



'ABD-AL-VAHHĀB BOHRĀ

'**ABD-AL-VAHHĀB BOHRĀ**, chief judge (*qāẓī*) in the reign of the Mughal emperor Awrangzēb. He was a native of Patan in Gujerat. The Bohrās (Vyohāra), a community of Hindu merchants, had converted to Shi'ite Islam in the 11th century but became Sunnites in the reign of Maḥmūd Begrā (1459-1511 A.D.). 'Abd-al-Vahhāb's learned grandfather, Sayyed Moḥammad Ṭāher Bohrā, was ruthless in persecuting the non-orthodox. 'Abd-al-Vahhāb was likewise reputed as a master of theology and religious law. During Shah Jahān's reign he was *qāẓī* of Patan. He and 'Abd-al-Qavī were confidants of Awrangzēb during the latter's viceroyalty of Gujerat (1645-46); together they brought about the destruction at Ahmadabad of Sayyed Rājū, leader of the Mahdavi sect, along with twenty-two of his followers. 'Abd-al-Vahhāb joined Awrangzēb in the Deccan during the prince's second viceroyalty there (1652-58). When Awrangzēb, after defeating his brothers, planned to celebrate his first coronation ceremony in July-August, 1658, the chief *qāẓī* refused to read the *koṭba* in the name of a son while his father was still alive. 'Abd-al-Vahhāb, now *moftī* of the prince's army, opportunely ruled Awrangzēb's accession as perfectly legal, on the grounds that Shah Jahān was physically and mentally unfit to rule. For this valuable service 'Abd-al-Vahhāb was elevated to be chief *qāẓī* of the empire (1659), a post he held until his death in 1675. In this capacity he exercised a strong influence on the emperor. He proved ruthless and corrupt, exploiting his position to enrich himself, not only by accepting bribes, but also secretly engaging in trade. As chief *qāẓī* he amassed a fortune of thirty-three lakhs of rupees, besides much jewelry and other property. After falling ill at Lahore (July, 1675), he proceeded to Delhi,



where he died on Friday, 18 Ramaẓān 1086/26 November 1675.

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