

**THE ROLE OF RELIGIO-POLITICAL ELITES IN PAKISTAN
MOVEMENT: A POLITICAL CASE STUDY**

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The major objective of this article is to focus attention on the endeavours of those sections of the Ulema who played a critical role in promoting the cause of Indian Muslims through mobilization of masses in support of the Two Nations Theory and the demand of a separate Muslim state for Indian Muslims. In this connection we can identify distinctly three groups of Ulema: (i) Ahl-e-Sunnat (Brailvi), (ii) Ahl-e-Sunnat (Deobandi), and (iii) Shia. The dissident group of Deobandi Ulema led by Moulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani.

THE BRAILVI GROUP OF ULEMA

This group of Ulema derived the inspiration from the writings, speeches, ideas and works of Imam Ahmed Raza of Braili. It is popularly called Brailvi school of thought in opposition of Deobandi school of Moulana Husain Ahmed Madani and his predecessors. They differ from each other in respect of ideological orientation, religious views and attitude towards the political destiny of Indian Muslims. The Brailvi school articulates popular version of Islam in contradistinction with the puritanical and fundamentalist approach of the Deobandis.

Examined in the sense of the historical perspective, the Brailvi school like Deobandi school had established chain of religious seminary (Deni Madaris) all over India both in urban as well as rural areas. Contrary to the votaries of Deobandi school the followers of the Brailvi school were successful in mobilizing the

mass opinion in sustaining the popular beliefs, rituals, values and creed of mystical orders. At the same time they had come out in support of the Two Nations Theory and demand for separate Muslim homeland as espoused by the All India Muslim League.

In the historical context the Ulema of the Brailvi persuasion were the vanguards of the War of Independence of 1857 which can rightly be described as the prelude to the Muslim struggle for seeking a separate political identity for themselves in the post 1857 era. In this connection the names of some of the most prominent leaders may be mentioned here:

1) Moulana Fazl-e-Haq Khairabadi, who was imprisoned in Andaman; (2) Mufti Inayat Ahmed Kakorvi; (3) Moulana Kifayat Ali Kafi; (4) Shaheed Muradabadi; (5) Moulana Syed Ahmed Ullah Shaheed; (6) Moulana Faiz Ahmed Usmani; (7) Moulana Wahaj Uddin Muradabadi; (8) Moulana Rasool Bakhsh Kakorvi; and (9) Mufti Sadar Uddin Dehalvi, etc.

The crux of the political ideology of the "Brailvi" sharply focuses on their anti-Hindu and anti-British stance. This is evident from the writings and speeches of Imam Ahmed Raza, the chief exponent and founder of the Brailvi school.¹

Imam Ahmed Raza was a staunch opponent of the British colonial rule and had refused to accept or recognize the British rule. This is proved by his personal conduct when he refused to appear before the court and once while refusing to appear in utter violation of the contempt of court rule, he made a categorical statement that how could he appear before a court which he did not recognize as legitimate. Consequently Imam Ahmed Raza neither served in any position or office under

British rule nor gave any religious verdict in favour of British rule.² On the other hand, he had always emphasized that Indian Muslim should preserve their separate identity as Muslim Millat and hence eschew mixing up identity either with the Hindus or the British.

During the first World War, the Indian politics had taken a new turn, when both Hindus and Muslims joined a common front against the Allied powers including the British in sympathy with the Khilafat of the Ottoman Empire. The allied powers were conspiring to demolish the empire and abolish the Khilafat which in fact symbolized political and religious unity of the Ummah. The Indian National Congress led by Gandhi took advantage of the situation for mobilizing Indian masses toward the goal of attaining national independence from the British colonial rule and at the same time seek the support of the Muslim masses for the nationalist cause. Thus, Gandhi started his famous non-co-operation movement against the British Government.

At this juncture, the Indian Ulema were divided into the advocates of **Hindu Muslim Unity** and **Non-Cooperation Movement** and other belonging to the Brailvi school opposed such a move as is obvious from the following statement of Imam Ahmed Raza:

"What kind of religion it is to eschew friendship with the Christians and submerge themselves wholly with the infidels".³

In this connection it may be noted that Imam Ahmed Raza Brailvi outlined a blue print and prescribed course of action for the Indian Muslims in his speech during the Patna session in 1897. It was in this speech he very clearly mooted the **Two Nations Theory** and continued to support the same until his death.

Perhaps, it may not be out of place to briefly mention here the leading figures among the Deobandi Ulema who were deadly against Imam Ahmed Raza and his followers both in theology as well as politics. Moulana Mehmood-ul-Hasan, Mufti Mohammad Kifayat Ullah, Moulvi Ahmed Saeed, Moulana Hussain Ahmed Madani and Moulana Abdul Kalam Azad, etc.

They have generally been described as the leaders of the nationalist Muslims. However, here it may further be pointed out that a section of the dissident Deobandi Ulema had preferred to charter an independent course of action and came to support the Two Nations Theory and demand for a separate Muslim state. In 1923 the fundamentalist revivalist Hindu groups launched a massive movement of reconversion of the Muslims known as "**Shuddhi Movement**", threatening the religious solidarity of Muslim Ummah. In sharp reaction, the Ulema of Brailvi laid the foundation of **Jamaat Raza-e-Mustafa** (seeing blessings of the Holy Prophet PBUH). At the same time they organized **Ashrafiya party** and the **Society for Servants** of the Muslims Saints. Their purpose was to counteract Hindu movement by propagating Islam among the Muslim masses.

Although, right from the beginning the Brailvi school had advocated their religio-political programme of action, from 1925 onward they adopted more aggressive attitude. It was at this time that the foundation of "**Al-Jamiat Aaliyah Al-Markaziyah**" (The Supreme Court Party). Moulana Syed Naeemuddin Muradabadi was nominated as chief organizer and Peer Syed Jamaat Ali Shah was its president. The major objective of this party was to create political awareness among the masses and to achieve economic wellbeing of the people alongwith the propagation of the teachings of Islam. In

1930, Allama Iqbal delivered his presidential address at the annual session of the All India Muslim League in which he mooted the idea of a separate homeland for Muslims of the subcontinent. The Deobandi Ulema and the Congress had launched a vehement opposition against the Two Nations Theory and a demand for a separate Muslim homeland. It was during this period that the Ulema of the Brailvi persuasions initiated an aggressive movement to counter-act the designs of the Deobandi Ulema and congress party. In this connection one may mention the efforts of **Al-Sawad-Al-Azam**, a monthly magazine projecting the views of the Ahl-e-Sunnat (Brailvi) took bold steps to present exposition of the political stand of the Brailvi school in a forthright manner. This magazine under the guidance of Moulana Naeemuddin Muradabadi carried on the campaign in defense of the Two Nations Theory and a separate Muslim homeland. They also pleaded vigorously for a separate electorate and constitutional reforms. Thus on the occasion of the annual session of **All India Sunni Conference** held in 1935 at Badayoun it's president Peer Syed Jamaat Ali Shah in the course of delivering his presidential address had observed:

"It is not your bounden duty to demand enactment of Qazi Act, [Muslim Judges] so that decisions in the courts are taken in conformity with the Shariah (Islamic Law). It is not true that the Islamic Laws relating to divorce, Khula, Blasphemy, Inheritance, Marriage, Gift etc. are being flagrantly violated and debased. Who else than the Ulema can assess the nature of such violations?

In order to achieve this goal, huge financial resources are needed. Is it not proper and timely proposal to set up "Bait-ul-Maal" (Religious Fund) and whether or not such a proposal is in conformity with Islamic Law? How long are you (the Ulema) going to lie in isolation within your four

walls? I earnestly appeal to each and every Aalim that this is not the time to sleep within your four walls! As government cannot function without levying taxes similarly the organization of a Millat will remain merely a dream without Bait-ul-Maal. It is imperative for you to take advantage of the existing constitution and legislation to achieve your objectives. The only practical way is to ensure effective representation in all councils. For this purpose the separate electorate is the only guarantee for your effective representation. It would be fatal for us to give up our demand for a separate electorate. Go to the councils and seek protection of your rights and seek legislation of Islamic Law. Safeguard the Auqaf (religious trusts), save Mosques and Mausoleums from the clutches of the enemies".⁴

Perhaps it may not be out of place to mention the names of those Ulema, who had played a vital role in the Pakistan Movement. Moulana Shah Abdul Aleem Siddiqui and Moulana Abdul Hamid Badayuni had joined the Muslim conference. Both of these Ulema participated in a meeting at the home of Moulana Shoukat Ali. They decided that the All India Muslim League would take part in the general elections as the sole representative of the Indian Muslims.⁵

Again in 1941, at Ludhyana **Pakistan Conference** was convened under the presidentship of Mawlana Abdul Hamid Badayuni. He made a fervent appeal to the Muslims to support the All India Muslim League. The text of his presidential address was published in the form of a pamphlet by the Nizami press India and the same was distributed throughout the length and breadth of the sub-continent among the Muslims.⁶

Moulana Badayuni undertook a whirlwind tour of different parts of India and made impassioned appeal to

Muslims to vote for All India Muslim League. On the request of Peer Saheb of Maanki Sharif the Quaid-e-Azam instructed him to visit the NWFP for mass contact.⁷ In this province the Khan Brothers were the deadliest enemies of the Muslim League. Even there was an attempt on his life. Consequently in the referendum the All India Muslim League was successful and the NWFP continued to be an integral part of Pakistan. On this occasion the Quaid-e-Azam conferred upon him the title **Conqueror of the Frontier** (Fateh-e-Sarhad).⁸

Later on, a delegation comprising Moulana Shah Abdul Aleem Siddiqui and Moulana Abdul Hamid Badayuni went to the Saudi Arabia with the purpose of explaining the Two Nations Theory and demand for Pakistan to the Muslim world.⁹

Another scion of the Brailvi school Moulvi Syed Shah Misbah-ul-Hassan in his presidential address at the Sunni Conference held in the year 1946, at Phaphoond highlighted the efforts of the Ahle Sunnah in galvanizing Muslim masses in support of the Muslim League.¹⁰ It was due to the participation of the Brailvi Ulema in the Pakistan movement that the All India Muslim League was successful in rallying Muslim masses under the dynamic leadership of the Quaid-e-Azam. Consequently during the elections of 1946, All India Muslim League emerged as the sole representative of the Indian Muslims and was successful in attaining the goal of Pakistan as an independent Muslim State.

In the same year another conference was held in Banaras in which a resolution was passed to the effect that they would continue to press the campaign for Pakistan even though the Quaid-e-Azam might abandon

it.¹¹ In elaborating the stand of the Ahle-e-Sunnat (Brailvi) Moulana Syed Mohammad Muhaddis Kachochvi had emphasised that the Brailvi Ulema gave unqualified support to Pakistan movement simply with the hope that in the new Islamic state the Quranic teachings would provide the ideological foundations.¹²

During the another conference of Ahle-e-Sunnat held on 8th June, 1946, Moulana Syed Mohammad Mohaddis Kachochvi re-iterated their stand that the demand for Pakistan should be articulated unceasingly with a view to confront those elements who vehemently opposed the partition of India and creation of Pakistan.¹³

In the course of their vigorous campaign in support of the All India Muslim League they were confronted with the forces which had opposed the ideology of Pakistan. They had to argue with the Muslim leaders of Congress such as Moulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Ulema of Deobund led by Moulana Hussain Ahmed Madani, the Ahrar led by Moulana Ataullah Shah Bukhari, the Khaksar of Allama Inayatullah Mushraqi, the Unionist of the Punjab and the Jamat-e-Islami of Moulana Abul Aala Moududi.¹⁴ All these elements were in the forefront of opposing the cause of Pakistan.¹⁵ The Ulema of the Ahle-e-Sunnat (Brailvi) were most successful in defeating their nefarious designs through their public utterances and speeches.

However, on the other hand, it may be noted that the anti-Pakistan Ulema mentioned above were united among them in their opposition against the All India Muslim League, fervently advocated preserving a united India. It is in this context that Moulana Amjad Ali in the course of his speech delivered on the occasion of the anniversary of Imam Ahmed Raza observed on June 23,

1946:

"The efforts of the Sunni Conference were successful. Once again we declare that Muslims should not support the Congress candidates [during the forthcoming elections]. The Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind led by Moulana Hussain Ahmed Madani has launched a massive campaign in support of All India National Congress. Similarly other groups like Ahrar and Khaksar are advocating the Congress cause. We appeal to all the Muslims that they should not become the prey of their malicious propaganda.¹⁶

Another devout advocate of Pakistan, Moulana Abdul Hamid Badaayuni on the occasion at the Lahore session of the Anjuman-e-Nomaniya held in 1946, exhorting Muslim masses, said:

"Pakistan is now question of life and death for all Indian Muslims, either we should attain Pakistan as a separate homeland for Muslims of India or we shall perish. Now the moment for the final decision has come. We have resolved to demolish all obstructions in the way of achieving Pakistan".¹⁷

Thus it is clear that during the course of Pakistan movement, the Brailvi Ulema stood by the side of the All India Muslim League and their support to the Muslim League was unconditional. Perhaps it may not be wrong to say that these Ulema were most successful in infusing a spirit of patriotism among the Muslim masses. From this angle it is hard to distinguish between the All India Sunni Conference and All India Muslim League as they reinforced each other in support of the "Two Nations Theory" and the demand for Pakistan.¹⁸ These Ulema (Brailvi) had tried to present to the Muslim masses Islamic rationale for espousing the cause of Pakistan. They believed that in a separate homeland for Indian Muslims a new social order would be established. The teachings of Islamic Law based on the Quran and the

Sunnah would become the foundation of the Muslim community. In this manner, these Ulema had abundantly proved that their efforts were not confined only to religion and theology but they could also launch political movement as well.

Thus on the occasion of the annual session of the All India Muslim League held in Lahore on 23rd March, 1940, Moulana Abdul Hamid Badayuni in support of Lahore Resolution delivered his historic speech.¹⁹

Therefore it may be concluded that Pakistan came into being with the joint efforts of the Quaid-e-Azam and his colleagues and the Sunni (Brailvi) Ulema.²⁰

PAKISTAN MOVEMENT AND THE SHIA COMMUNITY

In order to fully appreciate the contribution of the Shia religio-political leaders it is necessary to keep in mind the Shia attitude in contrast with the Sunni view. Therefore, they emphasised on the distinctly two different categories of Ulema:

1. Aalim: who is well-conversant with Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence), philosophy, Tafsir, (Quranic exegesis), logic and Hadith and who has full knowledge of the problems of Islamic Law; and
2. Mujtahid, one who, in addition to the knowledge of Islamic sciences is capable of seeking solutions of problems (Istanbat) in the light of the basic four sources (Adilla-e-Arbaa). They are described as Mujtahid and it is the Mujtahid, according to the Shia creed, who is the sole and the final authority to interpret the Quranic injunctions.²¹

The Shia community had organized a national forum known as "**All India Shia Conference**" for the purpose of protecting their rights and for promoting welfare of their community. The Shia conference did noble work by establishing Shia college and orphanage.

At the same time with the growing political awareness among the Shia community its political wing known as the **All India Shia Political Conference** was organized in 1929 at Lucknow.²² However, due to the machinations and manoeuvrings of the All India National Congress, the Shia-Sunni controversy was waged. As a result the Shia Sunni *riots* took place in different parts of the country. Consequently, both communities nominated their respective candidates during the elections.²³

In opposition to the activities at the All India Shia Political Conference and Shia Conference. Moulvi Abdul Shakoor Kakorvi had organized "**The Madh-e-Sahaba**" (praise for the companions of the Prophet) to counter-act the Shia propaganda. The religious edicts were issued to condemn "**Aza Dari**",²⁴ and "**Tazia Dari**",²⁵ led to Shia Sunni (Deobandi) riots in 1907 at Lucknow, hot bed of Shia-Sunni controversy. It may be pointed out here that in the earlier period the traditional harmony between the Shia community and Ahl-e-Sunnat (Brailvi) continued inspite of the conflict between the Shia and the above said Ulema of Deobandi persuasions. As a result of "Madh-e-Sahaba" (Public acclaim of the companions) and Qadh-e-Sahaba (public denunciations of the companions) the Shia Ulema became aggressively active. In self defence they organized "**Shia Razakar**" (Volunteer force). On the other hand, the Shia community generally came out in support of Pakistan Movement alongwith other elements.²⁶ But the Shia Mujtaheden kept themselves aloof and remained silent in respect of Indian politics. However, this implied their quiet acquiescence. The proof of this lies in the fact that the prominent Shia Muslim Nawabs and Land Lords under the dynamic leadership of Raja Shaeb of Mehmoodabad were mobilized to support All India Muslim League and the demand for Pakistan.²⁷

Among the Shia Ulema more prominent was Moulana Syed Najmul Hasan Karrarvi who played a significant role in mobilizing mass support for the Muslim League in NWFP during the course of referendum.²⁸

A former student of Shia religious institution known as Sultan-ul-Madaris at Lucknow and Moulana Sheikh Jawwad Hussain alumnus of the same institution took part in Pakistan Movement under the banner of the All India Muslim League.²⁹

Moulana Syed Ghulam Hasan Kazmi Al-Mushhadi started publication of a weekly "PAKISTAN" which closed down for unavoidable circumstances in 1938.³⁰

Allama Raza Husain Rasheed Turabi was the most prominent stalwart figure during the Pakistan Movement. Alongwith Nawab Bahadur Yar Jang took leading role in the Pakistan Movement from the platform of the All India Muslim League and Ittehad-ul-Muslimin (The united Muslim front).³¹

In the province of NWFP Moulana Sheikh Jawwad Husain Sadrul-Afaazil (chief of the religious scholars) alongwith the prominent League leaders, Khan Abdul Quyyum Khan and Khan Malik Rahman Kiyani took a leading part through his speeches in order to counteract the anti-League activities of the congress and the Red Shirt leader, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his followers.³² Similarly, another Shia Aalim Allama Ibn-e-Hasan Jarchvi had joined the All India Muslim League in 1935 and since then he had continued to take active part in support of Two Nations Theory. It may not be out of place that the Quaid-e-Azam had chosen him as the representative of Shia Ulema and Moulana Shabbir

Ahmed Usmani as the representative of the Sunni Ulema to appear before the "Cripps Mission 1946" to explain the religious basis of the Two Nations Theory and the demand for Pakistan. He was also a member of the working committee of the Muslim League.³³ Thus, Shia Ulema (Waizeen) carried on the campaign for Pakistan throughout the entire Indian subcontinent.³⁴ In nutshell the Shia religio-political leaders were in the forefront of Pakistan movement.

JAMIAT ULEMA-E-ISLAM (DEOBANDI SCHOOL)

The leading organization of the religious scholars of the Deoband known as **Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind** (The Association of Ulema of India) had been the allies of the All India National Congress. They believed in preserving a united India based on treating the Indian people as a united nation. They were an staunch opponent of the British colonial rule in India. Therefore, they were of the view that first we should attain freedom from the British colonial rule and thereafter both the Hindus and the Muslims should live in a mutual harmony on the basis of fairplay, justice and proportional representation with effective weightage and constitutional guarantees for the Indian Muslims.³⁵

In the face of growing intensity of the League — Congress conflict, Moulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani of Deoband a dissident from the Jamiat Ulema Hind, declared his unequivocal support for the All India Muslim League. He took a prominent part in organizing a religio-political organization known as **Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam** in opposition to Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind of Moulana Husain Ahmed Madani.³⁶

The foundation of this organization was laid in 1945 at the most critical moment in the history of Muslim struggle in India. Its first session was held in Calcutta

in the same year which turned out to be a grand success. Due to his illness Moulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani could not grace the conference but sent his message exhorting the Muslim populous in general and the Ulema in particular to join the All India Muslim League in support of the **Two Nations Theory** and demand for Pakistan. This message was read before the conference. His message made a salutary impact upon the audience. The participation of Moulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani in the struggle for Pakistan went long way in diffusing the popular support of the Indian Muslims and the religio-political scholars for All India National Congress and their nefarious designs.

Moulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani was joined by Moulana Zafar Ahmed Ansari³⁷ and Moulana Tahir Usmani in the League campaign for Pakistan.

Allama Shabbir Ahmed Usmani organized the conference of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam at Merrut. In the course of his presidential address the Moulana vociferously exhorted the Ulema and the Muslim masses to give full support to the All India Muslim League.

Again in 1946 Moulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani organized another conference on the theme of **Hamara Pakistan** (our Pakistan). In his presidential address he reiterated his appeal to the Ulema and the Muslim masses.³⁸

In conclusion it may be said that different sections of the Ulema were successfully mobilized to support the All India Muslim League, the Two Nations Theory and the demand for Pakistan. As a result of their support the pro-congress religio-political organization Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind of Deobandi Ulema was completely isolated and had little impact on the Muslim

electorate during the general elections of 1946. This resulted in the massive victory of the All India Muslim League who were successful in giving absolute majority in the central legislature. Of course this was the harbinger of the creation of Pakistan as a separate homeland in the year 1947.

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