

# ISLAMIC INSTITUTION OF EDUCATION IN BRITISH INDIA: A STUDY ON DEOBAND MADRASAH

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## Abstrak

*Kemunculan institusi-institusi pendidikan Islam di India seperti Madrasah Dar al-Ulum, Deoband merupakan rentetan daripada polisi kerajaan British terhadap pendidikan di India di mana pendidikan sekular diperkenalkan. Justeru masyarakat Islam khususnya memerlukan alternatif lain bagi memenuhi tanggungjawab pendidikan terhadap anak-anak mereka. Artikel ini cuba melihat aspek sosio-politik dalam memahami senario yang bergolak pada masa pemerintahan Kolonial British yang menyumbang ke arah penubuhan Dar al-Ulum.*

## THE SOCIO-POLITICAL MILIEU OF INDIAN MUSLIM UNDER BRITISH RULE

The political background to the emergence of the Deoband madrasah during British rule is as follows. The East India Company (EIC) gradually assumed administration of the Mughal central and the provincial government following the battles of Plassey in 1757 and Buxer in 1764. At the beginning, the East India Company was empowered to tax administration and then controlled the judicial departments. The economic lot of Muslim in Bengal, Orissa and Bihar deteriorated as a consequence, the power of the *subahdar* (land tax officer) being reduced considerably.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hunter, W.W., *Indian Mussalmans*, (Lahore, 1964), p. 117.

Lord Cornwallis removed the rights to the tax revenue collection from Muslim systematically by a series of measures,<sup>2</sup> elevating the Hindu collectors to the position of landholders, which allowed them to accumulate wealth and monopolize the soil, and led to the gradual impoverishment of the Muslims.<sup>3</sup> Nehru (later) voiced the opinion that such measures would only serve to divide Hindu from Muslim.<sup>4</sup>

In the first fifty years of the Company's rule, Muslims managed to retain almost all government positions with regard to land tax administration and the control of the judiciary system.<sup>5</sup> Then the situation changed, the British and the Hindus assuming control of the civil services and the judiciary respectively. The role of the *qadi*, *mufti*, and *mir-i 'adl*, who previously scrutinized cases and judged them according to *Shari'ah* Law, were now overseen by the *pandit* (hindu judge).

In 1772, Warren Hastings reorganised the district *Diwani* and *Faujadari* courts, the British tax collectors presiding over the *Diwani* court with the assistance of both the *qadi* and the *pandit*. Appeals in civil and criminal cases could be proposed to the *Sadar Diwani 'Adalat* and the *Sadar Nizamat 'Adalat* respectively. Then the Company's governor downgraded the *Sadar Diwani 'Adalat* in favour of *Sadar Nizami 'Adalat*. Formally he was appointed by the *Nawab of Murshidabad*.

In 1790, Cornwallis continued undermining Muslim influence by modifying and changing *Shari'ah* Law into Anglo-Muhammadan Law. *Munsifs* were appointed in the districts and the profession of *wakil* (representative) was opened to Indians. The function of the chief *qadi* and *mufti*, who previously would submit their comments on each case to the Supreme Civil Court for Indians for the final judgement, were downgraded, reduced to examining the decisions of the lower courts. Explicitly it showed the tribunal was under British supervision. The universal applicability of Muslim Criminal Law, as derived from the *Shari'ah*, all but vanished in 1832.<sup>6</sup>

Employment opportunities for Muslims, as a consequence deteriorated. Virtually all types of employment being snatched away from them and bestowed on other races, particularly Hindus. Several vacancies occurred in the office of the Sunderban Commissioner but it was stated in the advertisement that the position would be given

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<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*, p. 118.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, p. 121.

<sup>4</sup>Nehru, Jawaharlal, *Discovery of India*, (London, 1960), p. 303.

<sup>5</sup>Hunter, W.W., *op.cit.*, p. 124.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid*.

to Hindus only. Although Muslim clearly qualified for the advertised posts they were relentlessly discriminated against through government notifications.<sup>7</sup>

In addition, the army closed its door to Muslims. It was under these circumstances that Shah 'Abdul Aziz, the son of Shah Wali Allah issued a *fatwa* in 1803 declaring India to be *Dar al-Harb* (enemy territory). Consequently it embittered the relationship between Muslim and the British. As a matter of fact, this *fatwa* indicated the dissatisfaction rampant amongst the Muslims in North India and its issuance bestowed a legal sanction to the Wahabi movement.<sup>8</sup>

Syed Ahmad Barelwi (1786-1831), a disciple of Shah Abdul 'Aziz, led the Wahabi movement at the time under discussion. The movement was religiously ultra-conservative, in that it refused that aspects of Shari'ah law derived from sources other than the Qur'an or Hadith, and therefore rejected innovation (*bid'a*) as corrupt.<sup>9</sup> As time went on this movement assumed a political garb, its agenda being to challenge weak and non-Muslim rule. The revolt, known as the Mutiny of 1857, was in part, precipitated by the actions of the Wahabi movement.<sup>10</sup>

The Muslims in North West Provinces continued their representation in the Civil Services, in fact appeared to be over represented when considering their proportion to the total population of the provinces.<sup>11</sup> The absence of discrimination against Muslims, however, in terms of job opportunities afforded to them in the North West Provinces, may be ascribed to the intensity of Wahabi activities there.<sup>12</sup>

The East Indian Company had started in the region as the supreme revenue collecting agency. The *zamindars* of the Province, along with the *kayasthas* and the *Brahmins*, who excelled in estate management and had a profound knowledge of Persian, were employed by the company to collect revenue. But the Company found this system inefficient, for it neither covered collection of the increasing revenue demand of the Company nor kept the rulers in touch with the ruled. Finally the Company took some measures of far reaching consequences, one of which was to replace

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<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>8</sup>Smith, W.C., *Modern Islam in India*, (London, 1946), p. 161.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup>Faruqi, Ziya al-Hasan, *The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan*, (Bombay, 1963), p. 10.

<sup>11</sup>Robinson, Francis, *Separatism Among Indian Muslims*, (London, 1974), pp. 22-23.

<sup>12</sup>Gopal, Ram, *India Muslims*, (Bombay, 1959), p. 26.

Persian with Urdu in 1837. The principle of communal proportion in recruitment for government jobs was introduced in 1855.

After 1857 the control of British Indian territories passed from the Company to the Crown, resulting in more bureaucratic reforms. Entry to government posts for *Naib Tehsildars*, *Tehsildars* and *Munsifs*, was made more difficult through the introduction of additional, strict criteria by the new Lieutenant Governor, Sir Antony Macdonell possessed special prejudices towards Muslims, which he had developed during his stay in Bengal. His application of the principle of communal quota in government jobs, three Muslims to five Hindus, might be said to have proved prejudicial to Muslims.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the Nagri Resolution of 1900, which demanded the knowledge of Nagri script and the prevalent Persian script, revealed its effectiveness in reducing the number of Muslims in government services. The percentage of Muslims in the subordinate judicial and executive services was shortened from 63.9 percent to 45.1 percent within thirty years after the Mutiny 1857.<sup>14</sup>

Measures like the 'doctrine of lapse' and 'subsidiary' alliance kept the Nawabs and Rajas in a state of continual suspicion. These suspicions were shared by the common people who were apprehensive of government interference in their economical, social and religious aspect of life. In part the above mentioned policy changes contributed to the Uprising in 1857, where both Hindus and Muslims bore its consequence in mind. However, the British considered Muslims the greater threat, since they would have greatly benefitted had the uprising succeeded. Thus, they were singled out as the most dangerous of the indigenous communities.<sup>15</sup>

On the surface, Muslims in Delhi and Oudh appeared interested in Western knowledge and the English language, even before the Mutiny 1857. *Newton's Principe*, for instance, was translated into Arabic during the rule of 'Asif al-Daula (1778-1792). Whereas Nawab Sa'adat Ali Khan established an observatory and Ghaziuddin Hyder (1814-1827) constructed a laboratory, both in Lucknow. Similarly, Ghaziuddin Hyder excelled as a patron of Western and Oriental Philological studies.<sup>16</sup>

In 1827, the British Resident Commissioner of Delhi ordered Delhi college to place the study of the English on the syllabus. By the end of 1831 three hundreds

<sup>13</sup>Robinson, *op.cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>15</sup>Joshi, P.C., *Rebellion 1857*, (New Delhi, 1957), p. 56.

<sup>16</sup>Ahmad, Aziz, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan*, (London, 1967), p. 21.

students (of English) were enrolled there, among them were Munshi Zaka Ullah and Molvi Nazir Ahmad and Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi.<sup>17</sup>

However, the Muslim community in Delhi in general proved unresponsive to the offer of a Western education for their children. Though lavish government scholarships were offered, the best families in the city refused to send their children to these British schools.<sup>18</sup> One of the reasons for this resistance was the suspicion that an English education would convert their children to Christianity, since it was perceived that the supreme aim of Western education was the spread of Christianity.<sup>19</sup> Sir Charles Trevelyan had stated in his deposition before the select committee of the House of Lord in 1853 that the sole aim of education activities was conversion. This statement merely confirmed the suspicions of the Muslim, that the British intended to interfere in their religious life.

## THE EMERGENCE OF THE DEOBAND MADRASAH

Before the arrival of the British in India, educational institutions for Muslim were divided into neither religious nor secular. British introduced schools, which offered an exclusive secular education, from the beginning of the nineteenth century, thus rivalling the religious madrasah system. With the passage of time, the British government influenced all aspects of education, particularly in those areas populated by Muslims where the system of Western Education had developed through stages.<sup>20</sup>

Although government schools were deemed to be progressive, the madrasah nevertheless retained its important role in educating people up to the beginning of the second half of the century. From that point, particularly after the Mutiny of 1857, madrasah graduates were no longer guaranteed the important post in the government service, as had been the case in the past. Moreover, the government discarded the religious lesson from the syllabuses and promoted Western education by establishing modern schools and colleges where secular subjects were taught.<sup>21</sup>

Consequently, the Muslim community in India realised that they could not de-

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<sup>17</sup>Andrews, C.F., *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, (Cambridge, 1929), p. 38.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>20</sup>Syed Masroor Ali Akhtar Hashmi, *Muslim Response To Western Education: A Study of Four Pioneer Institutions*, (New Delhi, 1989), p. x.

<sup>21</sup>Mushirul Haq, *Islam in Secular India*, (Simla, 1972), p. 23.

pend on the government school for their children's religious education, since no religious instruction was given in government schools.<sup>22</sup> They were left with no alternative but to establish their own schools in order to guarantee Muslim youth an Islamic education.

According to Rizvi's account, Muhammad Qasim Nanutavi, assisted by several 'ulama such as Maulana Zulfiqar 'Ali, Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, Maulana Muhammad Yaqub Nanautavi, and Maulana Rafi' al-Din, founded the madrasah on Thursday, thirtieth of May, 1866A.D/ fifteenth of Muharram 1283A.H.<sup>23</sup> However such scholars as Barbara Daly Metcalf, A.H.M. Mujtaba Hossain, and Gail Minault think the year of the foundation to be 1867.<sup>24</sup>

The principle founder, of what eventually to become known as Dar al-'Ulum, Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi, was born into a religious family and ulama class in 1832<sup>25</sup> in the old village of Nanauta which lay sixteen miles west of Deoband. Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi was sent to Deoband to stay with his relatives. There he studied at the maktab of Maulana Mahtar 'Ali and Shaikh Nihal Ahmad.<sup>26</sup> Then he moved to live with his maternal grandfather in Saharanpur, where he studied the elementary book of Arabic grammar and syntax at an elementary level under the tutorship of Maulavi Nawaz.

In 1843, Maulana Mamluk 'Ali brought Muhammad Qasim to Delhi for higher education under his tutorship. Muhammad Qasim studied *kafīa*, logic, philosophy and scholastic theology. But later specialised, studying exclusively the Qur'an and the Hadith under supervision of Hazrat Shah Abd al-Ghani Mujjaddi, himself once a student and beneficiary of the renowned Hadith scholar (*muhaddith*) Shah Wali Allah.

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<sup>22</sup>*The Imperial Gazetteer of India: Atlas*, (Oxford, 1909), Vol. XXVI, p. 447.

<sup>23</sup>Rizvi, Mahboob, *History of the Dar al-'Ulum Deoband*, (India, 1980), Vol. 1, p. 103.

<sup>24</sup>Metcalf, Barbara Daly, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900*, (New Jersey), p. 88. See also Minault, Gail, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India*, (New York, 1982), p. 25 and A.H.M. Mujtaba Hossain, *Shaikhul Hind Mawlana Mahmud Hasan: His Contributions to Education and Politics*, in *The Dhaka University Studies* [Bangladesh], 41. 1984, p. 42.

<sup>25</sup>Rizvi, *op.cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 77.

<sup>26</sup>Jones, Kenneth W., *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British- India III.I*, (New Yorks, 1989), p. 77.

After completing his higher education, Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi worked as an editor at Matba-e Ahmedi publishing house in Delhi, then a great centre for the printing and publishing of Hadith works.<sup>27</sup> Thereafter, from the age of thirty-four, he devoted the remainder of his life to the administration of the Dar al-'Ulum.<sup>28</sup>

Originally the madrasah was incorporated within the Chhatta Mosque of Deoband<sup>29</sup> and was known as the Madrasah-e Islami Arabi, Deoband.<sup>30</sup> The first student to be admitted was a certain Mahmud Hassan, son of Maulana Zulfiqar 'Ali,<sup>31</sup> and the first and the only teacher at that time was Mulla Mahmud. The number of students increased considerably in the first year and additional classes were opened for the teaching of the Qur'an, Persian and Arithmetic. The mosque could no longer accommodate the increased intake of students, thus the excess were taught at the *Qadi* Mosque and then the *Jami' Masjid*, both in Deoband.<sup>32</sup>

It soon became obvious that the accommodation problem (for the purpose of teaching) could be solved only by the construction of a new block beside the Chhatta mosque itself, but this initiative was refused by Sayyid 'Abid Hussain, the first *muhtamim* (chancellor). The disagreements based on the grounds that the expense would be prohibitive and more importantly, that the new concept would disrupt the informal style of education. Instead of a separate building, he had built additional rooms (*hujrah*) at the *Jami' Masjid*.<sup>33</sup>

Finally in 1876, after Jumu'ah prayer, Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi announced the agreed decision to build a new separate building for the Dar al-'Ulum which was supported by the administration. The foundation stone was ceremoniously laid by three recognised elders, Hazrat Miyanji Munne Shah, a revered *sayyid*; Maulana Ahmad 'Ali, the notable hadith scholar of Saharanpur and Sayyid 'Abid Husain himself as a council representative. Within five years the said building was completed and called *Naudarah* because it was duly designated the nine arches.<sup>34</sup> The popularity

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<sup>27</sup>*Ibid*, p. 80

<sup>28</sup>Rizvi, *op.cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 103

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid*, Vol. 1, pp. 117-118

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid*, p. 144

<sup>31</sup>The Khilafat Movement, *op.cit.*, p. 27

<sup>32</sup>Rizvi, *op.cit.*, p. 127

<sup>33</sup>Metcalf, *op.cit.*, p. 113

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid*, pp. 114-115

of Dar al-'Ulum attracted students from wide geographical area and the number of its students increased year by year. The table below shows the growth of the students at the Dar al-'Ulum from 1866 to 1905:<sup>35</sup>

No	A.H	A.D	Number of teacher	Number of students	Number of graduate
1	1283	1866	6	78	None
2	1284	1867	6	100	3
3	1285	1868	6	114	3
4	1286	1869	9	92	None
5	1287	1870	9	87	6
6	1288	1871	9	106	None
7	1289	1872	5	145	1
8	1290	1873	6	83	3
9	1291	1874	10	183	2
10	1292	1875	10	178	None
11	1293	1876	8	198	7
12	1294	1877	14	215	1
13	1295	1878	14	188	5
14	1296	1878	11	164	4
15	1297	1879	11	186	3
16	1298	1880	10	224	2
17	1299	1881	10	187	12
18	1300	1882	10	170	9
19	1301	1883	10	152	11
20	1302	1884	11	159	2
21	1303	1885	12	159	2
22	1304	1886	10	195	5

<sup>35</sup>Rizvi, *op.cit.*, Vol II, pp. 337 - 339.



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No	A.H	A.D	Number of teacher	Number of students	Number of graduate
23	1305	1887	14	215	5
24	1306	1888	11	190	6
25	1307	1889	10	178	4
26	1308	1890	9	272	26
27	1309	1891	11	264	31
28	1310	1892	12	288	29
29	1311	1893	13	298	21
30	1312	1894	13	293	32
31	1313	1895	12	224	32
32	1314	1896	13	241	9
33	1315	1897	11	239	20
34	1316	1898	12	262	18
35	1317	1899	12	244	17
36	1318	1900	11	254	30
37	1319	1901	12	151	26
38	1320	1902	12	282	26
39	1321	1903	13	310	36
40	1322	1904	13	284	35
41	1323	1905	12	325	30

The madrasah was deemed so efficient and progressive that it served as a model for the establishment of several like minded madrasahs in the districts of Saharanpur and Buland Shahr. The Madrasah Mazahir-e 'Ulum, for instance, was launched at Saharanpur only six months after the establishment of the Deoband Madrasah.<sup>36</sup> Then in 1291A.H. a madrasah at Thana Bhavan was affiliated to the Deoband Madrasah. The syllabus and the supervision of income and expenditure were placed under the control of the vice-chancellor of the Deoband Madrasah.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup>Rizvi, *op.cit.*, Vol 1, p. 126

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 133

As time went on, the Deoband madrasah assumed the mantle of a higher institution of education for Muslim people. We know that when a new department of Unani Medicine was opened at the school in 1301A.H, it was under the designation of 'Dar al-'Ulum'.<sup>38</sup> The first stage in the development of the madrasah ended following the death of Maulana Qasim Nanautavi in 1880.

It was Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi who had drawn up the constitution for the school, emphasising therein the need to sustain its existence through public donation, in contrast to the previous system of government subsidisation. He submitted the following principles, that were to form the basis for the establishment of the seminar-ies:-<sup>39</sup>

1. The functionaries of the madrasah, as far as possible, should always have an eye to the augmentation of donations. Make an effort and also persuade others to do the same. The supporters of the madrasah must always keep this fact in mind.
2. The donation can be received in many forms. Food, for example, may be donated to the school.
3. The counsellors should always bear in mind that the madrasah should not tire in its aim to attain moral and academic excellence.
4. There should exist in the staff room an atmosphere of calm and co-operation and open-mindedness to other religions.
5. The syllabus should be adhered to strictly and there can be no deviation. Otherwise the madrasah will not prosper.
6. The staffs are reminded to avoid approaches by government officials. The independence of the school must be maintained (through donation). The affluent appears to be very harmful.

## THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHOOL

The principle aim of the madrasah was to impart Islamic teaching and to educate Muslim for the purpose of defending and propagating the Islamic faith, in the guise of either prayer leaders, preachers, teachers, and writers. The Dar al-'Ulum

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<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 152

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 116

served not only as a centre for the teaching of Islamic faith, but also as a movement ensuring that the faith remained protected against innovation (*bid'a*) or the (harmful) influences of other religions, for instance Hinduism, as Dr. 'Abdul Hayei pointed out to me (when I contacted him this year).<sup>40</sup>

Thus, academic achievement was highly valued at the Dar al-'Ulum but only in so far as such achievement was imbued with a moral character, cultivated above all through striving (*mujahida*) for and amongst fellow Muslims. The Dar al-'Ulum was not only a religious teaching institution, but also an effective and active movement in purifying the Muslims' faith and actions, protecting them from innovation.

The 'Ulama, for their part, believed that the establishment of the madrasah was the only way to protect Islamic values. In addition, its aim was to educate Muslims in the Qur'an, the Qur'anic exegesis, the Hadith, the *'ilm al-Kalam* and related subjects. Then, to develop Islamic disciplines in the life of the students and to generate an Islamic spirit in them, and to establish Arabic colleges for the dispersion of religious knowledge, and affiliate them to the Deoband Madrasah.<sup>41</sup>

## ADMINISTRATION

The administration of the madrasah was overseen by three principle figures: the highest was the *sarparast* (rector) who served as protector and guide to the institution. The *muhtamim* (chancellor) who functioned as the chief administrative officer and the *sadr mudarris* (the chief teacher or principal) who was responsible for instruction. In 1892, a fourth administrator was added to the staff of the school, the *mufti*, who was employed to oversee the issuance of legal opinions (*fatawa*), touching on local custom and conduct in particular.<sup>42</sup> The final authority within this institution lay in the hand of the Consultative Council, which comprised of the administrators and seven additional members. They discussed all matters of finance, personnel, curriculum, and organisational procedures before taking any action or decision.

In administering the Madrasah the school board adhered to the following agreed principles.<sup>43</sup> The councillors of the madrasah, in administering the school, should be

<sup>40</sup>Interview with Dr. Abd Hayei Sukor by phone on August 15, 1998. He was a student at Dar al-'Ulum in 1968-1972 and currently is an Associate Professor in Qur'an and Hadith Department at Islamic Academy, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.

<sup>41</sup>Rizvi, *op.cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 108.

<sup>42</sup>Metcalf, *op.cit.*, p. 95

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 95-96

flexible and candid in outlook. Furthermore, consultation and discussion should already agree on used instruction or later on agreed. The councillors should be elected from the ulama class and not from the respectable group in the community.

Consultation should be the order of the day, with no one individual dominating the administration of the school. In this way, Muhammad Qasim argued that preservation of the religious quality of the madrasah would be assured.<sup>44</sup>

## METHODOLOGY IN TEACHING

The methodology of instruction in the Dar al-'Ulum was religion based, principally on the teachings of the Qur'an and the wisdom of the Hadith. All knowledge was filtered and influenced by a reading and study of these sources and then subsequently diffused through the mode of instruction. The approach of the Dar al-'Ulum in teaching, by and large, reflected the approach of the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* which could be defined as comprehensive, moderate and flexible in spirit.

The administration of Shah Wali Allah showed and demonstrated this flexibility and moderation in the teaching of jurisprudence. The Madrasah granting a central position to the Hanafi school of legal opinion (the most liberal minded of all the four schools, with regard to the study and debate on matters of positive law) but nevertheless were willing to accommodate on this respect Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali opinions also.

At the same time the Dar al-'Ulum accommodated the teaching of the sufis including their texts in the school syllabus in order to regenerate the moral character and personality of the students regarding to the moral aspect. Most of the great luminaries of the Dar al-'Ulum were either related to the *Chistiyah Silsilah* or the *Naqhsbandiyah Silsilah* (orders).

## THE CURRICULUM OF THE DAR AL-'ULUM

Students who enrolled at the Dar al-'Ulum were expected to learn a fixed syllabus, studying a course which was originally scheduled for ten years and later was reduced to six. Local Indian students were expected to learn Persian and the Qur'an, but the Arabic students were required to have already studied Persian to the level of the Gulistan, as a prerequisite to completing study of the Qur'anic sciences.

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<sup>44</sup>Metcalf, *op.cit.*, p. 117

Basically, at the beginning the school's foundation, the syllabus was divided into two categories:<sup>45</sup>

*Manqulat* - essentially the studies of the Qur'an and the Hadith, and

*Ma'qulat* - study of the rational sciences, logic, philosophy and so on.

The syllabus taught at the Dar al-'Ulum was, in effect, an amalgam of three syllabi. One, which reflected the Delhi school of influence in Islamic studies, namely the traditional stance, covered study of the Qur'an, Hadith and Qur'anic exegesis. Two, the influence derived from the Farangi Mahall, a Muslim College associated with the court in Lucknow in eighteenth century. This college concentrated on teaching *fiqh*. And three, the Khayrabad school which specialised in philosophy and scholastic theology (*'ilm al-kalam*).<sup>46</sup> In addition a certain emphasis was laid on the teaching of contemporary sciences such as medicine and economics.

Lessons on the English language were not included on the syllabus until 1321A.H./1903A.D.<sup>47</sup> According to Rizvi, English language was taught at primary level in Modern Sciences department. The course lasted one year.<sup>48</sup> Muslims in general were of the opinion that the teaching of English rendered the Muslim students susceptible to conversion to Christianity. Maulana Abd al-Hayy Lakhnavi, who was attached to the old educational centre of Hanafi jurisprudence at Farangi Mahall, issued a *fatwa* advising caution in the study of English, "to study English language or learn to write English is prohibited if it constitutes an end in itself. However, if it constitutes merely a means to an end, namely to further the cause of Islamic studies, then it is permissible".<sup>49</sup> It says in the Hadith book *Mishkat Sharif* that the Holy Prophet (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) ordered Zaid ibn Thabit to learn the language of the Jews (Hebrew) for the same purpose. Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, for his part, issued a *fatwa* encouraging the study of English. He argued that it was correct to learn English language and one did not committed a sin by imbibing such knowledge, so long as it didn't involve the impairment of one's religion.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Metcalf, *op.cit.*, p. 100

<sup>46</sup>EI2, *op.cit.*, p. 132

<sup>47</sup>Rizvi, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 162

<sup>48</sup>Rizvi, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 210

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 231

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 231

The Dar al-'Ulum attracted students from far and wide, from such places as Afghanistan, Chittagong, Patna and Madras. The medium of instruction changed to Urdu away from Persian,<sup>51</sup> although this did not prevent students studying Arabic, Persian and English. M. Mujeeb, however, was of the opinion that the study of such a traditional syllabus as followed in the Dar al-'Ulum, leads to isolation and backwardness, and that future Muslim students should be provided with a secular education, alongside that of the traditional.<sup>52</sup>

## ADMISSION

Access to the Dar al-'Ulum was available to every (male) student who wished to acquire knowledge of the Islamic sciences, provided they abided by the rules and regulations of the school and provided their conduct which was considered to be in consonance with Islamic values. The students enrolled at the Madrasah were all boys. According to Dr. 'Abdul Hayei, no Muslim women were enrolled there on the grounds that co-education was inappropriate in the moral sense.

## FINANCIAL ORGANISATION

The madrasah was funded by donations collected, in part, from the public, irrespective of their religion or standing in the community, as in agreement with the clause stated in the Dar al-'Ulum constitution covering donations.<sup>53</sup>

All the donors' names, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, were cited in the school's annual report. Besides public charity, the Madrasah received grants from Muslim princes of such states as Hyderabad, Bhopal and Rampur. The Prime Minister of Hyderabad, Nawab Sir Asmah Jah authorised a monthly grant of a hundred rupees to the Dar al-'Ulum in 1305A.H.<sup>54</sup> This amount increased to a thousand rupees per-month over time. Similarly, the Asafyah government donated three thousands rupees per-month to the school.<sup>55</sup>

Apart from the cash donations, the madrasah procured books from individuals

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<sup>51</sup>Metcalf, *op.cit.*, p. 102.

<sup>52</sup>M.Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims*, (London, 1967), p. 522

<sup>53</sup>Rizvi, *op.cit.*, p. 150.

<sup>54</sup>Rizvi, *op.cit.*, vol. 1, p. 155.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*

for its library. The Nawal Kishore Press of Lucknow, for example, presented their publications to the Dar al-'Ulum on a frequent basis. The English registrar of the Punjab University, Dr. G. W. Letter, contributed nearly two dozen of books on the arts and sciences to the library in 1881A.D/1299A.H.<sup>56</sup>

Donations were augmented with alternative sources of finance. The Anjuman-e Mo'een al-Islam organisation, for instance, which originated from Hyderabad, launched a campaign to fund the school,<sup>57</sup> the majority of the contributions coming from its supporters. In addition, Muslims were encouraged to make their contributions to the Madrasah as *zakat* - obligatory alms, which amounted to two and half percent of their income. The Madrasah deliberately did not procure grant-in-aids from the British India government, in order to avoid political interference in the administration of the madrasah, as is clearly stated in the school's principles. Students were not required to pay any admission, course or examination fees, and their accommodation, board and text books were free.<sup>58</sup>

## ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DAR AL-'ULUM

One of the school's principle achievements was the provision of free education to the Muslim children, and that the school managed to maintain its financial independence through the system of donation. The Dar al-'Ulum at the same time produced 'ulama, though conservative in a theological sense, who formed the vanguard of the nationalists movements in India.

Aside from their liturgical roles as prayer leaders and preachers, the Deoband 'Ulama involved themselves with the community at large, principally through the distribution of pamphlets public debates. As early as the first decade of the nineteenth century, the Deobandis set the pattern of spreading religious teachings by new methods of cheap publication. Obviously, the goal of the publications was to delineate the correct method of performing the canonical prayer, of holding a marriage party, or of performing pilgrimage.<sup>59</sup>

Pamphlets were explicitly targeted at women in order to educate them, since the future of Muslim generation lay in their hands. That is to say, women were respon-

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<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup>Rizvi, *op.cit.*, vol. II, p. 281.

<sup>59</sup>Metcalf, *op.cit.*, pp. 210-211.

sible for the instruction in the home and the management of the family. Maulana Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi, in particular, performed sterling work in the education of Muslim women, by eradicating illiteracy, and by instilling in them the need to perform simple religious duties (through the invocation of the stories of the Prophet) and by offering practical advice on cooking, care of the sick and domestic management. His book entitled *Bihishti Zewar* became the standard text for the education of Muslim women, and became a favourite gift for the muslim bride.

The Deoband 'Ulama were adept in countering propaganda peddled by the Shi'ah, the Hindus and the Christians. One thinks here of Muhammad Qasim's polemical pamphlet, *Tahzir al-Nass*, which drew a vigorous response from the Bareilwi group of 'ulama and was reprinted several times.<sup>60</sup>

The Deoband 'Ulama were also to the fore in the public debates, as well as willing to participate in inter-religious debate involving Hindus and Christians as evidenced in Shahjahanpur where in 1875 and 1876, debates occurred among Deobandis, Christians and Arya Samaj, in what was commonly called "the Melayi Khudashanasi" and "the festival of the knowledge of God".<sup>61</sup>

## GRADUATES OF THE DAR AL-'ULUM

The Dar al-'Ulum throughout the years produced a number of prominent graduates who made a significant contribution to Indian Muslim culture and progress. Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, for example, supported the *Mujahid* forces in their *Jihad* against the British. Farzana Shaikh<sup>62</sup> pointed out that Muslim associated with the Indian National League were indefatigable in defending the interests of their fellow-Muslims.

The decline of Muslim power in India, under British rule spurred Muslim to a renewed and vigorous effort to restore the dignity of Islam and the political fortune of its adherents. In addition, the Deobandis rallied their fellow Muslims to a defence of their ideology. They participated in religious debate with non-Muslims, with Christians and Hindus who intrinsically opposed Islam. Muhammad Qasim, in particular, employed his fine oratory in defense of Islam against Christian missionaries and Arya Samaj Hindus, challenging their founder of Arya Samaj Hindus, Swami

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<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 212.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 216.

<sup>62</sup>Shaikh, Farzana, *Community and the Consensus in Islam*, (New York, 1989), p. 166



Dayananda Saraswati to a rigorous debate.<sup>63</sup>

The Deoband 'Ulama like Mahmud al-Hasan, the *sarparast* (rector) at the Dar al-'Ulum, and Husain Ahmad Madani joined the Indian Nationalist Movement, in alliance with the Indian National Congress. Another Dar al-'Ulum scholar, Shabbir Ahmad 'Uthmani, supported the Pakistan Independence movement.<sup>64</sup>

Another Dar al-'Ulum graduate, Shaikhul Hind Maulana Mahmud Hasan (son of Maulana Zulfikar 'Ali), one of the Dar al-'Ulum founders. He was the earliest graduate of the Dar al-'Ulum. Maulana Mahmud Hasan made a significant contribution to the field of Islamic education and politics in India.

Maulana Mahmud Hasan's first contribution to Islamic education was as a primary teacher between 1871-1872 whilst as a student at the Dar al-'Ulum.<sup>65</sup> He completed his studies in 1874 and was appointed as a teacher at the madrasah, lecturing on such text subjects as the *Quduri* and the *Qutbi*, texts for study at secondary level. Then after two years he taught difficult text relating to the Tradition of the Prophet, like *Jami' of Tirmidhi*,<sup>66</sup> and *tafsir* covering such works as the *Mishkatul Masabih* of al-Baydawi. He was eventually appointed to the position of the *Sadr Mudarris* (principal) and *Shaikh al-Hadith* of the Dar al-'Ulum, the greatest seat of Islamic learning in the sub-continent.<sup>67</sup>

Maulana Mahmud Hasan's knowledge of all the branches of the Islamic sciences was phenomenal, and his reputation attracted students from far and wide to his lectures. Students from Mecca, Medina, Mosul, Basra, Balkh, Bukhara, Hirat, Samarkand, Kandahar, Kabul, Turkey, Iran, China, Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia and other places of Middle East and Far East journeyed to the Indian sub continent to receive his instruction.<sup>68</sup> The below table shows the breakdown of foreign students known to have attended the Dar al-'Ulum during its existence:<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>Jones, *op.cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>64</sup>Basham, A.L., *A Cultural History of India*, (London, 1975), p. 388.

<sup>65</sup>Iqbal Hasan Khan, *Shaikhul Hind Mawlana Mahmud Hasan*, (Aligarh, 1973), p. 125.

<sup>66</sup>One of the six canonical collection of the Tradition of the Prophet.

<sup>67</sup>Mujtaba Hossain, A.H.M., *op.cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>69</sup>Metcalf, *op.cit.*, p. 111.

Foreign countries	Total	Foreign countries	Total
Afghanistan	109	Russia (including Siberia)	70
China	44	Burma	144
Malaysia	28	Indonesia	1
Iraq	2	Kuwait	2
Iran	11	Ceylon	2
S. Africa	14	Saudi Arabia	2
Siam	1	Yemen	1

Maulana Mahmud Hasan delivered lectures on Hadith in Mecca and Medina for a period of one year. He also spent some time as a prisoner in the Malta jail (1917) during which time he had compiled a special commentary on the Qur'an. His custom was to lecture after the *Fajr* prayer until 11 a.m., and between *Zuhr* and *'Asr* prayers, lectures which such Dar al-'Ulum luminaries as Maulana Shibbir Ahmad 'Uthmani (1885-1949) and Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri (1875-1934) attended, so keen were they to learn what new insights his analogizing would yield.

The hatred that Maulana Mahmud Hasan held for the British originated from the time he was six, when he witnessed horrible atrocities committed by them. In 1909, Maulana Mahmud Hasan set up the *Jami'iyya al-Ansar* to counter British influence and defend Islam, particularly with reference to the Ottoman empire. Its sultan was recognized as the Caliph of the Muslim World, and his empire was continually exploited by Russian, French and British forces during the early twentieth century.

Italy, for example, occupied Tripoli, a part of Ottoman Empire, in September 1911, and France conquered Morocco. Then, a year later, the Christians of Balkan states, namely, Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece, made repeated attacks on the Ottoman state. It was a critical moment of the Muslims all around the world. Maulana Mahmud Hasan's reaction was to close down the madrasah and sent all the teachers and students of the Dar al-'Ulum throughout India to rally volunteers to the aid of the Ottoman state.<sup>70</sup>

Another prominent graduate of the Dar al-'Ulum was Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi (1864-1943), a disciple of Rashid Ahmad Gangohi and Muhammad Yaqub

<sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 47.

Nanautavi.<sup>71</sup> Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi was an *'alim*, a scholar of the Qur'an and Hadith and, being a sufi, one of the pre-eminent mystics of his time. One of his brilliant contributions was a compendium of useful knowledge for women, *'Bihishti Zewar'*, composed for the salvation of Muslim women, that they might not abandon Islam through neglect; "the women's ignorance of the religious sciences", he argued "would affect generation of Muslims. This lack corrupts their beliefs, their deeds, their communications with others, their character and the whole manner of their social life".<sup>72</sup>

The below table gives a rough indication of the distribution of Dar al-'Ulum graduates throughout the professions.

Types of Services	Total
Spiritual Guides	536
Writers	1164
Debaters	1540
Orators and Missionaries	4288
Teachers	5888
Muftis	1784
Tabib (Doctors)	288
Journalists	684

## CONCLUSION

The success of the Dar al-'Ulum madrasah depended on a number of factors. One was the zeal of its founders and staff and the generosity of the Muslim public and patrons (the tradition of the endowment itself going back to the fourteenth century) which granted the school a measure of independence and freedom from government interference.

Another was the Hanafi persuasion of the Dar al-'Ulum 'Ulama (coloured by a sufi influence) which enabled the Deobandis, in the matter of initiating and imple-

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<sup>71</sup>Minault, Gail, *Secluded Scholars, Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India*, (Delhi, 1998), p. 64.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 63.

menting school policy, to adapt to local conditions, although the principle objective of the school, to offer free education and board to Muslim children in the Islamic sciences and to defend and propagate the Islamic faith, was never compromised. For example, they never encouraged innovation (*bid'a*).

We must conclude, however, that the education of Muslim girls was far from egalitarian in outlook due to the socio-religious mores of the time, the Muslim community, by and large, contenting themselves with their daughters' education in the domestic environment.

The madrasah system in India endured throughout the nineteenth century despite the British government's blatant discrimination against Muslim, as typified by the policies of Lord Cornwallis. The Deobandis model, in this respect, constituted a prime example of this dogged determination to survive.