



'ABD-AL-ḤAYY, ABŪ'L-ḤASANĀT

'ABD-AL-ḤAYY, ABŪ'L-ḤASANĀT MOḤAMMAD, 1264-1304/1848-86, Indian theologian from the distinguished [Farangī Maḥall](#) family. His father, Mawlavī 'Abd-al-Ḥalīm (1239-85/1822-68), was a noted teacher, writer, and judge in Hyderabad (Deccan). His mother was a granddaughter of Malek-al-'olamā' Mollā Ḥaydar, who established the Hyderabad branch of the Farangī Maḥall family. Born in Banda, Uttar Pradesh, 'Abd-al-Ḥayy studied under his father, Mawlavī Kādem Ḥosayn, and Mawlānā Ne'matallāh. At 17 he was sufficiently knowledgeable to assist Mawlavī 'Abd-al-Ḥalīm as a teacher. Twice he performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, where he met Moftī Aḥmad b. Zaynī Dahlān and received his permission to teach many works of Hadith. On his father's death, 'Abd-al-Ḥayy declined to succeed him in Hyderabad, preferring to devote his life to teaching and writing. He received financial support from Sir Sālār Jang, prime minister of Hyderabad state. Returning to Lucknow, 'Abd-al-Ḥayy worked there till his death.

At a time when Indian Muslims were beginning to feel threatened by the modernizing influences of British rule, 'Abd-al-Ḥayy promoted an understanding of Islam based on a fresh examination of the basic principles of traditional learning. An enlightened *'ālem*, he supported Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's attempts to found the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh. Concerned for Islam and traditional learning, he was once prosecuted for converting a man to his faith; with his uncle, 'Abd-al-Vahhāb, he founded the



Maḥles Mo’īd al-Eslām to promote the *ṣarī’a*. He defended with vigor the great tradition of Indo-Islamic scholarship focusing on the Hanafite path and relying on Borhān-al-dīn ‘Alī’s highly esteemed manual of *feqh*, the *Hedāya*. The leader of the Ahl al-Ḥadīth Navvāb Şeddīq Ḥasan Khan of Bhopal, declared that the Qur’ān and Hadith were the sole sources of the *ṣarī’a* and discounted the value of *ej̄mā’* and *qīās*; ‘Abd-al-Ḥayy’s reply, revealing the inadequacy of the Navvāb’s research, was set forth in *Ebrāz al-ḡayy al-wāqe’ fī šefā’ al-‘ayy* (“The sprouting of manifest error in curing the stammer,” cited in Saeedullah, *Muhammad Siddiq*, pp. 93-101). ‘Abd-al-Ḥayy’s arguments for *ej̄mā’* and *qīās* as sources of law, the legality of visiting the Prophet’s tomb, and other Hanafite positions may be found in *Nāfe’ al-kabīr*, *Moqaddamat al-hedāya*, *al-Se’āya fī kaşf mā fī šarḥ al-weqāya*, and *al-Sa’y al-maşkūr*.

‘Abd-al-Ḥayy was perhaps the greatest Muslim teacher of 19th-century India, and his pupils came from all over South Asia and beyond. He was a prolific writer, producing 110 books, most of which were in Arabic. ‘Enāyatallāh (*Tadkera*, pp. 133-37) sets forth a list of his major works, which principally consist of glosses and annotations on textbooks, though he also wrote substantial commentaries. They are still widely used in the *madrasas* in and beyond South Asia. The following works were especially important in establishing his reputation: 1. *al-Se’āya*, mentioned above; 2. *al-Ta’līq al-momajjad ‘alā mowaṭṭa’ Emām Mālek*; and 3. *Ẓafar al-amānī*. Also of interest is his collection of *fatāwā*, *Maǧmū’ al-fatāwā Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā ‘Abd-al-Ḥayy Marḥūm Ferangī Maḥallī*, which is widely used in India and Pakistan. There is also his *al-Fawā’ed al-baḥīya fī tarāǧem al-ḥanaḥīya* (Cairo, 1925), an abridgment with additional biographical notices of Maḥmūd b. Solaymān Kavafī’s *Katā’eb al-lām al-akyār*. Among scholars of the Farangī Maḥall family, ‘Abd-al-Ḥayy is matched only by ‘Abd-al-‘Alī Baḥr-al-‘olūm and Mollā Neẓām-al-dīn.

Although ‘Abd-al-Ḥayy’s work focused on traditional Islamic scholarship, he did not neglect his family’s great tradition of mystical learning. He regarded attendance at the *dargāh* of the Qāderī saint Shah ‘Abd-al-Razzāq of Bansa as important for his spiritual health (‘Abd-al-Bārī, *’Ors*, p. 10). In his will he urged all members of his family to study Imam Ḡazzālī’s monumental work *Eḥyā’ ‘olūm al-dīn* (Aǧmērī, *Ḳādemāna*, p. 53). Yet one should not overemphasize ‘Abd-al-Ḥayy’s interest in mysticism; his grave in the Bāḡ-e Mawlānā Anvār at Lucknow is that of a scholar and not a Sufi.



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