

*ROLE OF RELIGIOUS AND
CULTURAL SYMBOLS IN
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19th century was a period of social and religious awakening and the growth of a new spirit leading to socio-religious movement. These movements with regional difference, were more or less identical in character, because the focus was on the socio-economic and religious uplift of the society. These movements produced a multifarious intellectual expression of social and cultural transformation.¹ In majority of the cases religion was the basic guiding source.² Wahabi Movement was also primarily a religious³ or puritan Islamic movement.⁴ It was a period of travail and transition when the medieval society was dying and the new modern age was yet to take its place.⁵ It was also a political movement aiming at the liberation of India from the English and other infidels.⁶

As noted in the preceding chapter, an unprecedented atmosphere of terror and awe prevailed in Haryana during our study period. There was a strange quietude silence all around which one usually noticed not in human habitats but in grave yards. So demoralized and dehumanized the local people had become that despite the worst type of tortures, sufferings and all that no whisper was heard from any quarters. The European officials were “hazur-mai-baps, next to khuda”. It is surprising indeed that a popular movement – the Wahabi Movement opposing the ‘Zalim-be-iman and kafir Sarkar’ could come up in such an atmosphere.

Wahabism made its appearance in India in the early 19th century as a religious reform movement and attacked the “religious corruption”. In Hindustan it had a special appeal, as many of the converts from Hinduism had brought over into their new faith ideas and practices which were contrary to the spirit of Islam. The Wahabis branded all other Muslims as idolatrous because of the practice of visiting the tombs of the saints and

¹ Heimsath, Charls H., *Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform*, Princeton, 1964, P. 3

² Narayan, V.A., *Social History of Modern India 19th Century*, Meerut, 1972, P. 5

³ Allen, A.J., *The Cambridge Shorter History of India*, Delhi, 1958, P. 717

⁴ Powell Price, J.C., *A History of India*, New York, 1958, P. 545

⁵ Spear, Percival, *Twilight to Mughals* Cambridge, 1951, P. 11

⁶ *Research Journal Arts and Humanities*, Vol. VI, No. 1, Kurukshetra University, P. 98

appealing to them in emergencies which the Wahabis identified with the practice of pre-Islamic pagans.⁷

The Wahabi Movement was started by Syed Ahmad, (1786-1831) of Rai Barally in 1820⁸ to revive and restore Muslim power in India by bringing about the overthrow of the Sikhs in the Punjab and the British in Bengal. In the beginning a socio-religious movement aimed at improving the life of Muslims. After some time however it also acquired political content emphasizing that every Wahab should try to establish Muslim raj. No true Muslim they were told. It was but natural that Wahabs became enemies of the raj. This movement was originally started in Arabia by Muhammad-Ibn-Abdul Wahab (1707-87) got its inspiration from Imam-Ibn Taimiya of the Hanbali, a school of Muslim theology.⁹

Syyaid Ahmad had come under the influence of Abdul Aziz son of the famous saints of Delhi, Shah Waliullah (1702-62)¹⁰ who had preached similar views though less vehemently, about half a century earlier. But unlike Abdul Wahab of Nejd (1703-62), founder of the sect known after him as the Wahabis, Waliullah's Islam was more comprehensive, richer and more flexible and retained a marked Sufi colouring. In his Islam there was room not only for the Sunnis but also for the 'Shias' who quite contrary to the practice of the Wahabis, follow various Imams. But there was hardly any difference as regards the ends, pure Islam must be re-enacted and regenerated, society must again be mighty. By this time the Indo-Muslim Society had been reduced to the lowest level, particularly in the political fields, where the power had passed on to the Sikhs in the Punjab and the British in Bengal. Hindu power had revived itself in Western India. The movement for Islamic regeneration expressed itself in two directions against internal decay and abuses in society and resistance to end, even fight against infidel rulers.

Syyaid Ahmad belonging to the latter militant group which, in pursuance of their objectives, took up arms first against the Sikhs, whose country Punjab lay between his place and the British raj and then against the British. Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab

⁷ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Edited by James Hastings, Vol. XII, P. 62

⁸ Hunter, W.W., *The Indian Musalmans*, Comrade Publication, Calcutta, 1945, P. 3

⁹ Majumdar, R.C., *History of Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1971, P. 117

¹⁰ For detail see-Palgrave William Gifford, *Narrative of A Years Doing Through Central and Eastern Arabia 1862-63*, 2, Vol. Macmillan and Company 1866, PP. 285-95

offered them a resolute opposition. Syyaid Ahmad had established a regular system of apostolic successors, the movement did not lose its vigour.

Shariatullah (died in 1837) also began with religious reforms denouncing the superstitions and corruptions which had developed in the Muslim Society, but he proceeded further and declared the country under British occupation to be "dar-ul-harb, where Friday and festive prayers need to be held."¹¹ He gave it a political character. He was highly venerated for his piety and exemplary life, and in short time gathered around him a band of devoted followers-disgruntled peasants who had grievances against their landlords and idle craftsmen who were thrown out of their industries. His great achievement was that the apathetic and careless Benagali peasant was roused in to enthusiasm.¹²

His son, Mohammad Mushin known as Dubhu Mian (1819-60), was more politically minded. His main purpose was to unite the cultivators against the tyranny and illegal exactions of landlords. He forced Muhammadian 'ryots' to join his sect on pain of excommunication from the society of the faithful settled their disputes, administered summary justice and punished any Muhammadan, Hindu or Christian, who without first referring matters to him, dared bring suits for recovery of debts etc. in the Munsif's court. He made an attack on the levying of illegal taxes by 'Zamindars' and declared that all the lands belonged to God and no one had the right to demand any taxes. The activities of 'Dudhu Main' however united the Zamindars and indigo-planter against him.¹³ He was charged with plunder in 1838, committed to session for murder in 1841, tried for trespass and for unlawful assembly in 1844 and for abduction and plunder in 1846. But no evidence and witnesses against him. He was, however, arrested in July 1857, after repeated complaints from the 'zamindars, and confirmed in Alipore Jail as a state prisoner.¹⁴ He died at Bahadurpur on 24 September, 1860. While Dudhu Main was leading movement in Faridpur and adjoining district, Mir Nasir Ali, known as Titu Mir or Titu Main of Chandpur a pupil of Saiyed Ahmad whom he had met at Macca in 1822¹⁵

¹¹ *Journals of Research Asiatic Society*, Bengal, 1894, P. 48

¹² *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. III, 1893

¹³ Such as formation of Jamiats or Maths to help the peasants against Zamindars, assertion of the equality of mankind persecution of those who did not believe in his doctrines etc

¹⁴ *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. III, P. 58

¹⁵ *Chander is in East Pakistan*

was preaching Wahabi doctrine at Barasat in 1827.¹⁶ His reformatory zeal, however, alienated the hanafi peasantry and the Zamindars who tried to suppress the movement.

A crises occurred in June, 1831 when Krishan Ray, a Zamindar imposed a tax of Rs. 2/8 upon each of his tenants professing to be a Wahabi and collected it in one of his village Purna. A riat occurred in the adjoining village of Sarafarajpur and the follows of Titu Mian and the Zamindar, were involved in an open affray. The Wahabis marched on to Purna, for *Jehad* and murdered a Brahman priest, slaughtered two cows and sprinkled the blood on the Hindu temples, plundered the shops. They declared that the British Raj was over and proclaimed their sovereign power as the hereditary right of the Muhammadans which had unjustly been usurped by the Europeans.¹⁷ Titu Mian was killed in action, and his Lieutenant, Ghulam Rasul, with 350 followers was taken prisoner. Gulam Rasul was later on sentenced to death and 140 of his comrades were condemned to various terms of imprisonment.¹⁸

In 1822, he made a religious journey to Mecca and having thus completely covered his former character as a robber beneath the sacred garb of a pilgrim, he returned in October of the 1822 A.D. by Bombay.¹⁹ On his way back to Northern India, he enlisted a vast turbulent following²⁰ in his native district of Bareilly and in 1824 made his appearance among the wild mountaineers of the Peshawar Frontier, preaching a Holy War against the Sikh towns of Punjab.²¹

The Sikhs most aggressive of modern Hindu races at that time ruled the Punjab and the Apostle assured the fanatic Musalman borderers that those who survived would return Laden with booty, while those who fell would be translated in a moment to heaven as martyrs of the faith. On the 21st December 1826 A.D. (The 20th Zamadi-ul-Sani, 1241 Hijra) the Jihad, against the infidel Sikhs begins, Meanwhile the holy man's emissaries carried the call to war throughout all the cities of Northern India where he had made

¹⁶ Barasat is Near Calcutta

¹⁷ Majumdar, R.C., *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance, The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. 10, P. 886, Bombay, 1963, P. 886

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Hunter, W.W., *Ibid.*, P. 5

²⁰ Maulvi Walayat Ali, Maulvi Inayat Ali, Maulvi Murhum Ali and Maulvi Furhat Hussan, Besides Shah Muhammad Hussain as Chief Priest

²¹ Hunter, W.W., *Ibid.*

disciples and the above proclamation is taken from a tract published in the far inland province of Oudh.²²

A fanatical War of varying success against the Sikhs followed. Both side massacred without mercy and the bitter hatred between the Mussalmans crescentaders and the Hindu Sikhs lives in a hundred local traditions. The Muhammadan's burst down from time to time upon the plains, burning and murdering wherever they went. On the other hand, the bold Sikh villagers armed enmasse beat back the hill fanatics in to their mountains and hunted them down like beasts.

In 1827 the prophet led his bands against one of their entrenched Camps, and was repulsed with great slaughter. But the low land general dared not followed up his victory. The fanatical bands fell back across the Indus in to the mountains and so increased their fame by guerilla successes, that the Sikh chief found himself compelled to buy the alliance of the very tribes who had been foremost in the raids.²³

In 1829 the lowlanders trembled for the safety of Peshawar itself, their Frontier Capital and the Governor. (He was a Muhammadan But the mere creature of Ranjit Singh) basely attempt to put an end to the war by poisoning the Prophet. This rumour inflamed the zeal of the Muhammadan highlanders to a red heat. They burst down in fury on the plains, massacred the infidel army, and mortally wounded its general. Peshawar was only saved by a force under Prince Sher Singh and General Ventura. The prophet's influence had now spread as far as Kashmir, and troops from every discontented Prince of Northern India flocked to his camp. In spite of a reverse in June 1830 the Sikh Army under skillful Lieutenant named. General Allard and Hari Singh Nalwa, occupied the plains of overwhelming force and before the end of the year, Peshawar itself, the Western Capital of the Punjab had fallen.²⁴

He proclaimed himself Calipha and struck coins bearing the legend. He entered upon an ill-advised effort to reform the marriage customs of the highlanders, who practically sold their daughters in wedlock to the highest bidder, and as his Indian followers had left house and home, and were without wives, he issued an edict that every

²² The Targhib-UI-Jihad, an incitement to religious war by a Maulvi of Kanauj, official proceedings 1865, Hunter, W.W., *Ibid.*, PP. 6-7

²³ Hunter, W.W., *Ibid.*, P. 8

²⁴ Hunter, W.W., *Ibid.*

girl not married within twelve days should become the property of his Lieutenants. The tribes rose and massacred his Hindustani retinue and the prophet himself narrowly escaped.²⁵ But his reign was over, and in 1831 at Balakot on May while aiding one of his former Lieutenants who had set up for himself, the prophet was surprised by a Sikh army under Prince Sher Singh and slain, and the Peshawar was re-captured by the Sikhs.²⁶

The sudden death of Sayyid Ahmad was a great blow to the movement in fact he had already created a well-knit organization from Dacca to Peshawar,²⁷ but it must be said to the credit of the Patna 'Khalifas', that they not only kept it alive but made it even more vigorous in a few years time. This was mainly due to the wonderful organization evolved by the Wahabis in India. To remove the immediate danger of despondency among the followers, Vilayat Ali gave out that Sayyid Ahmad was not killed but had only disappeared and would appear again at the proper time to lead the army of the 'faithful' to victory.²⁸

The Wahabi 'Cliphah' in India now selected Maulvi Nasiruddin²⁹ as Commander-in-Chief who was to march through Tonk and Sindh and join the Wahabis at Bonair. He however remained at Sindh where many recruits from Hindustan joined him. He assisted the ruler of Kabul, Dost Mohammad in his fight against the British. The internecine troubles which arose among the Sikhs after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh gave an chance to the Wahabis, who were able to gain control over a large extent of territory along the left bank of the Sindhu etc. These conquests were however short lived. But after the establishment of the British authority in the Punjab in 1847, the Wahabi leaders and their troops surrendered to the British at Haripur.

1857

The Wahabis did not play a conspicuous role in the rising of 1857. The Wahabis had also a feeling that these disturbances were a matter concerning of sepoys only. When the great revolt of 1857 took place the Wahabis had already been working for about three decades. Taken as a concerted military challenge the movement of 1857 was the most

²⁵ From *Panjtar to the Valley of Pakli*, Hunter, W.W., *Ibid.*, 10

²⁶ Hunter, W.W., *Ibid.*, P. 10

²⁷ *Records of the Government of Bengal*, Paper No. XLII, PP-72, 103, 130, 132, 134 Quoted by Chaudhuri, S.B., *Civil Disturbance During the British Rule*, Calcutta, 1955, in India P-51

²⁸ Majumdar, R.C., *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, Vol. 1, Bombay, 1963, PP. 888-89

²⁹ Nasiruddin was the nephew of Abdul Aziz, Saint of Delhi, *Proceedings Foreign Department Secret* 10 July 1839, No. 21

formidable single challenge faced by the British empire in India. In its overt manifestation it was a sudden irruption the result no doubt of a long standing and varied discontent-sharp and short in its existence and ending in a trial of blood and fire.³⁰

The Wahabi Movement on the other hand was a more sustained struggle spreading well over half a century and passing through varying degrees of intensity and activity during the course of its existence. This too had its share of active battles waged against the British but these were unlike the swift and sudden uprising of 1857 based on a well organized and widespread network of political activities and other side the leaders of the Wahabis such as Muhammad Hussain and Ahmadullah had been put behind bars, communications with Sitana were cut off due to disturbed state of affairs, and forts across the Sindhu were zealously guarded, making it impossible to have any communication with their centre at Patna.

The Wahabi Movement since its very inception was strongly influenced by the theory of Hijrat³¹ which envisaged that the struggle against the British was to be carried on from outside by a sort of Provisional Government established in a territory outside British India. It, therefore, laid great emphasis on migrating from British India territory and founding a separate and independent principality. The war was then to be waged as between two separate and independent governments. Undoubtedly, there was a widespread civilian support to the rising, which was spear headed by the army units and particularly in the Shahabad area of Bihar and in Oudh the movement assumed the proportion of a national rebellion, yet primarily it was a revolt from inside.³²

The indirect influence of the Wahabi Movement on some aspects of the other one is also significant. The Wahabis with their compact organization covering the whole of Northern India, their secret calls in the Indian Army Units and their contacts in various princely states. The Wahabis had also a feeling that the rising of 1857 "a matter of sepoys" only. But this does not mean that they had reconciled themselves to the British, in fact they were "the first to spread, if not to originate, the idea of greased cartridges

³⁰ Sen, S.N., 1857, Delhi, 1857, P. 402

³¹ Ahmad, Qeyamudin, *The Wahabi Movement in India*, Calcutta, Mukhopadhyay, 1966, P. 217

³² Dutta, K.K., *Biography of Kunwar Singh*, Patna, 1957, PP. 112-113

amongst the sepoys at Barraekpore and according to District Superintendent of Police on special duty Mr. Reily³³, the story had its origin in the Misre Ganj Masjid at Calcutta.³⁴

In the time of Syyaid Ahmad Bihar was a most active center of Anti-British activities William Taylor who was the Divisional Commissioner of Patna from 1855, a farsighted English officer in Bihar and he had been persistently warning the Provincial Government of the gathering momentum of the anti-governmental activities in the town. He invited the Wahabi leaders, Ahmadullah and Muhammad Husain, with some other local citizens for consulting and then treacheriously put the Wahabi leaders under arrest.³⁵

The most striking characteristic of the Wahabis, according to Taylor “was the entire subservience which, “they yield to their Pir”. He decide to “take possession” of Wahabi Leaders, more as hostages for the good conduct to the whole brotherhood. The arrest of these leaders certainly upset the Wahabi arrangements for transmission of money to the frontier as a result acute privations prevailed. But Taylor was wrong in his assertion that this act with held the Wahabis from joining in the revolt of 1857.

The local Wahabis organized an armed rebellion but it was suppressed with the aid of military. At Hyderabad the Wahabi leaders, Turrabaz Khan and Alauddin led an attack against the British Residency but were defeated. Turbbaz Khan was shot dead while Alauddin was deported to the Andmands. Dr. Wazir Khan, supposed to be a Wahabi was at the head of rebels was besieged the British garrison at Agra fort. At the trail of Bahadur Shah, General Bakhat Khan, the leader of the mutineers at Delhi, was also described as a Wahabi and it was stated that the Wahabis came to the capital in large numbers from Jaipur, Bhopal, Hansi, Hisar to join the mutineers.³⁶

Infact the Wahabis as a community did not identify themselves with the revolt.³⁷ If the Wahabis in the frontier and the Punjab had decided to cast their lot with the leaders of the revolt, Lawerence would have found it difficult to denude the Punjab of European troops. But in fact frontier party of the Wahabis under command of Inayat Ali constantly fought against the British during revolt.

³³ Reily, J.H., He was later on promoted as Deputy Inspector General of Police

³⁴ *Proceedings Home Judicial*, September-December, 1872, P. 3252

³⁵ Kaye and Malleon, *History of Sepey War in India*, Vol. III, London, 1872, PP. 83-84

³⁶ *Proceedings of the Trial of Bahadur Shah*, Calcutta, 1895, PP. 176-77

³⁷ Sen, S.N., 1857, Delhi, 1957, P. 248

Sitana camp was a source of chronic anxiety to the British. From 1850-57, the English Government sent no less than 16 expeditions to destroy the rebels and their allies but with no great success.³⁸ An expedition had to be sent under Sir Sydney Cattan with 5000, men in 1858 to chastise the rebels, and the Sitana lands were made over to the mountain tribes on condition that they would not allow the 'fanatics' to pass through their territory to commit depredations within British frontier.

Maqsud Ali died in 1861, and Abdullah, son of Wilayat Ali, succeeded him as a leader of the Wahabis in Sitana. Abdullah vigorously pursued the anti-British campaign, urging the Muhammadans to leave the country and join the forces of Islam for the conquest of India. Ahmadullah, who managed the affairs in India, sent up a large number of recruits and money through the various agencies, which will be narrated in the section on organization. Several tribes as well as the Akhund, the actual name of the Akhund (or the religious chief) was Abdul Ghaffar. He was born in 1794 and belonged to a comparatively unknown family. He was a popular religious leader in Yusufzai and Swat area. He associated himself with Syed Ahmad during the early phase of the Wahabi Movement, but subsequently, during 1857-58, he was rather cold and unhelpful towards the Wahabis, of Swat who governed a population of one lakh, made a common cause with the Wahabis, who recovered their old settlement of Sittana in July 1863.³⁹

The Punjab Government in a note recorded its views that these fanatics were no harmless or powerless religiousists that they are a permanent source of danger to our rule in India.⁴⁰ The British Government sent several expeditions to crush the rebels, the most important expedition of the British against the Wahabi was in 1863, October under Sir Neville Chamberlin (commanding 7,000 infantry and a train of mountain artillery). The British army advanced in to the Ambeyla Pass but could not make headway to the Chumla valley, due to the stubborn resistance offered by the Wahabis and their allies. All British efforts to dislodge the rebels from their positions failed, and they were repulsed with heavy casualties.⁴¹ The Wahabis even captured a picket and drove the British force

³⁸ Hunter, W.W., *The Indian Musalmans*, P. 23

³⁹ Hunter, *Ibid.*, P-30, John, Adya, Sitana, *A Mountain Campaign on the Borders of Afghanistan in 1863*, London, 1867, P. 18

⁴⁰ Hunter, W.W., *Ibid.*, P. 39

⁴¹ John, Adye, *Ibid.*, P. 51

back with a loss of 114 men, besides officers killed and wounded.⁴² Subsequently, the Wahabis took another British picket which could only be retaken after a severe battle in which the British General was wounded. The situation became desperate for the British and Neville Chamberlin sent down a telegram asking for “as many troops as could be spared”.

At this stage General Garvock, took over the command and pushed forward at the head of 9,000 troops,⁴³ he defeated the rebels near Laloo and again at the foot of the Bonair Hills. The confederacy of the tribes was broken through diplomatic tactics and it facilitated British advance to the rebel village of Mulka, 35 miles from Sitana, which was burnt down but only two houses were actually burnt. After these campaign, the British decide to crush the Wahabis once for all. But for this it was necessary to go to the roots of the movements which lay not in the mountains in the North-West, but in the plains down below. Accordingly a systematic campaign was undertaken for this purpose, which gave meaningful clues of the existence of a network or organization of the Wahabis throughout Northern India.⁴⁴

The Wahabis met this force too right gallantry and compelled the British General to war. We much need reinforcement. I find it difficult to meet the enemys attack. This is urgent. The needful was done and in December 1863, when his position had improved, he defeated the Wahabis. The Punjab Govt. summed up the result of the campaign this. On no former occasion has the fighting in the hills been of so serve or sustained a character.⁴⁵

Haryana

Haryana was an important center of the Wahabis activities, with its headquarters located at Thanesar (Kurukshetra). Robert Montgomery, Judicial Commissioner of Punjab report that the Muslims of Patna and Thanesar were in correspondence with the

⁴² Hunter, W.W., *Ibid.*, P. 35

⁴³ According to Hunter, The Rebel Forces including Those of the Tribal Chiefs Amounted to 53,500 while a Muslim Chronical estimates them to be 64250

⁴⁴ *Bengal Government Records*, Vol. 45, PP. 120-40

⁴⁵ Hunter, W.W., *Indian Musalmans*, *Ibid.*, PP. 19-30

64th Native Infantry near Peshawar and urged it to revolt.⁴⁶ Haryana region was one of the major centers of its activities. Some of the disgruntled Muslim 'Zamindars' joined it.⁴⁷

One Muhammad Jafar, Alias Peeru Khan was Disciple of Vilayat Ali of Patna,⁴⁸ the headman of Thanesar was the leading light behind the whole show. Thanks to his efforts the organization had its branches opened at almost every big town in the region Karnal, Panipat, Jhajjar, Hisar.⁴⁹ It may be pertinent to know a little more about Zafar before we try to understand the movement. Who was this man? How did he join the movement? How did he carry on his work? Fortunately, we have full information about this man and his activities. He was born at Thanesar on Feb., 23, 1838 in a Muslim family of poor means. On the top of it he lost his father, the only working hand in the family, when he was not yet 12; Though not a sapient boy, he learnt some Urdu from a local 'Maulvi' and took to the job of a petition writer under the guidance of a relative (1856). He had a facile pen which made him successful in his avocation before long. He earned a lot of money and began to be counted among the wealthy persons in the town. After some time he got official recognition, too, when he was made a 'Lambardar' (village headman).⁵⁰

Jafar also had very strong streak of religiosity in him. He said his five namazs regularly and did other religious duties very carefully. He did not like corrupt and vulgar practices that had come to Islam. And probably this explains why he was attracted towards the Wahabi movement under the influence of an itinerant Wahabi preacher.

Zafar was popular among his people, hundreds of people joined the new movement under his spell. Impressed by his organizational skill, piousness of life singular sincerity and burning zeal for the regeneration of the fallen community, Syad Ahmad appointed him 'Khalifa' or the official incharge of the Wahabi activity in the north-western region upwards of Delhi.⁵¹ Zafar, on his part, as already noted, spared no

⁴⁶ Malik, Salahudin, *The Punjab and the Indian Mutiny*, Journals of Indian History, Vol. I, Part II, August 1972, P. 346

⁴⁷ Rizvi, S.A.A., *Ideological Background of Wahabi Movement in India in the 18th and 19th Century*, Delhi, 1968, P. 109

⁴⁸ Tarachand, *History of Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1967, P. 27

⁴⁹ Hunter, W.W., *Ibid.*, PP. 77-79

⁵⁰ Muhammad Jafar, *Kala Pani*, PP. 80-81, Yadav, K.C., *Modern Haryana: History and Culture*, Manohar Publication, New Delhi, 2002, P. 122

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

pains to justify his selection to this honourable post. He helped the 'freedom fighters' on the North-West Frontier by supplying them with men, money and material. Not only that in some of the frontier wars he was personally present on the scene and fought in actions. Commanding on the fighting capability of Zaffar, Hunter says, "Even in the unwanted work of fighting his force of character made him conspicuous."⁵²

Surprisingly Zafar's activities went on unnoticed by the British government for many years. But in 1863 as ill luck would have it, these were exposed.

There is an interesting story as to how all this came about⁵³ one day, in May 1863 it so happened that one Ghazzan Khan, a junior Police Official, posted at Panipat chowki (District Karnal), while on his round, found some strangers proceeding southwards along the G.T. Road. Smelling something foul, the police official got in to conversation with them, worked himself in to their secrets and elicited that they were Bengali luminaries on their way back to their native province to arrange for the forwarding of fresh supplies of money and men to fight against the British infidels. They invited the Ghazzan Khan also to join him. The official at once arrested these men and took them to the police station. They were tried by the extra assistant Commissioner, Ambala, who found nothing wrong with the peaceable way farers consequently, they were set free.⁵⁴

Ghazzan Khan chose to take the acquittal of these persons as an insult to his honour and he took a vow to prove the correctness of his charge. He at once sent a letter to his village committing his son in the name of family honour to go to the North-West Frontier and to collect information pertaining to the network of the Wahabi organization which had spread throughout India. The faithful son obeyed his father and at once set out to fulfil his mission. He joined the Wahabis at Sitana and remained there for some time (about 5 or 6 months) when his work was done he returned to Panipat, made a detailed report to the effect that there existed a widespread network for transmission of men and money from all over India to the frontier region. Thanesar (Kurukshetra) was one of the main centers of the Wahabi activity and Zafar was one of its chief organizers.

Important centre of Wahabis were Delhi, Thanesar, Ambala, Pehowa, Panipat, etc. some of the noble leaders of Haryana Maulvi Muhammad Qasim of Panipat,

⁵² *Ibid.*, P. 81

⁵³ Hunter, W.W., *Ibid.*, PP. 90-92

⁵⁴ Ahmad, Qeyamuddin, *Wahhabi Movement in India*, PP. 233-38

Hussaini of Thanesar, Muhammad Jafar of Thanesar and Muhammad Shaffi of Ambala, a contractor for the supply of meat to Europeans in all the cantonments from Ambala to Naushera.⁵⁵ They later on also served as a contributing factor in the great conflagration of 1857.⁵⁶

Ghazzan Khan reported the matter to the appropriate authorities with proof the information brought by his son. Accordingly, the Punjab government appointed Parson, the Superintendent of Police, Ambala to make further investigations. Parson raided the house of Zafar Muhammad a lambardar of Thanesar town in Ambala district on the 12 December 1863 (Lambardar was the fiscal representative of a township dealing on its behalf with Governments higher revenue officials) after being supplied with the above information.⁵⁷ He got some letters which referred to Muhammad Shafi, a contractor for supplying meat at Amabala Cantonment, Yahaya Ali, and some other persons from Bihar⁵⁸, Zafar who could for see the result of all these happenings did not think it wise to stay at Thanesar. He immediately left for Delhi and hid himself in the house of Wahabi friend, Bashiruddin. After some time, he left his place also and moved east wards along with Husaini and Abdullah of Patna who were carrying Gold Mohars from Patna to the Frontier. Jafar took the money from Hussani and gave it to another person of the same name of Thanesar with instruction to take it to the Frontier. Jafar himself along with the Hussaini of Patna and Abdullah continued his eastward journey.⁵⁹

The British Government now tried to strike at the root of the movement which was being continuously fed by men and money from Hindustan. Certain correspondence came in to the possession of the authorities which revealed that regular agencies had been set up in India for the purpose. The names of the certain persons and 'aliases' also figured in these letters. The discovery of these facts led to the state trial at Ambala in which 11 persons were charged for attempting to wage war against the Crown and aiding and abetting that war.

⁵⁵ Latifi, Syed Mohammad, *History of the Punjab from the Test Antiquity to the Present Time*, Delhi, 1964, First Pub. 1890, P. 586

⁵⁶ Dutta, K.K., *Biography of Kunwar Singh*, Patna, 1957, PP. 91-92

⁵⁷ Ahmad, Qeyamuddin, *Wahabi Movement in India*, P. 234

⁵⁸ Dutta, K.K., *Ibid.*, PP. 91-92

⁵⁹ Muhammad Jafar, *Tarikh-i-Ajib, Ambala Al-Hizri*, 1302, PP. 3-6, Quat-Q Ahmad, P. 234

In the meantime Shafi and his nephew, Abdul Karim, were arrested at Ambala. The next evening (December, 13) when Parson arrived at Thanesar to arrest Jafar he learnt of his flight. He at once let loose a reign of terror on the family members of Jafar who were severely beaten and humiliated.⁶⁰

The Punjab Police, meanwhile, moved earth and heaven to arrest Zafar. They persecuted all the members of his family. His younger brother who was built a weaker fibre, disclosed the secret of his escape to Delhi. On learning from the younger brother of Jafar that he had fled to Delhi, Parson immediately started from Delhi, taking the younger brother of Jafar with him, one Abdul Ghafur of Hazaribagh a Bengali boy who were present in the house of Jafar were arrested the same night and taken away. Parson at once went to Delhi and visited the house of all the person known to Zafar there. But zafar as noted above had already left Delhi via Panipat on this eastward march. At Delhi he stayed in the house of a co-worker, Bashruddin. Parson got this information also and he sent telegraphic message to different stations on the highway leading to Bihar.⁶¹ As a result Zafar was arrested at Koil (Aligarh) and brought back to Ambala. Zafar's arrested was followed by that of many other Wahabi in Haryana, Punjab and Bihar. The chiefs of whom were Hussaini of Thanesar.⁶²

Hussaini of Thanesar who was deputed by Jafar to take the 'Gold Mohars, to the Frontier was also arrested on his way up at Pipli, the tehsil headquarter of Thanesar. Having rounded up the persons of the Punjab involved in the conspiracy the authorities turned their attention to those belonging to Patna.

Among the papers seized at Jafar's house there were some letters written by two persons belonging to Patna, namely Elahi Bux and Mohiuddin. Hussaini of Patna when arrested with Jafar had also stated that he had been sent by the above mentioned Elahi Bux to deposit a draft of Rs. 2500/- with a person named Alauddin, a shoe merchant of Delhi. The other Hussaini of Thanesari who was arrested at Pipli, was also found to be carrying some 'Gold Mohars' on his person. In the coded language of the letters the 'Asharifs' (Gold Mohars) were referred to as 194 large stones and 96 small (Victoria) stones. The same number of Gold Mohars were found sewn in the coat of Hussaini.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, P. 234

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Dutta, K.K., *Ibid.*, PP. 91-92

These were wrapped in paper to avoid clinking against one another. The number of these 'Gold Moharas' corresponded exactly with the number mentioned in the letter of Mohiuddin to Abdul Ghafur arrested at Thanesar.⁶³

The Punjab Police sent a series of confidential and urgent communications to the authorities at Patna to arrest Elahi Bux. There was some confusion in the beginning about the identity of this Elahi Bux. The particulars given by the Punjab Police did not tally fully with those learnt by the Magistrate of Patna. The Magistrate, to be on the safe side, searched on the 18th December the house of a shoe merchant, named Elahi Bux, living in the city and seized all the papers found there. On inquiry the Magistrate learnt that Elahi Bux was the son of Karim Bux who was also alive. He had gone to Delhi⁶⁴ in poor circumstances on the eve of the 'Mutiny' and returned some time later as a rich man and started a shoe shop in Muchurhatta, Patna city.⁶⁵ He imported shoes from Delhi by taking loans from different local bankers. The profits earned were distributed equally between his bankers and himself. James Alexander, the Magistrate of Patna arrested him and demanded two sureties of Rs. 5,000/- each. Soon after, the Punjab authorities wired that Parsons was himself proceeding to Patna to conduct the inquiries. He arrived on the 10th January 1864.

A large number of letters was found in the house of Elahi Bux which showed that various amounts of money had been sent from time to time by Elashi Bux to Jafar and to different persons in Delhi. Ostensibly for purchase of shoe and other merchandise. The most important discovery among these papers was a letter written by Yahya Ali of Sadiqpur to Fakhruddin of Arrah. The handwriting of this latter was the same as that of the one written by Mohiuddin to Abdul Ghafur, mentioned above. It was thus established that Mohiuddin was no other than Yahya Ali "the chief of the whole sect and a man of much influence".

On the 21st January Alexander and Parsons along with a batch of armed force, raided the Sadiqpur premises and searched the house of Ahmadullah and Yahya Ali.⁶⁶ All the papers, manuscripts and registers found in the house were seized and taken away. At

⁶³ Ahmad, Q., *Ibid.*, P. 235

⁶⁴ Elahi Bux in his own statement said that he and his father had a shop in Arrah (Bihar) which was looted in the 'Mutiny' and afterwards they come over to Patna and set up a shop there

⁶⁵ *Government of Bengal Judicious Proceedings*, No. 122, Dated Oct. 1865 by Ahmad Qeyamuddin, *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Ahmad, Qeyamuddin, *Ibid.*, P. 236

this time Ahmadullah was in Calcutta. Abdul Rahim was also subjected to a searching cross examination which lasted from the morning till the evening. One, Abdul Ghaffar, who was present in the house and who, on being questioned declared himself to be a servant of Abdul Rahim, was also interrogated. He stated that Abdul Rahim, his master, carried on monetary transactions with Elashi Bux in his name. A draft latter was also found in the house of Abdul Rahim which mentioned *inter alia* the name of some persons like Yaqub, Nasiruddin etc., who were known to be in the Frontier. Both Abdul Rahim and Ghaffar were accordingly arrested. These two were remanded to Hajat and after two days sent to jail.⁶⁷

After this two witnesses, Salimuddin and Aminuddin were brought from Dacca. They testified that they had stayed in the Kafla, the Sadiqpur house, on their way to the Frontier and that at Sadiqpur Yahya Ali used to preach the desirability of fighting against the English. They also stated that many others besides them had stayed at the Kafla on their way. On receipt of this information Yahya Ali's bail was cancelled and he was arrested on the 8th February 1864⁶⁸ and put in jail along with Abdul Rahim and Ghaffar. All of them were forwarded to Ambala in March 1864. From March till the end of the Session Trial the prisoners were kept in separate solitary cells measuring 5 feet in length and four in wider with a high roof and a small opening high up in the wall.⁶⁹ The door of this room was opened once in 24 hours when a 'Jamadar' gave the prisoners a pot of water and some bread and dal and the sweeper cleaned the commode. The prisoners were subjected to most inhuman treatment during all this period.⁷⁰

The preliminary committal proceedings lasting over a week were held in the court of Tighe, the Deputy Commissioner Ambala. The Session Trial opened in the court of Herbert Edwards the Session Judge Ambala, was assisted by two Hindoos and two Muslims assessors. In all 11 persons were charged of waging war against the Crown.

Yahya Ali of Sadiqapur (Patna) - 47 years old (He was the youngest son of Elahi Bux, younger to Fayyaz Ali by 10 years. He was of medium height, fair complexion and fat build. He had a small beared and his face bore a few pox marks. He was married to

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, P. 237

⁶⁸ Dutta, K.K., *Bihar Mein Swatantrata Andolan Ka Itihas 1857-28*, Vol. I, Bihar, 1974, P. 94

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Ahmad, Qeyamuddin, *Ibid.*, P. 237

Hamida, daughter of Shah Muhammad Hussain. He accompanied Wilayat Ali to the Frontier on both journeys and returned to Patna after the death of former in 1852. He was a valiant fighter and many stories of his courage in the face of great danger are narrated in the 'Tazkira-i-Sadqa' by Abdul Rahim.

Muhammad Jafar was son of Mian Jeewan 'Lambardar' of Thanesar, a prosperous businessman referred to as Peeru Khan in Code letters age 28 years.

Abdul Rahim of Sadiqpur Patna, age 28 years was the son of Farhat Hussain and was born on the 14th Shabban A.H. 1252 (1836 AD). He had his early education from the various elders of the family, such as Fayyaz Ali and Abdul Hamid etc. After the death of his father and the departure of Abdullah to the Frontier the weight of organizational work at home fell, jointly on Yahya Ali's and his shoulders. Along with the former he was tried in the Ambala case and was imprisoned for life. After serving 18 years of his term his sentences was reprieved in 1883 and he returned to Patna. He prepared the biographical account of the members of his family in 'Tazkira-i-Sadqa' is one of the most important source of Wahabi movement. He dead in 1923.

Muhammad Shafi was son of Muhammad Taqi, meat contractor to military cantonments, prosperous businessman. Turned approverss referred to as Shafaat Ali in code letters.

Abdul Karim was a relative and employee of Muhammad Shafi 35 years old.

Abdul Ghaffar described as a servant of Abdul Rahim. Actually he was a trusted worker of the movement and also a collaborator of the Sadiqpur leaders.

Quzi Mianjan of comercolly distt. Patna. Had several aliases. Very old at the time of arrest. Died in detention at Ambala pending transportation to Andeman.

Abdul Ghafur was son of Shah Ali of Hazaribagh. Twenty five years old. Aarrested in the house of Jafar.

Hussaini of Patna was son of Meghoo, Patna city 35 years old, servant of Elahi Bux.

Hussaini of Thanesar was son Muhammad Bux. He was a lambardar. 25 years old. Had fought under Enayal Ali on the Frontier.

Elahi Bux was son of Karim Bux a shoe merchant of Patna city. Also acted as Ahmadullah' Mukhtar. Turned approver in Ahmudullah's trial. Released in 1865.

The prisoners were charged of being guilty of waging war against the Crown, section (121) of Indian Penal Code, and were first put before Tighe, the Deputy Commissioner of Ambala for drawing up committal proceedings.

The trial went on for a couple of weeks. And then came the judgement, three persons – Zafarkhan, yahya khan, Muhammad shafi, were sentenced to death (2nd May, 1864), others were given transportation for life, properties of all the eleven convicts were confiscated.⁷¹ As we expected, the judgement was taken to the Judicial Commissioner, Punjab, the highest court in the province then for patent hearing in appeal. Much was said on both sides. The Judicial Commissioner, however, confirmed the judgement with a modification - the capital sentences on Jafar, Yahya and Shaffi were changed to transportation for life. (24th August).⁷²

With the exist of Jafar Muhammad, the leading light of the movement and his associates the Wahahbi activities came to cessation in Haryana. Moreover, the attitude of the government was one of strict cautiousness and nobody could dare take to the ‘dangerous activity’ in such circumstances. Thus, the movement met its doom-after 1864.

From February, 1865 when the first batch of the prisoners was transferred to Lahore on their way to the dreaded penal settlement of the Andman Islands, which they reached almost after an year, began a period of nightmarish sufferings and inhuman severities of the prisoners. They were transferred from Ambala to Lahore on the 22nd February, the journey between these two places being performed on foot.⁷³ Abdul Rahim was detained at Ambala for some time in the hope of using him as an intermediary in arranging the surrender of Abdullah and the others on the Frontier. Shafi and Abdul Karim turned approvers and were detained at Ambala and others were transferred from Lahore to Multan Jail in the end of October. During this journey covering a week, the prisoners were seated together on a wooden plank and an iron chain was stretched through their chains from one end to the other so that they could not stand up their seats. Even the calls of nature had to be attended to in this uncomfortably fixed posture.⁷⁴ The total weight of iron handcuffs and chain on the legs of the prisoners during this time was

⁷¹ Hunter, W.W., *Ibid.*, PP. 82-91

⁷² Ahmad, Qemuddin, *Ibid.*, P. 239

⁷³ Tawarik-i-Ajib, Qeyamuddin Ahmad, *Ibid.*, P. 242

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, P. 243

not less than half a maund per head.⁷⁵ From Karachi they were brought to Bombay where they were put in the dreadful Thana Gaol which was situated in an old deserted Marhatta fort. The prison was well known for the severe and harsh penalties inflicted on its prisoners. Only the worst type of prisoners being lodged there. Like Ambala trial and the Patna trial of 1865 against wahabis was a direct sequel of former.

Zafer spent about 18 years in the Kala Pani (Andamans) and suffered a great deal in ways more than one. But as good luck would have it, the government of India released all the Wahabi prisoners in 1880. Zafar immediately rushed to his birth place. Thansar and was released from there in November 1880. He was accorded a warm welcome by his people'. After some time he was shifted to Ambala when he served as a clerks in some office until his death.⁷⁶

As a result of these trials (Ambala and Patna) and other vigorous measures the Wahabi Movement was gradually stamped out from India. The militant Wahabi Movement in the north-western hills almost came to an end, as it was deprived of those resources which had maintained it. Their role in the later expeditions of 1865, 1888 was not a very important one, but the readily supported the hill tribes in their encounters with the British and many of them died on the battlefield. By 1883 the 'Wahabi Movement' had been thoroughly suppressed. It no more represented a political threat the Government of India.

Nature of the Movement or organization

The Wahabi Movement was much better planned, organized and knitted than the Revolt of 1857. The absolute secrecy with which its activities were carried out and the fidelity of its members to one another were remarkable. Syyaid Ahmad, had appointed four Cliphas (Willayat ali, Inayat Ali, Muhammad Hussain, and Farhat Hussain) with a missionary zeal the Cliphas toured country to stir-up the people against the British. After the death of Syyaid Ahmad in 1831, Patna became the centre of the Wahabis. Yahya Ali was the chief priest of Patna (Nominated at this death – bed by Shah Mohammad Hussain who was appointed by Syyaid Ahmad).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Jafar-Kali Pani, *Ibid.*, PP. 104-05, K.C. Yadav, *Modern Haryana: History and Culture*, P. 123

A central committee with Ahmadullah as President and General Manager was in charge of the over-all operations. Its members were Yahya Ali, Abdul Rahim, Abdul Gafur and Illahi Baksh. It used to meet every Friday night after prayers, and discussed all matters concerning the 'Jehad' and the maintenance of Sitana Camp.⁷⁷

Their zeal was intensified from time to time by the visits of itinerant missionaries whose influence was consolidated by the central propaganda at Patna. Among district preachers the names of Mian Jan, Muhammad Ibrahim, Yahya Ali, Abdul Rahim, Ilahi Bakshi (Patna) Muhammad Jafar, Hussain Muhammad Shafi (Thanesar and Ambala) Abdullah, Faiz Ali and Muhammad Ansan (Sittana) deserve special mention. Sadiqpur (The headquarters of the Patna Cliphas) was like a caravanserai where the district missionaries sent up young men for onward transmission to Sittana after giving them training. After a thorough training were sent back to work as missionaries in their own provinces.⁷⁸

Yahya ali, organized a series of rest houses at regular intervals, where these recruits on their way to Sitana, were received by friends who looked towards their softly and comfort. A list had been prepared of these stages and the mosques where the recruits could safely put up, and also of the names of persons who were sympathetic towards the movement, the fresh recruits were required to learn this list by heart before leaving Patna. Regular agencies had been set up at Patna, Banaras, Kanpur, Delhi, Thanesar, Ambala, Amritsar, Jhelam, Rawalpindi, Peshawar.⁷⁹

At Sittana these youngmen were kept under the immediate tutition of the Abdullah (leader), who instructed to the young recruits personally. A few of them were selected as most trustworthy and sent to the plains to work as agents at different stations within the English territory. These agents invariably followed some vocations, such as tailors, book-seller, mullahs, butcher, meat contractor or supplier etc., to deceive the Police. The rest of these young men were drilled daily, sometimes twice a day, reciting songs extolling the

⁷⁷ Hunter, W.W., *Ibid.*, PP. 67-70

⁷⁸ Hunter, W.W., *Ibid.*, PP. 69-70

⁷⁹ *Proceedings Home Judicial*, September-December, 1872, P. 3283

glories of the war with the 'infidel' English.⁸⁰ They were formed in to 'Jamait's' of 130 men each, commanded by 'Jamadar'.⁸¹

Patna was the central office of the Wahabis but they had a permanent machinery throughout the rural districts of Bengal. The earlier 'Khalifas' favoured the efforts of their missionaries to make a permanent settlement wherever the multitude of these converts encouraged them to do so. So a number these settlements grew up in rural Bengal, as for example Islampur.⁸² These district centers kept up a regular correspondence with the headquarters at Patna, and each had its own machinery for raising money and recruits, complete with itself. The local chief, usually a man of piety and some influence, preached rebellion with great force, accustomed the people to a regular system of contributions for the holy war, and forwarded yearly supplies of men and money to Patna for transmission to the Frontier Camp. Besides the usual Muhammadan levy of *Zakat*, the Wahabis imposed on their followers other taxes like – 'Ushr' or a tax of one seer per manud on all produce, 'Mutthia' or a handful of rice put aside for each member of the family at every meal and deposited every Friday with the Mullah or custodian of the village mosque who sold the rice thus collected sale proceeds being given for the war fund, Fitra or the voluntary alms given for deserving persons at the mosques, '*Qurbani Ka Chamra*' or sale proceeds of hides of beasts killed during 'Bakr id'. Later an extra ordinary tax was devised to be realized at intervals as a voluntary donation over and above the regular taxes.⁸³ Another sources of income was the property of Wahabis dying without heirs.⁸⁴

As a rule each village had one tax-gatherer, but in populous villages a larger staff was employed consisting of the '*Din ka Sardar*', who led the prayers and gathered the contributions, '*Duniya Ka Sardar*' or the General Manager who looked after the wordly affairs of the sect and '*Dak Ka Sardar*' who supplied messengers for secret letters and for transmitting the money collected. As Rafiq Mandal village headman (Bengal) was the first man to organize a system for collecting the above taxes. Money was sent to the

⁸⁰ Hunter, W.W., Ibid, P. 65

⁸¹ *Proceedings home Judicial*, September, 27, 1865, Nos. 74-74, P. 75

⁸² *Proceedings Home Judicial*, September-December, 1872, P. 3259

⁸³ *Ibid.*, P. 3254

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, P. 3282

Frontier twice or thrice a year but not regularly, it depended on the requirements and party on the amount collected.⁸⁵

The mode of remittances was partly by 'hundies' (arranged by Abdul Ghafur with Illahi Baksh who produced drafts on Delhi and Ambala) and partly in Gold Mohurs' which were sent through private messengers. The supplies of men and money were thus forwarded through agents at each stage lower Bengal to Patna and then by rail to Delhi and Ambala etc. a distance of not less than 2000 miles. Abdul Ghani's visit to Port Blair to meet the transported Wahabis leaders, Ahmadullah, Yahya Ali and his safe return may well speak for the wonderful organization and planning of this movement.⁸⁶

The British police official also believed to be Wahabis in the Punjab in 1876. They classified the occupation of the Wahabis like some entries in different cities.

In Delhi here 45 entries of Wahabis in under –

'Wahabi' preacher	14
Whole sale hide merchants	11
Importers from Europe	3
Wholesale shoe merchant	8
Whole sale booksellers	4
Delhi college teacher	1
English teacher in Government school	1
Pickle and preserve manufacturer	1
Deputy Superintendent, Canal Department	1
Seal engrave to the king of Delhi	1

3 entries from 'Gurgaon district' are importants –

Maulvis and Itinerant preachers	3
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14 entries from Ambala are very important –

Maulvis or 'Wahabi' propagandists	4
Book seller	2
Munshis	4
Shopkeepers	2

⁸⁵ *Proceedings Home Judicial*, September-December, 1872, P. 3282

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, P. 3255

Naib Tehsildar	1
No occupation given	1

and 26 craftsman and artisans were also listed.

These entries under cultivators, zamindars and jagirdars are unsatisfactory as they given no indication of the size and importance of the holdings. The total figure of cultivators probably gives an erroneous impression of the strength of the 'Wahabis' allegiance among the cultivators of the Punjab.

In general the Wahabis appear to have drawn their support from the literate and 'respectable' lower middle classes of pre-industrial society the ulema, teachers, shopkeepers, skilled craftsmans, minor government servants and small or middling cultivators. In the Punjab 'Wahabism' seems to have had little appeal for professional men or lawyers large land holders or for those with an English education. It should be remembered however that in the Punjab of the 1870s there were relatively few muslims in these social categories.⁸⁷

Terrorists Activities of Wahabis

Justice Norman Officiating Chief Justice of Calcutta high court, who had also heard the appeal in the Patna Trial, was mortally wounded by a Muhammadan, Abdullah on 21st September 1871, in the court premises in Calcutta. Abdullah was supported by some to have been connected with the Wahabis, but a careful inquiry failed to show any grounds for such suspicion and he died on the scaffold, without giving any clue to his motives.⁸⁸

Four months later, in February, 1872 the Viceroy, Lord Mayo, was fatally stabbed at Port Blair, the capital of the Penal Settlement at the Andmans, by an Afgan Sher Ali (Sher Ali Khan is one of the greatest mryters of our country. Why he has been forgotten oblivion. The Governments gaol records testified it even then it is entirely is in oblivion. Non of any historian or politician never endeanous to remember him. Once an English officer asked Sher Ali did you have any accopmplishe in this mission. Sher Ali replied God is with me not any one. Here a short explanation of Sher Ali Khan.

⁸⁷ Public Record, Record Office Lahore, *Punjab Civil Confidential Annual* File No. 210, 28 April 1876 by Colonel H.N. Miller, under Secretary to Govt. Punjab Home Deptt. P. Harday, *Journals of Research Society of Pakistan*, Vol. 1, Part II, PP. 428-32

⁸⁸ Routledge, James, *English Rule and Native Opinion in India*, London, 1878, PP. 75-76

Upon deserted Island a shining eyes, having pleasing personality, a Pathan in under trial, having for the last 3 years awaits Sher Ali. Undergoing life imprisonment who put to death Lord Mayo had stunned to British Empire. Khabber (Darra) a native of the Jamrood, Sher Ali Khan, displayed his calm attitudes for the past three years in the sight of jail officers. The jail administration pleased his works and nature and they gave him the work of Barber. He could move in any island of Andaman or Nicobar. Lord Mayo appointed his officer General Steawart as a Jail Superintendent of the Andman in the 1871. After the six month of his appointment Steawart asked again and again to Lord Mayo to come and observe the dangerous circumstances of the Andaman Islands. On January 24, 1872 when Viceroy's two steamers Glassgo and Dacca, left from the Calcutta port to Rangoon, then a sort of wishpering perhaps Viceroy Mayo came to the Island when he return which did happen.

On the 8th of February both the steamers as soon anchored the port of Port Blair then the royal siren blown, then a gun salute is also performed the echo reached in the ears of Sher Ali, who was having near by "Hope Town Island". He thought that something going to happen. The took up a vegetable knife or Usttara sharpan its edge. He thought in his mind and heart the victim, is come. In a state of restlessness tried to cross the sea lying between the two Islands but unfortunately the tornedo of waves sent him back. On the other side General Steawart had fully prepared to shield security cover of Viceroy.

The programmes and event of Lord Mayo and the Government despalities February 2nd to 19 March, 1872 published in the "pioneer" the news. At about 11 AM the Pilot and Escort mere with the Viceroy. The prisoners were not allowed to go near the Viceroy. Around up to 5 PM Lord Mayo toured 'Ross' wiper and Chanthan Island. After survelliene Lord Mayo, pleadid to view the sunset scene at the top of "Mount Harriat". Still an hour is left and "Mount Harriat" should be seen. The royal sanad and death never changed.⁸⁹

In chaos, for the security cover of Lord Mayo, security performed were dispatched to 'Hope Town'. Along with Lord Mayo a group of officers also reached 'Hope Town' at 5.30 PM. Mule were arranged for Lord Mayo. None were aware of that a

⁸⁹ Das, F.A.M., *The Andman Island*, 1937



Sher Ali Khan Murderer of Lord Mayo (1872)

Pathan prisoner was followed Lord Mayo. They stayed for fifteen minutes at the peak of mount Harriat. What a beautiful scene on seeing the sunset. Lord Mayo, used to say again and again. But he was not aware that his life is no more.

Along with the sunset at 7 PM in the evening darkness have enveloped. The group of Lord Mayo was coming down by staires towards the lounge in the sea. General Steaward was following him whole of a sudden, people witnessed that a man very closely following Lord Mayo. After that Lord Mayo, was seen drawing in to the sea in dim lights. After stumbling got up and cried, these people attacked me but there is not much damage. The assailant could not tried to escape but eventually the security personality caught hold of him. On the other side the Police Officer helped to get Lord Mayo, stand up and nearly lay down to bed. The officers tried to plug the bleeding followed from to injuries. The Lord Mayo, said sport my head, these were his last words. Then Lord Mayo was brought on the steam lounge from the bed. Where he was lying. His assailant Sher Ali Khan was tied with ropes and put on the same bed. One was above the right shoulder and another was below the left shoulder. Doctor declared Lord Mayo dead on the launge itself. From the launge Lord Mayo was brought the steamer Glassgo, his assailant was put under trial the very next day and hanging orders were issued the next day. Here it is strange to know that what kind of feelings had been transpired with in Sher Ali. When he had a vegetable cutter knife. During trial, the Sher Ali Khan told Mr. Edden and Mr. Eithuson that he accomplished his task in the name of God.⁹⁰

Sher Ali admitted that he was planning to murder a high rank British Officer. He told that at when Viceroy would be coming down to the staires of Jt. He thought that he would not be succeeded in his mission he had to wait for tomorrow but suddenly an opportunity came.⁹¹ When the officers argued Sher Ali, to have a snape for the press that arrogant Pathan, roar in to laughter and stood in front of the cameras in different posses.⁹² Sher Ali Khan, on the charges of murder looked in the Andeman, was pressing vigourly that he would be known as a murderer of Viceroy Mayo.

When the evening of the February, 9th General Steawart announced the hanging of Sher Ali Khan. Then the later said that he would like to submitted a statement then after

⁹⁰ Dainik Jagran, August 15, 2004

⁹¹ Das, F.A.M., *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

re-thinking he said not still. "But only at the time of hanging".⁹³ British administration possibly did not given that opportunity. And on the March 11 before the hanging if spoke something but there is no evidence about it.

But the Sher Ali, was brought towards the gallows he cried like others compatriots. I have killed an enemy of all of us: Then he remembered - Allah and kissed the gallows. An Island named 'Wiper' is still stood a mute witness where Sher Ali Khan was hanged.

As in the case of chief Justice Norman, the motive of the murder remained a mystery and it was as before found impossible to trace any connection between Sher Ali and the Wahabi leaders in India.⁹⁴

Sher Ali, however, claimed to have been a martyr to the cause of Indian Muslims.⁹⁵

Character of the Movement

In the early days this movement was purely religious⁹⁶ or purition Islamic movement⁹⁷ particularly the lower middle class.⁹⁸ In the words of Reily District Superintendent of Police on Special Duty" where the Mohammadan ryots are rich that they find time to indulge in fanaticism and here the movement also assumes a political aspect. Dr. Rajender Prasad, rightly remarks that the earlier risings of Snathals, Mundas and the Wahabis were not "purely political movement for the freedom of the country". They were occasional and inspired by religious considerations.⁹⁹

It was primarily due to its political role that the movement enlisted the sympathies and even the active support of the general Mohammadan populace. The Hindus in general were suspicious about the motives and character of the movement which in its early stages was directed against the Sikh rulers and proclaimed religious Jehads. The forceful Wahabi denunciation of accretions to Islam which were practically all borrowings from Hinduism, was another cause of possible annoyance. "It did encourage communal

⁹³ *The Pioneer* March, 4, 1872

⁹⁴ *The London Times*, February 13, 1872

⁹⁵ Gulam Rasul Mehar Sarghasnt Muzahidin, *Urdu*, p. 450 Quat, Ed. by R.C., Majumdar *British Paramountry and Indian, Renaissance*, Part I, Bombay, 1961, P. 896

⁹⁶ Allen, A.J., *The Cambridge Shorter History of India*, Delhi, 1958, P. 717

⁹⁷ Powell, J.C., Price, *A History of India*, New York, 1958, P. 545

⁹⁸ Smith, W.C., *Modern Islam in India a Social Analysis*, P. 189

⁹⁹ Dutta, K.K., *History of Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, P. 72

attitudes, especially in religious thinking and left a considerable section of the Muslim masses more susceptible to later communalist propaganda than they might otherwise have been".¹⁰⁰ But in spite of it, after the extinction of the Sikh State, when the Wahabi movement became increasingly political and was turned against the British rulers, the Hindus felt some sympathy for it and there are no records reference to the detention of some Hindus for their pro-Wahabi activities.

In spite of its wide-spread character and the great enthusiasm it evoked, the Wahabi movement can not be regarded as a national movement. It was a movement of the Muslims by the Muslims and for the Muslims. The Hindu as a class held severely aloof, though a few individuals here and there, might have felt some sort of passive or occasionally even active, sympathy for it. Their number was, however, very insignificant and not a single Hindu figured prominently in this movement extending over a considerable part of India for nearly half a century. The Wahabis were undoubtedly inspired by the motive of freeing India of the British rule, but their struggle was not for securing freedom for India but for the re-establishment of Muslim supremacy.

¹⁰⁰ Smith, W.C., *Modern Islam in India*, PP. 189-90