

Role of Mujahidin Movement in Freedom Struggle of India (Part – II)

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The second phase of the careers of Maulana Wilayat Ali and Maulana Inayat Ali was to begin in the North West Frontier in the year immediate following the death of Ranjit Singh in C.E. 1839, and generally anarchical conditions prevailing in the Punjab after it, leading to the first Anglo-Sikh war, served as a background for the activities of the Ali brothers on the Frontier. According to the terms of the Treaty of 9th March, 1846,¹ the Sikhs ceded to the English the Jullundar Doab and agreed to pay cash indemnity of 15 million rupees. Since the treasury was short of the cash the whole of the mountainous area between the rivers Beas and Indus, including Kashmir and upper Hazara, was also ceded to the English in lieu of 10 million of the indemnity. The balance was to be paid at the time of the confirmation of the Treaty. Out of the ceded area the lands to the west of Ravi and exact of the Indus were sold to Gulab Singh, the governor of Hazara and Kashmir, for half million Manakshahi rupees. Upper Hazara, was also included in that area.

In the lower Hazara, on the other land, the various local Pathan tribes, convinced of the utter breakdown of the Sikh government, were in a state of semi-independence and striving for complete freedom from the Sikh tutelage. Even upper Hazara Gulab Singh was far from exercising any effective control over the newly acquired territory. He could reach it only after gaining effective control over Kashmir. But the governor of Kashmir,

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Imamuddin, on secret instruction from Lahore, refused to give charge to Gulab Singh.² So for all practical purposes both Kashmir and upper Hazara were out of control and seething with discontent and revolt. At both these places there developed centres of opposition to the Sikhs. These centers of opposition were, led in upper Hazara by Enayat Ali and in lower Hazara by Akbar Shah.

Abbot had been posted at Hazara and Henny Lawrence, the Resident at the Lahore court, moved with small force to Jammu from where he sent Herbert Edwardes to Imamuddin. The latter was won over and induced to handover Kashmir to Gulab Singh.

Sayyid Zamin Shah,³ the son of Hasan Ali Shah, was the chief of Kaghan valley and was a constant supporter of the Mujahidins who helped them in occupying Balakot and Upper Hazara, invited Wilayat Ali to come and take up the broken threads of Sayyid Ahmad's work for which the circumstances were 'favourable'.⁴ Wilayat Ali, accordingly, recalled his younger brother from Bengal where he was preaching at that time. Enayat Ali came to Patna with a party of some two thousand followers. In order to avoid suspicion of the Government the full party was broken up into small batches. Each batch moved out of Patna after short intervals and the whole party was thus sent out in about five months. The process of departure started in July, 1843, but Enayat Ali himself started a little later, on 21 November, reaching the Frontier towards the end of 1844.⁵

Prominent among these who accompanied him was Aulad Ali of Surajgarh. He was present at the time of the death of Sayyid Ahmad. According to the Hazara Gazetteer⁶ the Mujahidin defeated the Sikh units posted in the forts of Shinkhari, Birkhand, Garhi Habibullah and Agrore and occupied them.

Among the hypocritical chiefs who had sided with Sikhs, Nawab Khan Tanaoli⁷, Madad Khan,⁸ and Muhammad Ali were

arrested and produced before Enayat Ali. He, however, pardoned them on the intercession of some of the faithful chiefs such as Amir Khan.⁹

Those who strongly supported Enayat Ali and participated in the battle against the Sikhs were Sayyid Zamin Shah, Aulad Ali of Pakhli, Fatah Khan Panjtari, the erstwhile supporter of the Mujahidin, Maqsd Ali, Maulana Qasim of Panipat, Nasiruudin of Sind and Naubat Shah, the chief of Kaghan valley and brother of Sayyid Zamin Shah.

The encounter occurred sometime between July and September, C.E. 1846, and after it the Sikhs did not venture to move towards the Aadum country for some time.

In C.E. 1846 in the month of September Wilayat Ali reached the North-West Frontier from Patna. Yahya Ali, Tayyaz Ali and Akbar Ali, the three younger brothers of Ahmadullah accompanied the Maulana. He was also accompanied by a large number of volunteers and brought with him considerable arms and ammunities. Enayat Ali sent forward a detachment to receive him at Mankali, the border outpost of the Mujahidin State. A series of welcomes were arranged in the honour of Wilayat Ali at the various places of his halts inside the new state. It was a grand and happy occasion, and every-body celebrated it with thanks giving to Allah. The local chiefs assembled at Fatahgarh; now renamed Islamgarh, the capital of the Mujahidin State to pay allegiance and tributes. Soon after, Enayat Ali, without any hesitation took Biat on Wilayat Ali's hands who assumed the leadership of the state and the community.

Soon after the arrival of Wilayat Ali, the Mujahidins came into conflict with the British authorities in the battle of Doob Pass. The British authorities openly helping the Sikh authorities and the then Gulab Singh was chief. Herry Lawrence, the English Resident at Lahore, and under him a band of energetic young officers such

as Abbot, Edwardes, Taylor etc. were, in fact laying down the foundations of the English rule in those areas.

The British authorities having helped Gulab Singh get possession of Kashmir thought it advisable¹⁰ to send a detachment of British troops along with a Sikh army under the command of Diwan Karan Chand to march from Kashmir down to Lahore, restoring order on the way. Two British officers, Lumsden and Vans Agnew, were deputed with this force. It is interesting that along with this show of force the usual British diplomacy was also set in motion and many of the local tribal chiefs, including Zamin Shah¹¹, were won over by treacherous pledges.

While the Ali brothers were preparing to face the situation, a faint move was made in collaboration with the local chief to give the false impression that a Sikh army was also coming from another, the Pakhli side. The threat of a double-pronged attack unnerved many of the local adherents of the Mujahidins and they deserted. Left alone and faced with a force consisting of 10 Regiments the Mujahidins, including the Ali brothers, surrendered after a hostile meeting face to face.

Then the Ali brothers returned to Patna. Their return to Patna and the second migration to the Frontier is referred to in a letter¹² of the Magistrate of Patna. "They (the Ali Brothers) were sent down in the end of 1847 or beginning of 1848 from the N.W. Provinces, that security might be taken from them to remain at their houses and not to disturb the Government". Unfortunately, Mr. Lushington, then Magistrate, did not take "*Nazar Zamini*", consequently they returned shortly afterwards to the North West. "But as they have now joined the Swat leader in open war with our Government the security for good behaviour which was taken from them is, I believe, forfeited and in the case the Government should think fit I can seize the party who was their security. But as such a step may cause some stir in this evil and degraded city I await the orders of the Government."

According to O'Kinealy,¹³ having been bound down a bails of Rs. 10,000 each for four years, they stayed quietly at Patna for a few months but soon after entered into correspondence with Aulad Ali, the leader of the remnant group Ali, the leader of the remnant group of Sitana. Enayat Ali was once despatched to his chosen field of work period in the work of reorganisation and preaching. On a few months remaining for the completion of the period of security for good behaviour he disposed of his movable and immovable properties and migrated in September, 1849¹⁴ Farhat Husain¹⁵ the younger brother of Wilayat Ali, was left in charge of the family, Yahya Ali, Fayyaz Ali and Abdullah along with a party of 250 men and women, set out later and met Wilayat Ali near Arrah.

Finally Wilayet Ali reached Delhi after a journey of over a year. The party stayed in Fatehpur mosque for some two months. According to O'Kinealy his lectures attracted wide attention. Among the important persons present in his lectures, which were delivered in the Jama Masjid and other mosques, were the famous Urdu poet, Momin and Imam Ali, the tutor of Zinat Mahal, the chief queen of Bahadur Shah II. Both Momin and Imam Ali took Bai'at and also mentioned his activities to the king who expressed a desire to meet him and accordingly an audience was granted. It was held in the Diwan-i-Khas and Wilayat Ali went there with a party of 75 persons. He delivered a lecture on the transitoriness of life and the punishment of Hell awaiting those who did not act in conformity with the commands of Allah. It was a powerful and moving oration, delivered in contravention of the Court etiquette that unpleasant topics should not be dwelt upon in the presence of the King. The audience, including the King, were deeply moved¹⁶. Towards the end of the discourse the King interrupted to say that he, too, had composed some verses on the transitoriness of life. In reply, Wilayet Ali recited a Quranic verse to the effect that one should not interrupt in the course of the recitation of Quranic

texts. Later the King's¹⁷ verses were recited by the Residents. However, Waliyat Ali had become suspicious on account of some close questioning by the Resident about his antecedents and the object of his journey. Wilayat Ali immediately left the city for Ludhiana where he met his younger brother Enayet Ali in November, 1850.

O'Kinealy expresses astonishment at the "great gulf between the rulers and the governed; - how little care is taken to know anything of even the most dangerous sect. The war of Sayyid Ahmad, the rebellion at Baraset, the resistance and subsequent surrender of the fanatics at Hureepur were forgotten as soon as over; the Government awoke when it was too late to find that the Patna Maulvies had returned to Sittana to disturb and agitate the mind of the hilly tribes.¹⁸

It is said, that during the course of their second visit to the Frontier some difference of opinion developed between the brothers. The issue which precipitated it was the opposition of Jehandad Khanof Amb who, like many other local chiefs, had gone over to the English and was creating obstacles in the passage of the caravans from India. Enayet Ali wanted immediate action against him but Wilayet Ali, taking into account wide considerations, did not want to get entangled in local fights. According to O'Kinealy, the differences rose to such a pitch that the entire party was divided into two groups, the Bengalis favouring Enayat Ali and the rest favouring Wilayat Ali. Further unpleasantness was saved by the graceful action of the later who, in view of the grouping differences, appeared before both the parties, offered to relinquish the ommand and prayed that "the Lord would preserve them in their hour of need and prevent a war of brother against brother." Enayet Ali reciprocated the gesture and left Sittana and moved to Mangulthana¹⁹. On Nov., C.E. 1851,³⁶ Wilayet Ali died on the 5th November, C.E 1852, and was buried at Sittana. After his death Enayet Ali returned to

Sittana and elected as the leader. Although he had withdrawn to Mangalthana in deference to the views of his elder brother he was still convinced of the correctness of his own plan of action. His subsequent actions during the next few years confirm this contention. He immediately started a series of border attacks against the British outposts and harassed them generally by running a guerrilla warfare. On the outbreak of the Rising of C.E. 1857-59, too he utilised the general unrest prevailing among the Sepoys in the border outposts and organised attacks on Narinja and Shaikhjana. These, however, did not produce any deeper and effective result. The closing year of Enayet Ali's life were spent in circumstances of dire pecuniary stress and political set-backs. He died in Chinglai in C.E. 1858. The second phase of the Majahidin Movement suffered a great setback by the death of Enayet Ali which was followed by the disposal of some of its followers and their return to Patna.

It appears that after the death of Sayyid Ahmad and Shah Ismâ'il, the founders of the Mujahidin Movement, and the co-founders of the said movement Ali brothers had achieved uninterrupted progress through the entire length of the country with the declared aim of fighting the British Government. But finally they failed to achieve the said goal only because the British armies were well equipped.

The arrest and conviction of Ahmadullah also weakened the Mujahidin organization in India. However, it did not, as is generally supposed, mark the end, rather it was the beginning of the end. The important Muslim freedom fighters among the Mujahidin who continued their effort against the British Government till the end of the 19th century are as follows:

Haji Mubark Ali of Hajipur, district Muzaffarpur; Ibrahim mandal of Rajmahal ; Nazir Sirdar of Kalia Chak, Malda, West Bengal; Mubarak Ali of Patna; Bihar, Enayatullah of Shaikhpora, Monghy;

Bihar, Muhammad Ismail, a zealous Mujahidin, had been confined in Madras-185; Ahmadullah of Bengal; Ali Kureem of Patna, Bihar (1857-59 Movement); Barkatullah of Farrashkhana, Delhi-preached jihad in Poona; Khurshid Ali (brother of late Ellahi Bux, approver of Ahmadullah case); Umeed Ali (a resident of Backerganj, Bengal); Tabarak Ali known as Qadir Bux (son of Mubarak Ali of Patna); Muhammad Amin Prince Firoz Shah of Frontier; Izad Bux; Nazir Hussain, who lived near Pathak Habsh Khan in Delhi (originally belonged to Surajgarha in Monghyr); Jafar Thanesar; Abdullah, the Mujahidin Chief of the Frontier; Muhammad Amin or Aminuddin, resident of Backerganj (he had fled to Dacca); Amiruddin of Malda, West Bengal; Pir Muhammad of Dinapur (Orderly Bazar), Bihar/father in law of Tabarak Ali, son of Mubarak Ali); Haji Din Muhammad of Dinapur, Bihar; Amir Khan of Patna, Bihar; Hashmatdad Khan of Patna, Bihar; Abdul Rehman (of Dinapur), Bihar; Khuda Bux (old Dinapur), Bihar; Budhye Khan, Bihar; Umdu Khan, Bihar; Karamat Ali of Dinapur, Bihar; Waizul Haq of Patna. He had been arrested by Taylor in 1857, Murtaza of Maida, West Bengal; Mufti Husaini or Muhammad Husain (Mujahidin agent); Ghulam Husain; Ahmad Ali of Dinapur; Ghulam Rabbani; Syed Khan; khansaman to General Haly; Imdad Ali; Abdullah of Hajipur; Ahmadullah of Muzaffarpur (Khalifa of Wilayat Ali); Maula Bux; Hafiz Jafar Ali of Mahalla Syudpur; Muzaffarpur; Mustafa Ali of Darbhanga, Bihar; Abid Husain of Darbhanga; Seikh Subhan Ali of Mahana, Darbhanga; Pir Muhammad, who collected funds from Muzaffarpur and Shergati; Maula Bux of Patna; Ahmad Ali of Patna; Nizamuddin of Lucknow; Abdul Haq; (brother of Abdul Ghani) of Surajgarh, Monghyr; Amir Khan of Patna; Zorawar Khan, of Patna; Muhammad Ismail (nephew of Sayyid Ahmad); Abdul Rahman (nephew of Sayyid Ahmad); Faqurullah or Pakhrullah; Abdul Aziz, an agent of Mujahidin Movement; Mufti Husain of Peshawar; Alimuddin, Murad Ali of Hazara; Muhammad Niaman, an agent

in Jhelum; Ghulam Shah Haji of Rajmahal; Amanat Mondal of Hanspokhar, Malda, West Bengal; Lai Muhammad; a prosecution witness in the late Ambala Trial; Sharfullah of, Dhanaur, district Rangpur, Bangladesh; Nazir Muhammad of Dhanapur, district Rangpur, Bangladesh; Nazir Muhammad of Bogra, Bangladesh; Muhammad Umar of Dinapur (nephew of Rahat Ali), Musharraf Ali of Dinapur; Rahat Ali, (one of the main organizers of the Patna Conspiracy of 1845); Munshi Jamaluddin of Bhopal; Sadiq Hasan of Bhopal; Abdul Jabbar of Bhopal; Abdul Rahman of Bhopal and Ali Karim of Bhopal.

References and End Notes

- ¹ J.D. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, Kolkata, 1904, App. XVII, pp. XIV-XVI.
- ² *Ibid.*, pp. XXIV-XXV.
- ³ Sayyid Zamin Shah died in 1871. His brother Naubat Shah, was also a Staunch supporter of the Mujahidin.
- ⁴ T.S., *op. cit.*, pp. 122-123.
- ⁵ *Ibid.* p 235.
- ⁶ Hazara Gazetteer, pp. 132-33.
- ⁷ Nawab Khan Tanaoli was the son of Sarbuland Khan and was known as Chief of Shangeri.
- ⁸ Madad Khan was the younger brother of Painda Khan of Amb. He had been assigned Phulera as Jagir by Painda Khan. He died in 1878.
- ⁹ Amir Khan was the Chief of Garhi Habibullah and the son of Habibullah, the Chief who gave his name to the fortress (Garhi). He died in 1868.
- ¹⁰ Letter of Lumsden, dated 6th Feb., 1847, to his father, in England, giving an account of this battle: quoted by Mehr, IV., p. 262.
- ¹¹ Tazkira Sadaqa, pp. 123-24.
- ¹² Letter from T. Tucker, Magistrate, Patna, to C. Beadon, Secretary, Govt. of India, dated 19th Aug., 1852.
- ¹³ *Calcutta Review*, Vol. 51, 1870, pp. 381-83.
- ¹⁴ Gulam Rasul Mehr, *Syed Ahmad Shahid 1*, IV. Lahore, 1952-56.
- ¹⁵ Farhat Husain was the father of Abdul Rahim, the author of, Tazkirah-i-Sadaqa.
- ¹⁶ A. Rahim, *Tazkira Sadaqa*, pp. 126-27. The King got down from his throne and shook hands with the Mujahidin (Mehr, 14, p. 272. f.n. 1) also corroborates this. Further on, in another connection, the T.S. (pp. 153-54) states that the youngest son of Wilayat Ali, Muhammad hasan Zabih, then 5 years old, (he subsequently laid the foundation of a primary madrasah in Patna City, now grown up in the shape of M.A.A. Higher Secondary School) was also present with his father on that occasion. The King took him in his lap and asked as to what he read. The boy replied 'Quran', and recited a verse from it. The King was very much surprised at this precocious.
- ¹⁷ Jafar Thanewari, *Sawanih Ahmad*, Lahore, n.d., p. 223.
- ¹⁸ *Calcutta Review*, Vol. 51 (1870), p. 383.
- ¹⁹ Gulam Rasul Mehr, *Sayyid Ahmad Shahid (Vol.IV)*, Kitab Manzil, Lahore, 1954, p. 276.