

Rethinking Authority: Naqshbandi Responses to Political Transition in Early Nineteenth-Century India

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Abstract

The transition from the late Mughal Empire to British colonial rule fundamentally transformed the political, social, and intellectual landscape of Muslim India. Rather than viewing this period solely through the lens of political decline, this article examines how the Naqshbandi order redefined its intellectual and religious authority in response to unprecedented historical change. Renowned for its strict adherence to the Sharīʿa and its close engagement with political power, the Naqshbandi tradition did not respond to colonial expansion through a single ideological position. Instead, its leading scholars and Sufi shaykhs developed diverse strategies that ranged from resistance and political activism to accommodation, educational reform, and intellectual reconstruction. Drawing upon the careers and writings of two prominent Naqshbandi figures of the early nineteenth century, the article argues that the order demonstrated remarkable intellectual flexibility while remaining rooted in its established theological principles. Faced with the collapse of Mughal sovereignty and the growing dominance of the East India Company, Naqshbandi scholars sought to preserve Islamic identity by reinterpreting concepts of religious authority, political legitimacy, and social responsibility. Their responses reveal that Islamic intellectual traditions were neither static nor inherently resistant to change; rather, they continually negotiated between doctrinal continuity and historical necessity. By situating Naqshbandi thought within the broader context of imperial transition, this study challenges simplistic binaries of resistance versus collaboration and instead highlights the dynamic processes through which Muslim intellectuals adapted to colonial modernity. It argues that the intellectual legacy of the Naqshbandi order laid important foundations for subsequent Muslim religious and political thought in South Asia and significantly shaped the intellectual currents that would later influence the emergence of modern Muslim identity, including the ideological foundations of Pakistan.

Keywords: Sufi, Naqshbandi, Colonialism, Mughal Decline, British Period

Introduction

Turn of eighteenth century in Mughal India was transitional phenomenally in many ways. British colonialism had seen its prelude in defining settings. In the previous three centuries), Gangetic plain had seen the mature rise of Muslim civilization. That maturity was arrested by the persistent intrusions within the state and society of Later Mughals. Particularly since the Nadir Shah Invasion in 1739, Mughal capital Shahjahanabad had been facing the question of sovereignty in crisis. This fading away of sovereignty was intensely followed by the Administrative dispensation of East India Company in the 1803. Thus in this backdrop, eighteenth century shifted into

nineteenth century. The declining Mughal India was facing multifaceted challenges amidst of rapid transformations. By exploring the intermingling and compromising circumstances, this article would further research the actual challenges faced by the fragile Muslim society from one important segment of Muslim Society in Mughal India, i.e. Sufism—more precisely Naqshbandi order, as they were known prominently as the mediational Sufis. Set in that transition, in the midst of a countrywide pre-colonial British campaign, *Naqshbandi* Sufis had tried to devise their own methods to cope with the situation. There were many Sufis and *Ulemas* busy in nineteenth century Mughal India. They had *madrassas* and *Khanqahs* as well for the purpose of their propagation and maintenance of their order. All those *Ulemas* and Sufis belonged to various *Silsilas* of Sufism. However, predominantly they belonged to two prominent personalities of that time, Shah Abdul Aziz and Shah Ghulam Ali Dehelvi. Those two personalities were of such importance that all the religious and spiritual system was revolving around them. *Ulema* and their students of Islamic theology would come to those centers to get education, not only from sub-continent but also from central Asia, Khorasan, Arabistan and other Muslims places.

Condition of Hindustan at the turn of nineteenth century.

Condition of state

Mughal dynasty was seeing its declining phase, since the death of Aurangzeb Alamgir. In the post Nadir Shah attack, that fragility had reached its unaffordable limits. It was now difficult for the Mughal state to maintain the integrity of areas in the south and eastern periphery of the erstwhile empire. Rapid deterioration of the Mughal Centrality has unleashed many centrifugal forces to acquire the political and spatial recognition. Marhathas, Jaats and Sikhs had let loose every of their effort to dismantle the suzerainty of Mughal in the peripherals of Mughal and were leading to capture the center of their Power-Delhi. Mughal emperor was so much arrested in his decision-making authority due to the intrigues in power corridor by different stakeholder that he became unable to make decisions with detrimental impact.

After the battle of Plassy with relevant unfolding of the further deterioration, that fragility led to increasing sense of its inevitability. Nadir Shah Attack and Plassy war had left the Mughal Empire on the disposal of center fugal forces which were about to dismantle the central superiority of Mughal court. Jaats from the immediate surroundings of Delhi, were trying to wage their final move on the Mughal Empire. Sikhs were almost at the success to capture the province of Punjab. In addition, Marhatta had become the greatest threats in real terms. Shah Wali Ullah realizing the gravity of the threat had called Ahmad Shah Durrani and Najeebudaulah to quell that looming threats to the centrality of the Mughal Empire. Nevertheless, unfortunately after the defeat of Marhatta at Panipat war in 1761, Mughal court could not get able to regain its erstwhile glory. It is also against the facts that Shah Wali Ullah was not aware of the hidden threat of East India Company. His political insight had compelled Ahmad Shah Durrani to send a message for Mughal Emperor Ahmad Shah, who was at Bihar at the time, to come immediately in the capital to establish the order of state. That futile effort was extended to nip the influences of Company officials in the bud. However, Shah Alam refused to acknowledge the intention of his times. Immediately after the death of Shah Wali Ullah, situation got rapid turn of the transformations. In 1765, Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa were given to East India Company by Mughals as a reward which the official nomenclature, 'Altafgarh'. Thus company official was mandated to get whole revenue from these newly acquired Diwani provinces. Before this reward, Company was already possessing the Banaras and Gahzipur as Jagirs. (Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, 1992) Thus the erstwhile grand Mughal empire was left with province of Allahabad. That mistake by Shah Alam led to the aggrandizement of the company in a way to approach the capital— and by 1803 they got the administrative dispensation of Delhi with consensual contract with the Mughal Emperor.

Condition of society

In the period of this rapid decline, society and state echelon were passing through the same condition of fragility and all-encompassing degeneration. That condition of Muslim civilization in Mughal India could be ascribed as culturally accredited, which means that the basic tenants of Islam were intermingled with the non-Muslims cultural ethos. Many of the Non-Muslims cultural traits were adopted by the so-called aristocratic class, with their ultimate trickled impact in the lower strata. This social corruption was such rampant that Muslims had started to take part in the Hindu festivals as a harmless entertaining social activity. Many of them would start to consider that kind of participation as endorsed by Islam. That was a gruesome condition for the *ulemas* to ponder upon. However, the class of *Ulemas* was also corrupted enough not to diagnose the real problem. (Iqbal Mujedidi, 1978)

A significant majority of the *ulemas* were associated with the *Khanqahi* system. *Khanqahi* System was a purpose-built campus system developed by the various Sufi order to propagate their teachings and preaching. Developed in the late fifteenth century of India that system got corrupted at many of its parts in subcontinent. Many such *Khanqas* were converted into center of leisure pleasure. One prominent Sufi of Delhi Khawaja Muhamamd Ashraf used to hold festival of *Basant* at his *Khanqah* where many aristocrats come to participate. Concubines of Delhi were also called to perform their dancing art and singers were called to entertain the attendants. That was the routine norm of many *Khanqahi* center in Delhi of that time. (Iqbal Mujedidi: 1978, 12) In the wake of that particular situation, Sufis of *Naqshbandi* order felt the need to play their proactive role to avoid the maximum damage at least to the societal level in respect of religious values. Shah Wali Ullah had done what he could. After his death, Shah Abdul Aziz and his pupil Shah Ghulam Ali Dehlavi played that particular role in most profound way.

The *Naqshbandiyya* Mujaddidi

The *Naqshbandiyya* is one of the most widespread Sufi brotherhoods in the Muslim world of Central and South Asia. Its strength lies in its characteristic combination of strict adherence to the puritanical version of textual Islam and active involvement in social and political affairs. (Weismann: 2009, 31) The *Naqshbandi* order, whose history dates back to the 14th century Khorasan, is at present one of the leading and the most influential Sufi orders. For centuries, the *Naqshbandis* have in fact created a whole network everywhere throughout the Muslim world. Over the span of its complete history, Sufis had passed through three different types of their character while serving the masses. In his book, Arthur Buhler explored the same theme with the multifaceted development of personal authority in Indian Subcontinent. (Arthur F. Buhler: 2008, 212). He traced the transformation of one mystical suffix lineage, from pre-colonial setting to colonial India. In the early administrative dispensation of East India Company, Mughal India was facing a new set of challenges in the form of western inspired projects of modernity and enlightenment. In this backdrop the *Naqshbandiyya* order in India was also trying to cope with the situation. In this particular domain of challenge and response, Arthur F. Buehler identified four sources of personal authority which were manifested in the practices of the *Naqshbandiyya*-lineage, spiritual traveling, status as a Prophetic exemplar, and the transmission of religious knowledge to demonstrate how Muslim religious leaders have exercised charismatic leadership through their association with their own traditions and new challenges. Buehler also clarified that the institutional structure of Indian Sufism was intelligent itself enough to assess the corresponding conformations of personal Sufi authority, and possibilities of the revivalist discourse in Indian *Naqshbandis*. He traced that by modified and reprioritized spiritual practices that had sustained their predecessors for more than five centuries. He looks specifically at the three types of Sufis in consecutive order. (Arthur F. Buhler, 2008)

1. Teaching Shaykh (*Shaykh at-Talim*) 10th Century to 13th Century

2. Directing Shaykh(*Shaykh at-Tarbiya*) 14th to 16th Century

3. Mediating Shaykh(*Shaykh at-Majzub*) Modern Times

In this article, we would delineate the role of our two prominent Sufis by focusing on the third type- 'Mediating Shaykh.' This type would assist a lot to make a plausible comprehension of the said period in respect of the role and approaches both Sufis had adopted to cope the situation. (Weismann, 2009). In this very context of transforming the authority of Sufi order, the role played by the leading names among the Sufi Silsila is important to study.

Maulana Shah Abdul Aziz

Shah Abdul Aziz, eldest son of Shah Wali Ullah was born at 1746 at Delhi. He devoted his life to teaching and preaching. He was a public figure who could not made himself aloof from the popular circles. That was why during his active life times, his madrassa had become the center not only of northern India but also of the whole of Indian Muslims. Indian Muslims considered attending that madrasah compulsory to compete their education. That madrasah came to be known as *Madressah-e-Shah Abdul Aziz*.

Many of the Muslims of India of that time had indulged in different indianized social customs and habits which were branded by puritan Muslims as un-Islamic and innovations, but which were considered Islamic by those who were practicing them. Many close associates of Shah Abdul Aziz, as if Shah Ismail criticized those norms harshly and declared them un-Islamic. Nevertheless, Shah Abdul Aziz did not criticize those norms on reasons. according to one source he was having the ability to judge the situation in most peaceful way and by considering all the situational features and factors he pass his comments on any particular issue. Once a *maulvi* from Punjab came to him with the issue that whether it is justified to shake hands with British official and to share meal with them. One Maulvi was of the opinion by sharing meal with Christian, that person had become non-Muslims and now he need to re-convert .at that issue Shah Abdul Aziz opined that mere by sharing meal no Muslim could be considered as non-Muslim s. but that act would definitely le him to the verge of *kufr*. Therefore, he need to recite the *Kalima Sharif* and drink water from *Qadam Sharif* to remain on the safe side. This attitude of Shah Abdul Aziz would suggestive of the fact that he was aware of the problem in all of their aspects. He was not a person who could pass a judgment by keeping limited vision of any issue. He was well aware that in Islamic theology it was not prohibited to share meal with non-Muslims, given it is Halal. But at the same time he was aware of the condition that by allowing free mixing with Christian officials of East India Company, Islamic civilization could have got corrupted after getting influences of Christians. That was why passed very smart judgment. Then his order to drink water from *Qadam Sharif* manifested apparently that he held soft corner for accreditations. Nevertheless, a deep study of the Indian Muslim tells us that majority of the Muslims were converted from Hinduism, who had not become much indifferent to many of the norms and rituals of their earlier religion. That was very difficult to make them oblivious from those norms that was why Muslim Sufis allowed a few such norms. (Mushirul Hasan:1993,46)

Making sense of new forces

After 1803, in the backdrop of new situation authority was shifted to new Power-East India Company. In that situation, Muslims had started to ask such questions which were arising owing to the transformation of authority. Shah Abdul Aziz had dealt that critical situation in a wise way. It was major question that should the Muslims deal with British power or rely on the dying Mughal Power. Shah Abdu Aziz did not want to annoy the new official in Delhi. He made good terms with the British resident in Delhi. In his book *Kalimat-e-Azadi* one can find numerous such incidents, which shows the good relations between Shah Sahib and English officials. In his *mal-fuzat* Shah Sahib had mentioned three British officials another important point to be noted here is that the attitude of the company officials was quite different from the missionaries in India.

That is another reason, which could justify that cordiality in their mutual relationships. Many *ulemas* were in the services of the company. Many of them were close associate of Shah Abdul Aziz including his son in law Maulana Abdul hay was appointed in the office of mufti under the company authority. He realized that the policy of resistance to the company rule would be a futile effort. Thus, he opted the constructive way to play their role in positive way in assistance with the British officials. Those were the times, which were forcing the Shah Sahib to locate a safe way. In one answer posed to him he stated that those things made by British could be used which provide comfort to the body. (Mushirul Hasan:1993,39)

According to Mushirul Hasan, Shah Abdul Aziz was having different responsive approach in respect of native hostile forces and East India Company. He was quite critical of the policy of attack and destruction by Marathas and was of the strict opinion that those forces should be quelled with immediate effect. On the other hand, East India Company was encroaching its area of influences bases on the policy of mere penetration, though with intrigues. Nevertheless, was causing no immediate and horrendous destructive impact on the Muslims of the north. Therefore, Shah Abdul Aziz had not mentioned English forces in the same way in which he mentioned the Marhatas and Sikhs and Jaats. (Mushirul Hasan) Another important feature is that by 1831, East India Company was adopting the policy of proselytizing; neither were they encouraging the endeavors of missionaries. Company was much interested on their trade and not in Christianity. That was why Shah Abdul Aziz did not felt any apparent threat form the company officials. (Mushirul Hasan)

Fatwa about Darul Harab and its actuality.

He considered the country as *Darul Harab*, but at the same time, he allowed the Muslims to cooperate with British as far as Islamic values were not violated. It is an established fact in the tradition of Islamic jurisprudence that when an area or country got declared as *Darul Harab* then one option out of two is mandatory to act upon. First is about waging jihad against the enemy forces. Second is if jihad is not feasible then migration from that country is the ultimate option. However, in case of *Fatwa* by Shah Abdul Aziz, there is a clear silence about either of the option. Which means that Shah Abdul Aziz was considering not migrating neither waging jihad against the British forces. That silence was on causes. There could be a few reasons, which could elaborate his silence. For instance, at one place he described the three kind of jihad in which the fighting was put into third category which order to do fight with armament. (Mushirul Hasan:1993,44) He explained that only first two kinds of jihad, which were verbal, and to create frightening among the enemy are preferred kinds of Jihad. He considered the third one as the lowest in the values in Islamic tradition. By quoting the example of Holy Prophet, he categorically testified three kinds of jihad with their actual meaning and applications. (Mushirul Hasan:1993,38) Shah Abdul Aziz did not take part or pay consent to his followers to wage jihad against the infidels.

In the same way, there was no clear-cut mentioning of *Hijra* in relevance to his *Fatwa* of *Darul Harab*. Replying to a question, he stated that migration from every *Darul Harab* is not necessary. Only that kind of migration is allowed where non-Muslims are prohibiting the Muslims to perform their religious rites and rituals. That was because Muslims of his times were enjoining the religious practices. If we take the context and background of that *Fatwa*, then we can easily dismantle the misunderstandings or confusion surrounding various interpretations of that fatwa. For instance, Shah Sahib had issued that fatwa while answering to a question of his *mureed*. That person asked that question in the context of desiring to know the response of Shah Abdul Aziz about the new economic forces, company officials were introducing in the country. In that model, interest was the backbone of the system. Many a Muslims were interested in conducting their financial activities with on-Muslims including that ‘interest’ driven system. That was the actual

perspective which led many Muslims to get allowance from Shah Sahib in order to take advantages from that emerging system. (Iqbal Mujadidi,2016)

Shah Sahib had issued that Fatwa by keeping two main pertinent features clear. First is that when the law of Muslims abolished and second is that absence of any Islamic country between that *Darul Harab* and mainland of the occupant country. Second feature was absence because there were many Muslims countries between India and England, such as Ottoman Empire, Iran etc. in that way; it was quite controversial to declare India as *Darul Harab* from Muslims. (Iqbal Mujadedi: 2016,313) In that context, it is important to note the wordings and situation in which those issues were surfacing. First question that was posed to Shah Sahib was that whether areas controlled by company officials are considered as *Darul Harab*. Moreover, if so then can Muslim take 'interest' from non-Muslims. Second question, which is also mentioned in the *Mal'uat-e-Azizi*, is that what is status of Jumma prayer in those areas tagged as *Darul Harab*? Third question is also about conducting interest based commercial activity with non-Muslims.

According to the stance of Shah Sahib, Interest is completely abhorred in Islamic laws. Nevertheless, in that described condition Shah Sahib had allowed to conduct interest based system in inevitable option but advised those who were posing question to avoid taking interest at their maximum level. Therefore, that it should not become and prevent trend among Muslims to conduct business with non-Muslims so freely. That was his diplomacy, which led him to conclude on such sensitive matter with utmost care, considering all the circumstantial transformations.

It is important to note that fatwa of *Darul Harab* accompanied a new set of rights and duties. As in *Darul Harab* Muslims need to wage efforts to reconvert that state of *Darul Harab* into *Darul Islam*. Unless they could not have converted that status they can entertain some new rights, which were not provided to them in *Darul Islam*. In that condition, they are left with two options. One is to strive for reconverting that land into hub of Islam and second is that they can establish their business with non-Muslims on their terms and condition including interest-based requirements. That was the actual perspective in which many Muslims were posing such questions to Shah Abdul Aziz with the purpose of getting allowance to conduct their business with non-Muslims, which involved interest based economic activity. Those Muslims were more concerned with their business affairs rather than showing their concerns with the struggle to reconvert the land into Islamic hub. (Iqbal Mujadedi:2016,208)

Making of Delhi College and his role

Company officials wanted to establish a vernacular college in Delhi. For this purpose, in 1823 a committee was formed under the headship of Mr J H Taylor. Mr Taylor presented a report after detailed study of the said project. In which he recommended the site of *Madressa-e-Ghaziudin* at Kashmiri gate Delhi. In the year, 1792 Delhi oriental College was founded. That madrasahs were at that, time was in deplorable condition but was spacious and had detailed complex of buildings comprising 84 apartments with verandas, for the accommodation of the students and teachers. It was revived in the year 1825 when classes of English were started at the college (Hasan:1993,34). Committee also found that locals would not mind if any attempt to introduce European sciences and literature would be offered at that college. At the recommendation of the committee authorities decided to establish a college in that madrasahs at *Kashmiri Gate*. That committee also met with Shah Abdul Aziz in this regard and requested him to take the headship of the Islamic studies department of the proposed college. Shah Sahib declined that offer. At his refusal, his pupil Maulana Rashid udin khan was appointed the head of the Islamic studies department of that college.

In the beginning Muslim from Delhi were having reservations about the start of English classes at the college, but soon they realized that their suspicion was not based on entirely on reason. Then they develop some cordiality towards that college. In addition, by 1831 there were 300 students who were learning English in that college. Syllabus of that college was a compilation of

the vernacular subjects and many parts of Calcutta schoolbook society. Along with that, the classes of English language were also started with the intention of acquainting the natives with that emerging modern language. A wealthy Muslim endowed the land for the welfare of that college. It shows that college was gaining acceptance among Muslims classes of Delhi. Beside the foundation of that college, a mutual trust was gaining its space among Muslims and Christians by the time of Shah Abdul Aziz. One can see some earlier signs of indianization among natives during his life times. On which Shah Sahib had shown no clear comments, which show a kind of silent consent by him on that kind of relationship with the Christians. Throughout his life, Shah Abdul Aziz remained active on the intellectual, social, and political frontiers of the Muslim North India.

Maulana Shah Ghulam Ali

Maulana Shah Ghulam Ali was another most significant name among the Mujaddidi Naqshbandi order from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century only seconded by Shah Abdul Aziz. His role as a Sufi is indeed noteworthy. He was the *Khalifa* of Mirza Mazhar-e- Mazhar Jan-e-Janan. He was not a public figure of the level of Shah Abdul Aziz. His times confined mostly to his *Khanqah-e Mazhariya* throughout his life. His complete name was Shah Abdullah Mujaddidi Naqshbandi. He was born in 1743 in Patiala. He was the immediate spiritual successor of Hadhrat *Mirza Mazhar Jan-e-Janan*. He had mastered all the Sufi methods and was the greatest *Shaykh* of all Sufi orders in India at that time. He rose over the next five decades to become a leading religious and political figure in the Dying Mughal Empire. During that time, he had thousands of followers including Kurdish, Arab, and Iranian followers, spread from Kurdistan to the Arab and Turkish lands of the Ottoman Empire and eventually to Indonesia. Among the adherents of the *Naqshbandiyya-mujeddidiya* were the leading ‘ulama and leading families of Delhi and North India as well (Iqbal Mujadedi: 1978,32)

Many rich persons including the king wanted to financially support the *khanqah*, but he never accepted. Amir Khan, *Nawab* of *Malwa* was also under great influence of Shah Ghulam Ali. Once he desired to present some donation in the service of Shakh Ghulam Ali to meet the expenses of his *Khanqah*. At which Shakh Ghulam Ali showed resentment and did not take that donations. With all his simplicity and freedom, he never acted against the *Sunnah*, rather followed the *Shariah* and *Sunnah* in the smallest of matters. He would not like people acting against the *Sunnah* to visit him. Many people including scholars came to him from all corners of India, from Arabistan and Transoxiana, from Turkish and Kurd areas. Mawlana Khalid al-Baghdadi, who was founder of *Khalidia Silsila* in Ottoman Empire was also his follower who got *khilafah* within nine months. He spread the *tariqa* to hundreds of thousands of people in the Middle East and Turkish nations. Shah Ghulam Ali passed away in October 1824, at the age of 81. He was buried next to his Shaykh in the *Khanaqah Mazhariya* in Delhi, India. Throughout his life, Shah Ghulam Ali dedicated his life confining to his *Khanqah* and preaching teachings to his pupils. (Iqbal Mujedidi:2020,117)

Contrary to his many contemporary Sufis, Shah Ghulam Ali possessed a considered policy of detachment from the state and political affairs. He distanced himself from the court and the Mughal Emperor of Delhi. His attitude towards the state was also characterized by avoidance of the company officials residing at Delhi, rejection of *jagirs* offered by the state or any other rich man. He also abhorred official titles and government endowments. Shah Ghulam ali also criticized joining the state services, and refrained from involvement in issues of political nature. As many as fifteen books, Monograph and *Risalas* are attributed to the Shah Ghulam Ali. Apart from those works, two collections of Malfuzat were written by his Khulafa. Malfuzat are those books, which ascribed sayings are dictated to his pupils present at the time of his talks. His authored works include: *Maqamat-e-Mazhari* and complete biography of his Shaykh Mirza

Conclusion

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, it is noticed that the expansion of *Naqshbandiya Mujaddidiyah silsila* coincided with the weakening and decline of the Mughal power. It is noticed, moreover, that the expansion of the *Mujaddidi* branch of this order was far surpassed the mother order of *Naqshbandiyah* and in fact supplanted it in many ways. (naqshbandiya transformation) It had responded to the changing situation in the wake of colonial intervention. However, the earlier situation was not as hostile as they were to become later on. Still many negative changes were there amidst the rapid implantation of the company policies. (Iqbal Mujaddidi: 2020,317) In that context this article is insofar more concerned with the deeds and events surrounding the lives of its two Sufi personalities, Shah Abdul Aziz and Shah Ghulam Ali with teachings, and preaching they were involved in.

Role played by both Sufis could be studied under another important theme called "Mediation." This theme is propounded by Arthur F. Buehler in his acclaimed work, '*Sufi Heirs of the Prophet: The Indian Naqshbandiyya and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Shaykh.*' (Arthur F. Buehler: 2008,115) Mediation means that such kind of mediatory role, which helps to bridge the gap between the state authorities and the masses. It also implies the interaction between various social groups in order to solve the social problem or differences among them. In that social exercise, a Sufi is bound to play his pivotal role. According to Buehler in the pre-modern Sufis were playing their role as teachers. Beginning approximately in the tenth century, the teaching-shaykh, (*shaykh at- ta'lim*) which means that Sufis teach the lessons of Sufi ideologies directly to the followers. Second type of Sufis merged closely followed by the first type and that is called directing-shaykh (*shaykh at- tarbiya*) who presided over a purpose-built Sufi lodge (*khanqah*). In the colonial period, the Mujaddidi directing-shaykh gradually began to be replaced by a mediating-shaykh who was seen as the spiritual broker between god and a mass following. (Arthur Buehler 2008.) This paradigm shift caused the demise of premodern Naqshbandi hallmarks such as intensive spiritual exercises and the close personal relationship between master and disciple.

In the said period of which this article is all about, both Sufi saints had extended their services, which could be considered as 'mediatory' to a significant extent. Both Sufis had provided a mediating space to the people in their own style. Shah Abdul Aziz was different in many ways from Shah Ghulam Ali in providing services to the masses, elite circles and government officials as well. Thus, it could be perceived that he played a mediational role vis-à-vis the state as well as the society. Shah Abdul Aziz influenced the state policies in favor of the people by affecting the behavior of the rulers towards other political and social groups. He associated with the authorities of East India Company for mediating between the rulers and the ruled. (Arthur Buehler:2008, 117)

On the other hand, Shah Ghulam Ali was not in favor of developing relationship with the elite class or the ruling classes. He remained aloof from the Mughal Court and nobles, but performed the mediational role in his own right. He had served by providing mediating role to the masses and his thousands of followers. In that we can perceive that Shah Abdul Aziz had played the role of mediating Sufi, while providing services to his immediate followers and masses, usually came to him for the immediate resolution of any given problem. While Shah Ghulam Ali also serving the same duty by providing extension to the Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiyah Silsila to the maximum reaches of the Islamicate. Due to his that particular services we would find a huge and significant increment in the domain of that Silsila all across the Indian Subcontinent, central Asia, Arabistan, Ottoman Empire, Khorasan. A very significant and noteworthy example is of Shaikh Khalid Kurdi, who was a disciple of Shah Ghulam Ali and after going back to his native land in

the erstwhile ottoman empire he established his own silsila named Khalidia, a Naqshbandi Chapter in ottoman Empire. (Iqbal Mujedidi:2020,313)

During the life time of Shah Abdul Aziz Metropolitan of Delhi was shifted under the suzerainty of East India Company in 1803. Political situation was turning out of the hands of the Muslims very swiftly. In that gruesome situation, Shah Abdul Aziz had declared the employment under company legal but as a contingency plan. In the meanwhile, when he realized that those areas, which were captured by company, were seeing difficulties in terms of Muslims way of life, financial condition and other religious matters, he issues a fatwa in which he declared Mughal India as *Darul Harab*. That fatwa (proclamation) was proclaimed. Here it is noteworthy point that neither Shah Sahib had issued any order of Jihad against the company rule nor he issued the order to migrate to wards any Muslims country. Long before the issuing of Fatwa by Shah Abdul Aziz, there were many Fatwas were issued about those areas where Marathas and Sikhs had established their rule. The first fatwa in this kind was issued by Shah Inayat Qadri Qusuri and second was issued by Qazi Sanaullah Pani Pati. Along with those major two Fatwas, there were many more issued by other Muslim *ulema* at different times. However, the fatwa by Shah Abdul Aziz got the most prominent fame. Rulers and residents of Delhi used to pay visits to Shah Abdul Aziz regularly. Once they had expressed their desire that Muslim *Qazi* should decide Muslims judicial decision. For that purpose, they demanded to Shah Abdul Aziz of providing them with suitable name to be appointed as *Qazi*. Shah Abdul Aziz had recommended the name of Maulana Abdul Hay, student and son in law of Shah Abdul Aziz. At that matter, many Sufis had raised the point of objections on the decision of Shah Abdul Aziz, including Shah Ghulam Ali Dehelvi. He wrote a letter to Shah Sahib. That letter and its answer by Shah Sahib are included in the *Fatwa-e-Azizi*. In the answer to that letter, shah Abdul Aziz had written that I have allowed Maulana Abdul Hey to join the service of Company at the terms that he would not adopt the culture of English neither he would eat their food. He would only be there for establishing such a system of justice indifferent to all. (Iqbal Mujedidi,2016) It is important to note that Hazrat Shah Abdul Aziz Dehlavi has a special role to play in keeping the declining society of the nineteenth century in moderation and preventing it from reaching mental decline. A closer look makes it clear that the dynamic role of Hazrat Shah Abdul Aziz Dehlavi, on the one hand, is in line with the traditions of the Mujaddidi dynasty and, on the other, is fulfilling the needs of Muslim civilization in a rapidly changing political and social context. The Mujaddidi chain also seems to have a rational justification for its words and deeds. This feature enables Hazrat Shah Abdul Aziz Dehlavi to play a full role.

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