MUSLIM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN INDO-PAKISTAN

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The resurgence of Islamic educational institutions in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is a significant phenomenon from the viewpoints of education and history. It underlines the socio-political and cultural resuscitation of the Muslim community in the Indian environment. This system of orthodox religious education seems, on the one hand, to have determined the character of the Indian Muslim community by constantly providing it with a powerful religious leadership, and on the other hand, to have systematically re-awakened, the sentiments of unity and solidarity among the Muslims in the midst of a Hindu majority. More importantly it imbued in Muslims a deeper consciousness of the Islamic way of life, of Islamic history, philosophy and culture.

An all-pervasive frustration and despondency came in the wake of disintegrating Muslim political power on the sub-continent during the eighteenth century. In the background there arose an intense interest in questions of Islamic education directed at strengthening the Indian Muslims. Mawlana Muhammad Tayyib says: "As the Indian Muslims were in the process of total political and intellectual annihilation, the only way open to save Islam was the religious education which would reconstruct the hearts and minds of the Muslims and which could pattern their lives into the Islamic mould. This would give them internal guidance and at the same time defend them from external onslaughts. This would, it was thought, create in them a sense of true Islamic education and a sound political consciousness."1

To the knowledge of this writer no systematic attempt has so far been made to investigate why and how these remarkable institutions came into being. What was the intellectual and cultural situation in Indo-Pakistan during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries? Why did these institutions acquire medieval orientations, becoming isolated from the modern world and unrelated to the requirements of modern times? There is a paucity of original sources to answer these questions—many of which
are in Urdu—and to date no learned monographs have appeared dealing directly with the problem. Some, like Diyā’ al-Ḥasan Fārūqī’s, The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan (Bombay, 1963), discussed the problem in an indirect manner. The handling of material by both native and foreign scholars is very sketchy. Even the available sources in Urdu do not help us to fully understand the genesis and development of the madrasahs in different places, or their distinctions and fields of specialization. The Muslim authors, like Manāẓir ʿAlīnān Gīlānī (Muslim Educational System in India [Urdu], Delhi, 1944); Abu’l-Ḥasanāt Nadwī (The Old Muslim Educational Institutions in India (Urdu), A’zamgarh, 1936); Mawlānā ‘Abd al-Sattār (History of Madrasa ‘Āliyah [Urdu], Dacca, 1959), generally tend to portray Muslim education in medieval India as if it were a deliberately organized system, contrary to the facts. The official works issued by the madrasahs themselves lack a critical self-analysis and serve only to eulogize their achievements. They largely evince an attitude of exclusiveness.

Dr. Lini May, in The Evolution of Indo-Muslim Thought after 1857 (Lahore, 1970) asserts, without substantiation, that the establishment of these innumerable private centres of learning constituted a reaction against the modernist trend let loose by Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān’s Muḥam-madan Anglo-Oriental College at ‘Aligarh. The ‘Aligarh Movement certainly accentuated the development of the madrasah system but most of them, like Madrasah ‘Āliyah of Calcutta, and Madrasah Farangi Mahāll of Lucknow, were antecedent to this modernist movement. Moreover, the madrasahs followed their independent course of development unrelated to the modern secular developments. The demands for changes in the curricula of these madrasahs, influenced by complex external factors from time to time, cannot, however, be denied.

In this article, we shall confine ourselves to an analysis of the development of some renowned madrasahs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We shall presume them to be representatives of madrasahs as a whole, whether established by private persons or by the government; both types of institutions adopted similar curricula, methods of teaching, and modes of administration. We shall delineate the salient features, important problems, and issues involved, which are based primarily on tentative conclusions derived from the study of a limited selection of works.

It should be made clear in the beginning, that the madrasahs were not the only institutions of religious learning. Muslim masses received
their religious education from mosques and associate maktabs (primary schools) where the Qur‘ān was memorized. The religious orders of the Ṣūfis (mystics) also imparted some rudimentary teachings to the masses in their exclusive halqas (circles). In medieval Islamic times education was diffused in the sub-continent by these three means. The chief aim of this education was to produce men of religion and character; education was regarded as a preparation for life and for life after death. Hence, religion was the main determinant of all study and learning.2

The madrasahs throughout Muslim areas of Indo-Pakistan in the main belong to the Hanafite school of law. A rough census taken in 1950 indicated the existence, in India alone, of eighty-eight Arabic madrasahs of the traditional style.3 A greater number of madrasahs may be found in areas which now constitute Pakistan, (and Bangla Desh) but no official figures are available. Not all are important to our study, but as a whole they teach the same course, adopt the same methodology of teaching and cling to similar premises of dogma.

In medieval Muslim India, religious education was promoted and patronized by the Muslim kings, princes, and wealthy people. Foundations (waqfs) were created to maintain madrasahs and to encourage men of learning. The first regular madrasah was established by Sultān Shahābud-din Ghori, in the Year A.D. 1191 at Ajmer.4 Muḥammad Bakhtiyār Khaljī built many madrasahs in Bengal. The Firūzī and Naṣīriyah Madrasahs were two of the most important such early centres of higher learning, and were built by Ilūtūmīsh at Uch in A.D. 1227 and at Delhi about A.D. 1237, respectively. The Mongol invasion of Central Asia drove many scholars to India in the thirteenth century, so that from the outset the madrasahs were well supported with teachers of the highest learning. The largest and best of these schools were to be found in the chief centres where Muslim rule was first established.5

These madrasahs laid emphasis on specialization in particular subjects, i.e., Grammar in the Punjab; Ḥadīth and Tafsīr at Delhi; Logic and Philosophy at Rampur; Law and Theology at Lucknow.6

When the British took over the country from the Muslims, they introduced a secular type of education and replaced Persian with English. Thus the system of the madrasahs received a damaging blow. This is described well by the famous British civil servant Sir William Hunter in his book The Indian Musalmans:
Before the country passed to us the Muslims were not only the political but the intellectual power in India... They possessed a system of education which however inferior to that which we have established, was yet by no means to be despised; was capable of affording a high degree of intellectual training and polish; was founded on principles not wholly unsound, though presented in an antiquated form; and which was infinitely superior to any other system of education then existing in India: a system which secured to them an intellectual as well as material supremacy.

... During the first seventy-five years of our rule we continued to make use of this system as a means for producing officers to carry out our administration. But meanwhile we had introduced a scheme of public instruction of our own; as soon as we trained up a generation of men on the new plan we flung aside the old Muhammadan system and the Musalman youth found every avenue of public life closed in their faces.

The change to English and the abolition of Persian as the state language was opposed by the Muslims in general and the 'Ulamā' (the religious scholars) in particular, to which Hunter makes allusions in his book.

Why did 'Ulamā' oppose English? There are different explanations. One is that the Muslims, like any other people who had lately lost their political power, were still in a daze and suspected the British of being bent on ruining their religion, culture and economic basis. They were fearful of the fast increasing activities of the Christian missionaries who were patronized by the British Government. The 'Ulamā' saw in secularization, a threat to their own existence.

Another group, headed by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, accused the 'Ulamā' of narrowmindedness and obscurantism for their opposition to English education. Khan came to the conclusion that madrasah education, using traditional subjects, had become irrelevant to the modern age. To a committee on Muslim education in 1872, he spoke as follows: "When the question of education is mooted amongst the Muhammadans, their efforts are always hampered by their endeavour to adopt their old hereditary system of education, and the old established course of study. Many schools regulated by the old system have been established by the Muham-
madans of Jaunpore, Allygarh, Cawnpore, Saharanpur, Deoband, Delhi and Lahore.” He assured the committee that these schools were altogether useless to the nation at large and that no good could be expected from them.

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, himself trained in the traditional madrasahs diagnosed the social malaise inflicting the Indian Muslims, and for its cure he prescribed his own solution of modern western education. He was convinced that the Muslims could only progress if they received modern education and cooperated with the British government.

As stated before, the scrapping of Persian and the introduction of English not only had an adverse effect upon the employment of the Muslims in government services, it also produced feelings of dismay and discontent among the orthodox Muslim masses. Encouraged by the orthodox ‘Ulama’, secular education was boycotted by the Muslims. They were convinced that the only education worth pursuing, and which could safeguard their religious and cultural aspirations, was a religious one. Shocked by the secular nature of western education and activities of the Christian priests, the Muslims were reconciling themselves to forgo the possible material benefits that could accrue from an English education.

In this hour of self-examination, both groups of the Muslims, i.e., progressive and orthodox, felt the need for reconstruction of education in the Muslim community. Regarding the nature, content, and objectives of this education, however, there emerged a split and a dichotomy. The orthodox group, led by the ‘Ulama’ believed that objectives could only be realized through a system of education based on religious fundamentalism imparted in the madrasahs. This was the motive which impelled them to establish new madrasahs and revive old ones which had suffered from negligence and lack of patronage. The ‘Ulama’ thought that the solution of economic, political, and cultural problems lay in religious education.

The other group, led by the modernists, thought that modern western education was the only means to bring a new world of progress and enlightenment. This created a dichotomy in the system of education which still persists in the sub-continent. Despite many efforts to bridge the gulf between the two and to integrate them in a homogeneous system, they still oppose each other. This development also reflects the two distinct ideological and intellectual schools of thought in the Muslim community.
Our sources reveal, without doubt, that a wide movement of madrasahs appeared throughout Muslim India after the War of Independence in 1857. As explained earlier, however, the madrasah tradition is traced back to the period of the Delhi Sultanate. It is interesting to note that this tradition has been maintained continuously, and with fervour and enthusiasm. Before we discuss in detail the famous madrasahs, it is necessary to understand the nature of the curricula (niṣāb) taught in these institutions.

The Curricula:

Ideally, the subjects studied in the educational institutions of medieval times in India—as well as in the rest of the Muslim world—can be classified under two headings: al-manqūl or al-ʿulūm al-naqliyah (the transmitted sciences) and al-maʿqūl or al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyah (the rational sciences). The first group comprises the religious sciences which are as follows:\(^{12}\)

- **Tajwīd**: the art of Qurʾānic recitation
- **Qirʿat**: the art of different reading methods of the Qurʾān
- **Tafsīr**: Qurʾānic exegesis
- **Ḥadīth**: Prophetic traditions
- **Fiqh**: Jurisprudence according to different madhāhib (schools) of law
- **Uṣūl al-Fiqh**: doctrine of fundamental methods for deducing laws
- **Farāʿid**: the laws of inheritance (mīrāth)
- **Kalām**: scholastic theology
- **Taṣawwuf**: mysticism

The second group consists of linguistic and rational sciences. They are:

**Linguistic sciences**:

- **Naḥw**: syntax
- **Ṣarf**: morphology
- **Balāghah**: rhetoric
- **ʿArūd**: prosody
- **Qāfiyyah**: rhyme

**Rational sciences**:

- **Manṭiq**: logic
- **Ḥisāb**: arithmetic
Hay'ah: astronomy
Hikmah: Philosophy
Munāzarah: polemics

As regards the sub-continent, this niṣāb can be considered in the five stages of its development depending upon the emphasis put on manqūl or maʿqūl sciences.

These stages are as follows:\(^{13}\)

1. 7th-10th century A.H./13th-16th century A.D.
2. 10th-11th century A.H./16th-17th century A.D.
3. 11th-12th century A.H./17th-18th century A.D.
4. 12th-13th century A.H./18th-19th century A.D.
5. 14th century A.H./19th-20th century A.D.

In this paper we are concerned only with the last two periods. In the first period, the study of Nahw, Balāghah, Fiqh, 'Uṣul al-Fiqh, Manṭiq, Kalām, Taṣawwuf and Tafsīr were emphasized, but the importance of Ḥadīth literature was not realized because the study of Fiqh was over-stressed. In the second and third periods, Kalām, Ḥikmah and Manṭiq were particularly studied. The fourth stage was represeneed by Mullā Niẓām al-Dīn (d. 1161/1748) of Sohālī (Lucknow) who was a renowned scholar of his time. A madrasah was built by Aurangzeb (who reigned 1658-1707), known as Farangi Mahall in Lucknow and to which certain lands were dedicated. After completing his education, he began to teach in the madrasah and was associate professor with his father, Mullā Ḥuṭb al-Dīn. Niẓām was a great educator of his time and became famous for his curricular reforms. He introduced a reformed niṣāb in the madrasah which is still known as Dars-i-Niẓāmī and has been adopted, with slight modifications, in all the madrasahs of the sub-continent.

The Dars-i Niẓāmī consists of the following subjects and course books:\(^{14}\)

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Ṣarf:} & \quad \text{Mizān, Munshaʿīb, Ṣarf-i Mīr, Shāfiyāh,} \\
\text{Nahw:} & \quad \text{Nahw-i Mīr, Kāfiyāh, Sharḥ-i Jāmī} \\
\text{Manṭiq:} & \quad \text{Ṣughrā, Kubrā, Isāghiyyī, Tahdhib, Ḥuṭbī.} \\
\text{Ḥikmah:} & \quad \text{Maybudhū, Mullā Ṣādhar, Shams-i-Bāzighāh} \\
\text{Ḥisāb:} & \quad \text{Khulāṣat al-Ḥisāb, Euclid Bk.: 1} \\
\text{Balāghah:} & \quad \text{Mukhtaṣar Maʿānī, Muṭauwal.}
\end{align*}\]
It appears that the main characteristic of this curriculum is the instruction of Mantiq, Kalām and Ḥikmah. It is, however, not clear when and why these rational sciences with medieval orientation were pursued at the cost of transmitted sciences, Ḥadith and Tafsīr. It is reported that the Mughal emperors encouraged the study of Ḥikmah and Kalām. In 1586, Akbar (who reigned from 1555-1605), introduced the modern-sciences of philosophy, medicine, astrology, and chemistry. He considerably discouraged the study of al-ʿUlam al-Naqliyah: Qurʾān, Ḥadith and Fiqh. He used to invite foreign scholars to teach modern sciences in the madrasahs. Due to these curricular changes, fifteen books on rational sciences, as compared to only two on transmitted sciences (namely, al-Bayḍāwī and Mishkāt) are found mentioned in the syllabus.¹⁵

The Farangi Maḥall Madrasah became famous for its specialization in Fiqh and ʿUṣūl-i Fiqh, rather than in Ḥadith or Tafsīr. “The main peculiarity of the tradition established by Mullā Niẓām was that although a text book was prescribed, he paid scant attention to the text itself, but around the text he wove a wide net of learning by which the inner eye of the student was opened.”¹⁶ This great centre of learning produced illustrious ʿUlamāʾ, like Mullā Baḥr al-ʿUlūm Mawlānā ʿAbd-al-Rabb, Mawlānā ʿAbd-al-Ḥayy Farangī Maḥallī, and Mawlānā ʿAbd-al-Bārī.

In the fifth and last stage of curricular development, more books have been added and a greater emphasis has been put on logic and on memorization of Qurʾān and Ḥadīth texts. This stage is a transitional stage and under the impact of modern progressive ideas, new subjects have been added in some madrasahs, like Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ (Lucknow). Recently, new types of official madrasahs like Jāmiʿah Islāmiyah Bahawalpur (Pakistan) have been set up where new subjects have also been introduced.

In the next section we shall discuss the origin, development, objectives and achievements or failures of some renowned madrasahs of the
sub-continent. Each madrasah is in itself an area ripe for research and investigation, but we shall confine our study to giving a brief account of each.

The Madrasahs:

Madrasah ‘Āliyah, Calcutta. This is one of the oldest madrasahs and belongs to a special category. It was established by the British Governor-General Warren Hastings in October 1780/1194. The circumstances leading to its establishment are as follows: On August 12, 1765, Shāh ‘Alam, the Mughal emperor, handed over the diwānt (revenue collection) administration of Bengal to the East India Company on the stipulation that Mughal administration would continue. The Persian language, the system of administration and the courts were not changed. Warren Hastings, therefore, desperately needed trained and reliable personnel, well-versed in Islamic law. There was at that time no dearth of ‘Ulama’ in India, but they did not qualify to work in the offices or the courts, and were least trusted by the British. At this time the Muslims of Calcutta were planning to build a madrasah and they approached Warren Hastings for this purpose. He records the following:

It is a policy matter that Muslims should be appointed to the important offices of criminal and civil courts and police. These duties can only be discharged with a sound and thorough knowledge of Arabic and Persian languages and of Islamic law. But these sciences and the ‘Ulama’ are disappearing gradually. The revenue administration is in our hands and all the workers there are either British or Hindu who, due to their training and ingenuity, know the administrative matters better than the Muslims. It is also a fact that after the decline of Muslim rule, the Muslim families have been ruined and are without any means to educate their children. The result is that they are no longer able to procure any government jobs. For these reasons, the Governor-General has founded the Madrasah ‘Āliyah to provide opportunities to the Muslims to fully participate in the administration. With the approval of the Board he has attached some land from 24 Pargana district to cover the expenses of the madrasah.¹⁷

Mullā Majd-al-Dīn, a pupil of Mullā Niṣām al-Dīn, was appointed a mudarrisī awwal and Dars-i Niṣāmī was adopted as the curriculum.
The main features of this curriculum, which persisted until 1790, were as follows:

1) two or three abridged books on all subjects were used;
2) these were the most difficult books in their fields;
3) books on logic and philosophy were present in greater number;
4) only one book on Hadith (Mishkât) was taught; and
5) no attention was paid to literature as a subject.

On the recommendation of the Reform Committee of 1791, Mullâ Majd al-Dîn was dismissed and the following subjects were made compulsory: Physics, Fiqh, astronomy, Euclid, arithmetic, logic, rhetoric and syntax. In 1820, reforms were again introduced in the methods of examination, and the first examination was held in 1821. Instruction in the English language was started in 1826 but halted in 1851 for various reasons. The Bengali Muslims were still suspicious of the English language, for they believed that through imposition of English, the British government wanted to deprive Muslims of their culture, religion and freedom. The Muslims despised the British because they had systematically destroyed Muslim political power and had confiscated all the jâgîrs (fiefs) and waqfs (religious charitable endowments). In 1828, according to the Resumption of Grants, "A large part of the sum was derived from lands held rentfree by Musalmans or by Muḥammadan foundation... Hundreds of ancient families were ruined and the educational system of the Musalmans which was almost entirely maintained by rent-free grants received its death blow."  

When the Act of 1837 was passed, replacing Persian with English as the official language the 'Ulamâ' opposed it vehemently. This boycott of modern education in the madrasahs made matters worse for the Muslims because they failed to avail themselves of the new opportunities in education and government. In his book, Hunter narrates the conditions under which Madrasah 'Âliyah was established; makes mention of the mismanagement in the administration; and proceeds to deplore the fact that only Persian and Arabic were being used as subjects of instruction. He maintains that Arabic and Persian have ceased to be the bread-winners in official life. Inspite of many reforms, Madrasah 'Âliyah could not produce good scholars to assume their roles in society.  

In 1866, Act No X was passed which stopped the appointment of Muslim Qâqîls and assessors. Until this time the Muslim Qâqîls had
worked with British judges in the courts, and graduates of the madrasah had occupied these important posts. This new law then closed the last avenue of service for the graduates of Madrasah ‘Aliyah.21

The madrasah now lost its raison d’etre but continued to exist as an advanced centre of Muslim learning. The government soon after established three more such madrasahs in Dacca, Rajshahi, and Chittagong which followed the curriculum of Madrasah ‘Aliyah. Between 1932 and 1937 the number of madrasahs in Bengal and Assam reached fifty-two, most of them patronized and aided by the government and by the committees formed to improve the syllabus and over-all efficiency of these institutions.22

After the creation of Pakistan, Madrasah ‘Aliyah shifted location, from Calcutta to Dacca and became affiliated with the University of Dacca in 1947. The madrasah system, according to the Reformed Madrasah Scheme, was brought into line with the general system of education even before 1947. This system has as its basis, a network of thousands of maktabs associated with hundreds of junior and senior madrasahs, with many Islamic intermediate colleges forming a connecting link with the crown—the Islamic Department of the Dacca University.

The East Bengal Educational System Reconstruction Committee of 1952 recommended the integration of the old Madrasah ‘Aliyah with the general educational system; the inclusion of modern subjects in the old classical syllabus; and the establishment of a university of Islamic learning. In addition, the committee complained that the madrasah system “... has long failed to produce erudite scholars and religious savants and ‘Ulamā’ of outstanding merit and ability who could do original research work and thus contribute to a substantial advance of human knowledge and Islamic thought and culture.”23 They therefore recommended that suitable scholars be sent abroad and that a Research and Translation Bureau be established along the lines of Dār al-Muṣannīfīn (A’zamgarh, India).

The main approach of the Madrasah ‘Aliyah remained orthodox, with Dars-i Niẓāmi as its base. Available sources give abundant evidence of Madrasah ‘Aliyah’s forceful impact on the cultural and intellectual life of the Muslims of Bengal and Assam.

Dār al-‘Ulūm Deoband. The most important and influential insti-
stitution of religious education is the Dār al-‘Ulūm (seminary) established in 1867/1283 at Deoband in Saharanpur District, India. This institution following the tradition derived from the movement of Shāh Wālī Allāh (1703-1763) and the Indian Wahhābism, was dedicated to resuscitate Islam and to rid the Muslims of all corruptions, of religious degradation, and of social exploitation to which they had been subjected since the British occupied the sub-continent. Hājj Imdād Allāh, Mawlānā Muḥammad Qāsim Nānawtawi and Mawlānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī were the co-founders of this madrasah which originated from a small Arabic maktab. This madrasah emerged as a synthesis of the characteristics of three different types of religious institutions which existed in Delhi, Lucknow, and Khayrabad in the nineteenth century. As stated above, Delhi emphasized Tafsīr and Hadīth; Lucknow, Fiqh; and Khayrabad, Kalām and philosophy. Deoband became famous for the study of Ḥadīth.

In the words of Muḥammad Ṭayyib, "... the Dār al-‘Ulūm follows the religious tradition of the Ḥanafites, the theology (Kalām) of Ashʿarites, the mysticism of the Chishtī order, and philosophy (Ḥikmah) of Shāh Wālī Allāh; the basic principles ('Uṣūl) of Qāsim Nānawtawi and applied principles (Furūʿ) of Rashīd Gangohī." The constitution of Dār al-‘Ulūm Deoband laid down the following basic principles:

1. Most importantly, the authorities of the madrasah should always take utmost interest in raising funds from the public;
2. Constant and serious endeavours are to be made towards the establishment of quality living accommodations for students;
3. The members of the Shūrā (council) who are responsible for the management of the madrasah, should be individually dedicated to its aims;
4. The teachers of the madrasah must be like-minded, tolerant and respectful of each other;
5. The curriculum and method of instruction must be strictly adhered to;
6. As long as the madrasah does not have a regular source of income, it will exist; if some permanent source is found, i.e., landed property or a factory, the purpose of the madrasah will be lost sight of. In the matter of income, some uncertainty is beneficial;
(7) The participation of government and wealthy persons in madrasah affairs is harmful; and

(8) Donations of anonymous persons are blessings; the sincerity of these persons is a permanent source of income.26

There are three committees responsible for governing and supervising the overall activities of Dār al-‘Ulūm Deoband: Majlis-i Shūrā, a high-powered committee responsible for the management of the madrasah; Majlis-‘Āmilah, the executive committee and executor of Majlis-i Shūrā decisions; and Majlis-i ‘Ilmiyah, the committee for education and advisor to the Șadr-i Mudarris (principal) on matters of grading.

The officers of the madrasah are: Sarparast, patron or chairman; Muhtamim, director; Șadr-i Mudarris, head-professor; and Mufīt, authority on matters of Islamic law and rituals. Muhammad Țayyib lists the names of persons who held these positions between 1867 and 1967.27

The departments (Shu’bas) of the Dār al-‘Ulūm are: Arabic; Persian, Qur’ānic memorization; theology; calligraphy; medicine; handicrafts, like leather work; research in the Qur’ān; dār al-ifṭā’ (authoritative decisions on legal and theological problems); and tablīgh (missions).28 The following books and subjects are studied, and for the most part, are based on Dars-i Niẓāmī:29.

This syllabus appears to be a significant improvement on Dars-i Niẓāmī. More books on Ḥadīth, Fiqh and Arabic Literature have been added, and the new subjects of prophetic biography, history, medicine and the overall curriculum have been oriented towards the production of scholars well-versed in classical disciplines and imbued with piety, simplicity and dedication to the cause of Islam. This madrasah achieved astounding success in producing a great number of scholars. In addition, about one thousand Arabic madrasahs have been established throughout the sub-continent in the Deoband tradition. Some are associated with Deoband in matters of Syllabus and examination, such as Jāmi’ah Millīah Noākhālī,
Madrasah Qāsim al-‘Ulm Murādābād, Madrasah Jāmi‘ah Masjid Amrūhah, Madrasah Ghawthī, al-Madrasah al-Sharī‘ah (Medina). Other madrasahs which follow the same syllabus have been established in parts of Afghanistan, Burma and Africa.

The Deoband-based Jam‘iat al-‘Ulām‘i Hind, founded in 1919, brought the ‘Ulāmā‘ together on a common political platform to guide the Indian Muslims in religious and political matters. This was an anti-British and pro-Congress organization which stood for composite nationalism, thus opposing the Muslim separatist movement. The founders of Deoband and particularly Mawlānā Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan, actively fought in the 1857 War of Independence.

Although the curriculum of the madrasah was improved from time to time and although M. Qāsim Nānawtawī himself was not opposed to the study of modern sciences along with the religious sciences the forces of conservatism ultimately triumphed when at the instigation of M. Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī, even philosophical disciplines were removed from the list of course offerings. The study of the English language and of modern sciences was excluded from the syllabus and education was imparted from the old Dars-i Niẓāmī. This caused the ‘Ulāmā‘ to be more conservative and traditional in their outlook and unmindful of modern changes in the philosophy of education. It appears that more energies have been devoted towards building a religious personality than towards imparting knowledge. Deoband, however, produced religious leaders of first-rate importance who played significant roles in the education of the masses and in the national struggle for freedom.

**Shibli and His Criticism of Dars-i Niẓāmī:**

Muḥammad Shibli Nu‘mānī (1857-1914), madrasah-educated, was an associate of Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān’s (1870-1898) modern education movement. For sixteen years he taught Arabic and Persian at ‘Aligarh but differed with Sir Sayyid on many points. He criticized the ancient curriculum of the madrasahs, and wrote papers and delivered speeches which forcefully called for improvements. Shibli felt improvements were needed to meet the requirements of modern times. According to Shibli, the current curriculum suffered from the following defects:

1. The subjects which are necessary and important in themselves are not taught whereas the subjects which are the means and tools to understanding the real subjects are given too much importance. For example
Nahw (syntax) is needed for the study of Arabic literature, but so much time is given to syntax that Arabic literature is practically neglected.

(2) The books on logic and philosophy outnumber the books on Tafsir, Ḥadīth, Fiqh and 'Usūl-i Fiqh.

(3) Most of the books used are confusing and vague in their presentations. For example, Ḥamd Allāh, Mīr Zāhid, Mullā Ḥasan and Qāḍī are used in the study of logic yet many of their discussions more closely pertain to philosophy. The result is that the student is perplexed and is not able to grasp either logic or philosophy.

(4) Only two books are taught in the study of Tafsir, viz. Jalālayn and Bayḍāwī. Jalālayn is so concise and brief that its total word count compares to that of the Qurʾān, and only two-and-a-half of the thirty parts of the Bayḍāwī are studied.

(5) 'Ilm al-'Aqā'id (science of beliefs) is the most important subject, yet only Sharḥ 'Aqā'id Nasafi is taught which is of low standard. The Sharḥ Mawāqif deals only with the general problems of living which have no relation to religious beliefs.

(6) Most of the books do not help the student to discuss, analyze and infer in order to understand problems. Rather they increase his confusion and dull his mind.

(7) The syllabus does not contain any book on modern sciences.

(8) No attention is paid to the study of the English language.

Shibli was particularly critical of the fact that the study of sciences handed down by the Greeks had remained virtually identical since their introduction to the 'Arabs and that no effort had been made to study the modern developments in science and philosophy which were shaping the new world.

Shibli was Mu'tamid, Chancellor of the Dār al-'Ulūm, Nadwah (Lucknow) from 1905 to 1913, but his association with this progressive madrasah dates back to its inception in 1894. The madrasah was founded in reaction to the liberalism of 'Aligarh Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College and is a product of several important conferences attended by famous 'Ulamā'. The meetings of the Nadwah, held at Lucknow on April 12, 13 and 14, 1895, were attended by such famous Muslim scholars as Mawlānā Shāh Muḥammad Ḥusayn of Allāhabad, Mawlānā Shāh Muḥam-
mad Amānāt Allāh of Ghazipur, Mawlānā Shāh Muḥammad Sulaymān of Phulwārī Sharīf, Mawlānā Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdul Ḥaqq of Delhi, and Mawlānā Abū Muḥammad Ibrāhīm of Arrah, among others. Shiblī was the most active and enthusiastic conference member and its driving force. The delegates discussed how they could equip themselves with the knowledge that European science and education provided and yet remain consistent with their religious outlook. The madrasah was officially organized at Lucknow on November 2, 1898. Its objectives and aims were as follows:

(1) The advancement and reform of maktabs and madrasahs and the promotion of higher learning in Islamic disciplines;

(2) The suppression of sectional quarrels, especially between the Wahhābīs and the people of Sunnah wa’l-Jamā‘at;

(3) Social reforms among all classes of Muslims; and

(4) The pursuit of Muslim spiritual welfare and the spread of Islam through tablīgh.

The original aim in establishing Nadwah was, as Sayyid Sulaymān says, the reformation and improvement of the Arabic method of education and the niṣāb. When Shiblī took charge of this seminary, the following niṣāb was introduced:

(1) Greater attention was given to literature and the art of rhetoric. Besides Mukhtaṣar al-Ma‘ānt, other books like Dalā‘il al-I‘jāz, I‘jāz al-Qur‘ān (Bāqillānt) and Naqd al-Shī‘r were added.

(2) Fifteen of the thirty parts of Taṣṣīr Bayādī were included in the syllabus. An Egyptian book, as-Ṣirāt al-Mustaqīm, dealing with the commentary on those Surahs of the Qur‘ān related to Fiqh, Kalām and ethics, were also added.

(3) In ʿAqā‘id ibn Rushd’s Kashf al-Adillah and Ghazālī’s al-Igtiṣād were placed on the initial syllabus. Only one book, Rāzī’s Ma‘ālim fi ʿuṣūl al-Dīn, however, was retained.

(4) In philosophy, Hadya Sa‘īdiyāh, Sharḥ Ḥikmat al-ʿAyn and Sharḥ Ḥikmat al-Iṣhrāq were included. Sharḥ Ḥikmat al-Iṣhrāq deals with the philosophy of Iṣhrāq (Illuminations), a subject neglected by the ancient books.
(5) Shāh Wālī Allāh's book, Ḥujjat Allāh al-Bālighah on Sharī'ah was introduced.

(6) In modern philosophy, al-Durūs al-Awwaliyah (published in Beirut) which discusses the modern problems of science, was placed on the syllabus.

(7) The study of the English language was made compulsory.

The highest objective of the Nadwah was to produce specialists and experts of the highest level (Darjah-i takmil) and in numerous subjects. The subjects of modern science, history, philosophy, and mathematics were introduced.36

Under Shibli’s direction the Nadwah made great efforts to provide a more enlightened education for the Muslims. The young men who aspired to become ‘Ulamā’, writers and journalists underwent a very serious training in all branches of Islamic education over a period of at least eight years. The curriculum thus proved to be a great improvement on the ancient system of education. The Nadwah also established a department of research and writing, Dār al-Mu‘annifin, in 1914 which has since produced significant works on theology, history, and other subjects of Islamic learning, and has greatly developed the study of Urdu language and literature.

Nadwah symbolizes synthesis between the old and the new. It has established higher standards of research and study. Its additional stress on Arabic literature, however—originally a reaction against Dars-i Niẓāmī—has resulted in an imbalance in the overall scheme. Consequently, a great number of writers and journalists have been turned out but, with few exceptions, not many legal experts (Fuqahā’, singular Fāqih), traditionists (Muhaddithīn) or original thinkers of high calibre. The Nadwah began with a progressive spirit and a rationalist method, but, in the words of W.C. Smith, “...a true liberal position has by no means been achieved; either here or virtually anywhere in the theological world of Indian Islam.” The approach of Nadwah to socio-economic problems is conservative. “The triad of ribā (usury), mīrāth (inheritance) and zakāh (poor-tax) is addressed in economic questions; veiling of women may perhaps be modified, but not abandoned.” “...joint-stock company shares are permitted, bonds forbidden etc.”37

Mention may also be made of Madrasah-i Ilāhiyyāt (Cawnpore)
which was founded to defend Islam from attacks of Hinduism and Christianity. It is basically a missionary institution and its curriculum consists of the Qurʾān, Islamic theology and philosophy, Munāẓarah (polemics), Christianity, western science, and Sanskrit. Despite this modernist-oriented curriculum, Madrasah-i Ilāhiyät clings to conservatism.38

Other less important madrasahs, large and small, are spread throughout the sub-continent. Some well known among them are as follows: Madrasah-i Fayḍ-i ‘Ām (Cawnpore); Madrasah-i Jāmiʿ-al-ʿUlūm (Saharanpur); Madrasah-i Islāmiyah (Fateh Pūr); Madrasah-i ʿĀliyah (Rampur); Madrasah ʿArabiyyah Islāmiyah (Karachi); Madrasah Dār al-ʿUlūm Tando Allah Yar (Sind); Jāmiʿah Ashrafiyah (Lahore); Dār al-ʿUlūm Taqwiyyat al-Islam; (Lahore); Madrasah Anwār al-ʿUlūm (Multan); Dār al-ʿUlūm Ḥaqqāniya, (Akora Khattak); Madrasah Khayr al-Madāris (Multan).

It is interesting to note that when the movement of Muslim separatism bore fruit and Pakistan came into being in 1947, a powerful madrasah movement was stimulated and hundreds of Dār al-ʿUlūms sprang up throughout East and West Pakistan.37 Mawlānā Shabbir Āḥmad ‘Uthmānī and Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī tried to improve their curriculum. The real causes of this growth cannot be easily ascertained: first, because there is an acute dearth of material and second, because this is a complex problem with social, economic, and intellectual ramifications. We do know, however, that this new movement posed a dilemma to the government which was determined to promote new schemes of national reconstruction. As a result a crisis in the system of education occurred which has not yet been solved.

The existence of private madrasahs has created a dichotomy in the system of education. On the one side there are the modern secular institutions, model schools, colleges and universities where the sons and daughters of the ruling elite can afford modern education. On the other side are the privately-run madrasahs which in general, attract the sons of the down-trodden lower classes.40 Thus, the problem is symptomatic of socio-economic disequilibrium characteristic of an unjust socio-economic system. Many committees and conferences have been formed by the government to assist in improving these madrasahs and integrating them into the broader system of national education. But the gulf between the secular education and the theological learning has continually widened.41

In conclusion, three points should be made. First, the madrasahs
have been the centres of Islamic classical studies. With some exceptions, like Nadwat al-‘Ulamā’ (Lucknow), they impart the medieval Arabic learning with emphasis on Islam as a total system of life, and on piety and high character. In a sense, these institutions have become anachronistic: they have nothing in common with the modern system of education which puts greater emphasis on scientific and critical attitudes. Second, the *madrasah* system is closely related to the identity problem of the Muslim community in the sub-continent. Islam is the *raison d’être* of this community. As a religio-social system and as a *Weltanschauung*, it has its own conceptions of history, society, economics and culture—a view which has been forcefully preached by the ‘Ulamā’ and their *madrasahs*. This explains the struggle between the progressive and liberal modernists who want to re-interpret, reconstruct, and re-define the principles of Islam, and the conservative ‘Ulamā’—the products of these *madrasahs*—who tenaciously cling to fundamentalism in matters of dogma and interpretation of things religious. Third, the system of *madrasahs* in its contents and concepts cannot be studied properly without understanding the contemporary economic structure of the society which creates and sustains the dichotomy in the system of education.

*Madrasahs* are scattered throughout Pakistan. Their overall re-organization and curricular modernization cannot be carried out without scientific planning and research. They must be integrated and affiliated to the system of modern Universities, for these religious institutions also belong to the area of education. An improved scheme of *madrasah* system can potentially become a vehicle for educating the masses.

**NOTES**

8. Ibid., p. 140.
12. For a detailed analysis, see Şefi Ghulâm Muḥayyuddin, Al-Minhāj (Lahore, 1941) in which the author gives an excellent account of the evolution of curriculum in madrasahs of Indo-Pakistan. For general niṣāb of medieval Islamic times, see J. Pedersen's excellent article "Masjid" in Encyclopedia of Islam (1st ed.; Leiden, 1936).
17. Sattār, pp. 38-39. He quotes this passage from Revenue Record (18-8-1875), No. 92.
18. Ibid., pp. 47-52.
19. Hunter, p. 177; Sattār, pp. 72-73.
21. Ibid., pp. 183-186; Sattār, pp. 131-133, 156-166.
27. Ibid., p. 26.
28. Ibid., pp. 30-34.
29. Ibid., pp. 35-48; and Fārūqī, pp. 33-35.
30. Tayyib, pp. 87 and 89.
31. Fārūqī, Chapters III and IV for details.
32. Ibid., p. 31.


36. Ibid., pp. 428 and 431.


39. According to a rough census, the number of madrasahs reached 700 in West Pakistan alone. This number does not include many small institutions scattered throughout the country for which no authentic record is available. See *Report of the Committee established by the West Pakistan government in 1962 for purposes of recommending improved syllabi for the various Dār al-‘Ulūms and Arabic madrasahs* in West Pakistan.

40. Ḥāfiz Nadhar Ahmad, *Ja‘īza Madāris ‘Arabiya Maghrib Pakistan* (Urdu) (Lahore: Muslim Academy, 1972), II, 622.

41. The above-mentioned committee, after studying the present state of affairs of the madrasahs, inter alia, recommended the following: (1) a model education code be prepared for religious education, to be followed in all Dār al-‘Ulūms and Arabic madrasahs; (2) modern subjects such as English, mathematics, comparative religions, technical subjects and science be included in the curriculum, and Dārs-i Niẓāmī be drastically improved; (3) model rules governing the conditions of service and the conduct of teachers employed by these institutions be prepared; (4) government grants-in-aid be given to institutions which agree to improve standards of education; and (5) a scheme for advancing scholarships to students be prepared.