portuguese pirates who had devastated the riverside ports of Backergunge and Dacca districts in Bengal.[1] Aurangzeb was compelled to take action against the English because one of them, Roborts, had destroyed 400 trading vessels in three years.[2] In September, 1695, the Moghul ship *Ganj-i-Savāi*[2] conveying Indian pilgrims from Mecca was attacked by Henry Bridgman, between Bombay and Daman, looted and set to fire.[3] These pirates ranged over the sea from Mozambique to Sumatra. The anarchy and pillage which marked the sea voyage in those days gradually reduced the number of pilgrims going for *haj*, and to ease their conscience came forward the self-seeking ecclesiastics with their juristic opinions allowing the *haj* to be deferred in case of danger to life and property. One such juristic opinion or *fatwā* was referred to Maulānā ᶜAbdul Haᵓī and Shāh Ismāᶜīl, both of whom denounced the ruling as erroneous. Shāh ᶜAbdul ᶜAzīz, to whom both the sets of rulings were sent for review, agreed with Maulāna ᶜAbdul Haᵓī and Shāh Ismāᶜīl, and severely criticised those who sought to create

1. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. V, pp. 236-37
2. *Ibid.*, p. 309
2. *Ibid.*, p. 309

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a dangerous precedent by relinquishing the obligatory religious duties on different pretexts.

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd had already made up his mind to wage holy war on which he had been meditating for long. The decision had been taken by him not only because he considered India under the foreign yoke as *dār-ul-harb,* a land of the enemy, but also because he wanted to follow the holy Prophet's example of migrating to a land where he could give the call to rally round the banner of faith in perfect freedom. But, all of a sudden, he changed his mind and announced to his followers that he felt compelled by the Divine summons to perform the *haj* pilgrimage first.[1] The Saiyid was not in easy circumstances which was an essential condition for making the *haj* incumbent on him nor was the *haj* of a few persons likely to make any appreciable impact in reviving a practice which had long passed into desuetude. He, therefore, decided to go on pilgrimage with as many persons as possible to revive that obligatory observance in India once again. As indifferent to the perils of sea voyage as to the money required for traveliing expenses, he invited everybody who wished to make the pilgrimage to accompany him. He sent letters to his leading disciples in Burhānā, Delhi, Phulat and several other places saying: "I have decided to repair to the House of God for *haj.* You can take with you whosoever desires to accompany me, but let it be known to everybody that of the riches and treasures, I have none. I am undertaking this journey with complete trust in God, and I have every hope that He would help us in achieving our objective. We would earn our living through manual labour, in case we fall short of provisions in the way, before proceeding ahead. Only the old and the weak and the women shall be exempted from working; they shall look after the encampment while all others shall have to work to earn the expenses required for the journey onwards."[2]

1. *Waqāi' Ahmadī,* p. 561
2. *Ibid.,* p. 562

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The Saiyid also urged his family members and close relatives to join him in the pilgrimage. All of them were, however, aware that the Saiyid was without a shot in the locker ; unable, very often, to keep the wolf from the door. Some of them, naturally, raised objection to this seemingly mad venture. They argued that the *haj* was incumbent only on those who were in easy circumstances. Without a penny to bless oneself with and unmindful of the dangers of sea voyage, they said, the Saiyid's call would only result in bringing ruin to everybody.[1] To these objections the Saiyid replied by re-assuring them of their safety and urged them to place reliance in God, Who, he hoped, would certainly confer His blessings for completion of the sacred task undertaken by him.[2]

In the meantime the Saiyid went round Kānpūr, Kora Jahānābād, Khajwa, Fatehpūr and Dalmaū on a missionary tour. He was received with the highest honour, as in his earlier excursions, at each place where thousands of persons entered into his spiritual fold by taking oaths of fidelity to him. The Muslim wife of an Englishman, Mandru, offered herself for *bi'at* at Kānpūr and presented four thousand rupees alongwith her own house to the Saiyid. However, the Saiyid declined to accept the presents saying that he did not need them at the moment. On her insistence, the Saiyid gave over the house to Mirza 'Abdul Quddūs, the son-in-law of the donor. By the time Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd returned to Rae Barelī, he received the intimation that about two hundred and fifty persons from Sahāranpūr and Phulat had already left for Rae Barelī to accompany him for the *haj*. At Dalmaū, on his way back to Rae Barelī, he met a party of about thirty five pilgrims headed by Maulānā 'Abdul Ha'ī. Another group of about a hundred persons gathered from the surrounding areas. The growing host of pilgrims set at rest the doubts of the Saiyid's relatives who expressed regrets for raising objections to his project ; and, they offered themselves for *bi'at* to him and joined the party

1. *Waqāi' Ahmadī*, pp. 587-88
2. *Ibid.*, p. 588

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of pilgrims.

The Saiyid set out from his home with four hundred persons, including a number of women and children, on Monday, the 30th July, 1821. Maulvī Muhammad Yūsuf of Phulat had been appointed treasurer of the party. The Saiyid first gave away a hundred rupees to the poor and needy who had gathered on the occasion. Thereafter he asked Maulvī Muhammad Yūsuf to give away the remaining amount he had with him to beggars and the poor. Without a single shell left with him, he raised his hands in prayer to God. "Thou art benevolent, my Lord", he prayed, "and Thou hast placed the burden of these persons on my weak shoulders. Only Thou, canst help and lead this party safely to its destination."[1]

The first stopover was at Dalmaū, on the banks of the Ganges, where the pilgrims had to stay for a few days before they boarded the boats engaged for taking them to Calcutta. During their brief stay in the town, the local people vied with each other to act as hosts of the party. Large crowds were attracted by the sermons of Maulānā ʿAbdul Haʾī and the Saiyid while several more persons joined the party of pilgrims. The Saiyid instructed his companions in a speech delivered there: "Everybody should understand it clearly that we are undertaking this journey for *haj* as friars, empty handed. It is an adoration of God, sacred and exalted; therefore, each of us should inculcate fear of God. Everybody ought to make up his mind never to ask for anything from others, nor shall we beg anybody to provide our travelling expenses. We shall work and earn our living, if need be, and we shall spend half of what we would earn and save the half for meeting expenses in the way. I shall claim no precedence in performing the *haj*, and, if we fall short of money, I will send you on in batches from Calcutta and I will take my turn with the last batch. But, I hope that God will provide us with enough means to

1. *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, pp. 62-63

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perform the *haj* together."[1]

Five boats were engaged for taking the pilgrims to Calcutta. These got under way on the 3rd of August but as all the pilgrims could not be accommodated in the boats available, a party of seventy persons headed by Maulvī Mahammad Yūsuf took the road by the side of the river. By the time the caravan reached Rāmchaurā Ghāt, on the fourth day, many more persons had joined the pilgrims. With no more boats available one hundred and fifty persons had to continue the journey on foot. At every stopover large crowds collected to welcome the party and to invite them to partake their hospitability. The Saiyid always utilized these concourses to drive home the paramount necessity of following the injunctions of the *sharīʿah* in letter as well as in spirit, and exhorted them to give up all the customs, habits and manners opposed to the teachings of Islam.

The Saiyid stayed at Allāhābād for twelve days. Sheikh Ghulām ʿAlī played host to the entire party entertaing them with the choicest dishes and making some present, everyday, to the Saiyid and his companions. It is estimated that he spent about twenty thousand rupees in entertaining the pilgrims and presenting costly gifts to the Saiyid.[2] Several thousand persons of the city and adjoining rural areas came daily to listen to the discourses of the Saiyid and to be united in his spiritual fraternity. Before leaving Allāhābād the Saiyid appointed Sheikh Ghulām ʿAlī and Hāfiz Ikrām-ud-dīn, a local shopkeeper, as his spiritual successors for guidance of the new entrants to his order.

Passing through Mirzāpūr and Chunārgarh, where the stay of the Saiyid and his party did not exceed two or three days, he arrived at Banāras on the 6th September, 1821. As the rains had set in by that time, the pilgrims had to break the journey for a month. During the first fifteen days the spell of rain continued unbroken but the Saiyid was ever willing to visit the different localities where he was invited

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1. Abul Hasan ʿAlī Nadwī; *Sīrat Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, Vol. I, p. 233; *Mehr*; *Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, Vol. I, pp. 188-89.
2. *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, p. 67-68; *Waqāiʿ Ahmadī*, pp. 634-35

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to administer the oaths of fealty or to deliver the sermons. The Muslims of Rājghāt zealously observed Muharram and took out long processions of *tᶜaziās* and *ᶜalams*. The entire inhabitants of the locality promised to give up un-Islamic practices after entering into his *biᶜat*. They proved themselves as good as their words for they cooked food for the Saiyid and his party by using the *tᶜaziās* as fuel. Banāras had considerable population of weavers who were divided into two factions because of some long-standing feuds. The Saiyid paid a visit to them and brought about a reconciliation between the two parties. Both the groups took oaths of fealty to the Saiyid, repented of their sins and solemnly promised to give up all irreligious practices.

Setting the sail again on 14th October the Saiyid's flotilla reached ᶜAzīmābād (Patna) on the 19th of the same month. The Saiyid stayed at ᶜAzīmābād for eight days. Here a few Tibetans called upon him with the request to accompany him for the *haj*. The Saiyid, however, after administering *biᶜat* to them, asked them to return to their country for spreading the message of Islam in that land. He assured them of success in their mission but asked them to be prepared for every hardship in the venture..[1] Subsequent events reveal that these persons were successful in restoring the Islamic way of life among Tibetan Muslims.[2]

Besides several respectable persons like Nawāb Qutb-ud-dīn Khān, a Shīᶜā noble, Rahīm Khān and ᶜAbdur Rahmān, a large number of persons at ᶜAzīmābād expressed repentence at the hands of the Saiyid. A dancer belonging to a lower caste not only offered herself and her family for *biᶜat*, but also joined the pilgrims' party for performing the *haj*.[3] Setting sail from ᶜAzīmābād on 27th October, the Saiyid's party reached Calcutta some time in November, 1821, with brief halts at Surajgarha, Monghyr, Bhāgalpūr, Rājmahal, Murshidābād and Hoogly. Before the Saiyid's

1. *Waqāiᵓ Ahmadī*, pp. 751-54
2. *Ibid.*, p. 754-55
3. *Ibid.*, p. 777

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boat could skirt the shore, he found Munshī Amīn-ud-dīn,[1] an attorney of the East India Company, making enquiries about him. The Munshī met the Saiyid in his boat and took the promise from him that he would stay in a bungalow specially purchased by him for his stay at Calcutta. The bungalow was surrounded by spacious gardens, the Munshī told the Saiyid, with several outhouses where the pilgrims could easily be accommodated.[2]

The Saiyidi's sojourn at Calcutta which was prolonged to nearly three months in engaging the steamships and making other arrangements, was one of triumph.[3] The whole of this period was spent in preaching against the abuses that had crept into the life of the Indian Muslims ; teaching them the way to live strictly according to the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* and helping the noviciates to acquire spiritual merit. Everyday large crowds gathered, in the morning, to listen to the Saiyid's discourses. Maulānā ʿAbdul Ha'ī addressed the people on Fridays and Tuesdays after the mid-day prayers. Masses flocked to him in such numbers that the Saiyid was unable even to go through the ceremony of initiation by separately laying on his hands on the initiates.[4] Seven or eight turbans had to be unrolled simultaneously to be held by the persons taking oath, who repeated the words of *biʿat*. The process had to be repeated several times from early in the morning till the time arrived for mid-day prayer.[5] Among the notables who signified their willingness to accept the Saiyid as their spiritual guide were Munshī Amīn-ud-dīn, Sheikh Imām Bakhsh, Sheikh Ghulām Husain and the sons and daughters of Tipū Sultān.

Calcutta was then the capital of British possessions

1. Badr-uz-Zamān writes in *Tarīkh-i-Kalkatta* that Nākhuda Masjid, a famous Jāmī Mosque of Calcutta occupies the site of Munshi Amin-ud-din's house.
2. *Waqāi' Ahmadī*, pp. 797-801
3. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 169
4. *Indian Musalmans*, p. 13
5. *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, p. 75 and *Waqāi' Ahmadī*, p. 815

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and the largest commercial centre in the country visited by persons from different parts of the country. Many such visitors having entered into the spiritual fold of the Saiyid, his fame soon reached far and wide. A large number of persons came, in groups, from Sylhet, Chittagong, Dacca and Assam to offer themselves for *bi'at* and to invite the Saiyid to visit those towns. The Saiyid could not go to the cities he was invited to but he appointed several of his disciples as his spiritual successors to preach his message of reformation and righteous living in their home districts.

The salutary influence exercised by the Saiyid over the inhabitants of Calcutta left durable results. Thousands of persons who had concubines, according to the prevalent custom, either married them according to law or severed off their illegal connections.[1] The taboos of caste system and untouchability widely prevalent in Bengal were given up and the beliefs and actions smacking unbelief, such as, participation in the devotions to *Bhawānī*, *Kālī* and other deities were abjured[2]. The platforms contructed for keeping *t'azīās* during Muharram were converted into mosques.[3] With innumerable persons expressing repentance over their past laxness and intemperate living, the sale of liquor dwindled to such an extent that the traders in these commodities lodged a complaint with the Company's officials that their sales had gone down owing to the Saiyid.[4] The enthusiasm for righteous living capturing the imagination and sensibilities of the Calcutta Muslims during the Saiyid's stay in that city attracted the attention of non-Muslims also who daily called upon the Saiyid in large numbers. It is reported that on an average about ten to fifteen persons embraced Islam every day during the period the Saiyid remained in Calcutta.[5]

The Saiyid had set out from Rae Barelī empty-handed, but none of his disciples had to suffer any privation during

1. *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, pp. 75-76
2. *Waqāi' Ahmadī*, pp. 935-43
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 975-76
4. *Ibid.*, p. 911
5. *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, p. 75

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the course of the journey. The presents made to the Saiyid, in cash and kind, at Allāhābād and other places were lavishly given away to the needy and poor. According to Sheikh ʿAbdul Latīf, a merchant of Mirzāpūr accompanying the Saiyid, the latter distributed about ten thousand rupees[1] to the poor and needy who called upon him for help at Calcutta. Sheikh Ghulām Husain owned a flotilla of forty steamships. He offered to convey the pilgrims in his ships, free of charge, but the Saiyid declined to accept his offer. Instead, he paid the full charges of all the ships engaged for carrying the pilgrims.[2]

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was accompanied by 693 followers in addition to 60 destitutes who had hung around him in the hope of performing the pilgrimage. The pilgrims were divided into ten parties, each under a leader appointed by the Saiyid, which set out on different steamships. Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd embarked the last ship whose captain was 'Abdulla Hadhrami, an Arab, with his companions numbering one hundred and fifty persons. Each party was provided with clothes, food-grains, utensils for cooking food and other items necessary for the journey.

Saiyid ʿAbdur Rahmān, who kept company with the Saiyid, relates that on the day the latter departed he first paid a visit to Sheīkh Ghulām Husain Khān, a wealthy merchant of Calcutta, who had been taken sick at that time. All along the way through which Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd passed in a buggy, a large crowd of Muslims and non-Muslims had gathered to bid farewell to him. By the time of *ʿasr*[3] prayer the party reached the fort, where the prayer was performed in the open field in front of the fort. The prayer ended, and the Saiyid took leave of those who had come to see him off. He also distributed more than seven hundred rupees to the poor and destitutes who had gathered there. A large crowd kept standing on the shore, saluting and cheering him until

1. *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, p. 77
2. *Waqāiʿ Ahmadī*, p. 1010
3. Afternoon obligatory prayer

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the whole party embarked the ship from the boats that carried them from the sea shore. The *maghrib*[1] prayer was performed on the ship[2].

The Saiyid's companions had voluntarily undertaken to perform different chores. One Bādal Khān, fetched water for performing ablution while Sheikh Bāqar ʿAlī and a few other persons cooked the food for the whole party. The Saiyid's daily routine during the voyage was to spend some time after the dawn prayer in litanies, then listen to a portion of the Qurʾān recited by Maulvī Muhammad Yūsuf. Thereafter, he spent some time explaining the verses of the Qurʾān or Traditions or replying to the questions asked by his disciples. A little before noon he returned to his cabin, took his food and then settled down to take a nap. He got up for *zuhr*[3] prayers, after which he again sat down for a discourse with his companions. Nobody ever raised a feud or showed bitterness or temper during the voyage. A number of people were, however, sea-sick, and, therefore, the Saiyid perferred to perform two congregational prayers together, allowed by all the other juristic schools excepting the Hanafites.[4]

Shaping its course round Cape Comorin, the ship of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd laid anchor, first at Alleppey and then at Cālicut where a number of persons took oath of allegiance on his hand. Then, skirting Laccadive and several smaller islands like Amindive, Agathe and Socotra, the ship arrived near Aden. The Saiyid was so pleased to set his foot on the land of Arabia that the first thing he did on reaching Aden was to offer a thanksgiving prayer to God.[5] After a night's stay at the port, the ship again got under way but when it reached Bab-el-Mandeb the shipmaster requested the Saiyid to invoke the blessings of God for safely crossing

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1. Obligatory prayer performed after sunset
2. *Waqāiʾ Ahmadī*, pp. 1090-93
3. Mid-day prayers
4. *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, p. 89
5. *Waqāiʾ Ahmadī*, pp. 1116-17

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the strait between Africa and Arabia connecting Red sea to the Gulf of Aden.

Saiyid Zain-ul-ʿĀbdīn, one of the Saiyid's companions, relates that once he saw the Saiyid standing on the deck, holding the railing and tears flowing on his cheeks, reciting: "Glory be to the Lord, for Whom is all Praise; Glory be to the Lord, Who is Great," along with certain verses of Hāfiz. He stood thus for quite some time. Saiyid Zain-ul-ʿĀbdīn adds that the Saiyid's recital so touched the hearts of the people that, after a short while, when they performed the *zuhr* prayer, everybody felt attracted towards God.

On reaching Mocha, the Captain, who belonged to the place, decided to suspend the journey for a month. The Saiyid hired a house near Jāmī Mosque of the city for his stay during that period.[1] A curious custom of the place was that the natives bathed naked in the ponds and tanks. One Imām-ud-dīn of Bengal once took bath wearing an under-cloth; he was immediately arrested and produced before the Qāzī. Imām-ud-dīn was, however, released by the Qāzī.

The Saiyid expressed a wish to the Qāzī of Mocha to let him have a copy of *Mauzūāt-i-Hadīth*, written by Muhammad ibn ʿAlī Shaukānī[2] of Yemen. He promised to obtain a copy to be delivered to him on his return journey. The Saiyid also asked the Qāzī to restrain his people from taking bath stripped of every cloth. To this the Qāzī, expressed his helplessness, but managed to see that nobody took bath naked in the ponds in the Saiyid's vicinity, so long as he was there.[3]

One more incident related about Mocha is that a certain person, Maulvī Muhammad Yūsuf of Lucknow, who was also there during the period, was a zealous preacher of the doctrine of *Wahdatul Wajūd* or 'Unity of Existence." The Saiyid tried to convince him of the falacy of his views, but as the Maulvī insisted on the soundness of the doctrine the Saiyid

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1. *Waqāiʿ Ahmadī*, p. 1119
2. A renowed traditionist of the 18th century whose *Nail-ul-Autār* is still regarded a valuable work on *hadith* literature.
3. *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, p. 89

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forbade his followers to have any talk with him on the subject[1].

At last the ship again got under way to Jidda. After passing Hudiada, where it laid anchor for a short while, when the ship got opposite Yaulamlam[2] which is the *miqat*[3] for pilgrims from India and Yemen, the Saiyid and his followers took bath and put on *Ihram*[4] after performing two *rakʿats*[5] of prayer. Thereafter, everyone was busy reciting *talbiā*[6] and communion with God and begging His mercy and grace.

The ship touched the port of Jidda on Wednesday, the 15th of May, 1822. Most of his followers who had come earlier had left for Mecca, but a few of them were awaiting his arrival. Nawāb Mahmūd Nawāz Khān and Sultān Husain Khān, the two brothers belonging to Hyderābād were staying there for quite a long time to receive him. Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd left Jidda on the 19th of May, leaving Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl behind him to settle the official formalities. The Saiyid broke his journey for some time at Hudaibiya[7] where he administered an oath of allegiance to his followers for participation in the *jihād*.

On 22nd May, 1822, the Saiyid's party reached the outskirts of Mecca. There he was warmly received by those who had already arrived at the place. Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd humbly entered the holy enclosures of Kaʿaba, shedding

1. *Waqāiʾ Ahmadi*, p. 1124
2. The place is about one and a half day's journey before the ship reaches the port of Jidda.
3. The boundaries set for the pilgrims from different directions, where they have to change their dress and wear *Ihrām*. It signifies that the restrictions prescribed for the pilgrims would henceforth be applicable on them.
4. Two seemless white sheets of cloth worn by all pilgrims
5. One *rakʿat* or unit of ritual prayer consists of recital of the Qurʾān, while standing, a genuflexion and two prostrations
6. A prayer recited by the pilgrims, glorifying God and declaring their arrival at the threshold of His Blessed House.
7. Now known as Shumaisia, between Mecca and Jidda. It was the place where the companions of the Prophet took *biʿat* on his hands, to fight till death, against the Meccans.

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tears, through the gate called Bab-us-Salām, circumambulated the Kaʿaba seven times and offered two *rakʿats* of prayer at *Muqām-i-Ibrāhim*.[1] After taking a little *zamzam*,[2] the Saiyid went for *Saʿee*[3], got his hair cropped and put off the *Ihrām* before returning to his residence, a spacious house taken on rent from one, Miān Zain-ul-ʿAbdīn, close to Bāb-i-Umra of the Kaʿaba. A few more buildings were rented where his followers stayed.

During the month of Ramadhān, Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd used to have daily sittings with the scholars and divines of Mecca, between the *zuhr* and *ʿāsr* prayers. More often, after the *ʿāsr* prayer, too, which he performed in the great mosque of Kaʿaba, people gathered round him listening to his discourses. After breaking the fast and offering *maghrib* prayers, he used to circumambulate the Kaʿaba and then return to his residence. As the *tarāwih*[4] in the mosque of Kaʿaba attracted a large crowd, causing considerable din and clamour, the Saiyid used to listen the Qurʾān recited by his disciples till the *tarāwīh* congregation in the mosque was over. Thereafter, he went to the mosque to offer the prayers led by his cousin, Hāfiz Saiyid Muhammad, who recited two parts of the Qurʾān every day. Then he used to put on *Ihrām*, circumambulate the Kaʿaba and perform the *Saʿee*. He used to make rounds of the Kaʿaba again after dawn prayers.

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd retired to the mosque of Kaʿaba for meditations and prayers in *aʿitakāf*,[5] during the last ten

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1. The place where Prophet Abraham stood while he built the Kaʿaba with the help of his son Ishmael.
2. The sacred well within the precincts of the mosque of Mecca. It is the spring from which Hagar and Ishmael drank in wilderness (Gen. XVI : 4).
3. The ritual, covering at a brisk pace, seven times each way, the distance between two points of Safā and Marwā, the two hillocks near Kaʿaba.
4. Additional prayers of 20 *rakʿats* offered during Ramadhān after night prayers.
5. Seclusion in a mosque for intensive prayers during last ten days of Ramadhān.

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days of the Ramadhān. He returned to his house after the new moon of *ʿId*[1] was sighted.

A large number of people including Mecca's chiefs, nobles and scholars paid a visit to the Saiyid on the occasion of *ʿId*. Those who bound themselves to his spiritual paternity included Sheikh Mustafa, the Imām of the Hanafites, Sheikh Hasan Āfandī, a minister of Egypt, Khwājā Aghā Almās Hindi, Sheikh Sams-ud-dīn Shatā, and a number of others belonging to the gentry of Mecca. Muhaddith Sheikh ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdur Rasūl Hanafī, a reputed scholar venerated for his piety also paid a visit to the Saiyid. A man of saintly character, the Sheikh had earlier refused to accept a camel-load of sovereigns, gifted by the Caliph. Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd presented to him five *Riyāls* which were accepted by him.[2] Mecca had always been the religious centre of Islam, visited by erudite scholars and divines coming from every nook and corner of the Islamic world, but, as the contemporaries of the Saiyid report, never had anybody attracted such large crowds in that city as he did.[3] Besides the people belonging to Mecca, a few Indonisians and Balghārians[4] took oath of fealty on his hands.

Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl, who had, in the meantime returned from Jidda, translated *Sirāt-i-Mustaqīm*[5] into Arabic with the help of Maulānā ʿAbdul Haʾī for Sheikh Hasan Āfandi.

The time for *haj* had arrived by that time[6]. The Saiyid, with his followers, earnestly beseeched God within the

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1. *ʿId-ul-fitr* celebrated immediately after the month of Ramadhān is over.
2. *Waqāiʾ Ahmadī*, pp. 1147-48
3. *Manzooratus-Soʿada*ʾ
4. Inhabitants of Balghār, in Central Asia
5. A manuscript copy of the translation is to be found in the library of late Sahahzada ʿAbdur Rahīm Khān of Tonk.
6. For a detailed description of the *Haj* and the wisdom underlying different rites of the pilgrimage see *Four Pillars of Islam* brought out by the Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, Lucknow.

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enclosure of the sacred mosque, for His mercy and blessings, before setting out for Arafāt. The night was spent in prayers at Minā in his tent pitched besides the Mosque of Khaif. The next day he went to Arafāt. This is the place where the pilgrims stay on the ninth of Zil-Hijja. The midday and afternoon prayers were joined together, the *Khutba* ended, and then the Saiyid returned to his tent to adore the Lord and seek His mercy. In the meantime a few of his disciples, belonging to the gentry of Phulat arrived to renew their oath or *baʿit*. Just after sunset, the whole concourse left for Muzdalifa for a night's stay there, and then onwards they went to Minā after the dawn prayer. There he performed the rite of stoning the *Jamrās* (i. e. pillars which people commonly know as Satan) and engaged himself in prayer and supplication, in crying, entreating and beseeching God. The Saiyid had purchased one hundred goats for the sacrifice. After the sacrifice, he got the hair of his head shaved, removed the *Ihrām* and repaired back to Mecca for circumambulation of Kaʿaba once again. He returned to Minā after performing the *saʿee*[1]

At ʿAqba, in Mīnā, the Saiyid again called upon his followers to renew their oaths for participating in *jihād*. He stayed there for three days and then returned to Mecca on the 31st of August, 1822. The Saiyid stayed at Mecca for five months.[2]

Leaving the sick and the old in the care of Maulānā Muhammad Ismāʿīl at Mecca, the Saiyid took the road to Madīna along with his companions. A question was raised whether the pilgrims should leave their arms at Mecca or not for the predatory bands of bedouns very often ravaged the caravans in those days. The Saiyid was advised to let his followers carry their arms with them, for his mammoth caravan with more than two hundred camels was bound to attract the attention of the bandits. But Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd overruled them saying that he had come for

1. *Manzooratus Soʿada*
2. *Ibid.*

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the holy pilgrimage and not to fight his brethren, and if the brigands did make a raid on his caravan, he would prefer to part with his belongings. All the arms were left at Mecca and the caravan went ahead barehanded on the 22nd of October, 1822.

At the place called Rabegh, the Arab cameleers picked up a quarrel with certain persons belonging to Sahāranpūr. One, Maulvī Wahīd-ud-dīn, received a sword-cut. Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd deputed imām Khān Khairābādī and Muhsin Khān Barelvī to make enquiries about the trouble, but by that time both the sides had started hurling stones on each other. The Saiyid, too, was hit by a stone on his chest, whereas many others were hurt by the missiles ; the Saiyid, however, forbade his followers to retaliate but the bedouns did not listen to him. Ultimately, his followers armed themselves with branches of date trees and the bedouns retreated, only to reassemble again armed with matchlocks. However, the leader of the cameleers interceded on behalf of the pilgrims, persuading them to guide the caravan up to the next stopover.

At Wadi Safra the matter was placed before the head of the cameleers. He admonished them and provided other guides whose behaviour with the pilgrims gave no cause for complaint.

Once again a band of robbers mounted on seventy camels tried to molest the caravan. The cameleers, on this occasion, arrayed themselves for defence. On coming to know that the caravan enjoyed the guarantee of safety given by Viceroy, Ahmad Pasha, the bandits left without causing injury to anybody.

Two days before reaching Madīna, Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was confined to bed with high fever and headache. But, by the time the caravan arrived at Madīna, he recovered from the illness. It is also reported that he saw the Prophet, ʿAlī and Fātima in a dream.

On entering the city of the Prophet, he went straight to the Prophet's mosque, offered the prayers and then paid a visit to his tomb. During the Saiyīd's stay at Madīna a gathering was held to celebrate the birthday anniversary

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of the Prophet. Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was invited to participate in the function, but he refused to attend unless proof was afforded that the practice was founded on any precept or practice of the Prophet.[1]

The Saiyid intended to visit Bait-ul-Muqqaddas[2] and, for that purpose, during his stay at Madīna, he selected forty of his followers to accompany him. However, he gave up the idea on the request of some of his companions who did not want to part company with him.[3]

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd returned to Mecca after a month's stay at Madīna. He spent the month of Ramadhān again at Mecca in prayers, *tawāf*[4] and *saʿee* before he started preparations for the return journey on 24th June 1823. Qāzī Ahmad Ullah of Meerut was deputed by him to engage four ships. He left Mecca, after the last circumambulation of the Kaʿaba on July 10, 1823, and reached Jidda the next day.

The steamship steered away from the port of Jidda a few days after the Saiyid's arrival there, and made its way for Bombay. It came to anchor at Mocha where the Saiyid had to tarry again for a month.[5] However, the steamship made up for the delay by travelling so fast that the letter sent earlier to Bombay intimating the Saiyid's arrival was received 16 days after he had reached the city.[6] The Saiyid stayed in Bombay, in a mosque in Maimanwādā, for 18 days, but he could get little respite owing to the multitudes of people coming to pay their respect or to pledge allegiance to him.

At last, Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd returned to Calcutta after short breaks of the voyage at Alleppey and Malabar. Sheikh Ghulām Husain Khān, whom Saiyid had paid a visit before setting out for the pilgrimage, had since passed away. His

1. *Manzooratus-Soʿada*
2. The Dome of Rock in Jerusalem
3. *Manzooratus-Soʿada*
4. Circumamubulation of the Kaʿaba
5. The period of stay mentioned in *Makhzan* and *Manzooratus-Soʿadā* is 15 days.
6. *Makhzan-i-Ahmadī*, p. 110 and *Manzooratus Saʿada*

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son, ʿAbdulla, however, received the Saiyid and his party with great honour. Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd had to prolong his stay at Calcutta for a month or so, awaiting the arrival of one of the ships named *ʿAṭīatur Raḥmān* carrying a party of his followers. The Saiyid also made a short visit, during his stay at Calcutta, to Kuhna near Murshidābād on the request of Diwān Ghulām Murtaza. The honoured guest and his entourage enjoyed lavish hospitality of the Dīwān, who undertook to make payment of all purchases made by the Saiyid's followers in his home town. Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd tried to dissuade his bounteous host from doing so but the man replied, "Is it not a great honour to have a *hājī* as one's guest? What if I have the good fortune of entertaining so many *hājīs*!"[1] Dīwān Ghulām Murtaza presented a costly matchlock, seven pistols and an arrow to the Saiyid.

From Murshidābād the Saiyid resumed his journey to his home on country boats. The first stoppage was at Monghyr, where he offered the Friday prayer in the city's Jāmī Mosque and purchased some arms and ammunition. On arrival at ʿAzīmabād (Patna), the Saiyid found Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī, Shāh Muhammad Husain and Saiyid Karāmat Ullah awaiting his arrival at a village called Badh. Wilāyat ʿAlī was acquainted with the Saiyid since the days he was receiving education at Lucknow. However, belonging to a family possessing considerable estate and effects, he had returned home to live as a fashionable and rich young man. He entertained Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, as his guest, for ten days. The Saiyid made a short visit, during his stay at ʿAzīmabād, to Phulwāri to pay his respects to Shāh Niʿāmat Ullah (d. 1830) and Maulvī Ahmad ʿAlī, both famous divines and erudite scholars. On the Saiyid's departure from ʿAzīmabād, Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī, Tālib Husain, Shāh Muhammad Husain, Muhammad Hayāt, Saiyid Karāmat Ullah and several other persons left their homes to accompany him. Traversing the waterway through Yūsufpūr, Ghāzipūr, Banāras and Mirzāpūr, the Saiyid's party reached Allāhābād.

1. *Manzooratus-Soʿada*

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Here he was again lavishly entertained by Sheikh Ghulām ʿAlī, who detained the Saiyid for a few days as his guest. From Allāhābād, the Saiyid took the road to Rae Bareli.

The Saiyid reached his home in the last week of April, 1824 after a sojourn of two years and ten months.[1] A number of persons who had accompanied him during pilgrimage or those who had taken up his company in the return journey were lodged as guests of the Saiyid. The number of persons coming from the surrounding districts to pay their respect to Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was equally large. Ali such visitors were gratified with hearty meals. Thus, substantial expenditure had to be incurred on the entertainment of the guests, yet, once, when the accounts of the *Bait-ul-Māl* were checked, there was still a balance of rupees ten thousand.

While Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was at Madīna an unfortunate incident took place which has afforded an opportunity to Hunter to claim that in the holy city Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was publicly degraded and expelled from the town.[2] The fact, however, is that one of the Saiyid's companions, Maulvī ʿAbdul Haq of Neutanī, a zealous preacher against innovations and un-Islamic practices, was apprehended on the charge of being a Wahābi but was released later on. Almost every European historian and orientalist writing after the uprising of 1857 has expressed the view that while performing the pīlgrimage at Mecca, Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd fell in with the teachers of the Wahābī sect and was deeply impressed by the doctrine preached by Muhammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb. The matter had, at one time, assumed unusual importance for the Indian Muslims. After the great uprising of 1857, every religious-minded Muslim was looked upon by the British Government as a Wahābī and implicated in some criminal offence. Nobody took any notice of their helpless condition, and the higher authorities would not deign even to acknowledge their existence.[3] It would,

1. *Manzooratus-Soʿada*
2. *Indian Musalmans*, p. 60-61
3. *Ibid.*, p. 175

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therefore, be not out of place to examine, briefly, whether Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd had embraced Wahābī doctrines or it was merely a device to wreak vengeance upon the Muslims of India.

Sheikh Muhammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb[1] denounced innovations and accretions to which Muslims of his day had yielded a blind allegiance, and preached a return to Islam's former purity. The aim of his movement was the reform of abuses, abolition of superstitious practices and a return to the original faith which, in his view, was sufficient to regenerate the Muslim society and make it mighty. But, this has been the gist of every revivalist movement in Islam for it does not admit of any 'Reformation' in the sense it is understood by the West. Lord Cromer was, after all, not incorrect in his observation when he said : "Islam cannot be reformed ; that is to say, reformed Islam is Islam no longer ; it is something else."[2] Conversely speaking 'Reformation' is built-in within Islam, for, the social, moral, economic and spiritual betterment of the Muslim community can be fully achieved by reverting back to the prestine purity of Islamic teachings.

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1. Sheikh Muhammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb was born in 1703 (the year mentioned by Gibbs, Hughes, Lady Ann Blunt and other orientalists is not correct) at Urainah in Najad. He studied at Mecca, Basrah and Baghdād. At Madina he studied under Sheikh ʿAbdullah ibn Ibrāhim and Sheikh Muhammad Hayāt Sindhī. His preachings against the laxities and superstitions of his age were met with acceptance among the people but excited the opposition of the local chiefs. He found an ally in the Chief of Deriah, Muhammad ibn Saʿūd, who accepted his teachings and became a champion of his cause. Sheikh Muhammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb died in 1792 while his ardent follower was succeeded by ʿAbdul ʿAzīz. But the greatest military champion of the reformed doctrine was Saʿūd, the eldest son of ʿAbdul ʿAzīz, and it was under his leadership that the forces set into activity by the revivalist movement of Sheikh Muhammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb emerged out of Najad, capturing the entire peninsula up to the gates of Baghdād. Saʿūd invaded Syria and Damascus in the south and Allepo in the north. In 1811, Muhammad ʿAlī, the Viceroy of Egypt, sent an army under his son, Ibrahīm Pāshā, who finally turned out the Wahābīs from the whole of Arabia by 1818.
2. Cromer : *Modern Egypt*, Vol. II, p. 229

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Every fundamentalist-reformist movement in Islam must, of necessity, be a call to go back to the 'pure faith' as laid down by the precepts and practices of the Prophet himself. Religion was an absolute eternal reality which did not stand in need of revision or reformation: what one needed was only, to find out appropriate solutions to the problems, thrown up by the march of time in accordance with the spirit and purpose of its teachnings. And, this was the point at which the movements of Sheikh Muhammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb, Shāh Walīullah and Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd converged. Still, the two reformist movements of Arabia and India differed on some important issues which cannot be overlooked by any historian. While the former movement totally rejected mysticism, denouncing it as a later accretion, the Indian revivalist movement represented by Shāh Walīullah and Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was nourished by a rich tradition of mysticism. The followers of Sheikh Muhammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb were all Hanbalites, while those of the Indian reformers belonged to the Hanafite school or accepted the principle of primacy of the *hadith*[1] over the rulings of all the four juristic schools of Islam.

Claiming to be a follower of Ibn Taimiyah, Sheikh Muhammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb rejected the laxity and corruption of Arabian society, but his *Kitāb-ut-Tauhīd* differs from the Saiyid's *Sirāt-i-Mustaqīm* inasmuch as the latter condemned a different set of polytheistic customs, habits and practices prevalent among Indian Muslims. Another cardinal point of the Saiyid's teachings is *jihād* while *Kitāb-ut-Tauhīd* hardly touches upon the point for the simple reason that Arabia was then not threatened by alien domination like the Saiyid's India. It is this emphasis on *jihād* that really distinguished the Saiyid from Muhammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb—or other *sufīs* of his time. These facts were important enough but it is strange that they could not be appreciated by the European orientalists and historians some of whom have now begun to see the difference between the two

1. Traditions or the precepts and practices of the holy Prophet

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reformist movements.[1]

Henry T. Prinsep, writing in May, 1834, only a few years after the martyrdom of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, on the basis of reports compiled around 1830, by the two British agents in the Punjab, Captain Wade and Captain Murray, described the Saiyid's reformative endeavour and pilgrimage,[2] but he did not make any reference to his Wahābī leanings[3] although the exploits of Sa'ūd were fairly well-known by that time. Another contemporary historian, Cunningham, whose 'History of the Sikhs' first appeared in 1849, is also silent about the Indian followers of Sheikh Muhammad ibn 'Abdul Wahhāb.[4] In fact, the myth of Indian Wahābis was created around 1860s, when most of the British writers believed that the Mutiny was the result of Muslim conspiracy. It was then widely assumed in Britain that the British rule in India had been saved mainly because of anti-Muslim feeling of the Hindus.[5] These impressions were strengthened by such Indian writers as Bankim Chandra Chatterji (1838-1904) whose *Anand Math* displayed a morbid dislike of the Muslims.[6] The anti-Muslim feeling thus created was further aggravated by Hunter's 'Indian Musalmans' which presented Wahābism as synonymous with rebellion against the British Government. Hunter says that the Wahābis start with the declaration that India had become *dar-ul-harb*, that is, a country of the Enemy, and from that they deduce the obligation of holy war against the rulers.[7] However, Hunter's statements contain numerous contradictions which go to show that Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd and the *mujāhidīn*,[8]

1. *Islam in Modern History*, pp. 51-54 ; *The Muslims of British India*. p. 53.
2. Henry T. Prinsep ; *Origin of Sikh Power in the Punjab*, pp. 145-146
3. *Ibid*.
4. *Cunningham*, pp. 186-90
5. James Bryce ; *Modern Democracies*, Vol. I, p. 173
6. Bashir Ahmad Dar ; *Religious Thought of Saiyid Ahmad Khān*, p. 75
7. *Indian Musalmans*, p. 131
8. *Mujāhid* (pl. *Mujāhidīn*) is one who engages in *jihād*, a religiously obligatory effort to defend Islam.

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notwithstanding their hostility to the English, were not in any way connected with the Wahābi movement of Arabia. Hunter's contention that until the Saiyid's pilgrimage to Mecca the latter had not reduced his doctrine to any formulated system[1] cannot be reconciled with his statement that during the Saiyid's tours in 1820-22, when he traversed the British Indian Provinces with his retinue of devoted disciples, he had begun converting the population by thousands to his doctrine and establishing a regular system of Ecclesiastical Taxation, Civil Government and Apostolic succession.[2] Hunter adds that one of the disciples of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd had recorded his sayings in a book (*Sirāt-i-Mustaqīm*), which was regarded as the 'Koran of the Sect'.[3] Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, however, reached Mecca on 22nd May, 1822 while the book referred to by Hunter had been written long before he went for the pilgrimage. There can, thus, be little doubt that not only the postulates of the Saiyid's reformatory thought but also his theological-political movement had taken shape much earlier than he got the opportunity of coming into contact, if he ever did, with the Wahābi movement in Arabia.

A question arises here as to why Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was nick-named as Wahābi by his English detractors. For a proper analysis of the reasons for it we shall have to return to the successful compaigns of Saʿūd who had suddenly thrown a challenge to the degradation of the Muslim world. The movement had posed a threat to the Turkish Empire, yet, it would be difficult to exaggerate the alarm felt by the British, who were, at the time, busy in consolidating their empire in India. The imperialist West was not slow to realise that 'Islam is no longer asleep, and were another and wiser Abd el-Wahhāb to appear, not as a heretic, but in the body of orthodox sect, he might play the part of Loyola or Barromeo with success'—as Wilfred Blunt observed in his

1. *Indian Musalmans*, p. 53
2. *Ibid.*, p. 42
3. *Ibid.*, p. 53

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'Future of Islam.'[1] It was not merely diplomatic finesse that the Indian Government deputed a special messenger to congratulate Ibrāhīm Pāshā on his victory over the Wahābīs.[2] A resurgent Arabia was, after all, a greater threat to the British supremacy in the East than the Sick Man of Europe, for the Wahābīs had shown the courage to sustain a war with the British in the Persian Gulf after overrunning Syria.[3] A campaign of vilification and misrepresentation of the teachings of Sheikh Muhammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb was started by Ahmad ibn ʿAlī of Basra (d. 1747), Muhammad ibn ʿAbdur Rahmān (d. 1756), ʿAbdullah ibn ʿIsā (d. 1761). Ibn Fīroz (d. 1801) and many others[4] on the instigation of the Turkish government. In India a similar campaign was started, later on, at the instance of British government, by Maulvī Fazal Rasūl (d. 1880) of Badaūn.[5] The orientalists like Hughes, Blunt, Margoliouth, Palgrave and Zwemer soon picked up the concocted reports or invented stories like the desecration of the holy Prophet's tomb and demolition of the minarets of the sacred mosque at Madīna[6] by the Wahābīs. These efforts were not unsuccessful, for, a great majority of Muslims in India, as elsewhere, were made to believe that Wahābism was nothing but heresy and irreligiousness. The misunderstandings thus created through vilification of Wahābi movement by the enlightened orientalists presents, indeed, a strange commentary on the movement which had played a leading role in clearing away the accumulated abuses of

1. *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 662
2. Qeyamuddin Ahmad ; *Wahābī Movement in India*, pp. 20-21
3. *Indian Musalmans*, p. 59 ; A collection of Treaties. Engagements and Sanads relating to India and neighbouring countries, Records of Bengal Government, Vol. XLII, p. 183
4. Masʿūd ʿĀlam Nadwī ; *Mohammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb, Ek Mazlūm aur Badnām Musleh*, pp, 164-68.
5. Masʿūd ʿĀlam Nadwī ; *Hindustān kī Pahlī Islāmī Tahrīk*, p. 20
6. For details see Thomas Patrick Hughes : *Dictionary of Islam*, pp. 660-63 : W. S. Blunt : *Future of Islam* (1882), p. 45 ; Zwemer ; *Arabia, the Cradle of Islam* (1900), pp. 192-93 ; D. S. Margoliouth : *Encyclopaedia of Islam, art.* Wahhābism and *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, art.* Wahhābīs : W. Gifford Palgrave ; *Narrative of a year's journey through Central and Eastern Arabia*, pp. 363-80.

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centuries and restoring the bases for reconstruction of Muslim thought.

Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khān had, in his 'Review on Hunter's Indian Musalmans' asserted, not unjustifiably, that during the initial period, that is, till the martyrdom of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, British authorities were well informed of the activities of *mujāhidīn* and thousands of men and large stores of munitions of war were collected in India for the *jihād* against the Sikhs but the British government treated these activities with indulgence or rather abetted it.[1] In this connection he has cited an incident wherein a Hindu Banker of Delhi, entrusted with money for the Wahābī cause on the frontier, embezzled the same, and a suit was brought against him before William Fraser, then Commissioner of Delhi. The suit was decided in favour of the plaintiff, Maulvī Is'hāq, and the money paid by the defendant was forwarded to the Frontier. The case afterwards came up in appeal to the Sadder Court at Allāhābād, but the decision of the lower court was upheld.[2] One more case that can be cited to support Sir Saiyid is Charles Metcalfe's despatch dated June 22, 1827, reporting the repercussions of the *jihād* to the Governor-General. "Saiyid Ahmad, Maulvī Ismā'īl, and their colleagues," wrote Metcalfe, "have established a very extensive, if not universal, influence over the minds of our Mohammedan subjects. During rhe period of their recent attack on Ranjīt Singh's territories, the most fervent anxiety for their success pervaded the Muhammedan population of Delhi. Numbers quitted their homes and marched to join them, including some who resigned their employment in the Company's service, both military and the Civil branches, for that purpose. It is said that the King of Delhi encourages this spirit."[3] Proceedings of *Secret Consultations* of the then British Government also show that the Governor-General had been early appraised of the campaign of Saiyid

1. Syed Ahmad's *Review on Hunter's Indian Musalmans*, p. 21
2. *Ibid.*, p. 21-22
3. Ganda Singh : *Private Correspondence relating to Anglo-Sikh wars*

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Ahmad Shahīd by the political agents of the East India Company in Sikh territory, but the British were unable to correctly gauge the true intentions of his movement in eighteen-forties.[1] We can safely conclude from these reports that the British government had turned a blind eye to the activities of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd and his followers for two reasons. First, the British government believed or was led to believe by the judicious propaganda of the *mujāhidīn* that the *jihād* was directed against the Sikhs,[2] as it really was in the initial stages, and secondly, the British government itself wanted the destruction of their ally, the Sikhs, at the hand of the *mujāhidīn*. But, it is obvious that by that time Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd and his missionary activities were not considered to be connected in any way with the Wahābī movement of Arabia. Had it been so the British gavernment, which had had a foretaste of Wahābīs in the Persian Gulf[3] would have never allowed the Saiyid to carry on his activities unhampered in its dominions. Several other competent writers have reached the conclusion that historically there is little ground to establish a connection between the Wahābī and the *mujāhidīn* movements.[4]

The attitude of the British government began to stiffen soon after the annexation of the Punjab in 1849, when its delusion about the real intentions of the *mujāhidīn* began to peter out. The first direct clash between the *mujāhidīn* of Sitana and British forces occurred in 1852 after the final British annexation of the Punjab. It is, thus, not improbable that the *mujāhidīn*, too, might have considered it prudent, at least in the initial stages, to keep their enemies, the British, in dark in order to maintain continued supply of men and material from India to the Frontier, but after the

1. Proc. no. 29 of 14 August, 1839, *India Secret Consultations*, India Office Library, Vol. 23, fol. 7-28, August 1839.
2. Cunningham, p. 191
3. *The Indian Musalmans*, p. 59
4. Ishtiaq Husain Qureshī; *The Muslim Community of Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent*, p. 206; Qeyamuddin Ahmad; The Wahābī Movement in India, pp. 18-22.

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annexation of the Punjab, when they directly came in conflict with the British, it would have become difficult to conceal their intentions any longer. Cunningham, too, holds the view that the preaching of *jihād* in the initial stages was taken as against the Sikhs alone, but it was a mistake which became clear later on.[1] The activities of the *mujāhidīn* then began to be keenly watched by the British government and finally total suppression of the movement became its main concern. A witch-hunt of the *mujāhidīn* was started all over India. Ambala State Trial of 1864 was followed by Patna Trial of 1865. Malda Trial was held in September 1870, the Rajmahal Trial in October of the same year and then started the Great Trial of 1871. Yet, neither the persecutions at home nor successive military expeditions to the frontier could crush this greatest revivalist movement known to Indian History which had kept alive the spirit of revolt against the British Rule for about fifty years.[2] In fact, its popularity went on increasing day by day. One, Issac Allen, writing in 1874 has described the immense popularity enjoyed by the revivalist movement in East Bengal.

> These notions, introduced into East Bengal by Shari'atullah, the father of notorious Dadū Miah, on his return from Arabia in 1808, and afterwards preached everywhere by the emissaries of Saiyid Ahmad who was set up as the long expected Medhi, spread with rapidity in East Bengal, and the sect now numbers as its adherents, so they boast, the majority of the Muhammadan population and the process is still going on; indeed, a few months ago, we came into personal contact with a little episode thereof. 'Abdul Gafūr, a Wahābī Maulvī, was joined by nearly all the inhabitants of a large Muhammadan village near Dacca, only 15 families holding back from the movement.[3]

This was the time when a mere suspicion of being a Wahābī was enough to implicate anybody in some treason or conspiracy case. The British, however, were not slow to realise that any attempt to stamp out the reformist movement by persecution alone was bound to fan the zeal of

1. *Cunningham*, p. 191
2. *Indian Musalmans*, pp. 61-62
3. Art. *Revival of Islam*, *Calcutta Review*. Vol. LVII (1874), No. CXV, p. 47.

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Muslim populace to flame and array the whole community on their side. The ruling circles held the view that all attempts by the Muslims to return to the first principles of their faith involved a revolt against the ruling power.[1] It was therefore necessary to segregate these fundamentalist-reformers from the Muslim masses[2]. And, nothing could suit the purpose better than to defame the Saiyid as a prophet preaching a new religion[3] and his followers as Wahābīs who had, by that time, been sufficiently besmirched by the orientalists[4] and hired clerics, and were looked down upon by the illiterate Muslim masses of India as sacrilegious barbarians. A counter propaganda againtst the followers of the Saiyid was started and *fatāwā* against the *jihād* were obtained and circulated,[5] some of which have been quoted by Hunter.[6]

Nawāb ʿAbdul Latīf (1828–1893) of Calcutta founded the Muhammaden Literary and Scientific Society in 1863 which energetically tried to impress upon the Muslims that the holy war against the British was not a religious duty of the Muslims. Maulvī Karāmat ʿAlī Kajgavī of Jaunpūr went on a lecture tour of the whole of Bengal to emphasise that since the British allowed full religious freedom they ought to be treated as defenders of Islam. Although a Shiʿā, his arguments for acceptance of the British regime were drawn from the armoury of such Hanafite legal digests as the *Fatāwā-i-Alamgīrī*, the *Hidāya* and the *Durr-al-Mukhtār*.[7]

Maulvī Chirāg ʿAlī was another scholar of note who endeavoured to prove in *'A Critical Exposition of the Popular*

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1. *Indian Musalmans*, p. 76
2. *Ibid.*, p. 147 ; P. Hardy ; *The Muslims in British India*, p. 60
3. *Indian Musalmans*, pp. 51-54
4. *See* Carsten Nisbuhr's *Description de la Arabia*
5. Dr. Rajendra Prasad; *India Divided*, p. 94. Also *see Calcutta Review*, No. c, ci, cii and article 'Wahabeeism' by Mr. Reilly in the *Times*, London, dated Febrbary 27 and March 1, 1871
6. *Indian Musalmans*, p. 147
7. *Religious Thought of Saiyid Ahmad Khān*, pp. 72-73 ; *Lecture* by *Moulvie Karāmat Alī*, (Calcutta, 1871) pp. 2-5

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*Jihād*' that the injunctions of the Qur'ān in regard to *jihād* were not binding on Muslims for all times to come since they were meant only for the Prophet, whose wars were primarily defensive.[1] It, however, appears that these jurisprudential arguments did not cut much ice either with the Muslims or the British Government for the official circles, represented by persons like Hunter and Baillie, continued to be suspicious about the sincerity of declarations trying to prove that India was still a *dār-ul-aman*.[2]

Maulvī Nazīr Ahmad of Delhi, the well-known Urdu litterateur summed up all the arguments in his *Al-Huqūq-wal Farāi'z*[3] to show that the British dominion in India was *dār-ul-aman* or a land of peace and not *dār-ul-harb*[4] as held by Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd. We have earlier noticed Maulvī Fadhal Rasūl of Badaūn who took a leading part in this campaign of infamy. Another such ecclesiastic was Maulvī Muhammad Husain of Batālā[5] besides many others who, out of fear or avarice, had fallen in the trap laid by the British. The drive to disgrace the Saiyid's movement was taken to such greater lengths that a separate sect sprang up in the Indian Islam whose only business has been to confute and cast reproach upon everything even remotely connected with Wahābism[6]. It was also not without design that another schism in Islam was set up in India, following the suppression of the *jihād* movement, whose avowed objective was abrogation of *jihād* and preaching of unqualified loyalty to the British. Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad of Qadiān who assumed the role of Promised Messiah in 1891.[7] and then promoted himself, in 1900, to the office of prophethood,[8] took pride in being a defender and supporter of the British. He wrote scores of books in Arabic,

1. *A Critical Exposition of the Popular Jihād*, pp. 159-60
2. *The Muslims in British India*, pp. 110-111
3. Published in three volumes by Muhammad 'Abdul Ghaffār, Dehli (1324/1906).
4. *The Indian Muslims*, p. 399
5. *Hindusiān Ki Pahlī Islamī Tahrīk*, pp. 27-28
6. *Wahābī Movement in India*, pp. 363-64
7. Ghulam Ahmad Qadiāni ; *Fath-i-Islām*, pp. 6-7
8. Mirza Bashīr-ud-din Mahmood ; *Haqīqat-al-Nabūwat*, Vol. I, p. 124

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Persian and Urdu to impress upon the Muslims that *jihād* against the benevolent British government was in no way justified and that wholehearted support to the government was a religious duty of the Muslims.[1] He took great pains to get these books published and distributed, at his own cost, as he claimed, in all the Muslim countries from India to Turkey.[2]

The Wahābī movement of Arabia, as preached by Muhammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb, never, in fact, reached the Indian soil and it was only owing to peculiar circumstances, or, rather the efforts of the then ruling power that the reformatory endeavour of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd came to be known as Indian Wahābism.

1. Mir Qasim ʿAli Qadiāni ; *Tabligh-i-Risālat*, Vol. VII, p. 19 ; Ghulām Ahmad Qadiāni ; *Khutbāt-i-Ilhāmiyah* (Appendix) ; Ghulām Ahmad Qadiāni ; *Tiryāq-ul-Qulūb*, p. 335 ; Ghulām Ahmad Qadiāni ; *Nūrul Haq*, p. 34
2. Mir Qasim ʿAli Qadiāni : *Tabligh-i-Risālat*, Vol. VI, p. 65

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## Seven

# Forethoughts of Jihad

SAIYID Ahmad Shahīd remained at his home in Rae Barelī, on return from the *haj*, for one year and 10 months from May, 1824 to January 17, 1826. During this period he got two mosques constructed, one in the nearby village of Lohānīpūr, and the other in the locality called Shaikhūn in the city. His residential accommodation had also fallen into disrepair during his absence. It was repaired by him with the help of his relatives and disciples. Other occupations, in which we find him engaged during this period, were spending long hours in devotional prayers and meditations and guiding his disciples on the path of spirituality not by devotions and vigils alone, but by inculcating the qualities of selflessness, social service, travail and perseverance. These were the days when all those who laid a claim to nobility by virtue of birth or ownership of landed property deemed it below their dignity to engage in manual labour. But the Saiyid taught them, through personal example, how submission, earnestness and discipline were necessary to render one worthy of advancement in spirituality. His followers were ever willing to exert themselves, like disciplined soldiers, to undertake every strenuous work cheerfully with a missionary zeal. The well-groomed and smart young man, Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī from Azīmābad (Patna) now studied the science of Traditions under Shāh Muhammad

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Ismāʿīl and acted as his deputy. No longer a dapper as once he was in his home town, he now brought fuel-wood on his head from the forest, cooked food for others, worked with other disciples of the Saiyid as a labourer and spent his time off from these chores in the company of the Saiyid in orisons and litanies. Maulvī Fateh ʿAlī, his father, owned considerable landed property. Once he deputed the personal servant of Wilāyat ʿAlī to deliver some clothes and money to his son in Rae Barelī. When the servant arrived, he could not first recognise his master among the persons digging earth by the river side. Taken aback and filled with compassion at the pitiable condition of his master, he made over the gifts he had brought for him, but, Wilāyat ʿAli, unmindful of his tender entreaties refused to have anything to do with the clothes and money made over to him. Instead, he placed everything before his spiritual mentor and quietly resumed his work.[1]

The Saiyid was thus calmly engaged in imparting training to his followers who also occasionally took to martial sports like shooting and swordsmanship. But, as the subsequent events point out, the Saiyid was contemplating on his future course and examining the pros and cons of launching the *jihād*, for which he had been preparing his disciples so long. He had undertaken long tours, administered oaths to thousands of persons for fighting in the way of God, and appointed deputies to diffuse his message among the people in every nook and corner of the country he had visited. The Saiyid was convinced that any effort to reform the people without having the power to enforce and consolidate those reforms was a flagrant error. If the reform meant binding the spirit of man to the Absolute Being, it was necessary to pluck the saved from the kingdom of passions and to creat conditions in which he could not easily sever that link again. From time to time he had been urging upon his followers to fight in the way of God and telling them that like other religious observances enjoined by God, *jihād* was also a duty incumbent on them

1. A. Rahīm; *Tazkirah-i-Sādiqa*, p. 149

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for partaking the merits and felicities of the spirit as well as for their moral and intellectual advancement.

This was the time when the British were quietly stepping into the shoes or the Great Moghuls. The Company still maintained the facade of Akbar II (1806-37) being the Emperor of Hindustān, but as one of their pensionaries, he had not unoften to put up with the contemptuous behaviour of the Company's servants. For the Indians, particularly Muslims, ascendency of the British meant not merely the liquidation of an empire but also the destruction of all those social and political institutions which sustained their peculiar way of life. Nothing in the culture of their new rulers they found refined and graceful. To them the "eaters of pork and drinkers of wine, who paraded their women in the bare-shouldered evening fashions of the early Victorian age, builders of graceless bungalows, unskilled in the *ghazal*, always counting their—or worse, other people's—money and contemptuous of what they did not understand,"[1] seemed to be faithless, arrogant, lax and repulsive. But there was nothing that could be done: the whole of India appeared to be in a quandary at the time. Almost all the Indian princes had entrusted the defence of their principalities to the British under subsidiary alliances, while the demobilised troops of these Indian states, mostly Pathāns, who considered every other trade or calling as below their dignity, hovered all over the country as mercenary soldiers.[2] The Indians, Muslims as much as the Hindus, were divided by ethnic, caste, class and regional affiliations; ready to shed their blood for upholding the honour of their ruling chiefs, but lacking the patriotic zeal. The former, however, still possessed a sense of corporate unity based on religion. They were also fortunate to have a leadership drawn from the prosperous landed aristocracy but the system of land tenure introduced by the British seemed to be liquidating this class as well by depriving them of their estates which

1. *Muslims in British India*, p. 61
2. G. Palgrave ; *Narratives*, Vol. II, pp. 120-139

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in many cases were held for ages. Every man, from the princes ruling over Indian States to the humble man on the street realised that the British were their common foes, yet there was none to utilise this seething discontent for uniting the people against the new ruler detested by all. Nevertheless, the state of flux through which India was passing during the first half of the nineteenth century afforded an opportunity, perhaps the last one, to make a final bid for emancipation of the country. But, the mutual strife and jealousies of the ruling chiefs, to whom nothing appeared to be more important than the furtherance of their own petty, personal ends, provided a fertile soil for the growth of British power.

The Saiyid, it seems, had already drawn up his plan of action. His religion meant to him freedom and self-respect: to be free to shape his destiny and to guide the conduct of his co-religionists in accordance with the laws of God without any interference by an alien power. Failed by Amīr Khān, he had lost all hopes of the ruling chiefs rising to the occasion; and now he himself wanted to chalk out a path to check the ascendancy of the British by rooting out corruption and decadence in the Muslim society and by fighting against every evil—social and economic, political and moral—through an all-out *jihād* against all dangers, internal and external. He also knew that his call for *jihād* was not against the sister communities living in India inasmuch as the cry for *dharam yudh* against the British never alienated the sympathies of their Muslim brethren. Hindus and Muslims had always fought shoulder to shoulder under the banners of the Moghuls and Marāthās, and the Hindus could still be expected to join hands with the Muslims shedding their blood for a nobler cause.

Now, with a band of followers, purified morally and elated spiritually, ready to follow him in war, and the hope of other contingents joining him in succession under appointed leaders, there was nothing to deter him from translating into action his long cherished aim. Long before he proceeded to Mecca for pilgrimage, he had emphasised

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the necessity of waging war in the way of God. Explaining the wisdom underlying the *jihād* he had told his disciples in one of his discourses :

Just as rain does a world of good to mankind, beasts and plants, the entire humanity partakes in the advantages of *jihād*. The benefits of *jihād* are two-fold ; general, of which all human beings, the believers and the non-believers, the irreligious and the apostates, the profane and the hypocrites, even the jinn, animals and vegetable share alike ; special, of which only certain classes are benefited, each in different degrees. These advantages are of one kind for some, and of another category for the other. As for the general advantages, it may be said that the justice of the rulers, honesty of the officials, liberality of the rich and good faith of the people attract blessings of the Heaven—viz. copious showers at the seasonable times, abundant crops and fruits, flourishing trade and commerce, good times free of calamities, increasing prosperity of the masses, many more artisans and learned men—that these are the blessings conferred with righteous rulers, who, with the exalted power they possess, promulgate and enforce the laws of God . . . . . Compare the present state of this country in the year 1233 Hijrah (AD 1818) when the greater portion of it has become *dār-ul-harb*,[1] a land of the enemy—with the conditions prevailing some two or three hundred years back, and contrast the blessings of Heaven then vouchsafed, and the number of learned men now with those of that period. What were then the blessings of God : how many saints and pious souls were there to be found here ? I need not perhaps enumerate the advantages partaken by the righteous kings and the warriors who fight for the sake of God.[2]

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd must have been aware of the famous religious injunction issued by his mentor, Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz.

In this city (Delhi) Islamic Law does not prevail at all ; and the law of the Christian overlords is current without check or hindrance in the sense that in administrative and civil cases, in the prescription of punishments, the non-Muslims are in complete authority. It may be that they do not interfere with such Muslim rites as Friday or ʿ*Id* prayers, or call to prayers or ritual killing of eatable animals. But their chief

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1. *Dār-ul-harb* i, e. a country where warfare becomes incumbent on Muslims should satisfy three conditions according to Imām Abū Hanīfa viz. the edicts of Islam are suppressed, Muslims are made powerless to struggle for their just rights and no protection remains for either a Muslim or a *Zimmī* (a non-Muslim afforded protection by a Muslim power).
2. *Sirāt-i-Mustaqīm*, pp. 317-19

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principle is profit and sovereign control . . . . From this city to Calcutta Christian rule prevails."[1]

Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz had declared British India as *dār-ul-harb*. Thus, a *jihād* to liberate the country from the foreign yoke was a religious duty for the Saiyid, But, he would have also been receiving the harrowing reports pouring in from across the Sutlej where Muslims neither enjoyed the security of life and property nor were free to act on their religious observances. Not unoften indignities worse than death, to which there was no redress or appeal were heaped upon the unfortunate victims. And, there was also the writ of God urging him not to postpone his decision any longer.

> "How should ye not fight for the cause of Allah and of the feeble among men and of the women and the children who are crying: Our Lord! Bring us forth from this town of which the people are oppressors! Oh, give us from Thy presence some protecting friend! Oh, give us from Thy presence some defender!"[2]

To begin hostilities first against the British or the Sikhs would have, however, been the question agitating the mind of the Saiyid ever since he had returned from the *haj* pilgrimage. A pause in the narration of the decision taken by him, for relating the political situation of the country would be useful for a right understanding of the course of events that followed. The digression is also called for by the conflicting views put forward subsequently by certain writers about the intentions and objectives of the *jihād* launched by the Saiyid.

Clive had laid the territorial foundations of the Company's rule in India but Hastings and Wellesley were the real architects of British Empire. Lord Wellesley, Governor-General from 1798 to 1805, envisaged himself in the glorious role of a proconsul reminiscent of the ancient Roman Empire. From the very beginning of his governor-generalship

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1. *Fatāwā-i-ʿAzīziya*, pp. 16-17; *Indian Musalmāns*, p. 140
2. Q. IV : 75

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he laid down, as his guiding principle, that the British must be one paramount power in India, and that Indian princely states could only retain their personal insignia of sovereignty by surrendering their political independence.[1] The history of India since his time has been the gradual development of this policy. He won a diplomatic success by winning over Nizām, against the French, to sign a treaty in 1798 ; next he turned his whole weight of resources against Tipū Sultān who died fighting bravely in 1799 ; thereafter he was successful in bringing several Marāthā states within the net of his subsidiary alliance. Lord Hastings (1813-23), like Wellesley, was a grandiose man, who conducted himself with splendour, overawed the Indian princes, and persecuted wars of expansion on a grand scale. He successfully conducted wars against several Marāthā States, Nepal, Amīr Khān and the Pindārīs. Hastings can, in fact, be said to have created a British administration, organised the Indian civil service, reformed the administration of revenue collection and created the judicial and police organisations. By his time, the East India Company had become powerful enough to show its imperiousness in dealing with the Indian rulers. Hastings upheld from the puppet Emperor the tribute of Rs. 26 lakhs which had been paid to him since 1765 in return for the grant of Bengal's revenue farming right to the Company. Thereafter the British government began interfering in such trivial matters as conferring of titles by the Emperor.[2]

By the time Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd started the *jihād*, Lord Amherst (1823-28) had taken over as Governor-General of India. He declared war against Burma in 1824 and compelled the King of Ava, after two years, to sign the treaty of Yandabo abandoning all claims to Assam. Prior to that the mutiny of Indian sepoys in Bengal was crushed with a ruthless hand, when the corpses of the mutineers hanged in the parade ground were allowed to be bleached

1. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. V, p. 570
2. S. R. Bakshi ; *British Diplomacy and Administration in India*, pp. 138-39.

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and rot in order to strike terror into Indians. The British reigning supreme from Cape Comorin to the banks of Sutlej, lost no opportunity to teach the subject population how to obey as well to venerate its alien rulers.

Any insurrectionary movement within British India was thus out of question for it could have been easily put down by effective force and all supplies of men and material cut off in no time. There were two major Muslim States, Nizām and Oudh, but these were subjected even to a greater degree of British surveillance than the ordinary citizens. The impotence of these potentates is well illustrated by two incidents cited here. The Nizām wished to appoint Munīr-ul-Mulk as his Chief Minister after the demise of Mīr ʿĀlam in December, 1808. He was allowed to do so by Captain Sydenham, Resident in Hyderabad, only after the Nizām consented to let Rājā Chandūlāl, accused of being a British stooge, continue as *Peshkār*. The arrangement did not function smoothly as the two did not see eye to eye with each other on important matters. The British Government took a strong attitude in the matter and wrote to the Resident that the very foundation of subsidiary alliance with the Nizām would be exposed to hazards if Chandūlāl was removed from office.[1] The Nawāb of Oudh had similarly been reduced to a subordinate position by the Treaty of 1801 which imposed upon him a clause that "he would establish in his reserved dominions such a system of administration, to be carried into effect by his own officers, as would be conducive to the prosperity of his subjects, and calculated to secure the lives and property of his inhabitants, and that His Excellency would advise with and act in conformity to the counsel of the officers of the Honourable Company." Taking advantage of this clause Lord Minto warned Nawāb Saʿādat ʿAlī Khān, in 1810, of the serious consequences of his refusal to accept the British advice in regard to arrangements of revenue administration

1. *British Diplomacy and Administration in India*, pp. 140-41

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in Sultānpūr and Pratāpgarh districts.[1]

Beyond the Indus lay the Punjab and Sind within the confines of India. The latter was ruled by the family of Mīr Fateh ʿAlī Khān who, in 1783, had established himself as the ruler of Sind and obtained a *firmān* from Shāh Zaman for its government. Fateh ʿAlī's nephew, Mīr Sohrāb Khān, later on settled with his adherents at Rohrī; his son Mīr Thāro Khān, removed himself to Shāhbandar; and each of them occupied the adjacent country as an independent ruler, throwing off all allegiance to the head of the house at Hyderābād. The ruling family thus splitting itself into three branches—the Hyderābād or Shāhdādpūr family, ruling in Central Sind; the Mīrpūr house or the descendants of Mīr Thāro, ruling in Mīrpūr; and Sohrabānī line, derived from Mīr Sohrāb, ruling in Khairpūr—had rendered themselves as weak princes between the two rising powers of the British, in the east, and the Sikhs, in the north. In 1809 an arrangement was effected between the Mīrs of Sind and the Company mainly for the purpose of excluding French from settling in the Sind. By another treaty, signed in 1820, the Mīrs were forbidden to allow any European or American settlement in their territories and also to check raids in the British or allied territories.[2] A military expedition was sent by the Company in 1825 in retaliation to a raid by the Khosās, a Baluch tribe, into the territory of Kutch. In fact, Sind and Shikārpūr had become the fixed objective of the Sikh expansion southwards since 1820. Shortly afterwards Ranjīt Singh advanced claim to certain parts of Sind denouncing the Amīrs as usurpers. In 1823, he demanded tribute from the Tālpūr Amīrs. In 1824, he effected the complete subjugation of the Bhāwalpūr Daūdpotras, and extended his sway as far down the Indus at Tatta Bhakkar. In 1825, he made even an abortive attempt to occupy it by force. During the late twenties, emissaries of the Sind Amīrs constantly kept arriving to appease Ranjīt Singh,

1. *British Diplomacy and Administration in India*, pp. 141-43
2. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. V, p. 523

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who was getting impatient to subjugate the whole of Sind.[1] The Amīrs of Sind, undoubtedly, enjoyed a greater freedom than other Indian princes south of Sutlej, but they had neither the will nor the power to displease either the British or the Sikhs, nor could they allow any activity against them within their territories without jeopardising their own safety.

The speech delivered by the Saiyid at Panjtār before a large gathering of *sardārs*[2] and religious leaders of the frontier reveals something of the then political situation which had left hardly any choice to the Saiyid except to choose the frontier as the centre for starting hostilities against the Sikhs. The speech also throws light on his ultimate objective in taking that decision.

I have been thinking of a place of peace in India where I should take the Muslims and organise *jihād*. Although Hindustān is a sprawling country with an expanse of hundreds of miles, I could not find a suitable place to which I could migrate. Many friends advised me to start the hostilities within India and promised to provide me with men, money and the munitions of war required for the *jihād*, but I did not agree to their suggestion. I wanted to rise in arms strictly in accordance with the precepts and practice of the holy Prophet, for, I have never wished to let loose a rebellion. Some of your brothers, who happened to be there, told me that their country was the most suitable place for the purpose. They also told me that if I were to migrate to their country, hundreds of thousands of Muslims would join me, particularly, because Ranjit Singh was perpetrating great excesses in their land, putting the local population to severe torture and humiliating and bringing disgrace upon them. Ranjit Singh's men, I was told, burnt the mosques, destroyed the crops, relieved the local population of all they had and even took away women and children to be sold as serfs. In the Punjab itself, I was told, the Sikhs did not allow Muslims to give call for prayers and turned the mosques into stables. Kine-slaughter was completely banned; rather a Muslim suspected of killing a kine was done to death. Believing what your brothers told me to be correct, I considered it advisable to emigrate to your country to unite and call the Muslims to arms for launching a *jihād* against the infidels in order to rescue our brethren from their clutches."[3]

1. B. Hasrat; *Anglo-Sikh Relations*, 1799-1849, p. 134
2. *Meaning*, leader
3. *Sirat Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, Vol. I, p. 379-80

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It has been argued that Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd could have started *jihād* against the Sikhs in India where *mujāhidīn* had their houses and supporters, making the supplies more secure. But it is obvious that the British would have never allowed the Saiyid to raise any formidable force, in their own territories, likely to prove a danger to them. Any such venture, if allowed by the British, would have invited a protest from Ranjīt Singh who had already signed a treaty of perpetual friendship with the British in 1809. Then the British would have been obliged either to intervene on behalf of their ally or cross swords with Ranjīt Singh.

Thus, depredations of Ranjīt Singh demanded immediate retaliation and the north-west frontier was the only suitable place to launch the struggle. But, before we take a look at the march of events in the Punjab, it would be fruitful to follow up the doubts expressed subsequently, by certain writers about the ultimate object of the *jihād*.

Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khān was, perhaps the first to argue forcefully, and, also, quite convincingly, that the *jihād* of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was primarily directed against the Sikhs and not the British. Sir Saiyid wrote a series of letters[1] which were published in the Pioneer, to refute the inimical and highly coloured account of the Wahābi activity by Hunter designed to arraign the Muslims of India as seditionaries working for the destruction of the British Empire[2]. Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khān explained the Hanafite and Wahābite beliefs to underline their differences and showed that Wahābism never succeeded in gaining adherents in the frontier which was sufficient to prove "how impracticable it was for the Wahābīs to establish a rebel camp with the frontier tribesmen or to form a coalition between the two."[3] Sir Saiyid traced the development of

1. These letters were collected by a certain Musalman Vakil some time in 1872-73 and published by Henry S. King & Co., London, under the title *Saiyid Ahmad's Review on Hunter's Indian Musalmans.*
2. *The Indian Musalmans*, p. 32
3. *Saiyid Ahmad's Review on Hunter's Indian Musalmans*, p. 17

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Indian Wahābī movement to establish that the British government was fully aware of the activities of Indian Wahābīs from the very beginning but it never interdicted their preachings. The reason for it, according to Sir Saiyid, was that the *jihād* was not preached against the British Government. He cited the example of Shāh Ismāʿīl, who, when asked at Calcutta to preach *jihād* against the British, had replied that "under the English rule Mohammedans were not persecuted, and, as they were the subjects of that government, they were bound by their religion not to join in *jihād* against it."[1] Sir Saiyid even claimed that instead of putting obstacles in the way of Wahābī movement in its initial stages, the English deliberately ignored and in certain cases went so far as to give indirect assistance to them against the Sikhs. He, therefore, concluded that the clashes in the Frontier after 1857 were between the British forces and the Indian soldiers—both Hindus and Muslims—who had fled from India after the failure of the insurrection.[2]

Saiyid Ahmad Khan sought to defend his co-religionists at the time when they had, in the words of Dr. Ambedkar, sunk into "the lowest depth of broken pride black despair and general penury."[3] In the trial of Bahādur Shāh Zafar the indignation of Major F.J. Harriot, Deputy Judge Advocate and Government Prosecutor found strong expression against the whole Muslim community and their faith. The words with which he summed up his arguments indicate the mood and temper of the British rulers against the Indian Muslims. He said :

> The known restless spirit of Mahommedan fanaticism has been the first aggressor, the vindictive intolerance of that peculiar faith has been struggling for mastery, seditious conspiracy has been its means, the Prisoner its active accomplice, and every possible crime the frightful result. . . . . Thus the bitter zeal of the Mohammedanism meets us everywhere. It is conspicuous in the papers, flagrant in the petitions and perfectly demoniac in its actions.[4]

1. *Saiyid Ahmad's Review on Hunter's Indian Musalmans*, p. 17 ; Saiyid Ahmad Khan ; *Asbāb Baghāwat-i-Hind*, pp. 7-8.
2. *Saiyid Ahmad's Review on Hunter's Indian Musalmans*, pp. 45-46
3. B. R. Ambedkar ; *Thoughts on Pakistan*, p. 43
4. *Proceedings of the Trial of Muhammad Bahādur Shāh*, pp. 158-59

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The British, both in India and England, held the Muslims were mainly responsible for the 1857 uprising,[1] and the consideration that guided the British Government in framing their policy after the Mutiny was that the success of the struggle would have re-established Muslim Rule in India rather than that of the Marāthās or the Sikhs. The government turned fiercely on the religious-minded Muslims, in particular. Even the British Prime Minister, Palmerston, (1784-1865), had written to Lord Canning that every civil building connected with Mahommedans (an oblique reference to the Jami Mosque of Delhi) should be levelled to the ground 'without regard to antiquarian veneration or artistic predilection', while the *Times* had taken up a religious cry 'which was not content with cramming Christianity down the throats of the Mussalmans, unless in taking up the Cross they insulted the tenets of the Prophet'.[2] Defeat and death, humiliation and despair overcast the sky for Indian Muslims, who had lost much of their property, trades and callings as a punishment for participation in the revolt of 1857; their aristocracy was decimated, political supremacy exterminated for ever; and they had begun to lose their self-confidence as a result of the persistent anti-Muslim attitude of the rulers. But, a few years after the Mutiny, the *mujāhidīn* in the frontier began inflicting such severe losses on the British forces during Ambeyla expedition that the government was compelled, at one time, to think of withdrawing the expedition.[3] The passions of the English and the Muslims, according to Hunter, reached a heat such as unknown since the Mutinies.[4] The British government, thoroughly frightened, took vigorous efforts to unearth the centres supplying men and material to the *mujāhidīn* at Malāka. Indiscriminate arrests and trials for treason started at several places. But this was not the end of trouble. The British Viceroy Lord Mayo

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1. K. K. ʿAziz ; *Britain and Muslim India*, 1872-76, p. 25
2. *The Muslims of British India*, p. 71 (Letters no. 9 and 40 of the *Canning Papers*).
3. C. Marshman ; *Abridgement of the Indian History*, p. 526)
4. *Indian Musalmans*, p. 106

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and Justice Norman of Calcutta High Court, both connected with suppression of Wahābi movement were assassinated supposedly by a Wahābi.[1] The morbid fear aroused by these successive events among the British lingered on as late as 1883-84 when W. S. Blunt acknowledged that "in England we were perpetually scared at the idea of a Mohammaden rising in India, and any word uttered by a Mohammaden was paid more attention than that of twenty Hindus."[2]

Hunter's *Indian Musalman* was published at this critical time in answer to the question posed by Lord Mayo : 'Are Indian Muslims bound by their religion to rebel against the Queen ?'[3] The reply given by Hunter, however, added fuel to fire. Lord Northbrook, the successor of Lord Mayo, gave instruction to the provincial administrations to maintain a careful watch over the Wahābīs and keep him personally informed of their activities.[4] The repression that followed hardly left a well-to-do and religious-minded Muslim from Peshawar to Bengal who was not convicted on false charges or harassed by the police like a hardened criminal.[5] Sir Saiyid, whose heart bled at the sight of unparalleled ruin of the Muslims, took upon himself the task of rescuing his community by bridging the gulf between the rulers and the ruled, both of whom then hated each other. His defence of the Muslims, in general, and of Wahābīs, in particular, has to be viewed in the light of Muslims' plight in the post-Mutiny period. Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khān's contention that the British were aware or rather connived at the *jihād* movement against the Sikhs may be correct. The British perhaps hoped that the *mujāhidīn* and the Sikhs would ultimately exhaust themselves by fighting one another, but this does not mean that the British had any soft-corner for the *mujāhidīn* or that the

1. E. C. Moulton ; *Lord Northbrook's Indian Administration*, 1872-76 p. 10.
2. W S. Blunt ; *India under Rippon—A Private Diary*, pp. 103-104
3. *See* Publisher's note to 1945 edition of the book
4. *Lord Northbrook's Indian Administration*, 1872-76, p. 4
5. *Hidustan ki Pahli Islāmi Tāhrik*, pp. 16, 32, 35, 158

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latter were not against the alien rulers of India. Anyway, the fact remains that Sir Saiyid ignored, consciously or unconsciously, the evidences unmistakably indicating the anti-British designs of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd. There is also no evidence to corroborate the story that Shāh Ismā'īl prohibited *jihād* against the British at Calcutta. On the contrary, the Shāh is reported to have had an altercation with Charles Metcalfe earlier at Calcutta with the result that he had to leave Delhi within six months of his return from the *haj* pilgrimage owing to the arrival of Metcalfe in that city as Resident in the court of Akbar II.[1] In fact, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, the uncle of the Shāh, had already declared that India under British was *dār-ul-harb* or the land of the enemy, while Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was openly critical of even the former ruling circles for their willingness to act as collaborators of the British.[2] The Shāh could never have been expected to make any pronouncement contradicting his own uncle and the spiritual mentor.

As for the ultimate objective of *jihād* preached by the Saiyid, the letter written by him to Rāja Hindū Rāo, a minister of Gwalior, hardly leaves any doubt about it.

> You are fully aware that these strangers from across the oceans have become the rulers of the world : these mere merchants have founded an empire ! They have degraded and debased the honour and hegemony of majestic sovereigns. But those who were the masters of domains are fast asleep at their posts. At last, it fell upon us, a few poor and ill-equipped men, to girdle our loins and fight in the way of God. These bondsmen of Allah desire neither worldly fame nor power ; the only objective they have in view is to serve their Lord and His religion. They covet not the wealth and riches.[3]

And, again :

> Whenever we succeed in our efforts and India gets rid of these alien enemies, the ranks of responsibility and honour shall be assigned to those who covet these ; and then they shall enjoy the real power and

1. Maulānā 'Abdul Ha'i ; *Dehli Aur Uske Atrāf*, p. 55
2. (Persian) correspondence of Saiyid Ahmad, fol. 54b, British Museum, MSS No. 6633 (quoted from the *Muslims of British India*, p. 58).
3. *Sirat Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, Vol. I, pp. 357-58

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glory on a more firm foundation. What we desire from our chiefs and princes is merely this that they should serve the cause of Islam with all their heart and soul and rule in their dominions.[1]

In another letter addressed to Ghulām Haider Khān, Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd had clearly stated that his aim was emancipation of India.

A greater part of India has passed into the hands of foreigners who have let loose a reign of terror everywhere by their highhandedness. The dominions of the Indian potentates have been wrecked; none has courage to face them, instead everyone has acknowledged their overlordship. Some of us, poor and paltry, have now resolved to fight them because those who possessed power and authority have abandoned all hopes to stand up against them.[2]

Two other writers, associated earlier with the movement of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, tried to confirm, later on, either because of persuasion or fear of persecution the view-point of Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khān. One of these was Mirzā Hairat Dehlavī, a biographer of Shāh Ismāʿīl. In *Havāt-i-Tayyaba,* more of fiction than a biography, he has mentioned the tour of Shāh Ismāʿīl into the territories of the Punjab[3] although Shāh Ismāʿīl did not accompany Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd when the latter joined Amīr Khān in 1812. Amīr Khān himself visited the Punjab with Jaswant Rāo Holkar towards the close of 1805 and it is very doubtful if he ever went to the Punjab again after the Saiyid had taken up service under him. There is, therefore, absolutely no ground to assume that Shāh Ismāʿīl ever traversed the Punjab on a missionary tour. In fact, it would have never been possible for anyone to go into the Punjab under the Sikhs on a preaching tour. The other writer is Maulvī Mohammad Jʿafar Thānesrī, author of *Tawārīkh ʿAjīb*, but his account is even more unreliable than that of Hairat. As Ghulām Rasūl Mehr and Taufīq Ahmad Nizāmī have discussed in detail, Thānesri made numerous interpolations and alterations in the letters of the Saiyid, quoted by him in *Tawārikh ʿAjīb*, to establish that the *jihād*

1. *Sirat Saiyid Ahmad Shahid*, p. 371
2. *Ibid.*, p. 358
3. Mirza Hairat Dehlavi; *Hayāt-i-Tayyaba*, pp. 107-134

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had nothing to do with the British.[1] To cite an example here, the Saiyid wrote in a letter: "The infidels of *Firang* who have triumphed over India are worldly-wise, cunning and tricky."[2] Thānesrī changed it to read: "The infidels with long hair who have triumphed over the Punjab are worldly-wise, cunning and tricky."[3] Another instance of Thānesrī's untrustworthiness is the incident related by him: "It was considered prudent to inform the Lieutenant-governor of North-Western Provinces, through Sheikh Ghulām ʿAlī, a landlord of Allāhābād, about the preparations being made for the *jihād*. The Lieutenant-Governor wrote back in reply that he would have no objection so long as the peace of the British territories was not disturbed."[4] This intimation could have been sent to the Lieutenant-Governor around January 1826, when the Saiyid left for the frontier but the Lieutenant-governorship of North-Western Provinces was instituted in 1836.[5] We can very well understand the anxiety of Mirzā Hairat Dehlavī and Maulvī Mohammad Jʿafar Thānesrī to save the Muslims from the blind retribution of British or to create an alibi for the so-called Wahābis who were then deemed as the fittest target for all the ills that man can endure.

Yet another scholar has recently echoed the standpoint of Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khān. ʿAzīz Ahmad writes that the "twentieth-century Muslim historiography in India and Pakistan has invested Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd with an anti-imperialist role, basing its claim on his unpublished correspondence with the rulers of Afghanistan and Bukhārā without fully evaluating the diplomatic latitude and impact

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1. *Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, Vol. I, pp. 259-61; T. A. Nizāmī; *Muslim Political Thought and Activity in India during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 43-44
2. *Maktūbat Saiyid Shahīd*, p. 59
3. Jʿafar Thanesri; *Tawārīkh-i-ʿAjīb* p. 192
4. *Ibid.*, p. 70. Dr. Ganda Singh has wrongly attributed this report to Mirzā Hairat Dehlavī on page 30 of his 'Private correspondence relating to Anglo-Sikh Wars'.
5. The Organisation of the Government of Uttar Pradesh, pp. 3-4

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of these letters."[1] But ʿAzīz Ahmad leaves out of consideration, for reasons known to himself, the letters written by the Saiyid to the *sardārs* and theologians of the frontier and several other persons in India as well as his discourses. On the other hand, he leans on Sir Saiyid's Review on Hunter's book, Jʿafar Thānesrī, Mirzā Hairat and Rehatsek. We need not go into his other arguments which merely emphasise that certain *ʿulāmā* entered the service of the British Government either before or after the Mutiny which is hardly relevant to the point at issue.[2] However, several recent researches by competent scholars, such as, Muhammad Mujeeb[3], Ishtiāq Husain Quraishi[4], Shān Mohammad[5], Bashīr Ahmad Dar[6] and Dr. Hardy[7] are agreed that the *jihād* of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was directed not against the Sikhs alone but also against the British.

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1. *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan*, p. 20
2. Incidentally, it is interesting to note that one of the instances cited by ʿAziz Ahmad in support of his thesis is that Karāmat ʿAli Jaunpūrī, a Shiʿi supporter of the Saiyid's movement of reform in Bengal, was in close contact with the East India Company, received gifts from its Directors, was a member of the Muhammedan Literary Association and endeavoured to keep politics out of religion. This Karāmat ʿAli (1201-1290), hailing from Kaigāon, Jaunpūr, who was the teacher of Amīr ʿAli and author of *Mākhaz-ul-Uloom* was, however, a different person from Maulānā Karāmat ʿAli Jaunpūrī (d. 1285), a disciple and spiritual successor (*Khalifa*) to the Saiyid, whom the latter had deputed to carry on missionary activities in East Bengal. Maulānā Karāmat ʿAli's efforts were rewarded with phenomenal success as he is credited with the conversion of several million persons to Islam in that region. He saved the lives of two English women during the uprising of 1857 at Jaunpūr but declined to accept the reward sanctioned to him. He was also not a Shiʿi, as stated by ʿAziz Ahmad, for his numerous works, specially *ʿAqāʾid-i-Haqqa*, *Tazkiyatul-ʿAqāʾid*, *Faiz ʿAam*, *Kitāb-i-Istaqāmat*, etc. clearly show that he was a Hanafite Sunni, (*Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. VII, pp. 394 and 396 ; *Sirat Maulānā Karāmat ʿAli Jaunpūri* pp. 122-27).
3. *The Indian Muslims*, pp. 395-98
4. *The Muslim Community in Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent*, p. 200
5. *Syed Ahmad Khan : A Political Review*, p. 128
6. *Religious Thought of Saiyid Ahmad Khān*, p. 79
7. *The Muslims of British India*, p. 58

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In fact there is such a phalanx of testimony indicating the anti-British character of the Saiyid's movement that certain scholars have put forward the view that the exclusive object of the Saiyid's *jihād* was emancipation of India for a comprehensive social and economic reform of the country.[1] This view put forth by Muhammad Mian ignores the primary objective of the Saiyid's fundamentalist-reformist movement, of which *jihād* was only a part, that is, the restoration of a truly Islamic rule in India—an ideal never conceived in the past in India so lucidly and with such clarity of vision.[2] The reform movement of the Saiyid could not be anything else except religious and moral revival for sustaining a truly Islamic society but, true to Islam, it could not be cut off from the political activities that the times and circumstances then obtaining in India demanded. The Saiyid had, indeed, never tried to conceal the primary aim he had in view and had clearly expounded it to every one to whom he sent his epistles. His letter to Rājā Hindū Rāo, already quoted by us, is much too explicit to admit any misunderstanding about the type of government he wanted to establish in India. Howsoever unrealistic the concept of organising Muslims as a political community according to religious principles may appear to some of us today, yet the Islamic regeneration as conceived by Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd rightly demanded a struggle against external threat or domination for no fundamentalist reform designed to check the internal decay was likely to succeed if not accompanied by an effort to liquidate alien domination.

There is yet another point of view presented by a learned writer, Maulānā ʿUbaid Ullah Sindhī, who says that Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd intended to resuscitate the crumbling empire of Delhi.[3] Nothing can, however, be farther from truth than this assertion ; for, had it been so, the Saiyid would have never taken his followers to the frontier where

1. Muhammad Mian ; *ʿJlamā-i-Hind Ka Shāndār Māzi*, Vol. II, p. 101
2. *Sirat Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, Vol. I, pp. 370-75
3. ʿUbaid Ullah Sindhī ; *Shāh Wali Ullah aur Unki Siyāsi Tahrik*, p. 75

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he could not hope to rally the Pathāns round his banner for the cause of a Moghul. Despite their long rule over Afghanistan, the Moghuls had never succeeded in subduing the spirit of Pākhtūn honour. Their blood was always warmed by the stirring words of Khushhāl Khān (1613-89) urging the Pathāns to throw off the yoke of the Moghuls.

In days gone by Pathāns were the kings of Hind
And still in deeds the Moghuls they out do.[1]

India would have been, in that case, a more suitable place for *jihād*; for, the Emperor, though powerless, still enjoyed the esteem of the masses as shown by the events of 1857. The Maulānā's flight of imagination need not be taken seriously because the Saiyid never made any appeal—not for once—in the name of the Moghal Emperor. He had, in fact, declared to his disciples during one of his missionary tours : the "kingship of Delhi consists merely of protocols and stately ceremonials, devoid of all power and authority."[2] The attitude of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd and Shāh Ismā'īl towards the Moghul Emperor could, at best, be described as nonchalant which at times became even scornful.

It seems that Maulānā 'Ubaid Ullah Sindhi was led to the opinion expressed by him owing to the uninvited role thrust upon Bahādur Shāh Zafar and the leading part played by religious-minded Muslims such as Maulvī Ahmad Ullah Shāh, Maulvī Liāqat 'Alī and Bakht Khān during the uprising of 1857. But this is too flimsy a ground to assume that Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd wanted to restore the lost glory of the Moghul Emperor.

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was not a philosopher to lay down the blue-prints of his political thought, yet, his letters bear out the conceptual model of the State he desired to establish. The basic objective of his *jihād* was to set up a State functioning according to the Islamic law. He built up, for that purpose, a powerful mass movement—first in India's history—to emancipate the country from the alien

1. Olaf Caroe ; *The Pathans*, 306
2. *Sirāt-i-Mustaqim*, p. 178

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rule. The Saiyid was not interested in wielding the sceptre: he was even willing to pass it on to those who would covet it, provided, of course, they undertook to ensure supremacy of the Law of Islam and enabled Muslims to lead their lives strictly in accordance with the precepts of Islam. Co-operation with the Hindus, Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd never ruled out; on the contrary, he sought their support and co-operation to fight the common enemy and was prepared to let them rule over the dominions in their possession. Still, he was candid enough to inform almost every one whom he sent letters to join in the *jihād* that he had wielded the the sword to combat all that negated the Truth.

We only seek the pleasure of God. We have shut our eyes and ears to whatever is there except God and turned our backs on the world and whatever it stands for. We have raised the standard of *jihād* for the sake of God alone. We covet neither gold nor riches, nor yet authority and power: we have our hearts at nothing save God.[1]

1. *Sirat Saiyid Ahmad Shahid*, Vol. I, p. 355

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Eight

# Rise of the Sikhs

GURU Nānak was born in 1469 at a village called Tilwandi, now Nankāna Sāhib, in Pakistan. Of a pious disposition and reflective mind, he engaged himself in meditations and took a life of mendicant. He called upon his followers to worship *Alakh Niranjan*—the True, the Immortal, the Self-existent, the Invisible, the Pure One God—, to live virtuously by attaining spiritual liberation through humility, prayer, self-restraint and to show tolerance for the failing of others. He rejected idols and incarnations as abominations and put great emphasis on obedience to Gurūs and good actions as against the external marks of holiness and set prayers which he called dead rituals. He also rejected austere asceticism involving renunciation of society, celibacy and penance, and his teachings urged people to remain in the world without being worldly. Gurū Nānak owed a lot of debt to Islam, though he denounced the Muslims of his age as base perverts. It is clear from his works and thought that he was steeped in *sūfī* lore.

The early Gurūs won the reverence of the Moghul emperors. Amar Das (1552-74), the second successor of Gurū Nānak, is said to have found an attentive listener in the tolerant Akbar. The fifth Gurū Arjan (1581-1606), under whom the number of Sikhs had greatly increased, and with them his wealth, obtained tithes and offerings from every

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Sikh from Kabul to Dacca. He gave final shape to the scripture—*Adī Granth*—and built the first temple for enshrining the holy book. He blessed the banners of Khusrū, the rival of Jahāngīr and even gave monetary help to that prince. He was fined two lakhs of rupees for his indiscretion, which he refused to pay and stoically endured imprisonment and torture, the usual punishment of revenue defaulters in those days. He died at Lahore in June 1606. However, as Jadunāth Sarkar remarks : "This was clearly not a case of religious persecution but merely the customary punishment of a political offender."[1]

Arjan was a man of peace and humility but his assumption of the pretensions befitting a temporal king[2] began to show its effect clearly after him. His son Har Govind (1606-44) constantly trained himself in martial exercises and systematically turned his attention to chase.[3] According to one of his contemporary historians, Mohsin Fānī, Har Govind became a hunter and an eater of flesh although Gurū Nānak had abstained himself from animal food[4]. He gathered three hundred mounted followers constantly in attendance upon him and a guard of sixty matchlock-men[5], and provoked war with Shāhjahān by encroaching upon the emperor's game preserve.[6] His fame spread far and wide as he was able to resist and even defeat the first few forces despatched to subdue him, but he was ultimately forced to take refuge at Kirtārpur in the Kashmir hills where he died in 1644. The two Gurūs after him, Har Rai (1644-61) and Har Krishan (1661-64), avoided incurring the displeasure of the Moghuls, but the ninth one, Tegh Bahādur (1664-75), encouraged the resistance of the Hindus of Kashmir and openly defied the Emperor.[7] Ghulām Husain relates in *Sayr-ul-Mutākhrīn*: "this man finding himself at the head of

1. J. N. Sarkār ; *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, p. 309
2. Malcolm, *A Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 30
3. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 245
4. Mohsin Fānī ; *Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 248
5. *Cunningham*, p. 56
6. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. V, p. 245
7. *Ibid.*, p. 245 and *Cunningham*, p. 64

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so many thousands of people, became aspiring; and he united his concerns with one Hafyzdam (Hāfiz Ādam), a Mohammadan Fakir . . . . . These two men no sooner saw themselves followed by multitudes, implicitly addicted to their chief's will, then, forsaking every honest calling, they fell to subsisting by plunder and rapine, laying waste the whole province of Punjab."[1]

It is not improbable that in an age when the popularity of serene and peaceful *sūfī* saints, who kept themselves religiously aloof from the affairs of governments, were often looked upon with misgivings by the rulers, the activities of Tegh Bahādur might have been exaggerated by the provincial officials. But, the die was cast, and an irrevocable breach took place between the Muslims and the Sikhs. Tegh Bahādur was apprehended, along with his followers, at Agra, and arraigned before the court of the Qāzī at Delhi. He was sentenced to death and executed on the 11th of November, 1675.

Govind Singh, the tenth and last Gurū, was only fifteen years old when his father was put to death. Retiring to the hills around Jammu, he occupied himself in hunting, study of Persian and ancient legends as well as training his men for warfare. He preached openly against Islam and once imposed a fine of Rs. 125 on his followers for saluting a Muslim saint's tomb.[2] As he told his mother, his aims were frankly material. "Mother dear, I have been considering how I may confer empire upon the *Khālsa*."[3] He is stated to have organised a considerable force and placed them under the command of his trustworthy disciples.[4] He also engaged a body of Pathāns who were everywhere available in those days as mercenaries, and established a few forts along the skirts of hills between Sutlej and Jamuna.[5] In the initial skirmishes with the local

1. Ghulām Husain Khān ; *Sayr-ul-Mutākhrin*, Vol. II, p. 85
2. *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, p. 317
3. *Ibid.*, p. 317
4. *Sayr-ul-Mutākhrin* Vol. I, p. 115
5. *Cunningham*, p. 76

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chiefs and the imperial forces sent from Sirhind at their request, he emerged victorious; but after repeated attacks on Ānandpūr, his stronghold, and desertion of his followers, he had to evacuate the fort, closely pursued by the Moghuls. Two of his sons were slain at Chamkaur; two more along with his mother were betrayed and killed at Sirhind, while he was helped to safety by two Pathāns whom he had earlier done a favour. Gurū Govind Singh, undergoing many adventures, fled to Deccan whence he returned in 1707 on hearing of Aurangzeb's death.

While Aurangzeb's sons were engaged in war of succession, the Gurū took the side of Bahādur Shāh, who treated him with respect and took him to Golconda in his campaign against Kām Bakhsh. He took up his residence at Nānder on the Godāvari. He had engaged an Afghān for procuring a considerable number of horses for him. Impatient with the delay in payment, the Afghān used an angry gesture and was slain by the Gurū. The sons of the victim nursed their revenge, and stabbed him to death in 1708.[1]

There was no Gurū thereafter; but Gurū Govind Singh's heroic struggle against injustice, repression and exploitation of the ruling order of the time had relumed his followers with the Promethean fire. "I shall always be present wherever five Sikhs are assembled," was his departing message. Independent bands of Sikhs acting under different leaders, continued to harass the Moghuls in the Punjab and upper Gangetic Doab to the end of the eighteenth century. One of these, Bandā by name, gathered a number of followers around him, attacked Sirhind, defeated and slew the governor on 22nd May, 1710. "Sirhind was plundered," writes Cunningham, "and the Hindu betrayer and Musalman destroyer of Gobinda's children were themselves put to death by the avenging Sikhs."[2] The town was pillaged for four days with ruthless cruelty; the mosques were defiled, the women outraged and the Muslims slaughtered.[3]

1. *Cunningham*, p. 83
2. *Ibid.*, p. 86
3. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 322

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Bandā's next target of slaughter and rapine was the country between the Sutlej and Jamuna, and he laid waste the district of Sahāranpūr. Bahādur Shāh hastened towards Punjab; but before he reached Sadhaura, his officers had already defeated the rebel and compelled him to withdraw from his stronghold of Sadhaura. Desultory fighting with the Sikhs continued till Bahādur Shāh's death at Lahore on 27th February, 1712. Bandā was ultimately captured and executed on 15th March, 1716.

Bahādur Shāh's death was again followed by wars of succession which were, unfortunately, waged time and again at short intervals, affording an opportunity to the selfish and treacherous courtiers to clear their path to power through bribery and intrigue. Dissensions between the Tūrānian and Irānian factions, with fickle and weak princes presiding over the realm, made the government corrupt as well as bankrupt. A great peril threatened India in the shape of the advancing power of the British, but, unmindful of all dangers, the corrupt nobility was busy setting up puppet kings, carving out principalities for themselves and encouraging predatory bands for the elimination of their opponents. The Marāthās, first enlisted by the kingdoms of Deccan to oppose the invasion of the Moghuls, were gradually awakened to a new sense of nationhood and began depleting the resources of the empire by their constant guerrilla warfare. The Nizām of Hyderābād was diverting them against Delhi, while the Nawāb of Oudh sought their assistance to destroy the Nawāb of Farrukhābād. New forces of Jāts and Sikhs were raising their heads, and, then, in the wake of these internal difficulties, came the shattering blow of Nādir Shāh. Complete anarchy prevailed in the provinces of Sirhind and Punjab, where the subdued predatory bands of Sikhs were again emboldened to resume their raids of plunder. In 1739, the Sikhs fell upon the rear of the army of Nādir Shāh when he was retiring from Delhi along with his booty. Following upon the heels of a civil war in the Punjab during 1746-47, Ahmad Shāh Abdālī crossed the Indus in August 1759. Ahmad Shāh Abdālī

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shattered the dreams of the Marāthās, but the conqueror's own designs of proclaiming himself the Emperor of India were frustrated by the clamours of his own troops demanding immediate return to Kandahar. He returned to the Punjab many times over to fight desultory battles ; he sometimes punished the Sikhs, but produced even more confusion than stability. There was no civil government in the provinces of the Punjab, Sirhind and Delhi except in name only. The forces of disorder naturally made their appearance everywhere, while the Sikhs, having a fair amount of organisation, thanks to their *misl*, took the best advantage of this confusion and helpless state of the provinces.

The emerging Sikh power can be categorised into two classes regionally, each promoting its designs in a different manner, namely, cis-Sutlej and trans-Sutlej confederacies. The former lived in the area south-east of Sutlej, between Ludhiānā and Karnāl and the latter to the north-west of the river, between Lahore and Ludhiānā. The cis-Sutlej Sikhs developed into territorial chiefs like the rājās of Patiālā, Kapurthalā, Nābhā and Jind. The trans-Sutlej hordes were rebels engaging the governor of Lahore in desultory skirmishes, defying his authority, organising plundering raids, and then retiring into the lower hills of Jammu in times of difficulty. In the second stage of their expansion commencing from 1761, they began to organise regular raids of plunder, unaided by their brothers on the other side of the river, to plunder and rob the towns and villages lying in the country upto Delhi, Sahāranpūr and Hardwār. They sometimes looted and blackmailed their own brethren; nevertheless, animated by fierce enthusiasm for the *khālsa* and vindictive zeal against their former rulers, they perpetrated cruelties and humiliated their foes beyond measure. Numerous mosques were demolished, and Afghāns in chains were often made to wash their foundations with the blood of hogs.[1] The third stage began with the rise of

1. *Cunningham*, p. 104

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Ranjīt Singh in the trans-Sutlej country whose authority became gradually predominant among the Sikhs.

At this stage it would be useful to briefly narrate the rapidly changing events in Afghanistan which proved helpful to Ranjīt Singh in consolidating his power over the Punjab and extending it to the eastern provinces of Afghanistan.

Ahmad Shāh Abdālī died about 1773 and was succeeded by his son Timūr, who bore no comparison with his illustrious father. He received but nominal homage from the tribal chieftains and much of his reign was spent in quelling their rebellions. Disgusted with the people of Kandahar, Timūr decided to shift his capital to Kabul.

Timur died in 1793. His fifth son, Zaman, seized the throne with the help of Sardār Pā'inda Khān, the influential chief of Bārakza'ī. Beset with numerous difficulties, both internal and external, from the beginning of his reign, he had to face the rebellion of the two of his elder brothers, Humāyūn and Mahmūd, holding charge of the provinces of Kandahar and Herāt respectively. Humāyūn was defeated by Zaman and blinded while Mahmūd was forced to take refuge in Persia. Zaman then turned to India with the object of repeating the exploits of Ahmad Shāh. This alarmed the British who started intrigues against Zaman. Captain John Malcolm, reaching Persia as envoy in 1800, succeeded in persuading Fateh ʿAli Shāh to divert Zaman's attention from India by helping Mahmūd, the ex-governor of Herāt, with men and money to seize the territory of Kandahar. With the necessary force at his command, and assisted by his capable vizier Fateh Khān, eldest son of Pā'indā Khān Bārakza'ī, Mahmūd took Kandahar after a 42-day siege and then pushed on towards Kabul. While in India Zaman learnt of Mahmūd's activities ; hurried back to Afghanistan ; then, after many vicissitudes, he was betrayed by an old adherent, ʿĀshiq Khān. He was handed over to Mahmūd, blinded and imprisoned in the Bālā Hissār fort of Kabul in 1801.

Mahmūd proved to be an incapable, selfish and indolent

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ruler. He took no interest in the welfare of his people, squandered the nation's treasure on his personal pleasure and left the affairs of State in the hands of his vizier Fateh Khān. Jealousies between Fateh Khān and another chief, Akram Khān Alīzaʾī, caused unrest throughout the country, and finally some of the chiefs joined forces and invited Shāh Shujʿā, a full brother of Zaman to Kabul. Mahmūd sued for peace and was imprisoned in Bālā Hissār.

Shāh Shujʿā, who ascended the throne in 1803, was unable to restore peace. The chiefs had become too powerful and unruly and the outlying provinces were striving for independence. The Sikhs were encroaching upon Afghān territories from the east, while the Persians were threatening from the west and the Shāh was busy conciliating Fateh Khān whose brothers were holding the charge of the provinces.

At this time Napolean, the French Emperor, was the most powerful monarch of Europe. After signing the treaty of Tilsit in 1807, he and Alexander I of Russia decided on a combined invasion of India. British diplomacy was again moved to action, and a mission headed by Mountstuart Elphinston met Shāh Shujʿā at Peshawar, where his own idle hopes of an Indian Empire had brought him exposing the western dominions to insurrection. A treaty of friendship was concluded on 7th June, 1809, whereby the Shāh promised to oppose foreign troops crossing his country. Hardly had the mission left Peshawar when news was received that Kabul had been occupied by the forces of Mahmūd and Fateh Khan. Shāh Snujʿā advanced to check Mahmūd, but was defeated after a brief encounter near Gandamak. In 1810, after he renewed his efforts to recover his throne, he was captured and imprisoned in Kashmir. He escaped in 1812 and came to Lahore, expecting help from Ranjīt Singh, but the Sikh ruler robbed him of his famous Koh-i-Nūr diamond. Shāh Shujʿā ultimately found asylum under the British in Ludhiānā.

The Bārakzaʾīs were now dominant throughout Afghanistan. This incited the jealousy of Kāmrān, Mahmūd's eldest son, who nursed a grudge against Fateh Khān and wanted to

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try his arms against him and his brothers. His chance came in 1816 when Fateh Khān and his younger brother, Dost Muhammad Khān, who had been sent to defend Herāt against a Persian army, insulted Kāmrān's sister, who was daughter-in-law of the governor of Herāt. When she called on her brother to avenge the insult, Kāmrān seized and blinded Fateh Khān. Retribution immediately followed this outrage. The brothers of Fateh Khān, 21 in all including Dost Mohammad, who had escaped to Kashmir, took up arms. Mahmūd asked Fateh Khān to write to his brothers and order them to submit. His reply was that he was blind and a prisoner, and exercised no control over his brothers. The Shāh, enraged by the answer, had Fateh Khān cut to pieces. Dauntless and resolute, Fateh Khān died calmly as he had lived.

The first to take up arms against the Shāh, among the Bārakzaʾī brothers, was Dost Muhammad. Advancing from Kashmir in 1818, he took Peshawar and Kabul and drove the Shāh and Kāmrān from all their possessions except Herāt, where they maintained a precarious footing for a few years. The rest of Afghanistan was parcelled out among the Bārakzaʾī brothers. In the confusion that followed, Afghanistan suffered heavily. Balkh was seized by the ruler of Bukhārā; trans-Indus territory were occupied by the Sikhs; the outlying provinces of Sind and Baluchistan assumed independence.

Not confident of trying his arms with Ranjīt Singh, Yār Muhammad, the governor of Pesnāwar agreed to pay tribute to the Mahārajā. Muhammad ʿAzīm Khān, his brother, however, decided to face the Sikhs and gave out a call of *jihad* to the tribesmen living across the Khybar Pass. A large number of people rallied round his banner to make a last bid for their freedom. A reliable account of the fateful battle of Akora[1] that took place on 14th March 1823, written, perhaps, within a decade of its date of occurence by Prinsep, and which also corresponds with the version of another

1. The actual site of the battle was round Pir Sabak hill near village Naukhar, upon the Landai river's left bank.

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historian, Arthur Conolly,[1] is given here.

There were not more of the Moosulmans engaged on this occasion, their number between four or five thousand men, and these were mere mountaineers and villagers, who turned out for the *Ghazee*, that is, to fight the religious battle against the infidel Sikhs. Disciplined professional soldiers there were none amongst them, yet did they resist, for a whole day the entire army of Ranjeet Singh, who had in the field against them not less than 24,000 men, and all his best troops. There were upwards 1,000 men (captain Wade says 2000) killed and wounded on the side of the Sikhs, and amongst them their four officers of distinction, Phoola Singh Akālee,[2] Ghurba Singh, Kurum Singh Chahul, two Jageerdars, and Bulbhudur Singh Goorkhalee . . . . .

Muhammad Uzeem Khan was, during action of the *Ghazee*, or fighters for the faith, at Chumkawa, about four miles and a half east of Peshawar. He made no effort to succour, or support the warriors, and was watched in his position by a Sikh force under Kripa Ram, which had advanced by the opposite side of the river.[3]

The disorganised Pathāns could not withstand the superior fire of the Sikh artillery and had, ultimately, to give in. The tribesmen would have returned again, but upon hearing that they had been overpowered and dispersed, Muhammad ʿAzīm Khān retired, perhaps, fearing his treasure, to Jalālabād on the Kabul road, leaving the field clear to Ranjīt Singh.

In the partition that took place in 1826, **Ghazni**, Kabul and Jalālabād fell to the lot of Dost Muhammad, who thus became the chief amongst the Bārakzaʾī Sardārs. As soon as his position was secure, Dost Muhammad decided to recover Peshawar by force from the Sikhs. Declaring a *jihād* or holy war in 1836, he collected a large army and advanced on Peshawar confident of victory. But the shrewd Sikh leader finding himself weak to meet Dost Muhammad in the battle-field, sowed dissension in his camp, so that the invading army melted away and Peshawar was lost for ever to Afghanistan.

It is now necessary to return to Ranjīt Singh, the 'Lion

1. Arthur Conolly ; *Afghan History*, p. 306
2. The victor of Multān
3. *Origin of the Sikh Power in Punjab*, pp: 138-39

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of Punjab', who was gradually becoming predominant among the trans-Sutlej Sikhs. Ranjīt Singh was born in November 1780 at Budrukhan or, according to another version, at Gujrānwālā to Mahā Singh whom he succeeded in 1792 as head of the Sukarchakia branch (*misl*) of the Sikh confederacy. After the death of his father, who had built the foundations of his reputation on adventurous spirit and ambitious designs, Ranjīt Singh dispensed with the regency of his mother and mother-in-law at the age of seventeen. In 1799 Ranjīt Singh took possesion of Lahore. In 1801 he defeated the most powerful Sikh *misl*, the Bhangīs, compelled Nizām-ud-dīn Khān of Kasūr to submission in 1802, when he also seized Amritsar, the twin Sikh capital and set out to expand his dominion. Lynx-eyed Ranjīt Singh, who noted every blunder of the Afghāns, was not slow to take advantage of the anarchical conditions pervailing in Afghanistan following the fall of Zaman Khān. In 1804-5 he marched westwards; captured Jhang, Shahiwāl and Multān. Kasūr was completely plundered, and a large number of the inhabitants, men, women and children, were made prisoners of war.[1] After the capture of Jhang the victorious troops eased the inhabitants of the city of all they could by any means remove. In vain was redress sought from Ranjīt Singh, who dismissed the complaint by declaring that he was powerless to suppress the disorder that prevailed. By that time the Marāthā chief, Jaswant Rao Holkār approached him for help against the British. On 1st January, 1806 a treaty was concluded between Ranjīt Singh and the British Government by which the former agreed to exclude Holkār from his territory.[2] In that year Ranjīt Singh took possession of Ludhiānā from a declining Muslim family which had sought the protection of an Englishman. Ranjīt Singh's interference in the affairs of certain other states east of Sutlej, whose rulers appealed to the British for protection, compelled the East India Company to contain the expansion of his territories eastwards. The matter was settled by

1. S. M. Latīf ; *History of the Punjab*, p. 357
2. *Cunningham*, p. 379

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Charles Metcalfe's mission through a treaty of perpetual friendship between the British Government and the State of Lahore which was signed on April 25, 1809.[1] Ranjīt Singh decided not to cross swords with the British but to expand instead to the north and west.

From this time dates the formation of Western trained Sikh army ; many absconding soldiers of the British army and expatriate Englishmen were recruited, regular infantry battalions were raised and a formidable artillery was built up. Ranjīt Singh freely enlisted Hindus, Muslims and Europeans in his army, but always on the basis of Sikh supremacy. In 1807, Ranjīt Singh led a force, for the fifth time against Qutb-ud-dīn Khān, of Kasūr, successor of Nizām-ud-dīn Khān, who had become troublesome. After a long siege, the city fell, which was given to plunder. Much harbarity was shown by Ranjīt Singh's men towards the tender sex, many of whom committed suicide by strangling or throwing themselves into wells, thus preferring death to dishonour.[2] In the next year, the Sikhs, under Diwān Motī Rām, besieged the town of Multān. The old Nawāb Muzaffar Khān fought gallantly and died sword in hand. Great were the excesses committed by the invading army on this occasion. Houses were raised to ground or burnt down. Nothing was left with the inhabitants which was worth having. "Hundreds were stripped," writes an annalist, "even of their clothes. Outrages were committed on the women, many of whom committed suicide by drowning themselves in the wells, or otherwise putting an end to their lives, in order to save themselves from dishonour. Hundreds were killed in the sack of the city, and indeed there was hardly a soul who escaped both loss and violence. So great, in short, were the horrors inflicted upon the inhabitants, that the terrible incidents attendant on the sack of Multān are recollected to this day, and still not infrequently form the topic of conversation.[3]

1. *Cunningham*, p. 379
2. *History of the Punjab*, p. 367
3. *Ibid.*, p. 412

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A contemporary of Ranjīt Singh, Qāzī Nūr Muhammad, who had come down to the Punjab during the time of Ahmad Shāh Abdālī laments thus over the destruction of the city.

They led an expedition against Multān and gave the city over to plunder. The beasts have brought an immense booty from there. My mind refuses (to describe) what they did there. O faithful ones ! Since the days of auspicious natured Adam none remembers to have heard of such miseries inflicted anywhere except in Multān. But as God willed it each of us should also submit.[1]

Peshāwar and Kashmir were occupied during 1818-19 and thereafter the borders of the empire were extended over Hazārā and the adjoining areas when Hāshim Khān betrayed his country to the Sikhs. Harī Singh, the governor of Hazārā, ruled over the district from 1822 to 1837. "Of unbounded energy and courage, ruthless in treatment of those who opposed his path ; he ruled by fear alone, and was a terror to the countryside. And he still remains an ogre, invoked by mothers to quiet their babies."[2]

In the meantime a formidable force had been organised by Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd in the hilly tract to the west of Peshawar, for resisting the Sikhs, but we leave that to be dealt with in greater detail subsequently.

Ranjīt Singh added Ladakh to his kingdom in 1834 and repulsed an Afghān counter-attack on Peshāwar in 1837. In 1838, Ranjīt Singh agreed to the tripartite treaty with Lord Aukland and Shāh Shujʿā for restoration of the latter to the Afghān throne. Mahārājā Ranjīt Singh died on 27th June, 1839, and was succeeded by Kharak Singh. The Mahārājā's death, however, was followed by a series of palace revolutions, but the fate of the Punjab did not remain in suspense for long, and it had to fall i , line with the rest of India, after two Anglo-Sikh wars, under the British crown by the proclamation made at Lahore on 29th March, 1849.

Mahārājā Ranjīt Singh, the architect of the Sikh kingdom, possessed indomitable courage and exceptional martial virtues. Although an unlettered man, he kept

1. Qāzī Nūr Muhammad ; *Jang Namah*, p. 174
2. *District Gazetteer, Hazāra* (1907), p. 131

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himself well-informed and proved himself a capable ruler. He ruled in the name of Khālsa and followed religious observances punctually, yet, his rule can only be styled as an oppressive dictatorship. He enforced order in a country passing through chaotic conditions but he failed to establish a stable and orderly form of Government. Henry T. Prinsep's assessment of Ranjīt Singh's government, based on the reports of two contemporary officers[1] is particularly illuminating. He says : "With respect to the policy and internal government of Ranjeet Singh, the most remarkable feature is, the entire absence of anything like system or principle in his management."[2] The only concern of the government, it seems, was to mobilise resources for maintaining a large army, which, like a plague of locusts in a country ate up everything. Dīwān Sāwan Mall, governor of Multān, Dera Ghāzī Khān, Kāngrā and Jhang was the best of all the Mahārājā's administrators. Yet, according to O'Brien, his government's sole objective was the accumulation of wealth for the Diwān.[3] Another officer, Piāre Mal, was appointed by the governor of Hazārā, Sardār Tejā Singh, as *Kārdār* of the district in 1840. He leased out the country in heavy farms (*ijārās*) for a sum of Rupees four lakhs. At the time plentiful farming leases were given out, grain was dear ; an unusually plentiful harvest followed ; grain became suddenly cheaper ; the lessees absconded ; but Piāre Mal collected every rupee that he could squeeze out of the occupants. The severities resorted to by him were extreme, and caused great distress and panic among the people[4]. The report of yet another historian, Lepel Griffin, shows that what Piāre Mal did was not an unusual practice. "The Sikhs often actually took as

1. One of them, Captain Murray, was Political Agent at Ambāla and, the other, Captain Wade, his assistant at Ludhiānā. In 1830, they sent these reports to be laid before Lord William Bentinck. The former also prepared a separate report on the Manners, Rules and Customs of the Sikhs.
2. *Origin of Sikh Power in the Punjab*, p. 182
3. *L. Griffin ; Ranjīt Singh* ; p. 150
4. *District Gazatteer*, Hazārā (1907) p. 30

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much as one-half of the gross produce of an estate," writes Griffin, "besides multitudes of cesses."[1] Of the additional taxes, one was *Sawāee Jamā*, or extraordinary impost levied in cash on every village, under different names on a variety of pretexts. Then, there was *Kār-begār* or the impress of labour of the inhabitants without recompense.[2]

Mahārājā Ranjīt Singh had failed even to set up any organisation for the administration of justice in his dominions. A biographer of the Mahārājā has observed that "there was no written law. Still some sort of justice was dealt out.....Justice was not so much a national as a local concern. It was left to the feudatories but as they were men of locality they could not go far. 'Custom and carpice were the substitutes of legal codes.' Fines were levied in almost all cases. Imprisonment was unknown and capital punishments were rare, in distant and disturbed provinces like Peshāwar and Hazārā, however, the case was different."[3] This description is confirmed by two contemporary reports. One of these by Henry T. Prinsep says : "It cannot be said that Ranjit Singh has given to the Punjab any constitution or fixed form of government. There is no law, written or oral, and no courts of justice have anywhere been established."[4] The other one, by Captain Murray, reads : "In the Sikh States, the administration of civil and criminal justice is vested in the Sirdārs, or chiefs. Crimes and trespasses, as in the middle ages, are atoned for by money : the fines are unlimited by any rule, and generally levied arbitrarily according to the means of the offender, whose property is attached, and the family placed under restraint to enforce payment."[5]

In making an estimate of the Sikh rule over Punjab and the adjoining areas we should note in particular the relations

1. *Griffin*, p. 145
2. *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab*, p. 213
3. *N. K. Sinha* ; *Ranjit Singh* ; p. 146
4. *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab*, p. 182
5. *Ibid.*, p. 195

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between the government and its Muslim subjects. There is little doubt that Mahārājā Ranjīt Singh was not a bigot bent upon destroying the Muslims. We find a number of Muslims like Faqir ʿAzīz-ud-dīn, Nūr-ud-dīn and Khudā Yār Khān Tiwānā occupying prominent positions in his court. But the pick of the Mahārājā's forces consisted of 'Akālīs', the immortals, or rather the soldiers of God, who claimed for themselves a direct institution by Gurū Govind Singh.[1] They had taken upon themselves something of the authority of censors, or guardians of public morality and defenders of the Sikh commonwealth. Akālīs were formed into a band of irregular cavalry, retaining their own peculiar equipment and picturesque blue dress and bracelets of steel; and when their ravages began regular troops had to be employed to bring them back.[2] The Akālīs took offence even to the performance of normal religious functions by the Muslims. The attack on Metcalfe's escort merely because some of the Muslim employees of the British envoy had taken out a *tʿāzia*, is a case in point.[3] It is, therefore, not surprising if they, taking themselves as the true followers of Gurū Govind Singh, nursed a feeling of revenge against the Muslims. It was, perhaps, because of their predominant influence that the Sikh tradition deemed it unlawful to salute the Muslims, to associate with them or make peace with them on any terms[4]. It is also noteworthy that despite the Mahārājā's tolerance towards Muslims, conceivably, more in the interest of the administration rather than due to any enlightened sentiment, he could not carry much weight with his people in diffusing that spirit of catholicity. Indeed, the Mahārājā was afraid of interfering too closely with the Akālīs for they were supposed to be sacred men[5] and wielded tremendous influence over public opinion.

The excesses committed in times of war, a brief reference

1. *Cunningham*, p. 110
2. *N. K. Sinha*, p. 136
3. *Griffin*, p. 136
4. *Ibid.*, p. 114
5. *Ibid.*, p. 135

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to some of which has been made by us earlier, can be condoned as acts committed during an hour of savage licence, when every passion is inflamed and every restraint removed ; and when the impassioned soldiery can hardly be amenable to chivalrous forbearance. But in times of peace, too, every insult was heaped on Muslims. The ways of Muslims were considered so detestable that the Sikhs were forbidden to wear caps to dissociate them from Muslims even in dress. The Mahārājā had found it necessary to prohibit the call to prayer by the *Muezzin*, as it aroused the Akālīs to fury.[1] Another writer, Kanhaiya Lal, thus relates the woeful state of the great Bādshāhī Mosque of Lahore : "During the days when emperors ruled, this mosque had costly chandeliers and carpets worth lakhs of rupees. But when the times changed, and Sikhs came into power, it was converted into a residence for the troopers and artillerymen; the chambers were utilized for storing gunpowder;[2] and the mosque was even relieved of its stone slab flooring."[3] Another mosque at the Masti Gate was converted into a factory for manufacturing gunpowder, and it came to be known as gunpowder mosque[4]. According to Kanhaiya Lal, desecration and demolition of the mosques of which few, indeed, had escaped destruction,[5] had become a common feature under the Sikh rule. Thousands of mosques were demolished and converted into residential buildings.[6] Sunehrī Masjid or Golden Mosque was built by Roshan-ud-daula Zafar Khān during the reign of Mohammad Shāh (1719-1748). The story narrated about this beautiful mosque with golden cupolas reveals the mood and temper of the

1. *Griffin*, p. 136
2. The statement of Kanhaiya Lal is confirmed by Major G. Carmichael Smyth who says that during the reign of Sher Singh, who succeeded Ranjit Singh, the Bādshāhi Mosque contained a magazine of powder stored in wooden boxes, skins, etc. There was at least five thousand maunds of powder in the mosque. (*A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore*, p. 54).
3. Kanhaiya Lal ; *Tārīkh-i-Lahore*, p. 143
4. *Ibid.*, p. 146
5. Malcolm : *A Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 124
6. *Tārīkh-i-Lahore*, p. 350

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government and populace towards Muslims.

During the initial days of Mahārājā Ranjit Singh's reign, nobody cared to raise any objection against the existence of this mosque. But when the edifice near its well was erected and *Adi Granth* enshrined in it, the Akālis and priests started conceiving designs to grab the mosque. They complained to the Mahārājā that the Mullā of the mosque gives call to prayer loudly which disturbs them. The Golden Mosque should, they demanded, be either handed over to them or demolished, for, a mosque could in no circumstances be tolerated in the vicinity of a *gurūdwāra*. The Maharājā lost no time in passing the order that the *Mullā* should be turned out and the *Adi Granth* be placed in the Golden Mosque. The poor *Mullā* was chased out, cow-dung was plastered to consecrate it, and *Adi Granth* was placed in it with due honour. The shops attached to the Mosque were also appropriated in favour of the *gurūdwāra*. The dejected Muslims of the city led a deputation to Faqir ʿAziz-ud-din and Nūr-ud-din, who were fortunate enough to have the Mahārājā's ears, for restoration of the Mosque. The two Faqir brothers called upon the Mahārājā and submitted that nowhere in the whole of Punjab, can any *Mullā* dare to call out the faithful for prayers in a loud voice. It was, therefore, definitely inconceivable that the *Mullā* of the Golden Mosque should have the audacity of committing that error. They further promised to take a pledge from the *Mullā* never to give the call loudly in future. The Mahārājā was, at last, persuaded to order restoration of the Golden Mosque to the Muslims but he awarded the shops attached to the Mosque to remain in possession of the keepers of *gurudwāra*. For the Muslims considered it to be a great achievement, they thought it wise to take possession of the Mosque and forgo the shops attached to it.[1]

A Muslim was thus required to avoid all publicity in the exercise of his faith, to which any Akālī was likely to take offence. His life and property were spared in times of peace, but he was always exposed to violence from licentious armed bands which occasionally made plundering raids.[2] This state of affairs in the predominantly Muslim inhabited areas like Peshāwar is demonstrated by the accounts left by several historians. One, Captain James, wrote about the frontier and Peshāwar as follows—

The periodical visits of the Sikhs were calamitous to the people: their approach was the signal for the removal of property and valuables, and even of the window and door frames from the houses. Crowds of women and children fled frightened from their houses, and the country

1. *Tārikh-i-Lahore*, pp. 150-51
2. *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab*, p. 213

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presented the appearance of an emigrating colony. As the hated host advanced they overran the neighbourhood, pillaging and destroying whatever came within their reach and laying waste the fields. There is scarce a village from the head of the valley to the Indus which has not been burnt and plundered by the Sikh commander. His visitations were held in such awe that his name was used by mothers as a term of affright, to hush their unruly children, and at the present day in travelling through the country, old greybeards with many scars, point out the hills over which they were chased like sheep by the Singh, and young men show where their fathers fought and fell. Destruction was so certain that the few villages which from the extreme difficulty of their position were either passed by the enemy, or, resisting attack, were but partially destroyed, claimed a triumph and came to be looked upon as invincible.[1]

Similar was the condition of other areas too. Carmichael Smyth laments over the pitiable condition of Kashmirīs.

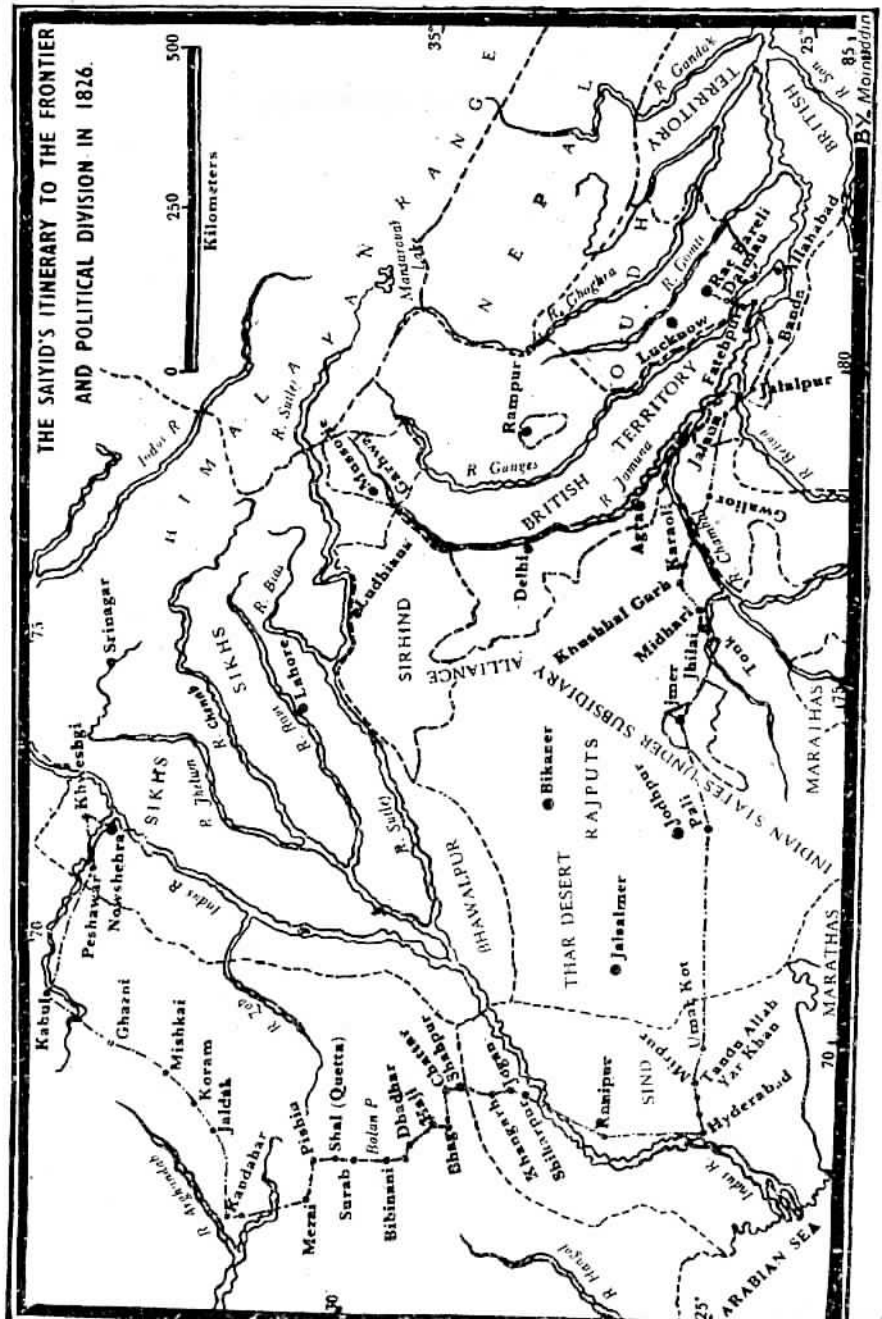
All those who have heard, and 'Oh, who has not heard of the vale of Cashmere', must have observed that every traveller who visited that place since it fell into the hands of Ranjit Singh, has heard the unfortunate inhabitants cry out against the oppression of the Seik Chieftain, and now their falling in the power of Goolab Singh is like escaping from Scylla into Charybdis.[2]

It is thus no wonder if Olaf Caroe, an ex-governor of the North-West Frontier Province, found the people of that province, after the lapse of a century, still referring to *Sikha Shāhī*—the Sikh Rule—as a synonym for mismanagement.[3] So, these were the circumstances, horrible as well as heart-rending, in which the Yūsufza'ī chiefs petitioned to Sardār Yār Muhammad Khān and Sardār Sultān Muhammad Khān, the Chiefs of Peshawar, in January, 1827, informing them of their lamentable condition in these words.

The calamity that has befallen the Muslims of this country, at the hands of the infidels, these days ; the way they are put to sword, humbled and insulated : their places of worship desecrated and despoiled are not unknown either to the learned or to the dolts. Numberless women and children in the Punjab, caught in the whirlpool of the pagans' tyranny, recite thess words of God with tears in their eyes : 'O Lord ! Bring us forth from out of this town of which the people are oppressors! Oh, give us from Thy presence some protecting friend ! Oh, give us from Thy presence some defender !' (iv : 57)."[4]

1. *Griffin*, pp. 146-47
2. *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore*, p. 20
3. *The Pathans*, p. 298
4. *Sīrat Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, Vol. I, p. 397

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THE SAIYID'S ITINERARY TO THE FRONTIER
AND POLITICAL DIVISION IN 1826.
Kilometers
0
250
500
BY Moinuddin
HIMALAYAN RANGE
NEPAL
OUDH
TERRITORY
BRITISH
TERRITORY
SIKHS
SIRHIND
ALLIANCE
BHAWALPUR
THAR DESERT
RAJPUTS
INDIAN STATES UNDER SUBSIDIARY
MARATHAS
SIND
ARABIAN SEA
Kabul
Ghazni
Mishkai
Koram
Jaldak
Kandahar
Peshawar
Nowshehra
Khyesbgi
Srinagar
Attock
Rohtas
Pishin
Shal (Quetta)
Sarab
Bibinani
Dhadhar
Bhag
Shikarpur
Sukkur
Khairpur
Shahgarh
Shahpur
Kaniput
Mirpur
Umarkot
Tando Allab Yar Khan
Hyderabad
Jaisalmer
Bikaner
Jodhpur
Pali
Ajmer
Jhilai
Midhari
Khushhal Garh
Karoli
Agra
Delhi
Ludhiana
Lahore
Multan
Jhelum
Gujrat
Rampur
Lucknow
Fatehpur
Rae Bareli
Daudan
Allahabad
Banda
Jalaun
Jalalpur
Gwalior
Chanbal
Toork
Manasarowar Lake
R. Ganges
R. Jumna
R. Sutlej
R. Indus
R. Kabul
R. Jhelum
R. Chenab
R. Ravi
R. Beas
R. Sutlej
R. Ghaghra
R. Gandak
R. Gumti
R. Son
R. Chambal
R. Betwa
R. Tapti
R. Narbada
R. Mahi
R. Sabarmati
R. Luni
R. Hakra
R. Ravi
R. Indus
R. Zob
R. Gomal
R. Kurram
R. Swat
R. Kabul
R. Indus
Indus R.
Indus R.
Indus R.

Before the Saiyid departed from Gwālior, Hindū Rāo threw a dinner party in honour of the Saiyid and presented him with a robe of honour. At Gwālior the Saiyid divided his force into five detachments: The main column with which the Saiyid was himself attached was put under the command of Maulvī Muhammad Yūsuf of Phulat; the advance column was placed under Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl; the two flanking detatchments were commanded by Saiyid Muhammad Yāqūb[1] and Amjad Khān; and the rear-guard responsible for protecting the supply convoys was headed by Allah Bakhsh Khān. The responsibility for providing beasts of burden was entrusted to Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl and Saiyid Muhammad Yāqūb. These detachments marching in an orderly manner passed through Karaolī where Hāji Jalāl-ud-dīn of Lucknow detained the Saiyid for a day. A large number of persons offered themselves for *biʿat* at Karaolī.

The Saiyid arrived at Tonk thirteen days after leaving Gwālior. Mawāb Amīr Khān himself came out of the town to receive the Saiyid and made arrangements for the stay of *mujāhidīn* in different parts of the city. The Saiyid remained in Tonk for about a month as a guest of the Nawāb. The Nawāb, his son Wazīr Muhammad Khān and several other high ranking officials, including Risāldār ʿAdul Hamīd Khan and a large number of troopers and civilians entered into the spiritual fold of the Saiyid. Risāldār ʿAbdul Hamīd, hailing from Rāmpūr, was a gallant Pathān of easy virtue, fast and gay. While the Saiyid was departing from Tonk, he happened to come across him in the way and cut a joke on him. The Saiyid lifted up his eyes to get a glance at him, smiled and said, "Khān Sāhib, come in! Take oath of allegiance on my hands." ʿAbdul Hamīd atonce turned round, took the *biʿat* and followed the Saiyid on foot like a servant throughout the journey. Nawāb Amīr Khān accompanied the Saiyid up to Jhalānā. The Saiyid sent

1. Son of Saiyid Ibrāhim, he was a nephew of the Saiyid

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back Saiyid ʿAbdul Rahmān, Saiyid Muhammad Yāqūb and Saiyid Zainul ʿAbidīn along with the Nawāb so that they might bring his family to Tonk as desired by the Nawāb. The Saiyid's party marched on to Ajmer and thence to Pāli, a town on the border of Mewār. At both these places a large number of persons were administered oaths of fealty by him.

Beyond Pāli up to Amarkot, on the borders of Sind, lay the sterile, sandy and inhospitable country of Mārwār or 'the region of death' as the name implies. The country is a dreary waste covered with sand dune hills, rising sometimes to 100 or 120 metres and the desolation becomes more absolute and marked when one proceeds westwards towards the Sind. Dusty, dry, unchanged, the land lies under the grilling sun, and between heaven and earth there is nothing but dust. As the traditional maxim goes, there are more spears here than spear-grass heads, and blades of steel grow better than blades of corn. The entire area resembles an undulating sea of sand ; and an occasional oasis is met with, but water is exceedingly scarce, constantly failing and turning brackish. The heat is intense and scorching winds prevail with great violence from April to June although hot season is not uncommon in the area even during October and November. It is a land ruled by death where sands suck in beast and men. The Saiyid had to cover about 450 Km. of this desolate land. He left Pālī by the middle of Ramadhān or the third week of April, 1826. His letter describing the journey speaks of the travel through Mārwār as extremely fatiguing which was rendered hazardous owing to scarcity of water coupled with the dearth of fodder. *ʿId* was celebrated at Sorāha, thirteen days after leaving Pālī. It was an uncommon spectacle for the local inhabitants to see such a large number of persons treading that perilous desert. At many places they fled in terror taking the *mujāhidīn* to be robbers. They returned only after they were fully assured of the good intention of the caravan. Towards the latter half of the journey, precautions had to be taken against the depradations of Khosa Baluchs who were a

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constant terror for the local population and wayfarers.[1]

Amarkot lay within the territories of the Amīrs of Sind but as the Mahārājā of Jodhpur also laid his claim over it, everybody coming from Jodhpur was looked upon with suspicion by the governor of Amarkot. The Saiyid and his companions were accordingly not permitted to enter the city. After a few days when the Saiyid reached the place named Karo, he was informed by Saiyid Joran Shāh, an old man commanding respect of the local population for his piety, that the reason for the distrust of the Sindhīs was that they thought him to be a spy of the British. Saiyid Jorān Shāh also took the trouble of going to Mīrpūr in order to inform ʿAlī Murād, the ruler of Mīrpūr, about the purpose of the Saiyid's journey but the latter does not appear to have been satisfied ; for, instead of meeting the Saiyid, he sent some presents to him and provided guides to lead his caravan to Tandu Allahyār.

The next stopover was at Hyderābād, the capital of the Shāhdād family which held sway over a greater part of Sind. After death of Mīr Fateh ʿAlī in 1801 and Mīr Ghulām ʿAli in 1811, the two surviving brothers, Mir Karam ʿAlī and Mīr Murād ʿAlī ruled over the country as regents of Mīr Muhammad, son of Mīr Fateh ʿAlī. Both the brothers received the Saiyid with all due respect and consented to allow the family of the Saiyid to take up residence at Hyderābād. They expressed admiration for the lofty object for which the Saiyid was leading the *mujāhidīn* to the frontier but, strangely enough, they showed little enthusiasm in joining or actively supporting him against the common enemy. However a large number of persons including some of the high officials and nobles took the *biʿat* on the hands of the Saiyid[2]. But, it seems, the Saiyid was not satisfied by the lukewarm support he got at Hyderābād, for he dropped the idea of settling his dependants at Hyderābād,[3] and left the city on the 11th June, 1826, for Rānipūr by the way

1. *Maktūbāt*, pp. 122-135
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 142-148
3. *Ibid.*, letter of Saiyid Hamid-ud-din

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of Kotri, Kot Saiyid, Lalū Kot and Mallā Kot.

At Rānīpūr the Saiyid was received by Saiyid Sibghat Ullah,[1] a highly respected mystic with several hundred thousand Sindhī and Baluchī followers. Saiyid Sibghat Ullah invited the Saiyid to Pīrkot, where the latter stayed for 13 days. The Saiyid also sent a courier to Tonk with the instructions to bring his dependants to Pīrkot, where they remained even after his death. Saiyid Sibghat Ullah extended full support to the Saiyid in his venture ; he not only preached *jihād* and asked his followers to join the Saiyid, but also expressed his willingness to accompany him. He was, however, asked by the Saiyid to remain at Pīrkot and, if possible, harass the Sikhs from the south[2].

Crossing the river Sind and its tributaries at Pīrkot, the Saiyid moved on to Shikārpūr. It was then a populous city and business centre of Upper Sind. The Mīrs of Sind had taken possession of the city only three years back after the defeat of Shāh Shujʿā by his brother Mahmūd Shāh. Shāh Shujʿā had taken refuge with the British at Ludhiānā, but he was still planning to regain his possessions in Sind and to recover Afghanistan. The Saiyid's arrival at Shikārpūr with a large party set afloat the rumour that Shāh Shujʿā had come back to re-take the possession of Shikārpūr. Accordingly, Mīr Kāzim, the governor of the city, closed the doors of the city but after a few days, his fears were allayed and he took the oath of fealty to the Saiyid.

To the north of Shikārpūr lay the difficult sandy and hilly tracts, totally devoid of bushes or vegetation of any sort, where marauders hovered along the line of march. Scarcity of water was the greatest problem during the hot season, but as snowfall was to soon commence in Afghanistan blocking access to that country, the Saiyid decided

1. Saiyid Sibghat Ullah was the son and successor of a *Qādiriyah* Sheikh, Saiyid Muhammad Rāshid, who had several hundred thousand disciples in Sind. He became the first Pir Pagaro, whose successors started the famous *Hur* movement and rebelled against the British Government.
2. *Maktūbāt*, letter to Saiyid Sibghat Ullah Sindhi

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to continue the journey. Of the 115 camels with him, about half were already much fatigued and unable to go any further, but only 12 animals were available at Shikārpūr to replace them. It was, therefore, decided to sell or give away the heavy stores. The Saiyid left Shikārpūr on 20th July, 1826, with a hearty send off by the local population, many of whom promised to join the *jihād* later on. At Jogan, the Saiyid stayed, for four days, awaiting the arrival of Saiyid Anwar Shāh, a respectable Sheikh of Amritsar from Bhāwalpūr. He had been mal-treated and put under house arrest by Ranjīt Singh for converting a Sikh to Islam. The Saiyid had deputed Hājī Yūsuf Kāshmīrī, from Fatehpur, to secure his release. Hājī Yūsuf Kashmīrī was successful in taking him out of confinement and conducting him to Bhāwalpūr.[1] In the meantime torrential rains had mitigated, to an appreciable extent, the rigours of travel in the parched tract ahead.

Travelling by way of Khān Garh, Shāhpur, Chattar and Bhāg, the Saiyid's caravan reached Dhādhar safely on the 5th August, 1826, which led to Bolan Pass. Along the bed of the Bolan river, the channel of which is the only road, with a total length of 88 kms, runs a stream of clear water, from nine to twelve metres broad and about one metre in depth, crossing the road six times. During the floods, the stream, which is in some places confined between steep precipices, would preclude the possibility of escape to an army caught in the torrent. The mountains on every side are the most abrupt, sterile, and inhospitable, where not a blade of vegetation of any kind is found. The mountains are as repulsive in appearance as they are barren in character, being everywhere of a dull and uniform brown colour. In this setting of monstrous desolation, the only sign of life are the camels, goats and sheep travelling to and from the plains, or the little tufted birds, sand coloured like the earth in which they live. In summer, the heat in the lower parts of the Pass is extremely trying. In winter the fall of snow

1. *Maktūbāt*, pp. 172-75

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is followed by a heavy wind which blows through the passes in blasts of icy bitterness.

The absence of vegetation throughout the Pass, which was covered by the Saiyid's party in seven marches, rendered it unavoidable to take with them as much food and forage as could be carried. To guard against the attacks by bands of robbers, for whom the passes afforded suitable hiding places where they could lie in ambush, the matchlock bearers were kept in the front, the weak and the stores were placed in the middle of the convoy and the Saiyid himself joined the guards in the rear. They had to pass through narrow defiles, at places not more than fifty to sixty metres in width, and commanded by perpendicular scraps on both sides, from thirty to a hundred metres high ; the road being studded with loose pebbles and large stones, which proved much trying both to men and the camels. Certain sections of the Pass had a steep and heavy ascent which was surmounted with considerable labour. The valley widened towards the other end of the Pass, presenting a surface totally devoid of stones as well as water. The rise up to the plain on the other side, although almost imperceptible, yielded a considerable height, with the climate changing from hot summer to biting cold.

The townsmen and the administrator of Shāl, now known as Quetta, received the Saiyid's party with open arms and many of them offered themselves to be enlisted for *jihād*. The territory on this side of the Pass was ruled by the Khān of Kalāt, Mahrāb Khān, who was at loggerheads with the rulers of Kandahār. When the Saiyid reached Quetta, the Kandahār armies had taken position under ʿAbdullah Khān Durrānī at Mezʾaī about 90 kms. north of Quetta, while the forces of Kalāt had advanced to Mastang, 25 kms. south west of the city to check their advance. The Saiyid sent a deputation under Saiyid Anwar Shāh and 20 others to Mastang to see Mullā Fateh Muhammad Ākhund, the commander of Kalāt forces to seek his permission for proceeding to Kandahār. After the permission was obtained by Mullā Fateh Muhammad Ākhund from the Khān of Kalāt,

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the Saiyid's envoy marched on to Saddaza'ī to seek a similar permission from ʿAbdullah Khān Durrānī for passing through Kandahār. He reached Kandahār on his way to Peshāwar on the 1st September, 1826. Thousands of Kandāhārīs showed their willingness to accompany the Saiyid for *jihād* but owing to the opposition of Barākza'ī brothers, specially, Par Dil Khān, ruling over Kandahār, only 270 persons were allowed to enlist themselves as *mujāhidīn*. Another tribe, Ghalza'ī, offered a force several thousand strong to his service but as the tribe had a long-standing enmity with the Durrānīs, the Saiyid did not consider it prudent to accept their offer, and asked them to join later on when he had started the *jihād*. The Saiyid arrived at Ghaznī on the 25th September and at Kābul on the 3rd October, 1826, where he was received with open arms by Sultān Mahammad Khān. All along the route, the local population welcomed the Saiyid openheartedly with the hospitability for which Afghāns are rightly celebrated. On reaching Kābul he was given a state reception by Mullā Hājī Mullā ʿAlī with a detachment of 50 cavalry and infantry. Inside the city a rousing reception was accorded by the citizens who had lined up all along the route to welcome the Saiyid.

We have already noticed how Afghānistān had been divided by the Bārakza'ī brothers amongst themselves. Kandahār was then ruled jointly by the five brothers, Par Dil Khān, Sher Dil Khan, Kuhn Dil Khān, Rahm Dil Khān and Mehr Dil Khān ; Ghazni fell to the lot of Mīr Muhammad Khān; Kābul was presided over by Dost Muhammad Khān ; Yār Muhammad Khān held the reins of government at Peshāwar ; Sultān Muhammad Khān[1] gained a hold upon Kohāt ; and Said Muhammad Khān kept a tight hand over Hashtnagar. The confederacy of Bārakza'ī brothers, popularly known as Durrānīs, acknowledged nominal supremacy of their eldest brother Muhammad ʿAzīm Khān but internal dissensions and jealousies prevented them from setting up a united and stable Government in Afghānistān. The Saiyid

1. He was the ancestor of the present Afghān ruling family. President Daūd Khān is his great-grandson.

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prolonged his stay in Kābul for forty-five days to bring about some sort of adjustment between the Durrānīs but his efforts were not rewarded with success. In a letter he wrote : "I remained at Kābul for forty-five days in the hope that I would find a way to patch-up their differences, but at last, when I saw no hope of success in my efforts, I left the city."[1] From another letter sent by Sultān Muhammad Khān to the Saiyid it transpires that he had promised to afford regular financial assistance to the Saiyid.[2] Another letter of Said Muhammad Khān shows that he had also presented some horses and money and provided guides for the Saiyid's journey onwards to Peshāwar.[3] It seems that the Saiyid left Kābul on the 15th or 16th of November and travelling by the way of Jalālābād, he arrived at Peshāwar after five days. Writing about the journey to Peshāwar, the Saiyid wrote in one of his letters that "the warmhearted reception accorded to us in this journey was marked by the same love and affection as shown to us by the Muslims of other places."[4]

The sojourn of the Saiyid at Peshāwar lasted for three days only during which he preached *jihād*. Thereafter, crossing the river Landai at Chamkani Ghāt, he headed towards Chārsadda in Hashtnagar. The news of the Saiyid's arrival in that area for waging the holy war had, by that time, spread like wild fire. It had raised the spirits of the Yūsufza'īs and other Pathāns which had been lowered by the crushing defeat they and the Peshawar Sardārs had received from Ranjīt Singh a few years back at the battle of Akora, when the whole country up to Khaibar Pass had been plundered by the Sikhs. The Saiyid's arrival in Chārsadda was something of a triumphal progress for thousands of men, women and children had gathered to have a glimpse of him. The saddle cloth of his dromedary was torn into shreds by the women, each of whom wanted to return home with her portion of the sacred relic.

1. *Manzooratus So'ada'*, vol. I, p. 316
2. *Makātib Shāh Ismā'īl*, p. 113
3. *Makātib Shāh Ismā'īl*, p. 314
4. *Maktūbāt*, p. 222

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The enthusiastic reception accorded to the Saiyid and his followers at Chārsadda was matched with their abject poverty, as if a gift from God, to save them from assuming airs. Soon after the *mujāhidīn* had pitched their tents, Maulvī Muhammad Yūsuf approached the Saiyid to tell him that there were absolutely no provisions available that day to satisfy the pangs of hunger. The Saiyid kept brooding over the matter for a few moments, then said, "Don't care. Whose creature they are shall provide for their sustenance." Then, he added, "We should have some utensils for cooking food. Pawn them and purchase some foodgrains for the present. We shall see what can be done later on." The flour thus procured and distributed equally to all was only one third of the ration the *mujāhidīn* normally used to get on other days.

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd had come all the way from Rae Bareli, trekking nearly 24,000 Km. over deserts, hills and forests to the Yūsufzaʾīs to rescue the Muslims of the Punjab groaning under the tyrannical rule of Ranjit Singh, and to re-implant the banner of Islam over India. The independence-loving Yūsufzaʾīs, brave, hospitable and hardy, inhabit the territories nearest to the natural borders of Indian sub-continent, in the northern portion of Peshāwar and Hazārā districts and beyond, from the Black Mountain on the eastern banks of the Indus to the east of river Kunar, above river Kabul. As the tradition would have it, these tribes are said to have descended from one, Mand, who had two sons, ʿUmar and Yūsuf. ʿUmar died leaving one son, Mandanr ; and from Mandanr and Yūsuf are the two primary divisions of Yūsufzaʾīs, from which sprang up all the sub-divisions. Of these, the Hassanzaʾīs, Akazaʾīs and Chagharzaʾīs occupy the western slopes of the Black Mountain lying to the east of the Indus. Between the Black Mountain and the Utmān Khel territory, live the Mada Khels and Amazaʾīs, adjoining the territory of Amb ; to the south of the Amazaʾī reside the Utmānzaʾī ; to their west the cis-Indus Gadūns with a larger portion in the Hazārā district known as Jadūn ; and beyond them come the Khudu Khel

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occupying the south-western slopes of Mahāban range. To the north-east of Khudu Khel settlements is the valley of Chamla, inhabited by a mixed population of different tribes, and separated from Buner by the Gurū range of mountains. Buner itself is held by two main sections of Nūrīza'ī and Salārza'ī Yūsufza'īs. Next to Buner come the tribes that hold the Swāt valley. Perpetually fighting with one another, these tribes made temporary alliances as easily as they broke them. Pillage and cattle raising being the principal means of sustenance in these arid hills, tribe fell upon the tribe at the least provocation. Every tribe had some enemy which it must fight, and every Pathān must constantly be on the look out for a possible enemy with whom his tribe might have a blood-feud. The life was hard and filled with danger for the free Pathān who had no State or law to protect him. He must look to his tribe as the sole guardian—a State, family and party, all combined into one. For the protection of its members against all aliens and enemies was the duty of the tribe, every individual must slavishly submit to it and honour its customs and usages which had grown over the ages.

A day after the Saiyid's arrival in this area, Muhammad Khān, the younger brother of Sultān Muhammad Khān, ruling over Bālā Hissār on behalf of his brother, called upon him with a swarming crowd to get them enlisted as his spiritual disciples. As it was difficult to go through the initiation ceremony with each man separately, the Saiyid unrolled a piece of cloth to be held by everyone taking the oath. The same day a spy of Budh Singh Sindhanwalia was apprehended by the *mujahidīn*. Certain Pathāns wanted to put him to death, but the Saiyid forbade them to ill-treat him. The man confessed that he had been sent by Budh Singh Sindhanwalia to gather intelligence about his forces but the Saiyid sent him back safely to tell Budh Singh that he had come duty-bound by the command of his own Master to fight him, just as he was there under the orders of Ranjīt Singh. Budh Singh's spy, Shamsher Khān by name, was so impressed by the kind treatment of the Saiyid that he promised to return with complete intelligence of Budh

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Singh's forces.

Amīr Khān Khatak, the chief of Akora came next morning to swear fealty to the Saiyid. He told the Saiyid that his nephew Khawās Khān had rebelled against him and invited Budh Singh Sindhanwalia to Akora. If the Sikhs came across the river Landai, feared Amīr Khān, the whole of Samah country[1] would be laid waste by them. As Budh Singh Sindhanwalia had already reached Khairābād, no time was to be lost. The Saiyid immediately consented to move on to Nowshera where he could check the advance of Budh Singh. He proceeded, with about 1,500 *mujāhidīn*, to Khweshgī, a small village north of the Kabul river between Nowshera and Chārsadda, on the 17th December, 1826 and entered Nowshera the next day. By that time Budh Singh had reached Akora, a few miles above Attock, about 12 Kilometers from Nowshera on the west bank of river Landai. With the enemy bivouacked so near, the *mujāhidīn* were asked to take food hurriedly and hold themselves in readiness for action. Simultaneously the Saiyid got an ultimatum[2] sent to the enemy in which he offered them the usual alternatives as required under the sacred Law for waging a holy war, *viz* :—

(1) The acceptance of Islam by the enemy in which case they would become brothers and citizens of the Muslim State.

(2) The payment of poll-tax, by which the enemy obtains protection and becomes *zimmi*.[3]

(3) In case the above alternatives were not acceptable to them, then the sword was to decide the issue between the two parties.

The declaration added that before choosing the third alternative, it should be borne in mind by the enemy that the

1. The territory lying between the Indus and the foot of Frontier hills. Peshāwar and Mardān are situate in this valley.
2. *Sawāneh Ahmadī*, p. 126
3. One whom, as a non-Muslim, the Muslim State undertakes to protect and extend citizenship rights on payment of *jizya* or poll-tax in lieu of exemption from military service.

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*mujāhidīn* had the whole of Pathāns and Indian Muslims at their back, and that they held death dearer than the other party was fond of beverage.

The ultimatum sent by the Saiyid to Budh Singh Sindhanwalia signified that he had not come to wage a war of aggression like the conquerors or soldiers of fortune. He meant to declare that redemption of the oppressed Muslims of the Punjab rather than winning a piece of land or booty of war was his objective. He considered himself duty-bound, by the precepts of his religion, to fight for his harassed brethren who were not allowed to breathe freely in their land of birth. Suppression of the freedom of thought and conscience, placing obstruction in the propagation of truth and violation of the sanctity of religious conventions is regarded by Islam as destructive of all values of justice, virtue and goodness. Elimination of such tyrannical forces was a duty incumbent on the Saiyid, but the despatch of an ultimatum before starting hostilities was designed to afford an opportunity to the oppressor to understand his purpose and respond to his call for restoring justice and cooperating with him in the establishment of a just and equitable political order necessary for the peace and progress of humanity. At the same time, the Saiyid undertook, by the token of his compliance with the Islamic law of *jihād*, to abide by its moral injunctions which regulate and mitigate the rigours of war. Following the law of Islam regulating the declaration of hostilities, the ultimatum sent by the Saiyid was perhaps the first in India after the conquest of Sind by the Arabs.

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Ten

# Election of the Amir-ul-Muminin

THE number of Budh Singh Sindhanwalia's force was estimated between 7000 and 10,000 with eight guns.[1] Other notable generals accompanying Budh Singh were Attar Singh and Lahna Singh who had thrown up a fencing of thorny bushes and fallen trees, known as *sangar*, to fortify their camp. The effective force at the disposal of the Saiyid, on the other hand, did not exceed 1,500 men, of which 500 were Hindustānīs, some 200 belonged to Kandahār and the rest were irregulars who had collected from the surrounding villages. This ill-equipped host had never had the experience of actual warfare and could not hope to face the experienced fighters of the Sikh Army. Also, being the first encounter between the Sikhs and those who were being hailed as deliverers of the persecuted Muslims, the outcome of the first battle was likely to be decisive in settling the attitude of the local tribes towards the *mujāhidīn*. Of a fact, victory in the first encounter was absolutely necessary for eliciting support of the Pathān tribesmen for the Saiyid's cause in future. Therefore, after due deliberations, it was decided that a night attack should be made at

1. Maulvi Muhammad Jʿafar gives the number as nine thousand (*Manzooratus Soʿada*ʾ, p. 193) while according to Mirzā Hairat the number was ten thousand (*Hayāt Tayyaba*, p. 62).

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Akora camp with the object of inflicting as much loss to the enemy as possible.

The Saiyid asked his commanders to present the lists of their men who could be detailed for action. He made a few changes in the lists. One of the persons dropped from the list was ʿAbdul Majīd Khān of Jahānābād ror being indisposed. As soon as he came to know of it, he came running to the Saiyid to tell him that but for slight temperature, he was all right to take part in the expedition. ʿAbdul Majīd Khān was allowed to join the expedition as he was anxious not to iniss the first encounter of the *jihād*. Soon after the sunset on the 20th December 1826, Allah Bakhsh Khān was nominated as commander of the expedition and directed to await, with a few men, the arrival of his force across the river Landai. After the *ʿishā* prayers, the rest of his men selected for the sally were collected. Before leading them to the riverside, the Saiyid asked those who found it difficult to take part in the raid, to drop out. The Saiyid then led the force, 900 in all, 186 of whom were Hindustānīs, 80 Kandahārīs and the remaining Pathān tribesmen, to the river where he bowed in prayer, saying . "O God our Lord ! Thou art the Powerful, the Generous and the only hope of Thy bondsmen. Here are Thy serfs, feeble and weak. Thou art the only Helper for they have none to succour them. They desire Thy pleasure alone and only Thou canst help them."

Guided by the scouts sent earlier by Allah Bakhsh Khān for reconnaissance of the enemy's position, the whole force quietly reached, taking advantage of the darkness, near Budh Singh's camp a little after midnight. Exactly at three, the *mujāhidīn* made a sudden attack with the cries of Allāh-o-Akbar. Almost at the same time, some one on guard duty in the camp opened fire which hit Sheikh Bāqar ʿAlī. Wounded seriously, he could not get up again, but he handed over his arms to one of his comrades.

The *mujāhidīn* started pulling down the tents and dealing death-blows to the straggling Sikh soldiers. ʿAbdul Majīd Khān of Rae Barelī, ʿAbdullah, the eunuch, Allah Bakhsh Khān, Shamsher Khān and many others cut down 10 to 15

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men each. In the general melee that ensued, a sizeable portion of the Sikh soldiery took to its heals. However, while the Hindustānī and Kandahārī *mujāhidīn* were following up the attack, the Pathān mountaineers got themselves busy in plunder and within a short time, most of them left the enemy camp with whatever spoils they could remove. In the meantime, certain *mujāhidīn* attacked the guns of the enemy. They had almost captured the guns when someone lighted a gun-powder torch, known as *ran-māhtāb*, in the light of which the Sikh soldiers running for their lives saw the handful number of persons mounting the attack. Taking heart by the small numbers of the *mujāhidīn*, the Sikhs called out their decamping comrades for making a counter-attack. As it was difficult for the small number of *mujāhidīn* to drive back the increasing host of the enemy, Allah Baksh Khān with 50 or 60 *mujāhidīn* tried to stave off the counter-attack, until Akbar Khān was able to retreat with the remaining *mujāhidīn*. Allah Bakhsh Khan died fighting gallantly alongwith a number of his comrades, but he was able to keep the Sikhs at bay, who were prevented from pursuing the retreating columns of the *mujāhidīn*.

By the time of day-break the *mujāhidīn* reached the river bank where they found the Saiyid awaiting their return. Leaving a detachment there to guard against the sally of the Sikhs, the Saiyid led the warriors back to his encampment. It was found that the casualties sustained by the Saiyid's followers were : 36 Hindustānīs and 46 Kandahārīs killed and 70 wounded. It is difficult to give the enemy's losses with any approach to accuracy, but they had been reduced to great distress[1]. Their numbers killed were estimated at 700.[2] The battle of Akora was fought on the 21st of December, 1826, as mentioned in a public notice issued in Oudh.[3]

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1. *Peshawar Gazetteer* (1883-84) p. 52 ; *Frontier and Overseas Expedition*, Vol. I, p. 209
2. Budh Singh suffered 500 casualties according to Griffin (*Ranjit Singh*, p. 211).
3. *Indian Musalmans*, pp. 14-15 ; *Manzooratus Soʿadaʾ*, vol. I, pp. 315-20

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Budh Singh Sindhanwalia moved his camp to Shaidu, between Akora and Jahāngīra and intended to retreat to Attock, but the commander of Attock fort prevailed upon him to fortify the encampment instead of breaking the camp. The Saiyid, on the other hand, marched with his force from Nowshera to a village Taur Dher, and from there to Hund, the old Waihind or Ohand, at the invitation of Khādī Khān. The place, on the right bank of river Sind, 27 Km. north-east of Attock, had a strong fortress by the side of the Indus. The Saiyid had moved to Hund, first, to guard against the possible surprise attack by the Sikhs who had begun re-inforcing the encampment at Shaidu, and secondly, to invite the Pathāns of the surrounding areas to join the *jihād*.

The brilliant victory won by the *Mujāhidīn* had raised the spirit of the Pathāns who, longing to free themselves from the oppression of Lahore Durbar, flocked around the Saiyid in large numbers. The Saiyid brought about a conciliation between Khādī Khān of Hund, Ashraf Khān of Zaida and Fateh Khān of Panjtār, all of whom pledged allegiance to the Saiyid. In the meantime, the Pathān sardārs proposed to the Saiyid that an expedition should be sent to Hazru, a business centre across the river Indus at a distance of about 9 Km. from Hund. The Saiyid, unwilling to take part in the venture, excused himself by saying that since the *mujāhidīn* wounded in the earlier combat were still convalescing, it would not be proper for him to send them on another expedition. However, on the insistence of the sardārs, he allowed them to organise the sortie themselves. None of the Hindustānī *mujāhidīn* joined this sally, but about forty Kandahārīs expressed the wish to accompany the mountaineers who set out the same night for a surprise attack on Hazru. The Kandahārīs captured the Sikh outpost, but the Pathān mountaineers started, as usual, to plunder the market. By the day-break all the mountaineers had left the place with the booty with the result that the Kandahārīs, too, had to vacate their possession. The retreating invaders were pursued by a party of about 15 to 20 Sikhs whose numbers soon swelled to 500. The Kandahāris, taking cover by the side of the river Abāsīn, tried to fend off the

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Sikh attack but the mountaineers hurriedly trying to make good with their loot caused a stampede with the result that a good number of them were drowned. The Saiyid had just performed the dawn prayer when the news of engagement between the Sikhs and the Kandahārīs at the river bank was communicated to him. He immediately despatched a party of the *mujāhidīn* with Saiyid Anwar Shāh at the head to help the Kandahārīs and himself rushed to the scene of action with the rest of his followers. Heavy fighting continued for the whole day, the Sikhs keeping up heavy fire from their gun *Shaheen* on the position of the *mujāhidīn*, but their attack was at last repulsed by the close of the day.

Khādi Khan's order to pool the plunder brought by the tribesmen enraged the latter to the point of breaking into mutiny, but the Saiyid saved the situation by asking Khādī Khān to withdraw his order. Three days after the Hazru expedition, a force consisting of two to three thousand Sikhs converged on the eastern bank of the river Abāsīn. The six field guns brought by the Sikhs kept up shelling the position taken by the *mujāhidīn* across the river, but courageous action by Ashraf Khān, the Pathān chief of Zaida, drove the Sikhs back with heavy losses.

The three engagements the *mujāhidīn* had had so far with the disciplined and well-equipped Sikh forces had established the valour of the *mujāhidīn* and gone a long way in animating the spirit of *jihād* in the tribesmen who had started collecting in thousands around the Saiyid. However, these encounters had also exposed the weakness of the ill-disciplined hill rabble. For ages the tribesmen on the north-western frontier of the Indian sub-continent have been subject to no law, leading a wild, free, active life in the rugged fastness of their mountains without any semblance of civil administration. Every tribe was divided and subdivided into numerous sections, each independent of the other, yielding but little obedience to its own petty headman : hating one another with the hatred begotten of generations of blood-feuds, and only uniting under the most exceptional circumstances against a common foe. But even

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such alliances more often proved to be temporary for these were thrown to winds at the slightest provocation or for petty selfish ends. The only way of waging war they knew was to sally forth to rob and murder their foes, and occasionally to take prisoners into captivity for ransom. Content with small profits and quick returns, a few casualties and half a dozen matchlocks and swords counted a rich prize for them, enough to leave the battle-field with the booty. Perpetually at war with one another, they had hereditary mutual hostility ; each tribe had a debtor and creditor account with its neighbours, life for life. Reckless of the life of others, they were not sparing of their own. In their eyes the one great commandment was revenge, blood for blood, and fire and sword for all who tried to cross swords with them.

Their zeal for religion could not be doubted but, for the most part, without any education, the hold of religion on their lives and morals was only nominal and it was not unoften that the preference for tribal customs overcame the demands of religion. Superstitious and simple hearted, avaricious and emotional, the surge of enthusiasm for the faith carried them away as easily as the envy and malice showed their heads destroying the righteous zeal.

A council of the Pathān and Hindustānī *ʿulama* and the tribal chiefs was convened to chalk out the future course of action. After much discussion, they at length agreed that the lack of collective discipline among the tribesmen made them unfit to stand against a determined charge, particularly if it was made by cavalry and supported by cannon fire. Views were expressed that if the mountaineers were to be engaged in future combats against the superior fire-power and disciplined regular force of the Sikhs, they would need to be brought under a unified command which could also prevent them from falling into internecine warfare. It was impressed by several speakers that the election of an *Imām* was not merely an expedient to meet the situation; it was really incumbent, according to the sacred law, to have an elected leader who could maintain the order of the law and

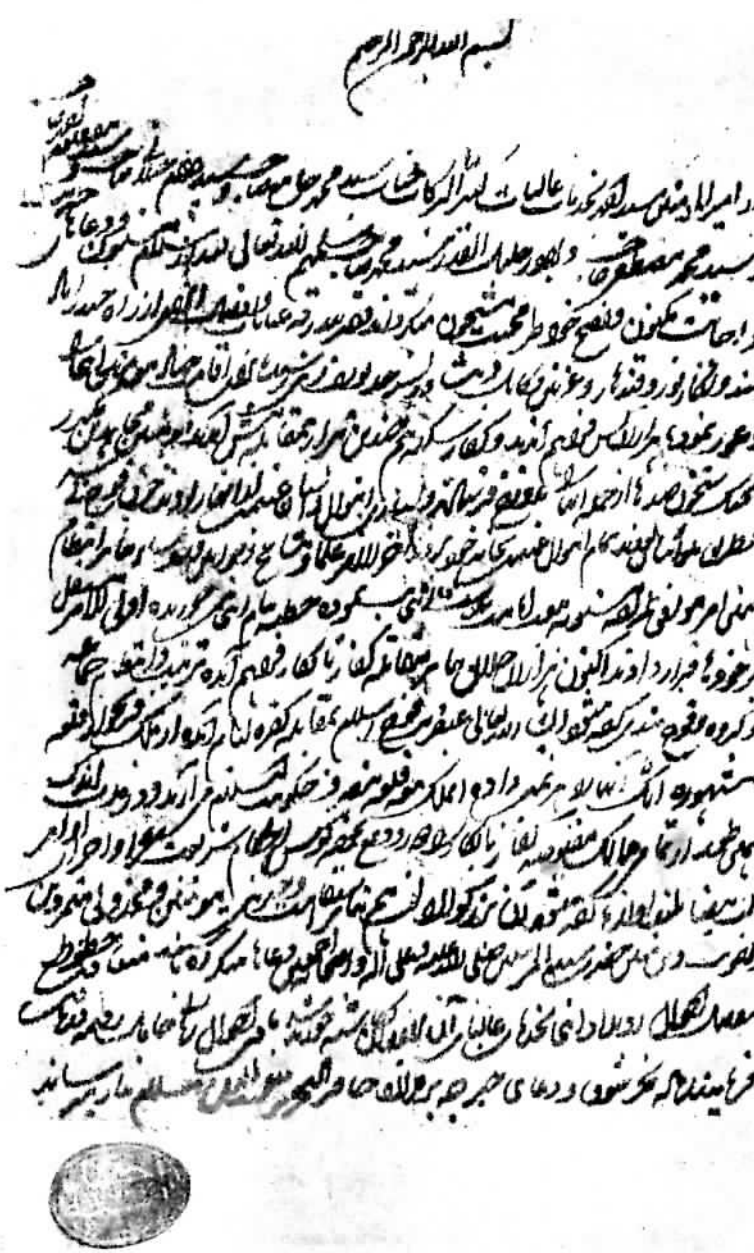
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protect the community from evil and disorder. For Islam seeks to shape a social order, complete with its ideological and philosophical bases and values, economic and political ramifications, it also provides for a sustaining power to enforce its code of life. "Surely Allah commands you to make over trusts to those worthy of them," runs the writ of the Lord, and the 'worthy' means, in the terminology of Islam, one most trustworthy and immaculate in conduct. There was consensus of opinion in the assembly of the elders that the Saiyid was the most trustworthy and virtuous amongst them, and also well-suited to rule the community by virtue of his unblemished character and prudence, confidence of the millions he enjoyed as a spiritual guide and the lead he had taken to galvanise the faithful for fighting the forces of tyranny and falsehood. The 'Saiyids, ʿulama, sheikhs and sardārs' unanimously decided to elect Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd as the *Amīr-ul-Mūminīn*.[1] All of them pledged their loyalty to him on 11th January, 1827 in the general assembly before they dispersed. The notable Pathān sardārs who acknowledged him as their chief or Saiyid Bādshāh, as they affectionately called him, were Khādī Khān of Hund, Ashraf Khān of Zaida, Fateh Khān, Saʿādat Khān, Bahrām Khān and numerous other religious heads and mullās of the surrounding areas. In the Friday sermon delivered in the mosques on the next Friday the Saiyid's name was mentioned as Caliph of the Muslims.

The oath administered by the Saiyid on this occasion was for participating in the *jihād* only for he left the Pathān chiefs free to administer their territories and tribes with the condition that they would rule according to the dictates of the *sharīʿah*. The Saiyid addressed letters and sent delegations to various rulers and kings in Central Asia, such as, Sultān Muhammad Khān, Sardār Said Khān, Nawāb Sher Muhammad Khān, Sardār Ahmad Khān, Nawāb Bhāwal Khān and Shāh Sulaimān calling upon them to extend their assistance in the *jihād* against the Sikhs. He described, in his letters, how Hindustan had fallen under the rule of

1. The commander of the faithful, as the caliphs are called

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Letter sent by Saiyid Ahmad Shahid to Saiyid Muhammad Jam'e and others of Rae Bareli

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Christians and how he intended to wage a holy war to free it and to establish the supremacy of the *sharī'ah* over it.[1] In one of his letters he wrote :

> The time for action has arrived . . . . . Therefore, every true believer and sincere Muslim ought to betake himself for getting enlisted among the *mujāhidīn*. Verily, God will accomplish the laudable task we have set before ourselves and cause the religion of Prophet Muhammad, on whom be peace, to gain ascendancy over all others ; whosoever shall sacrifice his life for this cause shall earn the eternal bliss, and whosoever shall be lagging behind today, remorse and grief shall be his lot on the Day of Judgement.

Among the chiefs of Bārakza'ī family, Saiyid Muhammad Khān had already entered into the spiritual paternity of the Saiyid. Khādī Khān, Ashraf Khān, and other Yūsufza'ī chiefs sent a joint memorandum, cited elsewhere, to Yār Muhammad Khān and Sultān Muhammad Khān, ruling over Peshāwar and Kohat respectively, drawing their attention to the atrocities perpetrated on the Muslims under the Sikh rule and asking them to join hands with the Saiyid against the common foe. Of all the Bārakza'ī brothers, Yār Muhammad Khān was more capable but crafty. He could not, however, ignore the enthusiasm of the local population and Yūsufza'ī and Khatak sardārs who had hailed the Saiyid as a deliverer from the raids and depredations of Harī Singh and the Sikh armies. The growing popularity of the Saiyid, says Diwān Amar Nāth, compelled Yār Muhammad Khān to acknowledge the Saiyid as his temporal as well as spiritual leader.[2] It is related that several persons advised the Saiyid against the pretended submission of Yār Muhammad Khān, but he preferred not to reject Yār Muhammad Khān's acquiescence partly to avoid a schism at the very outset of the *jihād*, and partly because there was nothing to support the allegation made against him.

Yār Muhammad Khān advanced to Nowshera accompanied by a large force consisting of cavalry and artillery

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1. (Persian) *Correspondence of Saiyid Ahmad*, British Museum MSS Or. 6635 fols. 27a-27b (quoted from the *Muslims of British India*).
2. Diwān Amar Nāth ; *Zafar Nāmah Ranjit Singh*, p. 175

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to pay his respect to the Saiyid personally while the Saiyid and Yusufzā'ī sardārs came down to Nowshera with a retinue of five hundred men to receive the Peshāwar Chief. For three days he remained with the Saiyid when plans were drawn up for a concerted action against the Sikhs. Accordingly, Fateh Khān, Ashraf Khān and Khādī Khān returned to their tribes to preach a holy war against the aggressors.

In the meantime, three days after the election of the Saiyid as *Amīr-ul-Mūminīn*, a letter was addressed by Budh SIngh to the Saiyid on 14th January, 1827. He challenged the Saiyid to face the Sikhs in an open combat instead of launching night attacks or sending expeditions to unguarded towns like Hazru. The Saiyid wrote back in reply :—

It seems you have not understood the purpose of my campaign. People desiring power and pelf engage in hostilities for three reasons : first, to possess riches and land ; secondly, to display their valour ; and, thirdly to achieve martyrdom. But, I have something else in view, for I desire nothing save to serve my Lord and Master and strive to make His chosen faith dominant, as promised by Him. . . . . In short, I neither desire to make a show of my bravery nor I want to carve out a kingdom for me. And you can test my sincerity. If any one amongst the nobles and chiefs of the Sikhs accepts Islam, I shall atonce pledge my loyalty to him and try my best to extend his dominions. . . . . Since you are here to follow the orders of your own ruler who is a man like you, nay, a man of your own clan, how can I disobey the command of my own Lord who is my Master and Creator of the entire world.[1]

The Saiyid sent letters to several persons including one to his relations in Rae Barelī informing them about the action at Akora and subsequent happenings. Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl also communicated the recent happenings and the election of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd as *Amīr-ul-Mūminīn* to one, Mīr Shāh 'Alī In India. He explained in detail the objections raised by certain persons in India about the feasibility of the Saiyid's ambitious project. The letters of the Saiyid and Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl seem to have raised the hopes of Muslims in India for an appeal to

1. *Manzooratus So'ada'*, vol. I, p. 344 ; *Maktūbāt*

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join the holy war was issued in Oudh which read as follows :

The Sikh nation have long held sway in Lahore and other places. Their oppressions have exceeded all bounds. Thousands of Mohammedans have they unjustly killed, and on thousands have they heaped disgrace. No longer do they allow the call to prayer from the mosques, and the killing of the cows they have entirely prohibited. When at last their insulting tyranny could no more be endured, Hazrat Saiyid Ahmad (may his fortunes and blessings ever abide !) having for his single object the protection of the Faith, took with him a few Musalmans, and, going in the direction of Cabul and Peshawar, succeeded in rousing Mohammedans from their slumber of indifference, and nerving their courage for action. Praise be to God, some thousands of believers became ready at his call to tread the path of God's service ; and on the 21st December, 1826, the *jihād* against the infidel Sikhs begins.[1]

1. *Indian Musalmans*, pp. 14-15

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Eleven

# The Great Betrayal

SAIYID Ahmad Shahid's assumption of the office of *Amīr-ul-Mūminīn* readily gained a general recognition in the whole of the Samah territory. Numerous chiefs of the tribes personally came to pay their regards, along with their followers, to the Saiyid or sent letters to acknowledge his leadership. The Saiyid, on his part, explained to them, through epistles,[1] appeals and sermons the necessity of waging war in the light of religious injunctions. "Every well-meaning and sincere person knows it full well," he explained on one occasion, "that war with the wicked and ungodly folk is a necessity, but if it is waged for earning riches or honour or land, it loses all merit in the eyes of God. The promise of Divine rewards, thus mentioned in the Qur'ān : 'Allah hath conferred on those who strive with their wealth and live a rank above the sedentary. For them are degrees of rank, from Him, and forgiveness and mercy'[2] is meant for what is called *jihād* in the strict sense i. e. striving for the defence of religion, for promulgating the commandments of God and for upholding the teachings of His Apostle. This is verily

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1. The Saiyid sent letters to 32 Maliks and religious leaders of the tribal area and the rulers of Kabul, Kohat Peshāwar, Hashtnagar, Herāt, Bukhāra, Chitrāl, Hyderābād and Rāmpūr (*Mehr*, pp. 433-35).
2. IV : 95-96

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a religious obligation and has to be discharged in accordance with the rules of the *sharīʿah* to make the effort fruitful in the Hereafter and to yield benefits in this world. And, one of the essential pre-requisites for waging such a war, propitious to God, is that a leader should be duly appointed to lead the faithful. 'Obey Allah, and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority,'[1] says the Qurʾān to emphasise the necessity of having a leader, as do several other passages in the Qurʾān and the Traditions of the Prophet. Thus, the *jihād* under the guidance of a leader becomes a bounden duty on the Muslims during a time, as at present, when the lawless and the profane create a reign of terror all-round.[2] The Saiyid charged several of his followers, both in the Frontier and in India to administer *biʿats* to the persons desirous of taking part in the *jihād* on his behalf. Among the Yūsufzaʾī chiefs Fateh Khān of Panjtār, Ashraf Khān of Zaida and Khādī Khān of Hund made indefatigable efforts to summon their tribesmen and rally them round the standard of the Saiyid, and, within a short time, about 80,000 Yūsufzaʾīs of the Samah, Dir and Swāt swelled the ranks of *mujāhidīn*.

Ranjīt Singh had already been forewarned of the Saiyid's preparations. A large army was despatched by him under Harī Singh who awaited on the Indus, while Budh Singh Sindhanwalia's forces, sufficiently reinforced and strengthened with men and material, were entrenched at Shaidu a few kilometres south of Akora where the first engagement had taken place.

The Saiyid came down to Nowshera with his host where he found the Durrānī forces, numbering 20,000 with eight guns, encamping across the river Landaʾi. After two or three days, the entire army of one hundred thousand warriors made its way towards Shaidu. From the day the two forces had joined, Yār Muhammad Khān undertook the responsibility of entertaining the Saiyid as his guest.

1. IV : 59
2. *Maktūbāt*

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Nazar Muhammad and Walī Muhammad, two Kashmiri brothers, had been commissioned to carry food for the Saiyid from Yār Muhammad's kitchen. But, on the day Saiyid arrived at Shaidu, he fell seriously ill after taking the meals. He had incessant vomiting, faintness, depression and nausea.[1] However, Yār Muhammad Khān decided to launch an attack on the enemy, on the very next day of reaching Shaidu. A little before the day-break, he sent an elephant for the Saiyid, and repeatedly exhorted, despite his serious illness, to bring the Saiyid in the battle-field before the action started. The Saiyid asked for his horse, but as he was relapsing into unconsciousness at short intervals, Shāh Ismā'īl got him on the elephant and took position by his side in the *hawdah*. The enemy had entrenched itself into its camp behind the *sangar* while its advance parties had established four gun-posts on the crest of a *nālah*[2] separating the two forces. *The mujāhidīn*, on the other side, had arrayed themselves in a semi-circle ; Yār Muhammad Khān and his forces on the extreme right, Sultān Muhammad Khān in the middle and the irregular levies of Pīr Muhammad Khān, Fateh Muhammad Khān , Ashraf Khān and other Pathān chiefs to the right. Godrī Shāhzāda, a religious leader belonging to Peshāwar had taken position with his followers in the Shaidu village to the north east of the Sikh encampment. The Saiyid and his Hindustanī *mujāhidīn* headed the Pathān irregulars.

No sooner than the *mujāhidīn* had taken position that the advance pickets of the Sikhs opened artillery and matchlock fire from the cover of rocks and brushwoods. Sultān Muhammad Khān, Pīr Muhammad Khān and Fateh

1. It transpired later on that Yār Muhammad Khān administered poison to the Saiyid who did not die but suffered for a long time from its toxic effects. Saiyid Ahmad Shahid and Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl both have referred to the incident in their letters. Later on, Nazar Muhammad and Wali Muhammad were accosted at Mangora, during the Saiyid's tour of Swāt and Buner territories. Their captors wanted to execute them for the crime committed by them, but the Saiyid got them released.
2. A ditch or natural watercourse

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Muhammad Khān displayed great valour and gallantry, and, setting an example which was well followed by the bands of cavalrymen under them, immediately charged, crossed the *nālah*, and captured the enemy gun-positions. Sustaining large casualties, most of the Sikhs had to beat a retreat from their advance positions leaving the dead and wounded behind. The *mujāhidīn* along with the hillmen advanced, in pursuit of the fleeting Sikh soldiers to the *sangar* and started demolishing the fortifications. In the meantime, Godrī Shāhzāda pushed forward from the opposite end and destroying the obstructions, pounced upon the enemy lines. The Samah warriors and the Hindustanī *mujāhidīn* cracked down on the Sikhs with such force that they were bewildered. A few of the bolder spirits pressed the attack on the artillery positions, and the enemy guns barring one or two were silenced. With hardly any doubt left about the defeat of the enemy, a few of his companions even congratulated the Saiyid on the victory won by the *mujāhidīn*. The Saiyid was, however, still in a coma, frequently passing out into swoon.

Ever since the fighting had started, Yār Muhammad Khān kept standing like a post along with his forces. Suddenly, a cannon shot burst in his front blowing up a few of his cavalrymen. Immediately he turned his horse and galloped with speed, and with him his whole army darted back. Some Sikhs came out of the *sangar* to pursue the fugitives but they were challenged by a detachment of the *mujāhidīn*. The act of treachery had, however, the desired effect ; the tribesmen took Yār Mohammad Khān's flight as defeat and started beating a hasty retreat. Disorder prevailed everywhere and the *mujāhidīn* were routed with great slaughter by the Sikh soldiery. Only Godrī Shāhzāda made a determined stand and fought with the courage of a hero. He withdrew his followers in an orderly manner but before he could reach the outskirts of the village Shaidu, he and his followers had been cut to a man fighting gallantly.

It is related that Budh Singh Sindhanwalia had warned Yār Muhammad Khān of the near approach of Ranjīt Singh

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and the fate that awaited him if he acted with the Saiyid.[1] This is also confirmed by the official annalist of Ranjīt Singh who is on record that "Yār Muhammad Khān, keeping in view his relations with Ranjīt Singh, administered poison to the Saiyid and took to flight as soon as the fighting commenced. His army also fled with him."[2] It seems that in this act of treachery he had not taken into confidence even his own brother Sultān Muhammad Khān. Yār Muhammad Khān, however, derived little benefit from his perfidy, for Ranjīt Singh doubled the amount of the Peshāwar tribute, desecrated the mosques, despoiled the country, and ultimately retired, taking Yār Muhammad Khān's son as hostage.[3]

As soon as Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl saw the scales turning in favour of the enemy, he got the draught elephant outside the battlefield, but the Saiyid, on the lone elephant, was too conspicuous a target for the prevailing Sikh soldiery. A few of the Sikh troops made for the elephant, but Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl got the Saiyid seated on a horse and sent him towards Chārsadda. The Saiyid was, by this time, so terribly afflicted that he could not continue the journey even on the horseback. He was taken on a stretcher to the village Bāgh and thence to Chingla'ī. Everywhere in the way old men and women, who came to see him, rendered whatever help they could, and earnestly prayed for his recovery. Few examples of the love and care as bestowed on the Saiyid on this occasion could be cited. Relations of the several of these villagers had been killed at Shaidu, but they only seemed to be anxious for the health of their Saiyid Bādshāh. At Chinglā'ī the Saiyid gradually recovered from the effects of blood-poisoning. He asked Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl, who had by then joined him, about the *mujāhidīn*. On being informed that most of them had escaped to Panjtār and Toru, he desired them all

1. *Peshāwar Gazetteer*, (1883-84), p. 52 ; *Frontier Expeditions*, Vol. I, p. 209.
2. Sohan Lāl ; *'Umdatut Tawārikh*, Vol II, p. 340-41
3. *Frontier Expeditions*, Vol. I, p. 209

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to be called back to Chingla'ī. The Saiyid took the defeat as a Divine punishment for his faults and earnestly beseeched God to forgive him and his companions and to guide those who had transgressed and gone astray from the right path.

The *mujāhidīn* had to face the frowns of fortune at Chingla'ī. A large number of them fell sick, and hardly a day passed, when they did not come to grief by the sad departure of one of their compatriots. Among the persons who died at Chingla'ī, one was Tālib 'Alī, a brother of Maulvī Wilāyat 'Alī of Patna. On the other hand, without any provisions left, they had sometimes nothing to eat except the leaves of certain bushes collected from the forest.[1]

Ranjīt Singh had won the day at Shaidu but at great cost. The Sikh forces had to sustain heavy losses, including Budh Singh himself, who was slain at the crisis of the battle.[2] Nevertheless, it was a great victory. Ranjīt Singh, however, minimised his losses and told Dr. Murray that the number of insurgents was only 40,000.[3] "On coming to know of the glad tidings," writes Sohan Lāl, "His Exalted Highness ordered that cannon shots should herald jubilation of the victory and the city of Lahore should be illuminated."[4] Ranjīt Singh also distributed a large amount to the poor and needy by way of thanksgiving charity on this occasion.[5]

The Saiyid stayed at Chingla'ī for about a month convalescing from the toxic effects of poison administered to him. Undaunted, however, by the defeat suffered by him and the treachery of his allies, he decided to arouse the

1. *Waqāi' Ahmadi*, pp. 470-72
2. *The Pathāns*, p. 303
3. C. M. Wade's letters dated 3rd and 5th March 1827 to C.T. Metcalfe; *Press list of the Old Records of Punjab Government, Ludhiana Agency*, Vol. I, *Misc. Correspondence*, 1816-40, p. 70.
4. *'Umdat-ut-Tawārikh*, p. 340
5. *Z'afar Namāh*, p. 181

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tribesmen from their slumber and face the enemy once again. He directed his course to the Mandanr clans, inhabiting the small valley of Chamla, to the south-east of Buner. The valley runs east and west, a spur of the Gūrū mountain separates it from Buner, another from the Sarpatā'ī peak of the Mahāban range intervenes between it and Khudu Khel territory, while a stream with a firm bottom runs down the middle of the valley. There are about twenty villages in the valley, of which the largest is Koga, followed by Sara and Garhī. Adjoining to Koga is a village Naoganī populated by the Saiyids.

At Koga the Saiyid was received by Hasan Rasūl, the chief of Naoganī. During the four days the Saiyid stayed at Koga, the tribesmen of surrounding villages continued to call upon him for taking oath of allegiance to him. Thereafter, the Saiyid headed north to the Buner valley, which is bounded on the north-west by the Swāt; north-east by the Puran valley; south-east by the Mada Khel and Amāzaʿī territories; and south-west by the Gūrū mountain from the Chamla valley and Dūma range from the Puran valley. From these ranges run smaller spurs, meeting one another and forming a small nucleus of inferior valleys, richly cultivated and well populated by different clans of Yūsufza'īs. Simple and austere in their habits, religious and truthful in their ways, hospitable to all who seek shelter with them, these tribes are bright examples of what good materials a Pathān tribe can be developed into. Grandfather of Amīr Khān, the Nawāb of Tonk hailed from the Salārza'ī tribe occupying village Allā'ī in the Buner valley. Saiyid Miān, the Chief of Takhtaband, invited the Saiyid to visit his village where about two hundred and fifty persons enlisted themselves as his spiritual disciples. The Saiyid remained at Takhtaband for four days until Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl and Sheikh Sʿad-ud-dīn joined him with other *mujāhidīn*. Leaving Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl and Sheikh Sʿad-ud-dīn, who had fallen ill, at Takhtaband, the Saiyid headed north-west towards Karākar Pass, staying for a day or two in the villages of Allā'i, Taursak and Jauwar. In all these places the tribesmen swarmed in thousands around him pledging

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their loyalty to him.

The district of Swāt, north of Mālākand across the Karākar Pass, comprises the lovely valley of the river of that name, from its junction with the Panjkora river northwards to the village of Ain. The average width of the valley, with a length of some 112 Kilometres, is about 18 Kilometres from crest to crest by its watersheds, and has wave after wave of tumbled and surging mountains, some bare, some forested, some lifting to an immense horizon of perpetual snow, and irrigated by hurrying waters, fed by glaciers and snows, which spread to fertilize wide and smiling vales. The bulk of the people belonging to the Akoza'ī branch of the Yūsufza'īs, are husbandmen who live on the produce of their cattle and fields and do not compare unfavourably with others of the Pathān race either in manliness, bravery or hospitability or the vices common to that race. However, with an innate spirit of discipline, which they have in a marked degree, the Swātīs can be roused to united action against the enemy under a spirited leader. The Saiyid undertook an extensive tour of the lower and upper Swāt, visiting Bārīkot, Thāna, Chakdarra, Auch, Kotīgrām, Barswāt, Mingaora, Chārbagh, Gulbāgh, Ushālā, Darasht Khel, Khanjarah, Shakrora and Banda. The Saiyid's fame as a pure-hearted saint and defender of Islam having already reached Swāt, the people of the surrounding country flocked to his call to solicit from him his blessings as well as to pledge their loyalty to him. The Saiyid passed the day of *'Id* on the 27th April, 1827, at Kotīgrām. A few days after *'Id*, Maulvī Muhammad Yūsuf of Phulat died. He had been with the Saiyid ever since he left Rae Bareli, as one of his closest companions and the treasurer of his party. A pious soul, that he was, his demise was an irreparable loss to the Saiyid as well as to all the Hindustanī *mujāhidīn*.

Several parties of Hindustanīs, coming to the Frontier, for joining the holy war were received by the Saiyid during his tour of Swāt. Maulvī Qalandar was the first to join the Saiyid with a party of about seventy persons at Kotīgrām.

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Thereafter came Qāzī Ahmadullah of Meerut and then ʿAbdul Hamīd Khān with eighty volunteers. The fourth party comprising a hundred persons headed by Maulvī Ramzān of Roorkee joined the Saiyid at Banda. Yet another party of forty Hindustanī *mujāhidīn* arrived under the leadership of Miān Muqīm of Rāmpūr at Hodīgrām. Maulānā ʿAbdul Haʾī also joined the Saiyid at Chārbāgh and was received by him with the greatest marks of honour.

At Khwāja Khel a few persons called upon the Saiyid to invite him to Kāshkar,[1] also known as Chitrār or Chitrāl. He did not go to Kāshkar himself but deputed Ākhund Faiz Muhammad with a few other prominent Swātīs to meet Sulaimān Shāh, the Mehtar of Kāshkar and to invite him to take part in the *jihād*. The Saiyid also sent, with his letter to Sulaimān Shāh, a few presents comprising a copy of the Qurʾān, a pair of pistols and a costly dagger. The reply received from Sulaimān Shāh was very encouraging for he promised all help in the Saiyid's laudable venture.

The Saiyid's tour of the Swāt was a great success. He was able not only to arouse the spirit of *jihād* in the Swātīs but also to invite many of them to lead their lives in accordance with the dictates of the *sharīʿah*. Numerous tribal customs, contrary to the teachings of Islam, were willingly given up by multitudes who expressed penitence over their past sins. The people of Swāt were not behind other Pathān tribes in pride, cupidity and revengefulness and each tribe had some blood-feud or another grouse to settle with the other. The potent influence exercised by the Saiyid made

1. The northernmost limit to which the dominion of Pakistan extends is formed by the Hindukush and Karakoram or Mustagh ranges—the great mountain barrier which divides Pakistan from Afghānistān, Russia and China. Immediately south of these ranges lies Gilgit, and to its west is the country of Chitrāl, bounded on the north by Hindukush, on the west by Afghān province of Kafiristān and on the east by Shandur Spur and the watershed between the Chitrāl and Panjkora rivers. To the south, the watershed of the Arnawai stream forms the boundary between Chitrāl and the districts of Dir and Asmar. The Chitrālis are mixed race of Aryan type, whose exact origin is not known. In the highlands the Maulāʾī sect predominates, but in the lowlands the majority of the people are Sunnis.

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the tribal chiefs to sink their petty differences and disputes and to enrol themselves under the Saiyid's banner as his lieutenants.

The Saiyid returned with his companions to Takhtaband by way of Karākar Pass after completing his missionary tour of Swāt. At Chingla'ī he was met by Fateh Khān with whom he made his way to Panjtār which was to serve, for a long time, as the headquarter of the *mujāhidīn*.[1]

Fateh Khān was a leading Yūsufza'ī Malik who had gone through the ceremony of initiation on the hands of the Saiyid at Hund. He had already invited the Saiyid to transfer the headquarters of the *mujāhidīn* to Panjtār, beyond Samah and Landa'i river, in the Khudu Khel hills north of Swābi, which was comparatively a safer place than Hund. After the battle of Shaidu, it had become all the more necessary to move his habitation further north, away from the dominion of the Sikhs. The Saiyid, therefore, decided to take up residence at Panjtār. It appears from a letter sent by Maulānā ʿAbdul Ha'ī to India that the Saiyid reached Panjtār a day before ʿ*Id-ul-Azha*, which fell on the 7th July, 1827. Maulāna ʿAbdul Ha'ī's letter shows that the number of *mujāhidīn* was then about 1,000 of whom 700 had been settled in the nearby villages while 300 were putting up with the Saiyid at Panjtār. Fateh Khān and the maliks of surrounding areas treated the *mujāhidīn* almost with the same loving regard as the Ansārs of Madīna had hailed the immigrant *muhājirīn*[2] of Mecca. The *mujāhidīn*, on their part, being unwilling to be a dead weight on their Pathān brothers, tried to do all their jobs by themselves. The different parties of *mujāhidīn* which had recently arrived from India had brought enough money to solve the pecuniary difficulties. Every man, great or small, was doled out a set measure of wheat and pulses every day and hand-spun cloth for three shirts and trousers and two pairs of shoes. A quilt and a bedspread was also

1. *Sirat-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, Vol. II, pp. 20-22
2. Companions of the holy prophet who migrated with him from Mecca to Madina.

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provided to every man during the winter season. Provision was similarly made for regular supply of soap and other articles of necessity.

The newcomers from India felt, at first, a bit shy of attending to the mental chores like bringing firewood from the forest, cooking the food, washing the clothes of their brethren or grinding the millstones for preparing flour but gradually they also became accustomed to the simple and unostentatious living of their comrades. The Saiyid himself helped the *mujāhidīn* in performing these odd jobs.

The Saiyid was, however, not the least less careful about the moral and spiritual training of his companions and the large number of visitors from the surrounding territories. In one of his letters written to his friends in India Maulānā ʿAbdul Haʾī writes: "Despite these pre-occupations, the daily discourses, prayers and meditations, initiation ceremonies and instruction in the ways of spiritual advancement are going on as usual. A number of religious doctors, mystics, maliks and tribesmen daily pay visits to the Saiyid and have discussions on religious matters with the Indian, Sindhī and Pathān scholars here. Many of them come to seek the spiritual blessings from the Saiyid while others arrive from far off places to take part in the holy war. Necessary arrangements have also been made for receiving the volunteers and the training of the *mujāhidīn*. Since the day I have come here, I have not seen any aspect of these multifarious activities being neglected. These pursuits of the *mujāhidīn* have convinced the maliks and sardārs of the tribesmen that this man (the Saiyid) is not like those ignorant and bigoted *mullās* who use their influence simply for raising a tumult and are easily destroyed by a powerful chief. They have come to realise that he is a resolute man of indomitable courage who enjoys the blessings of God."[1]

There was no bad-blood, no acrimonious disputes among the *mujāhidīn*, and, if there ever arose such an occasion, the parties were more willing to forgive and

1. *Maktūbāt*

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forget than to press their claims. One, Sheikh ʿInāyat Ullah had the charge of providing fodder for the horses. Once he became angry with his assistant, a poor man called Lahorī, and gave him a blow with the fist. When the matter was brought to the knowledge of the Saiyid, he referred the case to a *qāzī* who admonished ʿInāyat Ullah and allowed Lahorī to have his revenge ; but, he added that if Lahorī could forgive his brother he would have a goodly reward from God in the Hereafter. Lahorī immediately forgave ʿInāyat Ullah saying that the pleasure of God was dearer to him than the satisfaction of his vindictive feelings. Another time two Sikh spies were deputed by the governor of Khairābād to bring the intelligence of *mujāhidīn's* camp at Panjtār. Within a few days both embraced Islam and revealed their identity. The Saiyid presented horses to both of them and allowed them the option to remain at Panjtār or to return to Khairābād.

The training imparted by the Saiyid to his followers produced such noble specimens of humanity that their conduct has been thus described by a competent scholar : 'These soldiers of God spent their daytime on horseback and night in prayers ; they feared God and remembered the Day of Judgement always ; and they were firm on the way of truth and justice in all circumstances, favourable or unfavourable. If they suffered a defeat they did not lose heart and show cowardice ; if they came out triumphant they did not feel proud and behave like tyrants. History bears evidence that the soil of the sub-continent had neither witnessed the real Islamic *jihād* before them nor has ever seen such a phenomenon after them.'[1] Such were these *mujāhidīn* nicknamed as 'Hindustanī fanatics' by our British historians.

1. A. A. Maudūdi ; *A Short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam*, pp. 102-103

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Twelve

# Panjtar and Khar

THE growing power of the Saiyid at Panjtār soon attracted the attention of tribes living in Hazārā, who, harassed and persecuted by Harī Singh Nalwa, sent several deputations to seek the Saiyid's help against their oppressor. The country of Hazārā marched with the eastern boundaries of the independent territories of Kohistān, Ailā'i, Nāndihār, Daishī, Tikarī and Black Mountain and extended like a long tongue from south-west to north-east, at the base of Himalayas ; its tip, the Kagān valley, running up between Kashmir and the mountainous region that drain the upper part of the Indus. During the Moghul times a larger portion of it was included in what was called as Pakhlī Sarkār. After the cession of the Punjāb and Kāshmir to Ahmad Shāh Durrānī, in 1752, Hazārā served as the main thoroughfare of the Afghān governors of Kāshmir, who were content with ruling the country through the chiefs of the clans settled in the area. By the time Afghānistan was parcelled into several principalities by the Bārakza'ī brothers' anarchy, inter-tribal factions, treachery and assassinations took hold of the Hazārāwalās.

In 1818 Hāshim Khān Turk of Mānakrā'ī murdered his fellow chieftain, Kamāl Khān. Muhammad Khān, a Tarīn chief, espoused the cause of Kamāl Khān, and to save

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himself Hāshim Khān betrayed his country to the Sikhs. At his invitation Mākhan Singh, the governor of Rawalpindi, invaded Hazārā with 500 cavalry, built a fort at Sarā'i Sāleh, and levied a tribute on the tribes in lower Hazārā. Pressed by Mākhan Singh with an increasing demand of revenue, the Hazārā people gathered to attack the Sikh governor at Shāh Muhammad on the bank of river Dor, in which Mākhan Singh was slain. The governor of Attock, Hukmā Singh Chimnī marched out to punish the rebels ; but after some skirmishing at Mota, and at Sultānpūr on the Harroh, he approached the Lahore Durbar for reinforcements. Diwān Rām Dayāl and Colonel Ilāhī Bakhsh were despatched with a strong force to assist Hukmā Singh Chimnī ; part of Hazārā submitted, but the Tarīn chief, Muhammad Khān, Saidkhani Utmānzā'īs and the Mishwānīs opposed the Sikh governor at Nārā. The Diwān was defeated, and himself slain. Ranjīt Singh then sent Sardār Amar Singh Majīthiā. The new governor was an astute person, and he succeeded in winning over the leading men to his side, but he was also killed in a surprise attack by the tribesmen at Nārā. Reinforcements were again despatched from Lāhore under Mā'ī Sadda Kaur and Sher Singh, Ranjīt Singh's son, who established themselves in the Harīpur plain and built a fort at Torbela. The tribute payable by the chiefs was revised, and Mā'ī Sadda Kaur went through the ceremony of adopting the Tarīn chief, Muhammad Khān, as her son.

The events in Hazārā, however, took an unexpected turn. By this time Ranjīt Singh had annexed Kashmīr and its governor, Sardār Harī Singh Nalwa, was summoned to Lahore to give an account of his charge. He marched to Muzaffarābād and Pakhlī with 7000 foot-soldiers. Having reached Mangal, he attacked the Jadūn tribe, killed some 2000 men, women and children and, as a further punishment, levied a fine of five to six rupees on every house inhabited by the Jadūns. He then built a fort at Nawanshahr, garrisoned it, and went on to Lower Hazārā. Pleased with the treasure and presents brought from Kashmir, and with the victory won at Mangal, Ranjīt Singh excused him from rendering accounts of his former charge, and made him

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governor of all Hazārā. Harī Singh Nalwa inflicted severe chastisement on the Jadūns, Swatīs and Tanāolīs in 1823. But, after a year, at Nārā, a place which stands at the mouth of the path leading to Sirīkot, the Mishwanīs and Saidkhāni Utmānza'īs made a gallant stand, repulsed the Sikh force, 8000 strong, and sent it back to Hārīpur with a loss of 500 men. Harī Singh Nalwa was himself seriously wounded. Alarmed at the defeat of Harī Singh at Nārā, Ranjīt Singh hastened to Hazārā with a large reinforcement. He sent for all the chiefs and leading men at Sirīkot. The Tarīn chief Muhammad Khān, Shah Muhammad, the head of Mishwanīs and Sarbuland Khān Tanāolī were the only ones to obey his summons. He then attacked the Sirīkot hills at a number of points simultaneously, driving all opposition before him. Thereafter, he returned to Lahore with Muhammad Khān after inflicting punishment on Yūsufza'ī and Utmānza'ī tribes. Harī Singh Nalwa, too, came down hard upon the Hazārā people. He caused Muhammad Khān to be poisoned whose person he had obtained at 55,000 rupees from Ranjīt Singh, got Bostān Khān Tarin and a few other Mishwanī chiefs blown away by guns, exiled the Mishwānīs from Sirīkot hills, laid waste the valleys of Agror, Konish and Tikari, burnt down Singrī, the home town of Sarbuland Khān and slew his son Sher Khān.[1]

Crushed under an iron heel by Harī Singh Nalwa, Sarbuland Khān, Habib Ullah Khān Swātī, Zabardast Khān of Muzaffarābād, Khān 'Abdul Ghafoor Khān of Agror, Sardar Pā'indā Khān of Amb and several other chiefs and leading men of Hazārā approached the Saiyid personally or sent letters appealing him for help. All of them acknowledged the Saiyid as their leader and cherished deliverer. Sulaimān Shāh of Chitrāl, too, promised to help the Saiyid in his campaign to liberate Kashmīr.[2] At the time these deputations were received, the Saiyid was, it seems, contemplating chastisement of the traitor Mohammad Yār Khān,

1. *District Gazetteer*, Hazārā (1907) pp. 125-129
2. *Makātīb Shāh Ismā'īl*, p. 240

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for, on receipt of Pā'indā Khān's letter he sent Mulla Shāh Saiyid Ākhundzāda and Saiyid Muhammad Muqīm to confer with Pā'indā Khān before deciding the future course of action.[1] The Saiyid was warned by his companions that Pā'indā Khān was interested in enlisting his help only to destroy his enemies ;[2] but the fact that Pā'indā Khān had kept up a guerilla warfare from Bhingra range and from the country west of the Indus harassing the Sikh forts induced him to take Pā'indā Khān at his words. He despatched a picked force of one hundred and fifty men under Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl, with Saiyid Muhammad Muqīm of Rāmpūr as his second-in-command, towards Pa'indā Khan's trans-Indus capital of Amb, at the foot of Mahāban west of the Indus. A greater part of his territory, however, was in the western half of Hazārā, south of Black Mountain and Agror. The Shāh, on his way to Amb, repaired to Sitānā where the chiefs and leading men of the area had gathered in connection with some function. Here Saiyid Akbar Shāh, a man who was held in great veneration by the Utmānza'īs, Gadūns and neighbouring tribes, and who was also a declared enemy of the Sikhs, advised Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl to be cautious of the treacherous chief who would feign support to him simply to enrich himself by plunder, but leave the actual fighting to him. Saiyid Akbar Shāh's forbidings proved correct to the letter for Pā'indā Khān excused himself to render any assistance to the Shāh. Facing the territory of Amb, on the right bank of Indus, the Sikhs had several well garrisoned citadels. Considering it inadvisable to open hostilities with the Sikhs without active support of Pā'idā Khān, Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl moved further north to Chatarbai ferry where he crossed over to the eastern bank of the Indus for inviting the independent tribesmen to take part in the *jihād*. He deputed Mulla Muhammad Isma'īl Ākhundzādā and Mulla Shāh Saiyid to the neighbouring chiefs for enlisting their support, and asked the Saiyid for further reinforcement, which, he desired

1. *Makātib Shāh Ismā'īl*, pp. 122-23
2. *Waqāi' Ahmadī*, Vol. III, p. 1214

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to be sent in small batches every third or fourth day.[1] Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl then marched on to Nikha Panī and from there to Shergarh in the district of Agror where several leading men of the area took the *biʿat* to the Saiyid on the hands of Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl. Notwithstanding their oath of fealty, however, none of these chiefs showed the least willingness to antagonise the Sikhs. Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl had parleys with Sarbuland Khān also but the latter showed more interest in destroying Pāʾindā Khān rather than fighting the Sikhs who had turned him a fugitive. The Shah reached the conclusion that no help could be expected from any one of the Hazārā chiefs until the *mujāhidīn* gained more power and prestige. However, he decided to continue his efforts to preach *jihād* among the tribesmen and wait for further reinforcements.[2]

The presence of the *mujāhidīn* in the Agror territory was made known to Hari Singh Nalwa in no long time and he despatched a contingent of 3000 troops under Phool Singh. Before these fresh arrivals could join hands with the local Sikh forces and strengthen their *garhīs* or citadels, it became indispensable to strike a blow on them. Phool Singh was encamping with his 3000 men at Damgala, commanding the path to Muzaffarābād, when it was decided by Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl to make a night attack on his *sangar*. Saiyid Muhammad Muqīm was selected for the command of the expedition by Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl who also decided upon a plan of operation to overawe the Sikh forces. Saiyid Muhammad Muqīm left with a hundred Hindustani and 14 to 15 hundred tribesmen but by the time he reached Damgala, all the tribesmen excepting about 350 had vanished into the hills. However, Saiyid Muhammad Muqīm did not consider it advisable to return without making an attack for this would have had a demoralising effect on the local population, who would have completely withdrawn their support to the *mujāhidīn*. A little after midnight he surrounded the *sangar* and gave signal of attack

1. *Makātib Shāh Ismāʿīl*, pp. 221-224
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 208-214

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by the cries of *Allāh-o-Akbar*. Simultaneously, the *mujāhidīn* started throwing bamboo shells, filled with gunpowder, into the *sangar*. The tactics proved successful in setting fire to the tents of Sikh soldiers who came out bewildered to face a galling fire kept up by the *mujāhidīn* from across their *sangar*. Saiyid Muhammad Muqīm and a few other *mujāhidīn* had, by that time, crossed into the *sangar* with the help of cots brought by them. They bore down bravely on the enemy and forced it to abandon the camp. While this affair was being conducted by the *mujāhidīn*, the tribesmen who had escaped earlier, reappeared to make off with the spoils. The fleeing Sikhs who had gathered at a distance set fire to few houses of village Damgala. Now they saw the tribesmen running away with the pillage. The Sikhs re-assembled to make a counter-attack, but with commendable presence of mind, Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn, reorganised a band of *mujāhidīn* to check their advance; he fought with desperate valour allowing Saiyid Muhammad Muqīm and the remaining *mujāhidīn* to beat a hasty retreat out of the *sangar*, taking the wounded back with them. Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn also retired in an orderly manner without sustaining any loss from the enemy. Although the Sikh troops were still more than a thousand in number, they dared not pursue the *mujāhidīn*.

After despatching the expedition to Damgala under Saiyid Muhammad Muqīm, Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl had bivouacked with a handful of companions at Shinkiārī, near a *garhi* of the Sikh troops. His party had nothing to eat for two days. On the third day he could procure, with difficulty, some edibles which were being cooked by some of his comrades. Others were performing evening prayers. All of a sudden, Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl found the Sikhs advancing towards his camp. With only twenty men with him he decided to face the enemy and was successful, in the initial combat, in driving them back. However, because of the insignificant numbers with him, the enemy again made a bold charge and a hand-to-hand fight ensued. Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl fought so gallantly that the invading Sikh troops were again beaten back with heavy

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casualties. On the side of the *mujāhidīn*, seven were killed and ten injured including Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl. The *mujahidīn* returning from Damgala came to know of the action at Shinkiārī by the din of battle cry and musket shots; they hastened to the scene of action, but by the time they arrived, the invaders had already retreated.

Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl was contemplating a few more night attacks on the settlements of the Sikhs in the vicinity but the Saiyid recalled him back for a number of parties of the *mujāhidīn* had arrived from India. The letters sent by the Saiyid to India announcing the commencement of the *jihād* to save Muslims of the Punjab from the tyranny of the Sikh rule had awakened the Muslims to the need of coming to the rescue of their persecuted brethren. Volunteers from different parts of India grouped themselves in different parties to leave for the frontier to join in the *jihād*. During the period the Saiyid was at Panjtār fifteen such parties arrived, one of which was led by Saiyid Ahmad ʿAlī, a nephew of the Saiyid, and the other by Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī, brother of Maulānā Vilāyat ʿAlī of Patna. The total number of *mujāhidīn* arriving at Panjtār cannot be given as no chronicler has, unfortunately, given the number of persons arriving with each party.[1] All the parties took the rough track via Sind, Baluchistan, Derā Gāzī Khān, Derā Ismāʿīl Khān and Kālā Bāgh to reach Panjtār. A few of these were held up for a few months at Kandoh, between Derā Gāzī Khān and Peshāwar owing to the hostility evinced by the Durrānīs. They could move onwards after the Saiyid had arranged, with the help of local tribesmen, their safe conduct through the Durrānī territory.

1. The other thirteen parties reaching Panjtār were headed by Maulvi Qamar-ud-dīn of ʿAzīmābād, Maulvī ʿUthmān ʿAlī, Maulvī Mazhar ʿAlī of ʿAzimabād, Maulvī Khurram ʿAlī of Bilhaur, Maulvī ʿAbdul Quddūs of Kanpur, Maulānā Saiyid Muhammad ʿAlī of Kanpur, Maulvī Bāqar ʿAlī, Maulvī ʿAbdullah of Amroha, Hāfiz Qutb ud-din of Phulat, Maulvī ʿAbdul Haq of Neutanī, Maulvī Mahboob ʿAlī and Hakim Muhammad Ashraf, both of Delhi, and Meeran Shāh of Nārnaul.

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Among the persons arriving from India, one was Maulvī Mahmoob ʿAlī, a scholar and disciple of Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz. He was one of those to whom the Saiyid had sent letters for preaching the *jihād*. However, on arriving at Panjtār, he started raising petty objections and sowing seeds of dissension among the *mujāhidīn*. One of the major causes of difference of opinion between him and the Saiyid was that the latter had made peace with the Peshāwar chiefs and, after the treachery of Yār Muhammad Khān, had not marched upon him. A number of Saiyid's companions, some of whom were erudite scholars, tried to argue with Maulvī Mahboob ʿAlī to patch up the differences, but he left with his followers three days before Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl's return to Panjtār.

Besides the groups of *mujāhidīn* recruited from different parts of the country, financial help in the shape of bills of exchange was sent by organisers of *jihād* in India. The Saiyid also sent back to India some more persons to strengthen the missionary organisation already working there. Muhammad Qāsim of Pānīpat was sent to Bombay ; Maulānā Muhammad ʿAlī of Rāmpūr and Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī were deputed to Hyderābād Deccan ; Miān Muqīm, whose brother Karīm Ullah Khān, a minister of Nawāb Ahmad ʿAlī, had expired was asked to take up the duties of his late brother at Rāmpūr ; Maulāna Saiyid Aulād Hasan[1] and Saiyid Hamīd-ud-dīn were sent to Oudh ; and Hāfiz Qutb ʿAlī and Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī were commissioned to assume the charge of missionary work in Bengal. Two more persons, Miān Dīn Muhammad and Miān Pir Muhammad were charged with the responsibility of arranging transmission of letters and funds to the Frontier from India. None of them was, however, willing to retrace his steps once he had opted to fight in the way of God, but for the Saiyid, the *jihād* in the Frontier and missionary activities in India were two aspects of the same endeavour for reform and regeneration of Islam

1. Father of Nawāb Siddiq Hasan Khān, a noted author and scholar and husband of Nawāb Shahjahān Begum of Bhopal.

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in the sub-continent.

The departure of Maulvī Mahboob ʿAlī[1] had, however, considerably cooled down the zest of the *mujāhidīn*. After his departure, Meeran Shāh of Nārnaul also returned with his followers and Hakīm Muhammad Ashraf followed suit shortly thereafter. Another adverse effect of the return of these parties was that they caused misapprehensions to be entertained by certain people in India, and, for a considerable period, the arrival of fresh volunteers remained suspended. However, the efforts of Shāh Is'hāq and Shāh Yʿaqūb proved successful in clearing these misunderstandings and parties of *mujāhidīn* started arriving again. Two parties led by Maulvī Muhammad Is'hāq of Gorakhpur and Maulvī Jʿafar ʿAlī Naqvī, consisting of 24 persons were successful in reaching the Frontier through the territories held by Ranjīt Singh. Another party consisting of five persons under Hājī Wazīr Khān of Pānipat joined Maulvī Jʿafar ʿAlī Naqvī at Kālābāgh. Maulvī Muhammad Ramzān came shortly thereafter with a batch of fifty persons. One more party of *mujàhidīn* arrived under Maulvī Mazhar ʿAlī of ʿAzīmābād (Patna).

In October, 1827, one, Arbāb Bahrām Khān, Malik of Tahkāl in Peshāwar, who had migrated to village Mehr ʿAlī near Panjtār, paid a visit to the Saiyid with about 25 persons for taking an oath of allegiance to him. On his suggestion the Saiyid undertook a tour of Mohmand territory in the Samah district lying between Michnī at river Kābul in the south to Bajaur in the north and bounded by Utmān Khel territory in the east and confluence of river Kābul and Kunar in the west. The Mohmands, divided into several clans, are spread over this hilly tract, rugged and rocky but not impassable, scantily clothed with coarse grass and

1. Maulvī Mahboob ʿAlī returned to Delhī where he lived to witness the uprising of 1857. He refused to sign the *fatwā*, during the uprising, calling upon the Muslims to fight the British. He was rewarded 11 villages after the British had captured Delhi but he tore up the order granting him the fief.

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dwarf palm, and dry ravines. In summer the heat is intense and water is everywhere scarce. Remarkable for their innate zeal for religion they had, like their brothers elsewhere, imported numerous usages and customs incompatible with the mode of life approved by Islam. The Saiyid spent two weeks going round Shewa, Chargula'ī, Mehr ʿAlī, Machī, Amanza'ī, Ismāʿīlah, Kalū Khān, Tulandī and Sheikhjāna, and preaching the tenets of true faith to the Mohmands. Thousands of persons responded to his call and took *biʿat* on his hands to lead a chaste and pure life in future.

After a brief stay of another two weeks at Panjtār, during which he conferred with the *maliks* and *sardārs* of the area, he suddenly marched on towards north-west with a contingent of the *mujāhidīn*. Passing through Shiwālī, Machī, Katlang, Lundkhwar and preaching *jihād* to the tribesmen he came to Shāhkot where he stayed for a few days. From Shāhkot he headed north and crossing the Malakand Pass, reached Khar on the left bank of the Swāt river, opposite Chakdarra in the month of December, 1827. He decided, in consultation with ʿInāyat Ullah Khān, Malik of Alādand in Swāt, to make Khar a temporary headquarter of the *mujāhidīn*. After some time, however, he summoned the remaining *mujāhidīn* from Panjtār to Khar. The camels with the *mujāhidīn* force were transferred to Darga'ī under the charge of Pīr Khān. The Saiyid then prolonged his stay at Khar for about a year till December 1828 or early in January 1829.

It is difficult to give any precise reason why the Saiyid transferred the headquarter of the *mujāhidīn* from Panjtār to Khar, but, as the subsequent events indicate, the increasing hostility of the Durrānīs, especially Yār Muhammad Khān, might have been the chief cause of transferring the centre of his activities. The batches of *mujāhidīn* coming to Panjtār, lying to the north-east of Peshawar, had to face obstacles in crossing over to the territory south of the river Kābul. The bills of exchange remitted from India were usually encashed at Peshāwar, but the Durrānī chief had prohibited all such transactions. He also constantly tried

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to instigate dissatisfaction against the Saiyid in the Samah territory so as to cut off Panjtār from Swāt and Chitrāl. Therefore, Khar, lying on the border of Samah and Swāt, would have been preferred by the Saiyid for the time being.

Maulānā ʿAbdul Haʾī, who had been suffering from piles, fell seriously ill shortly after coming to Khar and expired on 24th February, 1828. A noted scholar, and a saint among saints, Maulānā Abdul Haʾī had been a source of great strength to the Saiyid from the day he had entered the spiritual fraternity of the latter. The Saiyid led his funeral prayers and consoled his relatives. Maulvī Ahmad Ullah, a step-brother of Maulānā ʿAbdul Haʾī, who resided in Nāgpūr had never seen his illustrious brother but had been in correspondence with him. Anxious to meet his brother he had already left Nāgpūr but the poor fellow arrived in Khar only three days after the death of the Maulānā.

Another notable incident during the Saiyid's stay at Khar was his third marriage. The Saiyid had recovered after the poison was administered to him but toxic symptoms such as burning sensation and eruptions like eczema still persisted. The physicians advised that it would be better for him to lead a married life. However, in the circumstances prevailing at the time it was not considered advisable to call his wives from Sind, nor was the Saiyid agreeable to contract another marriage unless his wives willingly gave their consent to it. A courier was therefore sent to Pīr Kot who brought back the reply that none of his two earlier wives had any objection to the proposal. The Saiyid received an offer for marriage from a Saiyid family of Buner, but he preferred to take as his wife another lady of Saiyid family belonging to Chitrāl who had been sent to him by Shāh Sulaimān. Later on, the Saiyid made arrangements for the religious education of the Bībī Sāhiba, as his third wife came to be known.

The Saiyid was still at Khar when two persons, ʿĀlam Khān of Utmānzaʾī and Rasūl Khān of Jalālah, took before

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him the complaint that the Durrānīs had looted their property and turned them out of their homes. The Saiyid asked them to wait for the time being as a few more persons with similar complaints had approached him earlier, but no hasty action to redress the wrong was possible. In the meantime, intelligence was received that a Durrānī force had crossed the Landa'i river and had occupied Utmānza'ī. The Saiyid convened a meeting of the Pathān religious leaders and placed the matter before them. The way Durrānīs created difficulties for the *mujāhidīn* was also considered by these religious leaders who unanimously decided that it was not only proper but essential to check their misconduct. They declared a *jihād* against the Durrānīs.

Durrānīs were likely to get support from the tribes living in neighbourhood of Khaibar. Therefore, a deputation consisting of two Pathān Sardārs, Arbāb Bahrām Khān and Arbāb Jum'ah Khān and a few eminent 'ulama like Maulvī Mazhar 'Alī, Sheikh Walī Muhammad and Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn was first sent under the leadership of Saiyid Ahmad 'Alī, the nephew of the Saiyid, to contact the Khaibar tribes and seek their help against the Durrānīs. After a report of successful parleys between this mission and the Khaibar as well as Mohmand and Khalīl tribes had been received, the Saiyid ordered the *mujāhidīn* to hold themselves in readiness for a march to Utmānza'ī. As usual, the Saiyid first earnestly beseeched God for the success of his expedition before leaving Khar. Leading his force to village Tota'i in the Samah district, the Saiyid pitched his tents to summon the tribesmen for his help. Anbālī Khān of Swāt and a few other chiefs of the Samah district joined the *mujāhidīn* at Tota'i in response to the Saiyid's call. The next stop was at Jalālah where the *mujāhidīn*, one thousand strong, camped for five days. A few hours before dawn half of the *mujāhidīn* force advanced under Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl towards the position occupied by the Durrānī forces, of which a reconnaissance had been made the previous evening. The other half of the *mujāhidīn* marched with the Saiyid, immediately thereafter, towards Utmānza'ī to check

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the Durrānīs taking refuge in the village.

Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl's detachment first stormed a gun position of the Durrānīs capturing two of their guns without any casualty. By this time the Saiyid also arrived and ordered the guns to be brought ahead so as to get within their range the hillock where the cavalry of the enemy was taking position. The *mujāhidīn* were now formed in lines of quarter column, the design being to break the enemy's centre. A sharp cannonade, blowing two of the enemy's cavalry, was opened by Mirzā Hasan Beg of Bareilly who then took the position below the spur of a hillock occupied earlier by them. Both the forces stood with firmness, availing themselves of the broken ground for protection, harassing each other with intermittent matchlock fire from morning till evening. No loss was suffered by the *mujāhidīn* during the period. Towards the evening the Durrānīs intensified their fire and also brought two guns into operation. The *mujāhidīn* performed evening prayer in batches as well as kept up the defence of their position. They were now becoming impatient to charge on the enemy but the Saiyid forbade them to take any hasty action. He ordered his guns to be brought in position at a place selected by him, and asked Mirzā Hasan Beg to silence the enemy battery. It did not take long for him to put the Durrānī's guns out of action.

ʿĀlam Khān, the Utmānzaʾī, who had approached the Saiyid for help, now came wailing to report that his son had sided with the Durrānīs. Simultaneously, Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn reported that the Khaibar tribes had gone back on their words given to Arbāb Bahrām Khān and decided to join the enemy. After *ʿishā* prayers the Saiyid called up the leading men in his force and apprised them of the latest developments. It was decided that a few *mujāhidīn* should keep up intermittent firing from their positions while the rest of the force should retire to make a surprise attack, in the night, from the rear of the enemy.

The *mujāhidīn* were accordingly withdrawn to be regrouped under the command of Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl for the night attack. But, by the time they assembled near

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Jalālah, ʿĀlam Khān informed the Durrānīs about the plan of the Saiyid, and they hastily retreated even leaving their guns undefended. They retrieved their guns only after the few *mujāhidīns* left to engage them in action had also returned. The Saiyid bivouacked for a day at Jalālah and thereafter marched back to Khar.

Shortly after returning to Khar from the Utmānzaʾī expedition, the Saiyid sent a delegation to the King of Bukhārā inviting him to lend support to the *jihād* movement. Miānjī Chisthī was selected to lead the delegation which conveyed the Saiyid's letter and certain presents for the King of Bukhārā. It was during this period that the Saiyid agreed to engage 200 Punjābīs on regular pay but owing to the absence of any regular source of income this force had to be disbanded after a few months. The Saiyid paid all the dues before discharging these men. Exhorted to join the *mujāhidīn* as volunteers for the service of God, most of these men decided to offer their services voluntarily and between 30 to 40 of them remained with the Saiyid till his martyrdom at Balākot.

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Thirteen

# Enforcement of the Shariah

THE ideal Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd had set before himself, from the very first day, was to re-introduce Islam in the Indian sub-continent as a dynamic socio-political order. If he had begun calling people to his *Muhammadiah* order by preaching to discard innovations in religion it was not because he wanted to confine his mission merely to the purification of spiritual and moral life of the Muslims, but that he had before him the example of the Prophet who did not enforce the entire body of Islamic laws all at once. The Prophet had started his efforts by inculcating belief in the fundamentals of Islam, trained the people to live a life demanded by these first principles, and then gradually introduced the social norms designed to set up an Islamic State. Following in the footsteps of the Prophet, the Saiyid administered oath to the people to live a life of righteousness and piety and trained his selected followers, or the *mujāhidīn*, to set an example of the dynamic, practical and social character of the faith to be emulated by others. It was about two years back when the Saiyid had been elected *Amīr-ul-Mūminīn*, but he had then confined the *biᶜat* taken by the people to their moral purification and asked them to take a pledge for participation in the *jihād*. As a sagacious and practical man he knew that the social organisation, customs and usages of a people who had never within their

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memory yielded more than a nominal and temporary submission to any authority, religious or temporal, were hopelessly out of accord with a scale of moral values demanding an orderly social behaviour. The Pathān tribes were divided and sub-divided into numerous sections, each independent of the other, yielding but small obedience to their own petty chiefs, who were seldom anything more than their leaders in fights and forays or their agents in dealing with others. Then, there were tribal customs which were directly opposed to norms of social behaviour demanded by the Law of Islam. To give an example, there was the Pathān code of *nanawatai* by which strangers had to be protected by the tribes with which they sought asylum irrespective of the fact whether they were criminals or not. If a man who had committed a murder took refuge with another tribe, it did not mean that the newcomer was to be extended merely generous hospitality ; he became, in fact, a client entitled to live in the shadow of a *malik* or protector who would not give him up to a justice which, in any case, appeared improper to him. Singularly ignorant of his religion, the Pathān had his own code of honour. Exceedingly proud, vindictive, jealous of female honour, brave and superstitious, the Pathān was, as a proverb goes, one moment a saint and the next a devil. But it was perhaps not his fault. Living in a barren and difficult country, the Pathān had to live not by his labour, but by his wit and valour.

During his tour of the Swāt territory, the Saiyid had expressed[1] the view that the *jihād* to be blessed with the grace of God and destined to be successful depended on complete acceptance of the *sharīʿah*, giving up of all manners, morals and customs not in accord with the Law and implicit loyalty to God, the Prophet and the leader. Then, while he was in Khar, he had explained the necessity of enforcing the *sharīʿah* in its fulness to the Saiyids, *maliks* and tribesmen paying a visit to him and also administered oaths to them to abide by this principle. Nevertheless, these

1. *Maktūbāt*, p. 95

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were pledges undertaken individually and not collectively. In the meantime several letters were received by him from Fateh Khān and Ashraf Khān pledging their support to his endeavour for enforcing the *sharīʿah* as the law of the land within their territories. The Saiyid decided to return to Panjtār for which he broke his camp at Khar by the close of 1828 or in January 1929. On his way back, he convened a meeting of the Samah *maliks* and religious heads, 200 of whom attended the convention, and demanded of them an unquestioning obedience to the precepts of the *sharīʿah*. The same demand he put forward before Fateh Khān on several occasions after reaching Panjtār, but the latter was hesitant of taking the pledge; perhaps, because he was doubtful of his own competence to make his tribesmen honour the word given by him.

It was about this time that about 2000 leading men and religious heads of the Samah and Swāt areas collected at Panjtār, in connection with some function, on Friday, the 6th February, 1829. Khādī Khān and Ashraf Khān were also present on the occasion. Addressing the gathering, the Saiyid explained the essential nature of his demand for replacing the tribal customs by the sacred Law of Islam. He told them that he had taken up residence amongst them on their insistence, and if they disagreed to abide by the Law of Islam he would have no choice but to leave their country. He also made it clear that if the leaders sincerely wanted to enforce the *sharīʿah* in their territories they would have first to submit themselves, wholly and truthfully, to the Law of God before they expected their tribes to do so. Fateh Khān was first to accept the call of the Saiyid. He was candid enough to declare that the acceptance of the demand made by the Saiyid was rather a difficult matter for it invplved parting with one's power and prestige and washing one's hands of the traditional sources of income, yet he was prepared, for the sake of God, to pledge his support to the proposal. A statement of juristic position in this regard was drawn up by the religious doctors, twenty-five of whom signed the document while the rest, *ʿulama* and the *maliks*,

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took an oath to abide by it.[1] Two weeks after it, on Friday the 20th February, 1829, another *jirga* of Fateh Khān's tribe was convened wherein all of his tribesmen agreed to abide by the rule of the *sharīᶜah*. Saiyid Muhammad Habbān was appointed as the Chief Qāzī for the area and Mulla Qutb-ud-dīn Ningarhārī was charged with the responsibility of *muhtasib*, or public censor, to punish the people found neglecting the rules and observances of the Law.[2] Ashraf Khān, Fateh Khān and Khādi Khān signed a covenant pledging to discard every tribal custom that may be at variance with the *sharīᶜah*. They undertook to establish, in its place, the Islamic system of administration and juridical procedure.

It is difficult to make any detailed assessment of the impact of this new system introduced in the Khudu Khel territory. Glimpes of a few incidents narrated by the annalists are, however, sufficient to indicate the radical change brought about in the life and morals of the tribesmen. A few months after taking the *baᶜit* of *sharīᶜah*, some Khudu Khel tribesmen seized about a hundred stray cattle in the area of Garh and Panjpīr. As soon as they had brought them to Panjtār, Fateh Khān sent word to the people of those villages to take their cattle back for, he said, it was now not lawful for him to detain the cattle although the tribal custom recognised the ownership of the captors in such cases.[3]

Another incident relating to the village Manerī is worth mentioning. The village stands at the mouth of Panjtār Pass on the path leading to Hund, within the territory of Khādī Khān. Following a tribal feud, some ninety years back, between the inhabitants of Manerī and the people of neighbouring villages, the Manerī people and their allies dispossessed their foes of their lands and houses and forced them to seek refuge with the tribesmen of Ashraf Khān in the neighbourhood of Zaida. The expelled tribe made several efforts to regain its lost possessions but was always

1. *Manzooratūs Soᶜāda*, Vol. I, pp. 446-447; *Muktūbat*
2. *Maktūbāt*
3. *Makātīb Shāh Ismāᶜīl*, p. 44

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repulsed by its adversaries who could muster a fighting strength to the number of 6000. About 400 men belonging to the two factions had been killed over the years in this internecine warfare, yet the blood-feud still continued unresolved. After the *sharīʿah* had been introduced as the law of the land in these areas the aggrieved party approached the Saiyid for the redress of the wrong done to it. The Saiyid called for the *maliks* of the area alongwith Khādī Khān, Fateh Khān and Ashraf Khān and having satisfied himself of the claim of the plaintiffs gave his decision in their favour. The inhabitants of Manerī vacated their illegal possession and the dispute was amicably resolved. Khādī Khān was, however, not pleased with the Saiyid's award for he considered the Manerīs, who were his clients, within their rights to continue their possession of the village in question according to the age-old tribal custom but he dared not raise his dissenting voice against a decision unanimously accepted by all the *maliks*.

While the Saiyid was still at Khar, Nāsir Khān, brother of Fateh Khān had picked up a quarrel with him and set all the *maliks* of the surrounding area against the latter. Fateh Khān, for a time, not even dared to go out of Panjtār. The Saiyid exerted his influence to reconcile the differences between the two brothers and made them to join hands for the nobler cause of fighting in the way of God.

The potent effect of even handed justice in the dispute of Manerī and similar other cases was that the tribal custom of might is right ceased to have the force of law, blood-feuds were extinguished, peace and amity took the place of frequent raids, murder and plunder became a thing of the past while the public censors ensured that every tribesman performed the religious observances punctually.[1]

Although Khādī Khān of Hund had set his seal to the pronouncement declaring *sharīʿah* as the supreme arbiter in all cases, elimination of age-old customary laws was abhorrent to his soul. Settlement of the Manerī affair was

1. *Maktubāt*

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taken by him as an affront to his authority. Like a true Pathān, he also did not like the growing influence of Fateh Khān as a lieutenant of the Saiyid, which was a natural corollary of the transfer of *mujāhidin's* headquarters from Hund to Panjtār. Two more incidents, happening in quick succession, led his smouldering anger to turn into open enmity against the *mujāhidīn*. Ashraf Khān of Zaida was the father-in-law of Khādī Khān but the latter had taken forcible possession of certain lands, adjacent to Hund, belonging to the tribe of Ashraf Khān. Called upon to relinquish the illegal possession, Khādī Khān replied by making a raid on Zaida. Ashraf Khān's request for help was complied with by despatch of a detachment under Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl who had, however, been directed to heal the breach between the two parties. The Shāh arrived in Zaida after Khādī Khān had already been turned back following a brief skirmish, but this only helped to increase Khādī Khān's animosity against the Saiyid. Accidental fall of Ashraf Khān from his horse and his instant death on the same occasion threw up the question of electing a Khān in place of the departed leader. Khādī Khān was in favour of Muqarrab Khān, his brother-in-law and the eldest son of Ashraf Khān. But, as Muqarrab Khān was mentally retarded, the choice of the *jirga* fell on Fateh Khān, Muqarrab Khān's younger brother and nominee of the late Khān. Khādī Khān departed with Muqarrab Khān sealing the doors of cordiality for ever. Now he began harassing such of the *majāhidīn* and relieving them of their possessions, as happened to cross the Indus at Hund on their way from India to Panjtār. The Saiyid, however, showed forbearance lest the action against Khādi Khān should create dissension among the tribes.

It was about this time that one, Khair-ud-dīn of Attock informed the Saiyid that the Muslim garrison in the Attock fort had made all arrangements for staging a coup against its Sikh Governor but it required *mujāhidīn's* help to take the fort by storm. After making necessary enquiries and satisfying himself, the Saiyid deputed sixty picked volunteers under the command of Arbāb Bahrām Khān to accomplish

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the job but by the time this party reached Attock, Khādi Khān had informed the Governor about the insurrectionists' plan. Prompt action by the Governor saved the fort for the Sikhs.

Under the Sikh rule the revenue of the tribal areas was usually farmed out to *arbābs*[1] and influential *maliks*[2] who collected the stipulated amount from the cultivators but were themselves required to present a horse, a falcon and hounds as a token of their submission to the Lahore Durbar. When, after Dashehra, General Ventura[3] arrived to collect the revenues Khādī Khān sent his presents and also offered to help him in collecting tribute from recalcitrant chiefs of Samah, of whom Fateh Khān of Panjtār had never paid the impost. Other chiefs, too, had discontinued to pay the levy at the instance of the Saiyid. Ventura crossed the Indus after taking Amīr Khān, brother of Khādī Khān, as a hostage, but no chief was prepared to pay the tribute. Most of them abandoned their habitations to take shelter in the hills while some of them made their way to Panjtār. Ventura advanced with his forces to camp out in the plains north-east of village Saiīm Khān where Badra'i Nālā emerges from the hills. He addressed a letter to the Saiyid alleging that he had fanned the spirit of revolt in the Samah territory, a dependency of Mahārāja Ranjīt Singh, with the result that

1. A chief (pl. of rabb)
2. A headman
3. Jean Baptiste Ventura, born about 1792-93, either in Italy or France, was commissioned into the Modenese contingent of the Italian Army, raised by Joseph Bonaparte for Napoleon. He served in various campaigns including the Russian campaign of 1812 and the battle of Waterloo. He came to Lahore with Allard, in 1822, by way of Kābul and Peshāwar and entered the service of Ranjit Singh. Ventura participated in the battle of Nowshera in 1823, captured Peshāwar and was also present with Sher Singh in the battle of Bālākot. He rose to become the most trusted lieutenant of Ranjit Singh, next only to Sher Singh, and was appointed as governor of Lahore. In 1837 Ventura proceeded on leave to Europe and returned at a time when Ranjit Singh's condition was critical. He finally left the Punjab again for France in November, 1844, after the assassination of Sher Singh.

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the leading men of the area had refused to pay tributes to the Mahārāja. The Saiyid confuted Ventura's claim in his reply and said that the Samah belonged to Muslims and that Ranjīt Singh had no right to any levy in that country. All lands belonged to God, he added, and whosoever has power takes possession of it. The Saiyid acknowledged that he had come to wage a holy war against the Sikhs whose depredations had ruined Muslims. He also invited Ventura to accept Islam if he wanted peace and amity. Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn, commissioned to convey the reply, was also provided with a detachment of 300 *mujāhidīn* to strengthen the defence of the passes leading to Panjtār.

Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn sealed the Panjtār Pass securely and moved forward with the rest of his men to pitch his tents in the plains at a distance of four kilometres from Ventura's camp. He also met Ventura to deliver the Saiyid's letter. The bold action taken by Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn inspired confidence in the tribesmen who began leaving their hiding places for their villages. Their movement on the surrounding hills was taken by Ventura as flanking movement of the *mujāhidīn* before making a night attack. He hastily ordered his forces to beat a disorderly retreat leaving even his stores and tents.

Retreat of Ventura without giving a fight animated a a fresh religious fervour for the expulsion of the infidel intruder. In a gathering of 3000 tribesmen, attended by almost all the *maliks*, khāns and saiyids of the surrounding area, the Saiyid explained the purpose of *jihād* and exhorted them to extend their assistance unreservedly if they wanted his efforts to succeed. He also alluded to the harm done by the acts of betrayal by certain *sardārs* during his previous campaigns. The impassioned appeal made by him moved everybody to tears. Thereafter, Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl addressed the tribesmen explaining to them at great length, in the light of the Qurʾān and the *sunnah*, the essential features of *imāmat*[1] and obligations devolving on those electing an

1. Leadership of the Muslim community.

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*Imām*.[1] Khādī Khān had also come to attend the concourse. The Saiyid tried to convince him of the harm he was doing to the cause of *jihād* but he remained adamant and bluntly told the Saiyid that he would pursue the course dictated by his self-interest.

Flight of Ventura had brought disgrace to him. In order to avenge his defeat he reappeared again at Hazrū in the Indus riverian tract of Chachh, with 10,000 troops to sweep up the arrears. Khādī Khān again paid the tribute submissively which was resented by many of his *maliks* and *sardārs*. Reports were received by the Saiyid that Khādī Khān had requested Ventura to launch an attack on Panjtār. In consultation with Fateh Khān, the Saiyid issued an appeal to all the Buner, Chamla and Khudu Khel tribes for help against the invader. He also went to reconnoitre the area lying south-west of Panjtār Pass. The territory, bounded on the north by Chamla and a spur from the Sarpata'ī peak of the Mahāban, is drained by the Badra'ī Nālā, which is dry, except after rains in the hills. It rises in the Sarpata'ī range, receives a branch from the east at Dandar, and a little lower another branch from Chingla'ī joins it from the west, it then passes the site of Panjtār, the villages of Gurgushti, Khala'ī Kala'ī and Jahāngīr Dara, and then issues into the plains north-east of Salīm Khān. The Saiyid decided that a four cubit wide wall should be erected between the cleft of the two hillocks near Khala'ī Kala'ī. The work was allotted to working parties which completed the breastwork in a few days. Beyond the village Khala'ī Kala'ī, the approach to Panjtār is held by a pass which narrows down to about 45 metres at Totala'ī. This defile led to another path by which the enemy could move to the rear of *mujāhidīn's* position. It was decided to erect a stone wall at this place barring the passage between a hill scrapment and a dry *nālā*.[2] Dividing the work into five parts, the Saiyid allocated four of these to the *mujāhijdīn*

1. Leader of the Muslims.
2. Channel carrying off water.

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and the remaining one to the local people. Following the example set by the Prophet in the Battle of Trenches, the Saiyid himself worked with the *mujāhidīn* in raising the wall.

As soon as these fortifications were completed, the Saiyid took in hand the disposition of forces at his disposal. Four pickets were posted at the breastwork near Khala'ī Kala'ī, and another four at Panjtār Pass. The next morning information was received that the enemy was heading towards the Panjtār Pass. After the dawn prayers, the Saiyid hastily prepared for defence. At the same time, smoke rising from the villages of Manerī, Swābī and Salīm Khān announced the approach of the enemy at the mouth of the Pass. He immediately despatched 150 troops under Mirzā Ahmad Beg with the instruction that he should relieve the troops manning the pickets at the breastwork and take to the hill on its right. He was asked not to engage the enemy but to attack on its flanks after it had taken the offensive. Fateh Khān was directed to send a detachment of his tribe to the hill on the opposite side with similar instructions. Another batch of tribesmen was asked to defend the fortification at Totala'ī and the Chamb and Buner warriors were directed to help the troops earmarked for flanking attack.

In an eloquent speech Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl explained to the forces awaiting enemy's arrival, the merits of *jihād*. Then the Saiyid raised his hands for prayer which carried everyone off his feet and filled every *mujahid* with an ardent desire to die in the way of God. In the meantime Ventura made for the crest of a hill to the right of Totala'ī. He took his meals there and scoured the country around him through his telescope. While Khādī Khān occupied himself in setting fire to the village Totala'ī, Ventura appeared to be perplexed by the numbers of the *mujāhidīn* and tribesmen taking positions in the hills around the pathway to Panjtār. It is reported that he even accused Khādī Khān of misleading him by giving him false information about the strength of the *mujāhidīn*. However, he came down from the Totalā'ī hill and ordered his forces to move ahead and launch an attack. The Sikhs now rushed to the breastwork

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and started demolishing it. Simultaneously, Mirzā Husain Beg opened a galling fire from his guns. This was a signal for the *mujāhidīn* and tribesmen to attack the enemy on its flanks. The steady fire from the front rendered the enemy's advance unavailing while the flanking attack from the heights of the hills on the left and right, unnerved Ventura who ordered his troops, a little before noon, to retreat. As soon as the enemy was out of sight, the Saiyid prostrated before God to offer his thanks for the victory.

The Saiyid once more decided to make a last bid to patch up his differences with Khādī Khān. He invited Khādī Khān to Panjtār, but the latter proposed that the Saiyid should meet him at Salīm Khān. The Saiyid was willing to go to Salīm Khān but on the insistence of the *maliks* and the Khāns, he deputed Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl to have parleys with Khādī Khān. Khādī Khān was, however, still not agreeable to enforce the provisions of the *sharīʿah* in his territory.

In the meantime, however, several tribes of the Samah which had not recognised the Saiyid as *Amīr-ul-Mūminīn*, acknowledged his leadership. Two of the more important tribes, Ismāʿīlzaʾīs and Daulatzaʾīs agreed, through the efforts of Mullā Qutb-ud-dīn Ningarhārī, to give up all the un-Islamic tribal customs in favour of the Law of God. The leading men of both the tribes called upon the Saiyid to invite him to Garhī Amānzaʾī where their tribesmen bound themselves to obey the Saiyid by taking *biʿat* on his hands. In order to comply with the requirements of the *sharīʿah*, consequent upon the election of an *Imām*, these tribes voluntarily agreed to pay the *ʿushr*[1] chargeable by an Islamic State. However, the refusal of Khādī Khān to accept the supremacy of the Saiyid, or, perhaps, his secret machinations encouraged certain tribes to flout the rules of the *sharīʿah*.

1. Tithe or one-tenth of the produce remitted to the public exchequer or *Bait-ul-Māl* of an Islamic State.

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At times the tribes even played tricks with the *mujāhidīn* which could not be allowed to continue without detriment to the cause of *jihād*. Inhabitants of village Tengī complained to the Saiyid about the excesses committed by their Durrānī rulers and sought his help to turn out the oppressors. But, when a detachment of 300 *mujāhidīn* was sent for their relief, they backed out of their promise to fight the Durrānīs. Action had thus become necessary against such treacherous elements if only to warn the contumacious tribesmen that similar action could also be taken against them.

During one of his tours of Yūsufza'ī villages in the northern hills of Sadhum which separate the Samah from Buner, the Saiyid selected 500 of the *mujāhidīn* for an expedition against Hund. Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl and Arbāb Bahrām Khān were commissioned to lead this detachment towards Garhī Amānza'ī in order to convey an impression that the force was returning to Panjtār. This force marched on to Garhī Amānza'ī and then to Tarka'ī from where it changed its direction towards Hund. Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl had planned to make a night attack by scaling the walls of the Hund fort, but by the time he arrived at Hund, the first flush of the morning had set in. Instead of postponing the action, he directed some of his men to take cover in a sugarcane field just in front of the fort. As soon as the doors of the fort were opened at the peep of day, the men taking cover in the field stormed into the fort and captured the gate slaying one or two of its guards. The remaining *mujāhidīn*, who had hid themselves a bit far away rushed inside the fort and made their way direct to the house of Khādī Khān. They found him alone in his house as his family members had already fled to take shelter in the house of a Saiyid. Thus, within two hours, Hund was captured without any resistance, the only casualties being the guards, Khādī Khān and one of his servants. None among the *mujāhidīn* sustained any injury.[1]

1. *Waqāi' Ahmadi*, p. 1488

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Fourteen

# Battle of Zaida

THE star of the Saiyid was now in the ascendant. Narrating the events of the year 1829 Cunningham writes that the Saiyid attacked Yār Muhammad Khān for the reason of Yār Muhammad Khān's base attempt to remove him earlier by poison. He goes on to say that Yār Muhammad Khān was defeated and mortally wounded, and Peshāwar was saved to his brother, Sultān Muhammad, owing to the presence of a Sikh force under Prince Sher Singh and General Ventura, which had been moved to that quarter under pretence of securing for the Mahārājā a long-promised horse of famous breed named Laila (Laili), the match of one of equal renown named Kahār (Subh Kahār), which Ranjīt Singh had already obtained from the Bārakzaʾī brothers.[1] The events leading to the death of Yār Muhammad Khān are, however, quite different as related in *Waqāiʾ Ahmadī* and *Manzooratus Soʿāda* and supported by a detailed report of the Battle of Zaida sent by the Saiyid from the Frontier to India on the 5th of October, 1829.[2]

Amir Khān, brother of Khādi Khān requested Muqarrab Khān, his brother-in-law, to straighten out the matters between him and the Saiyid and obtain recognition of the

1. Cunningham, pp. 170-71.
2. *Maktūbāt*, pp. 260-70

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Saiyid for his succession as the Khān of Hund. Muqarrab Khān agreed to mediate and on his recommendation the Saiyid wrote a letter to Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl to give over the fort of Hund to Amīr Khān. This man had, however, been secretly in league with the clients of his late brother and was instigating them to rise against the authority of the Saiyid. Twelve of the *mujāhidīn* sent by Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl to Panjtār for bringing a light gun to Hund were murdered by the partisans of Amīr Khān. Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl, therefore, did not consider it advisable to hand over the fort to Amīr Khān. He informed the Saiyid about the actual state of affairs and sought reconsideration of his decision. This further enraged the partisans of Amir Khān who raised a tumult against the *mujāhidīn*, cut off their communications and made it unsafe for them to travel in the country. Muqarrab Khān, however, kept himself aloof from the misconduct of Amīr Khān's henchmen while his two brothers Fateh Khān and Arsalān Khān called upon the Saiyid to assure him of their continued support and invited him to Zaida in order to suppress the disorder. Saiyid returned hurriedly from Sadhum with a force of 200 men and pitched his tents between Hund and Zaida, leaving some men at Sadhum and sending a detachment to guard Panjtār. Thus, the Saiyid was placed, by force of circumstances, in an extremely difficult and vulnerable position owing to dispersal of his forces at three places, *viz.* Hund, Zaida and Panjtār. He sent word to Amīr Khān that the fort of Hund could be delivered to him as the Khān and successor of Khādī Khān provided he agreed to bind himself to his obedience by taking an oath of fealty. Amīr Khān, however, spurned the offer and went away in a huff to Peshāwar to seek the help of Yār Muhammad Khān.

Sultān Muhammad Khān advised his brother, Yār Muhammad, not to cross swords with the Saiyid, but the latter was too anxious not to miss the god-send opportunity to wreak vengeance on the Saiyid whom he considered an obstacle in extending his sway over the Samah. He would also not cast off ten or twelve thousand rupees offered by

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Amir Khān as the price for restoration of Hund to the latter, but the supreme cause of his enthusiasm, as it transpired later on, was the edict of his master Ranjīt Singh commanding him to march against the Saiyid. He immediately despatched an advance column, consisting of 300 horse, to strengthen Garhī Haryāna, the village of Amīr Khān. Yār Muhammad's troops, on reaching Garhī Haryāna, started depredations around the fort of Hund. In one of their raids for plunder they came upon the *mujāhidin* but, unable to withstand their superior fire power, they had to withdraw with severe losses. At last, Yār Muhammad Khān also arrived in Haryāna at the head of a strong force with six guns. Several tribes in the vicinity of Hund which had so long been impartial, joined hands with Yār Muhammad out of fear or to ensure their own safety. His troops, stationed on Badra'i nālā near Zaida, started harassing the nearby villagers and preying upon their cattle.

The Saiyid hurriedly collected his troops in the fort of Hund, but its total strength did not exceed one thousand. Despite the reports pouring in daily about the impending attack by the Peshāwar chief, he considered it necessary to solicit peace and amity. He sent word to Yār Muhammad Khān that no cause of enmity existed between him and Yār Muhammad, and the only demand he made on the Pathān chiefs and *maliks* including him was that all of them should subordinate themselves to the Law of God to which no Muslim could have any objection.[1] Yār Muhammad turned the offer contemptuously saying that peace was now out of question. In view of the small number of troops at his disposal, the Saiyid was being pressed by his comrades to make a night attack but he had been postponing action pending the result of peace talks mooted out by him. But, no sooner than the blunt reply of Yār Muhammad was communicated to him that he ordered his forces to get ready for marching against the enemy. He sent the main body of his force, 800 in number, under Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl to launch a night attack and retained 200 with him to

1. *Waqā'i Ahmadi*, p. 1127

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render assistance to the expeditionary force in case of emergency. The columns in action advanced towards Yār Muhammad's camp, whose position had been reconnoitred earlier, avoiding the range of enemy artillery, for which they had to take a circuitous route about one kilometre to its rear. As this force approached its destination, it came across about a hundred enemy cavalry. Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl forbade his troops to fire on them, as far as possible, but someone more zealous fired a shot. Peshāwar cavalrymen got frightened by the sudden and unexpected attack on them, and hurriedly made their way to the camp. Now there was no alternative. The *mujāhidīn* entered the camp in hot pursuit of the fugitives. Yār Muhammad's guns started spitting fire but, exhibiting commendable determination and valour, Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl and few of his comrades, stormed the enemy guns, capturing four of them out of six. Finding their own guns pointed towards them, the Durrānī forces streamed out of the camp in great haste. They had still two guns with them but the *mujāhidīn* snatched these also from the Durrānīs. None of the *mujāhidīn* touched anything left by the fleeing enemy troops but the Pathāns among them could not resist the temptation of helping themselves with the spoils.

The battle of Zaida took place in the night of September 4 or 5, 1829. The enemy had sustained heavy casualties, but only two among the *mujāhidīn* had been killed and four were injured. Yār Muhammad Khān had been mortally injured. He died on his way to Peshāwar somewhere between the villages of Garhī Haryāna and Dodher. Large amount of stores, arms and ammunition, several light guns, 300 horses and sixty camels had been left by the enemy.[1] Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl also found a few women in the deserted camp of the Durrānīs whom they had abducted from the neighbouring villages. The Shāh immediately sent them back to their homes. While preparing the inventory of the spoils, the Shāh also came across an edict of Ranjīt Singh directing Yār Muhammad Khān to march against the Saiyid

1. *District Gazetteer, Peshāwar* (1883-84), p. 53

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and force him out of the Samah, restore Hund to the family of Khādī Khān and hand over the three famous horses Lāilī, Murīdwār and Subh Kahār to Ventura. Ranjīt Singh had concluded his letter with the threat that he would come down heavily on him if his instructions were not followed.[1] By the time Yār Muhammad Khān's dead body was brought to Peshāwar, Sultān Muhammad Khān found himself arrested in his own palace by Ventura who threatened to hold him a prisoner until Laili was delivered to him.[2] With the Peshāwar forces in disarray after the recent defeat, Sultān Muhammad had no option but to comply with the orders of Ventura. He had to give up both Laili and Murīdwār while Subh Kahār was captured by a Khatak Pathān at Zaida, who, later sold it to the Mahārājā.

Somehow the rumour that the *mujāhidīn* were defeated at Zaida got afloat. The tribesmen of the neighbouring villages immediately converged round Hund for depredations but the guns of the fort kept them at bay. In the meantime, the Saiyid had moved to Manerī where he got the report of victory. Joining the Shāh at Zaida, he took the road to Panjtār although he was advised to march against Peshāwar which, at the moment, lay undefended, but for the presence of Ventura with a small contingent. The Saiyid did not consider it proper to strike at Sultān Muhammad Khān, who still paid dutiful regard to him in his letters, without first calling upon him to enforce *sharīʿah* in his dominions. However, joyful news of the victory won by the *mujāhidīn* having travelled faster than the Saiyid, he was hailed, all along the way to Panjtār by groups of women singing ballads to the beat of drums and the tribesmen letting off their guns freely into the air. On reaching Panjtār, the Saiyid betook himself to the mosque where he fell down on his knees, tears trickling down his cheeks, to thank God for His succour and grace.

The captives were dealt with utmost care and compassion. The injured amongst them were treated by Nūr Bakhsh

1. *Makātib Shāh Ismāʿīl*, p. 205-6
2. *Griffin : Ranjit Singh*, pp. 103-104

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*Jarrāh*.[1] After some time they were let off laden with gifts granted by the Saiyid.

On reaching Panjtar, the Saiyid collected all the *mujāhidīn* and explained to them the rules of *sharīʿah* in regard to the distribution of spoils. In a forceful speech, he explained how indiscriminate plunder indulged in by certain persons defeated the purpose of *jihād* and desecrated their efforts in the eyes of God. Thereafter he asked the value of the spoils, excluding the munitions of war, to be assessed which was found to be worth 25 thousand rupees. Four fifth of the amount assessed was given away to the *mujāhidīn* participating in the battle of Zaida, the cavalrymen getting twice as much as the foot-soldiers. Hindustāni *mujāhidīn*, however, voluntarily returned their shares to the *Bait-ul-Māl*[2] since their needs were already being met from the Public Exchequer.

It was about this time, after the battle of Zaida, that the two Fateh Khāns of Zaida and Panjtār requested the Saiyid to levy *ʿushr* on their tribes. The Saiyid also appointed *qāzīs* in each village within the bounds of Zaida and Panjtār to hold the scales in local disputes. In the village Chundlaʾi, at a distance of two kilometres from Panjtār, the Saiyid established an artillery post on the crest of a hill where a few barracks were erected later on for the gunners. An ordinance factory for the manufacture of gun-powder and shells was thereafter set up in the village Qāsim Khel. With a view to enforcing discipline and making arrangements for the training of the *mujāhidīn* in the arts of warfare ʿAbdul Hamid Khān was appointed as *Risāldār*. Ever since the *mujāhidīn* had come to Panjtār, they had been sharing the houses of local population. The Saiyid decided that it was time to construct separate houses for them. He started the work by bringing stones on his shoulders which made everybody to cooperate in the joint venture, with the result that several houses were constructed within a few days.

1. Surgeon
2. Treasury of a Muslim state

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Fifteen

# Adventures in Hazara

SAIYID Ahmad Shahīd had tried two years back, in 1827, to turn out the Sikhs from Hazārā through which passed the roads connecting Yūsufzaʾi Samah with the Punjab as well as Kashmir. The earlier efforts had failed owing chiefly to the non-cooperation of Pāʾindā Khān, the Tanāolī chief of Amb. With Hund on the western bank of the river Indus in his possession, the Saiyid again turned his attention to this area. Two of the trusted counsellors of Pāʾindā Khān, Saiyid Hasan Shāh and Shāmā Jamādār had of late been paying visits to him to remove any doubts he might have entertained on account of the past conduct of their chief. About this time, late in 1829, Gandghar's chief, Muhammad Zamān Khān Mishwanī, sent a letter to the Saiyid informing him that Torbela fort was lying undefended in those days, and if he could come down to Khabbal with a detachment of *mujāhidīn* he would find the entire Mishwānī tribe, occupying the fastness of Gandghar Mountain above Torbela, at his beck and call. The Saiyid replied that he would be reaching Khabbal within a week.

The Saiyid left Panjtār with 300 *mujāhidīn* and eight guns for Khabbal and directed Risāldār ʿAbdul Hamīd Khān to come behind him with a detachment of 150 picked volunteers. Maulvī Ahmad Ullah of Nagpur was left to deputise for the Saiyid at Panjtār. He sent about sixty

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Kandahārī *mujāhidīn* to Gandghar to help Muhammad Zamān Khān and proceeded with the remaining force to Khabbal, on the right bank of Indus, occupied by Utmānza'ī Mandanr branch of the Yūsufza'īs. Muhammad Zamān Khān hurriedly collected his tribesmen and marched on to Torbela with the Kandahārī *mujāhidīn*, and detached a small force of 200 men to check advance of the Sikhs on the Torbela-Sikandarpur road, for, at a distance of about 13 kilometers from Torbela on this road Harī Singh held the fort of Bahāru Kot with a force 5000 strong. Muhammad Zamān Khān's attack on Torbela was a complete success, bringing the entire area under his control excepting a besieged outpost of the Sikhs containing about a hundred Sikh soldiers. Harī Singh, however, lost no time in leaving for the aid of his Torbela garrison and marched on with his entire force of 5000. The Mishwānīs sent to push back the enemy's advance kept them at bay for four hours but finding the task impossible, they took to the heights of surrounding hills. The force with Muhammad Zamān Khān was, however, hopelessly small to drive back Harī Singh and therefore, he too, had to abandon Torbela. He left with the Mishwānīs for the fastness of the surrounding hills and sent the Kandahārīs back to Khabbal. Kandahārīs were not far away when the Sikhs entered Torbela and sent a column in pursuit of the *mujāhidīn* on their way to Khabbal. Exchange of fire between the retreating Kandahārīs and the Sikhs invited the attention of the people in Khabbal. The Saiyid detailed Pīr Khān Jamadār to bring the Kandahārīs across the river, while his guns, since brought into action, foiled the attempts of the Sikhs to cross the river. For several days the Sikhs lurked on the eastern bank of the Indus to snipe at the *mujāhidīn* who usually performed their ablutions on the river bank but no harm was done to them.

On an invitation received from Saiyid Akbar Shāh,[1]

1. Saiyid Akbar Shāh was a descendant of Saiyid 'Alī Tirmizī, popularly known as Pīr Bābā of Buner, widely respected for his

[ Continued on next page

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the Saiyid left Khabbal with 150 *mujāhidīn* for Sitānā, barely 16 kilometres from Khabbal. Saiyid Hasan Shāh and Shāmā Jamādār had brought an invitation for the Saiyid from Pā'inda Khān Tanāolī but he wanted to consult Saiyid Akbar Shāh before visiting Amb. Saiyid Akbar Shāh advised the Saiyid that the invitation of Pā'indā Khān for paying a visit to Amb was more probably a subterfuge to hold him in detention while Saiyid Nādir Shāh, one of Akbar Shāh's relations, who had been close to Pā'indā Khān for several years, expressed the opinion that blood-thirsty, cruel and treacherous, as Pā'indā Khān was, he did not know what truth or faith was where he saw his slightest interest at stake. But the Saiyid wanted to meet Pā'indā Khān, perhaps, because he was still hopeful that Pā'indā Khān's faith would ultimately overcome his self-interest and tribal prejudices. Therefore, when the two emissaries of Pā'indā Khān came next morning to inform him that the Khān had come down to ʿAshrah where the Saiyid might come to see the Tanāolī with a few companions only, the Saiyid immediately gave his assent. Pā'indā Khān had actually laid a trap for the Saiyid, for he had directed his 300 horse to stay in hiding near the place of meeting. The Saiyid almost walked into his trap but Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl saved the situation by following his chief with the *mujāhidīn* at hand in Sitānā. As soon as Pā'indā Khān saw that his dirty trick had been exposed, he started acclaiming allegiance to the Saiyid as his leader and spiritual mentor.

The Saiyid also paid a visit to a scholar living in village Champā'i where he got the news that the small garrison in the fort of Hund had been taken prisoner by Sultān Muhammad Khān. He was told that worked up by his mother, who used to pass cutting remarks on him for not

piety, and common ancestor of the Saiyids of Kaghān and several other Saiyid communities who live among the tribes. He was not only a proved leader of the tribal warfare, but also remained a sincere ally of the Saiyid although the vicissitudes the Saiyid had to face.

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being able to avenge the death of his late brother, Sultān Muhammad had come down to Hund at the head of a large force and besieged the fort. About three scores of the troops in Hund fought gallantly but unable to withstand the overwhelming force against them they agreed, on an undertaking of safe passage given by Kewal,[1] an Englishman, to evacuate the fort. Sultan Muhammad, however, went back on his words and imprisoned all the *mujāhidīn*, whom he intended to take back to Peshāwar for being slain at the tomb of his late brother. The Saiyid recalled Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl to Gandab and from there they hastened back to Panjtār. Intelligence was brought to him that Sultān Muhammad intended to attack Panjtār also. After holding brief consultations with his colleagues, the Saiyid made the pretence of immediately leaving Panjtār with his force to reduce Peshāwar. The intelligence was promptly communicated to Sultān Muhammad, who handed over Hund to Amīr Khān and hastily returned to Peshāwar. After a few days all the men taken prisoner at Hund broke open the house in which they had been locked up at Hashtnagar and returned to Panjtār.

It was about this time that the Saiyid sent back Miān Dīn Muhammad to the Punjab with letters for 32 Muslim officers serving in the Sikh army.

Amīr Khān, now master of Hund, established contact with the Sikh Governor of Hazārā who sent to Hund a detachment consisting of 700 troops to assist him in disciplining the *maliks* and *khāns* of the surrounding villages. Defection of the local heads to the Sikhs forced Fateh Khān and his brother Arsalān Khān to evacuate Zaida and migrate to Panjtār. Likewise, Ibrāhim Khān and Ismāʿīl Khān, the chiefs of Kalābat, Mardān Khān of ʿAshrah and Mulla Saiyid Mīr of Kothaʾi had to seek refuge in the fastness of the hills. Pāʾindā Khān, too, recalled one of his brothers,

1. Perhaps Kerville (Carrol), an English adventurer, who later took appointment under the governor of Herāt and disciplined two battalions for him.

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Amīr Khān, from Panjtār but his another brother, Madad Khān, chose to remain in Panjtār in defiance of the wishes of Pa'indā Khān. Notwithstanding these insurrectionary conditions in the Samah, the Saiyid yielded to persistent demand of Nāsir Khān, the chief of Bhatgrām, Madad Khān, brother of Pā'indā Khān, and Rājā Pāras, the Vakīl of Sultan Zabardast Khān, to clear the way to Kashmir from where incessant requests for help were being received at the time. Accordingly, Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl was asked to proceed with 200 Hindustānīs to Muzaffarābād which held the key to the path leading to Kashmir.

Reaching Sitānā, Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl requested Pā'indā Khān to allow his forces to pass through his territory to Hazārā, but the latter refused the passage. The matter was brought to the notice of the Saiyid who again addressed a letter to Pā'indā Khān but the latter remained adamant in his intransigence. Now there was no course left except to force Pā'indā Khān to submission. First of all an advance column was sent to Sitānā, about 10 kilometres to the north-east of Amb, under Saiyid Ahmad 'Alī. After a few days the Saiyid marched on with the remaining forces to Champā'ī where he made the announcement that Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl would act as commander of the expedition and left the disposition of forces to him. Shāh Ismā'īl detailed 200 troops to village Digra, south of Sitānā at an equal distance to Amb, and moved further down to the south with the rest of the *mujāhidīn* to Farausa, thus encircling Amb from north-west to south-west. On the other hand, Pā'indā Khān decided to send a portion of his troops to Kanīrza'ī hills, opposite 'Ashrah on the western bank of the Bhitgalī river, in order to check the reinforcements being received by the *mujāhidīn* ; another column to 'Ashrah for checking the advance from Sitānā; and went ahead with a third column to engage the enemy at Digra and Farausa. Pāindā Khān's plan of action was soon intimated to the Shāh who atonce directed the column at Digra, commanded by Bahrām Khān, to garrison the heights of Kanīrza'ī hills, and then proceed to 'Ashrah, where he was to be joined by Saiyid Ahmad 'Alī. As soon as

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Pā'indā Khān got scent of the Shāh's directives, he stooped to his old game of trickery. Expressing regret for his past mistakes he reiterated his allegiance to the Saiyid, in a communication addressed to the Shāh, and invited him to come over to Banda, midway between Farausa and Amb, to have personal discussions. He was completely successful in misleading the Shāh who informed the Saiyid of the latest development in order to seek his advice, and simultaneously directed Saiyid Ahmad 'Alī and Bahrām Khān to stick to their old positions. Saiyid Ahmad 'Alī got the letter after he had already left Sitānā, and he turned back as directed. Bahrām Khān had, however, reached Kanīrza'i and therefore Pā'indā Khān moved forward with one thousand troops to snatch the hill position from him. A great battle ensued, Tanāolīs fought with firmness but they had to give in before the superior fire of *mujāhidīn* and fell back to 'Ashrah. However, the pursuit by the *mujāhidīn* was so rapid that the Tanāolīs could not reassemble either at 'Ashrah or Amb and fled to Chatarbā'ī, in the northern hills. Tanāolīs offered some resistance at Kotla but the well executed attack by the *mujāhidīn* forced them to make their escape. The Shāh, on the other hand, had been awaiting the arrival of Pā'indā Khān at Banda where he had sent a man to find out if Pā'indā Khān had turned up as promised by him. He proceeded to Amb on the next morning after getting the good news of the fall of Amb.

Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl besieged the citadel of Chatarbā'ī but the path leading to it being intersected by deep ravines, the assault could neither close up nor the enemy could be subjected to effective gun fire. The siege prolonged and the Saiyid had to come over to Amb to direct the operations. He got his heavy artillery brought from Panjtār but even these guns proved short of range, unable to make sniping strokes at the enemy. One, Hāfiz 'Abdul Latīf, led the *mujāhidīn* into an ill-conceived attack but had to fall back with heavy losses. A subterfuge resorted to by Pā'indā Khān during this period illustrates his wiliness. Finding himself hard pressed by the *mujāhidīn*, he deputed two emissaries, Saiyid Hasan Shāh and Munshī

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Ghaus Muhammad offering submission and evacuation of Chatarbā'i provided the Saiyid recalled his picket from Khabbalbā'ī, about 5 kilometres to the south of Chatarbā'i, cutting off his communications with the cis-Indus territory. As a proof of his good faith he even sent his minor son Jahāndād to Amb as a hostage with a few attendants. After a fortnight, the boy was allowed by the Saiyid to go back to see his mother[1] but after he had departed it was found that Pā'indā Khān had sent the party to dig out some treasure left by him while evacuating Amb.

The Saiyid did not want to linger round Chatarbā'ī nor its capture was his ultimate end. Opposite Amb, in the cis-Indus district of Hazārā, lay the Tanawāli territory separated on its west from the Yūsufza'ī country by the Indus, and having the Black mountain and Agror to the north, through which passed the road to Kashmir valley. Sulaiman Shāh had already promised help to the *mujāhidīn* in Kashmir, for his forces could come to their aid only through Gilgit. Rām Dayāl, the Governor of Hazārā, had been dismissed by Ranjīt Singh but his successor had not been nominated. Thus, it was an opportune moment for manoeuvring in that area. The Saiyid decided that three columns should move on to Hazārā simultaneously;[1] the first detachment headed by Sardār Muhammad Khān crossed over to Kirpīliyān ferry opposite Amb with two guns. There was brief resistance from the *Garhī* on the opposite bank, but the Sikhs and Tanāolīs soon begged for amnesty which was readily granted. The second detachment commanded by Saiyid Ahmad ʿAlī crossed the Indus at another ferry while Saiyid Nūrul Hasan moved ahead with his troops to cross the river further north near Sitānā.

The column commanded by Saiyid Ahmad ʿAlī reached Shāhkot by midnight and set upon the local *Garhī* on all sides. The troops inside the *Garhī* fired a few shots but realising the hopelessness of the task offered to vacate it. Saiyid Ahmad ʿAlī agreed and thus Shāhkot was

1. *Manzooratus Soʿada*, Vol. I, p. 770.

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captured without any bloodshed. The Tanāolī soldiers leaving Shāhkot went straight to Barotī, where Pā'indā Khān was staying at the moment. He left Baroti at once to strengthen the defence of Shergarh. Pā'indā Khān also despatched Munshī Ghaus Muhammad and Saiyid Hasan Shāh to Chatarbā'i to look after its defence, but as soon as they broke the news of *mujāhidīn's* advance and Pā'inda Khān's departure to Shergarh, the troops guarding the *Garhī* fled across Indus. Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn at once occupied Chatarbā'i. Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl, who had just returned from an expedition in Samah was ordered by the Saiyid to march on to Baroti in pursuit of Pā'indā Khān who had by then left for Shergarh. The Shāh continued his advance to Tikkāpānī, from where he moved on to Shinglātī and then to Shimidrah.

Pa'indā Khān was so hard pressed between Saiyid Ahmad 'Alī and Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl that he left his country for the time being to seek refuge in the distant Swātī tracts, cis-Indus. At last he went to the Agror chief and sent his son, Jahāndād as a hostage to Harī Singh Nalwā at Nowshera, begging his help. This Harī Singh Nalwā gave him, and despatched a strong Sikh force to drive away the *mujāhidīn* from the Tanāolī territory. By that time Saiyid Ahmad 'Alī had pitched his tents by the side of Bhingra hills after capturing Phulra. The columns of Sardār Muhammad Khān and Mīr Faiz Khān joined Saiyid 'Alī at Phulra but instead of making camp by the side of the hill, as directed by the Saiyid, they took up a position on the plain south of the Bhingra hill, on the right bank of the river Siran. On their invitation Saiyid Ahmad 'Alī also shifted to their encampment. For a few days guards were detailed to keep watch around the camp but as no enemy movement was reported, the constant vigilance was relaxed to their peril.

Suddenly one morning, while the *mujāhidīn* were making preparation for the dawn prayers, sound of gun shots fired at a distance was heard. Having finished the prayer the *mujāhidīn* gathered to face the enemy. The

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assailants charged on the *mujāhidīn* but no sooner than the counter attack was made by the *mujāhidīn* that they retreated in different directions. Covering a short distance, pursued by the *mujāhidīn*, the Sikhs turned back, in large numbers, joined by their comrades already taking cover behind the bushes. The *mujāhidīn* had by that time divided themselves into small sections and were thus encircled by the enemy many times more in number. No concerted action was now possible. Everybody continued to fight where he was. Saiyid Ahmad ʿAlī and Faiz ʿAlī held off the enemy till they had exhausted all the flints with them. Now the enemy troops closed in and both plunged into them using their matchlocks as sticks. Receiving numerous wounds from spears and swords, both fell down at last. A Sikh trooper captured the horse of Saiyid Ahmad ʿAlī, given to him by the Saiyid. Muhammad Khān called out his friends and bore down upon the captor of the horse and put him to sword. The Sikh troops again mounted an attack on him and he went down fighting bravely. Mīr Ahmad ʿAlī, a young man hailing from Bihar was an expert marksman. He sweeped scores of enemy troops by his rolling fire but was at last surrounded by the enemy. He threw away his musket and challenged them for a sword fight. None was able to put up a fight with him and at last someone fired at him at short range. Most of the *mujāhidīn* fell down at Phulra fighting the enemy swarming like maggots. Some of them, however, who had taken to the hills inflicted heavy losses on the enemy without suffering any injury. They also recovered a part of the plunder being carried away by some Sikh soldiers from the *mujāhidīn's* camp. After the enemy had departed these *mujāhidīn* returned to the scene of action and buried the martyrs after saying prayers over their dead bodies.

The dismal news of defeat and lamentable death of Saiyid Ahmad ʿAlī was communicated to the Saiyid. Brave, affable, dutiful and pious, Saiyid Ahmad ʿAlī was Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd's nephew, but being two year elder to him the Saiyid always addressed him as brother and his death was a personal loss to him. Reciting the Quranic verse :

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'Verily, to Allah do we belong and unto Allah shall we return,' the Saiyid retained his composure though tears rolled down his cheeks. Once or twice he murmured: 'Praise be to Allah. He achieved the end for which he had come,' and then sealed his lips. After the *ʿishā* prayers were over, the Saiyid consoled Saiyid Mūsā, son of late Saiyid Ahmad ʿAlī, and the relatives of other martyrs. He prayed for the salvation of the departed souls and invited those present to take food with him.

The news of defeat suffered at Phulra was brought to Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl at Chamberī where he awaited the arrival of other columns before advancing towards Kashmir. On getting the news of the collapse, he collected the Tanāolī Maliks and asked them to hold on against the Sikhs after he had departed. In a spirited speech the Shāh explained the merits of *jihād* to the Tanāolīs and took a pledge from them to support the *mujāhidīn* in their future efforts and to turn out the Sikhs from that area. The Shāh then returned to Amb.

In the days when the *mujāhidīn* were laying siege to Chatarbāʾi, Qāzī Habbān suggested to the Saiyid that an expeditionary force should be sent to Samah where certain tribes, encouraged by the presence of Sikhs in the Hund fort, had denied payment of *ʿushr* and posed a threat to the authority of the Saiyid. This was nothing exceptional for the Pathāns, who, at times prided in their untrustworthiness and were moved but a little by appeals with a pan-Islamic flavour. They were inspired by a deep-seated instinct which drove them to resist every encroachment on their independence. They respected and even liked those who wielded effective power but turned their backs as soon as they got the opportunity. Qāzī Habbān's proposal was accepted by the Saiyid who directed Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl and Risaldār ʿAbdul Hamīd to accompany the Qāzī with a detachment of 300 horse, 250 foot soldiers and six pieces of zamburaks or long swivels resembling astrolabe capable of discharging one to two pound balls. Qāzī Habbān advanced with his force to Panjtār and convened a

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meeting of the Maliks and Khāns of the Samah district. He offered to help the tribes whose lands had been forcibly seized by the Sikhs, provided they agreed to pay *ʿushr* regularly in future. After enlisting their support the Qāzī moved on to Kalābat and captured the villages of Marghuz, Thandkoʾi, Kaddī and Panjpīr in the vicinity of Hund. Thereafter he advanced towards Hund where the Sikhs, finding themselves unable to face the united force of all the surrounding tribes, evacuated the fort. Qāzī Habbān re-occupied Hund and entrusted it to the joint charge of Fateh Khān and Arsalān Khān of Zaida.

Qazi Habbān asked for some more reinforcements before proceeding towards Amānzaʾi. This was despatched under Maulvi Mazhar ʿAlī of Azīmābād. Amanzaʾis, however, renewed their allegiance to the Saiyid. Qāzi Habbān then summoned the Khāns of Katlang, Lundkhwar and Hoti. All of them excepting Ahmad Khān of Hotī, turned up to assure Qāzī Habbān that they were prepared to obey the rightful authority of the Amīr-ul-Muminīn. Ahmad Khān, on the other hand, hurriedly sent his brother Rasūl Khān to strengthen the defences of Mardān and, entrusting the charge of Hoti to his clients, went away to seek the help of Durrānīs at Peshāwar. After a few days, Qāzī Habbān stormed Hotī and then led his forces on to Mardān. Here Rasūl Khān had made adequate preparations for the defence of the town. Rolling fire from the parapets of the *Garhī* in the town checked the advance of the *mujāhidīn*, but they succeeded in silencing the enemy's muskets by superior fireworks of their light artillery. Qāzī Habbān and a few other *mujāhidin* made a bold charge on the enemy forcing it to lay down arms, but Qāzī Habbān got a bullet in his skull and died a martyr's death. Rasūl Khān, however, sued for peace which was granted to him by Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl. Some *mujāhidīn* had, it is related, taken possession of certain articles belonging to the inhabitants of Hotī after they had laid down their arms. The Shāh collected all the *mujāhidīn* and explained to them that it was not lawful for them to take away any plunder after peace had been granted to the enemy. The *mujāhidīn*, expressing regret,

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restored to their owners whatever they had annexed.

Shāh Muhammed Ismā'īl now took over the charge of the troops and led them back to Amānza'ī. Before returning to Amb, he appointed several collectors of *ushr*: Hājī Bahādur Shāh of Rāmpūr was left at Amānza'ī Hājī Mahmūd Khān was deputed to Sadhum, Maulvī Mazhar 'Alī was sent to Panjtār, Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn of Manglaor was despatched to Top'ī and Fateh Khān was commissioned to collect the *'ushr* from his own tribe in Zaida.[1]

Ranjīt Singh had, in the meanwhile, been giving serious thought to the new menace, a strange and formidable insurrection on his north-western border, which had swept across the mountains like a forest fire. Harī Singh had, undoubtedly, repulsed their advance in Hazārā but the Sikh forces had been stretched in arduous warfare against the new power ever since the battle of Shāidu. But, perhaps, Ranjīt Singh thought of the new leader as one of the numerous firebrands who occasionally make a debut in the mountainous regions, rally the faithful against an intruder, and then give up the struggle as soon as a fief or stipend is granted to them. Whatever the Mahārājā might have thought of the Saiyid, he considered it to his advantage to offer the trans-Indus territory to him and for that purpose he sent Faqīr 'Azīz-ud-dīn[2] and Wazīr Chand to Amb as his agents and simultaneously directed Ventura to negotiate a peace with the Saiyid. The two emissaries of Ranjīt Singh brought a letter of the Mahārājā requesting the Saiyid to invoke blessings of God for the prosperity and happiness of Ranjīt Singh. The Mahārājā offered to confer a *jagīr*[3] to the Saiyid in the trans-Indus territory provided he promised to cease all operations in the cis-Indus country of Hazārā under the Sikhs. Ranjīt Singh concluded his letter by expressing the wish that a religious leader, *Hājī*,

1. *Sīrat Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, Vol. II, pp. 232-241.
2. He was the personal physician of the Mahārājā and his minister for external affairs.
3. Assignment of land.

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*Khalifah* and a Saiyid like him would have hardly anything to do with carving out a kingdom for himself, for, such a conduct behoves not a man of God. The Saiyid accorded full honours due to the emissaries of the Mahārājā, who were also impressed by his saintly demeanour and ardent zeal of the *mujāhidīn*. The Saiyid was, however, firm in his reply to Ranjīt Singh. He wrote back to the Mahārājā that he had come to wage a holy war for the sake of God alone and that he could not give up his errand even if the latter gave him the whole of his kingdom. But if the Mahārājā were to accept the precepts of true faith, added the Saiyid in his reply, he would fight to extend his dominions.

Shortly after the emissaries of Ranjīt Singh had left Amb, intelligence was brought to Panjtār that a strong Sikh force under the command of General Ventura, Sher Singh and Allard had arrived in the country beyond the river Landā'i. On the invitation of Ventura, Maulvi Khair-ud-dīn was deputed by the Saiyid to hold talks with him. Allard was also present during the parleys but the deliberations were conducted by Ventura alone who could speak Persian fluently. Ventura opened the discussion by saying that while he was at Hazru an agent of the Saiyid had conveyed a proposal to him that if the Mahārājā agreed to entrust the collection of tributes from the Samah territory to the Saiyid, the arrangement would be advantageous to both the parties. Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn lost no time in contradicting Ventura by saying that the Saiyid could never be a party to any such proposal and that whoever had made the suggestion to him was a liar. Replying to another question of Ventura enquiring how the Saiyid hoped with his ill-equipped horde to subdue the powerful and rising power of the Sikhs, Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn said that such a phenomenon was not entirely without a precedent, for, all the prophets of God had to contend with powerful tyrants although they had no force behind them except their weak and poor followers. Had not the prophets, asked Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn, come out successful against mighty empires? The Maulvī explained to Ventura that *jihād* was a duty incumbent on every Muslim

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like the *namāz*[1], *zakāt*[2] or *haj*, but it carried higher merits and rewards from the Lord, for it was the highest form of service rendered by man to God. Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn also told Ventura that the *mujāhidīn* fought for the pleasure of God alone who would reward them either with victory or martyrdom. At last Ventura suggested that in order to maintain good relations with the Mahārājā, the Saiyid should at least present a horse of good breed to the latter. Ventura perhaps wanted to proclaim success in his dealings with the Saiyid whose presentation of a horse would have been adduced as a token of acknowledging the suzerainty of the Mahārājā. Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn saw the trap and turned down the suggestion. Having failed in his attempts to win over Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn, Ventura now threatened to invade Panjtār. In fact, the Sikh forces crossed the river Landa'i for pushing ahead towards Panjtār, but as Maulvī Khair-ūd-dīn had already warned all the tribes on way to Panjtār, they moved to the fastness of the hills and made preparations for checking the advance of the Sikh force. However, Ventura gave up his attempt for fear of night attacks in the inner hill regions where absence of adequate means of communication afforded little advantage to a big army.[3]

Undismayed by the failure of incursion into Hazārā, the Saiyid had, it seems, firmly decided to capture both Kashmir and Peshāwar. While at Amb, he issued a proclamation on the 19th March, 1831, offering Pā'indā Khān the territory of Galī Badr Māl, of which the latter was to be recognised as the *Sardār* and *Khān*, provided he agreed to restore the country of Hindwāl to his brother, Madad Khān; relinquished his claims over the territories of Agror and Pallāl; and promised to sever his relations with the Sikhs. Two days thereafter Pā'indā Khān executed an agreement whereby he bound himself to obey the *Amīr-ul-Mūminīn* as head of the Islamic State to abide by all the conditions mentioned in the proclamation. Pā'indā Khān also undertook to send a force

1. Prayer.
2. Payment of poor-due.
3. *Manzooratus Sa'ada*, Vol. I, pp. 794-810.

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of 160 troops under **Jahandād** Khān to Samah and another detachment consisting of 2000 warriors under the command of Akbar ʿAlī to Kashmir. In the event of any default in acting up to the provisions of the agreement, ran a proviso, the life and property of Pāʾindā Khān would be deemed to have been forfeited whereas faithful observance of the agreement was to entitle him to a fief valued at 10,000 rupees in Peshawar and another one of 20,000 rupees in Kashmir after the two territories had been captured.

The wild and lawless tribesmen of the Frontier areas, believing in the principle that private vendetta is the only sound sanction, have always found it difficult to adjust themselves to the rigours of the Law. The *sharīʿah*, with its even-handed justice, temperance and absolute submission to the commandments of God, outraged the convictions held strongly by the people. Unlike man-made laws, the *sharīʿah* did not provide for any relaxation authorising settlement of disputes by customary methods and that made the task of its enforcement still more difficult, at least, until the society was advanced to a stage where it began to appreciate the advantages of the Divine Law. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the Saiyid set himself to enforce the *sharīʿah* around Amb. The entire population of the area being Muslim, the hope that it would abide by the Law of God and realise its benefits was not entirely unjustified. The guilty were brought to justice for violent crimes while fines and other light punishments were prescribed for defaults of religious observances and norms of morality. A code enumerating amoral behaviours and punishments therefor had been drawn up by late Qāzī Muhammad Habbān who had been appointed as the Chief Qāzī of Amb, and was helped in the administration of justice by several *qazīs* and *muhtasibs* appointed in every town and village. A distinctive feature of the Islamic juridical system, as it soon began to be manifested at Amb, was that it created an aversion to impiety and evil. One, Phulaila, a devil

1. *Makātīb Shāh Ismāʿīl*, pp. 259/261.

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unchained, lived in the village Top'ī, who had been turned out of his home by the local people because of his evil nature. He turned into a hardened criminal, crossed the Indus, and was provided with a *Garhī* by the Sikhs near Attock from where he began organising raids of plunder to Top'ī, Mena'i, Manārā and Khabbal. At last the people of these villages complained to the Saiyid about the excesses committed by Phulaila. The Saiyid sent him a letter saying that it was not proper for him to subject his own brothers to outrages with the help of the Sikhs. He came to Amb on receiving the letter and solemnly swore to God that he would betake the right path. The Saiyid made peace between him and the people of Top'ī and gave him a deserted village near Khabbal. Phulaila took up residence in that village and ever since maintained cordial relations with the inhabitants of the surrounding villages.

The Saiyid was always anxious to see the *Mujahidīn* at their best, morally and spiritually. He never lost an opportunity to inculcate, by personal example, the spirit of brotherliness, self-sacrifice and mutual help amongst his followers. Whenever water had to be fetched from the river at odd hours, the mosque had to be repaired or the floor had to be swept clean, the Saiyid was always first to offer his services. Once, while he was in Amb, a portion of the turret of Amb citadel collapsed owing to heavy rains, burying a few men under the debris. As a portion of the turret still hanged dangerously, nobody dared to go near it for starting the rescue operations. The Saiyid immediately started digging the men beneath the wreckage despite warnings by others about the danger involved. He succeeded in digging out the unfortunate victims, one of whom was still alive.

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Sixteen

# Capture of Peshawar

PRESENCE of Ahmad Khān, the chief of Hotī, in the Peshāwar court again provided Sultān Muhammad Khān with an excuse to pit himself against the Saiyid. A few months after the capture of Hotī and Mardān by the *mujāhidīn*, Sultān Muhammad marched at the head of a strong force towards Mardān, with his brothers Pīr Muhammad Khān and Said Muhammad Khān and his nephew Habīb Ullah Khān. The panicky sardars of Samah, whom Sultān Muhammad had threatened with dire consequences repaired to Panjtār to request the *mujāhidīn* to come to their help. The message was promptly communicated to the Saiyid who directed Risāldār ʿAbdul Hamīd Khān, then at Panjtār, to proceed immediately to Garhī Amānzāʾī. Leaving Maulvī Khair-ud-din at Chatarbāʾī and Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl at Amb with 300 troops the Saiyid took the road to Panjtār with a force equal in number. The Bārakzaʾī brothers had, in the meanwhile, reached Chārsadda. The Saiyid came down from Panjtār to Amānzaʾī while the Peshāwar forces headed towards Utmānzaʾī and then marched on to Hotī. The Saiyid, on the other hand, moved forward to village Torū, from where he deputed Maulvī ʿAbdur Rahmān to bear his letter to Sultān Muhammad Khān. He explained the purpose of the *jihād* in his letter and added that he never intended to take up arms against any Muslim, but he

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was forced by Yār Muhammad Khān to take action against him. He appealed to Sultān Muhammad to go back and fight the infidels instead of taking up a hatchet with his own brethren. Sultān Muhammad, however, accused the Saiyid of being an impostor spreading irreligion whom he intended to destroy for ever. Sultān Muhammad Khān had, for all practical purposes, shut the doors of reconciliation but the Saiyid sent one more letter reminding him of the days when Bārakzaʾī brothers were united through his efforts and when they had taken the pledge to fight the Sikhs under him. The Saiyid also asked Sultān Muhammad Khān to cite at least one instance of his impiety, and offered to present himself before Sultān Muhammad for undergoing punishment according to the Law. Sultān Muhammad instead of giving any reply, turned out Maulvī ʿAbdur Rahmān who was sent to convey the Saiyid's letter. ʿAbdur Rahmān also brought the news that most of the *maliks* and *sardārs* of Samah were secretly in league with Sultān Muhammad Khān. Having failed in his efforts to avoid a conflict the Saiyid sent for Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl from Amb who arrived with 200 *mujāhidīn*.

Sultān Muhammad's force was 12,000 strong—4,000 foot soldiers and 8,000 horse—with two heavy and four light pieces of artillery. He got his troops to take an oath on the Qurʾān that everybody under him would fight the Saiyid to the last. On the other hand the Saiyid had 3,500 troops under his command of which the cavalry was only 500 without any gun.[1] Midway between the two encampments at Torū and Hotī, was the village of Māyār enclosed by a mud wall, and to its east ran a stream which was the only source of drinking water for the Saiyid's forces. The Saiyid detailed, on the advice of Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl, Mullā Lāl Muhammad and Mullā Qutb-ud-dīn to establish an advance picket with 200 men to guard its approach. The night before the day of action was spent in vigils and prayers. After the dawn prayers the Saiyid

1. *Mehr*, Vol. II, pp. 238-39

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beseeched God again for His help with tears running down his cheeks. He had hardly finished his prayer when he got the news that the Durrānī forces were advancing towards Māyār. The Saiyid also advanced at the head of his force towards the Māyār stream and ordered his troops to fall in battle formation after crossing the stream. Risāldār ʿAbdul Hamid was asked by him to keep his cavalry to the left in the rear of the main body of troops while the infantry was spread out in three rows, the Hindustānī *mujāhidīn* being in the front and the rear with the Pathān volunteers in the middle. When the *mujāhidīn* reached Māyār, they found the enemy advancing in four columns behind the cover of cannon fire. The ground in front was open and practicable for cavalry. Now the enemy had drawn nigh, and the cannon balls were falling on all sides. Most of the Pathān levies with the *mujāhidīn* started pulling out under the pretext of taking cover, reducing the number of active troops to about 2000. Fateh Khān of Panjtār, Mansūr Khān of Garhyālā, Mishikār Khān and Ānand Khān of Shewa, Ismāʿīl Khān of Kalabat, Sarwar Khān of Garhī Amānzāʾī, Fateh Khān of Zaida, Shahbaz Khān Khatak and Khawās Khān Khatak of Akora, Dalel Khān of Torū and Nasīm Khān of Lundkhwar along with a few Mullās were the only Pathāns of the Samah who had not withdrawn from the battle-field. Kale Khān of Maū Shamsābād was the first to get a cannon-shot, and he fell down never to rise again. A few other persons including Karīm Bakhsh who was carrying foodstuffs were also hit by musket fire.

The Saiyid stopped again, with the enemy advancing towards him, to make a devout supplication. "O God," he was heard saying, "we are Thy weak and humble creatures and we have none to help us save Thee. We tried our best to avoid this fight between the Muslims, but our efforts failed. Thou art the Knower of whatever happened and whatever is hidden in our hearts. If Thou consider us to be on the right path, help us to succeed. But if they are right, let them win the day." By this time one of enemy cavalry columns charged on the *mujāhidīn*. They were shouting : 'Where is Saiyid ?', 'Where is Saiyid ?'. The

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Saiyid took the musket from one of the two musket-bearers attending him and fired the first shot. This was a signal for the *mujāhidīn* who fell on the enemy with cries of *Allāh-O-Akbar*. The attackers could not stand the bold charge by the *mujāhidīn* and retreated with the utmost speed.

Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl and Sheikh Walī Muhammad pursued the retreating cavalry with 150 retainers and made for the enemy guns. In the meantime two more Peshāwar infantry divisions attacked the position, one after another, held by the Saiyid with only 500 men. Hand to hand fight ensued ; sabres clashed, axes, javelins and lances were hurled over one another. The Durrānī cavalry fought bravely but had ultimately to fall back. Their repeated failure in dislodging the *mujāhidīn* from their position had a depressing effect. In the meantime Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl and Sheikh Walī Muhammad had captured their guns and fired four shots on the Durrānīs. The Saiyid now recalled the Shāh and got the light guns in position to snipe at the enemy infantry which was again collecting for another charge. Unable to stand the cannon fire the enemy infantry also dispersed pell-mell signaliing defeat of Sultān Muhammad Khān. The Saiyid retreated to the stream where *mujāhidīn* quenched their thirst and relaxed, but the Saiyid kept waiting for reappearance of the enemy till the close of the evening. The *mujāhidīn* returned after performing evening prayers and burying their dead. Maulvī Saiyid Jʿafar ʿAlī writes that the number of *mujāhidīn* injured in the battle of Māyār was so large that the surgeons could provide first aid to all of them till late after midnight.[1]

Numerous feats of individual valour were performed in the battle of Māyār. Saiyid Mūsā, son of Saiyid Ahmad ʿAlī, was 17 or 18 years of age when the battle of Māyār was fought. Ever since his father had died he was seen depressed and sad of heart, but he used to remark that he would fight to the death at the next engagement. The

1. *Manzooratus Soʿada* ; Vol. I, pp. 874-75.

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Saiyid tried to have him among his retainers at Māyār but no sooner than the general melee had started that he charged on the enemy, mounted on his horse, and fought with an inspired recklessness until he fell down from his horse with innumerable injuries. He lost his both the hands in the battle. Rasāldār ʿAbdul Hamīd rushed at the enemy with his cavalry but all the Pathāns in his detachment fled at the commencement of the combat. The Risāldār, however, continued to press the attack with his depleted force until the enemy retreated in disorder although he was seriously injured and died shortly afterwards. The casualties among the *mujāhidīn* amounted to 40 dead and about 25 injured seriously. These were considerably smaller in comparison to the manifold losses suffered by the Durrānīs. An eye-witness, quoted in the *Waqāiʾ Ahmadī*, has related that when the Saiyid returned to the Māyār stream it was difficult to recognise anyone owing to the dust gathering on their faces. Arbāb Bahrām Khān tried to wipe off the dust on the face of the Saiyid but he remarked, "Brother, wait a bit. This is a blessed dust. A Tradition of the Prophet says that the feet defiled with this dust shall not be burnt by the Heli-fire. We have taken all this trouble merely for the sake of earning a bit of this blessing."

The *mujāhidīn* marched on, singing a war song, from Torū to Mardān. As the Durrānīs had fled leaving their camp and stores unattended at Hotī-Mardān, an advance party of 100 volunteers had to be despatched under the command of Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl to save it from pilferage by the local tribesmen. His party was welcomed at Hotī by a volley of musket fire coming from the parapet of its southern gate. The Shāh immediately dispersed his men in a grove to the west of Mardān and threatened to blow up Hotī with the guns left by the Durrānīs. Hotī capitulated, but he forbade his men to enter the habitations lest the *mujāhidīn* should lay a hand on the inhabitants of the town who had sided with the Durrānīs.[1] The Saiyid's force which had now swelled to more than 6000 strong,

1. *Manzooratus Soʿada*, Vol. I, pp. 879-82.

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set off from Mardān on the third day leaving the injured and a force of 100 men under Hājī Bahādur Shāh to garrison the town. Hājī Hamzā Khān was promoted as *Risāldār* to take the place of ʿAbdul Hamīd Khān. The Saiyid broke camp for a few days at Chārsadda where the people complained to him of the pillage and plunder committed by the retreating Durranī forces. Peshāwar was now only 25 kilometres away but the Durrānīs had destroyed all the boats after crossing the river Kabul. Heading north-west towards Tangī, the *mujāhidīn* forded the river Swāt to reach Math and then marched on to Shabqadr where the *arbābs* of the district called upon the Saiyid to make a request that they should be allowed to collect the land revenues as hitherto. The Saiyid was told, writes Maulvī Saiyid Jʿafar Alī, that the land revenue of the *tappas* and villages was usually farmed out to *arbābs* and influential *maliks*. The official share of the produce claimed by the Durrānīs was one-half, but the extra fees which they demanded on every possible excuse, and the expenses of the collection of revenues, which had to be paid by the cultivators, afforded the *arbābs* and their minions opportunities for unlimited extortion. Promising to make a regular settlement later on, the Saiyid fixed the land revenue for the year as one-third of the produce and prohibited to charge any collection or other expenses from the cultivators who were expected only to extend normal hospitability to the collection staff. The lands owned by the tribes which had joined the *mujāhidīn* force had been confiscated by the Durrānīs. These were restored to them.

In order to check the advance of *mujāhidīn* force to Peshāwar across river Landaʾi by way of Michni ferry, the Durrānīs had advanced seven hundred rupees to the Khaibar tribes but the prompt action taken by Arbāb Bahrām Khān foiled their attempt. He arrested a Khaibar Malik through whose intervention a detachment of about three hundred persons crossed the river one evening and established itself on a hill position across the river. The rest of the force joined the advance column next morning

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and took the road to village Regī, the home village of Arbāb Bahrām Khān. The Saiyid was told on reaching Regī that Sultān Muhammad Khān had sent away his dependents to Kohāt and had himself taken shelter with his remaining forces in some village. It is rather amusing to find certain historians of the Punjab referring to the victorious descent of the Saiyid into the plains of Peshāwar in great strength preceded by an action fought by Sultān Muhammad Khān to defend Peshawar.[1] The graphic description of the fall of Peshāwar narrated by the eye witnesses in the *Manzooratus Soʿada* and *Waqaiʾ Ahmadī* shows that no action took place after the battle of Māyār. However, when the Saiyid reached Farausa, Arbāb Faiz Ullah Khān, a Hazārkhāniwālā chief, called upon him to convey Sultān Muhammad Khān's regrets for the flagitious behaviour of his Khān. "Sultān Muhammad Khān is willing to appear before you," said Arbāb Faiz Ullah Khān, "for the confession of his sins and contrition. You would verily never turn down the request of a heathen to repent and embrace Islam. Sultān Muhammad is, after all, a Muslim and son of a Muslim father. He confesses his mistake and promises never to repeat it again. He also undertakes to fulfil his obligation of fidelity to you in future."[2] The Saiyid replied that he never intended to capture Peshāwar, but the open enmity of Barakzaʾī brothers forced him to take action against them. He told Arbāb Faiz Ullah Khān to let Sultān Muhammad wait till his entry into Peshāwar.

The Saiyid made a triumphant entry into Peshāwar late in the summer of 1830, but the fall of the city to the new chief was singularly different from what it had witnessed on earlier occasions. Before entering the city he sent a crier to announce that his forces were to get in that evening and therefore the shopkeepers should keep their shops closed

1. Cunningham, p. 171; History of the Punjab, p. 441; Princep, p. 149-50. The description of the fall of Peshāwar given by the compilers of the Distt. Gazeteer, Peshāwar, 1883-84, however, follows the sequence of events given by Saiyid's biographers.
2. *Manzooratus Soʿada*, Vol. I, p. 904.

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lest some overzealous troops or rowdy elements within the city should utilize the occasion to despoil them. After *ʿasr* prayers he set out for the city with his large force, but not before he had bowed down to offer thanks to God for reducing the city to submission and sought the Lord's help to enable him to restore the rule of truth and justice in that town. The shops were closed, but the citizens had come out of their houses to welcome the *mujāhidīn* offering them sweet drinks. The entire city had been lit up with small lamps studded on the walls and terraces. Instead of taking up residence in the palatial house of Sultān Muhammad Khān, the Saiyid preferred to stay in an inn known as Gol Gathri Sarāʾī.[1]

The *mujāhidīn* could not get anything to eat on the day they entered Peshāwar. On the day following their entry, no arrangements for their meals could be made as the shops had remained closed. Strictly prohibited to obtain anything without payment or pluck the fruits from the groves, which abound in Peshāwar, they had to go without meals. On the third day, when the shop-keepers were directed to start their business, ʿAbdullah Dehlavī was able to procure some flour for the mess of the *mujāhidīn*. The Saiyid's entry into Peshāwar had a tremendous moral effect. Maulvī Saiyid Jaʿafar ʿAlī writes that the prostitutes disappeared from the city, sale of intoxicants dwindled and all illicit business diminished within a few days.[2]

Arbāb Faiz Ullah Khān visited the Saiyid twice to advance Sultān Muhammad professions of loyalty to the Saiyid. He told the Saiyid that his chief was willing to rule, in future, in accordance with the *sharīʿah* and pay forty thousand rupees as indemnity for the battle of Māyār and the expenses incurred on coming down to Peshāwar owing to his folly. The Saiyid told Arbāb Faiz Ullah that he had no intention of foisting his rule upon Peshāwar, for his aim was not to carve out a kindgom but to unite all the Muslim

1. The name of the place mentioned by some is Sarāʾī Gor Khattarī.
2. *Sirat Saiyid Ahmad Shahid*, Vol. II, pp. 286-87.

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chiefs to fight the infidels. He also consulted Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl, Sheikh Walī Muhammad, Arbāb Bahrām Khān, Maulvī Mazhar ʿAlī, Mullā Lāl Muhammad, Mullā Qutb-ud-dīn Ningarhārī and several other Khāns and *māliks* of Samah about the offer made by Sultān Muhammad Khān. Some of them advised to accept the offer but the consensus of opinion was that Sultān Muhammad Khān could not be relied upon to fulfil his promises. Gradually the news that the city was likely to be restored to Sultān Muhammad Khān trickled out. A deputation of the citizens of Peshāwar, both Hindus and Muslims, called upon Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl to make a request that they should not be handed over again to the tyrannical rule of the Bārakzaʿī Chief. The Shāh, however, advised them to see Arbāb Bahrām Khān who conveyed the misgivings of the Peshāwar people and the *maliks* of the Samah to the Saiyid. He told him that all these people feared reprisal, once Sultān Muhammad came to power again, for hailing the *mujāhidīn* as their liberators. The Arbāb also conveyed the offer made to him that the inhabitants of Peshāwar were willing to make available a few lakhs of rupees to strengthen the administrative machinery, in case that was the cause of relinquishing Peshāwar to the charge of its ousted governor. He told the Saiyid that all the Samah chiefs who had met him, excepting Fateh Khān of Panjtār and another chief, Ismā'īl Khān, were willing to have him as the governor of Peshāwar. The Saiyid, however, asked the Arbāb to tell everybody that nothing was dearer to his heart than acting in accordance with the commandments of God. People have misunderstood his aims, he said, if they thought that subjugation of any country was his ultimate end. Sultān Muhammad Khān was repentant, willing to acknowledge the Law of God as the sole arbiter in his dominions and making promises never to depart from the path of truth and justice. The *sharīʿah* demanded that reliance should be placed on his professions, for, none except God knew what was hidden in one's heart. The Saiyid also asked the Arbāb to assure all concerned that their fears were unfounded as no ruler could afford to despoil his own dominions and displease his subjects.

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Arbāb Bahrām Khān was so moved by the Saiyid's speech that he requested the Saiyid to renew his *biʿat*, for, a longing to hold the reins of Peshāwar had found its way into his heart. The embassy of Arbāb Bahrām Khān having failed, one Budh Rām, waited upon the Saiyid on behalf of the Hindu money-lenders of Peshāwar to dissuade him from forsaking the city. He made an offer to advance as much funds as the Saiyid required to tone up the administration and recruit a regular salaried army to hold Peshāwar. The Saiyid thanked him for the offer and reassured him by removing his fears. He had, in all probability, no other option before him; for, establishment of his own rule or the installation of a new governor would have, doubtlessly, whipped up the Bārakzaʿī brothers, ruling over different principalities in Afghanistan, to join hands for restoring their family's rule over Peshāwar. The Pathān code of honour, which every Pathān observed strictly, and which he quoted with pride as *Pakhtūnwālī*, made it obligatory on him to take revenge for every act bringing disgrace upon his family or tribe. It is also not improbable that the Bārakzaʾī brothers would have collaborated with the Sikhs against the *mujahidīn*. In any event, to spurn the overtures made by Sultān Muhammad Khān would have meant picking up a new quarrel which would have triggered off unnecessary bloodshed and defeated the very purpose of terminating Sultān Muhammad's control over Peshāwar. Sultān Muhammad, being unreliable, was more likely to shake off his bondage to the Saiyid at the first opportunity, but the possibility of a genuine change of heart could not be altogether ruled out.

It was decided that Sultān Muhammad Khān should first meet Shāh Muhammad Ismāʾīl at village Hazārkhānī, about two kilometres to the south of Peshāwar, in order to renew his *biʿat* to the Saiyid. Sultān Muhammad, still in two minds, refused at first to meet the Shāh, but ultimately agreed to receive him in a grove outside the village, where he renewed his oath of allegiance to the Saiyid on the Shāh's hands. While the ceremony was under way, one of Sultān Muhammad's armed escort of 100 Durrānīs let off

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a matchlock. The *mujāhidīn* accompanying the Shāh were, however, not unwary and they promptly shouldered their muskets to fire upon the Durrānīs. The culprit was immediately produced before Arbāb Bāhrām Khān but he was pardoned since he made excuses for his inadvertent action. Sultān Muhammad Khān met the Shāh once more to confirm the terms of agreement before he was received by the Saiyid. He confessed his past mistakes but pleaded that he had been misled by certain misguided *mullahs* of India. He also handed over a declaration to the Saiyid which was signed by numerous religious heads and pseudo-mystics of India saylng that a man, Saiyid Ahmad by name, had gone to the Frontier with a handful of his followers ostensibly for waging a holy war, but he is an impostor who denies the fundamental precepts of the religion of Muslims, depreciates their saints and *walis*, and endeavours to promote a new religion of his own. The proclamation further accused the Saiyid as a spy of the British sent to extend the sway of the *Firangīs* over the independent territories of the Muslims, and called upon every Pathān to destroy him as early as possible. The Saiyid made over the declaration to the Shāh saying that this was the work of religious leaders whose vested interests were threatened by his reforms. He also absolved Sultān Muhammad Khān from the responsibility of paying the agreed sum of forty thousand rupees as indemnity to him.

The Saiyid remained in Peshāwar for more than three weeks. During this period *jihād* was preached in the Friday sermons. The inhabitants of Peshāwar were required to offer prayers in the mosques regularly. Maulvī Mazhar ʿAlī was appointed as Qāzī and pulpiteer of the Jāmī Mosque of Peshāwar on the request of Sultān Muhammad Khān. The Saiyid left about a dozen *mujāhidīn*, before leaving the city, to help Maulvī Mazhar ʿAlī in discharging his duties as a public censor in Peshāwar. However, the Saiyid is alleged to have assumed regal powers, proclaimed himself a *Khalifah* and stuck a coin in his name, bearing the inscription 'Ahmad the Just, the Defender of the Faith, the glitter of whose

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sword scattereth destruction among the infidels,' during his stay at Peshāwar.[1] *Khalīfah*, the Saiyid already was, for he had already been elected as *Amīr-ul Mūminīn* on the 11th January, 1827, but the report of Saiyid's giving way to vain-glory in this manner, obviously inexact, is as ill-founded as the tattle in regard to striking a coin in his name. We are indebted to Cunningham for the disclosure that the fall of Peshāwar was received with alarm at Lahore, and the Sikh force on the Indus was strengthened, and placed under the command of Sher Singh.[2] But Princep's account[3] that the Sikhs crossed Attock, and on their appearance on the plains of Peshāwar the Saiyid fled to the hills is purely a coinage of his brain as no other contemporary historian, nor the Saiyid's biographers allude to this event. Incidentally, these narratives give an inkling of our historians' eagerness to blackwash the achievements of the Saiyid.

The Saiyid returned to Panjtār by the way of Hazār-khānī, Chamkanī, Hashtnagar, Mardān and Garhī Amānza'ī While at Garhī Amānza'ī he despatched Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl with a force of 100 *mujāhidīn* to Bājaur, a town in the valley of same name towards Afghan Kunar to the west of upper Swāt, on the request of Mīr 'Alam Khān, the Sardar of Bājaur, who had expressed willingness to enforce the *sharī'ah* and levy *'ushr* in his territory. At Dheri the Shāh found his way to Swāt barred by armed hordes of Swātī tribesmen. He was told that the Swātīs feared that in the event of Bājaur tribes accepting the *sharī'ah* and joining hands with the Saiyid, they would be compelled to subrogate their customary laws and usages bv the religious law of Islam. All these tribes had, not very long ago, acknowledged the Saiyid as their *Imām* and taken oath of fidelity on his hands; still, they considered the compliance with the sacred law to be so irksome that they preferred to migrate to a land ruled by the heathens rather than give up their tribal usages. The Shāh did not try to force his way ahead

1. *Cunningham*, p. 171. *History of the Punjab*, p. 442 ; *The Pathan*, p. 303.
2. *Cunningham*, p. 171.
3. *Princep*, p. 150

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as he had been directed by the Saiyid to avoid all bloodshed on his way to Bājāur. He took the road back to Panjtār from Khar.

It was about this time that the Saiyid introduced a reform which has been distorted by certain writers to malign the Saiyid. While at Garhī Amānza'ī, one, Kākā Ahmad Khān, complained to the Saiyid that quite handsome amounts were fixed as dower at the time the girls were betrothed, and they were not sent off to their husbands' house unless the stipulated money had been paid to the bride's father. The custom was so scrupulously followed by the avaricious tribesmen that the girls more often saw the faces of their husbands only as old maids. In a gathering of the Amānza'ī people, the Saiyid first took a pledge from his audience that they would accept his advice, and then proposed that all girls whose marriages had already been solemnized should be sent to their husbands, provided, of course, they had also attained the age of puberty, within eight days of their marriage; but if their husbands had gone out, they could join them later on as soon as they had returned home.[1] The husbands, whose wives had been detained by their fathers-in-law, were allowed to put in a suit for restitution of conjugal rights with their wives in the court of the *Qāzī*. Hāfiz ʿAbdul Latīf and Khizr Khān were charged to execute the decree of the *Qāzī* in such cases.[2] This was a simple reform prohibiting the Pathāns to dispose off their daughters and sisters to the wealthy in return for large dowries—it neither required the tribesmen to marry all the young women of marriageable age at once[3] nor asked them to give their daughters in marriage to Hindustānī *mujāhidīn* as alleged by some historians.[4] It did cut across the tribal custom, however; but was hailed by others particularly the poor, the marriages

1. There is a difference of opinion about the time allowed by the Saiyid for sending the girls to their husbands,
2. *Manzooratus Soʿada*, Vol. I, p. 236.
3. *History of the Punjab*, p. 442.
4. *The Pathan*, pp. 304-5

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of whose daughters were delayed not infrequently, and also by the Hindu businessmen from whom the *maliks* and *sardārs* charged huge amounts on such occasions.

Complaints about ill-behaviour of certain *qāzis* were also made to the Saiyid while he was on his way back to Panjtār. The choice of the Saiyid first fell on Maulvī Khair-ud-din, but as he declined to accept the responsibility, Maulvī Ramzān of Saharanpur was appointed as Chief Qāzī for the entire Samah territory to look into such complaints. The Saiyid always took strong action to curb the lawless activities of his followers whenever any such instance was brought to his notice. One, Chedia Beldār, belonging to Rae Bareli and another man, Karīm Bakhsh, were reported to be helping themselves with illegal gratifications. The Saiyid ordered them to be produced before him so that he might give them exemplary punishment. Such cases were, however, few and far between, but as the tribesmen seldom took up their complaints to the authorities the Saiyid directed the Chief Qāzī to tour the whole of Samah territory, accompanied by a squad of *mujāhidīn*, and redress the grievances of the people against erring functionaries of the Islamic State. A few days after the Saiyid reached Panjtār, the *maliks* of Lundkhwar, Katlang and certain adjoining villages on the borders of Swāt requested him to send a force in that area for the collection of *ʿushr* and enforcement of the *sharīʿah* laws. Maulvī Khair-ud-din was deputed with a posse of 50 Hindustāni and 30 Kandahārī *mujāhidīn* to establish the rule of sacred Law in those areas but he was also directed to be cautious in view of the recent affair at Dherī. He found the *maliks* willing to abide by his instructions, but they expressed their inability to force their tribesmen to abide by the *sharīʿah's* norms of moral conduct. The Maulvī, however, asked the *maliks* to set the pace by paying the *ʿushr* chargeable from them and performing religious duties punctually. The tribesmen soon followed in the steps of their leading men. Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn was also successful in persuading many tribesmen to marry their daughters without demanding the customary dower.

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Seventeen

# A Dreadful Conspiracy

IN no long time after the Saiyid's departure from Peshāwar, Sultān Muhammad Khān brought all his sinister arts into play. Before the fall of Peshāwar, designs or desires of the Durrānī chiefs aroused the suspicion of the *maliks* and *sardārs* in the Samah, but the position had changed now. The Saiyid's sojourn in Peshāwar had afforded Sultān Muhammad an opportunity to establish friendly contacts with these *maliks* who started visiting Peshāwar every now and then. Maulvī Mazhar ʿAlī, the Saiyid's representative and the Chief Qāzī at Peshāwar had drawn the attention of the Saiyid towards these unusual rounds of visits, but the Saiyid dismissed his misgivings by sending a reply to him that the Samah chiefs had started visiting Peshāwar more frequently owing to the treaty of peace concluded with him. In another letter Maulvī Mazhar ʿAlī wrote to Shāh Muhammad Ismāʾīl, he informed that Arbāb Faiz Ullah Khān, Hazārkhāniwālā, had expressed the fear that Sultān Muhammad was marking time to revolt against the authority of the Saiyid.[1] Shortly after the Maulvī wrote this letter, he was called by Sultān Muhammad to a debate with the religious leaders of Peshāwar who contended that the murder of Yār Muhammad Khān by the

1. *Manzooratus Soʿada*, Vol. I, p. 964

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*mujāhidīn* was unjustified and a sin according to the *sharīʿah*. Maulvī Mazhar ʿAlī intimated the matter promptly to Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl, who, on the request of the Maulvī, penned two treatises to establish that Yār Muhammad was guilty of not only hypocrisy but also revolt against a chief whom he had already acknowledged as his *Imām*.[1] There are reasons to believe that Sultān Muhammad had, in the meanwhile, handed over copies of the declaration of religious leaders of Hindustān, proclaiming the Saiyid as a heretic to the scholars of Peshāwar ; for, the Saiyid sent them a detailed letter during this period denying the charges of irreligious beliefs and practices attributed to him. In it he asserted that he subscribed, like his forefathers, to the Hanafite school of jurisprudence and invited the scholars levelling wild charges against him to come to Panjtār and let him know of his beliefs or actions not upheld by the Qurʾān and the *sunnah* so that he might mend his ways. The Saiyid also assured the Peshāwar scholars that they would be extended a cordial treatment at Panjtār, since, it seems, they had accused him of overbearing and harsh treatment. The Saiyid added in his letter that even the enemy spies and prisoners of war would avouch for his kind and considerate behaviour to them.[2] The religious leaders of Peshāwar never went to Panjtār, but they kept on their malicious campaign unabated against the Saiyid, for all one knows, at the instance of Sultān Muhammad. This was, indeed, the most potent weapon in his hand against the Saiyid.

The Pathāns are known for their zeal for religion but leading an unruly, unrestrained and boisterous life in the rugged fastness of the mountains, they have an air of masculine independence which is irksome of every discipline or restraint. Their *biʿat* to the Saiyid seemed to impose no more obligation on them than performing the religious observances, and, at the most, paying the *ʿushr* at their sweet will. The appointment of officials to realise the *ʿushr*

1. *Manzooratus Soʿada*, Vol. I, pp. 964-71
2. *Maktūbāt*, pp. 408/414

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regularly was viewed by them as an affront to their dignity and an undesirable restraint on their freedom. The Sikhs and Durrānīs, no doubt, used to realise from them much more—more than half of the agricultural produce—as revenues, but they constantly fled to the hills to avoid payment of revenues and if one was powerful enough to cause trouble from there he was usually pardoned after a short interval and restored to his former position. There was also the marriage custom, which, for reasons of avarice, or, more appropriately, owing to a sense of pride and honour, required the *maliks* and *sardārs* to give the hands of their daughters and sisters to those who could pay the highest dowry. There might have also been a few cases of over-bearing and arrogant behaviour on the part of the officials charged to settle their disputes or to realise the tithe, but the prompt action taken by the Saiyid to punish the officials exceeding their authority should have hardly left any cause of complaint. Yet, be that as it may, the deep-seated feeling of reverence for religious leaders and fear of divine chastisement were a potent force to prevent the ignorant and superstitious Pathān from laying his hands on the Saiyid or his followers. The extent of influence exerted by the saintly figures on these tribesmen has been vividly described by Edwardes who visited the frontier in 1849.

> For him the whistle of the far-thrown bullet had no terrors; blood was simply a red fluid; and to remove a neighbour's head at the shoulders as easy as cutting cucumbers. But to be cursed in Arabic, or anything that sounded like it; to be told the prophet has put a black mark against his soul; to have the saliva of a disappointed saint left in anger on his door-post; or behold a hāji who had gone three times to Mecca deliberately sit down and enchant his camels with the itch and his sheep with the rot; these were the things which made the dagger drop out of the hand of the awe-stricken savage; his knees to knock together, and his parched tongue to be scarce able to articulate a full and complete concession of the blasphemous demand.[1]

Sultān Muhammad, not an illiterate Afghān but an

1. H. B. Edwardes; A Year on the Punjab Frontier

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educated, cunning and intriguing man, knew all this and also his men who could do the job for him ; and his men were the knave religious leaders of Peshāwar and the *maliks* and *khāns* of the Samah country. For the unwarranted concessions to the luxury of the wealthy religious scholars and *maliks* were the omens and auguries, sacred shrines and richly ornamented tombs, the silks and satins, the free and boisterous living of the tribesmen; but to the earnest reformer all this meant nothing but lamentable departure from the first principles of Islam. And the Saiyid's simple and frugal life and his insistence on the norms of behaviour upheld by the *sharī'ah* were a standing reproach to the luxury and superstitions of both the misguided religious leaders and the wealthy *maliks*. Sultān Muhammad got both these groups to start a whispering campaign to paint the Saiyid and his followers as heretics, wearing the masks of religious hypocrisy but in essence the masters of perfidy, concealing the sinister purpose of preaching a new religion. Simultaneously, the passions of hatred against the *Hindki*, the low and inferior stock of men from the down-country were inflamed. Thus, the stage was set for complete annihilation of the Saiyid and his followers. The proud and ignorant Pathān was made to believe that he had been duped, and nothing but retaliation and revenge—the strongest of all obligations to him—could now save his honour.

On the first of November, 1830, Saiyid Asghar, the *Imām* of the mosque at Dukhāra, about 8 or 9 kilometres to the east of Panjtār, informed Sheikh 'Abdul 'Azīz about the plot hatched by the *maliks*. After consulting his brother, Sheikh Hasan 'Alī, he went all the way to Panjtār to inform the Saiyid about the conspiracy to kill all the *mujāhidīn* who were then living in more than a dozen places. The Saiyid, however, refused to give credence to the report. "Brother, I cannot believe it," said the Saiyid, "all the *maliks* and *sardārs* are on friendly terms with us. We should never expect such a heinous crime from them. I think some one has given currency to this

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gossip merely to drive a wedge between us and them."[1] At last, Sultān Muhammad Khān took the initiative, perhaps, two days earlier than the day appointed for slaughter of all the *mujāhidīn* and agents of the Saiyids throughout the country. On one Friday, Sardār Pīr Muhammad invited Maulvī Mazhar ʿAlī and Arbāb Faiz Ullah Khān to a banquet and then got them slain. Imām-ud-dīn, one of the companions of Maulvī Mazhar ʿAlī at Peshāwar, went hurriedly to inform the Saiyid about the double murder.[2] He reached Panjtār late at night. Early next morning the Saiyid gave his horse to Saiyid Ismāʿīl to go round the surrounding villages and ask the *mujāhidīn* to come over to Panjtār at once. In the meantime, the Saiyid got the guns placed at suitable positions to ward off possible attack by insurrectionary forces.

Saiyid Ismāʿīl went round two or three villages and sent messengers to other places. However, he did not reveal the reason for summons in order to avoid panic, and the *mujāhidīn* delayed their departure till that evening or next morning to bid goodbye to their Pathān friends, or else were detained by the tribesmen under the pretext of partaking their hospitality before going back to the Saiyid. There was still a day to go by for the day of slaughter appointed at the secret council to arrive, but the intended departure of the *mujāhidīn* seemed to end up their plans in smoke. But, another man had also come from Panjtār on the heels of Saiyid Ismāʿīl.[3] This was Nasr Ullah Khān of Garhī Amānzāʾī who had come to tell the tribesmen that a decision had to be taken now or never, and the tribesmen did take a decision at once. On that winter night, at the time of '*ishā*' prayers, suddenly a beacon blazed upon the peak of a hill, drums were beaten from the house-tops and the tribesmen started collecting in different villages. Bewildered *mujāhidīn* asked the reason for that commotion, but their curiosity was satisfied by telling them that *makaʾi* had to be

1. *Manzooratus Soʿada*, Vol. I, pp. 972-75.
2. *Waqāiʿ Ahmadī*, Vol. III pp. 251-52
3. *Manzooratus Soʿada*, Vol. I, p. 977.

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thrashed—the code word coined for thrashing the *mujāhidīn* —so as to make payment of the tithe to the Saiyid Bādshāh. Most of the *mujāhidīn* were offering '*ishā*' prayers or making preparations for it, when they were attacked and slain by the armed bands of tribesmen. Hājī Bahādur Khān of Rāmpūr had reached Ismāʿīlah, on his way to Amānzaʾī. He was asked by the inhabitants of the village to break his journey for the night to enjoy their hospitality. But the proverbial hospitality of the Pathāns could also not save the life of that poor old man, for he was beheaded when he was prostrating before his Lord. Maulvī Ramzān Shāh and other *mujāhidīn* at Shewa died fighting the insurgents, and only Saiyid Amīr ʿAlī escaped unhurt from the village. At Mena'ī, the local Mulla saved three *mujāhidīn* by hiding them in his house while the rest took shelter in a mosque. The Saiyids, Akhunds, the women and even the Hindu shopkeepers of the village interceded on their behalf, but to no avail. Another Mulla had given shelter to a few *mujāhidīn*. Finding the way to Panjtār unsafe, he proposed that he might lead them to the ferry of Attock, so that they may cross over to the Sikh territory. The *mujāhidīn*, however, refused to go anywhere except Panjtār and they took a circuitous and difficult path to reach their headquarters. The *mujāhidīn* at Sadhum, more than 20 in number, were deceived by the friendly gestures of Khān Mubīn Khān, the Malik of Sadhum, and were made to part with their weapons. Thereafter all of them were overpowered and butchered to a man.[1] Hāfiz Ilāhī Bakhsh was just a boy when the insurgents attacked and killed his uncle. Ilāhī Bakhsh also got a sword cut in his head but he was saved by a Pathān who took him away to his house as a serf. The *jarrāh* or the surgeon asked to treat the boy dressed his wounds but applied some lotion which kept his wound unhealed for a long time. At last, the Hāfiz came to know that the *jarrāh* intended to apply some poisonous substance to kill him and he managed to abscond from the place. When he reached Panjtār it was found that a major

1. *Manzooratus Soʿada*, Vol. I, p. 1044.

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operation was necessary owing to the morbid growth caused by the poisonous medicine administered to his wound.[1]

Not all the *mujāhidīn* were killed in this holocaust, however. Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn got timely information of the uprising at Lundkhwar from an Ākhund. He despatched, at once, some of his companions to demand tribute from the local shopkeepers who arrived with their *maliks*, as anticipated by him, to settle the matter with the Maulvī. He did not allow the *maliks* to leave until they had agreed to let one of them, Malik Sadr-ud-dīn, remain with him as a hostage. The tribesmen armed with lethal weapons arrived shortly to do away with the *mujāhidīn*, but they had to return without doing any harm owing to Malik Sadr-ud-dīn being in the possession of the *mujāhidīn*. Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn left Lundkhwar safely with his companions and reached Panjtār after a month's stay with Malik Lal Muhammad of Parān Ghār who had remained steadfastly loyal to the Saiyid. The *mujāhidīn* at Amb and Chatarbā'ī were also not put to any harm. On coming to know of the massacre in Samah, Pā'indā Khān lost no time in laying a siege to both these places. The *mujāhidīn* of Amb were invited by the Sikhs to cross over to their *Garhī*, on the other bank of Indus, but they refused. However, after some time Saiyid Akbar Shāh of Sitānā managed to conduct the *mujāhidīn* of Amb and Chatarbā'ī safely to village Bardherī, where they joined the Saiyid when he was on his way to Hazārā.

The Saiyid was now a broken-hearted man. He had wandered over the great plain of the Samah and the mountain ramparts of Buner and Swāt preaching, exhorting the people to unite for the defence of Islam, called upon them to become true Muslims and make a common cause with him against the oppressors and imperialists, the enemies of their faith, but the tribesmen had failed him, and failed completely. But the Saiyid showed no bitterness. He was still calm and composed, although he had lost faith in the Yūsufza'i tribesmen of the Samah, and wanted to

1. *Manzooratus Sa'ada*, Vol. I, pp. 1005-6.

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leave them as early as possible. Arbāb Bahrām Khān requested the Saiyid that he might be allowed to lead a detachment of 500 *mujāhidīn* with a few guns and he would see that the whole of the Samah acknowledged allegiance to him once again, but the Saiyid did not agree to the proposal. "Our ambition never was," replied the Saiyid, "to raise ourselves to the throne of kingship. We only wanted them to become true believers, but now we leave them to God."[1]

Fateh Khān had been absent from Panjtār for many days before the turmoil began. With him came to Panjtār hordes of Khūdū Khel and Zaida tribesmen. The *mujāhidīn* immediately threw up fortifications around their habitations and prepared for defence. In the meanwhile Fateh Khān came to see the Saiyid. The *mujāhidīn* sought the permission of the Saiyid to disarm him, but the Saiyid allowed him to come with his arms. He told the Saiyid that the tribesmen had collected to avenge the wrong done to the *mujāhidīn*, but he agreed, on the insistence of the Saiyid, to send the tribesmen back to their homes. A number of persons testified to the Saiyid that Fateh Khān had been the moving spirit behind the massacre of the *mujāhidīn* ; some offered to kill him or take him captive, but the Saiyid forbade all of them. Instead, he asked Fateh Khān to call a meeting of the *maliks*, *khāns* and religious leaders who had not taken leading part in the uprising. Although a few *maliks*, known to have taken leading part in the killing came uninvited, all the guests were treated lavishly. Thereafter, the Saiyid rose to address the gathering. He said :

"We had left our homes to fight in the way of God. The *khāns* and *maliks* here were disunited, fighting one another for their petty ends. The *jihād* could not have been launched until all had united and, therefore, I directed my efforts first to fraternize you and all of you took the oaths of fealty on my hands, of your own accord and free will You acknowledged me as your *Imām* and gave your assent to enforce the Law of God. I appointed *qāzīs* with your consent to settle your disputes and you also volunteered to pay *'ushr* to me. The officials to collect the

1. *Manzooratus Sofada*, Vol. I, p. 1002.

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levy of tithe were also appointed on your asking, and then, you suddenly turned our enemies. You never brought any complaint to my notice, nor brought up a charge against anybody. Yet, all of a sudden, you slaughtered such a large number of *mujāhidīn*. I have still to know the reason for it. All of you may give your thought to my question and let me know your answer."

Nobody had any answer to give, for, the chiefs known to be faithful to the Saiyid, had been kept in the dark by their tribesmen. At last, it was decided that Saiyid Miān and Qābil Ākhundzāda should visit the tribes to make on-the-spot enquiries about the matter. They returned after five or six days, and produced before the Saiyid some letters written by certain religious leaders of Hindustān and Peshāwar. All these letters were found to be copies of the declaration handed over earlier by Sultān Muhammad Khān to the Saiyid.

After Friday prayers, on the next day, the Saiyid again addressed the vast concourse that had come to offer the prayer. He told them how he had come and what efforts had he made to guide them on the path of truth and virtue. It was regrettable, he said, that Sultān Muhammad Khān had been successful in deceiving the tribesmen, who, instead of bringing the matter to his notice, rushed to kill the *mujāhidīn*. He also declared his intention to migrate from that country to any other place where he could continue his mission of reviving the true faith. Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn advised against leaving the place since there were still some men in the Samah who were willing to support the Saiyid's movement, but he replied, "Here the sincere are few but the treacherous too many ; nor I expect them to take the right path. It would be imprudent and against the teachings of the faith to live among a people after having been deceived by them. The Prophet has said : A Muslim is never bitten twice from the same hole." He had decided to leave the Samah country for good. If Fateh Khān could be treacherous ; who else could be trusted there !

The Saiyid was invited by several *sardārs* to come over to them with the *mujāhidīn*. Of these, the four, Sultān

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Zabardast Khān of Khākhā Bambā, Nāsīr Khān Swātī, Habīb Ullah Khān of Khel Pakhlī and Sardār ʿAbdul Ghafoor Khān of Agror had been insisting on the Saiyid to emigrate to their territories. Sultān Zabardast Khān had sent his agent, Rājā Pāras, for the purpose while ʿAbdul Ghafoor Khān had deputed his brother, Kamāl Khān, to invite the Saiyid to Agror. Many other leading men of the Samah, however, called upon him to rescind his decision. On their repeated requests he left the matter to Fateh Khān, but the latter declined to give his consent for the Saiyid's continued stay at Panjtār. At last, the day of his departure arrived. After the *ʿasr* prayers, he gave his shirt and turban to Fateh Khān and nominated him as his *Khalīfah*. Addressing the gathering present on the occasion he invited them to betake the path with him to an unknown destination for he had still not decided where he would go. He told them to accompany him only if they were prepared to migrate for the sake of God and were also willing to bear the hardships with him. None of the *mujāhidīn*, however, forsook him at this critical hour.

The Saiyid wanted to go south-east by the way of Bukey, Manaʾī, Topʾī and Khabbal but the Khāns of those places refused to allow him to pass through their territories. He had, therefore, to take the way across the Sarpatai range of the Mahaban mountain in the north. The Saiyid had reached village Bardheri when Shahzād Khān, a leader of the insurgents, and Fateh Khān had second thoughts. Both of them turned up at this place where the Saiyid was awaiting arrival of the *mujāhidīn* of Amb and Chatarbāʾī, to make a request that he should return to Panjtār. However, he refused to go back on the decision already taken by him. He also sent back, from Bardherī, the *maliks* and Saiyids of Samah who had come to bid farewell to him. After crossing the difficult mountainous country, often precipitous and rocky with deep narrow glens or gorges lying between them, he forded the Indus at village Kabul Grām. Arriving at Thakot on the eastern foot of Black Mountain in Hazārā, where he stayed for a week or so, he moved on to Rājduārī lying on the path leading to Pakhlī on 18th January, 1831. It

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was at this place that Habīb Ullah Khān, whose territory lay to the east of the river Kunhar, came to see the Saiyid. He was on inimical terms with Nāsir Khān, the Malik of Thakot, as the father of Habīb Ullah Khān had killed a relation of Nāsīr Khan. Habīb Ullah Khān was at the moment without any abode for Garhī Habībullah had been captured by the Sikhs. The Saiyid persuaded the two chiefs to sink their differences for the sake of making common cause with him against the common enemy.

The third wife of the Saiyid, who was with him at Rājduārī, gave birth to a daughter shortly after he reached Rājduārī. She was named Hājrah by him. Ākhund Bahā-ud-din of Top[2]ī also paid a visit to him at the place. He told the Saiyid that only a few days after he left Panjtār, Hari Singh Nalwā marched on to the Samah country with a strong army consisting of 25,000 troops. He asked the tribesmen who had killed the *mujāhidīn* to surrender weapons of the people murdered by them, and, on their refusal, laid waste most of their villages and took away a number of their women to Lahore. Some of the Samah people who had fled from the country owing to the ravages of the Sikhs also came to Rājduārī to get him back to Panjtār, but he refused. He only said, "Go back and repair your burnt houses."[1]

Nāsīr Khān convened a *jirgah* of the Swātī tribes living to the east of the river Indus, which decided to acknowledge the Saiyid as their leader. The leading men attending the *jirgah* advised him that since the Sikhs were likely to appear soon for collecting the season's tribute, it would be advisable to detail some troops to seal the approaches to the valley of Pakhlī. They also proposed that *ʿushr* should be levied on the local population who would be saved from paying tributes up to half or more of their produce to the Sikhs. The Saiyid agreed to the first suggestion and directed Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl and Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn

1. *Manzooratus Soʿada*, Vol. I, p. 1094.

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to set out with a detachment of 400 troops to check the entry of Sikhs from Bhogarmang Passes, as desired by the Khāns, but he refused to have anything to do with the collection of *'ushr*. This he left to the Swātī Chiefs but asked them to be considerate with the people lest they should have any inconvenience in the payment of the tithe.

At Rājduārī a number of *mujāhidīn* took an oath on the pattern of *bi'at* taken by the *Suffah* companions[1] of the Prophet. The *mujāhidīn* taking this new oath bound themselves to demand nothing from anyone except God ; to give preference to the needs and requirements of their brothers over their own ; to desire for others only that which they considered pleasing for their own selves ; and, to do nothing whatsoever in future save for the pleasure of God.

1. Certain companions of the Prophet who had given themselves up to the study of religion.

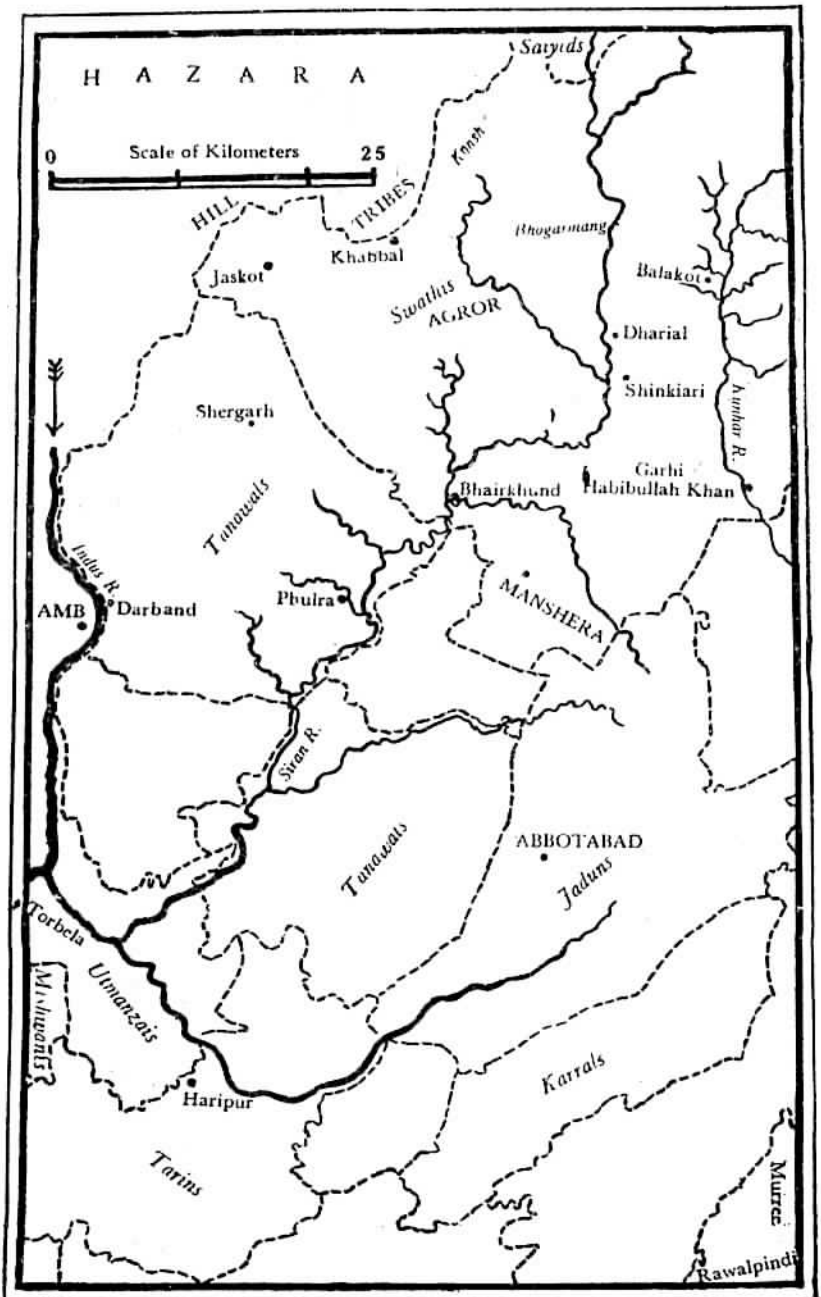
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## Eighteen

# Balakot

THE Saiyid had crossed over to Hazārā during midwinter when the season is much more severe in those tracts. Frost is frequent, snow falls from time to time, and with recurrent rains during January and February, the season is usually most disagreeable. He had, therefore, to wait at Rājduārī for a few months before he could chalk out his future plan of action. The inroads of the Sikhs in Hazārā had, on the other hand, produced almost a chaotic situation in the district. Zabardast Khān had been turned out of Muzaffarabad by his cousin Najaf Khān with the help of Sher Singh. Rājā Muzaffar Khān, who ruled in Darāba, had to seek asylum in the fastness of the nearby hills while another chief, Najaf Khān Ghorīwālā was wandering as a homeless refugee. Habīb Ullah Khān, the chief of the famous *Garhī* known by his name had fled to Kaghān valley since his *Garhī* had also been captured by the Sikhs. All these chiefs had requested the Saiyid to help them in regaining their possessions. As their territories lay on the way leading to Kashmir, the destination of the Saiyid for many years, he directed Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl to proceed to Bālākot which commanded the road to Garhī Habībullah and Muzaffarabad. Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn, accordingly, left Bhogarmong on the 10th February, 1831 on the direction of the Shāh, and reached Bālākot the same day. The Maulvī

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was asked by several Khāns to march on to Muzaffarabad, which lay almost unguarded at the moment, for Najaf Khān had gone away with Sher Singh. He refused the offer, however, since he had no orders to go beyond Bālākot. But the Shāh on joining Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn after two days, agreed to the suggestion of Zabardast Khān and allowed three detachments, each of a hundred men, under the command of Maulvī Qutb-ud-dīn Ningarhārī, Mansūr Khān Kandahārī and Ghaus Muhammad Amānzaʾī to accompany the Khān on an expedition to Muzaffarabad.[1] After a few days, Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn also left for Muzaffarabad on receipt of the Saiyid's orders to take over charge of the expeditionary forces.

By the beginning of March, when the hounds of spring were on winter's traces, the Sikhs had started collecting their forces at the entrance of the Bhogarmang Pass. With no *mujāhidīn* troops to check their entrance in the valley, it was now dangerous to remain staying at Rājduārī. The Saiyid, therefore, moved on to Sachchūn, a comparatively safer place, on the 7th March, with 350 *mujāhidīn*. It was at Sachchūn that a Kāghān Saiyid, Shāh Zāmin Shāh of Kawāʾi, called upon the Saiyid. He got himself initiated into the Saiyid's order alongwith 50 of his tribesmen, and remained his faithful follower to the end of his life.

In the meantime, Sher Singh and Najaf Khān arrived in Garhī Habibullah with 800 men. Leaving the *Garhī* under the charge of Mahān Singh, Sher Singh proceeded to Muzaffarabad. Harassed by the Shāh, Mahān Singh withdrew to Garhī Habībullah. In the meantime Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl had made arrangements to make a night attack, but before the plan could be executed, he received an urgent call from the Saiyid to return to Sachchūn. It seems that the Saiyid wanted to consult the Shāh about the danger posed by the convergence of the Sikhs at the inlet of the Bhogarmang Pass. Several deputations of Kashmiri Muslims had also called upon the Shāh at Bālākot requesting

1. *Manzooratus Soʿada*, Vol. I, pp. 1131-32.

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him to convey their request to the Saiyid that he should proceed straightaway with the entire force of *mujāhidīn* to the Kashmir valley where the local population, tortured and harrowed by the Sikhs, was willing to rise up in arms against their oppressors. The project seemed to be quite feasible, but the Hazārā chiefs, particularly, Hasan ʿAlī Khān and Habīb Ullah Khān, strongly opposed the suggestion for, they feared, the departure of the Saiyid would lay them open to the revenge of Sher Singh. The Shāh felt that instead of frittering away the prowess of *mujāhidīn* force in Hazārā, it would be better to descend on the Kashmir Valley. However, the Saiyid was so moved by the entreaties of the Hazāra chiefs that he decided to postpone action in Kashmir.[1] There was now nothing to do for him except to wait and watch the movement of the Sikhs to find out whether they wanted to take the swing at the *mujāhidīn* from Bhogarmang or Garhī Habībullah.

The Saiyid spent about five weeks at Sachchūn. After Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl joined him he asked the Shāh to begin discourses on *Mishkāt*, a well-known book of Traditions compiled by Imām Husain al-Baghawī. The Saiyid also started studying the book afresh, and whenever he found any difficult passage, he never hesitated in asking someone to explain it to him. Sometimes, he also expounded the meaning of a certain Tradition. Oftentimes, he took out some of his followers to practise archery. Once, during the archery shooting exercise, he sat down on the ground. Some of the people with him brought a cot for him but he refused to sit on it saying : "I am one amongst you. It does not look nice that I should sit on the cot and you on the ground."

The pastoral clans of Gūjars had several habitations around Sachchūn. They often paid a visit to the Saiyid who always received them with due consideration, although they were looked down upon by the Pathān tribes of the locality. Once, addressing the local people, about 200 of

1. *Manzooraṭus Soʿada*, Vol. I, 1138-1140.

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whom had assembled, he said : "Brothers, I have come here with so many people simply because the infidels have laid waste your land and they humiliate and outrage your honour. I want to turn them out of your country so that you may again be free and self-reliant, and cause Islam to gain strength here. Were I a seeker of my own well-being and comfort, I would have never bent my steps to your hilly tracts for I had had enough of it in Hindustān. I only want that you should realise your humiliation under the grinding rule of the infidels and join hands with me in liberating yourselves. If you would not listen to me, then, you would rue the day but your bemoaning would then be of no avail. If God wills me to help you, He would mould the hearts of other men for making His religion dominant, strong."[1]

Shortly after *'Id*, which was celebrated on the 15th of March, 1831, a detailed communication describing the events at Muzaffarābād was received from Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn. The three detachments of the *mujāhidīn* had successfully laid their hands on the Muzaffarābād town and the house of Zabardast Khān before Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn reached the place. Only the *Garhī* and a troops' encampment remained in the possession of the Sikhs. However, as soon as Zabardast Khān regained a part of his possession, he sent a secret communication to the Sikhs reiterating his allegiance to them. He also offered to get rid of the *mujāhidīn* by sending them back on some pretext, provided the Sikhs agreed to restore his looted property. Somehow, the *mujāhidīn* came to know of his secret dealings and they began pressing him to mount an attack on the *Garhī*. After Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn reached Muzaffarābād, he demanded the arms and ammunition promised by Zabardast Khān, but the latter kept on delaying their delivery by his studied pretence. The *mujāhidīn* had, however, become so restive at the inaction of Zabardast Khān that 'Abdus Samad Khān of Khaibar and Mullā Qutb-ud-dīn Ningarhārī led a detachment of the *mujāhidīn*, without

1. *Waqā'i', Ahmadī*, Vol. III, pp. 41-42.

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informing Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn, to attack the Sikh encampment. After a bloody encounter, the Sikh had to withdraw into the *Garhī*. Mulla Qutb-ud-dīn and ʿAbdus Samad Khān perhaps wanted to stall the secret designs of Zabardast Khān, but as they were guilty of indiscipline, both were severely reprimanded by Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn. He also sought fresh orders from the Saiyid who instructed him to send back a part of the *mujāhidīn* under him. None, however, consented to go back leaving Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn and their remaining comrades at the mercy of a treacherous ally.

Zabardast Khān's delaying tactics frustrated all attempts of Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn to strike a decisive blow on the Sikh troops in Muzaffarabad or to check reinforcements reaching them. Suddenly, one day, the news was broken that Sher Singh and Najaf Khān had reached the hills opposite Bālākot on the eastern bank of the river Kunhar. Zabardast Khān was now completely baffled, unable to decide anything. Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn offered to check the advance of the enemy at vantage points provided the Khān agreed to support him by manning other approaches with his tribesmen. Zabardast Khān agreed to the proposal, but the next morning Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn found him ready with his bag and baggage to flee to the heights of the hills. There was nothing that could be done now, and the Maulvī had to accompany the Khān in his flight. Two paths from the Muzaffarabad hills led to Bālākot ; one went through Garhī Habībullah and the other across the difficult hilly tracts, where the snows had still not melted at several places. Khandahār'ī *mujāhidīn* preferred the first road although they were sure to come across the advancing Sikh army in the way, but Mauivī Khair-ud-dīn selected the second route which was difficult yet safer. The Saiyid had, by that time reached Bālākot and an encounter between him and the enemy was soon expected. The *mujāhidīn* with Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn wanted, therefore, to reach Bālākot at the earliest, but, as ill-luck would have it, the Maulvī fell seriously ill and remained bed-ridden for about a month. On May 6, 1831, when he reached the village opposite

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Bālākot, across Kunhar, carried by his comrades on a stretcher, he got an intimation from the Saiyid that since the bridge on the river had been dismantled, he should take another way to reach Bālākot. The Maulvī took the path by the side of the river, upstream, to Kāghān, to cross it at another bridge or ferry, but when he came back on the hills north of Bālākot, the chapter had been closed with the final action.

Habīb Ullah Khān had taken the place of Shāh Muhammūd Ismāʿīl at Bālākot after the latter had gone back to Sachchūn. Sometimes, by the end of March, he intimated the Saiyid that Sher Singh had crossed the river Kunhar, some four kilometres down stream, where it takes a turn to the west, south of Bālākot. He had made the request that in view of the impending attack, the Saiyid might come down to the place with reinforcements. The Saiyid left Sachchūn on the 17th of April, 1831, but, before his departure, he called back Arbāb Bahrām Khān from Sherkot, where he had been left with about 20 *mujāhidīn*.[1] The Saiyid's forces were, however, scattered at the time at three places. Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn had not yet returned from Muzaffarābād and another detachment under the command of Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn had been posted to guard the Bhogarmang Pass.

The Saiyid also sent a letter to his wife at Rājduārī in which he said that he intended to call her at Sachchūn but as the Sikhs were likely to launch an attack, he had to depart for the action. Therefore, he said, he did not consider it advisable to call her at the moment, but she need have no anxiety for God was their ally. He also asked her to pray God for his success.

The first night after departure from Sachchūn, the Saiyid bivouacked at Jiuri, on the insistence of the villagers. The laborious advance uphill began next morning. After mid-day prayers, performed on the crest of the hill, Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl was sent ahead to Bālākot. The Saiyid

1. *Manzooratus Soʿadā*, p. 1165.

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intended to reach the town by that evening, but he delayed his departure till the nightfall spending his time in a sermon explaining the greatness and power and knowledge of God and the ways He wonderfully sustained and supported His bondsmen.[1] About a hundred *mujāhidīn* had stayed back with him, but none had any bedding which had been sent ahead. It was thus a problem how to spend the night in the shivering cold atop the hill. A little after ʿishā prayers some villagers clad in blankets came to see him with a few pitchers filled with milk and a bundle of blankets. They chatted with him for a while and went back leaving the articles for the use of *mujāhidīn*. The persons accompanying the Saiyid on this journey relate that he seemed to be a changed man, calm and serene, as if transported to the spiritual realm. He even expressed the wish that he wanted to spend a few days, provided his companions agreed, in the remembrance of God in some quiet corner on the hills. He was received by Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl at Bālākot the next day and lodged in the mansion of Khān Wāsil Khān.

Bālākot stands at the southern tip of Kāghān Valley, on the right bank of the river Kunhar, but the mountains of Kāghān flanking the river on both sides divide it from the valley just at the head of the town. Thus, the only approach to the town is from Mansehra in the south-west from where a road, then a bridle path, enters the narrow, snaky gorges of Kunhar valley. Opposite Garhī Habībullah, a track branches out to cross a bridge leading south-east to Muzaffarābād and Srinagar in Kashmir, while another track follows the western bank of the river northwards to Bālākot, which rises to an elevation of 1012 metres formed by a succession of ridges. The town is bounded in the north by three rocky knots which form a natural wall from north-west to north-east ; in the south the Kunhar valley opens up to allow a steep but not precipitous ascent ; in the east there is a raised mound with a village known as Kaiū Khān ; and another mound rising above Matikot village commands

1. *Waqāiʿ Ahmadī*, Vol. III, p. 92.

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the town on its western side. A number of *nālās* draining the northern hills protect the town, of which Barnā and Satbanā join Kunhar from north-west of the town and Nālā Matikot flanks it on the south western side.

When Saiyid reached Bālākot, the Sikh camp was still on the eastern bank of the river. However, the Saiyid paid attention to the defensive arrangements first and posted a number of pickets on the possible approaches to the town. Amān Ullah Khān of Lucknow was posted with about 25 *mujāhidīn* on the southern side on a holding position. He was also given two light guns which were sufficient to check any advance from that side. A footpath from the south-west of Matikot village, climbing the Bhogarmang hills led the way to Matikot mound. Mullā Lāl Muhammad Kandahārī was asked to keep watch over this path with a hundred *mujāhidīn* under him. A few men were also posted in Matikot village to inform the *mujāhidīn* in Bālākot in case of attack from that side. The bridge connecting the eastern bank of Kunhar to the track on the western side, leading to Bālākot, was guarded by another picket. The Saiyid had also got another wooden bridge constructed over the river opposite Bālākot, but later on both these bridges were dismantled. Mullā Lāl Muhammad was replaced after a few days by another detachment of *mujāhidīn* under Mirzā Ahmad Beg Punjābī.

On the 25th of April, 1831, the Saiyid sent a letter, his last one, to Nawāb Muhammad Wazīr-ud-daula of Tonk in which he stated the reason for his migration from the Samah to Hazārā. Thereafter he added : "I have now come to Pakhlī hills. The people here have received me with open hands and solemnly promised to join hands in the *jihād*. At present I am in Bālākot and the enemy has its encampment at a distance of about 4 or 5 *Kos*.[1] Bālākot is quite a safe place and, God willing, the enemy would not be able to reach this place. Thus, an action can take place only if the *mujāhidīn* decide to engage the enemy and march against them. We intend to take the offensive after two or

1. A *Kos* is equal to about 2 miles or a little more than 3 kilometres.

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three days and hope that God would open the doors of victory for us. If God helps us and we win this battle then the *muājhidīn* would be undisputed masters of the whole territory up to Jhelum in Kashmīr. Keep imploring God day and night for the exaltation of His religion and success of the *mujāhidīn*."

Ever since the Saiyid's appearance in the frontier hills, Ranjīt Singh had felt much perturbed. The latter intended to subjugate Sind, to which he laid a claim as a successor of the Afghān Empire, but he found his ambitions frustrated by the new danger raising its head in the north-west. Finding his European officers and the Peshāwar aliy unable to contain the Saiyid's growing power, he ultimately charged his most brilliant general, Sher Singh, to tackle the affair. The importance Ranjīt Singh attached to the campaign can be gauged from the fact that he deputed a number of other chiefs like Sardār Attar Singh Kaliānwālā, Sardār Shyām Singh, Sardār Pratāp Singh Atāriwālā, Ratan Singh Kunglu, Sadhū Singh Kanhāl, Ratan Singh Gajrakhia, Sardār Wazīr Singh Rangharikāliā, Gurmukh Singh Lahna and Lakhmīr Singh to assist Sher Singh. With 8,000 men and guns he headed towards Hazārā where the *mujāhīdīn* had made themselves masters of Muzaffarābād as well as Konsh and Bhogarmang glens, the Swatīs and Kāghān Saiyids aiding them. Sher Singh advanced, first, to relieve Muzaffarābād and then turned back toward Garhī Habībullah. Mahān Singh, left with a detachment of 800 men to take care of the *mujāhidīn* was, by then, in dire plight and seeking reinforcements. The repairs of the fortress of Fatehgarh, taken in hand by Mahān Singh, were first completed and further levies collected by Sher Singh before proceeding onward to Phallakot, a few kilometres downstream on the eastern side of the river.[1]

It was perhaps the 3rd of May when a villager informed the Saiyid that the Sikhs were constructing a wooden

1. *Wahabi Movement in India*, pp. 66-67.

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bridge on the Kunhar downstream south of Bālākot. The next day, the same man informed that the Sikh force was crossing over to the western bank of the river. The Saiyid made enquiries about the enemy's movement but it was reported that instead of advancing northwards they were taking some other route. A day later, about two or three hours before the fall of the day sounds of musket fire were heard echoing from the Bhogarmang hills where Mirza Ahmad Beg Punjabi's detachment was keeping a watch over the hilly track. The Sikhs had skirted the Matikot *nālā*, to the south of Bālākot, by a track going through Basiyan, Dumgala and Chandhwāl around Shohāl hills, and headed towards the north to reach Matikot hillock. Mirza Ahmad Beg tried to check the advance of the Sikhs. He lost eight of his men and inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy, but it was simply not possible for him to keep off the multitude making a dash for Matikot. He could do nothing except to fall back gradually with his men. A relief column consisting of a little over two hundred troops was immediately despatched by the Saiyid but when it reached the Matikot village the Sikhs were already in command of the holding position on the crest of the mound.[1] The Sikhs, however, could not immediately press the attack on Bālākot as they had reached Matikot hillock after the nightfall. Yet, the rout of the small force of *mujāhidīn* deployed at Matikot hillock was a major tactical blow to the defensive measures undertaken by the Saiyid. It is held by some that the Sikh forces had been treacherously led by the local people but the enemy's attempt could have been foiled if scouts had been sent to report its movement after crossing the river.

The same evening, according to *Waqāi' Ahmadī*, a letter was received from Najaf Khān. He had stated that Sher Singh had come, on his invitation, to regain possession of Muzaffarābād from Zabardast Khān but finding the Saiyid present at Bālākot, the former had come down to attack Bālākot. Najaf Khān had also advised the Saiyid that he

1. *Manzooratus Sofadā* Vol. I, p. 1175.

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should remain at Bālākot only if he found it possible to successfully engage 12000 musketeers[1] of Sher Singh, otherwise he might retire to the rocky heights of the mountains. Another alternative suggested by Najaf Khān was that the Saiyid might lead a night attack on the inadequately guarded camp of Sher Singh, who had left it under the charge of Najaf Khān along with his equipment and artillery. Arbāb Bahrām Khān also advocated the latter alternative.[2] Two other Sardārs, Nāsir Khān and Habīb Ullah Khān agreed that both the suggestions were practicable, but the Saiyid replied: "I do not want to evade the enemy. We shall fight them here in Bālākot. Here is Lahore as well as Paradise: and nothing in the world is goodlier than the Paradise of our Lord." There is hardly any doubt that the Saiyid could have adopted one of the two courses suggested by Najaf Khān or moved on to Kāghān with Shāh Zāmin Shāh Kawāiwālā, the Kāghān Saiyid, who was still present at Bālākot. However, the Saiyid's escape at that crucial moment would have meant a doom for the people of Bālākot and surrounding villages and shaken the confidence the local people had reposed in him. Therefore, he decided to stay on, cost what it may. This had been the consideration which had kept him, only a few months back, from sending an expedition to Kashmir. However, the Saiyid's position was not so desperate as it has been presented by certain writers. Between the hillocks of Matikot and Bālākot there was a low-lying area consisting of agricultural fields. The enemy had to cross it before it could clamber up the Bālākot hillock to launch an attack. The Saiyid, accordingly, got the agricultural fields excessively watered and made it slushy with a view to hamper the progress of the enemy, who was also to face the fire from Bālākot side before working its way up to Bālākot for launching an attack. The pickets of Mullā Lāl Muhammad, Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl, Sheikh Walī Muhammad, Nāsir Khān and Habīb Ullah Khān were posted in the west of Bālākot

1. The Sikh chronicles give the number as 5,000.
2. *Manzooratus Soʿadā*, Vol. I, pp. 1174-78.

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facing the Matikot hillock.

As the next day dawned, the Sikhs started firing shells from the lone cannon they had been able to bring with them. The exchange of fire continued from the two sides for a few hours beginning from the early morning.[1] The *mujāhidīn*, on the other side, stood guard for they had been ordered to open fire on the enemy but seek the orders of the Saiyid before launching an attack when it came down on the low ground between Matikot and Bālākot. After performing the dawn and *chāsht*[2] prayers, the Saiyid sat in the mosque watching the action and giving orders to his commanders. Several cannon balls fell around him and Arbāb Bahrām Khān, who was at the moment with him, received a minor cut from a musket fire which went off just touching his knee. As, however, the Saiyid refused to leave the place, the plank of a door was brought to be placed on the side shells were coming from in order to protect him. It was at this stage that another letter was received from Najaf Khān imploring him to come over to the eastern bank of the river. The Saiyid could have still crossed over with a portion of his force by way of Barnā or Satbanā *nālā* but his decision to hold on was firm and unchangeable. He wrote in reply: "We have received your two letters. You have, without doubt, showed your concern for our welfare which would be recompensed by God. But, to cut the matter short, we seek only the pleasure of our Lord. Neither my companions desire nor the honour of Islam demands that we should shirk our duty fighting the infidels. Now, whatever God wills will come to pass, here, in Bālākot."[3]

The Saiyid had ordered his men that they should keep up firing on the enemy but none should leave his entrenchment unless they saw his standard-bearer advancing towards the enemy. The enemy's force being much larger, isolated attacks by different parties of the *mujāhidīn* were not likely

1. *Tawārikh Hazārā* quoted in *Wahabi Movement in India*, p. 69.
2. A voluntary prayer performed when the sun has well risen.
3. *Mehr*, Vol. II, p. 391.

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to prove effective. He, therefore, wanted his men to make a joint attack when the enemy had reached the low land before climbing the heights of Bālākot. On the side of the Sikhs, Mahān Singh with his Hazārā Army and Lakhmīr Singh were sent to mount an offensive. This force was later joined by Shyām Singh Atārīwālā with the men under his command. The Sikhs soon started falling back. Sher Singh drew out his sword and despite requests by his commanders to stay back, himself led the offensive abusing and throwing stones at the retreating Sikhs. By his courageous action he succeeded in thrusting his men back to the battlefield.[1] Mullā Lāl Muhammad Kandahārī came running to inform the Saiyid that the enemy had collected in considerable numbers in the fields below and was trying to swarm up but the Saiyid asked him to go back and continue firing until he saw his standard-bearer moving forward. The Saiyid then moved inside the mosque and was engrossed for a while supplicating to God. When the Saiyid came out in the courtyard of the mosque, after some time, a number of *mujāhidīn* had already assembled there to seek his orders for marching against the enemy. Cannon balls and musket shells were then showering all round hitting a few people in the mosque, but the Saiyid again asked them to wait. Some of the *mujāhidīn* brought a few more wooden planks to protect themselves against the oncoming shells. He again had a look at the battlefield and then ordered the musketeers and carbine-bearers to march ahead of him to bear down upon the enemy. The decision to fall upon the enemy was taken by the Saiyid at this stage, most probably, because almost the whole of the enemy force had come down the Matikot hillock with Sher Singh, who was prodding at his men to move forward. It was the most opportune time to make a bold charge to dishearten the enemy which seemed to be upset by the vertical fire of the *mujāhidīn*.

The accounts given by different persons in the *Waqāi' Ahmadī* and *Mānzooratus Soʿadā*, who were present on

1. *Wahabi Movement in India*, p. 69.

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the occasion, agree about the happenings up to this stage but they vary about the course of events later on. Maulvī Jᶜāfar ᶜAlī Naqvī, author of *Manzooratus Soᶜadā*, says that after reaching the low land the Saiyid tarried for a few minutes, asked for a light gun to be brought, and then crossed the fields, which had by then been turned into a swamp due to excessive watering, to make a thrust on the enemy.[1] Lāl Muhammad of Jagdīshpur narrates that the fields were only slushy. The Saiyid crossed the fields and headed towards the Matikot *nāla* where a number of Sikhs had gathered. According to his statement the Saiyid engaged them in a hand-to-hand fight until they took to their heels.[2] Karim Ullah Khān Mewātī says that he was already in the paddy field firing on the enemy when the Saiyid went ahead of him to assault a group of the Sikhs which had gathered to his left.[3] Hāfiz Wajih-ud-dīn Bāghpatī relates that the Saiyid charged on the Sikhs who had gathered in the paddy fields and went ahead in pursuit of the enemy to the foot of the hills.[4] The statements of Sheikh Hafīz Ullah of Deoband, Sher Muhammad Khān of Rampūr and Rahīm Bakhsh of Banaras agree[5] with narratives of Karīm Ullah Khan Mewātī and Hafīz Wajīh-ud-dīn while another eye-witness, Miān Lakhmīr says that when a detachment of the Sikhs got near the entrenchment of Kandahārīs, they cracked down on them. As soon as the Saiyid got the news he mounted an attack upon the enemy who was collecting in the paddy fields. He further narrates that the Sikhs could not withstand the courageous assault of the Saiyid and they had to retreat with heavy losses.[6] All these statements show that the Saiyid had attacked the enemy when it had reached the paddy fields which were only slushy. He might have stopped in the way for a while but the engagement took place not long after he reached the paddy

1. *Manzooratus Soᶜadā*, Vol. I, pp. 1186-87.
2. *Waqāiᶜ Ahmadī*, Vol. III, p. 227.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 221.
4. *Manzooratus Soᶜadā*, Vol. I, p. 1194.
5. *Waqāiᶜ Ahmadi*, Vol. III, pp. 208, 234-35 and 243-44.
6. *Waqāiᶜ Ahmadī*, Vol, III, pp. 246-248.

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fields. It is also evident from these narratives that after the Saiyid engaged the enemy in hand-to-hand fight, nobody was able to keep a track of him in the commotion of the battle. Miān Lakhmīr's statement about the overhasty attack by Kandahārīs under Mullā Lāl Muhammad, which, according to his version, led the Saiyid to join the action, however, seems to be based on some misunderstanding. The Saiyid drew his sword against the enemy when its major portion had reached the paddy fields under Sher Singh who was urging his disheartened soldiers to rush at the *mujāhidīn*. This was, one would see, the most opportune time to strike at the enemy with full force. This is also confirmed by the accounts of Paget and Mason[1] who are on record that three times did the small band of *mujāhidīn* beat back the Sikh regiments before they suffered a defeat.

However, soon after the *mujāhidīn* reached the foot of the hill in hot pursuit of the fleeing enemy, nobody knew where the Saiyid was. Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl, Mirza Ahmad Beg Punjābi, Hāfiz ʿAbdullah, Hāfiz ʿAbdul Latīf and many others asked each other about the Saiyid but were unable to locate him. Only two, Sheikh Hafīz Ullah of Deoband and Hafīz Wajih-ud-dīn of Bāghpat relate that they saw the Saiyid firing on the enemy from the Matikot *nālā*. But as one was seriously injured immediately thereafter and the other joined a charge on the enemy, said to have been ordered by the Saiyid himself, none of them could say whether he remained there any longer or moved on to some other place. Jʿafar ʿAlī Naqvī, however, asserts that the Saiyid had received a gunshot in his thigh and was also hit by a stone in his head, but the place where he last saw him is different from the location given by others. It is, however, certain that he remained fighting to the last breath, but nobody was able to trace him, although many of his companions searched him frantically, forgetting all about the action in

1. *Wahabī Movement in India*, p. 73 ; Frontier and Overseas Expeditions, p. 211.

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progress, and some of them were hit unawares by enemy gunshots and missiles. The bewilderment of the leaders of *mujāhidīn* and consequent slackening of the vigour of their attack did not remain unnoticed by Sher Singh who was already lashing into a fury at the retreat of his troops and bearing upon them to make yet another charge. By the time he was able to persuade his men to make a set at the *mujāhidīn* again, Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl was already dead. He asked someone where the Saiyid was, and on being pointed out to a place where a pitched hand-to-hand fight was in progress, he charged with the courage of a hero and fell down fighting. Arbāb Bahrām Khān had, perhaps, received his mortal wounds when he was already with the Saiyid. Mirzā Ahmad Beg Punjābi received a musket shot searching his chief like one smitten with love. In short, confusion prevailed in the ranks of the *mujāhidīn* when the Sikhs made a swing at them. Defeating and dispersing the leaderless *mujāhidīn*, they ascended the Bālākot mound, and put it to flames.[1] The booty of war they captured, according to *Tawārīkh Hazārā*, consisteb of only eight light guns, one elephant, ten horses and ten mules.[2]

The number of *mujāhidīn* who fell down at Bālākot was 587 according to Mahtab Singh, author of *Tawārīkh Ḥazārā*, but Bellew reports that 1,300 Hindustanī *mujàhidīn* were killed in the action at Bālākot.[3] Other early European writers, too, appear to hold the view that the force of *mujāhidīn* was completely destroyed at Bālākot. The number of casualties, among the Saiyid's followers, however, did not exceed 300. The numbers collecting at Banser, a few days after the battle, according to several *mujāhidīn* participating in the battle, was 700. The Sikhs, on the other hand, are reported to have lost no less than 700 of their troops in the battle.

The action took place according to Mehr and Abul

1. The narratives of Bālākot battle given in *Zafarnāmah* by Diwan Amarnath and Mirzā Hairat in *Hayat-i-Tayyabah* seem to be entirely fictitious not supported by any eye-witness account or the Sikh chronicles like *Twārikh Hazārā* or later English chronicles.
2. *Wahabī Movement in India*, p. 69.
3. *A Report on Yusufzaʾīs*, p. 93.

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Hasan ʿAlī Nadwī, on Friday, the 6th of May, 1831, while Mahtāb Singh gives the date as 7th May, and the Newswriter in the court of Ranjīt Singh as 8th May. The margin of difference between the three dates is not much but since all the participants in the battle agree on the first date, it appears to be the correct one. The Newswriter's reports dated 10th May and 14th May are, undoubtedly, nearest in time from the battle of Bālākot, but the extracts from these reports forwarded by C. M. Wade to his Government on the 17th and 18th May 1831, contain several mistakes[1] in regard to the names and places which show that the Newswriter was neither present at Bālākot, nor had he access to firsthand information like the letter of Sher Singh through which the news was first communicated to the Mahārājā at Batala on 14th May, 1831.[2] Much reliance cannot, therefore, be placed on his reports.

The Saiyid's armed resistance against the Sikh rule had been engaging the whole attention of Mahārājā Ranjīt Singh ever since his appearance in the frontier hills. In the days Sher Singh was about to engage in hostilities at Bālākot, the Mahārājā was anxiously enquiring Pandit Madsūdan and Lālā Sohan Lāl about the verdict of the almanac in regard to the outcome of the combat.[3] As soon as the news of victory was received by him the messenger bringing the happy news was awarded a pair of gold bracelets valued at Rs. 300 besides a turban and a pair of shawls. "A special robe of honour was entrusted to a man with a letter of praises and appreciation for Kunwar Sahib (Sher Singh)," writes Sohan Lāl recording the events of May 14, 1831 in *Umdat-ūt-Tawārīkh*, "and the grant of the country of Tirah was made to the said Kunwar and a discharge of *Topkhānā* took place, letters were issued to the Kārdārs of Lahore, Multān, Kashmir and Attock informing them about the victory over *Khalīfa* and asking them to discharge guns and to make

1. *Wahabī Movement in India*, pp. 71/72.
2. *Umdat-ut-Tawārīkh, Dafter* III, Parts (I-V) pp. 33/34.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 31/33.

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illuminations."[1] Wade communicated the substance of the report received by Ranjīt Singh from his Newswriter to Princep, Secretary to the Governor General in his two despatches sent on May 17 and 18, 1831, and was, in reply, asked by the latter to "offer the Governor General's congratulations to His Highness the Mahārājā if the news of Sher Singh's success and the extinction by death of Saiyid Ahmad and the commotion excited by him be true."[2]

The dead body of the Saiyid was not found by his followers despite their vigorous search. Among the conflicting reports about his last moments, one was that certain Gujars had taken him away, after he was wounded, towards Satbanā *nālā*,[3] which was affirmed by several *mujāhidīn*, but never confirmed by any eye-witness nor proved by subsequent events. The mystery shrouding his death gave rise to a belief that the Saiyid would revive in energy and display himself in some great action for the glory of Islam and for the extension of the dominion and power of its professors.[4] This was undoubtedly a momentary reaction, which lingered on for some time, among his followers who had loved and respected him beyond description, and were stunned and stupefied at the sudden defeat and loss of their beloved chief after having almost won the victory. But, the allegation levelled by certain writers, both Indians and Europeans,[5] against the leaders of *mujāhidīn*, specially Wilāyat ʿAlī for propagating the belief dishonestly with the object of resuscitating the spirit of *jihād* is not established by concrete evidence. By the time ʿināyat ʿAlī, brother of Wilāyat ʿAlī, assumed the leadership of the *mujāhidīn* in 1839, belief in the doctrine had ceased to be a matter of cardinal importance. There was no stigma attached to

1. *ʿUmdat-ut-Tawārikh, Dafter III*, Parts (I-V), pp. 33/34.
2. *Press list of Old Records of Ludhiāna Agency*, Vol. VI, pp. 4-6.
3. *Waqāiʿ Ahmadī*, Vol. III, pp. 222, 227, and 229.
4. *Princep*, p. 151
5. *Calcutta Review*, Vol. 51, pp. 186; *The Indian Musalmans*, pp. 61, 64; *Shāh Walī Ullah aur Unki Siyāsi Tahrik*, pp. 159-61, 195.

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those joining the movement but not subscribing to the belief.[1] The same transformation of attitude is reported to have occurred in the case of Muhammad Jᶜāfar Thānesarī, author of *Tawārīkh ᶜAjīb*, who originally believed in the re-appearance of the Saiyid but had lost faith in it with the passage of time[2].

Subseququent reports by the *mujāhīdīn*, as well as the description given in *Tawārīkh Hazārā* reveal that Sher Singh got the body and head of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd searched and identified by several persons. It bore marks of bullet injuries on the right hand and on the chest below the left nipple. He placed a *doshāla*[3] on the dead body and allowed the Muslims in the Sikh army to perform the funeral service. They buried the body in a grave by the side of the river Kunhar. But, after Sher Singh had departed next day, Mahān Singh and Lakhmīr Singh conspired with certain Nahang Sikhs, whom they paid Rs. 25/- for the pious job, to disen-tomb the *Khalīfah's* body and throw it in the river. This they did and cut the dead body into several pieces before throwing it in the river.[4] The account given here is also confirmed by the compilers of the Gazetteer of the Peshāwar District, 1883-84, who add that parts of the body were washed ashore which were buried at Pallikot. It, however, seems that God had ordained that the exact place of the burial of one who had fought, throughout his life, against the supremacy of all save God should remain unknown, lest, perhaps, the impious gratitude of some of his followers should ascribe divine honours to his name, who might assemble to perform worshipful ceremonies at his sepul-chre.

1. *Saiyid Anmad's letters*, Patna University, Supp. p. 220 (Quoted from the *Indian Wahabi Movement*.
2. *Tawārikh ᶜAjīb*, pp. 137.
3. A woollen sheet.
4. *The Wahabi Movement in India*, p. 71.

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Nineteen

# The Homeless Warriors

THE *mujāhidīn*, dispersed during the battle of Bālākot, collected on a spring over the northern hills. Two or three persons of Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn's detachment, who had come in advance of their comrades bringing the Maulvī on a stretcher, met the warriors of Bālākot at the spring. With Nāsir Khān of Bhitgrām they headed towards his village Angrā'i to the west of Bālākot where Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn was also brought by his troops. Bībī Sahiba, the widow of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, had by then reached Banser, a village owned by Bahrām Khān, the elder brother of Habīb Ullah Khān. It was decided, on the advice of Nāsir Khān that the *mujāhidīn* should immediately proceed to Banser in order to afford protection to Bībī Sahiba, lest the Sikhs should try to capture her. At Banser also came back Maulvī Nasir-ud-dīn Manglorī with his 32 *mujāhidīn* from the Bhogarmang Pass as well as a few more men deputed earlier by the Saiyid to Sachchūn. In all, about 700 *mujāhidīn* came together at Banser a few days after the battle of Bālākot. The whole party was, however, in complete disarray, confused and heart-stricken. Some wanted to stay on in the hope of the Saiyid's return, others wanted to go back to their homes while Sheikh Walī Mohammad Phulatī had declared that his foremost aim was to escort Bībī Sahiba to Gi'git or Sind, wherever she might decide to go. Among

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the leaders of *mujāhidīn* spared by the jaws of death at Bālākot, the Sheikh had been nearest to the Saiyid, and commanded the respect of all, but he seemed wholly indifferent to everything except his self-imposed assignment. At last, he reluctantly agreed, on the persuasion of Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn, to take up the responsibility of acting as the chief of the organisation. Accordingly, he was elected as Amīr[1] and all the *mujāhidīn* took oaths of fealty on his hands.

For the continued stay of the *mujāhidīn* in the area of Nandihār,[2] where they were at that time, it was necessary to elicit the support of local population which depended on the cooperation of Sahibzāda Muhammad Nasīr, an influential religious leader of the area. He had not responded favourably to the invitation extended earlier to him by the Saiyid for joining the *jihād*, but, fortunately, he agreed now to assist Sheikh Walī Muhammad Phulatī in his task, and the *mujāhidīn* transferred themselves to Satbihār at his invitation. The Sahībzādā made adequate arrangements for the stay of Bībī Sahiba and called a meeting of the *sardārs*, *khans* and *maliks* of Nandihār to consider the means for supporting the large number of *mujāhidīn*. It was decided that all the *sardārs* and *khāns* would collect *'ushr* in their areas for supporting the *mujāhidīn* force, the major portion of which was transferred under Maulvī Muhammad Qāsim of Pānipat to village Kohāna. However, Sheikh Walī Muhammad Phulatī remained at Satbihār with a contingent of 70 *mujāhidīn* in the service of Bībī Sahiba. Later on the Sahibzādā toured Nandihār area with the *mujāhidīn* seeking the support of the local people for their cause. He also posted contingents of the *mujāhidīn* in different villages.

The *mujāhidīn* led an uneventful life at Kohāna, for about ten months, perhaps from June 1831 to March 1832, for they did not launch any offensive against the Sikhs except for one or two minor skirmishes. As they had to

1. Meaning, leader.
2. The area is a part of Swāti territory between Daishi, Konsh and Bhogarmang valleys.

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depend on the Sahibzādā and the local chiefs for their stay in Nandihār, they were not free to take any action without obtaining prior consent of the Sahibzādā as well as the chiefs of the tribes amongst whom they were putting up. In due course, however, the payment of *'ushr* became an unbearable burden on the Nandihār tribes not accustomed to levy of any tax or tithe. Like the Samah tribesmen, they, too, conspired to do away with the *mujāhidīn* at a given time, but Khuda Bakhsh of Rampūr fortunately came to know of it through Shahzādā Khān, his bosom friend, at Chapargrām. Sahibzādā Muhammad Nasīr later confessed that the conspirators had obtained his consent and also repented for his folly,[1] but the *mujāhidin* migrated to Panjtār again, under the leadership of Maulvī 'Abdul Halīm of Burdwān. Sheikh Walī Muhammad Phulatī had, in the meantime, reached Panjtār with his 70 *mujāhidīn* and the Bībī Sahiba, whom he wanted to take to Sind as desired by her. He had come by way of Swāt to Nawāga'i, but had to come over, albeit unwillingly, to Panjtār on the insistence of Fateh Khān, pending finalisation of arrangements for his journey onwards. Fateh Khān, on his part, was desirous of enlisting the support of the *mujāhidīn* once again for reasserting his influence and authority, which he had lost soon after the departure of the Saiyid. Maulvī Muhammad Qāsim and Maulvī Khair-ud-dīn,[2] however, decided to remain at Bhatkol in Nandihār, alongwith their three other companions, for they still hoped to find the Saiyid alive some day in that area.

Not long after the *mujāhidīn* had reached Panjtār, Fateh Khān received an ultimatum, addressed to all the Samah chiefs, from Hari Sĩngh Nalwā demanding the customary tribute payable to the Sikh Durbār. Fateh Khān had been specially asked to surrender the guns of the Saiyid to Hari Singh. Fateh Khān refused to pay the tribute and pleaded ignorance of the Saiyid's guns, and collected about

1. *Waqai' Ahmadī*, Vol. III, p. 328.
2. He later on returned to Sherkot.

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3,500 tribesmen belonging to Buner and Chamla for the defence of Panjtār. Khwās Khān Khatak, the chief of Akora, was deputed by Hari Singh Nalwā to persuade Fateh Khān to accept the suzerainty of the Sikh Darbār. Both the chiefs met at village Salīm Khān where Khwās Khān Khatak had arrived with a contingent of 25 horse and an equal number of foot-soldiers of Harī Singh's army, but the talks were of no avail because of the stubborn attitude taken by Fateh Khān. An interesting incident occurred during the period. One Najm-ud-dīn of Rampur accompanied Fateh Khān to Salīm Khān of his own accord, and while the two chiefs were conducting their parleys, he got himself busy in preaching sedition to the Muslim troops of the Sikh Army. He nearly succeeded in winning over a few of them, but his activity came to the notice of certain Sikh soldiers who arrested and took him to Lahore. When he was produced before Ranjīt Singh, the latter desired Najm-ud-dīn to give a demonstration of his marksmanship for which the *mujāhidīn* were reputed. Pleased with Najm-ud-dīn's performance, Ranjīt Singh asked him to take up his employment. Despite Najm-ud-dīn's refusal to take up any employment once he had dedicated his life to the service of God, Ranjīt Singh was gracious enough to grant him a horse, two Banārsī *dopattas*[1] and fifty rupees, and he also granted him permission to go away where he liked. Najm-ud-dīn came back to Panjtār again and surrendered the rewards given by Ranjīt Singh to the *Bait-ul-Māl*.

Harī Singh Nalwā, somehow, changed his mind and returned without invading Panjtār. As soon as the danger of Hari Singh Nalwā was removed, Fateh Khān, true to his dubious ways, started exerting pressure on the *mujāhidīn* for the purpose for which he had invited them with avowed magnanimity. Fateh Khān's plea was that the *mujāhidīn* ought to help him in subduing the recalcitrant chiefs so that he could collect *'ushr* for their maintenance. Sheikh Walī Muhammad Phulatī replied, after consulting his comrades and well-wishers, that Fateh Khān should first try to

1. Silk sheets.

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come to terms with the chiefs concerned before he could consider his proposal. The *maliks* of Qāsim Khel, Ghaur Ghushti, Sang Batnī and Khala'ī Kala'ī[1] signified their willingness to assist the *mujāhidīn* while others refused to get along with Fateh Khān. Khān Faiz Ullah Khān of village Jhandā Bokā had earlier picked up a row with Fateh Khān and, therefore, the latter tried to use him as the bone of contention. Khān Faiz Ullah Khān, however, still professed loyalty to the Saiyid and Sheikh Walī Muhammad Phulatī, but was not willing to patch up his differences with Fateh Khān. Fateh Khān led an expeditionary force, with 100 *mujāhidīn* to Jhandā Bokā, but Faiz Ullah Khān vacated the village on the advice of the Sheikh, and thus bloodshed was avoided. Fateh Khān now proposed to take up arms against Bājā Bam Khel, ruled by one, Khāfī Khān, and his two brothers who had also spearheaded the conspiracy of the *mujāhidīn's* massacre. The Sheikh's efforts of reconciliation failed as Khāfī Khān and his brothers seemed to be bent upon picking up a quarrel with the *mujāhidīn*. The expedition to Bājā Bam Khel cost the lives of three *mujāhidīn* and two of the brothers of Khāfī Khān, but Khāfī Khan's life was saved at the intervention of Sheikh Walī Muhammad.

Fateh Khān of Zaida had been elected as the chief of Zaida after the death of his father Ashraf Khān. As, however, he was a follower of the Saiyid, the Sikhs had turned him out along with his brother Arsalān Khān, and installed their uncle Lutf Ullah Khān as the Khān of Zaida. Fateh Khān of Panjtār headed another expeditionary force to Zaida, for rehabilitating Fateh Khān and Arsalan Khān on their former positions and laid a siege to the town, but returned without launching an attack on receiving the news that the Saiyid was alive. One, Ākhund Z'afrān Kandahārī, asserted that he had seen the Saiyid alive and, therefore, the *mujāhidīn* had no right to take any action until the Saiyid returned to guide them.[2] The Ākhund had, more probably,

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1. Panjtār, in those days, comprised the present site of the village and the four villages named here.
2. *Waqāi' Ahmadī*, Vol. III, pp. 360-61.

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given this false information so as to bring the contention to an end, and he succeeded in it. Fateh Khān led yet another successful assault on village Chandlā'i, although the *mujāhidīn* refused to accompany him. Fateh Khān thus utilised the presence of *mujāhidīn* to subjugate the surrounding chiefs once again.

An unfortunate incident happening shortly after the affair of Chandlā'ī, however, brought the brief sojourn of the *mujāhidīn* at Panjtār to an end. Fateh Khān's son, Muqarrab Khān, treacherously killed Khāfī Khān of Bājā Bam Khel. Although Fateh Khān pleaded ignorance of his son's crime, this was a clear violation of the accord reached after the previous action against him. Sheikh Walī Muhammad Phulatī was already finding it increasingly distasteful to become a party in furtherance of Fateh Khān's parochial and personal interests. He transferred the *mujāhidīn*, temporarily, to Nawāga'i in the Mohmand territory, and sent a deputation to Amb whose chief, Pā'indā Khān Tanāolī, once again appeared to be in a reconciliatory mood. The deputation returned with the promise of absolute loyalty of Pā'indā Khān to the Sheikh. The Tanāolī chief not only repented for his past behaviour and took the *bi'at* to the Sheikh, on the hands of Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn, but also executed an agreement transferring the countries of Agror and Jassīkot to the *mujāhidīn*. Sheikh Walī Muhammad Phulati thereupon sent the *mujāhidīn* to Amb under Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn, but detained about a dozen of them to remain with him at Nawāga'ī.

The Tanāolī chief was still hollowhearted, for he wanted the *mujāhidīn* to take up the cudgels for him, while the *mujāhidīn*, at any rate, had nobody else to bank upon for help. Pā'indā Khān's sister had been betrothed to the chief of Agror, 'Abdul Ghafoor Khān. Two and a half years back when Pā'indā Khān was pursued as a fugitive by Saiyid Ahmad 'Alī and Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl, he had left Barotī to take refuge with the Agror chief who had utilised the occasion to solemnise the marriage with the Tanāolī's sister settled earlier. He later on returned the

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family and belongings of Pā'indā Khān but detained his sister for which Pā'indā Khān never pardoned him. Thus he sought to use the *mujāhidīn* in his affair with the Agror chief.[1] Pā'indā Khān gave a warm reception to Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn and entertained the *mujāhidīn* for about two weeks. Thereafter, he transferred them to *Garhī* Jassikot near Agror. With a safe habitat in his possession, Maulvi Nasīr-ud-dīn led a successful night attack against the Sikh *Garhī* at Jiurī, near Bālākot, which went a long way in earning the allegiance of local population. But, the Sikhs retaliated with all speed by moving in a column of troops 700 strong to the Konsh Glen. Maulvī Khaīr-ud-dīn headed with his troops to check their advance. The two adversaries met in an action near Sachchūn, but unable to face the *mujāhidīn*, the Sikhs retreated to Shinkiārī, on the mouth of Bhogarmang pass. The Maulvī could not deal any further blow to the Sikhs, however, since he soon found to his utter dismay that the two influential chiefs of Konsh valley, Bārak Khān and Muhammad Khān, were secretly in league with the Sikhs. Both of them had been threatened with dire consequences, a few days back, by the Sikhs, but not imbued with any higher ideal, they had the least compunction in conspiring against those very magnanimous souls who had come to their help.

Departure of the *mujāhidīn* from Panjtār, on the one hand, provided the tribal chiefs under Fateh Khān with an opportunity to rebel against his authority once again and, on the other, enabled Pā'indā Khān to extend his own influence and prestige. The latter perhaps also wanted to embroil the *mujāhidīn* with Fateh Khān. On return from the expedition of Konsh Glen, Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn received a letter from Pā'indā Khān asking him to come with a detachment of *mujāhidīn* for he wanted to go towards Top'i and Mena'i.[2] The Maulvī came, for he had already decided upon the course of action to be followed by him. Pā'indā

1. *Dist. Gazetteer*, Hazārā, 1883-84, p. 28.
2. *Waqāi' Ahmadi*, Vol. III, pp. 376-77.

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Khān first headed with 700 troops towards Sitānā to settle his long standing dispute with the Saiyids of Sitānā. Māulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn, however, called a *Jirga* of the *khāns* and *maliks* of the nearby villages at Kaya, to which Saiyid Akbar Shāh sent three of his brothers. The Maulvī got the two parties settle their affairs on amicable terms and thus averted action between the two. Pā'indā Khān then marched on to village Kotā where a battle between him and Fateh Khān seemed imminent. Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn tried hard to convince Fateh Khān that he should limit his authority over Khudū Khel tribes, and leave the Tanāolis of Top'i, Mena'ī and other villages to have their reins into the hands of Pā'indā Khān, but Fateh Khān was adamant in asserting his claim by virtue of being a successor to the Saiyid. Pā'indā Khān, on his side, was equally insistent upon having the matter decided by the sword. It seemed that an armed conflict was unavoidable but, fortunately enough, Pā'indā Khān was invited by the people of Jhandā Bokā to partake their hospitality. As the village was quite near Panjtār, Fateh Khān hastened back to his headquarters lest Pā'indā Khān should march on it in his absence. Return of Fateh Khān thus saved the situation for Pā'indā Khān had to turn back without coming to blows with Fateh Khān.

Pāi'ndā Khan had sought the help of Harī Singh Nalwā against Saiyid Ahmad 'Alī, but after the defeat of the *mujāhidīn* he had recovered his Amb territory, cis-Indus, and also seized the Sikh forts of Khairābād and Kirpiliān thus commencing a new quarrel with the Sikhs of which the chief cause of provocation seems to have been the enmity which existed between him and Māhā Singh, the deputy of Harī Singh Nawlā. He marched on again to Sher Garh, where he was joined by a detachment of 150 *mujāhidīn* under Maulvī Nasir-ud-dīn, to make a joint incursion on the Sikh citadel of Bhairkhund, on the left bank of river Sīrān to the north-east of Mansehra. Pā'indā Khān crossed the river with 2,500 troops under him and attacked the Sikh garrison, 4000 strong, and compelled it to fall back within its safehold near the citadel. Now, Pā'indā Khān asked the Maulvī to lead his men to take the offensive. The *mujāhidīn* cracked down on the

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enemy with such force that it had to seek the safety of its citadel. The enemy suffered a loss of 50 killed without any casualties on the side of the *mujāhidīn*, but the force with Pā'indā Khān being inadequate to capture the fort, he had to withdraw from the area without any decisive action. Before the combined force of Pā'indā Khān and Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn returned to Sher Garh, a detachment of the *mujāhidīn* had a skirmish at Malikpur where the two Sikh *Garhīs* were manned by Muslim soldiers. The Malikpur contingent made friendly overtures to the *mujāhidīn* but secretly called a Sikh regiment to their aid. The Sikhs had to take to their heels in an ensuing combat but one, Miān Khān Swātī, was killed in action on the side of the *mujāhidīn*.

With the melting of the snows, a regiment of 2000 Sikhs re-appeared in Sachchūn to collect revenues from the tribesmen. Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn made arrangements to strike at them in a night attack, but before he could lay his hands on them, intelligence was received that the Daishī tribes, occupying the country on the eastern slopes of Black Mountain, to the north of Agror and west of Nandihār, had joined hands with Tikarī and Alla'i tribes to oppose the *mujāhidīn*. They were reported to have collected to the number of 4000 at Charī-bang, nine kilometres from Hasbikot and sealed all the appoaches to Hasbikot from the north-western side. Abandoning the expedition against the Sikhs, Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn marched on to the Daishī's stronghold from two sides and took them unawares. Daishis fled leaving the fort of Sha'ī Khān unprotected which was occupied by Nasir-ud-dīn and subsequently served as his headquarters. The *mujāhidīn* had been at Shā'i Khān for a month and a half, when Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn received the news that Daishī and Nandihār tribes had again mustered a force of about 10,000 but before the tribesmen could launch out against the *mujāhidīn*, he fell on them and pursued them up to Kotla, at a distance of 26 Kilometres from Shā'ī Khān. Twice defeated in their efforts to dislodge the *mujāhidīn*, all the Daishī, Nandihār and Konsh tribes begged for peace and voluntarily proffered payment of *'ushr* to the *mujāhidīn*. Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn now

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turned his attention again towards the Sikhs who were still at Sachchūn, but he had hardly finalised his plan when his efforts for *jihād* were again frustrated by another threat from the Allāi'wāls. These tribes inhabit the valley bounded by Kohistan on the north and east, by the Bhogarmang valley, Nandihār and Daishī on the south and by river Indus on the west. Maulvī Nasir-ud-din sent Sardār Naqīb Ullah Khān, a chief of the Daishī tribes, to sue peace on behalf of the *mujāhidīn* for there was no cause of quarrel with the Allā'i-wāls who occupied a country far away from the territory of the *mujāhidīn*, but the Allā'iwāls remained stubborn as a mule in their resolve to attack the *mujāhidīn*. With no alternative left the Maulvī marched ahead to meet the danger posed to his existence in that area. The volley of gunshots discharged by the Allā'iwāls injured six of the *mujāhidīn* at the outset of the encounter. Mullā Lāl Muhammad Kandahāri was one of injured hit by a bullet in his wrist. Somebody called out that the Mullā had been wounded but he slapped the man asking him to keep quiet, lest others should be disheartened. However, the brave charge by the *mujāhidīn* made the Allā'iwāls run for their life.[1]

Presence of a strong Sikh force at Sachchūn was the main cause of recurrent uprising against the *mujahidīn*. Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn, therefore, decided to strike a blow at them first. He marched on with about 125 *mujāhidīn* to village Lachibang and sent a few men to bring Bārak Khān from Batlūn so that further action against Sikhs might be planned in consultation with him. Bārak Khān had, however, already pledged his support to the Sikhs and, therefore, he fled on the approach of the *mujāhidīn*. He was caught and shot dead by a Kandahāri *mujāhid*. Now, the *mujāhidīn* turned towards Richārī, in the Sachchūn Pass, separated from Sachchūn by river Sirān. A few skirmishes took place between the advance column of the *mujāhidīn* headed by Muqīm Khān, but as the Sikhs had received the news of *mujāhidīn's* arrival in the area, no surprise attack was possible. Muqīm Khān led another expedition to Kotaliyān, standing at the mouth

1. *Waqā'i Ahmadi*, Vol. III pp. 414-20.

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of Pakhlī valley but as the enemy had been alerted, he turned towards Shihkiārī where he was able to claim a toll of about 70 enemy soldiers in a brief encounter.

Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn was again invited by Pa'indā Khān to join in an incursion to Pakhlī. After the Maulvī had gone away to Shergarh, leaving about 60 *mujāhidīn* in the Shā'ī Khān fort, the Daishīs hatched up a plan for the mass murder of the remaining *mujāhidīn*. One Khudā Bakhsh was slaughtered at Bālākot, another, Faiz Muhammad was killed at village Uthhal and Sheikh Lakhmīr was attacked at Bulandkot but he escaped unhurt injuring his four assailants. Mullā Kātīb Ākhundzādā and several other *mujāhidīn* sent to bring *'ushr* from the Daishī tribes, fled in the cover of night from different places and reached Shā'i Khān safely. As soon as the news of this new insurrection reached Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn he hurried back to Shā'i Khan, postponing action against the Sikhs. On return, Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn made lightning raids on Bulandkot and Gajbūrī to intimidate the Daishīs and also swooped down upon a large quantity of the munitions of war sent to the conspirators by the Sikhs. The strong action taken by Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn had the desired effect, for the Daishīs did not dare to kick up another uprising against the *mujāhidīn*.

During the next few months the *mujāhidīn* made irruptions into the Sachchūn Pass, at Jabbar, Chahla and Kot and posted a picket at the last mentioned place to check the advance of the Sikhs.

Maulvi Nasīr-ud-dīn had taken all possible precautions not to embroil himself in the dispute between Pā'indā Khān and the Khāns of Agror, 'Abdul Ghafoor Khān and Kamāl Khān, who had fled to the valley of Tikāri, lying to the south of Nandihār, and used to make incursions in the territory of Pā'ndiā Khān. Perhaps peace with 'Abdul Ghafoor Khān was possible but Habīb Ullah Khān, the uncle of 'Abdul Ghafoor Khān, had by then come to terms with the Sikhs and he continually instigated his nephews against the *mujāhidīn*. Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn also intercepted two letters sent by 'Abdul Ghafoor Khān to Habīb Ullah Khān asking

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the latter to attack the *mujāhidīn*. However, as Kamāl Khān still pledged allegiance to Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn, the latter desisted from taking any action against the two brothers. But the Kandahārīs, who had run out of all patience with the two brothers killed both of them without obtaining approval of the Maulvī.[1]

Near the *mujāhidīn*'s parapet at Kot, the Sikhs had constructed a fort on the ridge of a hill at Batlūn which was a source of constant danger to the territory under the *mujāhidīn*. Although the fort was well protected by strong fortifications and had more than 4000 Sikh troops, Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn decided to lay his hands on It. The *mujāhidīn* made a dash at the fort, but were unsuccessful in dislodging the enemy many times more their number. In order to draw them out of the fort the *mujāhidīn* feigned retreat after an attack and then cracked down on their pursuers. The Sikhs again took to the safety of fort. The casualties in the pitched battle fought for Batlūn on the side of the Sikhs were over four hundred while Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn lost about 50 of his comrades among whom was also Mullā Lāl Muhammad Kandahārī. He had been a brave, trustworthy and faithful ally of the Saiyid ever since he had accepted his call for the *jīhād* in Kandahār, and had been the right hand of Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn after the Saiyid's death.

Failing in his effort to capture the Batlūn fort, Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn retreated to Kot but two days after his return the Sikhs abandoned their stronghold after setting fire to its fortifications.

Another irreparable loss suffered by the *mujāhidīn* shortly afterwards was the death of Muqīm Khān. Hailing from Kālā-bāgh, this brave man had been in the forefront in every battle in Haʿārā. He led a punitive expedition against the Allāʾī tribes who were reported to be plotting again in conjunction with the Sikhs. His pistol failed him during a combat with the Allāʾīwāls. He punched his assailant with his pistol, but in the meantime another man hit him with a heavy stone in his neck. By the time he could regain his senses, several

1. *Waqāiʿ Ahmadī*, Vol. III, p. 476

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swords had been pierced into his body.

The *mujāhidīn* had, by this time, extended their sphere of authority to the whole of Tikāri and parts of Daishī, Nandihār and Allā'ī areas much to the dislike of scheming *maliks* and chiefs of the area. Yoked to a strong practical sense but shorn of all idealism and spirit of sacrifice for a higher purpose, the tribesmen tried to safeguard their petty interests by aligning themselves with the Sikhs, whom they feared more than they respected the *mujāhidīn*. It was difficult for them to believe that the ill-equipped *mujāhidīn* could ever turn out the powerful Sikhs commanding vast resources of men and meterial from that area; and, hence, they could never bring themselves to co-operate wholeheartedly with the *mujāhidīn*. However, failing in their efforts to dislodge the *mujāhidīn*, they begged Pā'indā Khān to rid the country of them. Pā'indā Khān, too, could have very easily told the *mujāhidīn* that he could no longer support them, but, intriguing by nature, he again started playing a double game. He summoned Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn to Amb, but the latter being aware of his intentions, went accompanied by 70 men with the result that Pā'indā Khān never had direct talks with the Maulvī, although he remained at Amb for about a month. Instead, he insisted on his demand communicated through Shama Jamādār that the *mujāhidīn* should vacate the Shā'i Khān fort and go back to Jassikot citadel. To this the Maulvī was not agreeable and he informed Sheikh Walī Muhammad Phulatī about the deterioration of relations with Pā'indā Khān. Saiyid Akbar Shāh of Sitānā was now the only prop on whom the *mujāhidīn* could lean upon in this hour of difficulty, and he welcomed the *mujāhidīn* to Sitānā with open hands.[1]

Pā'indā Khān had turned out the *mujāhidīn* from Tikāri area under the erroneous belief that he would become the undisputed master of Agror and the adjoining areas, but the Daishīs and Allā'iwāls soon started conspiring against him. Aided and abetted by the Sikhs, they rose in revolt

1. *Waqāi' Ahmadī*, Vol. III, p. 511

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and turned out Pā'indā Khān's men from Shā'i Khān. In 1836, Harī Singh Nalwā again raided Agror, evicted Pā'indā Khān's soldiers, and built more forts in the area. In the following years desultory fighting continued between the Sikhs and Pā'indā Khān. *Mujāhidīn* were offered a fief of an annual rental value of Rs. 25,000 by Harī Singh Nalwā provided they joined hands with him in liquidating Pā'indā Khān, but the offer was turned down by the *mujāhidīn*. However, all hostilities were abruptly brought to a close in 1841 by the great Indus floods of the 2nd June which swept away Amb, Pā'indā Khan's capital. In the winter of 1841-42, Kunwar Pratāp Singh, who had received Kashmir and Hazārā in *jagīr* from his father, Mahārāja Sher Singh, marched into Pā'indā Khān's territory. As Pā'indā Khān refused to come in at his summons, Pratāp Singh made over the country to his brother Madad Khān, and left nothing to Pā'indā Khān save a few acres of land trans-Indus. This marks the end of the chequered career of Pā'indā Khān who died in 1843. Undoubtedly brave and ambitious, if he had exhibited even a little sincerity and greater prudence he might have died as a brave warrior and founder of kingdom with the help of resources brought to his doorsteps by the Providence.

The *mujāhidīn* had migrated to Sitānā by the end of 1834 or in the beginning of 1835. They had thus stayed at Jassīkot and Shā'i Khān for more or less three years.[1] Fateh Khān of Panjtār, whose territory lay to the west of Sitānā, had again turned into their enemy and started harassing and looting the Hindustānīs passing through his territory to join the *jihād*. Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn, therefore, decided to lead a punitive expedition to Manāra and Top'ī where incoming Indian caravans had been intercepted and looted,[2] The *mujāhidīn* were, however, trapped during the assault, by the men of Fateh Khān who cut their line of retreat. Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn died fighting gallantly with four of his comrades and thus ended the brilliant career of

1. District Gazetteer, Hazārā, (1883-84), p. 28
2. *Bellew*, pp. 94/95

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a grand fighter for the cause of God, as a victim of the treachery of his former ally. Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn, belonging to Manglore In Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh, was sufficiently of advanced age when he joined the *jihād* but he was never found lacking either in vigour or valour in comparison with his younger comrades.

Sheikh Walī Muhammad Phulatī had, by that time, brought Bibi Sahiba to Sitānā from Takhtaband in Buner, but his whole attention was engaged in finding the way to conduct her to Sind, which he was able to accomplish in 1837. Mīr Aulād ʿAlī, a resident of village Surajgarha in district Monghyr was elected as the next leader after the death of Maulvī Nasīr-ud-din, but the period of his quiet leadership at Sitānā was spent in recuperation of the losses already suffered by the *mujāhidīn*. However, the fire of *jīhād* seemed to be burning out of them in the absence of any active support forthcoming from the tribesmen of surrounding areas.

Another Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn belonging to Delhi now held aloft the banner of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd for about three years. He was the daughter's son of Shāh Rafʿī Uddīn Muhaddith Dehlavī (d. 1830), a famous scholar of his time. Setting out from Delhi in April, 1835 with a few friends desirous of taking part in the *jihād*, he was joined by several parties of volunteers in the way. He marched through Jaipur and Tonk where Nawab Wazīr-ud-daula warmly received him and afforded valuable financial help to him. He intended to go to Sitānā where the remanent of the *mujāhidīn* force was still present, but on reaching Sind in 1837, he decided to make Sind the centre of his activities. He first stayed at Pīrkot, where the Saiyid family had been living with Pīr ʿAlī Gauhar, son of Pīr Sibghat Ullah, the founder of Hur movement. The Maulvī started corresponding with the ministers of Kalāt, Khairpūr and Hyderabad and also visited the latter place. but was unable to make the Amīrs of Sind to cast their lot with the *jihād*

1, *Mehr*, Vol. IV, pp. 148-150

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movement.

Sind occupied, at that time a politically precarious position between the Afghāns, Sikhs and the British. In 1830, Lieutenant (afterwards Sir) Alexander Burnes was permitted after many delays and threats on the part of the Mīrs, and counter threat by Mahārājā Ranjīt Singh, to follow up the course of Indus, then unexplored, taking with him presents from the King of England to the Mahārājā at Lahore. The English had, in fact, begun taking interest in the affairs of Sind and were anxiously watching the moves of Ranjīt Singh in that area, who laid a claim to suzerainty over the Amīr of Sind as a successor to the Afghān empire. After the battle of Bālākot, Capt. Wade had drawn the attention of his Government to the fact that Ranjīt Singh was likely to divert his attention to that area. In a report, dated 18th May, 1831, he worte: "The Sikhs having finally achieved the extinction of Syed who had afforded employment for their arms for the last five years nearly are now speculating on the future field of their exploits... It is in the direction of Shikārpur, therefore, (to the acquisition of which from Sindhians, Ranjīt Singh has often looked with anxious eyes) or the possession of the Nawāb of Bhawalpur, situated to the West of Sutlej, that he is now likely to send his troops."[1] If the Sikhs did not make any move towards Sind, after 1831, it was because they were aware of the interest of the British Government in that area. However, Col. Henry Pottinger concluded a treaty, two years later in June, 1832, with the Hyderabad Mīrs for the anvancement of commerce, which permitted traders and merchants to use the road and rivers of Sind, though no Englishman was allowed to settle in the country. The treaty was also ratified by the Mīrs of Khairpur. By 1835, Col. Pottinger had come to wield so much influence in Sind that he succeeded in obtaining leave to survey the sea-coast of Sind and the delta of the Indus although the Mīrs clearly mistrusted the intentions of their powerful

1. *Foreign Deptt. Pol. Corrs. No. 41,* dated June 17, 1831 (*The Wahabi Movement*, pp. 82/83).

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neighbours. It is reported that Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn and his party had been ordered to quit Sind under the orders of Col. Pottinger but he was allowed to stay on the intervention of certain influential persons. The Amīrs of Sind were thus apprehensive of the designs of Ranjīt Singh as well as the British, but they had neither power nor will to oppose either of them. The English, on their part, were cautiously consolidating their position in Sind, with the ultimate objective of extending their influence to Afghanistan, but were too careful to give any cause to the Sikhs for precipitate action.

Maulvī Nasir-ūd-dīn had reached Sind with about 200 *mujāhidīn*. He remained for some time at Pīrkot from where he addressed letters to more than a hundred persons in the northern India appealing for their help in the shape of money and men for waging the holy war. Similar appeals were also addressed to the Muslims in India by the Saiyid's widow and his minor son, Saiyid Ismā'īl.[1] Most of the *mujāhidīn* joining Maulvī Nasīr-ūd-din in Sind were drawn from Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.[2] His letters show that the encouraging response to his appeals was due mainly to the efficient propaganda machinery already built up by Maulvī Wilāyat 'Alī and Maulvī 'Ināyat 'Ali in Bengal and Bihar. Nawab Mubāriz-ud-daula[3] who had by then come under the influence of the Saiyid's emissary in Deccan, Maulvī Wilayat 'Alī, sent a party of 50 persons to find out the prospects of *jihād* in Sind, but, it seems, he could not send any further reinforcements to help Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn.

Mazāris, a Baluch tribe settled on the borders of Khairpur, corresponding to the south-western portion of the present Dera Gāzi Khān district, were continuing a desultory fight with the Sikhs under their chief, Mīr Bahrām Khān

1. Son of the widow of Maulānā Muhammad Is'haq, who had later married Saiyid Ahmad Shahid.
2. *Mehr*, vol. IV, p. 172
3. Nawab Mir Gohar 'Alī Khan, son of Nawāb Sikandar Jāh, the third Nizām.

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Mazārī. Dīwān Sāwan Mall, the Governor of Multan, had taken possession of Rojhān in August, 1936, to check the repeated attacks of Mazārīs on the Sikh territory. The Mazārīs again suffered a defeat in October following, after which the Sikhs captured their fort of Kan. Prince Kharak Singh and Prince Nau Nehāl Singh advanced to the banks of Indus with large armies, but the British diplomacy succeeded, on the one hand, in warning the Sind Amīrs to keep away from encouraging the Mazārīs and, on the other, notifying to Ranjīt Singh that he would be incurring a great risk in acting in opposition to the declared policy of the British Government,[1] but Mazāris were still recalcitrant and in search of an ally to avenge their defeat. Maulvī Nasir-ud-dīn took advantage of the opportunity and joined hands with Mīr Bahrām Khān. In a letter giving the the reason for selecting Mazārī area for commencing *jihād* operations, Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn wrote that he could not stay in Khairpur since its Mīrs were under the influence of the English. The Mazārīs, stated Maulvī Nasīr-ud-din, were neither afraid of the Sikhs nor the English and by helping them he could count on the help of local Muslim population.[2] His letter gives the lie to the assertions of Maulvī Muhammad Jʿāfar Thānesrī and Sir Syed Ahmad Khān that the *mujāhidīn* were not opposed to the British Government.

Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn first executed an agreement of mutual help and friendship with the Mazārī chiefs. Thereafter, he marched on to Rojhan, in November 1837, to lay a siege of the fort. Mahā Singh, the commander of the fort, received reinforcements from the forts of Mitthan Kot, Umar Kot and Dera Gāzī Khān, but unable to stand the charge of the *mujāhidīn* in open warfare, he preferred to keep himself entrenched within his stronghold However, a Mazārī Baluch Sardār who had sided with the Sikhs sent some Baluchs to his brothers fighting the Sikhs, who swore by the Qurʾān that Dīwān Sāwan Mall was approaching

1. *History of Punjab*, p. 474 and *Cunningham*, p. 216
2. *Akhbār Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn*, pp. 30/31 (Quoted from *Mehr*, Vol. IV)

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Rojhān with a large army. The Baluchs, like the Pathān tribesmen, were not a disciplined lot and they began deserting the battle-field. The Mazārīs also took away their cattle with them with the result that the supplies to the *mujāhidīn*, brought from Kashmoor, were abruptly cut off. Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn had now no alternative but to raise the siege and retreat to Kashmoor.[1] The Sikhs, emboldened by the retreat of the *mujāhidīn*, pursued them and an action took place at Kan, but they had to turn back with severe losses. The Maulvī wanted to extend his operations from Kashmoor, but Dīwān Sāwan Mall evacuated Rojhān, and made peace with Bahrām Khān who was called to Lahore and presented with a robe of honour and other gifts by Ranjīt Singh.

Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn shifted his camp to Mahrū on the request of Nawāb Bhāwal Khān of Bhāwalpur and then took the road to Baluchistan, on the invitation of Mukhtār-ud-daula Muhammad Hasan, the Prime Minister of Kalāt. In the meantime, deteriorating relations between the English and the Afghān ruler, Dost Muhammad, the son of Pā'indā Khān Bārakza'ī, were heading towards a crisis. The events leading to the unjustified aggression by the British may be recapitulated here, for we find Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn leading his forces into Afghanistān to oppose the advance of the British armies. At the moment British Government in India was in a flutter owing to circulation of the stories of a phantom Russian army moving south across the Kazakh steppes and Dost Muhammad flirting with the Russians. A mission under Alexander Burnes was sent to spy out the country and attempt a reconciliation between Dost Muhammad and Ranjīt Singh on the possession of Peshāwar and other Afghān territories appropriated by the Sikhs fifteen years earlier. Dictatorial and supercilious letters addressed by Lord Aukland, the British Governor General, to Dost Muhammad demanding him to acquiesce to the Sikh demands served only to make Dost Muhammad even more suspicious of the British intentions. It was

1. *Akhbār Maulvi Nasīr-ud-dīn*, pp. 45-48

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accordingly decided by Lord Aukland to replace Dost Muhammad by his protege, Shāh Shujᶜa, living as an exile at Ludhiana, although he had thrice failed to fulfil the role for which he was now cast. On the 10th December the Bengal Army under Major-General Sir Willoughby Cotton left on its long march to Kabul. Ranjīt Singh sent Shāh Shujᶜa's son, Timūr Mirzā through the Khaibar Pass with a Sikh contingent to support his father who had moved several marches in advance of the Bengal Army. March of the Bombay Army under Major-General Sir John Keane ran into trouble with the Amīrs of Sind, but they were forced into submission by threats to crush and annihilate them.

After celebrating a solemn ceremony of Shāh Shujᶜa's accession to the throne at Kandahār on the 4th May, 1839 a column of the British army reached Ghazni on 21st July and found the fortress strongly occupied by the Afghān forces. Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn, who had by this time reached Afghānistān with a force of 1,000 *mujāhidīn*, detailed a detachment for the defence of Ghaznī. The British assault made by demolishing the Kabul gate to the north of the city was met by a most determined stand by the Afghāns and Hindustānī *mujāhidīn*. Referring to the heroic defence put up by the comrades of Maulvī Nasir-ud-dīn, Hunter says, "They sent a great force to help our enemies in Cabul War, and a thousand of them remained steadfast against us to the death. In the fall of Ghaznī alone, three hundred obtained the joy of martyrdom from the points of English bayonets."[1]

Dost Muhammad was unable to rally sufficient force to oppose the advance of the British Army on Kabul. Now, Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn and remanent of his force tracked on to Sitānā where he reached by the end of 1839 or early in 1840. He was elected as leader of the *mujāhidīn* already at Sitānā but he died soon after and was buried there. Hajī Saiyid ᶜAbdur Rahīm was elected leader of the *mujāhidīn* after Mīr Aulād ᶜAlī, but the great flood of Indus washed away Sitānā and thus ended the first phase of the movement of *jihād* in June 1841.

1. *The Indian Musalman*, p. 21

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# The Ali Brothers

MAULVI Wilāyat ʿAlī had taken the *biʿat* at the hands of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd at Lucknow while he was still a student. His entire family including his father, Fateh ʿAlī of Sadiqpūr, Patna, entered into the spiritual order of the Saiyid when the latter passed through the town on his return from the *haj* pilgrimage. Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī (1790-1852) also accompanied the Saiyid to the Frontier alongwith his two brothers, Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī (1794-1858) and Tālib ʿAlī for taking part in the *jihād*. The last mentioned died of pleurisy at Chingla'i soon after the battle of Shaldu while Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī and Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī were sent back by the Saiyid from Panjtār, perhaps, in 1828, to look after the missionary activities in Deccan and Bengal respectively. Both the brothers carried out the mission entrusted to them with remarkable energy and zeal and spread the message of reform and renovation as well as revolt against the foreign masters amongst millions of their compatriots in the north and south of India. Wherever they went thousands flocked to listen to their discourses and took *biʿat* on their hands. *Khalīfāhs* were appointed by them in towns and villages to remodel the lives of the people taking the *biʿat* at their hands, in accordance with the tenets of Islam and to invite people to take part in the *jihād* then being fought in the Frontier. Paying tribute

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to the selfless zeal of the two brothers Sir William Hunter says: "Indefatigable as missionaries, careless of themselves, blameless in their lives, supremely devoted to the overthrow of the English infidels, admirably skilful in organising a permanent system for supplying money and recruits, the Patna Kalifs stand forth as the types and examples 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."[1]

Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī replaced Muhammad ʿAlī Rāmpurī in Deccan who was sent to Madras by the Saiyid. He worked there for about four years and returned to Patna, some time in 1831, after the death of his father, not long after the martyrdom of the Saiyid at Bālākot. Impressed by the enthusiastic piety and zeal for religion displayed by Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī, Nawāb Mubāriz-ud-daula became a staunch follower of the Saiyid's reformatory movement and employed several preachers to propagate the movement in Deccan. His life was also changed; not only he took to a temperate and unostentatious way of living, gave up all un-Islamic practices and sent off his concubines; but he also developed an intense hatred of the British. Mubāriz-ud-daula planned an uprising against the British in collaboration with the Nawāb of Karnool and a few other Indian ruling princes. It was found later on that the Rājā of Satārā and the princes of Jodhpur, Udigiri, Bhopal and Rampūr were in correspondence with Mubāriz-ud-daula, who had started extensive military preparations. His followers gained admittance into the different army units with a view to seducing sepoys to the so-called Wahābism and, conjointly with it, in all probability, to sedition. A reference to the despatch of envoys to Maulvī Nasir-ud-din in Sind by Mubāriz-ud-daula has already been made elsewhere. However, the unusually large influx of people from Northern India, Kabul, Persia and Madras

1. *The Indian Musalman*, pp. 68

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Presidency into Hyderabad aroused the suspicion of the British Agent in the State. As a result of it, enquiries were conducted by the British Agent, Fraser, and Mubāriz-ud-daula was confined as a State prisoner in the Golconda Fort. Later on, Mubāriz-ud-daula was tried by a Commission of Enquiry consisting of British officers and some Indians in 1839-40 and sentenced for life and confined to the Golconda Fort where he died in 1854.[1]

On his return to Patna, some time in 1831, Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī took up the charge of organisation in Bihar and Bengal which had so far been looked after by his younger brother, Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī. He appointed four deputies, Shāh Muhammad Husain for Chapra, Muzaffarpūr, Tirhut and Patna, Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī for Bengal, Maulvī Zain-ul-ʿĀbdīn of Hyderabad for Allahabad and Maulvī Muhammad ʿAbbās for Orissa.[2] He undertook an extensive tour of Bengal inviting the people to the path of righteousness and strengthening the local units by appointing preachers and getting mosques constructed at various places. He laid emphasis on the teaching of the Qurʾān and the Traditions to the populace in simple language. With his indefatigable zeal and remarkable organising capacity he created a well-knit organisation with its Centre at Patna, divided into subordinate circles and zones under local preachers, all over the country, who preached purer morals and the need for joining the *jihād* movement. These preachers also collected *zakāt* and enlisted recruits and sent them on to the Headquarters at Patna. The *Imāms* of the mosques, who were normally appointed as the local heads of the movement, were required to decide the disputes among their followers and thus discourage the people from taking their law suits to the courts of the alien rulers.

Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī left for *haj* after his tour of Bengal. He travelled to Yaman, Najd, Yasir and Mascat and met Qāzī Muhammad ibn ʿAlī Shaukānī from whom he also took

1. *Wahabī Movement in India*, pp. 124-128
2. *Tazkirah-i-Sādiqa*, p. 154

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a certificate of proficiency in *hadīth*. Returning to India after two years, he again toured some of the districts of Bengal before returning to Patna.

The organisation built up by the ʿAlī brothers, although extensive, was essentially a secret one because of the nature of its undertaking. At the apex was the Patna Headquarter in the house of ʿAlī brothers in Sadiqpūr, referred to by the local organisations as the '*Caravan Sarāʾi*'. Volunteers sent by the local units were lodged at the headquarters, provided doctrinaire education in theology and the dialects of Islam according to their educational qualifications and aptitudes and then sent out either as missionaries for preaching the creed of Islam to the masses or as *mujāhids* to the Frontier. The *Khalīfah* or deputy at the headquarters was assisted by a number of counsellors each of whom looked after different aspects of the organisation, such as, finance, missionary activites, recruitment of the volunteers, their training, etc. The Headquarter of the movement was placed for a period, under Maulvī Yahyā ʿAlī whose capable leadership combined with forethought, resolution and enthusiasm, made it the most active centre of the Movement in British India. His duties as the head at the Central Headquarters included "public ministrations in the mosques, lecturing to the students on 'doctrinaire' points, corresponding with the district centres, inspecting the arms to be forwarded to the Frontier and personally supervising the complicated system of drafts by which large sums of money were secretly transmitted."[1]

For the transmission of letters and funds to the Frontier Yahyā ʿAlī had organised a system of hospice along the entire route to the Frontier which received the messengers and conducted them safely through their areas. The system worked so efficiently that the messages sent from the Headquarters were conveyed thousands of miles away within incredibly short time. "The great North road was divided", according to Hunter, "into suitable sections and

1. *Wahābī Movement in India*, p. 143

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the Wahābī traitors on their way to our Enemy's camp journeyed in safety through strange provinces in the full assurance that at the end of each stage there were friends upon the lookout for their arrival. The Wahābī agents incharge of the hospices were men of diverse ranks of life, all devoted to the overthrow of the British Rule and each the head of a local committee of traitors."[1] Speaking about the selfless zeal of these messengers and heads of the hospices Hunter says that "neither fear of detection nor hope of reward has induced a single one of them to appear against their leader in the hour of disgrace."[2] Another means of transmitting money to the Frontier, employed since the days of the Saiyid, was to send it through drafts. Cash was deposited with the bankers at Delhi, Patna or Banaras, who forwarded it to Peshāwar after deducting 12% as their commission. This vital link in the transmission of money was entrusted, almost exclusively, to the Hindu Bankers, such as, Rāmkishan Fatehchand and Manohar Dās (Patna), Juggarnāth and Mukoond Lāl (Delhi), Lālchand Kurrum Singh (Banaras), Sāmunt Ra³i and Sheo Bukhsh and Santū and Motī (of Manora in the Frontier).[3]

The Saiyid had initiated a system of code words for communicating secret information to India and acknowledging the receipt of money which was further improved by the Patna leaders. Aliases were used for the active workers, names of the writers and the addressees of letters were avoided and religious and literary similes were utilised to convey secret messages. To give a few examples, bands of recruits were called *Kāfilās* (caravans), Malāka and Sitānā were spoken of as the *Barā* (Big) Godown and Patna as the *Chota* (small) Godown, Gold Mohars were called large red rubies, remittances of money through drafts or *Hundis* were spoken of as white stones and the amounts were intimated by the number of white beads, as on the rosary.[4]

1. *The Indian Musalman*, p. 93
2. *Ibid.*, p. 93
3. *Wahābī Movement in India*, p. 152
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 152-53 and 353-54

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During his tours before and after the *hāj* pilgrimage the Saiyid had appointed *Khalīfahs* or deputies in almost every important town he had visited to supervise and consolidate the work relating to reformation of beliefs, manners and morals initiated by him. Many of these deputies had also been authorised by him to accept novices in the Saiyid's religious order. This system was further developed into a high degree of efficiency by ʿAlī brothers who appointed village teachers or the *Imāms* of local mosques as the supervisors of the lowest unit at the village level. Besides, these itinerant preachers trained at the Patna Headquarters were sent to vitalise the local units. The number of such itinerant preachers must have been quite large, since, according to Hunter, they had "enveloped the whole of Bengal in their meshes and converted thousands of useful British subjects, first, into vagrant fanatics and then into bitter traitors to the Crown."[1] Many of these wandering preachers had also settled down in the interior villages. Such centres were spread over many parts of the country, notably in Bengal and supervised by district centres which coordinated their activities.

Itinerant missionaries and village *Imāms* commissioned by the *jihād* organisation to preach the Saiyid's message of social reform and renovation of Islam in India were normally well-trained and fully equipped with adequate and effective literature calling upon the Muslims to discard un-Islamic practices and customs then prevalent among the masses and asking them to adopt the norms of Islamic behaviour. Persian was then the educational standard : all literary compositions, even private letters, were penned by the gentry in that language. To acquire proficiency in Persian syntax and niceties and to employ an excessively florid style of Persian prose was in those days the glass of fashion and mould of form. But, to the devoted preachers of the *jihād* movement, who desired to carry the message to the laity, such Persian works were of little use. The movement, therefore, turned to compositions in Urdu

1. *The Indian Musalman*, p. 80

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which could be understood by the common man. A copy of the first Urdu translation of the Qur'ān by Shāh ʿAbdul Qādir, completed in 1790-91, had already been handed over by the Saiyid at Calcutta in 1822, to one of his disciples, Saiyid ʿAbdullah of Sirāmpūr, who had established a Press, for publication.[1] Another Press was set up by Maulvī Badʿi-uz-Zaman of Burdwān, a disciple of Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī, especially for printing the literature of the Movement.[2] Saiyid Ahmad Shahid's *Sirāt-i-Mustaqīm* and the *Taqwiyat-ul-Imān* of Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl were soon translated and scores of their editions were brought out within a short period.[3] *Tanbīh-ul-Ghāfilīn* was written by Shāh Rafʿī-ud-dīn at the instance of the Saiyid while the latter was at Calcutta and then translated into Urdu by Benī Narain Jahān in 1929-30.[4] Subsequently, a large number of tracts, such as, *Risālā-i-ʿAmal-i Hadīth*, *Risālā-i-Dʿawat*, *Risālā Taysīr-us-Salāt*, *Risālā-i-Shajar-ba-Thamar* and *Tibyān-us-Shirk* by Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī, *Risālā-i-Namāz*, *Tafsīr Surah Fātiha*, *Risālā-i-Jihādiya* and *Risālā-i-Nikāh-i-Bewgān* by Maulvī Gaffār of Sādiqūr, *Nasīhat-ul-Muslimīn* by Mauiānā Khuram ʿAlī and *Risālā-i-But-Shikan* by Maulvī ʿInayat ʿAlī were written either in Urdu or in both Persian and Urdu and widely circulated.[5] Discarding the highly ornate and turgid style of the Persian prose, these Urdu tracts were written in easy and simple language which helped in popularising the language from Calcutta to Peshāwar besides setting the pattern and style of present-day Urdu prose writing.

Hunter has correctly reckoned that throughout the whole literature of the movement the obligation that shined forth as the first duty was the regeneration of man.[6] To this end all the district and village centres and itinerant missionaries traversing the country on lonely foot journey

1. *Mehr*, Vol. I, p. 200
2. *Ad-Durr-ul-Mukhtār*, p. 154
3. Khwajā *Ahmad Faruqi*, *Urdu Men Wahābī Adab*, p. 37
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 42 and 43
5. *The Wahabi Movement in India*, pp. 358-63
6. *The Indian Musalman*, p. 65

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through forests and mountains directed their efforts. They called upon the Muslims to give up their un-Islamic and polytheistic customs, such as, seeking intercession at the tombs of saints and aversion to remarriage of widows shared by them with their non-Muslim neighbours. They appealed to them to discard their ignorance and indolence and to study the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* through translations in their own languages. The preachers of the movement called upon the masses to give up selfishness, pride and vain pretensions and forge ahead as a united, disciplined and industrious people by remodelling their lives in accordance with the teachings of Islam. Thus, they carried the true picture of Islam to the people, reformed their lives in religious, moral and social spheres, and gave them hope and courage to fight the alien masters. The missionaries of this powerful Movement persuaded the people, on the one hand, to resist passively and refrain from all intercourse with their alien rulers and boycott their courts of justice[1] and, on the other, to overthrow the rule of the foreigners. It goes to the credit of these preachers that in spite of their enthusiastic zeal for religious revival and hatred of the alien rulers there was hardly a case in which the British authorities could lay their hands on the seditious activities carried on for years by innumerable preachers throughout the country. They spread the message of the Saiyid in the whole country from end to end, slowly, calmly and coldly, gathering a great latent power, disciplining the people and improving the manners and morals of the population under their influence.

Contributions were raised by the village and district centres through collection of *zakāt, khairāt* (alms), *fitrā*, *sadqā* and special donations on the occasion of marriages, births, deaths, etc. A number of village centres were grouped for the purpose into 'fiscal circles' under a chief tax collector assisted by the collectors in each centre. Towns and villages with large population had, in addition to the tax collector, a lay leader or *Dīn-ka-Sardār,* normally

1. *Calcutta Review*, Vol 51, p. 393

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the *Imām* of the local mosque who looked after religious matters, a *Duniyā-kā-Sardār*, responsible for worldly affairs and a *Dāk-ka-Sardār*, whose business it was to arrange the transmission of money and secret communications through tried and dependable messengers.[1] Large amounts of money were collected by these centres and sent to the Frontier during the period the system had been in vogue. During the three years when the Ambeyla campaign was going on (1863-65) a sum of rupees one lakh was transmitted from Patna through one banker, Manohar Ram only.[2] Hunter says that in "southern India they raised such a hurricane of enthusiasm that even the women cast their jewels into the common purse."[3]

By the time Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī returned to Patna after the *haj* pilgrimage anarchical conditions prevailed in the Punjab following the death of Ranjīt Singh in 1839. The late Mahārājā had consolidated numerous dismembered petty states into a kingdom but he had failed to give an orderly form of government to it. His eldest son and successor, Kharak Singh, ascended the throne after the late Mahārājā, but he was a man of weak intellect and addicted, like his father, to opium. He had to abdicate in October, 1839, in favour of his son, Nau Nihāl Singh, but the young Mahārājā was murdered or crushed to death under an archway which crashed over him after he had ruled for 13 months. Rānī Chand Kaur, mother of Nau Nihāl Singh, then took the reins of government in her hands. Before, however, she could consolidate her power, Sher Singh marched on Lahore in accordance with a previous arrangement with the minister, Rājā Dhiān Singh. Addicted to pursuits of pleasure and drinking to an immoderate extent, he gave himself up to hunting and wrestling leaving the affairs of the State to the Rājā. Sher Singh wielded the sceptre for

1. *The Indian Musalman*, p. 76; *Wahābī Movement in India*, pp. 147-149 ; *Bengal Records*, p. 9.
2. *Wahābī Movement in India*, p. 152
3. *The Indian Musalman*, p. 50

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little more than two and a half years when he was assassinated. Dalīp Singh, the youngest son of Ranjīt Singh was proclaimed Mahārājā but the tumult and confusion reigning supreme after the death of Ranjīt Singh had made the soldiery all-powerful who could make and unmake a king. The protracted civil wars carried on in the heart of the capital and the heavy expenditure incurred on maintenance of the troops quickly emptied the public treasury. During the prolonged anarchy and confusion which spread throughout the Punjab, no revenue could be realised, and the whole country was devastated. Several chiefs and Governors of the provinces either rebelled or withheld payment of revenues. Further internecine warfare continued which brought Sārdār Jawāhir Singh, brother of Rānī Jindan, the queen of the great Mahārājā and her favourite, Lāl Singh, a Brahmin, on the stage of Lahore drama. The power of the Khālsā was now on its height; everyone, including the highest officers of the State, dreaded them for their cupidity which knew no bounds. The Rānī, ruling as regent of the State, herself felt the danger of annihilation, since with the resources of the kingdom exhausted, she was hardly in a position to feed the rapacity of the turbulent Khālsā soldiery. These were the conditions which led to the declaration of first Anglo-Sikh war in November, 1845.

Prolonged confusion threatening the existence of the vast fabric constructed by the great Mahārājā, encouraged several chiefs and Sardārs to revolt against the authority of Lahore. A Tiwānā chief, Fateh Khān, fled to Derā Ismaʿīl Khān and there he raised an insurrection. The Governor of Multan also countenanced the Tiwānā chief. In Peshāwar, a part of the soldiery rebelled as their demand for increase in pay was not met, while all attempts to crush the defiance of Adam Khel Afrīdīs and Utmān Khel tribes proved abortive. The affairs in Hazārā were in equally bad shape. In upper Hazārā Rājā Haider Bakhsh Ghakkar of Khānpūr, Nawāb Khān Plāll Tanāolī of Shingrī, Mīr Zaman Khān Tāhir Khel of Khalābat and Ghulām Khān Tarīn rose up in arms and in the lower Hazārā Jadūns forced Dewān Mūlrāj to abandon Harīpur. Gulāb Singh sent Dewān Ibrāhīm with

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a strong detachment to put down the rebelion in upper Hazārā but he suffered an ignominous defeat at the hands of Kāghān Saiyids headed by Shāh Zāmin Shāh of Kawā'i. The Shāh also wrote to Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī and invited him to come and accomplish the job left incomplete by the martyrdom of the Saīyid.[1] Wilāyat ʿAlī recalled his brother, Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī, from Bengal, where he held the charge of the *jihād* movement. The latter came back with a party of some two thousand followers who were broken up in small batches in order to avoid the suspicion of the Government, and moved out of Patna in four or five months during July-November 1843. ʿInāyat ʿAlī, accompanied by Aulād ʿAlī of Surajgarha, set out for the frontier in November 1843 and reached Hazārā by the end of 1844.[2]

In the meantime, the chiefs and maliks in lower Hazārā assembled at Harīpūr and appointed Saiyid Akbar Shāh of Sitānā as their ruler, with Nawāb Khān Tanāolī and Ghulām Khān Tarīn as his ministers. Throughout the district an attempt was made to restore the status which existed prior to the Sikh rule, especially in regard to the tenure of land. This period is still spoken of in Hazārā as the *Lundī Musalmānī*, the term '*Lundī*' signifying incomplete. And incomplete it was, for the hopes that had been raised by it were doomed to almost immediate disappointment.

Bellew and O'Kinealy both refer to the appearance of Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī in Hazārā at this time where he was joined by Aulād ʿAlī with the remaining *mujāhidīn* there, according to the former,[3] and by Maulvī Qāsim ʿAlī, a companion of Maulvī Nasīr-ud-dīn, according to the latter.[4] However, Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī assumed the charge of *mujāhidīn* at Kāghān where Shāh Zāmin Shāh and his brother, Naubat Shāh, became his disciples. Maulvī ʿInayāt ʿAlī soon took the offensive and, according to Hazārā Gazetteer, defeated the Sikh units posted at Shinkiari, Bhairkhund,

1. *Tazkirah-i-Sādiqa*, pp. 161
2. *Ibid.*, p. 190-91
3. *A General Report on Yūsufzaīs*, p. 95
4. *Calcutta Review*, Vol. 52, pp. 186-87

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Garhī Habībullah Khān and Agror and occupied the whole area. The Mashwānīs rose and stormed the Sirīkot fort while Khānpur Gakhars, led by Rājā Haīdar Bakhsh Khān, took the Khānpur fort, and repossessed themselves of their country.[1] A joint letter[2] dated 29th October 1846, sent by several *mujāhidīn* to their friends in India gives the details of events taking place between December 1845 and October 1846. It shows that ʿInāyāt ʿAlī was elected as *Amīr* in November 1845. He started appointing soldiers and reorganising the force under him immediately after his election as *Amīr* and was successful in recapturing Bālākot from the Sikhs. A month later, Garhī Habībullah was besieged and captured, Fatehgarh was also reduced by the *mujāhidīn*. In a short time, some twenty-two forts in Pakhlī Dhamtaur, Orish Tanāwāl and Hazārā containing large stores of armaments and ammunition surrendered to the *mujāhidīn*. At Fatehgarh the Sikhs had been able to muster a force of 900 cavalry and 5000 infantry while the local tribesmen, who had gathered on the occasion to the number of 12000 were in secret understanding with the Sikhs to loot the *mujāhidīn* as soon as they were defeated. The Sikhs, however, could not stand the concerted attack by the Rohilās and had to beat a disorderly retreat. The tribesmen soon fell upon the Sikhs, and killed them and made off with their arms and possessions worth more than a lakh of rupees.

After the discomfiture of the Sikhs several hypocritical chiefs, such as Nawāb Khān Tanāolī, Madad Khān, brother of Pāʾindā Khān Tanāolī and Muhammad ʿAlī were arrested and produced before Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī for having sided with the Sikhs but were pardoned on the intercession of some of the faithful chiefs, such as, Amīr Khān.

Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī also sent a detachment under Maulvī Maqsood ʿAlī, on the invitation of Sultān Husain Khān Bambā, to wrest Muzaffarābād from the Sikhs. According to O'Kinealy, the *mujāhidīn* first suffered a reverse at Muzaffarābād but were victorious in their second attack.

1. *Hazārā Gazetteer* (1907), pp. 132-133
2. *Mehr*, Vol. IV. pp. 239-44 ; *Wahābī Movement in India*, pp. 110-11

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The Sikhs tried to gain a hold at Mansehra, but were again defeated and thus the whole country to the east of the Indus from Harīpur in the south to Kāghān in the north and from Sitānā in the east to the borders of Kashmir in the west submitted to Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī.

Maulvi ʿInāyat ʿAlī laid the foundation of an Islamic Republic with Fatehgarh renamed as Islāmgarh, as its headquarters. The tribes inhabiting Tānawāl, Nāndihar, Bhogarmang and Koṇsh glens, Pakhlī, Dhamtaur and Kunhar valleys agreed to pay *ʿushr* to the new administration. The total revenues of the State amounted to over five lakhs of rupees. Rewards, gifts and *māʿāfī* (rent free assignment of land) and *jāgīrs* (fiefs) were granted to the *maliks* and *sardārs* on the condition of rendering military service in times of war. In this manner 30,000 men could be called to active duty in times of emergency. In addition, a standing army of 1000 Rohillas was maintained. Their salaries were: infantry, from Rs. 6 to Rs. 10 per mensem; artillerymen and havaldars, from Rs. 9 to Rs. 12 per mensem; and, ironsmith, Rs. 30 per mensem. Maulvī Maqsood ʿAlī was appointed as Commander-in-Chief and Akbar Miān Rāmpurī Boliānwāla as Quarter Master General. Abdullah ʿAzimābādi was appointed to impart military training to the troops. Sirāj-ud-dīn held the charge of the Armoury and Stable Departments.

The Civil Administration set up in the area under the Islamic State had a skeleton staff of civilian functionaries. Nāzīr Raihān-ud-dīn held the duel charge of Protocol Officer as well as Superintendent of Prisons. Badr-ūd-dīn Budhanwālā was appointed as Nāzim-i-Khazānā or the Master of Exchequer and Sūfī Muʿiz-ūd-dīn was given the charge of Stores. A number of civilian officers of lower rank, such as commanders of the forts, collectors of revenue, thanedārs, jamādārs and clerks were appointed in different areas.

Administration of justice was reorganised with a view to introducing the *sharīʿah* laws, both civil and criminal. Besides the *qāzīs* appointed to administer justice, *muftīs*[1]

1. Scholars capable of pronouncing juristic opinion according to Muslim religious law.

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were assigned the duties of Censors of Public Morals who toured the interior villages with a number of students to teach the people how to perform prayers and to restrain them from practices and customs contrary to the teaching of Islam. People found absenting themselves from the prayers or indulging in prohibited usages were made to pay fines which were utilised for meeting the expenses of students accompanying the itinerant *muftīs*. Sermonizers were also engaged to preach the moral law of Islam to the people. A few such sermonists commissioned by the government for preaching were Muhammad Husain Ākhundzādā in Pakhlī and Mullā Mīr Asad Ākhundzādā in Kunhar.

Although the administration evolved by the *mujāhidīn* under Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī was in its initial stages, and it had not had time to stablize itself, care was taken to create an outer facade of awe and grandeur in order to command respect in the eyes of the people. No one, whatever his rank or position, could enter the Fort where the Amīr lived without an entrance pass. Risāldārs and Jamādārs, when called, presented themselves with one trooper for offering Salāmi. Twenty gunners were always in attendance upon Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī.

Leaving one of his younger brothers, Farhat Husain (1811-1858), to look after the affairs of the Movement of *jīhād* in India, Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī arrived in the Frontier from Patna on 9th October, 1846. He was accompanied by a large number of *mujāhidīn*, besides Yahya ʿAlī, Fayyāz ʿAlī and Akbar ʿAlī, and his eldest son, ʿAbdullah, and had brought with him considerable arms and stores. He was presented a guard of honour by a detachment of the armed force at Mankali, the border outpost of the Islamic State of Hazārā. The two brothers met at Utarsīsa, near Garhī Habībullah. On Friday, the 16th October, 1846, ʿInāyat ʿAlī took *biʿat*, without any hesitation, on the hands of Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī and all the chiefs and leading men followed suit by acknowledging him as the Head of State.[1]

1. *Tazkirah-i-Sādiqa*, p. 161 ; *Wahābī Movement In India*, pp. 111-12

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Hardly three months had passed after Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAli's assumption of the leadership in Hazārā when the *mujāhidīn* came into conflict with the British. In order to shed light on the turn of events it appears necessary to break the narrative in order to keep track of the developments in the Punjab. On the 16th of March, 1846, the British concluded an agreement with Mahārājā Gulāb Singh by which the former made over to him all the hilly and mountainous country east of the Indus and west of the Rāvi, including Chamba and excluding Lahoul, being part of the territory ceded by the Lahore Darbar to the British Government, in consideration of which the Mahārājā agreed to pay £ 1,000,000 to the British Government. The transfer of these areas to Gulāb Singh effected at the instance of the British Government was distasteful to the inhabitants as well as the Lahore Darbar. Imām-ud-dīn, the Govenor of Kashmir, was secretly directed by the Sikh Durbar to stick to his guns against Gulāb Singh while the English, who had sold the State to the latter, were all agog to help him in recovering the possession of Kashmir. As for the inhabitants of Hazārā, the arrangement meant a transfer out of the frying-pan into the fire. Therefore, they combined, almost with one accord to make things uncomfortable for their new ruler. In November, 1846, Capt. James Abbot, an assistant to Henry Lawrence, the then English Resident at Lahore, proceeded to Harīpur where the local population was in rebellion, and a Sikh army of 4000 men was hemmed in the Harīpur Fort. Bringing his Machiavellian shrewdness to bear upon Mīrzamān Khān, the Utmānzaʾī Khān of Kalābat, who was the leader of the rebels, Abbot succeeded in conciliating the rebels. Thus he gradually undermind the Islamic State in lower Hazārā headed by Saiyid Akbar Shāh, who, shorn of local support, withdrew to Sitānā again.

In upper Hazārā, meanwhile, the tribes, united under Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī, had utterly defeated the Jammu troops. On the other hand, Imām-ud-dīn refused to surrender the country to Gulāb Singh. A detachment of the English troops alongwith a Sikh army was despatched under Diwan Karam Chand, accompanied by two English officers, Lamsden and

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Vans Agnew, to Kashmir. Imām-ud-dīn was first coerced to hand over the country to Mahārājā Gulāb Singh, and then this army marched on from Kashmir to subjugate upper Hazārā. As the show of force was not enough, the usual sly diplomacy of the British was put in action. The tribal chiefs were lured by the British through promises of rewards and *jagīrs* with the result that the coalition of tribes evaporated like mist.[1] On the 6th of January,1847, the *mujāhidīn* came face to face with the combined army of the Sikhs and the English at the Doob Pass, above Garhī Habībullah. The Swātīs submitted to the invading force and deserted their allies. A faint move was also made by them in collaboration with the enemy to give a false impression that a Sikh army was coming from the Pakhlī side. The remaining tribesmen also deserted leaving the *mujāhidīn* to face the enemy alone. Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī was thus forced to seek an understanding with the English in order to cross over to Sitānā to join Saiyid Akbar Shāh.

There is considerable difference of opinion among the authorities about the events following the surrender of 10 *mujāhidīn* regiments at Doob. Bellew[2] and O'Kinealy[3] relate that the ʿAlī brothers were arrested and sent to Patna while the accounts given by the authors of *Sawāneh*[4] and *Tazkirah-i-Sādiqa*[5], as corroborated by the statement of one, ʿAbdullah of Muzaffarpur, who deposed before the Assistant Commissioner, Rawalpindi on 12th of October, 1869, show that after the *mujāhidīn* suffered a defeat at Doob, their leaders were induced to surrender with the promise that they would be free to go wherever they liked. However, they were brought to Hazārā and then ordered to return to their homes. Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī, Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī, Maqsood ʿAlī, Fayyāz ʿAlī and Yahyā ʿAlī were thus sent back to Patna and bound down on bails of Rs. 10,000 each

1. *Tazkirah-i-Sādiqa*, pp. 161-62
2. *A General Report on Yūsufzaīs*, p. 95
3. *Calcutta Review*, Vol. 51, (1870), pp. 381 ff
4. p. 215-17
5. pp. 123-24
6. *Wahābī Movement in India*, pp 116-118

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for staying there quietly for four years.[1]

Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAli returned to Patna by the end of 1847, or in the beginning of 1848. He took up the broken threads of reorganising the *jihād* movement in India, started correspondence with Aulād ʿAlī who had escaped to Sitānā with some *mujāhidīn*, and sent Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī to supervise the organisational work in Bengal. In the meantime, Saiyid Akbar Shāh, who had been accepted as 'Bādshāh' of Swāt[2] in 1847, invited Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī to come over to the Frontier again. He summoned Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī to come back from Bengal but as the latter could not immediately leave Bengal, he migrated to the Frontier on the Ist September, 1849 after disposing of his movable and immovable property. Maulvī ʿInayat ʿAlī on return from Bengal, followed the example of his brother and left Patna on the 19th June, 1850. Farhat Husain, the yǫunger brother of Wilāyat ʿAlī was again left in charge of the organisation at Patna.

Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī is reported to have spent two months at Delhi, on his way to Frontier, and also met the last Mogul Emperor, Bahādur Shāh.[3] He caught up with his brother near Ludhiāna in November, 1850 and then, the two brothers, travelling together, reached Sitānā on February 10, 1851. In the meantime, Gulāb Singh had induced the Lahore Durbar to take over from him all the hilly country west of the Jhelam in return for a tract near Jammu. With the proclamation of 29th March 1849, announcing the annexation of the Punjab, after the second Anglo-Sikh war, the whole of Hazārā had come directly under the British rule. Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī led a quiet life at Sitānā imparting education in the Qurʾān and the *Sunnah* to the *mujāhidīn* and, occasionally, pracising arts of war in the hope of collecting sufficient force to face the new enemy, who commanded much more resources and armed strength than the Sikhs. According to O'Kinealy, however, Wilāyat ʿAlī had not that rancorous feeling towards

1. Or, two years, as stated in *Tazkirah-i-Sādiqa*, p. 180
2. *The Pathans*, p. 428
3. *Tazkirah-i-Sādiqa*, pp. 164-65

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the British Government which was characteristic of his brother[1] Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī, on the other hand, wanted immediate action to be taken against Jahāndād Khān of Amb, since conferred the title of Nawāb by the British, whose inimical attitude towards the *mujāhidīn* was creating obstacles in the passage of *mujāhidīn* from India. Whatever may have been the reason of differences between the two brothers, Maulvī ʿInayāt ʿAlī moved on with the Bengali *mujāhidīn* to Mangal Thānā, a strong and fortified *Garhī* in the Mahaban range in Khūdū Khel area. Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAiī remained staying at Sitānā where he died on the 5th of November, 1852, at the age of 64 years.

A man of average height, dark complexioned and fleshy, Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī had a short beard and close-knitted eyebrows. He came of an aristocratic family, but discarding comfortable living he was ever ready to undergo any hardship for the cause for which he had taken an oath at the hands of the Saiyid. Throughout his life he remained steadfast in his allegiance to his spiritual mentor, abandoned everything he possessed, property, hearth and home, and died as a refugee in a distant land.

Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī came down to Sitānā after the death of his brother and was elected as the leader of *mujāhidīn*. Almost at the same time, James Abbott, who had been appointed as Deputy Commissioner of Hazārā led an expedition to Kāghān, ostensibly on the complaint of certain Gūjars against the Kāghān Saiyids, but he really wanted to chastise the Saiyids for their close contact with the *mujāhidīn*. Actually he had been drawing the attention of the Board of Administration, Punjab, for a long time, towards the existence of "a remarkable nest of emigrants from Hindustān who bring with them their own arms and means of subsistence and sit down at Sitānā for a successful *Gazwa*" (battle) against the British. Abbott's action in Kāghān was enough to make ʿInāyat ʿAlī come to blows with the British, but he could not somehow lend his

1. *Calcutta Review*, Vol. 51 (1870), p. 383

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support to the Saiyids. Another incident, however, soon forced him to draw sword against the British.

A preventive line had been established along the left bank of Indus, shortly after annexation, to prevent trans-Indus salt being brought into the Punjab. During the autumn of 1851, Crane of the Customs Department accompanied by one of his officers Tapp, advanced towards Hassanzaʾī limits through the territory of Jahāndād Khān. Both were murdered by a band of armed Hassanzaʾīs. Jahāndād Khān was called to account and he at once delivered such Hassanzaʾīs as he could find in his territory to the British as hostages. The Hassanzaʾīs retaliated by making war on Jahāndād Khān and seized his forts of Chamberi and Shingli. In order to vindicate themselves and to support Jahāndād Khān a large force was despatched by the British under Lieut. Colonel F. Mackeson, Commissioner of Peshāwar, in December, 1852. Hassanzaʾīs, against whom the expedition was sent, reside on both sides of the Indus ; those of the cis-Indus territory occupy the southern-most portion of the western slopes of the Black Mountain, while those in trans-Indus territory live immediately opposite them. They made several bold attempts to check the advance of the British forces but were unable to face the close fire of a superior force which returned after destroying the villages between Kotakaʾī and Baradar, along the banks of Indus and all the villages and hamlets in the deep glens between Abu and Tilli. The British forces destroyed all the grains of Hassanzaʾīs.[1]

In the meantime, the *mujāhidīn* fell upon Ashra and Kotla, in the Amb territory, in order to give a helping hand to the Hassanzaʾis. Meckeson called upon Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī to withdraw from Kotla, but the latter sent a defiance—declaring that he had come to die. On the 6th January, 1853, James Abbott crossed the Indus from Kirpilian with 4 Dogra and Sikh regiments, a Mountain Train Battery and six Zamburaks to retake the fort of Kotla. Jahāndād Khān's troops assaulted the village of Ashra under cover of the

1. *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*, pp. 103-10

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Horse Artillery guns, whilst Major Abbott's column moved round and gained possession of the heights of Kotla. A large number of *mujāhidīn* at the two places had been taken ill owing to a pernicious fever, but they gave battle to the enemy before evacuating the villages. Some thirty or forty *mujāhidīn*, including Karam ʿAlī of Danapūr and Sher Khān Tānaolī, were killed in action.[1]

After the affair of Kotla, Mauvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī took a trip to Chamla, Buner and Swāt. Although Saiyid Akbar Shāh had been acknowledged as the Bādshāh of Swāt, the Ākhund, ʿAbdul Ghafoor, who exerted powerful influence over the Swātīs did not show any keenness to help the *mujāhidīn*.[2] The Maulvī returned to Sitānā on 14th April, 1854, and shortly thereafter transferred the headquarter of the *mujāhidīn* from Sitānā to Mangal Thānā. Maulvī Yahyā ʿAlī, however, remained staying at Sitānā. Now, Maulvī ʿInayat ʿAlī made vigorous efforts to bring about harmony between the warring tribesmen, particularly between Muqarrab Khān, Chief of Panjtār and the surrounding tribes as well as the two factions of the Saiyids of Mangal Thānā led by Saiyid ʿAbbās and Saiyid Yūsuf in order to enlist their support for *jihād* against the British. O'Kinealy says that during this period Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī laboured "to organise his followers and fire them with a hatred of the English *kāfirs*. The crescentaders were drilled daily, sometimes twice a day and, on parade, were taught to recite songs extolling the glories of *jihād*..... and on Fridays.....sermons extolling them to wait patiently until the time appointed for subjugation of the British India would arrive."[3]

Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī was not entirely unsuccessful in organising the Yūsufzaʾīs against the British. Mubārak Khel tribe accepted his leadership in December, 1855. Several other tribal chiefs of the Samah territory agreed to join hands with him, but it seems that his efforts were

1. *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*, pp. 211-12; *Mehr*, Vol. IV, pp. 286-87.
2. *Mehr*, Vol. IV, p. 290.
3. *Calcutta Review*, No. 51 (1870). p. 396

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balked by the unsteadiness and unending mutual hostility among the tribes. During this period, the British authorities also made an offer to pardon Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī and his followers, through a communication addressed to him, provided the *mujāhidīn* surrendered and agreed to go back to their homes. The offer of amnesty also contained a threat of panel punishment, extending up to three years, in the event of their refusal of the offer, but it was turned down by Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī.[1] However, the outbreak of anti-British revolt on 10th May, 1857 at Meerut afforded another opportunity to Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī to take up arms against the British.

The religious feelings mingled with the injured pride of Indians actuated the sepoys as well as the masses to rise in revolt against the alien rulers in 1857. That the greased cartridges formed the real and proximate cause of the mutiny of troops cannot be debated, but there existed a widespread and deep dissatisfation both among the Muslims as well as the Hindus against their English rulers. Yet, the immediate reaction of the British was that Muslims alone were innately hostile to them. The typical British attitude after the Mutiny has been recently summed up by Dr. Metcalfe.[2]

> The first sparks of disaffection, it was generally agreed, were kindled among the Hindu sepoys who feared an attack upon their caste. But the Muslims then fanned the flames of discontent and placed themselves at the head of the movement, for they saw in these religious grievances the stepping stone to political power. In the British view it was Muslim intrigue and Muslim leadership that converted a sepoy mutiny into a political conspiracy, aimed at the extinction of the British Rāj.

This assessment of the early British attitude towards Muslims may be correct or not but the whole drama, as it unfolded itself, afforded adequate justification for the British to hold this view. It was the Muslim cavalry which rode off from Meerut to Delhi to set up Bahādur Shāh as

1. *Mehr*, Vol. VI, p. 290
2. Thomas R. Metcalfe ; *The Aftermath of Revolt*, p. 298

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the King of kings. Delhi soon became the centre of rebellion with Bahādur Shāh issuing orders to the mutinous regiments to repair to the Capital and to fight for the defence of faith. The insurgent forces began to be 'daily reinforced by bands of *jihādīs* and Wahābīs repairing to Delhi from different quarters.'[1] The areas with a larger Muslim population were inflamed by an intense hatred of the English. In Saharanpur, where the population of the town was preponderantly Muslim, civil rebellion even preceded the mutiny.[2] The Muslims of Koil (Aligarh) raised the green flag, fought for the revival of Islamic glory, and swore to kill Europeans.[3] Kasganj in Farrukhābād turned into a strong centre of the rebel chiefs.[4] Tafaddul Husain, the local Nawāb, set us his government at Farrukhābād.[5] Chail, in Allahabad, inhabited mostly by Muslims, the green flag was hoisted.[6] The revolt in Rohilkhand was mostly confined to the Muslim community who shouted for the revival of the Islamic State.[7] At Lucknow, again, the sepoys rallied round the banner of Birjīs Qadar and his mother Hazrat Mahal. These are but a few instances which pointed to the disaffection caused against the British rulers by the Saiyid's movement. Members of the Muslim religious classes were also prominent in the revolt. Bakht Khān, a disciple of the Saiyid, took over the leadership of rebels from Mirzā Moghul in the imperial city. Ahmad Ullah Shāh (d. 1858) harassed Sir Colin Campbell's forces in 1858 for the conquest of Oudh. Maulānā Rahmat Ullah assumed the leadership of the revolt in Muzaffarpūr. During the siege of Delhi a contingent of Muslim warriors from Tonk, whose Nawāb was an undoubted patron of the *mujāhidīn*, fought valiantly against the British.[8] A delegation

1. *Civil Rebellion in the Indian Mutinies*, 1857-1859, p. 69.
2. *Ibid.*, p 76
3. *Ibid.*, p. 79
4. *Ibid.*, p. 81
5. *Ibid.*, p. 87
6. *Ibid.*, p. 91
7. *Ibid.*, p. 108
8. *Two Narratives of Mutiny at Delhi*, pp. 174-175

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from Swāt called upon Bahādur Shāh at Delhi to assure him of the support of Swātīs in the struggle.[1] At Patna, on 20th June, 1857, William Taylor arrested by a subterfuge the leaders of the *jihād* movement in India, Shāh Muhammad Husain (1788-1860), Ahmad Ullah (1808-81) and Waʿiz-ul-Haq, claiming that they were plotting a rising.[2] The case for the participation of the members of the Saiyid's reformist movement in the great uprising of 1857 is strengthened by the great zeal shown by the Muslim populace to overthrow the British and the part played by their religious classes but, owing to peculiar circumstances, the organisation had to be kept aloof from the uprising. The *jihād* movement of the Saiyid was, in the first place, a reformatory movement with a well-defined ideology and method of working. Unlike the sporadic and uncoordinated rebellion of 1857, it was a highly centralised organisation working under the guidance of its leaders who were unable to participate in it. The leaders in India were under detention and Maulvī ʿInāyāt ʿAli was in the Frontier, more probably, unaware of the proportions the uprising had assumed in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajputana. He was thus not available in India to give the call to join the rebellion when it suddenly broke out, and nobody else had the authority to make any authoritative declaration on behalf of the organisation. It is difficult to say what would have been the reaction of Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī, had he been present in India, but it is unlikely that he would have joined hands merely for the re-imposition of Moghul rule over India as some of the insurrectionists desired. The *jihād* movement envisaged enforcement of Islamic principles of social justice in the country, which were, in any case, incompatible with the institution of kingship. Their leaders knew that the decadent Moghul dynasty was not capable of being resuscitated again, and, perhaps, for that very reason, they had never pinned their faith in it. However, as pointed by Qeyamuddin Ahmad, the leaders of the

1. *The Trial of Bahādur Shāh*, p. 175
2. *Wahābī Movement in India*, pp. 221-22

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Movement might have realised that they were an integral part of the wider entity and if they were to come out in open opposition to the British within the country, they would be suppressed in no time. Thus by keeping low they survived the violent storm of 1857-58 and rendered invaluable services during the later phase of the movement by assisting the Frontier campaigns.[1] In any case, there is little doubt that even though no declaration was made for participation in the revolt, the preachers of the *jihād* movement had already stirred up anti-British feelings throughout the country by 1857 which summoned up the people to take part in the rebellion when it broke out.

But, unlike the provinces to its east, the Punjab remained fairly calm in 1857 owing, chiefly, to the religious antipathy between the Sikhs and the Muslims, a legacy of the Sikh rule, and saved the Indian empire for the British The Punjab had in 1857 thirty-six thousand troops of which ten thousand British soldiers and some thirteen thousand Punjabi irregulars remained loyal to the core.[2] As soon as the news of mutiny in Meerut was received in the Punjab, the sepoys of the cantonments at Miānmīr, Lahore, Multan and of other stations were adroitly and timely disarmed, often against the violent protests of their commanders. There were also no repercussions on the civil populations excepting a few places like Siālkot, Ludhiāna, Montgomery, Hissār, Karnāl and Panīpat, but everywhere the uprising was repressed with a firm hand. Even, so civilian population rose up in arms in Mardān, Nowshera, Jullundar, Ferozepur and Siālkot but nowhere did it assume the proportion as it did in Bihar or U. P. But the British at Peshāwar were finding the aspect of the affair gloomy in the extreme. "The most rancorous and seditious letters had been intercepted from Muslims of Patna and Thānesar, to the soldiers of 64th Native Infantry, revelling in the atrocities that had been committed on the "Nazarenes", and

1. *Wahābī Movement in India*, pp. 227-29
2. *Civil Rebellion in the Indian Mutinies*, p. 235

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sending messages from their own mothers that they should emulate those deeds, and if they fell in the attempt they would at least go to heaven, and their deaths in such case would be a pleasant news at home."[1] "These letters also alluded to a long series of correspondence that had been going on through the 64th Native Infantry with the *mujāhidīn* in Swāt and Sitānā."[2] It was at this time, in the middle of May, 1857, that 55th Native Infantry was moved to take the place of the corps of Guides at Mardān. At the end of the month a detachment of the 55th Native Infantry on duty at Attock ferry broke into mutiny, when about 100 sepoys were put to sword, and 150 taken prisoner by a column which had moved out from Peshāwar under Lieut. Col. John Nicholson, but some 600 sepoys of the regiment made good their escape to Swāt. The 55th were joined by the 24th Native Infantry.

As stated elsewhere, two persons—The Ākhund and the *Bādshāh*—reigned in Swāt. "Had these two been united," writes the officiai chronicler of Frontier Expeditions, "in harbouring the 55th Native Infantry, and at the moment proclaimed a *jihād* against us, there can be no doubt that it would have set fire to the valley of Peshāwar, and placed us in considerable difficulties."[3] Other British historians expressing almost the same opinion say that if the Swātīs had joined hands with the 55th and the *Wahābīs*, other tribes might also have probably joined in and the English would have been overwhelmed.[4] The position of the British was so critical at the moment that John Lawrence, the ruler of Punjab, was thinking of withdrawing to the Indus.[5] But the Swātīs failed once again, like other Pathān tribes, to rise to the occasion. Providentially for the British, Saiyid Akbar Shāh, the *Bādshāh*, had died on May 11, 1857,[6]

1. *Public Correspondence*, Vol. IV, No. 1, p. 86
2. *Ibid.*, p. 86
3. *Frontier Expeditions*, p. 213
4. *History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. II, p. 448 ; *Indian Mutiny*, p. 318
5. *Olaf Caroe*, p. 361
6. *Public Correspondence*, p. 96 ; *Olaf Caroe*, p. 361.

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the very day the first news of mutiny had reached Peshāwar, and Swāt was plunged in civil war. Saiyid Mubārak Shāh, son of the deceased *Bādshāh*, wished to succeed his father, but the Ākhund opposed his succession. Ākhund ʿAbdul Ghafoor who had risen to exercise great influence over Swātīs as a religious leader, feared that help to the sepoys of 55th Native Infantry and the *mujāhidīn* would only recoil on his tribe, who might lose their independence.[1] He turned out the sepoys, 500 of whom joined the young King, but were expelled from Swāt. Some of them repaired to Kāghān where a fate still worse awaited them on account of the treachery of Kāghān Saiyds. Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī had with him at the time some 600 *mujāhidīn*, about half of whom were armed with carbines.[2] Mubāraz Khān of Chinglāʾi, who had a long-standing feud with his cousin Muqarrab Khān of Panjtār, had joined hands with him in opposing the British. ʿInāyat Alī also sent emissaries to summon the sepoys of the 55th Native Infantry, turned out from Swāt, to Mangal Thānā and some of them accepted his invitation, but their actual number is not known. This was the time when the most disastrous tidings came daily to Peshāwar from Hindustān, and echoed in still more alarming voices among those hills. And, Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī was not the man to lose this golden opportunity. He invited the tribesmen to descend to drive away the foreigners ruling over the country. He could not, however, wait till all the tribes responded to his call, and, therefore, decided to take the intiative, come what may. He sent a detachment to Nawākla[3]ī, a village, close to Chinglāʾi, whose inhabitants hailed the *mujāhidīn's* arrival. One more village, Shaikh Jānā, was occupied by 200 men from Chinglāʾi under Bāz Khān, the nephew of Mubāraz Khān. Major Vaughan attacked and carried Shaikh Jānā with 350 troops and two guns on 2nd July, 1857. Bāz Khān was killed in action and some 25 villagers were taken prisoner of whom seven were executed by Vaughan.[3]

1. *Bellow*, p. 102-107
2. *Wahābī Movement in India*, pp. 181-82
3. *Frontier Expeditions*, pp. 215-216

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A fortnight after the affair of Shaikh Jānā, ʿInāyat ʿAlī crossed the border with 150 *mujāhidīn* and some 30 or 40 men belonging to the 55th Native Infantry, and raised the standard of religious war at the mountain village of Nārinji. On the extreme border of the British territory, Nārinji was very difficult of access and had successfully defied the Sikh assaults earlier. Nārinji had some 400 fighting men who were joined by 40 horsemen from Panjtār. The challenge was accepted by the British who sent a large force accompanied by 4 guns under Major Vaughan on the night of 18th July, 1857. The position of the village was very strong. It was built in terraces, and situated at the foot of a precipitous hill, the rocky spurs of which surrounded it on three sides, but in the front the ground was open and practicable for cavalry. As Major Vaughan's force was unable to work its way up the heights above the village, the action was started by bombarding the village with mountain guns. Major Vaughan's warning to the *maliks* to give up Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī was ignored. The British infantry advanced in skirmishing order, and after a tenacious resistance made itself master of the lower part of the village, and the rocks which flanked it. The *mujāhidin* and the irregular tribesmen pressed down to drive the enemy out of the position they had won; though they fought with great bravery, they were driven back with losses and the village was then destroyed by its captors. ʿInāyat ʿAlī's forces suffered a loss of fifty killed and fifty injured while the British casualties numbered, according to official chronicles, only five killed and twenty-one wounded.[1]

Only the lower portion of Nārinji had been destroyed, for the tribesmen and *mujāhidīn* still held the upper half stubbornly. The British forces retired to renew their attack on the 3rd August, while Mubāraz Khan of Chingla'ī and Ālam Khan, brother of Mukarrab Khān of Panjtār, succeeded in making overtures to the chiefs of Buner, who promised to bring assistance after the coming festival of ʿId. The tribes of Chamla sent 200 men, and warriors from other

1. *Frontier Expeditions*, pp. 217-18

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tribes began arriving daily. More detachments were called in by the *mujāhidīn* from Mangal Thāṇā and promises for help were also received from Swāt. On the other side, Major Vaughan was collecting his forces at Shewa. On the 3rd of August, Major Vaughan again marched from Shewa with 1400 troops, two 24-pounder Howitzers and Peshāwar Mountain Train Battery. He sent a detachment under Lt. Hoste which took the bye-road branching off about one mile and a half before reaching Nārinji to take ʿInāyat ʿAlī's men in the flank and rear. The main body of the British force took their position opposite the village, opening a cannonade upon the village which was returned by matchlock fire only. After about half an hour, the column led by Lt. Hoste which had been detached earlier made its appearance far away on the right. Its progress was vigorously opposed, but owing to its superior fire power, it kept on advancing until it gained the heights in the rear of the village. Finding the resistance hopeless against the two-pronged attack, Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī withdrew to the safer places up the mountain. Thirty of the *ghazīs* died, of which several were believed to be of the late 55th Native Infantry. Three persons were taken prisoner and summarily hanged. The work of destruction then began, and not a house was spared. The towers were blown up under the direction of Lieutenant Taylor of the Engineers and the village was soon a mass of ruins.[1]

Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī moved on to Chamla and then to Khūdū Khel. While he was at the later place, in October 1857, the *mujāhidīn* assisted by the Nārinji and Shaikh Jānā people cracked down in a night attack on the village of Nawakla'ī where Ḥorne, the Assistant Commissioner of Yūsufza'ī area was making a camp. Sharīʿat Ullah was the leader of this expedition. Bellew informs that Horne barely escaped with his life and a large booty fell into the hands of the attacking party.[2] This was, however, the most difficult period for Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī. On the one hand, strict

1. *Frontier Expeditions*, pp. 218-219
2. *Bellow*, p. 98.

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surveillance by the British authorities in India had cut off all supplies of men and money to him and, on the other, the tribes finding the *mujāhidīn* in distress had again turned against them. Rapacious and unscrupulous, as most of them were, some would not even fight shy of cutting the throats of the *mujāhidīn* for a little reward from the English. One, Saiyid Yūsuf Miān Gul, shed the blood of three *mujāhidīn* who were on their way from Mandī to Mangal Thānā in November 1857. Another incident of this type is stated to have occurred at Mangal Thānā owing to perfidy of Saiyid ʿAbbās.[1] The mob rule prevailing in the whole of northern India during 1857-58, had made the journey to the Frontier impracticable and few of the brave spirits who took the risk were arrested by the vigilant British authorities before they could cross over to the independent territory.[2] But this was not the end of ʿInāyat ʿAlī's troubles. First his son, ʿAbdul Majīd, and daughter, Shahr **Banu fell** seriously ill and then he was himself confined to bed. Absolutely nothing was available for the famished party of *mujāhidīn* to eat for several months and they had to keep their bodies and souls together by taking the roots and leaves of trees. ʿInāyat ʿAlī passed ten days in high fever without any food or medicine and developed blood dysentery,[3] but the brave soul neither yielded to despair nor wavered in his resolve to summon the people to the path of rectitude and freedom. He had left his prosperous home, an affluent and pre-eminent family of Patna, to live as a free man and he did depart from this fleeting world not in the thraldom of India, but in the freedom of Frontier, towards the end of March 1858. Bearded, of medium height and fair complexioned, Maulvī Ināyat ʿAlī had an impressive personality with a fine muscular body. A natural leader of men, a successful organiser, brave fighter and a good administrator with winsome qualities he had the spark of divine in him which had kept him relentlessly

1. *Mehr*, Vol. IV, p. 299.
2. *Tazkira-i-Sādiqa*, p. 193.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 193.

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wedded to his noble cause through all vicissitudes, trials and tribulations. He had grown irritable towards his old age. Perhaps, his ambitions thwarted by the capricious and wavering nature of the tribesmen had made him touchy but he was still loved and respected by his companions for his sterling qualities.

Having been expelled from Swāt, Saiyid Mubārak Shāh had gone over to Sitānā, and from that centre, reinforced by mutineers of the 55th Native Infantry, tried to raise the Chamla tribes against the British. Meanwhile, to punish the daring attack on Horne, the British had decided to destroy all the strongholds of the *mujāhidīn*. A force numbering 4877 men of all ranks was accordingly assembled on the left bank of the Kabul river, opposite Nowshera, under the command of Major General Sir Sydney J. Cotton, on the 22nd April, 1858 to mount an attack on Panjtar which was selected as the first target. On the 25th of April, the Frontier village of Salīm Khān was reached, which was made the base of operations against Panjtār and Khūdū Khel territory. One column advanced under Lt. Col. Renny to Panjtār and the other under Major Allen to Khūdū Khel.

The approaches to Panjtār were held by the people of Totala'i who had for several years been resisting the payment of tithes demanded by Moqarrab Khān. For the Totala'ī people, this was a God-sent opportunity and they led the reconnoitring parties to Panjtār. A number of *maliks* and *sardārs*, such as, Qādir Khān of Torū, Sarbuland Khān of Hotī, Kho'idād Khān of Isma'īlah, Shāhdād Khān of Hund, Ibrāhīm Khān of Zaida, all belonging of Khūdū Khel, and two chiefs of Sadhum, 'Ajab Khān and 'Azīz Khān, accompanied the invading army.[1] Muqarrab Khān fled with about sixty of his men to Chingla'i, seeing which, the people of Totala'i dashed in and set fire to Panjtār before British troops could come up. The other detachment marched on to Bāgh near the entrance of the Changla'i valley, but the village was spared from destruction as the Saiyids agreed to pay a fine of one

1. *Mehr*, Vol. IV, pp. 306-7.

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rupee per house and promised to give information of raids contemplated by the *mujāhidīn* in future. The column then crossed the top of the Darhan pass and proceeded at once to Chingla'i. Here resided Mubāraz Khān in a substantial little fort of wood and stone. Under the direction of Capt. Hyde of the Engineers, the troops were employed to destroy the fort, village and crops although no resistance was offered at all. Another column, in the meantime, dislodged the tribesmen taking shelter in the hills. Thereafter, returning to their base at Salīm Khān, the two columns were again sent, one in the direction of Mangal Thānā and the other to Panjtār as a support. On the 28th April, the first column pushed on by the moonlight towards Mangal Thānā led by Totala'ī people, who again offered to act as guides. This stronghold of Muqarrab Khān had also been abandoned before the British forces reached there. The fort at Mangal Thānā was blown up by the Sappers and Miners.

It now only remained to deal with the village of late Saiyid Akbar Shāh, the refuge of *mujāhidīn* at Sitānā. A strong force led by Major Becher, the Deputy Commissioner of Hazārā, moved to the left bank of the Indus so as to co-operate with General Cotton in the attack on Sitānā. Having reconnoitred the hills and villages of the area on the previous evening, Major Becher crossed the Indus early on the morning of 4th May, and advanced against the village from east, while the main column moved against it from the south. At the same time, Jahāndād Knān, the dependable British ally, occupied the hills to the north of Sitānā. With the approach of the main force to lower Sītānā, skirmishes were thrown forward while another column moved up the mountain in the rear of upper Sitānā. Mubārak Shāh had been informed, according to the author of *Durr-i-Maqāl*,[1] of the impending attack on Sitānā. He shifted with his family to Malākā, some 65 Kilometers up Sitānā, on the northern slope of Mahāban Mountain. A small party of about 40 *mujāhidīn* with some Gadūn tribesmen under Ikrām Ullah, remained to receive the attack on a hill called

1. *Wahābi Movement in India*, p. 192.

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*Shāh Noor-kī-Lari* near Sitānā. Paget and Mason, the official narrators of Frontier campaigns, record that "the fighting of the Hindustānīs was strongly marked with fanaticism ; they came boldly and doggedly on.....in perfect silence without a shout or word of any kind. All were dressed in their best for the occasion, mostly in white but some of the leaders wore velvet cloaks."[1] Some of the Gadūn allies of the *mujāhidīn*, who did not have their heart in the business fled precipitately. Sappers and Miners were employed, as at Mangal Thānā, to destroy both upper and lower portions of the village completely. All trees were either cut down or their barks were scrubbed so that they might not grow again[2]. Some sixty *mujāhidīn* and Gadūn tribesmen were killed while the British claim that they suffered a loss of six killed and twenty-nine wounded.

The Hindustānī *mujāhidīn*, expelled from Sitānā, had taken refuge with upper Gadūns. In order to prevent them from collecting a force again a column was sent to surround the villages of Gandap and Bisk, lying close to Yūsufzaʾī border. This threat took immediate effect ; the upper and lower Gadūns sent in their representatives, and signed an agreement, in full conclave of Utmānzaʾīs and Gadūns, by which both the tribes bound themselves to unite in expelling and keeping out the Saiyids and the *mujāhidīn*, and in resisting any third tribe which should endeavour to bring them back.[3]

The *mujāhidīn*, as already stated, were passing through overwhelming difficulties following the death of their leader, Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī, owing, chiefly, to the cessation of all supplies from India and estrangement of the tribesmen. This was also the first time when Enfield rifles had been introduced in the British Army whose effective fire would have evidently made a great impression on the minds of Pathāns who were used to out-dated matchlocks and carbines, for they actively supported the British against their own kinsmen in the destruction of Panjtār and Sitānā.

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1. *Paget and Mason*, p. 95.
2. *Mehr*, Vol. IV, p. 314.
3. *Frontier Expeditions*, pp. 220-26.

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Twenty-one

# Maulana Abdullah

THE descendants of Saiyid Akbar Shāh had shifted to Malākā after the destruction of Sitānā. Saiyid Mubārak Shāh invited the *mujāhidīn*, who were then a disorganised and leaderless group, to take up residence at Malākā with him. No immediate successor to Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī had been elected. The *mujāhidīn* as well as the Saiyids of Sitānā had, however, remained enthusiastically loyal to the cause of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd. The idea of sacrifice reigned supreme, when no one counts the cost; and, indeed, their idealism alone had kept them all together during this critical period. ʿAbdul Majīd, the son of Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī was considered unfit for leadership on account of slight stammering in his speech. A triumvirate consisting of Ikrām Ullah, Nūr Ullah and Muhammad Taqī was formed to look after the affairs of the *mujāhidīn* in the Frontier. Nūr Ullah being the senior among the three, acted as the chief assisted by the remaining two members.[1] Ikrām Ullah was killed in a battle near Sitānā soon after the formation of the triumvirate, while Nūr Ullah died shortly thereafter. Maqsood ʿAlī, belonging to Patna, was the next leader elected in 1860, but he also died in 1862. Maulvī Yahyā

1. *Bellew*, p. 98-99. Bellew, however, gives the name of Nūr Ullah as Nasr Ullah.

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ʿAlī had already returned to Patna while the leader of the organisation in India, Farhat Husain, a younger brother of Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī, had died in 1858. However, Maulānā ʿAbdullah, son of Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī, who had gone back to Patna after the death of his father had returned to Frontier some two years before the death of Maqsood ʿAlī. At Patna he had devoted himself to further studies and assisted his uncle, Farhat Husain, in the organisational work. On the death of Farhat Husain he set out on a journey for *haj* and then returned from Hejāz to the Frontier through Afghānistān, to take part in the *jihād* again. During his earlier sojourn to the Frontier with his father, he had taken part in several battles and shown his worth as a brave fighter. He was now elected as the next leader after the death of Maqsood ʿAlī. He started organising the *mujāhidīn* force anew with a youthful zeal. Caravans started arriving from India and Malākā soon became a prosperous town with several large edifices and barracks capable of accommodating about 3000 *mujāhidīn*.[1]

Utmānza'īs had occupied Sitānā after its abandonment by the Saiyids and brought the fields under cultivation. Saiyid Mubārak Shāh, had, however, not given up his claim to his ancestral village and was planning to re-occupy it ever since his forced exile to Malāka. His father had not only been a proved leader in the tribal warfare, but, more important, a respected Saiyid of the progeny of Pīr Bābā, the *Pīrkhāna* of all the Frontier tribes. His exile at the hands of the Englishmen was thus not palatable to the tribes. He, first, tried to win over the Gadūn tribes who agreed to help him. With the assistance of *mujāhidīn* and the Gadūns he constructed a fortified tower at Sirī between Kaya and Sitānā and from there started organising raids on Sitānā and other villages. He, thus, forced Utmānza'īs to vacate the fields of Sitānā. Following his success in getting hold of Sitānā, he revived the practice of levying the octroi duty on all merchandise passing through Sitānā territory. The tower at Sirī, however, soon became

1. *Mehr*, Vol. IV, p. 318.

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according to official reports, a refuge of outlaws from the British territory who started raiding the surrounding areas and kidnapping wealthy merchants from the border villagess for the purpose of extracting ransom from them. The British retorted by placing the Gadūns under blockade. On 2nd October 1861, the Gadūns made their submission and consented to destroy the tower at Sirī.

It should be stated here that Mahmūd Shāh, a cousin of Saiyid Mubārak Shāh, had earlier taken up employment under the English as a *Risāldār* or head of a unit of irregular cavalry. He repeatedly applied to the British to re-assign Sitānā to him but his request was turned down on the ground that Sitānā did not form part of the British territory. His request to be allowed to take possession of the village himself was also turned down. Dismayed, Mahmūd Shāh returned to Saiyid Mubārak Shāh.[1]

British chroniclers have accused the *mujāhidīn* of being responsible for committing robberies, organising raids against Utmānza'īs and sending threatening messages to their feudatory, the chief of Amb.[2] It was, in truth, just the other way round, for the highhanded policy of the British in preventing the Saiyids of Sitānā from taking possession of their ancestral patrimony, which lay outside British territory, had forced Saiyid Mubārak Shāh to use force for evicting Utmānza'īs from Sitānā. The *mujāhidin* were, no doubt, Mubārak Shāh's allies, but this was his personal affair which was unnecessarily magnified by the British officers as a grave threat to the security of the realm. The truth of the matter is amply borne out by a letter of the Secretary to Government of Punjab summarising the views of Deputy Commissioner, Hazārā, wherein it was stated that:

> The Hindoostanees themselves withhold their hands from all murder and robbery; it is necessary that this great point should be clearly noted. It is not known that any of their members have ever participated in kidnapping and murder of our Hindoo subjects. They form undoubtedly a centre of political intrigue and occasionally despatch

1. *Wahābī Movement in India*, pp. 195-196.
2. *Mehr*, Vol. IV, p. 239.

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*Ghāzīs* to lie in wait to murder infidel *feranghees* (Englishmen) .....our immediate concern with them at present is that it is from their presence and support that Mubārak Shāh derives the strength and importance.... It will be very necessary, in the event of operations being undertaken, and of its not being found possible to destroy them entirely to guard against their making any fresh settlement near our border.....[1]

The Government of Punjab was, indeed, determined to destroy the *mujāhidīn* in the Frontier. Its impatience in the matter is revealed by a letter it sent on August 16, 1862, to the Central Government :

The avowed object of the fanatics is the restoration of the Muhammadan rule in India by the sword .... They unite the sympathies of Muhammadans all over India and on its frontier. They are supplied with funds from Hindustan. It was ascertained that the Nawab of Tonk supplied persons with money to enable them to reach their settlements. They are believed to carry on correspondence with Bombay, Patna, Bareilly and other Muhammadan cities. In short their hostile position on our frontier is a rallying point for all those who long for the renewal of Muhammadan rule, an encouragement to the disaffected intrigues of that sect, and a stimulus of the worst sort to the unruly passions of the warlike and inflammable population on our frontier. In a time of difficulty their posture of defiance might not improbably serve as a beacon to the Muhammadans generally.[2]

In July 1863, Saiyid Mubārak Shāh re-occupied Sitānā, without any opposition either on the side of Gadūns or Utmānza'īs. The incident was used as a pretext to justify full scale war against the hated *mujāhidīns*, and, in September, 1863, the Viceroy, Lord Elgin (1811-63) sanctioned a major campaign against the advice of his Commander-in-chief[3] "to rid the Frontier of the chronic cause of disturbance."[4]

Mere expulsion of the *mujāhidīn* from the right bank of the Indus back upon their old post at Malākā on the south bank of the Brandu was not considered enough, nor was it thought advisable that they should find shelter in Swāt.

1. For. Deptt. Pol. Consultations 'A' No. 191, dt. August 1862, quoted from the *Wahābī Movement in India*, pp. 197/198.
2. Secretary, Punjab Government to Government of India, dated 16th August, 1862. *Selections from Government of Punjab Records*, Confidential Series, No. A XII. (Lahore, 1884), p. 23.
3. *Sitānā*, pp. 29-32.
4. *Frontier Expeditions*, p. 234.

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The military object decided upon was to attack the *mujāhidīn* from the north and force them to fight with their backs to the plains. Brigadier-General Sir Neville B. Chamberlain, Commanding the Punjab Irregular Force, was selected to command the expedition. To form the expeditionary force, comprising 5,150 Infantry, 200 cavalry and 280 Artillery troops with 13 guns all the northern stations were considerably weakened, and no reserve was left anywhere nearer than Lahore. All these elaborate arrangements were made by one of the most powerful governments of the time against a force numbering between 1,200 to 1,500, having a couple of cannons, 127 percussion muskets, 160 matchlocks and 20 flint-locks, and consisting of volunteers from Bengal, Oudh, Central and North Provinces (modern Madhya Pradesh and parts of Uttar Pradesh) and the lower Punjab. The *mujāhidīn* were then divided into 10 companies known as *Jamī'at*, each under a separate leader.

The plan of operation was to march on Malākā in the Chamla—a valley running east and west just south of Buner—with one strong force from the side of Mardān through the Ambeyla Pass. Another force was to occupy a safehold near Top'i. But, the political assessment of the expedition made one serious mistake. It was not considered necessary to inform the Buner or Chamla tribes of the expedition beforehand, for it was considered inadvisable to reveal the line of advance. Indeed, no hostilities were anticipated from the Bunerwāls, who, known to be the followers of the Ākhund of Swāt, were expected to have little sympathy with the *mujāhidīn*. On the 18th of October, a column was moved to the Darhan Pass from Swabi, another detachment moved up the following day from Nawa Kala to effect a junction at Parmalao with the one coming from Swabi, and both reached the Ambeyla Pass before sunrise next morning. On the afternoon of 19th, when it was too late for the Chamla and other tribes to make any preparations on a large scale for resisting the advance of the British forces through the Ambeyla Pass, a proclamation was sent by Taylor, the Commissioner of Peshāwar to the Chamla, Khūdū Khel, Gadūn, Amāza'ī, Mādā Khel and Baner

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tribes stating the object of the force. Simultaneously, ʿAbdullah sent another proclamation[1] exhorting the tribes to oppose the advance of the British troops. He had explained to the tribes that the avowed objective of the "deceitful and treacherous" enemy was to extirpate the Hindustānīs but once they got the opportunity they would "entirely ruin, torment and put you to so many indignities, appropriate to themselves your entire wealth and possessions, and injure your faith." No invader since the days of Akbar had dared to intrude into these difficult terrains of the turbulent Pathāns. The warning sent by Taylor stirred a chief, ʿAjab Khān, to wrath and caused him to taunt the Bunerwāls with the raising of their *purdah*. A call to defend the valley was sent out, drums were beaten and lashkars formed to fight the infidel *Firangī*. The Ākhund of Swāt stood aloof in the beginning, but with the commitment of Bunerwāls and other tribes, his followers, in the affair, he too came in.

The first echelons of the troops had slowly entered the Ambeyla Pass—a narrow, tortuously winding gorge about 10 kilometers long, traversed by a stream tumbling over boulders often overgrown with jungle and low trees, practicable for ridden animals and men on foot, but difficult for laden beasts of burden—and reached Kotal by noon on 20th October. It was then found that Bunerwāls were descending in considerable numbers. The British troops were in a deep gorge with tribesmen on the flanking mountains poised to strike against them. By the time daylight had quite gone, the tribesmen pressed the British troops very closely, and several times came upon the British troops, sword in hand. Eventually, as the troops drew into the camp, the pickets became engaged and there was a general attack upon their camp from the front and the flanks, which continued until midnight.[2]

The hostile attitude of the Bunerwāls had changed the

1. *Wahābī Movement in India*, appendix IV, p. 354.
2. *Frontier Expeditions*, pp. 242-43.

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entire plan of operation, it now became doubtful if the original objective of reaching the *mujāhidīn* settlement at Malākā could be adhered to. The British force, 6000 strong, was pinned down in the gorge and peaks of the mountains to fight for its own life. Attacks were made daily on the British positions for nearly a month and fierce intermittent fighting continued for another month. "By 23rd telegrams after telegrams reached the Government from the Frontier, begging for more and yet more troops. Before the three weeks were over, the Punjab stations had been so denuded of troops, that the Officer Commanding at Miānmīr could with difficulty supply a guard of 24 bayonets for the Lieutenant Governor."[1] But, "in spite of the reinforcements," adds Hunter, "our General found it impossible to advance. The British army lay for weeks to all appearance cowed within the Pass, not daring to emerge into the Chamla valley."[2]

The reinforcements received by Neville Chamberlain were matched by levies from Swāt, Chamla, Bajaur and Dir arriving to the assistance of Bunerwāls and the *mujāhidīn*. Normally, the tribesmen carry only enough food to sustain them for a few days but, on this occasion, new warriors took the place of the retiring fighters who again returned furnished with provisions. There were no signs of the Pathān warriors melting away, who fought with amazing gallantry. Quoting the journal of a British Officer who participated in the Ambeyla campaign Hunter writes: "Suddenly comes a wild shout of Allah! Allah! the match-locks flash and crack from the shadows of the trees; there is glitter of whirling sword-blades, and a mob of dusky figures rush across the open space, and charge almost up to the bayonets."[3] Furious attacks were made on the two English holding positions, Crag Picket and the Eagles Nest; the former was attacked four times, thrice captured by the tribesmen and thrice recaptured by the British.[4] Between

1. *Indian Musalman*; pp. 31-32
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid*, p. 32.
4. *The Pathāns*, p. 366.

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the period from 30th October to 20th November bold and vigorous attacks continued on the British positions. On the 13th November, the onslaught of the *mujāhidīn* was so dauntless that "not only the Picket, now one hundred and twenty strong, was thrown away but something like a panic spread among the followers in the camp.[1] The position became so critical that Chamberlain himself led the column of attack and was severely wounded in the arm.

The Punjab Government, not aware of the actual position at the battle-front, still pressed for the accomplishment of the original objective, the destruction of Malākā. Chamberlain, however, felt certain that it would not be advisable to make any advance towards Mahāban; to carry out the original views of Government, it would be exposed to the enemy's incessant attacks, both by day and night, in flank and rear, and it would be impossible in the face of such numbers, to protect adequately a long line of laden animals, to which would be daily added an ever increasing number of sick and wounded.[2] Chamberlain considered that in the circumstances the only way to uphold the honour of British arms was to act on the defensive in the position held by his forces. On the side of the Pathāns, *maliks* of Buner and Swāt elected Maulvī ʿAbdullah to command the united force. Ākhund of Swāt had called upon the Utmānzaʾīs, Ranizaʾīs, Mohmands and the people of Bajaur for support. Saiyid Mahmūd Shāh, who had received the training of warfare in British lines, took a prominent part. The Chiefs of Bunerwāls, Zaidullah Khān, Ahmad Khān and Nawāb Khān were said to have brought 12,000 to 15,000 men into the field. The villages of Chamla sent their quota, the Amānzaʾīs of Dhirori were well represented, and the Mada Khels also came in force. In addition to these, were the *mujāhidīn*, most of whom had been fired with zeal to fight a holy war, and their lines "stood unyielding like a wall of steel."[3] They were, indeed, men animated by the highest

1. *Younghusband, G. J., The Story of the Guides*, p. 89
2. *Frontier Expeditions*, p. 253
3. *Durr-i-Maqāl*, p. 317-20

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ideals who had left their homes in India, and took up residence in those rugged hills. Widely separated in language, manners, and interests from the people among whom they dwelt, receiving only a bare subsistence, their life was passed in a manner by no means congenial to the inhabitants of the plains. Yet, they were ever ready to fight to the last for the sake of defending the tribesmen, whose behaviour had been none too gracious towards them in the past.

From the day Buner tribes had declared hostilities, it was evident that the line of communication through the Ambeyla defile could no longer be depended upon, and it had become indispensable to seek some new line further removed from Guru Mountain, so as to enable communications being kept up with the British territory. A line of road between the villages of Khānpur and Sherdara, beyond the reach of Buner tribes, was accordingly selected. The Government of Punjab, forseeing the demand for transport, assembled 4,200 camels and 2,100 mules from all parts of the Punjab at Nowshera. The working parties on the proposed road were provided adequate troops to cover their operations but they soon found themselves overmatched and in serious difficulty. Ultimately they had to withdraw with a loss of seventy-eight officers and men killed and wounded.[1] Work on another road, forward to Malākā, was also taken in hand ; the *mujāhidīn* were, however, quick to retaliate and the portions of the road already built were broken up and blocked with rocks and trees.[2]

By the 5th of December further reinforcements had arrived. The British had some 9000 Regular troops, including picked Regiments like the 93 Highlanders besides Irregulars, and "it seemed hard to believe that a powerful British Army could thus remain cooped within the Pass week after week, harassed by the attacks of the enemy, and unable to strike a blow."[3] The situation was indeed dark, as described by

1. *Frontier Expeditions*, pp. 259-60.
2. *Durr-i-Maqāl*, pp. 201-2.
3. *Indian Musalman*, p. 37.

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Hunter : "A great political catastrophe was now dreaded. Our Army, wearied with daily attacks, might at any moment be seized with panic, and driven back pell-mell, with immense slaughter through the Pass."[1] General Chamberlain, the Commander of the expeditionary force, had been dangerously hit and lay incapacitated. The Viceroy, Lord Elgin, was precariously ill in some interior hills, unable to direct the operations. The Provincial Government was so unnerved by the turn of events that it played with the idea of ordering a general retreat. The entire Frontier was flushed with excitement and could explode at any moment. Kabul was sympathetic to the tribesmen but it had desisted from extending any active support to its Pathān brethren across the border in that hour of need. Still, the Frontier Regiments fighting against their own kith and kin, could not be expected to support the foreign rulers in a prolonged war.[2] The British were fearful of the "ruin of their prestige on the Frontier, and entailed disaster, the result of which was impossible to foretell."[3]

"But", says Hunter, "a coalition of mountain tribes is always capricious ; and what our arms had failed to accomplish, dissensions and diplomacy began to effect."[4] James, the Commissioner and Political Agent started sowing seeds of dissension among the confederate tribes.[5] He did all that was possible by negotiations to weaken the united front of the tribesmen, and was met with considerable success. He succeeded in drawing off Ahmad Khān, with a greater portion of the Ashāza'ī and Salārza'ī sections of the Buner tribe ; the Rānīza'īs of Swāt were also induced to return to their homes ; Suhbat Khān was sent back with his followers ; other chiefs acted in similar manner ; and

1. *Indian Musalman*, p. 35
2. *Sitānā*, p. 74.
3. *Indian Musalman* p. 36
4. *Ibid.*, p. 37/38.
5. James Memoranda, dated 5th, 7th and 14th December, 1873. Foreign Department Political consultations No. 15, Quoted from *Indian Wahābī Movement*, p. 206.

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amongst those who remained a mutual mistrust prevailed. Ākhund of Swāt issued denunciations against those who left the field ; Maulānā ʿAbdullah redoubled his efforts to bring back the wavering tribesmen ; he made impassioned speeches, his followers fought valiantly ; but none of the endeavours succeeded. Meanwhile, Faiztalah Khān arrived from Bajaur with three thousand men and another detachment of 500 men came under the Hājī of Kunar, but the tribsemen were so divided and mistrustful of each other that they were unable to resume the attack.[1]

In the meanwhile, Major General J. Garvock had assumed the command of the British forces in place of Chamberlain. A deputation of the Buner tribes, arriving into the British Camp on the 10th December agreed that they would accompany the Commissioner with a force and destroy Malākā. They also agreed to expel the Hindustānīs from their country. Soon the Swāt and Bajaur Khāns were hastening to their homes leaving the *mujāhidīn* homeless and helpless. Malākā, situated on an elevated plateau, on a northern spur of the Mahāban range, containing several large edifices—a hall of audience, barracks for soldiers, stabling and a powder manufactory—was burnt[2] on 22nd of December by the Bunerwāls and Amānzā'īs in the presence of Taylor.[3] Another village, Mandi, where the *mujāhidīn* had built a fort of loose stones was also destroyed and burnt by the Gadūn tribes on the direction of their new masters.[4] Sitānā was already in ruins. The tribesmen, including the *mujāhidīn*, had suffered 3000 dead and wounded.[5] The operation had cost the British too much, both in men and money. Their losses[6] amounted to 847 killed and wounded in the

1. *Frontier Expeditions*, pp. 273-74.
2. Saiyid ʿAbdul Jabbār Shāh, later elected King of Swāt, however, asserted that Malākā was not destroyed at all. Bunerwāls objected to its being burnt and Taylor returned without achieving his objective. (*Mehr*. Vol. IV, p. 365)
3. Frontier Expeditions, p. 287.
4. *Ibid*. pp. 290-91.
5. *Indian Wahābī Movement*, p. 208.
6. *Indian Musalman*, p. 36.

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action alone. More than that, the expedition had caused a serious damage to their prestige in the eyes of the tribesmen. With this great effort and expenditure, the empire had succeeded in destroying the nest but not the hornet.

Following the battle of Ambeyla, the *mujāhidīn* led by Maulānā ʿAbdullah settled down among the Chagarzaʾī tribes, occupying the country on the western slopes of the Black Mountain. Ākhund ʿAbdul Ghafoor was, at the time, patron of the *mujāhidīn* ; but the latter remained, throughout their stay in the area, extending to more than three years, out of countenance with the local people, receiving only grudging hospitality. Very often the Chagarzaʾīs threatened the *mujāhidīn* to turn them out of their territory. Now they had no ally so dependable and trustworthy as the Saiyids of Sitānā. It seems that by 1868, the *mujāhidīn* had migrated to Bajkatta in the Buner area[1] which strained the relations between them and the Ākhund. The main reason for incurring the Ākhund's displeasure was that Saiyid Amīr, another spiritual disciple of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, known by the name of Mulla of Kota, exercised considerable influence among some of the Buner tribes. The Ākhund's followers, who regarded the Mulla as a rival of the Ākhund, were already busy in bringing him into discredit by calling him a Wahābī—a term used to heap anathema on somebody. Not very long ago, a tumult had been raised againt the Mulla of Kota and his Amazaʾī followers resulting into a bloody combat between Amazaʾīs and some of the Bunerwāls. Thus, the migration of the *mujāhidīn*, still a disciplined force 700 strong, into the Buner country on the invitation of ʿAzīm Khān, a supporter of the Mulla of Kota, was regarded by the Ākhund as a threat to his influence in that area. It was here at Bajkatta, in the Buner area, that Prince Feroz Shāh, a cousin of Bahādur Shāh, who had taken a prominent part in the defence of Delhi during the revolt of 1857, joined the *mujāhidīn*.[2] Feroz Shāh sent

1. *Mehr*, Vol. IV, p. 464.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 464.

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letters to several Indian princes to help the *mujāhidīn* but none responded to his call.[1]

The Ākhund convened a *jirga* of the Buner *maliks* and leading men which decided to expel the *mujāhidīn* from Buner. Thereupon, the *mujāhidīn* repaired again, alongwith ʿAzīm Khān to their old centre of Malākā, where they started rebuilding their houses and fortifications. However, Maulānā ʿAbdullah met the Ākhund and obtained his permission to return to Bajkatta again. Shortly afterwards, internal squabbles of the Pathān chiefs again brought the *mujāhidīn* into disfavour with the Ākhund, who appeared with a strong force before Bajkatta demanding immediate evacuation of the place by the *mujāhidīn*. The demand was accepted, on the advice of ʿĀzīm Khān, but while the evacuees were leaving Bajkatta, through a narrow defile, the tribesmen treacherously fell on the rear-guard of the *mujāhidīn* consisting of about 40 or 50 men. The main body, including ʿAzīm Khān and Maulānā ʿAbdullah, successfully ran the gauntlet and crossed the pass but the rear-guard was cut off, and after a gallant stand, entirely destroyed.[2]

After leaving Bajkatta, the *mujāhidīn* lived temporarily, first in Gulima Bori in Chagarzaʾī area and then in Bihar, on the right bank of the Indus. They had again to leave the place for Palosi, a village belonging to trans-Indus Hassanzaʾīs 32 kilometres north of Durband, where they stayed for a fairly long time. This marked the end of their wandering existence but they were at the time, facing great distress owing to stoppage of aid from India. Their fighting strength consisted of 362 men of whom 57 belonged to Arrah and Ghazipur. The women and children numbered 70 and they had 27 horses and 27 mules. They were also reported to have two small guns, some percussion muskets with bayonets. The chief among them were, besides Maulānā ʿAbdullah, Fayyāz ʿAlī, brother of Ahmadullah, and Abdullah's three sons, Amānullah, Mutʿīullah and ʿAbdul Quddūs.[3] Several proposals were mooted out in India to let

1. *Bengal Records*, p. 83.
2. *Paget and Mason*, pp. 155-158.
3. *Wahābi Movement in India*, pp. 312-13.

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the *mujāhidīn* and their leaders return to India with a guarantee for immunity from reprisals, but the proposals were turned down by the Government on the ground that they were no more a significant body of men nor had they made any formal offer of surrender.[1] Maulānā ʿAbdullah, on the other hand, was firm in his resolve to continue his arduous struggle against the foreign rulers, come what may. He was, in the meantime, patiently busy in reorganising his resources and bridging the rift between the various tribes. He was known throughout the frontier as a 'pious man', only next to the Ākhund of Swāt who was on the verge of the grave. His *mujāhidīn* still represented a fighting force of great potentiality, dedicated to a higher and noble cause. If they were not able to enlist the support of the tribesmen, it was because of the hostility of the Ākhund and the petty sectarian differences of the tribes, but, steadfast in their mission and possessing hope and conviction they were willing to undergo all hardships for their cause for which they had dedicated their lives.

The first expedition against the Hassanzaʾīs of Black Mountain was led by Machenson in December, 1852. During the Ambeyla Campaign, in 1863, it was proposed to send a force, after the destruction of Malākā, to punish the Hassanzaīʾs but owing to the unexpected course of events, this plan was not executed. The overzealous officers of the Punjab had, however, not forgotten the Hassanzaʾīs, and tney established a body of police in the village of Oghi in Agror Valley in November 1867. This was rightly regarded as a deliberate menace to their long-cherished independence by the Hassanzaʾīs, Akāzaʾīs and Chagarzaʾīs, who in collaboration with the Pariārī Saiyids, attacked thepolice post on the morning of 30th July, 1868. The Deputy Commissioner of Hazārā, Ommanney, immediately marched on Khabbal with a strong detachment. As this force had to return without chastising the Black Mountain tribes, another expedition to the area was determined. The force now employed,

1. *Wahābī Movement in India*, pp. 313/316.

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exclusive of the reserve, numbered 9,500 of all ranks. The Mahārājā of Kashmir also offered the services of 1200 troops. Major General Wilde, who was placed at the head of the expedition, coerced the Hassanza'īs, Chargarza'īs and Akāza'īs into submission. During the course of the expedition, Wilde wanted to inflict a blow on the *mujāhidīn* and then to occupy the village of Bihar, on the right bank of Indus, opposite the Chagarza'ī village of Judba, where they had moved after expulsion from Buner. But as the country on the western slopes of the Black Mountain was inaccessible, the operation was given up as infeasible. However, the expulsion of the *mujāhidīn* was insisted upon as one of the terms of peace with Chagarza'īs.[1]

The year 1875 saw the submission to the British Government of the Black Mountain and other tribes, such as, Chagarza'īs, Hassanza'īs, Akāza'īs, Tikariwālās, Alla'īwāls and the Saiyids of Pariari who, since 1868, had set the British at defiance. Several minor incursions were made by the British troops after 1875 but in terms of size and significance they needed no further attention. In June, 1888, however, the Akāza'īs killed two British Officers and four men of the 5th Gurkhas, following their blockade continuing since 1868. A punitive expedition with a total strength of 272 officers and 9144 men along with two Kashmir battalions was formed in September 1888 under Brigadier-General J. W. McQueen. The entire force was divided into four columns; the first three were to advance by different routes to the spurs of the western side of the Black Mountain while the fourth one was detailed to push forward to the neigbourhood of Kotkai on the Indus. The first three accomplished the objective allotted to them by the first week of October, encountering little resistance in the way, but the fourth column had to encounter stiff resistance by the *mujāhidīn* between Toru and Kotkai.[2] The latter fought gallantly but had to give in owing to the superior fire power of the British forces and lost 48 of their men in the encounter.

1. *Frontier Expeditions*, p. 149
2. *Mehr*, Vol. IV, pp. 479-80

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On the 13th October, the settlement of the *mujāhidīn* at Maidan was completely destroyed by the fourth column,[1] after which Maulānā ʿAbdullah and his followers are stated to have dispersed among the Chagarzaʾī and neighbouring tribes. In order to demonstrate the "power, capability and determination of the British to punish when necessary," the Khān Khel section of the Hassanzaʾīs was severely dealt with and all their principal villages burnt before the expeditionary force returned to its base.[2]

The grand show of force had overawed the Black Mountain tribes, but, for the purpose of adding insult to injury, the Hassanzaʾīs, Akazaʾīs and Pariarī Saiyids were called upon to detail tribesmen for completion of a road proposed to be constructed on the upper slopes of the mountain. Simultaneously, Brigadier-General McQueen was directed to draft a column to march along the crest accompanied by the tribal *jirgās*—an indignity which the tribes were most likely to reject. McQueen was also told that "should the tribes oppose the promenade this autumn you should not push forward, but, having clearly put upon the tribes the odium of not having carried out their obligations, reserve their punishment for an expedition in the spring, which they will be told will be sent against them."[3] And, the odium was put upon the tribes for another expedition against them had already been decided to be sent.

Accordingly, Brigadier-General W. K. Elles ordered 169 officers, 7120 men and 15 guns to concentrate at Darbund and Oghi by the 1st March, 1891. Information was received that Hāshim ʿAlī Khān, the Khān of Seri, had induced Akazaʾīs and Hassanzaʾīs to collect at Nimal to oppose the advance of British forces. In the meanwhile, good roads had been constructed on the Tilli line up to Bela, and telegraph line was completed between Phaldar and Bela, both of which were occupied by the British troops by the

1. *Frontier Expeditions*, p. 155
2. *Ibid.*, p. 165
3. *Ibid.* pp. 168-69

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11th March. The right column, which had marched to Tilli, remained halted at the place. By the 16th March it was ascertained that the Hindustānīs under Maulānā ʿAbdullah were collecting at Didal and there were a number of Chagarzaʾīs at Kamach It was also reported that Hāshim ʿAlī Khān of Seri had been travelling about exciting the people, and had then gone off to Swāt to ask Miān Gul to join the holy war. On the 19th March, the *mujāhidīn* accompanied by the tribesmen attacked the British advance picket at Ghāzikot, a small straggling village on the left bank of the Indus, about a kilometre north of Kunar. As the *mujāhidīn* arrived close enough to be seen, the picket fired four volleys at them, on which the swordsmen of the *mujāhidīn*, with shouts, rushed on the picket straight from a mosque. A hot fire was then commenced on both sides, the *mujāhidīn*, firing from the roofs of the houses and charging with swords out of the mosque. Further reinforcements rushed in to help the picket swept round the right flank of the village. During the night, the main force of the tribesmen retired but the *mujāhidīn* kept creeping from various places, firing and using the knives in the dark. When the day broke, dead bodies of twenty-three *mujāhidīn* and two Hindu Pathāns, who had been acting as their guides, were found in the village. The British casualties also numberd twenty-five killed and wounded.[1]

Another encounter took place at village Bakraʾi, when the river column advanced from Pīrzāda Bela to Palosi, on the 19th March. A combined force of the Pathāns and *mujāhidīn*, with 50 or 60 firearms and 200 swordsmen attacked the 4th Sikhs. The British forces retired after sustaining a loss of 12 killed and 16 wounded.[2]

By the middle of the next month, the British forces had forced Hassanzaʾīs and Akazaʾīs into submission whose *jirgās*, influenced by the fear of losing their autumn crops with the spring harvest already forfeited, tendered unconditional

1. *Frontier Expeditions*, pp. 175-77
2. *Ibid.* pp. 177-78

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submission of the tribes. Hāshim ʿAlī had, however, not surrendered and, therefore, all the tribes were bound to his perpetual exclusion and banishment. Another condition imposed was that no settlement of the Hindustānī *mujāhidīn* would be permitted by the tribes in their country.

An essential condition, it would be seen, imposed invariably by the British on Frontier tribes was that they would not allow the *mujāhidīn* to settle in their territory. Thus, evicted by the Hassanzaʾīs, Chaǧarzaʾīs, Akazaʾīs and Mada Khels, Maulānā ʿAbdullah had to migrate to Amazaʾī territory after the expedition of 1891. The Amazaʾīs offered to lease out a village to him provided he agreed to help them against Mubārak Khels. To this, Maulānā ʿAbdullah did not agree, for he always hated bloodshed among the tribes. Finally, he appealed to Fīroz Shāh, son of Saiyid Mubārak Shāh, the old patron of *mujāhidīn*, to help him in procuring a settlement for the *mujāhidīn*. Mubārak Khels agreed, on Fīroz Shāh's recommendation, to give the village of Tilwāʾi to Maulānā ʿAdullah where he maintained a precarious existence of the *mujāhidīn* till his death on the 29th November, 1902.[1]

Maulānā ʿAbdullah's period of leadership, extending over more than forty years, must be seen against the background of the rising British power in the sub-continent which spared no efforts to exterminate the *mujāhidīn* menace on the empire's most difficult frontiers. The results of the Ambeyla Campaign, when the Maulānā assumed the united command of all the tribal forces, would have been disastrous for the British if the Bunerwāls had not been drawn in by British subornation. During the period following Ambeyla, the very people for whose sake he had abandoned his home, turned against him, persecuted and rendered him homeless, the supplies from India came to a standstill and the British hotly pursued him ; but, no impediment, no difficulty could waver his resolve to fight for his faith and freedom. His courage and sincerity,

1. *Mehr.*, Vol. IV, pp. 485-91

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steadfastness and conviction in the righteousness of his cause were always a source of strength to his followers which kept them from losing heart in the face of most adverse circumstances.

After the death of Maulānā ʿAbdullah, his brother ʿAbdul Karīm was elected as the *Amīr* of the *mujāhidīn* He had to shift the centre of the *mujāhidīn* to Asmast,[1] a fertile village situated on the bank of river Brandu, a tributary of the Sind. The small colony of the *mujāhidīn* lingered on, keeping the memory of its founder green in the Frontier. Later on, they took part in various border wars, and in 1915 were concerned in the rising which led up to the engagements at Rustam and Shabqadr. The *Mujāhidīn* also formed an essential link in the chain of communications in what was designated as the "Silk Letter" conspiracy between the Indians and exiled freedom-fighters working for the overthrow of the British Government in India with the help of Germans and Turks during the First World War.[2] The *mujāhidīn* colony continued to exist in the Frontier, without any effective force to oppose the British, content to live in a free country, keeping in touch with, and drawing support from, their sympathisers in India.[3]

1. *Mehr*, Vol. IV, pp. 494-95
2. *Sedition Committee Report* (1918), p. 124
3. *Ibid.*, p. 124

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Twenty-two

# Trials and Tribulations

THE British Government in India was aware of the activities of *jihād* movement for a long time, but it was not before the British arms were balked in the Frontier, in 1863, that they decided to suppress the movement with an iron hand. In the beginning of 1843, the Superintendent of Police, Lower Provinces had reported to the Government that a band of Muhammadan Mullahs, was moving about the districts of east Bengal preaching war against the Sikhs.[1] Then, early in 1850, saditious preaching and recruitment of crescentaders was brought to the notice of the Magistrate of the Rajshahi district.[2] Two years later, during the last year of Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī's leadership, the Punjab authorities seized some correspondence disclosing an "attempt on the part of Hindustānī fanatics in the Hills to tamper with the 4th Regiment of Native Infantry" stationed at Rawalpindi. This conspiracy was found to have originated at Patna, and in the letters seized a mention was made of several members of Sādiqpūr family and the caravans of *mujāhidīn* with arms proceeding to the Frontier for the holy

1. Letter from W. Dampier S. P., L. P. to F. J. Halliday, Secretary to Government of Bengal, Judicial Department, No. 581 dated 29th March, 1843, quoted from *Wahābi Movement in India*, p. 108.
2. *Calcutta Review* (1870), No. 102, p. 382

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war.[1] It appears that the view then held in the official circles was that precaution would savour for persecution. When the preaching of *jihād* and the incitement of hostile tribesmen were brought to the notice of Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, he simply directed, in his Minutes in Council dated 20th August and 7th September, 1852, that 'the Patna conspirators should be closely watched."[2]

The disastrous Ambeyla campaign, however, awakened the British to the danger looming near-at-hand.[3] By this time Ghuzzan Khān, a Pathān Police Sergeant of Karnāl had collected the details about transmission of men and money to the Frontier and when he submitted the information collected on his own initiative to the Government of Punjab, enquiries were quickly set on foot which resulted in the arrest and trial of some of the active members and leaders of the movement in India towards the end of 1863 and beginning of 1864.

We need not go into the details of the enquiry and judicial proceedings of what is known as the Ambāla Trial, 1864, but a cursory glance at these[4] is sufficient to convince any impartial observer that the accused were tortured, the witnesses were tutored and the judges were bent upon laying the blame on the 'Muhammadan fanatics' whose fanaticism and bigotry was, in the eyes of their rulers, 'the characteristic of the race'. Of the 11 persons arrested and put on trial, only two, Muhammad Shafʿī, a wealthy contractor to military cantonments and his servant, ʿAbdul Karīm, turned approvers and both were released after undergoing two years' imprisonment. Others included some of the prominent workers of the movement whose harrowing tales of agony are briefly set out to show how this first movement of religious reform and emancipation of India from the foreign yoke was ruthlessly crushed by the then rulers.

1. *Calcutta Review* (1870), No. 102, p. 393
2. *Ibid.*, p. 394, *Indian Musalmān*, p. 22
3. *Indian Musalmān*, p. 84; *Wahābī Movement in India*, pp. 233-34
4. For detailed account see *Tazkira-i-Sādiqa and Tawārikh ʿAjib*

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Among the prisoners was Yahyā ʿAlī, the spiritual successor of Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī and the superb organiser of Patna headquarters who had developed it into a highly secret and complex organisation. Other prisoners were Muhammad Jʿafar, a prosperous businessman and stamp vendor of Thānesar, ʿAbdul Rahīm, the brother of Maulānā ʿAbdullah, Qāzī Miān Jān of Comercolly, ʿAbdul Ghaffār, an active worker, Elāhī Bux, a shoe merchant of Patna, Husaini of Thānesar, and their servants ʿAbdul Ghafoor and Husainī. They were charged under Section 121 of Indian Penal Code for waging war against the Queen. Yahyā ʿAlī, Mohammad Jʿafar and Muhammad Shafʿī were sentenced to death on May 2, 1864 and their property was confiscated. The Lieutenant Governor commuted the capital punishment of the three accused persons and sentenced them to transportation for life. During the period of trial the prisoners were kept in separate solitary confinement under inhuman conditions. The first batch of the prisoners consisting of Yahyā ʿAlī, ʿAbdul Ghafoor and Muhammad Jʿafar were transferred to Lahore. From Ambāla to Lahore they were taken on foot laden with heavy chains[1] and from there transferred to Karachi in a closed compartment, chained together and tied to a wooden plank so that they could not move even for answering the call of nature.[2] Transferred to Bombay, they had to spend some time in the dreadful Thānā jail, located in a deserted Marāthā fort, known for the severe and harsh penalties inflicted on the prisoners. Ultimately, they reached Andaman Islands on 11th January, 1866 where Yahyā ʿAlī died, after a brief illness, as an old and infirm prisoner in February, 1868. Nothing but praise of God and thankfulness to Him was ever heard from his lips throughout his severe tribulations which were enough to test the courage and perseverance of any man. Even the rigours of solitary confinement and forced labour in the prison had not been able to disturb his serene and calm disposition and saintly demeanour. Several of the guards and hardened criminals

1. *Tawārikh ʿAjib*, pp. 52-53
2. *Ibid.*, p. 55

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mended their ways and embraced Islam in his company. Marzi, a contumacious Baluch convict, who was made to share his prison-cell at Lahore by the authorities in order to put him to inconvenience, became well-behaved and complaisant within a few days.[1]

ʿAbdur Rahīm was sent to Andaman after other prisoners as he was detained at Ambala for some time in the hope of persuading his brother, Maulānā ʿAbdullah and other *mujāhidīn* in the Frontier to lay down their arms, but he refused to oblige the British Government. ʿAbdul Rahīm and Muhammad Jʿafar's terms of imprisonment in Andaman were commuted on 3rd December 1882 and both returned to India afterwards. Hunter is unable to hide his animus against the prisoners, particularly Yahyā ʿAlī and Muhammad Jʿafar, but he is obliged to acknowledge that "they were earnest, conscientious men, who pricked themselves with the poisonous weapons which a false religion had put in their hands ; and now that Laertes-like they have paid the price of their treachery, history may dwell with emotions akin to pity on their fate."[2] Hunter perhaps knew little that what appeared treachery to him would in good time be regarded as the noblest reflection of the worthiness of these men.

Ambāla Trial was followed by the Patna Trial of 1865. During the course of Ambāla Trial, the convict Muhammad Shafʿī and ʿAbdul Karīm, his agent, and especially the former, made disclosures which led to the discovery of important evidence against Ahmadullah.[3] Thus, following the conviction of Yahyā ʿAlī and others in the Ambāla Trial, the Government of the Punjab started pressing the Government of Bengal to arrest Ahmadullah, the elder brother of Yahyā ʿAlī. Government of Bengal was at first hesitant to take action against him but it ultimately gave in.[4] It is

1. *Tazkirah-i-Sādiqa*, pp. 70-74
2. *Indian Musalmān*, p. 95
3. Proceedings of the Lt. Governor of the Punjab, No. 1451, dated 18th October, 1865, *Bengal Records*, pp. 221-24
4. *Wahābi Movement in India* pp. 243-45

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stated that Taylor, the dismissed Divisional Commissioner of Patna and Ishree Prasad, a Sergeant of Police, both staunchly opposed to Wahābīs, were responsible for bringing Ahmadullah into discredit with the Government. Finally, Elāhī Bux, an accused in Ambāla Trial, turned an approver against Ahmadullah and deposed that the latter held the charge of financial transactions of the Patna Headquarters. Ahmadullah was arrested in November, 1864 and charged on the 16th January, 1865 with waging war against the Queen. The Sessions Court sentenced him to death and ordered for the confiscation of his property on the evidence of only one prosecution witness, namely, Elāhī Bux. The High Court also confirmed the sentence but directed that he should be transported for life. He was thus first to reach Port Blair in Andaman Islands where he arrived in June, 1865, about seven months ahead of his brother.[1]

As pointed out by Qiyāmuddīn Ahmad,[2] the anti-government activities of the accused in the Ambāla and Patna Trials could not be denied, but "the admirable sagacity with which so widely spread a treason had been organised ; the secrecy with which its complicated operations were conducted, and the absolute fidelity of one another which its members maintained" had left practically no oral or documentary evidence with the authorities to enable them to legally prove their guilt. They had therefore to take recourse to brutal excesses and third degree methods to coerce the under-trials, throw a sop to the witnesses and award punishments by throwing all norms and procedure of justice to the winds.[3] Even the commutation of the death sentences into that of transportation for life was not an act of clemency. When the British judges learnt that the prisoners welcomed their sentences of death as the most befitting reward for their life-long efforts[4] they denied the "most treasonable among them the glory of martyrdom"

1. *Mehr*, Vol. IV, pp. 404-405
2. *Wahābī Movement in India*, pp. 249 53
3. *Tawārikh-i-ʿAjīb*, p. 38
4. *Ibid.*

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as a measure of "wise revenge."[1]

Vindictiveness of the British officials, so germane to the concluding phase of the *Jihād* movement, is illustrated by the destruction of its Patna headquarters. In the Patna trial it had been decided that the properties of the prisoners should be confiscated. However, the property belonging to Sādiqpūr family and its residential premises, where the headquarters of the movement were located, were owned by three units of the family, viz. Muhammad Husain and his six daughters; Elāhi Bux, father of Ahmadullah, Waliullah, Akbar Alī, Yahyā ʿAlī and Fayyāz ʿAlī; and Fateh ʿAlī, father of Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī, Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī; Talib ʿAlī and Farhat Husain. The shares of such members of these families who had neither migrated to the Frontier nor were implicated in the activities of the movement in India could not be attached. In order to overcome this difficulty it was decided that the properties which could not be escheated should be taken over "for public purposes under Act VI of 1857." Thus, whole of the property was taken away with one stroke of pen and sold at throw away prices.[2] The inmates of the Sādiqpūr premises were forced to leave the house with only the clothes on their bodies, on the morning of *ʿId*, perhaps to derive a sadistic pleasure from the suffering of the poor victims. None was allowed to take away even a small needle with him. Rather they were made to pay a price ten times higher of anything found missing according to an inventory prepared earlier.[3] Later on, the Sādiqpūr premises was pulled down, the family graveyard was levelled and the graves uprooted,[4] and made over to the Patna Municipality for the construction of a municipal market.

The conviction of Yahyā ʿAlī and Ahmadullah had dealt a serious blow to the organisation of the *jihād* movement, but the work was soon resumed by Hājī Mubārak

1. *Indian Musalmān*, p. 98
2. *Ibid.*, 261
3. *Ibid.*, 261-62
4. *Ibid.*, p. 263

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ʿAlī of Hajīpur, district Muzaffārpur. He was an early associate of Maulvī Wilāyat ʿAlī and had settled down in Patna before Ahmadullah was arrested. Although the central organisation and its leaders had come under a cloud, popularity of the movement was growing and alternate arrangements had been made for remittance of money to the Frontier by way of Mecca from Bombay. The number of Saiyid's followers at Banglore, nicknamed as Wahābīs, was stated to be 5000. A good deal of secret correspondence was also stated to be going on between the followers of the movement in the lower India and those in Delhi, Lucknow and other places.[1] The meetings of the adherents of the movement were, according to the Commissioner of Police, Madras, held in Triplicane, Poodoopet, Pursewaulkum and other places in Madras, generally on Fridays, and frequently attended by the sepoys. Their number in Madras was estimated to be between 2000 to 4000, and the number was increasing. One, ʿAbdul Qādir, son-in-law of Maulvī Ismāʿīl, a *jagīrdār* of Vaniembady was then stated to be on a visit to Madras proselytising and collecting money for operations elsewhere.[2] Two newspapers *Nayara Auzim* or "Sun of the World" and *Bailchah* or "Muttock" were advocating the ideas of the movement. Their circulation, though not very large, was widely spread.[3] By the middle of 1864, one, Muhammad Ismāʿīl, and ex-sepoy of 37th Regiment of Vellore, was reported to have started an extended missionary tour of all the Military stations of Northern Division.[4] An intelligent, cool and soft spoken man, he was shy of the imputation of being called a Wahābī, but preached against the

1. Letter from Officer Commanding, Mysore Division to Military Secretary to Commander-in-Chief, dated 13th November, 1865, *Bengal Records*, p. 103-105.
2. Letter from Acting Commissioner of Police to the Chief Secretary to Government, Madras, dated 23rd November, 1865 *Bengal Records*; pp. 110-13
3. *Ibid.*, p. 112
4. Letter from the Inspector General of Police to Chief Secretary to Government of Madras, No. 366, dated 28th February, 1866, *Bengal Records*, pp. 143-154

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corruption of the faith prevalent amongst the Muslims in general, and against the loose manners of the *Bidᶜatees*[1] especially. His tours were attended with much success. Earlier, in 1852, he had been turned out of the lines preaching sedition and was suspected of similar activities in Guntur. Thereafter, he went over to Burma where he continued to preach the reformist doctrines to the 'Native' troops. He was deported from Thayetmyo (Burma) to Calcutta as his preachings savoured of sedition. Finally, he was confined as a state prisoner at Coimbatore in 1869.[2] Another similar zealous preacher of refomation was Ahmadullah who was arrested in October, 1869. Simultaneously, the enquiries instituted in other parts of the country revealed centres of the movement in a number of other cities. In Bhopal, one Munshī Jamāl-ud-dīn who had married one of the late *Begums* of Bhopal was the chief organiser. Other prominent members of the movement at Bhopal were Sādiq Hasan, ᶜAbdul Jabbār, ᶜAbdul Rahmān and ᶜAlī Karīm.[3] Rangoon was another centre from where the followers of the movement carried on frequent correspondence with the Bhopal leaders.[4] Almost in the same period, the Government of Punjab, came to know of several active workers of the movement. Their enquiries revealed a vast network of *jihād* movement in several towns of the Punjab.[5]

The years following Ambāla and Patna trials saw a growing anxiety on the part of British rulers to find out all about the *jihād* movement, the designs and secretly disguised intentions of the group avowedly hostile to them, for, the Englishmen genuinely felt that the life, trends of thought and feelings of the population of the country were to them almost a sealed book, enveloped in mystery, of which they had little first-hand information. On the other

1. One accustomed to a reprehensible innovation in religion
2. Bengal Records, pp. 143-45
3. *Wahābī Movement in India*, pp. 305-306
4. *Ibid.*, p. 306
5. *Ibid.*, p. 295

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hand, there was no paucity of Indians who would take advantage of this ignorance of the ruling class for making fervent protestations of their loyalty and devotion to the British Government. One such man was Shurf-ool-Oomrah Bahadoor, hailing from Madras and a member of the Legislative Council, Madras, who submitted a memorandum[1] to the Viceroy and forwarded its copies to the Secretary of State, Governor of Madras and the Commander-in-Chief on 14th August, 1865, accusing the so-called Wahābīs as "the chief cause of the lamentable Indian mutinies" and numerous other conspiracies. He advised the Government that the members of this sect, who were "quite distinct from the orthodox Mohammedans", should be excluded from being enlisted in the armed force either as sepoys or *munshīs* in the regiments and the Officers-in-command of regiments should be called upon to furnish returns showing the number of Wahābī sepoys in their regiments. The matter seems to have been taken up by the Government in right earnest who called for reports from regimental commanders and civillian authorities. It also transpires from the correspondence in this connection that the Military Headquarters was already seized with the matter, and Sir Gaspard Lemarchant was, for several months, conducting confidential enquiries which showed that the "Wahābī" sect in limited number did exist more or less in several regiments in the native army ; that they were considered to be a dagerous element, likely on opportunity to tamper with the fidelity of the soldiery.[2] The replies received from the authorities are no less interesting. Officer Commanding of Nāgpur Force conveying the testimony of "all British Officers to the character of Wahābīs whom they had met or known" said : "It is always favourable to their intelligence, their higher regard to duty ; to truth-speaking in civil and criminal cases connected with social duties ; to their reverence of Almighty,

1. *Bengal Records*, pp. 95-100
2. Letter No. 562, dated November 9, 1865 from the Adjutant General, Headquarters, Ootacamund, to the Secretary to Government, Military Department, *Ibid.*, p. 100.

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and to the inculcation of a charity in deed and in thought, large and abounding towards all men : meaning thereby both Mohammedans and Christians..... "[1] The reply of the Acting Commissioner of Police showed his awareness of the true nature of the movement. He reported that the movement was in the nature of a revival, seeking to re-establish the pure doctrines of religion and rejecting the intercession or worship of all saints, and all forms and ceremonies, but added that the only danger was that being too earnest men they might seek to carry out in full all the precepts of their religion, including that of *jihād*."[2] The Collector of Vizagapatam found the followers of the Saiyids movement so much better behaved that he declared : "If I am to be a Mohammedan write me down a Wahābī."[3] But, just the reverse was the picture of the reformist movement painted by the Indian officials. ʿUmardarāz Khān, the Tahsīldār of Ramallakotta Taluq in Karnool reported that "those who profess the Wahābī religion are not inheritors of heaven they speak ill of the Moulvīs, the prophets, and God ; these ill-disposed religionists have been pronounced Kaffers by the *Soonath Jamath* sect."[4] A pensioned Risāldār, Kale Khān Hossainzy, depicted the sect as believing "that the *paigambar* is so common as any human being....." and labouring "under the misapprehension that their souls will reach heaven if they take the life of a European."[5]

The investigations carried on in connection with the Ambāla and Patna Trials had already indicated a link of Bengal with the *jihād* campaign in the Frontier. About 1867-68, it was brought to the notice of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal that "an active movement of some kind

1. Letter from Officer Commanding, Nagpur Force to Milty, Secy. to C-in-C, dated Oct, 10, 1865, *Bengal Records*, p. 107.
2. Letter dated 23rd November 1865, from Acting Commissioner of Police to Secretary to Government, Madras, *Ibid*., p. 111.
3. Letter from Collector of Vizagapatam to the Acting Secretary, Board of Revenue, Madras, No. 899, dated 1st November, 1865, *Ibid*, p. 117.
4. *Bengal Records*, p. 137
5. *Ibid*., p. 139

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was taking place among the Mahomedans of the Wahabī sect in several districts of the Lower Provinces."[1] An extensive investigation was ordered which revealed that money collected for the *jihād* from the east was received by Mubārak ʿAlī, and then made over by him to one, Khurshed ʿAlī, who sent it to Hindustanī *mujāhidīn* on the Frontier. At Delhi, the house of one Umaid ʿAlī was searched where a large number of letters were found which showed that he was the principal agent of Mubārak ʿAlī at Delhi, with another person named Muhammad Amīn, alias ʿĀbīdullah alias Amīn-ud-dīn. The search of Umaid ʿAlī's house and his confession yielded important clues of the network of the organisation in the Punjab, North-Western Frontier and Bihar, and as a result thereof several persons in Maldah, Rajmahal, Patna, Gaya, ʿAlīpur, Murshidabad, Bhagalpur, Serampur and Rajshahi were arrested.[2] Reily was helped in unearthing the secret organisation by Ishree Prasad who worked, according to Reily, with "much zeal and intelligence." Both these officers, working deligently, found out how and through whom communications and funds were sent to the *mujāhidīn* in the Frontier. More stringent measures appear to have been taken to interdict the transfer of men and money to the battle-front for we find Reily recommending to his counterpart in another Province that "the village *chowkeedars* and the police should be directed to report to the Magistrates and District Superintendent of Police whenever any man is about to leave his native village either as a *Hadji* or for the West."[3]

Reily was put in special charge of the investigations and all district Police Officers were directed to co-operate

1. Letter from Secy. to Govt. Bengal to the Government of India, Home Deptt. No. 6051, dated November. 10, 1869, *Bengal Records*, p. 39.
2. Letter No. 2813 dated 22nd April, 1869, from Secretary to Government, Bengal to Secretary to Government of India, Home Department, and Umaid ʿAlī's statement, *Bengal Records*, pp. 42-45, 52-59.
3. Letter from the Dy. I. G. Police to the Inspector General of Police, Lower Provinces, No. 61, dated Feb. 19, 1869, *Bengal Records*, p. 72.

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with him fully. He deputed his extra-Assistant, Nobokisto Ghosh, in 1868, to make enquiries about the statements made by one ʿInāyatullah and to report what he could discover about Ibrāhīm Mandal of Islampore in Rajmahal.[1] Ghosh discovered that contributions were openly made in several villages contiguous to Kallea Chauk for the *jihād* against British. He managed to make his enquiries privately by posing himself off as a silk merchant, and reported the matter to O'Kinealy, then Officiating Magistrate of Maldah. The Magistrate obtained dipositions of sixteen persons and arrested eight suspects including Nazīr Sardār of Kazeegram, an active and prominent member of the movement, who realised contributions from the Muslims of the locality for the *jihād*. The evidence of the witnesses, examined by O'Kinealy, also implicated Ibrāhīm Mandal as the head of the centre, to whom Nazīr Sardār sent all sums of money collected by him Ghosh lost no time in arresting Ibrāhīm Mandal also, who, alongwith Nazīr Sardār was brought to trial in 1870. On his visit to Maldah, Reily found out that Maulvī Amīr-ud-dīn of Sandipa Narainpur was the most influential man, next only to Ibrāhīm Mandal, among the followers of the movement. Amīr-ud-dīn was arrested on 30th March 1869 for being engaged for years in collecting money, preaching sedition and sending recruits to join the *mujāhidīn* across the Frontier. Incidentally, there was some information to the effect that Amīr-ud-dīn was connected with the indigo dispute relating to the factories of an Englishman whose name was Grey. Reily, however, asserted that Amīr-ud-dīn was in no manner connected with the indigo disputes of Grey's factories.[2] Both Amīr-ud-dīn and Ibrāhīm Mandal were prosecuted and sentenced to transportation for life. Amīr-ud-dīn reached Andaman Islands in March 1872, but Ibrāhīm Mandal could not somehow be shipped to the

1. J. H. Reily's letter No. 319, dated November 2, 1869, to the Inspector General of Police, Lower provinces, *Bengal Records*, p. 317-20.
2. Reily's letter No. 13 Ct, dated 16th April, 1869, to the Inspector General, Lower Provinces ; *Bengal Records*, pp. 350-366.

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Island. Both were released with other convicts in 1883.[1] The papers produced by the prosecution counsel in these cases show that the *jihād* campaign had become widespread throughout Bengal, especially in the districts of Dinajpur, Maldah, Rajshahi, Murshidabad, Nadia, Burdwan, Jessore, Calcutta and 24 Parganas. In these districts a net-work of compact organisation had sprung up which recruited fighters and collected subscription for the *jihād* in the North-West Frontier. The exact number of the Bengali Muslims who participated in the *jihād* against the British at any given time could not be ascertained but, according to Hunter, on one occasion, 430 *mujāhidīn* manned one particular outpost. All of them had been sent by Āmīr-ud-dīn and formed 10 per cent of the total fighting strength of the *mujāhidīn* at that time.[2]

Reily now turned his attention to Patna and Dinapur, both of which were important centres of the *jihād* movement. His enquiries revealed that one Hājī Dīn Muḥammad, a resident of Dinapur, who had been posted at Rawalpindi by Maulānā ʿAbdullah for transmission of money across the Frontier, corresponded with another person, Pīr Muhammad of Orderly Bazar, Ḍinapur. He applied to Government for the arrest of Pīr Muhammad under Bengal Regulations III of 1818. Government were first hesitant to accord permission, but on the report of the Magistrate of Patna, that Pīr Muhammad was suspected of sedition in 1857 and was the father-in-law of Tabārak ʿAlī, son of Mubārak ʿAlī, both of whom were prominent members of the *jihād* movement, a warrant for his arrest was issued. Pīr Muhammad was arrested on 14th June, 1869 and lodged in Digha Jail. Hājī Dīn Muhammad, too, was arrested, shortly after this, on his arrival at Dinapur to step up the work relating to collection of funds. However, he jumped from the running train and escaped while being taken to Delhi under an escort of two constables.[3]

1. *Hindustān ki Pahli Islāmī Tahrik*, pp. 129-30
2. *Indian Musalmān*, p. 81
3. *Wahābī Movement in India*, pp. 289-90

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The evidences collected in regard to Pīr Muhammad involved, besides Hāji Dīn Muhammad, five more persons, *viz.* Amīr Khān, Hashmatdād Khān, Mubārak ʿAlī, his son, Tabārak ʿAlī and Amīn-ud-dīn. Mubārak ʿAlī, had headed the organisation after the arrest of Ahmadullah while his son, Tabārak ʿAlī had been in the Frontier with Maulānā ʿAbdullah during the Ambeyla Campaign. Pīr Muhammad, Dīn Muhammad and Amīn-ud-din were charged with helping the *mujāhidīn* for conducting war against the Queen. But, the most eminent among the persons arrested was Amīr Khān, a wealthy hide merchant of Calcutta whose business establishments were at Bhagalpūr, Terbool, Muzaffarpūr and Patna. Hashmatdād Khān was a partner in the firm of Amīr Khān. Both of them were reported to have stood surety at the time when the ʿAlī brothers were asked to execute bonds of good behaviour on return from Hazārā. Some more incriminating evidence was unearthed during the course of investigations. Amīr Khān was arrested on the 10th July, 1869, when he was 75 years of age and at once sent to a Gaya jail. He was, however, taken back to Calcutta shortly afterwards and put into the ʿAlīpūr jail on the intervention of an Englishman named A. T. T. Peterson. Hashmatdād Khān was also arrested at Calcutta on 12th July 1869. Under the Preamble of Bengal Regulations III of 1818, the persons placed under personal restraint, otherwise than in pursuance of some judicial proceedings, were required to be informed of the grounds of such detention, but the persons arrested in this case were not afforded this opportunity for more than six months, nor was the Viceroy informed of the detentions as required by the law.[1] The Habeas Corpus petitions of Amīr Khān and Hashmatdād Khān were also rejected. Ultimately, Hashmatdād Khān and Pīr Muhammad were acquitted on 4th July 1871, while the remaining persons were sentenced to transporation for life and confiscation of their immovable properties. Amīr Khān and Mubārak ʿAlī were, on reconsideration, not sent to Andaman Islands, and the former was released after 10

1. *The Muslims of British India*, p. 84

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years in 1878. Mubārak ʿAlī died as a result of severe beating in the prison.[1]

In September, 1869 Reily had succeeded in apprehending a man named Murtaza, a resident of Malda, who had been for some time with the *mujāhidīn* in the Frontier. Reily was able to spot with his help most of the active workers of the organisation sustaining its supply line to the Frontier, through the Punjab. Another important witness who helped Reily to lay his hands on trustworthy agents of the *mujāhidīn* and their patrons was ʿAbdullah belonging to Hājīpur. Following the clues provided by Murtaza and ʿAbdullah, Police investigations were carried on vigorously all over the country during 1869 and 1870, which resulted in hundreds of arrests.[2] Hunter later depicted this drama of witch-hunting in his inimitable florid rhetoric:

> The last five years have brought forth five great State trials in districts many hundred miles apart, but all connected with the self-same conspiracy. Indeed, each case seems inevitably to give rise to a whole crop of others, and it is impossible to unearth a traitor in one Province without coming on subterraneous passages leading to half a dozen nests of treason in distant parts of the country.[3]

Thus, the vast resources of the most powerful empire of the day succeeded by the end of 1870 in getting a stranglehold on almost all the prominent leaders and active workers of the organisation and completely smashed the supply line to the *mujāhidīn* across the Frontier.

On 20th September, 1871, Chief Justice Norman (1819-71) of the Calcutta High Court, who had rejected the Habeas Corpus petition of Amīr Khān was knifed by ʿAbdullah, a Punjabi youth. Justice Norman was believed to be a supporter of the executive against the Wahābīs. A few months later, in February 1872, the Viceroy, Lord Mayo (1822-72) was also assassinated by a Pathan prisoner, Sher ʿAlī in the Andamans. The official records relating to the assassination of Lord Mayo show some circumstantial

1. *Mehr*, Vol. IV, pp. 416-425 ; *Indian Wahābī Movement*, pp. 290-305
2. *Wahābī Movement in India*, pp. 293-300
3. *Indian Musalmān*, p. 105.

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evidence, but nothing pointing out a direct 'Wahābī' complicity in the deed.[1] However, the official circles appeared to believe that the Muslims, particularly the so-called Wahābīs, were on a collusion course.

Wahābī prisoners in Andaman and their sympathisers in India were again the particular object of revenge and brutalities of the British officials, specially the Bengal Civil Service, which was familiar with the anti-British nature of the movement.[2] Isharee Prasad rushed to Andaman Islands alongwith the Police Commissioner of Calcutta to find out the complicity of the Wahābīs in these murders.[3] Another wave of conviction and deportations of the orthodox Muslims who were invariably looked upon by the officials as belonging to the Saiyid's reformist movement, was relentlessly pursued by the officials to cripple the organisation already weakened and without any leader left to guide its followers.

Nevertheless, persecution alone would not have succeeded in breaking the stronghold of the Saiyid's call for *jihād* and reform on the minds of Muslim masses. More than representing an expression of militant Islam, his message propagated a powerful ideology, enchanting and life-giving, that could be fought successfully only on the intellectual plane. Hunter had suggested two courses for it, and both were adopted in the post-1870 period. Hunter believed that "an established government has always the worldly minded on its side."[4] He had advised the Government of India to "segregate the party of sedition in a nobler way — by detaching from it the sympathies of the general Muhammedan community."[5] We have already discussed in some detail how *Fatāwā* were obtained to declare India a *dār-ul-aman* and what efforts were made to denigrate the so-called Wahābīs as detractors of the true

1. *The Muslims of British India*, p. 84
2. *Tawārikh-i-ʿAjīb*, p. 73
3. *Wahābī Movement in India*, pp. 256-57
4. *Indian Musalmān* ; p. 79
5. *Ibid.*

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faith. Hunter was indeed prophetic in his assessment for "men of inert convictions and of some property" zest-fully took up the lucrative pastime of "exposing" the Wahābīs and excluding them from Islam.

Another proposal made by Hunter was that the British Government :

> should develop a rising generation of Muhammedans, no longer learned in their narrow learning, nor imbibed solely with the bitter doctrines of their medieval law, but tinctured with the sober and genial knowledge of the West. At the same time they would have a sufficient acquaintance with their religious code to command the respect of their own community, while an English training would secure them an entry into the lucrative walks of life.[1]

Opposition to the western education by the religious-minded Muslims was not entirely unjustified, nor was it a product of their narrow-mindedness, as some people are apt to believe. The missionary schools started before 1857 openly talked of proselytizing all Indians, taught the principles of Christian faith, insulted the religious personages of other faiths in violent and unmeasured language, and Government officials required their subordinates to listen to these discourses.[2] Even Hunter believed that English education would be the first step towards weaning the Muslims away from Islam to a higher level of belief i. e. Christianity. In the English medium schools first opened in 1830, Bible and Christian teaching were given a commanding place in the curriculum. Christian missionaries like Dr. Alexander Duff distinctly influenced the shaping of the famous (Educational) Despatch of 1852, which aimed at the compulsory teaching of Bible in all Government and aided schools.[3] The schools started by the Church Missionary Society in the Punjab had resulted in significant conversion of Indians to Christianity. True, this did not remain for long the official policy, nor did the Muslims lose their souls to the Western education. But the introduction of Western system of education did pay rich dividends to the British

1. Skrine, *Life of Sir Willian Wilson Hunter*, p. 199
2. *Asbāb Baghāwat-i-Hind*, pp. 9-11
3. J. Richter, *A History of Missions in India*, pp. 182-184

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rulers for it paved the way for a reconcillation between them and their estranged Muslim subjects. It brought about a *modus vivendi* when the passions had been raised to the highest pitch. It is not that only the new class of Muslims educated in Western arts and sciences—numerous, growing and influential—came to terms with the British rulers of India; even the *Ulamā*, antipathetic to everything Western, fearing Muslim's intellectual capitulation to the West, reconciled themselves to the growing trend of Muslim public opinion. The classes receiving education in the traditional religious curriculum continued to align themselves with the forces working for the emancipation of India, but the significant change discernible in their attitude was that they began to realise the need of accepting British pensions and employment and the learning of English so long it did no harm to Islam.[1] It was, in this way, through persecution tempered with persuasion that the great movement of the Saiyid was undermined both from within and without and gradually it came to be regarded as a spent-up force.

1. *Majmuᶜa-i-Fatāwā*, Fatāwā of Maulānā ᶜAbdul Hai Firangi Mahli, pp. 179, 219-29, 233.

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Twenty-three

# Character and Achievements

TALL, fair and strongly built, with close-knit eyebrows, broad forehead, thick beard and of pleasing countenance,[1] Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was utterly simple in his manners and transparently honest in his dealings. Decorous and contemplative by disposition and eloquent in speech, he had a warmth of spirit that inspired everyone who came in contact with him with a feeling of love and respect for him. Himself gulleless, he never expected and seldom saw duplicity in others—a weakness of which people took advantage sometimes; but, his unaffected simplicity was matched by an unbounded ambition—an ambition to reform and renovate, revive and glorify Islam—which nothing or nobody could bilk or balk. The ultimate aim of his endeavours, as he explained in his letters,[2] was to establish a model Islamic State which could unite all the Muslim States from Afghānistān to Central Asia.

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd's initial progress through life seems to suggest to a modern writer 'significant parallels' with the life of the Prophet of Islam. Writes Dr. Hardy: "Both were men of action rather than men of pen; both migrated with

1. *Sawāneh Ahmadi*, p. 4
2. *Maktūbāt*; Bellew, p. 84

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faithful followers from an unpromising to a more promising locale; both had to work with unruly tribesmen and both struggled to establish an Islamic state on the fringe of powerful empires by defying the local powers by force."[1] For all that, however, it is not sufficient to view the Saiyid's reformatory endeavour, from the outside, merely to discover 'structural similarities' between his career and that of the Prophet. One must view him also, from within, from the Islamic view-point, which requires all Muslims to follow the Prophet as closely as possible, in order to see how his Islamic consciousness had patterned his conduct and behaviour. The Prophet came to expound, confirm and renew the eternal message of God and to show the way how to live up to those ideals through his life and sufferings and triumphs.

If one were to epitomise the characteristics which issue forth from the personality of the Prophet, these would be summed up as absolute reliance on God, moderation, courage, magnanimity, nobility and serenity. Let us see how far Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd reflected these qualities of the Prophet, whom, like every other Muslim, he must have held as the model of Perfect Man.

The first and foremost characteristic of the Prophet of Islam, or, in truth and reality, of every apostle of God is his absolute reliance on God. It has become difficult for most of us today to grasp the significance of *tawwakkul* or confidence in God, *tafwīz* or resignation, *zuhd fi'd-duniyā* or renunciation of the world, *qanā'ah* or contentment and *sabr* or patience in adversity which emanate from the core of one's heart having a living faith in the Cause of all causes. The interdependence of cause and effect normally leads man to believe in the universal causative origin of all phenomena. Gradually, he comes to have faith only in the objective existence of external world and to deny the existence of the Creator and the Lord of the Universe. The prophets, on the other side, proceed from the principle that apart from causes and effects, physical laws, matter,

1. *The Muslims of British India*, p. 52

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substance and properties, there is the transcendental, omnipotent Power that pre-determines every cause and effect, and they accordingly teach us to pin our faith in that Primal Cause. They in fact come as the teachers of humanity to demonstrate by their belief and actions that every physical phenomenon, event and incident depends wholly on the will and pleasure of God Almighty, Who brings into existence what He wills with or without a primordial cause. This is one great principle taught by every prophet of God and is discernible *par excellence* in the life and teachings of the Prophet of Islam. That is why we see all men of God resigned to the will of God, placing all their hopes in Him alone. Saiyid Mohammad ʿAlī, the author of *Makhzan-i-Aḥmadī*, has given a graphic description of the serene contentment of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd during the period of his stay at Rae Bareli in extreme frugal circumstances, but nothing better illustrates his absolute confidence in God than the journeys undertaken by him for the *haj* pilgrimage and to the Frontier. On the former occasion he had set out with hundreds of his followers without a single shell to meet the journey's expenses, while on the latter occasion when he went ahead to launch the *jihād* against a powerful kingdom, he had only five thousand rupees for five hundred men who had to cover 2,400 kilometres of arid deserts and mountains! A man who could undertake such hazards could never be called a quietist, as the *mutawwakkalīn*[1] are very often presented these days. Nor the Saiyid's efforts to make use of the means which God has provided impaired his trust in God's providence. His heart having been revivified and illuminated by the love of God, he had realised the triviality of the human before the Divine; subdued the pride of ego, expelled every worldly desire from his heart and learnt to depend on God with confidence. And it was this confidence in God, a fruit of true faith, which had enabled him to declare: "Even if we were in the deserts of Sind or Arabia where nothing is to be had at all, and all the people of the world

1. Pl. of *mutawwakkil*, i. e. one who has complete trust in God

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were with us, our Lord shall verily arrange to send us food even there."

Moderation marks the harmony of soul which guides a man to take the middle course and avoid extremes, teaches him to be temperate in conduct and enables him to establish equilibrium between different tendencies present in him. It illuminates the most worthy course to be adopted in all fields of human activity, be it personal dealings or social, economic or political decisions one has to take. Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl, the great renovator and martyr,[1] as Abul Kalām Āzād calls him, testifies to this quality of the Saiyid in these words: "Although very many people have taken to the right path of virtue, but none has betaken the way of life I want; and it is the way between excess and frugality, which I find in the followers of the Saiyid."[2] Maulvī ʿInāyat ʿAlī brought this characteristic of the Saiyid into focus when he said: "One has to have a sound sense and a little knowledge of the Prophet's Traditions to appreciate the rank and worth of the Saiyid. The saints so often reflect the characteristics of different prophets of God but my mentor has been bestowed the qualities of the Prophet of Islam while his followers blend the characteristics of the Prophet's companions. This is why they come to possess an affectionate regard for the Prophet and a breathless anxiety for the promotion of his religion."[3] Moderation also includes abstemiousness, self-denial and self-restraint of which several instances could be found in his life. They show how the Saiyid spent weeks after weeks in fasting and frugal circumstances cheerfully. Contemplative by nature, the Saiyid never entertained any political or worldly ambition whatsoever.

The whole life of the Saiyid is a beacon of the firmness of his mind and enduring courage: his readiness to face dangers signifies his unbroken nerve which helped him to

1. *Tazkirah*, p. 270
2. *Manzooratus Soʿāda*
3. *Risālah Dʿawat* (included in *Rasāʾil Tisʿah*), p. 64

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emerge from perilous situations undefeated, unsubdued In every battle he was present, he took the direction in his hand and fought with dauntless courage. In the battle of Māyār when the enemy charged shouting: "Where is Saiyid! Where is Saiyid!" he remained in the forefront leading his men and pressing the attack on the enemy with reckless chivalry. He often used to tell his companions that it was as easy for him to die as to break a piece of straw. Nawāb Wazīr-ud-daula writes in *Wasāyah*: "When cannon balls and bullets showered all round like rain-drops, the Saiyid remained standing in the battlefield with a smile on his lips, encouraging his companions how to fend off the assault of the enemy. During bloody embroilments when the courage of the doughty warriors failed them, the Saiyid never showed the least trace of losing his nerves."[1] In Amb he rushed to rescue certain persons from the debris of a fallen turret when none dared to go beneath the turret for a part of it still hanged dangerously.

The Saiyid possessed the quality of magnanimity in fullness. Giving away of whatever he had at hand freely, heartily and self-sacrificingly signifies that he possessed in abundance the qualities worthy of noble birth. Following in the footsteps of the Prophet, the Saiyid never turned down the request of anybody. Once he was presented with a costly sword by Sheikh Ghulām ʿAlī who said that even the Nawāb of Oudh would not have a blade so priceless. A Pathān from Rāmpūr who happened to be present on the occasion asked for the sword, and the Saiyid atonce gave it to him. Sultān Muhammad Khān had agreed to pay 40,000 rupees as indemnity of war, but the Saiyid gave up the claim on the first meeting with the Khān although he had to borrow money from the Hindu bankers for feeding his troops. The magnanimity of soul always rises above all that is poor, mean and weak and every feeling pertaining to resentment caused by injury or insult to one's own self. Of these we find numerous examples in the Saiyid's life. On

1. *Wasāyah*, Vol. II, p. 75

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numerous occasions he forgave the enemy spies, sent back his enemies laden with gifts and saved those who had administered poison to him from the wrath of his followers.

It is this magnanimity making its appearance with grandeur and beauty that is known as nobility. We have seen how Pā'inda Khān Tanāolī laid a trap to capture the Saiyid but started professing allegiance to him when his ruse was exposed. And, the Saiyid forgave him promptly. Nowhere is the nobility and generosity of the Saiyid better exemplified than on the occasion of his triumphant entry into Peshāwar. Sultān Muhammad Khān had taken oath from his troops, in the battle of Māyār, to kill the Saiyid. Without any feeling of rancor or revenge in his heart, the Saiyid not only pardoned Sultān Muhammad Khān but also reinstated him as the Governor of Peshāwar.

Serenity of the Saiyid expressed itself in his piety, his inward attachment to God. This is the characteristic which made him gentle, genial and agreeable. His serene spirit dwelt as if in the clean upper air, above all storm and shadow.

The peace of heart that 'passeth all understanding' is the reward of absolute subservience to the Will of God and love of the Prophet. The Saiyid once said to Nawāb Wazīr-ud-Daula : "For a long time I have not done anything : neither I went anywhere nor came ; neither I walked nor sat ; neither was I annoyed nor amused except for the pleasure of God. I did nothing at all to gratify my own self or for my own entertainment."[1] On another occasion the Saiyid explained the distinguishing feature of his mystic order, the *Tarīqah-i-Muhammadīya*, in these words : "Whereas other spiritual orders bear a relationship with the esoteric dimension of prophethood, the aides of the *Tarīqah* I teach require the traveller of spirit to take his food, put on clothes, marry, sleep, or else engage himself in a business, cultivation or employment, but with the intention of following the way of the Prophet. This *Tarīqah* or spiritual order links

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1. *Wasāyah*, Quoted from *Sīrat Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, Vol. II, p. 511

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the traveller explicitly with the Prophet."[1] The love of God and the Prophet had so overtaken his self that he never countenanced any innovation or deviation from the teachings of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* howsoever upheld it was by a prevalent custom or the practice of any learned or pious soul. The oath which the Saiyid administered to his disciples while initiating them into his spiritual order invariably required a solemn promise to be made to forswear every departure from the true faith.

The all-consuming love of God had detached the Saiyid's soul from all wordly desires and affections. But, unlike many other *sufīs* to whom the mystic communion with God meant mortification of the will-to-live and to renounce all aims at improvement of the conditions of life of the world, the Saiyid realised the subtle relationship between the inward and the outward aspects of love-divine. He knew that submergence in the love of God did not mean freedom from function nor was it tantamount to finding oneself unable to discharge one's social responsibilities or to lack the grit to be a leader, or *imām* or to feel unable to render his friends and relations their dues. To him the mystic experience of tearing the human veils for inward flight of spirit to its source was dependent on the obedience of the commands of God which find an outward expression in the laws of the *sharī'ah*. And, to this end he devoted his life, preaching submission to the commandments of God in every sphere of human behaviour, giving up every habit or custom not upheld by the Law of God and actively striving against everything that negated the Truth and disrupted the harmony of soul.

Judged by his personal magnetism and the religious ferment bestirred amongst the masses, there would be few religious teachers who could claim to enjoy the same popular regard as the Saiyid did. His call for repentance of the past misdeeds and betaking the righteous path

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1. *Kitāb Dāf'e-ul-Fasād-wa-Naf'e-ul-'Ibād*, quoted from *Sīrat Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, Vol. II, p. 512

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summoned up such a tremendous religious emotion in the populace that on several occasions as many as ten thousand persons offered themselves for *bi'at* on his hands on a single day. More than three million persons got themselves initiated in the Saiyid's spiritual order, claims Maulvī Wilāyat ' Alī, during his missionary tours, while another hundred thousand men and women were enlisted by him as his disciples during the *haj* pilgrimage.[1] The number of such persons would run into crores, says 'Abdul Ahad, if all the people entering his spiritual fold through the efforts of his spiritual successors were also taken into account.[2] Thousands among the novitiates belonged to nobility or were noted scholars of the time. "A sign of God he was," says Nawāb Siddīq Hasan Khān of Bhopal, a noted Arābist and scholar, "in guiding the people on the right path and making their hearts incline towards God. A large number of these became pure-hearted saints through the potent influence exerted by him, while his spiritual successors sweeped the country clean of all innovations and polytheistic thoughts and practices..... In short, there was none so godly and perfect of spirit in the whole world in those days, nor was there any mystic or religious scholar who exerted such a salutary influence even over one tenth of the people as he did."[3] Innumerable persons taking oath of fealty to him gave up vocations not approved by by the *Sharī'ah* as 'lawful', took to prayers and litanies and committed the Qur'ān to memory, constructed new mosques, opened a chain of theological seminaries all over the country and gave up numerous vain ceremonies and financially ruinous customs. The popular upsurge for reform and renovation of the Muslim society gained such a strength that a number of Indian ruling chiefs like the Regent Begum of Bhopal and Mubāriz-ud-daula of Deccan tried to emulate the strictness of the Chief of Tonk in their own dominions.[4]

1. *Risālah D'awat*, p. 65
2. *Sawāneh Ahmadī*
3. *Tiasār-o-Juyi d il-Ahrār*, pp. 109-110
4. *Cunningham*, p. 192

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The call of the Saiyid was not novel, but the way it engaged the attention of the masses, enthralled and animated them to devote their life for a higher cause was unparalleled in the country. There had been many mystics who had had hundreds of thousand followers and spiritual successors in every part of the country, but none had built up an enduring organisation to keep a watch over the manners and morals of all the persons taking a *bi'at* to them, nor had anybody else created an enthusiasm strong enough to make thousands leave their hearth and home for the service of God. With rare insight and superb qualities of leadership, he inspired all the diverse elements gathered round him for the resurgence of Islam in India. He allotted, to each of his followers, a task suited to his ability and inclination. To the Nawāb Wazīr-ud-daula, the Chief of Tonk, he instructed to rule in accordance with the dictates of the *Shari'ah* for the well-being of his subjects and to afford assistance for the conduct of holy war. Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl and Maulānā 'Abdul Ha'ī, the two paragons among scholars of the day, were asked to preach the path of righteousness through their writings and speeches. He did not fail to discern the organising capacity of Maulvī Wilāyat 'Alī, Maulvī 'Ināyat 'Alī, Muhammad 'Alī Rāmpūrī and a host of his other followers whom he sent to disseminate his message in the far flung corners of the country. He revived the performance of *haj*, which had fallen into desuetude and removed the stigma attached to the re-marriage of widows by his personal example. He saw clearly the weaknesses of the Muslim society and took appropriate steps to prepare the ground for raising a strong movement of reformation of the religious, moral and social affairs of the people. Wherever his message of reform reached, the lives of the people were changed so completely that, according to the testimony of Cunningham, "even the tailors of Delhi were moved to scrupulously return remanents of cloth to their employers."[1]

1. *Cunningham*, p. 192

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The sense of identity imparted to the Indian Muslims by the reformatory endeavours of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was a still greater achievement to his credit. The Muslim nobility coming from abroad had mostly settled down in the towns, and had in due course fallen a prey to many vices that invariably accompany power and pelf. The vast majority of Indian Muslims spread in every nook and corner of the country owned their accession to Islam to the *sūfī* mystics, and to these pure-hearted souls these Muslims turned for their religious, moral and spiritual guidance. These neo-Muslims abandoned their old habits and social customs gradually by imitating the ways of their spiritual mentors. But, by the time the rule of the Moghuls was fully established in India the mystic orders had fallen into decay. Ostentatious celebration of the death-anniversaries of departed *sheikhs*, seeking of intercession at their tombs and devotional practices in the honour of *walīs* and *pīrs* had come to be accepted as the common features of Indian Islam. In the rural areas consultation with the hedge priests, vegetarianism, aversion to re-marriage of widows and even the worship of local deities had hastened the process of de-Islamisation, and at many places only the dissimilar names of Muslims and non-Muslims indicated the difference between the two. Illiterate and misguided *sūfis*, misrepresenting the teachings of the earlier mystics were ever willing to condescend upon every departure from the true faith through their distorted representation of pantheistic monism. It was at this time that the Saiyid raised his voice for rejecting impious traditions of the conventional faith in favour of early Islam as taught by the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*. His teachings demanding absolute loyalty to God did not merely help to formulate intellectual position in relation to the strict monotheism of Islam but also imparted a realisation that true faith should be reflected in social life of the individual as well as that of the community at large. This realisation, this sense of Muslim identity, has ever since persisted in the sphere of individual and social life of the Muslims of this sub-continent. It is still their most cherished possession—a touchstone for

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deciding the soundness and acceptability of every social, religious, economic, cultural or political activity. It is, however, noteworthy that the Saiyid's call meant neither Muslim exclusiveness nor the spiritedness of his followers in the social and religious fields ever gave rise to any conflict of communal interests during half a century of their struggle, first, against the Sikh Raj and then against the British rule. The voluminous mass of letters written by the Saiyid and Shāh Muhammad Ismaʿīl's writings do not contain even a hostile reference towards the Hindus whose sympathy and, sometimes, active support, was enjoyed by the *jihād* movement. The Saiyid's message, in effect, called for freedom for the expression of Muslims' religious personality and removal of every social corruption that impeded its way and distorted its image.

The attainments of the organisation stemming from the Saiyid also deserve to be mentioned here. It was the first well-knit mass organisation with its branches spread all over the country, struggling for socio-political reform. Many of the tactics initiated by it were subsequently adopted by political parties working for India's emancipation from the British rule. "The passive non-co-operation, the Panchayati system, the social boycott of 'loyalist' elements—*the hukka pani bund*, as Reily puts it—all these were perfected into powerful methods of political agitation during the course of struggle for freedom, but it should be remembered that they had their beginnings under the Wahābīs,"[1] according to Qayamuddin Ahmad. The same writer adds: "The unobtrusive and effective method of collection of funds evolved by the Wahābīs was specially cited as a model by Surendranath Banerjee in a public speech, and recommended for adoption. The highly secret and complex Wahābī organisation for relay of vital information and transmission of men and money from all over the country appears to be strikingly modern and effective."[2]

1. *Indian Wahābī Movement*, p. 337
2. *Ibid*, p. 337

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The *jihād* movement had, however, the reawakening of the Muslim masses from their deep slumber as its chief objective. This it performed admirably at a time when the Muslims of India seemed to have no future at all. In fact, the widespread intellectual ferment and quickened vitality of the masses for participation in the *jihād* on the Frontier, would have never been possible without restoring the shattered self-confidence of the Indian Muslims, but this is a topic that needs a fuller and separate study.

However, eclipse of the Saiyid's *jihād* movement as an organised party from the political field of India towards the end of the third quarter of the last century made almost every historian of the pre-independence era to assume that the fierce enthusiasm of the *mujāhidīn* burnt itself out as quickly as straw. A number of studies, however, undertaken recently by competent scholars have tended to show that the impetus and ideals of the movement survived to make an important contribution to the resurgence of a dynamic Islam later on in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. Nevertheless, a question very often raised is why the martial exploits of the movement could not succeed in its initial stages despite such an upsurge of enthusiastic zeal as well as the sincerity and chivalrous sacrifices of the *mujāhidīn* and their leaders.

The Saiyid commenced his reformatory endeavours on returning to Delhi from Amīr Khān by the middle of 1818 and left for the Frontier in January 1826. Of these seven and a half years, about three years were spent in the performance of the *hāj*, and thus he got less than five years to preach his message of reform and *jihād* in India. During this period he did not stay for a long time at any particular place, except at his home in Rae Bareli where he returned after his frequent missionary tours. As these tours were undertaken during a time when the means of communications had not opened up the interior of the country, the Saiyid would not have been able to carry his message to the people living far away from the line of his routes. He had, thus, to leave the follow-up work to the persons appointed by him as his

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*khalifāhs* or spiritual successors. His success in building up a strong revivalist movement within such an extremely short period speaks volumes of his captivating influence and the sincerity of his deputies, yet, the period of his missionary activities was, in any case, much too short to build up a full-fledged organisation complete with a supply line capable of constant flow of men and material to the front of hostilities lying through a circuitous route over deserts and mountains covering about 2,400 kilometres. This inevitably resulted in shortage of adequate resources and fighting personnel whose effective strength remained round about a thousand Hindustānī *mujāhīdīn*, the core of the force, throughout the life-time of the Saiyid. The subsequent events show that this supply line was built up after the movement had spread to every nook and corner of the country, but by that time the Saiyid was no more alive to guide the movement. It may be asked why the Saiyid did not wait to build up the movement in India before migrating to the Frontier. But, the question does not arise at all, for the events were moving so fast and the calamity befalling the Muslims of the Punjab was so severe, so heart-rending that no well-meaning person, much less a kind-hearted man like the Saiyid, could have postponed the action for deliverance of Muslims in the Punjab for better times. The call was insistent and compelling, and had to be responded instantly at all costs, or given up altogether.

We have already discussed earlier the question relating to the choice of the Frontier for engaging in hostilities against the Punjab. There was, of a fact, no other place, either in British India, Sind or Afghānistān where the Saiyid could go for joining battle with Ranjīt Singh. Doubts have been raised that probably the Saiyid "harboured the misunderstanding that since the people of the Frontier region were Muslims and had been fed up with the non-Muslim domination they would eagerly welcome the Islamic State."[1] For the tribesmen of the Frontier have ever been known for their valour and religious zeal, there may be a quantum of truth

1. *A Short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam*, p. 109

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in this presumption ; yet, the question can arise only if we ignore the fact that the Saiyid had no alternative place to wage war against Ranjīt Singh. The Saiyid had really no other choice. Another factor normally ignored in considering the Saiyid's choice of the Frontier for starting the *jihād* is that he had been advised to go there by the Pathāns who had come down to India not in the distant past. Many of them still had kinsmen in the Frontier, but they were, almost without any exception, fond of liberty, faithful, hospitable, brave, hardy and sincere. Nobody who had had dealings with them could have visualised that their brethren in the rugged hills were disposed, by their upbringing and traditions, to intrigue and deceit. Nevertheless, the Saiyid did whatever was possible for the moral and religious uplift of the tribesmen but as the critics of the Saiyid agree these people were simply "not capable of sustaining caliphate."[1] The Saiyid never lost sight of the fundamental aim of his whole endeavour, which was nothing but the integration of the life of his followers with the eternal law of God, and *jihād* or struggle for the supremacy of the Truth, was but one aspect of it. Of a fact, we can see numerous examples of his earnestness in this regard during the stresses and strains of his stay in the Frontier. He never made any compromise with his principles for the sake of expediency; very often he took decisions apparently detrimental to his own interests; and repeatedly pardoned the recalcitrant and obdurate elements where the British succeeded later on by a tough policy of swift retaliation and brutal chastisement.

The tribesmen were, to be sure, traditionally attached to strong local or tribal loyalties. There were intense clanish sentiments of the Mohmands, Yūsufzaʾīs, Tanāolīs and the like, with a marked pride of the clan to which one belonged. Islam, in many respects, was hostile to these racial sentiments. Its insistence upon the brotherhood of all believers was as much antagonistic to these tribal sentiments and loyalties as was the Islam's political ideal of *Imāmat* or universal democratic commonwealth against every

1. *A Short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam*, p. 109

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form of injustice, exploitation and despotic rule. *Biʿat-Imāmat* and enforcement of *Sharīʿah* had made the common man realise the true nature and importance of these Islamic ideals, but it always takes a long time for any new idea to be genuinely accepted by the masses. And only when an idea has been thus accepted, does it form the basis of practical conduct of any people. Such a transformation is probably not the work of a few years but a life-long task, if not more. In fine, the tribal and racial sentiments permeated the popular consciousness of the tribesmen and their attitudes and behaviours were conditioned, not by what they considered to be just and correct, but by what they found to be more practicable and advantageous.

The long-standing traditions of vendetta amongst the tribesmen did not allow them to unite even in times of crisis; the avarice and short-sightedness of their *maliks* and *khāns* had made them blind to higher and nobler ends; their contempt for restraint of any kind incited them to flout every law, even if it be the Law of God; their seclusion in the difficult and rugged hills urged them to distrust every foreigner; and the tribal way of warfare had taught them to fight gallantly in brief engagements and leave the battlefield as soon as the encounter seemed to fail or a booty was in sight. This was the human material the Saiyid had to lean upon, but in spite of all the misanthrophy of the tribesmen he might have succeeded in his endeavour if the tribesmen had not one more failing—perhaps, the greatest vice of man. And, this was the tradition of treachery, of taking advantage of the friend as well as enemy, howsoever meanly. Some of their proverbs ran : "Keep a cousin poor, but use him" and "speak good words to an enemy very softly; gradually destroy him root and branch." Perhaps few instances of such perfidious behaviour as the betrayal of Yār Muhammad Khān or the conspiracy of Sultān Muhammad Khān and the Samah chiefs like Fateh Khān of Panjtār can be found in the annals of any other people. Even the unparalleled piety of the *mujāhidīn*, many of whom were replica of the Prophet's companions, had failed to arouse in them the feelings of honesty, sincerity and fear of God.

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For all one knows, the brief span of life allowed by the Providence to the Saiyid appears to have been the most appropriate time for the success of the *jihād* movement. Had the Saiyid succeeded in gaining control over the Punjab, and this was by no means impossible, the *mujāhidīn* would have got the time and resources to build up adequate strength to fight their way into liberating the remaining part of the country from the clutches of the rising power of the British. Despite all the swift strides made by the Englishmen in the fields of arts and sciences, the Indian Muslims had not reconciled themselves to the supremacy of British arms or their technique or culture during the first half of the nineteenth century. The traders coming across the seven seas had been able to extend their dominion in India not because of the supremacy of their arms but owing to the weakness of the Indian princes and the absence of a national sense and patriotic zeal among the inhabitants of this country. And, when the British came across the first outburst of such a righteous indignation in 1857, they succeeded in suppressing it because the Punjab was with them, and the rebellion was neither country-wide nor well-coordinated. But, after the failure of the uprising, the position had entirely changed. The *mujāhidīn* had lost the plains to which they could look forward for consolidation of their power before crossing swords with the British. Then, they had no other place except the rugged hills to fight an uneven combat with a superior power, and with an undependable ally by their side. Within the country, too, the savage suppression of the rebellion and the dire vengeance befalling the Muslims had left them dazed and disheartened. The defeat and humiliation had sapped their self-confidence—the confidence in the superiority of their own culture. Historians have overlooked the fact that any further effort to drive out the British from India was unthinkable for a dejected and disheartened people without bringing forth a fresh wave of self-confidence and enthusiasm among the masses on a wide scale. This, the *jihād* movement did in an unbelievably short period and caravans after caravans began to

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move towards the Frontier. It cannot be denied that the *mujāhidīn* now fought a losing battle, as the British had by then consolidated their hold over India and their military prowess had increased manifold as compared to the pre-mutiny period. Nevertheless, the grit of the *mujāhidīn*, their valour, their absolute faith in the righteousness of their cause and their sincerity of purpose urged them to continue their efforts, at all cost, under the most adverse circumstances. Even if they were unsuccessful in achieving their ends the sacrifices undergone by them preserved their cause from oblivion, and its spirit informed every social, cultural, religious and political movement of the later-day Indian Muslims.

It would, thus, be erroneous to bring in a verdict on the Saiyid's reformatory movement merely by the token of success or failure of his *jihād* in the Frontier, for the Saiyid never visualised religious strength of Islam in terms of its political success alone. That would be a too materialistic interpretation of his movement and achievements. Had that been the ultimate object of the Saiyid, he would not have launched his *jihād* movement over the heads of the then Muslim rulers nor demanded moral and spiritual purification of the participants in his movement as a primary condition. He invited the rulers, no doubt, to join his movement in the same way as he summoned the laity, but on his own terms—full and complete acceptance of Islam. The Saiyid saw, and saw much deeply, the malaise of Muslim society of his time ; he analysed and identified the causes of its latitudinarianism, its lethargic passivity and its disunity as well as the external encroachment threatening its existence ; and he reacted against the deterioration with a prodigious energy capable of transferring itself to the multitudes and creating in them a determination to redress those wrongs. The Saiyid knew that the true faith must ramify in every segment of human behaviour, be it private or social ; and that it must create a sound moral, social and political environment to keep itself alive, vigorous. The Saiyid gave, on the one hand, a call for inner reclamation

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and redemption of soul ; and, on the other, struggled against external threats instead of meekly submitting to the powers of his time. His struggle against the powers threatening to submerge a weakened and enervated Muslim society was only a part of his more comprehensive programme for the renovation and revitalisation of the nineteenth century Islam in India. He succeeded in his ultimate aim although its political aspect could not be put through at the moment. If it was a failure, it was the failure of decadent Muslim society of India, a section of which opposed his puritanical and fundamentalist approach ; of the Amīr Khāns of Indian princely states, Sind, Afghānistān and Central Asia ; and of the *māliks* and *khāns* of the Frontier who failed to see the danger looming large over their heads. It was their failure to unite in the hour of crisis. Nevertheless, the abounding enthusiasm of the Saiyid to redress the wrongs continued to awaken millions of his countrymen tc a consciousness that theirs was a community bound by the Law of God, with a distinct personality and having a set purpose and ideal. And, this was the glory of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd which assigns him a honoured place among the galaxy of great *mujaddids*, the renovators of faith, whom we find giving a call to the faithful at every turning point of their history.

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# Appendix

*English translation of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd's letter (appearing on page 176) sent to Saiyid Muhammad Jāmʿe and others of Rae Bareli*

In the name of Allah, the most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

From *Amīr-ul-Mūminīn*, Saiyid Ahmad, to the address of Saiyid Muhammad Jāmʿe, Saiyid Ghulām Jīlānī, Saiyid Mʿasūm Ahmad, Saiyid Muhammad Mustafa and the highly respected brother Saiyid Muhammad;

After salutations and prayer for the well-being of all, be it known that;

This friar reached the Frontier of Yūsufzaʾīs, with the help and mercy of Allah, after passing through Hyderābād Sind, Shikārpur, Qandahār (Kandahār), Ghaznī, Kābul, and Peshāwar, and invited the Muslims to join the *jihād*. Thousands of men responded to the call while several thousand infidel Sikhs appeared to put up a fight (with them). The faithful warriors despatched hundreds of them to the Hell by their successive night attacks and captured a large booty of war and a number of horses. Being a leaderless army, the warriors took away, in the manner of rioters, all the spoils with them. At last, the *ʿUlama*, the religious leaders, the Sardārs and the nobles took *biʿat*, in the way of the Prophet, on the hands of this friar and appointed him as their *Amīr* (leader) by reciting his name in the *khutbā* (Friday Sermon). By this time thousands of persons have collected to fight the infidels. Arrangements for the training and management

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of these troops and their reorganisation into ranks, sections and detachments are being made. An encounter is likely to take place in the near future between the forces of Islam and the infidels, whom they shall defeat, if Allah so wills, and the whole of their country including the famous fort of Attock will in this manner be brought under the Muslim rule. The infidels shall be humbled in this way in no long time and the rule of *sharīʿah* promulgated over their territories. You may also beseech Allah for the well-being and stability of the Muslims, humiliation of the infidels and victory of the religion of the leader of prophets, on whom be peace and blessings of Allah and also on his progeny and companions. Subsequent events shall be communicated to you in detail later on. You may enquire about the remaining affairs from the bearer of this letter, for, there is nothing more to put down in writing save our ardent desire to meet you and the prayers for your welfare. Hamīd-ud-dīn present at the time of writing (this letter) conveys his salutations.

(Seal of) Saiyid Ahmad.

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