Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and the `Ulamā': A Study in Socio-political Context.

by

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To Amina, `Umar and Bilāl,

in whom lie our hopes

of a better

future

Abstract

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Title of Thesis: Sayyid Ahmad Khān and the `Ulamā' :a study in socio-political context

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This study examines the relationship of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān with the Indian `ulamā'. As part of his reform movement, and in particular through his journal Tahzību'l-Akhlāq, Sir Sayyid launched a severe attack on the `ulamā'. He held the `ulamā' directly responsible for leading the community to the verge of disintegration. For their part, the `ulamā' 's opposition to Sir Sayyid seems to have been inspired not so much by the theological ideas of Sir Sayyid as by the `ulamā' 's perception that Sir Sayyid's ideas, criticism and his reform movement in general were a challenge to their position and role in society.

The `ulamā' 's opposition was venomous but, for a variety of reasons, it did not prove strong enough to deal a mortal blow to the reform movement of Sir Sayyid.

RÉSUMÉ

Auteur: Shaista Azizalam

Titre: Sayyid Ahmad Khān et les `Ulamā' :une étude en contexte socio-politique

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Cette étude examine les rapports entre Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān et les `ulamā' indiens. Une partie de son mouvement de réforme consista, en particulier par le biais de son journal Tahzību'l-Akhlāq, à asséner une critique sévère aux `ulamā' Il les a rendus responsables d'avoir mené la communauté au seuil de la désintégration. Quant aux `ulamā' leur opposition a Sir Sayyid semble avoir été inspiree par leur perception de la menace que représentaient ses idées, ses critiques et, de façon générale, son mouvement réformiste, plus que ses conceptions théologiques.

L'opposition des `ulamā' fut "venimeuse", mais pour plusieurs raisons, cela n'a pas été suffisant pour porter un coup fatal au mouvement de réforme de Sir Sayyid.

SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION

ا a	ڈ ḍ	ع ʿ
ب b	ذ z̲	غ g̲h
پ p	ر r	ف f
ت t	ڑ rh	ق q
ٹ ṭ	ز z	ک k
ث s̲	س s	گ g
ج j	ش sh	ل l
چ ch	ص ṣ	م m
ح ḥ	ض ż	ن n
خ k̲h	ط ṭ	و v
د d	ظ ẓ	ہ h
ں n̲		ی y

Vowels: Short: a, i, u

Long: ā, ī, e, o, ū

Alif maqsūrah: á

Dipthongs: au, ay

Aspirated: b̲h, t̲h, d̲h, etc.

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INTRODUCTION

This study examines the relationship of Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (1817-1898) with the Indian `ulamā'. In revitalizing the life of Indian Muslim community during the second half of the 19th century, after the loss of political power and the abortive attempt in 1857 to regain it, the role of Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān is clearly unparalleled by any other leader of 19th century Muslim India. In his efforts aimed at the rescue of the Muslim community from a state of social, political, and religious decadence, and in the attempt to create a rapprochement with the British Government, however, Sayyid was confronted with a grave challenge from the `ulamā'.

As part of his overall reform movement, and in particular through his journal Tahẓību'l-Akhlāq, Sir Sayyid launched a severe attack on the `ulamā'. He regarded them not only as a threat to his reform movement, and to a successful implementation of his ideas, and indeed to all prospects of Muslim progress, but also held them directly responsible for leading the community into such an unhappy state of affairs where it found itself on the verge of disintegration. He accused the `ulamā' of having lost sight of the realities of the time, of still maintaining a medieval outlook on life, and thus being incapable of appreciating the needs of, much less contributing to modern society. Further, he considered

that apart from being out of touch with reality, the `ulamā' had even lost sight of the true spirit of religion, of which they claimed to be the exclusive representatives and guardians. In other words, his attack on the `ulamā' clearly amounted to a denial of the relevance of their position and role in the Indo-Islamic society of 19th century British India.

In the light of the severe criticism to which the `ulamā' were subjected by Sir Sayyid, it is to be expected that the `ulamā' 's opposition to him would have emerged not merely on account of divergent perceptions and views on various religious and political questions, but also because the `ulamā' considered their very position and role in society to be called into question by the criticism of Sir Sayyid. It will be argued, therefore, that the reaction of the `ulamā' had more to do with his criticism of their function in contemporary society, than with his religious ideas as such. It needs to be noted here that Sir Sayyid's attack was not directed to any particular group within the `ulamā', but to the `ulamā' as a class. The interests and outlook of the men, generally regarded as `ulamā' were very similar, notwithstanding the very marked divergences in religious knowledge or social status among them. This, in other words, means that it is possible to speak of them as a class, and as will become apparent in the course of this study, Sir Sayyid's criticism is also based on the same understanding.

On their part, the `ulamā' looked to the past for their inspiration, and sought to retain and affirm a traditional worldview, whose preservation they thought was the best defense of Muslim society against the impact and encroachment of the West. In effect, therefore, they denied the need for reforming Muslim society to any significant degree in the light of the changing circumstances, given that, as Sir Sayyid and other reformers alleged, they failed to appreciate the nature and significance of this change. It is clear, for instance, for the purposes for which a religious school like that of Deoband was established, reforming Muslim society did not figure in the `ulamā' 's scale of priorities. Again, Dāru'l-`Ulūm Deoband's adoption of the Dars-i Niẓāmiyya syllabus, formulated more than a century earlier, and going back in turn to still earlier traditions, tells much about their rigidly conservative and traditional attitudes. Equally illustrative is the `ulamā' 's opposition to the study of the English language. Sir Sayyid, therefore, alleged that the `ulamā' sought to maintain and preserve Muslim society in much the same form it had had before the advent and impact of the British. They were fairly entrenched in this traditionally structured Muslim society, which is another reason why they resisted any efforts at change. The influence of the `ulamā' in society is shown, for example, by the very

large number of the fatāvā[1] which were sought from them, and of which the fatāvā issued by the Deobandi `ulamā' offer a fair sample. This entrenchment and influence also accounts for popular receptivity to their ideas and the consequent seriousness of threat they represented to the movement launched by Sir Sayyid.

However, with all their influence in society, the `ulamā' were divided amongst themselves. The sectarian polemics of the time bear ample testimony to their inner conflicts; in fact, some of the `ulamā' themselves appear to have been (or become) conscious of this, as is shown, for example, by the purposes for which the Nadvatu'l-`Ulamā' was established[2] and which included bringing together `ulamā' belonging to different sects and schools of thought, on one platform. Moreover, in marked contrast with Sir Sayyid, they did not possess a coherent or practicable vision of the course of action which the Muslims ought to adopt to come out of their present difficulties. This lack helps explain, therefore, why despite (or perhaps, in some measure, due to) the compromises he had to make (e.g., his willingness to

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[1] Fatvā is an authoritative opinion given by a muftī (a specialist on sharī`a or Islamic Law).

[2] It was established at Lacknow in 1894. On Nadvatu'l-`Ulamā', see Shiblī Nu`mānī, Maqālāt-i Shiblī, ed. Mas`ūd `Alī Nadvī(Azamgarh, 1938), passim; Sulaimān Nadvī, Hayat-i Shiblī, (Azamgarh, n.d.), pp. 298-411 and passim; Barbara Metcalf, Islamic Revival, pp. 335-47. Masroor Hashmi, Muslim Responses to Western Education, (Delhi, 1989), p. 126.

disavow any intention of imparting his religious ideas at `Alīgarh College, and even to appoint Deobandi `ulamā' in charge of religious instruction), Sir Sayyid was able to withstand the pressure of the `ulamā'.

While numerous studies on the life, ideas, and achievements of Sir Sayyid have brought to light diverse aspects of his contribution, it is rather surprising that the question of his relationship with the `ulamā' has received little serious attention. There are studies on various aspects of Sir Sayyid's career;[3] and there also are others which, directly or indirectly, discuss the `ulamā' in nineteenth century British India;[4] then there are still other studies, of a more general nature, which discuss trends in Muslim politics and society during the period in question.[5] In none of these three categories of

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[3] Christian W.Troll, Sayyid Ahmad Khan; A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology, (New Delhi, 1978); Hafeez Malik, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muslim Modernism in India and Pakistan, (New York, 1980); J.M.S.Baljon, The Reforms and Religous Ideas of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (Lahore, 1958); Bashir Ahmad Dar, Religious Thought of Sayyid Ahmad Khān, (Lahore, 1957); David Lelyveld, `Alīgarh's First Generation; Muslim Solidarity in British India, (Princeton, 1978).

[4] Barbara D. Metcalf, Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900, (Princeton, 1982); Francis Robinson, Separatism Among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces Muslims, 1800-1923, (Cambridge, 1974); I.H. Qureshi, Ulema in Politics, (Karachi, 1972); Ziaul Haq Faruqi, The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan, (New York, 1963).

[5] Aziz Ahmad, Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan, 1857-1964, (Oxford, 1967); Peter Hardy, The Muslims of British India, (Cambridge, 1972); Farzana Shaikh, Community and Consensus in Islam, (Cambridge, 1989); Abdul Hamid, Muslim Separatism In India; a brief Survey,

work, however, is the question which is the focus of present study adequately addressed.

To say, however, that the problem has not been adequately addressed is not, of course, to say that it has not been touched upon at all. Several authors do, within various contexts, refer to or briefly discuss Sayyid Aḥmad's relations with the *`ulamā'*. Altāf Ḥusain Ḥālī's *Ḥayat-i Jāved*,[6] which is a primary source of fundamental importance on Sir Sayyid's life and career, is also important for some information it provides on the opposition of the *`ulamā'* to Sir Sayyid. He gives the names of some of Sir Sayyid's leading opponents, describes the growth of the opposition, and discusses its nature and the reasons for it. But Ḥālī, of course, was a close associate of Sir Sayyid, not an impartial observer: he was concerned not just to describe Sir Sayyid's activities, but also to defend him against attack. The picture he provides of this conflict, therefore, must be considered to be a partial rather than a complete one. This remark is not to deny, however, the importance of Ḥālī's work as a source on this subject. Further, apart from other reasons, Ḥālī's work is of value precisely because it is partisan, for it tells us how opposition to Sir Sayyid was viewed by

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1858-1947, (Oxford, 1967); K.K.Aziz, *Making of Pakistan*, (London, 1969); Idem., *History of the Idea of Pakistan*. (Lahore, 1987)

[6] Altāf Ḥusain Ḥālī, *Ḥayat-i Jāved*, (Lahore, 1957).

those who belonged to his group, and by extension, himself.

If Ḥālī's work is sympathetic to Sir Sayyid, there are other works which indicate opposition to him. Works such as those of ʿAlī Bakhsh[7] and Imdādu'llah[8] indicate the hostility of conservative opinion to him, though they tend to present a rather distorted picture of Sir Sayyid. These writings also called forth rejoinders from Sir Sayyid which are quite illuminating for our purposes. As for Maulānā Qāsim Nānautavī's Taṣfiyātu'l-ʿAqā'id,[9] it is strictly based on theological issues raised by Sir Sayyid. Therefore, it does not tell much about the socio-political context in which it was written. Although it does, of course, indicate some of the areas of theological controversy. On the other hand, the fatāvā of the ʿulamā', which were issued condemning the theological and political stand of Sir Sayyid, have also been a major

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[7] ʿAlī Bakhsh wrote a pamphlet Tā'īdu'l-Islam, criticizing Sir Sayyid's religious ideas. These works were not directly available to the present writer. But Hālī has discussed this work in Hayat-i Jāved. Sir Sayyid wrote a detailed article "Dafaʿtu'l-Bohtān" refuting the accusations that were levelled against him in this pamphlet. Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.13, pp. 7-50. For ʿulamā' 's opposition and a discussion of their writings and newspapers, see Ibid., vol.10 and 7, passim.

[8] Imdādu'llah also expressed his hostility through newspapers. Sir Sayyid quotes him very often in his articles. For instance, see Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.10, p. 81 and passim.

[9] Qāsim Nānautavī, Taṣfiyātu'l-ʿAqā'id, (Deoband, n.d.).

source of understanding the opposition to Sir Sayyid.[10]

Among secondry sources, a work such as that of Muḥammad Miyān, `Ulamā'-i Hind kā Shāndār Māẓī,[11] though not entirely an unprejudiced work, still represents the opposition's point of view, in so far as Sir Sayyid's relation with `ulamā' are concerned. Though the author does not examine this question in explicit terms, he strictly maintaines that `ulamā' 's opposition to Sir Sayyid emerged solely on theological grounds. But inspite of this general understanding, his work is important because he does criticize Sir Sayyid for his humiliating subservience to the British and for his attitudes to some of the `ulamā' and in doing so captures some of the spirit of the `ulamā' 's opposition to Sir Sayyid.

There are other works in which several authors have briefly remarked on the relationship of Sir Sayyid and the `ulamā'. A relatively detailed discussion is to be found in Baljon's Reforms and Religious Ideas of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. Baljon is really not concerned with analyzing the problem; but seeks only to present it in its broad outline. In this, his basic, almost exclusive source is Ḥālī's Ḥayat-i Jāved, information from which is conveniently presented in a summary by Baljon.

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10 Some of the most important fatāvās have been quoted and discussed in Ḥālī's Ḥayat-i Jāved, p. 600ff.

11 Muḥammad Miyān, `Ulamā'-i Hind kā Shāndār Māẓī, vol.4 (Dėlhi, n.d.).

Reference should be made here also to an important article by David Lelyveld, "Disenchantment at Aligarh".[12] Though not directly concerned with the problem addressed by the present study, Lelyveld's article serves to show how Sir Sayyid's vision of imparting a reformed religious education at `Alīgarh alongside that in the secular disciplines, was frustrated by perceived opposition from the conservative forces in society. The article sheds light on some of the problems studied in this thesis.[13]

In his Mauj-i Kauṣar,[14] S.M. Ikrām has also briefly touched upon opposition to Sir Sayyid. Though basing himself essentially on Ḥālī, Ikrām's account is relatively more sympathetic to the `ulamā', particularly the `ulamā' of Deoband, than Ḥālī's. He concentrates on making the point that the `ulamā' were not opposed either to learning the language or to accepting employment under the British, so that opposition to Sir Sayyid was inspired not by his advocacy of these things, but on account of his religious views. Finally, there are brief allusions to the relationship between Sir Sayyid and the `ulamā', in the

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12 David Lelyveld, "Disenchantment at Aligarh: Islam and the realm of the Secular in late 19th century" in Die Welt des Islams, 22(1982), pp. 85-102.

13 For a brief discussion of Lelyveld's argument in this article, see the Conclusion of this thesis.

14 S.M. Ikrām, Mauj-i Kauṣar, (Lahore ,n.d.)

15 Aziz Ahmad, Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan,

works of Aziz Ahmad,[15] Qureshi,[16] F.Robinson[17] and others.

As is clear from the foregoing review, therefore, apart from some brief discussions, no systematic examination of the problem has been attempted so far. While not claiming to address all the aspects involved in this question the present study seeks to fill some of the gaps in our understanding of this important problem.

* * *

This thesis represents a preliminary effort to document and analyze Sir Sayyid's relations with the `ulamā'. The problem is addressed in a socio-political rather than theological context. Chapter one consists of two sections. The first section traces the early career of Sir Sayyid and discusses Sir Sayyid's familial background, his intellectual make-up before 1857, and the context of his writings in order to understand the growth of his personality and his perception of the Muslim society and religion. The second section seeks to trace briefly the role and status of the `ulamā' in the Indo-Islamic society in order to understand their attitudes towards religion

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1857-1969, (Oxford, 1967). See, for instance, chapter 5, passim.

16 Qureshi, Ulema in Politics, p. 207.

17 Francis Robinson, Separatism among Indian Muslims. See for instance, p. 109. Robinson's study is particularly important in delineating the life of the community in the late nineteenth century and the place of the `ulamā' in it.

and society. The discussion here makes special reference to Shāh Walīyu'llah, since he played an important role in defining the role of the `ulamā' in Muslim society in modern times. Both sections help set the discussion in the following Chapters in context.

Chapter two studies Sir Sayyid's wide-ranging criticism of the `ulamā' of his day. He held them responsible not just for incapacity in helping Muslims overcome their problems but for having contributed to Muslim decline. For him, therefore, the `ulamā' no longer had a constructive role to play in society.

The `ulamā' 's position seems to have been on decline when Sir Sayyid wrote. A sense of gradual deterioration in their influence and the realization that the rationale of their very existence was being challenged by Sir Sayyid, coupled with Sir Sayyid's peculiar religious ideas, greatly embittered the `ulamā'. Sir Sayyid's criticism called forth venomous attacks from them. An analysis of this opposition on the part of the `ulamā' constitutes the third and the final Chapter of this thesis. It argues, as does the thesis as a whole, that the attack of the `ulamā' was not only, and perhaps not so much because of sir Sayyid's religious ideas as because the `ulamā' felt their position in society to be threatened by his ideas and activities. This last point is elaborated in more detail, together with some other point,

in the Conclusion. Translation of a rejoinder to the `ulamā' by Sir Sayyid has been given as an appendix to the thesis.

CHAPTER ONE

Part I

Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān: Life and Intellectual Career Before 1857

Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān was born in 1817.[18] Normally his life is divided into two parts. The first part begins from 1817 and ends with the "Mutiny" of 1857.[19] The second part begins with 1857 and lasts upto his death in 1898. The events of 1857 are generally considered to have changed his entire outlook. Some have even argued that if Sir Sayyid had not witnessed the events of 1857, he would have ended up just being another maulavi of the traditional brand.[20] This seems to be rather exaggerated view or assessment of the impact of what happened during this

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[18] Hālī, Hayat-i Jāved, p. 77. A number of books are devoted to the study of the life and career of Sir Sayyid. Apart from Hālī, whose work remains the basic source of information, e.,g. see, G.F.I.Graham, The Life and Works of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, (London, 1909); Hafeez Malik, Sir Sayyid Akmad Khan and Muslim Modernisation in India and Pakistan; Abdul Hamid, Muslim Separatism in India; a brief survey, 1858-1947. For further references see bibliography in the end.

[19] For a study of conflicting interpretation among the Muslim writers themselves over the tragic events of 1857, see Salahuddin Malik's article "Muslim Historical Literature in the Era of Early Muslim Nationalism: A case study of Sir Sayyid and Ta`īb", in The American Journal of Islamic Studies, vol.1, no.2, (1984). The author criticizes Sir Sayyid's lack of historical insight into the affairs of 1857 and takes Ta`īb's interpretation as the authentic one lending it support from other Muslim writers.

[20] Shah Din "Syed Ahmad Khan as a Religious Reformer", Hindustan Review, (1904), cited by Baljon, The Reforms and Religious Ideas of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, p. 48.

year. A careful study of his life might lead us to draw different conclusions.

In the following pages, in briefly reviewing his life, it will be argued that the transition from medieval to modern which Sir Sayyid so desperately wanted his community to experience, he himself had already experienced before and during 1857. The methods or the lines that he chose for himself to come out of the spiritual, economic, and political crises, at the personal level, later guided him in his efforts to lead the Muslim community out of social, economic, political, moral and the most important of all, religious degradation. For the purpose of a clear presentation of this argument, his early life is divided into two parts. The first part falls into the period before his father's death: and the second part lasting until 1857 was one in which he faced the new situation outside his family.

The aristocratic family into which Sir Sayyid was born was materially, intellectually and spiritually very well equipped to create a proper environment for the growth of a curious mind. He was brought up in the house of his maternal grandfather Khvāja Farīdud-Dīn Aḥmad who was an administrator and intellectual at the same time. He was closely associated with the Mughal court,[21] and he also

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[21] Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt-i Sir Sayyid, ed., Muḥammad Ismā`īl Pānīpatī, (Lahore,1972), vol.16, p. 667.

served as the superintendent of the East India Company's madrasa at Calcutta.[22] He was also sent as an ambassador to Burma and Iran from Company's side.[23] He was a renowned mathematician and astronomer.[24] Through his grandfather's contacts and activities, Sir Sayyid may have been exposed to the complications and affairs of the administrative and political worlds. Khvāja Farīdud-Dīn also seems to have carefully supervised the education of his grandchildren,[25] which together with an "ashrāf" upbringing,[26] characteristic of the "noble" Muslim families, shaped the personality, and the outlook of the young Sayyid Aḥmad, and probably awakened some of that intellectual curiosity which he was later to put to much use. His mother, as part and parcel of the same culturally healthy atmosphere, also played a very important role in cultivating a sound basis for a rational outlook by practicing certain reformed religious activities[27] she had learned from the teachings of Shāh `Abdu'l-`Azīz (d. 1824) and his family with whom

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22 Ibid., p. 643.

23 Ibid., p. 650.

24 Ibid., pp. 668-70.

25 Ibid., p. 674. Also see Ḥālī, Ḥayat-i Jāved, pp. 65-85.

26 On an "ashraf" upbringing, see David Lelyveld, Aligarh's First Generation, pp. 35-68.

27 For example, she did not visit graves; was against any kind of superstitious beliefs and did not practice niyāz (a feast given in the name of saints) or mannat (making vows to saints for the fulfillment of wishes). She took great interest in widow re-marriages. Ḥālī, Ḥayat-i Jāved, pp. 91-93.

her family was closely associated and whom they greatly respected.[28]

The relations with leading `ulamā' characterized not only the maternal side of Sir Sayyid's family. His paternal grandfather served as qāẓī-i lashkar of the province of Shāhjahānbād in Shāh `Ālam's administration.[29] His father Mīr Muttaqī was not very attached to the worldly affairs. He was the favourite disciple of the famous Naqshbandi Mujaddidi Ṣūfī Shāh Ghulām `Alī (d. 1824)[30] and spent most of the time with him at his khānaqāh It was Shāh Ghulām `Alī who had named Sir Sayyid, Aḥmad. The bismillāh ceremony[31] of Sir Sayyid was also performed by him. Sir Sayyid called him 'dādā'

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28 Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.16, pp. 682-687. See also Hālī, Ḥayat-i Jāved, pp. 91.

29 Hālī, Ḥayat-i Jāved, p. 78.

30 On Shāh Ghulām `Alī, See Ghulām `Alī, Malfūẓāt-i Sharīfa, compiled by Ghulām Muḥyīud-Dīn Qasūrī (Lahore, 1978); Ghulām `Alī, Maqāmāt-i Maẓharī, tr. by Muhammad Iqbāl Mujaddidi (Lahore, 1983); For the Naqshbandi Mujaddidi influence on Sir Sayyid, see W.Troll, A Reinterpretation, pp. 30-32. On the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya from the 18th to the early 20th century generally, see W.C.Fusfeld, "The Shaping of Sūfī Leadership in Delhi: the Naqshbandiyya Mujaddidiyya, 1750 to 1920", unpublished Ph.D dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1981, pp. 154-192.

31 "Bismillāh" literally means "in the name of God". In a ceremonious fashion the child is made to recite some verses from the Qur'ān. The ceremony takes place at the age of four or so amid feasting and celebration. In nineteenth century Muslim India, this ceremony was a feature of the sharīf culture inparticular. See David Lelyveld, Aligarh's First Generation, p. 50. Also see Ibid., pp. 145, 302, 316.

(grandfather) and was very proud of his association with him.[32]

While it is important to observe Sir Sayyid's ties with Shāh Ghulām `Alī's khānaqāh, it is also noteworthy that for all the influence that relationship had upon him, it did not deter him from adopting an independent course when he had to. Thus, after his father's death when he decided to work with the British,[33] this was clearly resented by the religious divines of the khānaqāh. As an illustration, the nazar (religious offerings) he offered to the khānaqāh as a token of his attachment after his services with the British began, was refused by all the members of the khānaqāh,[34] family ties notwithstanding.[35] This rebuff may not have come as a surprise to Sir Sayyid for he would most certainly have known where the traditional[36] circles (Naqshbandi Ṣūfī in this case, but,

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[32] Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.16., pp. 221.

[33] Ibid., p. 110.

[34] Shāh Ahmad Sa`īd (d. 1860) was the successor (sajjādā nashīn) of Ghulām `Alī at that time. See Fusfeld, "The Shaping of Ṣūfī Leadership", p. 202.

[35] Ghulām Rasūl Mihr, Ghālib, p.283.

[36] By a "traditional" outlook or "traditionalism" is meant here a way of looking at or analyzing society and religion according to patterns of thought largely unaffected by (or resistant to) ideas derived from the West. It is a state of mind and a way of life which looks for authority and justifications to what is perceived to be well-established "tradition" expressed or defended in religious terms. The idea of being "traditional" can also be expressed by the notion of "conservatism". Two caveats should be noted, however.

in general, the `ulamā' as well) stood in reference to the British, though it is possible that his feelings were hurt. (In his writings, however, he does not appear to allude to this incident or his reaction to it.) The significant point is that already before 1857, he was willing to go his way, however unfavorably it might be viewed by traditional, closely related and therefore, influential circles.

It may also be noted parenthetically that while Shāh Ghulām `Alī's khānaqāh was opposed to working for or with the British,[37] the same was not the case with the family of Shāh `Abdu'l-`Azīz, with whom as noted above, Sir Sayyid's family had close ties on the maternal side. Shāh

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First, that some `ulamā' would be less "traditional" than others, in the sense that they would recognize the need for some readjustment in the nature and extent of the adherence to be given to the "tradition", handed down by forbearers; or prevalent at the time. In this sense the 18th century thinker Walīyu'llah who called for a creative rethinking of theology and a reordering of priorities in the study of the religious sciences is to be considered as having moved away from the established traditional thinking among the `ulamā' class. The `ulamā' of Deoband in the 19th century, likewise, in espousing the need for reform in certain aspects of religious life (even though this reform consisted in going back to what was perceived as an earlier and 'purer" tradition) were less traditional (e.g., in being more selective and puritanical about the religious tradition they identified with) than the other `ulamā', for example, Ahmad Raẓā Khān of Barelī who was regarded by the Deobandis as a "bida`tī" (innovator). The second thing which needs to be noted is that even someone who comes under the impact of Western ideas and responds to them, need not be assumed to have lost or abandoned all aspects of that "traditional" outlook which he may have imbibed from the society in which he was raised. This should be a

`Abdu'l-`Azīz had allowed his son-in-law `Abdu'l-Ḥayy to work under the British, as a legal adviser (muftī), provided he did no harm to Islamic identity.[38] This divergence of views, indicative and representative of other differences between these two schools of thought with both of which Sir Sayyid was related by family ties, may therefore, have encouraged the young man to follow his own lights, rather than passively adhering to received opinions. However, this is of course not to say that the influence of both the Naqshbandī-Mujaddidī and the Walīyu'llāhī traditions on Sir Sayyid's mind and intellectual development were unimportant. Such influences can hardly be denied.[39]

The death of his father in 1839 was not only an emotional crisis but a financial one, too. The sources of financial support from the royal court were mostly cut off. Although Sir Sayyid was imparted a traditional

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necessary caveat in analyzing the thought pattern and career of a "moderniser" like Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān. (The same applies to many others influenced in various ways by the impact of Western ideas: Shiblī Nu`mānī, Sayyid Amīr `Alī and Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl etc.,).

37 See Fusfeld, "The Shaping of Ṣūfī Leadership", p. 165ff.

38 Mushirul Haqq, "Indian Muslims attitude to the British in the early nineteenth century", M.A.thesis, McGill University, 1964, pp. 28,32;Hālī, Ḥayat-i Jāved p. 109; W.W.Hunter, The Indian Muṣalmans, (Delhi, 1969), p. 134.

39 For some observations on these influences, see Troll, A Reinterpretation, pp. 30-34.

education, his attitude was very careless and casual towards it.[40] we do not see that he was in any way trained to have an intellectual career. He had nothing to fall back upon.[41] Nevertheless, instead of withdrawing into himself[42] or becoming a complaining and self- pitying personality, he chose to work. It is from here that the his divergence from the traditional values of the so called noble class started.[43] He chose to work with the British. This divergence is also indicative of the fact that he had neither the mental nor the emotional make-up of a traditional `ālim who would have kept away from the British.

It was not until 1842, after attempting to write

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40 See Ḥālī, Ḥayat-i Jāved, p. 103.

41 Particularly when he had a very carefree youth mostly spent in sports, attending musical evenings, enjoying the company of the poets and actually attempting to write poetry which seems to have been the favourite pastime of the intellectuals and of the nobles at that time Ibid., p. 104-105.

42 It is interesting to observe that Ghālib, the court poet, had also met the same fate as Sir Sayyid in the sense that his financial income came to an end after the collapse of Mughal power; Ghulām Rasūl Mihr Ghālib, p. 201. He was an eye-witness of the events of 1857, too. But, as expressed in his letters to the Navvāb of Rampur, and in marked contrast to the thinking and stand of Sir Sayyid, one notes the extent of hopelessness and self-pity in tone and his requests for monetary grants which almost amounted to beggary. The Muslim elite in general had come to this stage of humiliation. See Imtiyāz `Alī `Arshī, Makātīb-i Ghālib, (Bombay, 1937), p. 23ff.

43 The tradition of depending upon royal financial support was criticized long ago by Shāh Walīyu'llah. See

Āsāruṣ-Ṣanādīd that he seriously thought in terms of educating himself in the religious sciences.[44] This is then the period when he delved into the past and returned disappointed after reflecting among other things over the attitudes of the past rulers towards the educational system.[45] It appears that during and after the completion of this book, which later won him the honorary membership of the Asiatic Society, Sir Sayyid came a long way in experiencing that transition in which a greater and superfluous part of the immediate history was to be left behind.[46]

It is interesting to note that the beginning of the expression of his interest in history coincides with his

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Sayyid ʿAbid Husain, Hindustānī Musalmān Aʾina-i Ayyām Men, (Delhi, 1964), p. 49, quoting from Shāh Walīyuʾllahʾs, Ḥujjatuʾllah al-Bāligha.

44 His teachers were Shāh Makhsūsuʾllah and Shāh Muhammad Ishāq who were the grandson of Shāh Walīyuʾllah and successor of Shāh ʿAbduʾl-ʿAzīz respectively. For Shāh Makhsūsuʾllah and Shāh Muhammad Ishāq, see Mahmūd Ahmad Barakati, Shāh Walīyuʾllah aur unkā Khāndān, (Lahore, n.d.), pp. 167-168, 178-181. He was also taught by Maulānā Mamlūk ʿAlī who was also Maulānā Qāsim Nānautavīʾs teacher in Delhi College. See S. M. Ikrāmʾs Mauj-i Kausar, (Lahore, n.d.), p. 65. Also, Abū Yāhyā Imām Khān Naushāhravī, Tarājim-i ʿUlamāʾ-i Hadīs-i Hind, (Delhi, 1937), pp. 113-120. On Delhi College see Andrews, Zakaullah of Delhi, (Cambridge, 1929). Also Abduʾl-Haqq, Marhūm Delhī Kālij, (Aurangabad, 1933).

45 For example, he observes that so many mosques, travellers houses, wells, and other buildings could be traced in the time of the Mughals but hardly any madrasas, because education was not given much priority. The students lived in mosques and lived on charity. This tradition persisted even into the 18th

consciously felt need to reeducate himself in religious studies. His constant interaction with the British which can safely be termed as constructive in terms of his intellectual development[47] also ran parallel to his renewed interest in his religion and his past. Given this background a pattern emerges in all his writings of an individual who had begun to take shape in a particular direction.

His writings before 1857 can be broadly classified into historical and religious writings. Among Sir Sayyid's historical writings are: Jām-i Jam (1840); a brief record of 43 kings that reigned in India beginning from Amīr Taimūr upto the last Mughal ruler Sirājud-Dīn Bahādur Shāh

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century: "In the mosques of Fatehpurī and Panjābī Kaṭrā and Kāshmīrī Kaṭrā and the madrasa of Shāh `Abdu'l-`Azīz and the khānqāh of Shāh Ghulām `Alī, many students were available to eat the feast of the dead and recite fātihā, and durūd (the Qur'ānic verses recited over the food prepared for the dead)". Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.5, pp. 62-66.

46 His intellectual pursuits undertaken during this part of his life give us enough insight to conclude safely that Sir Sayyid had an intense desire to embrace with open arms all that was an expression of inner beauty and strength but at the same time, he was also investigating the causes of the ruin of this strength. The painstaking task of undertaking the writing of Āsārus-Sanādīd and editing of A'īn-i Akbarī must have been borne by a desire to go back into history in order to explore and learn, not glorify. His activities in the succeeding years are a witness that his experiences acquired at this stage went a long way to broaden his perspective. He was able to chalk out a sound plan of education and culture to save the future of the Muslims. Baljon's understanding of Sir Sayyid's state of mind at that stage of Sir Sayyid's life, seems to be out of place. According to him, these two books show

(d. 1858); Asārus-Ṣanādīd (1847) is a detailed description of the old buildings of Delhi built by Hindu and Muslim rulers of India; a critical edition of A'īn-i Akbarī (1848); Silsila-i Mulūk (1852), is a brief list of those Hindu and Muslim rulers who ruled Delhi over a period of 5,000 years beginning with Raja Yudhistar and stretches upto Queen Victoria.[48] Though they were usually written in according to the traditional historiography, some, most notably Asārus-Ṣanādīd are remarkable for the genuine historical interests and curiosity of the author. They are also remarkable in that historical interests among traditionally educated Muslims of the time were very rare at best, and serve, therefore, to indicate Sir Sayyid's distance from that tradition.

His religious writings of the period include Jilāu'l-Qulūb bi Zikri'l-Maḥbūb which (1838) deals with the Prophet Muḥammad's birth, death, and miracles; Tuḥfa-i

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that Sir Sayyid was escaping reality by having recourse to dreams of the golden age when Islamic civilization flourished in India. See Baljon The Reforms and Religious Ideas of Sayyid Ahmad Khan, p. 5. On the contrary, at this stage, he appears to have developed the quality of looking at history objectively. His critical approach to the history of Indian Muslims, e.g., his criticism of the `ulamā' themselves, throws enough light on his objective outlook. Also see on p. 21, footnote, 45.

47 Graham, Life of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, passim.

48 Actually it is the same portion which was added to Asārus-Ṣanādīd when its second edition was brought out. Later on it was separately published and called Silsila-i Mulūk.

Ḥasan (1845) is a translation of the tenth chapter of Tuḥfa-i Iṣnā `Ashriyyā by `Abdu'l-`Azīz. It focuses on the Shi`i indictments against the first three Caliphs and `A'isha. It also deals with tabarra (the Shī`i practice of publicly cursing three Caliphs). Though this work reflects his involvement with the prevalent sectarian conflicts, but, the fact that this was the first and the last attempt on his part to say anything about them tells much about his changing understanding of religion. Kalimātu'l-Ḥaqq (1845) was written against the established norms of pīrī, murīdī and ba`it; Rāh-i Sunnat dar Radd-i Bida`t is characterized by his strong inclination towards "Wahhabism; Namīqa dar Bayān-ı Mas'ala-i Taṣavvur-i Shaikh reflects Sir Sayyid's deep sense of love for God and for the Prophet. These works reflect the Walīyu'llāhī school of thought. These are the prevalent trends, not peculiar to Sir Sayyid, but these works do indicate that he was responsive to these trends of this time. Through these writings a pattern can be traced which begins from his participation in traditional religious learning at home, followed by a conscious need and a conscious effort to study them at a later stage. Accompanied by a parallel growth of interest in history, his religious insights grew deeper. Growing out of the atmosphere of sectarian controversies and involving himself with the practice of what he considered true Islam, Sir Sayyid was greatly inclined towards Ṣūfīsm The events of 1857 caught him at a

very vulnerable stage of his religious growth. He came out of them as a reformer.[49] Other than these, the publication of Intikhābu'l-Akhvayīn could be considered a fairly important element throwing light on his genuine wish to pave the way for others.[50] Of course, at this stage he was not thinking of the community as such. He was busy rehabilitating himself.

However, in his writings before 1857, there are at least two things which can be regarded as noteworthy in so far as they mitigate the rather traditional character of his outlook. One was his sympathy for the zealous puritanism akin to what the British derided as 'Wahhabism' which while making for some uncompromising rigidity and in stance could scarcely be considered something traditional.[51] On the other hand is the consideration that his traditional early training not withstanding, he displayed in his works a greater variety of interests and

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49 On Sir Sayyid's earlier writings see Hālī, Hayat-i Jāved, pp. 881-883; Troll, A Reinterpretation, pp. 36-57; Hafeez Malik, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan pp. 73-76.

50 Published in 1940, it was a guide to the competitive examinations, freshly introduced by the government for the post of munsif. During his preparations for this examination which he passed successfully, he compiled his notes and published them for the benefit of those who aspired to be judges in courts. He was later on thanked for this service in a gathering of Anjuman-i Islāmia given in his honour in 1884 at Lahore. See Hālī, Hayat-i Jāved, p. 111.

51 On his "Wahhābī" sympathies see, S.M. Ikrām, Mauj-i Kausar, p. 690; also cf.W.C.Smith, Modern Islam in India, p. 7; Troll, A Reinterpretation, p. 46.

a breadth of scope which were clearly unusual among the traditionally inclined scholars of the time. But this latter of course was because he was a "Renaissance man" and not an *ʿālim* in the professional sense at all. Therefore, it is not unusual or surprising to see a wide range of his interests. The interest in history--exhibited in painstakingly prepared editions of some historical works and, of course, in that *tour de force* of historical interest and curiosity, viz, his *Āsārus-Ṣanādīd* --is an instance of this. Moreover, as Troll has noted:

> Though his religious writings fall within the traditional framework, it must be noted that he strove more to explore the social significance of religion[52]

This fact indicates that although 1857 was a decisive event and a turning point in his career, yet it can be safely stated that some of his earlier inclinations may already have been preparing him to accept the challenge which the watershed of 1857 was to offer to him.

Apart from the two considerations noted above his decision to work for the British signified another step, as already suggested, in moving away from the traditional outlook. In sum, then, the fact that Sir Sayyid did not suffer from many of the limitations of a strictly traditional outlook or world-view may be attributed not only to his upbringing and his own abilities, but also, surely to the fact that he was not after all, a member of

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[52] Troll, *A Reinterpretation*, p. 46.

the class of `ulamā' of the time. He did not belong to a family of the `ulamā', nor as noted, did he receive formal education in a traditional madrasa. This background gave him sufficient freedom to cultivate wider intellectual interests and subsequently to be catalyzed by the impact of Western ideas; and it also gave him sufficient detachment from the `ulamā' to be able to subject them to severe criticism. And yet, with all his responsiveness to the impact of European ideas, he never ceased being rather "traditional" in certain aspects of his life, outlook and thought, as Christian Troll has clearly shown.

It is not our purpose here to review Sir Sayyid's intellectual concerns or literary output after 1857. It is sufficient to say that these writings were thoroughly imbued with the reformist outlook, with stress on the need to establish a rapport with the British and with a criticism of the traditional circles represented by the `ulamā'. It was, inter alia on these writings that the `ulamā' 's criticism of Sir Sayyid was based.

Part 2

The `Ulamā' in Indo-Islamic Society: an Overview

By virtue of their being close to or being engaged in the studies of Qur'ān and hadīs, respect for whom is very fundamental to the faith of a Muslim, the `ulamā' at once command respect. The `ulamā' are there essentially to be consulted. With very clearly defined self-image of themselves as the guardians of their religion, they have over the years evolved into a body of people with set ideas and fixed attitudes.[53] They come from all walks of life and have been seen as

> semi-literate village imams and erudite qādīzs, as rabble rousers and privy councillors to kings, as spiritual directors and cynical politicians.... some are scions of wealthy and influential families, others are impoverished immigrants from remote villages. Some are land owners, some are salaried professors or bureaucrats, some are merchants or

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53 "They were certainly not a hierarchy or an order; if they were a professional body, they were without, so to speak, a registration council or a court of discipline. They were a class by their education,...They did not possess equal qualifications or individual parity of esteem. Not much more than pretension united the product of one of the great teaching centres, say the Farangi Mahal in Lucknow,and the village mullā who, though he could recite the Qur'ān in Arabic, could hardly understand what he was reciting...As long as a man followed a traditional syllabus of study (here the eighteenth century Dars-i-Nizāmi taught under the aegis of the Farangi Mahal had great but not exclusive prestige) and accepted the ijma of his learned predecessors, he would be accepted as an `alim." Peter Hardy, "The `ulamā' in British India", unpublished seminar paper, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1969, p. 8, quoted by Francis Robinson, Separatism among Indian Muslims p. 263. For more references on Indian `ulamā', see Ahmed `Alī, Twilight in Delhi, 2nd ed (Oxford, 1966), p. 92.

humble artisans.[54]

In short, they pervade society as a whole. They are lent credibility in varying degrees. In the conscience of a Muslim , respect for them is almost a religious duty. They are rarely opposed, least of all verbally.[55]

In India their deep-rooted importance in the social life of Muslims can be understood perhaps in inter alia, two ways. First of all imparting of religious education is associated with the `ulamā' alone. Ṣūfīs may be largely credited with the spread of the faith.[56] But the introduction and the dissemination of the religious sciences in India was the work of the `ulamā'.[57] Beginning from the most elementary level of Islamic education to the highest level, the `ulamā' were responsible for teaching the religious sciences. Being familiar with the Arabic language which was the language of the Qur'ān, they came to be considered as those who knew everything concerning religion. The fact that they acquired Arabic becomes

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54 R. Stephen Humphreys, "A Cultural Elite: The Role and Status of `Ulamā' in Islamic Society" in Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry, (Princeton, 1991), p. 187.

55 Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.5, p. 90-91.

56 Aziz Ahmad, An Intellectual History of Islam in India, (Edinburgh, 1969), p. 44.

57 Most eminent of them was Shaikh Ismā`īl Bukhārī (d. 1058), who laid the foundation of classical hadīs in the sub-continent. Rahmān `Alī, Tazkira-i `Ulamā'-i Hind, (Lucknow, 1914), p. 23; S.M. Ikrām, Āb-i Kausar, (Lahore, 1958), p. 81-85.

important in the Indian context because India was a land of converts,[58] and the convert Muslims did not know Arabic.[59] Moreover, most of them had a Hindu background and were used to a system of priesthood which played the role of intermediary between man and God. They could not be so easily driven to believe in an unseen god. They lacked direct access to the scripture.[60] Hence the people who acquainted them with scripture became the centre of their total veneration and surrender. The fatāvā of this class of people became somewhat as authoritative as the sayings of the Qur'ān itself.[61]

Secondly there is a political factor. Starting from the Ghaznavid state which laid the foundation of Muslim rule

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[58] M.Mujeeb, The Indian Muslims, (Montreal, 1967), p. 21.

[59] But this general impression that all `ulamā' knew Arabic and imparted this Qur'ānic language to the Muslims remains doubtful. A survey conducted as early as 1809-10, in the select districts of Bengal and Bihar shows that though the Qur'ān was read on many occasions, not more than five men out of 1,245,000 Muslims could understand the words. Francis Buchanan, An Account of the District of Purnea in 1809-10, ed. V.H.Jackson, (Patna, Bihar and Orissa Research Society, 1928), p.188. In another study, he reported that many of the "mullah" who recited the Qur'ān at various Muslim ceremonies could not even read but merely looked at the book while repeating a passage from the memory. Francis Buchanan, A Geographical, Statistical and Historical Discription of the District, or Zila of Dinajpur, (Calcutta, 1833), p. 92. Thirty years later in an another research undertaken to study the educational system in the same districts, it was found out that Arabic was no more taught in madrasas. Arabic was taught in some schools only for the formal reading of the Qur'ān. The teachers did not know Arabic and made no pretence of it. William Adam, Reports on the State of Education in Bengal(1835-1838)Including Some

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in India (977-1186),[62] till the end of the Mughal Empire we see the rulers and the `ulamā' involved with each other in what often was a game of power. This relationship, which rested on compromises, appears to have been vital to the existence of both parties. The rulers being Muslims and running a Muslim state, needed a religious justification for their actions. The moral authority lay with the `ulamā'. and they in their turn needed a Muslim state to survive.[63] The `ulamā' performed various administrative functions in the Muslim state, serving as qāẓīs (judges), vazīr (ministers), mustaufi-i mamāliks (auditor generals), mushrifs (accountant generals), safīrs (emissaries), etc,. In addition, the `ulamā' served as public vā`iẓ (preachers), imāms (leaders of congregational

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Accounts of the State of Education in Bihar and a Consideration of the Means Adopted to the improvement and Extention of Public Instruction in Both Provinces, ed. Anath Nath Basu (Calcutta, 1941), p. 291. Even with this limited knowledge of Islam based on orally transmitted instructions, these 'mullas' were able to exercise a great amount of influence and were religious leaders in countryside. Ibid. Coming to the 19th century and investigating the role of Deoband in preserving the Arabic language, it is observed that the students who graduate from this seminary do not necessarily excel in Arabic. It would be difficult to find graduates who are able to speak the language or translate into Urdu. See the observations of Muhammad Ismā`īl Pānīpatī in Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.7, p. 288.

60 It is particularly ironical in the case of the Indian Muslims since they had a similar experience with the Hindu religion in which the religious texts were in Sanskrit and the Brahmans, the priestly class had the exclusive right to study this language. Indian Muslims of foreign descent formed an elite group called the ashrāf, which distinguished itself from the Muslims of Indian origin. `ulamā' for the most part form a part

course, in the case of those `ulamā' who served in the administration, or who were affiliated with the court. But this is also true of those whose relationship with the state was less evident. It is noteworthy for instance, that the madrasas and mosque establishments where the `ulamā' functioned were usually supported and endowed by the ruler, or other notables. Furthermore, even when the `ulamā' may not have depended on state patronage for their livelihood, they depended on Muslim state for creating those conditions of stability wherein they, as `ulamā', i.e, as representatives of religion could undertake their various religious activities. This consideration has been repeatedly affirmed in medieval Muslim political thought, with the implication that even if the ruler is not a good Muslim, he should at least not be hostile to religion, and should at least preserve or ensure those conditions in which the religion of Islam can be promoted by the `ulamā'.[66] It can be stated, on the basis of the above considerations, therefore, that the whole of the `ulamā' establishment was supported by or found support in the existence of the Muslim state. It follows that when this state ceased to exist,and when Muslim society became subject to alien rule, the position of the `ulamā' should have undergone a change. The 18th century was a crisis for Indian Muslim society. In the wake of political

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[66] See A. K. S. Lambton, State and Government in Medieval Islam, (Oxford, 1981), passim, especially Chapters 7 and 9; M. Mujeeb, The Indian Muslims, pp. 56-80.

disintegration, the social and economic fabric which the state has supported threatened to collapse. It was also a time when the community was exposed to external (i.e., Hindu and Sikhs) threats to its integrity. Accompanying, and perhaps underlying all this was a general state of demoralization and a loss of moral stamina. It was to this overall challenge that Shāh Walīyu'llah, undoubtedly the most eminent religious thinker, and reformer of the age sought to respond.

Shāh Walīyu'llah's analysis of the situation, his diagnosis and prescription was perceptive and comprehensive. Without entering into detailed discussion here,[67] it is necessary to remark briefly on some aspects of Walīyu'llah's reformist vision. One of his major concern was to reinvigorate the religious life of the Muslim community. This he sought to do by striving to make acquaintance with the meaning of the Qur'ān widespread; by laying greater stress on the study of ḥadīs than that on

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67 Walīyu'llah is the author of a large number of works; his magnum opus is Ḥujjatu'llah al-Bāligha, tr.Abū Muhammad Abdu'l-Haqq, 2 vol.(Karachi, 1885?): also on Walīyu'llāhī thought, see, most recent work, J.M.S. Baljon, Religion and Thought of Shah Wali Allah, (Leiden, 1986). Other studies of his ideas and activities include: Aziz Ahmad, Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment, (London 1964), pp. 201-217; S.A.A.Rizvi, Wali-Allah and His Times, (Canberra, 1980); I.H. Qureshi, The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent, 610-1947; a brief historical analysis, (Columbia University, 1962); idem., Ulama in Politics, (Karachi, 1972), pp. 99-126; Shāh Walīyu'llah, Shah Walīyu'llah Dehlavi ke Siyasi Maktubat, Urdu tr. and ed. K.A. Niẓami, (Delhi, Nadvatu'l-Muṣannīfīn, 1969).

law; by his efforts to minimize sectarian conflicts;[68] and by his renewed emphasis on the use of ijtihād as a factor conducing to moral and intellectual dynamism in religious matters. In addition, and no less important, Walīyu'llah apparently intended to help redefine the position and role of the `ulamā' in society, in response to the changing circumstances of the time. The change in circumstances consisted, inter alia, in the fact that the religious scholars could no longer to be supported by, or depend on the state, which was itself in the process of disintegration. But what the situation demanded was that not only would the `ulamā' have to be independent and self-sufficient, they would also have to play an additional and rather a different kind of role in society, thrust upon them by the disintegration of the state. This role would consist in providing social and political leadership in a milieu where formal structure of political authority were becoming ineffective. Shāh Walīyu'llah's own career indicates to some extent his willingness to take the initiative in responding to some of political challenges of the time.

It is the Tarīqa-i Muḥammadīyya movement, organized by

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68 Sajida S. Alvi, in her unpublished paper, " Eighteenth-Century Sunnī `Ulamā 's and Sūfī's Views on Shi`ism in Northern India", (presented at MESA 1991), discusses Shāh Walīyu'llah's stand in sectarian conflicts that had begun to surface in 18th century in India creating insecurity among the Sunni `ulamā'. I am thankful to her for allowing me to use this paper for my research.

some of his spiritual successors, which exemplify more clearly the readiness of some sections of the religious elite to undertake a kind of religious reformism which had clear social and religious overtones. The Tarīqa-i Muḥammadīyya, besides advocating thoroughgoing reform in Muslim religious life, also attempted unsuccessfully as it turned out, to create an Islamic state on the North-Western frontier of India. Though principal leaders were killed in an encounter with the Sikhs in 1831, the movement continued to exercise some influence for several decades in various parts of India, including Bihar, Eastern Bengal and the North-Western provinces, besides, of course, the North-Western frontier where armed resistance also continued through the 19th century.[69]

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69 On the Tarīqa-i Muḥammadīyya, see H.O. Pearson, "Islamic Reform and Revival in Nineteenth Century India: The Tariqah-i Muhammadīyya", unpublished Ph.D dissertation, (Duke University, 1979); Qayamuddin Ahmad, The Wahhabi Movement in India, (Calcutta, 1966); Aziz Ahmad, Studies in Islamic Culture, pp. 209-217;S.A.A.Rizvi, Shāh Abdu'l-`Azīz: puritanism, sectarian polemics and jihād, (Canberra, 1982), pp. 421-541.

Other important studies include Ghulām Rasūl Mihr's Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd, (Lahore, 1952). Also his Jamā`t-i Mujāhidīn, (Lahore, 1955); W.W.Hunter, Our Indian Musalmans, pp. 4-35; Muhammad Husain, "Sayyid Husain Shahid" A History of the Freedom Movement, vol.1(Karachi, 1957), pp. 556-600; Abdu'l-Hasan `Alī Nadvī, Sīrat-i Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd, (Lacknow, 1938). One of those influenced by the ideology of this movement was Sir Sayyid, reference to whose somewhat "Wahhābī" inclination in the pre-1857 period of his life has been made. One of his religious writings Rah-i sunnat dar radd-i bida`t does very strongly defend Sayyid Ahmad Barelavi's stand as a religious reformer. See Hafeez Malik, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, p. 75.

Another 19th century movement of major importance, politically far less radical than the Tarīqa-i Muḥammadīyya, but under the influence of Shāh Walīyu'llah, is represented by the `ulamā' who founded the Dāru'l-`Ulūm at Deoband (1867). Apart from doctrinal affinities with the Walīyu'llāhī school of thought (and its reformist outlook), Deoband can be seen as continuing, in a very important respect, the programme envisaged by Shāh Walīyu'llah In a situation wherein the Muslim state had ceased to exist, the Deoband seminary represents an effort not only to try to reestablish the the position and reinvigorate the role of the `ulamā' in society (now especially threatened in the wake of the consolidation of British rule) but also to forge strong ties with the Muslim community. As an expression of the latter concern, it was as a matter of the conscious policy that the madrasas were run through communal support rather than on the basis of waqf endowments or princely patronage. In as much as it based itself on the community's financial support, something uncharacteristic of earlier madrasas; and in as much as it adopted certain administrative structures found in government colleges rather than in typical madrasas, Deoband, while continuing the Walīyu'llāhī tradition, is the madrasa of the new rather the old.[70] Another noteworthy thing about Deoband is its

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[70] On Deoband see, Faruqi, The Deoband School and Demand for Pakistan, (New York, 1963); Barbara Metcalf, Islamic Revival; K.W.Kenneth Jones, Socio-Religious

religio-moral reformism in the Walīyu'llāhī tradition. The `ulamā' associated with it or trained by it were always conscious of the need to advocate and practice a pure and reformed Islam, which is something that has always distinguished them from other men of religion in India who have been willing to accommodate attitude and practices of popular Islam.[71]

Thus, inspite of having certain reformistic tones and a modern touch the Deoband seminary, in the long run, produced students who

> have always saught the easier and surer method of livelihood; that is, that they have spread in villages and towns and in the name of the spiritual guidance of the common man have lived on his blood and sweat.[72]

Reform Movements In British India, (Cambridge, 1989),pp. 57ff; Syed Masroor Ali Akhtar Hashmi, Muslim Response to Western Education, pp. 35-72. A History of the Freedom Movement, vol.2, part 2, pp. 415-24. Also, Wilfred Cantwell Smith,"The `ulamā' in Indian Politics", Politics and Society in India, ed., C. H. Philips, (London, 1963), pp. 39-51. For more traditional account, see Manāẓir Aḥsan Gīlāni, Savaniḥ Qāsimī, vol.2(Deoband, 1955).

71 The Deoband Seminary, following the reform movement of the Mujahidins, aimed at doing away with certain social practices which were adopted by the Indian Muslims from other cultures of India. Over the years these practices got religious sanction and involved lots of expenditure. The poor got crushed under this expensive religious burden. These customs were, for example, fātiḥā (a ceremony to be held on funerals), tīja (a feast on the third day of the funeral), chehlum (a feast on the fortieth day of the funeral), niyāz (a feast given in the name of saints etc.,),and mīlād (a celebration of the Prophet's birthday). Likewise mahr (bride gift), and khatna (circumcision) had become a matter of prestige and virtue. For details, see chapter on Bida`t in fatāvā-i Rashīdiya, (Karachi,

In short, it remained essentially a traditional institution of learning with hardly any modification or adaptation in its syllabi. Rashīd Aḥmad Gangōhī's removing philosophy from the syllabus, after Qāsim Nānautavī's death, may be taken as one of the several indications of this.[73] Further, English was never and is still not taught at Deoband. Because it was basically a call to practice pure Islam to preserve traditional religious sciences perceived as being threatened by the subjugation of Muslim society; the movement did not really attempt an adaptation or accommodation to changing circumstances or even give any indication of the realization that the circumstances had changed to a degree as to call forth intellectual and social activity in a new direction (something which contrasts with Shāh

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n.d.), pp. 101-150. This Chapter includes among other things, the visiting of the tombs of saints, the celebrations of Prophet's birth, the feast on the completion of Qur'ān etc., as bida`t. The point to note is that all these ceremonies involved some degree of exploitation of popular religiosity on the part of the religious personages.

72 Faruqi, The Deoband School, p. 40.

73 Faruqi, The Deoband School, p. 31. Sir Sayyid, on the other hand, wanted to popularize the study of philosophy. He felt that there is a group among people which needs no arguments about the existence of God but there is also, another group who have doubts about Islam. They want to clear their doubts by philosophical arguments. Hence the study of philosophy, in his opinion, becomes necessary. This argument of Sir Sayyid indicates his apprehension about the new Muslim generations rejecting Islam altogether due to the lack of the study of rational sciences. See Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.3, p. 275; Hālī, Hayat-i Jāved, p. 273.

Walīyu'llah's sensitivity to the changing time and conditions).

Thus, the `ulamā' associated with Deoband, as well as others, opposed initiatives towards change in the wake of the penetration of new and modern ideas from the West. It was essentially on this issue that they clashed with individuals with modernizing orientations--most notably Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān.

CHAPTER TWO

Sayyid Ahmad Khān's Criticism on the Indian `Ulamā'

As discussed earlier, the India Muslim society, at the turn of 1857, faced disintegration, disorientation and demoralization of a severe order. The decline of the Muslims was all-pervasive and encompassed social, political, economic and religious spheres of individual and collective life.[74] This decline was most evident in the economic sphere, so much so that in the words of Sir William Hunter, writing in 1871,

> there is now scarcely a government office in Calcutta in which a Muhammad can hope for any post above the rank of a porter, messenger, filler of inkpots and menders of pens.[75]

The `ulamā' 's retreat into the walls of Deoband and other madrasas was a balm to the wounded phyche of the Muslims.[76] No doubt it served the cause of the religious

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[74] W.W.Hunter, Indian Musalmans, p. 138-206; Also see Peter Hardy, The Muslims of India, Chapter 3, "1857 and its aftermath", pp. 61-91.

[75] Hunter, Indian Musalman, p. 162; Faruqi, The Deoband school, P. 10ff.

[76] It is claimed that one of the main purposes of the establishment of Deoband was to make up for the failure of 1857. See Manāẓir Ahsan Gīlānī, Savānih Qasimi, p. 228. Most of the sources on Deoband maintain that the `ulamā' who had decided to establish this seminary had participated in the historical events of 1857 as part of the jihād movement against the British. Maulānā Qāsim Nānautavī is believed to have organized the jihād movement at Shamli and Thanabhavan under the guidance of Mamlūk `Alī. More recent research, however, has doubts thrown at the `ulamā' 's having participated to

sciences and proved to be an emotional anchor to the Muslims, but it could hardly offer an effective solution to the problems of the poverty of Muslims which had come about due to the loss of political power and other factors. Trying to preserve the religious and traditional heritage was one way of responding to the crisis of the Muslim community in the aftermath of 1857. Critics like Sir Sayyid felt, however, that such a responseturning inwards, shunning all external influences or adaptations to them, and trying to preserve a moribund tradition-would not only be ineffective in remedying the Muslim situation but would, in fact, be detrimental to Muslim interests. It was in this context that the most severe criticism was to issue forth from Sir Sayyid, the "Islamic rationalist".[77]

Criticism of the `ulamā' is not a novelty in the history of Indian Islam. The `ulamā' had been criticized before. Each criticism was a product of its own time and so was Sir Sayyid's. This was the first time, however, that someone from outside the ranks of the `ulamā' was

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any significant extent in the events of 1857. See Mushīru'l-Haqq, Religion and Politics in Muslim India (1857-1947), p. 3ff. That Deoband was, in many ways, a response to the debacle of 1857 and that its foundation had, in this sense, political dimension, need not be doubted, however.

77 This is how Sheila MacDonough, Muslim Ethics and Modernity: A Comparative Study of the Ethical Thoughts of Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Maulana Maududi, (vol.1, in Comparative Ethics series), (Waterloo, Ontario, 1984), p. 2, refers to him.

criticizing them with such severity and rigor and at such length.

Sir Sayyid spent seventeen months in England, along with his son Sayyid Maḥmūd in 1869-1870. This stay gave him a clear vision and a sense of direction for his future action with regard to Indian Muslims.[78] Having had a greater exposure to a highly cultivated system of education and culture, and after grasping its details with his keen sense of observation and receptivity for new ideas and a deep appreciation for all those who were involved in creativity of this kind, Sir Sayyid began his reformist work with his journal Tahzību'l-Akhlāq serving as a medium to express his thoughts and those of his colleagues. This journal became an instrument for the spread of new ideas, for a critique of the ills afflicting Muslim individual and collective life (hence its name),[79] and for Sir Sayyid's criticism of the `ulamā' from different angles.[80] In studying Sir Sayyid's criticism of

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78 David Lelyveld, First Generation, p. 104ff.

79 Sheila McDonough, Muslim Ethics, p. 28.

80 Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.10, pp. 34-39, 74; Hālī, Hayat-i Jāved, p. 217ff. The most important thing about this journal is its strikingly simple and straight-forward style of explaining a point. The most complicated ideas would be explained in a clear and lucid manner, devoid of all ambiguity and free of the artificiality and stylistic embellishments usually characterizing Urdu writing of those days. The conscious adoption and promotion of a simple, straightforward style of writing was an expression of Sir Sayyid's effort to bring home his message to the widest possible audience. His preference for such a

the `ulamā',[81] it needs to be noted that his attack was not directed at any particular group within the `ulamā', but at the `ulamā' as a class. The interests and outlook of the men generally regarded in society as `ulamā' were very similar, not withstanding the wide divergences in religious knowledge or social status among them. This, in other words, means that it is possible to speak of them as a class,[82] It seems quite clear that Sir Sayyid's criticism is also based on the same understanding.

One of Sir Sayyid's principal criticisms of the `ulamā' was that their attention was almost exclusively devoted to issues which were of no relevance to the needs of contemporary society. This criticism found several

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style is also indicative of his sense that language should adapt to change with changing times in order to express current concerns effectively. These concerns included expressing new ideas coming from the West, and these (e.g., regarding scientific matters) could not easily be expressed in the traditional ornate and artificial style of writing. (Note that in the Arab world too, the impact of the West from the 19th century onwards brought forth new trends and developments, e.g., towards a simpler diction, in the Arabic language. Cf. Albert Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1991), pp. 305-06. It is worth remarking that Sir Sayyid's consciously cultivated simple style was in marked contrast to the high-flown style in which the `ulamā' usually wrote, a style that could not have been intelligible to many people. (It may be pointed out here that this change in the Urdu language which Sir sayyid through constant efforts was able to bring about has not been retained in the character of Tahzību'l-Akhlāq whose publication has been resumed in `Alīgarh Muslim University for a few years. It is very ironical that even today, the only articles that everyone can comprehend are those written by Sir Sayyid and which are included in order to introduce this reformer to the new generation of

expressions in Sir Sayyid's writings.[83] He argued, for instance, that rather than concerning themselves with issues of social importance and relevance whereby to reform society the `ulamā' were interested only in reaffirming traditional piety by repeating formulae which were not new for anyone and, therefore, hardly contributed anything:

> God has made Islam pure wisdom (hikmat). It is necessary, therefore, that those people who are its well-wishers, also should be wise and knowledgeable, and not cunning and deceitful. And the task of the wise is that he cures the disease that he diagnoses. At this hour, the state of affairs of the Indian Muslim is that on account of the deterioration and destruction of the economic, social, and cultural affairs, and intellectual decline, they are being increasingly humiliated, despised, destroyed, and the vā`iz, the maulavī, and the pīr, the enemies of God and His Messenger, are constantly destroying them. Thus, in such a state of affairs, we fully believe

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Muslims. The writer of these lines translated the Urdu articles of this journal into Hindi for the Hindi version of it for a year. The real purpose of the journal i.e., to communicate effectively has been lost somewhere. Leave aside the illiterate, even the educated people cannot understand the high-flown language of most articles.

81 Sir Sayyid's several articles published in Tahzību'l-Akhlāq which may not be associated with the direct criticism of them are still directed towards them. For example the articles like Bahs o Takrār, Tā`ssub, Riyā, Mukhālifat, Khushāmad, Kāhilī and Hamāre Khat o Kitābat men Islāh kī Zarūrat. See Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.5, pp. 291-353.

82 To take a broader perspective, that of a student of Islamic history, it may be noted that the question whether the `ulamā' have been a "class"in society or not has received some interesting discussion. Ira M. Lapidus, Muslims Cities in the later Middle Ages, (Cambridge, MA, 1967), thinks the `ulamā' (in Mamluk times) did not form a social class, while Carl I. Petry, The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages, (Princeton, 1981) thinks that they did. For a

> that they, i.e., the Muslims, are firm in their religion, they believe in one God, consider the messenger to be truthful, consider prayers and fasting, pilgrimage, and zakāt to be obligatory; even a weaver knows the basics of essential prayer and fasting, or has the means of knowing them. Is this then the duty of the well-wishers of Islam that like the self claimed pīr or hazrat or maulavī, he should just sit and preach those things which are not needed and earn the world by cunning and deceit, or work towards those solutions which are actually needed by Muslims and Islam itself.[84]

As a related expression of the idea that the scholars were out of touch with reality, Sir Sayyid emphasized that the `ulamā' had entangled themselves in theological controversies which not only did not have any relevance to society but were also irrelevant to religion itself.[85] For instance, he ridiculed the `ulamā' for attaching so much importance to such a trivial question as that of how much

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discussion of these and other questions, also see R. S. Humphreys, Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry, (Princeton, 1991), Chapter 8. Unfortunately, studies such as the one, mentioned above do not yet exist for India.

83 For example, see Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.5, pp. 167-173, 209-212, 139-143, 162-166; vol.8, pp. 25-28.

84 Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.5, p.85.

85 Indeed they were worse: these controversies tended not only to be detrimental to the interests of religion but also divided the community against itself. Parenthetically, it may be noted here that like most of his other criticisms, this particular one was no mere rhetorical devise to score a point against the `ulamā', but rather pointed to a genuine and serious problem. In the 18th century, Shāh Walīyu'llah was conscious of the dangers, for Islam and the Muslim community, of this infighting among the `ulamā' and he had made efforts to heal it. This problem had continued in the 19th century. And many `ulamā', who were Sir Sayyid's contemporaries, were conscious that these bickerings, besides contributing to Muslim decline, had also been

above the feet should the trousers be worn:

> These scholars have made people wonder what kind of religion this is, which promises heaven if you wear trousers two inches above your ankle and sends you to hell if you wear it two inches below your ankle.[86]

Sir Sayyid argued that the priorities which the `ulamā' had set for themselves were entirely mistaken, which indeed, was symptomatic of the fact that they were completely out of tune with what Muslim society needed. For instance, he deplored that the `ulamā', keeping up with the old traditions, tended to be much more interested in constructing elaborately structured mosques than in addressing themselves to the basic social problems afflicting Muslim society.[87] Commenting bitterly on the newly constructed mosque and madrasa of Deoband, he says sarcastically,

> and do not ask anything about the madrasa of Deoband. The pride of the `ulamā', the honour of the perfect, the great leader of the age, the eminent scholar of the time, and the masters of the age, are teachers and administrators here...[88] if you reflect, all this is sheer deceit. Without getting into the argument whether these works are beneficial to the community

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responsible for a decline in their own position and role in society. This was one of the points emphasized at the convention of the `ulamā' in 1894 which resulted in the establishment of the Nadvatu'l-`ulamā'. See Maqālāt-i Shiblī, Comp. Mas`ūd `Alī Nadvī(Azamgarh, 1938); Aziz Ahmad, Islamic Modernism, p. 110.

86 Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.5, p. 5.

87 Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.5, pp. 62-66. Also Maqālāt, vol.8, pp. 42-50.

88 This is a sarcastic reference to the typical honorifics of the leading `ulamā', expressing their exaggerated self-image.

> and whether the community needs them or rather needs other things than these, when we look into the hearts of those who have done these works, or are doing them, we will know that they are doing all this work with the sheer enthusiasm of earning reward in the hereafter, without concern for the present welfare of the Muslims.[89]

In fact, Sir Sayyid's criticism went deeper than pointing out that the `ulamā' were concerned only with the otherworldly bliss of the Muslims, and not with their present welfare. In so far as such an attitude mitigated against economic initiative and a work-ethic, it tended to keep the Muslims poor, or make them poorer. Sir Sayyid suggested, by emphasizing the transitoriness of this world[90] and the need to concentrate only on the hereafter, the `ulamā' were in fact urging Muslims to turn away from activities beneficial to the community and contribute in those which benefitted only the `ulamā'; such as the building of mosques and madrasas. The inherent paradox, however, was, as Sir Sayyid pointed out with sarcasm, that if the Muslims continued to remain downtrodden, they would eventually be unable even to support the `ulamā', so that the depressed economic condition of the Muslims, to which `ulamā' were indifferent, would ultimately harm their own interests as well.[91]

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[89] Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.5, p. 64.

[90] Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.5, pp. 162-163.

[91] See Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.5, pp. 64, 84, 162-63.

Another of Sir Sayyid's criticism of the `ulamā' was that they had lost sight of the spirit of true religion even though they jealously claimed to be its sole guardians. The implications of this point were two-fold. On the one hand, it signified that the `ulamā' had entangled themselves in squabbles over mere words, adopting a literalist, rigid, even obscurantist interpretation of religious principles which had often not even a remote relationship with their original intent.[92] On the other hand, the `ulamā', Sir Sayyid felt, had, in losing touch with the spirit of religion, also perhaps almost consciously, distanced religion from the reach of the common man, thereby, perpetuating their own position as its exclusive interpreters, and placing themselves between man and God.[93] Sir Sayyid alleged, therefore, that

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[92] Ibid., pp. 3-4.

[93] Cf., for instance, Sir Sayyid's highly sarcastic article "Inshā'-Allāh", in which he not only ridicules the legal tricks (hiyāl) devised by the `ulamā', which he interprets as a mockery of their professed piety, but also accuses them of obscuring the spirit of the Qur'ān and placing themselves as intermediaries between man and God. Commenting on this, he says, "if you want, I can, right now, show you any kind of detailed rulings from such books as Hedāya, Sharh -ı Wiqāya, Durr-i Mukhtār, Bahrur-Raīq, Nahru'l-Faīq, and other such authoritative collections of fatāvā. And have you seen that collection of fatāvā, which is to be found with the old traditional families of maulavis and qāzīs? On such legal problems, there are two opposite rulings: one is supposed to make it permissible, the other to make it, (i.e., the legal problem) forbidden. And then you might take a fatvā according to whichever ruling suits your purpose...I do not care for any fatvā. I know only the Book of God, and the fatāvā of God, which are before everyone. Whatever I have to say, I would say from it." Maqālāt, vol.5, pp. 179-181.

this constituted an exploitation of religion on the part of the `ulamā',[94] so that religion had ceased to be anything more than a mere coffin that the `ulamā' were carrying on their shoulders. Because their interests are best served in keeping religion in this way, they could obviously not appreciate any effort aimed at reaching once again to its true spirit, which therefore, explains their rigid traditionalism.

Among the other criticisms to which Sir Sayyid subjected the `ulamā' was their unhealthy tendency to confuse, and therefore, mix together religious and worldly matters. By bringing all sorts of mundane issues into the sphere of religion and by giving religious verdicts on things which had nothing to do with religion, the `ulamā',

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It is interesting to note that Muhammad Tughlaq, the Delhi Sultan (1325-1351) had similar grievances against the `ulamā'. In his memoirs, he says "The ''`ulamā'' believing in the saying that necessity renders forbidden things as permissible, refrained from speaking the truth; and on account of their bias extended a hand of evil out of the sleeves of godlessness (be dīnī). In the greediness for lucrative posts they marched hand in hand. So the lustre of divine sciences (`Ulūm-i dīn) had completely disappeared from among them. Quoted from his Memoirs in Agha Mehdi Husain, The Rise and Fall of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq, (London, 1938), p. 173; also, Muhammad Miraj,"The Sultan and the `Ulamā' in Turkish Sultanate of Delhi(1206-1423) Iqbal, 13(1965), pp. 31-57. The Mughal ruler Akbar had serious grievances against the `ulamā', too. He accused the `ulamā' of twisting and misrepresenting the sharī`a in order to suit their own interests. See Aziz Ahmad," The Role of Ulema in Indo-Muslim Society", Studia Islamica, 31(1970), pp. 2-13; Qureshi, Ulema in Politics,

94 Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.5, p. 85.

Sir Sayyid felt, had not only placed serious obstacles in the way to a correct understanding of the problems in their true perspective but had also demeaned the spirit of religion itself. He, for instance, argued for the need to make a distinction between fundamental principles of religion and the principles and ideas on the basis of which society is, at a given time, organized. While the religion had to remain immutable, the society must necessarily change in accordance with and as a consequence of the changing circumstances and requirements. This distinction is, in some ways, reminiscent of the distinction the Egyptian reformer Muḥammad Abduh made between the religious injunctions and principles which are immutable and thus valid for all times, and those which can be modified in accordance with the needs of changing times. Abduh tried to justify legal, educational and other reforms, and some receptivity to Western ideas the basis of this distinction.[95] Sir Sayyid's concern was similar, though his distinction is somewhat different, for him in the second category fall those things which not only are subject to change but have nothing to do with religion in the first place.

The `ulamā', Sir Sayyid alleged, usually failed to make the distinction between the two kinds of principles, and with results disastrous for Muslim society, tended to

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[95] See Albert Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939, (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 147ff.

attach the same religious authority to now outmoded patterns and principles of social organization as they did to religion itself.

> These natural laws of change are such that hearts will not deny them, though tongues may deny them; and those who are against them, they cannot destroy these laws but if they declare the opposition to these laws, as the very essence of their religion, they destroy (thereby) their own religion and are to be held responsible for it. On account of these people, the religion of Islam has come to such a sorry state that instead of a spiritual religion it has come to be known as a "physical" (or bodily) religion, and among Muslims any progress in sciences and arts, reason, imagination, culture and civilization has been thwarted.[96]

It may be noted here, that Sir Sayyid's emphasis on the need to distinguish religion from worldly matters can be regarded as lying at the base of his emphasis on the need for the Muslims to adopt certain healthy Western ideas and institutions. Things, for instance, such as the Western system of education, the English language, and European dress, Sir Sayyid felt, had nothing to do with religion, so that it was wrong to invoke the authority of religion against them. They were rather a mark of progress which could be adopted without prejudice to religious conviction. The `ulamā', on the other hand, had always felt that Western education and languages would pave the way for inroads into Muslim traditions and religion and were, therefore, to be resisted. The seminary of Deoband, for instance, which became the premier institution of

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[96] Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.5, p. 7; also cf. p. 5.

Muslim religious learning in India, made no provision for instruction in the English language;[97] even Nadvatu'l-`ulamā' was able to introduce English only after very bitter controversies. The attitudes of suspicion which the `ulamā' harbored towards everything, however beneficial, which came from the West, was what Sir Sayyid bitterly deplored.[98]

Another of Sir Sayyid's criticisms related to what he identified as the chronic traditionalism characterizing the outlook of the `ulamā' of his time. Here, by traditionalism is meant that blind and unquestioning imitation (taqlid) of past practices and ideas in which the `ulamā' considered religious piety essentially to

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97 Faruqi, The Deoband School, pp. 27-42. On the question of the permissibility of learning English, see Ashraf Ali Thanavi's following fatvā, where the permission is severely hedged in with several qualification, tending in effect to discourage learning this language. (Even when the `ulamā' theoratically permitted the learning of English, it usually remained, for practical purposes, out of the syllabi at their madrasas).

"English is a language like other languages. No language is evil in itself; rather; it is one of the blessings of God....English, like other languages, is permissible. The following three accidentals have made it harmful. First, it comprises certain sciences which are contrary to the sharī`a....; secondly, even if one avoids such sciences, one frequently keeps company with irreligious persons....; thirdly, even if the company is not bad or if it has no influence, at least the motive for learning this language is to create a source of livelihood-no matter whether the method of earning is lawful or not. It is proven both traditionally and rationally that if something (A) which is permissible becomes a means of something (B) which is forbidden, it (A) becomes forbidden itself. Besides, such a motive is itself a sin of the heart. Thus, it is not only external immorality (fisq) but internal as well...If

lie.[99] The validity of an opinion for them consisted not in the fact that they could demonstrate its truth but merely in its having been handed down from the past.[100] This attitude of rigid adherence to tradition had a number of consequences which were lucidly brought out by Sir Sayyid.

One result, for instance, was their inability to develop an objective and critical outlook, since they placed restrictions on the exercise of the human mind and reason.[101] It was also reflected as already noted, in their inability to understand that tradition itself which they were ostensibly preserving. This latter point meant that in their hands religion became mere words, since its

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somebody frees himself from these accidentals--his beliefs are not damaged--the convenient or rather specific way for him to (achieve) this purpose (i.e., to learn English) would be first to seek knowledge of religion with certitude, to act accordingly, and to resolve that by this language (English) he will earn only that livelihood which is permissible according to sharī`a. Learning of English for such a person would then be permissible. If he has a higher target, i.e., serving the cause of religion by this means, the action in this case becomes `ibādāt (religious duty). When these accidentals do exist it is obligatory to refrain from learning English....The person who is an adolescent, he is probably more inclined towards them kuffār (unbelievers) and fujjār (sinful persons) who teach this language. His faith will be weakened... In this case the learning of the English language is definitely prohibited... In summary, the learning of English is to be judged according to the situation. Thus it is sometimes forbidden, sometimes permissible and sometimes religiously obligatory". Quoted from Khalid Masud, "Trends in the interpretation of Islamic Law as reflected in the Fatwa literature of Deoband: A study of the attitudes of the `ulamā' of Deoband to certain social problems and inventions", unpublished

content was not subject to any systematic inquiry.[102] As Sir Sayyid pointed out, the `ulamā' themselves deplored that the profession of faith on the part of Muslims was not reflected in their life and character, but pointed out that for this failing `ulamā' had only themselves to blame, since if the spirit of religion is not understood, it could hardly be expected to play any role in life.[103]

Moreover, the inability to think critically and reason out their position led, Sir Sayyid said, to their intolerant behavior which had at least two unfortunate consequences. On the one hand, they could not effectively answer the criticism which was brought to bear on their doctrines and therefore, resorted, whenever possible, to

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M.A.thesis, McGill University, 1969, pp. 29-31, citing Thānavī from, Imdādu'l-Fatāvā, (Rahimiyah; Deoband, n.d.) vol.4, pp. 151-152. According to Khalid Masud, a later fatvā clearly shows that the prohibition of learning English was commonly accepted. Ibid., p. 31.

98 For an expression of ideas similar to those of Sir Sayyid's, See Hālī's, Musaddas-i Madd-o Jazr-i Islam, (Lahore, n.d.), p. 59. (Maulavī Fakhrud-Dīn wrote, Musaddas-i Khayālī bi Javāb-i Musaddas-i Hālī, (Lacknow, n.d.), responding to Hālī's attack on the `ulamā'). More generally on the `ulamā', see Ibid., p. 55ff. Also for an interesting account of the attitudes of the `ulamā', see the novel, Ayāma, (Delhi, 1891), pp. 42-67, Chapter 5 "Āzādī ko maulaviyon men biyāhne kī tajvīz aur maulaviyon ke hālāt", by Maulanā Nazīr Ahmad, a contemporary of Sir Sayyid, and who shared his outlook in many respects. Basically woven around the symbolic female character Āzādī (freedom) it throws light on the economic, social and cultural life of `ulamā' of 19th century.

99 For a full explication of "traditionalism", see above, Chapter 1, p. 17.

intolerant suppression of such criticism. This, Sir Sayyid pointed out, would serve only to create doubts about the validity and strength of their position among their followers.[104] On the other hand, this intolerance which, as noted, was based on ignorance and lack of reason, found expression in sectarianism and religious controversies which were the preoccupation of the `ulamā' of his time. It was ironical that the `ulamā' should have insisted with such force that all religious points of view save that which they represented constituted unbelief and yet have been so ignorant of the nature and meaning of their own doctrine. As we have already seen, Sir Sayyid deplored the fact that these sectarian controversies served further to divide the Muslim community which at this time could obviously ill-afford to be fragmented into hostile camps:

> See how, on account of having differences in the subsidiary aspects of law, our people have broken the firmness of religion, giving up that bond of brotherhood which God Himself had established. Go to any tribe and city, go to any mosque and Imāmbāra, you will find enmity and discord among them on the basis of their being Shī`a or Sunnī, Wahhābi or bida`tī (innovators), lā-mazhab (atheists), or muqallid (conformists).[105]

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100 Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.5, pp. 235.

101 Ibid., pp. 213-237.

102 Ibid., pp. 3-5.

103 Ibid., p. 230.

104 Ibid., pp. 213-237.

105 Ibid., pp. 168-169. As an instance of sectarian polemics in late 19th century India, reference may be made to the following tracts:

The above-mentioned point relates to Sir Sayyid's broader criticism of the `ulamā'. It was only a concern with the material welfare of the Muslim community and not empty rhetoric about Islam which could guarantee the salvation of Muslims. Sir Sayyid implies that it is by preserving and promoting the worldly interests of the community and by securing for it an honourable place once again that the interests of religion too could be furthered.[106]

That the material well-being of the Muslims is inexorably tied up with the overall interests of the Muslim community, and of Islam itself, is a point Sir Sayyid emphasized again and again. That this was indeed

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(1) AGAINST THE DEOBANDI `ULAMA': Anonymous, "Fatvā-i `Ulamā'-i Delhī va Rāmpur va Lakhna'ū va Badāyūn va Bamba'ī vaghairā dar Tasdīq-i Aqvāl-i Maulavī Muhammad Shāh Sāhib Rahmatu'llah Ta`āla' alaihī va Tardīd-i Aqvāl-i Maulavī Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib Nānautavī", (n.p., n.d.); `Abdus-Samad Sahsvānī, "Tab`īdu'l-Shayātīn bi Imdād-i Junūdu'l-Haqqu'l-Mubīn", (Aligarh, 1870); Muhammad Ahmad Razā Khān, "al-Kaukabatush-Shahābiya fī Kufārīyyāti ila'l-Wahhābīyyāti", (Bareli, 1894); Anonymous, "Tasfiyātu'l-Azhān `an Makā'id-i Dafa`u'l-Bohtān", (Patna, n.d.); Imāmud-Dīn Muhammad, "Dafa`u'l-Visvāsi an Ṣudūrun-Nāṣi ma`rūf bi Āyāt Bayyināt alā `Uzāzi Munkari'l-Ihtiyāt", (Siyalkot, n.d.); Anonymous, "Jami`ush-Shavāhid fi Akhrāju'l-Wahhābayyīn `an al-Masājid", (n.p., n.d.); Razā Khān, "al-Qaulu'l-`Ajīb fī Javāzu'l-Taṣvīb", (Bareli, n.d.); `Alī Ahmad, "Nusrat-i Ahmadīyya fī Radd-i Qaulu'l-Najdīya", (Lacknow, 1870); Razā Ahmad, "Lama`atuz-Zuha' fī I`fā`u'l-Luha", (Bareli, 1897); Muhammad `Abdu'l-Qādir", "Āsārus-Sanādīd-Kalām fi Tahqīq-i `Aqā'idu'l-Islām", (n.p., 1879); Hashmat `Alī, "Mazālim-i Najadīyya bar Maqābir-i Qudsīyya", (Bareli, n.d.).

so, many `ulamā' may have agreed. Where they disagreed with Sir Sayyid was perhaps in the latter's view that, in the given circumstances, efforts towards a socio-economic uplift were the only way to secure and strengthen the long-term religious life and commitment of the Muslims as well (an idea strongly reminiscent of Shāh Walīyu'llah's strategy of coping with Muslim decline), rather than the other way around; they also disagreed consequently, with Sir Sayyid's emphasis that the Muslims should adapt to new circumstances of life, which meant coming to terms with rather than resisting the impact of Western ideas.

Several of the points discussed above, which express various facets of Sir Sayyid's criticism are also

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(2) AGAINST THE BARELAVI `ULAMĀ': Muhammad `Abdu'l-Qayyūm, "Anvāru'l-Muslīmīn: Majmu`a-í Hidāyatu'l-Mubtad`īn", (Lacknow, 1862); `Abdu'llah `Abu'l-Faẓal", "Tā'īdur-Raḥmān fī Aṣbāt-i Vujūb-i Taqlīdu'l-Nu`mān", (Patna, 1889); Muhammad `Abdu'l-Jalīl", "al-`Aqīdatu'l-Sāfīya fī Mājara-i baynu'l-Murtaẓa' va al-Mu`āviya", (Lacknow, 1895); Muhammad Ẓuhūr", "Bid`atī par Khudā kī Mār aur Farishṭon kī Phaṭkār", (Delhi, n.d.); Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad, "`Aqā'id-i `Ulamā'-i Deoband", (Dehli, n.d.); Muhammad Hasan, "Intisāfu'l-Bārī min'l-Kiẓabu'l-Muftarī", (Lacknow, n.d.); Muhammad Ẓiyāud-Dīn", "Makhzan Taḥqīq mulaqqab bi Tuḥfa-í Ḥanafīyya", (Patna, 1897).

(3) AGAINST THE SHI`A `ULAMĀ': Mulavī Muhammad `Abdu'l-Hakīm", "A'ina-i Islām", (Lacknow, n.d.); Muhammad `Abdu'l-Shakūr Fārūqī", "Qātilān-i Husain kī Khānā Talāshī", (Lacknow, n.d.);Anonymous, "Taḥrīf kī Khānāsāzī kā Javāb", (Lacknow, n.d.); Muhammad Vilāyat Husain, "Savāl az Jamī`-i `Ulamā'-i Shī`a", (Alahabad, 1893).

(4) AGAINST THE SUNNI `ULAMĀ': Shaikh Ahmad, "Anvāru'l-Hudā", (Agra, n.d.); Maqbūl Sayyid Aḥmad, "Tanzīhu'l-Qur'ān an Vasāvis-i Itba`u'l-`Usmān",

reflected in his critique of the institutions of traditional learning or madrasas.

Sir Sayyid argued, for instance, that the kind of education which the madrasas offered was irrelevant to modern society and the existing circumstances.[107] The madrasas produced only social parasites whose livelihood depended on the charity of Muslims.[108] Because there was no effort on the part of these madrasas to make their students useful and contributing members of society, it is understandable that the products of these madrasas also did not, on assuming the role of `ālims in society, encourage such virtues as self-reliance and economic independence. Moreover, as already noted, the madrasas were continuing a tradition of religious intellectualism which was clearly obsolete. It did not, for instance, train the `ulamā' who would be conscious much less capable, of effectively answering those criticisms of Islam which were brought forth by the impact of Western ideas. It is clear therefore, that in essence, Sir Sayyid's criticism of madrasas turns on two points: (a)that the kind of education imparted here did not

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(Muradabad, 1874).
The works refereed here are only a fraction of a very rich literature generated by the inter-`ulamā' controversies.

106 Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.5, pp. 84-86, 172.

107 Ibid., pp. 80-81, 211-212.

108 Ibid., pp. 63, 83-84.

contribute to the life of the Muslim community: and (b)that the `ulamā' were being untrue to their self-professed function of being the true guardians of faith by not being able to defend Islam in the face of modern challenges.

It was on the basis of the wide-ranging criticism of Sir Sayyid, some of which has been analaysed in the preceding pages, that he could accuse the `ulamā' of having directly contributed in bringing about that unfortunate state of affairs in which the Muslim community found itself at that time. He felt that they had stifled the true spirit of religion, so that it had become incapable of playing any effective role in the life of the Muslims. Their refusal to change with the times, in a world of rapid change, had served to stagnate both society and religion. They had thereby contributed to Muslim decline. No less grievously, they were, in the present state of Muslim disorientation, not only not willing to change their stance and thus contribute in any way to Muslim welfare, but were spending their energies opposing those who were trying to work for reforming and rescuing the Muslim society.

In concluding this analysis, a few observations may be made here. Whatever the justice of every single criticism which Sir Sayyid had to make of the `ulamā', his critique refers to a concrete historical situation rather than

being a set of abstract formulations constituting an indictment of the `ulamā'. This in itself, gives his criticism a certain validity, as does also the usually reasoned tone of his otherwise, scathing analysis. However, in studying the critique, another point which needs to be borne in mind is that along with being an indictment of the `ulamā', it is also an exercise in self-defense and vindication. By showing where the `ulamā' err, Sir Sayyid is also trying implicitly to argue how his own movement responds to the changed realities, and how it promises to secure the community's interests. Indeed the very assumptions in terms of which his criticism is conducted are those which characterize his own reformist programme. His emphasis that concrete efforts aiming at material welfare of community and not tall claims of advancing Muslim piety are what the Muslims need, is an example. His argument that the `ulamā' have lost sight of the true spirit of religion is also, as already suggested, an effort to suggest both that they have consequently, no right to criticize him (Sir Sayyid) for his religious beliefs, and that they are no longer fit to represent the religious life of the community, much less the community as such.

Given a basic perception between Sir Sayyid and the Indian `ulamā', his criticism tends therefore towards questioning their role in society and denying their place in it. This being the fundamental implication of his

criticism, it is scarcely surprising that it should have greatly alarmed the `ulamā' and those who shared their world-view, or that they should have clashed with individuals with modernizing orientations, most notably Sayyid Aḥmad Khān.

CHAPTER THREE

The `Ulamā's Criticism of Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān

In studying the nature of the extreme opposition to Sir Sayyid, which is the subject of this Chapter, it will be helpful to say a word about the traditional self-image of the `ulamā' class, which was communicated to them by the previous generation, of the `ulamā'. For centuries together they have viewed themselves as the guardians of the faith and public morality, thus by implication as leaders of society which in turn exempted them from being criticized.[109]

It appears that by the very nature of their profession,

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109 For the self-image of the `ulamā' in the 18th century, see Sajida S. Alvi, "Qāẓī Sanā' Allāh Pānipatī, an Eighteenth Century Indian Sūfī `Ālim: a Study of His Writings in Their Sociopolitical Context", in Islamic Studies Presented to Charles J. Adam, ed. Wael B. Hallaq and Donald p. Little, (Leiden, 1991), pp. 11-25. Qāẓī Sanāu'llah's emphasis on the `ulamā' being the heirs of the Prophet is repeated by almost all the religious scholars of the period. This is a clear statement of the `ulamā' 's claims to the exclusive religious authority. The following fatvā, issued against Muhammad Tughlaq (r. 1325-1351) by a contemporary `ālim Isāmī, gives a graphic illustration of the point. Muhammad Tughlaq had made the `ulamā' accountable before the courts of justice in case of default. The fatvā reads like this: "It has been contended that the Sulṭan has the audacity to employ and treat the `ulamā' and saints like ordinary men and he was, therefore, a kāfir". Isāmī, Futūhus-Salatin, as quoted in R.C.Majumdar, ed., The History and Culture of the Indian Peoples, (Bombay, 1960), p. 175.

the `ulamā' have tended to conceive of themselves as existing essentially to lead, not to be led, to "judge", not to be "judged". It is this feature of Sir Sayyid's criticism, his judging them, as it was, and his viewing them in such clear terms and so publicly, that appears to be the core of their hurt.

Keeping in view this distinctive characteristic of the class of `ulamā', this chapter seeks to study the various grounds on which they criticized Sir Sayyid and the way they justified their criticism. By way of a brief review of the various points around which their criticism developed, it would be possible to address later in the chapter, the question of the extent to which the opposition was genuinely inspired by the reasons `ulamā' themselves directly or indirectly acknowledged or alleged, and whether or how far other reasons other than those alleged may have been involved.

(1) The Opposition to Sir Sayyid's Theological Ideas: Perhaps the most celebrated casus belli between Sir Sayyid and the `ulamā' was the former's expression of certain ideas of a theological and religious nature which apparently aroused the opposition of the `ulamā'.[110]

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[110] For the principles he followed in writing on religious matters, see Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.10, pp. 102ff; For his views of various religious matters, see vol.3, pp. 16-25, 301-318, 277-282,

In his work Troll has shown with great lucidity that in his unrelenting commitment to some of the tenets of philosophy, Sir Sayyid tried to show harmony between reason and the basic principles of religion. He sought, thereby, to vindicate the essential rationality of Islam and to reconstruct an Islamic theology in the light of the dictates of natural philosophy and of the prevailing condition and the circumstances of the time.[111] His deterministic conception of a universe governed by the laws of reason[112] thus could not but have offended the `ulamā', for it clearly places him in the tradition of the falāsifa, who have been consistently denounced as heretical by traditional religious scholars through the ages. Moreover, the dogmatic tone in which the governance of the principles of reason and natural philosophy was asserted, offended the `ulamā', apart from the sheer inadmissibility, in the traditional view, of any effort towards chalking out a new theological course.

In more concrete terms among various other ideas expressed by Sir Sayyid, the most offensive were 1) his negation of the empirical existence of the devil and the

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111 C.W.Troll, A Reinterpretation, pp. 144-222: Also see Baljon, The Reforms and Religious Ideas of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, pp. 85-92; and Albert Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, pp. 124-25.

112 For further details on Sir Sayyid's view's on the nature of this world, man, civilization etc., see Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.4 and vol.6.

angels,[113] 2)his views on slavery,[114] 3)his views on the mi`rāj, the Prophet's heavenly journey,[115] 4)his views on shaqq-i sadr, the splitting of the chest of the Prophet,[116] 5)his opinion on the efficacy of du`ā[117] and 6)his views about the permissibility of eating the flesh of strangled birds.[118]

In the light of the foregoing considerations it is understandable that Sir Sayyid's position in religious matters should have been criticized by the `ulamā'. It is true that among themselves, `ulamā' belonging to various schools of thought and religious viewpoints differed violently, even when(as was often the case) the points of issue were of relatively minor importance. They went to

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113 Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.13, pp-157-186.

114 Ibid., vol.4, pp. 361-376, 377-390.

115 Ibid., vol.11, pp. 765-803.

116 Ibid, pp. 765-803.

117 Ibid., vol.13, pp. 54-64.

118 See Bashir Ahmad Dar, The Religious Ideas of sir Sayyid Ahmad Kham, chapter on "Nature and Reason", pp. 133-175;Baljon, The Reform and Religious Ideas of Sir Sayyid, pp. 71-155; Aziz Ahmad, Islamic Modernism pp. 40-54. Imddu'llah (the deputy collector, Kanpur), and `Alī Bakhsh (the sub-judge, Gorakhpur),; st`unch opponents of Sir Sayyid had already secure. `he signatures of sixty `ulamā' from different parts of India on the fatāvā declaring him to be kāfir. `Alī Bakhsh even went to Mecca in order to secure fatāvā from the `ulamā' of Mecca, condemning his efforts to establish an educational institution. Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol. 10, pp. 54, 70, 81, 78, 101, 86. The reply of the `ulamā' of Mecca reads like this:

"In this case no assistance is allowable to the

the extent of declaring one another as kāfirs.[119] Nevertheless, in their opposition to Sir Sayyid, all of them appear to have been united, even though, as will be argued later, their internal dissension served to mitigate somewhat the force of their opposition to Sir Sayyid.[120]

The `ulamā' 's opposition to Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān was variously expressed. As already mentioned he was declared a kāfir. He was also called a heretic, atheist, Christian, Nechari,[121] materialist, unbeliever and "Antichrist".[122] Fatavā was solicited and obtained from scholars of Hijāz.[123] Their religious verdicts denounced not only his religious views but perhaps more important, the reformist enterprise, in which he was engaged in

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institution. May God destroy it and its founder. No Mohammedan is allowed to give assistance to or countenance the establishment of such an institution. It is, moreover the duty of the faithful to destroy it if it be established and to chastise to the utmost those who are friendly to it." Translation from Shan Muhammad, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan:a political biography, (Meerat,1969), p. 71;Hālī, Hayat-i Jāved, pp. 631-634.

119 For sectarian and doctrinal conflicts among the `ulamā' see, Francis Robinson, Separatism, pp. 268-278; Barbara Metcalf, Islamic Revival, pp. 265ff.

120 The leading `ulamā' who signed the istafta of Maulavī Imdādu'llah represented different Muslim sects-Sunnīs, Shīa`s, traditionalists, non-traditionalist, wahhābis and bida`tīs. See Hālī, Hayat-i Jāved, p. 628. It should be pointed out here that Maulavī Imdādu'llah and Maulavī `Ali Bakhsh, staunch opponents of Sir Sayyid, belonged to the rival camps of Wahhabis and Barelavīs. They would never agree on any religious matter but they were united against Sir Sayyid. See Hālī, Hayat-i Jāved, p. 621-23. Does this mean that a concern to defend religion brought them together or does it perhaps indicate that what brought them

general. This phenomenon is a regular and indeed fundamental feature of the opposition of the `ulamā' to Sir Sayyid. It signified , as will subsequently be noted that criticism of Sir Sayyid Aḥmad's reformist activities and against everything that which may have been distasteful to the `ulamā' was justified by the former's heterodox views in religious matters. All aspects of the `ulamā' 's opposition to him was presented as essentially a religious opposition, (that is to say an opposition conducted in religious terms).

In addition to fatāvā against Sir Sayyid and the denunciation of his reformist effort, however, specific refutations of his views and works were also attempted in many cases. `Alī Bakhsh wrote a book called Tā'īdu'l-Islām refuting Sir Sayyid's concept of God. As Ḥālī points out, this work also contained many other accusations charging Sir Sayyid with blasphemous ideas.[124] `Abdu'l-Ḥaqq wrote a

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together was something other than the religious issues. For his part, Hālī observes that their opposition was based on personal grudges. See Hālī, Ibid., p. 263. In any case, however, if there was any unity (in negative terms, i.e., against rather than on something) it was more apparent than real.

121 In being denounced as a "Nechari", Sir Sayyid was generally understood to believe that God Himself was subject to the laws of nature.

122 Ḥālī, Ḥayat-i Jāved, p. 617, 627, 629.

123 Ibid., p. 631.

124 Accusations, for example, of Sir Sayyid's telling Muslims that they should give up Islam if they find it weak in the light of modern sciences; that accusing

tafsīr of the Qur'ān mainly to refute Sir Sayyid's ideas on the bodily existence of devils and angels, miracles and the nature of revelation. Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad, the founder of the Aḥmadīyya movement, came forward refuting severely Sir Sayyid's views on the efficacy of du`ā in a polemic called Barkātud-Du`ā (1893). Iḥtishāmud-Dīn's opposition focussed on his ideas about mi`rāj.[125] But the most noteworthy and scholarly criticism came from Maulanā Nānautavī. This was Nānautavī's Taṣfiyātu'l-`Aqā'id Unlike works by the other `ulamā', this work was not written in a polemical style, though it did criticise some of Sir Sayyid's religious views.[126] And it is noteworthy that despite Nānautavī's criticism, Sir Sayyid showed great respect for him and considered him as his only

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the Prophet does not make one an infidel; that throwing away pages of the Qur'ān is not kufr; that it is sufficient to say prayers in one's heart and the namaz in its present form is the invention of the `ulamā'; that doubt about the existence of another god can not be ruled out; that it is all right to declare non-permissible things as permissible; that abusing the Prophet is not infidelity; that the Day of Judgment would not come, that hell and heaven do not exist; that fasting in the month of summer cannot be obligatory; and that it is all right to drink wine or indulge in gambling as long as it does not overcome us. In one of articles, "Dafa`u'l-Buhtān", in Maqālāt, vol.13, pp. 7-50, Sir Sayyid deals with these accusations at great length. It was because of the criticism of Maulavī `Alī Bakhsh that Sir Sayyid had agreed to give the management of religious education to a separate governing body with whom the public would be satisfied. `Alī Bakhsh and Sir Sayyid were brought together to have a dialogue. `Alī Bakhsh had even announced a donation of Rs.800 for the establishment of Dāru'l-`Ulūm but he had a change of heart when he realized that he was not going to be the sole incharge of the religious department. See Hālī, Hayat-i Jāved, p. 641.

worthy opponent.[127]

It is not the purpose of the present study to go into the details of the `ulamā' 's polemical works aimed at refuting the theological ideas expressed by Sir Sayyid. In the present context, the significant thing is the consideration that not only did the `ulamā' react strongly but also intended their criticism to attract wide notice. Because their position was built into Muslim society the means for influencing Muslim public opinion were readily available to the `ulamā', and of these means the fatvā was but one, though an effective medium.

Another medium used to express criticism of Sir Sayyid to influence the Muslim public against him, his religious ideas and consequently, his movement for education and other reform, was the vernacular press. In direct response to Tahzību'l-Akhlāq, several newspapers expressing the traditional `ulamā' 's viewpoint and criticizing Sir Sayyid were started from different places.[128] This alacrity of the `ulamā' 's response seems

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125 Baljon, The Reform and Religious Ideas, p. 72.

126 Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Taṣfiyātu'l-`Aqā'id, (Deoband, n.d.). Sections of this pamphlet have been translated by Peter Hardy in Aziz Ahmad and Gustav Von Grunebaum, Muslim Self-statement in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent, (Wiesbaden, 1970), pp. 60-76.

127 Troll, A Reinterpretation, p. 21.

128 Nūru'l-Anvār and Nūru'l-Āfāq were started from Kanpur, Lauḥ-i Maḥfūẓ from Muradabad, Tehravīn Sadī from Agra

to indicate not only that the ideas and movement of Sir Sayyid were perceived as a threat to religion, but also that his reformist ideas were perceived to be quite influential. Since some of his ideas implicitly or explicitly criticized the `ulamā' and their contemporary role, it is to be expected that the threat of his ideas should have been perceived not only as directed against religion but also against the class of the `ulamā'. This point leads us to another basis of the `ulamā' 's opposition to Sir Sayyid, namely his social and educational reformist ideas.

(2) Opposition to Sir Sayyids's Socio-educational Reform: The opposition of the `ulamā' to Sir Sayyid seems to have rested among other things, on opposition to his ideas and efforts towards social and educational reform. It is true that typically the `ulamā' 's opposition was justified by themselves and understood by others as resulting from what Troll calls Sir Sayyid's interpretation of Muslim theology. This disagreement over theology, however, can scarcely be regarded as having been the only ground for the `ulamā' 's opposition. That the opposition was articulated and expressed in religious terms does not mean

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and Imdādu'l-Afāq, Shahāb-i Sāqib, Ṭā'idu'l-Islām from Norh Western Provinces. Those who did not react to them favourably and did not declare Sir Sayyid to be kāfirs were declared kāfir themselves. Hālī, Hayat-i Jāved, p. 623.

that the issues themselves were all theological, but only, as already noted, that the various grievances tended to be subsumed under a religious head.

In the preceding chapter it has been shown that as part of his reformist efforts Sir Sayyid subjected the `ulamā' to severe criticism, holding them responsible for many ills afflicting Muslim society, and accusing them of not just failing to alleviate the Muslim situation in a state of decline but of having contributed to bringing about that decline. Clearly then, his vision of social reform, or of a reformed Muslim society left little room for the traditional position and role of the `ulamā' in society. As Bashir Ahmad Dar observes,

> In his scheme there was no place for the theologians at all; to study and know what Islam stands for there was no need to master the fourteen different sciences as the theologians of the day used to claim but the simple Arabic Qur'ān. He gave all sensible and educated Muslims the right to interpret Islam themselves in matters which are not clearly set forth in the nass.[129]

It is to be expected, therefore, that his reformist efforts should have been anathema to the `ulamā' even though they may usually have cited his social reformism as a specific grievance.

Apart from the considerations noted above, however, the following examples can indicate the `ulamā' 's opposition

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[129] Bashir Ahmad Dar, Religious Thought of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, p. 276.

to Sir Sayyid's social reform.

As is well known, the journal Tahzību'l-Akhlāq was a cause of considerable unhappiness for the `ulamā'. It has been mentioned already that several journals were launched in response to it, to refute its contents and counteract its influence. Sir Sayyid's views on some religious matters were, of course, often expressed in this journal as were those of many of his colleagues. But , as the title itself indicates, this journal was primarily meant, not for purely religious or theological discussions, but rather as a medium for the expression of ideas leading to reforming social behavior and social norms.[130] It is instructive to note, however, that the `ulamā' 's opposition was not aimed merely at those of its contents which were of a religiously controversial nature, but at the journal as such.

Another example relates to Sir Sayyid's `Alīgarh College. It is of course true, as the `ulamā' said, that their opposition to this College was founded on their fear that Sir Sayyid's irreligious and heretical ideas would be taught there, so that Muslims studying there would go astray.[131] This, however, cannot be the only reason why they opposed the institution. In other words, it appears

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130 Sheila McDonough, Muslim Ethics, p. 28.

131 David Lelyveld, Aligarh's First Generation, pp. 132-34.

to be extremely unlikely that had it been certain that Sir Sayyid's new theology would not be imparted to the Muslim youth at `Alīgarh and that they would not be exposed to its influence, the `ulamā' would have withdrawn their opposition to `Alīgarh, as was asserted by Imdādu'llah.[132] Rather, it must be remembered that the `Alīgarh College was meant as an alternative to the traditional, and in Sir Sayyid's view, obsolete and even socially harmful system of education, which was represented by the madrasas, the strongholds of the `ulamā'.[133] In its very raison d'etre, therefore, `Alīgarh represented an attack on the `ulamā' 's position and, therefore, it could scarcely have appealed to them. Secondly Sir Sayyid's `Alīgarh movement was based on almost unqualified appreciation for Western ideas and institutions; the `Alīgarh College was also explicitly fashioned on such British educational institutions as Cambridge and Oxford English and other western subjects were to be taught there, and students were to be exposed to western influences.[134] Indeed, it was precisely in terms of many ideas derived from the West that Sir Sayyid sought to reform Indian Muslim society. It is understandable, therefore, that the `ulamā', who were

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[132] Ibid., p. 133;Hālī, Hayat-i Jāved, p. 641; Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.10, p. 124.

[133] Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.8, p. 102.

[134] David Lelyveld, Aligarh's First Generation, p. 102, 129.

so bitterly opposed to anything western,[135] should have opposed `Alīgarh; but it is equally evident that the cause or basis for this opposition could not have been merely the religious and theological ideas of Sir Sayyid. It can also be argued that Sir Sayyid's sharp critique of many of the customs and practices prevalent in the Muslim community of the time, though not constituting a direct attack on the `ulamā', may have been resented by them, and this for at least two reasons. First, however harmful or degenerate these customs may have been, they had become a part of life and the established social order. Sir Sayyid's Sharp criticism of the established norms might be taken to imply that the `ulamā', who were the guides and leaders of the community, had neglected, even betrayed their proper function in society by not drawing attention to these social vices. It might even have been taken to be Sir Sayyid's intention to suggest--and hints of such suggestion there certainly were in Sir Sayyid's writings--that the `ulamā' were even the beneficiaries in certain respects of those social norms and vices. Secondly, if Sir Sayyid's social criticism were resented, the resentment would be understandable given that the "standard" or "ideal" in terms of which he was studying his own society

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135 The extent of hatred for the British can be understood by the fact that Maulanā Qāsim Nānautavī, who was the most tolerant among the `ulamā', did not use buttons all his life because they were introduced by the British. Manāẓir Aḥsan Gīlānī, Savāniḥ Qāsimī, vol.1, p. 279.

was that provided by British society; it was in consciously comparing Indian (Muslim) to British society and social norms, that he found the former to be seriously deficient. But these terms of analysis and comparison, of course, were hardly acceptable to the more conservative members of his society. Consequently, the critique which issued from such a comparison could not command conviction but would certainly generate resentment.

(3) Opposition to Sir Sayyid's pro-British attitude: As a basis for the opposition of the `ulamā', the pro-British attitude of Sir Sayyid appeared to be at least as important as were his views of a religious and theological nature. Sir Sayyid was favourably disposed towards the British and wanted Muslims to cooperate with them, not only because he had realized early that a conciliatory attitude on the part of the Muslims was the only way for the community to survive--in view of the Hindu competition for positions and economic advancement and of initial British hostility towards the Muslims, and indications that British rule would last for a long time--but also because he thought that the West at this time represented a higher and more advanced civilization from which Muslims had much to learn and whose principles they could ignore only at their own peril. His plea to learn, appreciate and acquire from the West was useful and was based on a conviction of the essential and incomparable superiority

of the former to the present state of Muslim society, its institutions and ideas. This view means, by implication, that to him Muslim society could be brought out of its present state of stagnation and decline by consciously learning from and in several respect emulating the institutions of the West.

The `ulamā', of course, usually looked at Muslim decline not as resulting from stagnation and the refusal to move ahead with the times, but rather as a result of falling short of true religious behavior,[136] which they interpreted in traditional terms. To them, therefore, the way to meet the present challenge was not to emulate the West but precisely the opposite, viz., to try to counter the influence of British ideas and presence by promoting traditional learning, albeit in a somewhat reformed manner.[137]

For this, if for no other reason, then, it is clear that the positions of Sir Sayyid and the `ulamā' were divergent even though they shared a common purpose, namely to safeguard and promote the interests of the Muslim community.[138] But there were other dimensions as well

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136 cf.Fusfeld, "The Shaping of Ṣūfī Leadership p. 246.

137 Faruqi, The Deoband School, p. 30-31.

138 cf. Farzana Shaikh, Consensus and Community, p. 228. Also cf.Pearson, "Islamic Reform and Revival in Nineteenth Century India", p. 281f., where the contribution of both Deoband and `Alīgarh in creating, by training students "a new corporate identity and

which indicate ways in which expressions of Sir Sayyid's pro-British attitude aroused the ire of the `ulamā' as well as of the most conservative Muslims. For instance, being friendly towards the British was perceived to have not merely political but religious implications as well. As Ḥālī has observed, it was when Sir Sayyid began to eat with the British, and defended his decision to do so, that religious opposition against him began and he even came to be accused or having become a Christian. Receptivity to Western intellectual trends likewise aroused similar suspicions. For example when Elphinstone's History of India was translated and published under the auspices of the Scientific Society, some of the author's derogatory remarks against the Prophet created a storm of opposition, and it was stated by opponents that anyone who remained a member of this Society would cease to be a Muslim.[139] The two incidents noted above though rather minor in themselves, however, indicate that contact with the British was perceived as entailing a disruption of some aspect or another of religious ethic or belief. If this was so, then it would not have been difficult to conclude that not only was Sir Sayyid's "irreligion" due to his relations with the British and his receptivity towards their ideas, but also his advocacy that Muslims in general

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cohesion....spread(ing) a common Urdu language and a concept of a wider Indian Muslim community" is noted. Ibid.

139 Ḥālī, Ḥayat-i Jāved, pp. 614ff.

should be favourably disposed to the British would open the door to similar "irreligion" (of which Sir Sayyid's own ideas were an example).

Opposition to Sir Sayyid's educational programme which he sought to implement through the `Alīgarh College appears, moreover, to have been based not only on his own theological and religious views, the propagation of which among students was feared, but, also on the fact that English was to be the medium of instruction there.[140] It was believed that Muslim students would be exposed to western influences and encouraged to adopt European styles and conform to European traditions which would ultimately be conducive to irreligious beliefs and behavior.[141] `Alīgarh was also anathema to the traditional religious circles because it represented Sir Sayyid's pro-British and loyalist stance. This loyalism appears to have been contrasted, often consciously in the `ulamā' 's minds, with their own aloofness from the colonial government and their defiant adherence to traditional learning, which was interpreted as a kind of passive and silent, but conscious resistance against the British presence.[142] To add another dimension, it is interesting to note that politically, the `ulamā' 's antipathy to the British was manifested, e.g., in the favourable attitude of many to joining the Congress

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[140] Sir Sayyid, Maqālāt, vol.10, pp. 233-238.

[141] Maqālāt

[142] cf.Faruqi, The Deoband School, p. 24.

Party. To Sir Sayyid's founding of the Patriotic Association, intended to keep people from joining the Congress, nearly a hundred `ulamā' from all over India responded with a fatvā which declared joining the Patriotic Association to be unlawful and gave its blessing to the Congress Party. This incident indicates the extent of the `ulamā' 's distrust of the British and shows how it became a cause of conflict between Sir Sayyid and the `ulamā'. As I.H. Qureshi has pointed out, however, it indicates two other things as well. First it shows a serious lack of realism on the part of the ulamā'; the latter half of the 19th century was a period of growing Hindu militancy and of increasing anti-Muslim feelings. And yet, in their hostility to the British, the Indian `ulamā', especially those of the Deoband school, mostly ignored this unfortunate turn in Hindu politics and advocated unity and cooperation with them.[143]

The second point concerning this incident is that despite the support of several influential `ulamā' for the idea of joining the Congress, Muslims in general abstained from doing so. Whether or not Sir Sayyid's voice was very influential in this matter is not the question here. The point rather is, and it has been noted earlier in this chapter as well that the `ulamā' 's voice seems no longer

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143 I.H.Qureshi, Ulema in Politics, p. 227; On the Hindu movements during this period, see Kenneth. W. Jones, Socio-religious Reform Movements in British India, Movements in British India.

to have been very influential. Thus "even at this early stage the `ulamā' had lost so much ground that their fatvā did not result in the Muslims' crowding into the Congress."[144]

Regarding the `ulamā' 's opposition to Sir Sayyid's pro-British attitude, one further point may be noted. It is clear that the British colonial presence in India and the consequent European influences on Indian society represented a challenge to the traditional Indian Muslim society by implicitly calling into question the relevance and viability of its traditional values, norms and institutions. For instance, as a result of British administrative and educational policies the traditional Muslim system of education had started to become obsolete even from before the events of 1857.[145] Further, the Muslim hold over the judiciary was also gradually slipping from their hands, and the sphere of operation of the Muslim judges, recruited from the ranks of `ulamā', had

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144 Qureshi, `Ulamā' in Politics, p. 227.

145 The decline of traditional Muslim education, accompanied, paradoxically, by an increase in the number of traditional madrasas, see Francis Robinson, Separatism, p. 267; Barbara Metcalf, Islamic Revival, p. 136; Hundred Years of Dāru'l-`Ulūm Deoband, (Deoband, 1967). According to this pamphlet prepared by the Department of Tanẓīm Abnā'i Qadīm Dāru'l-`Ulūm, the graduates of this seminary were able to establish around 8934 maktabs and madrasas. The most distinguished among them were the Mazāhiru'l-`Ulūm at Saharanpur and the Qāsimu'l-`Ulūm at Moradabad. See Faruqi, The Deoband School, pp. 23-24.

begun to be narrowed by British judicial initiatives.[146] In a milieu wherein British presence signified a challenge to some aspects of the traditional structure of society, supporting the British would obviously be taken to mean being hostile to the traditional ways of society. This means that however much a man like Sir Sayyid might be opposed to particular British initiatives and reforms relating to Indian society as harmful to the interests or injurious to the sentiments of the local people, his pro-British attitude would, ipso facto be construed as an attack on the `ulamā' 's position in so far as this position was threatened by the consequences of British presence in India. One might even say that even if Sir Sayyid had not fiercely attacked the `ulamā', his pro-British stand could still possibly have been construed as an implicit criticism of their position and hence could have provoked reaction on the part of the `ulamā'. Given, however, that he did, in fact, vehemently denounce them, there was no way that an exchange of bitter polemics could be averted.

Having considered various aspects which seem, in varying degrees, to underlie the `ulamā' criticism of Sir Sayyid, one needs to ask oneself if these were the only reasons involved. In other words, is the entire criticism

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146 Cf.N.J.Coulson, A History of Islamic Law, p. 155; Francis Robinson, Separatism, p. 273; Farzana Shaikh, Community and Consensus, p. 228.

of the `ulamā', and all the bitterness in it, explicable in terms of the various reasons the `ulamā' themselves gave for it? If we were to arrive at a fuller comprehension, the `ulamā' 's criticism would need to be explained not only in terms of their opposition to one or another of Sir Sayyid's activities or attitudes but also, in terms of the consideration that these activities and attitudes had clearly adverse implications for the `ulamā' 's position and role in society, both in the past and in the present. To recapitulate, it has to be considered, for instance, that Sir Sayyid's rationalistic theology was not only a response to the impact of Western ideas but that it also signified an alternative to the traditional theology which the `ulamā' represented. Similarly, if the `ulamā' were hostile to the `Alīgarh movement, their hostility was apart from their suspicions that the students would be exposed to Western ideas or to Sir Sayyid's religious beliefs. It was, perhaps, `Alīgarh, in representing an alternative to traditional education, which threatened their interests. Moreover, cooperating with the British as Sir Sayyid did was an implicit criticism of the `ulamā' who were strongly opposed to them

But while these various activities of Sir Sayyid questioned the `ulamā' 's role implicitly, he also did not hesitate to articulate his criticism of them in explicit terms. In this criticism, as we have seen in chapter two, he virtually blamed the `ulamā' for bringing about the

sorry state in which the Muslim community found itself and questioned their relevance or utility in society.

The `ulamā' 's criticism then, was not only because of their disapproval of Sir Sayyid's particular ideas and activities but because directly or indirectly, these were perceived as threatening their position and interests. This is not to say that had such a threat perception not been there on the `ulamā' 's part, they would not have criticized him. For, after all, 19th century Indian history, as, indeed that of other periods, contains numerous instances of inter-`ulamā' recriminations and polemical exchange. However, it is unlikely that their opposition to Sir Sayyid would have been as intense and with such a considerable consensus if they had not, as a class, been threatened by him. If they did not succeed, their failure was not because they did not feel strongly about the matter but because they were divided among themselves, a fact which seems not to have prevented their common hostile attitude to Sir Sayyid from destroying his movement. But their failure may also have been due to the fact that, their position in society was registering some decline so that their influence on the people's attitudes was, perhaps, no longer as pervasive as it had once been, especially when it was Sir Sayyid and not the `ulamā' who were calling the people to a path which also led to the prospects of material welfare.

CONCLUSION

This study has sought to explicate the problem of the relationship of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan with the Indian `ulamā' from the perspective of each of the two parties involved. This relationship was one of extreme unfriendliness, involving sharp mutual criticism and an exchange of accusations. An effort has been made in the foregoing to document, and analyze the nature of Sir Sayyid's criticism of the `ulamā' and the grounds on which he tried to base or justify it; the `ulamā' 's criticism of Sir Sayyid has also been studied. Further, one of Sir Sayyid's more elaborate responses to criticism on him, which was published as an article in the Tahzību'l-Akhlāq, has also been translated as an appendix to this thesis. This article sheds interesting light on Sir Sayyid's relationship with the `ulamā', as viewed from the former's side.

It has been one of our main contention in this work that, as criticism of the `ulamā' suggests, Sir Sayyid seems to have been not merely pointing to certain faults in the `ulamā' 's activity, but rather denying the validity of their role in society and the relevance of their activities. To him, therefore, the fact that new madrasas were being established in India in the latter half of the nineteenth century was not merely distasteful but unacceptable. He regarded these madrasas to be the

stagnating influence of the `ulamā' on society and as one of the factors in Muslim decline in India. He regarded the madrasas -places where the `ulamā' operated, and from where their influence disseminated contributing to perpetuating Muslim decadence and a threatening modernist initiatives such as his own. As an obstacle to Sir Sayyid's conception of how the community should modernize and adapt itself to changing circumstances of life under British rule, and therefore as a threat to his vision of the future of the community, the `ulamā' were also a threat to Sir Sayyid's own reform movement. For not only could they, through their campaign against it, perhaps thwart or even destroy the movement, but also by continuing to uphold and propagate their traditional concerns, they could negate the purposes which Sir Sayyid's movement espoused.

On the other hand, the criticism of the `ulamā' directed at Sir Sayyid has to be understood not merely in terms of what the `ulamā' themselves alleged as the reasons for it. It is important also to consider that the implications of much of Sir Sayyid's reformism, as brought out in the second chapter of this thesis, (over and above his direct criticism of the `ulamā'), left little room for the latter's role in society. In view of such a stance--both stated and implied--of Sir Sayyid, a severe reaction on the part of the `ulamā' should hardly occasion surprise.

It may be observed, that whether it was the `ulamā' 's criticism of Sir Sayyid which provoked his rejoinders which in turn called forth further criticism from the `ulamā', or the other way around, is a question which is of rather minor interest. For, as suggested, Sir Sayyid's movement-apart from what the `ulamā' considered unIslamic in his religious ideas-had concomitants, e.g., an educational institution not just rivalling but intending to replace traditional madrasas. This change, detrimental to the `ulamā' 's interests, which would have been criticized in any case. Similarly, Sir Sayyid's criticism of the `ulamā' was based not on their having criticized him, but on his regarding them as an obstacle to reform and modernization: his criticism, therefore, would seem to have been equally inevitable.

The following points, involving a broader perspective, may also be noted. First, it is, of course, not just in India that modernization was perceived by the `ulamā' as a threat to their position. The same was true e.g., of Egypt in the 19th century where `ulamā', otherwise largely indifferent to modernizing developments in society, reacted strongly when such developments threatened their own position or privilege.[147]

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147 Cf. Daniel Crecelius, "Non-Ideological Responses of the Egyptian '`ulamā' to Modernization", in Scholars, Saints and Sūfīs: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East since 1500 A.D., ed., Nikki Keddie, (Berkeley, 1972), pp. 167-209.

Secondly, it is a well established fact that very often in Muslim societies, opposition to a person, institution, movement, or idea, tends, whatever its actual basis, to be expressed in religious terms.[148] A religious justification for such opposition, or its expression in a religious idiom, does not, however, necessarily make it religious in motivation and content. So far as the `ulamā' 's opposition to Sir Sayyid is concerned, the relevance of this insight is clear. In order to adequately understand and interpret this opposition, there is no need then, to go beyond explanations in terms of purely religious/theological reasons for the `ulamā' 's opposition; and to try to unravel some of the socio-political underpinnings of the phenomenon in question.

In concluding this study, it remains to make some observations on two further questions: what was the impact of the `ulamā' 's opposition on Sir Sayyid's reform movement; and why did the `ulamā' remain rather unsuccessful in the sense of not being able to crush this movement out of existence.

The answer to the first question can, perhaps, best be attempted with reference to a subtle analysis of some related matters offered by David Lelyveld,[149] and what

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148 On this point, see Patricia Crone and M. Hinds, God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the first centuries of Islam, (Cambridge, 1986), Chapter 2.

149 David Lelyveld, "Disenchantment at Aligarh: Islam and

follows is essentially based on his article. Sir Sayyid had initially sought to make provisions at `Alīgarh for the study of Islam at an advanced level alongside similar provisions in the secular sciences. He seems to have wanted not only to enable all students to think critically in religious matters by teaching a new syllabus of religious subjects, but also to train some genuine Islamic scholars who would be grounded in secular disciplines. In both ways the need for the traditional `ulamā' could effectively be eliminated. The implementation of this vision presupposed, however, that the religious sciences would be taught at the elementary and the advanced levels in a drastically new or unconventional manner and would, quite probably, bear the mark of Sir Sayyid's ideas on religious matters. This arrangement was unacceptable to many of Sir Sayyid's colleagues, members of the select committee which he had convened in 1872 to study the problem of Indian education. These members feared that because of its religious experimentation, the proposed College would be so discredited that the entire venture might fail. In the event, therefore, the innovative religious vision Sir Sayyid had for his College came to be abandoned: elementary religious education of a conventional and quite superficial order remained to give `Alīgarh some legitimacy as a Muslim institution of

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the realm of the secular in late 19th century India", in Die Welt des Islams, 22(1982), pp. 85-102.

learning; and in addition to its rather conservative and unambitious contents, the imparting of this traditional learning remained in the hands of those conservative `ulamā' who were willing to serve at `Alīgarh. The aim of instilling a critical, self-conscious attitude towards religion, or of producing religious scholars, had to remain unfulfilled. It can be said, therefore, that the conservative opinion in society, and even some of Sir Sayyid's colleagues, forced a major compromise in so far as the nature and manner of religious instruction were concerned. Since it was the `ulamā' who represented and typified this conservative sentiment, it appears that it is to their actual or potential opposition that the above mentioned compromise should ultimately be attributed. This compromise would seem, therefore, to be the principal impact which conservative opinion, or the `ulamā' 's threat to `Alīgarh had on Sir Sayyid's reformism.

As for the second problem, namely the question of why the `ulamā' 's opposition could not damage him or his movement more than simply forcing the compromise noted above, several possible answers can be suggested. That Sir Sayyid had to or was willing to make compromises with his conservative opponents on certain matters, as presently noted, is of course one reason. His being able to co-opt certain scholars who belonged to the ranks of the `ulamā' or carried some influence among them, e.g., Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā`īl, Maulavī Muḥammad Ansārī, Maulavī

Muḥammad Akbar, Maulānā Muḥammad Sulaimān, and Shiblī Nu`mānī etc.,[150] would also have contributed to establishing `Alīgarh's credibility. No less important, the internal conflicts and rivalries among the `ulamā' meant that despite a shared opposition to Sir Sayyid and his movement, they remained unable collectively even to try dealing a decisive blow to his activities. Part of this inability was no doubt also due to the fact that as remarked in the second chapter, the `ulamā' in late 19th century British Indian society were, due to the changing circumstances, experiencing some diminution in the authority and influence they had once enjoyed in society. Finally, one needs to take account of the consideration that Sir Sayyid's movement, as embodied in the `Alīgarh College, held out the promise of material benefit to British Indian society, by making its graduates eligible for respectable employment. The appeal of the Aligarh movement, therefore, was not just the rather abstract one of being receptive to modern ideas but was also an eminently practical one, viz., in terms of opening avenues leading to economic betterment. The `ulamā' could offer nothing to match such an appeal. It is not very surprising therefore that their opposition to Sir Sayyid did not prove to be as deadly as it could otherwise have been!

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150 See Lelyveld,"Disenchantment at Aligarh", pp. 94, 96, 97.

APPENDIX

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān's Response to the `Ulamā's Criticism on Him

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(197)[152]
I seek refuge with the Lord
And Cherisher of Mankind,
The King (or Ruler) of Mankind,
The God (or Judge) of Mankind,
From the mischief of the Whisperer (of Evil),
Who withdraws (After his wisper),
(The same) who whispers
Into the hearts if Mankind,
Among Jinns and among Men.[153]

It is our opinion that when various ideas circulate, these should be left at the discretion of the people rather than being defended by their advocates. But our friends suggest that it does not suit us to observe

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151 The following text is a partial translation of Sir Sayyid's article "Dāru'l-`Ulūm-i Musalmānān ke Mukhālifīn", published in Tahzību'l-Akhlāq, 10 Safar, 1290 A.H./1873 A.D., and reprinted in Maqālāt, vol.10, pp. 197-217. This article was written as part of the fund raising campaign for the proposed `Alīgarh College. It is marked by the polemical tone which accurately reflects the polemical milieu in which it was produced. In reading this article, the following two caveats should, however, also be kept in view. First, given the need to defend his position against heavy attack, some of Sir Sayyid's statements here may not accurately reflect reality (cf., e.g., his statement that he has nothing against the traditional madrasas). Secondly, it is to be noted that some of his ideas about advanced religious education at Aligarh, to which he alludes in this article, never materialized (on this latter point, see the Conclusion of the present thesis). Despite these qualifications, this article, being translated here for the first time, remains a document of great interest, reflecting Sir Sayyid's perception of and his answers to the opposition from the religious and conservative circles to his proposed College, and by implication, to his reform movement as such.

silence at the opposition raised by different people concerning the Dāru'l-`Ulūm.[154] Therefore, we are compelled to write, otherwise "causing pain to a friend is unwise and its pentinence is not easy".

As far as we have seen the writings and letters of the people who oppose us , we have found seven kinds of people opposing `Alīgarh College.

FIRST: The evil spirited and the evil-minded: they are those who link all our hard work and struggle, which to our knowledge we are doing for the sake of our community, to our selfish motives. They say that (198)whatever we do, we do for the recognition of our name and popularity and to cultivate our influence with the British government in order to deceive them (the Government).

But we say that if this defect of ours and our base desire seems to have motivated us to work for the betterment of the Muslim community and if the community is benefitted only by our evil-deeds then what is the harm for the community in this.

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152 The numeral in the parentheses refers to the page number of the Urdu text.

153 al-Qur'ān 114:1-5. This translation is taken from Abdullah Yusuf Ali, The Holy Qur'ān: translation and commentary, (Islamic Propagation Centre International, 1946), p. 1810.

154 The Dāru'l-`Ulūm refers to the `Alīgarh College. Henceforth in this translation, it will be rendered as `Alīgarh College or simply the College.

Those who oppose us are not the ones who can know the secrets of our hearts and weigh our intentions. We do not wish them to judge our intentions; instead, we only wish that they should decide as to whether whatever we say is for their betterment or not....[155]

SECOND: Malicious People. For a long time now, our former friends are angry at our success which God bestowed on us from His kindness and not for our ability. But they should be just in deciding whether it is appropriate for them to be angry with God or with me...Now (199)their egotism and satisfaction of heart lies in taking our deliberate faults, direct all kinds of accusations against us to appease their wrath.

In times like this, something which is even worse has happened (for these jealous opponents). (Even) the foundation of `Alīgarh College have been laid down. Malicious people think that now Sir Sayyid has planned to become a ghost and will be alive even after his death. Only they themselves know the extent of pain and disappointment which this (foundation of College) has caused them. So, what else they have to do now except turning into infidels (kāfir) and weakening the foundation of the College.

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155 In this translation, the four dots indicate that a sentence or more has been omitted. The three dots indicate the omission of only a part of the sentence.

THIRD: Some bigoted Wahhābīs whom I consider as the Jews of this community: their deeds are based on appearances and they consider the learning of English as forbidden (harām), consider it a sin to greet the English and the infidels. They consider it a sin to make friends with them and a virtue to humiliate them or to have contempt for them. They imagine it to be unbelief to be kind to them. If they happen to shake hands with them, they consider it to be a (religious) duty to wash their hands....Nevertheless, (220)they consider two things as lawful: to work for the infidels so that their deputy collectorship may not be taken away; and do not hesitate, for their selfish motives to go to them to demonstrate their loyalty. I consider unbelief better than this religiosity. I consider Islam as pure light whose reality and appearance is one and the same. I consider sincere love, sincere friendship and sincere sympathy with the infidels and with the whole world as a precept of Islam. The way I believe to have faith in the oneness of God to be the greatest pillar, the same way I consider the brotherhood of mankind the precept of Islamic education, but, however, I do not consider their religion (i.e., the Christianity) as good.

These bigoted Wahhābis are those who are the enemies of the sciences, consider philosophy and logic forbidden. The study of sciences is almost unbelief for them. Therefore, their opposition to the proposed `Alīgarh

College does not surprise us.

FOURTH: Self-conceited or selfish people: they are who exist only to fulfill their own pleasures and selfish motives in this world. They are not concerned with what the world contains. They do not know what it is to have sympathy for the community and (they do not know) what the community's honour means. Their thoughts are only confined to the way they will benefit from helping the people. They consider it to be the greatest stupidity to contribute money for the betterment of the community--but when people (201)point out to them, they get ready to level false accusations against us or against the proposed College, so that they could hide their defects with the sheet of false accusations.

FIFTH: Petty newspaper editors who think that by publishing these kinds of articles (which express hostility towards the movement), the sale of their newspaper will rise by one or two.

SIXTH: Undiscerning people, viz, people who do not distinguish between our ideas relating to personal beliefs and those which relate to the matters of community and do not comprehend the aims we have in the establishment of `Alīgarh College.

SEVENTH: Ignorant Muslims in whose hearts the first five kind of "saints" have put evil suggestions. Therefore,

these Muslims on account of their sincere faith are in a state of vacillation.

Among these seven kinds (of opponents), it is sheer folly to argue with the first five kinds. Because they are not foolish or ignorant but rather have deliberately chosen this opposition in order to serve their selfish motives. Yes, the last two kinds of people are those for whose sake it would be appropriate to write something and, perhaps, it is for the satisfaction of these two kinds that our friends have asked us to write. It will be sufficient for us to expose the stratagems (makā'id) of the opponents with which they deceive the last two kinds of Muslims.

THE FIRST STRATEGY: In the meeting of the committee of the College which was held on 10th February, 1873, a scheme for the method of education to be implemented in the College was put forward and the subjects to be taught laid (202)down. This proposal was formulated a few days before it was put forward in the committee. In order to remove any doubt (about the educational programme) from the hearts of the last two kinds of Muslims, we had published a question in the form of a legal inquiry (istiftā) with the intention of sending it to the `ulamā' of our times to seek their answer. Thereafter, it was published, and has also been distributed (among Muslims). We are copying the text of the istiftā here:

> What do the religious scholars of the divine law say regarding the matter that these days some Muslims have proposed to establish a madrasa for the education of the Muslims in the religious and natural sciences. The sciences that will be taught and the salaries the teachers and students will receive are mentioned in this proposal which with all its details is enclosed with this istiftā. The first question is: whether contributing money towards the establishment and maintenance of such a school, or contributing money by saying that our this money should be spent only on the teaching of such and such a science and should not be spent on teaching of such and such a science is appropriate or not from the view-point of shari`a. The second question is: which of the envisaged sciences are those for whose teaching, it is permissible for Muslims to contribute, and what are the sciences for which it is not permissible for them to contribute?

It is clear to every Muslim that the inquirer has put before the `ulamā' all the details of the educational programme with great clarity and sincerity, without any hidden motives and intentions, so (203)they might answer according to their faith. As a reaction to this istifta the first and second and third kind (of opponents) have published (their own) istiftā in the newspaper of Kanpur, Nūru'l-`Anvār, the text of which is reproduced here:

> What do the religious scholars of the divine law say in the matter that these days a person condemns the madāris like Madrasa-i Islāmiya Deoband, Madrasa-i Islāmiya `Alīgarh, or Madrasa-i Islāmiya Kanpur which teach religious sciences and those which are in auxiliaries to the religious sciences. He wants to establish a madrasa of his own choice which is in opposition to these madāris. And the state of (the religious beliefs) of this man is such that he considers a part of religion hundreds of such things which have been declared outside its realm by the consensus of the religious personages, the tradition of the legists, and by the Prophetic traditions and Qur'ānic verses. Therefore, the Muslims do not trust the deeds and beliefs of this man. Hence, this man

> opposes the religious personages of the past and the present in matters of religion and wants to establish a madrasa of his own choice which will be in opposition to the madrasas of the past and the present, and wants to teach some religious sciences and some natural sciences in his own way. Is it permissible for Muslims to contribute money for this kind of madrasa?

Now we leave this matter to those Muslims who have even a little common sense, to decide whether this istiftā of Kanpur is based on truthfulness, good-intentions, good-faith or is it based on falsehood and accusations. People who have studied our proposal for education must have seen (204)that from the beginning of the education till its completion, the teaching of fiqh, ḥadīṣ and tafsīr etc., and of Islamic theology has been prescribed. For these students some allowances have been proposed. Those who pass the exams in theology and become Maulavīs, for them 50 rupees per month have been proposed so that they achieve a greater excellence in this field. In this proposal, it is specially laid down that the religious books which are chosen to be taught are those generally acceptable to the Muslims of India. Therefore, comparing these proposals to (the accusations of) the istafta of Kanpur, everyone can surely understand whether that istafta was written with truthfulness, faithfulness and good-intentions or not. The religious education which is proposed for this madrasa and the scheme which has been devised for its development has not been proposed for any

madrasa so far--poor madrasas of Deoband and `Aligarh are not counted at all. We do not consider the existing madrasas "bad" for teaching religion; we complain about them on the score that besides religion other things are also taught in them which are nonsensical, useless and are not useful either for the religious or the worldly life. The education system in them is extremely defective which wastes life (of the student). In all this, reforms and modifications should be undertaken. Therefore, keeping in view the state of these madrasas, we do not expect them to achieve any progress and honour for community. To the community they contribute nothing except such students who would live only on public charity. Such madrasas would sustain on the bread of charity and nothing else. Therefore, such an institution should be established which would (205)cause the progress of both the religious and the worldly life and supervise and guard all these unstable and neglected madrasas. Now we should reflect that this "honest" man of Kanpur has interpreted our proposal saying that this man condemns the madrasas of Deoband, Kanpur and `Alīgarh and he wants to teach religious science in his own way. Now, Muslims should themselves decide the honesty, sincerity and good-intentions of the inquirer of Kanpur. This inquirer has pointed out lots of religious defects in us. We accept that we might have those defects. But what is the relationship of these defects with contributing money to

the madrasa. The inquirer should have written that such and such disciplines will be taught at the madrasa and teaching of them is infidelity-therefore, no contribution should be made for teaching of those disciplines. If I have defects and Muslims do not trust my deeds and my beliefs, then, the result should not be what the inquirer has established in the istiftā, but the result should be that the Muslims and the inquirer from the Kanpur himself, if they have some sense of honour, courage, integrity and sympathy for the community, they should come to the Committee meeting and give advice to the members of the Committee to take the management from our hands and place it into other hands. Right now there are 52 members in the Committee and many among them are religious and honest and knowledgeable, and there is no doubt that they will do in good faith whatever they deem fit. If our opponents and the inquirer from Kanpur do this then we are willing to accept it. Otherwise what is the use of (206)idle talking and instigating people and leveling false accusations. Are these things not considered sinful acts or they (the opponents) are intending to go for pilgrimage (hajj) again? The rules for `Alīgarh College have been laid down with such excellence that even worst kind of bigoted Wahhābī can not raise objections against it. In its 20th article this rule has been prescribed that if any person wants to acquire a particular discipline then he can pursue only that discipline. Thus, the bigoted Wahhābī

who considers learning of English as infidelity and considers that the learning of philosophy, logic and natural sciences not permissible, can study only those disciplines and that language which he thinks are permissible. And the bigoted Wahhābī who considers it impermissible to contribute money towards those sciences other then the one he considers permissible to study, then he can contribute money only for those disciplines. Hence, when the rules are laid down with such sincerity and clarity, then the people can think on what basis do the opponents of the `Alīgarh College oppose it.

The `Alīgarh College is not established for the Wahhābīs, or the recluse, or scholars who have abandoned the world but for all Muslims among whom are people with different aims and inclinations. The Muslims who are worldly and want to earn bread and honour in this world and want to be posted at high government offices which is not possible without attaining mastery over English language, for them there are all (207)the English sciences. And those who do not consider it infidelity to study philosophy, logic and natural sciences, for them all these sciences are there. And those who consider all these sciences infidelity and consider only theology and those sciences which are in its support as permissible, then for them these sciences are also there. Therefore, apparently except for their evil nature, there is no other reason to be known for opposition to the College.

THE SECOND STRATEGY: It is true that on a number of issues we disagree with the Muslims. We do not accept imitation taqlīd. We prefer to have faith in religion after investigations rather than accepting it as a tradition. Similarly there are many other cultural and religious issues with which, or with the exposition of which, we do not agree. we do publish and will continue to publish our ideas in Tahzību'l-Akhlāq and we will publish them. Our opponents, to deceive the ordinary Muslims, deliberately confound these religious issues with the `Alīgarh College. (208)Suppose my beliefs are not pure; but I am not the one to teach at the College. On the recommendation of the committee only those teachers will be selected whom you consider to be good... Then, how is my disbelief related to the establishment of the College. The religious books that will be taught at `Alīgarh College will not be written by me. These will be those very Munabba and Qudūrī, and Hidāya in which Muslims have faith. Then what have my words and writings to do with the College. Tahzību'l-Akhlāq has nothing to do with the College or the Islamic Committee. It is a journal which is separate from it; in fact it was brought out before the Committee was appointed. It has been brought out by a few special friends at their personal expense. They publish in it whatever they want to. Even if we suppose that in it, only those things are published which amount to

infidelity and apostasy, you must explain how this is related to the establishment of the College....(where) (209)only those beliefs will be cultivated and only those books will be taught which general Muslims recognize....

THE THIRD STRATEGY: Our opponents hide the entire proposed scheme of the Committee and deceive people by saying that whatever money is collected through contributions will be invested on interest and promissory notes will be bought (by them) and it is on account of popularizing this (false notion) that Muslims consider it a sin to contribute money--in this (matter) the opponents have spoken partial truth, but have mixed some lies with it. All Muslims of India know that Shāh `Abdu'l-`Azīz had issued a fatvā on the lawfulness of taking benefits on promissory notes and on the basis of this fatvā, hundreds of Muslims have promissory notes on which they take benefits and consider it permissible; the Shī`a Muslims do not entertain even the slightest doubt in the lawfulness of it. But yes, there are Sunnī Muslims who consider the interest on promissory notes to be usury and un-permissible. The Committee has permitted to buy both land and promissory notes with this contribution money and has laid down a rule that the money contributed by a person who lay down that his money should not be used in buying promissory notes but only for buying land, would be used only for buying land. For this kind of contribution separate registers are maintained...Therefore not to give

money, on the pretext of usury (210)is to hide one's flaws of mean-spiritedness and absence of sympathy for the community. And our opponents prolonging this topic and extending it, and crying usury! usury!--is sheer false pretence for instigating people. Otherwise every honest person can know that if he does not want his money to be spent in buying promissory notes then it will never be spent in buying them.

THE FOURH STRATEGY: We published one particular opinion in Tahzību'l-Akhlāq concerning how the students in the College should live and be trained. In the beginning of this article we have said that concerning these matters whatever rules will be laid down, will be laid down by the suggestion of a Committee of Muslims.... and whatever we have said (in that article) is only our opinion. Our opponents, in order to deceive people have deliberately spread the idea that these opinions are to be enforced in the proposed College. This is an absolute lie and accusation. If the Committee members do not like them even one of them can not be enforced. My opinion alone against the opinion of 51 existing members or of the members of that Committee...But But without doubt, the way other members have a right to express their opinion, I also have a right to express mine, although only that approved by the majority of members, will be instituted.... (211)After knowing the truth, every sincere man will realize how false and contrary to the facts is whatever is

written by our opponents in this context or on any other matter relating to the College. What really surprises (me) is that even while associating my personal matters and my particular opinions with the College, had they not made any additions to (my statements) or censored any word of it, it would have made sense but what they have done is that they have tampered with the words and distorted its meaning and (by doing this) have gone one step further than the Jews. Now we have no alternative but to repeat whatever we had originally said in our opinions: In that article, we had expressed the opinion that students will have choice in their dress except that they will have to wear a black (212)long gown and red Turkish cap which is also worn in Rome, Arabia and Syria and now this cap is associated with the Muslims of Turkey. This opinion of ours has been described by these liars as (imposing on students) wearing of English dress and coat and pants. If you reflect honestly which Muslim does not wear such a gown and considers it unpermissible and takes it to be English coat....It is so surprising that wearing of... angrakhā, Laknavī or Banārasī topī[156] is absolutely permissible but black gown...is considered unacceptable. Our second suggestion was that each students will have to wear socks and English shoes. This suggestion has been described by our opponents as our wanting to turn all

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156 These different parts of a dress have been adopted by the Muslims of India from the Hindu culture.

students into Christians. Irrespective of whatever has been said, we say that (you) go to each town and city and see that how many Muslims and their children wear English shoes and none considers them bad (i.e., irreligious). Therefore, if we have also suggested wearing of English shoes (by our students) then (213)what crime have we committed!...Now, every sincere person will realize that all this brawling of our opponents is based on their evil nature rather then any truth. Our third suggestion was that all students should eat at one place and the style of eating should be either the style of the Turks who eat at the table or the style of the Arabs who eat on floor... This thing was expressed by our opponents as eating with forks and knives. But however they express this opinion of ours, we like this style (of eating) and will surely give the same suggestion in the Committee meeting. If our suggestion is rejected by the Committee members then we can do nothing but in our heart we will say that its a pity that the members themselves are in need of education. The fourth suggestion which created such tumult was that the life-size portraits of those people who have greatly supported this madrasa, should be kept in the madrasa, for everlasting memory. It is true that this has nothing to do with principles of education and the establishment of the institute and right now, we are not concerned with the fact whether it is permissible or unpermissible. This is just a matter of personal liking. I like pictures. I keep

pictures in my house.... But if the members of the Committee do not (214)allow me to keep them there, I will bring them to my house and keep them there. There is nothing to quarrel over that and then it nas nothing to do with opposing madrasa.... There will be hundreds of Muslims who must have photographed themselves with great fondness. Even our old friend the honourable Ḥājī Sayyid Maulavī Imdād `Alī Ṣāḥib Bahādur, deputy collector, Kanpur, inspite of so much piety, has also, very courageously, got his picture made, which hangs in our room in an excellent frame. Then what crime did we commit if we suggested to keep pictures in the hall of the madrasa.

THE FIFTH STARATEGY: Those people who mislead people (the Muslims) by saying that all this (plan for College) is in the air. This much money will never be collected and this madrasa will never be established. Therefore, it is useless to contribute money to it. All this is there as long as Sayyid Ahmad is alive, after that who cares to do all this...It is true that nothing is possible without a large amount of money...But one should be just: (215)does the cure of such condition lie in making efforts together and becoming one soul and body in trying to collect money; or does it lie in misleading people saying that there is no use contributing money, for it is not possible to collect this much money?

THE SIXTH STRATEGY: They tell people that in this madrasa the new sciences of the English infidels will be taught. They want to make us leave the sciences which our fathers and grandfathers had been studying. This pretence of theirs is partly true and partly false. The person who has read the proposal and the pattern of education, he would very well know that we want to teach only those religious sciences like hadīṣ, tafsīr and fiqh etc., which our fathers and grandfathers have been studying. We also want to teach only that Arabic which our fathers and grandfathers have been teaching. Yes, undoubtedly, the worldly sciences which we studied before, we do not consider them useful in this age. In fact, we do not consider them sound and on this account, instead of these worldly sciences, we want to teach other worldly sciences which are useful for this age and whose knowledge is necessary to make man, truly human and whose ignorance makes even an educated man of our community a stupid person. In our opinion, the progress of a nation, respect of a nation, and prosperity of a nation, is dependent on the knowledge of these sciences. Further, these sciences alone are the source of livelihood, no matter whether they enable securing a government job or business or of adopting any profession. Therefore, it is in order to popularise these sciences that the establishment of `Alīgarh College is proposed. So, undoubtedly, this thing (study of modern sciences) is incurable. Therefore, if

Wahhābī or ignorant Muslims are angry on account of (216)teaching of these sciences which will be taught in this madrasa and on account of this they are reluctant in either helping or contributing money, then let them remain content with this stupidity for them. We do not regret if we do not receive money from such people. Such kind of people are like animals. Do we expect the animals to help us in (the establishment of) `Alīgarh College. Oh my friends! You should reflect deeply that this College is made for the benefit of our community and to spread the light of knowledge among them and to enlighten them and to cultivate in them the highest level of capabilities, culture and decency, so that, they too, like the other respected nations, attain honour. We will prove to be very incompetent and dead-spirited if, out of the fear of our opponents, we give up this high purpose of ours. You think for a while that if we gave up this high purpose of ours and turn this College into another bleak madrasa like the madrasas there are in the indigenous ("Asian") system of education, then it is possible that we become famous but we would not have done any good to our country and to our community, in fact, we would have done extreme enmity and we would have deepened the darkness and we would have thrown the blind man into a well. Supposing, we do not succeed in our quest, and, on account of the bigotry of the leading Wahhābīs, the efforts of the traitors of our country and the endeavors of our opponents, or (on account

of) the stupidity, ignorance and foolishness of Muslims, such a College as we want is not established....we will have no regrets. For our duty is only to strive, its (217)success or failure is not in our control. We have to only do our duty, "To me belongs only the making of an effort; its fulfillment comes from God alone".

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