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# THE IMPACT OF COLONIAL EXPERIENCE ON THE RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL THOUGHT OF SIR SAYYID AHMAD KHĀN AND AHMAD HASSAN:
## A Comparison

Agusni Yahya

A Thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Institute of Islamic Studies
McGill University
Montreal

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# ABSTRACT

Author : Agusni Yahya

Title : The Impact of Colonial Experience on the Religious and Social
Thought of Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan:
A Comparison

Department : Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University

Degree : Master of Art

This thesis studies in a comparative framework the impact of colonial experience on the religious and social thought of two modernists, Aḥmad Khān of India and Ahmad Hassan of Indonesia. At the religious level, both modernists were much concerned with the purification of Islam. They called upon the Muslims to return to the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*, abandon *taqlīd* and to undertake *ijtihād*. Aḥmad Khān, influenced by the natural sciences and rationalism of the West, was also inclined to interpret Islam in a naturalistic and rational manner. Ahmad Hassan, on the other hand, was very much preoccupied with the purification of Islam and the return to the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*, and was little influenced by the Western impact through colonialism. At the social level, both modernists considered education to be the essential means to social betterment. But whereas Aḥmad Khān also believed in cooperation with the British, Ahmad Hassan was opposed to the Dutch.

This study concludes by showing that, given the Western colonial experience, Aḥmad Khān's socio-religious thought was rational, realistic, liberal and dynamic. While Ahmad Hassan too lived in a colonial society, his socio-religious thought was puritanical, defensive and ideological.

# RÉSUMÉ

Auteur      : Agusni Yahya

Titre       : L'impact de l'expérience coloniale sur la pensée religieuse et sociale de
              Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān et Ahmad Hassan: Une étude comparative

Département : Institut des Etudes Islamiques, Université McGill

Diplôme     : Maîtrise

Cette thèse examine dans un cadre comparatif l'impact de l'expérience coloniale sur la pensée religieuse et sociale de deux modernistes: Aḥmad Khān, en Inde, et Ahmad Hassan, en Indonésie. Sur le plan religieux, tous les deux visaient la purification de l'Islam. Ils ont incité les musulmans à se tourner vers le Qurʾān et les *ḥadīths*, à abandonner le *taqlīd* et à entreprendre l'*ijtihād*. Influencé par les sciences naturelles et le rationalisme de l'Occident, Aḥmad Khān avait tendance à interpréter l'Islam d'une manière naturaliste et rationelle. De son côté, Ahmad Hassan, très préoccupé par la purification de l'Islam et le retour vers le Qurʾān et les *ḥadīths* était moins affecté par l'impact Occidental du colonialisme. Au niveau social, les deux modernistes voyaient dans l'éducation le moyen essentiel d'en favoriser une amélioration. Tandis que Aḥmad Khān croyait en une collaboration avec les Britanniques, Ahmad Hassan, lui, s'opposait aux Hollandais.

Cette étude se termine en montrant comment, face à l'expérience coloniale occidentale, la pensée socio-religieuse d'Aḥmad Khān a pris un caractère rationnel, réaliste, libéral et dynamique. Par contre, même si Ahmad Hassan a vécu, lui aussi, dans une société coloniale, sa pensée socio-religieuse a été puritanique, protectioniste et idéologique.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

In this study, the Arabic names and Islamic terms are transliterated according to the system used by the Institute of Islamic Studies McGill University. The Indonesian names and terms are written according the new Indonesian spelling system adopted by the government of Indonesia since 1972. Nevertheless, the names of certain individuals and organizations are spelt as is conventionally done, rather than strictly in accordance with the new system (e.g. Tamar Djaja instead of Tamar Jaya and Nahdatul Ulama instead of Nahdlatul Ulama). The following is a transliteration table of the Arabic and Indonesian alphabet.

| Arabic | English | Indonesian |
|--------|---------|------------|
| ء | ʾ | ' |
| ب | b | b |
| ت | t | t |
| ث | th | th |
| ج | j | j |
| ح | ḥ | h |
| خ | kh | kh |
| د | d | d |
| ذ | dh | dz |
| ر | r | r |
| ز | z | z |
| س | s | s |
| ش | sh | sy |
| ص | ṣ | sh |
| ض | ḍ | dl |
| ط | ṭ | th |

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| Arabic | English | Indonesian |
|--------|---------|------------|
| ظ | ẓ | dh |
| ع | ʿ | ' |
| غ | gh | gh |
| ف | f | f |
| ق | q | q |
| ك | k | k |
| ل | l | l |
| م | m | m |
| ن | n | n |
| ه | h | h |
| و | w | w |
| ي | y | y |
| ة | ah/at | h |

To indicate long vowels of ( و ، ي ، آ ), these are typed by using the Bars above characters : ā, ī and ū.

# ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| A M S | Algemene Middelbare School (General Secondary School, Senior High School). |
| A M U | Aligarh Muslim University |
| C I D A | Canadian International Development Agency. |
| I A I N | Institut Agama Islam Negeri (State Institute of Islamic Studies). |
| J I B | Jong Islamieten Bond (Union of Young Muslims). |
| M A O C | Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College. |
| MASYUMI | Majlis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Legislative Council). |
| N U | Nahdatul Ulama (Renaissance of ʿUlamāʾ). |
| P A I | Partai Arab Indonesia (Indonesian Arab Party). |
| PERSIS | Persatuan Islam (Muslim Unity). |
| P I I | Partai Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Party). |
| P N I | Partai Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian Nationalist Party). |
| P S I I | Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Association Party). |

# INTRODUCTION

The advance of the West European countries in the technological, industrial and military fields in the last two centuries enabled them to colonize most of Muslim lands. The broadest conquests were those of the British in India and of the Dutch in the Archipelago.[1] The coming of Europeans brought about political, cultural and religious disturbances and challenges for Muslims in these societies.

While some Muslim leaders rejected all aspects of modernity to which their societies were exposed as a result of colonialism, some Muslim reformers considered Western science, technology and institutional forms of organization as necessary elements for the development of their societies.[2] Among these Muslim reformers were Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (1817-1898) of the Indian Subcontinent and Ahmad Hassan (1887-1958) of Indonesia. These two reformers are the subject of this study. They urged their communities to adopt Western science and technology while preserving their moral and religious values. They emphasized the importance of *ijtihād* (reinterpretation of religious concepts according to the needs of the time) for freeing Islam from rigid interpretations and rendering it adaptable to the demands of modern society.[3] In order to better understand the religious and social thought of these two reformers, this study places them in the context of their respective colonial experiences.

Concerning India of Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, Marshall Hodgson describes the condition of Muslims as follows:

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[1]Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam 3* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 223.

[2]Akbar S. Ahmed, *Discovering Islam* (London: Routledge, 1988), 117.

[3]Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "Modernism: Islamic modernism," Mircia Eliade, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 10 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 16.

By 1818, the British had become the paramount power in most of India, ruling directly in Bengal and the Ganges plain where Islam was very strong. Within a few decades the British had also absorbed the lands of Indus basin, almost solidly Muslim. In some cases, the advent of British rule meant a transfer from one sort of infidel rule to another, perhaps less obnoxious sort of infidel rule. For some time, since the British perpetuated the administrative patterns of Timuri empire, including the use of Persian as official tongue, the fact that a handful of Christian were at the top made relatively little difference in day-to-day routine. But when the British decided to eliminate Persian in favor of English it became evident that British rule...for Muslims meant a deposition from position of ruling class and, rather more pervasively, the undermining of the basis for their traditional cultural life...Under these circumstances, members of the privileged Muslim classes...tended to see little compensation for their families' eclipse in studying English and learning to serve the British company...Thereupon, it was largely the Hindus...who took the training necessary for positions of responsibility, commercial or governmental.[4]

In 1857, the Muslims and Hindus revolted against the British government to restore the Timurid dynasty. The British put down the revolt on account of their military strength and the disorganization of the Muslims and Hindus. The British perceived the Muslims as being their main rivals in India in the post-Mutiny period, and blamed the Indian Muslims for being responsible for the revolt. Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, an eye-witness to all these developments, proposed a programme of Muslim revival through full cooperation with the British and through an interpretation of Islam compatible with a liberal nineteenth-century world view. Aḥmad Khān was certain that his community could be rescued from the post-Mutiny condition of despair by adopting a new attitude towards the emerging influences from the West. Meanwhile, he was seeking to win the sympathy of the British, declaring that his people were really loyal to the new government. At the same time, he was to convince his people not to be hostile towards the rule in order to save themselves from destruction. To this end, Sayyid Aḥmad Khān attempted a wide-ranging campaign of reform along the following line:

First, he insisted that there must be a change of political outlook. Instead of regarding India under British rule as *dār-ul-ḥarb*, he insisted that, even though

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[4]Hodgson, *The Venture*, 333-334.

it was not under Muslim rule, it was to be regarded as *dār-ul-Islam*, because Muslims were perfectly free to exercise all the essential rites and ceremonies of their religion. Secondly, he declared that there must be a change in the religious outlook. He considered that Muslims were suffering from the effects of a religious and theological straight-jacket, which had been imposed on them by well meaning but irrational custom. While he guarded...the Qur'ān as the final revelation of God, and well-attested Tradition as the pillars of faith, he insisted that the individual should assert his natural right to interpret these matters for himself in light of reason....While he was endeavoring to create a new norm of inquiry among his people, and set up for them a new norm of interpretation of Islam through rationalizing processes of investigation, at the same time he was led to make a study of Christianity. This led to an effort on his part to try to reconcile the two religions. He pleaded for more sympathy from both sides....Thirdly, he stated that there must be a change in the method and purpose of education....He held that, since the world of nature about us, which is God's work, and revelation, which is His word, both proceed from that same source, there can be no ultimate conflict between Science and Religion. He insisted that it was only as his community came to know and share the benefits of Western science that they could also truly come to understand and appreciate their own religion. Fourthly, he laid emphasis on the need for social reform, and carried on a vigorous and fearless campaign in its behalf, particularly through his magazine, *Tahdhīb-ul-Akhlāq* (Reform of Morals).[5]

Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's social thought was addressed to Indian Muslims, especially the upper class Muslims, who later supported his foundation of a Muslim college at Aligarh. Young Muslims were trained at Aligarh primarily in modern sciences so that they could serve the British administration or British companies and become leaders of community. By so doing, he tried to bridge the cultural gap between the Muslims and the British, for he believed that Muslims ought to benefit from the effects of modernity to which India had become exposed through British rule.[6]

In the case of the Indonesian Islamic experience, Islam served as a strong resistant against the colonial "infidel" rulers. Revolts and uprisings against the Dutch continued until independence was achieved.[7] The Dutch method of maintaining their

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[5]Murray T. Titus, *Islam in India and Pakistan* (Calcutta: Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 1959), 201-203.
[6]*Ibid.*, 203.
[7]Howard M. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam Islamic Reform in the Twentieth Century Indonesia* (New York: Cornell University, 1970), 3.

rule over their Indonesian Muslim subjects was by weakening the spirit of Islam, as pointed out by Federspiel:

> The Dutch colonial administration also limited the deepening of religious belief by rigidly maintaining a political and economic system that limited the rule of local rulers, and inadvertently prevented the adoption of social and political reforms that, from a religious viewpoint, would have intensified Islam among the general population."[8]

In the later half of the nineteenth century, the work of a Dutch scholar, Snouck Hurgronje,[9] on the role of religion and custom in the lives of Indonesians led to the encouragement of some aspects of religious activity. Yet, custom gained considerable priority over the application of Islamic law. The government also controlled such new ideas and activities among the Muslims which could threaten Dutch control over the Indonesians. Apprehensive of the influence of "Wahhābism"[10] and "pan-Islamism", the Dutch banned books and pamphlets advocating these ideas. However, modernist ideas did manage to reach Indonesia via several Indonesian teachers in Mecca, in particular the ideas of Syech Ahmad Khatib were spread by his students, such as Haji Rasul, Thaher Djalaluddin and Ahmad Dahlan, when they came back to Indonesia.[11]

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[8]*Ibid.*, 5.

[9]Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936) is a renowned Dutch Islamicist and adviser to the Dutch government in Indonesia. He wrote on general themes in Islam and Islamic jurisprudence, with a focus on Indonesian Islamic affairs. In 1889, he was sent to Jakarta serving as adviser to the colonial government and in 1892, he was posted in Aceh where the Aceh War against the Dutch (1873-1906) took place. Although in 1906 Snouck Hurgronje returned to Leiden, until he retired in 1927, he continued his role as Islamicist and adviser to the Dutch government. Dale F. Eickelman, "Snouck Hurgronje, Christiaan," Eliade, ed. *The Encyclopedia*, vol. 13, 374-375; *Leksikon Islam*, vol. 2 (Jakarta: Pustazet Perkasa, 1988), 670-671.

[10]The basic concepts of Wahhābī programs are *tawḥīd* (the oneness of God) and *ijtihād*. The implication of *tawḥīd* is that any action or belief which recognizes the ultimate authority or spiritual power in something other than Allah is polytheism. In the eighteenth century, the era of the Wahhābiyah founder, Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (d. 1792), this concept of *tawḥīd* became the basis for opposition to saint worship and other popular religious customs. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it became the basis for legal decisions and religious interpretations of scholars in Saudi Arabia for all aspects of the state policy. The second concept, *ijtihād*, intended that a person with a proper training should base his opinions directly on the Qurʾān and the *sunnah*. In doing so, the person is not required to accept the opinions of the great medieval scholars. However, in fact, the Wahhābīs have adhered to the Hanbalī tradition. John O. Voll, "Wahhābiyah," Eliade, ed. *The Encyclopedia*, vol. 15, 313-316.

[11]Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 8.

Ahmad Hassan, who was born in Singapore in 1887, had already read some reformist publications (*Al-Manār* of Cairo, *Al-Imām* of Singapore and *Al-Munīr* of Minangkabau) before he came to Indonesia. In 1921, Ahmad Hassan moved to Surabaya, East Java, initially for business. In this period there was a controversy between the *kaum tua* (traditionalists) and the *kaum muda* (modernists) on religious issues, and Ahmad Hassan was very attentive to the issues being debated by these two groups. He supported the modernists because he believed that their opinions were more closely based on the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*.

Ahmad Hassan became an important figure while he was a teacher at the Persis, abbreviation of Persatuan Islam (Muslim Unity).[12] Here he disseminated his modernist religious and social ideas through *tablīgh* (sermons at a religious meeting), public meetings, study groups, and by organizing schools, publishing pamphlets, periodicals and books etc. Around 1927, a special discussion class was organized for young people who had studied at Dutch schools and who wanted to learn more about Islam. In 1936, in order to satisfy the needs of Muslim preachers, in Bandung, Ahmad Hassan established a *pesantren*[13] where religious and secular subjects were taught using the modern educational system.[14] When he moved to Bangil, East Java, in 1941, he established another *pesantren* for both male and female students (having separate dormitories). The *pesantren*, together with a printing house, exists up to now and it is headed by his sons.[15] Ahmad Hassan died in Bangil in 1958. Since he lived in

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[12]The Persatuan Islam was formally founded in Bandung, West Java, in 1923 by Haji Zamzam, Haji Muhammad Junus and a group of Muslims who were interested in religious study and activity. Before Ahmad Hassan joined this organization, Zamzam and Junus, while being traders by profession but had received a traditional religious education and mastered Arabic, played an important role as teachers within the religious study and activity. Zamzam also spent three and a half years studying at the Dār al-ʿUlūm, Mecca. *Ibid.*, 11; Deliar Noer, *The Rise and Development of the Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia during the Colonial Period*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1963), 133.

[13]This is a term for a traditional Islamic religious school in Indonesia.

[14]Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900-1942* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1973), 85-87.

[15]Tamar Djaja, *Riwayat Hidup A. Hassan* (Jakarta: Mutiara, 1980), 30.

Bandung and Bangil respectively Ahmad Hassan is known as Hassan Bandung or Hassan Bangil.[16]

Ahmad Hassan did not publicly show his anti-Dutch feelings nor his loyalty to the government. When he came to Indonesia in the early 1920s, the Dutch oppression of the native population was at a rise while the zeal of Islamic and the nationalist movements was equally increasing. Politically, Ahmad Hassan supported the Islamic movements through his writings, polemics and debates. He was against the nationalist movements because of his conviction that their ideology was contrary to Islamic teachings. He was also among the supporters of "pan-Islamism" and 'Wahhābism", and was in line with Muḥammad ʿAbduh's religious ideas. All these were threats to Dutch rule in Indonesia. However, even though Ahmad Hassan took part in the movements, he was not considered a political figure,[17] because he was not publicly active in politics.

As for his attitude towards modern science and technology and their impact on Islam, Ahmad Hassan claimed that Islam historically has been compatible with science. He was sure that science and technology were beneficial to man and acceptable to Islam. However, he was quite concerned with and critical of the cultural influences accompanying the Western societies.[18]

Comparing Aḥmad Khān's attitude towards British rule with Ahmad Hassan's towards the Dutch, it is to be noted that the former considered the British too strong to be opposed by force or through politics. Consequently, he urged the Indians, particularly Indian Muslims to cooperate with the rulers and to derive as many advantages as possible from them, mainly through working for the government and

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[16]Ibid.

[17]Endang Saifuddin Anshari and Syafiq A. Mughni, A. Hassan Wajah dan Wijhah Seorang Mujtahid (Bandung: Al-Muslimun, 1985), 33.

[18]Federspiel, Persatuan Islam, 137-138.

sending their children to government schools and colleges. Without political power over India and being smaller in numbers than the Hindus, it was only by loyalty to and cooperation with the rulers that the Muslims could improve their condition. In the words of Nizami: "His decision to cooperate with the Englishmen was the result of a careful analysis of the situation. He believed that the British *raj* gave an opportunity to extricate the people from medievalist and prepare a ground for the development of Weste.n sciences in India."[19] Consequently, he urged the Indian Muslims to adapt to the modern context and change their political, religious and social outlook. With political pragmatism, religious rationalism and social adaptiveness and dynamism, they would, he promised, acquire honor and respect as they had in the past.

To Ahmad Hassan, considering that Indonesia was a Muslim majority country while the Dutch rule was an infidel rule, it was not proper to cooperate with this government. But nor was it necessary or wise to oppose this government since it would no doubt suppress anyone who threatened its power. Unlike Aḥmad Khān, Ahmad Hassan was a non-cooperative *ʿālim*. He did not care much for the importance of Western sciences and technology for Muslim progress. Ahmad Hassan was quite critical of the impact of Western culture. He felt that Muslims should defend themselves from any negative Western influences and particularly from the Dutch colonial culture. For this reason, while he adopted Western methods of education and organization to adjust to the need of the modern age, he never cooperated with the Dutch government. He was extremely critical of the government educational system for its being secular in nature which made the Muslim graduates of its schools and colleges unsympathethic to their religion.

Being aware of the impact of the colonial experience on Islam, Ahmad Hassan's religious attitude became quite apologetic and defensive towards any

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[19]K.A. Nizami, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan* (Delhi: Publication Division, 1966), 162.

criticism of Islam. During the colonial period, he founded the Commite Pembela Islam (Defender of Islam Committee). This Committee published the journal *Pembela Islam* from 1929 until it was banned by the Dutch in 1935. Through this journal, Ahmad Hassan counterattacked any criticism of Islam either from Christian missionaries or from Muslims whose religious viewpoints were not in line with his Islamic reformism.

Unlike Aḥmad Khān, Ahmad Hassan, though well acquainted with Christianity, never sought to reconcile Islam and Christianity as the basis of a social interaction. This attitude was also reflected in his political views during the nationalist movement, when he strongly advocated that the movement be based on Islam. In this respect, Ahmad Hassan differs considerably from Aḥmad Khān. Aḥmad Khān did not consider the dictates of religion on political and cultural matters binding on Muslims. Because these were not purely religious, they could be adapted to the present circumstances. Conversely, Ahmad Hassan held that Muslims should base their political system on Islam because in his view there was no separation between Islam and politics. In addition, Ahmad Hassan urged that Muslims ought to elect the devout Muslims who were willing to rule their community according to Islamic law.

This thesis is the first comparative study of two prominent Muslim modernists, Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan. It analyzes and compares the impact of the British and the Dutch colonial experience on the religious and social thought of both modernists. This study becomes important for the reason that both modernists, particularly Aḥmad Khān, are recognized, to have contributed ideas of Islamic modernism which were reflected in their writings, speeches and activities and left a lasting legacy. In this connection, it is necessary to see how they viewed the existence of the colonial rulers and how they approached the religious and social conditions and needs of their own communities. While there are both similarities and differences in

their viewing the colonial rule and the condition of their societies, their respective colonial experience left an imprint on their religious and social thought.

This thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter one gives a brief biography of Ahmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan with reference to socio-cultural milieu and the formative influences on their life and thought. Chapter two, which is the main part of this thesis, surveys the writings of these two modernists. The development of their religious and social views, which was a response to colonial rule, is the focus of this chapter. There is extensive literature on Ahmad Khān's life and thought, but because I do not read Urdu, which is the language he wrote in, I have had to confine myself to such sources and studies as are available in English. These have been carefully examined in this thesis to explicate his religious and social thought in the context of British colonial rule in India. As for Ahmad Hassan, I have discussed his religious and social ideas at length, using primary sources in Bahasa Indonesia. It is to be noted that the context of Ahmad Hassan's writings on Islam is primarily theological rather than socio-political. Consequently, they reflect the colonial milieu only in Ahmad Hassan's defense of Islam. Chapter three is a comparison of the basic viewpoints of Ahmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan concerning Islam and the Muslims under the colonial rule. This chapter also assesses the influence and contribution of each modernist to his respective society. This study concludes with a summary of the main findings of the preceding chapters.

# CHAPTER ONE
## Socio-Historical Portraits

### A. Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān: A Short Biography with Reference to His Interaction with the British

Born in Delhi in 1817, Sayyid Aḥmad's education started in a traditional manner. It began with the reading of the holy Qurʾān with a lady teacher employed by his grandfather's household. After completing the Qurʾān, he began to study in a *maktab*. Here he learnt introductory Persian, Arabic and mathematics. Geometry and medicine, which he studied under different prominent teachers, were also of interest to Aḥmad Khān. His formal education lasted only until he was eighteen. An event which greatly changed his life was the death of his father in 1838. This resulted in psychological and financial problems for his family. He decided to enter the service of the East India Company though his relatives did not approve of his choice; perhaps there was an anti-British feeling among them, partly because they had been closely attached to the Mughal court.[20]

Sayyid Aḥmad Khān started his work in the service of the British government in 1838 and retired in 1876. During 38 years of service in the British government, Sayyid Aḥmad Khān was posted in various cities across India.[21] Probably, this helped him develop considerable understanding of the nature of British rule in India, society in general and of Indian Muslims in particular. Throughout his active life, he remained loyal to the British, even in critical situations. When the revolt of 1857 broke out, Sayyid Aḥmad was posted in Bijnor. Although he had to take a great risk, he managed to save twenty Europeans who were in great danger in the area. He himself was threatened with death by Nawab Maḥmūd Khān, the leader of the anti-British

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[20]J.M.S. Baljon, *The Reforms and the Religious Ideas of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), 4.
[21]Nizami, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, 173-175.

movement in the region because Sayyid Aḥmad Khān did not want to cooperate with him. His house was burnt and his property was confiscated.[22] Aziz Ahmad devides his loyalism into three phases:

> From 1859 to 1870, it was essentially a politically stabilizing factor, its object being to wean his own community 'from its policy of opposition' to one of acquiescence and participation, and to wean the British government from its policy of oppression to one of paternalism'....The second phase of his loyalism, from 1870 to 1884,...it was mainly a response to the infiltration of pan-Islamic ideology, which Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān considered dangerous political adventurism...In the third phase, from 1887 to 1898, his loyalism was employed to emphasize Muslim political separatism, with the advent of elective institutions and the rise of the Indian National Congress founded in 1885.[23]

Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's attitude of loyalism to and cooperation with the British was criticized by the Indian traditionalist ʿulamāʾ. For this he was called names such as heretic, Christian, atheist, nechari,[24] materialist, and kāfir.[25] Even though strong criticism was directed at Sayyid Aḥmad Khān as well as his colleagues, his loyalism, cooperation and good relationship with the British greatly helped Muslims when the Aligarh College came into being. This great project might not have been implemented without Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's ability to convince the British government of the importance of this project. As much as 74 acres of land was granted by the government to put Sayyid's desire into reality.[26]

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[22]Altaf Husain Hali, *Hayat-i-Javed,* trans. Qadiri & David J. Matthews (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, 1979), 47-48. See also Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *Histrory of Bijnor Rebellion,* trans. Hafeez Malik and Morris Dimbo (Michigan: Michigan State University, n.d.).

[23]Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan 1857-1964* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 33.

[24]"This term is applied to Sir Syed Aḥmad and his followers, who emphasized the position that Islam was a religion according to Nature: the nature of man, and Nature in the scientific sense." Titus, *Islam in India,* 316.

[25]Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband 1860-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 325-326. For details of Aḥmad Khān's response to the ʿulamāʾs criticism on him, see his *Dārul-Ūlūm-i Musalmānān ke Mukhāliﬁn* in *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq,* 10 safar, 1290/1873 translated by Azizalam. Shaista Azizalam, "Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and the ʿUlamāʾ, unpublished M.A. thesis (McGill University, 1992), 92-111.

[26]Hali, *Hayat-i-Javed,* 144-145.

Until his death in 1898, Sayyid Ahmad's close relations, and an attitude of full cooperation with the British never changed. This attitude should not be accused of a flattery for he never compromised his self-respect, and was in fact greatly respected by influential Britishers both during his stay in England in 1869-1870 and after his return to India. In England, he was treated with courtesy and respect by many of his old British friends who had served in India, particularly Lord Lawrence. During his stay, Sayyid Ahmad was invited to dinners, was presented the Third Class of the Star of India, and was invited to speak to the Smeatonian Society of Civil Engineers.[27] He was also elected a member of the Athenaeum Club, which was then considered the most exclusive club in London. Besides visiting Cambridge University to observe the British system of education, which was one of his main purposes in visiting Britain, he attended several meetings of the Royal Asiatic Society. He had already been a member of this society before he left for London.[28]

Sayyid Ahmad's close interaction and full cooperation with the British helped curtail British apprehensions of the Muslims and to promote modern education among them. Government support was crucial to his educational projects, the establishment of the Scientific Society and the MAOC (Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College) after his return from England. The Secretary of State for India became the patron of the Scientific Society, while the Lieutenant Governors of Punjab and the North-Western Provinces became its vice-patrons. With government support and by translating numerous works from English into Urdu, the Scientific Society contributed to the introduction of modern knowledge from the West into India.[29] In case of the Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College, his friends in high positions of government, particularly John Strachey, helped

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[27]G.F.I. Graham, *The Life and Work of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 64-67.

[28]Hali, *Hayat-i-Javed*, 107-119.

[29]Nizami, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, 70-77.

materialize Sayyid Aḥmad's effort although some British officials were suspicious of its establishment.[30]

## B. Ahmad Hassan : A Biographical Sketch with Reference to His Attitude towards the Dutch

Ahmad Hassan was born in Singapore in 1887. He was of mixed Indian and Indonesian parentage. His father, Ahmad, also called Sinna Vappu Maricar, was a writer by profession, and a scholar of Islam and Tamil literature. He once edited a Tamil religious and literary magazine, *Nūr al-Islam*, wrote a number of books in Tamil and also produced a number of translations from Arabic. Ahmad Hassan's mother was born in Surabaya, and was of Madrasi origin. She was from a modest family, devout and much attached to religious learning. Ahmad Hassan's father married her in Surabaya and then moved to Singapore.

Ahmad Hassan began to learn the Qurʾān at age seven from a female religious teacher. Having completed the Qurʾān reading at age nine, he attended a public school, Sekolah Melayu, for four years. He started working at the age of twelve, even before completing his elementary school. But he continued to take private lessons in Tamil, Malay, English, and mastered the Arabic language. From 1910 to 1921 Ahmad Hassan had various jobs in Singapore, working as a teacher, textile trader, an agent for the distribution of ice, a clerk in the Jedda Pilgrims Office and as an editor of the *Utusan Melayu* daily, in which he was mainly concerned with ethical questions.[31]

Ahmad Hassan moved to Surabaya in 1921 to run his uncle's textile store. In addition to this business, he actively participated in discussions of Islam with the prominent scholars of Islam in Surabaya, both the traditionalists and modernists. In

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[30]David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 137-138.

[31]Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim*, 86; Tamar Djaja, *Riwayat Hidup*, 16-19.

Surabaya, he also came across the Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Association Party) and its top leaders (H.O.S. Cokroaminoto, Agus Salim, AM Sangaji and Wondoamiseno). After running his business unsuccessfully in Surabaya for three years, he went to Bandung to take a textile course. Here he met the members of the Persis, such as Asyari and Tamim, who were also textile traders. After he completed the six month long textile course in Bandung, he was asked to teach the Persis' members and became the most important leader of the organization. His influence on the organization as well as on its members was so strong that people considered the Persis identical with Ahmad Hassan.[32]

There is little information on his interaction with the Dutch or his opposition to Dutch rule. Even though during his lifetime there were strong political movements in Indonesia, he himself was not really involved in them. He was only a member of the PSII, Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Association Party) and the Masyumi, Majlis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia (Muslim Legislative Council Party).[33] His main concern was with investigating Islamic issues by recourse to the Qur'ān and *hadīth*. While not active politically, Ahmad Hassan debated with the members of the Dutch organizations on religious issues. He held two or three public debates (on Islam) with the leaders of the Seventh Day Adventists.[34] Ahmad Hassan also debated with the Dutch Christian intellectuals, Dirhuis, Elsink and Prof. Schoemaker. Schoemaker eventually converted to Islam and became A. Hassan's good friend because of their debate. The debates between Ahmad Hassan and these people were mostly on the status of Jesus Christ. He argued that Jesus was not the Son of God and the Redeemer, as the Christians thought; rather he was like the other prophets to whom God had revealed His revelation through Gabriel.[35]

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[32]Anshari, *A. Hassan Wajah*, 19
[33]Tamar Djaja, *Riwayat Hidup*, 33.
[34]Anshari, *A Hassan Wajah*, 33.
[35]Ahmad Hassan, *Bibel lawan Bibel* (Bangil: Al-Muslimun, 1983), 2-3.

Ahmad Hassan, like most Indonesian *ulamā* was opposed the Dutch rule. In the absence of any concrete activities, his oppositional attitude can be inferred from his support of "Wahhābism" and "pan-Islamism."[36] These two movements, in fact, were threats to the stability of the Dutch rule over the native people. Hazeu, the Dutch advisor on Islam and Arabian Affairs, said that "fanaticism" and "pan-Islamism" were serious problems for the government.[37] One of the Dutch policies in countering the Islamic "fanaticism" and the "pan-Islamic" ideology was the separation between religion and politics. Karel Steenbrink says:

> Snouck Hurgronje...favored a separation between politics and religion, but his political advice led towards the increasing involvement of the colonial government in the daily affairs of the Islamic church....Snouck tried to distinguish clearly between Islam's religious ideals and values on the one hand and its political involvement and aims on the other.[38]

The impact of the Dutch policy of separating religion and politics was reflected in the secular nationalists during the nationalist movement from 1920s to 1945 when Indonesia gained independence. In this period, the nationalists who were mostly Dutch school graduates, campaigned to base their movement on a neutral ideology, whereas Ahmad Hassan and the Muslim parties urged that Islam be used as the basis of the nationalist movement. Given that the majority of Indonesian population was Muslim, Ahmad Hassan argued that they could apply Islamic law when the country became independent. He strongly rejected the concepts of nationalism offered by the nationalists. Despite the fact that his ideological and philosophical viewpoints were not accepted by the nationalist groups, Ahmad Hassan's views did contribute in awakening the Indonesian Muslims, and had an impact especially on those who were not much concerned with politics.

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[36]Tamar Djaja, *Riwayat Hidup*, 14.

[37]Hamid Algadri, *Politik Belanda terhadap Islam dan Keturunan Arab di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Haji Masagung, 1988), 97.

[38]Karel Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism and Indonesian Islam*, trans. Jan Steenbrink and Henry Jansen (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993), 87-88.

# CHAPTER TWO
## Ideas on Islamic Modernism

Islamic modernism is one response of modern Muslim's encounter with the West in nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The concern is to purify religion of the non-Islamic elements, to interpret some of its aspects and to fuse it with modern elements. The goal of Islamic modernism has been to make Islam relevant and responsive in the context of modern society so that Muslims can live in and contribute actively to modern world while remaining faithful to their religion.[39] The religious outlook of the Muslim modernists shows much more concern with social and moral values than with transcendental and philosophical matters. Muslim modernists, in this study Aḥmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan, also aimed at purifying Islam and making it relevant in the context of modern society; they tried to do so by adopting, to some extent, Western sciences, technology and institutional forms of organization to improve the condition of the people while preserving Islamic mores and values. This chapter will deal with the religious thought and social reforms of Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan. Much has been written on Sayyid Aḥmad's religious thought and social reforms, and relatively little information is available in English on Ahmad Hassan.

## A. Sayyid Aḥmad Khān
### 1. Religious Thought

Our discussion below, while not comprehensive, summarizes scholarly views on the subject primarily to show that colonial experience served as the single most powerful force in shaping Sayyid Aḥmad's religious thought. Indeed, it was the most crucial impetus for his elaborate social reform programs. Like many other Muslim reformers, Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's religious thought developed from a traditional to a modern outlook. Being an autodidact, Sayyid Aḥmad Khān gradually disentangled

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[39]Eliade, *The Encyclopaedia*, 14.

himself from the tradition of *taqlīd* in interpreting Islamic teachings. The fact that his family was not bound to a traditional religious outlook nor belonged to *ʿulamāʾ* circles also helped him keep developing his religious thought towards a modern and independent outlook. In order to see the development of Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's religious thought it is necessary to divide it into two periods, i.e. the periods before and after 1857. This periodization is made to show that during the second period Aḥmad Khān's religious outlook was considerably affected by the entrenchment of the British rule in India and Sayyid Aḥmad's increased exposure to the Western thought.

### a. Before 1857

In his early life, when he mostly lived in Delhi (1817-1857), Sayyid Aḥmad Khān remained a traditional Muslim. His religious thought, looking at the themes of his writings in this period, appears to be puritanical, sectarian and apologetic. Although since the beginning of the nineteenth century, Muslims in Delhi had a contact with the British,[40] Aḥmad Khān's religious thought during this period was not yet influenced by the impact of the West on India. His sources of inspiration were Shāh Walīullāh's religious reform movement[41] as well as the Wahhābism.[42]

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[40]To quote Malik, "Sir Sayyid and Muslim society in Delhi were exposed to modernity by virtue of their contact with the tiny British society and the modern Delhi College, which were established in Delhi with the advent of the British rule in 1803. The British rule not only introduced the British citizens to a new subject culture, but also initiated a period of social mobilization which prepared the Indic Muslims, especially after 1857, to accept the process of change from traditional to modern ways of life. A glimpse of traditional Delhi confronting the carriers of modernity would shed light on the early environment of Sir Sayyid." Hafeez Malik, *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muslim Modernization in India and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 24.

[41]Shāh Walīullāh was the most important among the Indian Muslim thinkers. He was born at Delhi in 1702 and died in 1762. He remains the first of a line of the Indian Muslim reformers who had done so much to identify the socio-cultural problems of his co-religionists in the Subcontinent. Historians depict him as the precursor of the reform movement of Muslim India by developing an eclectic approach in legal matters, synthesizing sufism and orthodoxy and purifying both. Saeeda Iqbal, *Islamic Rationalism in the Subcontinent: with special reference to Shāh Walīullāh, Sayyid Ahmad Khān and ʿAllāma Muhammad Iqbal* (Lahore: Islamic Book Service, 1984), 59.

[42]Hafeez Malik, *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan,* 23-24.

Aḥmad Khān's religious thought during this period is largely reflected in the following pre-1857 writings: (a) *Jilā-ul-Qulūb bi zikr al-Maḥbūb* (Polishing of the Hearts by Remembering the Beloved), 1842 -- a small booklet dealing with the birth, death, miracles and other events in the life of the Prophet. It was written because there were very few handbooks giving an accurate account which could be followed in the *maulūd* celebrations. It was also intended to provide a more reliable text based on sound traditions for discouraging popular beliefs and fantasies concerning the Prophet.[43] (b) *Rāh-i Sunnāh dar Radd-i Bidʿah* (The Path of *Sunnah* in Rejection of Innovation), 1850 -- was written when Sir Sayyid was a passionate follower of the Wahhābī movement. It is an exhortation to orthodox Sunnīs to take a stand against heresy. (c) *Kalimāt-al-Ḥaqq* (The True Discourse), 1849 -- deals with *pīrī-murīdī*, the traditional way in which *pīrs* (masters) regarded by their *murīds* (disciples). The first part discusses the notion of *pīrī*, coming to the conclusion that the Prophet is the one valid *pīr*, and that therefore all organized *ṣūfī* life must be strictly directed to following the Prophet alone, by adhering closely to the Qurʾān and the *Sunnah*. The second part on *murīdī* discusses mainly the concept and practice of *baiʿah*.[44] (d) *Namiqa dar bayān masʾala taṣawwur-i-Shaikh* (A Letter Explaining the Teaching of the Master's Image), 1852 -- focuses on the practice of bringing the image of the master in one's mind practiced in the Naqshbandi *ṣūfī* order. Aḥmad Khān rejected this *ṭarīqah* practice for it threatened to make the mind passive and to attach it to that of one's *shaikh*. (e) *Tuḥfa-i Ḥasan* (The Gift to Ḥasan), 1844 -- deals with the defense of the Sunnī sect against the Shīʿah because the latter addressed various libels at the Prophet's Companions. It is a translation of the tenth and twelfth chapters of Shāh ʿAbd al ʿAzīz's *Tuḥfa Ithnā ʿAshariyyah*. The former chapter consists of answers to the abuses leveled against the

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[43]Baljon, *The Reforms*, 46; Christian W. Troll, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan, A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978), 43.
[44]Troll, *A Reinterpretation*, 40.

Companions and ʿAʾishah while the latter deals with the Shiʿah terms *tawallā* and

*tabarrā* (love and enmity respectively of one's neighbor on religious grounds).[45]

In addition to his religious writings, his two important historical works written in

this period cannot be ignored: (a) *Āthār al-Ṣanādīd* (1847), comprises research on some

125 old buildings of Delhi which had been built by Hindus and Muslims in the past but

had been vastly altered by the ravages of time. The purpose of the research was to

discover how the buildings had been originally planned. The book also described the

famous men of Delhi who had lived in this city until his own period. (b) Aḥmad Khān

prepared the critical edition of *ʿAʾin-i Akbarī* (1855), an administrative manual of

Akbar's empire (1556-1605) and the splendid life of Akbar's royal court,[46] written by

Abu'l Faḍl (d. 1602).

Looking at the themes of the above mentioned religious works, Aḥmad Khān

seems to be traditional in the sense that these works dealt with the purification of Islam

from the non-Islamic elements and the innovation of unsound traditions. He was

seeking validation of his conviction and behavior by reference to generally established

prescriptive Islamic norms.[47] In the case of *Tuḥfa-i Ḥasan*, Aḥmad Khān showed a

sectarian sensibility for he strictly favored the Sunnī sect. His historical works *(Āthār*

*al-Ṣanādīd* and *ʿAʾin Akbarī)* reveal an immense pride in the heyday of Muslim rule in

India. Saeeda Iqbal remarks that, "brought up around the decaying Mughal empire,

Sayyid Aḥmad Khān in his early life, like every enthusiastic Muslim, sought to escape

reality by having recourse to dreams of the golden age when the Islamic civilization

flourished in India."[48] In this respect, Baljon also makes a similar point.[49] Yet, during

[45]*Ibid.*

[46]Hali, *Hayat-i-Javed*, 37-45.

[47]Hafeez Malik, *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, 23.

[48]Saeeda Iqbal, *Islamic Rationalism*, 137.

[49]"Though Aḥmad Khān was more and more confronted with life's reality, we must not expect that in the years 1838-57 he had an actual understanding of what was going on; he apparently committed the same fault as the Muslims did in general in seeking to escape reality by having recourse to dreams of the golden age when Islamic civilization flourished in India." Baljon, *The Reform*, 46.

this period, Aḥmad Khān's religious thought had already started to be critical in viewing religious practices in the community, despite the fact that he was much influenced by Shāh Walīullāh and the Wahhābī movement.

### b. After 1857.

After the revolt of 1857, Aḥmad Khān became firmly committed to cooperating with the British. As a result of his increasing contact with them, particularly during his stay in England, Aḥmad Khān became sensitive to the backwardness of his people. Sayyid Aḥmad, an inquisive intellectual who edited the most important primary sources of Muslim rule in India, and preserved the architectural heritage of Delhi in *Āthār al-Ṣanādīd*, was viewing his community differently as he said:

> I have journeyed far and wide in search for road that will lead my people to a happier existence and I have seen many worthwhile things on the way. Wherever I have seen something beautiful, met cultured and learned men, attended scholarly meetings, set my eyes on fine buildings, gazed on fragrant flowers, witnessed people at work and play, indeed, wherever I have come across a fine looking person, my thoughts have returned to my own land and my own people. Seeing all these wonders I have suffered and constantly asked myself why my people cannot be the same.[50]

The events of the Mutiny and his journey to England facilitated the development of his rational outlook. The impact of these events on Aḥmad Khān was not only socio-political but also had religious implications. These experiences established him as a modernist Muslim.[51]

While before 1857 Sir Sayyid's religious thought was puritanical, sectarian and apologetic, after 1857, it was rational, dynamic and pragmatic. He was more concerned with moral and social values than with transcendental matters.[52] The development of Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's religious thought from the early period to the later can be seen with reference to his religious work, *Tuḥfa-i Ḥasan*. After 1857, he was no longer

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[50]Hali, *Hayat-i-Javed*, 146.
[51]Baljon, *The Reforms*, 45; Hafeez Malik, *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, 24.
[52]Hali, *Hayat-i-Javed*, 104.

sectarian and not concerned anymore with Shīʿah-Sunnī differences. In his general approach to maintain the Muslim community's solidarity, Sir Sayyid deemphasized Shīʿah-Sunnī differences and appealed to both sects to reform their cultural patterns."[53] Baljon observes:

> In a review of this tract *(Tuḥfa-i Ḥasan)*, written in 1878, his judgment on this question is more sober and more in conformity with historical truth, and there he states simply: "To discuss on libels levelled against Companions of the Prophet is one of the most nonsensical, silly and imaginary things in the world....The making of mistakes, particularly in the way of administration they used, is unavoidable....The Companions of the Prophet were not infallible....If there are stories known (about them) which are open to criticism, then neither ʿAlī nor the three Caliphs can be excused from that criticism.[54]

If, before 1857, Aḥmad Khān was not much aware of the living reality of Indian Muslim society, and was only attracted to the golden age of the Mughal empire, in later period he urged the people not to take pride in the achievement of their ancestors. He said: "Whatever our ancestors were they were, we are not. They were the inventors of several complicated sciences while we cannot even understand them. We should be sorry for ourselves instead of being proud of our ancestors."[55] Before 1857, Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's religious thought was quite dependent on the religious outlook of Shāh Walīullāh, Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd and the Wahhābīs,[56] but after 1857 he based this

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[53]Hafeez Malik, *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, 261.

[54]Baljon, *The Reforms*, 46-47.

[55]Saeeda Iqbal, *Islamic Rationalism*, 202. Cited from *Maqālāt-i-Shiblī and ʿIlm al-Kalām*, 26-27.

[56]Zobairi thus explains: "These figures held that a Muslim social order could succeed only with political power and only in an Islamic state could true Islam be practiced. Therefore, Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd waged a *jihād* against Sikhs whereas Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz issued a *fatwā* in 1803 declaring India to be *dār al-ḥarb* (land of the enemy), means land or abode of war. [sic.]. Aḥmad Khān, on the other hand, had a conviction in a Muslim renaissance without political authority. He used two approaches which were in strong contrast to those of the afore-mentioned leaders: First, he adopted a radically different approach towards Islam. He believed that the purpose and relevance of religion must change with time. Every new age, he argued, brings about changes in our attitudes and opinions, our habits and customs, our entire civilization and culture. Religion, if it is to remain a part of our lives, must change likewise. Syed Aḥmad was a staunch Muslim: he also believed in science. He therefore emphasized the need of *ijtihād* (independent interpretation) as an instrument of adjustment between theology and modern thought. Secondly, Syed Aḥmad preached loyalty to the British Government under the prevailing circumstances, he considered this to be the only wise policy. India was no longer *dār al-ḥarb*, he declared, because the lives and properties of Muslims were safe under the British and no restrictions were put on their religious observances.

religious thought on his own critical research. He once said, "I am a Musalman not because I was born in a Muslim house, but because I believe in Islam by my own conviction and research."[57] Now his religious approach became broad, tolerant and enlightened. He could no longer accept religion as a traditional reality; rather it was interpreted according to the spirit of every age.[58]

In this period Ahmad Khān was aware not only of the internal problems of Islam such as the established prescriptive Islamic norms but also of the external challenges to Islam and Muslims in India. Among the latter were "the increasing activities of the Christian missionaries and the naturalistic trends of thought from the West. He appeared as a Muslim scholastic to meet the first and as a Muslim rationalist to meet the second situation."[59]

Since Sayyid Ahmad Khān's religious thought was conditioned by the Western advance in science and technology and the threat of Christian missionaries and Orientalists, he was led to approach Islam in rational and naturalistic way. As far as science and technology were concerned, Ahmad Khān had no doubt at all that Muslims should acquire such knowledge for he believed that it was Muslims themselves who in the past had given them to the West.[60] In addition to this, to him, science and technology strengthened Islamic convictions since Islam was not dialectically opposed to reason.[61]

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*Jihād* was incumbent on the Muslims only if they could not live in peace and practice their religion without fear of persecution. Since none of these conditions prevailed, it was, in fact, obligatory to be loyal to the British Government." R.H. Zobairi, "Sir Syed Ahmad Khān's Interpretation of Muslims Society and His Reform Movement in the Indian Context," *Islamic Culture*, vol. LVII, no. 3 (1983), 171-172. Cited from *Maqālāt-i Sir Sayyid*, ed. Muhammad Ismāīl Pānīpati, vol. I, 189-270, 273 and vol. IX, 195-196.

[57]M. Muslehuddin Siddiqui, *Social Thought of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan* (Hyderabad: Osmania University, 1960), 134.

[58]Nizami, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, 113.

[59]*Ibid.*, 114.

[60]Hafeez Malik, *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, 23.

[61]Bashir Ahmad Dar, *Religious Thought of Sayyid Ahmad Khan* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1971), 46.

A rational outlook on social and moral values of the community now became Aḥmad Khān's vital concern in his religious approach. "He interpreted religion in terms of human service and identified it with those moral and spiritual values which give a forward pull to humanity and ensure its moral well-being."[62] In his view, religion is concerned with conduct. In this respect, Islam does not merely exist in theory, it should be observed by Muslims in the actual practice too. For Aḥmad Khān, the meaning of Islam, can best be understood by the behavior of the believers and not independent of it.[63] Therefore, "Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's struggle was a struggle not only for a purified Islam but a purified Muslim society."[64] He fully realized that reforming the Muslims of India required a change in the religious attitudes, but the situation was extremely complex. Aḥmad Khān realized that apart from the political problem that faced him from 1859 onwards, there was also the intellectual problem of evaluating the Western civilization and the theological problem of the challenges to Islam from the findings of new sciences.[65] Bashir Ahmad Dar describes the situation faced by Aḥmad Khān and his response to Western political and cultural influences in these words:

> In the modern period the political supremacy of the West brought about many new problems that necessarily follow the influence of a stronger and virile culture on relatively weaker ones. This was the position of India in the nineteenth century: Islam was now face to face with this new Western culture....It was only after the "Revolt 1857" that doubts began to be entertained about their capacity to rise to the occasion and withstand boldly and courageously the onrush of the new forces. It was in this atmosphere of doubt and despair that Sayyid Aḥmad came forward with a new way of meeting this challenge from the West. He stood for cooperation in the political field, assimilation in the cultural field, and reinterpretation of the Islamic ideology in the intellectual field.[66]

To respond to the challenge from the West, Aḥmad Khān wanted to reform the moral, social and religious beliefs and practices of the Muslims in a rational and critical

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[62]Nizami, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, 113.
[63]Saeeda Iqbal, *Islamic Rationalism*, 136.
[64]*Ibid.*, 137.
[65]*Ibid.*, 138.
[66]Ahmad Dar, *Religious Thought*, 263-264.

way. By so doing, he believed that Islam would be able to effectively serve the needs of society. Unlike his contemporary ʿulamāʾ who were not concerned with the mundane affairs of life, he believed that if Muslims ignored their worldly affairs, their religious ideology would come under attack. He wanted to prove that Islam was the only true religion in the world by means of Muslim's social and cultural rehabilitation.[67] To meet this end, Sayyid Aḥmad Khān devised a comprehensive programme of religious, social, economic and moral regeneration. He enumerated the following as of primary importance:

> 1. Independent thinking, according to him, the theological doctrine of *taqlīd* had been one of the most important factors responsible for social degeneration. 2. Rejection of all those religious beliefs and practices which form no part of Islam. 3. Assessment of some religious problems which are true in themselves but are not expounded in rational terms. 4. Critical review of some religious problems which had been wrongly interpreted in the past.[68]

It is to be noted that Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's rational approach to Islam was not solely due to his contact with the West, it had already been influenced by Shāh Walīullāh, who stressed a rational reinterpretation of Islamic thought to make it acceptable to the new age, as Saeeda Iqbal observes, "the revivalistic reformative movement of Walīullāh was adopted and practically applied by Sayyid Aḥmad Khān to the situation pertaining in the Subcontinent."[69] However, Aḥmad Khān did not merely adopt Shah Walīullāh's reformist framework, which had been intended to synthesize orthodoxy and sufism. Sayyid Aḥmad Khān added a new dimension to the concept of *bidʿah*. While he continued to emphasize the elimination of Hindu customs from Muslim culture, he urged that in secular matters, Islam was not different from the modern Western ways so that Muslims could legitimately adopt them.[70] Besides, seeking to legitimate the modern Western ways, Aḥmad Khān's reform was different

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[67] *Ibid.*, 264.
[68] *Ibid.*, 13.
[69] Saeeda Iqbal, *Islamic Rationalism*, 135-136.
[70] Hafeez Malik, *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, 261.

from Walīullāh's because the problems faced by the reformer in nineteenth century India were more complex than those of Walīullāh's in the eighteenth century. Aḥmad Khān attempted to reconcile religion with science and technology. So, Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's religious thought, in fact, was the development of Shah Walīullāh's movement for the purification of orthodoxy and sufism plus the former's "rational" reconciliation of Islam and the modern natural sciences. In this context, Aḥmad Khān's modernistic interpretation can be divided into three broad categories: (1) the Qurʾān and the apostolic traditions (2) the demythologizing of Islam and finally (3) the emergence of a modern orientation for Islam.[71]

Sayyid Aḥmad believed that only the Qurʾān was the most reliable basis for understanding Islam. He had no doubt that the Muslims of today ought to interpret the Qurʿān according to the conditions of modern life rather than restricting themselves to the commentaries of the ancient Islamic scholars. With the advance of the sciences in the nineteenth century, Muslims, he believed should be able to understand both the clear and the allegorical verses of the Qurʾān. A serious study of the natural sciences as developed in the West led him to the conviction that the Qurʾān being the word of God must be in conformity with the work of God and so there can no be contradiction between the two.[72]

Since it was only the Qurʾān which he regarded authoritative, Aḥmad Khān did not consider ḥadīth (the tradition of the Prophet) as a determinant basis for understanding Islam. Consequently, he held that ḥadīth was to be examined critically and any ḥadīth could be rejected if it contradicted the Qurʾān and reason.[73] His criticism on ḥadīth was that the traditionists, when collecting ḥadīth materials, only concentrated on the authenticity of the transmitters but did not pay attention to the subject matter of the ḥadīth at all. Aḥmad Khān made a distinction between purely religious aḥādīth and

[71]Ibid., 266.
[72]Aziz Ahmad, Islamic Modernism, 43.
[73]Nizami, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, 122.

the ones that relate to worldly affairs. It was only the purely religious *aḥādīth* to which Muslims were obliged to follow, whereas in their worldly affairs, such as the social, economic, political and cultural matters, they were not bound by the Prophet's traditions. Muslims could adapt them according to their present day life as long as they were in conformity with the fundamental values of Islam.[74] One of the causes that made Aḥmad Khān critical of *ḥadīth* materials was due to the Western criticism towards Islam. Sheila McDonough comments:

> He knew that the Western hostility towards Islam was often based on the writings of Western scholars like William Muir...Muir and others had used *ḥadīth* materials as the basis for their descriptions of Muslim beliefs and practices. Sayyid Aḥmad Khān was concerned to deny that these *ḥadīth* materials truly represented Muslim life as it had been or should be. Much of it he considered forged and unreliable.[75]

While the majority of Muslim scholars held that *ijmāᶜ* was one of the sources of law in Islam, Aḥmad Khān did not recognize it as a reliable source which was binding on the Muslims of the present day. He argued that the change of time could invalidate an *ijmāᶜ* of the past, including the *ijmāᶜ* of the Prophet's companions. Religious problems of today, according to Aḥmad Khān, should be solved by the present Muslims who knew their situation on their own.[76] To this end, *ijtihād* became a very vital necessity in Aḥmad Khān's view. "Sayyid Aḥmad believed in *ijtihād* as a necessary instrument for the realization of the real objectives of religion. It was *ijtihād*, he said, which infused a dynamic spirit in religion and made it responsive to new situations and requirement of time."[77] Aḥmad Khān strongly challenged the orthodox *ᶜulamāʾ* of his time when he said that for *ijtihād*, a Muslim did not have to master fourteen different sciences as laid down by the past theologians. He said that an

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[74]Ahmad Dar, *Religious Thought*, 268.
[75]Sheila McDonough, *Muslim Ethics and Modernity A Comparative Study of the Ethical Thought of Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Maulana Maududi* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984), 42.
[76]Ahmad Dar, *Religious Thought*, 269.
[77]Nizami, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, 121-122.

educated and sensible Muslim who knew the Qurʾān and Arabic had a right to interpret religious matters not clearly stated and not stated in the Qurʾān.[78]

In sum, Aḥmad Khān's colonial experiences gave impetus to his religious thought. When he realized that Islam was being challenged by modern science and technology as well as the Christian missionaries in the West, Aḥmad Khān developed his religious thought in the form of a rational, progressive and naturalistic approach to Islam.

## 2. Social Thought and Reforms

### a. Social Thought and Reconciliation Approach

Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's social thought is closely related to his religious thought discussed earlier, so that we can, in fact, speak of his socio-religious thought. As with his religious thought, his social thought was modern and rational in nature. Aḥmad Khān rejected the claims of the Christian missionaries that Christianity was the cause of the progress of the West. According to him, the strength of European countries was due to their intellectual progress, especially their proficiency in the physical sciences. It were Muslims, however, whose earlier contributions had made possible the achievements of science in the West.[79]

Islam, according to Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, though historically late in appearance, is essentially the same light of God which has appeared earlier and is eternal. All the Prophets preceding the Prophet Muḥammad stood for Islam and the Prophet Muḥammad has only confirmed the eternal truth. Islam is a religion based on the unity of God and the unity of men. Man is created by God to look after his own interests and the welfare of others. Thus, brotherhood and mutual cooperation in matters of the world

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[78]Ahmad Dar, *Religious Thought,* 270.
[79]Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, *The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent* (The Netherlands: Mouton, 1962), 238.

is the basis of human existence as conceived by Islam.[80] The religion of Islam is liberal and enjoins upon its adherents to observe tolerance and show respect to other religions. The Prophets of the Jews and Christians are honored by Islam, which teaches tolerance towards these religions. To show disrespect to other religions is against the spirit of Islam.[81] As regards other social and religious groups, Sayyid Ahmad Khān showed himself to be very tolerant and open minded. He wanted every member of society to respect others. Differences of faith should not be a hindrance, he believed, in building social relationships, for they are part of the very nature of human life. His social thought was inspired by the social, political, economic and cultural conditions prevailing in India, particularly after 1857. In analyzing Ahmad Khān's social thought, this section will discuss Ahmad Khān's role in improving the relation between the Muslims and the British, and in the general uplift of his people's conditions under British rule.

Sayyid Ahmad Khān saw that the Muslim society was steeped in medievalism, obscurantism, superstition and ignorance.[82] He perceived that there was prejudice and misunderstanding between the British and the Muslims. Englishmen sometimes attacked Islam, which created discontent among Muslims and created hindrances in building a harmonious social relationship between two sides. William Hunter's book, *The Indian Musalmans,* is an example of such attacks. It argued that the Indian Muslims had a religious duty to wage holy war against the government.[83] In his *Life of Mahomet,* William Hunter suggested that the present decline of the Muslims throughout the world was mainly due to their religion. Such misunderstandings of

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[80]Siddiqui, *Social Thought,* 126.

[81]*Ibid.,* 127.

[82]Nizami, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan,* 91.

[83]Hali, *Hayat-i-Javed,* 135. See also W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans* (Delhi: Indological Book House, 1969) and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *Review on Dr. Hunter's Indian Musalmans: Are they bound to in conscience to rebel against the Queen?* trans. Syed Ahmad Khan Bahadur (Lahore: Premier Book House, 1947).

Islam and attacks on it resulted in a feeling of repulsion among Muslims towards the British government.[84]

On the other hand, the Muslims, particularly the conservative *ulamā*, were also strongly prejudiced against the British. They were suspicious of the government schools, particularly the mission schools, fearing that the British would convert their children to Christianity. Titus pointed out:

> Led by their conservative *maulvīs*, they [i.e. the Muslims] determined to boycott the Western institutions which were rapidly taking root and flourishing everywhere. This prohibition had a particular reference to Western education, which included the teaching of English and modern science in the Government and Mission schools, everywhere springing up. With vehement language the reactionary *maulvīs* inveighed against the institutions of the infidels.[85]

In order to remove misunderstandings between the British and the Muslims, Ahmad Khān tried to remove their mutual prejudices through his religious writings. He approached his society through its religious beliefs for he was convinced that religion could play a great part in civilizing man as well as in retarding human progress. Ahmad Khān was conscious that the Muslims would not welcome progressive ideas since they were bound to their customs and were conservative, dogmatic and anti Western.[86] But he remained indeterred. Given that both Muslims and the British had misunderstood each other's beliefs, Sayyid Ahmad wrote his *Mohomedan Commentary on the Holy Bible* and *Al-Khutbāt al-Ahmadiya* (Ahmad's Lectures) with the purpose of making both sides understand each other's belief and to help reduce their mutual prejudices. He criticized the attitude that different beliefs were a hindrance in social relationship. In his *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, he asserted that the Christians and Jews did not corrupt their scriptures, and that the books spoken of by the holy Qur'ān were the same books as exist today among Jews and Christians.[87]

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[84]Ahmad Dar, *Religious Thought*, 87.

[85]Titus, *Islam in India and Pakistan*, 200.

[86]Siddiqui, *Social Thought*, 135.

[87]Nizami, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, 124. See Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *The Mohomedan Commentary on the Holy Bible* (Ghazeepore, Aligarh: Author's Private Press, 1862).

Aḥmad Khān also wanted to acquaint the Muslims with the new learning of the West. To that end, he set up the Scientific Society (1864) first at Ghazipur and then at Aligarh. Its mission was to translate English books into Urdu so that the people could be acquainted with the new trends of thought in the West. In this way too, Aḥmad Khān hoped that the prejudices and ill-will that had developed between the Muslims and the English could be removed.[88]

Aḥmad Khān also wrote a pamphlet, *Risālāt-i Aḥkām-i Ṭaʿāmi Ahl-i Kitāb* (An Epistle Pertaining to the Question of Eating with the People of the Book). This pamphlet was directed against the doubts raised by Indian *ʿulamāʾ* about the lawfulness of eating with Christians: such doubts had caused Muslims to refrain from eating with the British. On the basis of the Qurʾān and traditions, as well as the opinions of Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz, Aḥmad Khān proved that "it was perfectly in order for Muslims to do as he had done himself and eat in homes of the English food prepared by them, in their own utensils, providing that no pork or wine was included in the meal."[89]

Aḥmad Khān also wrote a short article, *Taḥqīq-i Lafz-i Naṣārā* (Inquiry into the Word *Naṣārā*), in order to explain this term to the British who felt disrespected by its use by the Muslim writers. In order to remove this feeling, Aḥmad Khān clarified that the word *Naṣārā* meant the helpers. Hali wrote:

> In one verse of the Qurʾān it is stated that Jesus asked his disciples: *man anṣārī ilā Allah* (who are the helpers of God?). The apostles replied: *naḥnu anṣār Allah* (we are the helpers of God). For this reason, those who followed the disciples those who believed in Jesus were known by the name that the disciples themselves had accepted and were thus called *naṣārā* (helpers)."[90]

Aḥmad Khān perceived that his people continued to regard the British as usurpers and their government as infidel rule, so that it became difficult for them to have social interaction with the rulers. Being aware that religious differences have been the

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[88]Ahmad Dar, *Religious Thought,* 9-10.
[89]Hali, *Hayat-i-Javed,* 106.
[90]*Ibid.,* 70.

cause of ill will, coercion and persecution, he emphasized that there should be no discrimination between the peoples on the ground of their different faiths. Rather, it should be the duty of the adherents of every faith to enter into social relations with the followers of other faiths and to remove from their hearts the feeling of envy, hatred and opposition.[91] Unlike his people, and as far as politics was concerned, Ahmad Khān did not regard the coming of the British rule in India as a great calamity. "He recognized that it was not by accident that Muslim rule had gone, but that in fact, it had lost the ability to rule...and that therefore another people had to rule over India...So instead of disliking the British government he regarded it as an improvement upon Muslim rule."[92] According to Ahmad Khān, the Muslims' prejudice had prevented them from associating with the British and from making progress; they thought that scientific inventions and the dynamic institutions of the West would harm their mind and faith. He wrote:

> The blind prejudice of Muslims...is preventing them from emulating (Western) education, sciences and technology; Muslim society erroneously admires the blindness of those who are stubborn and haughty and considers all nations except its own inferior. There is not a single nation in the world which acquired excellence, material progress and spiritual happiness entirely by virtue of its own efforts. Nations always benefit from each other; only bigots deny themselves the fruits of their fellow men's labor.[93]

One thing to bear in mind is that, despite the fact that Ahmad Khān was deliberately endeavoring to reconcile his people with the British and urging them to study Western sciences and culture, he was not a secularist nor was he trying to secularize the people. In the words of McDonough:

> Sayyid Ahmad Khān was not advocating a secular, pluralist society, although he was trying to urge Muslims to relate themselves constructively to Westerners--

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[91]Siddiqui, *Social Thought*, 124. Cited from *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, vol. II (*Jamād al-Awwāl*, 1313H./August, 1895), 55.

[92]Baljon, *The Reforms*, 4.

[93]Hafeez Malik, "Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Role in the Development of Muslim nationalism in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent," *Islamic Studies*, no. 4, vol. V (December 1966), 397-398. Cited from Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān, "Taʿassub" in *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* (1st *Shawwāl*, 1287H./September 24, 1870), 1-2.

to dine with them, to respect their religion, to learn their sciences and so forth. These efforts to change Muslim attitudes from contemptuous non-contact to respectful co-existence were all based on the interest of the success of the community under the new conditions.[94]

## b. Educational and Socio-Religious Reform

Aḥmad Khān's contribution to the Muslims community was not limited to working for reconciliation between the Muslims and the British. He is known to have given serious consideration to determine what he should do to best contribute for his people's welfare. In 1862, he was thinking of opening a large orphanage to help his people. But he abandoned this plan when he realized that without widespread education in India, any progress was virtually impossible.[95] Having decided to concentrate on education, Aḥmad Khān founded the Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College at Aligarh. According to him:

> The chief cause that led to the foundation of this college was...that the Mahomedans were becoming more and more degraded and poor every day. Their religious prejudices had kept them back from taking advantage of the education offered by the Government colleges and schools; and consequently it was deemed necessary that some special arrangement should be made for them.[96]

He was acutely conscious of the fact that while the Hindus had begun to acquire Western education, a lot of Muslims still refused to do so and for that reason they were educationally more backward than their Hindu fellows. This institution's foundation was the product of his educational philosophy and his dissatisfaction with educational system in the country. His philosophy of education was that "knowledge of objects is value neutral and *suigeneris* but to know is valuable and it is more fruitful to know what is valuable for mankind. Knowledge once obtained can become absolute and at times harmful. In such cases it ought to be forsaken and new venues of knowledge

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[94]Sheila McDonough, *The Authority of the Past* (Pennsylvania: American Academy of Religion, 1970), 11.
[95]Hali, *Hayat-i-Javed*, 84.
[96]Nizami, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, 17.

should be opened and sought."[97] Ahmad Khān was not satisfied with the traditional Islamic education, limited to the teaching of the Qur'ān, hadīth, fiqh etc., as provided by the madrasah at Deoband. This madrasah was founded in 1867, eight years earlier than the Aligarh, by Rashīd Ahmad Gangohi and Muhammad Qāsim Nanotawi. Its goal was to train 'ulamā' who would be dedicated to reforming Islam. The madrasah adopted the British bureaucratic style in education; it had classrooms and a central library, while the instructional system was like that of the other modern formal schools.[98] Assessing the role of the madrasah at Deoband, Bashir Ahmad Dar says:

> If we review the activities of this group of pious scholars, we see that they made no real contribution towards the solution of social and cultural problems that had arisen as a result of the growing influence of Western thought. They confined themselves within the four walls of the old type of religious lore and mystic illumination and did not care to start or inspire any broad based movement of cultural reform among the Muslim which could satisfactorily resolve the growing conflict between the purely Muslim and Western ideologies.[99]

Ahmad Khān argued that the Muslims should be educated not only in their own creed, but also in all the modern branches of knowledge. He strongly criticized those who wanted to maintain the traditional systems of education and were against modern learning. He remarked: "if we stick to the old ways and confine ourselves to the achievements of our ancestors and ignore the new knowledge of the West, we would look little better than animals, the species of which cling together with fright and remain unmoved."[100] In the words of Hali, "Sir Sayyid intended to establish a Muhammadan University in India, for he realized that under the existing system, the people of the country had absolutely no chance of developing their ability to the full."[101] In view of Ahmad Khān's philosophy of education and his awareness of the weakness of madrasah education, he defined the following four areas of study:

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[97]Saeeda Iqbal, Islamic Rationalism, 212.
[98]Metcalf, Islamic Revival, 91-93.
[99]Ahmad Dar, Religious Thought, 53.
[100]Siddiqui, Social Thought, 102.
[101]Hali, Hayat-i-Javed, 123.

Religion, literature, mathematics and natural sciences. Natural science, a subject neglected by British public schools, would deal with the elementary physics; mathematics, with algebra, geometry, and 'higher branches'. Literature was defined as including language, composition, history, geography, logic, politics, and various topics in philosophy. The course in religion would cover the life and sayings of the Prophet, commentaries on the Qurʾān, jurisprudence, and general principles.[102]

Based on his philosophy of knowledge as value neutral, Aḥmad Khān did not mean to Islamize modern sciences through this curriculum, but intended rather to achieve a higher degree of both religious comprehension and worldly sciences.[103] This institution was prepared to train the leaders of society. The Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College was distinct, compared to the existing educational system of colleges and universities in India. In the words of Nizami:

> The management of this institution shall be perfectly free from any control of the Government,...the university should secure for itself sufficient annual income to keep it independent of any external aid [and]...that residence within the precincts of the university and under its discipline should be as indispensable as education in the course of study itself.[104]

The establishment of the college can be considered a major effort at educational reform. Thus, it is not surprising that Aḥmad Khān and his colleagues faced strong criticism and opposition from many directions, particularly from the conservative Muslims. Actually, this criticism was the result of opposition to Aḥmad Khān's religious views, which antagonized the sharīʿah minded Muslims. But Aḥmad Khān was not deterred by criticism, for he was convinced that only through proper education and training could his people hope to progress.

In 1886, ten years after the establishment of the college at Aligarh, Aḥmad Khān founded the Muhammadan Educational Conference. It was established to solve the educational problems of the Indian Muslims. Its more specific objectives were: "(a) to promote Western education amongst the Muslims (b) to make proper arrangement for

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[102]David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, 125.
[103]Saeeda Iqbal, *Islamic Rationalism*, 213.
[104]Nizami, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, 81.

religious instruction in institutions established by the Muslims (c) to encourage the education of Oriental subjects and theology and (d) to improve and raise the standard of old Indian *maktabs*."[105]

The Muhammadan Educational Conference sought to make the Muslims as a whole aware of their educational needs. It was to strive for the progress of education through annual meetings in different towns. In these annual meetings, educational experts from all over India discussed various educational questions and reported the progress or decline of Muslim schools. This organization played a vital role in addressing the educational problems of Muslims and in the progress of education among them.

Besides his educational reform, Ahmad Khān tried to reform some social practices and customs. His journal, *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* was the major medium for the expression and dissemination of his ideas in this respect. Among the customs prevalent in India which Ahmad Khān wanted to reform were polygamy, funeral and marriage customs, and asceticism. Although polygamy was not very common among Indian Muslims, he condemned it in a strong terms. He felt that polygamy created a bad reputation for Muslims among Westerners. He did admit that polygamy was not against human nature, and that a man might need more than one wife because sometimes a wife was unable to share her bed with her husband. Polygamy, he argued, however, had to be eliminated gradually by Islam because it had already been prevalent when Islam came. Looking at the many restrictions imposed on polygamy as well as the great number of safeguards against divorce, he held that the Qurʾān and the Prophet Muhammad wanted to eliminate polygamy and to recognize monogamy. He concluded, therefore, that a Muslim was discouraged to practice polygamy. "Any one who cared to

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[105]*Ibid.*, 89; Baljon, *The Reforms*, 45.

follow Islamic injunctions honestly," he said, "would not be able to marry more than one wife."[106]

As regards funeral and marriage customs, Indian Muslims, according to Aḥmad Khān, remained under the influence of the Hindus even though Aḥmad Shahīd had tried to eliminate such customs through his movement. According to Aḥmad Khān, it was for the sake of custom and family prestige that the Muslims spent excessive amounts of money on both funeral and marriage ceremonies. He observed: "Gentlemen, farmers and peasants often sold or mortgaged their property to pay for the extravagantly celebrated marriages for their children or their parents' death ceremonies."[107] He urged the Muslims to use their money for the sake of education and national uplift instead of spending it on funeral and marriage ceremonies. In this regard, he tried to set a personal example: instead of spending money lavishly to entertain his friends and relatives for his grandson, Ross Masʿūd's *bismillah* ceremony,[108] he offered Rs. 500 to the Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College Fund at its eighth annual session in 1893.[109] He also did not give any *walīmah* party[110] at the marriage of his son, Sayyid Maḥmūd, and instead, he too contributed Rs. 500 to the College fund.[111]

As regards asceticism, Aḥmad Khān believed that such behavior was not derived from religious motives nor was it of any use to society. In the words of M.S. Jain:

> He ridiculed the preachers of asceticism because they would accept food from those very people and disciples whom they would advise to renounce this

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[106]M. S. Jain, *The Aligarh Movement: Its Origin and Development 1858-1906* (Agra: Sri Ram Mehra, 1965), 108.

[107]Hafeez Malik, *Sir Sayyid Ahmad*, 265.

[108]The so-called *bismillah* is a ceremony held when a child starts receiving Qurʾānic reading lessons, usually at the age of four. The ceremony is often accompanied by lavish feasting and entertainment by musicians and dancers. Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, 50.

[109]*Ibid.*

[110]*Walīmah* is a wedding feast intended to solemnize and publicize the event of marriage.

[111]Nizami, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, 83

world. Sayyid Aḥmad Khān considered this devotionalism as wasted energy without lasting benefit and also pointed out that to work for the welfare of mankind is to take over the heritage of the Prophets.[112]

Aḥmad Khān advised the Indian Muslims against asceticism, urging them to move with the modern and progressive ways of life so that they could contribute to the welfare of the community.

In sum, given his belief that religion played an important part in people's lives, Aḥmad Khān's social and religious thought was really inseparable. Both were rational and pragmatic. This rational and pragmatic nature of his thought in general was influenced by his exposure to Western ideas and institutions. Aḥmad Khān wanted his people to progress as had the European countries. He thought that such progress was possible only through the acquisition of the modern sciences. The people, however, were conservative and unenlightened; they were often unwilling to send their children to the British Government schools and colleges where alone were the modern sciences taught. Aḥmad Khan's social reform aimed at trying to make the people open-minded, cooperative and to have them abandon negative social attitudes, of which he considered prejudice to be the worst. The Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College and the Muhammadan Educational Conference were both cooperative ventures, and expressed his reformist efforts not only in the educational but also in the social spheres.

## B. Ahmad Hassan

### 1. Islamic Thought before and after Independence

Two decades before the Indonesian independence in 1945, several important religious issues confronted the Indonesian people. These included the controversy between the traditionalist and the modernist Muslims on various religious subjects, the growing Christian missionary activities and the polemics between the Muslim and the

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[112]Jain, *The Aligarh*, 105.

nationalist groups on the philosophical and ideological bases of the national movement. Ahmad Hassan was keenly aware of these issues, and addressed them through debates, polemics and writings.

Ahmad Hassan was an ʿālim who was always ready for a public debate in defense of Islam. He debated with the Nahdatul Ulama[113] on the subjects of taqlīd [114] and talqīn; [115] with the Aḥmadiyyahs on the prophethood and the Prophet Jesus; with the Seventh Day Adventists on Christianity; and with the nationalist leaders on secular theories of law and government.[116] This section will study Ahmad Hassan's religious thought in the context of the colonial experience and of Islamic modernism in Indonesia. The colonial government had an impact on Islam in this country as is evidenced by secularism and the growth of Christian missionary activities. Thus Ahmad Hassan's religious thought can be seen in the context of the pre and the post-independence phases.

### a. Basic Religious Thought and Views on Social Practices and Customs

Ahmad Hassan believed that the Qurʾān and ḥadīth were fundamental sources on the basis of which Islam could adapt to conditions and concepts prevailing in the modern world. Both of these sources were God-inspired, authentic and suitable for being used as the mainsprings of Islam.[117] The Qurʾān and ḥadīth comprise laws

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[113]The Nahdatul Ulama (Renaissance of ʿUlamāʾ ) abbreviated as NU, is a traditionalist organization founded in 1926. Boland characterizes this organization as a movement of the ʿulamāʾ to maintain the traditional Javanese way of life and to defend the authority of the four orthodox madhāhib. B.J. Boland, The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia (Leiden: The Hague-Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), 11.

[114]According to Noer, in the Indonesian context, taqlīd means "adopting the already-established fatwā and practices as final and having an authoritative character." Deliar Noer, Administration of Islam in Indonesia (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project Southeast Asia Program Cornell University, 1978), 81.

[115]Talqīn (Arabic), a term used to denote an instruction given by a religious teacher or an ʿālim and generally denoting instruction given to the deceased at graveside at the close of the burial service.

[116]Federspiel, Persatuan Islam, 26.

[117]Ibid., 27-38.

concerning worldly matters and matters of hereafter. Concerning worldly matters, men can essentially solve their problems with their reason because religion was not revealed to guide them of details in things such as helping the needy, founding schools, punishing the guilty, ways to dress up, marriage and divorce etc. When Islam came, worldly matters were evaluated and judged as either *wājib, harām, sunnat, jāʾiz,* and *makrūh.*[118]

The worldly matters are regulated by Islam through the *sharīʿah* law on worldly affairs. Regarding such matters, men are urged to do things that benefit mankind, even by innovating.[119] Conversely, in matters of the hereafter, on the other hand, called *ʿibādah* (worship), such as prayer, fasting and pilgrimage, men only follow the regulations as stated in the Qurʾān and *ahādīth* without any innovations. So far as worship is concerned, the *sharīʿah* regulates its ritual and order; these cannot be derived by human reasoning but are known only through revelation from God to man.[120] Ahmad Hassan concluded that in worldly matters man can do everything not forbidden by the Qurʾān and *hadīth,* whereas in matters of worship man can only act as has been laid down in the Qurʾān and *hadīth.* Ahmad Hassan emphasized that it was important to perceive the difference between various systems of law in Islam so that man would not be confused in his thinking and behavior, and so that he would know what he can and cannot do in any aspect of his life.[121]

Ahmad Hassan did not consider *ijmāʿ* and *qiyās* as independent bases of law in Islam. Only the Qurʾān and valid *ahādīth* are the valid bases of Islam. He accepted

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[118]"According to Islamic law, every act fits into one of the following categories: *fard,* obligatory under law, such as the performance of prayer; (to this is added *wājib,* obligatory through legal extrapolation but not expressly mentioned in the primary sources of law so that its omission is no sin); *mustahabb* or *mandūb,* not obligatory but recommended; *mubāh,* neutral or permitted; *makrūh,* not forbidden but discouraged; and *harām,* forbidden." Cyril Glassé, ed. "Sharīʿah", *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam* (Singapore: Tien Wah Press, 1989), 361. See Ahmad Hassan, *Ringkasan Tentang Islam* (Bangil: Al-Muslimun, 1972), 20-21.

[119]Ahmad Hassan, *Ringkasan,* 21.

[120]*Ibid.*

[121]Ahmad Hassan, *At-Tauhied* (Bangil: Persatuan Islam, 1937), 68.

only the *ijmāᶜ* of the Prophet's Companions as the valid source of Islam for he believed that the Companions based their opinions on the Prophet's traditions. Ahmad Hassan rejected *qiyās* as the basis of Islam because *qiyās* was not directly based on the Qurʾān and *hadīth*. He only accepted *qiyās* on worldly matters whereas in *ᶜibādah, qiyās* is not allowed. *ᶜIbādah* is that which is simply, and exclusively, regulated by God and the Prophet and these never exist anything new in such matters besides what is in the Qurʾān and *hadīth*.[122]

Ahmad Hassan strongly urged Muslims to undertake *ijtihād* or at least to be a *muttabiᶜ*, that is one who makes a serious effort to looking into the Qurʾān and *hadīth* on religious matters so that his worship is based on his own conviction and not merely on the opinions of his teachers or the *ᶜulamāʾ*. For a Muslim to be a *mujtahīd*, according to Ahmad Hassan, it was sufficient to know Arabic, *tafsīr*, *uṣūl al-fiqh* and *ᶜilm al-musṭalāḥ al-hadīth;* through such knowledge, a Muslim could understand the meaning of the Qurʾān and *hadīth*. He believed that in the present day it is easier for a Muslim to be a *mujtahīd* than in the past because *ahādīth* have been collected and printed in various books.[123]

Ahmad Hassan was vehemently opposed to *taqlīd*. Basing his arguments on the Qurʾān (17:36), he claimed that *taqlīd* was not allowed at all. He noted that all four of the Sunnī *imāms* repeatedly discouraged Muslims from blindly following their opinions and encouraged them instead to study the Qurʾān and *hadīth*, on which the *imāms* themselves based on their argumentation. To Ahmad Hassan, the backwardness of Muslims in all its aspects was due to the tradition of *taqlīd*.[124] He also rejected the opinion that a Muslim who was not able to undertake *ijtihād* should follow one of the four *madhhabs*, Mālikī, Hanafī, Shāfiᶜī, or Hanbalī. This opinion was expressed in 1935 by a traditionalist *ᶜālim*, Abdul Wahab, a leader of the Nahdatul Ulama. Abdul

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[122]Ahmad   Hassan,   *Ringkasan*, 22-24, 30.
[123]Ahmad  Hassan,  *Risalah   Al-Madzhab* (Bangil: Persatuan  Islam,  1956),  13-14.
[124]Ahmad  Hassan,  *Ringkasan*, 31-32.

Wahab also held that the gate of *ijtihād* had been closed for seven hundred years and whoever now performed *ijtihād* was an infidel. As Ahmad Hassan strongly rejected Abdul Wahab's judgment, the latter and his followers denounced him as a modernist, a Muꜥtazilite and a Wahhābī. These terms were considered highly derogatory by the traditionalits in that period.[125] In order to prove that a Muslim was supposed to practice the *taqlīd* of one of the four *imāms*, Abdul Wahab had given seventy-three reasons, most of them were quotations from the Qurʾān, *aḥādīth*, the sayings of the Prophet's Companions, and of the four *imāms*. Ahmad Hassan too presented seventy three arguments to refute Abdul Wahab's argumentation and proved that the latter had ꜜisinterpreted the references he had given.[126]

Ahmad Hassan was deeply concerned with the purification of Islam. He wanted Muslims to base their beliefs and worship only on the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*. He could not tolerate at all the elements of *shirk* and *bidꜥah* being mixed with *ꜥaqīdah* and *ꜥibādah*. Consequently, he was always ready to debate in public with and polemicize against whoever was not in line with him or did not share viewpoint of the Persatuan Islam.[127] He found his people to have mixed their words and actions with *shirk* and *bidꜥah* so that Islam was understood in a confused and inappropriate manner; hence his commitment to a return to the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*.

Before Indonesian independence, the attempts by modernists to purify Islam from *shirk* and *bidꜥah* were quite progressive in intent. Ahmad Hassan is considered to be the most ardent modernist who attempted to purify Islam from heterodoxies prevalent among the Indonesian Muslims. He believed that any element, relating to Muslim beliefs and worship, which was fabricated and not found in the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth* should be eliminated in order to make Muslims once again dynamic. The

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[125]Ahmad Hassan. "Alasan Pihak Yang Mewajibkan Taqlid" *Al-Lisan*, 27 December 1935, 6.

[126]*Ibid.*, 1-53.

[127]Tamar Djaja, *Riwayat Hidup*, 125.

traditionalists did not have the similar concerns, for they were more tolerant of local beliefs and customs. In addition, the traditionalists were not much aware of the social, political and economic problems of Muslim society; rather they were much preoccupied with *ʿibādah* and the rituals and ceremonies practiced in society. The traditionalist approach to Islam was quite suited to the interests of the Dutch government, for it was more amenable to recognizing the status quo of the colonial government.[128]

Ahmad Hassan was uncompromising towards all local Indonesian customs and practices he saw as conflicting with Islam. In this area, we do not witness any major shift in his views from pre-independent to post independent period. He opposed the traditionalists who were rather tolerant of the heterodoxies that prevailed among the *abangan* (nominal Muslims), for they believed that such practices would disappear gradually when they understood Islam more deeply. Such customs and practices include *slametan*,[129] magic, soothsaying, the use of amulets, mystical practices and the intercession and worship of saints. He wanted to purify Islamic beliefs and rituals from these forms of *shirk* and *bidʿah*. The purpose of this purification was not only to introduce the true Islam as originally revealed by God to the Prophet Muḥammad but also to help Muslims better understand their duties toward God. Otherwise Muslims would be confused in performing these obligations and they would be burdened with pseudo-religious obligations.

It has been a tradition in Indonesia to hold a *slametan* at the house of the deceased after the burial, on the seventh, the fortieth and on a the hundredth day after death. The *slametan* was allowed by some of the traditionalist *ʿulamāʾ*, who justified it based on the basis of a *ḥadīth* stating that on one occasion the Prophet had gone to the house of a deceased after burial and had eaten the food prepared by the members of the

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[128]Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim*, 336.

[129]*Slametan* (Javanese from Arabic), a communal feast, popular among the nominally Muslim *(abangan)* population of Java, given to commemorate important events in an individual's life. The ceremony attached to the meal has an animistic and shamanistic flavor. In the other words, it is a meal or feast of religious character, a ceremonial meal.

deceased's household.[130] Ahmad Hassan rejected the *ḥadīth* favoring of its practice and he proved that the *ḥadīth* was not valid. His position was that no *slametan* should be held at the family of the deceased.[131] He challenged any *ʿālim* who maintained that the Prophet did eat at the deceased's house to debate with him. Though none of the *ʿulamāʾ* responded to his challenge, he introduced a sound *ḥadīth*, according to him, showed the proper way of behaving during the days following a death. This *ḥadīth* stated that on one occasion after a death in the community, the Prophet commanded neighbors to prepare food for the mourners on the day of burial. According to Ahmad Hassan, the family of the deceased should be left alone with its grief for several days and the neighbors should prepare food for them up to three days; however, no *slametan* was to be held on this occasion.[132]

He also condemned the religious recitations and prayers at the *slametans* connected with death which were intended to aid the deceased. This practice was justified by the conservative *ʿulamāʾ* on analogy with the *ḥadīth* which stated that a young man could undertake the *ḥajj* (pilgrimage) or fast in the name of an elder person unable to perform these religious requirements himself. Ahmad Hassan, maintaining that there was no *qiyās* except on worldly matters, rejected the practice of praying and reciting religious texts at the *slametans* for the sake of the deceased. He stated that neither the Qurʾān nor *ḥadīth* commanded Muslims to engage in this practice, and that it was never performed by the *ṣaḥābah* (the Prophet's Companions), by the *tābiʿīn* (followers of the Companions), the *tābiʿ tābiʿīn* (followers of the followers) or by any of the four great *imāms*.[133]

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[130]Ahmad Hassan, "Dari Hal Makan-Makan di Rumah Orang Mati." *Sual-Djawab*, no. 12, 29-30.

[131]Ahmad Hassan, "Makan-Makan di Rumah Orang Mati dan Batas Terlarangnya." *Sual-Djawab*, no. 8, 64-66.

[132]*Ibid.*

[133]*Ibid.*, 62-63.

Ahmad Hassan found some Muslims holding that the ceremony of *slametan hamil* (feast for pregnancy) was sanction.·. by Islam. He emphasized that there were only two *slametans* which Islam had established: that on the seventh day after the birth and on the occasion of marriage. After the birth of a child. Muslims are commanded to make a sacrifice: but according to Ahmad Hassan, there is no sanction for the reading of the feast prayer, the *tahlīl*.[134]*barzanji* [135] or of anything else commonly celebrated in Indonesia.[136]

### b. Mysticism

Ahmad Hassan rejected the mystical practices of *tasāwwuf* and the *tarīqahs* prevalent in the Muslim society. He considered these as *bidᶜahs* because the mysticism practiced by the *sūfī* orders was far removed from the simplicity and purity of early Muslim *sūfī* practices. Moreover, since mystical practice emphasized regular religious contemplation, the *sūfīs* deemphasized the practice of regular articles of worship, i.e. prayer, fasting and pilgrimage.[137] Ahmad Hassan rejected all *tarīqahs* as *bidᶜahs* because the *tarīqahs* had regulations concerning *zikr* or the imagination of the *sūfī* master in the mind of its students or followers, etc., which were not recognized in the Qurᵓān or *hadīth*. Therefore, according to Ahmad Hassan, in order not to commit *bidᶜah*, Muslims should follow only the true and valid *tarīqah*, which is the worship of God according to the Qurᵓān and *ahādīth*.[138]

Indonesian Muslims have always visited the tombs of holy men. In Java, for example, people visited the tombs of the nine *walīs*, the first propagators of Islam on the

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[134]*Tahlīl* (Arabic). the act of repeating the ejaculations *lā ilāha illā Allāh* (there is no god but Allāh). It is believed by many Muslims that repetition of the *tahlīl* will cleanse a person's sins and gain him religious merit.

[135]*Barzanji* (Indonesian from Persian). a special prayer usually recited on the occasion of the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet *(maulūd)*.

[136]Ahmad Hassan. "Slametan Hamil." *Sual-Djawab*, no. 7, 7.

[137]Ahmad Hassan. *Soal-Jawab* (Bandung: Diponegoro. 1977). 345-347.

[138]*Ibid.,* 328-333.

island. At the tombs, the visitors asked favor and intercession of the dead *walīs*. Some made vows to be good Muslims if the saints would cause favorable events to happen. Ahmad Hassan considered that visiting tombs of saints for intercession and saint worship was not permitted in Islam. He stated that the Qurʾān and *hadīth* command that prayers be addressed directly to Allah, without, for example any such formula as "with the blessing of the Prophet."[139] Ahmad Hassan argued that had it been correct to ask for the Prophet's intercession after his death, the Companions would have done so.[140] He further stated that during the Prophet's lifetime, the Companions had asked him to pray for them but after he died they never addressed requests to his spirit at his grave. This indicates that Muslim tombs are not the places to ask for prayers and intercession but only to pray for the dead.[141] Ahmad Hassan did not reject the practice of visiting the tombs if the purpose was to pray for the deceased not to ask intercession and blessing of the deceased.

### c. Response to the Dutch Policies and Christian Missionary Activities

The Dutch made deliberate efforts to isolate Indonesian Muslims from politics. Besides, through the Islamic policy the Dutch colonial administration tried to restrain the strengthening of religious influence by rigidly maintaining a political and economic system that limited the role of local leaders and prevent social and political reforms among the general population.[142] The Dutch policy to limit the growth of religious and political zeal among the Muslims was intended to stabilize their rule over Indonesia and to create the feeling of satisfaction with it. To meet this end, according to Deliar Noer, the Dutch applied two methods:

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[139]Ahmad Hassan, "Tawassul," *Sual-Djawab*, no. 3 (1958), 11-16.
[140]*Ibid.*
[141]Ahmad Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, 50.
[142]Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun* (The Hague and Bandung: Van Hoeve, 1958), 82.

First, which had a cultural character, was how to spread Western culture in such a way that the Indonesians adopted it as their culture without necessarily neglecting their own. This idea which was called association, had the aim to bind the colony closely to the mother country by means of making available the advantages of the latter's culture...to the colonial population with full respect to the indigenous culture. The second view was how to convert the Indonesians, Muslims as well as pagans, to Christianity. This view should not be necessarily looked at as a response to the need for the spiritual upbuilding of the people in the country, it was also related to the aim of the first, i.e. the strengthening of the Dutch position in Indonesia. The missionaries themselves were of the opinion that if the aim of the first view was fulfilled, they will be able to make themselves more acceptable to those natives who had been culturally assimilated.[143]

The purpose of the association policy of the Dutch, in fact, was to ensure the preservation of colonial rule. Through the spread of the education among Indonesians, according to Snouck Hurgronje, they would become loyal to the Dutch government, the sentiment of pan-Islamism would be defeated, and the activities of the Christian missionaries would be more effective. Snouck Hurgronje, in fact, visualized that "the birth of the Dutch state, consisting of two geographically distant, but spiritually connected parts, one of which would be in Northwestern Europe and the other in Southeast Asia."[144] In his view, the Islamic system had become so rigid that it was no longer capable of adapting to a new age. Only through the large scale organization of education on a universal and religiously neutral basis would the colonial government be able to emancipate or liberate the Muslims from their religion.

The impact of the Dutch association policy on the Muslims was a challenge to the Muslim reformers in Indonesia for it resulted in the increase of Christian missions among the Indonesians, the secularization of politics, and freedom of male-female relationships. It was the need to respond to this challenge that became Ahmad Hassan's major concern as a reformist Muslim of this period. The Dutch government was also

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[143]Deliar Noer, *The Rise and Development*, 31-32. See also Steenbrink, *Mencari Tuhan dengan Kacamata Barat* (Yogyakarta: IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Press, 1988), 252-253; Aqib Suminto, *Politik Islam Hindia Belanda* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1985), 38.
[144]Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism*, 88.

much concerned with missionary activities. It viewed Muslim reformers as a threat to Christian missionary activities. Therefore, the government supported the latter with all possible means and ways.

> A government decree of 1889 stipulated that in non-Muslim parts of the outer regions (i.e. out of Java and Madura) no Muslim chiefs or officials are allowed to be installed, neither are Islamic regulations and customs to be introduced. The aim of this decree was to reduce the danger of resistance in the heathen areas to the introduction or spread of Christianity.[145]

The strategy of Christian missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant was never to attack Islam directly but to use all possible indirect means against it. Thus they promoted ancient folk customs, adat and folk religions, regional dialects (in contrast to Malay, thought to be of Islamic origin), and the modernization of health care and education. The common aim of the missionaries was the curtailment of Islam's power and influence, especially through economic, political and educational means.[146]

Ahmad Hassan was aware of the Christian missionary activities, and especially of missionary statements against Islam. He believed that Islam should be defended from all attacks from non-Muslims as well as Muslims. Among the concerns guiding the foundation of the Commite Pembela Islam (Defender of Islam Commitee) of which Ahmad Hassan was the advisor, were to detect books, magazines, booklets and statements which attacked Islam intentionally or unintentionally and to respond to them by publishing books, journals, newspapers, leaflets and by holding public meetings. The committee also urged Muslims throughout Indonesia to found committees to further its purpose.[147]

In 1929 the Committee published a journal, Pembela Islam. This journal was published until 1935 when the Dutch colonial government banned it for allegedly attacking its Christianity.[148] In 1939, Ahmad Hassan was appointed by the 2nd

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[145]Deliar Noer, The Rise and Development, 35.
[146]Steenbrink, Dutch Colonialism, 98-99.
[147]"Asas dan Tujuan Commite Pembela Islam," Pembela Islam, no. 1 (1929), 1-3.
[148]Anshari, Ahmad Hassan Wajah, 15.

Congress of Al-Islam in Solo, Central Java, to respond to any criticism to Islam from Christians and others. For this purpose, Ahmad Hassan urged Muslims to report or send to him any books or writings critical of Islam so that he might respond to them. This year, a Christian propagandist, Rifai Burhanuddin, wrote a book entitled *Isa di dalam al-Qur'an* (Jesus in the Qur'an) published by Cimindi, Bandung. This book, according to Ahmad Hassan, was intended to mislead the Muslims in understanding their religion. Thus, while the author quoted the verses of the Qur'an he translated them in favor of Christian viewpoints. Ahmad Hassan remarked that the picture on its cover showed a Qur'an reciter and inside, on page eight, there was the picture of the Syuhada Mosque of Yogyakarta.

Ahmad Hassan's response to this book was to write a book on Christianity, *Bibel Lawan Bibel* (The Bible against the Bible). This book which consists of four sub-sections: *Ketuhanan Yesus Menurut Bibel* (Jesus according to the Bible), *Isa dan Agamanya* (Jesus and his religion), *Bibel Lawan Bibel* (The Bible against the Bible) and *Benarkah Isa Disalib?* (Was Jesus really crucified)?[149] Like his other works, this book is clearly and precisely written but without referring to the *Qur'an* and other Islamic sources; rather all argumentation is exclusively based on the Bible alone. According to Ahmad Hassan, the fourth sub-section, *Benarkah Isa Disalib*, was written because there were many Christian teachers and propagandists preaching to Muslim students about Jesus and hoping to attract them for Christianity. For this reason, he was asked by his fellow Muslims to write on this issue.[150]

Ahmad Hassan's special attention to studying Christianity was inspired by the threat of Christian missionary activities to Islam. Many of his students after all were studying at Dutch schools, where their Islamic convictions were sometimes challenged

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[149]Ahmad Hassan, *Bibel lawan Bibel*, 1.
[150]*Ibid.*, 91-92.

by their Christian teachers.[151] Besides, Ahmad Hassan supp.sed that students who studied at Dutch schools were indirectly led to undermine religion, particularly Islam. Consequently, after they completed their study, the students tended to be less interested in Islam.[152] Therefore, to be able to defend Islam from Christian propagandists and to prevent his students and Muslims in general from missionary activities, Ahmad Hassan had to acquaint himself fully with Christianity and to respond to Christian missionaries through writings and debates.[153] Thus Ahmad Hassan challenged Pastor Ten Berge to a public debate because the pastor had written an article containing uncomplimentary remarks about the Prophet Muḥammad.[154] The impact of the Dutch colonial experience which greatly assisted Christian missionaries, also gave a motivation to Ahmad Hassan to undertake a comparative study of religions. To a certain extent, Ahmad Hassan also learnt from discussions with his students from Dutch schools. He admitted that such discussions served as a stimulant for him to augment his own knowledge for he had to look into the sources of Islam to answer the questions raised in the discussions.[155]

### d. Politics

Ahmad Hassan's religious thought before independence shows a preoccupation with the political and cultural impact of the colonial rule. He based his philosophical and ideological views on the Qur²ān and ḥadīth. During the two decades before Indonesian independence there were two major groups known as the Muslims and the Nationalists struggling for national independence.[156] In this period, nationalism and Islam became

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[151]M. Natsir, *Kebudayaan Islam dalam Perspektif Sejarah* (Jakarta: Girimukti Pasaka, 1988), xviii-xix.

[152]M. Thalib & Haris Fajar, eds., *Dialog Bung Karno-4. Hassan* (Yogyakarta: Sumber Ilmu, 1985), 69.

[153]Tamar Djaja, *Riwayat Hidup*, 55.

[154]Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 26.

[155]Deliar Noer, *The Rise and Development*, 141.

[156]These terms were used in Indonesian politics during the national movement. The Muslim groups means the whole groups from different Indonesian Islamic parties, in contrast to the nationalist parties. The nationalist groups means the "secularists" as the antagonists of the Islamic parties, but not the real secularists.

important issues for the Indonesian leaders. The Muslims insisted that their movement
was to be guided by the Islamic principles, while the Nationalists favored secular
principles which were neutral of any religious conviction. Ahmad Hassan, who
belonged to the Muslim group tried to convince the Indonesian Muslims to unite
politically but only under such Muslim parties as the PSII, Partai Syarikat Islam
Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Association Party) and the PII, Partai Islam Indonesia
(Indonesian Muslim Party). The PII was strongly supported by the Muhammadiyah
movement[157] and other modernist groups such as Persatuan Islam of Bandung.[158]

Supporting the Islamic groups, Ahmad Hassan believed that it was impossible
to implement Islamic law in Indonesia without making the latter an Islamic state. Ahmad
Hassan often issued *fatwās* on political subjects, which, although not directly criticizing
the existing government policies, attacked the general flatform of nationalism, the
philosophical basis of the national state, and political trends opposed to the goals of the
Islamic groups. In his *fatwās* compiled in such collections as *Islam & Kebangsaan*
(Islam and Nationalism) and *Pemerintahan Cara Islam* (Government according to
Islam), he stated that in Islam there was no separation between religion and state. The
West separated religion from state because its religions, according to Ahmad Hassan,
did not have any principles concerned with politics or state. Conversely, the teachings
of Islam had two major aspects: one regulating man's relationship with God, such as

[157]"The Muhammadiyah was founded by Kiyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan (1869-1923), a pious businessman from the *kauman* (the predominantly Muslim urban quarters adjacent to the principal mosque) of Yogyakarta, who had twice made the pilgrimage and studied with renowned shaykhs in the Holy City. Muhammadiyah shunned organized political activities, concentrating on a bold programme of religious innovation directed towards the purification of Javanese Islam, the formulation of Islamic doctrine in the light of modern knowledge, the reform of Muslim education, and the defense of the faith against external influences and attacks." Harry J. Benda, "South-East Asian Islam in the Twentieth Century", P.M. Holt, et. al., eds., *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 1970), 190. In the words of Boland, "The Muhammadiyah came into existence in 1912 as a socio-religious association, due to the initiative of K. H. Ahmad Dahlan, who was working as a teacher at a school which gave its name to this association. The association fought for reformist principles, which, coming from Egypt, had stirred the Islamic world." Boland, *The Struggle of Islam*, 11.
[158]Alfian, *Muhammadiyah the Political Behavior of a Muslim Modernist Organization under Dutch Colonialism* (Yogyakarta: Gajahmada University Press, 1989), 57.

prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, burial rites, vows and sacrificial offerings, and the other concerning man's relationship with man in its temporal aspect, including the principles of state. The latter aspect is divided into two. First, matters that pertain to Muslims alone, such as marriage, inheritance, *jihād* and everything else related to these matters. These are not binding on non-Muslims living in a Muslim area. Second, laws binding on Muslims and non-Muslims living in Muslim areas, such as matters of trade, labor relations, peace accords, securities and other legal affairs generally regarded as civic matters.[159] In the words of Natsir (1908-1993), "every command of Islam with regard to *ʿibādah* matters is also related to and bound by earthly matters. Here lies the difference between Islam and other religions."[160]

Throughout the 1930s, Ahmad Hassan continued polemicizing against the nationalist leaders, particularly Sukarno, on the ideology of the national movement and the basis of the state once Indonesia reached its independence. Ahmad Hassan invoked the Qurʾān and *aḥādīth* to urge Muslims to join Muslim parties. The Muslim parties, Ahmad Hassan promised, would implement Islamic law in the country once Indonesia was free from the colonial rulers who never gave full religious freedom to the Muslims. Ahmad Hassan also said that although Muslims constituted 90% of the Indonesian population, they never had the freedom to undertake *al-amr bil al-maʿrūf wa al-nahy ʿan*

[159]Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 41-42.

[160]M. Natsir, "Oleh-Oleh dari Algiers", in *Capita Selecta*, vol. 1 (Bandung: W. Van Hoeve, 1954), 165. Natsir was active in Persis and received direct guidance from Ahmad Hassan, the Persis leader, particularly from 1927 to 1945. Together with Ahmad Hassan, he established schools and managed the journal *Pembela Islam*. He had traditional *madrasah* education and also completed the Dutch Senior High School, the AMS (1927-1931) and did the Teacher Training Diploma Course from 1931 to 1932 in Bandung. Although he graduated from the Dutch educational system, Natsir, like Ahmad Hassan, was opposed to secularism, which he argued, separates the values of life and civilization. He further said that in secularism, ethics is distinguished from knowledge and economics is divorced from ethics; social sciences are separated from moral norms, culture and belief; and psychology, philosophy and law are merely for the sake of objectivity. See O.G. Roeder and Muhiddin Mahmud, *Who is Who in Indonesia* (Singapore: Gunung Agung, 1984), 192 and his *Islam Sebagai Dasar Negara* (Bandung: Pimpinan Fraksi Masyumi Dalam Konstituante, 1957), 13. See also Aboebakar, *Sejarah Hidup K.H.A. Wahid Hasjim dan Karangan Tersiar* (Jakarta: Panitia Buku Peringatan Alm. K.H.A. Wahid Hasjim, 1957), 217-219.

al-munkar (enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong); all they had was freedom of *ibādah* (worship) and something similar to it. Ahmad Hassan suggested the experts of Islam and law to study and discuss other countries' laws and translate them so as to be implemented in Indonesia when required, and provided they were not contrary to Islamic law.[161]

Ahmad Hassan's main interest was to see the *sharī*ʿah operative in Indonesia. He held that it was wrong for Muslims to live under any other law, particularly the law formulated by the Dutch, the non-believing people. He warned that Muslims willing to compromise their religious principles by living under nonsacred Dutch law were in danger of severing their ties with Islam altogether. He was critical of those Muslims who had joined the Dutch administrative service and helped enforce this secular law. Arguing on the basis of three verses of the Qurʾān and one *hadīth*, he wrote in *Islam & Kebangsaan* that Muslims who did not choose devout Muslims as their leaders were "sinners", "unbelievers" and "transgressors."[162] He insisted therefore that Muslims should follow Muslim leaders, who would apply Islamic law throughout the country. Muslims should be the rulers of society and under no circumstances should Muslims accept nonbelievers as their leaders, for the latter would not rule according to the commands of God.[163] True nationalists, according to Ahmad Hassan, were those who accepted Islam as the basis of their movement and as the basis of law in the country. He stated: "Since the secular nationalists want to imitate Turkey in throwing out Islamic laws; although there are thousands of leaders who say that they are the true and real nationalists, for us "Muslims" they are all in error and lead others astray."[164]

Ahmad Hassan's political ideas were challenged by the nationalists with several criticisms. One of the things the nationalists said that all Islamic law schemes were

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[161]Ahmad Hassan, *Islam & Kebangsaan* (Bangil: LP3B, 1984), 164.
[162]*Ibid.*, 8-9.
[163]*Ibid.*, 40.
[164]Federspiel, "Islam and Nationalism", *Indonesia*, no. 24 (1977), 39.

outmoded systems and were meant for Middle Eastern Muslims of the past; they were not suitable for the problems of twentieth century Indonesia. Islam was essentially a Middle Eastern system of values that did not correspond with those of Southeast Asia.[165] The nationalists held that secularism was a logical compromise for Indonesia, for secularism did not favor any particular religious groups, yet allowed every person to follow his own religious principles and obligations. Indonesia needed to follow the example of Turkey, which was a secular and civilized country.[166]

Ahmad Hassan responded by arguing that Islamic law could be applied to modern society and that, when it was applied consistently, it would have beneficial results. He noted that Ibn Sa'ūd in Saudi Arabia and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān in Afghanistan had both established the sharīʿah as the law of these countries and, as a result, the incidence of crime had fallen considerably. That was not the case in Turkey, whose leaders had abandoned that nation's Muslim heritage and, consequently, suffered for it with a high rate of crime and disorder.[167] To the idea that secularism ought to be the basis of the Indonesian movement, Ahmad Hassan responded that 90% of the Indonesian population being Muslim, such an overwhelming majority should determine the basic principles and direction of the nationalist movement. He said: "Is it fitting that we blot out the importance of a majority of 90% because of a minority of 10% minority? Would such a rule be fair?"[168]

While Ahmad Hassan's commitment to a system based on the Qurʾān and ḥadīth never changed, after independence he no longer subjected those whose opinions were different from his own to severe attacks. His concern now was more on education, writing and publishing, as well as on the consolidation of his organization. Although his desire for the implementation of Islamic law throughout the country did not cease,

[165]Ibid.. 46.
[166]Ibid.
[167]Ahmad Hassan, Islam & Kebangsaan, 99-103.
[168]Ibid.. 40.

his earlier political stand that Muslims should join Muslim parties and his antagonism towards secularist leaders, now came to be replaced, to some extent, by an attitude of cooperation with these leaders. He was no longer opposed to Sukarno as the champion nationalist leader as well as the first president of the Indonesian Republic. He considered that independence was the matter of immediate importance for Indonesian Muslims and that later on they could implement Islamic law. In 1946, he urged Muslims not to be critical of Sukarno's government. He said that "they" (the secularists) proclaimed independence and "we" (the Muslims) sought shelter in an independent nation; we must give them our thanks. Muslims should have patience and later, when it became possible to decide the permanent nature of the state with permanent laws, the Muslims would establish an Indonesian government based on the *sharī'ah*. While Ahmad Hassan considered Indonesia to be a secular state, he now believed that shortcomings caused by secularism should be combated peacefully with sermons and advice. He reminded the Muslims that using force to create an Islamic system in the given condition would result in heavy bloodshed and civil strife which the enemies could benefit from.[169] He seems to have realized that the progress of Islamic education, and strongly managed organization were more effective for the progress of Islam in the newly independent Indonesia.

Now he could develop his religious ideas and activities without fear of the non-Muslim rulers. His concern with the Christian missionary activities too seems to have declined, perhaps, because the Christian propagandists themselves were now more cautious since there was no more Dutch government to support their activities. After independence, Ahmad Hassan had public debates only with his fellow Muslims: with Husain al-Habsyi on *madhhab* (schools of thought), with Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy on men shaking hands with women, with the Majlis Syuro Masyumi on women traveling

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[169]Ahmad Hassan, *Kedaulatan* (Malang: Toko Timur, 1946), 17-19.

without a male relative and with the Ministry of Religion on the *mīqāt* [170] of *hajj* for the Indonesian pilgrims.[171]

In 1956, Husain al-Habsyi, wrote a book, *Lahirnya Madzhab Yang Mengharamkan Madzhab-Madzhab* (The Rise of a *Madhhab* which Forbids the *Madhhabs*) in response to Ahmad Hassan's *Risalah al-Madzhab*. Husain maintained that to follow a *madhhab* and *ijmāʾ* was not *taqlīd* because it was impossible for any one of the *imāms* not to base his *madhhab* on the Qurʾān and *ahādīth*, and it was through these great *imāms* that the *ahādīth*, *ijmāʿ* and *qiyās* had come down to the Muslims today.[172] Besides Husain, two other *ʿulamāʾ*, Umar Hubaisy and Bey Arifin also wrote a book, *Ummat Islam Indonesia dan Madzhab* (Indonesian Muslim Community and *Madhhab*). They said that a Muslim was allowed *taqlīd* if he had to do so when, for example, he was not able to study Islam and his knowledge of Islam was poor.[173] This opinion, was to some extent, a middle position between Ahmad Hassan, who boldly held that following a *madhhab* and *taqlīd* were not permitted by Islam, and Husain, who persistently believed that Muslims should accept one of the *madhhabs* of the great *imāms*.

After independence, Ahmad Hassan concentrated on writing and publishing besides acting as a jurisconsult responding to questions on religious matters which came from Muslims throughout Indonesia. A total of seventy books that he wrote, forty

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[170]"*Mīqāt* (lit. appointed time, date and by extension, place and time of meeting). On the traditional overland approaches to Mecca, and situated in some cases a considerable distance away, are the points each called *mīqāt*, at which pilgrims on their way to perform the greater pilgrimage *(hajj)* assume *ihrām*, that is, consecration and the ritual dress that marks it. Pilgrims approaching Mecca by way of Red Sea would, at the latest, put on *ihrām* when the ship passes the latitude of one of the *mīqāts*. Today pilgrims coming to Jedda by air often put on *ihrām* at the point of embarkation." Cyril Glassé. ed. *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam* (Singapore: Tien Wah Press, 1991), 270. According to the Ministry of Religion, the *mīqāt* for Indonesian pilgrims is at Bir ʿAlī. According to Ahmad Hassan, however, these pilgrims' *mīqāt* should be at Yalamlam. He bases himself on the *hadīth* which says that pilgrim is to assume his or her *ihrām* at his or her own *mīqāt*. Bir ʿAlī is the *mīqāt* for Medina pilgrims. Tamar Djaja, *Riwayat Hidup*, 49-53. See also Ahmad Hassan's *Risalah Hajji* (Jakarta: Tintamas, 1955).

[171]Tamar Djaja, *Riwayat Hidup*, 29.

[172]Anshari, *Ahmad Hassan Wajah*, 84.

[173]*Ibid.*, 85.

of them were published after independence.[174] The subject on which he wrote during the colonial period, revealed his highly confrontationist stance against the traditionalists, the nationalists and the Christian missionaries. His books belonging to that period are best described as debates or polemics with his opponents. Most of his writings were written in *tanya-jawab* (question and answer) style. Among his books of the colonial period are *Debat Taqlid* [Debate on *Taqlīd*] (1935), *Talqin* (1931), *Ketuhanan Yesus* [Divinity of Jesus] (1939), *Risalah Kudung* [Treatise on Veil] (1941), *Islam & Kebangsaan* [Islam & Nationalism] (1941), *Debat Riba* [Debate on Usury] (1931), *Debat Kebangsaan* [Debate on Nationalism] (1941) and *Risalah Ahmadiyah* [Treatise on Ahmadiyah] (1932).

After independence, it was easier for Ahmad Hassan to teach his students, particularly after he moved to Bangil. He considered the metropolitan Bandung as unsuited for Islamic education and for the training of his students because, in addition to cost of living there, Bandung was well-known as Paris van Java (Paris of Java) for its amusement or pleasure.[175] In Bangil he established a *pesantren* where male and female students from various parts of Indonesia studied and some of its graduates went on to continue their study in Egypt. After independence, his books were frequently reprinted; this was, particularly the case with his *tafsīr*, which was the first complete *tafsīr* of the Qur'ān in the Indonesian language. Some of his books were also published in Malaysia after being transcribed into the Arabic Malay script. The proceeds from publication or reprinting of his books were not only used for his family needs but also for the construction of his *pesantren*.[176]

Ahmad Hassan's religious thought before and after independence may be summarized as follows in the words of Federspiel:

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[174]Tamar Djaja, *Riwayat Hidup*, 166-168.
[175]*Ibid.*, 26-27.
[176]*Ibid.*, 31.

The life of Muslims according to the view of Ahmad Hassan is not separated from the laws of Islam [and] as consequence mankind must value the Islamic life. The individual Muslim must...worship Allah, purified from the elements of disbelief coming from outside Islam or from traditions which Islam did not command....The famous *ʿulamāʾ* and great *imāms* of Islam...were only considered teachers whose views should not be accepted unquestioningly. For this reason, Ahmad Hassan does not follow any of the *madhhabs* of the four great schools...however, the opinions of the four great schools are [not] wrong, so long as their viewpoints on a question are not in conflict with the sources of Islamic law (i.e., Qurʾān and *sunnah*).[177]

## 2. Social Thought and Reforms

### a. Socio-Economic and Political Issues

Ahmad Hassan's social thought is quite inseparable from his religious thought. Like his religious thought, Ahmad Hassan's social thought is based on the Qurʾān and *hadīth*. The guiding principles of his social thought is that any activity concerning worldly matters which is not forbidden by the Qurʾān and *hadīth* is lawful. Human beings are urged to create whatever is beneficial for mankind, for example, to establish schools, hospitals and to construct roads and bridges.[178] But, what is clearly forbidden by Islam such as alcohol, prostitution and gambling, should under no circumstances be made lawful in society. According to him, Muslims should make progress in science, technology and economy and Muslim countries should be superior to others. The governments of these countries should seek to apply Islamic law according to the Qurʾān and *hadīth*. All matters not mentioned in these sources can be made in accordance with the national interests.[179]

Ahmad Hassan held that the government should be democratic. He said that democracy derives from Islam and was practiced by Muslims in Arabia, Europe and Africa no less than seven centuries ago. However, democracy as applied in the modern times has been detached from religion and has completely surrendered to human

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[177]Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 14.
[178]Ahmad Hassan, *Ringkasan*, 20-21.
[179]Ahmad Hassan, *Islam & Kebangsaan*, 43.

reasoning.[180] Therefore, whatever decision is made depends merely upon the will of human beings permitting the unlawful or to forbidding the lawful regardless of what has been established by religion. A democratic government based on Islam never tolerates sin or wickedness. According to Ahmad Hassan, the idea of *shūrā* is not basically different from that of the modern parliament where the government, other representatives of the people and the experts of various fields have consultations for the good of the nation.[181]

Ahmad Hassan accepted modern developments as beneficial to mankind, but emphasized that they should be in line with the spiritual and moral values of Islam. While he accepted science and technology from the West, he warned Muslims that technology in the West was not tied to a system of values.[182] Some of the issues relating to the impact of the West on which Ahmad Hassan expressed his views included medical practice, economy and women's role in society.

Ahmad Hassan held that people who got sick would do well to consult physicians rather than rely on folk ritual for cure. However, a sickness must not be treated by using medicine containing alcohol which is forbidden by Islam. He said that alcohol was not medicine but rather itself a sickness.[183] In Islam, drinking blood is forbidden, but, according to Ahmad Hassan, blood transfusion is permissible because it is not similar to drinking blood.[184] Taking medicine during the daytime in *Ramadān* did not negate the fast of a sick person, for taking medicine is not similar to eating and drinking.[185] Another controversial issue of modern medical practice which gave impact to Islamic law was birth control. Birth control according to Ahmad Hassan was permissible but abortion was not. This opinion was based on the *ḥadīth* recorded by

[180]*Ibid.*, 142.
[181]*Ibid.*, 151.
[182]Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 138.
[183]Ahmad Hassan, *Soal-Jawab*, 299.
[184]Ahmad Hassan, "Memasukkan Darah," *Al-Muslimun*, I, no. 7 (October, 1954), 5.
[185]"Minum Obat Waktu Puasa," *Al-Muslimun*, III, no. 25 (April, 1956), 8.

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Muslim and Abū Dāwud, regarding the Prophet's permission to prevent pregnancy.[186]

As regards economic problems, Ahmad Hassan was in line with other modernists who accepted the modern practice of banks, insurances and cooperatives. He was convinced that these financial institutions were compatible with Islam. In this regard Ahmad Hassan was opposed to the traditionalist Muslims, who held that any profit received by a lender on the goods he lent was *ribā*. Ahmad Hassan defined *ribā* only as the excessive profit while the interest from banks, insurances and cooperatives was reasonable and should not be considered *ribā*. Such interest could not be equated with the Prophet's condemnation of *ribā* commonly practiced in pre-Islamic Arabia, where the amount due might even be doubled due to a failure to repay the loan on time.[187]

## b. Socio-Religious Reform

Although Ahmad Hassan sought strict adherence to the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* in matters of *ʿaqīdah* and *ʿibādah*, he also wished Islam to be understood and applied in an effective manner. He seems to have perceived that the *ʿulamāʾ* had hampered Islam with unreasonable *fatwās* to requiring, for example, the use of Arabic at the Friday *khuṭbah* (sermon) regardless of whether it was understood by the listeners or not. Ahmad Hassan argued that Muslims should differentiate between *ʿibādah* and *ʿādah*. In his view, *ʿibādah* such as *ṣalāt*, the obligatory prayers, it had to be performed in Arabic. But other kinds of *ʿibādah*, such as individual prayers and the guidance and admonition in the Friday sermons, could be done in the language of the worshipers.[188] Ahmad Hassan also said there was no command either in the Qur'ān or *aḥādīth* requiring that *khuṭbah* should be recited only in Arabic. He held that the Qur'ān commanded Muslims

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[186]"Membatasi Kelahiran," *Al-Muslimun*, II, no. 9 (November, 1954), 10.
[187]Ahmad Hassan, "Riba," *Pembela Islam*, no. 51 (September, 1932), 51.
[188]Ahmad Hassan, "Bahasa Khutbah," *Sual-Djawab*, no. 7, 22.

to think and understand and revile those who do not think and know when they read this holy book. How could Muslims be honorable if they were listening to the *khutbah* without understanding it? The purpose of the *khutbah* was to offer advice and the admonition on religion. This could only be attained if the *khutbah* was understood by its listeners. If there was anybody who maintained that the *khutbah* should be in Arabic, then he should also assert that the Prophet had obligated all Muslims to speak Arabic. According to Ahmad Hassan, it was unreasonable to give the *khutbah* in Arabic to an audience which did not understand it.[189] The *khutbah*, according to Ahmad Hassan, cannot be equated to the Qurʾān, which should be recited in Arabic, rather it was a form of advice which could respond to time, place and necessity.[190] Given the view that the *khutbah* is meant to inform and advise Muslims about religious and moral teachings in the languages understood by them, the mosques influenced by the *kaum muda* (modernists) used their vernaculars in the *khutbah*.

Magic, soothsaying and amulets were popular in Indonesia during Ahmad Hassan's lifetime. In these matters, the *dukuns*, the practitioners of magic who claimed to posses secret powers to treat the sick, to cast the spells of good or bad, fortune and so forth played an extremely important role. Ahmad Hassan warned Muslims not to invoke secret oaths and curses meant to harm and cause loss to other persons and their possessions. He warned Muslims not to ask the aid of creatures and objects believed to have miraculous power. Muslims should seek their desires only from God; addressing prayers to creatures and objects was to place them on a par with God. According to him, any person who made such a comparison was a *mushrik* (idolater), and his standing as a Muslim and a believer was in jeopardy.[191]

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[189]Ahmad Hassan, "Khutbah Bahasa Melayu," *Sual-Djawab*, no. 4, 4-5.
[190]Steenbrink, *Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1986), 188.
[191]Ahmad Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, 75.

### c. Women's Issues

Concerning the role of women in society Ahmad Hassan's opinions were quite strictly based on the Qur'ān and ahādīth. During the 1930s, Ahmad Hassan disputed with the secularists who advocated greater social freedom for women. He seems to have had a narrow interpretation of women's role in society. According to him, women were allowed to leave the house, go to the market, go for hajj, undertake a number of everyday tasks and perform religious obligations in the presence of men. Women could appear before men while performing their activities in the present time, but, Ahmad Hassan emphasized, the Prophet gave only a limited permission for their contacts with men in society. Based on a number of instances during the Prophet's life, Ahmad Hassan noted that the sexes should be kept apart as much as possible.[192]

According to Ahmad Hassan, the separation of the sexes was not intended to be a denigration of either sex, but an indication of Islam's awareness of the place of women and an attempt to honor them.[193] Islam honors women by requiring that women wear clothing that covers their bodies and their shapes in order that they are not appealing to men, and to avoid the temptations which lead to corruption, perversion and the destruction of society. People who do not sincerely honor women allow them to dress in provocative and revealing Western clothes thus inciting men.[194] According to Ahmad Hassan, during the time of the Prophet, women did not sit on councils, and to do so in the present circumstances would obviously contravene the sunnah of the Prophet.[195] It is clear that Ahmad Hassan had a very narrow understanding of women's role in society. He did not allow a sufficient opportunity for Muslim women to face the modern circumstances. Islam, according to Ahmad Hassan, does not require women to

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[192]Ahmad Hassan, "Perempuan," Pembela Islam, no. 1 (April, 1956), 35.
[193]Ahmad Hassan, Perempuan di Dewan Podium (Bangil: Persatuan Islam, 1940), 1-8.
[194]Ahmad Hassan, "Perempuan," Pembela Islam, no. 2 (March, 1957), 10.
[195]Ahmad Hassan, Perempuan Islam di Dewan, 9-10.

do things that are commonly done by men so that there is no mixing of men and women and slander is avoided: such activities include carrying the corpse, making the *adhān*, going to battle field, coming to *Jumʿah* prayer etc. Women can also not be prophets, *imāms* for public congregational prayer, judges, leaders for public affairs; all these jobs belong to men.[196]

In 1956, Ahmad Hassan accused certain groups championing free association of men and women and supporting a wider role of women in politics and society of being hypocrites. Such groups did not really honor women, but only wanted to use women to attract men to political parties, meetings and conferences, and allowed them to become film stars and to appear in advertisements only in order to make money.[197] In his debate with Ahmad Hassan, Sukarno said that the intellectuals kept away from Islam on account of the limited role *fiqh* gave to women. Islamic law, he said, should be reinterpreted so that it expressed to the spirit of Islam and could meet the demands of time; the intellectuals would then love Islam. Ahmad Hassan responded to this idea by stating that Islam has required women to put on *jilbāb* (let down upon them their over garments), the Qurʾān (24:31), and nobody could be allowed to contravene a Qurʾānic injunction in the name of the progress. He further said that it was not *ijtihād* to allow women to be film artists, and be free to kiss, dance and so forth; it was wrong to allow such things, by considering them world matters, like the Partai Arab Indonesia (Indonesian Arab Party) figures did.[198]

Ahmad Hassan eagerly wanted to implement his strict views towards women, particularly among the Persis. He seems to have been quite displeased to see that several members of the Persis were not much concerned about the behavior of women. He criticized the members of his organization saying that they had created a new *bidʿah*. This *bidʿah* he said, was that of the imitation of the West, particularly in the attitude

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[196]*Ibid.*, 6-7.
[197]Ahmad Hassan, "Perempuan," *Pembela Islam*, no. 2 (March, 1957), 11.
[198]Thalib, *Dialog Bung Karno*, 67.

towards womanhood. They were no longer guilty of such things as prayers for the dead, making *khutbah* too long and other old *bidᶜahs*;[199] rather several members of the Persis allowed their daughters to dress up in modern styles, wearing objectionable clothes, and allowed them to become guides and associate with boys.[200]

### d. Educational Activities

As the Dutch government schools did not teach religious subjects and were secular in outlook, Ahmad Hassan, who considered religious education to be of crucial importance for Muslims began, in 1927, to run classes for Muslim students studying at Dutch schools. Under his initiative, the Persis founded a *pesantren* in Bandung in 1936 for the purpose of the training of *muballighīn* (religious preachers) and teachers. Through this kind of education, Ahmad Hassan wanted to produce Muslim preachers capable of spreading, teaching and defending Islam wherever they lived. The *pesantren*, while stressing the religious subjects with a modernist Islamic approach, also had courses on general knowledge and basic science. To include the general knowledge and science in a *pesantren* was not yet common at this period. Hearing that Ahmad Hassan had run a *pesantren*, Sukarno wrote to him in 1936 suggesting that more of Western sciences be taught in order to produce qualified Muslim scholars.

> I am so pleased to hear that you have established a *pesantren*. If I may suggest that you give more Western sciences to your students due to the fact that we have so many scholars who are so poor in modern sciences. Although your *pesantren* is not a university, yet it would be better if Western sciences are added here. Indeed, Islamic sciences are not restricted to those which are auxiliary to the Qurᵓān and *hadīth* but also embrace other than those.[201]

To achieve this educational goals, Ahmad Hassan as the director of the *pesantren*, had requirements regulating admission in as well as the stay at the

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[199]The Persis considered some additional prayers (conducted by the traditionalists for the dead) and making the Friday *khutbah* too long as *bidᶜahs*.

[200]Ahmad Hassan, "Kembali lagi," *Pembela Islam* (new series), no. 1 (March, 1956), 6-7.

[201]Steenbrink, *Pesantren, Sekolah, Madrasah*, 227.

*pesantren.*[202] This *pesantren* was called the Pesantren Persatuan Islam. Beside this, an afternoon class was established for elementary school children, both boys and girls, who attended secular schools in the morning. This class was called the Pesantren Kecil (small pesantren). The latter remained in Bandung even after the Pesantren Persatuan Islam was relocated in Bangil when Ahmad Hassan moved to East Java in 1941.[203]

The Pesantren Kecil became the elementary school with a duration of six years. During the first two years, seventy-five percent of school time was allocated for the religious subjects and twenty-five percent for general subjects, while in the last four years it was equally divided between religious and general subjects. Most of the textbooks used at the schools to teach religious subjects were written by Ahmad Hassan.[204] The Persatuan Islam of Bandung, which functioned as the center of the organization, also has the *Thanawiyah* (secondary school), which lasted for four years. During the first two years of this school, the courses stressed religious subjects while during the last two years the emphasis was on the general subjects.[205]

As a modernist organization, the Persis, reflecting Ahmad Hassan's viewpoint, offered a variety of Islamic educational services. Short religious training courses lasting from two to three months and intended to train a person for a religious occupation were held. The organization also undertook adult education to facilitate the understanding of religion and to enable their proper fulfillment of religious duties. Special courses were also given in government schools, orphan schools, schools for the blind, in prisons and

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[202]In the words of Noer: "Requirements for admission into this school included: age (18 years), sound health, ability to read and write Arabic and Latin scripts, ability in Qur'ān reading, an oath that the graduates would serve as teachers and propagandists of Persatuan Islam and make efforts to establish Persis branches. They were also subject to a strict discipline and were bound to observe the general rituals and practices of Islam,...to abjure all that is forbidden by Islam..., to refrain from smoking within the precincts of the *pesantren*..., to observe cleanliness of body and clothing..., to adhere to the social proprieties prescribed by Islam and those customs not prohibited by it, to uphold always the glory of Islam." Deliar Noer, *The Rise and Development,* 142-143.

[203]Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam,* 19-20. Cited from "Pesantren Persis di Bangil," *Dunia Madrasah,* no. 5 (January, 1955), 17.

[204]Mahmud Junus, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Mutiara Sumber Widya, 1992), 299.

[205]*Ibid.,* 300.

at hospitals. The Persis of Bangil also runs a university, the Universitas Pesantren Persatuan Islam. This university was intended for undergraduate study of Islam in greater depth; its courses comprised religious and general subjects and were designed to prepare religious officials. In 1955, three years before Ahmad Hassan died, Persis' schools numbered twenty and had approximately 6.000 students enrolled in them.[206]

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[206]Federspiel. *Persatuan Islam*. 126-129.

## CHAPTER THREE

### The Impact of the Colonial Experience on Aḥmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan and Their Actions : Similarities and Differences

Even though both modernists lived in different countries and at different periods of time, there are a number of similarities between Aḥmad Khān's and Ahmad Hassan's religious and social thought. Both also have many differences in their views on religious and social matters, given their particular political, economic and social circumstances. As both Aḥmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan undertook extensive efforts for the progress of their respective peoples, it is important to see the impact of the colonial experience on the thought and their activities ensuing from their experiences. This chapter will discuss this impact in the religious, political and educational spheres.

### A. Religion

Both Aḥmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan were very concerned with the purification of Islam. They were aware and critical of the religious beliefs and practices prevailing in their societies. They emphasized the significance of *ijtihād* in responding to the situations of the modern age. For this reason, both seem to have reduced the requirements traditionally laid down by the *ʿulamāʾ* for a *mujtahid*. They were of the conviction that the advance of printing and publication in the modern time facilitated becoming a *mujtahid* for those who were prepared to do so. Aḥmad Khān was more liberal than Ahmad Hassan on the requirement of becoming a *mujtahid* as he believed that a Muslim who knew the Qurʾān and Arabic could become a *mujtahid*. Whereas Ahmad Hassan required a *mujtahid* to know *uṣūl al-fiqh* and *ʿilm al-muṣṭalāḥ al-ḥadīth* besides Arabic and *tafsīr*. As a necessary corollary to their emphasis on *ijtihād*, both Aḥmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan strongly rejected *taqlīd*. Their conviction was that *taqlīd* was among the factors responsible for the backwardness of Muslims and for their social degeneration. They also rejected mysticism and the *ṭarīqahs*, for they thought that

the *ṣūfī* life and the *ṭarīqahs* had deviated from the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*. Therefore, according to them, in matters of *ʿibādah*, Muslims were to follow the Prophet alone.[207]

Looking at the similarities in their ideas concerning the purification of Islam, both modernists seem to have been influenced by the Wahhābī teachings. In India, the Faraʾiẓi movement was inspired by Wahhābī ideas, as were some other reformist movements. Sayyid Aḥmad Khān was sympathetic to these reformist movements. His family had blood relation with the leaders of the movements and supported the reformers' activities.[208] The nature and the impact of these movements in the Indian context has been described by Amalendu as follow:

> From 1818 to 1870 vast areas of India were affected by these movements, particularly by the Wahhābī movement. Mainly religious in character, directed towards purifying Islam in India by removing un-Islamic influences from it, these came to acquire with the inclusion of economic and political programme, a mixed movement, socio-economic and political....In the religious sphere it strengthened the processes of Islamization. Pan-Islamic ideas had been infused into it by the Faraizi-Wahhābīs. In the political sphere these movements were directed against the British rule. They considered the British India as *dār-ul-ḥarb* (country of war or enmity). So they wanted to convert it to *dār-ul-Islam* (land of Islam or safety).[20.']

According to Titus, the Wahhābī movement in India was devided into the "right" and the "left" wings. The former, led by Sharīʿat· Allah and Karamat ʿAlī, emphasized of *tawḥīd* and *ijtihād* based on the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*, rejected the four orthodox schools of canon law, opposed the worship of saints considering it a sort of *shirk* and attempted to remove all traces of practices and beliefs deriving from the Hindu converts to Islam. The latter, which was led by Sayyid Aḥmad of Rae Bareli, while observing the former's principles, asserted that India under non-Muslim rule was *dār al-ḥarb*, for which it deserved to declare *jihād* (a holy war).[210] Aḥmad Khān approved of the religious principles of the Wahhābī movement mentioned earlier but vehemently

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[207]For details, see their religious thought in chapter two.
[208]McDonough, *Muslim Ethics*, 34.
[209]Amalendu de, *Islam in Modern India* (Calcutta: Maya Prakashan, 1982), 12.
[210]Titus, *Islam in India*, 186-187.

rejected pan-Islamic ideas as well as the consideration that India under the British rule as *dār al-ḥarb*.[211]

Ahmad Hassan too came from a family with connections with the Wahhābīs. His father was a follower of the Wahhābī teachings. According to Deliar Noer, "One instance of his father's rejection of a traditional ritual remained vivid in his memory. This was concerned with *talqīn* which the *kaum muda* condemned as *bidʿah*. Hassan's father would leave a funeral intentionally when the *talqīn* was about to be read."[212]

The ideas of Wahhābī puritanism in Indonesia were brought by the Indonesian pilgrims who, according to the Dutch statistics of 1911, comprised almost thirty percent, and in 1926-7 became forty percent of all overseas pilgrims in Mecca. "Heightened orthodoxy in Mecca could not but affect, more or less profoundly, the Java colony in Mecca, the reservoir of Indonesian Muslims who remained in the city for years, and whose returning members so often played an important role in Southeast Asian Muslim affairs."[213] In addition to the Wahhābī influence, Islamic reformism in Indonesia was also fostered by the influence of Muḥammad ʿAbduh of Egypt, through students returning from al-Azhar in Cairo. These students along with the pilgrims returning from Mecca aroused Muslims to eradicate syncretism, mysticism and *bidʿah* and return to the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth* in order to adjust Islam to the requirement of the modern world.[214] In the Persatuan Islam, Ahmad Hassan associated with both those returning from Mecca and the students from Egypt. Unlike India, there was no Wahhābī political movement in Indonesia aiming at the overthrow of the Dutch power. Perhaps,

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[211]See Shan Mohammad, *Sir Syed Ahmad Khan: A Political Biography* (Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1969), 131-138; his *Writings and Speeches of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan* (Bombay: Nachiketa Publications Limited, 1972), 237-239, 253-260; and Mazheruddin Siddiqi, *Modern Reformist Thought in the Muslim World* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 1982), 42-43.

[212]Deliar Noer, *The Rise and Development*, 138.

[213]Harry J. Benda, "South-East Asian Islam in the Twentieth Century," P.M. Holt et. al., eds., *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 1970), 182.

[214]*Ibid.*, 183.

this was due to the colonial government's strict control over any political activity which could threaten its rule.[215] The Islamic modernist organizations such as the Persatuan Islam and the Muhammadiyah, therefore, only adopted, to a limited extent, the religious teachings of Wahhābī reformism.

As a reformist, Ahmad Hassan realized that the growth of the heterodoxy among the Indonesian Muslims, particularly among the nominal Muslims, was partly because of the Dutch colonial rule. Starting from the early twentieth century, there had been a cultural and ideological conflict between the nominal Javanese Muslims and the Muslim reformists in Indonesia. As an example, the latter founded an association, the Tentara Kanjeng Nabi Muhammad (Prophet Muḥammad's Army) to respond to the former's attack of the Prophet. In 1918, under the influence of the Dutch theosophists and in response to the Tentara, the nominal Javanese Muslims founded the Comitte voor het Javaansche Nationalisme (Javanese Nationalism Committee). Being strongly influenced by Javanese Muslim culture, these people considered the Islam propagated by Muslim reformists as an alien teaching imported from non-Javanese culture. Thus emerged this cultural nationalism which was propagated by the secular nationalists.[216] Ahmad Hassan and the Muslim parties did not approve the nationalism based on culture. Instead, they demanded that nationalism should be based on Islam.

The existing heterodoxies in the Muslim community also had some connection with the Islamic Policy applied by Snouck Hurgronje in order to domesticate Islam in Indonesia.[217] Therefore, although Ahmad Hassan was accused by some Muslim

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[215]Algadri, *Politik Belanda*, 97.

[216]Taufik Abdullah, ed., *Sejarah Ummat Islam Indonesia* (Jakarta: Majlis Ulama Indonesia, 1991), 238.

[217]"Snouck Hurgronje's Islamic policy was founded on three basic foundations. The first foundation was that of giving unlimited and sincere freedom to the Indonesian Muslims in practicing the *ʿubūdiyah* part of religion....The second foundation of the policy concerned with the *muʿāmalah* matters of the religion: matters related to social institutions existing in the Muslim community such as marriage, inheritance and the like. On these matters the government should show its respect while at the same time attempts should be made to gradually displace them with Western institutions through an evolutionary process of attracting a number of them to appreciate the benefits of Western culture....The third foundation of Snouck Hurgronje's Islamic policy was concerned with

leaders of having created rifts among Muslims through his concern with heterodoxy, he argued that the discussion of these religious issues would make Islam dynamic. Whoever prohibited discussing these issues and characterized them as only the branches or details of Islam was, according to Ahmad Hassan, opposing the discussion of *ʿibādah* itself, which was fundamental in Islam. The impact of the Dutch colonial experience on Ahmad Hassan's religious reform, in so far as it concerns his campaign for a purification of Islam was not much, however. At this level, Ahmad Hassan was essentially reacting as a critical and courageous *ʿālim*, committed to the Qurʾān and *hadīth*, against the religious beliefs and practices prevailing in society.

Ahmad Hassan also considered that Dutch culture, which was being imitated by the Indonesians, had jeopardized the Muslim lifestyle, particularly the pattern of male and female social interaction. Ahmad Hassan found that a number of Indonesians coming out of Dutch schools were questioning polygamy, *jilbāb*, and limitations on social interaction between men and women.[218] He realized that these students had been so much influenced by the colonial education that they considered religion as a hindrance in the path of progress. He felt that these people should be introduced to the teachings of Islam. Thus he wrote, for example, *Wanita Islam* (Muslim Women), a book in which he discussed the problems of social interaction between men and women according to the Qurʾān and *hadīth*. Here he also polemicized against the journal *Aliran Baru*, which had said that *jilbāb* was not obligatory for an adult Muslim woman.[219]

Unlike Ahmad Hassan who was quite critical of Western culture, Ahmad Khān, to a great extent, accepted Western culture as well as its acceptable values. In the words of Malik:

political matters, notably that of the influence of pan-Islamism upon Indonesian Muslims. On matters of politics, he was to suggest that the government should resist and eliminate any political ambitions of the Muslim such as represented in the ideas of the pan-Islamism." Alfian, *Muhammadiyah*, 22-25.

[218]M. Thalib, *Dialog Bung Karno*, 69-70.

[219]Ahmad Hassan, *Wanita Islam* (Bangil: Persatuan, 1989), 7.

Sir Sayyid had accepted Shāh Walīullāh, and Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd and his associates' framework of Muslim social reforms. However, he added a new dimension to the concept of *bidʿa* in urging Muslims that in secular matters where Islam was indifferent, modern Western ways could be legitimately adopted; while he continued to highlight the imperative of eliminating Hindu customs from Muslim culture.[220]

In the words of Troll, "He [Ahmad Khān] viewed education (including the learning of English and the acquisition of Western and acceptable Western values) as the basic means for improvement. All his other activities were rooted in this one basic desire to restore Islam in India to its pristine dignity and prestige."[221]

The rising Christian missionary activities also had an impact on both Aḥmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan. Aḥmad Khān was affected by "the activities of the Christian missionaries in India and the naturalistic trends of thought in the West."[222] The Christian missionaries, supported by the British government, made various efforts to convert the Indians to Christianity through such means as distributing books and pamphlets and preaching in public gatherings. They also established orphanages and schools in which the Christianity was taught. Besides, the missionary writers attacked Islam in order to shake the faith of the younger Muslim generation. William Muir's *Life of Muhammad* is an example of such writing. Since this writing had resulted in the public resentment, Aḥmad Khān, in his *Al-Khuṭbat al-Aḥmadiyah* (Lectures of Sayyid Aḥmad), demonstrated Muir's distortions, and defended Muslim faith.[223] One of Aḥmad Khān's purposes in visiting England in 1869 was also to gather material for a refutation of Muir's *Life of Muhammad.*[224]

Because of the Christian missionary activities in the colonial period, both Aḥmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan studied Christianity in order to be able to refute the attacks of the Christian writers. In this connection, these modernists also prepared

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[220]Hafeez Malik, *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan,* 261.
[221]Troll, *A Reinterpretation,* 15.
[222]Nizami, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan,* 114.
[223]*Ibid.,* 118-120.
[224]Lelyveld, *Aligarh First Generation,* 105.

themselves through a comparative study of religions and their writings contributed to a comparative study of religions in their respective country. Thus, Ahmad Khān wrote *A Commentary on the Christian Bible* in 1862. It is interesting to note that having studied both the Qur'ān and the Bible, he no longer remained hostile to Christianity as he had been before 1857; rather he was now concerned with reconciliation between the two religions, and urged the Christians and the Muslims to respect each other.[225] He did not agree with those Muslim theologians who held that the Jews and the Christians had corrupted their scriptures to justify their actions on different occasions. His position was that, "in paraphrases and commentaries on books of the Old Testament, people were in the habit of corrupting the senses of certain passages of scriptures, but that the original text was not tampered with."[226]

As Ahmad Khān was conditioned by the naturalistic and rational trends of thought in the West, he paid a good deal of attention to Western works while not disregarding of the Oriental works. He founded the Scientific Society, which aimed at searching and publishing the rare non-religious Oriental manuscripts and translating European works on arts and sciences into Urdu.[227] In the words of Lelyveld, in a speech in Calcutta in 1863, Ahmad Khān emphasized that:

> There was something to learn from the English besides their language. He spoke about the accessibility of European science and technology, and denied that there was anytning in Islam that militated against the study of such subjects. On the contrary, the most glorious period of Islamic history was characterized by a great flowering of rationalism and science; Muslims had declined in the world by ignoring this heritage.[228]

Like Ahmad Khān, Ahmad Hassan was faced with the Christian missionary activities, which were supported by the Dutch colonial rule. In defending Islam from the missionaries' attacks, he wrote books and pamphlets to counterattack missionary

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[225]Lelyveld, *Aligarh First Generation*, 75.
[226]Nizami, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, 125.
[227]Hali, *Hayat-i-Javed*, 85.
[228]Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, 78.

writings. Besides, Ahmad Hassan was so fond of debating on religion that he often challenged the missionaries to contest with him. In this case, he was not like Aḥmad Khān, who wished to reconcile Islam and Christianity by seeking the similarities between the two religions. Rather, as seen from his arguments written in the *Bibel Lawan Bibel* (Bible against the Bible), he was extremely critical of the Christian beliefs and persistently pointed out the weaknesses of the holy Bible.[229]

One of the challenges both Aḥmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan faced was the Western criticism on the position of Muslim women in society. Muslims were criticized for mistreating women, for giving them so limited freedom, and for polygamy. While Aḥmad Khān was worried about the influence of the Western women's freedom on Muslim community, he at the same time responded to the Western criticism by apologetically arguing that Islam had given more rights to women than had other religions.[230] Ahmad Hassan argued that the limitations on women's freedom of social interaction was intended by Islam only to honor women. Aware of the influence of Western women, both modernists tended to protect Muslim women by giving them limited freedom to associate with men in society. Aḥmad Khān, who considered *purdah* (seclusion of women) a good custom,[231] held that female education should be arranged for training girls in handicrafts and home economics, neither of which involved their associating with men.[232] For his part, Ahmad Hassan established a separate *pesantren* for female students, with strong emphasis on their Islamic dress code. Although both modernists were protective of women, but unlike Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, Ahmad Hassan took practical steps for female education by establishing the Pesantren Putri as he did for male students.

[229]See Ahmad Hassan's *Bibel lawan Bibel*.
[230]McDonough, *Muslim Ethics*, 46.
[231]Baljon, *The Reforms*, 31.
[232]Saeeda, *Islamic Rationalism*, 213.

## B. Politics

These modernists had quite different attitudes in viewing the existence of the colonial rule over their countries. Aḥmad Khān, realizing that the British rule was firmly established in India and it would be impossible to oust the British, strove to end the backwardness of his people through English education and Western culture. He tried to remove misunderstandings between the British and the Muslims.[233] In 1871, when there was a widespread fear among Englishmen that Wahhābīs would declare *jihād* against the Government, Aḥmad Khān tried to remove misunderstandings. He wrote:

> As a staunch well-wisher of the British Government, and at the same time as a well-wisher to true Wahabeeism, I venture to claim the indulgence of space for these few lines....1. Mohammedans who live under the protection of a Government professing a different faith, are not justified in declaring a religious war against it. 2. When there exists a treaty or peace between Mohammedans and some other people of different religion, *jihād* against the latter is unlawful. 3. *Jihād* is allowable when there is every probability of victory to Mohammedans and glory to Islam....The Mohammedans in India are, in no way justified in engaging in any project having for its object the subversion of the English Government. They have perfect freedom of speech, and no one interferes with their religion....As regards the Wahabees in India, as far as my experience goes, their principles are identical with those of other Mohammadans as regards the unlawfulness of *jihād* against our Government.[234]

Aḥmad Khān sought to create better conditions for Indian Muslims under the British rule. He thought that British fears of the potential rebelliousness of Muslims were dangerous for his people. He convinced the British that *jihād* was not incumbent on Muslims as long as the government gave them religious freedom. On the other hand, "his open criticism of English failures in the pre-Mutiny period convinced Muslims that persuasion rather than violence was a viable option for settling disputes."[235]

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[233]Amalendu, *Islam in Modern India*, 13-14.

[234]Shan Mohammad, *Writings and Speeches of Syed Ahmad Khan* (Bombay: Nachiketa Publications Limited, 1972), 238.

[235]McDonough, *Muslim Ethics*, 52. For Aḥmad Khān's criticism on the British government, see Graham, *The Life and Work*, 24-39.

Ahmad Khān was acutely aware of the socio-religious and political conditions of his community. This can be seen from his rejection of the idea that India was *dār al-harb*, seeking thereby to safeguard Muslims from British suspicions. Ahmad Khān's realistic and pragmatic view of *jihād* was based on his British colonial experience. He realistically recognized that the loss of Muslim rule in India was due to its weakness to rule. He held, therefore, the British had to rule this country to replace and meanwhile improve the Muslim rule.[236] Ahmad Khān asserted that it was not a wise course of action for Indian Muslims to try to liberate the country from the hands of British since it was impossible to defeat their government through revolt.[237]

Conscious of the strength of British rule and of the backwardness of his people, Ahmad Khān wanted his people to acquire Western education and Western culture in order to progress. This was not an easy task; because quite often, he had to remove misunderstandings between the British and the Muslims. In 1871, the British authorities were again prejudiced against Indian Muslims as a result of the warning of W. W. Hunter, that, "the whole Muhammadan community has been openly deliberating on their obligation to rebel. It would be a violation of Islam for the thirty million Muslims of British India to accept British rule."[238] Ahmad Khān refuted Hunter's book with a conclusive evidence, and proved his case so successfully that Hunter's own colleagues, such as William Muir and Sir Alfred Lyāll also rejected Hunter's arguments.[239]

Unlike Ahmad Khān, Ahmad Hassan's socio-political thought was based on Islam. He persistently debated with and polemicized against those individuals and modernist organizations which were more concerned with ideological and philosophical matters. He seems to have firmly believed that by practicing Islam according to the Qurɔān and *hadīth* and applying Islamic law in the country, the people would be

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[236]Baljon, *The Reforms*, 4.
[237]Shan Mohammad, *Writings and Speeches*, vii.
[238]Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, 10.
[239]Hali, *Hayat-i-Javed*, 136-140.

peaceful and tranquil.[240] Unlike Aḥmad Khān, Ahmad Hassan did not consider politics merely as a social matter. He also did not agree with the view that in order to progress politically like the West. Muslims, were supposed to adopt Western culture, as was claimed by Sukarno. Ahmad Hassan held that because Islam did not separate religion from state, Muslims should not imitate this kind of Western culture.[241] Therefore, his ideas came to be rejected by the secular nationalists, and, on the question of religious reform, by the conservative ʿulamāʾ. The latter were rather tolerant to the formalism of the Islamic orthodoxy of rural Indonesia. Related to this, it is worthwhile to quote Benda:

> ...Indonesian reformism was, by its very nature, bound to come into conflict with the colonial *status quo* itself. This was the inevitable concomitant not only of the deepened Islamic consciousness which resulted from its manifold activities among cities dwellers and the more prosperous strata of the rural population which came under its influence, but also of the Dutch policy of support of *adat* institutions....It is not surprising that the rise of Islamic reformism, with its simultaneous challenge to Muslim orthodoxy, *adat*, and Westernized Indonesians, generated animosity and hostility within Indonesian Islam and within Indonesian society at large.[242]

As for Ahmad Hassan's political views, they were like those of other Islamic parties and organizations then existing, also quite radical. He naturally considered the Dutch colonial government as infidel rule, and desired the nationalist movement to be based on Islam so that Islamic laws could be applied after the country was free from the Dutch control. Ahmad Hassan also advocated pan-Islamism, as propagated by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (d. 1897). He envisioned Indonesian Muslims to develop religious ties with the Muslim *ummah* outside Indonesia. He stressed that all Indonesian Muslims should unite in Muslim parties in order to be identified as true Muslims. During the nationalist movement, in fact, his political views were rejected by the nationalist groups. The latter favored nationalism, which was bound to the idea of the modern nation

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[240]Ahmad Hassan, *Islam & Kebangsaan*, 103.
[241]Thalib, *Dialog Bung Karno*, 86.
[242]Benda, *The Crescent*, 49-50.

state.[243] Consequently, Ahmad Hassan's political views were not considered practical in modern Indonesian context because that was the period when people were actively struggling for national identity and nationhood.[244]

It seems that Ahmad Hassan did not realize that the reputation of Muslim parties had been declining in the last decade of the Dutch rule; because of 90% of Indonesians who were Muslims did not mean that Islam could be the basis of the nationalist movement. It is also worthwhile to note that a large number of Muslims who did not agree with his political views, in fact, were due to their syncretism or their secular or non-religious outlook. However, Ahmad Hassan's political views contributed to Islam in Indonesia. Muslims, who disregarded politics, came to be influenced by his position that there is no separation between Islam and politics, began to take part in this field. With his religious justification for political action, Ahmad Hassan had made a considerable contribution to the Indonesian nationalist movement.[245] Djojomartono remarks that Ahmad Hassan believed that true Islam is against colonialism and racist-discrimination, and it prohibits exploitation of human beings. Consequently, he refused to cooperate with the Dutch and this attitude, to a certain degree, contributed to the overthrow of the Dutch rule over Indonesia.[246]

Like Ahmad Khān, Ahmad Hassan also believed that the colonial power was too strong to be opposed. He was aware that many PSII leaders were arrested by the government for political reasons. He felt, therefore, that the Muslims did not have to oppose the Dutch rule in their weak position but unlike Ahmad Khān, Ahmad Hassan believed that Muslims did not have to cooperate with the colonial government. He urged the PSII leaders not to accept the subsidy from the government and not to work for the colonial government, in order to show that Muslims were not supporting the

[243]Federspiel, Indonesia, 46.
[244]Pijper, Beberapa Studi, 133.
[245]Anshari, A. Hassan Wajah, 33.
[246]Muljadi, Djojomartono, et. al., eds., Dunia Baru Islam (Jakarta: Panitia Penerbitan Buku Dunia Baru Islam, 1966), 317.

government.[247] Ahmad Hassan believed that Indonesian Muslims would be able to achieve their independence by joining the PSII which was struggling to improve the economic, political and religious condition of the people. Thus, he called upon all Muslims to build Muslim power through unity in this Muslim party.[248]

Being aware of the colonial suppression of Muslims and being non cooperative towards the Dutch, Ahmad Hassan sought to improve his people's condition through the organization, the Persatuan Islam. Its main goal was to develop Muslim life in accordance with Islamic teachings. To achieve this goal, the organization dealt with Islamic education, established clinics, orphanages and undertook other religious and social activities such as Islamic preachings and publication as well as activities for improving its members' economic condition. Only practicing Muslims over 18 who were willing to follow the Qur'ān and *hadīth* could become its members.[249] Because of being quite radical, perhaps, this organization developed slowly and its activities were largely concentrated on publication and education. It showed little interest, however, in establishing new branches. According to Deliar Noer:

> Persis' main concern was to disseminate its ideas by holding public meetings, *tablīgh*, by conducting sermons, study groups, organizing schools and publishing pamphlets, periodicals and books. Its publications particularly had contributed to a large extent to the propagation of its ideas, the more so since it also served as references for teachers and propagandists of other organizations like the Al-Irsyad and the Muhammadiyah.[250]

## C. Education

As regards education, both Ahmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan felt that the traditional or medieval educational system was incompatible with the modern era. On the other hand, the modern colonial educational system being offered to the Muslims

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[247]"Selamat Hari Raya," *Pembela Islam*, no. 41 (1932), 39.
[248]"Kaum Islam dan Pergerakan Politik," *Pembela Islam*, no. 21 (April, 1931), 3-5.
[249]Pijper, *Beberapa Studi*, 128-129.
[250]Noer, *The Rise and Development*, 135.

was secular and Western oriented in nature, so that it was unwelcome in society. As a result, each modernist established an educational institution in which the traditional and modern systems were together adopted. Further, both at the Aligarh of Aḥmad Khān and the Pesantren Persatuan Islam of Ahmad Hassan, the acquisition of knowledge and the refinement of the students' character were equally emphasized. To this end, the students were to study and stay together disentangled from their family and society, so that both teaching and training could easily be conducted at the same time.

However, the reformers had different orientations in training the Muslim youth. At Aligarh, Aḥmad Khān was preparing his students to be community leaders and government employees. To this end, the curriculum of his college emphasized Western sciences, with English as the medium of instruction. Aḥmad Khān's aim of training students at this institution was considered successful. The Aligarh college which became the Aligarh Muslim University in 1920 produced at least two heads of states, Dr. Zakir Hussein, president of India and General Muhammad Ayyub Khan, president of Pakistan.[251] Unlike Aligarh, at his Pesantren Persatuan Islam, Ahmad Hassan was preparing his students to be scholars in Islam and preachers who would propagate and defend Islam; consequently the curriculum stressed Islamic law and Arabic. Here Western sciences were a subsidiary compliment to other disciplines, because the students who had to deal with modern society were also supposed to have basic knowledge of the sciences and technology. This different emphasis was due perhaps to the background and preoccupations of the two modernists. Aḥmad Khān was a civil servant, writer, politician, social reformer and religious thinker, whereas Ahmad Hassan was a trader, teacher, writer, religious reformer and an ʿālim. As Ahmad Hassan was an ʿālim, not a politician nor a social reformer, and as he was preoccupied with

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[251]"Down the Memory Lane in the AMU Campus: Report on International Sir Syed Day, 1992," *Muslim India*, vol. no. X, no. 119 (November, 1992), 506.

religious matters, it is understandable that he emphasized Islamic education rather than the Western sciences in training his students.

It is to be noted that Ahmad Hassan was confronted with the Westernization and secularization as is stated by Benda, "...Indonesian reformists sought to stem the tide of Westernization by identifying Islam with Indonesian-centered separateness, opposed the passive surrender to Western-Christian no less than secular-values and norms."[252] In this connection, Ahmad Hassan was very critical of the impact of Dutch colonial role in which he found that the Ethical Policy and the Islamic Policy of the Dutch had, to a great extent, resulted in the Westernization and secularization of education, culture and politics. In the educational sphere, although Ahmad Hassan seems to have recognized the importance of Western sciences taught at the Dutch schools, he was not in favor of these schools because they had no provision for Islamic education, so that the graduates tended to be secular in outlook.[253] Because of this experience he established a *pesantren* in which both secular and religious subjects were taught. The Muhammadiyah had already initiated a similar experiment. The *pesantren* Ahmad Hassan established aimed at bringing together the traditional and the modern educational systems and sought to counter the growing influence of Westernization and secularization as well as Christianization encouraged by the colonial rule. Unlike the Muhammadiyah schools, Ahmad Hassan gave priority to Islamic subjects in the curriculum so that his students were able to defend Islam and counter the influence of Westernization.

In his attack on Westernization, Ahmad Hassan himself organized a class on Islam for students of Dutch schools. He also urged Muslim youth to join the Jong Islamieten Bond (Young Muslim League), abbreviated JIB, of which he was highly appreciative for its Islamically oriented base and its similarities to reformist orientation

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[252]Benda, *The Crescent*, 49.
[253]Ahmad Hassan, *Islam & Kebangsaan*, 51.

of the Persatuan Islam.[254] This organization was founded by Agus Salim in 1925 and its members were Muslim students and graduates of Dutch schools. Its aims were (1) to give Islamic guidance to its members so that they could have sense of belonging and responsibility towards Islam; (2) create tolerance for the beliefs of others; (3) promote communication among the members; and (4) help in the physical and mental advancement of its members by encouraging self-reliance and autonomy among them.[255] According to Benda, this organization:

> ...moved to counter ideological Westernization by Western weapons of organization....In the late 1925, it became the politically most important organization in the reformist counter-attack on this alienation among Dutch-trained students. It grew into a training school for an Islamic leadership distinct from the secular, Western-oriented Indonesian intellectuals.[256]

To disseminate the religious, political and educational ideas, both Ahmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan mainly used their writings as the medium to reform the religious and social traditions in society. With the *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, Ahmad Khān tried to reform Muslim religious thinking and to eradicate prejudices towards Western education. This journal was one of the products of Ahmad Khān's experience while he was in London. There, he was impressed by what Steele and Addison had done in Britain with their London magazines, the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*, for refining the morals, traditions, and consciousness of the British. In *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, Ahmad Khān not only introduced various scholars' opinions on religious subjects, but he also translated articles from European languages concerning moral philosophy, social advancement and matters pertaining to culture and civilization as well. According to Hali, "The journal had made a great impression on the Muslims and had fired them with as much enthusiasm as they were capable of mustering...In the space of six years, some 262 articles had appeared, of these Sir Sayyid had contributed no less than 112."[257]

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[254]"Musuh Islam," *Pembela Islam,* no. 67 (January, 1935), 5.

[255]Ridwan Saidi, *Cendekiawan Islam Zaman Belanda* (Jakarta: Piranti Ilmu, 1990), 22.

[256]Benda, *The Crescent,* 49.

[257]Hali, *Hayat-i-Javed,* 127.

It was also through his journals that Ahmad Hassan became well-known in the colonial period. From 1929 until the Dutch left Indonesia in 1942, Ahmad Hassan, in the Persis circle published two influential journals, the *Pembela Islam* and *Al-Lisan*. These journals were besides others through which he and the other prominent Muslim writers propagated Islamic reformist ideas during the last decades of Dutch colonial era. The *Pembela Islam* began to be published in 1929 but ceased publication in 1935, when it was banned by the Dutch for slandering the Dutch Christian writers. The same year, *Al-Lisan* began to be published, playing more or less the same role as the *Pembela Islam*. It continued until 1942, with a circulation of about 2000. The focus of both journals was on "proper observance of religious behavior and ritual in the lives of Muslims, on the nationalist movement and international affairs."[258] The journals' readership, according to Deliar Noer, included people from all over Indonesia, particularly the members of the Muhammadiyah and the Al-Irsyad. Besides, the journals were also read in Malaysia, Singapore and Muangthai.[259] That the role of Ahmad Hassan was quite important in publishing these journals can be seen from the fact that when he moved to Bangil, the Persis' publication also moved there.

The influence of Ahmad Hassan's religious thought, especially on juridical issues was widespread in Indonesia as well as in the neighboring countries, Malaysia and Singapore. Tamar Djaja notes that the members of Muhammadiyah in Singapore read Ahmad Hassan's writings, especially his *Soal-Jawab*, which contains *fatwās* on various religious issues.[260] In January 1979, to honor Ahmad Hassan, the Muhammadiyah of Singapore, held a seminar, the *Seminar Falsafah dan Perjuangan Mujtahid Hassan Bandung* (Seminar on the Philosophy and Struggle of Ahmad Hassan as a *Mujtahid*).[261]

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[258]Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 20.
[259]Noer, *The Modernist Muslim*, 102.
[260]Tamar Djaja, *Riwayat Hidup*, 171.
[261]Anshari, *A. Hassan Wajah*, 1.

Although both Aḥmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan had their private presses, they used them not for profit but for the continuation and improvement of their publication programmes. It shows the sensitivity of both modernists to the significance of the printed word in awakening their society. In addition to the medium of writing, both Aḥmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan used their considerable rhetorical abilities in spreading their ideas.[262]

Looking at the development of the religious thought of both modernists, Aḥmad Khān's socio-religious thought seems to have been rational and realistic, particularly after 1857 period. The colonial experience on Aḥmad Khān's religious thought seems to have made him conscious of the need for a rational interpretation of the sources of Islamic law and to extricate the Muslim mind from narrow and parochial adherence to old ways of thinking and belief. Troll has remarked:

> Sayyid Aḥmad Khān was rooted firmly in the religious tradition of Indian Islam. The upbringing and early education in his remarkable family and later on, his personal religious studies in the intellectually vivid atmosphere of pre-1857 Delhi contributed to a genuine concern for the purity and strength of Islamic belief and practice in India. This led to his active participation in contemporary religious debate and the endeavour for reform.[263]

Ahmad Hassan's reformist ideas revolved around Islam as an ideology. His religious and social reformism was strictly directed towards the ideological concepts rather than the social reality. Consequently, at religic us level, he had much success in encouraging Muslims to return to the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth* in order to purify Islam from *shirk* and *bidʿah*.[264] At political and social levels, however, Ahmad Hassan's legacy was not so influential during his own lifetime or after his death. He was essentially a radical religious reformer, and it is in this sphere that his contribution lies.

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[262]In the case of Aḥmad Khān, see Baljon, *The Reforms*, 10. Whereas on Ahmad Hassan, see Tamar Djaja, *Riwayat Hidup*, 27.

[263]Troll, *A Reinterpretation*, 56.

[264]A. Rahman, "Hassan Bandung dengan Persis Memurnikan Tauhid," *Khazanah*, no. 131 (July, 1991), 6.

## CONCLUSION

There is little doubt that Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's religious and social thought was influenced by British colonial rule, and the political, social and religious disturbances that it caused in Muslim society. Similarly, Ahmad Hassan's religious and social thought was, in some respects, also conditioned by the Dutch colonial rule. Having discussed both modernists' attitude towards and relations with the colonial rulers, and the religious and social thought of each, the impact of the colonial experience on their thought may now be recapitulated.

As regards educational background, both Aḥmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan began with private Islamic training at home. Both received formal education for a relatively short period because financial worries forced them to look for jobs early in their lives. It was not formal education but a great deal of self-study and self-help that made these figures very knowledgeable and made them modernists and reformers. Since neither belonged to a conservative *ulamāʾ* family and both were influenced by the puritanical ideas of the Wahhābīs, they easily disentangled themselves from *taqlīd* and became critical of certain beliefs and practices (which they considered *shirk* and *bidʿah)* prevalent in Muslim societies. They considered *shirk*, *bidʿah* and *taqlīd* to have obscured true Islam and to have been the responsible factors for the decadence of Muslim community. They held that Muslims should return to the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth* as the only valid sources of Islam. *Ijmāʿ*, *qiyās* and *ijtihād* of the *ulamāʾ* in the past were not to be followed if they were not in line with these basic sources and not in accord with the contemporary needs of Muslim society. The four great *imāms* were regarded as great teachers, but their ideas were not to be followed unquestioningly, and Muslims were not to rigidly adhere to one of the *madhdhabs* to the exclusion of others. While being against *taqlīd*, both modernists urged Muslims to undertake *ijtihād* in order to liberate Islam from rigid interpretations and make it compatible with the demands of modern circumstances. They thought it was *ijtihād* which gave a dynamic spirit to

religion and could make Islam responsive to new situations and requirements of time. Both Aḥmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan themselves undertook *ijtihād* in responding to the requirements of the time.

The Muslim condition under colonial rule both in India and Indonesia was very distressful. Besides being politically powerless and economically poor, their religious and social condition was also degenerate. The Muslims were also under particular suspicion on the part of the colonial rulers, who were very apprehensive of the influence of Wahhābī and pan-Islamic ideas and movements. The colonial government also provided limited opportunities for higher education for fear that the enlightenment of the ruled would sooner or later threaten the existing rule. When these governments did offer educational opportunities to the native people, the kind of education which was offered was incompatible with the Muslim interests owing to its secular in nature; therefore, Muslims were reluctant to send their children to the government schools and colleges. In the case of Indonesia, only the children of aristocrats, who worked for the Dutch administration, could enter the colleges which the government had established. This sort of educational problems account for the backwardness of the Muslims. Under the Christian rulers, the Muslims in India and Indonesia were also challenged by the growing Christian missionary propaganda and the naturalistic trends of Western modern sciences and technology.

Both Aḥmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan believed that education should be given into primary consideration in order to improve the people's condition. The traditional and medieval systems of educational, according to them, should be reformulated and the teaching of the general sciences and technology be made a part of the new educational system. By so doing, they hoped that the Muslims would be able to adapt themselves to the demands of modern life. Thus, Aḥmad Khān founded the Muslim College in Aligarh, where the Indian Muslim youth was trained to be community leaders, whereas Ahmad Hassan established the Pesantren Persatuan Islam in Bandung, later moved to

Bangil, where indonesian Muslim students were trained to be teachers, preachers and the defenders of Islam.

Given that Aḥmad Khān was much influenced by the natural sciences being taught in the West, and because he thought that the West was highly civilized on account of its advance in natural sciences and technology, he laid special emphasis on these sciences at the Aligarh College. He hoped that Muslims would thereby progress like the West had and be able to regain their lost honor. The influence of the natural sciences also shaped Aḥmad Khān's religious thought. This influence can be seen in his conviction, for example, that the Qurᵓān, being the word of God, must be in conformity with the work of God [i.e. the universe] and there can no be contradiction between the two.

Ahmad Khan's social thought was closely related to his religious thought. In the political field, he had strong faith in a cooperative policy with the British; such a course alone, he believed, could safeguard and promote the interests of the Muslims, a minority, in the Subcontinent. For him reconciliation with the British was not a partial but an all embracing policy. He took great pains to convince his co-religionists that their future lay in their ability to foster Western rationalism and liberalism.[265]

Aḥmad Khān's religious and social thought developed from a traditional to a modern outlook. His awareness of the contemporary social reality and his constant interaction with the British, shaped his intellectual concerns. In this regard, the Mutiny of 1857 is often considered to have played a decisive role in changing his socio-religious outlook. Before 1857 his socio-religious outlook was puritanical, sectarian and apologetic; whereas after 1857 it was rational, dynamic and realistic. In the later period he was much more concerned with moral and social values rather than with historical and transcendental matters. Besides the events of the Mutiny, this change was also effected by his visit to Britain in 1869-1870, where he directly observed the advance of

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[265]Shan Mohammad, *Sir Syed Ahmad*, 255.

the West in a variety of aspects, particularly in science and technology. The Muslim College in Aligarh was inspired by the University of Cambridge and the journal *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* owed much to the influence of Steele and Addison's magazines, the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* of London. Both the college and his journal, played a very influential role in improving the Indian Muslims' condition. It is clear then that the colonial experience had a fundamental impact on Ahmad Khān's religious and social thought.

Unlike Ahmad Khān, Ahmad Hassan's socio-religious thought was not much influenced by the West in general or by the Dutch rule in particular. He was much more influenced by the Wahhābīs and by Muhammad ᶜAbduh in matters of religious reforms and by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī in politics. He was preoccupied with the purification of Islam from the *shirk* and *bidᶜah* he observed in Indonesian Muslim beliefs and traditions. Since the coming of the Dutch confronted Muslims with various social, cultural and religious challenges, Ahmad Hassan's socio-religious thought was very much in the nature of a defense of Islam rather than of an accommodation with Western cultural influences and natural science and technology. He was very conscious of the negative impact of the West and urged Indonesian Muslims to defend themselves from the efforts of the Dutch to domesticate Islam in Indonesia by introducing Western culture. Ahmad Hassan was also much concerned about the Christian missionary propaganda towards the Muslims, and endeavored through his writings to counterattack any Christian criticism on Islam. In this sense, his socio-religious thought can be considered traditional, ideological, puritanical, and apologetic. Yet, although he never cooperated with the colonial rulers, Ahmad Hassan too adopted the modern system of education and organization introduced by the Dutch government.

In politics, Ahmad Hassan regarded Dutch rule as an "infidel" government, which never gave full freedom to the Indonesian Muslims to implement Islamic law except in matters of worship. During the nationalist movement, he called upon

Indonesian Muslims to unite themselves in Muslim parties, particularly the Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia, struggling to improve the economic, political and religious conditions of Indonesian Muslims, so that when the country was free from the colonial rule Islamic law might be implemented. Despite the fact that during the nationalist movement the Muslim groups were in conflict with the nationalist groups, particularly with the PNI (Partai Nasional Indonesia) headed by Sukarno, they all aimed at gaining Indonesian independence and each contributed therefore in the overthrow of the Dutch power.

The impact of both Aḥmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan on their respective countries was quite deep. Their criticism of the conservative Muslim beliefs and customs helped awaken the people to the need for a more critical understanding of islam. Both urged their people to respond to the religious, social and political problems in accordance with the new developments of modern life. The educational institutions which each established became centers of Muslim intellectual activity. Through the publication of the *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* of Aḥmad Khān and the *Pembela Islam* and *Al-Lisan* of Ahmad Hassan, as well as the works of other writers which they encouraged and inspired, both modernists contributed to the social, political and religious development of their societies. It is not surprising, therefore, that both modernists are still commemorated by the people today, and their socio-religious thought is considered to relevant to the problems and concerns of the present day.

Besides the educational reform of Aḥmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan, the strong criticism of funeral and marriage customs and asceticism in the case of Aḥmad Khān, and of the *slametans*, magic, mystical practices, the intercession and worship of saints etc. in the case of Ahmad Hassan, not only contributed to the purification of Islam but also helped liberate Muslims from intellectual stagnation. It is true that initially their reformist movements were intensely opposed by the conservative *ʿulamāʾ* of their periods. But opposition to their socio-religious reforms in both countries was gradually

diminished due to the increasing influence of modern systems of Islamic education and the modernist Islamic organizations. This is yet another way in which the condition created by colonial rule impinged on the religious and social thought and reforms of Aḥmad Khān and Ahmad Hassan.

# GLOSSARY

*abangan* (Javanese) = nominal Muslim.

*adat*, *ᶜādah* (Indonesian, from Arabic) = a custom which is considered by Muslim jurists as valid in some instances.

*akhlak*, *akhlāq* (Indonesian, from Arabic) = moral character.

*ᶜālim*, pl. *ᶜulamāʾ* (Arabic) = individuals who are considered knowledgeable in Islamic religious learning, particularly in jurisprudence and theological matters.

*Al-Imam* (Malay, from Arabic) = leader; a reformist journal published fortnightly in Singapore in 1906-1909 by Syech Thaher Djalaluddin.

*Al-Irsyad* (Indonesian, from Arabic) = guidance; the name of an Islamic reform movement founded by Ahmad Surkati in Jakarta in 1913.

*Al-Lisan* (Indonesian, from Arabic) = "tongue"; the journal of the Pembela Islam published in 1935 to replace Pembela Islam which was banned by the Dutch government.

*Al-Manār* (Arabic) = lighthouse, minaret; a reformist journal published by Muhammad ᶜAbduh's disciple, Sayyid Rashīd Riḍa, in 1898.

*Al-Munir* (Indonesian, from Arabic) = illuminating; a reformist journal published in Padang under the editorship of Haji Abdullah Ahmad.

*ʾamr-maᶜrūf nahy-munkar* (Arabic) = enjoining the good and forbidding the wrong.

*ᶜaqīdah* (Arabic) = a statement of doctrine, or an article of faith. (Islamic belief, faith, creed).

*azan*, *adhān* (Indonesian, from Arabic) = the call to prayer given for the five daily and for the Friday prayers.

*baiᶜat* (Arabic) = uttering an allegiance.

*barzanji* (Indonesian, from Persian) = a special prayer usually recited on the occasion of the Prophet's birthday celebration *(maulūd)*.

*bidᶜah* (Arabic) = lit. "innovation"; a practice or a belief which was not present in Islam as it was revealed in the Qurʾān and established by the *Sunnah* on the basis of the Prophetic tradition; hence something possibly contrary to Islam.

*bismillah* (Urdu, from Arabic) = "in the name of God"; a ceremony held when a child starts receiving Qurʾānic reading lessons. The ceremony is often accompanied by lavish feasting and entertainment by musicians and dancers.

*dār al-Islām* (Arabic) = "the abode of Islam": a country where the law *(sharīʿat)* of Islam is in full force.

*dār al-ḥarb* (Arabic) = "the abode of war": a term used by Muslims with reference to a country belonging to infidels which has not been brought under the rule of Islam.

*dukun* (Indonesian) = a practitioner of magic who claims to possess secret powers.

*fatwa, fatwā* (Indonesian, from Arabic) = an opinion on a point of law made by an *ʿālim* or a *muftī* (legal scholar) or a *qāḍī* (judge).

*fiqh* (Arabic) = Islamic jurisprudence.

*ḥadīth* (Arabic) = tradition of the Prophet.

*haji* (Indonesian, from Arabic) = Honorific title given to those Indonesian Muslims who have undertaken the pilgrimage to Mecca.

*ḥajj* (Arabic) = the pilgrimage to Mecca.

*ḥarām* (Arabic) = forbidden.

*ʿibādah* (Arabic) = a technical term in theology meaning acts of worship or ritual, from the verb *ʿabada* ", to serve".

*ijmāʿ* (Arabic) = a consensus, expressed or tacit, on a question of law. Along with the Qurʾān, *ḥadīth* and *sunnah*, it is a basis which legitimizes law.

*ijtihād* (Arabic) = reinterpretation of religious concept according to the needs of time.

*imām* (Arabic) = either a leader of prayer or a head of a community or a founder of the school of iaw *(madhhab)*.

*ittibāʿ* (Arabic) = acceptance of a judgment from another who bases it on the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*.

*jāiz* (Arabic) = neutral or permitted.

*jihād* (Arabic) = a religious or holy war waged by a Muslim ruler or any group of Muslims against unbelievers.

*kāfir* (Arabic) = lit. "rejecter"; used in Muslim theology and law to define the unbeliever.

*kaum muda* (Indonesia) = "the young group"; a term applied to those Muslims in Indonesia in the twentieth century who advocated changes in religious ritual, belief and practice, on the basis that such change purifies Islam of accretions taken on over the centuries.

*kaum tua* (Indonesian) = "the old group"; the term applied to those Muslims in Indonesia during the twentieth century who defend traditionalist Islam against reforms by the modernists.

*khatib, khaṭīb* (Indonesian, from Arabic) = Friday or ʿĪd sermon giver.

*khurafat* (Indonesian, from Arabic) = superstition.

*khuṭbah* (Arabic) = the sermon given on a Friday in a congretional mosque before *ṣalāt al-Jumʿah* and after sunrise at the ʿĪd *al-Fiṭr* and ʿĪd *al-Aḍhā*.

*kudung* (Indonesian) = veil.

*madhhab* (Arabic) = a jurisprudential school among the Sunnī Muslims. There are four major *madhhabs* in the Muslim world—*Shāfiʿī, Mālikī, Hanafī* and *Hanbalī*.

*madrasah* (Urdu and Indonesian, from Arabic) = a place where teaching is done; a school, particularly a school where the Islamic sciences are taught.

*makrūh* (Arabic) = discouraged.

*maktab* (Urdu, from Arabic) = a makeshift arrangement located on the verandah or in the courtyard of the teacher or some benefactor.

*maulvī* or *mawlawī* (Urdu, from Arabic) = a learned man, a graduate in theology.

*maulūd* (Urdu and Indonesian, from Arabic) = gatherings to commemorate the birth of the Prophet.

*muballigh* (Arabic) = religious preacher.

*mujtahid* pl. *mujtahidūn* (Arabic) = lit. "one who strives"; an authority who makes original decisions of canon law, rather than applying precedents already established. The *mujtahidūn* were the founders of the schools of law and their principal exponents.

*murid* (Urdu and Indonesian) = disciple.

*muṣṭalāh al-ḥadīth* (Arabic) = the science of examining and using *ḥadīth* for legal and religious purposes as established in Sunnī Muslim jurisprudence.

*necharī* (Urdu) = the term applied to Sayyid Ahmad Khān and his followers who emphasized the position that Islam was a religion according to Nature: the nature of man and nature in the scientific sense.

*Nurul Islam* (Malay, from Arabic) = light of Islam; a Tamil religious and literary journal. This is also the name of a reformist organization, set up in Pekalongan in 1920 which later on transformed into a branch of the Muhammadiyah.

*Pembela Islam* (Indonesian) = "defender of Islam"; the journal of the Persatuan Islam established in 1929.

*pesantren* (Indonesian) = a traditional Islamic religious school in Indonesia.

*pīr* (Urdu) = master.

*purdah or pardah* (Urdu) = the term applied to the system of seclusion of Muslim women in India.

*qiyās* (Arabic) = lit. "measure", "scale" or "examplar" and hence "analogy"; the principle by which the laws of the Qurʾān and *sunnah* are applied to situations not explicitly covered by these two sources of religious legislation.

*raj* (Urdu) = sovereignty, dominion.

*ribā* (Arabic) = the taking of interest on loans, which is forbidden according to the *sharīʿah*.

*Sekolah Melayu* (Malay) = Malay school.

*sharīʿah* (Arabic) = the canon law of Islam, based on the Qurʾān and *hadith*.

*shaykh* (Arabic) = a spiritual master, a *guru*, the head of a *sūfī* order.

*shirk* (Arabic) = lit. "association"; association of something with God, other than God Himself and is considered a fundamental error at the root of all sins or transgression.

*slametan* (Javanese) = meal or feast of religious character.

*salāt* (Arabic) = prayer.

*sahābah* (Arabic) = the prophet's companions.

*sunnat* (Arabic) = recommended

*tābiʿīn* (Arabic) = the followers of the Prophet's companions.

*tābiʿ tābiʿīn* (Arabic) = the followers of the followers of the Prophet's companions.

*tablīgh* (Arabic) = sermon at religious meetings.

*tafsīr* (Arabic) = a commentary on the Qurʾān.

*Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* (Urdu, from Arabic) = reform of morals; the journal established by Sayyid Ahmad Khān.

*tahlil, tahlil* (Indonesian, from Arabic) = lit. "making lawful"; the uttering of the *shahādah: lā ilāha illā-Llāh* ("there is no God but God").

*takhyul* (Indonesian, from Arabic) = belief in the disembodied spirit of a dead person.

*tanya-jawab* (Indonesian) = question and answer.

*taqlīd* (Arabic) = a term used in Muslim jurisprudence for uncritically accepting legal and theological decisions of a teacher or teachers.

*tasawwuf* (Arabic) = mysticism.

*ummat, ummah* (Indonesian, from Arabic) = community.

*usūl al-fiqh* (Arabic) = lit. "roots of jurisprudence"; the basis of Islamic law. Among the Sunnīs these are: the Qurʾān, the *sunnah* (acts and statements of the Prophet), *qiyās*, and *ijmāʿ* (popular consensus or agreement).

*Utusan Melayu* (Malay) = delegate of the Malay.

*Wahabi, Wahhābī* (Indonesian, from Arabic) = a sect of Muslim puritan revivalists, founded in the eighteenth century in Najd, Saudi Arabia, by Muḥammad bin ʿAbdul Wahhāb.

*wājib* (Arabic) = obligatory

*wali* (Indonesian, from Arabic) = saint, used for a certain Islamic religious notable who is believed to be close to God and has special piety and spiritual power. .

*walīmah* (Arabic) = a wedding feast intended to solemnize and publicize the event of marriage.
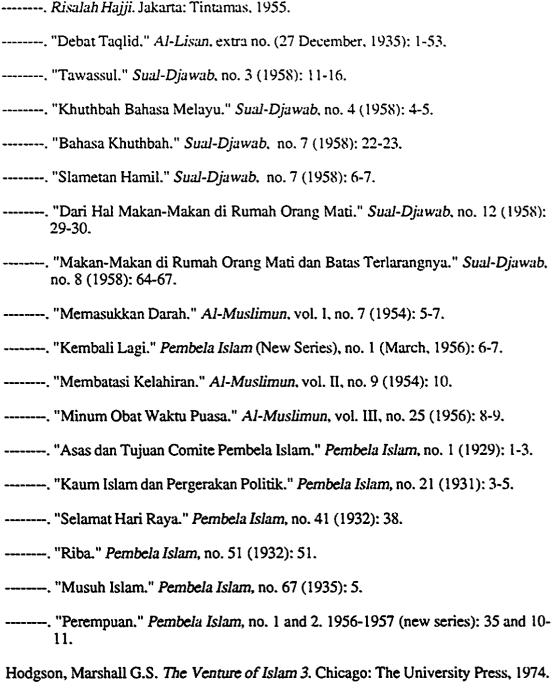
*wanita Islam* (Indonesian) = Muslim women.

*zikr* or *dhikr Allah* (Arabic) = "remembrance of God"; making mention of God refers to invocation of the Divine Name, or to litanies; metaphysical "anamnesis".

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