



'ABD-AL-BARĪ

'**ABD-AL-BARĪ**, QĪĀM-AL-DĪN MOḤAMMAD, early 20th century Indian scholar and *pīr* of the **Ferangī Maḥal** family. Born in Lucknow in 1295/1878, he was descended on his father's side from a distinguished line of *pīrs* and on his mother's side from Mollā Ḥaydar, who had established the Hyderabad branch of the Ferangī Maḥal family. 'Abd-al-Bārī was brought up in Lucknow, where he studied under many teachers, notably his uncle 'Abd-al-Bāqī and 'Ayn-al-Qoẓẓāt, the prominent pupil of 'Abd-al-Ḥayy. He traveled to the Hejaz in 1301/1891, 1321/1903, and 1330/1912 and also visited other parts of the Ottoman empire. In Medina, where he came to know Šarīf Ḥosayn Makkī, he studied Hadith under Sayyed 'Alī Vetrī and then taught for six months.

With Abu'l-Kalām Āzād (q.v.), 'Abd-al-Bārī was the first Indo-Muslim scholar to play a major role in modern Indian politics. He came to the fore as Muslims of the subcontinent were being agitated by events in the Ottoman empire immediately prior to World War I. In 1913, after his return from Mecca, he and Mošīr Ḥosayn Qedvāī founded the Anjōmān-e Qoddām-e Ka'ba. After the war he helped to launch the Indian Khilafat movement, and in 1918, he led the first *'olamā* to attend the All-India Muslim League sessions. Then he developed an alliance with Mahatma Gandhi and contributed to the organizing of the Central Khilafat Committee in 1919. Throughout this period he continued to agitate the Muslims, until in 1920 the Khilafat movement adopted a policy of noncooperation with the British government, as did the Indian National Congress. In these years 'Abd-al-Bārī's influence was at its zenith, a fact recognized, at least by the Indian *'olamā*, by his election in 1919 as the first



president of the Jam‘iat-e ‘Olamā-ye Hend, which he had helped to found. But in 1921 and 1922 he began to draw apart from the politicians, because they disagreed with his view that force should be used to defend the Khilafat. By 1923 the resurgence of communalism had driven him to defend Islam in India at the cost of Hindu-Muslim unity, and he continued to agitate over the Khilafat, even after the issue had ceased to interest the politicians (Robinson, *Separatism*, chaps. 7-9). In 1925 he led a tremendous protest in India against Ebn Sa‘ūd, and died in January, 1926, while in the midst of his campaign (Iqbal, *Life and Times*, pp. 336-40).

‘Abd-al-Bārī knew that Muslims had to face the problems posed by the modernization of their society. Willing to support Muslims who sought Western learning, he sent boys to Aligarh College and made a donation to the Muslim University movement. In an effort to equip the children of ‘*olamā* and *pīrs* for modern life along traditional lines, he established the Madrasa Neẓāmīya at Ferangi Maḥal in 1905, where an improved form of the Dars-e Neẓāmīya was offered. Modern subjects like English were available to advanced students (Qedvā‘ī, *Qīām*, passim). ‘Abd-al-Bārī was no less concerned about the future of Sufism. He felt that the ignorance of those who were Sufis, and of those who were not, was damaging the reputation of *taṣawvof*. He was particularly concerned that Sufis should adhere strictly to the *šarī‘a*. It was for this reason that around 1914 he revived a plan, first proposed by his father and others in 1896, to establish a *madrassa* where Islamic mysticism would be taught systematically. The plan was adopted as the goal of the Bazm-e Šūfiya-ye Hend, an organization which, with the support of many leading Indian Sufis, was founded during the ‘*ors* of Mo‘īn-al-dīn Češtī at Ajmer in May, 1916 (Aḥmerī, *Kādemāna*, passim).

‘Abd-al-Bārī was one of the great teachers of his time and had at least 300 pupils. He wrote over a hundred books and pamphlets that displayed wide learning in both Persian and Arabic. As was customary in the Ferangi Maḥal family, Hanafite *feqh* was his primary field; but, unlike his forefathers, he also attempted a Koranic commentary. He was initiated into the Qāderīya Razzāqīya and the Češtīya Neẓāmīya; he became an influential *pīr* and counted several leading politicians, including Moḥammad and Šawqat ‘Alī, among his *morīds*. An independent-minded but emotional man, ‘Abd-al-Bārī was guided by the need to defend and strengthen Islam. He achieved fame and success in part because of what he did but also because of who he was: the dominant member in his generation of the widespread and talented Ferangi



Maḥal family. In recent years he has been his family's most distinguished product.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mawlavī 'Enāyatallāh, *Resāla Ḥaṣrat al-āfāq be wafāt majma' al-aḳlāq*, n.d.

Idem, *Taḍkera-ye 'olamā-ye Ferangī Maḥal*, Lucknow, 1930, pp. 106-18.

Nūr-al-Ḥasan Aḳmerī, *Ḳādemāna gozāreš*, Lucknow, 1923.

Moḥammad Alṭaf-al-Raḥmān Qedvā'ī, *Qīām-e neẓām-e ta'līm*, Lucknow, 1924.

Afzal Iqbal, *The Life and Times of Mohammad Ali*, Lahore, 1974.

Francis Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, 1860-1923*, Cambridge, 1974.