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Waliullahi Ulama and their Role in the Struggle for Freedom during the Colonial Period (1857-1919)

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ABSTRACT

In the aftermath of the War of Independence of 1857, the leadership of Walīullāhi Jamā't decided to establish educational institutions (madāris) under the new strategy to transfer the Walīullāhi philosophy to the next generation in the guise of education. The graduates of these institutions established different organizations and initiated Silk Letter Movement to get rid of the colonial rule. Ḥaẓrat Haji Imdad Ullah Mohajir Makki RIP supervised the movement till his death. After him, Ḥaẓrat Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi RIP and Ḥaẓrat Shah Abd-ur-Rahim Raipuri RIP fulfilled the responsibility of supervision. In Pakistan, adherents of the Deobandi sect associate themselves with the 'ulamā and leaders of the Silk Letter Movement which creates the perception that the movement was religious and sectarian in nature, contrary to the footprints of Walīullāhi Jamā't and Walīullāhi philosophy. The present research attempts to explore the role of Walīullāhi 'ulamā in the struggle for freedom during 1857-1919, with particular emphasis on examining its historical continuity. It also aims to investigate whether these 'ulamā adhered to the established ideological footprints of Walīullāhi Jamā't or diverged. Following the historical method, the data were collected from different sources, particularly the writings and biographies of Walīullāhi 'ulamā. The data analysis shows that Walīullāhi 'ulamā and Mashaikh followed the footprints and line of action of Ḥaẓrat Shah Waliullah Dehlawi RIP and Walīullāhi Jamā't during the struggle against the British rule.

Key Words: Walīullāhi Tehrīk, Silk Letter Movement, Political Role, Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband

Introduction

Shah Waliullah Dehlawi RIP founded Walīullāhi Jamā't in 1731. Shah Abd-ul-Aziz Dehlawi RIP and Shah Ishaq Dehlwi RIP were his successors. These Walīullāhi Mashaikh served in three spheres of Shari'at, Tarīqat and Politics. They contributed for scholarly written books on tafsir, hadith, fiqh and translation of the holy Quran in local languages i.e. Persian and Urdu. Moreover, they also promoted the Shari'ah knowledge by establishing madāris in different cities. These madāris and education centers were also used for the spiritual training of the disciples. Walīullāhi Mashaikh also resisted the rule of EIC as Ḥaẓrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz Dehlawi (RA) issued fatawa Dar-ul-Harb. Syed Ahmad Shaheed (RA) and Shah Ismail Shaheed (RA) established a provisional government at Balakot in 1831 at the golden jubilee of Walīullāhi Tehrīk. Shah Muhammad Ishaq Dehlawi (RA) also followed the footprints of Walīullāhi Mashaikh and continued the struggle (Hussain et al., 2025). He died in 1846 and after his death, Ḥaẓrat Haji Imdadullah Mohajir Makki RIP (Shortly: Ḥaẓrat Mohajir Makki) was accepted as his janshīn who continued the struggle for freedom till his death (Sindhi, 1944/2016).

In the aftermath of 1857, the utterance of the word 'Freedom' was considered to be tantamount to suicide. However, despite all these atrocities, the British could not disengage the Walīullāhi Jamā't from

the struggle for freedom which had led from the front in the battlefield of Shamli during the War of Independence. Then Ḥaḥrat Haji Imdad Ullah Mohajir Makki (RA) was leading the Waliullāhi Jamā't. Ḥaḥrat Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi RIP (shortly: Ḥaḥrat Gangohi) and Ḥaḥrat Maolāna Muhammad Qasim Nanotvi RIP (shortly: Ḥaḥrat Nanotvi) were its Commander-in-Chief. Moreover, Hafiz Muhammad Zamin Shaheed (RA), Maolāna Rahmatullah Kiranwi (RA), Nawab Bahadur Khan (RA), Maolāna Tafazul Hussain (RA) and many notable and sincere people like them were also fulfilling the sacred duty (Mansoorpuri, 2000). The British imperialists had issued arrest warrants for Ḥaḥrat Mohajir Makki (RA), Ḥaḥrat Nanotvi (RA) and Ḥaḥrat Gangohi (RA) in return for participating in the War of Independence. Therefore, under the new strategy, Ḥaḥrat Mohajir Makki (RA) decided to stay and work from Makkah. So, he migrated to Makkah secretly (Raipuri, 2016). Ḥaḥrat Nanotvi (RA) and Ḥaḥrat Gangohi (RA) supervised the movement on behalf of Ḥaḥrat Makki (RA) during his stay in Makkah. Ḥaḥrat Gangohi established his khanqah in Gangoh for the spiritual training of disciples, which became famous as the 'Khanqah Gangoh'. He became sarprast of the movement in 1899 after the demise of Ḥaḥrat Mohajir Makki RIP (Raipuri, 2016).

It is an admitted fact that Ḥaḥrat Makki (RA), Ḥaḥrat Gangohi (RA), Ḥaḥrat Nanotvi (RA), Ḥaḥrat Sahikh-ul-Hind Mahmud Hasan Deobandi RIP (shortly: Ḥaḥrat Sahikh-ul-Hind) and Ḥaḥrat Shah Abd-ur-Rahim Raipuri RIP (shortly: Ḥaḥrat Raipuri-I) were sufis who established their khanqahs to fulfill the spiritual needs of the disciples. Therefore, the research has a special focus on investigating the political role of Waliullāhi 'Ulamā in the guise of education.

The present research attempts to explore the role of Waliullāhi 'ulamā in the struggle for freedom during 1857-1919, with particular emphasis on examining its historical continuity. It also aims to investigate whether these 'ulamā adhered to the established ideological and strategic footprints of Waliullāhi Jamā't or diverged. The research would provide a framework to researchers for evaluation and analysis of the religious and religio-political groups in Pakistan who associate themselves with Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband and Silk Letter Movement in order to strengthen their intellectual superiority, religious identity and historical legitimacy.

Methodology

This research uses a historical method to analyze the published sources of the time. It evaluates primary and secondary sources to conclude by applying descriptive and analytical approaches. The sources like letters, biographies, autobiographies and books, written by Waliullāhi 'Ulamā, have been analyzed to conclude.

New Strategy to Establish Educational Institutions

After ten years of the War of Independence, key members of Waliullāhi Jamā't stepped forward to take revenge for the defeat of 1857 when the terrible atrocities of the British had not yet faded from the hearts of the people. In these circumstances, it was decided to establish educational institutions (madāris) under the new strategy to transfer the Waliullāhi philosophy to the next generation in the guise of education. So, many madāris were established in several cities like Delhi, Meerut (a city in the western region of the Indian state UP), Khurja (a city in Bulandshahr district in the Indian state UP), Bulandshahr (a city and a municipal board in Bulandshahr district in the state UP), Amroha and Saharanpur (Qasmi, 2011). Most of them could not flourish except the following:

- a) Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband
- b) Mazhir Uloom Saharanpur
- c) Madrasah Shahi Moradabad

Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband

Ḥaḥrat Gangohi (RA) and Ḥaḥrat Nanotvi (RA) laid down the foundations of a madrasah on 30th May 1867 in Deoband upon the advice of Ḥaḥrat Mohajir Makki (RA) (Nasir, 2018). It was the time when Christian missionaries were very active against Islam and the Muslims of India. Their main objective was to forcefully convert local people, particularly Muslims, to Christianity and to counteract the struggle for freedom by channeling it into communal and sectarian lines. So, the British used all kinds of tactics to crush every revolutionary effort, and the network of spies was spread throughout the country for the purpose. However, these things could not influence the leaders of the Waliullāhi Jamā't. Therefore, they

initiated the movement of Dar-ul-Uloom for Islam and freedom movement with a new determination to promote religious knowledge but the struggle to decolonize India remained intact under cover (Aziz-ur-Rehman, 1927).

Jamia Imām Anwar Shah and co-founded the Dar-ul-Uloom Waqf in Deoband, writes: Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband was not only a Khanqāh for some spiritual practices or a madrasah for religious education, where a few books were taught without regard to the world and its problems. In fact, it was the continuity of the War of Independence-1857. Apparently, it was different because the struggle for freedom was under the cover of knowledge (Aziz-ur-Rehman, 1927). Syed Muhammad Anzar Shah Masoodi, an Indian Islamic scholar who established the

“It was no longer possible to work for the freedom movement after 1857 when the British had dominated Delhi. Therefore, Ḥaẓrat Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi (RA) and Maolāna Muhammad Qasim Nanotvi (RA) chose the town of Deoband to decolonize India. So, they founded Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband, which was apparently a center for knowledge and wisdom and military headquarters internally.” (Masoodi, 1398 AH)

Ḥaẓrat Nanotvi (RA), by putting forward the results of Jihād-e-Shamli, raised the foundation of Dar Uloom Deoband, its principles and its system in such a way as to compensate for the fall in Shamli. So, it was an attempt to fulfill the plan that could not be successfully met in 1857 (Qasmi, 1995). Therefore, Ḥaẓrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) (Shahjahanpuri, 2014), Ḥaẓrat Obaidullah Sindhi RIP (shortly: Ḥaẓrat Sindhi) (Shaikh, 1986) and Maolāna Hussain Ahmad Madani (RA) (Madani, 2023), the prominent leaders of Waliullāhi Tehrīk during its 2nd and 3rd period, were the graduates of Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband.

Mazahir Uloom Saharanpur

Ḥaẓrat Maolāna Muhammad Sa’adat Ali Faqih Saharanpuri (RA), Ḥaẓrat Maolāna Ahmad Muhadith Saharanpuri (RA) and Ḥaẓrat Maolāna Mazhar Ali Nanotvi (RA) were the founding figures of Mazahir Uloom Saharanpur who laid down its foundations on Friday, 9th November 1866, upon the advice of Ḥaẓrat Gangohi (RA) (Saeedi, 2018). It was the continuation of the policy to establish educational institutions to prepare the youth for the freedom movement in the guise of knowledge and education. Initially, Ḥaẓrat Gangohi (RA) became its first sarparast but it touched the peak of fame during the time of Ḥaẓrat Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri RIP (shortly: Ḥaẓrat Saharanpuri) (Rizvi, 1992). It has great importance in the history of Khanqāh Raipur that its first four janshīn Ḥaẓrat Raipuri-I (RA), Shah Abd-ul-Qadir Raipuri (RA), Shah Abd-ul-Aziz Raipuri (RA) and Shah Saeed Ahmad Raipuri (RA) got education at the madrasah which justifies its objectives (Raipuri, 2016).

Madrasah Shahi Moradabad

Madrasah Shahi (alternatively known as Jamia Qasimia) was established in Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh (India) in 1879 by the poor Muslims of the city (Rizvi, 1992). Ḥaẓrat Gangohi (RA) and Ḥaẓrat Nanotvi (RA) laid down the foundations of the Madrasah (Admin, 2018a) and Ḥaẓrat Gangohi (RA) was its first sarparast (Admin, 2018b). So, it became operational under his supervision at the pattern of Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband. Therefore, it was decided not to accept any aid from the government (Rizvi, 1992). It was also known as ‘Madrasatul Ghuraba’ as its founding members were almost the poor of the city but it gained recognition as ‘Madrasah Shahi’. Maolāna Ahmad Hassan Amrohi (RA) was appointed as its first principal who served there for seven years and the scholars such as Abd-ur-Rahman Siddiqi Amrohi, Abd-ul-Ghani Phalaudi, Muhammad Yahya Shahjahanpuri and Khadim Hussain Amrohi graduated in those days.(Deobandi, 2000)

Madrasah Shahi has a meritorious record for its services as it played a leading role in the freedom movement to get rid of colonial rule. Therefore, on one hand, it produced scholars, theologian teachers and preachers of high repute while on the other, patriots and freedom fighters as well. (Admin, 2018a).

Anjuman Samrat-ut-Tarbiyyat

Ḥaẓrat Shaikh-ul-Hind Maolāna Mahmud Hassan Deobandi RIP (Shortly: Ḥaẓrat Shaikh-ul-Hind) had not only learned religious knowledge from his teacher but also his ideology and the objectives of his political struggle which was the leading cause to lay down the foundation of Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband. So, Dar-ul-Uloom was producing intellectual minds and freedom fighters for the nation (Shairkoti, 1976).

Ḥaẓrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) founded 'Anjuman Samrat-ut-Tarbiyyat' in 1878 upon the advice of his teacher Ḥaẓrat Nanotvi (RA) for the political training of students who had graduated from Dar-ul-Uloom and associated with him (Nasir, 2010). It used to start its activities under the kind supervision of Ḥaẓrat Nanotvi (RA) who died in 1880 at the age of 50 years. (Usmani, 2018). So, Ḥaẓrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) took over all responsibility of the organization after the death of his teacher and it continued its activities for thirty years secretly till 1909 (Rahemi, 2013). The members of the central body were Ḥaẓrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA), Maolāna Ahmad Hassan Amrohi (RA) (an Indian Muslim scholar and freedom struggle activist who served as the first principal of Madrasah Shahi in Moradabad), Maolāna Fakhar-ul-Hassan Gangohi (RA), Maolāna Abd-ul-Haq Parqazvi (RA), Maolāna Muhammad Fazal Deobandi (RA), Maolāna Mir Muhammad Sadiq Madras (RA), Maolāna Abd-ul-Qadir Deobandi (RA), Maolāna Fateh Muhammad Thanvi (RA), Maolāna Abdullah Ambethavi (RA), Maolāna Muhammad Murad Sakan Pakpatin (RA), Maolāna Abdullah Gwaliori (RA), Maolāna Abd-ul-Ali Abdullahpuri Marathi (RA), Maolāna Nehal Ahmad Deobandi (RA), Maolāna Abd-ul-Latif Saharanpuri (RA), Maolāna Abdullah Jalal Abadi (RA), Maolāna Muhammad Ali Ambethavi (RA), Maolāna Muhammad Abd-ul-Adal Phalti (RA), Maolāna Kousar Naganvi (RA) and Maolāna Karamat Ullah Dehlawi (RA) (Shairkoti, 1976). Maolāna Syed Muhammad Mian (RA) writes in his book:

"It was not the purpose of Samrat-ut-Tarbiyyat to organize the old students of Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband. Its actual purpose was to motivate the youngsters to take the revenge of 1857." (Mian, 2015)

Khanqāh Raipur as Janshin of Khanqāh Gangoh

Ḥaẓrat Raipuri-I (RA) was intact with Ḥaẓrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) since the days of Anjuman Samrat-ut-Tarbiyyat. But after the death of Ḥaẓrat Gangohi (RA) in 1905, he became the sarparast of all the movements and institutions which were working under sarparasti of Ḥaẓrat Gangohi (RA). Thus, Khanqāh Raipur became the vicegerent and successor of Khanqāh Gangoh. Therefore, Maolāna Shabbir Ahmad Usmani (RA) discussed the status of Khanqāh Raipur in his poetry. He describes that Khanqāh Gangoh, the Khanqāh established by Ḥaẓrat Gangohi (RA) in Gangoh, can be observed during the visit to Khanqāh Raipur due to having the same ideology, thoughts and pattern of training for sālikīn. So, a visitor of Khanqāh Raipur finds himself in Khanqāh Gangoh. Similarly, Ḥaẓrat Sahikh-ul-Hind gave him the title of "Janshīn-e-Karaam", the successor of Ḥaẓrat Gangohi (RA), in his famous elegy 'Musaddas-e-Malta' (Raipuri, 2016).

Jamiat-ul-Ansar

According to Ḥaẓrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA), there was a need for both religious and political education and training of youngsters. Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband was the center for religious education, and many madrasahs were performing this service in other cities. However, political education and training was not organized in this way. There was no political organization or party in the country whose practical efforts would fulfill the need for the Muslims' intellectual guidance and practical training to some extent. It was a long-term project to confine the efforts only to the students of Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband while the requirements of the country's conditions were urgent in nature. Therefore, the political training of young people was in view of him outside the Dar-ul-Uloom and its old students to propagate the Walīullāhi political thoughts at the mass level. For this purpose, he initially established an association named 'Anjuman Samrat-ut-Tarbiyyat' in 1878 to attach the graduates of Dar-ul-Uloom with Walīullāhi thoughts and struggle for freedom (Jahanpuri, 1988).

The people everywhere in Punjab were expecting a change during the tumultuous period of 1907-1908, as they were curious to know about the outcome of thirty years of struggle at the platform of 'Anjuman Samrat-ut-Tarbiyyat'. This era and the curiosity of the public was the golden chance for Ḥaẓrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) and his followers to publicize the outcome of their struggle which was initiated secretly after the foundation of 'Anjuman Samrat-ut-Tarbiyyat' (Mian, 2005). Therefore, Ḥaẓrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) and Ḥaẓrat Raipuri-I (RA) founded a new organization, 'Jamiat-ul-Ansar', in 1909 with mutual consultation. It was established to organize the graduates of Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband against British imperialism and to create religious awareness among the masses. Moreover, its purpose was also to promote Walīullāhi thoughts and to carry forward the political struggle collectively in the light of Walīullāhi philosophy (Raipuri, 2016). Ḥaẓrat Maolāna Syed Muhammad Mian (RA) writes that:

“It has been reliably heard from elders that Ḥaẓrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) presented the situation of the general public before Ḥaẓrat Shah Abd-ur-Rahim Raipuri (RA), Ḥaẓrat Maolāna Ahmad Hasan Amrohi (RA), Ḥaẓrat Maolāna Khalil Ahmed Saharanpuri (RA) and Ḥaẓrat Maolāna Ashraf Ali Thanvi (RA). All were agreed except Ḥaẓrat Maolāna Ashraf Ali Thanvi to launch Jamiat-ul-Ansar” (Mian, 2005).

Ḥaẓrat Sindhi (RA) writes while mentioning the sarparasts of Jamiat-ul-Ansar:

“A meeting of Ijmā ‘al-anṣār was held in Deoband on Saturday, 23rd April, 1910. The Sarparasts of Jamiat-ul-Ansar Ḥaẓrat Maolāna Mahmud Hasan (RA), Ḥaẓrat Shah Abd-ur-Rahim Raipuri (RA), Maolāna Masood Ahmad Gangohi (RA), Hafiz Muhammad Ahmad (RA) and Maolāna Habib-ur-Rehman (RA), the Deputy Administrator of Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband, attended the meeting along with 130 other members of Jamiat. Ḥaẓrat Shah Abd-ur-Rahim Raipuri (RA) and Maolāna Masood Ahmad Gangohi (RA) praised Ḥaẓrat Sindhi (RA) after his speech about the rules and regulations of Jamiat-ul-Ansar. They also expressed their sympathies with Jamiat and wrote their comments at the end of the meeting to implement the suggestions of Ḥaẓrat Sindhi (RA)” (Sindhi, 1911)

Ḥaẓrat Sindhi (RA) was honored to take over the organizational responsibility of this most important organization as chief administrator (Raipuri, 2016). He wrote in his book, ‘Zati Diary’, as:

“Ḥaẓrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) called me in Deoband from Sindh and advised me to stay in Deoband after a detailed discussion. I worked for four years in organizing the Jamiat-ul-Ansar. Maolāna Muhammad Sadiq Sindhi, Maolāna Abu Muhammad Lahori and Maolāna Ahmad Ali Lahori were also working as founding members with me during that period.” (Sindhi, 1946)

In order to promulgate the message of Jamiat-ul-Ansar, it was considered appropriate to present it in a purely religious semblance which was a very prudent move in terms of the political scenario and also following the tradition of educational institutions. Therefore, a grand public gathering-cum-convocation was organized in Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband, in which about thirty thousand Muslims participated from all around India (Madani, 2023). Although people from all walks of life participated in that gathering, a significant number of those who had been associated with Anjuman Samrat-ut-Tarbiyyat also participated. They had the opportunity to have a meeting through that gathering. Moreover, Jamiat-ul-Ansar was also introduced among the graduates of Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband (Nasir, 2018).

The greatness and political wisdom of Ḥaẓrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) was recognized among the religious circles and by the elders of Aligarh. Therefore, Notable personalities of Aligarh also graced the above-mentioned convocation. Sahibzada Aftab Ahmad Khan, who was later appointed as the Vice Chancellor of Aligarh University, proposed that the graduates of Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband should go to Aligarh to study English and graduates from Aligarh should come to Deoband for religious education. This proposal was considered auspicious among the leadership. (Mian, 2005).

The first meeting and public gathering of Jamiat-ul-Ansar was held in Muradabad city on 15th-17th April 1911, presided by Ḥaẓrat Maolāna Ahmad Hassan Amrohi (RA). Religious scholars from different schools of thought and notable personalities participated in the meeting. Besides the severity of the plague in the city, the participation was excellent, and the management was enviable (Mian, 2005). Public gatherings were arranged in Shimla, Meerut, and Deoband after the Muradabad meeting. So, Jamiat-ul-Ansar became a source of contact and communication with the general public. And stagnancy in Muslim politics was reduced to a great extent. It continued to carry out its work regularly for about four years and positively affected the people (Nasir, 2010).

Nazart-ul-Maarif-ul-Qurania

Ḥaẓrat Sindhi (RA) established a training institution named ‘Nazarat-ul-Maarif-ul-Qurania’ (نظارۃ اَلْمَا‘رِفَا اَلْقُرْآنِيَّة) on 13th June 1913 upon the advice of Ḥaẓrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA). Its purpose was the political training and guidance of modern educated youngsters in the light of Walīullāhi philosophy and ideology. Ḥaẓrat Sindhi (RA) was declared as its administrator while Ḥaẓrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari (RA) and Nawab Waqar-ul-Mulk (Madani, 1953) and Ḥaẓrat Raipuri-I (RA) were its sarparat (Doebandi, 2013). It was an educational and training center for the supporters of the freedom movement. However, it was also a secret meeting point for freedom fighters (Parveen, 2021). The patterns of this strategy were founded by Ḥaẓrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA), whose aim was to establish a

training center outside Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband for political education and training (Nasir, 2010). In this context, Ḥaḏrat Sindhi (RA) said:

“Ḥaḏrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) introduced me to his followers during my stay in Deoband when I was the chief organizer and administrator of Jamiat-ul-Ansar. Similarly, he wanted to attach me to the young leadership of the nation. Therefore, he advised me to go and stay in Delhi. So, Ḥaḏrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) visited Delhi and introduced me to Dr Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari (RA), who further arranged a meeting with Maolāna Abul Kalam Azad (RA) and Maolāna Muhammad Ali Johar (RA) to introduce me with them. In this way, I remained familiar with the top-level politics of Indian Muslims for about two years.” (Sindhi, 1946).

Silk Letters Movement: An outcome of Struggle

Ḥaḏrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) had planned that the representatives of the movement would establish madāris in their hometowns. They would also continue to contribute by mobilizing public opinion, financial and military resources and wait for a favorable situation. Then, at the same date, the whole of India would be revolted and the country would be invaded by the independent tribes of Yaghistan (a key frontier region between Afghanistan and British India) with the help of some other country. Obviously, it was a long-term plan to decolonize India. For this purpose, centers of the movement were established at Deoband, Raipur, Delhi, Goth Pir Jhanda, Dinpur, Amrut, Karachi, Chakwal, Trang Zai, Yaghistan, Kabul, Panipat, Raghistan and Madina. (Mian, 1988). But in 1912, the serious events of the Tripoli and Balkans wars tormented the soul of his plan due to the British policy as the hostility of the British government to the Ottoman Empire had become clear (Madani, 2023). Every Muslim was furious about the situation and British policy towards the OE. Moreover, the break out of the First World War (WW I) in 1914 further fuelled the public opinion against the British in India, particularly. Therefore, it was the right time to blow the colonial power. So, it was decided to start the Jihād immediately (Nasir, 2018).

Maolāna Saif-ur-Rehman (RA) and Haji Trang Zai (RA), the active members of Shaikh-ul-Hind’s movement, had established a center in Yaghistan. There were very brave and active supporters in that region but they were facing financial crisis. Ḥaḏrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) was the main financial source from India. Moreover, people from other parts of the country were also funding individually in secret ways. But all these aids and donations were not enough to meet the need. Therefore, they requested him to arrange support and financial assistance of an independent government in reply to his message for Jihād against the colonial power (Doebandi, 2013).

Ḥaḏrat Sheikh Al-Hind (RA) evaluated all these things and decided to get military and financial aid from Afghanistan and OE. He advised Ḥaḏrat Sindhi (RA) to visit Kabul to convince the Afghan government against the British. He himself set off for the Holy Hijāz where he had to meet with the Turkish leaders to make permanent arrangements for freedom fighters. In the end, it was part of his plan to join the freedom fighters in Yaghistan. Therefore, he called Ḥaḏrat Sindhi (RA) from Delhi and advised him to go to Kabul secretly without any detailed discussion about the plan. Ḥaḏrat Sindhi (RA) was reluctant to migrate due to the incomplete message of Ḥaḏrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) (Nasir, 2018). As he said that:

“I was not mentally ready for the migration to Kabul, but it was necessary to go for the compliance of order.” (Khan, 2018)

In August 1915, Ḥaḏrat Sindhi (RA) left for Kabul and arrived there on 15th October 1915. It was a hazardous journey indeed. The task entrusted to him was extremely important and he carried it out with great devotion, courage and statesmanship (Shaikh, 1986). He narrated about its importance as:

“I came to know when I reached at Kabul that the result of fifty years of struggle of Ḥaḏrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) was before me in raw form. Therefore, I was much needed there to streamline the resources in Afghanistan. So, I felt proud upon his selection and trust in me.” (Sindhi, 1946)

In those days, the British government decided to arrest all those people who were against the government and were not ready to support the government unconditionally. The situation was alarming for the plan of Ḥaḏrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA). In case of his arrest, the whole struggle could be ruined. Meanwhile, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari informed that the government had decided to arrest him due to his political activities. Therefore, he decided to leave the British territory at the earliest which was part

of his plan to go to Hijāz to seek financial and military resources. Coincidentally, the days of Hajj were approaching which was a suitable time to set out for Hijāz. Therefore, he decided to travel to Hijāz with the unobjectionable purpose of performing Hajj. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari (RA) paid the expenses and he left for the Hijāz with Maolāna Uzair Gull (RA) and Maolāna Syed Muhammad Mian (RA). The government issued his arrest warrant and tried at its level best to arrest him but failed (Madani, 1953). Ḥaḏrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) had a meeting with Governor Makkah Ghalib Pasha, who was already familiar with him, on reaching Makkah. He discussed the political situation of India and his freedom plan with him, who assured him of his support and cooperation. He got a letter from Ghalib Pasha, later became famous with the name of 'Ghalib Nama', in which he addressed to the Indian Muslims to rise against the tyrannical British (Nasir, 2018). He also met with Ghazi Anwar Pasha, minister for war, and Jamal Pasha in Madina (Hussain, 1977). Both were impressed and overjoyed by him due to his efforts against the colonial power. Particularly, Anwar Pasha was very much impressed to know the plan of Ḥaḏrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA). He gave a letter to Ḥaḏrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) in which he addressed the sovereign tribes to support the freedom fighters (Nasir, 2010).

Ḥaḏrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) was unable to leave for Yaghistan himself. Therefore, he advised his companions, Maolāna Hadi Hassan (RA) and Maolāna Syed Muhammad Mian (RA), to fulfill the responsibility. Maolāna Syed Muhammad Mian (RA) delivered the message of Ghalib Pasha in the frontier region and sovereign tribes which gave an extraordinary boost to the enthusiasm of the Mujahidīn and made them intend to throw off the shackles of British slavery (Doebandi, 2013). Moreover, another letter was also delivered to 'Hukumat-e-Mo'aqqatah' and 'Junūdi Rbānyū' in which Ḥaḏrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) advised to attack India through different sides on 19th February 1917 to get rid of colonial power (Nasir, 2018). Ḥaḏrat Sindhi (RA) had established 'Hukumat-e-Mo'aqqatah' in 1916 during his stay in Afghanistan which was an interim government and parallel to the British Raj in India. Meanwhile, he also established 'Junūdi Rbānyū', the military force of the Salvation Army level (Sindhi, 2014).

Ḥaḏrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) was in Taif for a meeting with Ghalib Pasha. Meanwhile, a great change took place when America joined the war and became an ally of the British. Turkey's victory changed into defeat when countless American troops, loaded with the latest war tools, came to the aid of the British and the French. Meanwhile, Sharif Hussein committed treachery and began to damage the Turks and their forces in support of the British. Therefore, the Turkish government was unable to fulfill its promise to provide military assistance to the resistance forces in India (Madani, 2023).

Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion, it is inferred that it was the foremost objective of the Walīullāhi Jamā't to transfer Walīullāhi philosophy to the succeeding generation after the defeat in the War of Independence. Because a considerable number of the prominent leaders and devoted followers were martyred, as a result of which Walīullāhi philosophy had become confined to only a few minds. Therefore, it was transferred to the next generation in the guise of educational institutions. As a result, these institutions produced the leadership for the Silk Letter Movement and also served as khanqahs to fulfill the spiritual needs of the people. Ḥaḏrat Gangohi (RA) established his khanqah in Gangoh and Ḥaḏrat Raipuri-I (RA) in Raipur.

Ḥaḏrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) founded 'Anjuman Samrat-ut-Tarbiyyat' upon the advice of Ḥaḏrat Nanotvi (RA), for the political training of students who had graduated from Dar-ul-Uloom. It was a long-term project to confine the efforts only to the students of Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband while the requirements of the country's conditions were urgent in nature. Therefore, Ḥaḏrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) and Ḥaḏrat Raipuri-I (RA) established 'Jamiat-ul-Ansar' to propagate the Walīullāhi political thoughts at the mass level. Ḥaḏrat Sindhi (RA) established a training institution named 'Nazarat-ul-Maarif-ul-Qurania' (Nẓarā' Al-ma'ārifā Al-Qrānyā) upon the advice of Ḥaḏrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA). Its purpose was the political training and guidance of modern educated youngsters in the light of Walīullāhi philosophy and ideology. It was also a secret meeting point for freedom fighters. Although the Silk Letter Movement became unsuccessful due to the fall of OE because it was unable to provide military support. However, the movement was the best outcome of the struggle of Walīullāhi 'ulamā and Mashaikh after the defeat in

1857, which influenced the whole Subcontinent for the sacred cause of freedom. Therefore, it is inferred that the movement was not sectarian in nature.

In view of the above discussion, it is clear that Walīullāhi 'ulamā and Mashaikh served in three spheres of Shari'at, Tariqat and Politics in following the footprints and line of action of Ḥaẓrat Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (RA), Ḥaẓrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz Dehlawi (RA) and Ḥaẓrat Shah Ishaq Dehalwi (RA) after the War of Independence.

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