

The spirit of Islamic revivalism and the aspiration to establish the ideal Islamic system, as generated by the Jamaat-e-Islami, has influenced a considerable section of Muslim youth in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. Simultaneously, the same spirit – initiated by Hassan Al-Banna when he established the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 – has been active throughout most of the Arab world. Although the widespread impact produced by these movements is beyond dispute, it must be realized that lack of a unanimous policy in relation to the all important matter of methodology has been responsible for the creation of a number of divisions among them, leading to the formation of various smaller parties and organizations. For example, though the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan has, in general, taken the path of peaceful social and political struggle, some of its dissatisfied offshoots have adopted violent or even terrorist methods for achieving the same objective.

However, such radical organizations, along with the enthusiasm of other non-violent but nevertheless revolutionary groups, have succeeded in bringing the goal of Islamic Resurgence a bit closer to reality – at least in the eyes of the West. The whole phenomenon has produced a sense of shock and alarm among the Western powers and their “Muslim” stooges, despite the fact that the actual achievements of parties like Takfir-wal-Hijra, Al-Jehad, Islamic Tendency Society, Jamaa Islamia, Hizb ut-Tahrir, and Islamic Salvation Front, are as yet far from the establishment of an Islamic state. One can have a number of disagreements with each of these organizations, but it has to be admitted that these movements represent, as a whole, the revivalist aspirations of the Muslim Ummah, and have become a force that has to be recognized at the international level. The role of the revolution in Iran and the rise of Shei’te fundamentalism is also significant in this respect.

To Be Continued



a certain point in its history the Al-Ikhwan Al-Muslimun or the "Muslim Brotherhood" of Egypt had become the focus of all revivalist aspirations due to its unprecedented fervor and influence, the fact remains that the real superiority in this field too -- belongs to the Indian subcontinent.

The first person to invite the Muslims towards the struggle for Islamic revival in the Indian subcontinent was late Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958), who, during the early part of the present century, called for the establishment of "God's Kingdom" through his pioneering magazines *Al-Hilal* and *Al-Balagh*, and, in order to reach that goal, formed a group known as "*Hizbullah*". His ability to motivate the audience through a unique style of writing and oratory, which was especially prominent during the Khilafat Movement, made him a well-known public figure throughout the subcontinent, and his own sincerity and enthusiasm conquered the hearts of millions of Indian Muslims. If it were not for the opposition and obstructions created by some of the traditional scholars, he would have been selected as the all-powerful *Imamul Hind* during the early '20s. Disillusioned and frustrated by the lukewarm response from the religious establishment, Abul Kalam gave up his mission altogether, and, from then onwards, dedicated his life to the nationalist politics of India, until his death in 1958.

The echoes of his vehement and vociferous clarion call to the Qur'an and Jihad continued to reverberate in the four corners of Muslim India. Like the second runner in a relay race, another unconventional and courageous young man appeared on the scene with the firm resolve to continue the mission that was forsaken by Maulana Abul Kalam. He worked alone for nearly seven years as a journalist, presenting a methodology for the establishment of "God's Kingdom" and the revival of Islam as a complete way of life. He then worked for sometime at "Darul Islam" -- an Islamic research academy created by Chaudhry Niaz Ali Khan, a devotee of Alma Iqbal. He finally laid the foundation of his own party, *Jamaat-e-Islami*, in 1941, and started an organized movement. This young man was, of course, none other than Maulana Sayyad Abul Ala Mawdudi (1903-1979).

influenced by Tablighi Jamaat are, in general, simple folks or those who are untouched by the atheistic and materialistic philosophies of the West, and who already have a dormant inclination towards religious and moral virtue. Despite this limitation, the movement of Tablighi Jamaat certainly occupies an important position within the larger process of Islamic Renaissance, in relation to its effort for the regeneration of faith among the masses.

Islamic Resurgence

We are definitely indebted to the arduous and often unrewarded efforts by our Ulama, as they have succeeded in keeping the structure of traditional beliefs and rituals intact during the extremely unfavorable period of Western colonialism. However, the most significant aspect of the process of our revival concerns an entirely different type of response to the decline of Muslims. The forerunners in the revivalist movement are all those organizations and groups which were created with this very purpose in mind, i.e., to re-awaken the Ummah and to re-establish the domination of Islam. Such groups and parties have categorically rejected the prevalent responses to Westernization — either withdrawing in the shells of tradition, or blindly accepting whatever arrives from the West. Instead, they have emphasized, again and again, that Islam is not merely a collection of dogma, rituals, and customs, as are other religions, but that it is the God-given *Deen*, i.e., a complete way of life encompassing the whole spectrum of human activity, including its social, cultural, legal, economic, and political aspects. And, most importantly, like all other ways of life, Islam demands its complete and total ascendancy, and the struggle to establish that ascendancy is the duty of every Muslim.

For a number of centuries, India and Egypt have held the distinction of being the two most prominent centers of culture and learning in the Muslim world. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the two major revivalist movements of the twentieth century — *Jamaat-e-Islami* and *Al-Ikhwān Al-Muslimun* — rose from the Indian subcontinent and Egypt, respectively. Although at

touch with developments in contemporary philosophical, social, and scientific thought. Imam Ghazzali (1058-1111) and Imam Ibn-e-Taimiyyah (1263-1328) were able to defeat the onslaught of Greek Philosophy and Aristotelian Logic only after a careful and deep study of these invading ideas. Similarly, in order to deal with the modern ideologies that are seeking to destroy the foundations of Islamic faith, we need first to clearly discriminate between what is and what is not against the spirit of the Qur'an. Afterwards, we need to refute that part of the invading ideologies which is in opposition to the Qur'anic spirit, and to accept and incorporate the part that is in accordance with its spirit into a new and contemporary interpretation of Islam. Unfortunately, this is not being done by our religious scholars.

The role of the Ulama today, instead of being that of an engine capable of propelling forward the ship of Islam, is actually nothing more than that of a heavy anchor which prevents the ship from drifting away in any wrong direction. Although, under the present circumstances, even this is a commendable and substantial service, the fact remains that this is by no means enough.

Another aspect of the activity of our Ulama that needs correction is their unusually strong emphasis on sectarian matters. A serious stagnation of thought along with dogmatism has set in ever since the practice of *Ijtihad* was done away with. The religious seminaries and Ulama of every sect are therefore spending most of their time and energies in defending and propagating their particular brand of dogma and ritual, often insisting that any variation in such matters is nothing short of apostasy. Such narrow-mindedness has exacerbated the evil of sectarianism and the resulting intolerance among the masses has led to a dangerous militancy.

One very important movement that has originated from the School of *Deoband*, the great theological seminary in India, is that of the "*Tablighi Jamaat*", which has succeeded in causing a massive religious mobilization among the Muslims. *Tablighi Jamaat* has made headway in focusing the attentions of a big section of Muslim population towards the renewal of faith. However, the overwhelming majority of the people being

establish the ascendancy of the politico-socio-economic system of Islam, they are often unaware of even the existence of such a need. Therefore, the services of the Ulama can be seen as a continuation of the efforts of previous reformers of Islam, in that the nature of their efforts — like the services of present-day Ulama — was mainly focused on the *defensive* rather than on the *revivalist*. Our noble ancestors were justified in narrowing down their fields of activity because the cultural and legal system of Islam was still very much intact in those days, and the predominant need of their time was merely to preserve the religious faith in its original form and to defend it against foreign influences. As a result, all our past reformers concentrated their energies in the academic fields, or, at the most, in the moral and spiritual purification of common Muslims. None of them tried to launch any organized political or militant movement, as Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) had set strict restrictions on such a rebellion against Muslim rulers. According to the popular interpretation of some a'hadith, as long as the *Shariah* is being enforced and no flagrant violation of Islam is being committed, it is not considered permissible to revolt even if the rulers are themselves wicked and oppressive. Therefore, as soon as the situation changed, and non-Muslims started to conquer and occupy Muslim territories, the reformist efforts quickly turned into armed struggles. Prominent examples of this phenomenon include the Mujahideen movement of Sayyad Ahmed Shaheed (1786-1831) in India, the Sanussi movement in Libya — started by Sayyad Muhammad Ibn Ali as-Sanussi (1787-1859) — and its struggle against Italian occupation up to 1932, and the Mahdist movement — initiated by Muhammad Ahmad (1844-1885) — that resisted the British invasion in Sudan.

It is obvious that, even today, our orthodox Ulama are following in the footsteps of earlier reformers, who had worked under completely different conditions. In other words, traditional Muslim Ulama have, in general, restricted themselves and their abilities within a rather narrow circle of activity, which is essentially defensive rather than revivalist. Moreover, even the task of defending Islamic doctrines is not being properly done by the Ulama, as they are, more often than not, completely out of

the personality of Allama Iqbal (1877-1938), whose poignant and moving poetry had aroused and invigorated the Indian Muslims from their appalling lassitude and apathy.

Second Dimension

The liberation of Muslim states from the yoke of Western Colonialism was only the first stage in the ongoing process of Islamic revival. We now turn to the second dimension of this process, which is the role of traditional and orthodox religious scholars or *Ulama*. Numerous organizations of these Ulama, belonging to various schools of thought, are actively pursuing the mission of serving Islam and Muslims along the lines of their own particular methodology. In this respect too, the Indian subcontinent enjoys an outstanding and unparalleled superiority, in that the grip of the Ulama over the masses and the popular support for the orthodox Islam in this part of the world is unmatched in the entire Muslim Land. Even the Arabian peninsula, which was dominated by the effects of the reformist movement of Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792) up to the middle of the present century, has now been left too far behind the Indian subcontinent in this regard.

The reason for this phenomenon is not at all difficult to discern. A comprehensive, versatile, and extraordinary figure like Shah Waliyullah of Delhi (1703-1762), is not to be found anywhere else in the Muslim world during the last three hundred years. His gigantic efforts in shifting the focus of Muslims from trivial legalities back to the original sources of Islamic faith and knowledge — the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith — and his restructuring of Islamic thought and philosophy were certainly unparalleled achievements. It was his pioneering work that had led to the enhancement of the respect for religion and religious scholars in the Indian subcontinent.

However, we must keep in mind that the main thrust of the efforts of our Ulama is directed only towards safeguarding and preserving the dogmatic, ritualistic, and institutional structure of Islam. As regards fulfilling the requirements and demands of reviving Islam in the present Westernized milieu, and to re-

Dr. Ahmed Afzaal

LESSONS FROM HISTORY-V

Based on the Urdu Columns By: Dr. Israr Ahmad

In this respect, the Pakistan Movement stands out as a unique and exceptional phenomenon. If the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent were to struggle against the British Raj by forming an alliance with non-Muslims on the basis of Indian Nationalism, then there was certainly enough justification to do so (and this is exactly the principle that was adopted by *Jamiyat Ulama-i-Hind*). However, what actually happened was that the overwhelming majority of Muslims based their political struggle – under the leadership of Muslim League – upon the concept of Muslim Nationhood and the Two-Nation Theory, the basis of which was neither racial or linguistic unity, nor a common homeland, but was founded upon the religious beliefs and heritage of the Muslims. This means that today there is nothing to justify the partition of British India and nothing to legitimize our separate existence except Islam itself. It also means that Pakistan is already a step ahead of all other Muslim states by virtue of her very genesis and *raison d'etre* in Muslim nationhood.

One of the most important factors which caused the Indian Muslims to define and organize themselves in terms of their religion was the prejudice and intolerance of the Hindu majority. Also, the fact that the Hindus had a burning desire to settle their old score with Muslims, and to “avenge their thousand years long humiliation”, was an open secret. The ambition on the part of the Hindus to annihilate the Muslims caused the latter to wake up pretty quickly, and, in this way, the Hindus themselves paved the way for Islamic Renaissance, albeit unwittingly. Moreover, it must be kept in mind that the Indian Muslims already had an unmatched devotion and passion for Islam and the Muslim Ummah, as epitomized by their massive and emotional reaction at the abolition of Caliphate. Last, but not the least, was