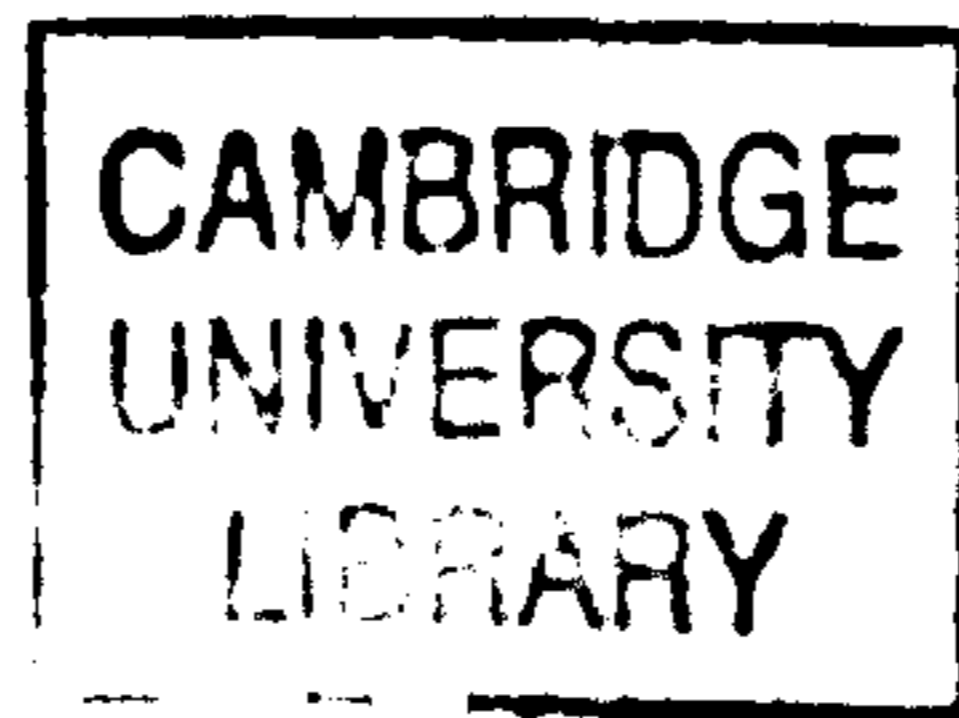


Ph.D. 30280

THE SHI‘A MUSLIMS OF THE
UNITED PROVINCES OF INDIA,
c.1890-1940.

Justin Jones



Pembroke College
University of Cambridge

This dissertation is submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

ABSTRACT

'THE SHI'A MUSLIMS OF THE UNITED PROVINCES, c.1890-1940.'

This dissertation examines religious, social and political change among the Shi'a Muslims of the United Provinces of colonial India, c.1890-1940. Focusing especially upon the towns of Lucknow and Amroha but discussing the region as a whole, it traces the formation of a community identity among Shi'a Muslims, and questions how disparate Shi'a populations were able to construct a consciousness of solidarity. The dissertation is based on a combination of archival and printed sources in English and Urdu.

The first chapter assesses processes of sectarian organisation and the formation of a number of Shi'a institutions and societies in Lucknow in the thirty year period from 1890, including several *madrasas* and the All India Shi'a Conference. The second chapter examines manifestations of religious renewal among Indian Shi'as. Forms of religious proselytisation are discussed, particularly the contribution of the printing press and the changing role of preaching. The development of religious conflict is outlined, through examinations of religious debates and the reformation of Muharram rites.

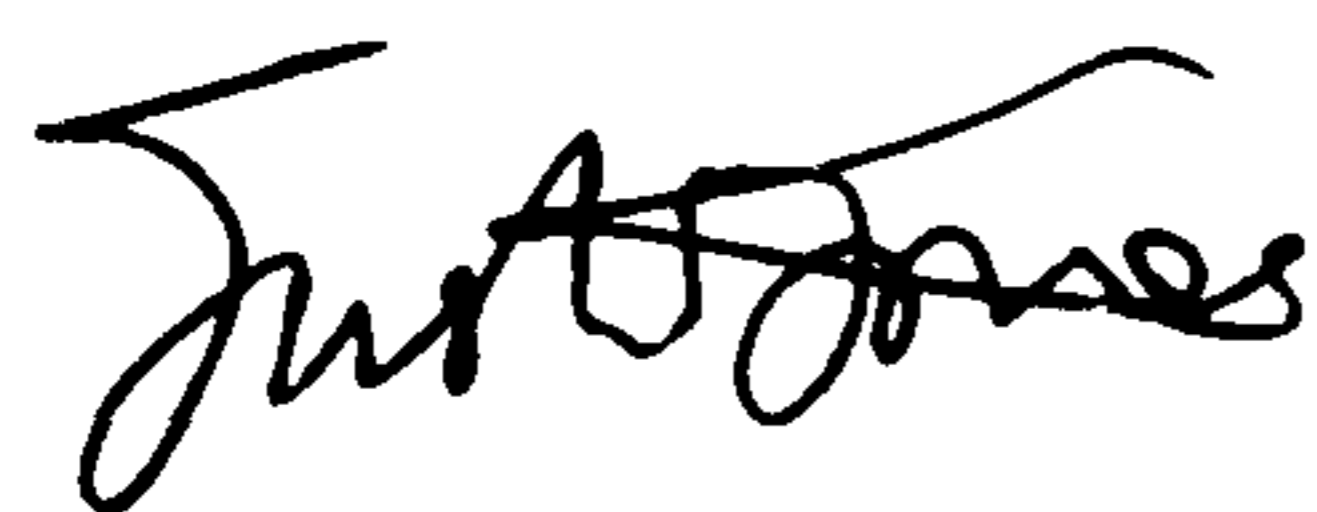
A third chapter examines Shi'a responses to the so-called 'Aligarh movement,' considering reactions to educational reform and the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at 'Aligarh. A fourth chapter discusses Shi'a responses to the campaigns of *jihad* and pan-Islamism current among many Muslims in the early twentieth century. Together, these two chapters demonstrate the expansion and politicisation of sectarian differences, and the attempts by some Shi'as to organise separately from wider Muslim institutions.

The final chapter assesses a series of Shi'a-Sunni conflicts in Lucknow in the 1930s. It examines some of the contributory factors and discusses the conflicts in the light of the processes of sectarian organisation discussed in earlier chapters. The conclusion evaluates the implications of the thesis for our understanding of Indian Shi'a Muslims and, more generally, of sectarian identities and conflicts in Indian Islam.

Statement of length and originality

This thesis totals 79, 963 words (excluding footnotes, references and bibliography) and does not exceed the stated word limit of 80,000 words.

This thesis is entirely the result of my own work. While it includes a small amount of research also used in my M.Phil thesis, 'Sectarianism and identity politics among the Shia Muslims of Lucknow in late colonial India' (Faculty of History, Cambridge, 2003), its contribution is minor, and none of the material presented here remains in the same form.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin Jones', with a stylized, cursive script.

Justin Jones
15 January, 2007.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	i
Note on transliteration	iii

INTRODUCTION

• ‘Islamic revival’ and sectarian revivalisms	1
• Writing a Shi‘a history for colonial India	4
• Sectarianism in Indian Islam	7
• Reconstructing the Shi‘as: sources and structure	15
• Shi‘ism from the global to the local: Lucknow and Amroha	17

CHAPTER 1

SHI‘A *TANZIMAT*: THE BEGINNINGS OF SHI‘A ORGANISATION IN COLONIAL LUCKNOW

• Introduction: colonial Lucknow and the modernist generation of ‘ <i>ulama</i> ’	30
• Institutionalising Shi‘ism: the foundation of Shi‘a <i>madrasas</i>	35
• The Shi‘a <i>mujtahids</i> in public life: the Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor	45
• A Shi‘a Conference for India	52
• Shi‘a <i>anjuman</i> -building: the construction and integration of sectarian organisations	62
• Conclusion: the modern ‘ <i>ulama</i> ’, the Islamic city and the Shi‘a community	69

CHAPTER 2

TABLIGH AND *IKHTILAFAT*: SHI‘A RELIGIOUS PROSELYTISATION AND CONFLICT IN COLONIAL INDIA

• Introduction: the <i>zakir</i> , <i>wa‘iz</i> and the immediate face of Shi‘ism	77
• <i>Maulavis</i> , <i>majalis</i> and ‘Mission’ in Shi‘a Islam	79
• Printing and proselytisation in Shi‘a Islam	87
• Shi‘a-Sunni <i>ikhtilafat</i> : religious discord in nineteenth century north India	94
• Disputation and <i>munazara</i> in colonial India	100
• From civic cohesion to sectarian division: the reformation of Muharram	107
• Conclusion: the internal and external dynamics of Muslim sectarianism	119

CHAPTER 3

CRAFTING ‘SEPARATENESS’: SHI‘AS AND THE ALIGARH MOVEMENT

• Introduction: Shi‘a ‘separateness’ and Muslim ‘separatism’ in colonial India	127
• Imamiya Congresses and <i>madrasas</i> : Shi‘a alternatives to the Muslim ‘centre’	131
• Exclusion and compartmentalisation: Aligarh College and Nadva‘t ul-‘Ulama	140
• Sectarian divide or municipal enmity: Aligarh and Amroha	149
• The campaign for a Shi‘a College	157
• Conclusion: the sectionalisation of Islamic reform	166

CHAPTER 4

IMPERIALISM AND ISLAM: SHI'ISM, PAN-ISLAMISM AND MUSLIM UNITY

- Introduction: Colonial encounters and Muslim unity 171
- *Jihad* and *taqlid*: modern activism and traditional religion 176
- The Sultanate and the 'Shi'i International': Shi'a responses to pan-Islamism 185
- Ambivalent responses: Shi'as and the Khilafat movement 195
- Conclusion: Muslim 'unity' and the failure of Muslim nationalism 202

CHAPTER 5

A DECADE OF RELIGIOUS CONFLICT: THE CHANGING NATURE OF SECTARIANISM IN LUCKNOW, 1930-1939.

- Introduction: Shi'a -Sunni relations in the years of Muslim-Hindu communalism 208
- The origins of the *tabarra* agitation 212
- The '*jihad* of the pen': the Imamiya Mission of Lucknow 218
- The political and socio-economic roots of sectarianism in the 1930s 227
- Establishing a sectarian battleground: the re-fashioning of Muharram 234
- The changing role of a city: 1930s Lucknow 241
- Conclusion: religious leadership and sectarian conflict in Indian Shi'ism 248

CONCLUSION

- Sect and sectarianism in Indian Islam 255
- System and singularity: reflections on sect and sectarianism in South Asian Islam 259
- Epilogue: sectarianism in South Asian Islam after 1939 266

SELECT GLOSSARY

273

BIBLIOGRAPHY

279

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following work would have been impossible without the contributions of a number of people and institutions, whose help I would like to acknowledge here.

First mention is due to the Arts and Humanities Research Council (A.H.R.C.), for enabling this research, and to the staff and fellows of Pembroke College, Cambridge, who have been so good to me. In the U.K., I owe thanks to the staff of a number of libraries and university departments, including the British Library, London; the University Library, Cambridge; the History and Divinity Faculties, Cambridge; and in particular, to Kevin Greenbank, Rachel Rowe, Barbara Roe and Jan Thulborn of the Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge, who have been excellent company and colleagues respectively for a number of years. In India, I am obliged to the staff of the Nehru Memorial Library, New Delhi; the National Archives of India, New Delhi; the library of Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi; the Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh; and the Uttar Pradesh State Archives, Lucknow. I would additionally like to acknowledge the invaluable help of the staff of the following *madrasas* and educational institutions in Lucknow: Nadva't ul-'Ulama; Tanzim-ul-Makatib, especially Maulana Safi Haider; the Tagore Library, Lucknow University; the Amir-ud-daula Library; and the Shia Postgraduate College, especially Bhaskar Srivastava, Dr. Taqi, Ali Naqi and the principal Dr. Naqvi.

For the help they have offered with my sometimes excruciating learning of Urdu, recognition is due to Sarfaraz Ahmad and Naseem Akhtar of Jamia Millia Islamia, and to Aftab Ahmad, Fauzia Farouqi and the other staff of the American Institute of Indian Studies, Lucknow. For their occasional help with the more troublesome of my texts, Shahnawaz, Akbar, Ibrahim, Mariam and Zain deserve mention. I also owe much to my contemporaries in Cambridge with whom I have shared the research experience more generally, among them Ben Hopkins, Sarah Wilkerson, Rachel Berger, Magnus Marsden and Kaveri Gill.

My research trips to India would not have been as enjoyable or as fruitful were it not for the contributions of the following. For offering me a soft landing, warm welcome and enjoyable stay in Delhi, I am ever thankful to Shakti Sidhu and family, and Sunit Aiyar and family. Particular thanks are reserved for Kazim, Zakia and Ahmad Zaheer, for the extensive combination of help and hospitality with which they have endowed me in both Delhi and Lucknow. The experience of Aligarh was made tolerable by the good humour of Farhan and Fauzia Mujib, and Ataur Rehman.

The following have shown me some of the kindness and hospitality for which Lucknow used to be famous. The legendary Ram Advani offered me the same excellent company, conversation and cups of tea as he has many researchers before me. For his introduction to the ways of western Lucknow and for no end of help, I thank Sultan Ali Sadiq and family. Nirmala Sharma and Naheed Varma have both provided me with a warm and

friendly place to stay. For taking the time to speak to me or for the advice they have offered I also owe additional thanks to the following: Muhammad Amir Muhammad Khan (Sulaiman Khan), the Raja of Mahmudabad; Maulana Hamid ul-Hasan (principal, Madrasa Nazimiyya, Lucknow); Maulana Jam-o-Mian (principal, Sultan ul-Madaris, Lucknow); and Maulana Agha Roohi (Nasiriyya Library, Lucknow). Among the Shia religious community in Lucknow, my main gratitude goes to two scholars of exceptional generosity. Maulana Sajjad Nasir Abaqati, the closest I could have to an *ustad*, furnished me with much of his wisdom and good humour. He and his relatives Kazim Jarwali, Husain Nasir, Jamal Kazim and Daniyal Khan together provided me with a virtual second home in their *haveli* in Nakkhas, Lucknow. Maulana Mustafa Husain Asif Jaisi graciously allowed me access to his knowledge, home and bookshelves over a number of weeks, asking nothing in return. I am much indebted to him and to his nephews Rinku and Ali Mehdi for their help and hospitality.

Many other researchers have kindly offered me their time and invaluable advice on aspects of the research for this thesis, in particular Dr. Seema Alavi, Professor Mushirul Hasan, Professor David Lelyveld, Dr. Rosie Llewellyn Jones, Dr. Francesca Orsini, Dr. Avril Powell, Professor Francis Robinson and Dr. Carey Watt. I am extremely grateful to Professor C.A. Bayly, who has offered me all kinds of invaluable advice, support and encouragement over a number of years and who was kind enough to supervise this thesis in its final half-year. Special thanks are also owed to Dr. William Gould, who has helped me in every conceivable way since my early days as a graduate, and who takes some of the credit or blame for nudging me towards this subject in the first place. Particular mention is reserved for the late Dr. Raj Chandavarkar, under whose supervision I thoroughly enjoyed working in the short two years from 2004-06. He is sorely missed in Cambridge, and I can only hope that he would have been at least partially satisfied with this final work.

Lastly, I owe a great deal to my family, for their unqualified patience and unconditional support. Were it not for my parents, Keith and Celia Jones, and my wife Aleksandra, none of this would have been possible.

January 2007.

NOTE ON transliteration

The following is the system of transliteration adhered to throughout the thesis. For the sake of simplicity and elegance, long vowels are marked with diacritics (as below) in the titles of referenced texts only. In the main text, short-vowel sounds (i.e. those unmarked by a particular character) have been written according to their pronunciation in the word. In citations of and quotations from other sources, vernacular words and the names of people, places, publications and organisations are written as they appear in the original text.

ا	ā	ط	t
ب	b	ظ	z
پ	p	ق	·
ت	t	ك	gh
ث	t	ف	f
س	s	ق	q
ج	j	ك	k
ح	ch	گ	g
ه	h	ل	l
خ	kh	م	m
د	d	ن	n
ذ	dh	و	w, v
ز	z	و	ō, ū
ر	r	ه	h (or 'a' where ◦ denotes an aspiration at the end of a word.)
ر	r	ی	ē, ī, y
ز	z		
zh	zh		
س	s		
ش	sh		
س	s		
ز	z		

INTRODUCTION

‘Islamic revival’ and sectarian revivalisms

Considerable research has been conducted upon the supposed ‘Islamic revival’ that took place in India from the late-nineteenth century onwards.¹ The cradle of this Islamic renewal has generally been identified as a number of Muslim institutions and *madrasas* (religious schools), which emerged among the Muslim *ashraf* (nobility) and elites in the United Provinces (U.P.) of India. Such examples of the re-crafting of the religious life of Indian Muslims were numerous; among them were prominently included the scriptural Sunni *dar-ul-‘ulum* (college) of Deoband and its multiple successor schools; the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College of Aligarh and its related efforts at acculturation with western and secular knowledge; voluntarily administered *anjumans* (organisations) seeking the renewal of Muslim culture or faith, prime among them the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, the Anjuman-i-Islamia and the Central Muhammadan Association; and additionally the origination or expansion of various new sects or schools, such as the Ahl-i-Hadis, Bareilvis and Nadva’t ul-‘Ulama.² Of course, these various organisations outlined a diversity of approaches and directions for Islamic reform, and communications between them were often characterised by debate and antagonism. Despite this, however, such organisations are considered to have together contributed to a broad contemporary re-assessment of Muslim identity, and a common invigoration of Muslim faith and communal solidarity. As has been argued in one of the most accomplished studies on the subject, despite the differences in approach and the frequent disagreements between these organisations, all possessed so-called ‘continuities’ which fed into the overarching sense of an ‘Islamic revival’ in north India:

¹ Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic revival in British India: Deoband 1860-1900* (Princeton, 1982), *passim*.

² Some of the literature in this regard includes: *ibid*; Usha Sanyal, *Devotional Islam and politics in British India: Ahmad Riza Khan Bareilwi and his movement, 1870-1920* (Delhi, 1996); Yoginder Sikand, *The origins and development of the Tablighi-Jama'at: a cross-comparative study* (New Delhi, 2002); David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's first generation: Muslim solidarity in British India* (Princeton, 1978); Yohanan Freidmann, *Prophecy continuous: aspects of Ahmadi religious thought and its medieval background* (New Delhi, 1989); Masroor Hashmi, *Muslim response to Western education: a study of four pioneer institutions* (Delhi, 1989); Y.B. Mathur, *Muslims and changing India* (New Delhi, 1972); Gail Minault, *Secluded*

‘All contributed to the substantial religious self-consciousness of the period; all reflected and encouraged the growing sense that Muslims resident in India were tied together in a separate community; and all fostered the use of Urdu among educated Muslims.’³

Such scholarship has recognised the distinctions between these many reform movements. However it could be suggested that since these studies of such movements have generally focused upon their role as responses to Muslim subordination under, respectively, colonial rule or the Hindu majority, they have been understood as efforts to speak for ‘Islam’ or ‘Muslims’ more widely. This focus has thus tended to cloud the extent to which these various movements were, in fact, often motivated by competition and confrontation between themselves. Rather than framing themselves as branches of a common Islamic campaign, such movements frequently perceived and presented themselves as independent and autonomous ‘sectarian revivals.’ They were often adversarial movements, primarily delineated not against non-Muslim communities but against other Islamic reformist efforts, and attempting to maintain separateness from them.

This study will examine the Shi‘a Muslims of the United Provinces of colonial India. Few efforts to discuss Indian Shi‘ism in any detail have been conducted; perhaps the concern with the broader notion of an ‘Islamic revival’ has led scholars to focus upon the majority community, hence the Sunni-dominated concerns of the historiography of Indian Islam. However, it is clear that only with a full consideration of India’s Shi‘as, the Muslim minority most distinct and distant from the predominantly Sunni reform movements listed above, and by exploring Shi‘a reactions to and involvement in processes of transformation within Indian Islam, can we discern the viability of discussing a broad ‘Islamic revival’ manifested through these various particular movements. The thesis is concerned only with the ‘Isna ‘Asharia branch of Shi‘ism (also known as Twelvers, for their belief in the Twelve Imams), bypassing communities such as Isma‘ilis and Khojas with whom the former shared few associations of family, region,

scholars: women’s education and Muslim social reform in colonial India (New Delhi, 1998).

³ Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic revival in British India*, p.315.

religious belief or political action.⁴ It will also confine itself tightly to the swathe of north India latterly known as the United Provinces where 'Isna 'Asharia Shi'as were most numerous and influential, and in particular to Lucknow and other specified localities. The reason for this is that the thesis intends to examine the interaction of the Shi'a religion with the loyalties of the individuals who professed it, such as one's family, kinship, *muhalla* (neighbourhood), *qasba* (town), region and nation.

The thesis has two key and interlocking objectives. The first is to present the first detailed and sustained history for India's Shi'as during the given period, examining their activities and responses during a time of rapid national social and economic change. Assessing the impact of local, provincial and national transformation in various forms, the thesis asks how Shi'a families and populations were affected religiously, socially, educationally, and how they responded. During this period, it is argued, numerous exclusively Shi'a organisations and associations were established. These brought about a new consciousness of religious identity and solidarity among disparate Shi'a co-religionists and developed a new organisational network enabling their religious reform, social organisation and political intervention during the colonial period. The second aim is to chart and discuss the consolidation of difference and growth of conflict between Shi'a and Sunni Muslims, focusing on the way in which 'sectarianism,' as these broad processes are together termed in the thesis, was transformed and expanded during the colonial period. It is argued that a growing awareness of religious difference among Shi'a and Sunni Muslims alike prompted the growth of more particular and differentiated forms of Islam which eventually transmuted into the delineation of Shi'as as a separate community more broadly in society and politics. Neither of these stories has received adequate attention in scholarship. Before embarking on these questions, however, the introduction will outline the current condition of historiography on the subject of Indian Shi'ism. It will ask why Shi'ism has received little attention in the scholarship of South Asian Islam, and will outline some of the common assumptions of this historiography in need of redress.

⁴ The transliteration of words used in Western scholarship to denote this religious community and system vary considerably, but for the sake of simplicity this thesis uses the terms 'Shi'a' and 'Shi'ism' respectively throughout.

Writing a Shi'a history for colonial India

Comparatively few works have been produced on Indian Shi'ism. While some accounts have opened up our knowledge of their beliefs, ritual customs and sociology,⁵ fewer have looked into the historical development of these communities. Cole's expert telling of the history of Shi'ism in Awadh ends with the collapse of the Nawab's rule, after which the field has been almost entirely forsaken.⁶ While work on Shi'ism has continued apace for the Iranian lands since 1979, and more recently for Iraq,⁷ India's Shi'as have not yet received the same levels of attention for the post-1857 period.

Why has the Shi'a Muslim minority of India gone so apparently unstudied? One reason is the continuing placement of Shi'a Islam in the international context. In contrast to studies of the Deobandi and Aligarhist experiments, which took place almost exclusively in the national arena, the most authoritative scholarship upon Indian Shi'ism has emphasised the early roots of the Nawabi dynasty in the shrine cities in Iraq and the Persian origins of the most senior *'ulama* (religious scholars) in India.⁸ Moreover, while religious learning sank in former Awadh in the second half of the nineteenth century, the shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala of southern Iraq emerged unequivocally as the nexus of the Shi'a world. A number of factors, including immigration of *'ulama* from Iran, the relative autonomy of southern Iraq from the Ottoman administration in Baghdad, the growth of pilgrimage to the shrine cities, generous patronage and an expansion of popular Shi'ism among the Mesopotamian tribes all established Najaf in particular as the foremost establishment of Shi'a knowledge and jurisprudence.⁹ The subsequent tendency to view

⁵ These include John Norman Hollister, *The Shi'a of India* (London, 1953); Nadeem Hasnain and Sheikh Abrar Husain, *Shias and Shia Islam in India: a study in society and culture* (New Delhi, 1988).

⁶ Juan R. I. Cole, *Roots of north Indian Shi'ism in Iran and Iraq: religion and state in Awadh, 1722-1859* (California, 1988); Saiyid Athar 'Abbas Rizvi's two-volume *A socio-intellectual history of the Isna 'Ashari Shi'is in India* (Delhi, 1986) is broad in its historical and geographical scope and rich in detail. However, the way in which Shi'ism and Shi'a communities were affected by interactions with historical developments is little discussed in this work.

⁷ On Iran, see especially Michael M.J. Fischer, *Iran: from religious dispute to revolution* (Massachusetts, 1980); Nikki R. Keddie, ed., *Religion and politics in Iran: Shi'ism from quietism to revolution* (Massachusetts, 1983). On Iraq, see especially Meir Litvak, *Shi'i scholars of nineteenth-century Iraq: the 'ulama of Najaf and Karbala'* (Cambridge, 1998); Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton, 2003).

⁸ Cole, *Roots of north Indian Shi'ism in Iran and Iraq* (California, 1988), *passim*.

⁹ Litvak, *Shi'i scholars of nineteenth century Iraq*, p.17.

Shi'ism in India as somehow secondary to such international centres has meant that significant indigenous Indian developments have not received the attention sometimes deserved.¹⁰

A further reason for the lack of attention devoted to India's Shi'as is the intractable association of Shi'ism with its Nawabi incarnation and thereafter its assessment in terms of the continuity of its past. Sarojini Ganju's assessment of the Muslims of Lucknow, for instance, focuses upon 'the extent to which elements from the historical and religious background of the city continued to affect the fabric of society [and]... how the past asserted an influence on the perception of the Muslim citizens of themselves.'¹¹ She argues that in Lucknow 'the structure of Muslim society... maintained a considerable influence from the past,' thus attributing the community identity of Lucknawi Shi'as to memories drawn from the community's historical background.¹² On account of this identification with Lucknow, Shi'ism more widely has been associated with pre-colonial religious structures rather than the modern processes of innovation and experimentation which characterised reform movements in other religions and north Indian metropolitan centres.

One of the most important reasons for the neglect of distinctively modern change among Shi'as, however, has been that many studies have continued to theorise South Asian Islam largely in terms of aspirations to communal unity. Scholarship has long focused upon the creation of a communal 'Muslim' identity which managed to supersede alternative personal ties of kinship, class and *qasba* and recast affiliation to a broadly defined Muslim community as a primary basis for organisation. It has frequently been supposed that a combination of colonial-era factors, among them aggressive Hindu

¹⁰ For instance Mushirul Hasan, writing on the twentieth century, claims that 'the Shias... did not have any advanced theological schools to match Firangi Mahal, Deoband or Nadwa... so the best among them, especially those aspiring to become *mujtahids*, were educated in Iran and Iraq.' Mushirul Hasan, 'Sectarianism in Indian Islam: the Shia-Sunni divide in the United Provinces,' in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* (27, 2, 1990), p.224. Francis Robinson also writes that 'ideas by and large travelled from the Shi'a heartlands to India' rather than *vice versa*. Francis Robinson, *The 'ulama of Farangi Mahall and Islamic culture in South Asia* (Delhi, 2001), p.26.

¹¹ Sarojini Ganju, 'The Muslims of Lucknow - 1919-1939,' in K. Ballhatchet and J. Harrison, *The city in South Asia: pre-modern and modern* (London, 1980), p.279.

¹² *Ibid.* pp.294-5.

revivalism, the communalisation of the Urdu-Hindi language controversy, a widespread perception of collective Muslim 'backwardness' and a government policy which tended to understand India's 'Muslims' as a largely unified and composite community, encouraged India's varied and multifarious Muslim groups to perceive and project themselves according to the notions of a singular Islamic identity. By this interpretation, a number of organisations including Aligarh College, the Muhammadan Educational Conference and ultimately the Muslim League, all thus encouraged various communities among the Muslim *ashraf* to organise on the basis of common religious affiliation rather than along the alternative lines of kinship, class, region or sect.¹³ Some subsequent scholarship has further expanded these ideas, locating the deeper roots of this Muslim 'separatism' in the long-standing religio-cultural distinctiveness of Islam in India.¹⁴

On first appearance, it seems reasonable to assume that Shi'as engaged with the same debates and concerns as wider Muslim communities. The shock of the Mutiny, often interpreted as widely signifying for Muslims the humiliation of Islam, loss of state patronage, and the inevitable onset of backwardness, were all arguably more acute for the sect who had long held political and cultural hegemony in Awadh. Additionally, the presence of many prominent Shi'as in institutions such as Aligarh College, the Muhammadan Educational Conference and the Muslim League, and other such organisations and institutions of this supposed Muslim 'separatism,' has long suggested Shi'a engagement with these wider dialogues of Muslim identity. It is thus not surprising that Shi'as have largely been treated in scholarship alongside wider *sharif* (noble) Muslim communities during the social, economic and political transformations of the

¹³ Especially important works in this regard are Francis Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims: the politics of the United Provinces Muslims, 1860-1923* (Cambridge, 1974); Paul R. Brass, *Language, religion and politics in north India* (Cambridge, 1974); Lelyveld, *Aligarh's first generation*; Lance Brennan, 'The illusion of security: the background to Muslim separatism in the United Provinces,' in Mushirul Hasan ed., *India's partition: process, strategy and mobilisation* (New Delhi, 1993), pp.322-60.

¹⁴ Robinson has cited a 'fundamental connection between Islam and political separatism,' borne of long-standing cultural distinctiveness and 'the religio-political ideas of Islam, in particular those that stress the importance of the existence of a Muslim community.' Francis Robinson, 'Islam and Muslim separatism' in Francis Robinson ed., *Islam and Muslim history in South Asia* (New Delhi, 2000), p.204. Meanwhile Farzana Shaikh, interpreting the aspiration for communal exclusivity as drawing from the notion of the '*ummah* (Islamic brotherhood) and the jurisprudential tool of *ijma*' (consensus), has suggested that the projection of 'communal identity [and]... the communal group as the basic unit of representation' was drawn from an 'Islamic' understanding of representation itself. Farzana Shaikh, 'Muslims and political

colonial era. Whenever biographical narratives of eminent Shi'a individuals of U.P. have been offered by historians, they have generally been framed primarily not as representatives of Shi'ism but of the wider Muslim *ashraf*, engaging with the same issues and questions as preoccupied numerous distinguished Muslims during the colonial period.¹⁵ This was most bluntly asserted by the Oriental scholar William Cantwell Smith in the early 1940s, who suggested that influential Shi'a individuals were largely those who established their reputations as Muslims rather than as Shi'as. Leading Shi'as, he stated:

'take their places in the development... not of the Shi'ah as a group but of Islam in general... these men have functioned not *qua* Shi'i but *qua* Muslim. In so far as a Shi'i is Shi'ah-community conscious, he is *ipso facto* less advanced.'¹⁶

On account of these factors, there is a clear need for a historical reassessment of India's Shi'a communities for the colonial period. This will mean a sustained examination of how Shi'as responded to factors as diverse as the growth of western education, the growth of a 'public sphere' in U.P. cities, and the growth of Muslim separatism and Indian nationalism.

Sectarianism in Indian Islam

Alongside a re-examination of Shi'ism and Shi'a communities, this thesis will discuss the apparent increase in so-called Shi'a-Sunni sectarianism during the colonial period. The term 'sectarianism' is used in this thesis to refer to numerous forms of dispute and disagreement between particular Muslim individuals and groups. The term is of course

representation in colonial India: the making of Pakistan,' in *Modern Asian Studies* (20, 3, 1986), p.341.

¹⁵ This is the case with prominent educationalists such as Sayyid Karamat Husain, the Arabic-educated pioneer of western education for Muslims who founded the Muslim Girls' School in Lucknow, in cooperation with the Raja of Mahmudabad. Gail Minault, 'Sayyid Karamat Husain and education for women' in Violette Graff ed., *Lucknow: memories of a city* (Delhi, 1997), pp.155-64. The case is similar for Badr-ud-din Tyabji, the Shi'a Congressite and founder of the Anjuman-i-Islam. Husain B. Tyabji, *Badrudin Tyabji: a biography* (Bombay, c.1952). An evocative account of the changing meaning of being a *sharif* Muslim in north India in from the 1860s, and the adoption of modern education and integration as a landed and administrative gentry under colonial government as a way of preserving *'izzat*, is offered in Lelyveld, *Aligarh's first generation*, pp.35-101.

¹⁶ William Cantwell Smith, *Modern Islam in India: a social analysis* (Lahore, 1947), p.345.

problematic, and demands some initial elaboration and justification. It has been used in wider scholarship primarily in one of two ways. For one, and in a primarily Christian context, it been used in the dichotomy of 'church' and 'sect,' with the former a large, conservative religious body assimilated within its environment and associated with social and political authorities; and the latter, which denotes a smaller, exclusive, peripheral group situated outside its social context.¹⁷ Second, and particularly in colonial readings and historiography of the Middle East, 'sectarianism' has been understood as an ideology antithetical to state-led national co-existence: *ta'ifiya* as opposed to *ta'yush*.¹⁸ Neither of these definitions applies here. The term 'sectarianism' is here largely adopted for convenience, to distinguish inter-Muslim conflict from 'communalism,' which has been used in South Asian historical writing to denote various conflicts primarily between Hindus and Muslims, for it is an argument of this thesis that inter-Muslim sectarianism needs to be understood as a phenomenon distinct from Hindu-Muslim communalism.¹⁹ Conversely, I have used the term 'sectarian' to refer to associations and projects which were organised exclusively among or for specific Muslim (primarily Shi'a) groups or schools. One difficulty with the use of such terminology is that it implies unintended comparisons between the categorisation of different religious groups within Christianity and Islam. One advantage of the terminology, however, is that it conveys something of the essentially competitive nature of 'sectarian' identity-formation in colonial-era Islam, an argument which underlies much of this thesis.

Where Shi'a-Sunni sectarianism in India has been discussed in scholarship, it has generally focused upon sporadic conflict during Muharram, the annual commemoration of the third Imam Husain, which is seen to represent both the cause and ultimate manifestation of sectarian conflict.²⁰ The implication of such assessments is that Shi'a-

¹⁷ Rodney Stark and Sims Bainbridge, 'Of churches, sects and cults: preliminary concepts for a theory of religious movements,' in *Journal in the Scientific Study of Religion* (18, 1979), pp.117-33. Cole's study of Indian Shi'ism uses this dichotomy successfully to explain its evolution from 'sect' to 'church' during the Nawabi period. Cole, *Roots of north Indian Shi'ism in Iran and Iraq*, especially pp.123-7.

¹⁸ For elaboration on such ideas, see Ussama Makdisi, *The culture of sectarianism: community, history and violence in nineteenth-century Ottoman Lebanon* (London, 2000), pp.166-7.

¹⁹ For the use of the word 'sectarianism' in a similar context, see Hasan, 'Sectarianism in Indian Islam,' passim; Theodore Wright, 'The politics of Moslim sectarian conflict in India,' in *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* (Spring, 1980), pp.67-73.

²⁰ For instance, Imtiaz Ahmad, 'The Shia-Sunni dispute in Lucknow, 1905-1980,' in Milton Israel and

Sunni conflict in India, however forceful, was simply a deviation around the time of Muharram from a norm in which Shi'a-Sunni relations were generally harmonious, a view held, it seems, by some Muslims at this time as well as in later historiography.²¹ What explains these distinctly limited terms by which Shi'a-Sunni sectarianism has been assessed? Part of the reason is certainly the intractable association of Shi'ism with Lucknow. Since the essayist-journalist 'Abdul Halim Sharar's account of Lucknow as the centre of a composite, *sharif*-led culture that integrated its inhabitants,²² the city has long been depicted as a seat of communal harmony and is widely assumed to have risen above the inter-community conflagrations of much of the province.²³ A further factor contributing to the scholarly neglect of the salience of sectarianism rests upon the long-standing tendency to emphasise the pervasiveness of Hindu-Muslim conflict in all areas of public life, with the volumes written on such conflicts somewhat concealing the existence of inter-Muslim tensions. Muslim sectarian conflict in India has often been implicitly interpreted as a secondary undercurrent to Hindu-Muslim communalism in a wider process of community-formation in colonial India; sectarianism, according to one analyst, 'tap[ped] the range of organisations and ideological appeals that had been created for the political expression of Hindu-Muslim competition.'²⁴

Perhaps the overriding reason for the neglect of Muslim sectarianism in colonial north India, however, has been the dominant narrative of the consolidation of communal solidarity among Muslims in colonial India, as discussed above. The fact that sectarian conflict increased simultaneously with Muslim communal organisation, and in the latter's

Narendra K. Wagle eds., *Islamic society and culture: essays in honour of Professor Aziz Ahmad* (Delhi, 1983); Mushirul Hasan, 'Sectarianism in Indian Islam'; Mushirul Hasan, 'Traditional rites and contested meanings: sectarian strife in colonial Lucknow,' in Graff ed., *Lucknow*, pp.114-35; Sandra Freitag, *Collective action and community: public arenas and the emergence of communalism in colonial north India* (Berkeley, 1989), pp.249-79.

²¹ For instance, one *zamindar* of a *qasba* in Azamgarh, recording Shi'a-Sunni riots during Muharram in the 1830s, presented them as an aberration from a norm in which Muslim 'tradition' and 'unity' were held dear. Gyanandra Pandey, "'Encounters and calamities": the history of a north Indian *qasba* in the nineteenth century,' in Ranajit Guha ed., *Subaltern studies III: writings on South Asian history and society* (New Delhi, 1984), pp.256-8.

²² Abdul Halim Sharar, *Lucknow: the last phase of an Oriental culture* (London, 1975), *passim*.

²³ For instance, the argument of Laws that 'the city's history was characterised by.... a continuation of the communal harmony of the Nawabi period.' Rama Amritmal Laws, 'Lucknow: society and politics 1856-1885' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of South Wales, 1979), p.ii.

²⁴ Freitag, *Collective action and community*, pp.249-50.

assumed heartland of U.P., is a convergence that requires explanation, yet it has received little comment in scholarship. The insinuation of such works is that, while Shi'a-Sunni sectarianism may have been present or even intense at the local level in riots or quarrels, it remained bound by the constraints of the local arenas in which it appeared. It had little resonance in higher spheres of provincial Muslim discourse or political life where cross-sectarian unitary dialogues were in the ascendant. Other discussions have taken this argument yet further, arguing that Muslim communal mobilisation did not simply circumvent sectarian controversy, but actually served to unite different Muslim sects. The politics of Muslim nationalism, argues Mushirul Hasan, actively 'overwhelmed sectarian allegiances.'²⁵

This notion that 'modernist' currents in Islam facilitated a sectarian rapprochement, common to many studies, was evident in the discussions of colonial observers. One, in a declared 'study of the changes wrought in Islam by modern social processes,' appeared to convey exactly this supposition:

'We have not given the Shi'ah group separate treatment... because there is nothing in the[ir] differences... fundamentally relevant to these processes. The two groups diverge over... questions which today do not arise... as far as modern religious development is concerned, the Shi'ah has shown precisely the same trends as have the Muslims generally.'²⁶

This statement alludes to the widespread presumption that the issues on which Shi'as and Sunnis differed, based around the debates over the Khilafat and Imamate emerging in the first century of the Islamic calendar, were somehow 'traditionalist,' pre-modern, of limited relevance in modern times. Self-declared Muslim 'progressives' in colonial India were quick to condemn the raising of Shi'a-Sunni questions, as have historians after them, as 'sectarian claptrap.'²⁷ Simply, there was little room for Islamic sectarianism in the 'modern' history of South Asia.

Interestingly, this perspective compares strongly with the way in which colonial

²⁵ Mushirul Hasan, 'Sectarianism in Indian Islam,' p.226.

²⁶ Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, p.345.

²⁷ Hasan, 'Traditional rites and contested meanings,' p.121.

observers and historians have observed Islamic reform and Shi'a-Sunni relations more broadly in the Islamic world. The rough period between 1870 and 1940 into which this thesis falls has long been identified in particular as that of 'modernist' or, as the great Orientalist scholars called it, 'liberal' Islam.²⁸ Despite the difficulties of clustering together the achievements of the various reformists of the colonial period, such as Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Riza and Jamal-ud-din Afghani, into a singular programme, scholars have long emphasised the common efforts of these thinkers to construct forms of Islam better adapted to the modern world.

Discussions of 'modernist' manifestations of Islam originating in this period have generally focused upon their engagement with such projects as the formation or renovation of educational institutions, and the establishment of religious newspapers and periodicals. The impact of supposedly modern or Western values of rational enquiry initiated a great trend of reform in Islamic jurisprudence and practice, as the unquestioning submission to established scholars was surrendered and substantial reinterpretations of religious faith and practice thus permitted. It has frequently been argued that such efforts were partly inspired by the encounter with the colonial environment, which at once demonstrated the need and offered the opportunity for a reconciliation of Islam with the modern values and media of the modern world. Frequently, modernist Islam took up the issues of nationalism and agitation for political liberalisation. Important for this study is the fact that many such assessments have concluded that these 'modernist' trends in Islam tended to diminish the salience of Shi'a-Sunni differences, especially in matters relating to social and political action. One study of Islamic political thought notes that from the late nineteenth century 'the barriers between Sunnis and Shi'is gradually became less insuperable, allowing a good many cross-sectarian currents,' due to a series of interrelated and internationally apparent conditions.²⁹ Three of these in particular are worthy of examination.

²⁸ Charles Kurzman, *Modernist Islam, 1840-1940, a sourcebook* (New York, 2002); David Waines, *An introduction to Islam* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.219-20. The great Arabist Albert Hourani described this same period as marked by 'liberal' thinkers who sought 'to reinterpret Islam so as to make it compatible with living in the modern world, and even a source of strength in it.' Albert Hourani, *Arabic thought in the liberal age, 1798-1939* (London, 1962), pp.vi-vii.

²⁹ Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic political thought: the response of the Shi'i and Sunni Muslims to the*

One of these was the revival of *ijtihad*, independent jurisprudential authority. *Taqlid*, the submission to the decisions of earlier authorities, was increasingly interpreted as parochial traditionalism by Indian thinkers from the eighteenth century onwards³⁰ as well as reformists in the Middle East such as Muhammad Abduh. The latter's prescription for religious education and his interpretative methods of scholarship inspired Shi'a as well as Sunni reformists; some Iraqi and Iranian *'ulama* in the first half of the twentieth century even proposed that Shi'a seminaries be reformed on the model of Abduh's plans for the Sunni Al-Azhar *madrasa* of Cairo, while others called for the coming of a 'Shi'ite Muhammad Abduh.'³¹

A second factor in the building of Shi'a-Sunni bridges during this period was the cultivation of a phenomenon termed pan-Islamism, the identification of Muslims with their co-religionists across national borders. Jamal-ud-din Afghani, an individual of partially Persian origins and himself educated in the Shi'a shrine cities of Iraq, contributed greatly to the cultivation of themes of cultural greatness and military prowess which formed the basis of this consciousness. In India especially, his evocation of a single Islamic state under the implied reign of the successor of the Khilafat fostered a viable alternative to secular nationalism in the 1870s-80s. He spoke little of Shi'a-Sunni differences, and his notion of the spiritual Khilafat and his vision for the Islamic *millat* have long been considered as drawing from a number of distinctly Shi'a influences, and inspiring sections of both Shi'as and Sunnis.³²

A final crucial factor in Shi'a-Sunni *rapprochement* in the wider world during this period

twentieth century (London, 1982), p.41.

³⁰ Saiyid Athar 'Abbas Rizvi, *Shah 'Abd al-Aziz: puritanism, sectarian polemics and jihad* (Canberra, 1982); M. Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims* (London, 1967), pp.271-82.

³¹ On this brand of modernism among Shi'as, see Said Amir Arjomand, 'Ideological revolution in Shi'ism,' in Said Amir Arjomand ed., *Authority and political culture in Shi'ism* (Albany, 1988), p.183; Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq* pp.262-268; Sabrina Mervin, 'The clerics of Jabal 'Amil and the reform of religious teaching in Najaf since the beginning of the twentieth century,' in Rainer Brunner and Werner Ende eds., *The Twelver Shia in modern times* (Leiden, 2000), p.82.

³² The Ottoman Sultan 'Abdul Hamid II stated that 'Jamaladdin kindled a ray of hope for Shii-Sunni unity... this would be an enormous accomplishment for Islam.' Nikki R. Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din Afghani: A political biography* (London, 1972), pp.380-1, c.f. pp.10-22.

was the cultivation of themes of Islamic unity in the face of colonial power. As in post-Mutiny India, attempts to foster a united response to colonial rule among Muslims have been interpreted as cultivating new will for sectarian reconciliation. For instance, it was primarily the threat of the Christian West that motivated 'Abdul Hamid II to engage in the service of Shi'a-Sunni unity, especially from around the 1890s. Perhaps inspired by his correspondence with Afghani, he offered more aid and attention to the Shi'a shrine cities, promoted Shi'a education, tried to foster contacts with Arab and Persian Shi'a *'ulama* and in 1894 formed a society to promote sectarian unity. 'According to the plain decrees of Allah,' he wrote in some correspondence, 'Muslims are brethren; the direction of our prayers is the same, towards the Ka'aba.'³³

These several narratives demonstrate how Islamic 'modernism' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been understood as a contributory factor in the reconciliation of Shi'a and Sunni Islam. Conversely, this reading implies that sectarian conflict is to be associated with some form of Islamic traditionalism. The scholarship of past decades on the Islamic world has thus sometimes assessed Shi'a-Sunni conflict or Muslim sectarianism more widely as a pre-colonial or even anti-modern triumph of parochialism and an impediment to a tolerant and more unitary Muslim modernity.³⁴ Interestingly, it can also be seen that there is a clear correspondence between the ways in which Shi'a-Sunni relations in the era of European colonialism have been discussed for the very separate domains of India and the wider Middle East. This is especially true since it has long been known that Indian Muslims, adopting the print media and new facilities for travel, gained a greater knowledge of international affairs during this period and thereby developed an interest in and solidarity with their co-religionists abroad.³⁵

Shi'a-Sunni sectarianism in India has thus gone largely unquestioned in its broader senses. Little sustained effort has been made to chart the appearance of sectarianism, as

³³ Azmi Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain 1877-1924* (Leiden, 1997), pp.57-8.

³⁴ For instance, Moshe Moaz, *Ottoman reform in Syria and Palestine, 1840-1861: the impact of the Tanzimat on politics and society* (Oxford, 1968).

³⁵ Mushirul Hasan, 'Religion and politics in India: The *'ulama* and the Khilafat Movement,' in Mushirul Hasan ed., *Communal and pan-Islamic trends in colonial India* (Delhi, 1985), pp.1-26.

has been characteristic of studies of Hindu-Muslim communalism, in many spheres and at many levels of society. This thesis will attempt to present a new framework for understanding Islamic sectarianism in colonial India. Sectarianism was not simply an eruption of religious passions confined to Muharram; without understating the importance of Muharram in Muslim sectarian conflict, this thesis takes Muharram disturbances, as did the Piggott Committee appointed to enquire into Shi'a-Sunni riots in 1909, as 'an outward and visible sign of discord and ill-feeling already existing between the two communities.'³⁶ Instead, sectarianism appeared in many spheres of society simultaneously as both a practice, expressed in various modes of public religious confrontation, and as a discourse, delineating more closely the distinctiveness and exclusivity of certain Muslim communities from others. Sectarianism was, as Ussama Makdisi has termed it in a different context, a 'culture,' in other words, an expression of one 'vision of modernity' which emerged as an alternative to, rather than through the absence of, other discourses of modernisation.³⁷

This thesis argues that Shi'a-Sunni sectarianism was not simply a derivative of Hindu-Muslim communalism, which somehow cheated its way into history despite this alternative dominant narrative of community formation. Nor, it argues, was sectarianism a manifestation of conflictive primordial religious identities or of traditional or unreformed Islam. Instead it needs to be understood in the Indian context on its own terms, according to a long and multi-layered process of the construction of difference within religious reformist movements, and in relation to its conjuncture with wider colonial, national and communal discourses of modernisation and Islamic unity in colonial India.

Reconstructing the Shi'as: sources and structure

Many studies of the transformation of religious communities in India, and perhaps

³⁶ 'Resolution,' dated 7 January 1909, General Administration Department (GAD) File No. 591 of 1908, Uttar Pradesh State Archives, Lucknow (UPSA).

³⁷ Makdisi, *The culture of sectarianism*, pp.1-14, 174.

especially those concerning Muslims, have fallen prey to the criticism that they unquestioningly categorise India's populations on the basis of their faith. Communities with little in common are thus bound together first and foremost on the loose grounds of religious affiliation. As such, an analysis of the Shi'as of India undoubtedly risks following such a trend, grouping individuals tenuously connected by religious commonality into an implied 'community.'

Thus, without seeking to downplay the importance of the manifold identities and loyalties of the individuals or lose sight of the wider local contexts of the processes discussed, this thesis concentrates upon those particular moments and platforms upon which Shi'a individuals were encouraged to convene and act on the basis of religious commonality. Hence, the sources chiefly used in this thesis are those that compelled their readership to consider themselves as Shi'as first and foremost. Prominent among these are printed vernacular sources from the period, among them the proceedings of newly emerging Shi'a organisations and associations, religious and instructive tracts produced by Shi'a authors, Shi'a-written histories and Shi'a newspapers. None of these have previously been used substantially in western language scholarship. These have been supplemented by material from newspapers and government documents, particularly educational and political files of the U.P. Government on 'Muhammadans' and police records, and backed up by secondary materials, especially vernacular biographies of India's Shi'a *'ulama*.

The thesis says little on the authoritative Arabic and Persian scholarship of the great *mujtahids* (highest religious scholars) of Lucknow, nor about the fine *marsiya* poetry of the likes of Hali and Mir Anis. Rather, the intention is to look at the development of Shi'ism in public life, the appropriation of methods of public organisation and application of modern media, and the interaction of religious reform among Shi'as with wider social and ultimately political change. In so doing, this thesis does not intend to negate other personal orientations, but to elaborate upon the interactions between the varied experiences of individuals and groups as Shi'as, and as families, Sayyids (descendants of the Prophet or the Imams), Lucknawis, Indians and indeed as Muslims. Nor does the

thesis aim to present Shi'as as a 'united' community even at points when they organised on the basis of faith. Under the auspices of Shi'ism lay a variety of approaches and agendas, and despite being guided by a process of sectarian organisation, the thesis acknowledges and discusses throughout the substantial differences among Shi'as.

This thesis discusses the fifty-year period between the close of the 1880s and the 1930s. Speaking generally, this period was one of great significance for its many concurrent efforts to modernise Islam according to the demands and faculties of the contemporary world, both in India and abroad, as discussed above. More immediately, the starting and concluding points of this period represent key moments in Indian Shi'ism. The late 1880s in Lucknow witnessed, as shall be seen, important attempts in Lucknow to assert the religious and community identity of Shi'ism by its adherents, including the foundation of a *madrasa*, the reworking of the *azan* (call to prayer) and the formation of a public Shi'a *anjuman*. The late 1930s, meanwhile, witnessed the vitriolic *tabarra* (the practice of cursing the Sunni Caliphs) agitation among Shi'as, marking perhaps the lowest point to date in Shi'a-Sunni relations in Lucknow. The somewhat abrupt stop after 1939 is intended in no way to suggest the closure of the forms of sectarianism founded in earlier decades; rather, this end-point simply reflects the rapid transformation of Muslim affairs in the 1940s. This said, a brief evaluation of the build-up to 1947 is offered in the conclusion.

The first four chapters of this thesis all examine the approximate period reaching from the close of the 1880s until the mid-1920s, each taking up a different theme. Primarily considering Lucknow and its circle of senior *mujtahids*, the first chapter introduces the main subject of this thesis, namely the establishment of a large number of Shi'a *anjumans* founded on specifically sectarian lines. It discusses campaigns of Shi'a organisation, and demonstrates how the various involvements of Shi'as in Lucknow's emerging public sphere instigated change within both Indian Shi'ism and the ethos of Lucknow itself.

Subsequent chapters focus more upon U.P. as a whole, and the emergence of a consciousness of distinctiveness among Shi'as in opposition to a Sunni counterpart. The

second chapter looks at the intertwined developments of religious proselytisation among Shi'as and the growth of Shi'a-Sunni religious polarisation in U.P.. Assessing the impact of print, verbal disputations and the renovation of Muharram practice, the chapter shows how religious change in Indian Shi'ism served to harden religious boundaries and accentuate sectarian conflict.

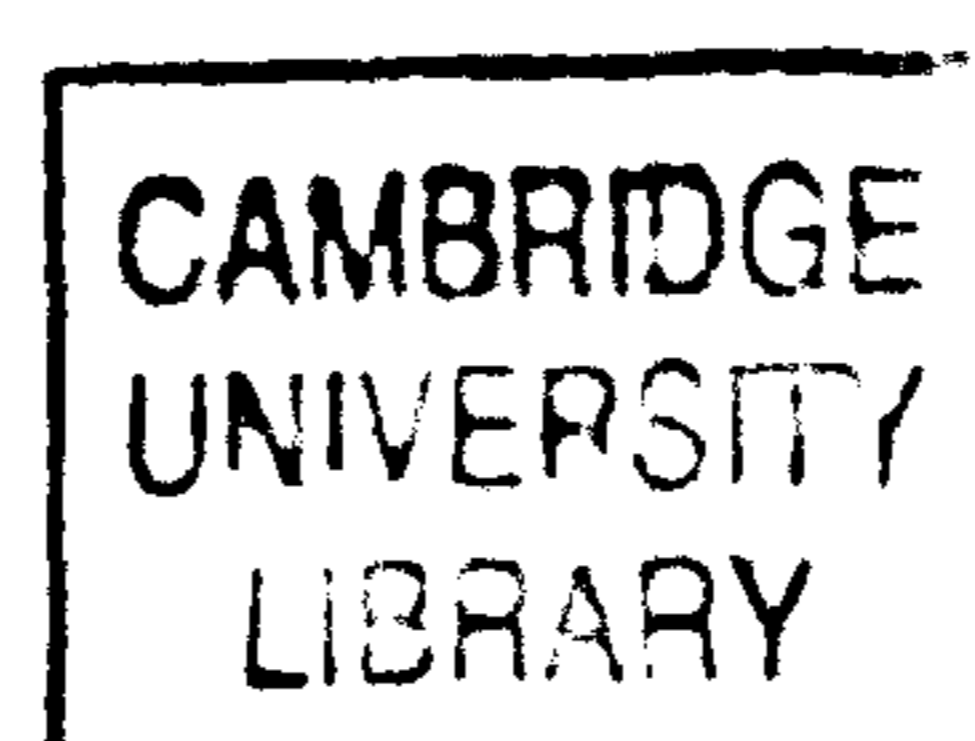
The subsequent two chapters discuss how this enhancement of religious and cultural consciousness among Shi'as contributed to the creation of wider sectarian distinctions in society and politics. Chapter 3 assesses Shi'a responses to the 'Aligarh movement' and, in particular, to its efforts to bring under its wing the multifarious campaigns of Islamic reform around India. It argues that Shi'as resisted these attempts to construct a Muslim 'centre,' and hence evolved a language of sectarian separateness and exclusivity. Chapter 4 then turns to Shi'a responses to the issues of imperialism, *jihad* (holy effort or struggle) and pan-Islamic movements, showing how Shi'as constructed an entirely separate understanding of their role in respect of the wider Islamic world.

Returning to an exclusive focus upon the *muhallas* of Lucknow, the last chapter examines the decade-long build-up to the *tabarra* agitation of 1939, in light of the societal upheavals of the decade and their impact upon Shi'ism. A conclusion expounds the findings of the thesis to establish a wider framework for the interpretation of Islamic sectarianism in colonial India.

Shi'ism from the global to the local: Lucknow and Amroha

Much of the most authoritative recent scholarship upon Shi'ism, working from a perspective influenced by new developments in globalised history,³⁸ has endeavoured to work outside the confines of national boundaries. Cole, for instance, asserts the need to 'look... at Shi'ite Islam outside the box of a national framework, at its international

³⁸ For a summary of such ideas, see C.A. Bayly and Leila Fawaz, 'Introduction: the connected world of empires' in Fawaz C.A. Bayly and Leila Tarazi Fawaz eds., *Modernity and culture from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean* (New York, 2002), pp.1-27.



networks and the profound interaction they entail... we need to rescue Shi'ite Islam from the nation.'³⁹ Other studies, by emphasising the city of Najaf as the hub of international Shi'ism and as the centre of a trans-national web of personal and institutional connections labelled the 'Shi'i International,' similarly imply the existence of a global Shi'ism beyond borders.⁴⁰ The most recent scholarship, drawing from the perceived significance of the sectarian conflict in modern world affairs, has continued such perspectives by depicting a global 'Shi'a crescent' linking, rather unquestioningly, communities in centres such as Tehran, Najaf, Beirut and Lucknow.⁴¹ In the light of recent global events, such literature risks giving the somewhat teleological impression of the Shi'a-Sunni divide as the pivotal nexus determining the national and international histories of the Islamic world.

In contrast to these studies, and aware of the self-confessed 'vertigo' which an alternation between such diverse geographical centres can entail,⁴² this thesis will look primarily at developments in Shi'ism within the national borders of India. Indeed, one key argument of this thesis is that Shi'ism in South Asia was increasingly able to turn inward to national rather than international sources for its own renewal and regulation. Rather than a 'Shi'i International,' then, this thesis adopts an approach of 'concentric circles' of influence which allowed local, national and international developments in Shi'a life and leadership to proceed with some degree of autonomy in each.⁴³ More precisely, the thesis for the most part examines Shi'ism on a local level, discussing changes in religious life and in consciousness of community as most immediately experienced. It shows how discourses at one level could both complement or contradict those at another, and conversely, how wider Indian and international dialogues among Muslims were often perceived through the prism of local concerns.

Given the largely local emphasis of this thesis, it is necessary to describe at the outset

³⁹ Juan Cole, *Sacred space and holy war: the politics, culture and history of Shi'ite Islam* (New York, 2002), p.1.

⁴⁰ Chibli Mallat, *The renewal of Islamic Law: Muhammad Baqer as-Sadr, Najaf and the Shi'i International* (Cambridge, 1993), passim.

⁴¹ Vali Nasr, *The Shia revival: how conflicts within Islam will shape the future* (New York, 2006), passim.

⁴² Cole, *Sacred space and holy war*, p.1.

some of the local arenas of U.P. with which this thesis is most concerned, as they stood at the starting-point of this thesis in the late-1880s. Ascertaining the Shi'a population of the U.P. region generally is no easy matter. British census figures and district reports consistently cited the overall population of Shi'as as around 3% of Muslims.⁴⁴ As the 'mapping' of India's communities by the Census became increasingly politicised, so enumeration became increasingly contentious and contradictory, with a sizeable proportion of the Muslim population sometimes asserted to be Shi'as.⁴⁵ However, it seems a reasonable assumption that Shi'as constituted a very small minority of north Indian Muslims, although with their proportion perhaps reaching 10-15% in those towns and cities where they were most numerous. As such, while nominally examining the Shi'as of the entirety of the United Provinces, the thesis in practice focuses upon a specific quota of those towns and cities where Shi'as were most prominent. The cities of Jaunpur, Allahabad and Fyzabad had some of the largest and most self-conscious Shi'a populations in the province, often local landholding gentries from *qasbas* outlying these cities such as Macchlishehr and Kajgaon (outside Jaunpur)⁴⁶ and Dariabad (outside Allahabad). The towns and districts of Moradabad and Muzaffarnagar had sizeable Shi'a populations, while many of the small towns in the districts of Awadh, such as Mahmudabad, Kintor and Nasirabad, were dominated by Shi'a landholding families.⁴⁷ Having received favour and patronage under the Nawabs of Awadh, they were often wealthy landholders, upholding a rich education in Oriental and Islamic literature and proclaiming themselves as the bastions of High Islam.

⁴³ Litvak, *Shi'i scholars of nineteenth-century Iraq*, p.45.

⁴⁴ *Census of India 1881, Northwestern Provinces and Oudh, Part I: Report* (Allahabad, 1882), p.74; *Census of India 1911, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Part I: Report* (Allahabad, 1912), pp.142-3.

⁴⁵ For instance, by the 1940s some Shi'a politicians were making the bold claim that over two-fifths of Indian Muslims were Shi'as. 'Shia Muslims' position' by Hooseinhoy A. Lalljee, Public and Judicial (L/PJ) File No.8/693, Oriental and India Office Collections, London (OIOC). The variations in estimates fell prey to various difficulties, among them perhaps the politicisation of community, the uncritical association of various groups considered as outside of broad Sunni Islam such as Isma'ilis and Sufis, together with perhaps the indications of Sayyid caste and participation in Muharram as distinctions of Shi'as.

⁴⁶ H.R. Nevill, *District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume XXVIII: Jaunpur* (Allahabad, 1908), pp.84-5, 257.

⁴⁷ Mahmudabad (Sitapur district) was the dominion of the province's most dominant Shi'a, the Raja of Mahmudabad; Kintor (Barabanki) was the ancestral home of the 'Abaqati family which emanated personalities such as the *mujtahids* Hamid Husain and Nasir Husain and the educationalist Karamat Husain; and Nasirabad (Rae Bareili) was the home of the *mujtahid* Dildar 'Ali and the subsequent Nasirabadi family of 'ulama.

In such *qasbas* of the North Western Provinces and Awadh alike, Shi'as were often high-ranking Sayyids who considered themselves directly descended from the sons of 'Ali or the Imams.⁴⁸ To give one example the Za'idi Sayyids, a community who dated their ancestral entry into India to a resident of Wasit in the fourteenth century, rose to the status of a landed gentry under the Mughals and were ultimately scattered across small *qasbas* in Meerut, Bijnor and Bareilly districts. The most prominent branches of this family matured into two especially distinguished Shi'a landed gentries: the Sayyids of Barha, a community settled primarily at Jansath in Muzaffarnagar district, and the Sayyids of Bilgram in Hardoi.⁴⁹ Given the renowned fierce cultural pride and consciousness of ancestry among such communities, it is of little surprise that the U.P. Census declared that 'the Shi'a religion is the more fashionable and the more richly endowed... and the ex-royal family and the greater part of the higher classes among the Muhammadan community belong to it.'⁵⁰

However, this thesis will focus primarily upon the two most important Shi'a centres of U.P.: Lucknow and Amroha. It is the Shi'as of these two towns who feature most prominently in this thesis, since they became some of the most significant actors in Shi'a organisations in colonial north India. Focusing primarily upon the established and distinguished communities found in these centres, this thesis admittedly offers a predominantly elite, masculine history of Indian Shi'ism; however, it is also true that Shi'as in most centres of U.P. were drawn from primarily noble and landed populations, excepting a few particular urban centres such as Lucknow where Shi'a artisans existed in some numbers. As essential background to this thesis, then, it is necessary to offer some

⁴⁸ On the definition and significance of Sayyids, see: Zarina Bhatti, 'Status and power in a Muslim dominated village of Uttar Pradesh,' in Imtiaz Ahmad ed., *Caste and social stratification among the Muslims* (New Delhi, 1973), pp.89-106; Cole, *Roots of north Indian Shi'ism*, pp.72-84. It is significant in this regard that the District Gazetteers of U.P. tend to discuss Muslim society on the basis that 'far more important [than sect] is the division into tribes and castes.' H.R. Nevill, *District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume XVII: Shahjahanpur* (Allahabad, 1910), pp.80-1.

⁴⁹ H.R. Nevill, *District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume III: Muzaffarnagar* (Allahabad, 1903), pp.160-6; H.R. Nevill, *District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume XXI: Hardoi* (Allahabad, 1904), p.68; H.R. Nevill, *District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume XIV: Bijnor* (Allahabad, 1908), pp.101-3.

⁵⁰ J.Charles William, *The report on the Census of Oudh* (Lucknow, 1869), Volume 1, p.76.

initial description of both these centres of Lucknow and Amroha, where the story of community formation within Shi'ism locates its foundations.

Lucknow was the erstwhile capital of the Shi'a Nawabs until 1857. Even after the destruction of the Nawabi state, Lucknow remained by far the most important Shi'a centre in north India, home to a large Shi'a population and the most senior *mujtahids* of post-Rebellion India.⁵¹ As will be demonstrated by this thesis, most of the attempts at the renewal, reform or modernisation of Indian Shi'ism both began and found their ultimate expression in Lucknow. At points this thesis will move swiftly between discussion of the Shi'as of Lucknow and the Shi'as of north India; however, it is an implicit and explicit argument of the thesis that Shi'a religious and secular organisation in the early twentieth century increasingly centralised Indian Shi'ism around the former Nawabi capital.

An understanding of Lucknow's centrality in Indian Shi'ism demands a brief recount of the history of Awadh and the expansion of Shi'ism within it.⁵² Established by Sayyids from Nishapur in 1722, the independent state of Awadh gradually took on an ever more religious intimation as local Shi'a authorities and institutions were reinforced. While Shi'as themselves remained a small minority of the population, the state's patronage of the court, poetry and religious and welfare institutions ensured that Awadhi culture included strong infusions of Shi'ism. The constant immigration of Persian physicians, poets and *'ulama* and interaction with the shrine cities of Iraq ensured that the Shi'a elements of institutional and cultural life were gradually enhanced. As time passed, the Nawabs increasingly centralised the governance of their state in their capital, hence sponsorship of religious institutions became more aggressive and Shi'a *'ulama* were increasingly integrated into the administration of the state.

Particularly significant was Dildar 'Ali (Ghufran-i-Ma'ab), an *'alim* from the *qasba* of

⁵¹ Two of the most notable of these were Maulanas Muhammad Ibrahim and Hamid Husain. For their biographies, see Sayyid Murtaza Husain, *Matla'-i-Anwār: tazkira-i-Shī'a-afāzil-va-'ulamā, kabār-i-bar-i-saghīr-i-Pāk-va-Hind* (Karachi, 1981), pp.156-63; *Firdōs-i-Makān kā tazkira* (Lucknow, circa 1960), *passim*.

⁵² This summary of Lucknawi Shi'ism is based almost entirely upon Cole, *Roots of north Indian Shi'ism*, *passim*, except where otherwise stated.

Nasirabad, outlying Rae Bareili. He travelled to the shrine cities of Iraq to become a *mujtahid*, where he made his conversion from Akhbari Shi'ism, the branch of 'Isna 'Ashari Shi'ism which had been dominant in Safavid Iran and early Awadh, to Usuli Shi'ism, which made an almost global triumph over Akhbarism in the eighteenth century and greatly enhanced the authority of Shi'a clerics.⁵³ Returning to Lucknow in 1781, Dildar 'Ali almost single-handedly transformed Shi'ism in Awadh. Akhbari Shi'ism was replaced by a broad Usuli consensus, and the informal tutoring networks of *'ulama* were succeeded by a formal hierarchy of scholars systematically coached in the Usuli sciences. This provided an indigenous clergy that came to supplant the Persian immigrants of old.

Most important, however, was the creation of a 'formal religious establishment,' administered by Usuli Shi'a clerics, through which Shi'ism became an instrument for the state in both courtly administration and social and cultural cohesion. Shi'a *namaz-i-jum'a* (congregational prayers) were first held in 1786 in Lucknow, while the rites of the festival of Muharram were greatly expanded, giving Shi'ism a public expression and facilitating its development as a popular faith among artisans. Shi'a state-formation reached its heights in the 1840s, when the senior Shi'a *'ulama* assumed an authority that was increasingly charismatic as well as judicial: they acted as prayer-leaders; as supervisors of *auqaf* (religious endowments); as jurisconsults in the Awadh Court; as collectors of the Shi'a *khums* tax and distributors of these funds as public charity; and as founders of Lucknow's Madrasa-i-Shahi which was established in order to ensure the perpetuation of their expertise. Despite the religious roots of governance, Nawabi Lucknow was of particular note for its relatively cordial Shi'a-Sunni relations. Occasional sectarian disturbances could occur at Muharram, but for the most part, the Muslim *ashraf* and Nawabi government alike remained relatively free from Shi'a-Sunni quarrels. The secretaries and officials of Wajid 'Ali Shah's reign were predominantly

⁵³ In contrast to Akhbarism, which accepted only two sources of authority in *usul* and *fiqh*, the Qur'an and the Sunnah, Usuli Shi'ism added to these the roots of *ijma'* (consensus) and *'aql* (reasoning); both of these latter enterprises, of course, were the duties of the *mujtahids*. Hence Usuli Shi'ism expanded the ability of the *'ulama* to perform *ijtihad* (jurisprudence), and declared that the *mujtahids* had the ability to make independent legal decisions in the absence of the last Imam. On the differences between Akbari and Usuli Shi'ism and the Akhbari-Usuli struggle in the eighteenth century which saw the triumph of Usuli Shi'ism, see Moojan Momen, *An introduction to Shi'i Islam: the history and doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism* (New York, 1985), pp.220-5; Cole, *Sacred space and holy war*, pp.58-77.

Sunnis as were, remarkably, those charged with the supervision of *imambaras* (sites for the remembrance of the martyrdom of Husain, used during Muharram) and the management of Muharram, illustrating perfectly Lucknow's much lauded composite, Shi'a-intimated culture which was able to assimilate the city's numerous religious communities.⁵⁴

The peak of *mujtahid* power in the 1840s went into ebb and then near-destruction in 1857, and considerable decline was evident in Lucknawi Shi'ism in the decades after British occupation. Oldenburg's classic study of the 'remaking' of post-Mutiny Lucknow according to the tenets of security and the prevention of rebellion by its inhabitants has been shown to have wrenched the heart out of the traditional civic structures of Lucknow,⁵⁵ and this particularly applied to the members of the religion which had been carefully crafted as a suitable creed for governance. The largest *imambaras* were appropriated as military barracks, ceasing the public religious functions of these institutions.⁵⁶ The *auqaf* (endowments) of Lucknow were brought under colonial control, and secular law replaced the Awadh Court.⁵⁷ The Royal family was exiled to Bengal, while Mirza Muhammad 'Abbas, the chief *mufti* (jurist) of Awadh in the final years of the Nawab's reign, had his personal library destroyed in 1857 and was forced into self-imposed exile from Lucknow.⁵⁸ The closure of the Madrasa-i-Shahi after the fall of the Nawabs, meanwhile, left colonial Lucknow with no formal institution of Shi'a religious education.

Consequently the 1860s and 1870s, Lucknow's 'grey years' as one author has termed them,⁵⁹ were decades of decline there for Shi'ism. With the loss of much of the vigorous state patronage it had enjoyed in the early nineteenth century, its funding, visibility and popular support diminished correspondingly. The Lucknawi *mujtahid* Ahmad 'Ali in the

⁵⁴ Sharar, *Lucknow: last phase of an oriental culture*, pp.74-5.

⁵⁵ Oldenburg's work assesses the British administration of Lucknow as prioritising 'social control,' and thereby incurring unprecedented intervention in the social and religious customs of Lucknow's indigenous populations. Veena Talwar Oldenburg, *The making of colonial Lucknow, 1856-1877* (Princeton, 1984).

⁵⁶ Ibid, pp.35-7.

⁵⁷ Ibid, pp.191-8.

⁵⁸ Husain, *Matla'-i-Anwār*, p.77.

⁵⁹ Amaresh Misra, *Lucknow: fire of grace, the story of its renaissance, revolution and the aftermath* (New

1870s commented upon the ‘religious paucity’ of the Shi‘as.⁶⁰ Even the numbers of those registered as the Shi‘a sect was falling. For instance, 23% of Lucknow’s Muslims had been registered as ‘Shi‘a’ in the Census in 1881, equal to some 35,000 individuals. By the early twentieth century this had shrunk to 14%.⁶¹ Evidently many of the Sayyid families of Awadh, who had earlier converted to Shi‘ism for patronage in the Awadh Court or advantageous revenue-free *zamindari* grants, weakened demonstrations of their religious affiliation after the British occupation ceased the preferential treatment they had formerly enjoyed.

Lucknow’s Shi‘as were for the most part crowded into the city’s western wards such as Chowk, Daulatganj and Sadatganj. Among them were included some 1,700 *wasiqadars* (lit: ‘pension-holders’), the dispossessed pensioners and dependents of the Awadh court. This ‘impoverished and declining class of persons,’ crowding Lucknow’s old *muhallas*, had been systematised by the *mujtahids*’ distribution of alms from Lucknow’s endowments, and suffered greatly after annexation.⁶² Devoid of work, the pensions they received were often very small and increasingly so with the subdivision of this revenue over successive generations.⁶³ Lucknow’s *wasiqadars* were often castigated by British officials for their assumed backwardness, their inability to modernise and their attachment to a life of leisure. Lucknow’s *District Gazetteer* evoked these pensioners and dependents as a people ‘mostly in debt, and lead[ing] a wretched hand-to-mouth existence, which also seems to have a demoralising effect on their fellow citizens,’⁶⁴ while one Commissioner of Lucknow described them with disdain as ‘a feckless lot, who are degenerating.’⁶⁵ They were stereotyped as shunning educational and commercial

Delhi, 2004), pp.143-79.

⁶⁰ Habib Husain ibn Ahmad Husain, *Sawānih-i-'umrī-i-Ghulām Hasnēn Kintōrī* (Lahore, 1904), p.186.

⁶¹ H.R. Nevill, *District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume XXXVII: Lucknow* (Allahabad, 1904), p.68-9. Remarkably, two thirds of those recorded as Shi‘as were females. It is important to note that Lucknow’s population remained largely static during this period.

⁶² Lovett to Burn, 24 September 1912, and Lovett to Chief Secretary of United Provinces Government, 31 January 1913, Political Department File No.42 of 1913, UPSA.

⁶³ Lovett himself claimed ‘What makes the matter really urgent is not only the straitened means and illiterate condition of many of these wasikadars but the fact that, while they become no better able as years go on to earn a useful living, their allowances are yearly more and more subdivided.’ Lovett to Burn, 24 September 1912, *ibid*.

⁶⁴ Nevill, *District Gazetteer: Lucknow*, p.65.

⁶⁵ R. Burn to His Honour, 27 September 1912, Political File No. 42 of 1913, UPSA.

enterprise, and instead engaging in court cases and fratricidal feuds as they fought claims over inherited status and wealth.⁶⁶ Indeed, the *wasiqadars* received similar criticisms from Shi‘a progressives themselves:

‘Today their property is alienated, education is disappearing. even their character is suffering a change for the worse and they have slid down to the level of the low castes of India excepting that they still know that they had worthy ancestors... does it not touch this community that... the descendents of the Prophet from whose house were sent to the world the best lessons in principles of human intercourse,... a standard to the rest of the followers,... should have made itself a target for the addage which lays down that stretching hands for alms blackens one’s face in both the worlds?’⁶⁷

This description of such a community in the *muhalla* of Muftiganj further succinctly encapsulates their plight in colonial India:

‘This is the *muhalla* named after the distinctions of its people; this is the *muhalla* where you will find in abundance people of every trade and every rank... this *muhalla* had a special influence on the whole city, and its own affairs were very much connected with the rest... but alas! The people of this *muhalla*, which used to prosper more than all the other *muhallas*... are forgetting all those virtues and ideals which are considered worldly.’⁶⁸

In tandem with this Shi‘a decline and one of its contributing factors was the decline of Lucknow itself. Much of the economic development, industry, trade and immigration that touched other large cities of U.P. late in the nineteenth century largely bypassed Lucknow, which rested under a consistent cloud of stagnation.⁶⁹ Indeed, it is quite possible that the colonial-era deterioration of Lucknow has further entrenched the long-standing perception discussed above that Lucknow’s elites, and thus Shi‘ism itself, were

⁶⁶ For instance, ‘The unfortunate man is uneducated except in Urdu and was only taught at home... He has two children - one of three, one of one. He is twenty two. It really is pitiable.’ Hewett to Chief Secretary, 3 February 1912, *ibid.* *Wasiqadars* were said to operate mutually along lines of ‘intrigue and favouritism.’ Lovett to Burn, 24 September 1912, *ibid.* Many cases of struggles by such individuals to stake their claim upon the pensions of elder relatives reached the U.P. Political Department, should the case be taken beyond the decision of the *wasiqa* officer. See for instance Political Department File No. 313A of 1897; Political Dept. File No. 365A of 1897; Political Dept. File No. 263 of 1924, UPSA.

⁶⁷ *All India Shia conference: Calcutta sessions 1928, Presidential address His Highness Mir Ali Nawaz Khan Talpur, ruler of Khairpur State* (Khairpur, circa.1930), pp.14-5. This critique is aimed at the Sayyids of both Lucknow and Barha.

⁶⁸ Sayyid Muhammad Hadi Lucknawi, *Waz‘idārān-i-Luckna‘u* (Lucknow, 1908), pp.36-7.

⁶⁹ David A. Thomas, ‘Lucknow and Kanpur 1880-1920: stagnation and development under the Raj.’ in *South Asia* (December 1982), pp.69-72.

interminably bound to Lucknow's pre-colonial structures and thus immune to modern processes of reform.

The other town upon which this thesis will focus is Amroha, a large *qasba* in Moradabad district that has remained largely ignored in western scholarship.⁷⁰ In the late nineteenth century, Amroha was a town of some 35,000 inhabitants, a small majority of whom were Muslims.⁷¹ At the heart of *qasba* life were Amroha's Shi'a Sayyids, whose ancestors had established the town in the fourteenth century.⁷² An influential and ancestrally distinguished community numbering some four or five thousand in the nineteenth century, Sayyids were said to be more abundant in Amroha than in any U.P. town excluding Lucknow.⁷³ Sayyid families of both sects could be found although with Shi'as in a large majority, having enjoyed advantage from the Nawabs. Common to all Sayyid families, however, was the significance attached to their Sayyid genealogy, which was flaunted in order to distinguish themselves from the largely Sunni Shaikh and Pathan families settled in the town.⁷⁴

In many ways, Amroha was typical of the nineteenth century 'ideal *qasba* society' sometimes evoked in scholarship, with its ruling Sayyids an archetypal example of rural

⁷⁰ The only sustained analysis of Amroha in English-language scholarship is S.M. Azizuddin Husain, *Medieval towns, a case study of Amroha and Jalali* (New Delhi, 1995). Mahmud Ahmad Hashmi's *Tārīkh-i-Amrōha* (Delhi, 1930) is a detailed historical account of Amroha which has been used extensively in this thesis.

⁷¹ H.R. Nevill, *District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume XVI: Moradabad* (Allahabad, 1911), pp.176-7.

⁷² The Shi'as of Amroha were Naqvi Sayyids who traced their ancestry to Sharf-ud-din, otherwise known as Shah Wilayat, a descendent of the tenth Imam 'Ali Naqi. Originally from Wasit in Iraq, he founded and settled in the seat of Amroha early in the fourteenth century C.E.. After his death in 1381, the various *muhallas* of Amroha were gradually established by his descendents. Some of Amroha's Sayyid families had changed their sectarian allegiances on some or even numerous occasions for advantages in wealth or status under the rulers of the day. The best study of the Sayyids of Amroha to date is Jamal Ahmad Naqvi, *Tārīkh-i-sādāt-i-Amrōha* (Hyderabad, 1934), which describes the genealogical heritage of the most prominent families, while the introductory section gives a typically rosy account of Amroha as a seat of classical Islamic scholarship, high culture and fashion, and communal harmony.

⁷³ The Sunnis of Amroha to the Secretary of North Western Provinces and Oudh, 29 February 1896, GAD File No.106C/64 of 1896, UPSA; Anonymous on behalf of Sadat of Amroha, 4 August 1902, GAD File No. 255 of 1903, UPSA. In the words of the District Gazetteer, 'the number of Syeds is greater [in Moradabad district] than in any other district except Lucknow... their chief seat is Amroha, where they have been settled for many centuries.' Nevill, *District Gazetteer: Moradabad*, pp.78-9.

⁷⁴ Nevill, *District Gazetteer: Moradabad*, pp.176, 180; Naqvi, *Tārīkh-i-sādāt*, passim.

U.P.'s post-Mughal 'service gentries.'⁷⁵ Like many *sharif* elites, they had been settled on revenue-free grants of land upon which they maintained a tenacious hold and remained dependent into the nineteenth century. Similarly typical of *qasba*-based elites was the tradition of the service occupations; Amroha was a key post for recruitment into the administrations of both colonial government and the Nizam of Hyderabad. In addition religious learning was strong in Amroha, preciously guarded by its most influential residents and visible in the town's public structures. Despite its modest size, Amroha was dotted with Sunni and Shi'a mosques and almost fifty *imambaras*, and Muslim festivals such as 'urs (death anniversaries of saints) and especially the annual Muharram commemorations were elaborate and well attended.⁷⁶ The numerous *auqaf* upon which some of these institutions subsisted ensured a further source of the continuity of Sayyid culture and stature.⁷⁷

While there were few significant ancestral ties between the Shi'as of Lucknow and Amroha they largely shared a consciousness of Sayyid birth and of, albeit faded, noble status,⁷⁸ and engaged in religious and cultural exchange.⁷⁹ One factor shared by both communities, however, was the experience of decline, fostered by growing economic and educational poverty. The late nineteenth century, with the coming of urbanisation, commercial development and administrative transformation, was a challenging era generally for the mid-level landowners and old service communities at the heart of the *qasba*,⁸⁰ but Amroha's Sayyids suffered especially. They were a 'generally impoverished body,' riddled with debt; their ancestral wealth had decreased over successive generations as a result of the constant subdivision of their estates and their failure to modernise land

⁷⁵ C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, townsmen and bazaars: north Indian society in the age of British expansion, 1770-1870* (New Delhi, 1983), pp.189-93.

⁷⁶ Nevill, *District Gazetteer: Moradabad*, pp.184-5.

⁷⁷ *Ahsan-al-Akhbar* (Amroha), 29 December 1881, United Provinces Native Newspaper Reports (UPNNR), OIOC.

⁷⁸ Both Lucknow's *wasiqadars* and Amroha's landholding Sayyids were constituencies of the so-called 'noble poor' who were thought to be in particular need of government attention, and both these communities were included in *darbars* (audiences) by the British on account of their supposedly enviable social standing. Political Department File No. 164A of 1896, UPSA; Humble memorial of the undersigned Sayeds of Amroha to La Touche, 7 May 1902, GAD File No. 255 of 1903, UPSA.

⁷⁹ During the Nawabi period prominent families of Amroha would send certain chosen members to Lucknow for study, and their subsequent return as an 'alim or *wa'iz* enhanced the prestige of that family. Cole, *Roots of north Indian Shi'ism in Iran and Iraq*, pp.137-8.

management. Relying on inherited wealth, the community was perceived as educationally backward and slow to adapt to modern economy and society.⁸¹

Comparably with the established elites of Lucknow, competition over hereditary land and posts in municipal government and wrangles between tenants and *mu'afidars* led to constant quarrelling among Amroha's elites in which the individuals of particular families and *muhallas*, alone or in league with comparable local families, attempted to protect their own status and influence against other factions. As described by one observer, 'party intrigue is still the chief occupation of even the leading residents, and when the Musulman community as a whole is not in league against the Hindus, the Shi'a and Sunni sects are engaged in quarrelling among themselves.'⁸² These tense socio-economic conditions likely contributed to Amroha's unique affliction of communal conflict, which occurred with unfailing regularity between Amroha's Shi'a, Sunni and Hindu residents, often sparked during religious festivals or by the publication of controversial texts. It was said that 'probably no other town in the United Provinces has given more trouble to the administration in proportion to its size than Amroha.'⁸³ Tensions between Shi'as and Sunnis had existed here since the Rebellion, and were linked to reforms in the control of the wider Moradabad district.⁸⁴ These conflicts worsened dramatically from the 1890s, and the transformation of Amroha into one of north India's central arenas of Muslim sectarian conflict alongside Lucknow is discussed in the coming chapters. The case of Amroha presents an important antidote to the traditional description of the U.P. *qasba* as a pocket of communal harmony, bound by an elite, cross-communal, Urdu-based culture and a syncretic local cultural life exemplified by mutual participation in religious festivals and the veneration of local saints, immune to

⁸⁰ Bayly, *Rulers, townsmen and bazaars*, pp.355-8.

⁸¹ Nevill, *District Gazetteer: Moradabad*, pp.176-8.

⁸² Ibid, p.176.

⁸³ Ibid. This contrasts strongly with Mushirul Hasan's description of Amroha as 'a quiet town... with a history of Hindu-Muslim amity.' Mushirul Hasan *Legacy of a divided nation: India's Muslims since independence* (London, 1997), p.146.

⁸⁴ Once the British had taken control of the district after the 1857 Rebellion, it was put in the care of Wilayat Husain Khan, a Shi'a and a former deputy collector of Moradabad who had been dismissed for his involvement in Shi'a-Sunni riots. He was one of the prime collaborators with the British in reoccupying the district and identifying former rebels in a district where large numbers of Muslims had supported the rebellion. Nevill, *District Gazetteer: Moradabad*, pp.161-9.

the communal conflagrations witnessed in urban arenas.⁸⁵

Focusing closely upon such particular towns allows this thesis to discuss the immediate experiences of religious and political change, asking how the religious identity of Shi'a individuals interacted with other affiliations: one's family, *qasba* and, indeed, to one's national, 'Muslim' and international Shi'a communities. Emphasising the crucial distinctions between dialogues at different levels, this thesis alternates between global, national, provincial and local circles of Shi'a-Sunni and Shi'a-Shi'a dialogue, emphasising at all points the exchanges between these arenas. Did they see themselves as Shi'as only in the *qasba* context, or as Shi'a Indians, or as indelibly bound to their co-religionists across the Islamic world? It means, moreover, that as well as a study of the process of community formation and organisational activity among Indian Shi'as, this thesis will also incidentally present a history of the individual towns at its heart. In particular, it offers something of a reassessment of the history of colonial Lucknow itself, and the transformation of a city perpetually associated with its pre-colonial past, its traditionalism and its cosmopolitanism.

⁸⁵ Mushirul Hasan, *From pluralism to separatism: qasbas in colonial Awadh* (Delhi, 2004), passim; Bayly, *Rulers, townsmen and bazaars*, pp.192-3.

CHAPTER 1

SHI'A TANZIMAT: THE BEGINNINGS OF SHI'A ORGANISATION IN COLONIAL LUCKNOW

Introduction: colonial Lucknow and the modernist generation of 'ulama

In the thirty-year period commencing at the close of the 1880s, and particularly in the first two decades of the twentieth century, a large number of organisations, associations and societies emerged among the Shi'as of Lucknow. While they varied in their agenda, leadership and longevity, all were similarly founded as strictly and exclusively Shi'a organisations, and all advocated the religious, cultural or social revitalisation of India's Shi'as. Moreover, all were characterised by a language of *tanzim* (meaning 'organisation' or 'regulation').¹ *Tanzim* became the driving force of Shi'a reformist activity in Lucknow, and the fresh efforts among Shi'as towards the organisation and structuring of social and religious life, beginning in the final ten or twelve years of the nineteenth century, will be the subject of this chapter.

It has been widely argued that from the mid-nineteenth century, attempts at organisation and systematisation were visible in all the major religious traditions of north India.² Substantial investigations, however, have not been attempted specifically concerning

¹ *Tanzim* has often been interpreted in the specific context of the 1920s following the crumbling of the Khilafat campaigns. For instance, Nandini Gooptu, *The politics of the urban poor in early twentieth century north India* (Cambridge, 2001), pp.287-92; Gail Minault, *The Khilafat movement: religious symbolism and political mobilization in India* (New York, 1982), pp.193-4. However, this underestimates the extent to which these notions of Muslim resurgence drew from a language which had already been developed and used by Muslim religious movements in the later nineteenth century. Vernacular religious texts of Islamic reform display a strikingly frequent application of such language of ordering and regulation. Moreover, the assessment of these terms with reference to specific Sunni campaigns underestimates the extent to which this language of renewal was evoked by numerous Muslim revitalising campaigns, including those of Shi'as.

² For instance, Kenneth Jones, *Socio-religious reform movements in British India* (Cambridge, 1989); Vasudha Dalmia, *The nationalisation of Hindu traditions: Bharatendu Harischandra and nineteenth-century Banaras* (New Delhi, 1996); Harjot Oberoi, *The construction of religious boundaries: culture, identity and diversity in the Sikh tradition* (Delhi, 1994); Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Princeton, 1982).

Shi'as. As was suggested above, the centrality of Iraq in religious life and colonial Lucknow's attachment to its pre-colonial past have been perceived as barriers to the modern manifestations of religious reform seen among other communities. The most significant attempt at community formation in Lucknow after 1857, by contrast, was the emergence of a cross-communal *taluqdari* (landholding) class, who with active British support were established as the 'natural rulers' and cultural custodians of the city.³ Alongside this, the appearance of a number of civic social and literary associations such as the Jalsa-i-Tehzib and Rifah-i-'Am among a group of western-educated philanthropists and professionals who came to constitute an emerging middle-class, could also be interpreted as signifying that associational life in Lucknow was class-based rather than religious or communal.⁴

While further chapters of this thesis will examine wider Shi'a centres in the United Provinces, this chapter will focus predominantly upon Lucknow since, as is argued in this chapter, it was here that the inspirations for wider Shi'a organisation during this period originated. While this new and urgent sense of sectarian religious activity was declared for the Shi'as of all India, it is in fact traceable to a small and interconnected circle of 'ulama in Lucknow. Previous scholarship on developments in Indian Shi'ism has focused on particular 'generations' of 'ulama blessed with great authority and activity. The most significant of these was the 'first generation' of 'ulama emerging in the late eighteenth century. With Dildar 'Ali Nasirabadi as the most prominent figure, this generation pioneered the dominance of Usuli over Akhbari Shi'ism, instituted the practice of communal Friday prayers, and pioneered Usuli Shi'ism as a 'formal religious establishment' close to the judicial administration of the State.⁵ A 'second generation' of 'ulama, emerging in the 1820s, extended the sources of their patronage and their public

³ Peter. D. Reeves, *Landlords and governments in Uttar Pradesh: a study of their relations until zamindari abolition* (Bombay, 1991); Thomas Metcalf, *Land, landlords and the British Raj: northern India in the nineteenth century* (Berkeley, 1999).

⁴ Sanjay Joshi, *Fractured modernity: making of a middle class in colonial India* (New Delhi, 2001).

⁵ Juan R.I. Cole, *Roots of north Indian Shi'ism in Iran and Iraq: religion and state in Awadh, 1722-1859* (California, 1988), pp.123-44.

influence, and came to develop their authority as charismatic as well as rational-judicial.⁶ Later, following thirty years of decline for Indian Shi'ism after 1857, there emerged what can be regarded here the first generation of modernist Shi'a *'ulama*. They were modernist in that, whether unitedly or merely simultaneously, they established a number of new public religious organisations and *madrasas* which would come to define national religious life and leadership over subsequent decades.

A brief biographical account of the four most prominent of this generation of *'ulama* can locate the social and intellectual background of this revival. Nasir Husain ('Sadr-ul-Mohaqqiqen'), was the son of the great Lucknawi *mujtahid* Hamid Husain, who received his *ijazat* (certification as a *mujtahid*) at the age of sixteen, and inherited the duties and work of his father following the latter's death in 1888. He became widely considered as the highest *mujtahid* of twentieth-century India and was sometimes pronounced the subcontinent's only *Marja'-ul-taqlid*.⁷ Najm ul-Hasan ('Najm-ul-Millat'), originally educated in Sambhal in his native district of Moradabad, received his *ijazat* from his father-in-law Mirza Muhammad 'Abbas, one of the greatest jurists of Lucknow, the city in which he settled.⁸ Aqa Hasan, ('Qutva't-ul-'Ulama') was a descendant of Dildar 'Ali Nasirabadi. He received his *ijazat* under a number of notable Persian *mujtahids* in Iraq around 1893-95, and returned as one of the most renowned and active *mujtahids* of Lucknow.⁹ Muhammad Baqir Rizvi ('Baqir-ul-'Ulum') was educated in Iraq for ten years from circa 1882-3, achieving *ijazat*.¹⁰ For reasons discussed in later chapters, these four individuals represented in certain ways the final generation of great Indian *mujtahids*, the authority of whom was not accomplished by subsequent generations. These *'ulama*, moreover, shared an ancestral and socio-cultural milieu. They shared commonalities in their age (all four were born in the 1860s, during a period of

⁶ Ibid, pp.173-93. Cole's is not the only study of modern Islamic society to speak of particular 'generations' of reformists in this way. C.f. Albert Hourani, *Arabic thought in the liberal age, 1798-1939* (London, 1962), pp.67-103.

⁷ Sayyid Murtaza Husain, *Matla'-i-Anwār: tazkira-i-Shi'a afāzil-va-'ulamā, kabār-i-bar-i-saghīr-i-Pāk-va-Hind* (Karachi, 1981), pp.666-7. On the institution of the *Marja'-ul-taqlid*, see Linda S. Walbridge ed., *The most learned of the Shi'a: the institution of the Marja' Taqlid* (New York, 2001).

⁸ Husain, *Matla'-i-Anwār*, pp.678-9.

⁹ Ibid, p.45.

¹⁰ Sayyid Muhammad Naqi Rizvi, *Farishtgān jahān: tazkira-i-khānwāda-i-Sayīd Muḥamad Bāqir Rizvī Kashmīrī Bāqir-ul-'Ulūm* (Lucknow, 2005), pp.10-25.

acute decline for Indian Shi‘ism), the ties of ancestry, marriage and tuition which often connected clerical families, as well as their attachment to Lucknow as their ancestral or adopted city. All ascended to public prominence as accomplished *mujtahids* in Lucknow in the 1890s, and all became active in the formation and administration of Lucknow’s new religious institutions and, a little later, of secular organisations.

The adjustment of the ‘*ulama* to the colonial world has been a substance of much debate, but on India especially much has focused on those aspects of threat brought by these socio-cultural changes, and the receding influence of traditional religious authorities. Barbara Metcalf has described how the loss of Muslim state power precipitated an ‘inward-looking strategy,’ an introspective turn among Muslim religious reformists. Seeing the loss of the public space for Islam, they relinquished questions of state organisation and instead initiated an attempt at internal correction of faith and practice, the articulation of what it meant to be rightly and properly Muslim.¹¹ There were also the twin-processes of on the one hand, the growth of a conviction of the instrumentality of the individual as a result of the encounter with Western knowledge and liberalism, and on the other, the impact of print, which newly offered the public access to religious texts and ideas.¹² Both these processes could be understood to have empowered Muslim individuals to assume new responsibility for their own religious life, bypassing the traditional guiding roles of the ‘*ulama*. The empowerment of individuals goes part of the way to explaining a further challenge to the ‘*ulama*: the conquest of religious life by powerful lay Islamist movements in modern South Asia.¹³ To paraphrase Clifford Geertz, traditional religious leaders were forced by modernisation to justify or even earn their authority, rather than suppose its inviolability.¹⁴

¹¹ Metcalf, *Islamic revival in British India*, pp.11-14.

¹² Francis Robinson, ‘Islam and the impact of print in South Asia,’ in Francis Robinson ed., *Islam and Muslim history in South Asia* (New Delhi, 2000), pp.66-104; Francis Robinson, ‘Religious change and the Self in Muslim South Asia since 1800,’ in *ibid*, pp.105-21.

¹³ Mumtaz Ahmad, ‘Islamic fundamentalism in South Asia: the Jamaat-i-Islami and the Tablighi Jamaat of South Asia,’ in Martin Marty and Scott Appleby eds., *Fundamentalisms observed, Volume 1* (Chicago, 1991), pp.457-530; Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The ‘ulama in contemporary Islam: custodians of change* (Princeton, 2002).

¹⁴ Clifford Geertz, ‘“Internal conversion” in contemporary Bali.’ in Clifford Geertz ed., *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays* (New York, 1973), p.186. For a further exploration of such ideas, see Zaman, *The ‘ulama in contemporary Islam*, *passim*.

Assessing the responses of the Shi'a 'ulama to the rapid social, religious and cultural transformations of colonial Lucknow, this chapter argues that, rather than experiencing a diminution of their authority, this circle of *mujtahids* in Lucknow in fact had their stature enhanced and extended through their embrace of the new ideas and media emerging in Lucknow's public sphere. Acting through a series of emerging Shi'a organisations and societies, this modernist generation of Shi'a 'ulama were publicly active figures in a way previously unseen, allowing them to regain some of the influence and stature held by their ancestors in the Nawabi period. Their various activities, it was said, ushered in a period of 'unity and agreement' (*ittehad-va-ittefaq*) among them, during which each 'alim (religious scholar) contributed in his respective role to a coordinated project of revitalisation:

'The unity of action among 'ulama at this time was such that in every department of religious duty, whether in *madradas* or mosques, *imambaras* or mourning rites, every 'alim in whatever way showed complete commitment to the ideal, and set an example.'¹⁵

The question of whether this apparent unanimity and cooperation was substantial or merely cosmetic is discussed more substantially in later chapters. Before this, however, this chapter will outline the various activities of Shi'a 'ulama from the late nineteenth century, and the character of this new religious and secular renewal. While various manifestations of *tanzim* were visible in Shi'a religious life in colonial India, this section will focus on Lucknow and will examine some of the most prominent examples. The chapter examines the character of these manifestations of organisation and the sources from which they drew their inspiration, allowing an assessment of the transformation of Shi'a life and culture in Lucknow, and more widely of Indian Shi'ism itself.

¹⁵ Rizvi, *Farishtgān jahān*, p.15.

Institutionalising Shi'ism: the foundation of Shi'a madrasas

The late nineteenth century witnessed the foundation of numerous *madrasas* across U.P.. The towns of Deoband, Saharanpur, Aligarh and Bareilly were all graced with a *dar-ul-'ulum* during this period. Less well-recognised is the fact that a striking number of Shi'a *madrasas* were also founded, especially in Lucknow, from 1889 onwards. The formation of *madrasas* was one aspect of a broader religious renewal discussed further in the following chapter, but moreover it was one of the first and most important examples of a process of establishment of Shi'a organisations and institutions. Later attempts at organisation among Indian Shi'as all drew from the language of *tanzim* inaugurated by the proponents of these seminaries.

As was shown in the introduction, the closure in 1856 of the Madrasa-i-Shahi robbed Lucknow of its only prescribed institution of formalised religious learning for Shi'as. With the exception of Madrasa-i-'Aliya in Rampur, there seem to have been few or no significant formal establishments of religious education for Shi'as in the U.P. region during the 1870s. While in previous generations many of Lucknow's *'ulama* had gained their *ijazat* from the reputed scholars of their own *vatan* (homeland), the generation emerging after 1857 were thus increasingly forced abroad. With a few notable exceptions, most of those who were to emerge as senior *'ulama* by the end of the nineteenth century had received their *ijazat* in Iraq rather than in India.¹⁶ Those *'ulama* fewer in number who did remain in India for their guidance commonly received instruction from their parents or close acquaintances, tailored towards the inheritance of their posts.¹⁷ In such cases, Shi'a religious education largely took place on a level of informal instruction and personal tuition. Based upon personal networks and the weight of the familial name, it tended therefore to perpetuate the advantages of kinship, rather than expanding or formalising educational activities. It seems natural, therefore, that attempts at religious systematisation and organisation should focus on the provision for

¹⁶ A few prominent examples include Aqa Hasan, Muhammad Baqir Rizvi, Sayyid Sibte Husain and Sayyid Ahmad Hindi. Exceptions include Nasir Husain, Najm ul-Hasan and 'Abid Husain.

¹⁷ As was shown above, this was certainly the case for Nasir Husain and Najm ul-Hasan, who received their *ijazat* from their father and father-in-law respectively. Each of these individuals continued to write under the *takhlus* of their exalted instructors.

new and specifically Shi'a religious education. Emerging Shi'a seminaries were modern in that they attempted to reform the transmission of religious knowledge according to wider patterns of religious organisation and institutionalisation in the late-nineteenth century.

The first attempt at the formation of a *madrasa* in colonial Lucknow was the short-lived Madrasa Imaniya, established by the *mujtahid* Abul Hasan, in 1872-3.¹⁸ Ghulam Hasnain Kintoori, a respected scholar of nineteenth-century Awadh, was charged by Abul Hasan with the post of fundraiser for the *madrasa* and was appointed as its *mutawalli* (trustee).¹⁹ He declared himself ashamed of the *madrasa*'s failure, identifying three reasons.²⁰ First of these was public ignorance of the name of Abul Hasan. Second was the difficulty of securing pledges and of realising promised donations. A third reason for the ultimate failure of the project, according to Ghulam Hasnain, was an atmosphere of self-interest among Indian Shi'as which precluded sectarian cooperation.²¹ In districts of U.P. such as Muzaffarnagar and Meerut, the *madrasa*'s fundraiser was warned by local Shi'a *ra'is* that he would receive not even one *paisa* in donations. Moreover, in such *qasbas* there seemed little enthusiasm to finance the Shi'as of so distant a place as Lucknow. Why, asked one dignitary of Meerut, should the money not be better spent on religious education in our own town?²²

Essentially, the *madrasa* project became bogged down amidst current intrigue and harsh disagreements among the Shi'a *'ulama*, which came to impede the fundraising effort for the *madrasa*.²³ While on the one hand vocal attempts were launched to sully the

¹⁸ A detailed account of the failed attempt to found this *madrasa* is available in a biography of Ghulam Hasnain Kintoori., Habib Husain ibn Ahmad Husain, *Sawānih-i-'umrī -i-Ghulām Hasnēn Kintōrī* (Lahore, 1904), pp.176-7.

¹⁹ One of the most esteemed Shi'a scholars of nineteenth century India, Ghulam Hasnain Kintoori was a relative of Hamid Husain. Husain, *Matla'-i-Anwār*, pp.419-20.

²⁰ Husain, *Sawānih-i-'umrī*, pp.187-8.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid, p.178-9.

²³ A debate emerged at around this time between the *'ulama* of Lucknow and certain *'ulama* of Matia Burj, the seat of the exiled Nawab in Bengal, as to whether the current descendents of the Awadh Royal Family maintained the rightful status of princes. While the *'ulama* of Lucknow issued *istiftah* (legal declarations) questioning their royal status, a number of individuals under Muhammad 'Ali Qa'in-uddin, the *mufti* of Calcutta, declared as incorrect the decisions emanating from Lucknow. Ibid, p.195.

reputation of the Lucknow *‘ulama* who were heading the project, at the same time the *muqallids* of Lucknow’s Abul Hasan in Bengal chose to demonstrate their loyalty by conducting the fundraising themselves, bypassing individuals such as Ghulam Hasnain who had been charged with the task. In such a charged atmosphere, it seems that cooperation around the proposed *madrasa* became impossible. Certainly, these open frictions dissuaded a number of potential donors. Raja Baqir ‘Ali Khan of Pinjrawal, hearing these slurs against the Madrasa Imaniya’s key proponents, abandoned his pledge of assistance with the claim that the Shi‘as could not be rightly guided in the absence of the *Imam Mas‘um* (‘sinless Imam,’ referring to the awaited Mehdi); seemingly a veiled statement that nobody was currently capable of organising the Shi‘as.²⁴ While a building was obtained for the *madrasa* and a round of examinations even held, within months of its establishment the *madrasa* was closed, the project abandoned, and the monies returned to their donors, apparently leaving its founder so aggrieved that he departed India for Iraq.²⁵

Later attempts at the formation of a *madrasa* achieved greater success. It was again Abul Hasan who founded Madrasa Nazimiya in 1889, this time in collaboration with the other foremost *mujtahid* of the period, Mirza Muhammad ‘Abbas. Najm ul-Hasan, having recently gained his *ijazat*, was appointed as its first director on account of his well-known ‘scholarly and organisational talents,’ and it was under him that the *madrasa* gained a building in the heart of old Lucknow.²⁶ In 1894, Abul Hasan founded a second *madrasa* in Lucknow known as Sultan ul-Madaris, funded by the great Husainabad *waqf*, to which he appointed Najm ul-Hasan, and thereafter his son Muhammad Baqir Rizvi, as principal. The school grew quickly, and by the early twentieth century could hold some two hundred students at one time.²⁷ Like Madrasa Nazimiya, it produced many important preachers, writers, *qazis* (judges), *hafiz* (those able to recite the Qur’an) and poets, its pupils spreading as far as Kashmir and Africa.²⁸

²⁴ Ibid, p.198.

²⁵ Husain, *Matla‘-i-Anwār*, p.49.

²⁶ Ibid, pp.49, 676.

²⁷ All India Shi‘a Conference, *Rō‘īdād-i-ijlās-i- hashtim-i-Āl Indiā Shī‘a Kānferans. munaqīda 18-20 October 1914* (Lucknow, 1915), p.98.

²⁸ Husain, *Matla‘-i-Anwār*, p.519.

These two *madrasas* together would have a path-breaking effect upon Shi'a religious life in Lucknow and in India more widely. The distinguishing feature of these *madrasas* was their effort towards the ordering and regulation of clerical authority, as a solution to the long-standing problems of the dispensation of religious authority within Indian Shi'ism. The first problem was the declining number of sanctioned *mujtahids* in India in the aftermath of 1857, and the implications of this shortage of teachers qualified to confer *ijazat* upon aspiring successors for the long-term prospects of the Shi'a clergy of north India. Madrasa Nazimiya's solution to the erosion of religious authority in India was, for the first time, the establishment of institutional bonds with the *mujtahids* of Iraq. The managers of the *madrasa* acknowledged the status of southern Iraq as 'the centre of *fiqh-va-usul* ('law and learning')' and of the contemporary Shi'a world more particularly, holding the 'principle books of the original educational *nisab* (syllabus).' ²⁹ Consequently, they initiated contact with Aqa Sayyid Kazim Tabataba'i of Najaf, the current representative of a dynasty considered among the Shi'a world's foremost in the discipline of *fiqh* (jurisprudence). An agreement was made with Tabataba'i that he would be established as Madrasa Nazimiya's examiner in *fiqh*. Exam papers were produced in Iraq under Tabataba'i's supervision, sent to Lucknow, and the answers of *talibs* returned to Najaf for examination under his authority. ³⁰

Additionally, the dispensation of standardised, recognised endorsements was an effort to resolve the further problem of the imprecision of the *ijazat* of many 'ulama in India. In the late nineteenth century, the former Awadh abounded with 'ulama who carried assumed *ijazat* or similar qualifications to the status of *mujtahid*; however, the authority of the individual 'alim was no longer clearly defined or regulated. In some cases, certain 'ulama whose authority had been conferred by senior *mujtahids* were little recognised as figures of conviction. ³¹ In others, certain individuals held great influence among local

²⁹ Imamiya Mission, *Khatib-i-āl-i-Muhamad* (Lucknow, 1933-34), p.19. As was outlined in the introduction, Najaf was the undisputed centre of Shi'a scholarship and jurisprudence during this period.

³⁰ Ibid. Kazim Tabataba'i would later become the highest *mujtahid* of Karbala.

³¹ One example of such an individual is Sayyid Ahmad Hindi. The district authorities of Lucknow, asked to affirm his status as a recognised *mujtahid* to satisfy the conditions of his appointment as the *mutawalli* of an important *waqf*, found him to possess *ijazat* granted from both Najaf and Karbala, but to have little

populations despite their lack of formal qualifications.³² Moreover, some individuals received their qualifications from *'ulama* whose own authority was doubted, and some were accused of forging or exaggerating the qualifications with which they had been assigned.³³ The qualifications offered in Madrasa Nazimiya and Sultan ul-Madaris, known respectively as *Mumtaz-ul-Afazil* and *Sadr-ul-Afazil*, resulted from some fifteen years of study encompassing a broad curriculum of *hadis* ('Traditions'), *usul* and *fiqh*. As such, the intention of the qualifications newly formulated within these *madrasas* was that they would be recognised and understood regardless of the distinctions of influence, wealth and ancestral background of its holder.

Following a period of tangible decline for the faith, these *madrasas* thereby together furnished north India with a visible and abundant corps of *'ulama*. Their achievements to this end were visible in the subsequent generation, by which time many visible and prominent *'ulama*, *wa'izen* (preachers) and *zakirs* (narrators of the sufferings of Husain during Muharram) were drawn from among the first generation of students educated in Madrasa Nazimiya and Sultan ul-Madaris.³⁴ Some of the graduates of these schools, among them Sibte Hasan and Muhammad Haroon, gained the illustrious distinction of *imama* (lit: 'turban').³⁵ While still carrying less authority than the *ijazat* attainable under the *mujtahids* of contemporary Najaf and Karbala, the most esteemed pupils of these schools, designated as *mujtahid-ul-'asr-ul-zaman*, were to all intents and purposes popularly considered as *mujtahids* in India.³⁶

popular recognition as a *mujtahid* and very few *muqallids* (followers). He himself blamed this on his frequent absenteeism from Lucknow. To Chief Secretary of United Provinces Government, 22 May 1912, Political Department File No. 84 of 1912, Uttar Pradesh State Archives, Lucknow (UPSA).

³² One example is Maqbool Ahmad, who is discussed in some detail in Chapter 2.

³³ For example, see the claim of one Maulana of Lucknow: 'in Lucknow among the most famous Mujtahids there is a large number of those who do not possess certificate of Mujtahidship and this can be verified.' Allamah Sayyid Ahmed Hindi to Burn, 19 September 1912, Political Department File No. 84 of 1912, UPSA.

³⁴ Among them are included Sibte Hasan, Firman 'Ali, Muhammad Da'ud, Muhammad Haroon Zingapuri and Sayyid Shabbir Husain. All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-hashtim*, 1914, p.98. The first generation of *ulama* created by these *madrasas* differed from their predecessors in important ways, and are discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

³⁵ Imamiya Mission, *Khatīb-i-āl-i-Muhamad*, pp.17-20.

³⁶ This title of 'Mujtahid of the Age' dated from the Safavid period and was often taken to denote a *Marja'*, although it entailed neither systematic doctrinal authority nor formal leadership over the administration of religious institutions. Meir Litvak, *Shi'i scholars of nineteenth-century Iraq: the 'ulama of Najaf and Karbala'* (Cambridge, 1998), p.6.

While Shi'a seminaries had existed in nineteenth century India before these, Lucknow's freshly-founded schools were soon to exceed these in reputation and importance. Part of the explanation for this was the schools' ability to recruit senior *mujtahids* as its *ustaden* (teachers): not least Najm ul-Hasan, who had quickly ascended to his high status and coached a number of pupils in Madrasa Nazimiya, and Muhammad Baqir Rizvi, who became principal of Sultan ul-Madaris. Additionally, given the symbolic significance of Lucknow for Shi'as, these schools were able to attract their pupils from outside of the civic community, and both these schools gained a reputation for their inclusion of Shi'as from across the nation at large.³⁷ Furthermore the *madrasas* themselves, through the congregation of Shi'a students, the close bonds with their tutors, and apparently even the *mehel* (building) of the colleges, fostered a bond of community among their membership.³⁸ Akin to Sunni schools such as Deoband, the affiliates of these schools were connected through mutual participation in the institutional structures of the *madrasas*, remote from the kinship-based teaching systems predominant among Lucknow's *maulavis* in previous decades.³⁹ The fraternal bonds cultivated in these institutions were further enhanced by the fact that the schools maintained the active support of their former students. Certainly in the case of Madrasa Nazimiya, it was the rule rather than the exception that successful graduates would return periodically to teach in their former institution.⁴⁰

These two *madrasas* in Lucknow were merely the starting point, rather than the final result, in a process of the construction of new Shi'a *madrasas* that continued into the twentieth century. Aqa Hasan later established the Madrasa-i-Din-i-Jafariya, a seminary which taught English alongside Arabic and Islamic studies.⁴¹ However, those among the first generation to gain *fazil* (certificates) in Lucknow's schools had to look to Mesopotamia for provision for further religious education, and hence it was not long after

³⁷ Husain, *Matla'-i-Anwār*, p.679.

³⁸ Imamiya Mission, *Khatīb-i-āl-i-Muhamad*, p.20.

³⁹ For similar impressions of Deoband, see Metcalf, *Islamic revival in British India*, p.106: 'such bonds, formed on the basis of common experience rather than on kin and locality, prepared the students for mutual cooperation and participation.'

⁴⁰ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'īdād-i-ijlās-i- hashtim*, 1914, p.98.

⁴¹ Mustafa Husain Asif Ja'isi ed., *Khāndān-i-ijtihād nambar, shumāra che* (Lucknow, 2005), p.87.

the establishment of these schools that appeals were made for a *madrasa* of higher religious education in India to serve these graduates. It was to this end that the Madrasa't ul-Wa'izen was established at the close of 1919, quickly becoming India's foremost Shi'a seminary; such is its importance that it is discussed separately in the subsequent chapter.

It is worth briefly digressing from the confines of Lucknow to demonstrate that this spate of the foundation of Shi'a religious schools was impressed upon many towns and cities across north India. The Madrasa Hifz ul-Qur'an, a Shi'a-run school which accepted Shi'a and Sunni students alike, opened in Delhi in 1890.⁴² Madrasa Mansabia of Meerut and Madrasa Suleimaniya of Patna also matured in the late nineteenth century, with the 'alim Sibte Husain acting as their principal.⁴³ The town of Shikarpur in district Bulandshehr was granted the Ehsan ul-Madaris in 1906, a school founded to train *hafiz*: its most famous student was Kifayat Husain, who would mature into one of the greatest 'ulama of the subcontinent.⁴⁴ Early in the twentieth century the famed Shi'a orator Maqbool Ahmed, whose activities are discussed in detail below, founded the Madrasa't ul-Qur'an, while after his death in 1921, the Maqbool-i-Madaris was founded in his memory in Agra.⁴⁵

One town particularly illustrative of this reformation of Shi'a religious education was Amroha. As with Lucknow, the substantial Shi'a population of the town lacked a seminary in the late nineteenth century, only to be suddenly confronted with a plethora of such opportunities. The first came with Sayyid-ul-Madaris, which began as an Urdu *maktab* (elementary school) and matured into an Arabic *madrasa* from 1894. The school's funds were drawn from personal contributions, government and municipal grants and the wealth of the Nawab of Rampur. The *madrasa*, it was said, contained ten teachers and some 120 students; the final degree of the *madrasa* was known as *Sayyid-ul-Afazil*, and the school produced *maulavis* and 'ulama who became widely present across

⁴² Agha Haider 'Ali Beg, *Imāmyā Ejūkeshanal Kāngrēs kā ijlās-i-awal ma'rūf jalsa-i-gulshān-i-ta'līm-i-Imāmyā* (Fategarh, 1892), passim.

⁴³ Husain, *Matla'-i-Anwār*, p.285.

⁴⁴ Ibid, pp. 457-8.

⁴⁵ Husain, *Matla'-i-Anwār*, p.651.

India.⁴⁶ No less significant was Imam-ul-Madaris, founded by Najm ul-Hasan on his return to his native district in 1901; the school recruited a series of prominent *'ulama* as teachers and included English into its curriculum on government request.⁴⁷ Nor-ul-Madaris followed in 1904. Financed through a *waqf* (endowment) founded by several Sayyids of the town, the Arabic and Persian curriculum was steered by the famed *'alim* of Amroha, Sayyid Murtaza Husain, a specialist in Arabic *mantiq* (logic) and grammar.⁴⁸ Around 1914 Maulana Sibte Nabi, a graduate of the latter, founded the Bab-ul-'ilm in the neighbouring Sayyid settlement of Noganwan from where he originated.⁴⁹ This latter instance shows how Amroha, like Lucknow, could attract aspiring *'ulama* from outside the town who would then carry their learning back to their native townships.

There is thus little doubt that, in and beyond Lucknow, the formation of *madrasas* fundamentally transformed Shi'a religious life in north India. Firstly, the formalised teaching systems of these *madrasas* replaced the personal ties along which religious knowledge had long been transferred, substituting the significance of kinship networks with a greater emphasis upon participation in a fabricated network based upon a shared experience of formal training.⁵⁰ Furthermore, these *madrasas* provided new public presence for Shi'ism. Schools like Sultan ul-Madaris, initially convened in an *imambara*, were increasingly endowed with their own, purposely-constructed classrooms, libraries and hostels, reinforcing the visibility of the Shi'a religion in Lucknow's public spaces.⁵¹ In cities such as Lucknow, the *madrasas* began the reverse of a lengthy period of decline for Shi'ism, based no longer upon state-patronage of religion but upon vigorous voluntary patronage of modern Shi'a institutions.

⁴⁶ Mahmud Ahmad Hashmi, *Tārīkh-i-Amrōha* (Delhi, 1930), pp.144-5; H.R. Nevill, *District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume XVI: Moradabad* (Allahabad, 1911), p.185; *General Report upon Public Instruction in the North West Provinces and Awadh, 1912* p.99-100, V/24/916, OIOC.

⁴⁷ Hashmi, *Tārīkh-i-Amrōha* (Delhi, 1930), p.146; Jamal Ahmad Naqvi, *Tārīkh-i-sādāt-i-Amrōha* (Hyderabad, 1934), p.44.

⁴⁸ Hashmi, *Tārīkh-i-Amrōha*, p.145; Husain, *Matla'-i-Anwār*, p.643.

⁴⁹ Husain, *Matla'-i-Anwār*, pp.287-8.

⁵⁰ This compares with the 'associational ties of origin [and] educational experience' which characterised the organisation of emerging Deobandi schools. Metcalf, *Islamic revival in British India*, p.98.

⁵¹ The imposing building of Sultan ul-Madaris was built between 1911-1913, largely on a grant from Mehdi 'Ali Khan, who is described in a plaque on the building as 'philosopher and philanthropist of Awadh.' The *madrasa* was inaugurated by Lucknow's Commissioner James Hewett in March, 1913.

The rapid pace of the foundation of such religious seminaries raises the important question of why it was at this time, namely, from the end of the 1880s, that such *madrasas* suddenly emerged. When compared to the failure of the comparable Madrasa Imaniya project in the 1870s, what factors had changed to make the foundation of *madrasas* so widespread and so workable during this period? Certain explanations lie in wider current developments in Islamic education in north India. There is little doubt that the formation of Deobandi *madrasas* across the North Western Provinces over previous decades set a precedent along which a similar movement could take place among Shi'as. The Shi'a *madrasas* bear comparison with their Deobandi forerunners in important ways: the formation of a recognised and ordered *nisab*, the dispensation of agreed and distinguished qualifications of learning, and the dissemination of education across the ties of kinship and locality.⁵²

A further explanation for the establishment of indigenous religious education lies in events in the wider Shi'a world. The shrine cities of southern Iraq had been the source from which many Indian Shi'a religious leaders sought their direction through the late-nineteenth century, but a series of events during this period made Iraq less accessible to Indian pilgrims, students and corpse traffic alike. Plague restrictions on the movement of travellers to Mesopotamia were imposed from the early 1890s, with very few individuals succeeding in gaining entry.⁵³ This was compounded a decade later with the further difficulty of the condition of the Awadh Bequest, a branch of the Husainabad endowment which had since the 1850s been a prime source of funding for Indian residents, students and pilgrims in Iraq. Poor administration of the Bequest was compounded in 1903 with the abolition of the so-called 'Indian fund,' a part of the Bequest reserved for Indian citizens, which made settlement or study in Iraq increasingly difficult for Indians.⁵⁴ Once these funds were siphoned off by *mujtahids* and trustees to alternative causes, a number of Indian poor, pilgrims and pensioners were effectively stranded in Najaf and Karbala, ensuring for many others the impossibility or at least inadvisability of disembarkation to

⁵² Metcalf, *Islamic revival in British India*, passim.

⁵³ From W.S. Marris, 3 May 1903, Home Department (Sanitary A.) Proceedings, July 1903, Nos. 298-302, National Archives of India, New Delhi (NAI).

⁵⁴ For instance, A.L. Saunders to Chief Secretary of Government of the United Provinces, 29 July 1910, Political Department A., May 1911, File Nos. 10-44, UPSA.

Iraq.⁵⁵ Compounded with the decline of religious education in Iraq in the pre-First World War period,⁵⁶ the situation in Mesopotamia thus gave pressing urgency to the need for workable institutions of religious learning within India itself.

In this sense, the establishment of functional Shi'a *madrasas* marked the completed indigenisation, or 'Indianisation,' of the Shi'a religion. By providing a curriculum in *usul* and *fiqh* which excluded the necessity of direct travel to Iraq, these schools enabled the autonomous administration of religious jurisprudence, under a national Shi'a religious leadership. It is highly significant that the guardians of Lucknow's *madrasas* looked not to the 'Shi'i International' or to Najaf for inspiration or direction, but to successful indigenous organisations: the enviable growth of the Arya Samaj, the communal zeal and active public life of the Ahmadi community and the opening of colleges, hospitals, refuges and orphanages by Christian groups, all of which were active in contemporary north India.⁵⁷ In this sense, Shi'a *tanzim* was a movement towards the appropriation of the language and styles of national public organisation, assuming the organisational discourses of both state and other religious groups as the precursor to religious renewal.

Yet, besides enabling religious reform in the national context, the new *madrasas* furthermore established Lucknow's precedence as the centre of national religious renewal. These *madrasas* were glorified as bringing something of the graces and treasures of Karbala and Najaf to Lucknow,⁵⁸ yet perhaps in light of the information above these *madrasas* are better understood as carrying the ethos of Lucknow to the rest of India. Lucknow saw the reinstatement of its traditional reputation as a place of religious learning, providing a focus to attract scholars and teachers from outside the city.

⁵⁵ The administration of the Awadh Bequest is deserving of its own analysis in greater detail. Some discussions of the Bequest are available in Juan Cole, *Sacred space and holy war: the politics, culture and history of Shi'ite Islam* (New York, 2002), pp.78-98; Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton, 2003), pp.211-29. It was partly due to the heightened difficulties in travelling to and living in Iraq that the number of Indians visiting Iraq for pilgrimage or corpse burial fell gradually during this period. Ibid, pp.164-73, 184-205.

⁵⁶ The decline of the *madrasa* in Iraq owed in part to the return of many students to Iran during the Constitutional Revolution, the deterioration of student-*mujtahid* relations over funding, and Ottoman interference. See *ibid*, pp.247-62.

⁵⁷ Akbar Husain Rizvi, *Madrasa't ul-Wā'izēn kī āwāz* (Lucknow, circa 1928), pp.7-8.

⁵⁸ Husain, *Matla'-i-Anwār*, p.678.

The foundation of *madrasas* was not a uniformly spread phenomenon of national religious revitalisation, but centred upon a restricted clique of established *mujtahids* of Lucknow, whose stature was further enhanced by their charge of religious education. Moreover, those *madrasas* which emerged outside Lucknow, rather than enhancing the autonomous religious life of the communities of the *qasbas* in which they were situated, were largely an extension of Lucknow's revived religious consciousness into further localities: they emerged later, they were mostly founded by students of Lucknow's schools or by Lucknawi *'ulama* themselves, and none achieved the size or reputation of Lucknow's *madrasas*. As such, the Shi'a *madrasas* served to assert the centrality of Lucknow in national Shi'a religious life. *Tanzim* within Shi'ism meant less the construction of ties between Shi'as of different localities, more the impartation of Shi'a Lucknow's modes and mores to wider arenas.

The Shi'a *mujtahids* in public life: the Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor

Some of the *madrasas* discussed above, including the major schools founded in Lucknow, were enduring institutions that developed their own buildings and financial competence, while others were makeshift and short-lived affairs. Collectively, however, they furnished north India, but Lucknow and U.P. especially, with a new generation of religious scholars and preachers, whose activities and impact are discussed further in the next chapter. For our more immediate purposes, however, their effect was twofold. First, they inaugurated a language of *tanzim* which informed the further organisational activities among Shi'as described in this chapter. Second, they re-established the public activity and visibility of the Shi'a *mujtahids* of Lucknow in a way unprecedented since the Nawabi period.

It is the second of these, the increasing participation of the *mujtahids* in the public arenas of Lucknow, with which this section is concerned. The expansive public activities of the Shi'a *'ulama* have been central to important studies of nineteenth-century Indian Shi'ism; at the height of Shi'a 'state formation' in the 1840s, for instance, the Shi'a *mujtahids* had

extensive societal responsibilities such as the provision of institutionalised education and the distribution of state-provided charity such as alms and 'poor tax.'⁵⁹ Such perspectives have parallels in wider studies of Shi'ism. Litvak's study of the '*ulama* of nineteenth-century Iraq, for instance, describes their function as 'almost exclusive custodians of Shi'i tradition and religious life,' and as 'bastion[s] of religious tradition and social continuity'; the *mujtahids* carried, it is further argued, a 'dual role... as both spiritual and social leaders.'⁶⁰ As in Cole's study of Nawabi Lucknow, then, the '*ulama* functioned as an essentially self-governing corps and as mediators between the population and government.⁶¹

Co-ordinated attempts by the senior Shi'a '*ulama* to gain a presence in Lucknow's public space first appeared in the late 1880s. One of these attempts was the formation of *madrasas* as described above. Actually pre-dating these, however, was the re-establishment of traditional Friday prayers in Lucknow. In pre-colonial Lucknow, one of the greatest demonstrations of communal organisation among Shi'as had been the weekly congregation of Shi'a citizens for Friday prayers. According to Usuli Shi'ism as instituted by Dildar 'Ali in 1786, these *namaz-i-jum'a* could only be said in one mosque in each city, a custom henceforth adhered to across the Shi'a world. However, the conversion of the Asafi mosque and the expansive compound in which it stood into military barracks in the wake of the British occupation of Lucknow had ceased the public religious functions of the institution.⁶² No such congregational or Friday prayers were permitted in the mosque during this period, a source of serious grievance that elicited various failed petitions for the restoration of the Friday mosque for most of thirty years.⁶³ According to one source, Shi'a *namaz-i-jum'a* during this time were held in a mosque in Tehsinganj, a mosque allegedly too small for its burgeoning population.⁶⁴ This was

⁵⁹ Cole, *Roots of north Indian Shi'ism*, pp.199-203.

⁶⁰ Litvak, *Shi'i scholars of nineteenth-century Iraq*, pp.1-5.

⁶¹ Such perspectives, it should be noted, offer an alternative perspective to the supposed turn inwards away from society described in studies of the Deobandi and other Sunni '*ulama*. Metcalf, *Islamic revival in British India*, pp.11-4.

⁶² See Veena Talwar Oldenburg, *The making of colonial Lucknow, 1856-1877* (Princeton, 1984), pp.35-7, 49-50, 210.

⁶³ For instance, Porter, Commissioner of Lucknow Division, to Chief Secretary to Government of the United Provinces, undated, Political Dept. File No. 95 of 1906, UPSA.

⁶⁴ Shakil Hasan Shamsi, *Shi'a-Sunī qazīa: kitnā mazhabī kitnā sīāsī?* (Lucknow, circa 2005), p.85.

possibly a factor contributing to the relegation of the Shi'a population to the decentralised spheres of the *muhalla* and local mosque for prayers throughout the early colonial period.⁶⁵

A landmark moment in Shi'a religious and social life in colonial Lucknow came when the Asafi Masjid was released by the Government to the Husainabad trustees, and was again re-instated as a place of public prayer. In 1884, Friday prayers were allowed to commence here, and Muhammad Ibrahim, descendant of Dildar 'Ali and father-in-law of Aqa Hasan, was appointed *peshnamaz* (prayer-leader).⁶⁶ The release of the mosque to this representative of the Nasirabadi family of *mujtahids* made possible for the first time the collective weekly congregation of the city's Shi'as in worship for the first time in thirty years. It represented the re-opening of the central religious spaces of old Lucknow and offered a highly visible public role to the Shi'a faith which recalled the 'organised' character of Shi'a Lucknow during the Nawabi period.

It seems entirely plausible that the ensuing weekly congregation of the municipal Shi'a population on a religious basis in a way which transcended the boundaries of family and *muhalla* contributed greatly to the formation of Shi'a solidarity in Lucknow. As will be demonstrated throughout this thesis, the years after 1884 mark the approximate moment at which serious efforts were made towards Shi'a religious renewal, educational betterment and public representation. Following the reassertion of their efficacy after the reinstatement of *jum'a* prayers and the formation of two *madrasas*, the 'ulama of Lucknow from the 1890s made efforts to create a public podium through which they could further project their voice into Lucknawi society. In July 1901 a circle of 'ulama, prominent among whom were Aqa Hasan, Najm ul-Hasan and Nasir Husain, founded the Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor, otherwise known as the Kanferans-i-Imamiya-i-'Isna

⁶⁵ Oldenburg, *The making of colonial Lucknow*, pp.36-7.

⁶⁶ *Firdōs-i-Makān kā tazkira* (Lucknow, circa 1960), pp.48-50; Aqa Hasan to Lieutenant Governor, 25 March 1906, Political Department File No. 95 of 1906, UPSA; 'The Shias of Lucknow' to Lieutenant Governor, 12 April 1906, *ibid*; Porter, Commissioner of Lucknow Division, to Chief Secretary to the Government of the United Provinces, undated, *ibid*.

‘Asharia, in Husainiyya Ghufran-i-Ma‘ab.⁶⁷ The *anjuman* mimicked, both in terms of organisational structure and its emphasis upon sectarian solidarity, social welfare and cultural development, the public voluntary organisations and societies formed during the same period among various caste and religion-based groupings in north India. It also represented an attempt by the senior ‘*ulama* of Lucknow to use the creation of a public *anjuman* to reinforce their control over civic public space and exert influence across a broad spectrum of municipal affairs.

The ‘*ulama* described the organisation as an effort to secure the betterment, both worldly and spiritual, of Indian Shi‘a Muslims. From the outset it set up a two-pronged strategy for leadership and guidance in both worldly and religious (*dini* and *dunyawī*) matters.⁶⁸ Indeed, it was this *anjuman* that first established the link, influential in later Shi‘a organisations, between religious awareness and worldly uplift, the latter conditional upon the former. Spiritual furtherance and livelihood were described as two flowers of the same branch: as such, ‘development will be granted following the establishment of *shari‘at* upon this sect, and this condition will not be obtained for as long as the followers are not attentive to their religion.’⁶⁹ On the one hand, it established a commercial (*tijarati*) branch, which pledged to improve the financial conditions of Shi‘as and to promote business enterprises. Half of accumulated membership fees, it was said, would be channelled to this end.⁷⁰ This said, its emphasis was unequivocally upon its second branch, the department of religious propagation (*tabligh*). It intended to establish *madrasas*, offer religious instruction and appoint religious leaders across India. Aqa Hasan specified the organisation’s aims as:

‘The appointment of *peshnamaz* and *wa‘izen*... that they may tour about different cities and villages and, after spending ten or fifteen days may conduct Friday and congregational prayers and may continuously set out preachings and counsel, and religious and

⁶⁷ Ja‘isi ed., *Khāndān-i-ijtihād nambar*, p.74. In successive years it was managed from the offices of Aqa Hasan in Jauhari *muhalla*.

⁶⁸ The *anjuman*, its supporters claimed, engaged in ‘good secular and spiritual work’ alike. *Surma-i-Rozgar* (Agra) 16 March 1907, United Provinces Native Newspaper Reports (UPNNR), OIOC. Moreover, the organisation was explicitly non-political, pledging to remain aloof from issues of government. All India Shi‘a Conference, *Rō‘idād-i-ijlās-i-awal-i-Āl Indīā Shī‘a Kānferans* (Lucknow, 1908), p.4.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ja‘isi ed., *Khāndān-i-ijtihād nambar*, p.73.

worldly education, and set essential examples. If the *hazrat* and *mominin* give them their attention, then the level of funding will grow, so that another *peshnamaz* or two may be appointed and another *madrassa* established.⁷¹

The Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor counted several achievements to this end. It founded the *Dar-ul-Zikr*, a printing and proselytising organisation discussed in the next chapter, as well as the Madrasa-i-Imamiya in Ghufuran-i-Ma'ab *imambara* in 1904. The *maktab* sought to provide a solid grounding in both religious learning and Western-styled education throughout the first twelve years of one's schooling, synthesising disciplines as diverse as Arabic, Persian, English, philosophy, logic, science and economics.⁷²

Perhaps the *anjuman's* most enduring achievement, however, was its pitch for the command of the regulation of Muharram in Lucknow. In line with Shi'a observance, it attempted to eliminate the festivities which had traditionally accompanied many of the commemorations and instate a genuine atmosphere of mourning over the proceedings at Lucknow's main *karbala* at Talkatora, the burial site of *ta'ziyas* (effigies of the tomb of Imam Husain) to the south of Lucknow. Up until 1905, the route of the *juloos* (procession) and the environs of this *karbala* had experienced a *mela* (fair), nourishing and entertaining the crowds that congregated during this period, awash with shops, entertainments and displays and even tents for prostitutes. In advance the Muharram of 1905, a deputation of 'influential gentlemen' and delegates of the Anjuman-i-Sadr-i-Sadoor met with the Commissioner of Lucknow, asking permission for the tightening of public discipline during the festival. Before the 'Ashura (10th day of Muharram, when *ta'ziyas* are buried) of 1905, word circulated that these 'leading Shias' gathered around the Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor had issued a decree attempting to impose an atmosphere of solemnity around the *karbala* and *ta'ziya* route. It was said that they had asked the local proprietors of land around the *karbala* and on the main route for the *ta'ziya juloos*

⁷¹ Aqa Hasan, *Tarjuma-i-Imād-ul-Islām hēsa-i-awal; kitāb-ul-tōhīd* (Lucknow, circa 1905), p.2.

⁷² All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-awal*, p.5. To this end, the organisation sought monetary assistance from its followers in Lucknow. It charged a small membership fee and made it incumbent upon its members to engage in fundraising and organisational responsibilities. Hasan, *Tarjuma-i-Imād-ul-Islām*, p.2. It also instigated motivated personal fundraising by its founders. As would say Aqa Hasan's son some years later, 'my father, the late Qutva't ul-'Ulama, had clothes-shops opened, and himself served in those shops... he and a few other dignitaries would sell cigarettes, batteries and biscuits' in order to fund the activities of the *anjuman*. Ja'isi ed., *Khāndān-i-ijtihād nambar*, p.75.

to close their land to the revelries, entertainments and the sale of refreshments which had accompanied the commemorations in previous years, commands which many duly obeyed.⁷³ In 1906, a leaflet nominally produced by the Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor attempted to further advance this purification of religious practice, designating that entry to the *karbala* ground would only be granted to those dressed in black, with bare head and feet and who would recite an Arabic *du'a* (prayer) for the Shi'a Imams upon entering, all tokens of mourning hitherto practiced by Shi'as alone.⁷⁴

The resulting exclusion of most non-Shi'as from the *karbala* was the trigger for the establishment in 1906 of a separate Sunni *karbala* in Phulkatora, to the north of the city. The separation of Sunni (and many Hindu) observances of Muharram from Shi'a equivalents is commonly interpreted as the source of Lucknow's extensive sectarian conflict over subsequent years, as discussed in the following chapter. British observers understood the seeming purification of Muharram practice as indicative of a 'religious revival' among Shi'as.⁷⁵ However, rather than any public religious fervour, these renovations of Muharram rites more precisely reflected an attempt by the *mujtahids* to reassert the essential Shi'a character of the public spaces of Lucknow. Further to the reconquest of the Asafi Masjid compound in 1884 and the construction of *madrasas* conducted at their behest, the senior religious authorities of Lucknow staked their claim to a further public assertion of a central tenet of Shi'ism.

Such aggressive activities of religious reinvigoration and purification, compounded with the inattention to its more secular resolutions, ensured that the Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor

⁷³ 'Note' by Saiyid Shahinshah Husain Rizvie, 15 December 1908, General Administration Department (GAD) File No. 591 of 1908, UPSA. It continues: 'I think [the regulations] were made a little more stringent in the direction of decency and decorum... I think the owners of land on both sides of the road from the Aishbagh Road turning to Ghaziuddin Haidar's canal must have been consulted as well as the owners of the lands immediately around the Tal Katora *Karbala*; their consent had been obtained by the leading Shi'as before they approached me.' 'Note,' Appendix to Piggott Committee Report, *ibid*.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*. Some members of the Anjuman itself denied issuing the notice, although the fact that it was widely considered genuine suggests that it was in keeping with common perceptions of the *anjuman's* activities and ambitions.

⁷⁵ The Piggott Committee, appointed in 1908 to examine the roots of Shi'a-Sunni tensions, said that it was 'not surprising that anything of the nature of a religious revival amongst the Shi'as should have produced as one of its consequences a desire to renew and accentuate the character of these festivals as days of mourning, and to free their celebration from... abuses.' *Ibid*.

failed to become the all-embracing religio-secularist organ to which it aspired. While communicating lofty aspirations for a unanimous Shi'a congregation, the stringent retention of the organisation's leadership in the hands of the *mujtahids*, its administration from the offices, homes and printing presses of 'ulama and its focus upon the propagation of faith all ensured that the *anjuman* carried a distinctly religious aspect. The controversies surrounding the Muharram reforms, together with a high-profile argument with the Muslim Educational Conference discussed in Chapter 3, ensured that the organisation was interpreted by some as an antagonistic, communal or political body set up to do the will of its clerical management. It created some high-profile opposition, and after some six years the *anjuman* was ultimately dissolved by its original founders.⁷⁶ These later developments aside, the Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor was a significant influence among Lucknow's Shi'as for several years, and upon the direction of sectarian activity in future organisations. For instance, it called for the establishment of organs that would eventually be founded by the Shi'a Conference, such as a *madrasa* to train *wa'izen*, a Shi'a College, and an institution to oversee the management of Shi'a *auqaf*.

Moreover, the *anjuman* represented perhaps the most dramatic intervention into public life thus far by the 'ulama of colonial Lucknow. It signified their first attempt to establish public associations among Lucknow's Shi'as which would be shared with non-'ulama on a basis of simple religious commonalty. It was also the first such systematised attempt to secure their sway over 'secular' public issues such as commerce and development. Moreover, while never making its intended impact outside of Lucknow, no less was the association a path-breaking articulation of aspirations for an all-India presence for Shi'a public organisations, and attempts to cultivate affiliations and membership outside the socio-cultural milieu of its mother city.

⁷⁶ Husain, *Matla'-i-Anwār*, p.661.

A Shi'a Conference for India

Even before the formation of the Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor, the idea appears to have circulated that some form of conference, a meeting of community representatives for the exchange of views on modern socio-economic and educational questions, was needed among Shi'as. A series of early efforts had been made in this direction from the 1880s onwards, and despite only modest success they were hailed by advocates as evidence that 'the whole community seemed ripe for the experiment... the sectarian papers and leaders demanded a gathering of the sort and denounced the lethargy under which the [Shi'a] nation is labouring.'⁷⁷ The notion of a Shi'a Conference bore the clear influence of contemporary organisations such as the Indian National Congress and Muhammadan Educational Conference, and demonstrates the extent to which the self-appointed religious and public representatives of Shi'as, rather than being bound to memories of their faded grandeur as has often been assumed, had adapted entirely the national currents of community-based activism and pressure-group petitioning which characterised public life in the era of elite nationalism.

In the aftermath of the arguments besetting the Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor, a number of individuals including Aqa Hasan, the Aligarhist Ghulam ul-Saqlain, and Sayyid Muhammad Hadi, the current principal of Madrasa Nazimiya, convened to ascertain the best strategy for ensuring the future well-being of India's Shi'as. The opinion emerged that, in order to overcome such divisions, Shi'as should organise as a 'Conference' rather than an '*anjuman*,' and should seek a balance between the '*ulama* and English-speaking *hazrat*. In contrast to its predecessor, moreover, the Conference should not be confined to Lucknow.⁷⁸ In the monsoon of 1907, Muhammad Hadi and 'Ali Ghazanfar

⁷⁷ *Tribune* (Lahore), 18 October 1907, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge (CSAS). Some early, albeit short-lived efforts in this direction included the Anjuman-i-Imamiya, founded in Lucknow in 1888-9, a conference considering 'means for improving the conditions of the Shias' in 1899, and the Anjuman-i-Jafariya, founded by the Sayyids of Barha and convened at the close of 1905. *Akhbar-ul-Momineen* (Lucknow), week starting 2 June 1890; *Oudh Akhbar* (Lucknow), 20 October 1899, UPNNR; *Tribune* (Lahore), 18 October 1907, CSAS.

⁷⁸ 'Ali Naqi Safi, *Sahifa't ul-millat-i-ma'ruf be-lakhat jagir* (Lucknow, undated), pp.8-9.

toured U.P. and Bengal to promote support for the idea.⁷⁹ The first session of the All India Shi'a Conference, composed of some 450 attendants, eventually convened in October 1907. Organised from the home of the young Lucknawi barrister Agha Husain, it was held in the prestigious *Rifah-i-'Am* compound of old Lucknow.⁸⁰ It was decided at this session that the Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor would be dissolved, and the present organisation, formed out of the ashes of the latter, be renamed the All India Shi'a Conference. Yet according to one source, and despite the presence of more so-called *ghair-'ulama* (non-'ulama), the Conference's structure remained markedly similar to that of its predecessor.⁸¹ Lucknow's *mujtahids* were consistently attendant at its sessions and involved in its campaigns. Aqa Hasan was hailed as its founder, and Najm ul-Hasan was confirmed *sajjada-nashin* (president of the organisation) in early sessions of the Conference. Over subsequent sessions, the presidential chair would be held for the most part by *mujtahids* of Lucknow.⁸²

This association convened annually and became the first Shi'a organisation to, relatively successfully, convene support across the boundaries of locality and even of province. Structures were put in place by which envoys could be deputed to other towns and villages, members enlisted, the aims of the conference expounded, and donations for its projects collected. Within a year, such emissaries were received in certain districts of former Awadh and in Benares, Jaunpur, Ghazipur, Moradabad and Muzaffarnagar, and soon after in many districts in Bihar, Punjab and Hyderabad.⁸³ In some cases, it was said, local inhabitants were initially unenthused by the Conference, but were soon persuaded by its envoys to back it. Conference proceedings thereafter included accounts by such envoys, listing the number of Shi'as and Shi'a institutions in these towns, the sum of donations elicited, and the names of newly obtained signatories. By 1910, the Conference boasted some 5000 members.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ *Tribune* (Lahore), 18 October 1907, CSAS. The latter of these two men was a resident of Lucknow who would act as the permanent secretary of the Shi'a Conference for most of its first decade.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Safi, *Sahifa't ul-millat*, pp.9-10.

⁸² Nasir Husain, for instance, held the presidential chair in the fourth session at Amroha in 1910.

⁸³ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-chārhōm-i-Āl Indiā Shī'a Kānferans, munaqīda 10-12 October 1910* (Lucknow 1911), passim.

⁸⁴ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-chārhōm*, p.50.

In contrast to its predecessor, the Shi'a Conference at its outset managed to embrace a diversity of eminent Shi'a individuals. 'Ulama shared a public platform with representatives of Lucknow's *wasiqadars*, landed magnates such as the Nawabs of Rampur and Pirpur, moderate nationalists such as the Raja of Mahmudabad, educationalists like Ghulam ul-Saqlain, and spokesmen from many towns and districts. Its ability to do this stemmed in part from its commitment, inherited from the Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor and re-stated as the first resolution of its first session, to abstain from comment upon affairs of government.⁸⁵ Avoiding the minefield of political affiliation, the *anjuman* instead focused from the outset upon the supposedly consensual matters of 'the advancement of the social, moral and intellectual condition of the Shia in India.'⁸⁶ The Shi'a Conference thereby initially cut across the political divisions between *wasiqadar* and *taluqdar*, loyal and nationalist. At the same time, the divide between religious and secular constituencies was, in contrast to certain other Muslim organisations of the time, largely bridged by the continuation of the Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor's interlocking of religious and worldly agendas. Restating this ethic, the second resolution of the first session declared that 'faith and the renewal of religious principles should assist in worldly life, which is not antagonistic to religion.'⁸⁷ Replicating and reaffirming the opinion that religious and material betterment were inseparable and interlinked, the Shi'a Conference thus rested on a platform of recuperation from perceived cultural, economic and educational 'backwardness' (*gadda'i*) from which few deemed it necessary to dissociate.

This struggle for combined spiritual and material renewal among Shi'as permeated the approximately 150 resolutions passed during the Conference's first eight sessions,⁸⁸ which focused on a range of broad and related principles: the renewal of Islamic law and guidance on religious custom and responsibility; the formation of Shi'a *madrasas*, schools and colleges; the improvement of commercial enterprise and economic well-

⁸⁵ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i- awal*, p.4.

⁸⁶ *Oudh Akhbar* (Lucknow), 15 October 1907, UPNNR.

⁸⁷ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i- awal*, p.4.

⁸⁸ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i- hashtim*, 1914, p.9.

being; the foundation of Shi'a printing presses and newspapers and the distribution of religious literature; the preservation of knowledge of Arabic, Persian and Urdu; the enumeration of India's Shi'a population; the promotion of good relations between Shi'as and other religious and Muslim communities in India; the reparation and correct management of religious foundations such as mosques, *imambaras* and *auqaf*; the dispensation of charity in the shape of education grants and provision for orphans, widows and the destitute; and not least, the consolidation of the Shi'a Conference as the prime organ for the expression of Shi'a needs and interests and the source of guidance (*islah*) for the Shi'as of India.

Despite the articulation of such high ideals and lofty rhetoric, the Shi'a Conference was ultimately most significant not as a final result of Shi'a organisation, but as a so-called 'congress of *anjumans*.'⁸⁹ The Conference became the platform for the further construction and propagation of numerous Shi'a associations and societies, a point which it recognised in its remark upon the 'pressing need to establish new *anjumans* and reinforce current ones.'⁹⁰ These *anjumans*, often described as 'branches' (*shakhen*) of the Shi'a Conference itself, were distinct in character and purpose while reinforcing the co-operative ethos inherited from their parent organisation.

Lucknow was the place most transformed by the emergence of these associations, and it is worth giving some examples of the most significant among them. One of the Conference's prime achievements was the Shi'a Orphanage. Its foundation came in 1912, following a number of supportive resolutions passed by the Shi'a Conference over several years, petitions for funds from Aqa Hasan and substantial donations from *taluqdars* such as Yusuf Husain Khan.⁹¹ The orphanage was one of the more enduring of the Conference's branches. Within two years it contained some 200 orphans, around a quarter of whom were of Lucknawi origin.⁹² Described by one supporter as 'the centre of

⁸⁹ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i- awal*, p.1.

⁹⁰ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i- chhatā-i-Āl Indiā Shī'ah Kānferans, munaqīdah 18-20 October 1912* (Lucknow, 1913), p.71.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.114-123, 133-34.

⁹² All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-hashtim, 1914*, pp.104-118.

our communal activities,⁹³ the orphanage's significance for Lucknow's Shi'as extended beyond its functionary duties to its role in fostering social and religious solidarities. Surprisingly, some eighty percent of entrants to the orphanage were said to be of Sayyid descent, a fact seen as a stain upon India's supposedly mannered, hospitable and family-conscious Shi'a elites.⁹⁴ As such, as was elucidated by one supporter, the orphanage represented an intermediary institution between family and the supposed religious community, presenting the opportunity for the religious community to intervene in a situation where the affiliations of family had failed.⁹⁵ Moreover, the orphanage was not simply a welfare foundation, but a theatre of religious instruction. Declaring that it was the will of the Prophet that orphans be taught, tutors from Madrasa Nazimiya were enlisted in service of the orphanage and some of its donations were received on condition that religious education was administered.⁹⁶ The indivisible association in the orphanage of the provision of food and shelter with religious education and moral instruction ensured that the institution was not a mere charitable foundation but a religious congregation (*hashr*), which cultivated its occupants as vigorously as the emerging Shi'a *maktabs* and *madrasas*.⁹⁷

The orphanage was not the only scheme of charity (*waza'if*) established by the Conference. Alongside it were educational grants for poor students, hospices for widows, and importantly the Shi'a Boarding House, set up in Lucknow on the back of private donations in 1912.⁹⁸ Like the orphanage, the funding and condition of the latter were perhaps not of the highest standard. However these two organisations, together with other charitable enterprises, prove the earlier point that many Shi'a associations emulated communal organisation among other religious communities in India. The successful construction of both such institutions by Hindus and Sikhs was cited as a model for Shi'a

⁹³ *All India Shia conference: Calcutta sessions 1928, Presidential address His Highness Mir Ali Nawaz Khan Talpur, ruler of Khairpur State* (Khairpur, circa.1930), p.11.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, p.13.

⁹⁶ All India Shi'a Conference. *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i- chhatā*, 1912, p.34.

⁹⁷ Ja'isi ed., *Khāndān-i-ijtihād nambar*, p.86.

⁹⁸ All India Shi'a Conference. *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i- chhatā*, 1912, pp.1, 23-68.

activities,⁹⁹ not to mention the zealous backing of orphanages for Europeans by Christian groups and the colonial state in contemporary India.¹⁰⁰

A surprising addition to these enterprises was the Conference's key commercial experiment: the so-called Shi'a Sugar Company of Lucknow. The Company appears to have been largely unsuccessful on account of internal mismanagement, unsuccessful record-keeping and the deflating price of sugar.¹⁰¹ The organisation is less significant for its actual success than for what it represented: the expansion of an organised sectarian agenda into professional fields. The intention was that a portion of the Sugar Company's revenue would be contributed to the orphanage and boarding house, and that members of the orphanage would receive business training within the Company.¹⁰² The Shi'a Conference thus envisaged the full integration of the *anjumans* affiliated to it, by intention mutually supportive in a way which could provide the foundations of a functioning, self-reliant community.

Other Conference-initiated *anjumans* were simpler, localised affairs which aimed at religious renewal in particular *muhallas* of Lucknow. The Anjuman-i-Ta'mir-i-Masajid was formed to construct and maintain Shi'a mosques in Lucknow, and the Anjuman Mushir ul-Iman appeared to be conducting similar work in the decaying Shi'a *muhalla* of Rustamnagar.¹⁰³ *Imambaras* were repaired alongside mosques; the famed Husainiyya Ghufran-i-Ma'ab and Imambara Akram-ullah Khan were both restored in the early twentieth century on the back of personal donations and requests, urged by the Conference.¹⁰⁴ Even the *wasiqadars* of Lucknow, that most insular circle of former royalty and nobility who were traditionally least prone to adopting the new means and

⁹⁹ Ibid, p.33.

¹⁰⁰ Orphanages for Europeans were founded across nineteenth century by church and state as a means of maintaining the cultural distinctiveness and superiority of the colonisers. Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal knowledge and imperial power: race and the intimate in colonial rule* (Berkeley, 2002), pp.69-70. It seems that elite Shi'as in Lucknow may have been seeking to achieve a similar end in the municipal context. The idea that orphanages were, furthermore, used as guises for religious proselytisation is discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁰¹ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-chārhōm*, 1910, pp.103-14. It is also worth mentioning that certain caste formations established a Prayag Sugar Company in Allahabad in 1910.

¹⁰² All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i- chhatā*, 1912, p.121.

¹⁰³ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i- hashtim*, 1914, pp.71-2.

¹⁰⁴ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-chārhōm*, 1910, pp.121-2.

methods of Lucknow's media and associational life, constructed among themselves new *anjumans* such as the Anjuman-i-Khandan-i-Shahi, the Anjuman-i-Wasiqadaran-va-Pensionaran-i-Shahi, and the Anjuman ul-Irkan.¹⁰⁵

One of the most important and influential departments of the Shi'a Conference was its Central Standing Waqf Committee, appointed to supervise the condition and administration of Shi'a *auqaf*, or endowments. This committee aspired to establish local *waqf* committees in every city and *qasba*, composed of local members of the Shi'a Conference who would compile reports on such *auqaf* listing the *mutawalli*, revenue and expenditure.¹⁰⁶ The aim was that the Conference bodies could themselves supervise that the *auqaf* were being managed by correct means and according to the intentions of their founder, and that embezzlement by corrupt trustees would be stopped.¹⁰⁷ The supervision of *auqaf* was frequently the starting point for the reparation of mosques, *imambaras* and the regulation of Muharram and *majlis* gatherings, all of which frequently depended on such endowed wealth. In towns with a significant long-standing Shi'a presence such as Meerut, Moradabad and Jansath, registries of all municipal Shi'a *auqaf* were produced.¹⁰⁸ The Conference aspired to the classification of a full list of India's Shi'a *auqaf*, and it was resolved that in cases of the proven poor condition of *auqaf* help of government would be requested, and information would be circulated in the press.¹⁰⁹ Unsurprisingly, the large *auqaf* of Lucknow, especially the Husainabad *waqf*, were the first subject of the Waqf Committee's attentions. Attempts were made to streamline its management and use its revenue to support local educational projects and some of the Conference's own work, such as the orphanage and boarding house and the repair of religious buildings.¹¹⁰ Unsurprisingly, as in other instances, this brought the Conference into conflict with the *mutawallis* of such *auqaf* who had long held jurisdiction over the endowed revenue, and

¹⁰⁵ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-hashtim*, 1914, p.74.

¹⁰⁶ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-awal*, pp.110-4; All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-chārhōm*, pp. 111-21.

¹⁰⁷ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-chārhōm*, 1910, pp.111-3.

¹⁰⁸ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-hashtim*, 1914, pp.112-4.

¹⁰⁹ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-chhatā*, 1912, pp.138-9, 142-3; All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-hashtim*, 1914, p.185.

¹¹⁰ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-chārhōm*, 1910, pp.114-117.

many of whom were themselves members of the Conference.¹¹¹ The concern for the proper administration of endowed wealth echoed the efforts of earlier Muslim foundations to advocate a central examination of India's *auqaf*, especially the Central Muhammadan Association which had attempted such a task in 1885, and indicates that the failure of these efforts prompted Shi'as to seek solutions to the issue on their own initiative.¹¹²

Of lasting impact, moreover, was the Shi'a Conference's creation of a vigorous press. *Akhbar-i-Imamiya* of Lucknow was the first Shi'a newspaper, running in the 1890s. Others opened in Lucknow early in the twentieth century, including *Shi'a Gazette*, *Imamiya ka qadim tariqah*, *Sayarah* and *Al-Ma'ruf*. All of these, however, were confined to Lucknow, appeared to have a limited circulation and some closed soon after opening.¹¹³ Affiliated with the Shi'a Conference, the newspaper *Ittehad-i-Islam* (lit: 'The unity of Islam') was founded in September 1910 in Amroha. In common with much of the emerging Urdu press but in contrast to earlier Shi'a papers, its editor Sayyid Mujahid Husain Jauhar, a resident of Amroha, was a young and active proponent of social and religious reform.¹¹⁴ The newspaper quickly simplified its name to *Ittehad*, and switched to a weekly rather than monthly circulation. The newspaper was one of the great success stories of U.P.'s vigorous Urdu press in the 1910s, with the number of distributed copies growing rapidly through the 1910s and increasing by some 350% by 1915.¹¹⁵ The fact that the newspaper was frequently referenced in the wider U.P. press and attracted contributing writers from towns as diverse as Lucknow, Bijnor, Etawah and Ghazipur confirm the newspaper as the first successful attempt to rouse a Shi'a readership across particular localities. The newspaper became the mouthpiece of Shi'a Conference views

¹¹¹ Ibid, p.95. Conflicts occurred between the representatives of the Shi'a Conference's Waqf Board and trustees of *auqaf* in Meerut, Hooghly, Bhagalpur and Gorakhpur, among others.

¹¹² All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-chhatā*, 1912, pp.143-4. A full investigation of Shi'a *auqaf* and their reform would demand a much fuller examination than is permitted here.

¹¹³ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-hashtim*, 1914, p.72.

¹¹⁴ He was born in 1882-3. *Listings of the vernacular press*, 2 June 1911, UPNNR. A brief biography of Mujahid Husain Jauhar is available in Sayyid Aja'iz Husain Rizvi Jarchvi, *Anjuman-i-Wazīfa-i-Sādāt-va-Mōminīn silvar jūbilī nambar* (New Delhi, 1933), p.12.

¹¹⁵ See for instance. *Listings of the vernacular press*, 2 June 1911 and 2 July 1915, UPNNR.

and propaganda and, as is proven in subsequent chapters, was an unprecedented influence in the formation of Shi'a solidarities across the limits of family and *qasba*.

While Lucknow unsurprisingly experienced the greatest impact from the Shi'a Conference, no less important was the Conference's creation of *anjumans* outside of Lucknow. As was shown above, the Conference deputed envoys to various localities in U.P. and elsewhere to conduct assessments of local Shi'a communities and institutions and to garner support and membership for the Shi'a Conference. A connected responsibility of such envoys was to establish organisations affiliated to the Shi'a Conference in all districts, so that 'by the influence of the Conference in all corners of India, all people need to promote solidarity, thus from our brotherhood we can create *anjumans*, send out teachers and make *shari'at* current.'¹¹⁶ Local *anjumans* newly emerging across U.P. through the influence of the Conference include the Anjuman-i-Jafariya, Barha; Anjuman Nasir ul-Iman, Amroha; Anjuman-i-Imamiya, Macchlishehr, Jaunpur district; Anjuman Imamiya Society, Bareilly; Anjuman-i-Nasiriya, Bijnor; Anjuman-i-Imamiya, Gurdaspur; Anjuman-i-Rifah-ul-Islam, Dandopur, Allahabad district; Anjuman-i-Shi'a, Badaun; Anjuman-i-Imamiya, Shahganj, Agra; Medina't ul-Shi'a, Chanagarh, Mirzapur district; Anjuman-i-Haideriya, Sinthal, Bareilly; Anjuman-i-Imamiya, Saharanpur; Anjuman-i-Mehdiviya, Ghazipur; Anjuman-i-Sera'i Mir, Azamgarh; Anjuman-i-'Aliya, Sultanpur; Anjuman-i-Husainiya, Allahabad; Anjuman-i-'Isna 'Ashariya, Hardoi; Anjuman-i-Husainiya, Noganwan, Moradabad district; Anjuman-i-Sajjadiya, Rae Bareili.¹¹⁷ Compounding this was a similar albeit less spectacular proliferation of Conference-linked *anjumans* outside U.P..¹¹⁸

By 1912, the Conference claimed the existence of a stunning 123 *anjumans* working around the country at its behest.¹¹⁹ The functions of these organs were as diverse as the *qasbas* in which they emerged. Most were simply small alliances geared towards

¹¹⁶ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-chārhōm*, 1910, p.50.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 33, 36, 41-2, 91-2; All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-chhatā*, 1912, pp.71, 143, 157; All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-hashtim*, 1914, pp.41, 47, 51, 108, 167.

¹¹⁸ Outside U.P., they included Anjuman-i-Murtazwi, Amritsar; Anjuman-i-Muhammadi, Matia Burj, Bengal; Anjuman-i-Hifaz-i-Auqaf, Bengal; Anjuman-i-Shi'a-ul-Safa, Sonipat; Anjuman-i-Mu'id-i-Shi'a Kanferans, Hyderabad. Ibid.

¹¹⁹ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-chhatā*, 1912, p.71.

overseeing Muharram ceremonies, and administrating the rites of *azadari* (mourning). Others supervised the functioning of mosques and *imambaras* in their towns, or the distribution of religious texts. Others were wider in scope. Agra's Anjuman-i-Imamiya and Barha's Anjuman-i-Jafariya considered means for the betterment of Shi'as in these localities, while the Medina't ul-Shi'a of Chanagarh and the Anjuman Imamiya Society of Bareilly, otherwise known as the Loyal Shi'a Society, aimed to promote Shi'a loyalty to government. The Anjuman-i-'Isna 'Ashariya of Hardoi, meanwhile, was encouraged by the Shi'a Conference to expand beyond the regulation of Muharram and *azadari* and address wider issues.¹²⁰ However, arguably for the first time since the British annexation of Awadh, the watchfulness of the Shi'a Conference over such *anjumans* gave these communities a concrete link with the secular and religious Shi'a leadership in Lucknow. This wide associational network distinguished the Shi'a Conference from its predecessors, including the Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor. A religion-based public sphere among Shi'a communities in particular towns could thus be tied into a broader organisational web of Shi'a *anjumans*, with the Shi'a Conference at its centre.

Indeed, despite its supposed all-India status, the Conference was largely confined to the Shi'as of the United Provinces. Its presence in provinces such as Punjab and Bengal remained minimal. It was regretted that the Conference had no connection with the Shi'a population in many major provinces of India,¹²¹ and it was a telling fact that all of its first nine sessions were held in U.P. or Patna.¹²² More precisely still, and contrary to its claims to all-India status, the Shi'a Conference was at heart an organisation of Lucknow. As was admitted by a speaker at one of its sessions, 'all the hopes of the Shi'as of Lucknow are attached to the Shi'a Conference, and it is clear that while this is the Conference of all the Shi'as of India, Lucknow is its presidential seat, and so necessarily it is most attentive to the Shi'as of Lucknow.'¹²³ Lucknow was the seat of the *mujtahids* who founded the Conference and usually acted as its *sajjada nashins*, the site of its offices and the location

¹²⁰ This was the case with Shi'a *anjumans* in Hardoi. All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-chārhōm 1910*, p.75.

¹²¹ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-hashtim, 1914*, p.11.

¹²² The locations of its earliest sessions were as follows: Lucknow (1907, 1908, 1909, 1914), Amroha (1910), Benares (1911), Patna (1912), Jaunpur (1913), Allahabad (1915).

¹²³ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-hashtim, 1914*, p.98.

from which its envoys were widely deputed. As the Conference expanded, subsequent reforms only seemed to enhance its centralised structure. The Central Committee of the Conference, presenting a national composition, symbolically contained quotas of members from each province of India. However the Conference's most influential body was the Intizamiya Committee, which elected the former and managed the monthly administration rather than annual sessions of the Conference. Half of this committee's forty seats were reserved for Lucknawi residents.¹²⁴ The Shi'a Conference, like the great *madrasas* of Lucknow, thus served largely to augment the influence of its mother city across the wide and disparate Shi'a communities of India.

Shi'a *anjuman*-building: the construction and integration of sectarian organisations

The key to understanding the apparently enhanced awareness of religious identity and its implications for the fostering of *baradari* (brotherhood) among north India's Shi'as from the late-nineteenth century is the process of *anjuman*-building outlined above. This chapter has identified some of the most important Shi'a *anjumans* of both religious and secular orientations and has indicated their functions, support, sources of funding and methods of recruitment. Many of the most important Shi'a *anjumans* founded in colonial Lucknow, such as the Madrasa't ul-Wa'izen, the Shi'a College and the Sarfaraz Qaumi Press, were projects initiated by the Shi'a Conference which would come to match or surpass the Conference as important influences in their own right, and are discussed individually in subsequent chapters.¹²⁵ This said, these and the organisations discussed above are only the most visible instances of a much wider trend in the formation of sectarian associations from the late 1880s. One Lucknow newspaper claimed in 1907 that 'the Shias have formed several societies of their own in almost every quarter of the

¹²⁴ Ibid, pp.12-14.

¹²⁵ The Madrasa't ul-Wa'izen appears to have been the fruit of the frequent call in Shi'a Conference resolutions for a Shi'a 'Mission,' while the Shi'a College resulted from frequent calls for such an institution. For some early references to some of these objectives in the Shi'a Conference, see *ibid.* pp.25-27.

town,'¹²⁶ most of which have left no significant documentary record but doubtlessly made their contribution to Shi'a solidarity and exclusivity in the *muhallas* of old Lucknow. Similarly, the many *anjumans* simultaneously and hastily arranged across U.P. among the various Shi'a gentries of the *qasbas* of Awadh and Rohilkhand, while leaving little information on their activities, also identify this period and particularly the first two decades of the twentieth century as an era of striking reformist activity among Shi'as of numerous classes and localities. Few of these organisations appear to have had much influence outside their own *qasbas* or to have left any substantial written records of their composition, and it is difficult to speculate with any precision on the effects of these various *anjumans* upon the Shi'a communities in the particular arenas in which they operated. What can be assumed is that they fostered a consciousness of religious distinctiveness among certain elites in those towns where they emerged, and promoted Shi'a commonality as a basis for public organisation.

However, it is worth examining this process of *anjuman*-building as a whole, in order to decipher why the language of *tanzim* and this organisational structure became so central in modern Shi'a reform, and to discuss the connections between the various Shi'a *anjumans* emerging at this time. This chapter has given several indications of why *tanzim* was such a prominent and ubiquitous component of Shi'a religious and social renewal. One factor is that the process of organisation instituted by Shi'a *anjumans* paralleled various other religious and educational movements that emerged after the expansion of British rule in the North Western Provinces and Awadh.¹²⁷ The formation of Shi'a *madrasas* resembled the simultaneous establishment of several Deobandi seminaries across the Doab, and internal reforms in the structures of teaching and funding within these *madrasas* similarly compare strongly with their Deobandi forerunners. The debt of the Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor and the Shi'a Conference to elite nationalist and communal foundations such as the National Congress and Muhammadan Educational

¹²⁶ *An-Najm* (Lucknow), 10 July 1907, UPNNR. One example of this is a number of committees founded around this time to oversee the proper conduct of Shi'a funerals, following perception that proper customs were not being followed. Abdul Halim Sharar, *Lucknow: the last phase of an oriental culture* (London, 1975), p.213.

¹²⁷ For a discussion of such organisations, see Gail Minault, *Secluded scholars: women's education and Muslim social reform in colonial India* (New Delhi, 1998), pp.158-75.

Conference is self-evident. Moreover, the focus upon the correction of popular practice and religious ritual as a central priority of religious reform evoked assumptions common to the Bareilvi and Deobandi movements as well as concurrent Hindu revivalism.

At the same time, the above discussion could also be suggested to show how the notion of *tanzim* was in part inspired by a so-called 'culture of organisation' endemic to the colonial period, by which the re-structuring of societal institutions encouraged indigenous communities to emulate the colonial administration's organisational and regulatory styles. Zavos, for instance, traces wide processes of religious systematisation to a so-called 'colonial discourse of organisation,' by which nineteenth-century systems of law, infrastructural development and bureaucracy set a modern administrative standard which 'projected organisation as a cultural force' and came to influence the reformist dialogues within religious communities.¹²⁸ This connection is certainly evident in organisations such as the Shi'a Conference which included many leaders close to governmental machinery such as *taluqdars* and lawyers and which made a habit of petitioning the government, in the process emulating its language and style. Yet it is equally feasible that the will to order and regulate religious education can in part be traced to the societal and administrative reforms generated under colonial rule. The spokesmen of the Shi'a *madrasas* evoked ideas of *tanzim* and *dastur-i-'amal* (regulation), to replace the unordered and informal teaching systems of old. Nowhere is this more evident than in the words of Najm ul-Hasan's son and successor Akbar Husain Rizvi, justifying the need for the foundation of the Madrasa't ul-Wa'izen in 1919:

'Our world, enamoured with organisation and regulation (*tanzim-va-tartib*), is developing with great speed in the direction of active systematisation and administration (*nizam-va-tartib-i-'amal*). So, it is our pressing need that a new Mission should be assembled, in conformity with the present age.'¹²⁹

It is clear from these words that the theme of *tanzim* articulated by U.P.'s Shi'as was fashioned very much according to the bureaucratised, organisational culture of the colonial period, which became engrained in indigenous cultural and religious reform.

¹²⁸ John Zavos, *The emergence of Hindu nationalism in India* (New Delhi, 2000), pp.26, 34.

¹²⁹ Rizvi, *Madrasa't ul-Wā'izēn kī āwāz*, p.8.

A further factor contributing to this organisational language is the appropriation of the emerging institutions of public activity and collective action in the urban space, such as the voluntary public association and the printing press. The network of Shi'a *anjumans* compares with Carey Watt's study of the wider 'associational culture' of north India in the first two decades of the twentieth century, by which both nationalist and religio-culturalist activity were characterised by a 'proliferation of organisations dedicated to social service and constructive public work.'¹³⁰ Just as organisations such as Gokhale's Servants of India constructed notions of citizenship through activities of social service, so a sense of wider solidarity among Shi'as was fostered through their co-ordinated contributions to this *anjuman* network. Furthermore, in the context of Lucknow itself, these Shi'a *anjumans* reflected the various other public meetings, reform societies and civic associations which had arisen from Lucknow's budding middle class since the 1880s. Joshi's study of colonial Lucknow has alerted us to how this emergent public sphere in Lucknow played an important role in the formation of a new middle class tied by professional commonalty that supplanted family ties and the advantages of elite heritage.¹³¹ In a similar way, the same institutions could be appropriated for the cultivation of bonds of religious affiliation which crossed the constraints of kinship and municipality.

A second question related to these Shi'a reformist associations is whether this plethora of organisations can be understood as an integrated, organised network of activity across U.P., or whether these various *anjumans* functioned independently, even chaotically, without any sense of overarching programme. On the one hand, despite their predominantly local organisation, these *anjumans* in some ways together provided an integrated structure for wider reform. The above analysis has shown that this plethora of organisations had at its head a comparatively small network of leaders, many of whom were senior *'ulama* or established social and political figures, often with ties to Lucknow. Together with such a small and intertwined headship, these Shi'a organisations also

¹³⁰ Carey Watt, *Serving the nation: cultures of service, association and citizenship in colonial India* (New Delhi, 2005), p.20.

¹³¹ Joshi, *Fractured modernity*, pp.23-31.

sported an interlocking network of managers, donors and publicists. Moreover, assigning functionary roles to elements as diverse as *'ulama*, preachers, small-town landed families and urban officials, these *anjumans* were able to bring together co-religionists who in other contexts may have seemed dissimilar or incompatible. Many such individuals working as assistants on behalf of Shi'a *anjumans* maintained constant contact with each other, and were periodically invited to serve in other like-minded organisations. As such, these associations formed a collective network which fused together a host of activities that otherwise appeared to be localised and disparate.

At the head of this network was the Shi'a Conference, which became the chief agent of the numerous public activities of various Shi'a associations and bore true to its stated role as a 'Congress of *anjumans*.' The relation between the Conference and the numerous associations founded at its behest was varied. In many cases, envoys of the Shi'a Conference appear to have founded the organisation themselves, while associations such as the Anjuman-i-Husaini of Noganwan were founded expressly to do its will.¹³² In other cases, the example of the Shi'a Conference seems to have inspired local elites to found such *anjumans* on their own initiative. Sometimes the Shi'a Conference simply reinvigorated pre-existent associations, while a few others, such as the Anjuman-i-Ja'fariya, were subsumed into it. It is a telling fact indeed that the various *anjumans* founded and integrated by the Conference were described not as independent associates of the Conference, but as subordinate (*mataht*) *anjumans*, working on its behalf.¹³³ Beyond enabling the synchronised reform of India's Shi'as, therefore, the Shi'a Conference attempted to establish itself as the central manager of reform. From this emerged a degree of concern among smaller Shi'a communities that the Conference should not be allowed to dominate local organisations. Some newspapers described the attempts of smaller Shi'a associations to demonstrate their autonomy from it. Shi'as should unite around the work conducted by the Lucknow Conference, it was argued in early 1907, rather than undermining it through the foundation of separate forums.¹³⁴ Among the Sayyids of Bilgram there was apparent unease at the Conference's

¹³² All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-hashtim*, 1914, p.108.

¹³³ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-chhatā*, 1912, pp.12-14.

¹³⁴ *Surma-i-Rozgar* (Agra), 16 March 1907, UPNNR.

standardising programme, and little initial willingness to participate in it.¹³⁵ Some of the Sayyids of Amroha were similarly apprehensive of the organisation and in some cases worked to found an alternative.¹³⁶

However, the *anjuman*-based system of organisation for the most part enabled a selection of alternative possible interactions between the central elite of the Shi'a Conference and the spokesmen and preachers active locally in Lucknow's *muhallas* or surrounding *qasbas*. Leaders in local *anjumans* could assume a dual role. Firstly, they could participate in wider currents of Shi'a reform, acting as intermediaries for the central structures of larger associations and as their legitimators in the neighbourhoods. Alternatively, they could act autonomously at the heads of these smaller organisations, working independently from or occasionally even in protest at the wider programme of the Shi'a Conference. More will be said about the periodic differences between individual Shi'a associations in later chapters. However, it is clear that the *anjuman*-based system of organisation allowed individual agents to act independently and often in contrary directions while still, when beneficial, portraying themselves as servants of a wider and organised project of social and religious reform.

Certainly this impression of cohesion among Shi'as was successfully conveyed to other communities within India. In colonial-era observations upon the Shi'a Muslims, what seemed most remarkable to outsiders was their frequently noted close-knit and sealed organisation. One British official working in Lucknow stated that Shi'a leaders could 'rely with certainty on the rank and file obeying the[ir] directions... The word of the mujtahids is law and their lay leaders are men of assured position,... with the Sunnis it is a very different matter.'¹³⁷ One Sunni petitioner equally perceived this assumed unity, writing that 'among the Shias there is no wide social gulf between the higher and lower social orders... all rendering unquestionable obedience.'¹³⁸ It is reasonable to assume that

¹³⁵ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-chārhōm*, 1910, p.74.

¹³⁶ See Chapter 3.

¹³⁷ 'Copy of Mr. Radice's remarks,' Saunders to Hose, 12 February 1909, GAD File No. 366 of 1911, UPSA.

¹³⁸ Needless to say, this was particularly notable in comparison to the supposedly fractured and divisive Lucknawi Sunnis, who were found 'wanting in public and religious spirits' and internally discordant.

such impressions of unity were conveyed by the prevalence of sect-based *anjumans* and the apparent cohesion among them. How substantial this organisation was is another matter entirely. The proliferation of Shi'a *anjumans* always had the capacity to promote diversity and difference instead of organisation and unity, and later chapters will say more on the diverging paths which Shi'a 'organisation' would sometimes take. Here, it will suffice to say that north India's Shi'as were increasingly perceived by themselves and others as a distinct and integrated religious collectivity, working within and represented by exclusively Shi'a organisations.

A final point of importance which derives from the above examination of the process of Shi'a *anjuman*-building is that it cleanly refutes any preconceptions of Indian Shi'ism as either substantially administered from Iraq or inseparably bound to the traditional structures of Nawabi Awadh. The renewal of religious education in India and the notion of a national conference of India's Shi'as represented the indigenisation, or Indianisation, of Shi'a concerns and activities, and reflected the diminishing dependence upon the education and guidance offered abroad. The process of *anjuman*-building among Shi'as also proves entirely that Indian Shi'a leaders were not restricted by loyalties to pre-colonial Awadh and Lucknow, but instead came to adopt the organisational language and styles most current in colonial India. The 'institution-building' of the Nawabi era, by which the Shi'a state implemented religious law as state policy and offered patronage to Shi'a social and religious activities,¹³⁹ gave way to a voluntary process of *anjuman*-building more reflective of modern times. Now devoid of preferential treatment from the state, and established as one of many Indian religious communities rather than part of the ruling establishment, Shi'as through these *anjumans* were able to adapt to and utilise the public association, printing press and other elements common to various religious revivalisms for the purposes of constructing a consciousness of Shi'a commonality in colonial India.

'Humble memorial of the Sunni Muhammadans of Lucknow,' Sayyid A. Aziz to the Deputy Commissioner of Lucknow, 5 December 1910, *ibid.*

¹³⁹ Cole, *Roots of north Indian Shi'ism*, pp.194-220.

Conclusion: the modern *'ulama*, the Islamic city and the Shi'a community

'Abdul Halim Sharar wrote of Nawabi Lucknow that it was 'not the custom' for Muslims or others 'to form clubs and societies.' This was a custom associated with Europeans, Arabs and Persians, he argued, rather than Indians.¹⁴⁰ Such a statement only supplements a sense of the enormous social and cultural impact of such a proliferation of Muslim *anjumans* in the latter part of the nineteenth century, as is discussed above. Writing more generally on Muslim reformist activity in late-nineteenth century north India, one newspaper claimed that 'Indian Musulmans have... a morbid desire for establishing new institutions, but in making unsuccessful attempts at doing so they neglect the old institutions.'¹⁴¹ Muslims, the newspaper continued, were 'always hankering after founding new separate institutions and never thinking of supporting and completing those already existing.'¹⁴² Whatever has been said about the cultural resilience and resistance to change among the traditional Shi'a elites of Lucknow, the transformative quality of the numerous Shi'a organisations emerging in Lucknow is not to be doubted. The proliferation of sectarian *anjumans* had an enormous impact upon Shi'a life in U.P. from the late-nineteenth century, and almost completely abandoned the organisational structures integral to Indian Shi'ism before that period.

The Shi'a *tanzim* campaigns offered a province-wide organisational network of specifically Shi'a associations and societies by which families and elites could be integrated into a wider consciousness of religious distinctiveness and public solidarity. Their impact, however, was perhaps strongest in Lucknow. This chapter has shown that almost every Shi'a *anjuman* of note in north India had some connection with Lucknow, a city that was renewed as the geographical and cultural focus of the faith in India. It is therefore fitting to end this assessment in Lucknow itself, with a consideration of the ultimate effects of this process of organisation upon the circle of *mujtahids* and the Shi'a population over which they presided.

¹⁴⁰ Sharar, *Lucknow: the last phase of an oriental culture*, p.195.

¹⁴¹ *Al-Bashir* (Etawah), 5 June 1899, UPNNR.

¹⁴² *Al-Bashir*, 28 August 1899, *ibid*.

The *anjumans* discussed in this chapter all exhibited the ubiquitous presence of a seminal generation of *mujtahids* and *'ulama* in Lucknow. Whether directly or indirectly, they maintained some hand in the foundation, administration or merely inspiration of various kinds of Shi'a organisations, in and outside their own city. A tracing of the senior individuals in the foundation of the Shi'a *madrasas*, conferences and other *anjumans* reveals a surprisingly compact central circle of eminent individuals. Senior *mujtahids* such as Nasir Husain, Najm ul-Hasan, Aqa Hasan and Muhammad Baqir Rizvi were only the most exalted and important figures in a process which included diverse Lucknawi *'ulama* such as Muhammad Hadi, Sayyid Ahmad and Sibte Hasan, too numerous to be discussed individually here. This was the new, modernist generation of Shi'a *'ulama* discussed above, who emerged as authoritative public figures from the 1890s.

It was shown above that this generation were frequently perceived to have ushered in a new degree of unity. Indeed, while there were mutual commonalties between these *'ulama* in their age, cultural associations and shared municipality, possibly a more important factor in instilling the unity they often exhibited as a group was their mutual participation and cooperation within modern Shi'a *anjumans*. Contrasting with the 'inward turn' away from colonial society or their displacement by lay religious movements, as has occupied some studies of the Indian *'ulama* during the colonial period, this clique became the most prominent and widely involved participants in the frenzied formation and expansion of sect-based organisations which marked the period. Their fresh engagement with such *anjumans* and their enhanced involvement in public activities were largely unprecedented and demonstrate, in contrast to descriptions of the religious traditionalism of Lucknow, the striking adaptability of these later *'ulama* to the modern conditions of colonial India. Perhaps more than ever before in pre-colonial or colonial Awadh, public involvement replaced the scholarly reputation or the familial name as the crucial basis of clerical authority, and narrowed their distance from the lay Shi'a population of Lucknow.

This chapter has of course investigated those pursuits, such as *madrasas* and the Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor and the Shi'a Conference, in which Lucknow's circle of

mujtahids appeared to propound a largely united front. Alongside these, however, it is worth noting that many *mujtahids* engaged individually in personal projects of a similarly public character. Aqa Hasan, for instance, formed an *anjuman* known as Yadgar-i-‘Ulama in 1912, directed at disseminating knowledge and re-publishing the writings of the Nasirabadi *mujtahids*.¹⁴³ During the same year, Nasir Husain’s public activities were pitched at sustaining the memory of the seventeenth-century martyr Qazi Nor-Ullah Shastari. Starting annual *majalis* in 1912 at his recently reconstructed tomb in Agra. Nasir Husain established the Anjuman-i-Mu‘in-ul-Za‘irin to administer these rites.¹⁴⁴ Such individual endeavours among these *mujtahids* are too numerous to be discussed here, suffice to say that a similar *anjuman*-led discourse of organisation drove the Shi‘a ‘*ulama* individually as well as collectively.

The willingness with which these religious authorities became involved in the management of public organisations contrasts with the quietude of the previous generation of ‘*ulama*. Instead, their new engagement with programmes of education and welfare better compares with the role of the *mujtahids* at the peak of their power in the 1840s. Attempts by the ‘*ulama* to order religious instruction and their newly assumed function as the providers of charity through their participation in voluntarily-funded institutions such as orphanages, boarding houses and schools, it could be suggested, somewhat echo the earlier role of *mujtahids* in education and charitable dispensation at the peak of Nawabi power.¹⁴⁵

Additionally, it could be argued that the indigenisation of religious life, or the reinvigoration of Indian Shi‘ism in the national context unbound by connections with Iraq, incurred a new vigour into the activities of the Shi‘a ‘*ulama*. The tangible loss of contact with Iraq perhaps offered them a certain amount of autonomy and prompted a

¹⁴³ Ja‘isi ed., *Khāndān-i-ijtihād nambar*, p.87.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Abbas Nasir Saeed Abaqati and Murtaza Nasir Saeed Abaqati, *Mazar-e-shaheed-e-salis* (Lucknow, circa 2000). I am grateful to the Nasiriya library, Lucknow, for providing this document.

¹⁴⁵ It is worth mentioning at this point that the charitable function of the ‘*ulama* did not end with foundations such as the orphanage and Shi‘a College. Some time after the peak of the Shi‘a Conference in the 1910s a number of *mujtahids*, many of them from this same original circle, worked extensively for the establishment of schools for Shi‘a children and refuges for orphans and widows. Ja‘isi ed., *Khāndān-i-ijtihād nambar*, pp.87-8. Such activities are additionally referenced in further chapters.

turn towards indigenous traditions.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters, it seems that the twin processes of the distancing from Iraq together with their enhanced involvement in public life ultimately engendered a new propensity among Shi'a *'ulama* to become involved in wide-ranging national and political affairs, as will be discussed in following chapters. Through this unprecedented involvement in public activity and secular as well as religious issues, the senior Shi'a *'ulama* were apparently able to enhance their own power and prestige and gradually presented themselves as the guardians of the Shi'a voice in modern India.

The *anjuman*-centred process of organisation among Shi'as transformed not only the function of the Lucknawi *'ulama*, but the importance of their seat of Lucknow itself. Alongside the processes of religious renewal and associational congregation and cooperation discussed above, one further consequence of *tanzim* upon Indian Shi'ism must here be acknowledged: 'Lucknawisation,' or the unprecedented focus upon Lucknow as the centre of national Shi'a reform. Following the upheavals of 1857, Lucknow had lost much of its precedence as the centre of Indian Shi'ism, and religious life in subsequent years appears to have been very specific to the *qasbas* in which it was performed. Muharram reflected regional and local *qasba* affiliations, rather than 'Indian Shi'ism' as such. The tuition of aspiring *'ulama* by relatives or acquaintances of the same vocation, the management of mosques and *imambaras* by local dignitaries and the organisation of Muharram rites upon local endowments were all structures which meant that, in the absence of a wider centre, Shi'a religious life had been largely particular to the arenas in which it was conducted rather than uniform across localities. Newly emergent Shi'a institutions and organisations, however, reinforced the centrality of Lucknow in Shi'a life. Through its new *madrasas*, Lucknow once again became the foremost centre for religious education, which could attract students and then depute them back to their own *qasbas*. The Shi'a Conference was most active in Lucknow, the location where its offices were held, from which Shi'a Conference envoys were sent and in which a strategy for India's Shi'as was prescribed. Printed Shi'a tracts as discussed in

¹⁴⁶ C.f. Cole, *Sacred space and holy war*, p.9.

the next chapter, while in the late-nineteenth century published from various towns, increasingly came over time to originate from the single centre of Lucknow.

Colonial Lucknow was, thus, established as the religious and cultural, and ultimately social and political, centre of Indian Shi'ism. In addition to its Nawabi history and resident *'ulama*, the city was in some senses well-placed for this new role. As Lucknow was moulded into an administrative hub, the urban residence of Awadh's *taluqdars* and an emerging political centre, it became a cross-over point in which Shi'a landholders, gentries and local religious and social leaders could convene and communicate, returning to their *qasbas* for family occasions and religious festivals. Through their confluence in Lucknow, networks of Shi'a activity were able to embrace local and familial connections from across the province. As such, the evocation of religious community among Shi'as tended to entrench rather than erode their relationship to Lucknow. Studies of religious and casteist reform movements in India have often implied the substitution of local bonds with the creation of wider structures of community, giving the sense of the imminence of a Muslim solidarity which transcended local boundaries.¹⁴⁷ However, and in something of a contrast to the obsession in scholarship with the search for a Muslim 'centre' supplanting local or geographical specificity, community-formation among Indian Shi'as often seemed to signify the expansion of Lucknow as the religious, cultural and social hub of Indian Shi'ism. Despite the numerous Shi'a populations across India and the presence of several important seats of earlier Shi'a rule, Lucknow earned a centrality in Shi'a religio-cultural life unprecedented in modern times, perhaps analogous to the enhanced status of Benares as the holy city and core of Hinduism during the same period.¹⁴⁸

In some ways, early twentieth century Lucknow can be compared in the broadest sense to the notion of the pre-modern 'Islamic city,' evoked by Orientalists such as Hourani, Lapidus and Stern. The evocation of the 'common character' of Near and Middle Eastern cities by such scholars, with common features including the centrality of the

¹⁴⁷ E.g. David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's first generation: Muslim solidarity in British India* (Princeton, 1978), *passim*.

¹⁴⁸ Dalmia, *The nationalisation of Hindu traditions*, *passim*.

congregational mosque, the presence of numerous religious schools, the integration of social and religious civic leadership and the ties of religious networks binding residential neighbourhoods, seems to elicit strong comparison with early twentieth century Shi'a Lucknow.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, the argument of such theorists that an integrated social and religious Islamic leadership could administer the civic community in the aftermath of the loss of state power¹⁵⁰ seems to be realised by the Shi'a *anjumans* of Lucknow. These organisations took charge of Shi'a affairs with considerable vigour and independence, despite the supposedly penetrating and oppressive influence of the British government in the municipal affairs of Lucknow.¹⁵¹ Indeed, the arising Shi'a *madrasas*, public organisations and charitable institutions present Lucknow instead as more evocative of Sandra Freitag's notion of the 'alternative world' to the colonial order, an idiom which helps to explain the seeming invisibility of the colonial state in many of the Shi'a organisational efforts described for the period.¹⁵²

Indeed, the renewal of the presence of Shi'ism in the public spaces of Lucknow reinforced the city's 'Shi'a' character, something of a contrast with the frequently-assumed continuity of Lucknow's cross-communal Nawabi culture. As budding networks of *anjumans* emerged in municipal public spaces, so the integrated cultures and communities of Lucknow gave way to ever more diverse equivalents. Following thirty years of public quietism among Shi'a and Sunni communities, the city suddenly witnessed the rapid emergence of *madrasas*, conferences, printing presses, missionary organisations, libraries, literary associations, commercial enterprises and welfare institutions all along sectarian lines. The Shi'a Conference itself remarked upon

¹⁴⁹ A.H. Hourani, 'Introduction: the Islamic city in the light of recent research,' in A.H. Hourani and S.M. Stern eds., *Papers on Islamic history I: the Islamic city, a colloquium* (Oxford, 1970), pp.12-8. Other aspects of Hourani's assessment bear an even greater affinity with Lucknow, such as the description of the Islamic city in terms of 'collective action' and the volume of public activity. Moreover, the described integration of religious and corporate life through the medieval *turuq* ('guilds' or Sufi orders) is mimicked in our example by the similarly combined activities of Shi'a *anjumans*.

¹⁵⁰ S.M. Stern, 'The constitution of the Islamic city,' in *ibid*, pp.25-50.

¹⁵¹ Oldenburg, *The making of colonial Lucknow*, *passim*.

¹⁵² Sandra Freitag, *Collective action and community: public arenas and the emergence of communalism in colonial north India* (Berkeley, 1989), p.6. The seeming absence of the state could also point to the possible desire on the part of these *mujtahids* to avoid direct association with the colonial regime, maintaining a 'social and ritual distance.' C.f. Avril Powell, *Muslims and missionaries in pre-Mutiny India* (London, 1993), p.74.

Lucknow's evolution from a cosmopolitan, integrated municipality into a stage comprised of separate schools, orphanages, hotels and commercial enterprises for alternative religious communities.¹⁵³ This parting of the ways on matters of communal advancement mimics the process of Hindu-Muslim differentiation in other U.P. cities from the 1880s. On the other hand, the sectarian nexus along which this sectionalism occurred was very specific to Lucknow itself, and the transformation of old Lucknow into a theatre with parallel and often conflicting Shi'a and Sunni institutions left Lucknow as an independent microcosm of Shi'a-Sunni segregation with few parallels in India.

Alongside the spate of Shi'a organisation came the re-working of descriptions of community among Indian Shi'as. Increasingly during this period, Shi'as were evoked as a *qaum*, a term indicating an autonomous collective grouping usually translated into English as 'community' or 'nation.'¹⁵⁴ The term *qaum* was that frequently espoused by Sayyid Ahmad Khan to describe Indian Muslims,¹⁵⁵ and the use of the term by the early twentieth century to demarcate Shi'a Muslims mimicked the language adopted by Muslim reformists to describe the distinct Muslim 'nation,' and no less the evocation of a Hindu 'nation' by groups such as the Arya Samaj.¹⁵⁶ *Qaum* was adopted in the vernacular religious writings and proceedings of emerging Shi'a *madrasas* and organisations, and its usage was accelerated by its constant presence in the rhetoric of the Shi'a Conference and its associate *anjumans*, especially the newspaper *Ittehad*, as will be further discussed in subsequent chapters.

¹⁵³ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'īdād-i-ijlās-i-hashtim*, 1914, p.73.

¹⁵⁴ For Sir Sayyid's definition of the term *qaum*, see Lelyveld, *Aligarh's first generation*, passim, pp.26-7, 300-348; Safia Amir, 'Semantics of the word Qawm: a study of Sir Sayyad Ahmad Khan' in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* Vol XLIX, (4, 2001), pp.53-61; Farzana Shaikh, 'Millat and mahzab: rethinking Iqbal's political vision,' in Mushirul Hasan and Asim Roy eds., *Living together separately: cultural India in history and politics* (New Delhi, 2005), pp.387-8; Ayesha Jalal, 'Negotiating colonial modernity and cultural difference: Indian Muslim conceptions of community and nation, 1878-1914,' in Leila Tarazi Fawaz and C.A. Bayly ed.s, *Modernity and culture from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean* (New York, 2002), pp.230-60.

¹⁵⁵ For a discussion of Sir Sayyid's use of the so-called 'semantic flexibility' of the term of *qaum*, see Amir, 'Semantics of the word Qawm,' pp.53, 59-60.

¹⁵⁶ For an enlightening study of the evocation of 'religion' as a *qaum*, *panth* or *dharm*, and the conferring of a so-called 'unified and organised *qaumik* form' upon Hinduism by such reformist groups, see Mark Juergensmeyer, *Religion as social vision: the movement against untouchability in twentieth-century Punjab* (Berkeley, 1982), pp.2-6.

Formerly, *qaum* had rarely been used to evoke the Shi'as as a group. As far as can be discerned from nineteenth-century texts, more usual were the terms *jama'at* or *millat*, each of which was carried into the Urdu writings of Shi'a *'ulama* and writers from its presence in Persian texts.¹⁵⁷ These terms denoted communities on a primarily religious basis, suggesting the status of Shi'as, respectively, as a Muslim 'party,' or as part of the wider Islamic people. The new application of *qaum* to denote the Shi'as carried connotations of national and ethnic distinctiveness, and implied their autonomy as a distinct and independent community. As of the turn of the twentieth century, the Shi'as were no longer part of the Islamic *millat*, or one *jama'at* within a Muslim *qaum*. They were an entirely separate *qaum* of their own, well-defined, close-knit and exclusive, looking to their own heritage and aspiring to cultural, social and political autonomy as a distinct community in India.

¹⁵⁷ For instance, Ja'far ibn Sa'id ul-Hilli, *Jāmi' ul-Ja'farī: sharī'at-ul-Islām* (Lucknow, circa 1870s), passim; Ghulam Haider Khan, *Tehqīq-i-Ja'farī*, (Lucknow, 1888), passim. These texts are partially translations, or make extensive use, of earlier Persian writings; it is thus quite plausible that the usage of the term *qaum* coincided with the usage of Urdu as a key agency of Shi'a writing, discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

TABLIGH AND IKHTILAFAT: SHI'A RELIGIOUS PROSELYTISATION AND CONFLICT IN COLONIAL INDIA

Introduction: the *zakir*, *wa'iz* and the immediate face of Shi'ism

In 1910, the Sunni propagandist 'Abdul Shakoor drew attention to the emergence of a 'fresh religious life' (*na'i mazhabi zindagi*) among India's Shi'a Muslims.¹ One aspect of this religious renewal was the wide array of *tanzim* campaigns as discussed in the previous chapter. From the close of the 1880s *madrasas* were founded, mosques and *imambaras* were repaired or freshly built, and the senior *'ulama* of Lucknow substantially expanded their public significance through their role in numerous Shi'a *anjumans*. A second aspect, however, was the theme of *tabligh*, religious proselytisation, the presence of which was ubiquitous in discourses of religious renewal. Like the notion of *tanzim* of the previous chapter, the term *tabligh* is associated with particular Sunni revivalist campaigns of the 1920s, but was actually a theme common to much of the discourse of religious revitalisation on both Shi'a and Sunni sides from the nineteenth century onwards.² This chapter will focus upon the ideas and manner of religious proselytisation among Shi'as during the period, discussing the emergence of bodies which aspired to publicly promote faith in the central tenets and enforce the correct practices of Shi'ism.

A few of points of difference in analysis from the previous chapter need to be noted. Firstly, this chapter does not only examine Lucknow but, given the concerns of this language of *tabligh* for the expansion of the faith into other centres, discusses numerous

¹ 'Luckna'u kē masībat-zada Sunīōn kī faryād ōr vāqā'ī asbāb-i-masībat' (Lucknow, circa 1910), a pamphlet contained in General Administration Department (GAD) File No. 366 of 1911, Uttar Pradesh State Archives, Lucknow (UPSA), p.2; Shamraluddin Ahmad, *Shikast-i-'azīm bā'i-ādā-i-Qur'ān-i-karīm* (Lucknow, 1920), p.3.

² For a long history of understandings of *tabligh* in Indian Islam, see Yoginder Sikand, *The origins and development of the Tablighi-Jama'at: a cross-comparative study* (New Delhi, 2002), pp.16-64.

municipalities in U.P.. Furthermore, this chapter will focus less upon the established *mujtahids*, but instead will mostly discuss that lower level of orators and preachers, known as *wa'iz* or *zakir*. These were the individuals who more usually took to the public *mimbar* addressing audiences after prayers, or who led private and public *majlis* gatherings during the weeks of Muharram. Many of those trained in the burgeoning *madrasa* network of north India came to fulfil exactly these functions. The *wa'izen* were often funded by influential individuals who would invite them to speak in their localities, and they often drew support from more senior *'ulama* in their respective towns; this said, their roles were largely separate. In contrast to the Lucknawi abodes of the *mujtahids*, the presence of *wa'izen* in the mosques and *muhallas* of towns with Shi'a populations, together with the relative independence from institutional structures in which they operated, meant that they often encapsulated the more immediate public presence of Shi'ism. As Fischer claims, it was 'in this role that the passion of Shi'ism [was] most clearly focused.'³ It was they who most often acted as the connecting point between the reformist trends within the circle of *mujtahids* and social dignitaries and the wider population, and between the reformist agendas of Lucknow and other centres of U.P..

While the previous chapter examined wide currents of both religious and secular organisation among Shi'as, this chapter is concerned primarily with modern developments within the Shi'a religion itself. As such, it relates to wider studies of religious reform within Indian Islam. What, for instance, was the impact upon Shi'ism of what Barbara Metcalf termed an 'inward-looking strategy,' an introspective turn among Muslim religious reformists, who eschewed questions of state organisation and instead initiated an attempt at internal correction of faith and practice?⁴ Alternatively, what change was incurred in Shi'ism as a result of what Francis Robinson has described as a shift towards more 'this-worldly' manifestations of Islam, by which new systems of knowledge and modern media inaugurated a fresh emphasis upon individual instrumentality in the world, and the responsibility of the individual to act?⁵ What was

³ Michael M.J. Fischer. *Iran: from religious dispute to revolution* (Massachusetts, 1980), p.100.

⁴ Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Princeton, 1982), pp.11-4.

⁵ Francis Robinson, 'Religious change and the Self in Muslim South Asia since 1800,' in Francis Robinson ed., *Islam and Muslim history in South Asia* (New Delhi, 2000), pp.105-21.

the impact of the onset of print? More generally, did Shi'ism conform to the wider trend among Muslim, Hindu and Sikh reformists of the construction of more organised and standardised manifestations of religion, with ever more carefully delineated boundaries?⁶ An analysis of the transformations of religious faith, practice and leadership within Indian Shi'ism offers an excellent example of the styles and effects of religious renewal in colonial India.

Finally, this chapter will also introduce the subject of Shi'a-Sunni sectarianism, which was in the ascendant in colonial north India during this period. As was argued in the introduction, analysis of Islamic sectarianism in India has remained largely unexplored, hitherto lacking the same scrutiny as has been applied to studies of Hindu-Muslim communalism. Drawing from analysis of long-term processes of religious change, this chapter aims to present a framework for understanding the dynamics and causes of Shi'a-Sunni religious conflict, considering why religious proselytisation and polemic were so heavily intertwined, and why the renewal of religious consciousness should have taken place along such oppositional and conflictive lines.

Maulavis, majalis and 'Mission' in Shi'a Islam

'Our holy and humble teachers and their pure education, they lifted the curse of our stutter through their oratory. After such a light had shone, the candle could not be extinguished.'⁷

One of the intentions and outcomes of campaigns of religious revitalisation from the nineteenth century onwards was to establish a role for the Shi'a religion in the developing public spheres of cities such as Lucknow. The previous chapter described a largely visual and spatial conquest of Lucknow's cityscape by the representatives of Indian Shi'ism, with the foundation of *madrasas* and the re-appropriation of the city's central religious buildings as sites of public worship. There was, however, a simultaneous intervention

⁶ Harjot Oberoi, *The construction of religious boundaries: culture, identity and diversity in the Sikh tradition* (Delhi, 1994).

⁷ Akbar Husain Rizvi, *Madrasa't ul-Wā'izēh kī āwāz* (Lucknow, circa 1928), p.10.

into the verbal and printed public spheres of colonial Lucknow, and it is these attempts to communicate religious knowledge and make it accessible to the population which concern us here.

The cornerstone of Shi'a *tabligh* was the heightened emphasis placed by Shi'a reformists upon oratory or eloquence (sometimes called *khutbah*, referring to the sermons traditionally given after *namaz-i-jum'a*) in both written and spoken forms. The prioritisation of public communication, a characteristic which distinguished religious renewal during this period, prompted a fundamental change in the role of even the senior Shi'a *'ulama*. The key *mujtahids* of the late nineteenth century had their authority established primarily upon the strength of their *ijazat* and the reputation of the *'alim* under whom they studied. By the twentieth century, a change in the designation of religious authority had become evident. The increasingly numerous graduates of Lucknow's *madrasas*, whose qualifications lacked the same connotation of expertise as the *ijazat* of some of the *mujtahids* of the previous generation, instead increasingly strove for distinction based on their reputation for fine oratory, be it written or spoken, and their ability to communicate their learning to the Shi'a public.

One such example is Sibte Hasan, trained in Madrasa Nazimiya and Sultan ul-Madaris, who quickly became one of twentieth-century India's most prominent *'ulama*. His reputation derived from his gift for eloquent speech and writing, and he was frequently acknowledged as 'the greatest orator in Urdu that India has produced.'⁸ Encapsulating the orientation of many *'ulama* towards the task of communication evident in his time, he earned the title *Khatib-ul-Azim*, or Great Orator. As is written in his *tazkira* (biographical treatise):

'Maulana Sibte Hasan was in all reality perfected in oratory, and oratory was perfected in him. The *mimbar* (speaking stand) was given grace by him, and he was its grace. If the gift of praise (*fan-i-zakri*) had come from the heavens, then he gave it the greatest throne, and if it was a star, then he nurtured it into the sun illuminating the world.'⁹

⁸ 'List of those persons who have done yeomen service to the Shia College cause,' Fateh 'Ali Khan to Meston, 24-7 July 1917, Education 'A' File No. 152 of 1914, UPSA.

⁹ Imamia Mission, *Khatib-i-āl-i-Muhamad* (Lucknow, 1933-34), p.61. Some of the great successes of Indian Shi'a public organisation at this time, such as the mustering of the resources and energies to found

In many ways, Sibte Hasan embodies the transformation of the Shi'a clergy by the early twentieth century. He received the entirety of his training in India, imparted formally in recognised institutions. While never achieving the same jurisprudential authority as those most senior *mujtahids* trained in southern Iraq, he quickly ascended to national prominence through his involvements in public religious life: his famed oratory, his participation in the teaching of Lucknow's *madrasas*, and his establishment of new schools. His example demonstrates how many 'ulama of the colonial period assumed public involvements, rather than reclusive excellence, as the means of legitimising their role.

Yet it was not only the *madrasa*-educated 'ulama who gained such a following as exalted public speakers. A new standard in *khutbah* was reached in the twentieth century by a populist Shi'a speaker, Haji Maqbool Ahmed, the appearance of whom was widely interpreted as having been a turning point in the revitalisation of Shi'a religious life.¹⁰ A Sunni orphan of Delhi by background, he converted to Shi'ism by choice in his 'teens. Having gained great fame as a preacher initially in the mosques and seminaries of Delhi, in the early years of the twentieth century he toured the fertile ground of U.P. where he became a renowned preacher achieving, it is said, particular fame and influence among the Shi'as of Lucknow and Jaunpur.¹¹ His *khutbah* and in particular his *majalis* sermons gained unprecedented popularity, and appeared to have a profound and long-term effect upon Shi'a public religious activity:

'A revolution in the preference and intellectual condition of faith among the population came upon the appearance of Maulana Maqbool Ahmed. The general public were so compelled at hearing this 'alim that the people could not get their fill. Wherever news spread that the aforementioned was preaching people would come, running alongside or behind his convoy, and congregate there in their hundreds and thousands.'¹²

the Shi'a College of 1917, were attributed directly to the persuasive skills of Sibte Hasan. *The Leader* (Allahabad), 9 October 1913, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge (CSAS).

¹⁰ Ahmad, *Shikast-i-'azīm*, p.3.

¹¹ Syed Murtaza Husain, *Matla'-i-Anwār: tazkira-i-Shī'a-afāzil-va-'ulamā, kabār-i-bar-i-saghīr-i-Pāk-va-Hind* (Karachi, 1981), pp.650-1.

¹² Imamia Mission, *Khatīb-i-āl-i-Muhamad*, p.11-2.

Contrary to Sibte Hasan, Maqbool Ahmed was not a product of anything we could call a religious establishment. He did not have a family background of religious learning, receive a formal religious education, originate from Lucknow or maintain associations with the established Lucknow *'ulama*. He was in fact criticised by some among the latter, since he delivered sermons in common Hindustani which incorporated English rather than Persian or Arabic vocabulary.¹³ His example demonstrates the capacity of the twentieth century's developing public sphere in urban centres to elevate fresh, subversive voices, as well as pre-established authorities, to popular prominence.

The Shi'a *tabligh* was not confined to a few personalities, but became the driving purpose of new Shi'a *anjumans*, among them certain *madrasas*. The Madrasa't ul-Wa'izen, founded in Lucknow in 1919, quickly became the foremost Shi'a *madrasa* of South Asia. Pioneered like earlier Lucknawi schools by the *mujtahid* Najm ul-Hasan, and built and administered upon the funds provided by a specially founded *waqf* and an annual donation drawn from the estates of the Raja of Mahmudabad, the school was the fruit of the resolutions in the Shi'a Conference since 1907 calling for a so-called 'Shi'a Mission.'¹⁴ The *madrasa*, termed by its founders a 'house of propagation (*dar-ul-asha'at*),¹⁵ was the destination of many of those *'ulama* who had claimed *fazil* in Nazimiya, Sultan ul-Madaris and other schools in U.P. discussed above, who then came here to attain the higher qualification of *wa'iz*, qualifying them to offer public sermons on the *madrasa*'s behalf. It included a seminary for the training of preachers, a hostel, an extensive library for both scholarly and public use and an in-house printing press, the latter an addition which had become increasingly common in north Indian *madrasas* in recent years. Within two years, the *madrasa* had gained considerable prominence, recruiting scholars from across India, who would then carry its 'mission' back to their native *qasbas* and districts.¹⁶

¹³ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-chhatā-i-Āl Indiā Shī'a Kānferans, munaqīda 18-20 October 1912* (Lucknow, 1913), p.123.

¹⁴ The *madrasa* was founded in commemoration of the deaths of Najm ul-Hasan's son and the Raja of Mahmudabad's brother.

¹⁵ Rizvi, *Madrasa't ul-Wā'izēh kī āwāz*, p.13.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp.11-3.

If the Madrasa Nazimiya and Sultan ul-Madaris had been institutions of *tanzim*, or attempts to regulate religious education and jurisprudence, then Madrasa't ul-Wa'izen ushered in an era of *tabligh*. The *madrasa* presented itself not as an instrument merely of religious revitalisation, but as an active missionary organisation. Trained *wa'izen* were quickly dispatched to Punjab, Peshawar, Bihar, Bengal and Gujarat, by which the Shi'a *tabligh* was presented 'across approximately half of the area of British India, and 22 crores of population,' as well as in Africa.¹⁷ Proselytising literature was produced, including a number of serialised publications, among them the regular *Al-Wa'iz* and the monthly English-language magazine *Muslim Review*, in order to address a new and wider audience.¹⁸

One aspect of the *madrasa's* *tablighi* efforts was its appropriation of fresh linguistic means as well as its innovative media of communication. The way for Shi'as to avoid their own extinction in the face of this communicative process, claimed the '*ulama* of the *madrasa*, was a focus upon new eloquence and communication, both written and spoken, by a new generation of orators. Moving away from the authority of the traditional languages of Islamic scholarship, Arabic and Persian,¹⁹ the chief demand of these fresh orators was to be 'knowledgeable and clear in indigenous and foreign languages,' and primarily those of the Indian subcontinent.²⁰ The adoption of Urdu compares with and served as a counterpoint to the 'Hindi sphere' through which Hinduism was simultaneously reinvigorated in other urban centres of U.P..²¹ Moreover, alongside the disaffiliation from Iraq discussed in the previous chapter, this 'vernacularisation' was one further manifestation of 'Indianisation' among Shi'a *maulavis*, who met the declining knowledge of Arabic and Persian with a turn inward to indigenous traditions.

Importantly, *tabligh* as embodied by the Madrasa't ul-Wa'izen came to notify explicit missionary activity under the *madrasa's* centralised administration and guidance:

¹⁷ Ibid, p.12.

¹⁸ Husain, *Matla'-i-Anwār*, pp.676-7.

¹⁹ The authority denoted by the use of Arabic and Persian by the Indian '*ulama* is discussed in Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The 'ulama in contemporary Islam: custodians of change* (Princeton, 2002), pp.43-9.

²⁰ Rizvi, *Madrasa't ul-Wā'izēh kī āwāz*, pp.8, 14.

²¹ Francesca Orsini, *The Hindi public sphere 1920-1940: language and literature in the age of nationalism*

‘Within the constitution of all of us is the form of a missionary. Inside every member is present the armoury to be made into a missionary. The only necessity now is that these missionaries are given their direction with the apparatus of those modern formations and enterprises of the current times.’²²

The constant evocation of the *madrasa* both before and after its foundation as a ‘Mission,’ transliterated from the English word into Urdu, demonstrates how the Shi‘a *tabligh* was framed clearly in the language of overt missionary activity, borrowing from Christian ‘Mission’ as well as wider evocations of *tabligh* among Muslims and *shuddhi* (a religious purification movement) among Hindus. Resembling these latter movements especially was the adopted ideal that this ‘Mission’ should break the divisions between different castes and social groups. The Madrasa‘t ul-Wa‘izen, in striking contrast to the continued citations of nobility and ancestral distinction by north Indian Shi‘as, criticised the fact that Shi‘as were invariably of *sharif* ancestry and contained few from among the *ajlaf* (indigenous) castes.²³ The emphasis on actively conferring religious knowledge upon India’s common populations was one relatively new to Shi‘ism, and more in line with the *tabligh* campaigns in Mewat or the cow-protection movements in late-nineteenth century Hinduism, which comparably aspired to traverse caste boundaries.²⁴

The idea of ‘Mission,’ moreover, reflects the pressure felt by some of the Shi‘a ‘*ulama* in the face of the rise of a number of aggressive campaigns of proselytisation by other religious communities. The founders of Madrasa‘t ul-Wa‘izen evoked the description of India as essentially a battleground upon which all faiths were possessed of new missionary organisations, arguing that Shi‘as had been by comparison slow to accept this trend:

‘Every religion is free. All faiths are level and open upon the great stage (*medan-i-‘amal*). Every faith and every community in its freedom must be ready, with great seriousness and without surprise, for the questioning of faith, and the exchange of beliefs.’²⁵

(New Delhi, 2002), passim.

²² Rizvi, *Madrasa‘t ul-Wā‘izēn kī āwāz*, p.10.

²³ *All India Shia conference: Calcutta sessions 1928, Presidential address of His Highness Mir Ali Nawaz Khan Talpur, ruler of Khairpur State* (Khairpur, circa.1930), p.16.

²⁴ Sikand, *The origins and development of the Tablighi-Jama‘at*; John Zavos, *The emergence of Hindu nationalism in India* (New Delhi, 2000).

²⁵ Rizvi, *Madrasa‘t ul-Wā‘izēn kī āwāz*, p.8.

Such words show clearly the perception by religious leaders of the transition within Indian Shi'ism away from the advantages of state patronage in the early nineteenth century into simply one of many faiths, forced into battling for its survival against the unprecedented scrutiny projected by other religious communities.

This raises the interesting question of whether the development during this period of Shi'a oratory and the rhetoric of *tabligh* owed in part to the simultaneous competitive revivalisms amongst other faiths. It has been convincingly demonstrated in scholarship that the communicative styles of Muslim resurgence, whether spoken or written, were spurred in part by the activities of Christian missionaries in nineteenth century north India.²⁶ This hypothesis has strong support in the case of Shi'as. Tracts were produced which attempted to contradict Sunni and Christian doctrines simultaneously, offering different proofs in each case,²⁷ and a comparison of the sufferings of Imam Husain and Christ was also established as a subject of contention.²⁸ Lucknow certainly had a powerful presence of Christian proselytising organisations and evidently caused some worry among Lucknawi Shi'as; for instance it was alleged that the Shi'a orphanage was founded on account of Christian successes in proselytising among Shi'a orphans.²⁹

However, despite awareness of the parallel campaigns amongst such communities, it was doubtless the emergence of the Tablighi-Jama'at which gave the Shi'a *tabligh* its greatest source of orientation. While the Tablighi-Jama'at's ability to cross the boundaries of locality, nation, language, caste and the differences between Sunni schools have been widely acknowledged, and while the organisation even gained involvement from the Ahmadi community, it made little outreach to Shi'as.³⁰ At the same time, Shi'as

²⁶ Metcalf, *Islamic revival in British India*, p.198. For comparable influences upon Hindu revivalism, see Zavos, *The emergence of Hindu nationalism*, pp.38-9.

²⁷ Ghulam Haider Khan, *Tehqīq-i-Ja'farī*, (Lucknow 1888), passim.

²⁸ *Mukhbir-i-Alam* (Moradabad), 23 December 1912, United Provinces Native Newspaper Reports (UPNNR), Oriental and India Office Collections, London (OIOC).

²⁹ *All India Shia Conference: Calcutta sessions 1928, Presidential address of His Highness Mir Ali Nawaz Khan Talpur*, p.12. The induction of native orphans into Christianity by European missionaries is also discussed in Avril Ann Powell, *Muslims and missionaries in pre-Mutiny India* (London, 1993), pp.158-63.

³⁰ 'What they frequently dwell upon and take pride in is their important role in bridging the doctrinal divide between various schools of theology and jurisprudence. What they will not react to is why they keep the

seemingly voiced no approval of the Tabligh-i-Jama'at's campaigns initiated in the 1920s. As such, the aggressive campaigns of religious dissemination of both sides aided to give the impression that there was no co-ordinated 'Muslim' *tabligh*, but rather a series of separate and possibly adversarial projects. Despite the constant circulation of the language of *tabligh* and attempted proselytisation among Muslim groups in early-twentieth century north India, such a flurry of activity represented competitive rather than co-operative currents between separate Muslim reformist movements. Separate religious communities, even in such a supposedly composite and well-integrated city such as Lucknow, were engaged in a constant process of differentiation from and competition with others.

Ultimately, the constant circulation of the theme of *tabligh* effected considerable amendments not simply within public religious organisations and schools, but perhaps alluded to an equally significant transformation of personal faith and conception of the Self. An enhanced duty was conferred upon the *wa'izen, muballighin* (missionaries) and others emerging from Madrasa't ul-Wa'izen and other *madrasas*, who were addressed not as mere teachers or followers of a particular religious tradition, but were conceived as active defenders of their faith. Such language is highly reminiscent of Robinson's description of the development of 'this-worldly' forms of Islam in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which incurred a 'new sense of responsibility' and entailed 'the empowerment of individuals, indeed the requirement placed on individuals to act.'³¹ All such *maulavis* were freshly assigned the obligation to act appropriately, passionately and publicly as representatives and emissaries of their religion. Fittingly, the reference to a 'great stage' (*medan-i-'amal*) in the literature of the Madrasa't ul-Wa'izen³² is somewhat ambiguous; it perhaps refers to modern India as a battleground upon which India's various religious traditions were battling to stamp their marks, or to the life of the

Shias outside their fold. Is their silence an avowal that for them the Shias, who despite reciting the *kalima* day in day out, are beyond the pale of Islam... Although Ilyas forbade his followers to enter into religious controversy and disputes over detail, the Tablighi Jamaat frequently finds itself embroiled... they have themselves taken positions against the Shias (though not officially), and refrain from observing Muharram.' Mushirul Hasan, *Legacy of a divided nation: India's Muslims since independence* (London, 1997), pp.200-

1.

³¹ Robinson, 'Religious change and the Self,' pp.112, 116.

³² Rizvi, *Madrasa't ul-Wā'izēn kī āwāz*, p.8.

individual as the platform upon which they must perform appropriately, but probably to both. This powerful vision of personal empowerment and responsibility, as Robinson points out, perhaps helps to explain much of the zealotry of Muslim religious activity during the colonial period.³³ It also indicates something of the combativeness with which many came to defend their religious convictions against those of alternative sectarian and intellectual positions, as will be discussed later in the chapter.

Printing and proselytisation in Shi'a Islam

Khutbah was projected among the Shi'as through two media, both of which gained in importance in north India during this period: preaching and publishing. The training of *wa'iz* by a new *madrasa*-network as discussed above and the crowds they attracted testify to the importance of the former. Easier for the historian to analyse, however, are the religious writings published during this period. It is without question that a key aid to the distribution of religious oratory came with the impact of print in north India. Publishing houses serving local communities became increasingly common in north Indian cities and towns onwards from the 1870s. Many of the first cities in north India affected by the printing press were those with significant Muslim populations, while even more importantly, in cases such as Lucknow, Moradabad (serving Amroha), Meerut and Jaunpur, the emergence of print coincided with important Shi'a centres.

Much study has been conducted on the implications of the emergence of print upon Islamic resurgence in South Asia. Many authors have stressed the role of the press in offering the *'ulama* and their intellectual orientations a new readership and broadening public access to Islamic ideas.³⁴ Yet the printing press was also employed in the service of particular Islamic doctrinal groupings. Specifically Shi'a publishing houses were in operation in Lucknow by the end of the 1880s. Among these were the *Matba'-i-Ja'fari*, which served many of the Arabic and Persian writing of the *'ulama*, while a prolific Shi'a

³³ Robinson, 'Religious change and the Self,' p.110.

³⁴ Especially Metcalf, *Islamic revival in British India*, p.233; Francis Robinson, 'Islam and the impact of print in South Asia,' in Francis Robinson ed., *Islam and Muslim history*, pp.66-104.

publishing house for Urdu tracts arose in the private property of one ‘Abid ‘Ali Rizvi, a Shi‘a Sayyid from the bustling central *muhalla* of Wazirganj.³⁵ The aim of such establishments was to dispense Shi‘a tracts into and amongst the city’s population. Studies of Lucknow have demonstrated how the city’s press contributed to the emergence of a new and public leadership in the city, in social, political and cultural terms. It was the ability to cultivate the press, it has been argued, that contributed more to the emergence of communities and classes in cities such as Lucknow than traditional status or ancestral heritage.³⁶ In the same way, print played its role in the propagation of a religious consciousness among the city’s Shi‘as unbound by loyalties of family or locality.

When the Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor emerged among the ‘*ulama* of Lucknow at the beginning of the twentieth century, one of its most visible endeavours was the appropriation of new print media for the purposes of proselytisation in Lucknow. It put *anjumans* in place to propagate religious awareness. The *Dar-ul-Tarjuma* was established to translate into Urdu and disseminate the exalted texts of earlier scholars, in particular the writings of Dildar ‘Ali.³⁷ Meanwhile the *Dar-ul-Zikr*, operating separately but simultaneously, produced and published newly authored religious literature.³⁸ Both organs were administered by Muhammad Hadi, a descendant of the Nasirabadi family and an ‘*alim* associated with Madrasa Nazimiya. Both organs appear to have been active in Lucknow for over a decade and were taken under the wing of the Shi‘a Conference after 1907. Nominally, *Dar-ul-Zikr* was served by both Shi‘as and Sunnis, although the organ was also accused of fostering sectarian ill-feeling during the 1900s.³⁹

Who authored these tracts, and what subjects were discussed in the burgeoning Shi‘a presses of Lucknow, Jaunpur and western U.P.? Their writers were sometimes ‘*ulama*; at

³⁵ E.g. Aqa Hasan, *Khazāna’t ul-masā’il ul-fiqhīya* (Lucknow, 1894), p.218; Nur ul-Hasan, *Tawārīkh shahān-i-ma’ziya-i-mazhab-i-‘Isnā ‘Asharīa* (Lucknow, 1896), p.1; Sa’id Isma’il bin Sadr ul-Din, *Sīrāt-ul-Mustaqīm* (Lucknow, 1898-9), *passim*.

³⁶ Sanjay Joshi, *Fractured modernity: making of a middle class in colonial India* (New Delhi, 2001), pp. 24, 34-41.

³⁷ For example, Aqa Hasan, *Tarjuma-i-Imād-ul-Islām hēsa-i-awal: kitāb-ul-tōhīd* (Lucknow, circa 1905).

³⁸ Mustafa Husain Asif Ja’isi ed., *Khāndān-i-ijtihād nambar, shumāra che* (Lucknow, 2005), p.76; All India Shi‘a Conference, *Rō’idād-i-ijlās-i-chārhōm-i-Āl Indiā Shī’a Kānferans, munaqīda 10-12 October 1910* (Lucknow 1911), pp.4, 95. The organisation contained two full-time paid staff.

³⁹ *Al-Najm* (Lucknow), 10 July 1907, UPNNR.

other points they were free-working *maulavis*, many of whom were not religious authorities but merely figures of local prominence with some level of religious education.⁴⁰ Such authors gained their stature less from formal religious training, but from their creative and powerful use of the vernacular in such tracts. With some exceptions, such authors largely neglected the specialist disciplines of *hadis* and *fiqh*, these being left to the qualified, *madrassa*-educated *'ulama* who wrote primarily in Arabic and Persian as testament to their exclusive education. Few senior *'ulama* made incursions into this 'popular,' vernacular press. Instead, most texts were independent tracts and treatises (*rasa'il*), eschewing the traditional authority of the classical languages, and emphasising the communicative abilities of the vernacular. Such genres also gave their authors the freedom to work outside the disciplines of the most senior religious authorities.

While an exhaustive study of the development of vernacular Shi'a treatises would deserve its own study, it is worth identifying a few of its key genres. Many tracts concerned the practice of Muharram, and the exact regulation and purification of the practice of mourning (*azadari*) for the Shi'a martyrs.⁴¹ A large proportion of others focus upon popular histories of the Shi'a Imams, and eulogies for Husain (*marsiyas*). This partially biographical genre of writing reflected one aspect of the wider so-called 'interiorisation' of Islam by reform movements after 1857; a new focus upon the personages of Islam as moral exemplars and suitable guides for the Muslim individual.⁴² Similarly aimed towards the individual, a further emerging genre was that of corrective literature, or works of public instruction. Their authors and contributors were occupied in large part by concern for the proper behaviour (*akhlaq*) of Muslims. For instance one such text, published in Fyzabad and Jaunpur, specified the correct structure, charitable

⁴⁰ To assess this, we need only to look to Amroha, where two established writers of controversial Shi'a critiques of Sunni Islam were Amjad 'Ali Khan, an honorary magistrate and long the Deputy Collector of the district, and the town's *munsif* (judge). From J.S. Lock, undated, and From H.W. Hammond, 21 September 1859, in Hamid Ali Khan ed., *The certificates etc of Hakim Mohamed Amjad Ali Khan, Hakim Mohamed Niaz Ali Khan, Khan Bahadur Sheikh Altaf Hasan Khan, and Munshi Shaukat Hasan* (Lucknow, 1899), pp.1, 6, 27; *Nizam-ul-Mulk* (Moradabad), 10 February 1893, and *Jam-i-Jamshed* (Moradabad), 29 January 1893, UPNNR.

⁴¹ Prominent among these are Hakim Ahmad 'Ali Khan, *Azādārī-i-māh-i-Muharam* (Lucknow, 1905), passim; Sa'id 'Abid 'Ali, *Fāzilāt-nāma-i-ta'ziya* (Bahraich, 1908), passim.

⁴² Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, pp.286-7; Robinson, 'Islam and the impact of print,' pp.95-6.

deeds and actions (*taqvim; waza'if; 'amal*) of the life of the individual. Through this structure the text could outline, firstly, the appropriate observation of the religious calendar and festivals; proper ethics of commerce, finances, interest and management of endowments; and finally, particular responsibilities encompassing issues as broad as prayers, rituals, Haj, slaughter, marriage, and the making of wills.⁴³ Freshly published Shi'a texts of both biographical and instructive slants therefore had at their heart a preoccupation with public behaviour, reflecting the argument of several scholars that religious leaders of this period came to focus less on matters of state, more on the correction of practice and the purification of the conduct of Muslim individuals.⁴⁴

Another series of Shi'a printed works of some importance was newspapers. The emergence of an active newspaper press from the 1870s has long been understood as an active agent in promoting a consciousness of community in north India, and Shi'a newspapers began to emerge decisively from the 1890s. The *Akhbar-i-Imamiya* was published monthly from Lucknow from the beginning of the decade, and while focused largely upon civic affairs in Lucknow, the paper was often used as a vehicle to carry as supplements religious tracts and treatises by Lucknawi and Amrohawi authors. Among these were a biography of the twelve Shi'a Imams, and *Sa'if-i-Qata* (The sword of the Prophet), a controversial tract accusing the first three Caliphs (*Khalifas*) of infidelity to the Prophet.⁴⁵

However, a large number of newly emergent tracts were controversial sectarian writings, most of which attacked the Sunni Caliphs.⁴⁶ In popular Urdu literature at least, religious histories were merged with polemical literature to the extent that the genres were little distinguishable. In this way, religious knowledge was fused inextricably with sectarian polemic, and such provocative works were something of an emerging literary genre in the

⁴³ Haji Sayyid 'Ali Ansar, *Masā'il-i-Ja'firiya* (Fyzabad and Jaunpur, 1915). As with Muslims more generally, a large proportion of such instructive texts were concerned with the correct conduct of women. See especially Sayyid Mujahid Husain Jauhar, *Masnawi Mēwā-i-Shīrīn* (Amroha, 1915) and *Hayāt-i-niswān* (Amroha, circa 1928), passim. More will be said on such texts in a later chapter.

⁴⁴ Metcalf, *Islamic revival in British India*, passim; Robinson, 'Religious change and the Self,' passim.

⁴⁵ Nur ul-Hasan, *Tawārīkh shahān-i-ma'zīya*, passim; *Akhbar-i-Imamia* (Lucknow), April 1893, UPNNR.

⁴⁶ To take just a few of the numerous examples of this genre: Sayyid Muhammad Husain, *Budra-i-Hēdariya li-naqz-i-fēsla-i-Abī Bakrīya* (Muzaffarnagar, 1910); Sa'dat 'Ali Sufi, *Tazkira-i-Imāmēn*

early twentieth century. In the 1910s in U.P., one government report affirmed that 'polemical publications supplied their usual quota. The differences between various Muhammadan sects, as for example, between Shi'as and Sunnis, accounted as always for a certain number.'⁴⁷ It can be seen how the emergence of the printing press in the cities of U.P. created new possibilities for the emergence of sectarianism in colonial India. Polemical tracts emerged not only among Shi'as but among various Muslim groups, such as Deobandis and Bareilvis, Ahl-i-Hadis and Wahhabis.

Furthermore, it is significant that Shi'a and Sunni polemical tracts frequently emerged from the same cities, particular those with strong printing presses, such as Lucknow, Meerut, Moradabad and Jaunpur.⁴⁸ Such municipalities clearly became the chief *akharas* (arenas) in which conflicting religious identities were formed and enacted, with each city sufficiently served by its own publishing industry to witness its own development of sectarian formations. The number of emerging polemical tracts in particular towns initiated a long-term literary conversation among emerging writers; one tract of polemical literature was followed by a counter-tract in specific refutation, passing from one sect to another respectively.⁴⁹ As such, despite their evocation of universal debates and questions, sectarian diatribes sometimes hinted at their distinctly local instigation. In Amroha, for instance, sectarian writing sometimes offered an apparent outlet for local rivalries. One Shi'a author wrote a response to a tract attacking the doctrine of *taqiya* (the Shi'a doctrine of the concealment of faith in times of danger), penned by a resident of the

(Moradabad, 1898).

⁴⁷ *Report on the Administration of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, 1914-15* (Allahabad, 1916), V/10/1916, OIOC, p.72.

⁴⁸ Of these, the first three had numerous lithographic presses that produced many publications on various topics; Jaunpur, however, was noted solely for producing 'polemical works on Musulman theology.' H.R. Nevill, *District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume XXVIII: Jaunpur* (Allahabad, 1908), p.90. Other centres of publication for Shi'a and Sunni tracts were those of central significance for particular Sunni schools, such as Saharanpur or Bareilly, the presence of whom seemed to impel local Shi'a writers in turn. These are general observations from the extensive Urdu catalogues of the Oriental and India Office Collections, London.

⁴⁹ Two texts published in Bijnor demonstrate this point clearly. Muhammad Rahim-ullah Bijnori, *Ibtāl-i-usūl-ul-Shī'a* (Bijnor, 1903) and Sayyid Amir Kazim, *Ehqāq-ul-hāq-ul-ibtāl-ul-bātil* (Bijnor, 1906), passim. The first of these was a systematic Sunni confutation of Shi'a personages and doctrines; the second a defence explicitly written against the former. From the titles as well as their contents, it can be seen that the publication of one tract would initiate a retort from a rival party.

muhalla neighbouring his.⁵⁰ The printing press, therefore, often elevated local rivalries onto a higher level of universalistic religious difference. Moreover, the citation of the Shi'a doctrine of *taqiya* as a point of attack by Sunni polemicists raises another interesting issue: that sectarian polemics often focused upon aspects of Shi'ism drawn from textual accounts rather than as lived in north India. Given the growing visibility of Shi'a religious practice in public spaces, and its role in instigating religious conflict with Sunnis – the increasingly demonstrative practice of Muharram, the evocation of the Imams, the distribution of provocatively sectarian writings and so forth – the focus by Sunnis on the issue of concealment of the Shi'a faith seems to be remote and de-contextualised. Sectarian disputation thus reflected a focus upon textual, idealised, prototypical standards of religion, rather than the everyday forms lived and practiced.⁵¹

This discussion reveals how the sectarian writings so frequently produced during the period were less individual pieces and more part of an ongoing literary dialogue taking place through the lithographic presses of individual towns. It was a dialogue with two effects. For one, it widened the reach of religious knowledge, acquainted new sections of the public with religious doctrine, and democratised its interpretation.⁵² At the same time, it systematised and sharpened the differences between traditions. Indeed, the conversations conducted through these writings were marked by hostility and insularity, rather than communication or any attempted exchange of ideas. Shi'a writings were often marked with warnings that they should not be read by Sunnis.⁵³ Alternatively, other texts projected *tabligh* as an outward as well as inward process, attempting to correct the beliefs of non-Shi'as and pull them into the fold. For instances, one assault upon the Sunni Caliphs published from Amroha stated ultimately that it would be handed out free of charge, so that Sunni Muslims 'may see from their cold hearts and may distinguish truth from falsehood.'⁵⁴ Such polemical writings were aimed not only at internal

⁵⁰ Sayyid Hamza 'Ali, *Tashīh ul-aqā'id* (Amroha, 1919), p.1. A Lahore newspaper serialised these debates in 1904.

⁵¹ C.f. this is the perspective on Muslim sectarian conflict given by Muhammad Qasim Zaman, 'Sectarianism in Pakistan: The radicalization of Shi'i and Sunni identities,' *Modern Asian Studies* (36, 3, 2000)

⁵² Robinson, 'Islam and the impact of print,' *passim*.

⁵³ Kazim, *Ehqāq-ul-hāq*, p.i.

⁵⁴ Sayyid Hamza 'Ali, *Hāq kī kasōtī* (Delhi, 1916), p.80.

regeneration but were projected outwardly at their opponents. This surely contributed to and helps to explain the intensity of the print-wars between alternative authors. Writers thus became defenders of their religion, not simply against internal forgetfulness but against deliberate outside assault.

Despite the seeming outward, aggressive projection of sectarian discourse, it was in fact often a tool used to exercise internal religious reform. It seems that these confrontational writings were generally pitched at the author's own sect, and that in such cases the framing of an alternative religious group as an opponent was a tactic adopted by authors attempting to instruct or direct Shi'as themselves. In other words, the fabrication of an outside opponent offered the sense of urgency and competition which could elicit attention from within the author's own religious community. One striking example of this is a text published from Jaunpur, which outlined the tenets of Usuli Shi'ism through an assault upon Akhbarism, the other branch of 'Isna 'Ashari Shi'ism with a separate conception of *fiqh*.⁵⁵ Akhbari Shi'ism was virtually extinct in north India at the time that this tract was written, and clearly presented little contemporary challenge to the dominance of Usuli Shi'ism.⁵⁶ However, the medium of the polemical sectarian tract simply acted as a convenient means of describing the tenets of Usuli Shi'ism, by comparison and competition with the opponent. The evocation of Akhbarism as an urgent threat to Usuli Shi'ism allowed the author of this tract to outline Usuli tenets with more purpose and passion, and perhaps to assume the status of a defender of the faith among his readership. This example demonstrates something of the interdependent relationship of internal religious renewal and sectarian disputation, and furthermore, shows how the Shi'a *tabligh*, the propagation of religious knowledge among members of the religion, was entirely enmeshed with the consolidation of sectarian polemic. As such, a full understanding of *tabligh* demands a more detailed examination of Shi'a-Sunni religious conflict in colonial India.

⁵⁵ Shaikh Muhammad Kazim, *Tanqīd-ul-taqlīd* (Jaunpur, 1915), *passim*.

⁵⁶ There was a strong Akhbari presence in Hyderabad, but north Indian Shi'ism was entirely dominated by Usulism.

Shi'a-Sunni *ikhtilafat*: religious discord in nineteenth century north India

Having discussed certain aspects of Shi'a religious renewal above, our analysis now turns to the subject of the various manifestations of religious polemic or conflict between Shi'as and Sunnis. As was discussed above, the presumption of Lucknow's quietude and cosmopolitanism, the focus on wider Muslim unitary organisation and the constant shadow of Hindu-Muslim communalism have all served to sometimes conceal the veracity of inter-Muslim religious conflict. Some expressions of sectarianism appeared most dramatically in the early decades of the twentieth century, and will occupy later sections of this chapter. However, before this it is worth offering a brief account of a more general religious evolution within Indian Islam towards increased sectarian specificity. It was in the nineteenth century that we begin to see the erosion of many of those factors and institutions which could harmonise Shi'a and Sunni belief and practice into mutually sympathetic systems and likewise into benevolent religious communities, in favour of conceptions more broadly hostile to communication or reconciliation between Shi'a and Sunni traditions.

Much scholarship has implied that Islam as lived on a local level in the nineteenth century *qasbas* of U.P. proved itself a more syncretic, integrationist force than later instances of Shi'a-Sunni conflict would have us believe. Several examples can be identified of a gradual transmutation of custom and practice in nineteenth century north India away from religious mutuality between Shi'as and Sunnis and towards sectarian particularity. One of these is Muharram, which is discussed on its own terms below. Two others, however, are deserving of examination here. One such instance is the practice of Sufism, the 'mystical' strand of Islam associated with the veneration of saints and popular rather than scriptural practice. Attendance at and pilgrimage to the shrines of *pirs* (saints) and the observation of *'urs* (death anniversaries of saints) had been a source of common faith and practice between Shi'as and Sunnis from the eighteenth century onwards. According to one scholar, 'the gentry's patronage and the common man's veneration of Muslim shrines and holy men enhanced, undoubtedly, the *qasba's*

solidarity as a unique entity.’⁵⁷ While mostly associated with Sunni practice, Sufi orders with few exceptions tended to trace their lineage to the descent of ‘Ali and so maintained some form of Shi‘a consciousness. In Amroha, Shi‘a Sayyids had long attended the *dargahs* (shrines) of saints who were credited as their ancestors and the founders of the town, and still offered great respect to their shrines into the twentieth century.⁵⁸

A further instance of collaboration between Shi‘a and Sunni traditions through the early decades of the nineteenth century was the consistent intellectual cooperation between Hanafi Sunnis and Shi‘as in many of the province’s nineteenth century *madrasas*, and more particularly, through the consensual nature of their curricula. No better instance of this exists than Firangi Mahal, Lucknow’s foremost *madrasa* and the dominant seminary of U.P. until and even into the nineteenth century. While administered by a Hanafi family, its syllabus was constructed upon the famed *dars-i-Nizamiya* curriculum, which had a rationalist emphasis. It excelled in the fields of *kalam* (theology) and *mantiq* (logic), Oriental literature and languages, grammar, scientific knowledge (inclusive of philosophy, natural sciences and metaphysics) and mathematical knowledge (including geometry and astronomy),⁵⁹ all disciplines with which Lucknow as a whole would long be associated.⁶⁰ This focus upon rationalist subjects enabled the school to offer some tuition to Shi‘as alongside Sunnis. Furthermore, the emphasis upon rationalist thought and applied learning facilitated the instruction of judges and secular administrators as well as ‘*ulama*, and the *madrasa* emerged as essentially an institution of state administration for Shi‘a Awadh, fashioning much of the state’s juristic and administrative bureaucracy.⁶¹ Firangi Mahal was therefore able through its curriculum to serve both Islamic sects and integrate them into the apparatus of governance, contributing to the oft-lauded composite character of nineteenth century Lucknow. Comparably the Madrasa-i-‘Aliya in Rampur, a Shi‘a seminary functioning for much of the nineteenth century with

⁵⁷ Mushirul Hasan, *From pluralism to separatism: qasbas in colonial Awadh* (New Delhi, 2004), pp.124-132.

⁵⁸ Jamal Ahmad Naqvi, *Tārīkh-i-sādāt-i-Amrōha* (Hyderabad, 1934), pp.28-30.

⁵⁹ For details on the *dars-i-Nizamiya*, see Francis Robinson, *The ‘ulama of Farangi Mahall and Islamic culture in South Asia* (Delhi, 2001), pp.46-55, 249-251.

⁶⁰ Abdul Halim Sharar, *Lucknow: the last phase of an oriental culture* (London, 1975), p.95; Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, pp.174-5.

⁶¹ Juan R. I. Cole, *Roots of north Indian Shi‘ism in Iran and Iraq: religion and state in Awadh, 1722-1859*

Najm ul-Hasan of Lucknow as its principal, emphasised Oriental learning and literature, a curriculum which was harmonised from 1889 with the syllabi of the Oriental Colleges of Calcutta and Punjab. Its inclusion of both Shi'as and Sunnis and its consensual curriculum appeared to harmonise rather than strain sectarian relations, and contributed to good sectarian integration in Rampur State.⁶²

However, modern attempts at religious reform initiated a gradual erosion of such integrationist influences between Shi'as and Sunnis, and the corresponding appearance of an elevated consciousness of difference. From the nineteenth century, movements of both Shi'a and Sunni reform targeted Sufi practice. The assaults commenced by Dildar 'Ali upon Sufism on the grounds of its supposed ecstatic innovations and its inclusion of Sunni influence in the Nawabi period was continued by modern 'ulama into the twentieth century. In Lucknow, the *dargahs* of Muslim saints such as the Shahmina Sufi shrine attracted the attentions, and vituperations, of those seeking to purify Islam according to the tenets of orthodox practice.⁶³ Lucknow's Shi'as referred in the early 1900s to 'urs, the observation of saints' days, as 'an institution unwarranted by Muhammadan religion and offensive to the Shi'a creed and sentiments.'⁶⁴ The esteemed *dargahs* of Amroha and in particular that of Wilayat 'Ali, long a source of cultural affinity and cordiality between Shi'a, Sunni and Hindu communities in the town, were also targeted by Shi'a and Sunni reformists alike.⁶⁵ At approximately the same time, a Shi'a newspaper launched an attack upon the descendants of Fakhir ud-din, the founding member of a prominent Sufi family of Delhi.⁶⁶ Tellingly, one Shi'a author writes in the 1915 to defend the virtues of *tasawwuf* (Islamic mysticism) as an important part of the philosophical origins of Shi'ism, dismissing its detractors as misguided and narrow-minded⁶⁷; the implication of this statement, of course, is that Sufism was being criticised by many Shi'a 'ulama at this

(California, 1988), pp.43-5.

⁶² *Gazetteer of the Rampur State* (Allahabad, 1911), pp.72-3. Evidence suggests that Rampur remained immune to many of the sectarian quarrels that characterised the United Provinces, at least until the 1930s when the leading Nawab was accused of preferential treatment towards Shi'as.

⁶³ *Tafrih* (Lucknow), 7 June 1913, UPNNR.

⁶⁴ 'The humble memorial of the Shias of Lucknow' to T.C. Piggott, President, Shia-Sunni Committee, Lucknow, 24 November 1908, GAD File No. 591 of 1908, UPSA.

⁶⁵ S.M. Azizuddin Husain, *Medieval towns: a case study of Amroha and Jalali* (New Delhi, 1995), p.28.

⁶⁶ *Tauhid* (Meerut), 24 April 1913, UPNNR.

⁶⁷ Kazim, *Tanqīd-ul-taqlīd*, p.12.

time. During this period, it was the mosque and *madrassa*, institutions of sectarian specificity, which overshadowed the Sufi *dargah* and *khanaqah* (Sufi order) as the foremost structures of civic life in towns such as Lucknow and Amroha.

The same period witnessed the increasing exclusivity and differentiation within north India's *madrassas*. The process began with Lucknow's Madrasa-i-Shahi, founded in the 1840s, which promulgated a curriculum fusing works from the *dars-i-Nizamiya* with works of Shi'a jurisprudence borne of the Usuli revival from Iraq, Persia and India. While the *madrassa* failed to survive its second decade, its more lasting contribution was the dissociation of Shi'as from Firangi Mahal, which set a precedent for the sectionalisation of Islamic education even after its closure.⁶⁸ From this point, those *madrassas* established during the period of proliferation of such institutions after 1857 tended to display a far greater level of differentiation between Shi'as and Sunnis within the context of formalised religious education. The Deobandi schools emerging after 1865 were exclusively Sunni and virulent in anti-Shi'a polemic, adopting a syllabus that was strikingly different from the Nizami curriculum hitherto dominant. Downplaying the importance of philosophy and scientific subjects, they placed new emphasis upon the disciplines of *tafsir* (exegesis of the Qur'an) and *hadis*. Such subjects brought to the fore Shi'a and Sunni divergences over issues such as the source of the meaning of the Qur'an and the conceptions of *hadis*,⁶⁹ contracting the space for common education for Shi'as and Sunnis. Thus, while an emphasis upon *hadis* lent itself well to the more instructive, ethical constructs of Islam emerging in British India, it also led to the consolidation of an emphasis upon religious differentiation.

When Shi'a *madrassas* began to appear once again after 1889, they tended to echo Deoband both in their sectarian exclusivity, being open only to Shi'a *talibs*, and in their emphasis upon disciplines which had long been associated more with Delhi and the North

⁶⁸ Amir Hasan, *Palace culture of Lucknow* (Delhi, 1983), p.22. While Shi'a dissociation from Firangi Mahal at this point is tangible, it is not clear whether it was total. Sayyid Ameer 'Ali wrote of Firangi Mahal as a contemporary Shi'a institution in his article 'Islamic culture under the Mughals' of 1927. Syed Razi Wasti ed., *Syed Ameer Ali on Islamic history and culture* (Lahore, 1968), p.221.

⁶⁹ Shi'a *hadis* is largely drawn from the words and deeds of the Imams, while most Sunni *hadis* is based upon oral traditions passed down by the Companions of the Prophet, who in Shi'a understandings are

Western Provinces than with Lucknow itself.⁷⁰ Despite its continuation of many of those hallmarks of the *dars-i-Nizamiya*, the curricula of schools such as Madrasa Nazimiya and Sultan ul-Madaris mostly took the lead of their 1840s predecessor and contained more works of the Usuli Shi'a masters. They oversaw a diminution of the attention conferred upon subjects such as logic and philosophy in favour of a distinctly greater emphasis upon subjects such as *hadis*, *tafsir* and jurisprudence.⁷¹ As was seen above, Madrasa Nazimiya established as one of its distinguishing features the study of *fiqh*, a discipline with entirely separate roots according to Shi'a and Sunni traditions, and thereby a speciality which precluded intellectual cooperation with Sunni counterparts.

For these reasons, educational reform among Shi'as and Sunnis took separate paths. If Firangi Mahal had epitomised the intermittent educational cooperation between Hanafi Sunnis and Shi'as at the turn of the nineteenth century, then it was Madrasa Nazimiya, Sultan ul-Madaris and the new Sunni schools in Deoband, Saharanpur and Bareilly which represented their relations by the turn of the twentieth. In both Lucknow and Amroha, the decisive growth in the number of both Shi'a and Sunni *madrasas* represented a form of undeclared competition between the two communities, as each patronised religious institutions which represented their side.

The general evolution in the direction of sectarian precision and differentiation, in Sunni as well as Shi'a *madrasas*, intellectual life and ritual practice, laid the foundation for the origination of more overt Shi'a-Sunni religious antagonism in Indian in later decades. A decisive moment in this regard came at the end of the 1880s when the phrase 'Aliy' *an-wali-Allah, wasi-i-Rasul-i-Allah-va-Khalifa-bila-fasil* ('Ali, the beloved of God, heir of the Prophet and Caliph without interruption)', implying the first three Caliphs to have been usurpers rather than legitimate forerunners of 'Ali, was freshly introduced into the

considered to have erred.

⁷⁰ For instance, 'Lucknow was not strong in the fields of theological science, *tafsir* (the interpretation of the Quran), *hadis* and *rijal* (investigation of *hadis*). Tafsir was understood to a certain degree, but no more than in many other places.' Sharar, *Lucknow: the last phase of an oriental culture*, p.95.

⁷¹ A full account of the curricula of these *madrasas* is not given here for want of space. However, a useful description of their syllabus is given in Syed Najmul Raza Rizvi, 'Shi'a Madaris of Awadh: historical development and present situation,' in Jan-Peter Hartung and Helmut Reifeld eds., *Islamic education, diversity and national identity: dīnī madāris in India post 9/11* (New Delhi, 2006), pp.108-114, 121-130.

Shi'a *azan* in several U.P. towns. Its first application appears to have been in 1887 in Allahabad when Sayyid Aqa, a Lucknow-educated *zakir*, built a mosque into which he inscribed the phrase and incorporated it into the *azan*. He was taken to the municipal court of Allahabad by a Sunni *hakim*, who demanded that the phrase should be removed from the *azan*, although the case decided in favour of Sayyid Aqa in 1890.⁷² However, controversies surrounding the introduction of the phrase appeared almost simultaneously in Allahabad, Lucknow and Jaunpur. In Lucknow, the phrase appeared in the *azan* of one Shi'a mosque in Daliganj, an event which initially stoked violence in several districts of Lucknow.⁷³ Comparably, some Sunnis challenged the right of Shi'as to use the phrase in local courts in 1887-8, and the government initially ordered the controversial addition be removed. However, the Commissioner of Lucknow consulted the *mujtahid* Muhammad Ibrahim, who claimed that the '*bila fasil*' claim had always been present in the *azan*, and that its recitation was a compulsory act of faith. After the *mujtahid* wrote to the British monarch declaring the Shi'a faith to be founded upon belief in Hazrat 'Ali and hence the phrase in the *azan* to be compulsory, government declared the use of the phrase to be an ancient practice and permission for its inclusion was granted.⁷⁴ Seeing perceived victories in each of these towns, the phrase then appeared in the *azan* of several Shi'a mosques in Amroha. Here, the case in 1894 reached the District Magistrate and ultimately the Commissioner of Rohilkhand, Sunnis accusing Shi'as of exploiting the fact that the *munsif* (judge) and *tehsildar* (collector) of the town were counted among them to turn the municipal machinery in favour of the Shi'a side.⁷⁵ The implicit acceptance in all of these cases by the British of the unassailable right to include a reference to the eminence of

The curricula established in Lucknow were replicated in other Shi'a *madrasas* across north India.

⁷² Husain, *Matla'-i-Anwār*, pp.41-2. This individual was a writer of Shi'a tracts, one of which was a somewhat typical biography of the Imams, *Taqrīr-ul-'alī'atēn* (Lucknow, 1895-6). Some of his writings were, again typical of the period, held to have corrected the faith of Sunnis as well as reinforced that of Shi'as.

⁷³ *Firdōs-i-Makān kā tazkira* (Lucknow, circa 1960), pp.18-20; Shakil Hasan Shamsi, *Shī'a-Sanī qazīya: kitnā mazhabī kitnā sīyāsī?* (Lucknow, circa 2005), pp.86-7. Different sources cite the insertion of the contentious phrase in 1882, 1887 and 1889 respectively, although 1887 appears to be the best substantiated.

⁷⁴ *Firdōs-i-Makān kā tazkira*, pp.21-3; 'Note' by Sayyid Shahinshah Husain Rizvie, 15 Dec 1908, GAD File No. 591 of 1908, UPSA. Following the persuasions of Muhammad Ibrahim and others, the City Magistrate of Lucknow resolved that "not the words themselves, but the exception taken to them by the Sunnis, is a novelty." 'The humble memorial of the Shia residents of Lucknow,' to A.L. Saunders, 22 March 1908, GAD File 591/1908, UPSA.

⁷⁵ To Chief Secretary, 27 January 1896, GAD File No. 106C/64 of 1896, UPSA; 'The Shias of Amroha' to Mac Donnell, Lieutenant Governor of the North West Province and Oudh, 19 December 1895, *ibid*: 'The

'Ali in the *azan* seems to have contributed greatly to the often favourable Shi'a response to British rule, which is further elaborated upon in later chapters.⁷⁶

The introduction into the *azan* of this reference to the pre-eminence of 'Ali represents the increasingly coordinated and public role of Muslim religious conflict in north India as would develop over subsequent decades. Ensuing sections will discuss two key manifestations of ever more direct and 'public' expressions of religious difference: the practice of *munazara*, or public religious debate, and the consolidation of difference around the rites of Muharram, both of which became key theatres in which sectarian differences could be negotiated, crystallised and demonstrated. Both were most evident in Lucknow, but were common to various *qasbas* of the United Provinces.

Disputation and *munazara* in colonial India

Munazara, religious disputation indicating in this context debates between Shi'as and Sunnis, grew steadily as a written genre from the late eighteenth century onwards, in north India generally but in Lucknow particularly. Its starting point is commonly considered to be the anti-Shi'a polemic of Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz of Delhi (d.1824), the *Tuhfa-i-'Isnā 'Ashariya*, written in a combination of Arabic and Persian.⁷⁷ The work's introductory passages, while hinting at the synthesised society of Shi'a and Sunni Islam in the early nineteenth century as discussed above, professes its intention to erode such composite influences from Sunni life and practice through a systematic confutation of Shi'a doctrines:

'The need for writing this book arose due to the problem of the popularity of 'Isna 'Ashari faith among Muslims. Sunnis are being influenced by the faith of 'Isna 'Asharis and not a single house was left where one or two Sunnis would not have accepted the 'Isna 'Ashari faith or taken influence from it.'⁷⁸

Sunnis of Amroha' to Secretary of North West Province and Oudh, 29 February 1896, *ibid.*

⁷⁶ Shamsi, *Shi'a-Sanī qazīya*, p.86.

⁷⁷ Space does not permit an examination of this work here, but a thorough examination is provided in Sayyid Athar 'Abbas Rizvi, *Shah 'Abd al-Aziz: Puritanism, sectarian polemics and jihad* (Canberra, 1982), pp.245-355.

⁷⁸ This translation is taken from Husain, *Medieval towns*, p.24.

The work was not an isolated instance, but ushered in a literary genre of polemic which came to prevail in the nineteenth century. While the genre had its roots particularly in the custom of *hadis* scholarship associated mostly with Delhi, Lucknow quickly became the centre of such literary activity.⁷⁹ It was initially the Nasirabadi family of *'ulama* who responded in writing to the claims of 'Abdul 'Aziz's *Tuhfa*, but a further cornerstone in Shi'a polemical scholarship came with the production of *'Abaqāt ul-Anwār fi Imāmāt ul-a'īmmat ul-athar*, an extremely thorough response to the former written over the two lifetimes of two of Lucknow's most revered *mujtahids*, Hamid Husain and his son and successor Nasir Husain.⁸⁰

It has been argued that *munazara*, which existed as both literary genre and a form of verbal discussion between scholars of alternative religious traditions, was greatly expanded in the early part of the nineteenth century through the initiation of such debates by Christian missionaries.⁸¹ The prevalence of these written Shi'a-Sunni controversies through the century, then, suggests how such conflictive traditions became indigenised and internalised, evolving from Christian-Muslim disputations and ultimately contributing to debates among Muslims themselves. However, in the later stages of the nineteenth century, there was a development towards the carrying of *munazara* out of the sole guardianship of religious scholars and into the public *akhara*. *Munazara* evolved from, as one scholar has expressed, 'a harmonious, elegantly conducted discussion' into a 'bitter disputation, of a kind to be repeated many times in the bazaars of northern India in

⁷⁹ Sunni polemics against Shi'ism, following the precedent of 'Abdul 'Aziz's *Tuhfa*, include the *Muntahi ul-Kalam* by Maulana Haider 'Ali, a resident of Fyzabad who became famous in Lucknow in the nineteenth century. Other renowned polemicists of the age include Mauvli Lutuf Ullah and, in confutation of the treatises of the latter, Mian Mushir. Sharar, *Lucknow: the last phase of an oriental culture*, p.95; for other examples, see Rizvi, *Shah 'Abd al-Aziz*, pp.356-470.

⁸⁰ *'Abaqāt ul-Anwar's* authors answered Arabic portions of 'Abdul 'Aziz's work in Arabic, and Persian portions in Persian. Hamid Husain, in a lengthy reply of some seven volumes to the *Tuhfa*, defended certain *hadis* which 'Abdul 'Aziz had considered weak or invalid, drawing from both Shi'a and Sunni sources in his support. Eight further volumes of the work were produced after his death by Nasir Husain, writing under the name of his father. Similarly, he defended Shi'a *ayat*, and showed that the Shi'as accepted a number of the *hadis* which according to 'Abdul 'Aziz were rejected by Shi'as. Sayyid Athar 'Abbas Rizvi, *A socio-intellectual history of the 'Isna 'Ashari Shi'is in India*, Volume II, (Delhi, 1986), pp.171-3; Husain, *Matla'-i-Anwār*, p.671.

⁸¹ Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, passim.

the last years of the nineteenth century.’⁸²

The invigoration of *munazara* in the early 1900s had a profound effect in the localities of Lucknow and numerous other cities for at least two decades. The appearance in the first decade of the twentieth century of the Sunni polemicist ‘Abdul Shakoor was a turning point in the practice of *munazara*.⁸³ Initially from the outlying *qasba* of Kakori, his fame in the *muhallas* of Lucknow was borne of his volatile preaching and his editorship of Lucknow’s foremost Sunni newspaper *Al-Najm*, crafting him as a public representative of Lucknow’s Sunnis. The early twentieth century equally witnessed the emergence upon the public scene of Haji Maqbool Ahmed, the above-described young and rebellious Shi‘a orator, who was of particular note for his inflammatory sermons and his unprecedented development of the *munazara* genre. Upon his arrival in Lucknow in 1904, it is said that he called *munazara* on an almost daily basis in numerous *muhallas*, sometimes even failing to attend the confrontations that he had organised.⁸⁴ Consequently, he was held personally accountable for the early twentieth century integration of *munazara* into mainstream religious discourse: ‘by the mark of this man, the infusion of *munazara* into religious worship was completed, a distinction passed down to one or other figurehead until today.’⁸⁵

A particularly prominent *munazara*, classic and representative of the practice in many respects, is described for the year 1910 in Lucknow. In one Shi‘a mosque a pamphlet, lacking the name of the author or publisher, was circulated, praising the Caliphs Umar and Mu‘awiya. As a result of the argument provoked, a *munazara* was held between ‘Abdul Shakoor, still operating in Lucknow, and on the Shi‘a side Mirza ‘Abdul Husain and Sayyid ‘Ali Jaunpuri, respectively an Arabic teacher from Hyderabad and a member of Madrasa Nazimiya.⁸⁶ The ensuing debate, unravelling through a number of sessions, concerns the virtue of these supposed Caliphs, each side evoking Arabic literary sources in their defence. The Shi‘a side for their part blamed the three first Caliphs for certain

⁸² Ibid, pp.263-4.

⁸³ Sharar, *Lucknow: the last phase of an oriental culture*, p.95.

⁸⁴ ‘*Luckna’u kē masībat-zada Sunīōñ*,’ GAD File No. 591 of 1908, UPSA, pp.2-3.

⁸⁵ Imamia Mission, *Khatīb-i-āl-i-Muhamad*, p.11-2.

military defeats and for fleeing from the Prophet's side in battle,⁸⁷ while defending against the claim that the Shi'as were *kafirs* (unbelievers). However, while the primary focus is the familiar disputation of the authenticity of the Caliphs, the debate also encompasses a much wider breadth of subjects, such as disagreement upon the authenticity of the Qur'an. The Shi'as are accused of believing in a Qur'an which was 'created' and open to inaccuracies, while the Sunni Caliphs under whom the Qur'an was compiled are blamed for their partiality and innovation in conducting the task.⁸⁸ Of course, this Shi'a-written text proclaims a decisive victory for 'Abdul Husain who, it is said, maintained perfect composure while 'Abdul Shakoor became increasingly aggressive in his self-defence, and inarticulate and agitated in his responses.⁸⁹

As with many of the printed treatises discussed above, the linguistic tone and structure of the debate clearly demonstrate that the medium of *munazara* was intended not for the orderly exchange and synthesis of views, or the identification of common ground; rather, the primary function of the *munazara* was the demonstration by both parties of unqualified victory over the rival sect. This perhaps explains one common feature in the written records of this and other *munazaras*: a non-Muslim Arabic speaker, in this case a Hindu 'Pandit,' as a neutral spectator interested in advancing his knowledge of the Shi'a religion. Whether a factual truth or stylistic flourish, he is so persuaded by 'Abdul Husain that he comes round to the Shi'a side.⁹⁰

While drawing from a largely Lucknawi tradition and particularly prominent within this municipality, such *munazaras* were not confined to Lucknow. Similar controversies, described as an 'echo of the pamphlet controversy in Lucknow' and imitative of the

⁸⁶ *Shī'a-va-Sunī kē munāzarē san 1328 hijrī par tehqīqī nazar* (Lucknow, 1910), pp.1-3.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.7-12.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.68-77. This debate reveals the adherence of some Indian Shi'as at this time to the particularly exclusivist doctrine that key portions of the Qur'an had been excised by the enemies of the Prophet. These ideas are by no means consensual among Indian Shi'as and perhaps evidence ideas gained from Persian scholars, such as Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, whose works were frequently re-printed in India during this period. C.f. Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, p.148.

⁸⁹ *Shī'a-va-Sunī kē munāzarē*, pp.9-10.

⁹⁰ A similar figure is present in the account of a *munazara* in Amroha, in which the debate is in fact delayed until a non-Muslim Arabist is found. Ahmad, *Shikast-i-'azīm*, pp.3-5.

munazara culture and style that the city had fostered,⁹¹ quickly spread to other cities in the province, notably Amroha, Fyzabad and Saharanpur.⁹² These municipalities in effect became the theatres in which wider Shi'a-Sunni controversies of U.P. played out. Amroha, for instance, clearly demonstrates the way in which *munazara* became a civic spectacle, dominating municipal life and drawing celebrity to the town. Debates between various religious communities here became regular calendar features from around 1916, invariably attracting a large audience.⁹³ On the calling of a *munazara*, Shi'a 'ulama and *maulavis* of national prestige, not least Sibte Hasan and Maqbool Ahmad together with Deobandi 'ulama of Saharanpur and Moradabad, travelled for miles to grace the small outpost of Amroha with their presence, whether due to their desire for public exposure, or perhaps for their worry at public irrelevance stemming from their absence at such important occasions.⁹⁴ As *munazara* developed in Amroha, it increasingly took on the character of overt theatre and *tamasha* (spectacle). More than simple discussion, it would consider only questions of the utmost and dramatic importance ('*qiyamat haisa awal*').⁹⁵ Debates had a carefully selected audience which balanced religious communities; scribes were present to record the proceedings; and partly for the benefit of the latter, the disputants were requested to speak in a clear and stylised manner.⁹⁶ The obvious popularity of such occasions entirely contradicts the view of some modern observers that *munazaras* were matters solely for theologians, carrying minimal public significance.⁹⁷ Moreover, the frequent production of written accounts of the *munazara* theatricals allowed the preservation of the debate for later personal reflection, as well as shaping memory of the event itself. In effect, these texts marked the privatisation of *munazara*, back from public spectacle to private meditation.

⁹¹ To Chief Secretary, 4 August 1914, GAD File No. 480 of 1914, UPSA; From Commissioner of Lucknow Division, 20 July 1914, *ibid*.

⁹² *Ibid*. The emergence of Saharanpur as a site of *munazara* is probably explained by the presence of the two most important Deobandi *madrasas* in the district, which were fundamental institutions in the cultivation of the *munazara* tradition in north India.

⁹³ See Muhammad Ashfaq Husain Saddiqi, *Mujādala hasna* (Moradabad, 1918), *passim*; Ahmad, *Shikast-i-'azīm*, *passim*.

⁹⁴ Ahmad, *Shikast-i-'azīm*, pp.2-4. Amroha also at various points enlisted the presence of 'Abdul Shakoore, some prominent 'ulama of Moradabad, and other Deobandi and Bareilvi leaders.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, pp.2, 10-11.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, pp.4-5.

⁹⁷ Hasan, *From pluralism to separatism*, pp.36-7.

While *munazaras* were confined to a few key towns where they occurred prolifically, they often absorbed much wider provincial themes and controversies. In Fyzabad, described as a 'place... where the feeling between the two communities is always more or less strained,'⁹⁸ Shi'a-Sunni hostility increased as a result of the debate between Hindus and Muslims in neighbouring Ayodhya, concerning Muslim obligations to cow sacrifice. Certain Sunnis were apparently hostile to the assumption by Shi'a politicians of spokespersonship for 'Muslims' on this question, and displayed notices across the city which attempted to draw the Shi'a editor of *Al-Islah*, a Shi'a newspaper, into a *munazara* with the same 'Abdul Shakoor of Lucknow:

'It is an old practice with the Shias to run away from debate, to put the public in delusion and to publish pamphlets and notices for the mitigation of their shame... As it is not our aim to deceive the public like the Shia ulamas, we accept the challenge of the Shias for debate... the editor of the *Islah* and other Shia ulamas may come to Faizabad and may hold debate with the said Editor ['Abdul Shakoor].'⁹⁹

Exposing the overlap between *munazara* and the notions of *tabligh* discussed above, the declared aim of such *munazaras*, whether in Lucknow, Amroha or Fyzabad, was frequently the conversion of the unfaithful to the religion of the victors. In the latter case, for instance, the proposals instructed that the loser of the debate should publicly acknowledge his defeat and should espouse the religion of the victorious party.¹⁰⁰ However, it does appear that in spite of such stated goals, the proceedings of the orators in *munazaras* were principally directed at the consolidation of their supporters. Just as sectarian publications clearly often professed their aims as the correction of the opposite community, so the *munazara* enabled the invigoration of sectarian awareness among the populace, while expressing this process as the victorious and confident recruitment of the rival group.

That *munazara* was a pursuit centred upon internal religious renewal rather than an active attempt at outwardly focused proselytisation is further strengthened by the presence of *munazara* in particular towns where the religious allegiances of individuals proved fluid

⁹⁸ 'Notice,' A.W. McNair to Ferard, 20 July 1914, GAD File No. 480 of 1914, UPSA.

⁹⁹ 'Proclamation of the Shi'as for debate accepted,' *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

and negotiable, depending upon the groups targeted in the debates. Looking again to Amroha, a *qasba* with sizeable Shi'a, Sunni and Hindu communities. it can be seen that *munazara* was not limited to Shi'a-Sunni controversies, nor even to solid communal categories. In 1917, some activity by the local Arya Samaj prompted certain 'Muslims' of the town to convene the Anjuman-i-Asha'at-i-Islam, formed to invite prominent local *'ulama* to the town and hold staged confrontations with the Hindu *babus*. of course gaining perceived victory.¹⁰¹ When the organisation convened to defend against Hindus, quarrels between Shi'as and Sunnis apparently fell silent; Shi'as and Sunnis alike appear to have been among the named participants. Yet, Amroha simultaneously gained something of a reputation in Shi'a-Sunni debates, in the same way attracting preachers to the town to defend their respective sects in front of audiences. The case of Amroha therefore demonstrates the existence of a three-way communal triangle, in which Muslims rallied to Islam or to sect depending on the circumstance. In such a context, *munazara* was less a confrontation between fixed parties and more a means of negotiating momentary and fluid religious identities through the constant communication of difference from other religious communities.

The conduct of *munazara* from the late-nineteenth century therefore differed in several important ways from its antecedent manifestations. For one, *munazara* was included in the process of vernacularisation discussed above. For its proponents, scholarly learning or acquaintance with the classical languages were perhaps less significant than their fluent and dramatic Hindustani oratory and their foothold in the Urdu sphere of popular writing and speech. Secondly, *munazara* in effect metamorphosed from an intellectual pursuit among the literate *ashraf* into a populist altercation on the public street. Third, *munazara* widened not only public knowledge of the Shi'a-Sunni divide but the scope of these differences themselves. The medium of debate by its nature endlessly referenced, reproduced and systematised the gulfs existing between Shi'as and Sunnis in scholarly background and orthodox interpretation. The specific histories of the Prophet's Companions and the acts of the Caliphs, the meanings attributed to each particular act of Muharram, disagreement over the authenticities of this or that *hadis*, all left the gates of

¹⁰¹ Saddiqi, *Mujādala hasna*, pp.1-3.

the *madrasas* and emerged into the realm of public knowledge. *Munazara*, like the printed sphere discussed above, tended to enhance the significance of those subjects of sectarian specificity such as *taqiya* and *mut'a* (a form of Shi'a temporary marriage) which drew much more from textual traditions than from the normative realities of Islam as lived in modern north India. Islam as evoked in *munazara* overtook Islam as lived in its sectarian specificity, while also gradually influencing the latter.

From civic cohesion to sectarian division: the reformation of Muharram

One of the definitive manifestations of Shi'a-Sunni religious differentiation from the end of the nineteenth century was Muharram, the annual commemoration of the martyrdom of the Imam Husain. Aside from all the instances of Shi'a organisation discussed in the previous chapter, proponents of Shi'a organisation often identified the 'organising factor' of Muharram as the prime source from which sectarian solidarity could be kindled.¹⁰² The inherent uniformity of the great *ta'ziya* processions and gatherings for their burial at *karbalas* enlisted great congregations from Nawabi times onwards in Lucknow and other cities and *qasbas*. They have been described subsequently by scholars as indicators of Lucknow's 'high level of organisation and corporate cooperation for a pre-modern South Asian city.'¹⁰³ However, during the colonial period the application of this organisational character increasingly shifted away from the encouragement of broad cross-communal participation and towards the propagation of uniform, standardised demonstrations of sectarian homogeneity. Muharram was appropriated as a means of distinguishing and delineating alternative conceptions of Islam.

This perspective somewhat contrasts with much scholarship upon the observance of Muharram in India, which has more usually focused upon the abilities of this festival to

¹⁰² *All India Shia Conference: Calcutta sessions 1928, Presidential address His Highness Mir Ali Nawaz Khan Talpur*, p.15.

¹⁰³ Cole, *Roots of north Indian Shi'ism*, pp.110-2. Writing on Muharram in Lucknow in the 1830s, the observer Mrs. Meer Hasan 'Ali remarked upon the 'singularity in the habits, manners and customs' of Shi'as during Muharram. Mrs. Meer Hasan Ali, *Observations on the Mussalmauns of India* (Karachi, 1978), p.54.

assimilate with the cultural norms of the diverse centres in which it was practised.¹⁰⁴ While nominally a Shi'a commemoration of the slaying of Husain at *karbala*, the diversity of Muharram as practiced around the subcontinent has long been taken as evidence of the ability of lived Islam to adjust entirely to the popular customs of the Indian milieu in which it found itself.¹⁰⁵ This has especially been the case for U.P.; one analyst writes of Muharram that 'the "little" and "local" traditions could seep in... and make possible the collective participation of the masses,'¹⁰⁶ while another assessment takes Muharram as a component of so-called 'popular as opposed to scriptural Islam,' contributing wholeness and harmony to Lucknow and its outlying *qasbas*.¹⁰⁷ Going yet further, the analysis of the practice of Muharram in the Indian *diaspora* has revealed how the commemoration could be appropriated as a public demonstration of 'Indianness' rather than religious persuasion, uniting Hindu, Shi'a and Sunni artisans alike.¹⁰⁸ It could indeed be argued that this concentration on the observation of Muharram in India from the perspective of cultural assimilation and cross-communal participation is one reason, in addition to those already covered, for the overlooking of the significance of Shi'a-Sunni conflicts in India.

¹⁰⁴ E.g. David Pinault, *Horse of Karbala: Muslim devotional life in India* (New York, 2001), *passim*.

¹⁰⁵ Such perspectives reflect the framework championed by Imtiaz Ahmad that Islam in India adapted so completely to its environment that it became inseparable from the local cultural traditions in which it was expressed. For instance, 'the religious tradition of the Muslims in India... comprise[s] two distinct elements; one ultimate and formal, derived from the Islamic texts; the other proximate and local, validated by custom. The integration of the two elements to a point that they should come to co-exist as complementary and integral parts of a common religious system was presumably conditioned by the constraints of Islam's own struggle for survival in an alien environment... the resistance and resilience shown by the indigenous traditions encouraged Islam in India to accept and retain the local cultural traditions but adapt them to its own requirements and needs by putting an Islamic content into them.' Imtiaz Ahmad, 'Introduction,' in Imtiaz Ahmad ed., *Ritual and religion among Muslims in India* (Delhi, 1981), p.15.

¹⁰⁶ For instance, 'Moharram,... not being a rigorously defined religious event, could be more easily torn out of its real- as essentially political/historical - context, and transformed into a mass festival. Its ten-day duration was another facilitating factor; it is not surprising, therefore, that in the context of Indian rural life, Moharram eventually came to be what it is... [it has] succeeded, to an extent, in binding Hindus and Muslims together.' A.R. Saiyid, 'Ideal and reality in the observance of Moharram: a behavioural interpretation,' in Imtiaz Ahmad ed., *Ritual and religion among Muslims in India*, p.140.

¹⁰⁷ Hasan, *From pluralism to separatism*, p.21.

¹⁰⁸ For instance, one study of Muharram among Indian artisan laborers in Trinidad, as also in Guyana, Surinam and Jamaica, has shown how Muharram was celebrated by Hindus, Shi'as and Sunnis alike. Muharram is thus interpreted as an expression of a common subaltern culture and an agent of social integration among such communities. Prabhu Mohapatra, 'Unmaking the coolie: resistance and accommodation among Indian labour in the Caribbean,' in Arvind N. Das and Marcel van der Linden eds.,

Such a perspective has informed our knowledge of Nawabi Lucknow. Muharram matured from the Nawabi period as the ceremonial centre of the religious calendar, and its commemorations were an important source of municipal communal integration. Rather than being an exclusively Shi'a obligation, Muharram was perceived for years as contributory to communal harmonies. The great *ta'ziya* processions enlisted the participation of Shi'as, Sunnis and Hindus alike and carried a flamboyant carnival atmosphere,¹⁰⁹ while the large assembly at the *karbala* engendered a similarly cross-communal participation.¹¹⁰ A number of Lucknowis even described between Lucknow's communities 'good feelings, which were more prominent during the Muharram than on other ordinary days.'¹¹¹ Further ensuring its role in the often-lauded communal integration of Lucknow, Muharram was a key moment in the interaction of the city's economic classes. The Shi'a nobility dispensed public charity on Muharram days, while the displays of Muharram provided labour that would seasonally engage many of the urban poor of Lucknow.¹¹² Muharram in fact generated such revenue from the donations of all communities that it was an important economic occasion for the city.¹¹³ Scholarship has been quick to pinpoint that these 'syncretic tendencies' allowed Lucknow's Muharram to assume a distinctly inclusive, composite quality, the product less of orthodox traditions and more of Lucknow's distinctive municipal culture.¹¹⁴

This quality of Muharram in Lucknow was shared by the *qasbas* of Awadh. As practised in individual towns, the collective participation in Muharram bound together a Shi'a-tinged civic culture by which the rites of mourning in effect contributed to social cohesion between the religious communities and classes of these small towns, and hence to the integration of society within the *qasba*.¹¹⁵ In Amroha, for example, the lavish

Work and social change in Asia: essays in honour of Jan Breman (New Delhi, 2003), especially p.156.

¹⁰⁹ Mrs. Meer Hasan 'Ali wrote in the 1830s that 'the pompous display is grown into a habit, by a long residence among people, who make a merit of showy parades at all their festivals... the ceremony is not complete without a mixture of pageantry.' Mrs. Meer Hasan Ali, *Observations on the Mussalmauns of India*, p.30.

¹¹⁰ 'On these occasions, the vast population of Lucknow may be imagined by the almost countless multitude, of every rank, who visit this Durgah.' Ibid, p.36.

¹¹¹ 'Note' by Sayyid Shahinshah Husain Rizvie, 15 Dec 1908, GAD File No. 591 of 1908. UPSA.

¹¹² Mrs. Hasan Ali, *Observations on the Mussalmauns of India*, pp.53-54.

¹¹³ Ibid, p.36; Cole, *Roots of north Indian Shi'ism*, pp.93-5.

¹¹⁴ Cole, *Roots of north Indian Shi'ism*, p.115.

¹¹⁵ These ideas are expounded in Hasan, *From pluralism to separatism*, especially pp.37-40.

displays of Muharram apparently held the centre of municipal life and contributed to the social cohesion.¹¹⁶ In certain towns, Sunnis even led the nominally Shi'a *ta'ziya* processions. In Barabanki, for instance, it was the local Sunni *zamindar* Mir Mehboob 'Ali Khan who took the lead, and the processions were marked by the use of specifically Shi'a practices, such as the carrying of the standards of *tir* and *mashk* (a representation of the water-holding vessel of Sakina), with little apparent sign of sectarian controversy.¹¹⁷

Such customs demonstrate how Muharram, permeating the public life of individual towns and cities, was able to act as a cementing force between the nobles and populations as well as between the religious communities of particular localities. At the heart of Muharram was a consensual sympathy for Husain who, while regarded differently by Shi'as and Sunnis, was applauded by both for his heroism and sacrifice. Consequently, Muharram literature and practice remained comparable among Shi'as and Sunnis for much of the nineteenth century. Sunni-authored tracts circulated in which 'the whole pathetic story of Husain's expedition and of his death is set forth in terms which any Shi'a enthusiast might be glad to endorse, and [his] character and conduct are praised in the most enthusiastic terms.'¹¹⁸

Fischer's notion of the so-called 'Karbala paradigm' reveals how the tale of Husain's martyrdom was able at different historical moments to absorb and project a diversity of meanings.¹¹⁹ This was proven widely true of Muharram in India, as it was able in terms of both its significance and ritual practices to act as an agent of communal discord as fluently as a source of integration. From the 1890s Muharram was increasingly organised as a more particularistic Shi'a occasion in several towns, diverting the organisation of Muharram from cementing civic and social ties towards the re-assertion of distinctively

¹¹⁶ Naqvi, *Tārīkh-i-sādāt-i-Amrōha*, p.44-5.

¹¹⁷ 'Luckna'u kē masībat-zada Sunīōh,' GAD File No. 591 of 1908, UPSA, p.6; 'The humble petition of Mirza Mohammad Jelaluddin Bakht Bahadur, alias Munna Sahab, a zamindar in the district of Gaya on behalf of the Shia community to Victor Alexander Bruce,' 30 September 1894. Home Department (Public) Proceedings, January 1895, Nos. 123-146. National Archives of India, Delhi (NAI).

¹¹⁸ *Piggott Committee Report*, GAD File No. 591 of 1908, UPSA.

¹¹⁹ 'The story can be elaborated or abbreviated. It provides models for living and a mnemonic for thinking about how to live: there is a set of parables and moral lessons all connected with or part of the story of Karbala... to which all of life's problems can be referred.' Fischer, *Iran: from religious dispute to revolution*, p.21.

Shi'a religious practice. Attempts by any community to amend customary practice concerning Muharram frequently spilled over into communal disturbances. In Amroha the *duldul*, a representation of the steed of Husain reminiscent of Lucknawi rather than Amrohawi custom, was introduced anew by Shi'as in 1894, provoking the segregation of the commemorations and even animosity between Shi'a and Sunni residents which eventually culminated in a series of three-way riots between Shi'as, Sunnis and Hindus in 1902-3.¹²⁰ Just across U.P.'s borders in Gaya, Shi'as freshly attempted to take out Muharram processions with the Shi'a particularities of *tir* and *mashk* upon the standard of 'Ali, an innovation possibly resulting from the formation of an Anjuman-i-Imamia in that town bent on reforming local Muharram practices. The interpolation was vigorously challenged by Sunnis and led to public disturbances from around 1885.¹²¹ In other towns, the erosion of the composite character of Muharram revealed itself in sectarian violence. Allahabad witnessed Shi'a-Sunni skirmishes during Muharram as early as the late 1880s, despite the fact that Sunnis had taken out a majority of *ta'ziyas* in the city just a few years earlier.¹²² Jaunpur and Barabanki were among the towns to witness Shi'a-Sunni disturbances in the very early years of the twentieth century.¹²³

The central theatre for the re-negotiation of the character of Muharram, predictably, was Lucknow. Turning its back upon the historical predominance of cross-communal participation and civic organisation, the Muharram of Lucknow demonstrated increased segregation according to sectarian particularity. The practice of *matam* (flagellation) seemed to be on the rise during these years, sponsored by certain wealthy members of the community.¹²⁴ A defining moment was the intervention of Maqbool Ahmed, the above-discussed *maulvi*, who became a visible figure in Lucknow's Muharram in 1904. He held

¹²⁰ 'Official translation of a petition from Sayyid Gulsham Ali and others, residents of Mohalla Qazizada and others, Amroha, District Moradabad to the Government of India,' 20 January 1896, GAD File No. 106C/64 of 1896, UPSA; 'Humble memorial of the undersigned Sayeds of Amroha' to La Touche, Lieutenant Governor, 7 May 1902, GAD File No. 255 of 1903, UPSA.

¹²¹ Babu Baij Nath Ojha to District Superintendent of Police, Gaya, 19 April 1892, Home Department (Public) Proceedings, January 1895, Nos. 123-46, NAI; 'Appendix VIII: Resolutions passed by the Shia community of Bihar,' L.M.T. to Secretary, 27 November 1894, *ibid.*

¹²² C.A. Bayly, *The local roots of Indian politics: Allahabad 1880-1920* (Oxford, 1975), p.81.

¹²³ On Jaunpur see *Ar-Riyaz* (Lucknow), 18 June 1901, UPNNR; in Barabanki, Shi'a-Sunni violence resulted from the innovative Shi'a practice of mourning for the figure of Haider during Muharram alongside Hasan and Husain. *Tohfah-i-Hind* (Bijnor), 20 June 1900, *ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Hidayat-ul-Akhbar* (Moradabad), 8 May 1900, *ibid.*

a number of incendiary *majalis* in various quarters of the city, in which scorn was thrown upon the Companions of the Prophet.¹²⁵ In response to Maqbool Ahmad's interpolations, the government expelled him from Lucknow. Following his banishment, he carried his *majalis* to Jaunpur and Fyzabad, and it was after his utterance of the *tabarraḥ* in a famed *majlis* offered before a large crowd in the latter city that he was arrested. The treatment of Maqbool Ahmad apparently caused great bitterness among Lucknow's Shi'as,¹²⁶ and may have added fuel to the concurrent attempts by the Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor, as discussed in the previous chapter, to purify religious practice at the *karbala*. As demonstrated above, in 1905 leading Shi'a 'ulama and dignitaries affiliated with this *anjuman* introduced a number of provisions for admission to the *karbala* ground, such as entry bare-headed and bare-footed. It was in response to these reforms that the Sunnis decided to establish a separate *karbala*, at Phulkatora on the city's northern outskirts, separating the communities at an annual event which had previously encouraged their mutual participation.

This separation of the Shi'a and Sunni *karbalas* signified a fundamental change in the composite character of Muharram. Shi'as and Sunnis were segregated and their *ta'ziya* processions led in opposite directions, often along the same streets. Most importantly, this separation led to the incorporation of identifying particularities on both sides. As was written by the Piggott Committee, appointed to investigate Shi'a-Sunni disturbances in Lucknow, the separation of the *karbalas* and purges of the more frivolous accompaniments to the Talkatora *karbala* was followed by 'movement... in favour of impressing upon the Sunni celebrations a character which should, in one way or another, bring prominently forward the peculiar tenets of their religion as opposed to those of the Shias.'¹²⁷ On the Sunni side, the *char-yari* ('four comrades,' denoting the names of the Sunni Caliphs) were freshly inscribed upon the corners of *ta'ziyas* and their accompanying standards and *jhandas*, and paraded through the streets of Lucknow. They were supplemented also by the recitation of *madh-i-sahaba*, verses in praise of the three Caliphs and a marker of distance from Shi'ism. Contrasting with earlier Sunni *marsiyas*

¹²⁵ 'Luckna'u kē masībat-zada Sunīōñ,' GAD File No. 591 of 1908, UPSA, pp.2-3.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Piggott Committee Report, GAD File No. 591 of 1908, UPSA.

and writings in Lucknow which illustrated the glories of Husain, a new and innovative genre of Sunni elegiac poetry in praise of the Caliphs emerged and was 'published, sold, distributed, read and recited publicly everywhere.'¹²⁸ A series of new meetings, including *bazm-i-Saddiqi*, *bazm-i-Faruqi* and *bazm-i-USmani*, in honour of the Caliphs and Companions of the Prophet and seemingly self-conscious opposites to the more traditional Shi'a *majalis*, were established and convened during Muharram, and publicly advertised.¹²⁹ At the heart of many of these practices was 'Abdul Shakoor, the above-described Sunni *maulvi* who, like Maqbool Ahmad, became known for his twin-role in the consolidation of spoken *munazara* and Muharram controversy.

Following the initial transformation of the Muharram rites at the older *karbala*, Shi'a religious practice during Muharram showed the same broad fluidity and adaptability as that of Sunnis, and comparable innovations took place. Shi'as leaflets condemning the Caliphs were published during Muharram. Reflecting the novel *mehfils* (congregations) of Sunnis in honour of their personages, self-consciously comparable Shi'a alternatives were freshly construed in their place: mock-*janazas* (funerals) of Sunni leaders were commenced, while *bazm-i-Firozi* meetings were held in celebration of the death of Umar, taking the name of his murderer, and advertised publicly.¹³⁰ 'Abdul Halim Sharar described such experimental innovations as theatrical performances, novel decorations attached to *ta'ziyas* and the burning of effigies of Umar, and indicated something of the ability of Shi'a *majalis* to absorb and project any number of new innovations.¹³¹ The '*bila fasil*' phrase, while in earlier years recited mostly in seclusion and only in three or four Shi'a mosques,¹³² appeared as a frequent feature of religious life across Lucknow. Around 1905, these words were habitually introduced into *majalis*, mosques, funeral

¹²⁸ 'The humble memorial of the Shia residents of Lucknow,' to the Lieutenant Governor of U.P., 8 April 1908, *ibid*; 'The humble memorial of the Shia residents of Lucknow' to A.L. Saunders, 22 March 1908, *ibid*.

¹²⁹ 'Notes of the proceedings of the committee, dated 18 April 1907, at the *kothi* of Mirza Muhammad Abbas Ali Khan Sahib' and 'The humble memorial of the Shias of Lucknow' to T.C. Piggott, President, Shia-Sunni Committee Lucknow, 24 November 1908, *ibid*.

¹³⁰ Such customs were, according to their detractors, 'taken out by Shia fanatics with no conceivable purpose but that of insulting the religion of their opponents.' 'The humble petition of the Sunni community of Lucknow,' *ibid*; 'Translation of the report of Maulvi Muhammad Abdush Shakur, Sunni member, dated 15 December 1908,' *ibid*; *Advocate* (Lucknow), 21 May 1908, UPNNR.

¹³¹ Sharar, *Lucknow: the last phase of an oriental culture*, p.217.

¹³² 'The humble petition of the Sunni community of Lucknow' GAD File No. 591 of 1908, UPSA.

sermons and, perhaps most importantly, into the public street.¹³³ A similar process applied to the *tabarra*. Its recitation had been documented during Muharram since the Nawabi period,¹³⁴ but in the early twentieth century the usage of these verses became increasingly conspicuous and public.¹³⁵ Their inclusion in *majalis* and their repetition by the assembled crowds resulted in the cessation of Sunni attendances at Shi'a congregations, and the establishment of separate assemblies for Sunnis.

The reform of Muharram not only effected a change in the systematisation of difference between Shi'a and Sunni traditions, but somewhat altered the internal character of these traditions themselves. The antagonistic correspondence which arose between the two communities through the consolidation on both sides of the specific sectarian qualities of *ta'ziya* processions and *mehfils*, the recitations and counter-recitations of controversial phrases, all reduced Muharram into a standardised set of motifs, phrases and practices. The myriad customs of Muharram were reduced into a series of uniform recitations and sloganeering, while the multifarious meanings attached to Husain's martyrdom were contracted into more overt and clear-cut exaltations of, respectively, Husain or the Caliphs, and denunciation of their opposites. The diverse traditions of Shi'a and Sunni Islam were thereby increasingly reduced to a finite inventory of idioms, acts and personages, which increasingly became signifiers of their religions in their entirety. It was for this reason that customs like the recitation of *tabarra* and *char-yari* even became divorced from their original context, recited outside the period of Muharram.¹³⁶

Given the consolidation of difference and the construction of sectarian boundaries around the rites of Muharram in Lucknow by certain *maulavis* and *anjumans* on both Shi'a and Sunni sides, it is unsurprising that the 'Ashra (first ten days of Muharram) became a key period of Muslim sectarian conflict in early twentieth century Lucknow. A series of

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Mrs. Meer Hasan Ali, *Observations on the Mussalmauns of India*, p.23.

¹³⁵ Observers pointed out *tabarra* was generally said not to be a 'new' or 'introduced' practice, but 'we do certainly dislike that in our city *tabarra* should be uttered on the public road.' 'Notes of the proceedings of the committee, dated 18 April 1907, at the *kothi* of Mirza Muhammad Abbas Ali Khan,' GAD File No. 591/1908, UPSA.

¹³⁶ 'The humble petition of the Sunni community of Lucknow,' *ibid*; *Advocate* (Lucknow), 21 May 1908, UPSA.

Shi'a-Sunni riots followed the institution of such religious practice in 1906-8, cited by police reports as some of the worst instances of civil violence of the decade.¹³⁷ They left an enduring legacy of sectarian tension over the enactment of Muharram which was only inhibited in subsequent years by the firm hand of the police. There had long been a routine of Shi'a-Sunni disturbances at the time of Muharram, extending back to the Nawabi period.¹³⁸ However, the new clashes were distinct not only in their sheer severity, but in their lasting legacy, poisoning inter-sect relations long after the close of Muharram and into the next decade, with implications in wider society and politics.

Without attempting to rationalise the violence with which these processes of the ritual differentiation of the two sects unravelled, it is worth assessing some of those factors which contributed, on each side, to this process of religious differentiation. There is no doubt that Muharram could act, as in the past, as a theatre for the playing out of innumerable personal and local quarrels; as had written one observer some seventy years previously:

‘The enthusiastic Sheahs and Soonies - having reserved their long hatred for a favourable opportunity of giving it vent - have found an early grave on the very ground to which their Tazia has been consigned. Private quarrels are often reserved for decision on the field of Kraabaallah.’¹³⁹

Among such ‘private quarrels’ are likely to have been innumerable social and class conflicts. It is likely that those ‘lower orders’ of Sunnis who were deemed to be engaging in the *ta'ziya* processions used such antagonistic theatricals to express their resentments against the illustrious *mujtahids* who were perceived to be at the heart of the *karbala* reforms, and the respectable Shi'a *zamindars* who permitted such reforms upon their land.¹⁴⁰ Similar instances of class animosity between erstwhile Shi'a landed nobilities and protesting Sunni artisans were evident factors in Shi'a-Sunni Muharram clashes in other

¹³⁷ *Report on the administration of the police of the United Provinces, year ending 31 December 1908*, V/24/3174 (OIOC), p.6.

¹³⁸ Cole, *Roots of north Indian Shi'ism*, pp.322-32. This was also true in the *qasbahs* of Awadh; see Gyanandra Pandey, ‘“Encounters and calamities”: the history of a north Indian *qasba* in the nineteenth century,’ in Ranajit Guha ed., *Subaltern studies III: writings on South Asian history and society* (New Delhi, 1984), pp.243-4.

¹³⁹ Mrs. Meer Hasan Ali, *Observations on the Mussalmauns of India*, pp.52-3.

¹⁴⁰ *Piggott Committee Report*, *ibid.*

north Indian towns.¹⁴¹

This said, the origination of comparable conflicts across the province, simultaneously and spanning very different local social and economic factors, suggests the need for a wider explanation crossing the particulars of individual towns. Imtiaz Ahmad has argued that efforts towards sectarian differentiation stemmed from a wider 'new context of heightened self-consciousness' among Muslims at this time, instilled by the language of community emanating from Aligarh College, the formation of the Muslim League and resurgent Hindu nationalism. Such assertions of Muslim distinctiveness, he convincingly argues, encouraged more overt displays of Islamic ritual in public which in turn tended to intensify equivalent sectarian demonstrations.¹⁴² Further helping to explain these Shi'a-Sunni conflicts within the colonial context is the role of colonial government in giving legal definition to the sectarian division. Taking an active self-appointed role in banning or approving religious observances and processions, the state increasingly converted religious differences into public, political and legal issues.¹⁴³ Furthermore, given the state's desired role as arbitrator between the two communities, there was a converse process underway by which numerous grievances with the state could be expressed through the stirring of public unrest based around religious conflicts, which themselves became an effective means of undermining government authority. This is certainly true in the 1900s and even more so in the later period when, as will be discussed further in Chapter 5, sectarian conflict came to intertwine with nationalist protest.

¹⁴¹ In Jaunpur, disturbances occurred when Sunni masses gathered outside the houses of elite Shi'as during Muharram. *Ar-Riyaz* (Lucknow), 18 June 1901, UPNNR. The disturbances in Gaya also reveal a pre-existing grievance in local relations. The leading Shi'as of the district, who were primarily *zamindars* holding a number of villages on the *qasba's* outskirts, were directly challenged by 'lower orders' and 'illiterate antagonists' from inside the town, evidently confronting the hegemony of traditional authorities. As in Jaunpur, the site of the disturbance was the ancestral residence of the former, with a crowd preventing the *juloos* from leaving the gates. 'Heading of decision in original suit,' from Brihmohun Prasad, 27 August 1894; Taffazul H. Khan and others to Commissioner of Patna Division, 28 May 1893. Home Department (Public) Proceedings, January 1895, No.s 123-46, NAI; D.J. Mac Pherson to Commissioner of Patna Division, 14 November 1893, *ibid*; Sayyid Khairat Ahmed to Commissioner of Patna Division, *ibid*; 'Humble petition of Mirza Muhammad Jellaluddin Bakht Bahaudur alias Moona Sahib,' to Commissioner of Patna Division, 24 August 1892, *ibid*.

¹⁴² Imtiaz Ahmad, 'The Shia-Sunni dispute in Lucknow, 1905-1980,' in Milton Israel and Narendra K. Wagle eds., *Islamic society and culture: essays in honour of Professor Aziz Ahmad* (Delhi, 1983), p.338.

¹⁴³ Keith Hjortshoj, 'Shi'i identity and the significance of Muharram in Lucknow, India,' in Martin Kramer

Connected with the above, there is little doubting the importance of the evolution of urban public arenas during this period into what Freitag calls 'a world of ritual, theatre and symbol,' in which ritualised public activities in north Indian urban arenas became the chief means by which social and political re-configurations between communities were communicated, negotiated or resisted.¹⁴⁴ Such symbolic religious activity, she argues, produced a set of motifs which encouraged the 'otherisation' of alternative communities, and evolved from expressing civic identity to systematising the differences between religious groups.¹⁴⁵ Such a framework for understanding community formation echoes very strongly the parallel development of Shi'a and Sunni idioms in the streets of Lucknow. As was shown above in the case of practices such as the recitation of *tabarrah* or *madh-i-sahaba*, it was the projection of overtly identifiable Shi'a or Sunni acts into the public space, rather than the novelty of the customs themselves, which was most at issue. Recitations of such verses in earlier years had been 'occasional and infrequent and not calculated to attract general notice'; the innovation was instead the 'organised and systematised recitation' of the verses in public arenas and in newly-convened sectarian *majalis* and meetings.¹⁴⁶

As an extension of this assessment of sectarian differentiation in municipal public arenas, we could understand such riots as the product of the colonial transformation of the Indian city, and the consequent attempts of separate religious communities to impose their stamp upon such re-worked arenas. It is notable that those main towns in which the '*bila fasil*' verse was introduced into the *azan*- Lucknow, Allahabad, Jaunpur and Amroha - were also the key centres of sectarian conflict during Muharram, suggesting that the consolidation of one Shi'a idiom in the public space ensured further attempts to impose

ed., *Shi'ism, resistance and revolution* (London, 1987), p.291.

¹⁴⁴ Sandra Freitag, *Collective action and community: public arenas and the emergence of communalism in colonial north India* (Berkeley, 1989), pp.19, 280. Freitag's understanding of communal activity in public spaces draws heavily from Geertz's notion of the 'theatre state.'

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p.53.

¹⁴⁶ Piggott Committee Report, GAD File No. 591 of 1908, UPSA. In a similar way, while sectarian literature had long been circulated during the days of Muharram, it had been circulated on a personal basis; it was only in the 1900s that sectarian organisations began 'circulating these leaflets publicly.' And, while meetings denouncing the Caliphs had previously held with some discretion, were now 'convened... publicly, and they are advertised by posters.' 'The humble petition of the Sunni community of Lucknow,' *ibid*.

Shi'a particularities into municipal religious observances. The Muharram reforms in Lucknow in particular hint at a struggle between Shi'as and Sunnis to control the city's public space. The exercising of reforms at the *karbala* and ensuing battles in the courts could be understood as an attempt by Shi'a *mujtahids*, landowners and lawyers to maintain their long-held grasp over the city's institutions, by ensuring the visibility of distinctly Shi'a elements in public municipal events.¹⁴⁷ Conversely, the formation of a separate Sunni *karbala* could be construed as an attempt by aspiring Sunni leaders to resist the influence of this Shi'a elite, furthering their own aspirations for influence in municipal public life.¹⁴⁸

However, the transmutation of the ritual and significance of Muharram cannot be understood solely in terms of local factors or contemporary municipal power struggles; it must also be assessed in terms of a broader and multi-layered religious and cultural assertion in Indian Shi'ism during this period. Muharram was frequently the canvas upon which a province-wide religious rejuvenation and enhanced consciousness of religious distinctiveness among Shi'as was first impressed, with its exclusive Shi'a character renewed in many towns. The invigorated network of *madrasas* created an abundance of *wa'izen* and *zakirs*, those preachers of sermons and *marsiyas* active primarily during Muharram, who could either work in Lucknow or return to administer Muharram in their own towns. New printing presses were able to circulate poetic and prosaic eulogies for Husain. The general and pervasive religious consciousness of the period doubtlessly had its effect upon the communities of Sayyids and landed gentries around U.P.; newly compelled by the activities of the *madrasas*, *anjumans* and printing presses around them to make their own efforts towards invigorating the public presence of Shi'ism in their towns, Muharram was often the first subject of their efforts. This explains why in the towns discussed local Shi'a social elites actuated the purification of ceremonial practice and, it seems, were perhaps more inclined to invite to their towns energetic or even

¹⁴⁷ Earlier Shi'a-Hindu conflicts in Fyzabad have been similarly interpreted as stemming from the attempts by ruling elites to maintain their grasp over the public spaces of the city. Cole, *Sacred space and holy war: the politics, culture and history of Shi'ite Islam* (New York, 2002), pp.173-189.

¹⁴⁸ It is perhaps no accident that the new *karbala* was encouraged by and founded upon the lands of Ehtisham 'Ali, an aspiring Sunni politician. It was he who approached government seeking permission to found a separate *karbala* and procession route. Note by Sayyid Shahinshah Husain Rizvie, 15 December

antagonistic speakers, who were most likely to make a public impact.

As such, the Shi'a particularities of Muharram in Lucknow were onwards from the 1890s increasingly emulated in other *qasbas*. Many of the Shi'a *anjumans* founded in cities and *qasbas* from the 1890s, as was shown above, identified the organisation or correction of Muharram as their first point of contact with the local populations which they sought to influence. This was especially true of the *anjumans* founded in the wake of the Shi'a Conference, which were often directed to oversee the management of the Shi'a *imambaras* in which Husain was remembered and the *auqaf* through which Muharram was funded. There is little indication that Muharram subsequently lost any significant participation from the Hindu or Sunni public in most of U.P.'s towns and cities during the subsequent period. However, in many cities and *qasbas* Muharram came to be renovated for the Shi'a section of the population as an increasingly ordered and regulated phenomenon, emphasising the ritual and didactic particularities of Shi'ism.

Conclusion: the internal and external dynamics of Muslim sectarianism

The overriding impression to be gained from the above analysis is the interconnected and co-extensive nature of the exercise of *tabligh* and *ikhtilafat*. Religious renewal among Shi'as was executed not as a stand-alone process, but through conflict with other communities. Sectarian disputation, whether through published tracts or spoken *munazara*, was not somehow secondary to processes of religious revitalisation but engrained within them. This was not simply due to the essentially competitive nature of religious renewal and community formation in colonial India, which relied upon the 'otherisation' of alternative groups and the construction of separate inventories of motifs and symbols.¹⁴⁹ Instead the above discussion reveals a more nuanced process, in which authors or public speakers communicated religious, doctrinal or historical knowledge to their co-religionists through the vituperation of other communities. This explains why

1908, GAD File No. 591 of 1908, UPSA.

¹⁴⁹ Freitag, *Collective action and community*, passim.

sectarian disputation was not simply a tangential product, but a central part, of the processes of religious renewal discussed.

Religious argumentation in Indian Islam was fundamentally transformed, or even modernised, during the colonial period. Its increased expression through ritual separatism converted doctrinal differentiations into an inclusive, participatory public sphere activity. Connected with this, knowledge of Shi'a-Sunni controversy was no longer solely in the grasp of an exclusive clerical elite, but ventured out of the *madrasa* and onto the streets, and was communicated in the vernacular. It demonstrated a process of experimentation mirrored simultaneously in other religious traditions; an ongoing series of innovations encompassing the use of print, the democratisation of religious knowledge, new literary genres, poster and publication campaigns, and the transformation of religious ritual and ceremony. Indeed, it is striking how examples of Shi'a religious renewal discussed in this and the previous chapter drew from the languages and methods of other Muslim reformist movements, while being conducted entirely separately from them. The frequently used dialogues of *tanzim* and *tabligh* to describe the Shi'a campaigns for the formation of *madrasas*, the appropriation of printing, the correction of ritual and custom and the practice of public debates, all echoed the aims and methods of Sunni reformist movements such as Deoband, and were set up as a counterpart discourse. Such a perspective on Muslim religious conflict in colonial India is an important response to those implicit understandings, tangible in colonial readings of Indian Islam, of sectarianism as the result of a re-assertion of Islamic traditionalism, or the opening of controversies unchanged for 1300 years. In India, sectarianism was entirely bound up with the language, media and emerging public life of the modern world.

The discussion of sectarianism inevitably suggests the existence of clearly defined and fixed Shi'a and Sunni communities, in perpetual struggle against each other, establishing their respective distinctiveness through public debate and periodic conflict. Indeed, the vitality of the Shi'a *tabligh* presented a largely united front, and suggested the existence of singular and co-ordinated efforts among Shi'a *'ulama*, *wa'izen* and *zakirs*. This section takes a different approach, arguing that those processes of religious innovation and

experimentation which instigated transitions in relations between Shi'as and other religious communities also impacted upon the internal dynamics of Indian Shi'ism itself. The perception among the key pioneers of the Shi'a *tabligh* of contemporary India as something of a battleground in which all faiths were locked in perpetual competition with each other was discussed above. Yet the study has so far said little about the internal religious dialogues, among and between Shi'as. For this reason, our study shifts back to the internal dynamics of Shi'a religious reform for its further explanation.

Both religious renewal and the reconfiguration of religious disparities can only be properly understood against a background of diversity and differentiation within the Shi'a fold. Despite the cosmetic appearance of a homogenous religious awakening, the 'fresh religious life' was by contrast a subject of little consensus, masking disputes over the direction and leadership of religious renewal. The proliferation of new *madrasas*, the development of a public sphere, the impact of print and its implications for vernacularisation and the democratisation of religious knowledge, all led to the diversification of religious authority and the appearance of a new generation of religious leaders in various conurbations.

Despite their new public exposure gained through the headship of an invigorated associational network in Lucknow and some other towns, the *mujtahids* emphasised in the previous chapter largely remained on the sidelines of the activities discussed above. Most authors of populist Urdu publications were aspiring local leaders and emerging orators, with few senior or established *mujtahids* choosing to involve themselves openly with such media or genres. Both *munazara* and the Muharram reforms also reflected to a great extent the immediate command of local *maulavis* and *wa'izen* rather than a distant, restricted circle of established authorities. In individuals such as Maqbool Ahmed and the graduates of new *madrasas*, we see fresh, young public orators trumping the traditional Maulanas in their imminent authority and public visibility.

Several factors during the period in question contributed to a pluralisation of religious leadership. The partial replacement of person-to-person and family-based religious tuition

by systematic education within formal establishments; the decreasing number of Iraq-educated *'ulama*; the proliferation of new religious *anjumans*, and the emergence of new public spokesmen holding *fazil* from newly formed *madrasas* were all important factors. It is also likely that a further contributing factor to the diversification of religious leadership was the development in north Indian cities of an open 'public sphere' with a multitude of voices, which perhaps favoured more demonstrative, populist, even aggressive performers. In an age of ascendant printing media and public association, secluded scholasticism perhaps counted for less than public visibility.

These rapid and un-coordinated adjustments of religious leadership in Indian Shi'ism ensured the production of competition not simply between Shi'a and *ghair*-Shi'a communities, but between the various actors engaged in Shi'a religious renewal. Some scholars have identified competition between alternative religious leaders as an inherent tendency within Usuli Shi'ism, since to some extent a *mujtahid*'s financial and social standing are predicated upon his public recognition and the number of individuals observing *taqlid* under him.¹⁵⁰ Whether or not a fair assessment of the essential doctrines of Shi'ism, it seems clear that the Shi'a religious renewal in north India produced as one of its effects the intensification of competition between rival candidates for leadership.

Evidencing this is the clear expansion of those terming themselves '*mujtahids*' in early twentieth century India. While in the nineteenth century the retention of religious authority within particular families and the small number of individuals holding certified *ijazat* had ensured the existence of a relatively small and authoritative circle of undisputed *mujtahids*, the early twentieth century saw increasing the title of *mujtahid* used with increasing regularity. It was essential in order to compete for a popular following in the ever more crowded religious battlefield, and consequently was increasingly used in public life to denote merely a *maulvi*, preacher or recipient of some

¹⁵⁰ The author continues: 'competition... is of the essence in the legal and social structure of Shi'ism. It determines the barometer of learnedness and the subsequent number of followers in the Shi'i civil society.' Chibli Mallat, *The renewal of Islamic Law: Muhammad Baqer as-Sadr, Najaf and the Shi'i International* (Cambridge, 1993), p.35.

form of *fazil* or equivalent qualification rather than to indicate formal clerical training.¹⁵¹ This meant that the title was laicised, used with less selectivity and in turn with less significance for its recipient. While this thesis guards against the overstatement of Indian Shi'a connections with co-religionists abroad during this period, this makes an interesting comparison with the description of religious authority among Iraqi Shi'as by the British Resident in Baghdad in the 1900s, which could equally well have been written about the Shi'a '*mujtahids*' of Lucknow and U.P.:

'The word [*mujtahid*] is loosely used... it seems to be that a man... with a sufficiently large following and... in most cases worldly wealth also or the command of it, may style himself and soon become a mujtahid... if we follow the *vox populi*, the mujtahids may go up and down like puppets in a marionette show.'¹⁵²

While new Shi'a *anjumans* and campaigns of religious dissemination appeared to exhibit a co-ordinated front of united action, they in fact developed as arenas for negotiation between alternative Shi'a religious leaders. An examination of the Shi'a *tabligh* demonstrates how the propagation of religious ideas could also fuse with struggles for recognition among alternative voices all craving the opportunity for public exposure. The media of print demonstrates this. While the impact of print has often been interpreted as enhancing the stature and widening the audience of the '*ulama*, print also carried with it connotations of differentiation and democratisation. It threw new scrutiny upon the pretensions of established authorities to be the sole guardians of religious knowledge, cutting out the traditional requirement that tracts be read with a qualified '*alim*. Print weakened traditional scholars by breaking their monopoly over the transmission of religious knowledge, and allowed instead the development of alternative voices and

¹⁵¹ As, for instance, in the constant evocation of '*mujtahids*' in *Shi'a-va-Sunī kē munāzarē*, passim. This is also a general observation taken from the biographical accounts of numerous '*ulama* in Husain, *Matla'-i-Anwār*, passim, and from discussions with certain present-day '*ulama* in Lucknow.

¹⁵² He continues: 'It seems to be essential that a mujtahid should have an "ijaza" or diploma from some older or greater mujtahid [but]... these ijazas seem to have been given rather freely. They are often very vaguely worded and sometimes amount to little more than an announcement by the writer that... the applicant is qualified to become a mujtahid, and the implication seems to be if he can only get people to accept him... There would be a general consensus of opinion probably about [the status of] a few [*mujtahids*] but there would be so many more nearly, if not quite equal, to the lowest of these that it would be almost impossible to know where to draw the line.' Major L.S. Newmarch, Officiating Political Resident in Turkish Arabia, to Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, 20 September 1902, Political Department A., May 1911, File Nos. 10-44, UPSA.

unfettered religious change.¹⁵³ Much the same could be said of *munazara*, which sometimes functioned as a series of competitive endeavours for recognition among aspiring orators.

Yet nothing better embodies the internal struggles for influence among the Shi'a population than the conduct of Muharram, which became one of the key theatres in which struggles between alternative orators were played out. Admittedly the *mujtahids* initially sanctioned the 1905 imposition of the atmosphere of mourning, one *mujtahid* had years earlier issued a *fatwa* supporting the right of Shi'as to use the words *bila fasil*,¹⁵⁴ while Aqa Hasan represented the Shi'a case in the committee appointed to find a solution to the quarrels.¹⁵⁵ However, the display of *matam*, shouting of *tabarra*, performance of funerals and other such innovations seem to have thrived in a sphere of activity distant from their influence. As 'Abdul Halim Sharar claimed, 'mujtahids and Shia prelates do not approve of such innovations, but popular interest in them is increasing day by day.'¹⁵⁶ Instead, the Muharram conflicts in Lucknow demonstrated the local authority of new and inflammatory preachers who were of recent fame in the city and carried little ancestral or clerical distinction, as well as the seemingly decisive influence of the editors of and contributors to the local Shi'a and Sunni press.¹⁵⁷ Propelled from a lower level, higher authorities were marginalised from such activities.

Other quarrels relating to the conduct of Muharram took place between the supporters of new reforms and those tied to more traditional practice. In Lucknow, the decision to purify the Muharram commemorations was presented as a consensual one. However, a drop in Shi'a as well as Sunni and Hindu attendance at the *karbala* suggests the existence of limited public sympathy for this programme of reform.¹⁵⁸ In Barabanki, a *qasba* comparable with Lucknow insofar as Muharram had long contributed to civic integrity

¹⁵³ Some of these ideas are explored in Robinson, 'Islam and the impact of print,' *passim*.

¹⁵⁴ Sayyid Muhammad Naqi Rizvi, *Farishtgān jahān: tazkira-i-khānwāda-i-Sayīd Muḥamad Bāqir Rizvī Kashmīrī Bāqir-ul-'Ulūm* (Lucknow, 2005), p.19.

¹⁵⁵ 'Luckna'u kē masībat-zada Sunīōñ,' GAD File No. 591 of 1908, UPSA, p.4.

¹⁵⁶ Sharar, *Lucknow: the last phase of an oriental culture*, p.217.

¹⁵⁷ See especially *Asr-i-Jadid* (Lucknow), May 1907, UPNNR.

¹⁵⁸ 'Luckna'u kē masībat-zada Sunīōñ,' GAD File No. 591 of 1908, UPSA, pp.2-3. According to this assessment there was an 80% drop in attendance at the *karbala*, which included a reduced Shi'a presence.

and communal cohesion, clashes occurred not between Muslims and Hindus or Shi'as and Sunnis, but between different groups of Shi'as.¹⁵⁹ Such cases prove that broad attempts at the adjustment of Muharram rites were met with fierce resistance from within particular localities, including Lucknow.

In this light, the Muharram reforms are best understood in terms not of cohesive Shi'a action, but of the considerable debates and controversies emerging within each sect. The reformed Muharram commemorations displayed not sectarian unanimity but uncertainty; not Shi'a unity in cities such as Lucknow, but what could be better described as 'inter-*muhalla* competition' between different sections and preachers.¹⁶⁰

The modern manifestations of Shi'a-Sunni religious conflict discussed in this chapter emerged at a historical moment when Shi'as were increasingly beset by argument and internal debate. With this in mind, how is the growth of sectarianism in Indian Islam to be interpreted? It seems that the manufacturing by Shi'a orators of a Sunni opponent allowed discussions and disputes among and between Shi'as to be expressed as an inter-community debate, rather than an internal one. Printed tracts and public *munazara*, while outwardly depicting the vituperation or conversion of a rival party as an end in itself, provided a podium from which an aspiring voice could address his own religious community and craft his own space in local life and leadership. Claimed aspirations to convert or claim victory over other communities were largely cosmetic and certainly secondary to the opportunity provided by such media for the reform of one's own sect. Confident and combative dialogues against a supposed 'other' allowed these debates to be presented as a mark of sectarian strength rather than of weakness or uncertainty. A number of alternative prescriptions for religious reform, and the jostling for influence between various *maulavis* and preachers, thereby took place under the outward cloak of Shi'a-Sunni sectarian controversy. Individual writers and orators, by expressing their attempts to shape the religious life of their own community as sectarian conflict, were able to influence inward religious rejuvenation while sustaining the sense of confidence

¹⁵⁹ *Mehr-i-Nimroz* (Bijnor), 14 May 1900, UPNNR.

¹⁶⁰ I have drawn this phrase from Nita Kumar, *Artisans of Banaras: popular culture and identity, 1880-1986* (New Delhi, 1995), pp.211-12.

and purpose of an outward struggle.

This argument that Shi'a-Sunni hostility often materialised out of salient debates and disagreements among variant groups of Shi'as themselves informs subsequent chapters. More immediately, the argument contradicts the frequent understanding of sectarianism in terms of interactions between pre-supposed and clearly categorised Shi'a and Sunni communities, newly revitalised and radicalised by modern styles of religious reform. Sectarianism is to be understood not as the result of religious renewal, but as the chosen means by which religious evolution and transformation were debated, negotiated and communicated. Shi'a-Sunni sectarianism was, therefore, entirely interlinked with internal processes of change and debate among the Shi'as (and, indeed, within various Sunni schools) of colonial north India.

CHAPTER 3

CRAFTING 'SEPARATENESS': SHI'AS AND THE Aligarh MOVEMENT

Introduction: Shi'a 'separateness' and Muslim 'separatism' in colonial India

Writing on colonial Lucknow, the essayist and journalist 'Abdul Halim Sharar remarked that 'the Shias... maintain a separateness (*judagana*) in their habits and customs.' Instead of attempting to 'unite into one fraternity' with other Muslims, he claimed, Shi'as 'prefer to remain separate and exclusive (*juda-va-mumtaz*).'¹ While in Nawabi Lucknow 'no one even noticed who was a Sunni and who a Shia,'² early-colonial Lucknow witnessed the consolidation of elements of Shi'a distinctiveness from Sunnis. This was largely a cultural phenomenon, reflected in moments of distinctive dress, linguistic differences, and as of 1871, separate Shi'a and Sunni graveyards.³ Moreover, as has been demonstrated by the previous two chapters, this distinctiveness also meant the consolidation of religious distinctiveness, asserted in the institutionalisation of more exclusive Muharram rites, the parting of the ways over religious education, and a vigorous production of polemical religious tracts. As claimed Sharar, 'in recent times even the religious leaders of both factions encourage[d]' this separateness.⁴ The next two chapters of this thesis both consider how this *judagana* of Shi'as in Lucknow gave rise to the emergence of a language of Shi'a separatism in wider public life, in both province and nation. It was primarily in the twentieth century that the need to express Shi'a distinctiveness transgressed from disparities in customary practice and religious belief in towns such as Lucknow into a more widespread and active social and political demand to

¹ Abdul Halim Sharar, *Guzashta Luckna'u yā mashrīq kē tamaddun kā ākhīrī numāna* (Delhi, 1985), pp.310, 327.

² Abdul Halim Sharar, *Lucknow: the last phase of an oriental culture* (London, 1975), p.74.

³ It was said that Shi'as began to use the address *Salam-un 'Alaikum* rather than the more traditional *As-Salam 'Alaikum*, in order to distinguish themselves from Sunnis. Ibid, p.198. On the establishment of separate graveyards, see Veena Talwar Oldenburg, *The making of colonial Lucknow, 1856-1877* (Princeton, 1984), pp.112-3. It is likely that this development preempted the consolidation of specifically Shi'a ritual customs, including the recitation of the *tabarraḥ* at funerals and the carrying of the coffin by relatives of the deceased, both of which have been referenced in earlier chapters.

⁴ Sharar, *Lucknow: the last phase of an oriental culture*, p.198.

keep 'separate' ('*alehda*).⁵

As was discussed in the introduction, this consolidation of Shi'a exclusiveness in colonial U.P. has been largely neglected in scholarship on account of an alternative historical focus, upon the development of Muslim solidarity as a basis for wider public and political organisation. According to this narrative, Muslims came to conceive of themselves as a distinct *qaum*, a clearly delineated community, in north India. At the forefront of this process was the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh (henceforth, Aligarh College), founded by Sayyid Ahmad Khan in 1875 in order to promote the learning of western knowledge and sciences among Muslims. According to a frequently applied historical narrative, the language of the Muslim *qaum* within Aligarh encouraged Muslims to mobilise across the distinctions of kinship, class and religious persuasion on the basis of religious commonality.⁶

The interaction between the simultaneous development of Muslim sectarian identities and Muslim 'separatism' is an untold story which is considered in this chapter. It dispels a seemingly frequent assumption in much of the historiography of Muslim separatism: that however intensive and protracted Shi'a-Sunni disputes may be in religious dialogue or on local levels, Muslims were willing to bury their religious differences in the higher echelons of public and political life and work together as Muslims. Sectarian and unitary discourses, such historiography has implied, could exist in separate spheres with minimal impact on each other. For instance, while Sayyid Ahmad himself may have indulged in anti-Shi'a religious polemic as a young '*alim*', this was of little significance in his later evocation of collective Muslim nationhood.

This chapter seeks a redress of this slightly uncritical perspective on the relationship between Muslim sectarianism and 'separatism.' It is true that recent revisions of the notion of Muslim 'separatism' have considered the vacuity of the notion of a Muslim

⁵ This term for 'separateness' pervades Sayyid Mumtaz Husain, *Risāla-i-kifān-pōsh līdaran-i-qōm* (Amroha, 1915), *passim*.

⁶ Especially important works in this regard include David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's first generation: Muslim solidarity in British India* (Princeton, 1978), especially pp.300-48; Francis Robinson, *Separatism among*

qaum at the hands of the normative particularities among Indian Muslim individuals and groups. The work of Ayesha Jalal in particular has shed light on the often ambivalent relationship between the Muslim self (*khudi*), the product of various individual, sectarian, regional and class distinctions, and the externally-imparted notion of the Muslim 'nation' which grouped all Muslims together as a supposedly cohesive social and political community.⁷ Yet this framework opens up new directions for further elaboration upon the relationship between the varying orientations of individuals and the religious brotherhood in which they were supposedly encompassed. Was it simply that the Muslim *qaum* was an elusive ideal with which personal realities were often unable to engage? Alternatively, did other personal loyalties, among them Shi'a-Sunni distinctions, come to actively conflict with the overarching and somewhat homogenising Muslim *qaum*?

Previous chapters have demonstrated how Shi'a organisation in the public spaces and publishing networks of Lucknow and other centres crystallised the evocation of Shi'as as a *qaum*, an independent and self-governing community in India. It was also shown how this notion of a *qaum* derived inspiration from the language appropriated by other movements of religious reform in colonial India and, in particular, from the expressions of Islamic nationhood emanating from the offices and publications of Aligarh. This chapter examines the interactions between the languages of the *qaum* of, respectively, Muslims and Shi'as. Rather than interpreting these as two complementary constructions of community to which the Shi'a individual could relate in different contexts, it argues that they were increasingly construed as alternative and even adversarial forms of affiliation.⁸ In other words, one's sectarian and 'Muslim' identities, rather than simply existing in separate spheres, often became increasingly oppositional focuses of solidarity. The perception increasingly arose among U.P. Shi'as that they would have to organise

Indian Muslims: the politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, 1860-1923 (Cambridge, 1974).

⁷ Ayesha Jalal, *Self and sovereignty: individual and community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London, 2000), passim. Such were the differences between the normative identities and moral systems of individual Muslims that there were diverse reactions to social and political change: 'the recognition of a religiously informed difference from an assertive Hindu "other,"' she argues, 'did not cement the multiple internal cleavages among Indian Muslims... this haemorrhaging of a religiously bounded community was not a fleeting but a recurrent phenomenon.' p.100.

⁸ On the increasingly 'well-defined, closely knit, exclusive and even aggressive' implication of the term of *qaum* as applied by Sayyid Ahmad Khan from the 1880s, see Safia Amir, 'Semantics of the word Qawm: a study of Sir Sayyad Ahmad Khan' in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* (49, 4, 2001), p.59.

and function separately from, and even in competition with, other Muslim communities in India.

Just as a language of Muslim solidarity was developed in colonial U.P. primarily through attempts to initiate the educational and cultural betterment of Indian Muslims, so this chapter will discuss educational reform as a means of assessing the wider transformation of understandings of community among Shi'as. The chapter examines simultaneously two interconnected themes. Firstly, it considers issues of educational modernisation and regeneration as discussed by Shi'a reformists, and the *anjumans* founded in order to actualise these goals. Secondly, it discusses Shi'a responses to wider efforts towards the improvement of the condition of Indian Muslims. The 'Aligarh movement' is a highly loose term which is used to indicate not only Aligarh College but a broad array of Muslim *anjumans* and societies which aspired to modernise Muslim education, ameliorate Muslim backwardness and as such foster a communitarian Muslim solidarity.⁹ Among these are included organisations as diverse as the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, Anjuman-i-Islam and, from 1894, the Nadva't ul-'Ulama. All such organisations are commonly perceived to have formed components of a coordinated network of Muslim *anjumans*, with Aligarh College and the Muslim Educational Conference at its head, which adopted an inclusive ethos as a means of cultivating Muslim communal solidarity as widely as possible.¹⁰

The principle sources used for much of this chapter are extracts from newspapers, primarily those from the newspaper *Ittehad*, north India's foremost Shi'a newspaper from 1910 until 1925.¹¹ As such, in addition to its assessment of Shi'a educational reform and

⁹ For an excellent description of many such *anjumans*, see Abdul Rashid Khan, *The All-India Muslim Educational Conference: its contribution to the cultural development of Indian Muslims* (Karachi, 2001), pp.13-25, 42-53.

¹⁰ For instance, Aligarh was 'the arena in which Muslim opinion was created and U.P. Muslim leadership assembled' and the Educational Conference 'extended the scope of Aligarh's influence to Muslims throughout India.' Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims*, pp.124-5. Another author writes that the Educational Conference 'achieve[d] a general consensus to break the deadlock between the 'Young' and 'Old' parties' and 'fashioned a community of views and a shared outlook among the educated classes of Muslims in all provinces. The bonds of Islamic brotherhood were strengthened.' Khan, *The All-India Muslim Educational Conference*, pp.106, 252.

¹¹ A compilation of extracts from *Ittehad* until 1915 has been preserved as the text Husain, *Risāla-i-kifān-pōsh līdaran*. This has been supplemented by the plentiful extracts from *Ittehad* surviving in the Native

perspectives on Aligarh, the chapter has implications for the study of the newspaper-press in colonial north India, including its contributions to public-sphere debate and the novel construction of communities.¹²

Imamiya Congresses and *madrasas*: Shi'a alternatives to the Muslim 'centre'

Aligarh College, and its affiliated organisation the All India Muhammadan Educational Conference founded in 1886, sought to offer a 'centre' to Muslim education in India. Through these two establishments, Aligarh was designed as the 'great centre for a unified network of Muslim institutions,' serving to coordinate numerous efforts for religious and cultural regeneration among India's Muslims.¹³ Indeed, until the Aligarh-Conference combine became dominated by the campaign for a Muslim University from around 1908, the need for a Muslim 'centre' was the dominant theme of their discourse and sessions. Both these organisations have been examined primarily from the perspective of their unitary achievements, and less discussed is the fact that the attempt to establish a monolithic Muslim 'centre' was apparently resented by certain minority Muslim communities. This section examines early attitudes among some Shi'as to the Aligarh movement and argues that, at a time when Shi'as in many cities and towns had been newly engaged with the foundation and administration of specifically Shi'a organisations, there was often little willingness to be submerged into the Aligarh programme. Of course, many Shi'a individuals of provincial and national significance, prime among them the Raja of Mahmudabad, Mehdi 'Ali Khan ('Mohsin-ul-Mulk')¹⁴ and Sayyid Husain Bilgrami were ardent supporters of Aligarh College and its prescriptions for communal betterment. However, an examination of Shi'a communities on a more local level before around 1908 reveals a much greater degree of suspicion and ambivalence towards this overarching programme.

Newspaper Reports compiled by the U.P. Government (UPNNR).

¹² C.f. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London, 1991); Anindita Ghosh, *Power in print: popular publishing and the politics of language and culture in a colonial society* (New Delhi, 2006).

¹³ Lelyveld, *Aligarh's first generation*, p.303.

¹⁴ Mehdi 'Ali Khan (Mohsin-ul-Mulk) is also frequently known as Mehdi 'Ali Hasan; I have used the

Interestingly, and perhaps on account of the proximity to Aligarh, it was in the North Western Provinces rather than Awadh that the first organised Shi'a responses to the Aligarh movement appeared. An *anjuman* entitled the Imamiya Educational Congress emerged at the beginning of the 1890s, primarily on the initiative of a large number of Sayyids of Saharanpur. Originating within years of both the All India National Congress and Muhammadan Educational Conference, the Imamiya Educational Congress openly acknowledged its resemblance to both.¹⁵ It shared an array of features with these organisations, not least its convening of annual and bi-annual sessions, its carefully ordered lists of members and attendants and a conscious effort to enlist geographically and culturally wide support. Like these forerunners, the Imamiya Congress manifested an elite basis of mobilisation, led by eminent public figures of local position and dominance.¹⁶ Moreover the Imamiya Educational Congress' evocation in prose and verse of a Shi'a *qaum*, one of the first instances of its kind, echoed the attempts of these parent associations to subordinate the interests of self, kinship and caste to, respectively, the Muslim 'community' or Indian 'nation.'

In common with Deoband, and in a rare moment of acknowledged sympathy for the institution,¹⁷ the aim of the Imamiya Congress was to administer religious education, and to oppose the westernised strand of learning propounded in Aligarh. Aligarh College and the newspapers affiliated with it were accused of having 'quaffed the cup of *nechri'at* (atheism or materialism), of setting obstacles in the path of Islamic works, and of failing to distinguish lawful and unlawful knowledge.'¹⁸ To this end, the Imamiya Educational Congress founded the Madrasa-i-Imamiya of Delhi, a seminary of substantial size and annual intake founded in 1890. The *madrassa* was established in order to offer a broad curriculum of basic subjects and, in particular, to train *hafiz* (those able to recite the

former simply because it is the name usually adopted in the sources used.

¹⁵ Agha Haider 'Ali Beg, *Imāmīya Ejūkeshanal Kāngrēs kā ijlās-i-awal ma'rūf jalsa-i-gulshān-i-ta'līm-i-Imāmīya* (Fategarh, 1892), pp.30-2.

¹⁶ See the lists of donors and 'well-wishers' of the Congress, *ibid.* pp.19-27.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.29.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.28-9.

Qur'an), with the aim of raising preachers to be dispersed across India.¹⁹ The seminary was intended to serve Shi'a and Sunni students alike, and was forced to change its name to Madrasa Hifz-ul Qur'an to this end.²⁰

The Imamiya Congress' presence in Saharanpur most likely reflects the contemporary visibility of the Muhammadan Educational Conference in the North Western Provinces rather than Awadh, as well as the desire for a visible rejuvenation of Shi'a religious learning to mirror the same region's Sunni renewal at Deoband. However, as Shi'a organisational efforts became apparent in Lucknow from the 1890s, it was this city where Shi'a responses to Aligarh increasingly became focused. One community conspicuously absent from the sessions of the Muhammadan Educational Conference were the *wasiqadars*, the Shi'a pensioners of the former Awadh Court. Contrasting with the rapid transformation of Aligarh, and better reflecting the current economic stagnation of Lucknow itself, this clique was slow to modernise, and unenthusiastic to seek education or employment. *Wasiqadars* were noted for their failure to enrol their children in government schools.²¹ Looking on Lucknow's Shi'as as 'a community backward beyond all normal degrees of backwardness,' Government treated the *wasiqadar* class as a constituency in need of special consideration.²² Attempts were made by government to uplift this class, but early attempts to ease certain children of *wasiqadars* into commercial or industrial education came to nothing.²³ Some years later in 1912, a Wasiqadars' Scholarship Fund was established by Government for the same purpose, and the All India Muslim Educational Conference proposed the construction of a special school to educate *wasiqadari* children appropriately, again to no avail. They were instead castigated by the

¹⁹ Agha Haider 'Ali Beg, *Imāmīya Ejūkeshanal Kāngrēs kā jalsa-i-sālāna imtehān sāl-i-dōm 1310, ma'ruf jalsa-i-gulshān-i-ta'līm-i-Imāmīya* (Fategarh, 1892), p.7.

²⁰ Beg, *Imāmīya Ejūkeshanal Kānferans kā ijlās-i-awal*, pp.9, 30-1.

²¹ Hewett to Chief Secretary, 3 February 1912, Political Department File No. 42 of 1913, Uttar Pradesh State Archives, Lucknow (UPSA).

²² Meston claimed, for instance, that the Shi'as 'embrace that multitude of impoverished *ashraf* in Lucknow whom it is so absolutely essential to bring into the ranks of the ordinary population and to provide with respectable employment. This result is certainly not going to be achieved without some special measure of Government help in the way of education for the younger men of this class.' From Meston to Secretary, 7 February 1918, Educational Department File No. 7 of 1918, UPSA. He also claimed that 'the pressing need of doing something is strongly felt by those who know something of the private life of this impoverished and declining class of persons.' Lovett to Chief Secretary to U.P. Government, 31 January 1913, Political Department File No. 42 of 1913, UPSA.

latter for their 'life of laziness and beggary' and 'moral decadence' (*akhlaqi kamzori*).²⁴

The *wasiqadar* networks in the *muhallas* of old Lucknow were clearly little affected by the distant revolutionary murmurs of Muslims in Aligarh, and the Muhammadan Educational Conference proved unable to entrench itself among this particular local elite. This was due in part to the resilient self-awareness of the Lucknow nobility, who clung to their family heritage and distinctive civic culture rather than being absorbed into a monolithic communitarian reform campaign from which little tangible benefit had been forthcoming. On the other hand, and in the municipal context of Lucknow, it reflected a social and class rivalry between this Shi'a elite and the representatives of the Muhammadan Educational Conference in this city. The *taluqdars* newly established in Lucknow often adopted the Aligarh College and Educational Conference as the vehicles for their sustained social mobility and furtherance under colonial administration.²⁵ The dispossessed former aristocracy were not natural allies of the *taluqdari* class, and the latter's re-definition of respectability in Lucknow took as its victims the courtly nobility, who were dismissed for their self-indulgence and backwardness.²⁶ It was an edge which separated social groups of the 'old' city of Chowk and 'new' residents of Qaiserbagh, and on occasion, overlapped with the emerging rivalries of Shi'a and Sunni.

Another dimension of *wasiqadar* opposition to the Muhammadan Educational Conference was more overtly political. Having endured an era of dissipating wealth and social decline since the British annexation of Awadh, the *wasiqadars* had suffered substantially under colonial rule and were surprising but consistent participants in the Indian National Congress. The Anjuman-i-Muhammadi, the foremost public organisation

²³ Lovett to Burn, 24 September 1912, Political Department File No. 42 of 1913, UPSA.

²⁴ All India Muhammadan Educational Conference, *Rapōrt-i-ijlās-i-sālāna-i-Āl Indiā Muhammadān Anglō-ōrī-ēntal Ejūkeshanal Kānferans, bēmaqām Luckna'u 28-30 December 1912* (Aligarh, 1913), pp.9, 103, Sir Sayyid Room, Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University (AMU).

²⁵ John L. Hill, 'Muslims and the Congress organisation in Lucknow, 1885-1905,' in John L. Hill ed., *The Congress and Indian nationalism: historical perspectives* (London, 1991), p.138.

²⁶ It is worth mentioning that the *taluqdars* were not the only opponents of the *wasiqadars* in Lucknow in social or class terms. Burgeoning 'middle class' activity in Lucknow was largely formulated against both *taluqdari* and *wasiqadari* notions of respectability, giving middle-class political activity in Lucknow 'an anti-aristocratic edge... less visible at other urban centres.' Sanjay Joshi, *Fractured modernity: making of a middle class in colonial India* (New Delhi, 2001), p.15, c.f. pp.44-8.

of Lucknow's *wasiqadars*, was close to Congress through the late nineteenth century.²⁷ As political competition was systematised between the Congress and Educational Conference, it was thus raw political competition, as well as substantial class and educational differences, which separated many Lucknawi Shi'as from the Aligarh movement.²⁸

The other Shi'a clique whose response to the Aligarh movement was less than enthusiastic was the *'ulama*. Contrary to some perspectives that the Shi'a *'ulama* were more sympathetic to the assumed benefits of Western learning than their Sunni counterparts,²⁹ there was little evidence of this in the nineteenth century. A descendent of Dildar 'Ali, Sayyid Banda Husain, had produced in 1866-7 an edict asserting the importance of a sound education, which had been included in a compilation of *fatawa* (legal decisions) published primarily by *'ulama* of Deobandi and other schools and entitled *Imdād-ul-fāq-ul-rahīm-i-ahl-ul-nufāq*, published from Kanpur in 1873-4, which accused Sir Sayyid of atheism and of denying the *mi'raj* (ascension of the Prophet).³⁰ In 1891 certain *mujtahids* of Lucknow, unnamed but evidently scholars of particular eminence, urged and forced the Raja of Mahmudabad to withdraw his financial support of Aligarh College, a move which incurred significant financial damage upon the institution.³¹ It seems that, at a time when formalised Shi'a education was being established in new *madrasas* in Lucknow and elsewhere with considerable success, many senior Shi'a *'ulama* were loathe to admit the Aligarh movement as the solution to questions of Shi'a cultural and social regeneration.

²⁷ The head of this alliance was Sheikh Raza Husain Khan, who was also involved in the literary Rifah-i-'Am Association. *Akhbar-ul-momineen* (Lucknow), 2 June 1890, UPNNR. It was only around 1900 that the *wasiqadars* severed their formal connection with Congress. *Al-Bashir* (Etawah), 8 May 1900, *ibid*: c.f. Hill, 'Muslims and the Congress organisation,' pp.137-8.

²⁸ It is worth mentioning that the rift between Aligarh and Congress supporters was particularly acute in Lucknow, since the city was both a prominent fixture in the early organisation of Congress and conversely a particular target of anti-Congress activity by supporters of the Aligarh movement. Speeches by Sir Sayyid in Lucknow condemned Congress, while a Lucknow Anti-Congress Committee was established through his machinations.

²⁹ This is the perspective of Saiyid Athar 'Abbas Rizvi, *A socio-intellectual history of the Isna 'Ashari Shi'is in India*, (Delhi, 1986), Volume II, pp.363-444.

³⁰ *Firdōs-i-Makān kā tazkira* (Lucknow, circa 1960), p.12.

³¹ All India Muhammadan Educational Conference, *Rō'idād-i-sālāna, chhatā ijlās, 1891* (Aligarh, 1892).

Later in the same decade, the opposition of *mujtahids* seemed to tangibly diminish. Sayyid Ahmad and Mehdi 'Ali Khan both corresponded with Lucknow's *peshnama* Muhammad Ibrahim, and convinced him to issue an edict allowing Western education on condition that religious learning was not neglected.³² The move was hailed by Shi'a educationalists as a victory and paved the way for wider Shi'a attendance in Aligarh, but the continuing quarrels between 'ulama and Aligarhists meant that little common ground was agreed.

As the expanded public role of Lucknow's 'ulama crystallised, so their prescription for Shi'a education became increasingly separate from the Aligarh project. A crucial moment came with the foundation of the Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor. As was described above, the organisation was primarily concerned with religious propagation, despite its claims of concern for secular uplift, and described worldly development as contingent upon religious nourishment. Its overbearing attention to religious learning and establishment of the Madrasa-i-Imamiya in Lucknow implied a rejection of the Aligarh programme. This generated powerful opposition to the *anjuman* from Shi'as closest to the Muhammadan Educational Conference, including the Secretary of Aligarh College Mehdi 'Ali Khan, the educationalist Sayyid Husain Bilgrami (Imad-ul-Mulk) and the founder of the Anjuman-i-Islam Badraluddin Tyabji of Bombay.³³

The Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor's unequivocal refutation of the Aligarh movement came in December 1904, upon the convening of the Muhammadan Educational Conference's annual meeting in Lucknow.³⁴ At this meeting, a protest assembly of around 5000

pp.147-53, AMU.

³² *Firdōs-i-Makān kā tazkira*, pp.13-5.

³³ 'Ali Naqi Safi, *Sahīfa't ul-millat-i-ma'rūf be-lakhat jagir* (Lucknow, undated), pp.7-8; All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-awal-i-Āl Indiā Shī'a Kānferans* (Lucknow, 1908), p.4. On the Tyabji clan as 'pioneers of both westernisation and modernisation' among Muslims, see Theodore P. Wright, 'Muslim kinship and modernisation: the Tyabji clan of Bombay' in Imtiaz Ahmad ed., *Family, kinship and marriage among Muslims in India* (New Delhi, 1976), p.218; Husain B. Tyabji, *Badruddin Tyabji: a biography* (Bombay, c.1952), passim. For a biography of the educational modernists Sayyid 'Ali Khan and Sayyid Husain Bilgrami, see Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims*, pp.395-8; Khan, *The All India Muslim Educational Conference*, pp.258-60. Further information on Husain Bilgrami can be obtained from his private papers in the Nehru Memorial Library, New Delhi (NML).

³⁴ This was only the second session of the Muhammadan Educational Conference to be held in Lucknow, the first of which was in 1887.

individuals gathered opposing the Educational Conference, composed of 'all classes of Mahomedans, mostly Shias,' *wasiqadars* and *ra'is*.³⁵ A number of Shi'a *mujtahids* of Lucknow, most prominently Aqa Hasan, declared in writings and through *fatawa* that religious instruction was only nominally given in Aligarh College and that Shi'as should give no financial help to Aligarh College until arrangements for religious education were introduced.³⁶ There was concern among government and religious voices alike that such an influential figure as Aqa Hasan should so unequivocally oppose the principles set by Aligarh, and in response to this incident some argued that he should be somehow demoted from his influential post of *peshnamaz* in Lucknow's Asafi mosque.³⁷ The stand of these certain *mujtahids* was not universal among the Shi'a *'ulama*, and such influential men as Nasir Husain were notably less hostile to western education.³⁸ These moves were furthermore criticised by such men as Aligarh's secretary Mehdi 'Ali Khan, the young lawyer Hamid 'Ali Khan, and Sheikh Reza Husain, a former participant in Lucknow's Rifah-i-'Am organisation.³⁹

As shown above, this row was one of the major factors which led to the dissolution of the Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor, and its replacement by the All India Shi'a Conference. The Shi'a Conference claimed upon its foundation that it would pay full attention to modern

³⁵ *Oudh Akhbar* (Lucknow), 23 December 1904, UPNNR.

³⁶ *Aligarh Institute Gazette* (Aligarh), 9 January 1905, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge (CSAS); *Akhbar-i-Imamiya* (Lucknow), 20 December 1904 and *Shahna-i-Hind* (Meerut), 1 January 1905, UPNNR. Initially, the Shi'a *mujtahids* found a rare source of common cause with the Sunni *'ulama* of Firangi Mahal, both putting forward a single front of opposition. However, many prominent supporters of the Educational Conference in Lucknow were senior Firangi Mahallis, and *maulavis* 'Abdul Hamid, 'Abdul Wali and 'Abdul 'Aziz all apparently held public meetings to promote the benefits of the Muhammadan Educational Conference. The opposition of some Shi'a *mujtahids* was seemingly more persistent. *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, 9 January 1905, CSAS.

³⁷ 'Sayyid Aka Hasan is the person who opposed the British Government when Muhammadan Educational Conference was held at Lucknow, a fact well known to the public and published in newspapers. He prohibits men and women to learn English arts and language and his speech has produced some effect in some places. He will become more powerful if he is allowed to lead prayers in the mosque Asafuddaulah. He is therefore not a fit person to lead prayers in the said mosque.' Sayyid Sibte Husain to Lieutenant Governor, 9 May 1906, Political Department File 95 of 1906, UPSA.

³⁸ *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, 9 January 1905, CSAS. The family of Nasir Husain were significantly accommodating towards western education, and the *mujtahid's* cousin, Maulvi Sayyid Karamat Husain, made great advances in the education of women, spearheading the Educational Conference's focus upon women's education and founding Karamat Husain Girls' College in 1912. Gail Minault, 'Sayyid Karamat Husain and education for women' in Violette Graff ed., *Lucknow: memories of a city* (Delhi, 1997), pp.155-64.

³⁹ *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, 9 January 1905, CSAS.

education. However, the powerful influence of the *'ulama* and the predominance of *wasiqadars* and landed elites within it meant that, despite the presence of reformists, authoritative acknowledgement of a desire for modern education was conspicuously absent. Like its predecessor, the Conference perceived the reformation of religious education as the primary means of maintaining the cultural distinction and promoting the uplift of the newly fabricated Shi'a *qaum*, a fact which caused some unease among modernists within the Conference, such as the young Lucknawi barrister Agha Haider:

‘One thing which I note with regret is... [that] secular education is neglected and apparently made subordinate to sacred education. If not cured in future I doubt whether this scheme can prosper. The special object of this Conference appears to be to found a College of Divinity and send out a Shia Mission.’⁴⁰

The Shi'a Conference often and consistently declared itself ‘a helper and supporter of the Educational Conference in the realisation of its aims and objects.’⁴¹ However, it was admitted that ‘at the birth of the [Shi'a] Conference some of the leaders of public opinion were afraid, and their fear in the circumstances was not groundless, that it may find itself in conflict with a Conference representing a joint body of Muslims like the Muhammadan Educational Conference and may split the Muslims in two opposite camps.’⁴² Particularly in its early years, the Shi'a Conference focused upon religious education. In later years, as will be shown in later sections, policy centred around the foundation of exclusive Shi'a *maktabs*, schools, colleges and boarding houses, all of which reflected the Shi'a Conference's view that educational advance could only come alongside the propagation of a consciousness of Shi'a distinctiveness. Proponents of modern education were increasingly estranged from the Shi'a Conference, and there was an ‘open breach’ between educationalists and *'ulama*; Ghulam ul-Saqlain, a key modernist and figurehead of educational advancement, resigned from the Conference in protest at the dominance of

⁴⁰ *Tribune* (Lahore), 18 October 1907, CSAS.

⁴¹ ‘The Muhammadan Educational Conference does offer a common platform for all the Muslims and aims at the common good.’ The Shi'a Conference, meanwhile, does not ‘aim... at a separatist policy, but stood for co-operation or unity of action.’ *All India Shia conference: Calcutta sessions 1928. Presidential address of His Highness Mir Ali Nawaz Khan Talpur, ruler of Khairpur State* (Khairpur, circa.1930), pp.2-3.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.2.

the *'ulama* and the pervasive focus upon religious instruction.⁴³ Over subsequent years secularist, progressive individuals such as the Raja of Mahmudabad and Wazir Hasan were absent from its sessions. Those who remained within the Conference were primarily of the *'ulama* and the so-called 'Old Party,' and consequently the Conference largely scrapped the reformist agenda.

The example of such opposition by Shi'a organisations indicates not only the failure of the Aligarh movement to ingratiate itself with established Muslim nobilities and religious authorities, but suggests how attempts at the standardisation of a Muslim programme for communal betterment accentuated attempts by minorities within this suggested category to assert their autonomy. The call for a Muslim 'centre' was a key factor in prompting the differentiation and sectionalism which increasingly came to define relations and interactions among and between Muslim groups in colonial north India.

Shi'a suspicions of the Aligarh movement before the 1910s were far from unified or codified, but nevertheless there was a tangible resistance to the principle of uniformity in Muslim education and the coronation of Aligarh's College-Conference combine as the educational 'centre' for Indian Muslims. However, the emphasis of Shi'a critiques of Aligarh tangibly shifted through the colonial period. From the time of Aligarh's formation and during its 'first generation' until 1897, criticism largely focused upon perceptions of Aligarh's deleterious effect upon religious education. At this time, Shi'a *'ulama* were able to pinpoint common ground with Deobandi or other Sunni counterparts, and even cooperate in criticism. However, from the 1890s onwards many prominent Shi'a *'ulama* appear to have acceded to the necessity of such education. Some like Nasir Husain or Sibte Hasan voiced acceptance of western learning, and it was widely introduced into the curricula of Shi'a *madrasas*, among them even those administered by Aqa Hasan such as *Madrassa-i-Imamiya* and *Madrassa-i-Jafariya*. By this point, the dominant line of criticism against Aligarh appears to have been less the denigration of western education, more the belief that Shi'as needed to be educated in exclusively Shi'a

⁴³ Sayyid Reza 'Ali, 'The Khilafat and the Shia mujtahids,' in *The Leader* (Allahabad), 26 March 1920, CSAS. Ghulam ul-Saqlain's distinguished record in supporting secular education is recorded in Khan, *The All-India Muslim Educational Conference*, pp.63, 120-1, 125-6, 132-4, 263.

rather than wider Muslim institutions. It can be assumed that the appearance of abundant Shi'a *anjumans* in Lucknow and other towns from the 1890s, and their frequent focus on provision for public education and charity, encouraged their membership to focus on exclusively sectarian institutions as the best means for securing Shi'a educational and social betterment. As is discussed in subsequent sections, the debate over 'Muslim' education thus shifted from a discussion of the virtues of Western and religious education towards a debate over the viability of legitimate Shi'a instruction in wider Muslim institutions.

Exclusion and compartmentalisation: Aligarh College and Nadva't ul-'Ulama

'People used to say that Aligarh is a place of unity
 Everyone fights in his own place for unity
 Every atom composes a picture of unity
 From all sides you hear the cry of unity
 In the faith of Islam everyone is blended together
 And without fear or pressure fulfils his duty...

In our situation, you should again come out and cry for unity,
 You will be made to repent if you try to bring unity,
 The management of the College themselves demolished the foundation of unity,
 Such great holes appeared in [unity] that walls turned into doors,
 Such hatred was unveiled and spread outside.'

Mushir Kazim Lucknawi, *Shōr-i-Māshehr (The cry of Judgement)*.⁴⁴

If we are to believe its own hype, no institution better encapsulated the ability of Shi'as and Sunnis to work together within an individual, cross-sectarian 'Muslim' educational institution than the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh. Symbolically, just before its foundation, Aligarh's college was allocated the collected revenues of the failed Shi'a Madrasa Imaniya project of 1872-3, suggesting that it carried the support of Shi'a reformists of religious as well as secular persuasion.⁴⁵ In its lauded 'first generation.'

⁴⁴ Husain, *Risāla-i-kifan-pōsh līdaran*, pp.118, 127.

⁴⁵ Habib Husain ibn Ahmad Husain, *Sawānih-i-'umrī -i-Ghulām Hasnēn Kintōrī* (Lahore, 1904), p.199. In the end, however, the funds were returned to their donors. Ibid, p.203.

Aligarh College set a precedent as a transitional foundation in which sectarian factors were conspicuous by their absence. Following the College's foundation, its development of common allegiance to a Muslim *qaum* above sectarian loyalties ensured that 'Aligarh was able to transcend sectarian narrowness, including both Sunnis and Shi'ahs among its students,' while Shi'as were also generously represented among its trustees and staff.⁴⁶ The College mosque, Aligarh's trustees boasted, was the only mosque in India shared by both Shi'as and Sunnis, with both concordantly holding their *namaz* at different times. In 1899, it was said that 'Sunni and Shia students live on terms of perfect cordiality and friendship' in Aligarh.⁴⁷ Even in 1902, certain newspapers claimed that 'the Muhammadans of all sects, Shias and Sunnis... stand on an equal footing the Aligarh College... it will be a great day indeed when all the Muhammadan sects cooperate with each other in reforming the present system of education.'⁴⁸

However, in the 1910s many Shi'as increasingly declared Aligarh College to be a 'Sunni' institution. Contradicting the esteemed, inclusive ideology of Aligarh, they regarded it with increasing degrees of mistrust and, ultimately, launched open challenges upon it for its assumedly narrow and Sunni-informed character. Described pervasively in the Shi'a newspaper *Ittehad* as an expulsion (*ikhraj*) from Aligarh, Shi'a students and trustees deserted the College body and boards *en masse*. This story of the descent of Aligarh from a space of unitary pragmatism into one of sectarian controversy has been sidelined in scholarship, which has long been preoccupied with Aligarh's unitary qualities. Yet, as the chief aspiration of the Aligarh movement shifted from the establishment of a Muslim 'centre' towards the promotion of Aligarh College into a Muslim University after 1908, so Shi'a opposition was transferred away from criticism of the singular Muslim agenda and towards the supposedly Sunni character and composition of Aligarh College itself. The reasons for the Shi'a desertion of Aligarh College, and its parallels with the Shi'a abandonment of the Nadva't ul-'Ulama association some two decades earlier, are discussed here.

⁴⁶ Lelyveld, *Aligarh's first generation*, pp.123-4, 186, 200.

⁴⁷ *Al-Bashir* (Etawah), 5 June 1899, UPNNR.

⁴⁸ *Edward Gazette* (Lucknow), 9 December 1902, UPNNR.

The Shi'a-Sunni troubles in Aligarh were initiated by a pamphlet issued by the secretary of the Shi'a Conference, which outlined a number of Shi'a grievances caused by the Aligarh College in 1913.⁴⁹ There were complaints that the secretary-ship and other senior posts had always been held by Sunnis, and that disproportionately low numbers of Shi'as held professorships or posts in senior and student bodies.⁵⁰ The number of Shi'as on Aligarh's Board of Trustees was said to be insufficient, given the size of Shi'a financial contributions.⁵¹ Salaries were reported to be lower for Shi'a teachers, and Shi'a students were underprovided for with pecuniary help.⁵² Shi'as, it was also argued, were further disadvantaged in the College's religious life. No *peshnamaz* had been provided for Shi'a students, and no money was provided to fund their preachers. While Sunnis gained priority of access to the college mosque, Shi'as were forced to practice their religious rites in private houses and out-buildings.⁵³ Some Shi'as described restrictions upon *majalis* and certain other overt practices of Muharram, while concurrently no ban on rowdy behaviour during Muharram was imposed by the College.⁵⁴ Shi'a festivals were not properly acknowledged as holidays, and Shi'a literature was not widely available.⁵⁵ The College's main teacher of Sunni *diniyat* (theology) was said to have recited the biography of Caliph Abu Bakr in front of all students including Shi'as.⁵⁶ All of these complaints compounded the perception among Shi'as, both inside and outside the Aligarh campus, of a gradual drift in Aligarh's character from a Muslim into a Sunni College.

A little after the Shi'a Conference's announcement of these grievances and its prescription for their correction came the pinnacle of Aligarh's Shi'a-Sunni controversy in early 1914. Sibte Hasan visited Aligarh, and in a speech before Shi'a students he quoted a *hadis* offensive to the Sunni conception of the Caliphs. After his departure, Aligarh's Sunni *peshnamaz* Suleiman Ashraf responded to it with a 'scandalous attack'

⁴⁹ Extracts of this pamphlet are published in Husain, *Risāla-i-kifan-pōsh līdaran*, and *The Leader* (Allahabad), 25 September 1913, CSAS.

⁵⁰ Husain, *Risāla-i-kifan-pōsh līdaran*, pp.72-4.

⁵¹ *Ittehad* (Amroha), 16 January 1914, UPNNR.

⁵² Husain, *Risāla-i-kifan-pōsh līdaran*, p.75.

⁵³ *Ibid*, p.77-80.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, pp.80-81.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, pp.79, 82-85.

⁵⁶ On these numerous grievances, see *Ittehad*, 16 January, 23 March and 1 April 1914; *Daily Prince* (Meerut), 20 February 1914, UPNNR.

upon the Shi'as, calling them infidels and urging Sunnis to dissociate from them.⁵⁷ This convinced many Shi'as of the College's Sunni partialities. Some denounced the College as an institution of the *kafirs* (atheists),⁵⁸ and striking rumours circulated that the college would be renamed Umaran College (after the second Caliph), teaching only Sunni principles and educating all pupils as in missionary institutions.⁵⁹ In late 1913 an internal committee, composed of Shi'a staff and trustees, had been appointed within the college to examine Shi'a grievances,⁶⁰ but its lack of achievement in the wake even of this incident was interpreted only as another indication of the college's Sunni composition. The Nawab of Rampur and others resigned their seats on this committee in protest at the failure of the college authorities to act upon its recommendations. Particular blame fell upon the current College Secretary Ishaq Khan, who was accused of Sunni partiality, collaborating with Ashraf and ignoring the findings of the committee appointed to study Shi'a grievances.⁶¹

The press remarked upon the transformation of Aligarh College from symbol of Indian Muslim unity into a campus of sectarian vitriol and the convening of rival *majalis* and *milads* (celebrations of the birth of the Prophet) by opposing communities.⁶² Yet, many of the issues newly cited by Shi'as as grievances were in no way new practice in Aligarh, and had persisted in the long-term without complaint.⁶³ What happened in the early twentieth century, therefore, to bring sectarian issues into the foreground?

No doubt, part of the explanation for the opening of closed issues reflects a fresh consciousness of Shi'a distinctiveness and a wider appetite for sectarian assertion,

⁵⁷ *Ittehad*, 24 February, 16 and 24 April 1914, *ibid*.

⁵⁸ *Ittehad*, 1 March 1914, *ibid*.

⁵⁹ *Ittehad*, 16 April 1914, *ibid*.

⁶⁰ *Naiyer-i-Azam* (Moradabad), 28 August 1913, *ibid*.

⁶¹ *Ittehad*, 24 February, 23 March, 16 April and 1 May 1914; *Oudh Akhbar*, 2 April 1914; *Al-Bashir*, 24 April and 1 May 1914, UPNNR. Ishaq Khan forcefully repudiated accusations of such partisanship, defending the attention he had given to the issue. See his long self-defence in *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, 10 June 1914, CSAS.

⁶² *Al-Bashir*, 23 March 1914, UPNNR.

⁶³ A Shi'a mosque, while planned on the original blueprints for the college, had never been constructed, yet for years both sects shared just one mosque, performing their *namaz* at different times, seemingly without difficulty. Indeed, Shi'as and Sunnis had only organised separate *namaz* as late as the 1890s. Lelyveld, *Aligarh's first generation*, pp.157, 276. Equally, restrictions on religious ceremonies within the

spurred by the formation of the Shi'a Conference and other Shi'a *anjumans* in Lucknow and elsewhere. Yet furthermore, Aligarh College itself had experienced a shift in character since the turn of the twentieth century. Despite their sudden impact in 1914, Shi'a complaints against Aligarh had been growing steadily during the secretary-ships of Mehdi 'Ali Khan (1898-1907) and Mushtaq Husain (1907-13). Both secretaries were mistrusted by some Shi'as in a personal capacity.⁶⁴ But more importantly, as put succinctly by one source, 'the Shia grievances... began with the introduction of religious education in the college,'⁶⁵ and it was during these two secretary-ships that attempts were made to increase the religious credibility of Aligarh.⁶⁶ In the year after Mehdi 'Ali Khan's promotion, the College authorities called upon both Shi'as and Sunnis within Aligarh to give more attention to their religious education, 'which they have neglected so far.'⁶⁷ It was during his tenure that an Arabic department was established, and it was mainly on account of his efforts for a balance of religious and modern education that the opposition of the *'ulama* to Aligarh considerably decreased.⁶⁸ Mushtaq Husain ('Viqar-ul-Mulk') introduced for the first time a compulsory paper on 'Islamic Religion' for all students, which appeared to some as an attempt to standardise religious instruction.⁶⁹ Such moves were perceived by Shi'as as a relinquishment of Aligarh's secularist commitments. By some assessments, in a diversion from the cherished understandings of Sayyid Ahmad, the College had come to perceive itself as a religious rather than educational institution.⁷⁰ Moreover, provision for Shi'a religious education was widely perceived to be weak. It was claimed that, in comparison with the theological teaching provided for Sunnis, the Shi'a equivalent was under-staffed and under-funded, with

college precincts had long been enforced. *Ittehad*, 1 May 1914, UPNNR.

⁶⁴ Mehdi 'Ali Khan, a Shi'a Barha Sayyid of Etawah, converted to Sunni Islam by personal decision, probably during his holding of the college secretary-ship. Some have suggested that this was in account of his view that the notion of *taqlid*, which continued to be held in particular esteem by Shi'as as shall be described in Chapter 4, was an impediment to modernisation. Mushtaq Husain, meanwhile, was the leading representative of the Sunnis of Amroha and so was resented by many of the town's Shi'as, as is discussed below.

⁶⁵ *Al-Bashir*, 21 March 1916, UPNNR.

⁶⁶ Khan, *The All-India Muslim Educational Conference*, p.210.

⁶⁷ *Al-Bashir*, 12 April 1899, UPNNR.

⁶⁸ Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic modernism in Indian and Pakistan, 1857-1964* (London, 1967), pp.65-6.

⁶⁹ Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims*, p.400.

⁷⁰ *Al-Bashir*, 24 February 1914; *Ifada* (Agra), 30 April 1914, UPNNR. Moreover, they resented for many managerial interference in religious education, something resented by many Shi'as who argued that the community must be able to administer its own religious education even within institutions managed by

organisation deficient and exams badly administered.⁷¹

The combination of the erosion of Aligarh's secular status, managerial intervention into questions of religious education, and under-provision for its Shi'a minority, gradually convinced increasing numbers of Shi'as within and outside the campus of Aligarh's Sunni majoritarian propensity. Yet an addition to this Sunni character was given to Aligarh in the 1910s, with the rise of student activism on campus. The pan-Islamic agitation found a particular theatre among young, disaffected students at Aligarh, and the heightened visibility of *'ulama* and *wa'izen* in college life which followed further implied the penetration of the college by a radical and Sunni-tinted discourse.⁷² Moreover, the sectarian quarrels were an expression of the dissatisfaction of many young student activists with their college at a time of considerable political fervour. Shi'a-Sunni questions were deliberately stoked by young activists to confront and challenge the college's boards and trustees, who were perceived as outdated and pro-government sympathisers.

For all these reasons, it became widely declared that 'at this time, Shi'as cannot recognise this college as their own college.'⁷³ There was the perception or the reality of a shift in Aligarh's ability, or willingness, to maintain a secular ethos in which all sects could subsist, or to allow separate space for its Muslim minorities. Perhaps the contraction of Aligarh's inclusiveness was, ultimately and ironically, the result of its attempt to occupy a middle-ground between secular and religious reformists. Aligarh's claim to be a Muslim 'centre' had sharpened disagreements between reformists of variant persuasions, and attacks upon Aligarh from *'ulama* and others for its secularism and supposed atheism were intense. Attempting to annul these complaints of its critics and instil fresh unity into the Aligarh project in the early twentieth century, college secretaries and authorities

other communities. For instance, *Surma-i-Rozgar* (Agra), 16 October 1910, UPNNR.

⁷¹ *Akhbar-i-Imamia* (Lucknow), 5 June 1906, UPPNR.

⁷² The presence of pan-Islamism in Aligarh had actually been of persistent concern for Shi'as, even as early as 1897, the date of an early agitation in support of the Ottoman Sultan which had some effect on Aligarh. Some Shi'as were skeptical of the College on account of support within the College for the Sultan. Despite issuing a series of articles declaring that the Sultan could not be a Caliph, Sayyid Ahmad seemed powerless to remove the perception of Aligarh as a centre of solidarity with the Sunni Khilafat, and Aligarh was characterised as a centre of Turkish imitation. *Oudh Akhbar* (Lucknow), 7 October 1910, UPNNR.

increasingly acceded to requests to adopt a more visibly religious ethos and include provision for religious education. As the College's religious character was emphasised, it implied the acceptance of a Hanafi Sunni consensus which was less able to encompass Muslim minorities.

The events in Aligarh and pervasive evocation of an *ikhraj* bear an uncanny parallel to the experiences of Shi'as some twenty years earlier in Nadva't ul-'Ulama, the association of 'ulama established by Shibli Numani in Lucknow. The comparison was made by some observers, and Mujahid Husain Jauhar, the editor of the newspaper *Ittehad* which spearheaded the Shi'a rebellion against Aligarh, had first made his journalistic name in a systematic denunciation of Nadva't ul-'Ulama in *Awadh Akhbar*.⁷⁴ As such, the story of Nadva't ul-'Ulama and the Shi'as is worthy of examination.

Comparably with Aligarh College and the Muslim Educational Conference, Nadva't ul-'Ulama desired the integration of the leaders of various Muslim associations and schools into a coherent singular programme. It aspired to be a podium for the internal strengthening of Islam through the initiation of dialogue, articulation of issues of common concern and resolution of long-standing disagreements. The disunities which it aimed to settle included those of sect: it aimed to 'produce union and friendship among the opposing sects of Islam' and 'persuade them to drown their petty sectarian differences and thereby bring about good will and amity.'⁷⁵ As such, its initial committee of twelve members, founded in 1894 to construct the organisation's objectives and provisions, was self-consciously inclusive, incorporating representatives of the Bareilvis, Deobandis, the Ahl-i-Hadis, Aligarh and others. A representative of the Shi'as was included in Ghulam Hasnain Kintoori, the renowned scholar and founder of the Lucknow's Madrasa Imaniya in 1872-3.⁷⁶ Teachers from the Shi'a Madrasa-i-'Aliya of Rampur graced the Nadva't ul-'Ulama early sessions with their presence, and the convenors of these meetings evoked common Shi'a and Sunni adherence to the *hadis* and principles upon which Nadva't ul-

⁷³ Husain, *Risāla-i-kifān-pōsh līdaran*, p.85.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, pp.17-18.

⁷⁵ *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, 12 March 1895 and 10 October 1901, CSAS.

⁷⁶ Nadva't ul-'Ulama, *Kāravā'ī-i-daftar-i-Nadva't ul-'ulamā, ya'nī jamā'at-ul-'ulamā* (Lucknow, 1894).

'Ulama's ethic was based.⁷⁷ Until its third session, its speakers referred to the question of diversity within Islam with the claim that 'all are involved and all are invited.'⁷⁸

Despite the organisation's lofty aims, Ghulam Hasnain encountered opposition in its third session and was forced to withdraw from Nadva't ul-'Ulama, signalling the end of the organisation's inclusion of Shi'as. During the annual meeting of 1895, three Bareilvi *maulavis* attacked the Nadva't ul-'Ulama as over-inclusive of minority groups, dubbing it a mixture of Shi'as, *Nechris* (referring to the supposed 'atheists' of Aligarh) and Wahhabis.⁷⁹ In self-defence, the Nadva't ul-'Ulama committee 'in a weak moment... decided to sever its connection with the Shias altogether.'⁸⁰ Weakness was indeed the key factor, its leaders forced by accusations from religious spokesmen to prove its legitimacy, leading to a broader self-identification with a Hanafi Sunni consensus and excluding Shi'as. At the annual meeting of the organisation the following year, one member defended Nadva't ul-'Ulama against these earlier accusations by depicting the school as broadly Sunni: 'those who are Sunnis like myself and my friends act on the basis of the Qur'an and *hadis*... There are no Shi'ah among us.'⁸¹ The withdrawal of Ghulam Hasnain left the organisation as another narrowly Sunni establishment and ended its pretensions to cross-sectarian unity. By the time of the official foundation of the organisation's *madrassa* in Lucknow in 1898, the Nadva't ul-'Ulama was understood by Shi'as as a broadly Sunni seminary, indistinguishable from schools such as Deoband in its adherence to a rigidly sectarian creed and disposition for *munaẓara*.

The experiences of Shi'as within Aligarh College and Nadva't ul-'Ulama remain strikingly analogous. Both demonstrate a process by which an embrace of diversity within 'Muslim' organisations gave way to sectarian quarrels, scepticism of their ability to accommodate Muslim minorities, and a consequent narrowing of membership. Both display a comparable contradiction between their aspirations for inclusiveness and

p.9.

⁷⁷ Nadva't ul-'Ulama, *Rō'īdād-i-jalsa-i-dōm-i-Nadva't ul-'ulamā* (Lucknow, 1895), pp.11-2. 87.

⁷⁸ Nadva't ul-'Ulama, *Rō'īdād-i-jalsa-i-sōm-i-Nadva't ul-'ulamā* (Lucknow, 1896), p.89.

⁷⁹ Masroor Ali Akhtar Hashmi, *Muslim response to Western education: a study of four pioneer institutions* (Delhi, 1989), p.143.

⁸⁰ *Al-Bashir*, 5 June 1899, UPNNR.

realities that pushed them in a direction of enhanced sectarian particularity. Their parallel furthermore extends to other institutions long-hailed for their propagation of 'Muslim' communal unity. The Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, an organisation founded in Lahore in 1884 to promote Muslim unity and education, was similarly declared to be neglectful of Shi'as.⁸² Rather than interpreting all of these examples as isolated cases, it is possible to envisage a general narrowing of the constituencies represented within supposedly 'Muslim' institutions. Even the Lieutenant-Governor of U.P. James Meston hinted in the 1910s at the 'turbulent atmosphere which has recently been characteristic of some of the mixed Muhammadan institutions.'⁸³

Rather than being symptomatic of a simple desire among Shi'as to conduct efforts for their betterment within exclusively Shi'a organisations, this process could be taken more widely as a metaphor for certain developments within Indian Islam itself after 1850. Previous chapters have discussed the prolific establishment of *anjumans* and societies by aspiring Muslim leaders, and demonstrated that these numerous organisations often acted autonomously and under independent guidance, rather than as components of a collective effort. With this plurality of organisational efforts came differentiation, and the systematisation of division. Separate Muslim groups became increasingly compartmentalised into different *anjumans*, crystallising and enhancing the differences between them. In particular, as Shi'a and Sunni *anjumans* emerged across U.P. in growing numbers, so 'Muslim' institutions found it increasingly unworkable to maintain their broad basis and avoid categorisation as 'Sunni' or 'Shi'a' institutions. As a result of the 'expulsion' of Shi'as from Aligarh College, Shi'a educationalists were increasingly powerless to heed the further sectionalisation of Shi'as from Aligarh-inspired institutions far beyond Aligarh itself.⁸⁴ The perceived mistreatment of Shi'as here led to the wider

⁸¹ Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Princeton, 1982), p.344.

⁸² Husain, *Risāla-i-kifān-pōsh līdaran*, p.71. On the Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam see Khan, *The All-India Muslim Educational Conference*, p.16.

⁸³ Meston to Hamid Ali Khan, 16 September 1915, Educational Department 'A', File 152 of 1914, UPSA.

⁸⁴ A case in point is the Islamia High School of Etawah, long an exclusive Muslim intermediate college and a stepping-stone to Aligarh. Its manager was the Shi'a editor of *Al-Bashir*, a newspaper which remained supportive of Aligarh's cross-sectarian modernisation project. When he invited local Shi'as to contribute funds to and participate in the Islamia High School, the Shi'a press whipped up vociferous opposition, arguing that Shi'as should recall their experience in Aligarh and work only for the education of their own community, not relying upon educational institutions with a heavily Sunni contingent. *Ittehad*, 15 and 19

compartmentalisation of the Muslim modernisation agenda along Shi'a-Sunni lines, and would project new support into the foundation of specifically Shi'a alternatives to Aligarh.

Sectarian divide or municipal enmity: Aligarh and Amroha

At many points in this thesis, it is suggested that apparent Shi'a-Sunni conflicts were often manifestations of distinctly localised disputes and rivalries, with social and political conflicts in particular towns played out along sectarian lines. In other cases, however, sectarian rivalries could express hostilities between the elites of different towns. The Shi'a-Sunni controversy in matters of education and communal modernisation largely intersects with the rivalry between leading Muslim representatives of two of western U.P.'s Muslim centres: Aligarh and Amroha.⁸⁵ Barely 130km apart across the plains of the North Western Provinces, these two towns could hardly have been more different in their response to colonial presence and western styles of education. While Shi'a organisation in north India had formerly been directed mostly from Lucknow, during the 1910s the lead on the Aligarh issue was taken by the Sayyids of Amroha, a *qasba* which came to both absorb and broadcast wide-ranging Shi'a grievances. The enormous and consequential debates over the 'Sunni' leanings of Aligarh and the consequent Shi'a separation from wide-ranging Muslim educational institutions in north India were largely orchestrated in Amroha. Amroha's Shi'as were strongly criticised by Muslim reformists for their apparent refusal to participate in Aligarh College and the Muhammadan Educational Conference. In 1911, the Shi'as of Amroha explicitly dissociated themselves from the current campaign for a Muslim University at Aligarh, and refused to offer contributions to the fundraising efforts in its direction.⁸⁶ Moreover, the chief organ for

December 1914, UPNNR. Conversely, the editor of *Al-Bashir* opposed the Shi'a College on the grounds of it being 'so decided a secession from Aligarh.' 'Extract from a fortnightly letter dated 24 March 1916, from the Commissioner of Allahabad Division,' Educational Department 'A', File 152 of 1914, UPSA.

⁸⁵ Aligarh in this section is taken to mean the College and Civil Lines district around it, as opposed to the largely separate old town of Aligarh some kilometres away.

⁸⁶ Husain, *Risāla-i-kifān-pōsh līdaran*, p.18. The campaign and fundraising for a Muslim University reached their height at this time, around 1910-12. See Khan, *The All India Muslim Educational Conference*, pp.91-8.

Shi'a criticism of Aligarh was the newspaper *Ittehad*, published from Amroha by its dynamic young editor Mujahid Husain Jauhar. It employed the inventive medium of a mock-dialogue, one drawing from the discursive styles of Sayyid Ahmad's *Tehzib-ul-Akhlaq* and even Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*.⁸⁷ This depicted Sir Sayyid in conversation with a number of past and present Aligarhist trustees and politicians; it portrayed his supposed frustration at their desertion of his legacy, and at the descent of Aligarh from a centre of Muslim progress into an arena of sectarian controversy.⁸⁸ What explains such hostility to the Aligarh College and its branches among the Sayyids of Amroha? Moreover, why should their opposition have become expressed as an instance of wider Shi'a resistance, rather than mere local defiance?

As was discussed in the introduction, the Shi'a Sayyids of Amroha were a cultured, devout and fiercely independent local landed gentry, who found their legitimacy through ancestral ties and the distinctions of heritage. As such, they could scarcely have differed more from the modern Muslim professional aspirants centred upon Aligarh College, a newly fabricated 'Muslim' (and predominantly Sunni) space largely unconscious of the ties of family and clan from which its inhabitants had been recruited. Those Muslims clustered around Aligarh substituted the loyalty to one's own family, clan and *qasba* for a Muslim *qaum*, disregarded the historical and local origins of its *sharif* members in favour of common youth and professional status. In contrast to the manufactured and novel communal identities of Aligarh, encroaching modernisation prompted in Amroha an increased insularity around the pillars of kin and *qasba*, by which the Sayyids clung more tightly to the glories of their familial lineage and memories of past prosperities. Sayyid authors frequently outlined their genealogy in self-justification,⁸⁹ while the continued attendance by the Sayyids at the *dargah* of the founding Sayyid of the town, in spite of the wider efforts by Shi'a religious reformists here and elsewhere to eliminate such practices, was a powerful statement of cultural resilience.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ M.K Gandhi, *Hind swaraj*, in Anthony J. Parel ed., *Hind swaraj and other writings* (New Delhi, 1997).

⁸⁸ This is the format of a large part of Husain, *Risāla-i-kifan-pōsh līdaran*, passim.

⁸⁹ Sayyid Hamza 'Ali, *Hāq kī kasōtī* (Delhi, 1916), p.2.

⁹⁰ Jamal Ahmad Naqvi, *Tārīkh-i-sādāt-i-Amrōha* (Hyderabad, 1934), pp.28-9.

The opposition to Aligarh among the Shi'as of Amroha had long roots in fundamentally different approaches to educational reform in the North Western Provinces. As has been demonstrated in previous chapters, Amroha witnessed the entrenchment of *maktab* and *madrasa* education, and the sustained propagation of traditional education and religious publications. It was shown in the first chapters that a large number of Shi'a and Sunni *madrasas* appeared in Amroha from the 1880s.⁹¹ In fact, the persistent tendency to religious learning among the Sayyids was often begotten of their poverty. Unable to afford an English education in the town, many sons of Amroha were sent to the burgeoning selection of Urdu *maktabs* and Arabic schools, whose endowments provided free education.⁹² By contrast with government schools, these establishments were 'apparently flourishing.'⁹³ Consequently, religious education took precedence and distrust of Western-style educational institutions grew among Amrohawi Sayyids of both sects.

Like the *wasiqadars* of Lucknow, the Sayyids of Amroha were treated by government as a group in need of special consideration. Government were forced to institute unique legislation in Amroha, making Islamic religious education compulsory in some government schools, in an attempt to persuade Amrohawi Muslims to join them.⁹⁴ A special arrangement was made between the government and the Sayyid-ul-Madaris that a set annual quota of five of the *maktab*'s pupils would be admitted freely to the town's Government High School, a scheme explicitly to 'encourage Western education among the old Muhammadan families of the neighbourhood.'⁹⁵ The arrangement was in place for some years, although its success was limited.⁹⁶ Attempts to uplift Amroha's Sayyids according to a British example thus failed, due to their immersion in religious education

⁹¹ Mahmud Ahmad Hashmi, *Tārīkh-i-Amrōha* (Delhi, 1930), pp.138-46.

⁹² From E.F.L.Winter, 19 November 1905, Educational Department File No. 21 of 1911, UPSA.

⁹³ From E.M. Cook, 4 February 1911, *ibid.* Amroha's young, *madrasa*-trained Muslims were perceived as 'discontented and fanatical and disloyal' by the government. From E.F.L.Winter, 19 November 1905, *ibid.*

⁹⁴ It is no accident that Amroha was the single town chosen for this scheme, and it was said that it was this aberration from government policy alone which persuaded the Muslim residents of Amroha to enrol their sons within such establishments. *General report on public instruction for the North Western Provinces and Oudh* (1894-1895), p.82; *General report on public instruction for the North Western Provinces and Oudh* (1895-1896), p.54, V/24/916, OIOC.

⁹⁵ Yakub Ali, headmaster of Government High School, Amroha, to Inspector of Schools, Rohilkhand Division, 12 November 1910, Educational Department File No. 21 of 1911, UPSA.

⁹⁶ A large proportion of its few beneficiaries withdrew or were expelled from the High School for unsatisfactory work. De La Fosse to Secretary of U.P. Government, 21 January 1911, *ibid.*

and their mistrust of its Western-inspired counterpart.

Hostility to Aligarh among Amroha's Shi'as, however, was not simply a question of religious versus secular education. At the heart of the debate was the persisting crisis of Muslim identity from the post-Rebellion period and the search for a response to colonial *jadid*. While the Aligarh generation sought accommodation with the colonial administration and reaped the benefits of economic betterment and political visibility, in Amroha a sense persisted that colonial rule had brought with it ruin rather than betterment. While the Shi'a Sayyids had remained in stagnation or decline economically and educationally, modernisation had been kinder to Amroha's Sunnis. Headed by Mushtaq Husain (who would become the Secretary of Aligarh College much mistrusted by Shi'as in the next decade), a number of Sunnis acquired considerable wealth as administrators and pleaders, after which as new 'masters of wealth and property' they aspired to gain influence and civic honours. The conflict between the established Shi'a aristocracy and aspiring Sunni professionals in Amroha intensified greatly after the devolution of power to municipal councils in the early 1880s, which led to the appointment of some local Sunnis as municipal commissioners and established institutions of local governance as an arena in which Shi'a-Sunni conflict would be enacted.⁹⁷ Indeed, the above-discussed introduction by Shi'as of new Muharram rites and the *bila fasil* phrase into the *azan* during the 1890s, it could be argued, represented a form of public resistance to this new civic prominence sought by Sunnis.

For the Shi'as of Amroha, therefore, colonial presence had brought with it a hostile local administration, challenges to former Shi'a dominance and enhanced Shi'a-Sunni conflict. Since the connotation of *jadid* (modernity) for Amroha's Shi'as was one of instability and decline, attempts by Shi'as to alleviate their 'backwardness' were often marked by insularity, shunning perceived modern or Western ideals in favour of municipal heritage and traditionalism. A striking example is the Anjuman-i-Sadat-i-Amroha, a society formed with apparent considerable local support after the Amroha session of the Shi'a

⁹⁷ In other cities in the North Western Provinces, the 1883 Municipalities Act has been shown to have enhanced local Hindu-Muslim conflicts in a similar way. Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims*, pp.79-80.

Conference in 1910. The organ's proclaimed function was to promote the Islamic *shari'a* and uphold Islamic traditions, expunging non-Islamic innovations. Even the Shi'a Conference perceived this organ to be misguided and over-conservative, and urged the Sayyids to close it and open an alternative that could work for educational and financial betterment.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, the organisation seems to have been successful in at least temporarily siphoning off the latter's support; in contrast with the former enthusiasm within Amroha for the Shi'a Conference, in 1912 no deputation from Amroha attended its session.

Resistance to the Aligarh project in Amroha was manifested not only in resistance to modern education and colonial municipal administration more widely, but in wider social reform. The uplift of women's education became one of the most visible and distinctive aspects of the Aligarh movement in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The sense grew that women were guardians of the domestic space, the hearth of Islam, and hence the transmitters of Islamic values responsible for the correct religious and ethical upbringing of future generations; women were thus established as the battleground on which various reformists and traditionalists would play out their agendas.⁹⁹ As such, many Muslim reformists during this period came to focus upon the proper role of women. In particular, a number of Aligarh-inspired reformists developed ideas that women should be educated in practical as well as religious matters, should attend schools with a formally organised curriculum rather than receiving home instruction, and should be relieved of *purda* (veiling or seclusion).¹⁰⁰ By contrast, those opposing the Aligarh project more widely came to offer an opposite prognosis for the role of women, and this was especially true in Amroha. Alongside his opposition to Aligarh in the columns of

⁹⁸ All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-chhatā-i-Āl Indiā Shī'a Kānferans, munaqīda 18-20 October 1912* (Lucknow, 1913), pp.183-4.

⁹⁹ Gail Minault, *Secluded scholars: women's education and Muslim social reform in colonial India* (New Delhi, 1998), passim; Khan, *The All-India Muslim Educational Conference*, pp.116-141; Francis Robinson, 'Religious change and the Self in Muslim South Asia since 1800,' in Francis Robinson ed., *Islam and Muslim history in South Asia* (New Delhi, 2000), pp.111-2.

¹⁰⁰ On institutionalised education for women, see Minault, 'Sayyid Karamat Husain and education for women.' It is notable that some of the most prominent Shi'a opponents of Anjuman-i-Sadr-ul-Sadoor, such as Mehdi 'Ali Khan, Husain Bilgrami and Badr-ud-din Tyabji, were strong proponents of female educational establishments, and in some cases, advocates of the reform of the custom of *purda*. Khan, *The All-India Muslim Educational Conference*, pp.121-4; Husain B. Tyabji, *Badruddin Tyabji: a biography* (Bombay, c.1952), p.71.

Ittehad, Mujahid Husain wrote and published instructive tracts for women, a common literary genre in colonial India. One of his writings, described as ‘a book suitable for young girls,’ laid down the regulation of the appropriate lifestyle, morals and habits of women, discussing issues such as home-making, manners, cooking and the raising of children.¹⁰¹ As with many wider reformists discussed above, he emphasised the domestic sphere as the building-block of Muslim society. However, his omission of a prescription for women’s education implied that women needed to be further reminded of traditional manners and custom, rather than becoming newly versed in modern knowledge or participating in the institutionalised education advocated by many modernists. Moreover, Mujahid Husain frequently restated of the need for *purda*. *Ittehad* press distributed numerous tracts aimed at the ‘honourable woman’ who, it was said, would never be seen out of *purda*.¹⁰² Poetry glorifying the ‘sweet fruit’ of *purda* was published,¹⁰³ while *Ittehad* newspaper declared opponents of the custom to be morally vacuous.¹⁰⁴ Mujahid Husain’s reinforcement of *purda*, then, was a symbolic form of written resistance to some of the wider campaigns of educational modernists associated with Aligarh.

Equally important is the question of why the Sayyids’ suspicion of Aligarh should have become expressed as a Shi’a-Sunni controversy, rather than an issue of municipal competition or dispute between the ‘old’ nobility and ‘new’ middle class? Simply, the framing of the quarrel as a Shi’a-Sunni question coincided with its entry into national debate through the conversations of the vernacular press. *Ittehad*, a newspaper which was often dominated by news on local issues such as land tax and municipal personalities, aspired nonetheless to a wider readership, causing it to frame its assault upon Aligarh as a wider Shi’a-Sunni question, rather than as one specific to Amroha’s Sayyids. Partly in consequence, sections of the pro-Aligarh reformist press in the towns of western U.P. were prompted to frame their responses in equally stark Shi’a-Sunni lines. In 1911-12 a series of attacks were made upon Amroha’s Shi’as in vernacular Muslim newspapers, accusing them of backwardness and an undermining of Muslim modernism. Moradabad’s

¹⁰¹ Mujahid Husain Jauhar, *Hayāt-i-niswān* (Amroha, circa 1928), passim.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, pp.115-6.

¹⁰³ Mujahid Husain Jauhar, *Masnawī Mēwā-i-Shīrīn* (Amroha, 1915), passim.

¹⁰⁴ *Ittehad*, 1 March 1914, UPNNR.

Naiyar-i-'Azam contained a contributed article by an Amrohawi Sunni on the Muslim University movement, claiming that 'the absence of education and the extent of the ignorance among the Shi'a Sayyids of Amroha results in them having absolutely no sense of the pace of the times,' the words and spirit of which were recycled in several other U.P. newspapers.¹⁰⁵ These articles were decisive in inciting Amroha's Shi'as to finally break their links with Aligarh College and the campaign for a Muslim University. It was this dialogue between Shi'a and Sunni columnists in the budding Muslim press which led to the identification of 'Shi'as' rather than the clique of landed *ra'is* as the impediment to Aligarh's uplift agenda. More widely, this dialogue came increasingly to frame the traditional-modernist debate in Muslim education in ever more stark Shi'a-Sunni lines. As *Ittehad* matured, it increasingly criticised Aligarh primarily for its Sunni-tinted administration rather than its irreligious syllabus.

This transition of the debate from a traditionalist-modernist one into a sectarian one owed further to the fact that by the 1910s many Shi'a organisations of Amroha no long differed substantially from the Aligarh movement in their language and aims, after which their sectarian distinction became their characteristic feature. An example is the Anjuman-i-Wasifa-i-Sadat-va-Mominin, founded in 1912 by Mohsin Mirza, a participant in many Shi'a orphanages and refuges in Delhi, and Jalal-ud-din Haider, an Azamgarh resident settled in Lahore.¹⁰⁶ The organisation essentially requested donations and provided financial grants for the religious and secular education of Shi'a students, as a strategy for lifting their families and by extension the Shi'a community out of backwardness.¹⁰⁷ It acquired some 300 members and affiliation to the All India Shi'a Conference within two years of its foundation,¹⁰⁸ and claimed the proud status of an all-India organisation, maintaining members and presence across Punjab, U.P. and Bihar, and even as far as Najaf, London and Oxbridge. However, its membership lists, the origins of contributors to its journals, the location of its administrative and publishing activities and close

¹⁰⁵ Husain, *Risāla-i-kifan-pōsh līdaran*, p.18.

¹⁰⁶ Jalal-ud-din Haider was descended from a line of Za'idi Shi'as of Jaunpuri origins. Sayyid Aja'iz Husain Rizvi Jarehvi, *Anjuman-i-Wazīfah-i-Sādāt-va-Mōminīn silvar jūbilī nambar* (New Delhi, 1937), pp.25-30.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, pp.1-2.

¹⁰⁸ *Rō'īdād-i-ijlās-i-hashtim-i-Āl Indiā Shī'a Kānferans, munaqīda 18-20 October 1914* (Lucknow, 1915).

alliance with Mujahid Husain Jauhar¹⁰⁹ all reveal it to have been largely an *anjuman* of Amroha. Similarly suggesting its local origins was its reinforcement, in spite of its supposedly wide religious constituency, of the distinctions of the *sadat* so revered in Amroha. In some ways, the Anjuman-i-Wasifa-i-Sadat-va-Mominin could have been a branch of the Aligarh movement. It spoke in terms of progress and the overcoming of backwardness, in a way which did not negate religious identity.¹¹⁰ The appeal to membership on grounds of religious rather than familial or local affiliation, the attempt to craft it as a national organisation, and the support of secular subjects such as commerce and technology, also placed it more closely to the Aligarh project than previous Amrohawi efforts. With a great deal of equivalence between the aspirations of this *anjuman* and Aligarh, the greatest distinction was no longer one of substance, but the Shi'a exclusivity of the latter. The organisation reflected and propounded the assumption, influential in many circles, that Shi'as could no longer be educated mutually with Sunnis.

On account of these new seminaries and *anjumans* in Amroha, by the 1910s the town offered its Shi'as numerous alternatives to the monolithic Aligarh project. As Aligarh became the centre of an aspiring all-India educational project for Muslims, Amroha became the equivalent centre of the alternative vision for Shi'a distinctiveness in education. Unsurprisingly, in subsequent years Amroha would become a dominant platform for the Shi'a College movement. Once the campaign for the Shi'a College began, the Shi'as of Amroha were its most enthusiastic supporters, giving 'great reception' to its envoys and pledging donations 'far in excess of their whole possessions.'¹¹¹ Shi'a College committees were held in Amroha, and there was even talk of the College being founded there. *Ittehad*, meanwhile, evolved into the chief organ of

p.18.

¹⁰⁹ In its commemorative edition of 1937, perhaps approaching a half of listed members and donors are cited as residents of Amroha. Jarchvi, *Anjuman-i-Wazifah-i-Sadat-va-Mominin*, passim. Mujahid Husain Jauhar was so closely affiliated to the *anjuman* that he temporarily closed his newspaper to help with the *anjuman*, and took on some of the *anjuman's* members as his staff.

¹¹⁰ 'Progress should always be apparent in education, but our customary education is divorced from the education of faith and integrity, and the influence of this particular kind of education is that we are moved further away from the standard of Islam.' Ibid, p.5.

¹¹¹ 'Extract from a fortnightly report, dated 12 March 1916, from the Commissioner of Rohilkhand Division,' Educational Department 'A', File 152 of 1914. UPSA; Meston to Fateh Ali Khan Qizilbash, 29 May 1916, *ibid*. Stories also circulate in Lucknow of how the Shi'a women of Amroha offered their jewellery as donation to the college fund.

the Shi'a College movement. As is discussed below, the reasons cited for supporting the Shi'a College ranged from the support for progressive Muslim education to sectarian vitriol against the 'Sunni' character of Aligarh, but in *Ittehad* certainly the latter predominated. The leaders of the Shi'a College movement voiced concern that *Ittehad* was exploiting the issue to 'make a living,' and undermining the respectability of the movement by giving vent to 'imaginative, scurrilous and malicious outpourings.'¹¹²

Having reaped few of the benefits of Aligarh during the early-colonial period, the Sayyids of Amroha took instead the route of heightened insularity and refuge in the tested cultures of kin and *qasba*. While the estrangement of Amrohawi Shi'as from the Aligarh movement appeared initially as a rift between the traditionalist gentries and the modernist Muslim middle-class, such an interpretation is partly misleading. The process by which opposition to the Aligarh movement was fostered, including among its features reformed *madrassa* education, fresh journalistic campaigns, new public *anjumans* and the active participation of budding Amrohawi writers, district administrators and magistrates, do not identify Amrohawi resistance to Aligarh as a resurgence of traditionalism. Rather, the Sayyid retreat from the Aligarh movement represented an alternative programme of modernisation, focused upon resistance to Aligarh's centralised reformist programme. However, like the Aligarhists, they increasingly appealed to religious commonalty rather than *ashraf* status in the articulation of their reform agenda. It was a choice that, besides distancing Amroha's Sayyids from the Aligarh movement, came increasingly to define the nexus of the wider debate over Muslim education as a Shi'a-Sunni one.

The campaign for a Shi'a College

As Shi'a-Sunni tensions swelled in Aligarh, and as *Ittehad* of Amroha inflamed sentiment around the issue, so grew the calls for a separate College, run by Shi'a staff and trustees and for Shi'a students. The foundation of such a college was policy of the Shi'a Conference onwards from a narrowly passed resolution in its 1913 session, but the

¹¹² Fatch Ali Khan to Meston, 17 July 1916, *ibid.*

concept was given its main legitimacy by the sectarian quarrels the following year in Aligarh. Indeed, there were signs that certain of Aligarh's Shi'a students and trustees were accentuating the conflicts and impeding their resolution in order to further vindicate the concept of a separate sectarian institution.¹¹³ Subsequent years saw a high-profile campaign for the foundation of this college, which was eventually founded at the close of 1917. The campaign for the Shi'a College is remarkable for the unprecedented level of unanimity and organisation seen among Indian Shi'as, as well as for its impact in distancing them from the Aligarh movement in the early twentieth century.

The campaign was initiated by Fateh 'Ali Khan Qizilbash, a resident of Lahore and 'Old Party' Aligarh trustee with landed property in Punjab, U.P. and Karbala. After talks with Shi'a 'ulama and trustees at Aligarh soon after the sectarian controversies, he proposed the foundation of a Shi'a College in the province.¹¹⁴ In 1914 a deputation of 'ulama toured U.P. in order to enlist donations from Shi'a taluqdars.¹¹⁵ At the close of the same year, a deputation of U.P. Shi'as led by the *ra'is* of Jansath toured the country to promote the College idea.¹¹⁶ The Shi'a Conference became an active vehicle for the project, its sessions repeatedly passing resolutions in its favour. The Nawab of Rampur stepped forward with financial pledges to the college, and many local Shi'a gentries followed suite. The Shi'a College Foundation Committee, sending out further deputations and requests for contributions and establishing district committees for the college in various towns of U.P. and Punjab, was active in 1915-16.¹¹⁷ As had been the case with the Shi'a Conference in its early years, the prospect of a Shi'a college initially received support from diverse political persuasions of Shi'as, and many were surprised by the uncharacteristic 'absolute unity' of the Shi'as of all parts of India to establish the

¹¹³ *Naiyer-i-Azam*, 12 March 1914, UPNNR; *Mashriq* (Gorakhpur), 17 March 1914, *ibid*; *Oudh Akbar*, 23 May 1914, *ibid*.

¹¹⁴ Fateh Ali Khan to Meston, 19 May 1914, Meston Collection, Mss. Eur. F.136/6, OIOC.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁶ *Ittehad*, 15 December 1914, UPNNR. The following year, Fateh Ali Khan made a further suggestion that all Shi'a landlords and *taluqdars* should release a fixed contribution to the College. *Ittehad*, 24 December 1915, *ibid*.

¹¹⁷ 'A number of devoted workers have travelled far and near interesting the Shiahhs of India in the college, collecting money for it and creating an atmosphere of pride and enthusiasm.' *The Pioneer* (Lucknow), 26 April 1916, Meston Collection, Mss. Eur. F.136/15, OIOC.

College.¹¹⁸

This 'unity' had several facets, and the level of cooperation was unprecedented. On the one hand, the College movement seemed to temporarily bury the disquietude between those of religious and secular inclinations. Significantly, most senior *'ulama* of Lucknow actively engaged with the college campaign's deputations and committees, among them Nasir Husain, Najm ul-Hasan and even Aqa Hasan, who in previous years had taken a stand against the supposedly irreligious education of Aligarh. Sibte Hasan issued strong and sometimes crucial oratorical support.¹¹⁹ In essence, the character of the college was left ambiguous from the outset, and suited the aspirations of its various supporters. For the *'ulama*, the college presented a further arena for religious teaching, and would combine secular learning with powerful and ubiquitous moral instruction. Meanwhile, the most ardent of secularists applauded the rhetoric of welfare and secular uplift which initially surrounded the college project and envisaged the construction of another college broadly within the Aligarh tradition, and possibly even as an antidote to the sectarian theatre into which Aligarh College itself had descended.

However, as the will for the existence of the college progressed into a debate on its character, the emergence of disagreement was predictable. The *mujtahids* began campaigning for a high contingent of theological teaching in the curriculum of the college, asking that 'religious teaching will have the first place among all the teachings of the College' and that other subjects should contain 'an admixture of theology.'¹²⁰ In a series of petitions over the coming years, they proposed measures such as compulsory religious education for Shi'as and the presence of *'ulama* on the Board of Trustees.¹²¹ Simultaneous disagreement arose on the location of the college. Suggestions among patrons were as varied as the individuals, although Lucknow was the most obvious

¹¹⁸ *Al-Bashir*, 25 April 1916, UPNNR.

¹¹⁹ It was in fact Sibte Hasan's speech in 1913 that was widely perceived to clinch the passing of a resolution in favour of the Shi'a College's foundation by the Shi'a Conference. *The Leader*, 9 October 1913, CSAS.

¹²⁰ 'Memorandum of mujtahids: Why did we need the college?' Educational Department 'A', File 152 of 1914, UPSA.

¹²¹ 'Draft Constitution of College Governing Body,' *ibid.* In addition, the Constitution expressed unease at the 'neglect of the next world' by modern systems of learning.

possibility.¹²² This prospect frightened many, for Lucknow was both a hive of nationalist political activity and a seat of learning, both of which were feared as possibly detrimental influences upon the institution.¹²³ The Shi'a *mujtahids* remained decided upon Lucknow, and a series of meetings between the Nawab of Rampur and the *mujtahids* on the location of the college descended into in-fighting.¹²⁴

Amidst such fundamental disagreements, much of Qizilbash's success in realising this project in its early years owed to the proactive support of Government, especially from the Lieutenant-Governor James Meston. Meston showed great willingness to be openly associated with the scheme and corresponded at length with Qizilbash, assuring college committees of the 'sympathy and assistance' of government.¹²⁵ Meston promoted the college vision as an effort towards educational uplift, pronouncing himself 'genuinely anxious to advance Muhammadan education, and... the enthusiasm of the Shia community provides a splendid opportunity for promoting that cause.'¹²⁶ He contended that the college would further secular education and thus foster 'the healthy competition of learning and not of theological disputes.'¹²⁷ Crucially, it was Meston's continuous communication with the leading figures of the college committees that seemed to hold together college supporters of diverging opinions, and Meston was largely responsible for keeping donors on side. He mediated the schism concerning the location of the college, and forced an agreement.¹²⁸ On the issue of the constitution of the college, crucially Meston served to maintain the support of the '*ulama* even as it became clearer that the college would be primarily an establishment of secular education, saying that on top of the school's curriculum 'would rest as a crown the special instruction in religion, which

¹²² For instance, the Nawab of Rampur and some *ra'is* of Jansath favoured Meerut, while others suggested Agra, Amroha, Fyzabad or Dehra Dun. Fateh Ali Khan to Meston, 22 October 1916; Meston to Fateh Ali Khan, 29 October 1916, *ibid*.

¹²³ Lucknow was 'the central home of Ulamas [hence]... the students may come out very orthodox, bigoted, even fanatics.' Petition to Meston, 22 December 1916, *ibid*. Meston described that 'the fear that, in a great centre of Shia religion, theological teaching and practice may leave insufficient time for adequate secular education' was commonplace. Meston to Education Department, 7 January 1917, *ibid*.

¹²⁴ Meston to Fateh Ali Khan, 24 December 1916, and Fateh Ali Khan to Meston 25 December 1916, *ibid*.

¹²⁵ *The Pioneer*, 26 April 1916, Meston Collection, Mss. Eur. F.136/15.

¹²⁶ Meston to Fateh Ali Khan, 24 October 1915, *ibid*.

¹²⁷ Speech by Meston in *The Pioneer*, 26 April 1916, *ibid*.

¹²⁸ Meston, for instance, forced an agreement on the location of the College. Meston to Fateh Ali Khan, 6 January 1917, Meston Collection, Mss. Eur. F.136/4.

would be the distinguishing feature of your College.’¹²⁹ That Meston ultimately laid the foundation stone of the College was a telling piece of symbolism not missed by sections of the press, which lamented that Shi‘as themselves were not sufficiently co-ordinated to conduct such a campaign without outside support.¹³⁰

The question of the Shi‘a College’s relation to Aligarh College can only be answered in connection with the ubiquitous hand of government in the College. Was the Shi‘a College a broadly complementary project to Aligarh, sharing its institutional structure and educational programme? Or, was the Shi‘a College an attempt to undermine Aligarh? Meston unequivocally stated the former, proposing the Shi‘a College as part of the wider framework of the development of Muslim education. He declared that the college was founded ‘not as a fruit of racial bitterness, but as a genuine endeavour to increase the facilities... for Muhammadan education.’¹³¹ Meston compared its future system of learning to that of Aligarh. He stressed the need for technical and commercial learning,¹³² insisted that the College would contain non-Shi‘as and would not mix religious education with the wider curriculum, and he outlined certain safeguards in order to prevent ‘excessive devotion to theology.’¹³³

However, the British administration at this time had a further vested interest which contradicted declared government policy that its support for the Shi‘a College was ‘not inspired by a desire to impair the usefulness of Aligarh College.’¹³⁴ Aligarh College in

¹²⁹ Address by Meston to Shi‘a deputation, Lucknow, 12 January 1916, Meston Collection, Mss. Eur. F.136/15.

¹³⁰ *Nai Roshni*, 15 December 1917, UPNNR. According to Meston, ‘I have worked very hard to get a start made with the Shia College and to stir up and maintain the necessary enthusiasm among the community. It had no previous experience in organisation or in the search for knowledge, and the whole of this business has been a very laborious enterprise.’ Meston to Education Department, 7 February 1918, Education Department File No. 7 of 1918, UPSA.

¹³¹ Meston to Her Highness Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam of Bhopal, 15 September 1916, Meston Collection, Mss. Eur. F.136/15. Also note his comment that ‘I am influenced by no desire to attack any person or sect, but solely by the wish to improve the facilities for Muhammadan education in these parts.’ Meston to Maulvi Sayyid Fasih-Ullah Manzur Ali, 5 December 1915, *ibid*.

¹³² ‘Reply given by His Honour Sir James Meston to an address presented by a Shiah deputation at Government House, Lucknow,’ 12 Jan 1916, *ibid*.

¹³³ These included the careful selection of a Governing Body, a watertight constitution, the siting of the college on the outskirts of Lucknow, and affiliation to Allahabad University. *The Pioneer*, 26 April 1916, *ibid*; Meston to Fatch Ali Khan, 6 January 1916, *ibid*; Meston to Rampur, 4 February 1917, *ibid*.

¹³⁴ Burn to Meston, 28-9 March 1914, *ibid*.

the 1910s had become a focus and centre of 'Young Party' politics and pan-Islamist fervour, and the campaign for Aligarh's elevation to University status became a significant challenge to the government. Harcourt Butler in 1912 described the 'pan-Islam flavour about the idea of a central university,'¹³⁵ and subsequent British policy came to orient around attempts to, in the words of the Viceroy, 'isolate Aligarh.'¹³⁶ Subsequently, Government sought to diffuse Aligarh's activism by encouraging a provincialisation and sectionalisation of Muslim education through the devolution of educational institutions away from Aligarh's 'centre.'¹³⁷ The Government seized upon the opportunity provided by the Shi'a College as a means of undermining Aligarh's emergent student radicalism and diffusing the funding, participation and attention conferred upon Aligarh. Fateh 'Ali Khan Qizilbash, the leader of the college movement, alluded to this at one point, when he deemed Aligarh's Shi'a-Sunni quarrels 'a lesser evil and a convenient opportunity to divert them from politics by keeping them for some time engaged in their own miserable... sectarian controversies.'¹³⁸ Perceived Shi'a nationalists and seditious newspaper editors were likewise deliberately diverted from such activities through their promotion onto Shi'a College committees.¹³⁹

As a result, the figureheads of the Shi'a College campaign were men of government loyalty, prime among them Qizilbash himself, who had been a strong proponent of discipline within Aligarh and headed the Moderate Muslim Senate, an association which attempted to further Muslim loyalty to government.¹⁴⁰ The College movement thus began the process of shaping a coalition sympathetic to Government, with Aligarh-inspired

¹³⁵ Butler to Hardinge, 3 November 1912, Butler Collection, Mss. Eur. F.116/71, OIOC.

¹³⁶ Hardinge to Butler, 13 April 1913, quoted in S. Y. Shah, *Higher education and politics in colonial India: a study of Aligarh Muslim University, 1875-1920* (Delhi, 1996), p.241.

¹³⁷ The Shi'a College was not the sole fruit of British attempts to devolve Muslim education from Aligarh; added to it were new Islamiya schools at Lahore, Peshawar and the Sultaniya College at Dehra Dun. Fateh Ali Khan to Meston, 30 July 1916, Meston Collection, Mss. Eur. F.136/15, OIOC; Meston to Her Highness Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam of Bhopal, 15 September 1916, *ibid*; Nawab of Bhopal to Meston, 23 October 1917, *ibid*. This raises questions about the extent to which British policy in education contributed to sectarianism during this period, since it facilitated the ascendancy of those who wished to set up educational systems on sectarian lines.

¹³⁸ Fateh Ali Khan to Meston, 19 May 1914, Meston Collection, Mss Eur F.136/6, OIOC.

¹³⁹ Fateh Ali Khan to Meston, 17 July 1916, Meston Collection, Mss. Eur. F.136/15, OIOC.

¹⁴⁰ Fateh Ali Khan to Meston, 26 December 1913, Meston Collection, Mss. Eur. F.136/6, OIOC. Qizilbash established himself as the main spokesman of government interests on the Board of Trustees, and organised meetings for discipline to be discussed on behalf of Government. Fateh Ali Khan to Meston, 19 May 1914.

progressives conspicuous by their absence.¹⁴¹ The Shi'a College was left in the hands of sympathetic operators, with Qizilbash as the spearhead of the movement and Shi'a *taluqdars* as its patrons. After its foundation, Government funding exceeded that of any other college in U.P., and its grant was consciously used by Government as 'a lever of their loyalty,' to ensure the college maintained a suitable governing body and political opinion.¹⁴²

In many ways, the exploitation of sectarian inclinations in education was successful in weakening Aligarh College itself. Tellingly, significant Shi'a participation in the Muhammadan Educational Conference virtually froze until 1917.¹⁴³ Furthermore, the Shi'a College campaign diverted funds and donations away from Aligarh. Many of the key donors recruited to the Shi'a College cause were traditional patrons of Aligarh, and from 1917 their gifts to the latter were severely diminished.¹⁴⁴ Some of Aligarh's wealthiest patrons, such as the Nawab of Rampur, resigned their trusteeships in Aligarh and became crucial contributors to the Shi'a College.

Perhaps more significant, however, was the ideological rather than financial destabilisation of Aligarh College. The Shi'a College undermined Aligarh's claim to represent the entirety of India's Muslim population. The language with which the necessity of the Shi'a College was justified became increasingly inflammatory and frequently intoned themes of overt hostility and sectionalism to accentuate the gravity of the sectarian difference. *Ittehad* depicted Aligarh as a purely Sunni conspiratorial institution and frequently evoked the historical persecution of Shi'as as the reason for the expediency of the new College. In this way, a whole new polemical dialogue matured in the debates surrounding the College. The active leaders of the campaign were motivated largely by sectarian passions, and persuaded prospective donors through recourse to the

Meston Collection, Mss. Eur. F.136/15, OIOC.

¹⁴¹ *Al-Bashir*, 25 January and 25 April 1916, UPNNR.

¹⁴² De La Fosse to Secretary, 28 January 1918, Educational Dept File No. 7 of 1918, UPSA; From James Meston, 27 December 1917, *ibid*.

¹⁴³ Fateh Ali Khan to Meston, 22 August 1917, Meston Collection, Mss. Eur. F.136/15, OIOC.

¹⁴⁴ Some newspapers were concerned that the foundation of a Shi'a College was diverting funds contributed to Aligarh. *Al-Bashir*, 5 April 1916, UPNNR.

College's exclusive nature rather than to educational furtherance.¹⁴⁵

The claims of *Shi'a College News* after the establishment of the College that it was a branch of the same tree as Aligarh thus carried little weight.¹⁴⁶ Despite such lofty rhetoric, the College was founded to compete with rather than compliment Aligarh College, and undermined rather than enhanced the Muslim solidarity which its founders had long evoked. The exclusivist motives of certain activists, together with the overtly sectarian rhetoric used to justify its necessity, ensured that the Shi'a College would be widely perceived as the rival rather than companion of Aligarh. The same opinion was further reinforced by the College's critics, notably Wazir Hasan, who described it as a government-manipulated attempt to break Muslim solidarity and deflect attention from the Aligarh movement.¹⁴⁷ However, opponents of the College were widely dismissed as unrepresentative in the Shi'a press¹⁴⁸; instead it was proponents such as Yusuf Husain Khan, who argued that Shi'as must be educated in separate institutions and not subsidise the education of Sunnis, who were hailed as the new representatives of Shi'a public opinion.¹⁴⁹ It is an interesting fact that the sectarian struggles within Aligarh College themselves evaporated quickly in 1914,¹⁵⁰ and no significant sectarian outburst appears to have taken place there subsequently. After 1914, the momentum against Aligarh appears to have been engineered entirely outside Aligarh itself.

One newspaper commented on the widespread consensus upon the need for the Shi'a College, despite the fact that 'even responsible persons do not know what sort of an institution the college will be or what will be its aims or objects.'¹⁵¹ The only consensus holding the campaign together was the belief that Shi'a education could only be properly

¹⁴⁵ The proposals floated by its planners which won the College a great deal of support, none of which were eventually borne true, included proposals that the college should be named a 'Shi'a' college; that non-Shi'as should be forbidden from attending the college, contributing funds or participating in its management; that the *'ulama* should control its most senior managerial positions; and that all education should be supplemented with a heavy dose of religious learning. *Ittehad*, 24 November 1915 and 16 February 1916; *Al-Bashir*, 9 November 1915, 14 March, 11 April and 16 May 1916, *ibid*.

¹⁴⁶ *Shia College News* (Lucknow), 10 May 1918, *ibid*.

¹⁴⁷ *Sitara-i-Hind* (Meerut), 16 May 1918, *ibid*.

¹⁴⁸ As in the case, for instance, of the Raja of Mahmudabad. *Ittehad*, 23 March 1914, *ibid*.

¹⁴⁹ *Dabdadi-i-Sikandari* (Rampur), 16 February 1914, UPNNR.

¹⁵⁰ Meston to Rampur, 16 August 1914, Meston Collection, Mss. Eur. F.136/6, OIOC.

¹⁵¹ *Al-Bashir*, 25 April 1916, UPNNR.

administered in separate institutions. That the cooperation between Shi'as of variant partialities in education was a pragmatic temporary arrangement for the foundation of the College is shown by the fact that these disputes soon re-appeared after its establishment. A series of debates on the exact role assigned to religious education led to protracted argument among trustees and within the College bodies, a 'struggle between the old and the new' which led to the disputation of Board elections, College strikes, withdrawal of financial grants, and other such 'unfortunate upheavals' which revealed the fragility of the ground upon which temporary unanimity had been built.¹⁵² The College in the 1920s was afflicted by declining funds and managerial struggles, after which it was said to have 'fallen from its high place, illiteracy is common among it, poverty has got hold of it and it is no longer in an organised state.'¹⁵³ This was scarcely a suitable tribute to an institution whose foundation had set such exacting standards and ideological clarity for Shi'a solidarity. Further, as is consistently evidenced by the persistent references to Shi'a beggary and poverty in the sessions of the Shi'a Conference in subsequent years, neither did the College make great inroads into its stated purpose of uplifting the persistent backwardness of many Shi'a communities, in Lucknow and elsewhere. Instead, the more enduring effect of the Shi'a College movement came with the collapse of the notions of a Muslim 'centre' and a distinct Muslim nationality that spanned sectarian affiliations. The newspaper *Al-Balagh* of Calcutta summarised most succinctly the impact of the Shi'a College campaign on the Aligarh movement:

'Is not the establishment of a separate College a message of death for the principle of a 'centre'?... Is it not true that the real founding of the Shi'a College was based on opposition to Aligarh College, and that in this manner injury is being inflicted on the scope and effect of the Aligarh College?... Does not every member... know that this is the most harmful movement of the present time and that it will greatly injure the Muhammadans?... where has your attitude towards a centre been destroyed? In what corner has your appeal for a nationality been buried?... The fundamental foundation of Aligarh College is being demolished and Sir Sayyid's *shari'at* of centralisation is being torn entirely.'¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² *Indian Daily Telegraph* (Lucknow), 24 June 1924, Education Department File No. 93 of 1921, UPSA. More specifically, supported by the Shi'a Conference, a majority of College trustees resolved that the 'ulama carried the right to veto the appointment of future trustees, to the dismay of certain barristers among the trustees. To Secretary, 5 July 1924, *ibid*.

¹⁵³ *All India Shia conference: Calcutta sessions 1928, Presidential address His Highness Mir Ali Nawaz Khan Talpur*, pp.7-8.

¹⁵⁴ *Al-Balagh* (Calcutta), 25 February 1916, Education 'A' File No. 152 of 1914, UPSA.

Conclusion: the sectionalisation of Islamic reform

As the Shi'a College campaign expanded, the realisation of its deteriorative influence upon the Aligarh movement's aspiration for Muslim unity dawned on much of the vernacular press. One newspaper predicted that 'the foundation of an exclusively Shia College will not only leave the Aligarh College entirely to the Sunnis, but will also create a gulf between the two sections of the Muhammadan community, which will considerably weaken the Muhammadans.'¹⁵⁵ Another assumed that 'the establishment of an exclusive educational institution for Shi'as will separate the two communities even in social and political matters.'¹⁵⁶ The College demonstrates how the discourse of Muslim education, so proactive in the creation and articulation of a Muslim *qaum* after 1875, was eroded in the early decades of the twentieth century. Muslim education became increasingly particularised along Shi'a-Sunni lines, and the unitary ideals of Sayyid Ahmad Khan were weakened by the establishment of separate educational institutions. There was an increasing sense during this period that Shi'a uplift could only be actualised through disengagement from Sunni-dominated Muslim institutions.

'Past events,' *Ittehad* claimed, 'have proved the falsity of the saying that education tones down religious prejudices.'¹⁵⁷ The gradual emergence of alternative colleges and *anjumans* along sectarian lines demonstrates the vacuity of that assumption held in some degree by colonial government, the Aligarh movement and the National Congress alike, and no less by certain subsequent commentators on Indian nationalism, that secular education would come to erase sectarian and communal differences. One early newspaper suggested that the eventual Shi'a College with its proposed secular syllabus would be 'instrumental in removing the inter-communal religious prejudices which have created the existing gulf between Sunnis and Shias.'¹⁵⁸ In reality, the Shi'a College campaign

¹⁵⁵ *Kaiser-i-Hind* (Fyzabad), 23 January 1916, UPNNR.

¹⁵⁶ *Zulqarnain* (Badaun), 14 May 1916, *ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *Ittehad*, 15 and 19 December 1914, *ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Medina* (Bijnor), UPNNR.

demonstrates how even such a theoretically consensual agenda as the improvement of Muslim education became conceived along purely sectarian lines in the early twentieth century. Education came to be implemented less as a project of cross-communal betterment or of bridging communal differences, more as a resource used competitively to strengthen the distinctiveness of individual communities.

In the late nineteenth century, reactions of Shi'as to the Aligarh movement were informed by wider debates over the value of Western or religious education. The invigorated standing of the *'ulama* and the renewal of formalised Shi'a religious education directed Shi'as in towns such as Lucknow and Amroha in an entirely different direction from Aligarh's secular and vocational learning. Debates on education at this time took on a primarily religious-secular focus of debate that intersected only passingly with Shi'a-Sunni questions. Into the twentieth century, however, the tone of debate changed substantially. Organs such as the Shi'a Conference, Anjuman-i-Wasifa-i-Sadat-va-Mominin and the Shi'a College committees all implied a tacit acceptance that some form of western knowledge was essential to provide income and employment. At this stage, none of these organisations differed qualitatively in their agenda from the diverse coalition of associations within the Aligarh movement. From this point, then, the difference was primarily construed as a sectarian one. Shi'a-Sunni animosity, rather than any disparity of educational policy, became the nexus around which the aims of these organisations were articulated and justified. The more Shi'a educational projects progressed, the louder the rhetoric about the impossibility of Shi'a participation within Muslim educational institutions. At the same time, sectarian particularity increasingly proved a useful mechanism for overcoming the secular-religious debate which had dominated educational development over previous years. Demonstrated most succinctly by the campaign for the Shi'a College, little was needed to unite its variant supporters except their faith in the necessity of exclusivity.

This chapter has only discussed the most prominent Shi'a responses to affairs of educational betterment. However, it hints at numerous, disparate efforts by local Shi'a elites of U.P. to separate themselves from the centralising Aligarh movement. One

particularly demonstrative example is found in the Shi'as of Shahganj, a long-established Sayyid community dwelling on the outskirts of Agra. After the foundation of the Muhammadan Educational Conference, they were consistent attendants at its sessions. However, in 1906 they convened their own meeting to find a common plan for the advancement of their education. Henceforth, they were incorporated into the Shi'a Conference, and their names disappeared from the Muhammadan Educational Conference members' lists. The Shi'a Conference gave formal affiliation to their association, Anjuman-i-Imamiya-i-Shahganj, and they went on to become visible actors in the Shi'a College campaigns.¹⁵⁹ The example of this one local Shi'a community encapsulates a much wider and multi-layered desertion by Shi'a communities of the Muslim betterment agenda in U.P., which extended far beyond its founding College and Conference at Aligarh. The often told story of the emergence and development of organisations for Muslim educational uplift from the 1880s onwards is therefore matched by a concurrent and consistent story of sectionalisation within these organisations, and the consequent foundation of more exclusive sectarian alternatives.

This examination of Shi'a separateness, as opposed to Muslim separatism, suggests the need for a wide re-appraisal of the narrative of Muslim communal organisation in colonial U.P.. The story narrated above contradicts the expectations of both Indian Muslim reformists and the subsequent literature which has emphasised the unitary capabilities of the Aligarh College and its branches. The evocation of Shi'a distinctiveness in the heart of public life and the Muslim betterment agenda contradict the argument implicit in some literature that the individual could be mobilised as a Shi'a or as a Muslim in different contexts with no contradiction. By contrast, a driving concern among many Shi'as was to maintain their independence from an overwhelming 'Muslim' counterpart. Some of this apparent confrontation between Shi'a and 'Muslim' programmes, it could be argued, owed to the language in which Shi'as were evoked; the

¹⁵⁹ This story of the Shi'as of Shahganj is deduced from the following: H.R. Nevill, *District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume VIII: Agra* (Allahabad, 1905), p.194; All India Muhammadan Educational Conference, *Rō'idād-i-sālāna chhatā ijlās, 1891* (Aligarh, 1892), passim; *Surma-i-Rozgar* (Agra), 1 August 1906, UPNNR; *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-chhatā-i-Āl Indiā Shī'a Kānferans, munaqīda 18-20 October 1912* (Lucknow, 1913), p.71: 'List of those persons who have done yeomen service to the Shia College cause,' Fateh Ali Khan to Meston, 24-7 July 1917, Education 'A' File No. 152

articulation of a Shi'a *qaum* afresh in the early twentieth century placed this idiom on a competitive equality with the Muslim *qaum*, and posited a direct challenge to the cause of Muslim unity.

Certainly it is this emerging sense of difference, and sometimes rivalry, between the Muslim *qaum* of the Aligarhists and the separate Shi'a *qaum* that seems to have characterised the evolution of supposedly unitary associations into narrower, more conflictive sectarian counterparts. It seems that the increasingly frequent interventions by aspiring Muslim spokesmen of various persuasions into the *anjuman*-based public sphere of urban north India led to a compartmentalisation of Muslim communities. The various cleavages between individuals and groups, it could be argued, were newly systematised and crystallised by their fresh institutional expression. This chapter has solely discussed the separate educational initiatives of Shi'as, but the process in fact embraced far broader conceptions of charitable action. Lucknawi organisations such as the Shi'a Conference, Shi'a Waqf Board, Shi'a Boarding House and Shi'a orphanage all expressed and propagated the sense of Shi'as as an independent and self-governing community, independent from wider communities in India.

Finally, this chapter has important implications for an understanding of sectarianism in colonial India. As was discussed in the introduction, the implied assumption of some scholarship has been that Shi'a-Sunni sectarian differences in India were limited to the private sphere and to distinctions in religious belief and ceremonial practice, having little impact upon attempts by Muslims to form social and political unanimities in order to sustain their importance in colonial India. By contrast, the debates over the public character of Shi'ism embodied by the Aligarh controversies did a great deal to widen the scope of Shi'a-Sunni sectarianism in colonial India. The distinctive feature of Muslim sectarianism from the 1890s, contrasting with its manifestations in earlier decades, is its appearance in social and political questions of national significance. No longer simply a conflagration of religious passions, sectarianism by the twentieth century bore an impact upon the definition and direction of the Muslim *qaum* itself, and upon the place of that

qaum within the nation-state.

CHAPTER 4

IMPERIALISM AND ISLAM: SHI'ISM, PAN-ISLAMISM AND MUSLIM UNITY

Introduction: Colonial encounters and Muslim unity

As was demonstrated at the beginning of the last chapter, much of the historiography concerning the impact of colonial rule upon Indian Islam has emphasised the expansion of discourses concerning Muslim unity. Shi'a Muslims, it has long been implied and argued, for the most part positioned themselves alongside Sunnis in the cause of a greater Muslim unity. The story of the articulation of Muslim solidarity has been well-narrated, beginning with the Aligarh movement and its definition of Muslims as a distinct and self-governing community, and then following on through the enumeration of Muslims as a separate political electorate, and the emphasis upon a symbolic language of distinctiveness and exclusivity.

However, a further important aspect of the development of unitary discourses was the growth of awareness and concern among Indian Muslims for their co-religionists abroad. Pan-Islamism, it is argued, enhanced a sense of Muslim solidarity by cultivating sympathy for Muslims across international borders. The notion of a *dar-ul-Islam* (abode of Islam), an Islamic nation or *millat* with the Caliph at its head, had long existed as an ideal but during the colonial period the notion became infused with a greater level of temporal resonance among some north Indian Muslims from the 1870s onwards. Its effects, however, became most manifest in the 1910s, with a series of intense agitations. In 1913, the destruction of a portion of the Machhli Bazaar mosque in Kanpur triggered a widespread and coordinated protest, with many declaring it an assault by government upon Islamic sentiment and sensitivities. This tied up with the current international context of the loss of power and autonomy in the Islamic world, with stories of the 1913 crisis in the Balkans, Italy's invasion of Tripoli, Russian interventions in Persia, together

with Imperial attacks upon the Ottomans and occupation of their former lands, all reaching Indian Muslims through a growing Urdu press. These latter grievances fostered the pan-Islamic agitations through the 1910s, eventually culminating in the Khilafat movement from 1919, an agitation in support of the Ottoman Sultan. Such campaigns, so it is commonly argued, fostered a communitarian identity which surmounted the various individual, class, regional and sectarian loyalties of Muslims.

Like the Aligarh movement, these campaigns for unity between the various sects and sections of Muslims have been assumed to have induced forms of cooperation between Shi'as and Sunnis. In his study of pan-Islamism, for instance, Azmi Ozcan has claimed that during the pan-Islamic campaigns of the 1910s, 'the participation of the Muslims was almost total... for the first time in their history, the *ulema* appeared to have found an issue on which they could patch up their differences. Thus the Deobandis, the Barelvis, the Farang-i Mahalis and the *Nadvatu'l-Ulema*, as well as the Shiis, came together.'¹ Hence, most of the key scholars of 'Muslim' politics have pointed out the significance of these agitations in combining Shi'as and Sunnis and enhancing their mutual cooperation. The consensual scholarly view of Shi'a participation in such campaigns is epitomised by these words of a leading specialist:

'certain developments in India and abroad created a favourable climate for... Shia-Sunni rapprochement. Whatever the depth of doctrinal cleavage, they shared the concern over the future of the M.A.O. College at Aligarh and combined in protesting at the 'sacrilege' of the Macchli Bazaar mosque in Kanpur. Above all, they shed quietism for political activism in trying to defend the Turkish Empire and the Holy Places.'²

In tune with this argument the Shi'a barrister Sayyid Ameer 'Ali, a figure discussed in more detail below, claimed in 1923 that all followers of Islam 'are animated by one common sentiment of unity and faith and doctrine. Even the longstanding feud between Sunni and Shi'a has now disappeared as a factor in practical politics.'³

¹ Azmi Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain 1877-1924* (Leiden, 1997), p.147.

² Mushirul Hasan, 'Sectarianism in Indian Islam: the Shia-Sunni divide in the United Provinces,' in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* (27, 2 1990), p.212. He continues: 'Even after the Khilafat and non-cooperation movements petered out, there was no indication of Shia-Sunni friction in UP or elsewhere.'

³ 'The Khilafat and the Islamic Renaissance,' first published in *Edinburgh Review* 1923, reprinted in

While the Aligarh movement was foremost an effort of Indian Muslims, the examination in this chapter of pan-Islamism and the forging of connections by Indian Muslims with their international co-religionists leads us to consider global developments in Shi'a-Sunni relations. The introduction of this thesis demonstrated how, by some assessments, the co-joined factors of jurisprudential reform, rising currents of pan-Islamism and the search for a united Islamic response to European colonialism meant that the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries represented a moment of 'modernist' Islam which prevailed over Shi'a-Sunni differences. As was shown above, both Jamal ud-din Afghani and the Ottoman Sultan 'Abdul Hamid II attempted, to some extent, to bring about a reconciliation between the two traditions, making space for Shi'ism within a particular brand of Islamic universalism.⁴ However, perhaps the most illustrative instance of the inducement of Shi'a-Sunni collaboration internationally was the combined participation of Shi'a and Sunni *'ulama* in protest at the British Mandate in Mesopotamia. Iraqi nationalist organisations, oratory and political rallies through the 1910s were inclusive of Shi'a and Sunni alike, and to some extent offered active rapprochement⁵; however, the climax of this was the call by the Shi'a *mujtahids* in 1920 to revolt together with Sunnis under the banner of the Ottoman Sultan.⁶ The decision bore the hallmarks of all these processes; jurisprudential reform, combined embrace of pan-Islamic action, and the construction of cross-sectarian support for the Caliph in the face of colonial intrusion and desire for self-determination in the Islamic world. The Shi'a participation in the Sunni *jihad* in this case was orchestrated 'in order to prevent the rule of non-Moslems over Moslems. This is a general Islamic religious principle and not a sectarian one.'⁷

Sayyid Razi Wasti ed., *Syed Ameer Ali on Islamic history and culture* (Lahore 1968), p.150.

⁴ Hala Fattah, 'Islamic universalism and the construction of regional identity in turn of the century Basra: Sheikh Ibrahim Haidari's book revisited,' in Leila Tarazi Fawaz and C.A. Bayly eds., *Modernity and culture: from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean* (New York, 2002), p.125.

⁵ Amal Vinogradow, 'The 1920 revolt in Iraq reconsidered: the role of tribes in national politics,' in *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (3, 1972), pp.133-5.

⁶ On Shi'a agitation in Iraq in support of the Ottoman Sultan, see Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton, 2003), pp.66-72; Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq 1918-1932* (London, 1976), pp.38-41; Charles Tripp, *A history of Iraq* (Cambridge, 2002) pp.41-5; Vinogradow, 'The 1920 revolt in Iraq reconsidered,' pp.123-39.

⁷ Vinogradow, 'The 1920 revolt in Iraq reconsidered,' p.136.

Keeping in mind these themes of the supposed impacts of this broad Islamic 'modernism,' this chapter re-visits these matters of Islamic religio-political unity in the colonial period. As the previous chapter questioned the frequent presumption that the Aligarh movement induced a form of concord between Shi'as and Sunnis, this chapter seeks to address the similarly frequent assumption that the growth of pan-Islamism among South Asian Muslims and their response to colonialism led somewhat inevitably to Shi'a-Sunni cooperation. The chapter argues instead that the conjecture of sectarian renewal did not necessarily coalesce with the experiences of Shi'as in the wider world, and pursues an alternative framework for understanding a national consolidation of sectarian difference.

A suitable starting point for this chapter is the story told by a frustrated contributor to a vernacular newspaper in 1913. Elaborating upon the pressing urgencies which should concern Muslims in the current age, namely, the defence of Islam against the challenges of imperialism and the loss of Muslim power in the world, he writes:

'Whenever their Sunni brothers want to make any efforts, then the Shi'as build up alliances among themselves in opposition to them, and bind themselves up in distractions... our rights will be pulled away from us by the Shi'as themselves and handed to others out of our very hands... if today the Shi'as could be re-united with the Sunnis, then just look at what would result, and what power would develop in both the hands of Islam. Yet due to the Shi'as, this outcome is impossible, because until now whenever the Sunnis have wanted to raise their voice for any communal or national tasks, the Shi'as have immediately reacted against it.'⁸

This perspective rather departs from the scholarly narrative of colonial-era Muslim unity outlined above. Moreover, the eruption of such dialogues at this moment locates the heart of the analysis of this chapter squarely in the 1910s. While this chapter will consider the several decades leading up to the 1920s, it was the conversational relationship during this decade between the *jihadist* and pan-Islamic rhetoric of some Muslim apologists on the one hand and Shi'a dialogues on the other which will form the mainstay of the analysis.

The second decade of the twentieth century has generally been seen as both the zenith of

Muslim communal and separatist politics, and simultaneously a crucial moment of communal accord between Hindus and Muslims. On account of the engagement of Muslim modernists and *'ulama* alike with anti-British initiatives in concert with the National Congress, and ultimately the combined coalescence around the non-cooperation movement, this decade is generally represented as the peak of communal harmonies before the sudden polarisation of religious communities in the 1920s.⁹ Simultaneously, however, the same period witnessed the first explicitly political interventions by Shi'a organisations. As was explained in the first chapter, Shi'a organisations had largely shunned overtly political statements in the earlier period, not least the All India Shi'a Conference. In its early years, this organisation's initial agenda was 'the advancement of the social, moral and intellectual condition of the Shia in India',¹⁰ and it committed itself to avoid 'meddling in politics.'¹¹ These pledges were short-lived, however, and community leaders starting around 1910 to petition for a new Shi'a political voice.¹² At the Conference's 1911 session, one speaker said that all questions on social and educational uplift were in fact 'political questions, the solution of which is necessary for the well-being of the community.'¹³ Accompanied by the newspaper *Ittehad*, the process of community formation took on the more overt tones of politicisation. As such, this chapter discusses the somewhat enmeshed and conversational relationship between these various political dialogues, and the impact upon them of the inflamed religious conflicts current in the lanes and streets of towns such as Lucknow.

A final point is that this chapter does not seek to underplay the importance of certain Shi'a individuals in the traditional narrative of Muslim politics. The Raja of Mahmudabad was a prominent leader of the All India Muslim League and a pioneer of Aligarh; Wazir Hasan accompanied Muhammad 'Ali to London on the 'Muslim' deputation in 1913 and was prominent in the Muslim League; and Sayyid Reza 'Ali, the

⁸ Sayyid Mumtaz Husain, *Risāla-i-kifān-pōsh līdaran—i-qōm* (Amroha, 1915), pp.17-8.

⁹ Francis Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims: the politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, 1860-1923* (Cambridge, 1974); Judith Brown, *Gandhi's rise to power: Indian politics 1915-1922* (Cambridge, 1972).

¹⁰ *Oudh Akhbar* (Lucknow), 15 October 1907, United Provinces Native Newspaper Reports (UPNNR). Oriental and India Office Collections, London (OIOC).

¹¹ *Tribune* (Lahore), 18 October 1907, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge (CSAS).

¹² *Hindustani* (Lucknow), 28 October 1910, UPNNR.

lawyer from a *qasba* in Moradabad district later based in Allahabad, was a prolific spokesman of Muslim unity and an active figure in the provincial Khilafat campaigns. All of these and many others took part in Muslim politics without specific reference to the Shi'a character of their own faith. Rather than questioning the motives of such personalities, this chapter looks at those separate individuals who were primarily moved to action as Shi'as rather than Muslims, in the process asking why it was such individuals who were apparently so able to surpass the former in their right to speak for the supposed 'Shi'a community' of India.

Jihad and taqlid: modern activism and traditional religion

A key instance of Shi'a resistance to wider Muslim political activism in the 1910s was the reaction to the Kanpur mosque agitation. When a section of the Machhli Bazaar mosque in Kanpur was destroyed by the British Government in order to build a new road in 1913, the issue was appropriated by a number of Muslim activists in U.P. as a source of mass protest and a demonstration of Muslim unanimity. To some extent, there were hopes among Muslims that the subject could garner support across sectarian boundaries. Remarkably, the intended cross-sectarian significance of the campaign is revealed in the fact that the demonstrations themselves often appropriated the evocative language and symbolism of the so-called 'Karbala paradigm.'¹⁴ The destruction of the mosque was often discussed in the distinct terminology of *shahadat* (martyrdom), and the protestations in Kanpur, in which antagonists walked bare-headed and bare-footed and paraded black *jhandas* (flags), were densely reminiscent of the annual Muharram *juloos* for Husain in Lucknow and other towns.¹⁵ Freitag has identified more generally in Muslim collective action a similar symbolic language evoking idioms of 'mourning, martyrdom and defeat.'¹⁶ Such themes, it could be argued, were not exclusive to the Kanpur mosque question, but ran through religious mobilisations as broad as the Khilafat

¹³ *The Leader* (Allahabad), 8 October 1911, CSAS.

¹⁴ This notion of the 'Karbala paradigm' was discussed in Chapter 2.

¹⁵ *Advocate* (Lucknow), 10 August 1913, UPNNR.

¹⁶ Sandra Freitag, 'Ambiguous public arenas and coherent personal practice: Kanpur Muslims 1913-1931'

and *tanzim* movements, while similar themes of the victimisation and oppression of Muslims drawing from the language of Muharram also accompanied the Muslim League's 'Islam in danger' campaigns in the 1940s.¹⁷

While some newspapers commented that 'we are very glad to find that the majority of the Shi'as are aggrieved at the demolition of the mosque,'¹⁸ it was clear that this sentiment among Shi'as was by no means unanimous. In Kanpur, Sunnis were drawn into exasperation with the Shi'as, not helped by the fact that two local Shi'as, an honorary magistrate and *tehsildar* (Collector) of Kanpur, led a campaign for the acceptance by Muslims of a separate portion of land for the re-building of the mosque.¹⁹ Muzaffar 'Ali Khan, the *ra'is* of Jansath and the key figurehead of the several thousand-strong Shi'a Sayyids of Barha in Muzaffarnagar district, issued a declaration that only the ablutions area of the mosque had been destroyed, and urged fellow Shi'as to keep their distance from the campaign. That this served to forge disagreement between Shi'as and Sunnis is clearly indicated in the words of one columnist, who urged that the *ra'is* 'should not have been compelled to give the Shi'as the impression that they were separate from the Sunni Muslims on the Kanpur issue.'²⁰ Contrary to the religious passions which have been assumed in much scholarship, then, Shi'a perspectives on the Kanpur mosque action were often apathetical and sometimes overtly hostile.

An implication of the Shi'a reaction to the Kanpur mosque affair, one undermining some presumptions of scholarship on Shi'ism, is its demand for a questioning of the metaphor of martyrdom as a symbolic language common to both Shi'a and Sunnis. Much of the theatrical expression of anger at the Kanpur mosque question did seem to decorate itself

in Katherine Ewing ed., *Shari'at and ambiguity in South Asian Islam* (New Delhi, 1988), p.151.

¹⁷ It is an interesting point that Muslim League activists in the later period, mirroring the mobilisations of the Kanpur mosque and Khilafat agitations some thirty years earlier, employed the Karbala paradigm as a way of communicating their cross-sectarian significance. Numerous examples can be found in the speeches of pro-League campaigners touring U.P. late in 1945. The Muslim struggle for freedom was compared with the battle at Karbala on which rested the strength of the Muslim 'nation.' Muharram was evoked as part of the common heritage of Muslims and Husain as a suitable model for emulation. *Dawn* (Delhi), 16, 19 and 21 December 1945, CSAS.

¹⁸ *Muslim Gazette* (Lucknow), 23 July 1913, UPNNR.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Husain, *Risāla-i-kifan-pōsh līdaran*, pp.16, 23.

in symbols of persecution drawn from the Shi'a mourning for Husain. Was this symbolic language, however, really common to Shi'as and Sunnis? In the Kanpur case, Shi'as clearly regarded the appropriation of the symbols of martyrdom with some suspicion. It may well be that some Shi'as were displeased with the possible trivialisation of Husain's sufferings by their evocation in unrelated contexts, or the use of such a didactic symbolic language in singular political causes. Alternatively, it may have been that the use of such imagery in the Kanpur mosque case as a precursor to urgent, proud action in the name of religion was more befitting of Sunni rather than the more anguished, aggrieved interpretations of the Karbala paradigm among Shi'as. In any case, this event demonstrates that the use of the martyrdom motif, one recurrent in South Asian Islam, should not be taken as indicative of cross-sectarian participation.

However, of more immediate importance is the question of why Shi'as remained apparently hostile to the Kanpur mosque agitation, and there appear to be two essential reasons. The first was the essentially conservative nature of many Shi'a communities, and the consequent resilience to activism and revolutionary campaigns. The interventions of Muzaffar 'Ali Khan and *Ittehad* identify the Sayyids of Barha and Amroha respectively at the forefront Shi'a anti-agitationalist politics. Both communities, who were shown in earlier chapters to have been ardent opponents of challenges to their ancestral authority, seem to have been somewhat troubled by these antagonistic campaigns among a reactionary clique of nationalist Muslims. Support for the government was construed as synonymous with the perpetuation of the authority of local elites, and of the current systems of land revenue and local control on which their prosperity entirely depended.

The Kanpur mosque issue is bound up with the wider question of the Shi'a response to colonial rule, and this thesis has shown consistently that in comparison to certain Sunni movements and in particular certain schools of Sunni *'ulama*, Shi'as had long been close to the British Government. The starting point for this trend was perhaps, as discussed above, the general British tolerance for the reconstruction of the Shi'a *azan* in the late 1880s, and some years later, the Piggott Committee's focus on the innovative aspects and

subsequent curtailment of Sunni rather than Shi'a religious customs.²¹ The close association also owed in part to, as seen in the previous chapter, the close alliance between particular Lucknawi Shi'as and British officials, including several commissioners of Lucknow and, in particular, U.P. Lieutenant Governor James Meston. It is quite possible that the romantic typecasts of Lucknow and Nawabi rule, together with the close association of the government with the *taluqdars* and *ra'is* of whom many were Shi'as, extended to a particular sympathy for this religious community more widely. However, the Kanpur mosque incident in 1913 was a defining moment in the configuration of Shi'a-British relations over subsequent years, inaugurating a sustained programme of Shi'a loyalty towards the British. In contrast to an increasingly vigorous, nationalist and anti-establishment Urdu press, the newspaper *Ittehad* became government's fervent defender. Despite early indications that the publication would follow many contemporaneous publications and bring Shi'as into line with wider Muslim causes and activism, the newspaper was offering by 1913 a determined appraisal of the benefits of colonial rule for Shi'as. The newspaper blamed the leaders of the Kanpur mosque agitation for prejudicing the government against Muslims, and even indirectly for the destruction of the mosque itself.²² In consequence, it dictated that it was the 'duty of the Shias to publicly dissociate themselves from such an... agitation.'²³ Urging submission to the colonial administration on the grounds that it had never suppressed religious practice or conspired against the descendants of the Imams, the newspaper boldly stated that 'among Muhammadans, the Shias alone are truly loyal subjects of the British Government.'²⁴ Such statements demonstrate the determination of many Shi'as to craft a space in colonial politics independently from wider Muslim communities, entirely against the rhetoric of wider Muslim unity by politicians and pan-Islamists which has

²¹ As can be deduced from Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis, the *mujtahids* after 1857 maintained a strong social and ritual distance from the British. The first sign of sustained communication between the *mujtahids* and the colonial administration came only in the 1880s and 1890s. In 1884, Muhammad Ibrahim negotiated the release of the compound of the Asaf-ud-daula Imambara and Asafi mosque, of which he became *peshnama*. A few years later, he similarly earned British recognition of the legitimacy of the reference to 'Ali in the *azan*. By the time of the sitting of the Piggott Committee in 1908-9, the Shi'a religious authorities in Lucknow were widely accepted to have access to the ear of government.

²² *Ittehad* (Amroha), 8 July and 8 September 1913, UPNNR.

²³ *Ittehad*, 24 April 1913, *ibid*.

²⁴ *Ittehad*, 24 October 1913, *ibid*. In a similar vein, a later issue argued that Shi'as should not assert claims before the British Government, but should be loyal and submissive, since the government alone gave rights and could take them away. *Ittehad*, 1 January and 8 April 1914, *ibid*.

hitherto so concerned scholarship.

However, equally significant in Shi'a opposition to the agitation, and seemingly more proactive in causing the abstention of those Shi'as from outside the Sayyid elites of the western United Provinces, was a religious rejection of the Sunni understanding of *jihad* (holy war or struggle), the notion of religious struggle commonly indicating action against the government. The rhetoric of *jihad* was widely circulated in the Sunni-dominated Urdu press from the time of the Kanpur struggles onwards and by activists and by 'ulama from Deoband, Firangi Mahal and, in particular, Nadva't ul-'Ulama. However, the declaration of *jihad* was widely resisted by Shi'as. Certain Shi'a traditions affirm *jihad* to have been forbidden since the occultation of the Mehdi, the absent Twelfth Imam, since he alone is qualified to make such a declaration, and these were widely endorsed by contemporary Shi'a representatives. In one allegorical passage, *Ittehad* narrated a castigation by a government figure of Muslim newspapers for their violent language, and claimed that the Shi'as were alone among Muslim sects in deprecating *jihad* and disloyalty to the ruler.²⁵ At the same time, newspaper editors reported the claim that Shi'as 'will never make *Jehad* with the Government.'²⁶

Shi'a rejection of *jihad* in the 1910s can largely be understood in relation to the process of religious renewal among Shi'as in this period, described in previous chapters. One aspect of the attempt to reverse the decline of Shi'ism in India was the reaffirmation of the notion of *taqlid*, the doctrine of individual submission to a chosen senior *mujtahid*. It was part of a wider elaboration on the specifics of Usuli Shi'ism, which propounded the absolute jurisprudential authority of the senior *mujtahids*. A number of tracts by Shi'a writers and 'ulama in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries concerned *taqlid*, and it was often the first principle discussed in Shi'a compendiums of *fiqh*.²⁷ However, for our purposes here, *taqlid* impacted upon the assumptions underlying the declaration of *jihad*. The declaration of *jihad* was contingent upon a sanction of the right to

²⁵ *Ittehad*, 23 January 1914, *ibid*.

²⁶ Maulvi Sayyid Fasih-Ullah Manzur Ali, editor of 'Shamim,' to Meston, 1 December 1915. Education Department 'A', File No.152 of 1914, Uttar Pradesh State Archives, Lucknow (UPSA).

²⁷ Especially Shaikh Muhammad Kazim, *Tanqīd-ul-taqlīd* (Jaunpur, 1915), *passim*; Aqa Hasan, *Khazāna't*

autonomous decision and self-determination, which implied a rejection of *taqlid*; as such, the Shi'a reassertion of *taqlid* forbade the kind of individual activism implicit in a declaration of *jihad*.

One important Shi'a treatise on *taqlid*, compiled from the writings of Safavid-era scholars such as Muhammad Baqir Majlisi²⁸ and printed from Jaunpur in 1915 in Arabic, Persian and Urdu editions, opened its discussion of *taqlid* with an expressed prohibition of *jihad*:

'The subject of this tract concerns the following: that the *jihad* of the Imamiya (Shi'as), in the age of the absence of the manifestation of the [Twelfth] Imam... without his inimitable declaration from any source, is therefore not lawful in any way, upon the defence of any instance of the law, without he who declares it, the *Imam-i-Mas'um* ('sinless Imam'). This faith in themselves and in the *Imam-i-Mas'um*, is in all aspects binding upon the Imamiya.'²⁹

The re-statement of *taqlid* was primarily a religious matter, reasserting the relevance of learned Usuli authority and the invalidity of unqualified personal judgements and declaring *taqlid* to a chosen *marja'* as *wajib* (obligatory). The text contrasted the Shi'a faith with other strands of Islam that consider *taqlid* as *haram* (forbidden), meaning by implication Sunni Islam and Akhbari Shi'ism.³⁰ However, set in its historical context of widespread activism and the pronouncement of individualistic assertions by religious activists and writers, the accompanying prohibition of *jihad* was widely perceived, in spite of the directly religious focus of the text, as a political statement by Shi'as. By its own admission in a re-print, the text itself caused something of a stir upon its release, and advocates of *jihad* criticised its interpretation of *taqlid* as invalid.³¹ This same tract was submitted to Government by some unidentified loyal Shi'a individual or group as proof that the Shi'a religion could not admit any hostility to British control of India.³²

ul-masā'il ul-fiqhīya (Lucknow, 1894), p.3.

²⁸ On these scholars, see e.g. Moojan Momen, *An introduction to Shi'i Islam: the history and doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism* (New York, 1985), pp.114-7. The *tasnifat* and *ta'lifat* of Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, were apparently widely translated and published in colonial India, as was referenced in Chapter 2.

²⁹ Kazim, *Tanqīd-ul-taqlīd*, p.4.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.5.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp.24-5.

³² Home Department (Political) Proceedings, Part B, May 1916, Nos. 289-90. National Archives of India, New Delhi (NAI).

While seemingly enunciating a tenet essential to Usuli Shi'ism, the prohibition of *jihad* by Shi'as in the 1910s is furthermore significant for several reasons. For one, the current opposition to *jihad* appeared to contradict decisions on comparable issues by U.P. Shi'as in earlier decades. In 1857, Shi'a *mujtahids* in Lucknow had not recoiled from sharing a declaration of *jihad* with Sunni 'ulama, and several members of the Nasirabadi family had taken up arms against the colonisers.³³ After this point, Shi'a opposition to *jihad* against the British government gradually crystallised with subsequent declarations on the issue. In 1871, a number of *mujtahids* produced a pamphlet condemning the *jihad* of the Wahhabis and proclaiming it to be impermissible in the absence of the twelfth Imam:

'When that innocent Apostle shall appear, is known only to the all-knowing God, and to no-one else. To commit bloodshed, except under the leadership of that Imam in person, is strictly forbidden by the Shia law. Those are the rebels and sinful ones who would revolt without the Divine Sanction the Apostle.'³⁴

This *fatwa* was a turning point in the relation of Shi'as with the British, overturning the upheavals of 1857 for a compromised acquiescence. In his famous assessment of post-Rebellion 'Muslim' opinion, Hunter concluded that:

'At least one small sect of our Muhammadan fellow-subjects are not bound by the first principles of their religion to rebel against the Queen... they are naturally loyal, for they know that if either the Hindus or the Sunni Muhammadans ever get the upper hand in India, the days of tribulation for the Shias will begin.'³⁵

No doubt British concerns were further assuaged by the *fatwa*'s explicit prediction of good relations between Shi'as and Christians, on the basis of a shared belief in the final judgement.³⁶ This episode of 1871 established the traditions of Shi'a political quietude

³³ Juan R. I. Cole, *Roots of north Indian Shi'ism in Iran and Iraq: religion and state in Awadh, 1722-1859* (California, 1988), pp.272-82.

³⁴ W.W. Hunter, *The Indian Musulmans* (Delhi, 2002), pp.110-1. Similarly, the prominent *maulvi* Sayyid Karamat Ali of Jaunpur argued in a lecture presented in 1870 at a meeting of the Muhammadan Literary Society of Calcutta that since the Muslims of British India were free to observe their religious duties, the country did not cease to be a *dar-ul-Islam*, and hence *jihad* against its rulers was forbidden unequivocally. *Abstracts of the proceedings of the Mahomedan Literary Society of Calcutta: lecture on a question of Mahomedan law involving the duty of Mahomedans in British India towards the ruling power* (Calcutta, 1871), passim; c.f. Peter Hardy, *The Muslims of British India* (Cambridge, 1972), p.110; M. Naeem Qureshi, 'The 'ulama of British India and the Hijrat of 1920,' *Modern Asian Studies* (13, 1, 1979), p.42n.

³⁵ W.W. Hunter, *The Indian Musulmans*, pp.112-3.

³⁶ The *fatwa* read: 'at the time when the above-named Imam shall appear, Jesus Christ shall descend from

and congenial relations with government which would persist over subsequent decades.

Furthermore, while the Shi'a decision to prohibit *jihad* differed from the verdicts of earlier generations of co-religionists in India, it differed no less from the contemporary pronouncements coming from contemporary international co-religionists. During the very same period, *mujtahids* in Iraq were urging a qualified form of *jihad*, known as *idfah*, which could be declared by the community of '*ulama* in the absence of the Imam.³⁷ Such developments among Shi'as in Mesopotamia seem to have been much less evident in India, where submission to established lines of authority was apparently asserted. This perhaps reflects the separate orientation of the '*ulama* in U.P. towns. Drawn from, serving and patronised by elite Sayyid circles, they were perhaps enticed to more conservative or even restrictive interpretations of *fiqh* than those '*ulama* of Iraq. It also reflects a further impact of the process of 'Indianisation' discussed in previous chapters. In addition to the formation of indigenous religious educational institutions and the turn towards the vernacular, 'Indianisation' came to include among its outcomes the political determination of Indian Shi'as separately and autonomously from their international co-religionists. There was an enhanced distance between the political vocalism of the Shi'a '*ulama* in Mesopotamia and Iran, and the resilience to political activism among their equivalents in some of the more traditionalist, conservative *qasbas* of north India.

As such, the anti-*jihad* campaign of the Shi'as, tracing its roots as far back as the 1870s but crystallised and invigorated by reactions to the Kanpur mosque question, owed to a coincidence of factors. Among the distinguished Sayyids of Lucknow and Rohilkhand it drew from their association with government and their guarded political and socio-economic interests, while in cities of Shi'a scholarship such as Lucknow and Jaunpur, it was religious sensibilities and an adherence to political quietude in the absence of the last Imam that prevented involvement. Indeed, the Shi'a opposition to *jihad* in the 1910s

the Fourth Heaven, and friendship, not enmity, shall exist between these two Great Ones.' Ibid, p.112. British observers of Indian Shi'ism often remarked at some length upon the millenarian themes of the religion which, it was argued, gave Shi'as a particular appreciation of the second coming of Christ. Hollister, *The Shia of India* (London, 1953), pp.92-100; Avril Powell, *Muslims and missionaries in pre-Mutiny India* (Richmond, 1993), pp.121-2.

³⁷ Home Department (Political) Proceedings, December 1914, No. 56, NAI.

demands a corrective of one manner in which Shi'ism has often been interpreted: that of subversion and social protest. Due to its expectation of the temporal governance of the twelfth Imam and the historical mistrust of temporal rulers, together with the emotive and transferable quality of the Karbala metaphor, some research has identified a certain innate tendency towards anti-governmental hostility on the part of Shi'ism.³⁸ In India, however, Shi'ism lent itself to the alternative role of government legitimisation. This had been the case with the 'formal religious establishment' Shi'ism which had proven a suitable and controlled ideology of governance under the Nawabs.³⁹ It later, as is shown above, became the case under British rule, where the continuous evocation of the historical tribulations suffered by Shi'as under Sunni domination were appropriated alongside conservative interpretations of Shi'a jurisprudence to develop Shi'ism as a doctrine justifying deference to government.

Moreover, the Kanpur events cast doubt upon the assumption of some scholarship as discussed in the introduction that this was a period marked by reform within global Islam, whereby efforts to break jurisprudential traditionalism, and the pursuit of a united response to colonial power, both opened new space for cooperation between Shi'as and Sunnis. Neither such process appears to have occurred in India. Also, the events hint at an expansion of Shi'a-Sunni difference far beyond the limits of localised quarrels. Indeed, the divergent reactions accompanying the Kanpur mosque event were perceived by some Muslim nationalist politicians as a considerable threat to Muslim unity. So severe became the political disunities between Shi'as and Sunnis that Sayyid Reza 'Ali, a leading agitationalist Muslim League politician, was forced just a few months later to assemble a meeting of Shi'as and Sunnis in Amroha, exhorting them to sink their differences and work for the common good of Muslims.⁴⁰ It would soon become apparent that such petitions did little good. Opposition to the Sunni political *jihad*, beginning with the Kanpur mosque agitation but perpetuated over subsequent years, came to colour Shi'a reactions to a dominant issue among Muslims in the remainder of the decade: the pan-

³⁸ Juan R.I. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie, 'Introduction,' in Juan R.I. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie eds., *Shi'ism and social protest* (New Haven, 1986), pp.1-29.

³⁹ Cole, *Roots of north Indian Shi'ism*, pp.194-220.

⁴⁰ *Naiyer-i-Azam* (Moradabad), 5 November 1913, UPNNR.

Islamic campaign.

The Sultanate and the ‘Shi‘i International’: Shi‘a responses to pan-Islamism

From the late nineteenth century, and especially in the second decade of the twentieth, the single question of the Prophet’s successors at the root of centuries of Shi‘a-Sunni difference rose to prominence as an acute issue in Muslim politics. The collapse of Islamic rule and subjugation to the British monarch spurred sections of *ashraf* Muslims in north India to look to the Ottoman Sultan, nominally the successor to the Islamic Khilafat, as a point of reference for the continuation of Islamic statehood and as a necessary safeguard for their own political future. The idea of an international Islamic state (*dar-ul-Khilafat*), presiding over the international *ummah* (Islamic brotherhood), had long persisted as an ideal, yet the concept gained greater temporal relevance with the political activism among the ‘*ulama* and Muslim middle-classes of the United Provinces from the late nineteenth century. The city of Lucknow was consistently at the very centre of the pan-Islamic campaigns. The first Khilafatist organisation was perhaps the Majlis-i-Mu‘id-ul-Islam, established in Lucknow by a group of Firangi Mahalli ‘*ulama* after the start of the Russo-Turkish war in 1877, which supported the Ottoman *Amir-ul-Mominin* and aimed to raise money for Turkey in its war with Russia.⁴¹ The first pan-Islamic agitation proper took place on the occasion of the Russo-Turkish war of 1897, but the agitation really came into its own after 1912 when the themes of Islamic universalism rooted in the perpetuation of the Ottoman Sultanate were developed by numerous Muslim nationalist individuals and groups. Prime among these were the ‘Ali brothers, some ‘*ulama* of the Firangi Mahal led by ‘Abdul Bari, Deobandis such as Mahmud ul-Hasan, and an active and reactionary Urdu press.⁴²

What was the response of Shi‘as to this pan-Islamic movement? Much scholarship has

⁴¹ Francis Robinson, *The ‘ulama of Farangi Mahall and Islamic culture in South Asia* (Delhi, 2001), pp.75, 153. This organisation was resurrected by later Firangi Mahallis such as ‘Abdul Bari in 1913. *Urdu-i-Mualla* (Aligarh), January 1913. UPNNR; *Muslim Gazette* (Lucknow), 5 February 1913, *ibid*.

⁴² Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims*, pp.257-325.

assumed that they widely participated in the campaigns, and thus calculated that pan-Islamism was a key force in cementing cross-sectarian unities. There are several reasons for this understanding. For one, pan-Islamism did not focus solely upon the status of the Ottoman Sultan as legitimate successor to the Caliphs, but upon the wider concern of the fate of the Muslim world, and particularly the Holy Places, under western machinations across the Middle East. That the Shi'a-Sunni distinction was largely negated in these concerns is evidenced by the fact that the fate of Persia under Russian influence, including alleged massacres at Tabriz and the bombardment of the shrine of Imam Reza at Mashhad, was consistently cited by Indian pan-Islamists alongside the Balkan wars and occupation of Egypt as an indication of western hostility to Muslim freedoms and sensitivities.⁴³ Encapsulating the wide thematic scope of pan-Islamic concerns, both Shi'as and Sunnis were initially enlisted in committees proposed in India to discuss the rehabilitation of the Khilafat.⁴⁴

Equally suggestive of pan-Islamism's capacity to induce Shi'a-Sunni cooperation was the prominence of certain Indian Shi'a leaders among the key advocates of the Khilafat ideal. In the later nineteenth century, Indian Shi'a thinkers had largely offered it their support, seeing it as a means of renewing the Muslim *millat* around the world, and in India itself.⁴⁵ In particular, the Agha Khan of the Isma'ili sect, and Sayyid Ameer 'Ali, an 'Isna 'Ashari Shi'a barrister of Calcutta based in London, established themselves as the spokespersons of Indian Muslims to the British on the Khilafat question throughout the 1910s, and carried their concerns to Mustafa Kamal in 1922.

Ameer 'Ali, aspiring to the role of 'bridge-builder' between Indian Muslims and the Government, likewise aimed through his writings to lessen the gulf between Shi'as and Sunnis. For Ameer 'Ali, the survival of the Khilafat was a question for both communities.

⁴³ *Al-Bashir* (Etawah), 21 January 1913, UPNNR; *An-Nazir* (Lucknow), April 1913, *ibid.* 'Abdul Shakoor's vehemently Sunni newspaper, *An-Najm* of Lucknow, included some Khilafatist poetry in which are included the lines 'What a pity the doom of Persia is sealed/ Muslim sovereignty exists in that country only in name.' *An Najm* (Lucknow), January 1913, *ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Oudh Akhbar* (Lucknow), 27 September 1913, *ibid.*

⁴⁵ Chiragh Ali selected Turkey as a possible model for political and religious reform, and denied the opinion that the Khilafat needed to be held by a Qureishi Arab, while Badr-ud-din Tyabji, the Shi'a Bohra leader of Bombay, advocated supporting Turkey over Russia in 1897. Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic modernism in*

and their collaboration around the issue was indicative of their unanimous verdict upon modern affairs. In an influential article written in 1915, 'The Khilafat: a historical and juridical sketch,' he argued that the 'prestige and influence' of the Khilafat were essential for the 'renaissance of Islam,' and attempted to rework a notion of the Khilafat ideal which could be acceptable to both Shi'a and Sunni Muslims. Indeed, his characterisation of the Khilafat seems to belie his own Shi'a faith, and to be written with Shi'a concerns in mind. In his discussions, the 'spiritual leadership' of the temporal Caliph is termed 'Imamate'; the application of the titles 'Caliph' and 'Imam' is interchanged; a distinction is made between the Ottoman Sultanate and a Muslim Khilafat of concern to all Muslims; all such features seem to carry a curious Shi'a intimation. Furthermore, the description of the 'spiritual tie' bonding Imam and *ma'mum* (congregation) depicts the Imam as possessing a charismatic authority closer to Shi'a than Sunni understandings of religious sovereigns, while implying the practice of compulsory singular congregational prayer especially characteristic of Usuli Shi'ism.⁴⁶ Future works of Ameer 'Ali, evoking a 'spirit of Islam' above regional and sectarian distinctions, continued this trend, appealing to a brand of 'Islamic modernism' which would exclude Shi'a-Sunni difference.⁴⁷ As pan-Islamic loyalties spread among Indian Muslims, he wrote in 1919 that 'the Sunnis and the Shias have combined in this agitation.'⁴⁸

In India, therefore, pan-Islamism presented and to some extent instilled accord between Shi'as and Sunnis. However, a very different story unravelled in the *qasbas* and districts of north India. An examination of particular Shi'a communities in the localities of U.P., and especially those towns such as Lucknow and Amroha where Shi'as were most self-consciously distinct from other Muslims, demonstrates that pan-Islamism acted as a divisive rather than unitary force between Shi'as and Sunnis during this period. While certain Shi'as established themselves on the all-India level as spokesmen of the Khilafat cause, their reach as representatives of their community was limited. Local Shi'a

India and Pakistan, 1857-1964 (London, 1967), pp.130-1.

⁴⁶ 'The Khilafat: a historical and judicial sketch,' first published in *The Contemporary Review*, 1915. Reprinted in Wasti ed., *Syed Ameer Ali*, pp.116, 120, 125.

⁴⁷ For a broader discussion of these issues, see Martin Forward, *The failure of Islamic modernism? Syed Ameer Ali's interpretation of Islam* (Bern, 1999).

⁴⁸ 'Address on Islam in the League of Nations,' first published in *Transactions of the Grotius Society* 1919.

dialogues increasingly evoked traditional Shi'a antipathy to the Caliph and, by extension, to the pan-Islamic and Khilafat agitations.

Speaking generally, it appears that many Shi'as in Lucknow were hostile to any moves to promote allegiance to the Ottoman Sultan, and crystallised their opposition to the institution as a further mark of defining their 'separateness' from wider Muslim communities. When the Turkish cap, popularised by Sayyid Ahmad Khan among modernist Muslims, appeared in Lucknow, some Shi'as adopted the *kulah* cap of the Persian court.⁴⁹ Sharar remarked that 'just as the Sunnis are culturally close to the Ottoman Empire, the Shias are faithful to the culture of Persia.'⁵⁰ Shi'a opposition to the institution of the Khilafat was no doubt fostered by many of the combative Shi'a printed tracts and published debates which, as discussed in previous chapters, were in the ascendant in many north Indian cities from the late nineteenth century. While these were mostly directed at the illegitimacy and immorality of Caliphs such as Mu'awiya and Yazid, they also threw criticism upon the venerated early Caliphs and Companions of the Prophet. While saying little on current debates over the Ottoman Khilafat, the new consciousness of Islamic history introduced by such texts would certainly have had the effect of reminding the Shi'a faithful that the institution of the Khilafat was an unsanctioned usurping of the Imamate.

The perspective on pan-Islamism among certain Shi'as could be compared in some senses to the reactions to Aligarh discussed in the previous chapter: an impression of Shi'a-Sunni convergence of opinion in the 1870s, which gradually transmuted into suspicion of its distinctly Sunni character over subsequent decades. The available information for the period of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8 suggests that Shi'as lined up visibly alongside the Sunnis in support for Turkey. The Aligarh *Institute Gazette* stated that 'happily the enlightened Shias burst the shackles of prejudice and warmly joined the other sect in their proceedings. The Mussulmans must congratulate themselves that the feeling of unity of nation and religion now animates the two great divisions of

reprinted in Wasti ed., *Syed Ameer Ali*, p.148.

⁴⁹ Abdul Halim Sharar, *Lucknow: the last phase of an oriental culture* (London, 1975), pp.173, c.f. 175.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* There were similar distinctions imposed in dress styles more widely between Shi'as and Sunnis.

Islam in matters which concern their common interest.’⁵¹ One religious leader of Mecca evidenced the same point in his writings upon Indian Muslims in 1877: ‘O Mussulmans... the Sunnis and the Shiis, you have done very well indeed... You should continue to act in this manner as far as you can. Both God and the Prophet are pleased with this action of yours, and you will be doubly rewarded by the Creator.’⁵²

It was only in later years that such common ground evaporated. Indian Shi‘a opposition to the Ottoman ‘Caliph’ was solidified concurrently with the first campaigns in support of Turkey, which broke out over the Russo-Turk war in 1897. A text published from Lucknow by Shaikh Ahmad Husain, an Awadhi *taludkar*, piloted the Shi‘a response. It appears that this pamphlet was widely circulated, and extracts were distributed in newspapers.⁵³ It was essentially an indictment of the concept of the Caliph as circulated in the mainstream Urdu press, and the titles of *Caliph-ul-Mominin* and *Amir-ul-Mominin* attributed to him. It claimed that the title of Caliph could be bestowed only upon a leader of Qureishi descent in the thirty years after the Prophet’s death, and hence the title had recently been ‘falsified in order to gratify a certain class of people who are anxious to call someone their Caliph.’ In effect, adherence to the modern Khilafat was a ‘blunder’ with ‘its origin in no other cause than the ignorance of the tradition of their own faith.’⁵⁴ The title of *Amir-ul-Mominin*, the text continues, referred in the Shi‘a tradition only to ‘Ali, precluding the Shi‘as from attributing the title to any worldly sovereign and thereby excluding them from the Khilafat agitation. As the author claimed, the Shi‘as ‘do not consider themselves religiously bound to any Muslim sovereign, however pious or benevolent, and would never rise in *jihad* against men of other creeds at his instigation, and cannot address him by any such title.’⁵⁵ Rejecting the Caliph in this way, he then pledges loyalty to British rule:

‘To be a peaceful and loyal citizen is the first duty of every Muhammadan... our worship is protected, and we are particularly taken care of; facilities are offered for working out our regeneration, if we are inclined to utilise them; these are the blessings for which it is

⁵¹ *Aligarh Institute Gazette* (Aligarh), 1 November 1876, UPNNR.

⁵² *Nusrat-ul-Akhbar*, 11 April 1877, *ibid*.

⁵³ *Liberal* (Azamgarh), 8 January 1898, *ibid*.

⁵⁴ Shaikh Ahmad Husain, *Ba‘z Musulmānōn ki afsōsnāk ghalat fehmi* (Lucknow, 1897), pp.5-6.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p.2.

our duty, as true Muslims, to be extremely grateful... It is emphatically in your own interest to be loyal.⁵⁶

The tract had significant influence in later years. A contributor to one newspaper in 1900 wrote that the Shi'as were alone among Muslims in not regarding the Ottoman Sultan as Caliph.⁵⁷ In 1906, the newspaper *Akhbar-i-Imamiya* of Lucknow stated that 'British rule in Mecca and Medina will be more welcome than that of the Sultan.'⁵⁸ While in 1909 the All India Shi'a Conference applauded the British Government for action on the side of Turkey, come 1911 the 'Shias of Lucknow' issued a notice deprecating support for Turkey in the war with Italy.⁵⁹ The Shi'a newspaper *Ittehad* was quick to take up opposition to the pan-Islamic agitation. At the beginning of 1913 it appeared to support the wider international Muslim cause, publishing accounts of alleged Allied atrocities in the Balkans, expressing support for the Turkish Relief Fund, and instructing the Shi'as to take an interest in Turkish affairs.⁶⁰ The overt framing of pan-Islamism in the language of *jihad* at this time, however, and the visible involvement of the Sunni school Nadva't ul-'Ulama, convinced the editor to change direction. From this point, the newspaper recommended that Muslims should renew their loyalty to the British Government,⁶¹ a standpoint reinforced by its subsequent convergence with the Kanpur controversy.

Such early developments in the construction of Shi'a 'separateness' from pan-Islamism, primarily in Lucknow, assumed new momentum after the foundation of the Anjuman-i-Khuddam-i-Ka'ba in 1913, the new organisation of 'ulama in defence of the Caliph and Ottoman control of the Holy Places. The Shi'a press termed this organisation the 'Anjuman-i-Jihad,' claiming that it would preach religious war, exclusively admit Sunni members and corrupt Muslim youth and women. No Shi'a, it was said, should join the society.⁶² The same newspapers also gave a strong defence of loyalty to government, not just on the basis of the prohibition of *jihad*, but on the claim that Sunni atrocities

⁵⁶ Ibid, pp.6-7.

⁵⁷ *Oudh Akhbar* (Lucknow), 7 October 1900, UPNNR.

⁵⁸ *Rohilkhand Gazette* (Bareilly), 24 November 1906, ibid.

⁵⁹ Home Department (Political) Proceedings, December 1911, No. 9, NAI.

⁶⁰ *Ittehad*, 16 January and 16 February 1913, UPNNR.

⁶¹ *Ittehad*, 24 February 1913, ibid.

⁶² Husain, *Risāla-i-kifān-pōsh līdaran*, p.19; *Ittehad*, 16 May and 1 June 1913, ibid.

committed by the early Caliphs were worse than the desecration of Muslim shrines by the modern Christian powers.⁶³

Outside of the printed sphere, Shi'a expressions of an alternative agenda to pan-Islamism took on distinctly local manifestations. While in Lucknow Sunni mosques collected contributions for Turkish widows and orphans through the Relief Fund, Shi'a mosques launched a clearly reminiscent although oppositional campaign, raising funds for the Shi'a orphanage recently established in the city.⁶⁴ In 1915 Muzaffar 'Ali Khan of Jansath, who had two years earlier led Shi'a opposition to the Kanpur mosque agitation, republished the 1897 tract of Shaikh Ahmad Husain, to which he added a declaration of loyalty to the King and the claim that 'to be a peaceful and loyal citizen is the first religious duty of every Muhammadan.'⁶⁵ The re-emergence of this tract from his district of Muzaffarnagar appears to have carried the Shi'a anti-Khilafatist agitation out of Lucknow where it had previously been focused, into the western United Provinces; the following year, the 'Shia community' of Bulandshehr issued up prayers for the success of British arms against Turkey.⁶⁶

Shi'a opposition to *jihad* among Muslims earned them many friends in government. Following the Shi'as' response to Sharif of Mecca's declaration of independence in 1917, Meston claimed that the Shi'as were 'conspicuously friendly and loyal,' noting that 'they have been perfectly staunch to the British Government, and have never listened to any temptation to embarrass us.'⁶⁷ The Shi'as, he noted, 'have withstood all suggestions for a Jihad and have justified their opposition on strict theological grounds. They have no feeling against the Khilafat passing away from the Sultan of Turkey.'⁶⁸ Meston at one point even warned the Viceroy that such pledges of loyalty from Shi'as could backfire, as they would be seen as deprecations of the sacred Sunni institution of the Khilafat itself

⁶³ *Ittehad*, 1 June 1913, *ibid*.

⁶⁴ Home Department (Political) Proceedings, August 1916, No. 34, NAI.

⁶⁵ Shaikh Ahmad Husain, *Ba'z Musulmānōñ ki afsōsnāk ghalat fehmi* (2nd edition: Muzaffarnagar, 1915), p.4.

⁶⁶ Home Department (Political) Proceedings, Part B, August 1916, Nos. 367-8, NAI.

⁶⁷ 'Note on the future system of Government at Baghdad,' 21 May 1917, Meston Collection, Mss. Eur. E.136/4, OIOC.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*.

and thus encourage Sunni Khilafatists to intensify their agitation in response.⁶⁹

Shi'a resistance to pan-Islamism did indeed spur denunciations from Sunni reformists. Furthermore, the divergent Shi'a and Sunni understandings of the Khilafat were interestingly intertwined with current debates over supposed Muslim modernism and backwardness which, as was shown in the previous chapter, often overlapped with Shi'a-Sunni controversies. In other words, Shi'a Sayyid communities of *qasbas* such as Amroha were dismissed as stagnant and out of touch with the modern world on account not of their economic or educational predicament, but the regressive nature of their religious belief. The Sunni notion of the Khilafat was interpreted as evidence that Sunni Islam was able to maintain its modernity and relevance with the changing times: it was the institution through which the Prophet 'remains modern and fresh tomorrow, and in eternity.' In comparison, implicitly on account of the absence of guidance from the Imam, Shi'a 'religious life is struck by dearth and insularity.'⁷⁰ The issue of the Khilafat became one more area in which Shi'as were attacked for the supposedly inherent conservatism of their religion, meaning that arguments between conservatives and modernists often became manifested along Shi'a-Sunni lines.

It is thus clear that, in contrast to the assumptions in much scholarship, pan-Islamism did little to promote agreement between Shi'as and Sunnis upon modern religio-political questions. Despite their own claims and those in some scholarship, the various pan-Islamic associations appearing in the 1910s were in many senses no more broad or less sectarian than many other Muslim *anjumans*, and never managed to develop an inclusiveness of the Shi'a minority.

How are we to explain the failure of pan-Islamism to interrupt the development of political 'separateness' among Shi'as during this decade? Part of the explanation lies in the wider promulgation of Shi'a distinctiveness at the heart of this thesis, by which the establishment of *anjuman*-based organisational structures resulted in the

⁶⁹ Viceroy to Meston, 5 Sept 1914, and Meston to Viceroy, Home Department (Political) Proceedings, April 1916, No.2, NAI.

⁷⁰ Husain, *Risāla-i-kifān-pōsh līdaran*, p.23.

institutionalisation of broader social and political differences between Muslim communities. In further part, however, Shi'a-Sunni differences over pan-Islamism can be traced to very dissimilar contemporary configurations of relations with the wider Islamic world. In fact, in contrast to the usual interpretation of the effects of pan-Islamism, it could be argued that concern among Shi'as for wider events in Persia and Iraq in fact steadily declined during this period. It seems that even Sunnis paid more attention than Shi'as to the Russian incursions in Persia, and destruction of the holy tombs in Mashhad. While the Shi'a Conference issued an obligatory notice against Russian activities in its session of 1912,⁷¹ action by Indian Shi'as upon their supposed loyalty to Persia was largely negligible. Even one Shi'a newspaper stated that 'the Shia Muhammadans made no effort to collect funds for the help of their suffering brethren in Persia,' and that the Shi'a *mujtahids* neglected to request pecuniary help for the cause.⁷² Another commentator accused Indian Shi'as of shedding only 'crocodile tears' for their brethren overseas.⁷³ No celebrations were held in Lucknow when the Shah of Persia was inaugurated, and no 'better instance of indifference' could be cited than the All India Shi'a Conference.⁷⁴ A few years later, Shi'as were accused of 'apathy' to the question of Persia.⁷⁵

The Shi'a reaction to pan-Islamism thus demands a reappraisal of the prevalent view that pan-Islamism nurtured increasing concern among Indian Muslims for the fate of their co-religionists abroad. Previous chapters have emphasised some manifestations of a broad 'Indianisation' of Shi'ism which marked the colonial period, a turn away from a vague adherence to a 'Shi'i International' and inwards towards national traditions and structures of collective governance. This 'Indianisation' encouraged some Shi'a *ulama* to engage more directly with national political affairs but, conversely, it also perhaps explains the growing Shi'a disinterest in the wider Shi'a world in the 1910s. While Sunni *ulama* were becoming ever more conscious of and concerned with the wider Muslim world, Indian Shi'as were becoming more exclusively focused upon their national future.

⁷¹ Home Department (Political) Proceedings, November 1912. File No. 9, NAI.

⁷² *Ittehad*, 16 January 1913, UPNNR.

⁷³ Husain, *Risāla-i-kifān-pōsh līdaran*, pp.19-20.

⁷⁴ *Saiyara* (Lucknow), 28 July 1914, UPNNR.

Lastly, the Shi'a reaction to pan-Islamism demonstrates that developments in national and provincial politics had little influence upon the emotive anti-Khilafatist dialogues in many localities of north India. These two discourses existed in different spheres, each rarely influencing or commenting upon the other. When an interaction between the two was apparent it was often a hostile contestation of the legitimacy of the national figureheads of pan-Islamism to speak for 'Muslims.' One such example is the serialised assault launched by a Shi'a author of Ghazipur district, published in *Ittehad*, upon Ameer 'Ali's famed tract on the Khilafat. The author refutes Ameer 'Ali's biographies of the Caliphs and Imams, his description of the spiritual presence of the Imam, his depiction of Sunni perspectives upon the integrity of the Caliph and his view that *jum'a* prayers could be said outside of congregation.⁷⁶ The serialised assault was not so much a refutation of Ameer 'Ali's goal of Shi'a-Sunni unity; rather, it was an attempt to establish U.P.'s Shi'a petitioners as the public spokesmen of their supposed community, and to impede the attempts of a small minority of English-speaking Muslims to establish themselves as representatives of India's Shi'as.

In essence, there were two debates among Shi'as concerning the Khilafat. The former was largely conducted in English, pitched at the national level and influenced by modern concepts of statehood, and conducted in the constitutional language of government petitioners. The latter was conducted in Urdu, pitched very much at the local level, conducted in the confrontational language of the *munazaras* and printing presses of early twentieth century north India, and intermeshed with local-level sectarian conflicts. National pan-Islamic dialogues, therefore, did not consistently penetrate the resurgent consciousness of distinctiveness and doctrinal disparity which marked some Shi'a communities in U.P.'s cities and *qasbas*.

⁷⁵ *Ukhuwat* (Lucknow), 28 March 1919, UPNNR.

⁷⁶ *Ittehad*, 24 October, 1 and 11 November 1915, UPNNR.

Ambivalent responses: Shi'as and the Khilafat movement

The apex of the pan-Islamic campaigns was the Khilafat movement, a nationwide agitation in support of the Ottoman Sultan. As with pan-Islamism generally, it has mostly been assessed as a moment of successful religious mobilisation with a remarkable accumulation of support among Muslims above and beyond differences of region, class and sect.⁷⁷ Moreover, the sudden involvement of certain Shi'as in 1921 has been interpreted as part of the successful Khilafatist strategy of cross-sectarian mobilisation.⁷⁸ A wider concern over the threat to the holy places rather than the specific future of the Khilafat itself, allowed the movement to, by common scholarly agreement, 'transcend... regional or sectarian differences.'⁷⁹ Such scholarly impressions are further reinforced by the fact that the leaders of the Khilafat movement in the United Provinces were figures of sectarian compromise by their very backgrounds. The Shi'a barrister Sayyid Reza 'Ali was the leader of the Khilafat movement in Allahabad, along with another Shi'a of that city, Sayyid Hyder Mehdi. Muhammad 'Ali Jauhar, the Indian figurehead of the pan-Islamic and Khilafat movements, was himself the product of a truly cross-sectarian family. His Sunni father had converted to Shi'ism at the behest of his Shi'a wife, while Muhammad 'Ali himself made no attempt to convert his Sunni wife to the Shi'a faith.⁸⁰ Himself encapsulating the cause of Muslim unity, he spurned the sectarian polemics of his era.

It is against this background that Shi'a reactions to the Khilafat movement need to be reviewed. It is indeed true that in a number of cities in U.P., the activity surrounding the Khilafat movement appeared to recruit significant support from Shi'as. For the first Khilafat day in October 1919, Shi'a *maulavis* attended assemblies alongside their Sunni counterparts in Allahabad, Jaunpur and Meerut, all cities where the Khilafat movement

⁷⁷ Especially Gail Minault, *The Khilafat movement: religious symbolism and political mobilisation in India* (Columbia, 1982).

⁷⁸ Ibid, pp.73-76, 97; Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims*, p.328.

⁷⁹ Mushirul Hasan, *Nationalism and communal politics in India, 1916-1928* (New Delhi, 1991), pp.136-7, 178.

⁸⁰ Mushirul Hasan, *From pluralism to separatism: qasbas in colonial Awadh* (New Delhi, 2004), p.145.

seemed to gain some ground among Shi'as.⁸¹ On the second Khilafat day six months later, Sayyid Hyder Mehdi issued a rousing speech admitting that Shi'as did not believe in the Khilafat but albeit shared anger at the occupation of Muslim lands, and urged Shi'as to co-operate with other Muslims.⁸² In such towns, Shi'a-Sunni differences were overlooked and disagreements postponed in the cause of a pragmatic unanimity.

However, in those towns where the ethic of Shi'a distinctiveness was most entrenched, there were few signs of a Khilafat-manufactured reconciliation. The nationalist Deobandi 'alim Muhammad Mian, arriving in Amroha at the point when 'the Khilafat movement was at its peak and the need of the time was to maintain unity... among Muslims in particular,' was horrified to find Shi'a-Sunni *munazaras* being conducted by the town's *maulavis*. Given the needs of the time, he argued, 'any action that increased the gulf, instead of bridging it, was not proper.'⁸³ Such instances demonstrate that the actions of Khilafatists to inspire sectarian harmony were frequently unsuccessful, and that in those towns where Shi'a communities were most self-conscious, Shi'a involvement in the Khilafat movement was by no means as extensive as has sometimes been supposed.

The most powerful Shi'a opposition to the Khilafat movement was orchestrated by the *mujtahids* of Lucknow, within that same period of 1920 in which 'Abdul Bari declared India a *dar-ul-harb* ('abode of the unfaithful') and vindicated *hijrat* (exodus to the lands of Islam). Perceiving it as a purely Sunni endeavour which contradicted Shi'a doctrine, three of Lucknow's most esteemed *mujtahids*, Nasir Husain, Aqa Hasan and Muhammad Baqir Rizvi, issued a *hukum* (order) demanding that 'the Shias should strictly keep aloof from the proposals published by the Khilafat committees.' Participation, they declared, was 'not lawful under Shia religious laws and... not advisable.' While expressing moral support for the Sultan and sympathy with all Islamic countries, their edict stated that:

'The Shias have no concern with the present Khilafat question, because according to the Shia religion there is no *Calipha*... except the *Amir-ul-Mumineen* Ali... A Shia who believed anyone else... to

⁸¹ *The Leader* (Allahabad), 19 October 1919, CSAS.

⁸² *The Independent* (Allahabad), 21 March 1920, OIOC; *The Leader*, 21 March 1920, CSAS.

⁸³ Muhammad Mian, *The prisoners of Malta (Asira'n-e-Malta): the heart rending tale of Muslim freedom fighters in British period* (New Delhi, 2005), pp.109-10.

be a Caliph... will thereby be totally excluded from the pale of Shi'ism.'⁸⁴

The *hukum* prompted similar declarations from lesser-known '*ulama*⁸⁵ and from some secular Shi'a organisations. Almost simultaneously the Anjuman ul-Irkan, an organisation which represented the former royal family and the old aristocracy of Lucknow, issued a similar statement: 'though we sympathise with the Sultan of Turkey as our co-religionist... the severing of our connection with the British Government is detrimental to the interests of the Muslims of India.'⁸⁶ The Governor of the Provinces reminded the organisation that 'your objects are loyalty to the British throne and protection of the rights and welfare of the late kings of Oudh... you have given expression to your loyalty in many ways... I am glad to hear that you condemn in the strongest terms the non-cooperation movement.'⁸⁷

Thus bolstered in no small way by the support of Government, the *mujtahids* and Shi'a conservatives again managed to formulate a co-ordinated defiance of pan-Islamism. Predictably, this intervention apparently raised 'resentment among Sunnis.'⁸⁸ Tracts were printed from Lucknow accusing Nasir Husain of propagating false information on the Sunni Caliphs.⁸⁹ One newspaper asked how Indian Shi'as could oppose the Khilafat movement while the great *mujtahids* of Iraq were so vehemently advocating *jihad*.⁹⁰ However, disputes between variant Shi'as on the Khilafat question were often equally pronounced. One sarcastic Lucknawi Shi'a wrote of the pronouncements of his co-religionists that their 'voice... is not at all in harmony with public opinion [and]... fell from their mouths like a bolt from the blue... let them rest assured that we do not require

⁸⁴ *The Leader*, 21 March 1920, CSAS. According to one commentator, the *fatwa* showed that 'some clever man has been working from behind the scenes.' *Haqiqat* (Lucknow), 9 April 1920, UPNNR.

⁸⁵ One individual, for instance, offered a lengthy instruction against participation in the Khilafat movement which gained considerable space in *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, perhaps on account of the pro-government orientation of most of the University's trustees. *Aligarh Institute Gazette* (Aligarh), 29 November 1920, CSAS.

⁸⁶ *The Independent*, 21 March 1920, OIOC; To Secretary of United Provinces Government, 22 March 1920, General Administration Department (GAD) File No. 189 of 1920, UPSA.

⁸⁷ *The Leader*, 25 March 1921, CSAS; Lieutenant-Governor of U.P. to Commissioner of Lucknow, 28 March 1920, GAD File No. 189 of 1920, UPSA.

⁸⁸ *The Independent*, 23 March 1921, OIOC.

⁸⁹ *Tārīkh-i-Khilāfāt* (Lucknow, 1924), *passim*.

⁹⁰ *The Independent*, 18 July 1920, OIOC; *Al-Bureed* (Cawnpore), 20 October 1920, UPNNR.

their valuable services.’⁹¹

Shi‘a quietude was maintained in Lucknow until a sudden entry into the Khilafat movement in March 1921, when rumours circulated that the shrine of ‘Ali in Najaf had been bombarded by the British occupying forces in Mesopotamia. These were compounded with stories that the recent deaths of two venerated Iraqi mujtahids were due to British actions: Muhammad Taqi was said to have been poisoned in August 1920, and his successor Fateh-Ullah Isphahani to have died of despair following the bombing of the holy shrine.⁹² Protests were also launched that the mosque of Kufa had been occupied by Sikh troops, an allegation brought back from Mesopotamia by returning soldiers.⁹³ It seems that such rumours were drawn from an Afghan paper and subsequently circulated in the vernacular papers of north India.⁹⁴ Shi‘a members of the United Provinces Legislative Council warned Government of the ‘great excitement among the Shi‘a community.’⁹⁵ The Government claimed that ‘intense feeling prevails throughout the province,’ especially in Lucknow; the Shi‘as were said to be ‘in a fanatical mood over the religious question’ and despite having been ‘loyal throughout... are now very much excited.’⁹⁶ Perhaps the most striking aspect of the emerging agitation among Shi‘as was the sudden change in decision of Lucknow’s *mujtahids*, who had opposed such action just one year before. Nasir Husain, after communications with other *mujtahids* in Lucknow, led a deputation to the Lieutenant Governor.⁹⁷ Aqa Hasan, still the highly-influential *peshnamaz* of Lucknow’s Asafi mosque, delivered a speech in front of a crowd of 20,000 in Asaf-ud-daula Imambara urging that the Shi‘as had kept aloof from the Khilafat for too

⁹¹ *The Independent*, 25 and 30 March 1920, OIOC.

⁹² Secretary of the U.P. Government to Secretary of the Government of India, 9 March 1921, Home Department (Political B) Proceedings, May 1921, Nos. 482-490, NAI.

⁹³ Copy of a telegram from the Government of the United Provinces, 16 March 1921, *ibid*.

⁹⁴ These newspapers included *Zamindar* and *Siasat* of Lahore. The former of these actually contained an article by Shaukat Ali, imploring Shi‘as to engage in civil protest. Chief Secretary of the Punjab Government to Secretary of the Home Department, 11 March 1921, *ibid*.

⁹⁵ Sayyid Raza Ali to William Vincent, 17 March 1921, *ibid*.

⁹⁶ G.B. Lambert, Chief Secretary of Government of U.P., to S.P. O’Donnell, Secretary of Home Department, 15 March 1921, *ibid*; Secretary of the U.P. Government to Secretary of the Government of India, 9 March 1921, *ibid*; Copy of a telegram from the Government of the United Provinces, 16 March 1921, *ibid*.

⁹⁷ Copy of a telegram from the Government of the United Provinces dated 16 March 1921, *ibid*.

long and should now join with the other sects of Islam.⁹⁸ This determined intervention by such *mujtahids* in contradiction of the *hukum* they had issued just a year before represented a significant reversal of their previous decision.

Despite these interventions from the Lucknow *mujtahids*, however, the momentum behind the Shi'a agitation lay elsewhere, in a number of actors and *anjumans* only recently apparent in public life. In April 1921 a new Shi'a association, Anjuman-i-Khuddam-i-'Atabat-i-'Aliyat ('The Organisation of the Servants of the Shrine Cities'), was founded and resolved to lead an investigative deputation to Mesopotamia.⁹⁹ The *anjuman's* president was Mirza Muhammad Rahim Bulbula, a religious authority from Baku who had arrived in India in 1917. Basing himself in Bombay and later in Lucknow, he was described as an 'extremist and... confirmed pan-Islamist,' conferring with 'Abdul Bari and 'mixed up with the 'Ali brothers.'¹⁰⁰ He managed to establish his influence among not only the 'Isna 'Ashari Shi'as of U.P., but the Bohras of Bombay and other multifarious Shi'a communities of only tenuous denominational congruence with the former.

The establishment of this *anjuman* had great implications upon structures of religious authority in Lucknow, representing a key moment in the transfer of authority away from the city's established civic Shi'a elite and the exalted *mujtahids* towards a younger, reactionary and more populist leadership. None of Lucknow's senior *mujtahids* were selected as members of the deputation to Mesopotamia.¹⁰¹ Also absent were pro-government former Shi'a Conference figureheads such as Fateh 'Ali Khan Qizilbash;

⁹⁸ 'Extract from the newspaper "Siasat," Lahore,' dated 10 March 1921, *ibid*.

⁹⁹ Secretary of Anjuman-i-Khuddam-i-'Atabat-i-'Aliyat, Lucknow, to Viceroy, 30 September 1921. Home Department (Political) Proceedings, File 161/II, 1921, NAI: 'Translation copy of Resolution 3, passed at the meeting of Anjuman Khuddam Attabat-i Aliat, 1 May 1921,' *ibid*.

¹⁰⁰ H.S. Craik to Chief Secretary of Government of Bombay, 8 June 1921, *ibid*; From J.H. Adam, 28 October 1921, *ibid*; 'Note' dated 31 March 1921, Home Department (Political), File 161, 1921, NAI; Muhammad Qujam-ud-din Abdul Bari Ansari, Firangi Mahal, Lucknow 24 Shaban 1339, *ibid*.

¹⁰¹ 'Shias of Lucknow... for some reasons discarded most of their religious leaders in Lucknow and demonstrated their want of confidence in local Maulavis by not selecting any of them as members of the proposed deputation to Mesopotamia.' Lambert to H.D. Craik, 29 July 1921, *ibid*. This compares with the 'jealousy' which Mirza Muhammad Rahim was said to instil among established among Shi'a religious leaders in Bombay, having apparently eclipsed their immediate public influence. Copy of a demi-official letter from the Commissioner of Police, Bombay, 19 July 1921, *ibid*.

instead, dominant were Khilafatist activists such as Hyder Mehdi and Mirza Muhammad Rahim himself, the latter of whom apparently achieved such popularity in U.P. that plans for his deportation were shelved for fear of 'stir[ring] up feelings unnecessarily' among the public.¹⁰² It thus seems that, as in Iraq where a qualified *jihad* was launched despite the opposition of the chief *mujtahid* Muhammad Taqi, the Khilafatists gained the upper hand over longer-established religious figureheads in India. The mass-mobilisations of the Khilafat movement momentarily eclipsed both Shi'a sectional instincts and traditional social and religious authorities.

However, despite the appearance of triumph for Shi'a Khilafatists and so-called 'progressives' over the former Lucknawi headship, this burst of enthusiasm at the peak of the Khilafat movement began to dissolve. As early as June of 1921, the Shi'a agitation was described as 'half-hearted.'¹⁰³ A month later, the U.P. Government predicted that 'excitement will soon subside' so long as Mirza Muhammad Rahim was tactically ignored,¹⁰⁴ and the government responded to the openly anti-British deputation with numerous delays in the granting of permission to the deputation and in the issuing of passports to its members, eliciting protests from the *anjuman*. The death and imprisonment of two key supporters of the deputation further served to dampen the will. Come October, the Shi'as were 'at present not in a state of ferment,'¹⁰⁵ and at the beginning of 1922 the Raja of Mahmudabad offered the opinion that the deputation would never be realised, and the Shi'a agitation was 'nearly dead.'¹⁰⁶ Mirza Muhammad Rahim, meanwhile, retired into relative obscurity, working in Shi'a orphanages and charities in Bombay.

Momentary participation in the Khilafat movement, therefore, does not constitute evidence of prolonged support. Shi'a engagement came late and was brief in duration. Furthermore, it was only initiated through the framing of the agitation according to

¹⁰² Lambert to H.D. Craik, 29 July 1921, *ibid*.

¹⁰³ Note dated 11 June 1921, *ibid*.

¹⁰⁴ Lambert to H.D. Craik, 29 July 1921, *ibid*.

¹⁰⁵ From A. Majid, 22 October 1921, Home Department (Political) Proceedings, File 161/II, 1921, NAI.

¹⁰⁶ G.B. Lambert, Chief Secretary of U.P. Government to Secretary of Government of India, 6 January 1922, *ibid*.

exclusively Shi'a concerns. There is little specific evidence that the Shi'as of Lucknow were motivated in any great degree by the fate of the Khilafat or even by wider pan-Islamic concerns such as the standing of the Islamic world or the fate of the holy places; rather, they were responding to the specific question of the Shi'a shrine built up by an efficient rumour machine. Just as many north Indian Shi'as came late to the Khilafat movement, they departed early. In certain other Shi'a-dominated towns in U.P., participation in the Khilafat movement was even less than momentary, with many Shi'as opposing it absolutely. Muzaffar 'Ali Khan renewed his opposition to such agitation by forming an Aman Sabha in Muzaffarnagar district, advocating an end to such rebellion.¹⁰⁷ In Amroha *tehsil* (administrative district), local Shi'as presided and joined in some numbers the so-called Amroha Liberal Federation, a foundation which lent support to the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms Scheme and pronounced that progress would not be gained through nationalist reaction.¹⁰⁸

Like pan-Islamism more generally, this story of Shi'a resistance to the Khilafat movement is a necessary corrective to that scholarship which has argued that, in the Middle East as well as in India, pan-Islamism and the Muslim encounter with colonial rule were two experiences which fostered urges for sectarian reconciliation. In India, both incurred increased disagreement between some Shi'a and Sunni communities, and were a source of enhanced differentiation. Additionally, Shi'a abstention from the Khilafat movement could be used to further demonstrate the indigenisation of Shi'a Islam during this period. Indeed, it seems to reveal that by the early twentieth century Indian Shi'as had the organisational structures and institutional basis in Lucknow to make their own social and political rulings independently from the supposed Shi'a heartlands of Iran and Iraq.

Interestingly, the response of the Shi'a *mujtahids* of Lucknow to the issue of the Khilafat movement seems to represent an unprecedented diversion from the decisions of their co-religionists to the west. It is tempting to speculate that the *mujtahids* actively relished the

¹⁰⁷ *The Leader*, 29 April 1921. CSAS.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 9 May 1921. This organisation was a branch of the Moradabad Liberal Federation.

opportunity presented by the Khilafat movement in 1920 to reach such diversionary verdicts, attempting to demonstrate their autonomy and augment their prestige through a deliberate confrontation with both Shi'a nationalists in India and the religious leadership in Iraq.¹⁰⁹ It was a confrontation in which, ultimately, they failed. They were forced to capitulate to the initiative of secular nationalists and formerly-unknown *maulavis*, albeit in a way which presented unqualified enthusiasm for the new cause. It was a capitulation, however, with far-reaching implications in Shi'a public life in the 1920s-30s. Perhaps partly on account of the reconfiguration of public influence around 1921, the formerly inviolable supremacy of the senior *mujtahids* of Lucknow at the head of public Shi'a organisations was newly questioned over subsequent decades. As is demonstrated in the next chapter, newly-appearing *maulavis* and spokesman were increasingly free to style themselves as fresh leaders, and the Shi'a public sphere became less restricted and more crowded. These were developments with important implications for subsequent notions of community among Shi'as, and for relations between Muslim communities more widely.

Conclusion: Muslim 'unity' and the failure of Muslim nationalism

'This is not the time to go to all ends to cancel out each other's works... Shi'as and Sunnis must stand on one platform and try to effect change in worldly affairs. In the meantime, we must give up religious debates until the Imam Mehdi appears and himself resolves these questions.'¹¹⁰

This author, writing in 1913, represents the existence and extent of severe Shi'a-Sunni political differences during this decade. During the same era, those Khilafatist newspapers which continued to advocate the great benefits of 'Muslim' unity published articles which similarly reflected frustration at the perceived undermining of the cause of unity by the persistence of sectarian dialogues. A member of Aligarh's Shi'a *diniyat*

¹⁰⁹ This perspective on the South Asian *'ulama* reaching diversionary verdicts on social and political questions in order to uphold their distinction and modern relevance is comparable with the framework posed in Zaman's study of the modern *'ulama*. Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The 'ulama in contemporary Islam: custodians of change* (Princeton, 2002).

department contributed an article to Abul Kalam Azad's newspaper *Al-Hilal* in 1913, imploring readers to strive urgently for *ittehad-va-ittefaq* (unity and agreement) between the sects. He re-states an often-repeated prescription for the removal of sectarian differences: the surrender of the practices of *munazara*, *tabarra* and excessive praise of the Caliphs, a recapturing of shared veneration of the Prophet, and an open discussion upon the urgent national questions of Muslim politics and education. These questions must be dealt with now, he argues, so as not to poison relations for generations to come.¹¹¹

In such a climate in the 1910s, what became of the much-lauded discourse of *ittehad*, or Muslim unity? Calls for Muslim unity seemed at best distant from the pervasive alternative discourse of Shi'a-Sunni differentiation, which had been entrenched in recent years. During the 1910s sectarian bases of mobilisation seemed to have expanded to a level of provincial and perhaps even national visibility, and often seemed to carry a momentum that those more unitary causes often failed to equal. Prominent Shi'a exponents of Muslim nationalism such as the Raja of Mahmudabad, Wazir Hasan and Sayyid Raza 'Ali, despite their national prominence, were widely interpreted by many of their sectarian kin as unrepresentative: 'by fate the Shi'as decide against them, and together separate off from them.'¹¹² Alternative Shi'a spokesmen instead earned their credibility through recourse to exclusivity, and the crafting of an entirely separate sectarian platform. In an era marked by a language of *munazara* and competition on the public street, those public spokesmen who dared to advocate the cessation of sectarian disputations were often interpreted by one community as capitulating to the other rather than attempting to effect reconciliation.¹¹³

Some attempts were even made to set up organisations during the 1910s explicitly to reconcile Sunnis and Shi'as in a wider unitary cause. In Lucknow in 1911, the Anjuman-i-Ittehad was formed in response to Shi'a-Sunni tensions, successfully enlisting various

¹¹⁰ Husain, *Risāla-i-kifan-pōsh līdaran*, p.19.

¹¹¹ *Al-Hilal* (Calcutta), 3 September 1913, Nehru Memorial Library, New Delhi (NML).

¹¹² Husain, *Risāla-i-kifan-pōsh līdaran*, p.20.

¹¹³ Mian, *The prisoners of Malta*, pp.109-10.

maulavis, *'ulama* (including even Aqa Hasan and several Firangi Mahallis) and secular dignitaries, and 'afford[ing] good opportunities to the two sects to meet on a common platform.'¹¹⁴ However, with low attendance and a failure to recruit popular speakers, Lucknow's Anjuman-i-Ittehad failed to achieve its aspired unity.¹¹⁵ Its call for *ittehad* was clearly inconsistent with the mindset of many Muslims in contemporary Lucknow, the atmosphere of which remained schismatic over the subsequent decade. In contrast with the failure of Lucknow's Anjuman-i-Ittehad, the success of Amroha's like-named Shi'a newspaper *Ittehad* in the same short period says much about the shift in the meaning of 'unity' during this decade. It was an illuminating fact that the newspaper's name changed from *Ittehad-i-Islam* upon its foundation in 1910 into, simply *Ittehad*, accompanied by its increasingly sectional outlook. The *ittehad* propounded by this newspaper was not the cross-sectarian, pan-Islamic unity striven for in many contemporary Urdu vernaculars, but was unity among and between Shi'as themselves. *Ittehad* was projected inwards, used less to evoke Muslim unanimity and more to urge cohesion within particular sects and factions.

The findings of this and the previous chapter together present a number of important conclusions on the nature of collective Shi'a identity and sectarianism in the colonial period. Most striking perhaps is the consolidation of a political expression of Muslim sectarian differences. Increasingly through the colonial period, the consolidation of religious and cultural distinctions transmuted into an articulation of Shi'a-Sunni political difference, one which elevated sectarianism to a level of provincial and national visibility. In contrast to the narrative of Islamic 'modernism' discussed above, these two chapters reveal how concerns and questions around which Shi'as and Sunnis had previously been able to collaborate gradually transmuted through the late nineteenth and

¹¹⁴ For a brief moment it had even appeared that 'the reunion of the Shias and Sunnis of Lucknow does not seem to be an impossible task.' Note dated 25-6 April 1910, GAD File No. 366 of 1911, UPSA. Such movements were not confined to Lucknow. By way of comparison, the Anjuman-i-Tauhid emerged in Allahabad in 1917 at the behest of a local Muslim newspaper. This organisation maintained that Hindus had weakened Muslims by exploiting Shi'a-Sunni differences, such as over the pan-Islamic movement and local disputes, and as such advocated increasing cooperation of Sunni and Shi'a leaders in order to re-exert 'Muslim' political power and cultural dominance. Like its Lucknawi equivalent, however, it failed to gain significant long-standing support. *Nai Roshni* (Allahabad), 23 October and 25 November 1917, UPNNR.

¹¹⁵ 'History of the Shia-Sunni controversy subsequent to the 7th January 1909,' 8 July 1911, GAD File No. 366 of 1911, UPSA.

early twentieth centuries into issues of divergence. During and after the ‘shock’ of the Mutiny, matters such as the sanction of *jihad*, the foundation of Aligarh College and the reflection upon the trans-national Islamic *millat*, all appeared to contribute to the public or political relegation of sectarian distinctions under colonial rule. However, all of these causes of unity were gradually transmuted into issues of differentiation. The dissociation by many Shi‘as from the causes of Aligarh College, *jihad* and pan-Islamism together demonstrate how early attempts at Shi‘a-Sunni partnership gradually shifted into a parting of the ways on these issues during the colonial period, and particularly in the twentieth century’s first two decades.

In turn, this analysis of new manifestations of sectarian politics illustrates the need for a re-dress of the traditional narrative of Muslim community-formation and ‘separatism.’ The often-told story of the enormous contribution of the colonial system of governance to the singular categorisation of Indian Muslims and the consequent organisation by many on the grounds of shared Islamic faith is in need of reconsideration. The evocation of a ‘Muslim community’ in politics did little to ease the multifarious differences among Muslims, including the distinction of Shi‘a and Sunni. Indeed, Shi‘a-Sunni political antagonisms appeared to be at their most pronounced during the eighteen-year period commonly perceived to be the height of Muslim ‘separatism’ between the foundation of the Muslim League and the collapse of the Khilafat movement.¹¹⁶ Census pressures, demands for Muslim electorates and colonial political systems which have commonly been interpreted as actualising a form of consensual ‘Muslim’ politics¹¹⁷ were less successful in enjoining Shi‘a and Sunni communities than has often been supposed.

Somewhat contradicting the solidification of the ‘Muslim’ category in politics through the colonial system of control, the last two chapters have both demonstrated how British political machinations played a surprisingly direct role in the widening and politicisation of Muslim sectarian difference. While not comparable with the formal political

¹¹⁶ E.g., Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims*; Hasan, *Nationalism and communal politics in India*.

¹¹⁷ Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims*; David Page, *Prelude to partition: the Indian Muslims and the imperial system of control, 1920-1932* (Delhi, 1982).

institutionalisation of 'Muslim' or caste identities through separate enumeration and electoral representation, there is no doubt that, in certain municipalities of U.P. and especially Lucknow, the British informally pulled closer to Shi'as at times when 'Muslim' politics was moving in a more reactionary and anti-governmental direction. As Muslim organisations and political parties fell under the control of 'Young Party' activists, the British tended to initiate communication with Shi'a organisations, whether the Shi'a Conference, Shi'a educational associations or congregations of the former Lucknawi nobility, pensioners and royalty. Just as it was previously shown that Meston's strong involvement in the Shi'a College campaign was an attempt to cultivate Shi'a loyalty and diffuse some of the attention conferred upon the increasingly volatile campus of Aligarh College, then the clearly thriving correspondence between the Lieutenant Governor's compound and Shi'a political and religious leaders in the 1910s alludes to a similar attempt by the British to diffuse some of the virility of the *jihad* and pan-Islamic agitations. Inculcating Shi'a resistance to these causes, the British attempted, with some success, to expose the vacuity of the notion of Muslim unity at a time when this had been rallied in protest at colonial governance.

Finally, it is worth remarking upon one of the most notable absences running through the previous two chapters: the absence of reference to north India's Hindu majority. As in Shi'a religious disputations and polemical writings, references to non-Muslim communities in discourses of Shi'a organisation, social betterment and political activity were rare indeed. Allusions to British rule, moreover, seem to have been confined to those occasions when the British had become involved in 'Muslim' religious questions and issues. Rather, it was the wider process of unitary Muslim communal organisation against which Shi'a social and political organisation was projected, self-consciously crafting a space for Shi'as separate from broader 'Muslim' activity. As such, the organisational efforts discussed in these two chapters often appeared to be directly comparable retorts to similar 'Muslim' counterparts. The Shi'a Conference was established finally in 1907, within a year of the emergence of the All India Muslim League. The Shi'a orphanage in Lucknow emerged alongside the financial campaigns for the relief of the orphans and widows of the Ottoman Empire. The campaign for a Shi'a

College paralleled the campaign for a Muslim University. The development of ideas of *jihad* were answered with a reinforcement of the notion of *taqlid* and declarations of loyalty to the Government, while increasing Sunni interest in pan-Islamism was met with powerful assertions of independence by some Shi'a *'ulama*. The 'other' against which Shi'a organisation was conducted, then, was the hegemonic 'Muslim' *qaum*, and the provision of separate sectarian institutions permitted the internal self-governance and autonomy of a supposed Shi'a *qaumik* alternative in national life.

CHAPTER 5

A DECADE OF RELIGIOUS CONFLICT: THE CHANGING NATURE OF SECTARIANISM IN LUCKNOW, 1930-1939.

Introduction: Shi'a-Sunni relations in the years of Muslim-Hindu communalism

In comparison with the Shi'a-Sunni disputations which were widely apparent in religious, social and political dialogues in the first two decades of the twentieth century, the years after 1921 showed a comparative ebbing of the presence of such themes in public life. The ascendant Hindu-Muslim communalism in the period 1923-1927 seemed to edge sectarianism within Islam out of the spotlight. In Lucknow, for instance, conflictive energies within Lucknow were apparently redirected into the violent Hindu-Muslim conflagrations of 1924 provoked by disputes over the timings of *namaz* (prayers) and *arti* (Hindu ceremony of worship) in Aminabad, an issue dominating local politics for several years.¹ This Muslim-Hindu dispute momentarily brought Lucknow's communal configurations into line with those of other major cities in the province.² There were even signs that the common enemy of the Hindu *shuddhi* and *sangathan* menace prompted a partial Shi'a-Sunni reconciliation; some religious leaders even attempted to organise mutual participation in *ta'ziya* processions during Muharram.³ Moreover, following the precedent of the collaborations of 1921, Shi'as and Sunnis intermittently restored a cooperative stand on affairs relating to the wider Islamic world. In 1922, Shi'as organised campaigns in objection to the British extradition of Shi'a *mujtahids* from Iraq, a further cause which they shared with many former advocates of pan-Islamism.⁴ This was also

¹ A discussion of this riot, which was centred upon *arti* ritual, can be found in David Page, *Prelude to partition: the Indian Muslims and the imperial system of control, 1920-1932* (Delhi, 1982), pp.78-80.

² Shi'as did not take prominent part in these riots. *Indian Daily Telegraph* (Lucknow), 23 September 1924, General Administration Department (GAD) File No. 479 of 1924, Uttar Pradesh State Archives, Lucknow (UPSA).

³ To Lambert, 19 September 1924, *ibid.*

⁴ *Oudh Akhbar* (Lucknow), 28 July 1922, United Provinces Native Newspaper Reports (UPNNR), Oriental and India Office Collections, London (OIOC); *Hamdam* (Lucknow), 18 August 1922, *ibid.*; *Al-Bashir* (Etawah), 15 September 1922, *ibid.*

seen in the involvement of Shi'as in Lucknow in protests at Ibn Sa'ud's declaration of sovereignty over the Hejaz and holy places and desecration of Shi'a shrines,⁵ causes broadly shared by many wider post-Khilafat Muslim associations.

However, the absence of overt conflict during this period does not signify a significant narrowing of the distance between Shi'as and Sunnis. Shi'a leaders were isolated from and suspicious of the *tanzim* and *tabligh* campaigns among reactionary lay Muslims during this period, whose attempts at religious revival and ceremonial purification were conducted along definitively Sunni lines. Ex-Khilafatists, stated one Shi'a newspaper, could not be trusted with the fate of Shi'as, as seen from their disrespect towards *ta'ziyas*.⁶ Moreover, while many Sunni '*ulama* of schools such as Deoband and Firangi Mahal continued to engage with the nationalist movement as a means of maintaining the '*izzat* of Islam under a conquering power,⁷ it is of note that their Shi'a equivalents were for the most part invisible in the subversive political stirrings of the same period. As has been shown above, the Shi'a *mujtahids* of this period were increasingly engaged with public and political issues of direct significance for Shi'as in cities such as Lucknow; however, at least by comparison with some Sunni '*ulama*, they remained to a large extent disengaged from wider nationalist political activism, whether through their association with the colonial administration or their desire to preserve their elevated personal prestige by remaining above the fray of politics. This was a fact pounced upon by their critics. One polemicist, writing in 1925 on the current evocation of the Gandhian notion of *swaraj* ('self-rule'), suggested that Shi'as were unable to focus upon the nationalists' interpretation of this term since they were preoccupied instead with the 'Shi'a *swaraj*,' the bountiful reality which would emanate from the return of Imam Mehdi to his

⁵ Some Shi'as accused the British Government of having sympathies for Ibn Sa'ud, and deputations of Lucknawi Shi'as on this matter even reached the Viceroy. 'Fortnightly report for the first half of May 1931' and 'Fortnightly report for the second half of February 1932.' Public and Judicial Files (L/PJ), 12/34, OIOC.

⁶ *Shia College News* (Lucknow), 31 March 1923, United Provinces Native Newspaper Reports (UPNNR), OIOC.

⁷ The foremost example of Deobandi participation in the nationalist movement was the formation of the Jami'at-ul-'Ulama-i-Hind in 1919. Barbara Metcalf, 'Reinventing Islamic politics in interwar India: the clergy commitment to composite nationalism,' in Mushirul Hasan and Asim Roy eds, *Living together separately: cultural India in history and politics* (New Delhi, 2005), pp.389-404.

followers.⁸ While buried in a typical sectarian polemic, this particular criticism likely reflects the comparative invisibility of prominent Shi'a religious leaders in the organs of the nationalist movement.

Alongside these divergent approaches of certain *'ulama* towards involvement in political issues, sectarian disagreement further emerged in the political sphere following the drafting by many Muslim politicians of schemes for the expansion of separate Muslim representation in the wake of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919. Many Shi'as claimed that their community could not gain adequate representation within the electoral model of separate Muslim representation owing to 'the selfishness and bias of the Sunni majority,' and claimed that through the merciless use of sectarian propaganda Sunnis had gained all but one of the thirty-six reserved Muslim seats in the Legislative Assembly.⁹ It was on account of such claims that calls were made for the establishment of a 'Shi'a League,' a political organisation in opposition to the Muslim League. Wazir Hasan, the former Congressite and Muslim Leaguer, his son Sayyid 'Ali Zaheer, the former Khilafatist Hyder Mehdi of Allahabad and a few Shi'a *taluqdars* corresponded and held meetings in the wake of the collapse of the Congress-League accord and 'decided that we should start a movement among the Shi'as and should wean them away from the Muslim League fold.'¹⁰ Out of this communication emerged the All India Shi'a Political Conference in 1925. The organisation remained benign rather than active until the late 1930s, but more significant was the foundation of its affiliated newspaper, *Sarfaraz*, in 1925. Taking advantage of the further expansion of the printing industry in Lucknow in the 1920s, edited by Mirza Shamar Lucknawi and managed from its own printing press in Lucknow, the newspaper eclipsed *Ittehad* as the most influential and widely circulated Shi'a periodical, starting as a bi-weekly and quickly becoming a daily. This said, rather than publishing the poetic and prosaic novelties and the frequent diatribes frequent in its forerunner, *Sarfaraz* was essentially from the outset a Congressite newspaper, carrying

⁸ He argues that 'there is no doubt that such *swaraj*, God forbid it ever be forgotten, will bring the fortunes of restfulness to non-Shi'a sects.' Conversely, since the Shi'as obsessed over the coming of the absent Imam and the 'fire and brimstone' awaiting Abu Bakr and Umar, 'moments of trial and tribulation will always persist from all sides in the lives of Shi'as, more so than in us.' *Shi'a swaraj or is ke vāqi'at qābil-indirāj* (Qadian, circa 1925), pp.491-492.

⁹ *Sarfaraz* (Lucknow), 20 February and 27 November 1926, UPNNR.

news of national events within the independence movement and for the most part eschewing religious polemic.

Together with the sustained publication of virulent sectarian tracts in Lucknow, there are thus ample reasons to assume that the Shi'a-Sunni nexus consolidated in public life in the 1910s was perpetuated into the subsequent decade, less dramatic but similarly ubiquitous. However, it was in the 1930s that the expansion of sectarianism in the early twentieth century discussed in the previous chapters found its ultimate expression. It culminated in the *tabarraḥ* agitation of 1939, when some 18,000 Shi'as in Lucknow were jailed over a matter of months for the organised and collective recitation of the long-banned curses of the early Caliphs.

Discussing the sectarian confrontations of the 1930s, this chapter completes the thesis in the same arena in which it began: the old city of Lucknow, the birthplace and the main theatre of Shi'a-Sunni sectarianism in north India. In contrast to the earlier manifestations of sectarianism discussed in previous chapters of this thesis, the heightened levels of Shi'a-Sunni tension manifested in the *madh-i-sahaba* and *tabarraḥ* agitations and the violence that accompanied them have received significant attention in scholarship.¹¹ However, these studies have been somewhat limited in their focus. Some have for the most part discussed the connection of these conflicts with the period of Congress government from 1937-9¹² and, in some cases, as simply variations of the same process of community-formation as the ascendant Hindu-Muslim communalism in 1930s U.P..¹³ Attempting to offer a more thorough and detailed assessment of the sectarian conflicts of the 1930s than hitherto available, this chapter will seek to analyse these conflicts on their

¹⁰ Syed Kazim Zaheer ed., *The memoirs of Syed Ali Zaheer* (New Delhi, 2004), p.19.

¹¹ Imtiaz Ahmad, 'The Shia-Sunni dispute in Lucknow, 1905-1980,' in Milton Israel and Narendra K. Wagle eds., *Islamic society and culture: essays in honour of Professor Aziz Ahmad*, (Delhi, 1983), pp.335-50; Sandra Freitag, *Collective action and community: public arenas and the emergence of communalism in colonial north India* (Berkeley, 1989), pp.249-80; Nandini Gooptu, *The politics of the urban poor in early twentieth century India* (Cambridge, 2001), pp.301-3; William Gould, *Hindu nationalism and the language of politics in late colonial India* (Cambridge, 2004), pp.213-8; Mushirul Hasan, 'Sectarianism in Indian Islam: the Shia-Sunni divide in the United Provinces,' *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* (27, 2 1990).

¹² Gould, *Hindu nationalism and the language of politics*, pp.213-8.

¹³ Freitag, *Collective action and community*, pp.249-80.

own terms, rather than as an extension of other contemporary processes of community-formation. Moreover, rather than looking at the momentary events of the late-1930s, this chapter seeks to interpret the origins of these sectarian conflicts according to the process charted throughout this thesis: namely, the formation of increasingly numerous and competitive sectarian *anjumans* in the civic arena of Lucknow, and the continual construction and elaboration of Shi'a-Sunni differences in religion, society and politics. Finally, the question will be asked of whether the struggles of the 1930s represented the culmination of sectarianism, the fulfilment of the process discussed throughout this thesis, or whether instead they represented a new phenomenon, a re-working of older conflicts in a fresh environment. As a background to this analysis, it is first necessary to give a chronological account of unfolding events in Lucknow, leading up to the agitations of 1939.

The origins of the *tabarra* agitation

The decisions of the Piggott Committee of 1909, appointed in the wake of the sectarian riots in Lucknow, had proscribed the public recitation of the Sunni *madh-i-sahaba* verses on certain days of religious significance and the Shi'a *tabarra* curses of the Caliphs were similarly restricted. The arrangement had been perceived from its implementation onwards as a quasi-victory for the Shi'a side, and attributed by its opponents to the better networking abilities of Lucknow's Shi'as and their friendly relations with government. Nevertheless, the verdict rested firm for some twenty-five years without organised challenge.¹⁴ Serious opposition to the verdict was freshly raised in the early 1930s, when a number of Sunni *maulavis* began to campaign for the lifting of restrictions on praising the Caliphs.¹⁵ The issue was adopted by the Majlis-i-Ahrar, an organisation founded in the 1920s by a group of ex-Khilafatists and informally allied to the Congress. Drawn

¹⁴ There were some challenges to the verdict in the 1910s from Sunni *'ulama*, discussed in GAD File No. 366 of 1911, UPSA. However, they were neither sustained nor successful.

¹⁵ While the demand for a public recitation crystallised around 1935, elementary disputes over the legitimacy of these verses had been present through the first half of the decade. See 'Fortnightly report for the second half of June 1930,' L/PJ/12/22; 'Fortnightly report for the first half of July 1933,' L/PJ/12/56, OIOC.

primarily from the urban middle and lower classes of Punjab and U.P., the movement worked on the loose basis of, on the one hand, advocating the reform of Islamic practice and the purification of indigenous *bid'ah* (innovation) from Islam, and on the other, the awakening of a political consciousness among Muslims in opposition to the *dar-ul-harb* of colonial rule.¹⁶ Following a sustained campaign against the Ahmadi community in Punjab, they transferred their attentions to the dissenting Shi'as of Lucknow in the mid-1930s.¹⁷ They quickly became highly visible figures in Lucknow where 'they espoused the cause of the Sunnis and with their powerful oratory succeeded in creating a good atmosphere for themselves.'¹⁸ Their spokesman here was Zafar ul-Mulk, an ex-Khilafatist Congressite *maulvi* skilled in effective public speaking and inflammatory journalism. He had played a prominent role in the *tanzim* campaigns of the 1920s, during which he had campaigned against the influence upon Islam by indigenous 'Hindu' cultural activities.¹⁹ A decade later, it was the comparable campaign for the removal of Shi'a interpolations in Muslim practice and custom which became his prime concern.

In 1936, responding to government's refusal of permission for a *madh-i-sahaba* procession to be carried out, the Ahrars launched a civil disobedience movement, during which activists recited the controversial phrases. The *madh-i-sahaba* agitation focused upon the Tila mosque where activists would collectively take out a *madh-i-sahaba*

¹⁶ No substantial monograph about the Majlis-i-Ahrar exists. Much information, however, is contained in the following: Y.B. Mathur, *Muslims and changing India* (New Delhi, 1972), pp.109-119; Chaudhry Khaliqzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan* (Lahore, 1961), pp.150-1; Ayesha Jalal, *Self and sovereignty: individual and community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London, 2000), pp.356-382. Jalal emphasises their political aspect, describing the organisation as an attempt to advance the political ambitions of urban middle-class Punjabis. This perhaps underemphasises the extent to which the organisation drew from local support and emphasised religious as much as political rhetoric.

¹⁷ Interestingly, this is comparable to modern anti-Shi'a organisations in Pakistan, whose main protagonists had previously been followers of anti-Ahmadi agitations. Muhammad Qasim Zaman, 'Sectarianism in Pakistan: the radicalization of Shi'i and Sunni identities,' in *Modern Asian Studies* (36, 3, 2000), pp.689-716.

¹⁸ Khaliqzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan*, p.151.

¹⁹ Ideologically, he was of note for his fear of orthodox Sunnism being infiltrated by secular education or indigenous influence; in 1931, for instance, he had cautioned attempts to foster Hindu-Muslim unity through cultural harmonisation, noting that 'for the Muslims... the idea of keeping their general features distinctively separate from those of other nations and communities is as old as Islam itself.' See 'Note of dissent' on Congress committee for investigation into Kanpur riot, 24 October 1931, in N. Gerald Barrier, *Roots of Communal Politics* (New Delhi, 1976), p.267. Adopting the Sunni cause in Lucknow, it was the perceived pollution of 'Islam' by Shi'ism rather than Hinduism against which he rallied defence.

procession after weekly Friday prayers and court arrest.²⁰ An 'All India Madh-i-Sahaba Day,' organised in August 1936, recorded large gatherings in cities as diverse as Meerut, Aligarh and Allahabad.²¹ Over the next three years, Government held talks and appointed enquiry committees in order to bring the issue to a close, but with little success.²² As Sunni recitations of *madh-i-sahaba* became ever more sustained, so the resultant recitations of *tabarraḥ* became more frequent in Shi'a neighbourhoods. Government restrictions had to be applied to Shi'a processions during Muharram of 1937 in order to maintain peace and were met with organised resistance, with Shi'as wearing the black garbs of Muharram courting arrest.²³ Despite all efforts, public recitations of *tabarraḥ* sparked Sunni-Shi'a riots in May 1937, the most serious since the 1900s.²⁴

In 1938 the principal of the *dar-ul-'ulum* at Deoband, Husain Ahmad Madani, assumed spokespersonship of the *madh-i-sahaba* campaign. This brought the *madh-i-sahaba* cause in Lucknow greater national prominence and legitimacy, while Husain Ahmad's leading role in the United Provinces Congress Committee made government reluctant to discipline him. In the latter half of 1938, the call for a *madh-i-sahaba* procession intensified.²⁵ With increasing signs that the Congress Ministry of U.P. was contemplating concessions to the Sunni demands, civil disobedience was vigorously revived in March 1939.²⁶ The government's policy in response gently but tangibly shifted from the continuation of the prohibition of *madh-i-sahaba* to the recognition of this right under appropriate conditions.²⁷ Attempting to halt the persistent Sunni civil disobedience, the

²⁰ For instance, *The Leader* (Allahabad), 2 and 17 August 1936, OIOC.

²¹ *The Leader*, 1 September 1936, OIOC; Gould, *Hindu nationalism and the language of politics*, p.215.

²² The most notable Government attempt to resolve the question was its appointment of the Allsop Committee in 1937. It largely upheld the conclusions of its predecessor, the Piggott Committee Report, arguing that 'in 1935 and 1936... the desire to recite *Madh-i-sahaba* arose out of a feeling directed against the Shias,' and thus should not be permitted in the context. For a copy of the report, see *Government Gazette of the United Provinces*, 28 March 1938, Quaid-i-Azam Collection, Ior. Neg. Pos. 10773, OIOC.

²³ *The Leader*, 1 April 1937, OIOC.

²⁴ *Indian Annual Register: July-December 1937* (Delhi, 1938), Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge (CSAS), p.142; Haig to Linlithgow, 7 June 1937, Haig Collection, Mss. Eur. F.115/17, OIOC; *The Leader*, 23 May 1937, OIOC.

²⁵ Haig to Brabourne, 10 October 1938, and Haig to Linlithgow, 23 October 1938, Linlithgow Collection, Mss. Eur.F.125/101, OIOC.

²⁶ Gwynne to Puckle, 26 March 1939, L/PJ/5/267, OIOC. This civil disobedience movement revealed new levels of support, including the help of *jathas* from other districts. Gwynne to Puckle, 7 March 1939, *ibid*.

²⁷ During these negotiations, the emphasis shifted away from the conclusions of the Allsop Report, which declared *madh-i-sahaba* to be forbidden as a deliberately provocative act, to claiming in March 1938 that

Congress Ministry capitulated and gave permission for a *madh-i-sahaba* procession on the day of *Bara-Wafat*.²⁸

The first major confrontation occurred on 31st March 1939, the day on which permission for the procession had been granted. The Sunni recitations of *madh-i-sahaba* outside the Tila mosque were responded to by the congregation of Shi'as in the adjacent grounds of the Asaf-ud-daula Imambara, who recited *tabarraḥ* and themselves courted arrest. This pattern repeated itself in subsequent months, during which Shi'as would time the shouts of *tabarraḥ* from the roof and balconies of the *imambara* compound to coincide with Friday prayers in the adjoining Sunni mosque.²⁹ Fresh batches of Shi'as conducted this agitation in ever growing numbers. The *tabarraḥ* agitation persisted against all attempts at a settlement and movements towards conciliation, and dragged on for months. A look at the numbers alone shows the scale of the reaction; while the number of Sunnis courting arrest before March 1939 was around 3000,³⁰ the equivalent number of Shi'as reached up to 14,000 in the next four months.³¹

The most important organising force in the *tabarraḥ* agitation was a new Shi'a *anjuman*, the Tanzim-ul-Mominin, founded in May 1938. Controlled from offices in Chowk, it was headed by the retired judge Asghar Husain and the Patna lawyer Sultan Ahmad.³² The organisation was the informal leader of the *tabarraḥ* agitation, frequently accused of organising groups of volunteers to recite *tabarraḥ*, and even bringing together a military corps known as the Sipah-i-'Abbasiya to identify recruits and cultivate a 'martial spirit,' which was said to have 650 members.³³ Ultimately, it was responsible for organising

'the Sunnis' right of public or private recitation... is not in dispute.' Ibid. This shift of tone effectively committed the government to granting the Sunni wish.

²⁸ *The Leader*, 3 and 4 April 1939, OIOC.

²⁹ Communique from the District Magistrate of Lucknow, 5 July 1939, Political Department File No. 65 of 1939, UPSA.

³⁰ *The Leader*, 6 April 1939, OIOC.

³¹ Mirza Sajjad Ali Khan ed., *Why 14,000 Shias went to jail? U.P. Congress Government and justice, "Fundamental rights of people overthrown", severe repression of the Shia minority* (Lucknow, circa 1939), passim.

³² Ibid, pp.3-7.

³³ District Magistrate of Lucknow to Chief Secretary, 25 March 1939, Political Dept File No.65 of 1939, UPSA; 'Note,' Deputy Commissioner of Lucknow, 8 April 1939, ibid; Khan ed., *Why 14,000 Shias went to jail?*, p.3.

daily civil disobedience,³⁴ and together with the Shi'a Political Conference it built up a so-called 'War Council' for the orchestration of the agitation.³⁵ The support of the *mujtahids* was a further crucial factor. Nasir Husain and Najm ul-Hasan, both of whom have been a constant presence throughout this thesis, resisted attempts at a cessation of the *tabarra* agitation and urged their *muqallidin* (followers) to defend Shi'a rights, to the frustration of those trying to bring it to a close.³⁶

The *tabarra* agitation seemed to induce a condition of 'intense emotional hysteria'³⁷ across the Shi'a community of Lucknow. As claimed one Lucknawi citizen, 'all the Shias collectively and individually are devoting their mind and money, energy and resources, to the *tabarra* agitation.'³⁸ Participation in *tabarra* in April-May 1939 notably transcended all boundaries of *muhalla*, family, class, political affiliation, as well as the ubiquitous religious-secular divide. Many Shi'a 'ulama courted arrest, including the son of Nasir Husain, as did members of the ex-Royal family of Lucknow, including the grandchildren of Wajid 'Ali Shah.³⁹ Many Shi'a *talugdars* of Awadh participated, and the Sayyids of Bilgram led deputations of Shi'as to Lucknow in support of the cause.⁴⁰ The politicians of the Shi'a Political Conference also joined the *tabarra* agitation; Mirza Jafar Husain, Sayyid Kalb-i-'Abbas and Sayyid 'Ali Zaheer, together with other members of the A.I.S.P.C., handed themselves over.⁴¹ The president of the Shi'a Political Conference Wazir Hasan facilitated the participation of the Lucknow Shi'a Students'

³⁴ Jasbir Singh to Harper, 2 April 1939, Political Department File No.65 of 1939, UPSA.

³⁵ Jasbir Singh to Harper, 11 May 1939, *ibid*; 'Note,' Deputy Commissioner of Lucknow, 8 April 1939, *ibid*. Reflecting other volunteer movements of the era, it apparently carried a socialist leaning and eschewed the support of the rich and noble; it was even accused of deliberately discrediting aristocratic Shi'a leaders. Jasbir Singh to Harper, 25 August 1939, *ibid*; Syed Ali Zaheer ed., *The dead past* (Lucknow, 1950), Private papers of Kazim Zaheer, New Delhi, p.115.

³⁶ For instance, 'it is well known that after discussing the situation and consulting people from other provinces our Mujtaheds came to the conclusion that the agitation should not be suspended under the circumstances, for the reasons best known to them.' Khan ed., *Why 14,000 Shias went to jail?*, p.98.

³⁷ 'The Madhe Sahaba controversy,' Haig to Linlithgow, 18 April 1939, L/PJ/7/2587, OIOC.

³⁸ *The Leader*, 20 May 1939, OIOC.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 13, 24, 25 and 27 April 1939.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 22 and 25 April 1939. For details and photographs of Shi'a *ra'is* and *talugdars* courting arrest, see *Hukumaran*, 27 April 1939, Proscribed Publications 13 (Urdu), OIOC.

⁴¹ *The Leader*, 24-6 April 1939, OIOC; *National Herald* (Lucknow), 23 April 1939, CSAS; 'Who is responsible for the Shia/Sunni dispute?', by Sayyid Akbar Ali, member of Central Standing Committee of All India Shi'a Political Conference, L/PJ/7/2587. Leaders of provincial and district branches of the organisation also courted arrest. *The Leader*, 15 April and 3 May 1939, OIOC.

Federation,⁴² while Lady Wazir Hasan organised the remarkable movement of *pardah* ladies. This alliance of the *begams* (wives) of prominent figures such as Nawabs, descendents of the royal family and *'ulama* shed their *pardah*, shouted public recitations of the Karbala tragedy and even planned to lie in the road blocking the Barawafat procession, many subsequently courting arrest.⁴³ Indeed, the Governor remarked with surprise upon the presence of 'Shias of the most respectable families' within the agitation, and the consequent 'gentlemanly lines' along which it was conducted.⁴⁴ As claimed one Shi'a Congressman, 'the cream of the Shia community is behind bars.'⁴⁵ The elite basis of the *tabarraah* agitation perhaps explains why it remained so well ordered and for the most part peaceful, in contrast to many of the riots which had accompanied Muharram in previous years.

Given the many elements participating in the *tabarraah* cause, among them local preachers and senior *mujtahids*, artisans and aristocrats, lawyers and politicians, young and old and those from in and outside Lucknow, it is futile to try to posit a single or dominant explanation for the sudden rise in Shi'a-Sunni conflict throughout the decade. The motivations for an individual courting arrest in a religious cause are likely to be as numerous and diverse as the individuals themselves, with simple, uncomplicated religious ardour by no means least among them. However, it is the task of this chapter to describe some of the factors contributing to sectarian animosities in Lucknow throughout this decade. Focusing firstly upon movements of religious renewal within Indian Shi'ism, the chapter will then move through political and socio-economic change to underscore the interaction between these currents, and will ultimately identify a gradual shift in the

⁴² *The Leader*, 4 and 11 May 1939, OIOC. The Shi'a Political Conference, or more precisely Wazir Hasan and 'his army of Congressite Shias,' were blamed by some for some of the force of the *tabarraah* agitation. Statement by Abdul Waheed Khan, Joint Secretary of Provincial Muslim League, *The Pioneer* (Lucknow), 22 June 1939, Quaid-i-Azam Collection, Ior. Neg. Pos. 10773, OIOC.

⁴³ On this movement, see *The Leader*, 14 April, 4 May and 3 June 1939, OIOC; *National Herald*, 25 and 28 April 1939, OIOC; Haig to Linlithgow, 26 April 1939, Linlithgow Collection, Mss. Eur. F.125/102, OIOC; Member of the Legislative Assembly for Shahjahanpur to Jinnah, 27 April 1939, Quaid-i-Azam Collection, Ior. Neg. Pos. 10773, OIOC.

⁴⁴ 'The Madhe Sahaba controversy,' Haig to Linlithgow, 18 April 1939 and 12 June 1939, L/PJ/5/267, OIOC.

⁴⁵ Statement by Sayyid Hyder Mehdi, *The Leader*, 1 May 1939, OIOC. It is even tempting to speculate that the relative comforts allowed to the Shi'a prisoners was in part due to a lack of willingness to keep the gentlemanly and political classes in such conditions. Shi'a prisoners had access to newspapers and tobacco

character and central markers of Indian Shi'ism. As such, this chapter is an attempt to re-evaluate the nature of Lucknow's conflict itself, and the evolution of Muslim sectarianism in India through the fifty-year period discussed in this thesis.

The 'jihad of the pen': the Imamiya Mission of Lucknow

As during earlier decades, the key to understanding efforts towards Shi'a religious renewal and solidarity lies in the formation of numerous public *anjumans* expressedly for this purpose. Indeed, several small and informal Shi'a associations of this nature were already in place in the *muhallas* of Lucknow from the beginning of the 1930s, among them the Anjuman-i-Jafariya, Anjuman-i-Baqariya, Anjuman-i-Mehdiviya, Anjuman-i-Pinjatani and Anjuman-i-Maqbool-i-Husaini.⁴⁶ However, by far the most important of the Shi'a *anjumans* to be established and the apex of this trend was the Imamiya Mission of Lucknow, which quickly established itself as the most organised and successful proselytising movement of Indian Shi'ism. In its appropriation of the language of *tabligh* and its emphasis upon proselytisation, the Imamiya Mission was also the successor of many of the religious formations discussed earlier. Moreover, it encapsulates succinctly the character of many other religious and socio-culturalist associations in the early twentieth century that, alongside their reflection upon the history of their communities and their recourse to text-based religious traditions, appropriated media and communicative methods of recent origins in the public arenas of colonial north India. The existence of detailed proceedings of the Imamiya Mission's first two years and the continuous re-publication of many of its key writings allow the opportunity for an analysis of the history and workings of the *anjuman* unequalled by any other Shi'a religious organisation of the same period.

The *anjuman* was the creation of Maulana Sayyid 'Ali Naqi (also known as Sayyid ul-

and were not handcuffed/ fettered. Ibid. 19 May and 8 June 1939, OIOC.

⁴⁶ 'Abdul Shakoor Farooqi, *Tehrif kī khāna sāz haqīqāt kā jawāb* (Lucknow, 1933), p.4.

‘Ulama), a descendent from both sides of the Nasirabadi family of ‘*ulama*.⁴⁷ Born in 1905, he demonstrates the extent to which young ‘*ulama* became active and influential during this period, supplanting the now-elderly religious authorities who dominated previous chapters. ‘Ali Naqi returned to Lucknow in 1932 from Najaf after several years of education from which he gained *ijazat*, and immediately set about a renewal of the Shi‘a religion in Lucknow.⁴⁸ His education in Najaf was cited by the Imamiya Mission’s members as part of the justification for the organisation’s authority, the president declaring that ‘the distinctive feature of our teacher’s writings to my mind is that they are from that very time when he was gaining perfect wisdom in Najaf-i-Ashraf.’⁴⁹

Although much of the organ’s legitimacy came from ‘Ali Naqi’s *ijazat* and reputation, the immediate context out of which the organisation grew was the straining of Shi‘a-Sunni relations in Lucknow in the early 1930s. The Imamiya Mission emerged subsequent to a flurry of activity among Sunni reformists. The key moment emerged around the turn of the 1930s when ‘Abdul Shakoor Farooqi, the namesake of his famed Kakorvi father discussed in Chapter 2, established a Sunni *madrassa* and publishing house in Lucknow. The Dar-ul-Muballighin seminary, it was said, excelled in the practice of *munazara* and aimed solely at the contradiction of Shi‘a doctrines,⁵⁰ and clearly echoed the Shi‘a Madrasa’t ul-Wa‘izen in its emphasis upon public oratory and its recruitment and training of *maulavis* and *wa‘izen*. Like the Madrasa’t ul-Wa‘izen, furthermore, the school worked in tandem with a publishing house, Jama‘at ul-Tahaffuz-i-Millat, which printed many of ‘Abdul Shakoor’s writings. Like those of his father, his arguments were oriented around the central theme that the Shi‘a faith and its doctrines could not be justified from the Qur’an.

It was this atmosphere of sectarian vitriol in Lucknow to which ‘Ali Naqi returned.

⁴⁷ Maulana S. Ali Naqi Nadvi, *History of Islam*, transl. Murtaza Husain (Aligarh, 2002), p.i.

⁴⁸ Farooqi, *Tahrif ki khāna*, pp.1-3.

⁴⁹ Imamiya Mission, *Sālāna rapōrt-i-Imāmīya Mishan Luckna‘u: bābta-i-sāl-i-awal* (Lucknow, 1933), p.13.

⁵⁰ Shakil Hasan Shamsi, *Shi‘a-Sunī qazīya: kitnā mazhabī kitnā sīyāsī?* (Lucknow, circa 2005), p.87. Peter Hardy, *The Muslims of British India* (Cambridge, 1972), p.245, gives its date of foundation as 1931, although I have not been able to certify this. Certainly it was around this time that the *madrassa* ascended to public prominence.

Sectarian relations became particularly tense during Muharram of 1932, when certain unspecified Sunni preachers and newspapers circulated claims that it was the Muslims of Kufa, in other words Shi'as, who were responsible for the death of Imam Husain. As 'Ali Naqi recalls:

'It is lamentable that certain people, who take pleasure in inciting and furthering division and stirring up troubles within the [Muslim] community, give much importance to the opinion that the killers of Husain were themselves Shi'as, and these claims are forever being perpetuated with great noise and force.'⁵¹

This prompted a further straining of Shi'a-Sunni relations. Muharram of that year was marked by the convening of separate Shi'a and Sunni meetings and assemblies, and the conducting of public *munazaras*.⁵² In response to these rumours, 'Ali Naqi wrote the important tract *Qātilān-i-Husēn kā mazhab* ('The Faith of the Murderers of Husain'), undoubtedly one of the most influential and widely-distributed Shi'a writings of colonial South Asia. Originally serialised in seven instalments in *Sarfaraz*, the treatise offered a series of so-called 'historical demonstrations and proofs' seeking to prove that:

'Referring blame for the murder of Imam Husain upon the community of the city of Kufa is completely without foundation, and to say that it was in fact these Shi'as is far from the reality of these events. Thus, there is a pressing need to clarify these ideas, so that the principles of world history are not in hindsight distorted, and proper consideration is fully made.'⁵³

At this point, moves were made for the publication of this and other religious writings of 'Ali Naqi perceived as worthy of public distribution. The organisational initiative appeared to come from Jalal-ud-din Haider, formerly the founding member of the Anjuman-i-Wasifa-i-Sadat-va-Mominin of Amroha association discussed in Chapter 3, who retired to Lucknow and became the Imamiya Mission's first president. Arguing that *Qātilān-i-Husēn kā mazhab* should be published in book-form in order to be more widely distributed, he met with the manager of the *Sarfaraz* press to make arrangements for its publication.⁵⁴ Money for the publishing of such texts was drawn from the management of

⁵¹ Syed 'Ali Naqi Naqvi, *Qātilān-i-Husēn kā mazhab* (Lucknow, 1932-3), p.16.

⁵² Imamiya Mission, *Sālāna rapōrt-i-Imāmīya Mishan Luckna'u*, p.22.

⁵³ Naqvi, *Qātilān-i-Husēn kā mazhab*, p.51.

⁵⁴ Imamiya Mission, *Sālāna rapōrt-i-Imāmīya Mishan Luckna'u*, pp.23-4. 'This tract was produced for the public good, and has been serialised in seven instalments in the *Sarfaraz* national newspaper. But, since

Sarfaraz and the *auqaf* of the Husainabad Trust and Shah Najaf *imambaras*.⁵⁵

At first, the Imamiya Mission was little more than an *aegis* under which the publication of religious treatises could be conducted, but the twin pillars of the newspaper *Sarfaraz* and the Imamiya Mission's tracts together quickly developed into a singular organisational project which earned the Imamiya Mission its reputation as a powerful publishing organisation.⁵⁶ The Mission represented a new application of the print media with unprecedented skill and focus; the 'effort of the pen (*jihad-i-qalam*)' as it was described by the Mission's managers, was responsible for its growth and influence.⁵⁷ Few examples demonstrate more clearly than the Imamiya Mission the decisive role of the printed word in disseminating a religious consciousness among lay Muslims, as well as in broadening the audience reached by religious authorities.

Within the first year of its existence the Mission was able to publish an impressive fifteen-thousand individual tracts of twenty-five titles, the majority written by 'Ali Naqi, the most successful of which were re-printed in further editions.⁵⁸ A 'modern' *mujtahid* in more than simply his youth, 'Ali Naqi understood intently the promulgatory power of Urdu. While 'Ali Naqi's references allude to his classical Arabic and Persian education in Najaf, his fluent use of the vernacular was perhaps unprecedented for a *mujtahid* of his stature. 'Urdu is the language of the writings of the Mission and it will remain so,' the Mission's secretary claimed; the use of the vernacular was perceived as a necessary adjustment to the often-cited 'needs of the times.'⁵⁹ 'Ali Naqi's authority was drawn as much from the maximisation of his readership through the vernacular as his erudition. In complete contrast to the contingency of religious authority upon a knowledge of Arabic

clearly the aim of this piece was to be further circulated, it should be printed in future in the format of a book, and we ourselves felt this need and for this purpose the Imamiya Mission was founded, so that the propagation of this kind of literature may be successfully conducted.' Naqvi, *Qātilān-i-Husēn kā mazhab*, p.2.

⁵⁵ Imamiya Mission, *Sālāna rapōrt-i-Imāmīya Mishan Luckna'u*, pp.24-7.

⁵⁶ 'Because of the newspapers, the Prophet cannot remain unheeded. *Sarfaraz* has been continuously disseminated, and many tracts relating to religious and holy knowledge have been distributed. So many writings were ordered to be printed, of two or even three editions.' Ibid, p.16.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p.45.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p.80.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p.16. Additionally, the Mission published the books *Husēn ōr Islām* and *The Martyrdom of Husain*

and Persian was 'Ali Naqi's occasionally evident view that meaning is best conveyed in the native tongue. He argues, for instance, that the meaning rather than the word of the Qur'an is the source of benefit, this being part of the reason why the perceived lack of *hafiz* among the Shi'a community is an irrelevance.⁶⁰

An examination of some of 'Ali Naqi's treatises helps us to understand the Mission's own contribution to Shi'a faith and practice, and to interpretations of community and religious leadership in Shi'ism. They were most commonly examinations of Islamic history, referencing *hadis* and ancient histories and, frequently, authoritative Sunni as well as Shi'a texts.⁶¹ While these tracts tended to discuss long-standing religious questions and apply the findings of classical Arabic and Persian texts, the immediate trigger for the writing of each text was often identified as a necessary clarification of a rumour or slander recently created, through either the spoken or printed word. Like *Qātilān-i-Husēn kā mazhab*, the origin of which is traced to verbal rumour on the streets of Lucknow, many of his writings were produced in response to perceived falsehoods recently circulated in public discourse.⁶² For instance the second publication of the Mission, *Tehrīf Qur'ān kī haqīqāt*, an attempt to outline the Shi'a perspective upon the Qur'an, was a response to certain contrary claims which had been recently propounded in a hostile newspaper that Shi'as regarded the Qur'an as 'created' and liable to failure.⁶³ While subscribing to belief in the inimitable authority of the Qur'an, the work blames the wills of the early Caliphs and Companions for the admission of innovations into the revelation: the loss of the *surahs*' (chapters of the Qur'an) order, the changing of words and the rejection of particular passages. Wherever the Qur'an is unchanged and authentic,

in Hindi and English.

⁶⁰ Imamiya Mission, *Tazkira-i-hifāz Shī'a, hēsa-i-awal* (Lucknow, 1933), pp. 15-27, 101.

⁶¹ Where these are used, 'Ali Naqi is careful to emphasise the fact and at point chooses even to congratulate Sunni historians on their grasp of fact. Naqvi, *Qātilān-i-Husēn kā mazhab*, p.5.

⁶² *Tazkira-i-hifāz Shī'a* was also a response to perceived Sunni slurs that no *hafiz* (those able to recite the Qur'an) existed within the Shi'a community. The work denies the claim, arguing instead that any deficiency in Shi'a religious knowledge in India was due to their constant persecution; moreover, religious development also took place under *taqiya*, and has been more than compensated by the overwhelming Shi'a contribution to religion and literature in recent generations. Imamiya Mission, *Tazkira-i-hifāz Shī'a*, passim.

⁶³ Syed 'Ali Naqi Naqvi, *Tehrīf-i-Qur'ān kī haqīqāt* (Lucknow, 1932-3), pp.2, 7.

he infers, is due to the custody of Shi'as.⁶⁴

Additionally, some of the Imamiya Mission's publications had a more contemporary focus, and identified the organisation's agenda as one of fresh social and economic modernisation. 'Ali Naqi was known as a pioneer of reform, and this is ably demonstrated by the Imamiya Mission's twelfth publication, *Tijārat ōr Islām* ('Commerce and Islam'), compiled from a series of lectures delivered by the Maulana. Referring implicitly to the economic poverty and educational decline of many of the Shi'as of Lucknow, the tract unfolds as a long metaphor comparing the Shi'a community to one who does not realise himself to be in the early stages of an illness, demanding a successful diagnosis and cure for the community's ills.⁶⁵ The author rejects the view, evident among certain Shi'as of the day, that worldly enterprise represents a neglect of Islam. Arguing that 'Ali rejected the divorce (*talaq*) from the world, he suggests that the sayings and deeds of neither the Prophet nor 'Ali demonstrate that worldly enterprise contradicts Islamic principles. For this reason, the solution was distinctly secular; progress in agriculture and industry, and the development of trade. The readership was encouraged to save wealth, and to initiate or participate in commercial enterprise.⁶⁶ Indeed, 'Ali Naqi's petition that Shi'as should support Shi'a businesses and trade to facilitate the community's betterment was more than fulfilled; it was complained that Shi'as in 1930s Lucknow ceased conducting transactions with Sunni traders.⁶⁷ These brave assertions made the Imamiya Mission the main successor to organs such as the Shi'a Conference and educational organisations of earlier decades, picking up their efforts where the latter had been unsuccessful in instigating substantial change. 'Ali Naqi assigns the *'ulama* to the forefront of attempts at secular reform, describing the duty of Shi'a *maulavis* as the endeavour to give instructions to the community, and to respond to practical concerns with teachings from the Qur'an and *hadis*.⁶⁸ Rather than upholding traditionalism or resisting modernisation, it was their duty to bring about regeneration in the modern world.

⁶⁴ Ibid, passim.

⁶⁵ Syed 'Ali Naqi Naqvi, *Tijārat ōr Islām* (1933), pp.4-6.

⁶⁶ Ibid, pp.11-2.

⁶⁷ Ibid, pp.71-2; *Naqara* (Lucknow), 19 September 1936, UPNNR.

A solid trade in religious publications offered the Imamiya Mission a base from which it could expand beyond its centre at Lucknow and ingratiate itself among wider Shi'a communities. Members of the Imamiya Mission were instructed to distribute these texts and assigned with the task of dispensing them in their towns and among relatives and acquaintances.⁶⁹ Members sometimes maximised readership by distributing books freely among those who could not afford them, and attempted to release books at reduced prices.⁷⁰ Yet no less important to the Imamiya Mission were the various Shi'a newspapers emerging at this time. *Sarfaraz* was not the only newspaper affiliated to the Imamiya Mission: other papers described as 'working for' the Mission included *Shi'a* (Lahore), *Dar-i-Najaf* (Sialkot) and *Al-Wa'iz* (Lucknow).⁷¹ The Mission thus gave something of a centre to localised printing projects in U.P. and Punjab, attaching local editors to a national network of Shi'a publishing organisations. As such, from its initial status as an informal agreement among a few Lucknawis managed from a side-room of a house in Chowk, with no furniture and no salaried employees,⁷² the Mission quickly evolved into a national organisation with multiple offices, full-time staff and some 270 active enrolled members around the country.⁷³ It boasted a highly regulated structure with a central organisational committee, regional and district branches, membership schemes, publicity campaigns and affiliations with other Shi'a organisations.

As the Imamiya Mission grew, so it developed beyond the scope of a publishing organisation. Having enlisted the support of locally eminent individuals in Lucknow who were most able to provide support, funding and meeting places, the Mission thus proved adept at utilising networks of family, profession and local reputation in the consolidation

⁶⁸ Naqvi, *Tijarat or Islām*, pp.71-2.

⁶⁹ 'I realised that in every single district, should just one or two people to whom we could dispatch from [Lucknow] an appropriate number of tracts acquire a sympathetic faith, they could distribute them amongst their relatives and friends... in this way our output of texts could be great in number.' Imamiya Mission, *Sālāna rapōrt-i-Imāmīya Mishan Luckna'u*, pp.34-5. The first non-Lucknawi member of the Mission was asked to distribute texts around his locality, while it was said that many other members of the Mission bought books for distribution among their friends and by post. Ibid, pp.29-33.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p.40.

⁷¹ All of these newspapers 'have supported the propagation of the Mission's aims and essence in every possible way, and will remain and contribute to the service of the community.' Ibid, p.84.

⁷² Ibid, pp.72-6.

of its influence. In addition to cultivating local Shi'a urban and rural nobilities, it also made efforts to train a volunteer corps, mimicking many populist religious and political *anjumans* during the period.⁷⁴ With the clear aim of building up a body of young activists, a camp was convened in Delhi to engage young activists and train them in work for the Mission. The Mission further established a so-called 'Comrades of Action' scheme, advertised in *Sarfaraz*, for appropriate volunteers who could travel to the districts and disseminate the message and tracts of the Mission.⁷⁵ Through all such means the Mission was able to reach beyond the confines of old Lucknow, explaining the organisation's remarkable expansion in terms both of membership and geographical reach.⁷⁶ It established a wide presence through its engagement with local networks and in this way carried its tracts and message to Shi'as in cities as distant as Delhi, Lahore, Patiala, Jabalpur and Peshawar.⁷⁷ This said, an overall majority originated from U.P., the districts of Lucknow, Hardoi, Allahabad, Meerut and Bareilly especially.⁷⁸ Donations flowed in from such places, with U.P. and Hyderabad unsurprisingly the most fruitful sources of revenue.⁷⁹

The Imamiya Mission did not itself openly instigate Shi'a-Sunni antagonism. Indeed, while it was concerned primarily with Shi'as rather than wider Muslim communities, the Imamiya Mission positioned itself in conjunction with wider causes of Muslim welfare in

⁷³ Ibid, pp.47, 80.

⁷⁴ This style of politics in 1930s north India is described in Gooptu, *The politics of the urban poor*, passim; Gould, *Hindu nationalism and the language of politics*, passim.

⁷⁵ Imamiya Mission, *Sālāna rapōrt-i-Imāmīya Mishan Luckna'u*, pp.34-5. Alongside publishing and the construction of networks, a further way in which the Mission was able to establish credence beyond Lucknow was through its intervention in affairs within local Shi'a communities. This is clearly shown in the intervention of Jalal-ud-din Haider in Sialkot in July 1932, another town where the Mission was able to establish its roots. A quarrel amongst the town's Shi'as over Muharram rites during 1932 in Sialkot had caused divisions, prompting Jalal-ud-din Haider to place 'an appeal for the preservation of the essential faith above the local schism.' The Imamiya Mission, thus, was credited with the halting of the quarrel. It seems that the Mission, drawing from the credentials of its Lucknawi basis, was permitted to resolve local difficulties. Ibid, pp.33-4.

⁷⁶ As the secretary described: 'on the one side the books and printing work... continued, and on the other side I occupied myself in [the exchange of] letters and books from powerful Shi'a organisations, and frequently individual supporters of the community, from all over India.' Ibid, pp.32-3.

⁷⁷ Ibid, p.42.

⁷⁸ Ibid, pp.36-7. The large membership from Hardoi district may indicate the support of the Sayyids of Bilgram, although this cannot be proven.

⁷⁹ Through a number of large donations from members, the organisation raised a revenue of 1600 rupees in its first year. Ibid, pp.80-2.

much of the language of its proceedings and the tracts it published. It pledged to act for 'the preservation and propagation of Islam' and to 'work together with all Muslim missionary organisations with a unity of principles,' although of course giving particular prominence to Shi'a organisations.⁸⁰ Some of its tracts, such as *Itteḥād ul-farīqēh* ('Unity of the sects') advocated the harmonisation of Shi'a-Sunni relations, albeit through a process asking more from Sunnis than Shi'as.⁸¹ Despite such pledges, the Imamiya Mission both emerged from and contributed to a wider context of the consolidation of religious difference between Shi'as and Sunnis in the early 1930s. Its published treatises restated time and again the historical controversies at the heart of sectarian differences, and built upon themes of past and present victimisation of Shi'as at Sunni hands. There can be little doubt that the texts of the Imamiya Mission, many invigorating long-standing Shi'a-Sunni debates and attempting to arouse Shi'as out of their supposed intellectual slumber, may have contributed to the arousal of tensions, or at the very least have been used to this end by certain activists.

As such, rather than an affiliate of wider schemes for Muslim unity, the Mission is better understood as the successor of earlier Lucknawi sectarian organisations. Like the city's Sunni and Shi'a printing presses and *madrasas* of the previous forty years, it initiated further sectarian closure and the tightening of religious boundaries. Moreover, newspapers affiliated with the Imamiya Mission, such as *Sarfaraz* and *Al-Wa'iz*, were widely accused of inciting sectarian conflict. It is also worth noting that the Imamiya Mission had a great influence upon the character of *Sarfaraz*. Initially a broadly Congressite newspaper with a particular focus upon Shi'a politicians, after its contact with the Imamiya Mission in the early 1930s it began to print religious discussions and invectives. The Imamiya Mission, then, converted the most widely read Shi'a organ in India from a broadly nationalist political publication into a serialised outlet for Shi'a religious polemic. As such, the Imamiya Mission can be understood as an important contributory factor to the heightening sense of Shi'a-Sunni religious difference, which ultimately blended with the social and political tensions between the communities

⁸⁰ Ibid, p.8.

⁸¹ Syed 'Ali Naqī Naqvi, *Itteḥād ul-farīqēh* (Lucknow, 1933), passim.

manifest in the decade.

The political and socio-economic roots of sectarianism in the 1930s

The successive Sunni and Shi'a agitations of the late-1930s differed in important ways from the earlier campaigns in the 1900s to imprint the identifying religious practices of each community onto the rites of Muharram, as discussed in the second chapter. Each was more systematised, more ordered, headed by more a more eminent and prominent leadership and, in part in consequence of these, embracive of wider proportions of the Shi'a and Sunni population in Lucknow. All these factors distinguished the sectarian conflicts of the 1930s from their forerunners. While their 1900s precursors had appeared to be the religious campaigns of a minority of religious orators and leaders, and were viewed with scepticism by wide sections of the communities that they aspired to represent, these later agitations were actualised as mass-mobilisations, couched in the language of government-petitioning and highly resonant of the political activism which typified north India from the 1920s. Indeed, distinctive to the 1930s was the extensive interaction between sectarian frictions and the municipal transformation of Lucknow, and additionally, the overt politicisation of the Shi'a-Sunni conflict. The sheer force of the *tabarraḥ* as a source of popular and public mobilisation must be understood with regard to this intertwining of manifestations of Muslim sectarian conflict in the 1930s with such wider socio-economic and political transformation.

It has been shown over previous chapters that pre-1920s Lucknow had been slow to modernise and remained largely stagnant both economically and in terms of population, leaving in place enduring social and economic structures which were broadly favourable to the city's traditional elites and authorities. However, Lucknow's languishment was reversed from the 1920s onwards. It very quickly after 1921 became a centre of industry and trade, and its 'increasing commercial and industrial importance' resulted in 'the movement of labour to the city in the closing years of the decade, and spiralling levels of

immigration.’⁸² In the decade after 1921 Lucknow’s population grew by some 34,000, or 15.6%.⁸³ Even more startling was Lucknow’s 54.1% population increase in the 1930s,⁸⁴ bringing the population from some 217,000 to 387,000 in just twenty years. This sudden population increase, exceeding even Kanpur, stemmed partly from the wider trend of urban immigration,⁸⁵ and partly from the re-establishment of Lucknow as U.P.’s political centre following the establishment here of the Legislative Council and seat of the Governor, attracting to the city increasing numbers of politicians, officials and investors.⁸⁶ This massive numerical growth not only transformed the character and composition of Lucknow, but had particular impact upon the Shi’a-Sunni balance, since a disproportionate number of these immigrants were Muslims,⁸⁷ while the predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods in western Lucknow appeared to bear the brunt of this immigration.⁸⁸

The tremendous growth of Lucknow could be construed to have contributed to Shi’a-Sunni animosity in various ways. On the one hand, the sudden numerical expansion of the Sunni population may well have been felt to compromise the traditionally disproportionate public influence of Shi’ism in Lucknow and cemented the impression of fresh Sunni dominance. Furthermore, it seems likely that this massive immigration to the older *muhallas* contributed to the influence of Muslim religious organisations, as these *anjumans* came to offer immigrant populations a means of offsetting a sense of alienation and displacement in a new environment. Shi’a and in particular Sunni organisations in 1930s Lucknow exhibited a prominent contingent of Muslims of *qasba*-U.P. rather than

⁸² For instance, *Census of India, 1931, United Provinces, Part I: Report* (Allahabad, 1933), pp. 86, 392-3, 429.

⁸³ *Census of India 1921, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Part I: Report* (Allahabad, 1923), pp.34-6; *Census of India, 1931, United Provinces, Part I: Report*, pp.141-2.

⁸⁴ *Census of India, 1951, Volume II Uttar Pradesh, Part I-A, Report* (Allahabad, 1953), p.169.

⁸⁵ Gooptu, *The politics of the urban poor*, pp.34-47.

⁸⁶ See Peter Reeves, ‘Lucknow politics: 1920-1947,’ in Violette Graff ed., *Lucknow: memories of a city* (New Delhi, 1997), pp.216-9.

⁸⁷ Almost certainly, an overwhelming proportion of these incoming Muslims would have been Sunnis. The population of Muslims grew faster than the Hindu population, rising by 21.5% rather than the average 15.6% in the 1920s. *Census of India, 1931, United Provinces, Part I: Report*, pp.522-3.

⁸⁸ There was, for instance, an increase in the 1930s of the density of population in the ward of Yahiyaganj, a crucial quarter nestled between Nakhhas, Patanala and the Madrasa’t ul-Wa’izen in which several incidents of sectarian violence occurred. R. Mukerjee and B. Singh, *Social profiles of a metropolis: social and economic structure of Lucknow, capital of Uttar Pradesh, 1954-56* (London, 1961), p.32.

Lucknawi origins, perhaps attesting to this theory that such religious organisations offered outsiders a powerful means of integration and orientation.⁸⁹

No less importantly, the mass resettlement of outside-populations in Lucknow seemed to exacerbate social and class rivalries, which tied up with the Shi'a-Sunni conflict. As was described of the sectarian conflicts in the 1900s, the *karbala* battleground was perceived as offering an outlet for innumerable personal and social conflicts. Those municipal landowners and lawyers deemed to be representing the Shi'as conflicted with those lower and middle-class Sunnis who pushed for a broader assertion of their civic authority and relevance through the imposition of reforms onto the character of Muharram. This said, these relatively confined undertones of class struggle are not as extensive as the more overt social rivalries on display within the religious strife of the 1930s. For instance, there was a clear polarisation between the lower class background of many of the Ahrar volunteers who requested the right to recite *madh-i-sahaba* and the privileged, aristocratic Shi'as who petitioned against it. The Ahrar organisation 'contained no man of even a moderate social position within its ranks' and drew its support from the 'lowest strata of Lucknow's Muslims,'⁹⁰ allowing the British to characterise them as degenerates: 'those offering themselves for arrest were generally the riff-raff.'⁹¹ This was in total contrast to the Shi'a *tabarra* campaign, which was often most surprising to the government for the participation of Shi'a notables, professionals and aristocrats. A further issue fuelling Sunni disaffection was the apparent stranglehold by Shi'as over posts in government service, a fact highlighted by the Public Services Commission of the early 1930s and referenced by Sunni agitators.⁹² As such, the Sunni agitation has sometimes been interpreted in the context of contemporary political assertion by artisan

⁸⁹ As is insinuated throughout this chapter, Sunni organisations in Lucknow such as the Majlis-i-Ahrar and Dar-ul-Muballighin, and to some extent even Shi'a organs such as the Imamiya Mission, drew large sections of their support from outside of Lucknow, especially in both cases from neighbouring districts such as Rae Bareilly, Hardoi and Barabanki.

⁹⁰ Haig to Linlithgow, 7 June 1937, L/PJ/5/267, OIOC.

⁹¹ 'The Madhe Sahaba controversy,' Haig to Linlithgow, 18 April 1939, L/PJ/7/2587, OIOC. By contrast, it was often noted that 'educated and responsible Sunnis [have] kept aloof of the Madhe Sahaba agitation.' Member of Legislative Assembly for Shahjahanpur to Jinnah, 27 April 1939, Quaid-i-Azam Collection, Ior. Neg. Pos. 10773, OIOC. Moreover, according to one Lucknow citizen, 'responsible and wise [Sunni] leaders did not take any active part in the *madh-i-sahaba* affair.' *The Leader*, 20 May 1939, OIOC.

⁹² Zafar ul-Mulk, *Shia-Sunni dispute: its causes and cure, a critical analysis of the presidential address of*

groups, as an 'attempt by the poor to seize political control and initiative, even in a place such as Lucknow with a history of established religious leadership.'⁹³

Of more novelty in the 1930s, however, was the ascendancy of political divisions between Shi'as and Sunnis. Despite Shi'a engagement in an adversarial dialogue with such burning issues in Muslim politics as the Aligarh movement and pan-Islamism as discussed above, party-political divisions did not formally open up between Shi'as and Sunnis until the inauguration of the 1935 Government of India Act and the devolution of provincial power to the Indian National Congress administration. The provincial elections in 1937 were widely seen to have inflamed Shi'a-Sunni rhetoric, as contests for 'Muslim' seats often encouraged the raising of issues of sectarian affiliation. It was argued by many Shi'a politicians that the decade's ascendant sectarian issues had entered the elections, and rallied the Sunni majority against any standing Shi'a candidates. Sayyid 'Ali Zaheer, figurehead of the All India Shi'a Political Conference, claimed that 'during elections for Muslim seats, it is a very common experience... that appeal is made to the religious fanaticism of the majority of voters, and a Shia is defeated merely because he is a Shia.'⁹⁴ This he certainly claimed of his own failed attempt at election in 1937: 'the madhe-sahaba issue was raised to defeat me... and I was called Rafizi [heretic]. Other Shia candidates had also to face similar propaganda.'⁹⁵

Whatever the level of truth in claims of disappointment at the number of Shi'as willing to stand in these circumstances,⁹⁶ or the defeat of prominent Shi'as on religious grounds,⁹⁷

Sir Sultan Ahmed (Badaun, circa 1940), pp.14-5.

⁹³ Gooptu, *The politics of the urban poor*, pp.302-3.

⁹⁴ *Indian Annual Register: July to December 1944* (Delhi, 1945), CSAS, pp.230-1.

⁹⁵ Speech by Sayyid Ali Zaheer, *The Moonlight* (Lucknow), 27 October 1945, L/PJ/8/693. OIOC. 'Ali Zaheer eventually entered the Provincial Assembly through a by-election in 1939. J.M. Goodman, B.D. Graham, P.D. Reeves, *Handbook to elections in Uttar Pradesh, 1920-1951* (Delhi, 1975), p.314. Even prior to the 1937 elections, there were claims that Shi'as were losing seats on sectarian grounds. Wazir Hasan contested election to the Viceroy's Central Legislative Council in 1934; his son wrote, 'My father was fighting this election on a Muslim League ticket, and yet it made no difference; he lost because he was a Shia.' 'Memoirs of Syed Ali Zaheer,' manuscript, private papers of Kazim Zaheer. New Delhi.

⁹⁶ *The Leader*, 18 October 1936, OIOC, claims that six Shi'as stood for the 66 seats in the Provincial Assembly, and that only three stood across the 17 seats in the Legislative Council; while precise statistics are difficult to ascertain, this seems to be have been a slight underestimate.

⁹⁷ Including: Sayyid Asghar Husain, K.B. Shah Nazar Husain, Agha 'Ali Khan, Sayyid 'Ali Zaheer. Goodman et al. *Handbook to elections in Uttar Pradesh*, pp.293, 294, 298, 302. Successful Shi'as included

the elections convinced many of the hazards of separate electorates for Shi'as. Opposing the Muslim League's central cause of separate Muslim representation, the Shi'a Political Conference moved during its 1930s sessions towards advocacy of joint electorates, albeit under a vague scheme of quotas for Hindu, Sunni and Shi'a seats, and was hence pulled closer towards the National Congress. Congress' 'mass-contacts' campaign to enrol Muslim support met with only sporadic successes, one of which was among the Shi'as of Lucknow.⁹⁸ The president of the Shi'a Political Conference, Wazir Hasan, offered a speech in 1937 in which 'he vehemently opposed the ideology of the Muslim League to form a separate Muslim block, and opined that the Muslim League alone did not represent all the Muslims of India,' formalising the organisation's support of Congress.⁹⁹ Thus during the late-1930s, when political disagreements in elite circles tended to find violent expressions in the streets, there was a clear political polarisation in Lucknow between Shi'as and Sunnis. Whether independently or on the urges of the Shi'a Political Conference, Shi'as cautiously yet consistently aligned themselves with Congress, while Sunnis largely rallied to the local Muslim League candidate, Chaudhury Khaliqzaman, who was a member of what was described as 'the most orthodox Sunni family in Lucknow.'¹⁰⁰

Why, in these circumstances, Congress actively saw fit to re-open the Shi'a-Sunni conflict is a matter of some debate. It may have been a tactical ploy to expand the flagging sympathies for Congress among Sunnis. Alternatively, it may have been an attempt to meet the wishes of Husain Ahmad Madani, who was at this time Vice President of the United Provinces Congress Committee. Rumours floated that he had promised to reward Congress with Sunni votes for allowing the *madh-i-sahaba* procession, and in 1938 the Ministry certainly believed that 'they should meet the demand of Maulvi Husain Ahmad.'¹⁰¹ Alternatively, it has been suggested that the

the following: Ja'far Hasan Khan, and the Rajas of Salempur, Pirpur and Hasanpur. *Ibid.*, pp.297, 302-5.

⁹⁸ For instance, Mushirul Hasan, 'The Muslim mass contacts campaign: analysis of a strategy of political mobilisation,' in Mushirul Hasan ed., *India's partition: process, strategy and mobilisation* (Delhi, 1993), pp.140-1.

⁹⁹ Zaheer ed., *The memoirs of Syed Ali Zaheer*, p.19.

¹⁰⁰ Note by Sir Hasan Suhrawardy, 26 October 1942, Information Department Files (L/D), 1/880, OIOC; Khaliqzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan*, p.3.

¹⁰¹ Haig to Linlithgow, 23 October 1938, Linlithgow Collection, Mss. Eur. F.125/101, OIOC. Additionally,

Congress actively encouraged the dispute in order to 'split the Muslims'¹⁰² and expose the vacuity of the Muslim League's ideological platform. This was certainly the perspective of Muslim League activists. Khaliqzaman suspected Congress machinations, while Jinnah emphasized that 'those responsible for leading, rather misleading, sections of both the Shi'as and Sunnis in a fratricidal struggle are prominent Muslim Congressites.'¹⁰³ The secretary of the U.P. Muslim League similarly claimed that many of those alliances at the centre of the *madh-i-sahaba* and *tabarra* agitations, including the Shi'a Political Conference and Majlis-i-Ahrar, would 'dance like puppets to the tune of the Congress High Command and can be made to do anything if it is to weaken the Muslim League.'¹⁰⁴ Such an interpretation would suggest that the Congress administration handled Shi'a-Sunni relations with the same manipulative skill as had their British predecessors during their earlier attempts to find gaps in Muslim unity during the Muslim University and pan-Islamic campaigns.

Evidence that the *tabarra* agitation had a motivation of political protest can be found in the explanations of the Shi'a political leaders who courted arrest. Wazir Hasan, president of the Shi'a Political Conference, instructed his comrades that 'the present Shia *satyagraha* (civil disobedience) is in no sense a sectarian agitation but is directed only against the Government.'¹⁰⁵ Sayyid Hyder Mehdi, another prominent Shi'a Congressman, claimed that the agitation was 'in the nature of a defiance of government order,' stating that, 'I have not been able to find any other front from which Shias can give a fight to the Government.'¹⁰⁶ Often the Congress party specifically suffered the vitriol of the *tabarra*

Congress' support of the Sunni side may have been because the two serving Muslim members of the U.P.C.C., both of whom were Sunnis, sympathised with the *madh-i-sahaba* cause. Hafiz Muhammad Ibrahim, who headed the negotiations on the *madh-i-sahaba* issue, was of a family from which other members courted arrest. 'Who is responsible for the Shia/Sunni dispute?', by Sayyid Akbar Ali, member of Central Standing Committee of All India Shi'a Political Conference, L/PJ/7/2587, OIOC.

¹⁰² 'Shia-Sunni trouble,' Haig to Linlithgow, 18 April 1939, *ibid*.

¹⁰³ Khaliqzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan*, p.213; *The Leader*, 10 May 1939, OIOC.

¹⁰⁴ Khan ed., *Why 14,000 Shias went to jail?*, p.39.

¹⁰⁵ *The Leader*, 11 May 1939, OIOC.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 1 May 1939. Importantly, many such political figures were careful to stress that 'the present question is more political than religious and it is carried... without any disrespect to the Sunnis.' Sayyid Shibli Ali to Liaquat Ali Khan, 15 April 1939, Quaid-i-Azam Collection, Ior. Neg. Pos. 10773, OIOC. It was frequently claimed that should the right to *tabarra* be granted, it would be given up; some 'ulama even pronounced that the recital was only obligatory while it was prohibited. *The Leader*, 1 May 1939, CSAS; *The Statesman*, 3 June 1939, Quaid-i-Azam Collection, Ior. Neg. Pos. 10773, OIOC. Some played

agitation, a remarkable example being the inclusion of the names of Congress leaders alongside the Caliphs in the *tabarraḥ* during Muharram.¹⁰⁷ Shi'as, the government predicted, were likely to 'indulge in anti-Ministerial slogans and lend their support to any organisation that is carrying on an agitation against Government.'¹⁰⁸

Further evidencing the political tones of the Shi'a-Sunni conflict in Lucknow is the fact that the *madh-i-sahaba* and *tabarraḥ* agitations came to adopt the militant styles of many of the era's nationalist and communal 'volunteer movements.' Both frequently resembled ordered political protests, and were evoked in the Gandhian language of *satyagraha*. Moreover, given the ubiquitous hand of the British government and municipal authorities in attempts to bring the troubles to a close, the Shi'a-Sunni conflicts were appropriated by many participants as a means of demonstrating their defiance of government orders at various levels. This is perhaps a more sophisticated explanation than the thesis of a 'divide and rule' tactic on the part of Congress for the presence of many quasi-nationalist individuals and Congress-affiliated groups in both the *madh-i-sahaba* and *tabarraḥ* agitations.

While studies of communal conflict in north India have arguably tended on occasion to portray religious conflict as simply an expression of economic and political competition between opposing communities, this recognition of the important temporal dynamics is not intended to discount the importance of the renewal of religious consciousness for understanding the conflict, as previously discussed. It is, instead, an attempt to convey something of the depth of the interaction of religious conflicts with socio-economic and political divisions, one unprecedented in earlier decades. As has been argued in previous chapters, a defining feature of Shi'a-Sunni disputes after 1900 as opposed to, for instance, before 1890 was their escaping the boundaries of exclusively religious conflict, and their tendency to instigate wider social segregation and find expression through political differentiation. However, the extent of the overlap between religious, social and political

down sectarian differences altogether: Lady Wazir Hasan, for instance, described both the *madh-i-sahaba* and *tabarraḥ* agitations as political movements under 'religious garb,' even stating that the communities had found a unity in 'making life difficult for the Government.' *The Leader*, 27 May 1939, OIOC.

¹⁰⁷ Lall to Conran Smith, 22 August 1939, L/PJ/5/268, OIOC.

conflicts among Muslims in 1930s Lucknow suggests that this was not so much a culmination of a process of sectarian consolidation reaching back over previous decades, but a tangibly novel formation reflecting the severe societal anxieties of north India in a context of social and political unrest. These numerous antagonisms would increasingly become expressed and consolidated through ritual demonstrations of religious difference in the public spaces of Lucknow.

Establishing a sectarian battleground: the re-fashioning of Muharram

Many scholars have demonstrated how entire religious communities came to be represented in the urban public arenas of north India by a series of increasingly ritualised, expansive and competitive symbols. In particular, Sandra Freitag has suggested that the exhibition of increasingly conflictive manifestations of religion in the public arena after the 1920s meant that certain standard features of religious life, such as in the case of Islam prayer, the mosque and other 'public' expressions of allegiance, were isolated and then used as a 'shorthand vocabulary' to represent the meanings of the religion as a whole.¹⁰⁹ In other words, a new symbolic language developed, which compacted the expansive themes and fluidities of religious thought and custom into a finite list of recurring images and emblems.

For Lucknow's Shi'as, Muharram had long been perhaps the most important symbol of the wider meaning and vigour of their faith. The weight put upon Muharram as an expansive representation of Shi'ism was by no means new; as was shown above, Muharram was adapted in Lucknow from the Nawabi period onwards as the primary means of demonstrating Shi'a rule and, subsequently, the sustained presence of Shi'ism in Lucknow's public life. Similarly, it was shown that in the early twentieth century

¹⁰⁸ Jasbir Singh to Harper, 11 October 1939, Political Department File No.65 of 1939, UPSA.

¹⁰⁹ Sandra Freitag, 'Ambiguous public arenas and coherent personal practice: Kanpur Muslims 1913-1931,' in Katherine Ewing ed., *Shari'at and ambiguity in South Asian Islam* (New Delhi, 1988), p.145. C.f., 'given the nature of public arenas, this religious idiom became the vocabulary in which competition was expressed and through which adjustments were made in the social and cultural fabric. This process was heightened during periods of change, particularly change initiated by alterations in the relationship between the state

Muharram became the chief target for those seeking the amendment of Shi'a custom or the tighter definition of Shi'a-Sunni differences. However, the weight placed upon the recurring motif of Muharram seemed to take its own momentum in the 1930s. The bulk of the numerous *anjumans* materialising and functioning in Lucknow on both Shi'a and Sunni sides had as their primary objective the correction of Muharram practice. It was thus the festival of Muharram, and attempts by all sides to guard against the *bid'ah* of rivals, which became the focus around which these rival campaigns of religious renewal were manifested. Essentially, the six-week period of Muharram was appropriated as a canvas for the transformation of a religion and its followers in their entirety. The evolution of the meanings and customs associated with Muharram, therefore, offers a strong basis for understanding the shift in Shi'ism and in Muslim sectarian conflict during the 1930s.

As was demonstrated in earlier chapters, Muharram was often the starting-point from which new Shi'a *anjumans* attempted to make their mark more widely upon Shi'a society; conversely, religious change in Shi'ism and sectarian conflict tended to find their first expressions in transformations within Muharram. This was as true of Muslim *anjumans* in the 1930s as in the 1900s. For instance, 'Ali Naqi and his comrades in the Imamiya Mission sprung into action annually during this period. The Imamiya Mission adhered rigorously to the seasonal publication of its *du'as*, *marsiyas* and other tracts, and it is in the 1930s that we locate the origins or at least the maturation of the practice of setting up temporary bookstalls in the proximity of the best-attended *imambaras* during Muharram. This was not confined to Lucknow, but extended to other towns where the Imamiya Mission was able to establish its influence. In Fyzabad, seemingly one of the first towns to be 'Imam-ized' according to the agenda of the Mission, the organisation's secretary visited the town. Despite an initially apathetic reception, the secretary was able to gain the support of a local *zakir* and the *majalis* held during Muharram became essentially occasions of recruitment for the Imamiya Mission, with the Mission's publications openly distributed.¹¹⁰

and its constituent communities.' Freitag, *Collective action and community*, pp.51-2.

¹¹⁰ Imamiya Mission, *Sālāna rapōrt-i-Imāmīya Mishan Luckna'u*, pp.60-4.

Furthermore, the Imamiya Mission proved adept at working with those local *anjumans* which organised Muharram commemorations and *ta'ziya* processions in the *muhallas* of Lucknow, in effect making them its own branches. One such example was the prolifically active Anjuman-i-Nasir-ul-'Aza, run from the private home of a Lucknawi Shi'a, Abu Tarrab, an organisation which organised *majalis*, supervised the *ta'ziya* and *tabut* (in which the steed of Husain is represented) processions to the Talkatora *karbala* and recruited volunteers to conduct *azadari*.¹¹¹ This organisation had a close working relationship with the Imamiya Mission. Also affiliated to the Imamiya Mission were similar associations including the Darbar-i-Husaini and the Idara-i-Yadgar-i-Husaini, both additional organisations professing the will to preserve the true greatness of Husain and involved in the local regulation of Muharram practice.¹¹² Through these local organisations, the Imamiya Mission could surpass its status as a mere publishing body, working in conjunction with the regulation of Muharram practice. At the same time, the affiliation with a wider structure of religious activity offered these local associations the opportunity to transcend their limitations, gaining affiliation to the Imamiya Mission and, by extension, to similar *anjumans* springing into action during Muharram.

As Muharram developed as the prime marker of Shi'a presence and distinctiveness, and as the practice of *azadari* was elaborated and systematised, so the *majlis* tradition that accompanied Muharram was subject to a similar process of evolution. From periodic religious gatherings, *majalis* evolved into significant arenas in which *mujtahids* and *wa'izen* could attempt to rectify and rehabilitate the Shi'a community according to their proposed designs. 'Ali Naqi used the *majlis* gatherings of Muharram, taking to the *mimbar* before the large crowds accommodated in the grounds of the Husainiya Ghufraani-Ma'ab, to speak widely and systematically on a number of subjects well beyond the boundaries of the customary reflections upon Imam Husain. It was during Muharram of 1932, for instance, that he offered a series of sermons calling for Shi'as to seek their

¹¹¹ Mehdi Husain, *'Arf Chatan, Anjuman-i-Nāsir-ul-'azā*. (Lucknow, 1942), Private papers of Sultan 'Ali Sadiq, Lucknow, pp.8-10.

¹¹² Ibid, pp.8-9.

economic betterment and participate in commercial enterprise.¹¹³

'Ali Naqi's expansion of the *majlis* into an occasion for public communication and reflection upon wider issues seemed to play into the hands of those who administered smaller, local *majalis*, and often came to appropriate them to stir religious animosities. This tendency is reflected in an observation of the Raja of Mahmudabad. A figure well-versed in traditional adherence to *azadari* who had long presided over the elaborate and cross-communal observance of Muharram in his own *qasba* in Sitapur district, he lamented in 1938 what he saw as the precedence of the *majlis*' theatrical elements over pious reflection. The traditional large *majalis* given by 'men well versed,' he argued, had declined in favour of 'many small *majalis*,' lacking an orienting centre and offered by preachers who lacked the learned eminence of the senior *mujtahids*. As such, he argued, *majalis* became increasingly antagonistic in nature and there was an evident tendency in Lucknow 'to convert these *majalis* into a debating society for attacking the beliefs of people of other sects.' He commented upon:

'The recent tendency of the Majalis to develop into a *munazara*.... This tendency is neither good nor natural for Majalis. It is merely a reaction to the unhealthy communal strife raging in Lucknow... Majalis are sacred institutions, and they should not be dragged down from their high pedestals to serve such low ends.'¹¹⁴

Some of the increasingly combative tendencies of Muharram can be directly or indirectly assigned to the influence of new, confrontational *anjumans* on both sides of the conflict. The Tanzim-ul-Mominin, while professing to work for the 'safeguarding the economic, social, religious and political rights of the community,'¹¹⁵ focused its attention upon the defence of *ta'ziyadari* and the use of *tabarraḥ* as a fitting response to the *madh-i-sahaba* procession. Come 1939, the Tanzim-ul-Mominin was consistently at the forefront of the sectarian disturbances. Early in the year, it convened celebrations on the anniversary of Umar's murder.¹¹⁶ Simultaneous with these Shi'a efforts was a responsive rise in the activity of Sunni *maulavis* and seminaries during this period, in particular 'Abdul

¹¹³ These were published as Naqvi, *Tijarat ōr Islām*, passim.

¹¹⁴ Zaheer ed., *The dead past*, pp.112-113.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p.116.

¹¹⁶ Jasbir Singh to Harper, 10 February 1939, Political Department File No. 65 of 1939, UPSA.

Shakoor and the Dar-ul-Muballighin, which focused upon sustained condemnations of Shi'a customs. Shakoor's proselytising machine and the Ahrars alike were united in the belief that Shi'a 'innovations,' particularly the custom of *ta'ziyadari*, should be ceased entirely among Sunnis. Their attempts to withdraw their followers from the Shi'a-led practices of Muharram were met with increasing success. By 1937, Sunnis had ceased almost completely the taking out of *ta'ziyas*, following instructions from 'Abdul Shakoor, the vast majority instead observing a *hartal* while Shi'a *azadari* conversely became more elaborate and better attended.¹¹⁷

Interestingly, however, 'Abdul Shakoor's desire to purge what he saw as excessive populist ritualism was also compounded with a somewhat contradictory re-casting of devotional and commemorative activity away from the Shi'a martyrs and towards the Sunni Caliphs. In 1936 'Abdul Shakoor ordered that the virtues of the Caliphs should be narrated during the first ten days of Muharram, and in subsequent years narrations of the achievements of Abu Bakr were consistently held during the first ten days of Muharram.¹¹⁸ Attempts by Sunni reformists to abolish *ta'ziyadari* were similarly compounded with efforts to essentially convert Muharram processions into *madh-i-sahaba* rallies, using many of the same ritual displays of Shi'ism upon a different subject. By the end of the decade, anti-Shi'a polemicists went beyond the rejection of the authority of the Imams to actively assail them and eulogise their murderers. An organisation known as Anjuman-i-Tahaffuz-i-Namoos-i-Sahaba extended the lead set by the Majlis-i-Ahrar, condemning Shi'a beliefs and personages alongside defending the rights of Sunnis.¹¹⁹ A further example of an incredible departure from normative religious belief and practice was a group calling themselves 'Kharijis,' who reviled 'Ali and praise his murderer.¹²⁰ Such positions exceeded the beliefs of mainstream Sunnis who had long held the family of the Prophet in high esteem despite their belief in the Khilafat.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ *The Leader*, 26 March and 4 May 1937, OIOC.

¹¹⁸ *Census of India 1961, Monograph serie, no.3: Moharram in two cities, Lucknow and Delhi* (Delhi, 1962), pp.22, 38; Jasbir Singh to Harper 22 Feb 1939, Political Department File No. 65 of 1939, UPSA.

¹¹⁹ Khan ed., *Why 14,000 Shias went to jail?*, p.37.

¹²⁰ Jasbir Singh to Harper, 15 April 1939, Political Department File No. 65 of 1939, UPSA.

¹²¹ This development somewhat parallels Sunni organisations in Pakistan in the 1980s. See Vali Nasr, 'The Iranian revolution and changes in Islamism in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan,' in Nikki R. Keddie and Rudi Matthee eds., *Iran and the surrounding world: interactions in culture and cultural politics*

As the years passed, there was a gradual shifting away from a criticism of Shi'a Muharram practices as heretical interpolations, and towards the claim that Shi'as were appropriating Muharram as a tool for the tacit conversion of their Sunni brethren. Such tensions were heightened yet further when Zafar ul-Mulk referred to *ta'ziyadari* as the 'main plank in the Shia tabligh,' and described it as an effort for 'the ignorant Sunni masses to be absorbed and converted by the Shias' through participation in their practice.¹²² In this context, *madh-i-sahaba* and displays of veneration for the Caliphs was elevated from the role of a customary observance into the defence of the Sunni creed and an 'antidote' to Shi'a attempts to convert Sunnis through *ta'ziyadari*.¹²³ This rhetoric of the threat from religious conversion openly drew from the themes of *tabligh* and *shuddhi* which had characterised Muslim-Hindu conflict in earlier years. As such parallel *azadari* and *madh-i-sahaba* processions, each with its respective forms of praise for its subjects, were consolidated as the inherently comparable but entirely contradictory practices of Muharram, pulling the two communities in separate directions. Religious leaders on both sides were able to expand beyond their limited role in the historical and ritualistic instruction of their lay adherents, and assumed credence as guardians of their tradition against outside enemies bent on proselytisation on their own terms.

From this description of activity among Shi'as and Sunnis respectively, it is clear that Muharram acted as the stage upon which the conflict between religious communities could be defined and played out, and provided religious activists and reformists with a focus for their endeavours. Previous chapters of this thesis have somewhat played down the significance of Muharram and have charted instead the manifestation of sectarian differences in various spheres of public life, social interaction and political debate in the United Provinces. However, moving back to the level of popular activity within the boundaries of the locality and *muhalla*, this examination reminds us of the essentially seasonal character of Muslim sectarianism as experienced in colonial north India's cities. Sectarian violence and reformist activity were largely restricted, in terms of time and

(Washington, 2002), p.343.

¹²² *The Pioneer*, 6 June 1939, Quaid-i-Azam Collection, Ior. Neg. Pos. 10773, OIOC.

geography, by the boundaries of Muharram. Shi'a and Sunni *anjumans* would spring to life for a number of weeks, and then return to a largely benign condition while developing resources, recruitment and strategies for the commemorations the following year.

The renovations of Muharram in 1930s Lucknow demonstrate not only the natural malleability of the ritual performance of Muharram in north India, but the equal adaptability of the meanings attached to it. From a symbol of Shi'a dominance as the religion of state, it had evolved subsequently into an expression of Lucknow's cultural resilience and the amicable relationships between its religious communities. In the twentieth century, reforms to Muharram in Lucknow for the most part attempted to assign to it insinuations of exclusivity to particular communities. In other words, Muharram adapted from a representation of cohesion to one of separation and conflict. The violent uprisings accompanying Muharram in 1906-1909, and then again in the late 1930s, were similar in regard to the appropriation of markers of sectarian difference and the embracing of practices unacceptable to the other sect.

A further significance of this centrality of Muharram is the apparent reconfiguration of the Shi'a religion itself, through the idiomisation of particular tenets and customs. Whether on account of the need to offer easily understood markers of faith, or the pressures to establish a visible presence in north India's public arenas, a finite list of expansive symbols associated with Muharram came during this decade to denote the traditions of Shi'a and Sunni Islam as a whole for their exponents. Customs associated with Muharram such as *ta'ziyadari* processions and the recitation of *tabarraḥ* and the *madh-i-sahaba* verses increasingly came to be interpreted not simply as religious acts but as representations of the religions in their entirety, and as the badges identifying the adherents of that religion. Despite all of the processes of religious communication and negotiation discussed in previous chapters, such as the attempts of religious leaders to impart religious knowledge more widely, we perhaps see in this period a contraction of the scope of Shi'a or Sunni Islam. Multifarious practices and meanings were condensed

¹²³ Ibid.

into a finite series of standardised symbols. This process of religious symbolisation, moreover, surely contributed to Shi'a-Sunni conflict. Practices and recitations which stirred tensions between the communities were increasingly standardised as indicators of the religion themselves, and hence as essential religious obligations. This symbolic language was not one suitable for communicating the nuances and fluidities between related Islamic traditions; rather, it established equivalent symbols as polar opposites, increasing markedly the acrimony between those who upheld them.

The changing role of a city: 1930s Lucknow

The enhanced definition of Muharram according to a partial condensation of its meaning into the most controversial and antagonistic of its practices led to a prolonged period of mayhem in old Lucknow. It is clear from the above discussions that the sectarian animosities of 1930s Lucknow drew from a combination of social transformation, political disputes, religious renewal and the development of popular, volunteer activism in the public spaces of north Indian cities in the inter-war period. The city was within just a few years transformed from a city of relative communal harmonies, at least by the standards of the period, into a so-called 'powder magazine of bigotry.'¹²⁴

Looking beyond the momentary factors in the conflict, however, it is important to emphasise the longer-term history of Lucknow, in particular, the process of sectarian community-formation which has been the basis of this thesis. In contrast to the cosmopolitan capital lauded by its older families and literati throughout the colonial period, Lucknow was reworked throughout this period into a city awash with separate Shi'a, Sunni and Hindu public associations, printing houses and volunteer movements. Within each religious community, all such institutions possessed somewhat interlocked and cooperative leaderships and memberships and all together pushed a popular project of religious enthusiasm. In the Shi'a case, the process of *anjuman*-building evident in 1930s Lucknow is analogous in many ways to the styles of public Shi'a activity current

¹²⁴ *The Times of India*, 17 May 1939, Public Information Department File No.133 of 1939, UPSA.

in this city since 1890 as discussed throughout this thesis.

The important question remains, then, of the extent to which the modern manifestations of Shi'a organisation and religious renewal discussed in this thesis were co-extensive with Lucknow, or were rather wider phenomena which simply impacted upon Lucknow more than most other towns. Connected with this, is Muslim sectarianism best understood as a Lucknawi, or an all-India experience? Using the example of the conflicts of the 1930s, it is worth evaluating the implication of much of this thesis that Lucknow frequently represented both the starting-point and the epitome of sectarian organisation and conflict.

On the one hand, the sectarian agitations of the 1930s took the shape of an all-India struggle. The controversy spread to other districts, notably Rae Bareili, while Sunnis in towns including Kanpur newly demanded permission to recite *madh-i-sahaba*.¹²⁵ Moreover, while unravelling within Lucknow, the *madh-i-sahaba* and *tabarraḥ* agitations were increasingly sustained by outside players. New members of the Majlis-i-Ahrar flooded in from so-called 'outstations,' neighbouring *qasbas* such as Kakori and Malihabad, to support their co-religionists in Lucknow, as well as from U.P. and Punjab more widely.¹²⁶ No less was the *tabarraḥ* presented as an all-India movement, taken to demonstrate the existence of the shared concerns and aspirations of the national Shi'a *qaum*. The agitation secured the direct participation of Shi'as from across the regions of U.P. and Punjab, and hopeful predictions that the *tabarraḥ* agitation would cease after the arrest of a substantial portion of Lucknow's Shi'a population were dashed by an influx of Shi'a activists from outside Lucknow. Shi'a volunteers came from Rampur and districts of U.P. such as Agra, Fyzabad, Barabanki and especially Rae Bareili. It was this influx of activists from outside Lucknow which appeared to keep the *tabarraḥ* agitation afloat after its first two weeks.¹²⁷ Within a month, Punjab was supplying a growing number of Shi'a activists, making the possibility of a resolution of the conflict by religious or political

¹²⁵ *The Pioneer*, June 13 1939, Political Dept File No. 65 of 1939, UPSA.

¹²⁶ Jasbir Singh to Harper, 16 May 1939, *ibid*.

¹²⁷ Jasbir Singh to Harper, 18 and 25 April and 2 May 1939, *ibid*.

leaders of U.P. ever more remote.¹²⁸ Moreover, the increasing 'social estrangement' resulting from the conflicts was not confined to Lucknow.¹²⁹ Other centres in U.P. exhibited a no less tangible breakdown of even public interaction between the two communities. In Rae Bareilly, Sunni *faqirs*, tailors and barbers refused to serve Shi'a clientele,¹³⁰ while in Kanpur, Shi'as protested against the torments inflicted upon their co-religionists in Lucknow by observing a coordinated protest, raising black flags on the roofs of their homes.¹³¹

No less significantly, the *tabarraḥ* agitation attracted the interest of a number of Shi'a organisations from far afield. Organisations which came to express their contempt for the Congress lifting of the *madh-i-sahaba* ban and sympathy with their Lucknow brethren included the Anjuman-i-Shi'a-i-Bengal, Calcutta; the Anjuman-i-Mustafavi, Bengal; Anjuman Shamsheer-i-'Abbasiya, Calcutta; the Shi'a Tanzim Committee, Bareilly; the 'general Shi'a public' of Benares; the Shi'a Association, Shahpur; as well as Maulanas of places as diverse as Meerut, Sonipat and Murshidabad.¹³² The existence and activities of such *anjumans* seem to confirm one of the central arguments of this thesis: the foundation in the colonial period of a network of Shi'a organisations and societies, able through their communications with Lucknow to achieve some form of coordination. Despite their roots in families and apparently localised and disparate networks, they were apparently able to work in conjunction with wider Shi'a communities across India.

Nevertheless, while the network of intertwined and synchronised Shi'a activity in the 1930s at first glance appears to elevate India's Shi'a *qaum* above the municipal particularities of Lucknow, it was in fact a process that cemented the centrality of Lucknow in the identification of India's Shi'as. As was implied in earlier chapters, the

¹²⁸ 'Fortnightly report for the second half of May 1940,' Mudie to Conran Smith, 22 June 1940, L/PJ/5/269, OIOC.

¹²⁹ *Hamdam* (Lucknow), 15 May 1937, United Provinces Native Newspaper Reports (UPNNR), OIOC.

¹³⁰ Extract from the confidential fortnightly letter from the Commissioner, Lucknow division, dated 15 September 1939, Political Dept File 65/1939, UPSA.

¹³¹ *The Pioneer*, 24 August 1939, and Diaries, 10 June 1939, in Harold Charles Mitchell papers, Mss. Eur. E.255/14, OIOC.

¹³² Telegrams from all of these are available in Home (Political) Proceedings, 5/3/1939, National Archive of India, New Delhi (NAI).

new consciousness of Shi'a distinctiveness as a clearly delineated community represented less the crossing of regional and municipal differences, and more the impartation of Lucknow's communal configurations to wider arenas. Clearly demonstrating this is the Imamiya Mission discussed above, an organisation whose ambitions for national proselytisation sat at some distance from its distinctly municipal roots in the *muhallas* and *galis* (lanes) of old Lucknow. Despite its pretensions and the rhetorical importance it attached to the existence of a membership outside of Lucknow, the membership of the Mission was mostly contained within Lucknow and a few districts of the United Provinces. The composition of its committee further reflected its Lucknawi foundation. The original ten full-members of the *anjuman's* management committee were all men of Lucknow. Reforms exercised in the first full meeting of the Mission, aiming to make the organisation more representative of Indian Shi'as in general, extended these ten to twenty four places on the committee of management, of which still half the seats were reserved for Lucknawis.¹³³ Therefore, the Mission's expansion across the country was less as an attempt at the establishment of autonomous local branches, and more of a case of expanding the influence of the Lucknawi Shi'as across India. The management committee declared that while the Imamiya Mission may establish 'many branches (*shakhen*)... in all the great centres of India... its presidential office [in Lucknow] may continuously provide supervision (*nigrani*) over all its branches, provision for all their needs and advice in occasions of difficulty.'¹³⁴ The local branches of the Mission were described as *naqul daftar* (secondary or imitative offices), implying their status to be imitative of Lucknow rather than independent affiliates.¹³⁵ At heart very much Lucknawi in its style, language and aims, the Mission remained essentially an attempt to standardise wider religious organisation according to the will of a small and characteristically Lucknawi elite. The Imamiya Mission did not, as it claimed, so much carry its evoked 'spirit of Najaf' to Lucknow¹³⁶; rather, it was a campaign to carry the spirit of Lucknow to the rest of India.

¹³³ Imamiya Mission, *Sālāna rapōrt-i-Imāmiya Mishan Luckna'u*, pp.5, 10.

¹³⁴ Ibid, p.71.

¹³⁵ Reflecting a similar assumption of the centrality of Lucknow was the Mission's comment on its successful campaign of proselytisation in Sialkot, attributed to the fact that its citizens had become 'acquainted with the believers of Lucknow.' Ibid, pp.33-4.

¹³⁶ Ibid, p.13.

Similarly, the disputes over religious customs remained firmly focused upon Lucknow, and such innovative practices had little currency or popular support outside the city. While there was in 1939 an initial spread of sectarian tensions to neighbouring districts, often with the help of Lucknawi religious leaders,¹³⁷ there were signs that the innovative practices recently introduced in Lucknow were greeted with some unease in other U.P. *qasbas*. In 1940, for instance, 'Bara-Wafat' processions were taken out in several other places but they were confined to the honour of the Prophet,¹³⁸ while attempts by activists to instigate conflict in neighbouring districts often failed.¹³⁹ One observer even wrote that 'no Sunni has as yet recited *madh-i-sahaba* outside Lucknow, and when an attempt was made by the Ahrars to do so at other places, it was the Sunnis who discouraged it.'¹⁴⁰ In spite of all attempts to widen and essentialise the religious conflict, the disputes of the 1930s remained as intrinsic to Lucknow in their focus and style as many of the Shi'a public activities discussed in previous chapters.

Few examples better represent the interconnection of sectarianism and the city of Lucknow than an assessment of the changing topography of Lucknow, which reveals how a sense of religious and cultural distinctiveness was accompanied by the social and spatial segregation of communities. While it cannot be definitively asserted, it seems likely that the civic restructuring of the city in this decade appeared to reflect and in turn cement the increasingly marginalised relations between Shi'as and Sunnis. Those central areas adjacent to Victoria Street which had survived the traumas of 1857 and the nineteenth-century British re-structuring of Lucknow, such as parts of Chowk and Nakhhas, often had a close mix of Shi'a and Sunni populations, while those parts of the city constructed or reconstructed during the 1920s seemed to be much more exclusive to one or other community. These include Husainabad and the areas below the Gomti river, which had been largely demolished in the early colonial period and were substantially

¹³⁷ Jasbir Singh to Harper, 4 April 1939, Political Department File No. 65 of 1939, UPSA.

¹³⁸ 'Fortnightly report for the first half of April 1940,' Mudie to Conran Smith, 1 June 1940, L/PJ/5/269, OIOC. These places included Rae Bareilly, where tensions seemed already to have dissipated. See Hallett to Linlithgow, 19 April 1940, *ibid*.

¹³⁹ As, for instance, in Sitapur. 'Fortnightly report for the second half of May 1940,' Mudie to Conran Smith, 22 June 1940, *ibid*.

rebuilt during the 1920s, and the neighbouring outer *muhallas* such as Sadatganj and Rustamnagar, which re-appeared as heavily populated residential quarters when Lucknow expanded outwards. As Lucknow enlarged, it unravelled according to a sect-determined topography rather than the traditionally-envisaged cosmopolitan melting-pot.¹⁴¹

Moreover, as Lucknow's structure changed, so did the character of the violence between Shi'as and Sunnis. In the 1900s, the violence had accompanied Muharram and had been confined to those mixed localities such as Chowk through which Shi'a and Sunni processions would pass. By the 1930s, momentary violence between the two sects became increasingly commonplace in western Lucknow. It was not confined to Muharram or to mixed neighbourhoods, but could occur in any proximity, primarily in the vicinity of prominent mosques, *madrasas*, *imambaras* and the houses of the public and religious leaders of each community, far from the main procession routes where it had earlier been focused. Such a development did much to divorce Shi'a-Sunni ill-feeling from the episodic limits of Muharram, and from the boundaries of local rivalries.

Indeed, so co-extensive were Lucknow and sectarian conflict that the fate of each was somewhat bound up with the other. It could be argued that the widening of the realms in which Shi'a-Sunni questions were discussed, from local *mehfils* and civic vernaculars to provincial assemblies and the national press, was dependent upon the simultaneous expansion of Lucknow's size and significance. Lucknow's inauguration as the political centre of U.P. after the establishment of the Provincial Assembly here, together with the city's expansion in the 1920s, threw new light upon Lucknow's religious conflict and gave it a novel position on the national stage. The unprecedented volume of British, Congress, Muslim League and other political activity and the accompanying increase in journalistic output gave wider resonance to municipal events. Issues which appeared entirely local in the 1900s were now presented as questions of national significance and reached national newspapers, a fact which prompted the involvement of wider

¹⁴⁰ Aziz Ahmad Khan to Jinnah, 11 June 1939, Quaid-i-Azam Collection, Ior. Neg. Pos. 10773, OIOC.

¹⁴¹ It was from these more homogenous *muhallas* that emerging Shi'a and Sunni organisations appeared to draw their support. For instance, the Imamiya Mission was perceived to be most active in the almost exclusively Shi'a *muhalla* of Husainabad. Farooqi, *Tehrif kī khāna*, p.4.

movements such as the Majlis-i-Ahrar and the Deobandi combine of Husain Ahmad Madani and the Jami'at-ul-Ulama-i-Hind.¹⁴² Efforts to resolve the controversy, involving senior Congress leaders including Nehru, Gandhi and Abul Kalam Azad as well as the Governor of U.P. and Viceroy, brought more attention to the controversy. The Governor and others involved in the negotiations over the dispute expressed concern that *tabarraḥ* should become 'a general question between Sunnis and Shias all over India.'¹⁴³

The steady spread of the significance of Lucknow's religious controversies across the Gangetic belt and Punjab, accentuating its intensity and intransigence, thus mirrors the growing significance of Lucknow as metropolitan centre and provincial capital. As has been consistently emphasised throughout the thesis, Shi'a-Sunni conflict was a phenomenon inextricably connected with Lucknow, and its presence in other centres indicated the export of Lucknawi traditions as much as the autonomous configurations of these towns. From the 1930s, Indian Shi'as were defined as such through their involvement with the *tabarraḥ* agitation in Lucknow, rather than through separate activities in alternative towns. Moreover, this thesis has indicated that the transformation of Muslim sectarianism in India, from particular local and ritual conflicts to broad disputation over social and political questions, coincides definitively with the shifting character of Lucknow, from a *talūqdari* backwater of secondary importance in the later nineteenth century to the important commercial and political centre of U.P. from the 1910s onwards. The national fate of Lucknow and sectarianism in the life of the nation were inextricably intertwined.

¹⁴² *National Herald* (Lucknow), 9, 17 and 19 May 1939, CSAS.

¹⁴³ Haig to Linlithgow, 18 May 1939, Linlithgow Collection, Mss. Eur. F.125/102, OIOC. For the claim that even the *madh-i-sahaba* movement should become an 'all-India question,' see Haig to Linlithgow, 24 May 1937, L/PJ/5/267, OIOC. Such interventions seemed to work against attempts by local leaders to 'soften and localise' the trouble. Statement by Muhammad Yakub, *The Leader*, 18 May 1939, OIOC; *National Herald*, 16 May 1939, CSAS. Haig said that, given that the dispute was an 'administrative issue relating to the city of Lucknow,' it was 'exceedingly important to keep it as far as we can on that plane.' Haig to Linlithgow, 18 May 1939, Linlithgow Collection, Mss. Eur. F.125/102, OIOC.

Conclusion: religious leadership and sectarian conflict in Indian Shi'ism

The *tabarraḥ* agitation was frequently trumpeted by its advocates and participants as the pinnacle of Shi'a unity, and a vindication of Shi'a cooperation. The sheer numbers of participants from so many classes and regions, and their differing religious and political persuasions, were used to demonstrate remarkable unanimity within the supposed Shi'a *qaum*, which was articulated through the organisational efforts discussed in previous chapters. With unprecedented success, the *tabarraḥ* agitation linked together diverse communities on the sole ground of their religious commonalty, using a fabricated Sunni 'other' as a mirror in which to shape an agenda for the Shi'a community.

The 1939 *tabarraḥ* agitation is a fitting conclusion to this thesis, since it marks in some senses the culmination of the process of sectarian consolidation of previous decades. The agitation was the end-point of the fruits of earlier efforts at Shi'a organisation, in that it remained characterised by an intertwined network of *anjumans* and co-ordinated efforts among them. Conversely, the agitation represented the close of the development dominating earlier chapters. More than the several previous decades, the 1930s had witnessed significant alterations of Shi'a leadership. The emergence of powerful bodies such as the Shi'a Political Conference and the Tanzim-ul-Mominin was compounded with the even more significant development of the diminution of earlier social and religious authorities. The late-1880s had marked the beginning of a forty-year period during which the *mujtahids* of Lucknow evolved from isolated, somewhat reclusive scholars of a trans-national faith into active public spokesmen, reinforcing their authority through their role in public organisations and their public involvement in the religious and social life of Indian Shi'as. It was these *mujtahids*, together with established aristocrats, who were persistently at the summit of the organisational efforts discussed in earlier chapters. However, the 1920s-30s began to witness the reverse of the earlier consolidation of their stature. The tense conditions of the 1930s marked by municipal transformation, spiralling population and reactive politics, all conspired to force the waning of traditional religious and social elites. Moreover, several of the most influential

Lucknawi *mujtahids* died just before or during this period,¹⁴⁴ arguably giving a sense of discontinuity that elevated alternative religious leaders to accelerated prominence. While Nasir Husain and Najm ul-Hasan remained bulwarks of reverence and influence during the *tabarraḥ* agitation, they remained in their old age distant from the immediacy of events. Contrasting with their powerful public interventions in earlier decades, they were described as merely ‘swimming with the tide.’¹⁴⁵ All such factors aided in undermining the authority and influence of those senior religious leaders and secular aristocrats of Lucknow who had hitherto been dominant in Shi‘a public life.

Earlier chapters have demonstrated how Shi‘a-Sunni conflict at particular moments fulfilled the role of facilitating internal reforms within one or other community. For instance, as was argued in an earlier chapter, religious disputation consistently used the castigation of a Sunni or Shi‘a ‘other’ as a basis for crystallising more clearly the tenets of one’s own grouping. It was, thus, often in the interest of aspiring Shi‘a and Sunni leaders alike to sustain such sectarian dialogues and consolidate religious boundaries. The agitations of the 1930s demonstrate most clearly a further internal modification enacted through sectarian conflict: the competition between alternative Shi‘a spokesmen and organisations for religious leadership. All of the major *anjumans* discussed above were new, tracing their origins back no further than the 1930s. The spokesmen of new institutions such as the Dar-ul-Muballighin and Tanzim-ul-Mominin were all inexperienced participants in Lucknow’s public life, who had been largely invisible before the establishment of their organisations. It seems that such leaders aspired to assert their own authority and independence from traditional Shi‘a and Sunni leaders alike, using public disturbance and the impedance of negotiations as a demonstration of their authority.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ The dates of death of these most influential of *mujtahids* in Lucknow are as follows: Aqa Hasan (1929); Muhammad Baqir Rizvi (1928); Sibte Hasan (1935). Syed Murtaza Husain, *Matla‘-i-Anwār: tazkira-i-Shi‘a afāzil-va-‘ulamā, kabār-i-bar-i-saghīr-i-Pāk-va-Hind* (Karachi, 1981), pp.38, 257, 494.

¹⁴⁵ Jasbir Singh to Harper, 11 October 1939, Political Department File No. 65 of 1939, UPSA.

¹⁴⁶ Such a proposition links with Nandini Gooptu’s discussion of volunteer movements and other artisan-based associations as the attempts by poorer classes to seize initiatives from traditional leaderships. The *madh-i-sahaba* is cited as an example of one of the ‘efforts at political assertion by the poorer Muslims through public religious expression.’ Gooptu, *The politics of the urban poor*, pp.301-2.

As in the earlier period, the number of Shi'a *anjumans* may have done much to evoke the sense of a cohesive Shi'a religion and community, but they did just as much to manufacture differences and promote diversity within them. The multifarious and disordered appearance of a plurality of sectarian *anjumans* under the guise of organisation in the 1930s is perhaps best evoked in the observations of the Raja of Mahmudabad. He argued that such organisations reflected not so much the organisation and tight discipline of a well-guided community, but the self-interested bids for leadership by individual Shi'as and the purposeless generation of organisations and alliances. 'It is open to everyone to start as many Anjumans as he chooses,' he declared, 'if he considers this to be the only vehicle for gaining popularity and fame.' New *anjumans* were constantly emerging, he said, and were forced to call up 'irrelevant and unnecessary' questions in order to 'justify the[ir] existence.'¹⁴⁷ Moreover, the process of *anjuman*-building was argued to be dissipating rather than constructing unity among Shi'as. 'The best course for the Shias of Lucknow will be to cooperate with and strengthen the social and political organisations that are already in existence,' he continued, while 'the creation of numerous new Anjumans will only imperil the solidarity of the community of a whole.'¹⁴⁸

Thus, underneath the Shi'a-Sunni conflict the *tabarra* agitation gave rise to a series of important disputes between Shi'as themselves. The demonstrative practice of *azadari* advocated by some activists was long contrary to the instruction of many more traditional 'ulama, and the recitation of *tabarra* was variably pronounced as compulsory, forbidden or inadvisable in the circumstances by alternative authorities. In fact, the Tanzim-ul-Mominin and its affiliated organisations eclipsed the influence of two alternative prognoses: that of the Shi'a Political Conference, and that of the *mujtahids*. The Shi'a Political Conference at the beginning of the *tabarra* agitation had urged restraint and compromise.¹⁴⁹ However, with the Tanzim-ul-Mominin carrying off the *tabarra* agitation and thwarting attempts to negotiate a resolution, the Shi'a Political Conference

¹⁴⁷ Zaheer ed., *The dead past*, p.116.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.115.

¹⁴⁹ *The Leader*, 13 April 1939, OIOC.

within a month or two had little option but to throw its weight behind the agitation.¹⁵⁰ The *mujtahids* were in a similar position. While always spokespersons of the Shi'as' right to perform their distinct practices, it appears that they did not unequivocally back the *tabarraḥ* agitation until it was already at its height. The Tanzim-ul-Mominin and *mujtahids*, with the exception of a month or two at the peak of the agitation, enjoyed a highly antagonistic relationship. Their contestation for leadership peaked towards the end of 1939, when the *mujtahids* issued instructions for Shi'as to halt the agitation, while the Tanzim-ul-Mominin directed that these be ignored. The Tanzim-ul-Mominin even went to 'the length of suggesting that their ulamas are useless persons and are not worthy of the positions they hold' in an attempt 'to frustrate the object of the Ulamas' and deprive them of a following.¹⁵¹ A similarly competitive relationship was apparent between alternative Sunni leaders and organisations, among whom an apparently united front against Shi'as disguised a climate of maneuvering and mutual antagonism.¹⁵²

These examples all imply that the production of conflict with Sunnis was used by some Shi'a leaders and organisations as a means of enforcing competition between different and competing Shi'a factions. By the 1930s, aggressive sectarian conflict was no longer simply a means of allowing an internal process of negotiation within each party, stifling internal divisions through the formulation of an outside opponent, but was a means of initiating competition between alternative leaders from within one's own sect. This facet of sectarian conflict in India explains a further interesting point: that conflict between Shi'as and Sunnis was often most intense when internal debates among and between Shi'as were most vociferous. The case could easily be made that the various

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 15 May 1939. Politically, the Tanzim-ul-Mominin flitted between supporting the Muslim League and Congress, and sometimes advocated unity between the two. Such contradictory policies gave it a sometimes complimentary and sometimes adversarial relationship with the Shi'a Political Conference, which was clearly allied with Congress. Khan ed., *Why 14,000 Shias went to jail?*, p.41.

¹⁵¹ Jasbir Singh to Harper, 20 October 1939, Political Department File No. 65 of 1939, UPSA. He continues: 'the Tanzim-ul Mominin were not desirous that the lead given the Shia divines should be followed by members of their community in general and had decided to create trouble if necessary in order to frustrate the object of the Ulamas and their and their adherents.' Jasbir Singh to Harper, 3 November 1939, *ibid*.

¹⁵² In April 1939, Husain Ahmad Madani and the Majlis-i-Ahrar tried to call off civil disobedience, but local Sunni groups such as the Anjuman-i-Namoos-i-Sahaba and Jama'at-i-Tahaffuz-i-Millat persisted. It was observed that, in spite of the sporadic moments of cooperation, 'good feelings between the Ahrars and local Sunni associations interested in the *Madh-i-sahaba* have never existed. There has been constant

transformations of the 1930s had provoked internal disagreements among Shi'as in a way unprecedented in earlier times. The economic and topographical transformations of Lucknow, together with the enormous questions of the devolution of political power and the best means of securing political representation, and the competition between alternative religious leaderships and organisations, all caused ruptures between Lucknow's Shi'as which were apparently more intense than in preceding decades. At moments when Shi'a unity was put under pressure, Shi'a-Sunni conflict became more intense as alternative leaderships stoked antagonism in order to vindicate their own authority and sideline adversaries.

However, despite all these internal conflicts within both Shi'a and Sunni communities, and the manifestation of such disputes as broader sectarian conflicts through the machination of particular factions, it was in the 1930s that the meaning of being a 'Shi'a' or a 'Sunni' in colonial India was most clearly elaborated. The notions of 'Shi'a' and 'Sunni' and what it meant to belong to one or other of these fixed and inviolable categories, it could be argued, were more closely defined by their mutual conflict than at any previous point. On the Shi'a side, the *tabarraḥ* agitation provided a rare opportunity for overt unanimity among a collection of individuals who often struggled to find any cause to unite them. Religious leaders and political figures managed to cooperate. Elevated *mujtahids*, who for the most part had accepted the right for distinctive Shi'a praises of 'Ali and the Imams and the taking out of *ta'ziyadari* during Muharram, but who had long eschewed some of the more elaborate displays of mourning and violent vilifications of the Caliphs, managed to find cause with younger, less disciplined *maulavis* who championed those very customs.

If this manufacturing of a single 'Shi'a' canon of practice in spite of traditional differences seems surprising, then it was perhaps all the more so among Sunnis, who in India had long been scattered among a multiplicity of schools and traditions. Nothing had previously managed to locate common ground among Sunnis as successfully as the 1930s vituperation of Shi'a practice and the campaign for *madh-i-sahaba*. As with

jealousy between them and each has tried to outdo the other.' Jasbir Singh to Harper, 1 April 1939, *ibid.*

contemporary Shi'a organisations, there was a strong interconnection between the various Sunni actors at work. The Majlis-i-Ahrar, composed largely of lay Muslims, often acted upon the commands of the *'ulama* of the Dar-ul-Muballighin, who themselves were often branded as 'Wahhabis.' Moreover, these *'ulama* sometimes put themselves in subservience to Husain Ahmad Madani, who was located firmly within the Deobandi tradition, and who himself sometimes associated himself closely with the former two groups. This interchangeable leadership of the *madh-i-sahaba* cause did more to present a functioning 'Sunni' Islam than any of the debates between Sunni groups would normally allow, and was seemingly immune to the normal disagreements between Deobandis, Bareilvis and Ahl-i-Hadis, and the usual discrepancies between the tenets of the *'ulama* and the folk-laden practices of artisan Muslims. Further giving the sense of a cohesive 'Sunni' unity was the fact that some *'ulama* of Firangi Mahal and Nadva't ul-'Ulama, both schools which had hitherto resisted involvement in Lucknow's municipal quarrels, became involved.

Thus it was only really in this period, through the constant repetition of particular inventories of religious personages, phrases and practices in the public sphere, and the constant circulation of languages of community by religious leaders and organisations, that distinct and clearly delineated notions of a 'Shi'a' and 'Sunni' Islam were brought into being. In notable contrast to earlier decades, the conflicts of the 1930s were endlessly described in stark terms of Shi'a and Sunnis. In earlier years, the two acting agencies within Muslim sectarian conflict had proven somewhat more negotiable and open to re-definition, and could be variously demarcated according to the wills of their witnesses. For instance, the quarrel had been discussed by some as one between the disinterested Muslim majority, of whom even most Shi'as showed little interest in the practice of violently cursing the Caliphs, and the most zealous of the Shi'a *wa'izen*. No less frequently, it had been described as a conflict of the majority of Muslims, both of whom indulged in customs such as *ta'ziyadari*, against 'puritanical' Wahhabis who desired to prohibit such acts; the latter, of course, were again interchangeably classed as Sunnis or as a grouping of their own, depending on the beholder. In this way, any individual involved in the conflicts had been able to portray himself as ascribing to the reasonable

'norm' in a conflict pushed by radical elements on the opposite side. It was only really in the 1930s that Muslim sectarian conflicts became set down so essentially and repetitively in the bare dichotomy of Shi'a and Sunni. A full explanation of Muslim sectarian conflict in India, whether in the 1930s or through previous decades, therefore cannot be ascertained simply through evidence of religious renewal, or novel social and political differentiation. Rather, it demands a further reflection beneath such outward events upon the most elementary religious change in Islam, and the shifting nature attached to being a Shi'a, a Sunni or a Muslim in colonial India.

CONCLUSION

SECT AND SECTARIANISM IN INDIAN ISLAM

This thesis has set out to document and investigate the substantial religious and social re-conceptualisation of Indian Shi'ism, in the fifty-year period from the late-1880s. It has argued that Indian Shi'ism was gradually redefined from a doctrinal group within Islam into the basis of a cohesive, autonomous religious community. Shi'ism was not simply reconstructed as a religion but also as a sense of communal or even national commonality, encompassing separate provision for education, charity, politics and even a language of citizenship. Shi'as were evoked not as a *firqa* or *jama'at*, a sect or party implying their incorporation into a wider Islamic brotherhood, but as a *qaum*: an independent and self-determining community. Influenced by Hindu nationalist and Muslim separatist constructs of the nation, this language of Shi'as as a 'community' or 'nation' was appropriated to delineate the distinctiveness, self-determination and solidarity of Shi'as in India, on the basis of mutual religious identity.

Chapter 1 introduced the structure through which this *qaumik* identity of Shi'ism was generated: the constant production of exclusively Shi'a public organisations or *anjumans*. Among these were included religious institutions such as *madrasas*, together with a functioning network of welfare and charitable institutions, such as schools, orphanages and endowment funds. The All India Shi'a Conference, while an independent institution in its own right, functioned primarily as a means of incorporating or creating anew many smaller, local Shi'a *anjumans*, thus providing a far-reaching organisational structure which was able to span localities and include wide and disparate regional populations in the cities and *qasbas* of north India. Despite their often different or even divergent approaches, all these organisational efforts shared the assumptions that Shi'as needed to remain distinct, or even separate, from other Muslim communities, and that the agenda for religious renewal, cultural awareness and social betterment for Shi'as would be one conducted on lines of exclusivity. This creation of voluntary Shi'a public organisations in

some senses mimicked the process of 'institution-building' within Shi'ism during the Nawabi period, replacing state support with a vigorous appropriation of the new methods and media provided by the developing public sphere and printing presses in the cities of U.P., primarily Lucknow. Indeed, one result of this organisational activity was the enhanced centrality of Lucknow, a city that increasingly developed into the religious, cultural and political hub of wider Indian Shi'ism, and that has been consistently identified throughout as the city in which attempts at Shi'a organisation were initiated and epitomised. Indeed, the further implication of the existence of a workable Shi'a organisational network in India was its contribution to the indigenisation of Indian Shi'ism, as religious leaders and secular reformists alike were increasingly able to turn inward to local traditions rather than endlessly looking to their international co-religionists.

Additionally, these diverse organisational efforts reinterpreted and invigorated the authority of the Shi'a *'ulama*, particularly the esteemed *mujtahids* of Lucknow, who were re-cast from guardians of the doctrines of the Shi'a religion into active and visible public spokesmen through their frequently pivotal role, both active and inspirational, in such *anjumans*. Chapter 2 demonstrated how the foundation of Shi'a religious organisations, printing presses and the fresh public role of the *'ulama* contributed to a tangible religious renewal within Indian Shi'ism. Public exhibitions of this new religious vigour included the dissemination of religious knowledge, strong trade in religious publications, and the instigation of more universalistic, explicitly Shi'a observances during Muharram. This religious renewal was often conducted in strongly antagonistic tones, which drew from the wider context of religious proclamation among Muslims, Hindus and Christians in colonial India. This ensured that the reinvigoration of Shi'ism often intertwined with an elaboration of religious differences and demarcation of religious boundaries, and often ignited local religious conflicts between differing Muslim communities.

In contrast with the rather restrictive vision of some scholarship, this thesis has demonstrated that the defining feature of sectarianism during the given period is that it was not simply encapsulated by religious disputations and Muharram violence, but was

consolidated in wider public and political life. As an increasing number of *anjumans*, religious and welfare institutions emerged among particular Muslim communities, Shi'a-Sunni differences were articulated, systematised and institutionalised through separate organisational networks and various forms of public differentiation. Discussing Shi'a reactions to the Aligarh movement, which has long been assumed to have laid the foundations for broader Muslim social and political organisation in colonial U.P., Chapter 3 demonstrated how Muslim sectarianism was expanded and politicised in colonial India. Shi'a ambivalence or opposition to the Aligarh movement in varying degrees prompted the formalisation of Shi'a-Sunni difference from religious or cultural discrepancies into matters of acute public and political relevance. The novel *qaumik* identity of Shi'as was positioned as an alternative to, rather than an extension of, the Muslim 'nation' in discourses of social and political reform, leading to the withdrawal of Shi'as from 'Muslim' organisations. This was further elaborated upon in Chapter 4, which suggested that reactions to colonialism and the *jihad* and pan-Islamist campaigns, long assumed to have cemented the presence of a progressive, inclusive Islam in public and political life, were similar subjects of divergence between Shi'as and Sunnis. As such, sectarianism existed as a powerful alternative discourse to that of Muslim unity, rather than as its weak, localised subsidiary as has sometimes been implied.

This new form of *anjuman*-based sectarianism, ascendant until the 1920s, was once again re-interpreted and re-negotiated in the 1930s, as an array of intertwined socio-economic and political turmoils contributed to conflict both between and within Muslim communities. Despite its semblance of organisation and co-ordination, Chapter 5 demonstrated how the Sunni *madh-i-sahaba* and Shi'a *tabarra* agitations both expressed the multifarious anxieties and grievances of their participants, and were used as a way of instigating internal transformations within Indian Shi'ism itself.

In fact, considering the thesis as a whole, it can be seen that sectarianism periodically fulfilled a number of functions. Somewhat simplistically, Shi'a-Sunni differences sometimes appeared to be manufactured and institutionalised by aspiring Shi'a leaders, whether religious, social or political, in order to vindicate the separateness of the

population they sought to represent. However, this thesis has also shown how the production of Shi'a-Sunni conflict was often focused inwardly, as a tool with which Shi'a leaders could attempt to exercise reform within Shi'a communities themselves. Religious disputation was, as shown above, often deliberately manufactured as a means of communicating religious doctrines and enabling religious instruction. Simply put, the 'otherisation' of an external community was adapted as a method for negotiating internal reform. Furthermore, Shi'a-Sunni conflicts were on occasion stirred by particular Shi'a religious leaders, politicians and activists in attempt to rebuff alternative leaders from within their own community. This argument raises the interesting possibility that Shi'a-Sunni conflict was most severe during those times at which debate and disagreement was most rife among Shi'as themselves, as alternative sections sought to consolidate their own positions or negotiate mutual opinions through the vituperation of external communities. As is demonstrated by the intense debates over alternative programmes for Shi'a reform and betterment between Shi'a factions in the 1910s, and the jostling for influence among alternative individuals and organisations in the 1930s, Shi'a-Sunni conflict was most frequent at times of great internal change among Shi'as.¹

The description of the process of Shi'a community formation and the evolution of Shi'a-Sunni divergence in India discussed in this thesis provides a starting point for a wider consideration of identities of sect and sectarianism more generally within South Asian Islam. This final evaluation seeks to provide a few additional reflections upon the nature of Muslim sectarianism in colonial India, offer a reappraisal of current scholarship upon Indian Islam, and outline the implications of this study for further research on the subject.

¹ This process has parallels in modern times. Serious Shi'a-Sunni riots during Muharram in Lucknow in 2005 were widely linked to the recent formation of the All India Shi'a Personal Law Board, a subject of some contention among Shi'as. It was widely argued in the press that the violence was stirred by Shi'a opponents of this organisation as a means of demonstrating and securing their influence among the community. Additionally, a distant comparison can here be made with the way in which Hindu-Muslim communalism has often been discussed. By some interpretations, for instance, a series of social and political divisions among different Hindu castes in the 1980s were channeled into a conflictive form of Hindu nationalism which generated conflict with Muslims. This perspective informs Sarvepalli Gopal ed., *Anatomy of a confrontation: Ayodhya and the rise of communal politics in India* (New Delhi, 1991).

System and singularity: reflections on sect and sectarianism in South Asian Islam

As was discussed at the outset, analysts of Islamic reform in colonial India have doubtless recognised the great diversity among reformist movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries such as the Deobandis, Ahl-i-Hadis, Bareilvis, Nadva't ul-'Ulama, Tablighi Jama'at and educational modernists. However, such studies have often tended to frame these as broader 'Muslim' movements, responses to questions such as Muslim political subjection to the colonial administration or numerical domination by other religious communities. As such, scholarship has tended to emphasise those common elements running through these movements: the heightening of religious consciousness, the vigorous dissemination of religious knowledge, the promotion of Urdu and the articulation of Muslims as a clearly-demarked community. Less has been made of the way in which many Muslim reformist movements were actually primarily directed against alternative Muslim groups. As is indicated by this thesis, north India was simultaneously awash with controversies between Shi'a and Sunni and other Muslim groups. The focus on the common elements of Islamic reformist campaigns, it could be argued, has somewhat obscured the high degrees of antagonism and combativeness which characterised inter-Muslim relations during the colonial period. Rather than being characterised as an era of 'Islamic' revivalism, then, the colonial period is better characterised as one of a plurality of campaigns of religious renewal among diversionary Muslim groups, better described as a series of independent 'sectarian revivals.' Scholarship needs to take closer account of the immediate experiences of *munazaras*, *fatawa* wars and ritualised conflicts that seemed to typify the interactions of Islamic reformist campaigns.

This thesis implies that much scholarship, long obsessed with the question of Hindu-Muslim communalism and thus implying sectarianism within Islam as either an offshoot of the former or an occasional distraction from it, has underestimated the scope and significance of Muslim sectarianism in colonial India. Much the same could be said about many contemporary observers in the colonial period; even at the height of the sectarian controversies in the 1930s, while the Urdu press was saturated with the issue, it was

remarked that the Hindi press paid it very little attention.² However, this does not so much indicate the insignificance of sectarian conflict, but instead reflects the way in which conflicts were commonly interpreted. This thesis has described how sectarian dialogues often functioned simultaneously on various levels, conveying alternative meanings inwardly and outwardly, and this perhaps explains the relative lack of importance assigned to sectarianism by many non-Muslims, who perceived a monolithic Islamic renewal where Muslim reformists themselves observed a series of sectarian contestations. An illuminating study of the Ahl-i-Hadis community in Benares in more recent times has shown how, in a local context, the development of sectarianism between different clusters of reformist Muslims could offer different impressions to those observing the process, and those participating directly in it. The resurgence of religious activity within the Ahl-i-Hadis, it is argued, 'set in train a competitive process among other Sunni Muslims in the city... in asserting their separateness.'³ Alternative groups engaged in the funding and construction of new religious institutions, schools and mosques, in order to counter the influence of their competitors. While many Muslims thus experienced this as something of a sectarian confrontation, it is argued that the ensuing increase in public Muslim religious observance 'inevitably [became] more conspicuous to the Hindu population of the city who, often unable to distinguish one Muslim section from another, interpret the process as being general.'⁴

Expanding this framework for understanding Muslim sectarianism beyond the context of one city, it is evident how the process which surfaced outwardly as a wide and multi-layered 'Islamic revival' in colonial India may have functioned most imminently as a combative process of sectarian rivalry between Muslim individuals and groups. The example suggests that a series of interconnected conflicts between north India's religious communities could be understood in different terms by alternative audiences and in certain spheres as 'sectarian' or 'communal'; the processes often understood as a

² See for instance, United Provinces Native Newspaper Reports (UPNNR), week ending 5 June 1937, Oriental and India Office Collections, London (OIIOC). It is pointed out that only two Hindi newspapers commented on the Shi'a-Sunni riots at a time when the Urdu press was awash with detailed coverage.

³ Searle Chatterjee, Mary, "'Wahabi' sectarianism among Muslims of Banaras' in *Contemporary South Asia* (3, 2, 1994), p.88.

⁴ Ibid.

'Muslim' religious reinvigoration, social renewal and political awakening simultaneously functioned as 'sectarian' movements. It also raises the possibility that Muslim sectarianism was, for certain audiences, of far more immediate and expansive significance than has often been recognised in scholarship hitherto concerned with Hindu-Muslim communal relations.

Furthermore, the conclusions of this thesis demand not only a reassessment of the scale and scope of Muslim sectarianism during the colonial period, but an elaboration upon its very nature. This thesis has attempted to challenge the assumption previously discussed, one common to colonial British observers, Muslim reformists and some academic studies alike, that Islamic sectarianism was somehow a pre-modern or 'traditional' phenomenon. Such a view discusses sectarianism, both in South Asia and more widely, as a throwback to the elementary controversies of Islamic history, and contrasts it with a more unitary 'modernist' or 'liberal' Islam which emerged out of colonial-era reformist movements. The chapters of this thesis have interpreted sectarianism in Indian Islam not as an expression of intrinsic historical antagonism within Indian Islam rooted in some form of essentialist or primordial schismatic consciousness, which was merely expanded or consolidated during the colonial period; rather, sectarianism has been explained as a phenomenon in some senses newly created in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a wholly novel expression of alternative doctrinal groups as entirely separate communities and as markers of modern public identity. Sectarianism did not exist in a vacuum, but was borne of a wider negotiation of identities in the colonial context. It was a phenomenon intimately bound up with the societal transformations in urban north India through the colonial period, and institutionalised through the deliberate manufacture and public display of religious contestation and the *anjuman*-based organisational structure of social and religious reform.

Rather than a simplistic disputation over religious tenets and practices as has sometimes been implied, Muslim sectarianism in colonial India was, through its adoption of its *qaumik* language and styles, gradually transformed from a religious debate into a process by which a Shi'a community was defined, negotiated, and presented as a basis for

citizenship and modernisation. Of use in this regard for understanding Muslim sectarianism in India is a study of 'sectarianism' in a different context as one 'vision of modernity,' emerging out a multitude of competing discourses of nationhood.⁵ One central deduction to be inferred from this thesis is that the evocation of Shi'as as an autonomous *qaum* suggests that sectarianism was, to some extent, a struggle between alternative constructs of the nation. The Shi'a community emerged in the colonial period alongside and in interaction with a series of alternative discourses of nationhood in India, such as colonial modernity, secular nationalism and various religious nationalisms, as one framework for communal modernisation. The Shi'a 'nation' was defined and framed against all these alternatives, in particular that of Muslim nationalism or 'separatism,' and there is a tangible correlation between those moments at which the evocation of a Shi'a *qaum* was at its most vigorous and the competing rhetoric of the 'Muslim community' was at its loudest.⁶ This is evidence that Shi'a solidarity, as defined and expressed through sectarian conflict, was used by particular individuals or groups as a means of undermining numerous possible alternative constructs of the modern nation. As can be shown through many instances described in this thesis, opposition to any form of secular or religious nationalism could be countered with a retreat into what were perceived, or were in reality formulated, as primordial or essentialist religious identities.

However, the constant juxtaposition between these alternative constructs of 'Shi'a' and 'Muslim' communities suggest the most elementary re-conceptualisation of Islam itself, and demand a reconsideration of the nature of being a Shi'a, a Sunni or a Muslim in

⁵ Ussama Makdisi, *The culture of sectarianism: community, history and violence in nineteenth-century Ottoman Lebanon* (London, 2000), p.174.

⁶ Francis Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims: the politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, 1860-1923* (Cambridge, 1974); David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's first generation: Muslim solidarity in British India* (Princeton, 1978); David Page, *Prelude to partition: the Indian Muslims and the imperial system of control, 1920-1932* (Delhi, 1982), etc. Indeed, the thesis has shown how the most significant surges in Shi'a-Sunni sectarianism largely correlate with the most intensive attempts to rally Muslim unity, for instance: the end of the 1880s, as the Muhammadan Educational Conference attempted to set up a scheme for national Muslim reform; the years in the aftermath of the revocation of the partition of Bengal and the foundation of the All India Muslim League in 1905-1908; the decade between 1911-1920 which witnessed the growth of pan-Islamism, the entry of *ulama* into politics, the campaigns for a Muslim University and the furtherance of Muslim electorates in the 1919 Reforms; and, of course, the revival of the Muslim League and concerns of Hindu-majority rule in the late 1930s. Needless to say, this is an inference with important implications for the long-standing assumption that a pragmatic communal unity was consolidated among Indian Muslims for political benefit during the colonial period.

colonial India. One implication of this thesis is that Sect and Islam were, from the late eighteenth century onwards but after 1880 in particular, construed not as mutually supportive affiliations, or simply different ways of referring to the same religion in different contexts. They were instead often antagonistic points of reference, one countering rather than complimenting the other. The frequent description of sectarian conflicts as fratricidal struggles among Muslims is perhaps misleading, given its frequent articulation as a conflict between entirely separate communities.

A useful framework for understanding sectarianism is set by Eickelman, who describes how Islam has in the twentieth century been objectified as a self-contained 'system' or 'curriculum' (*minhaj*). Reformists and modernists, he argues, have increasingly moved away from a so-called 'generic Islam,' a non-sectarian and fluid corps of beliefs and practices, towards the evocation of Islam through a self-referential inventory of universalistic and interconnected beliefs, practices and personages:

'The formal principles of Islamic doctrine and practice are compartmentalised and made an object of study... this pervasive notion of system is a profoundly new element in modern religious thought... the overall trend has been one of turning away from situating meaning in local and immediate ritual and symbolic contexts... instead, meaning becomes situated in explicit statements of belief.'⁷

Eickelman links this development of the objectification of Islam to a number of factors which this thesis has established as evident in colonial India, such as the impact of print and the expansion of formalised education. It eloquently describes the nature of that religious modernisation which this thesis has identified in Indian Shi'ism during this period, namely, the location of religious meaning not in diverse local or lived experiences, but in an idiomatic, universalistic registry of particular tenets, personages and ritual practices.

Furthermore, this understanding of Islam as a 'system' perhaps foreshadowed polarisation between alternative groups: 'treating Islam as a system of beliefs and

⁷ Dale F. Eickelman, 'Mass higher education and the religious imagination in contemporary Arab societies,' in *American Ethnologist* (19, 4, 1992), pp.647-8.

practices,' Eickelman argues, 'implicitly highlights differences within the Muslim community.'⁸ Alternative constructions of Muslim identity, previously conceived as variations within the same myriad collection of Islamic beliefs and practices, were increasingly construed to represent alternative and opposing systems. Divergent beliefs and practices previously perceived as on the periphery of Islam were now positioned outside it, and the awareness of dissimilar religious beliefs and practices among other Muslims was reconceived as a conflict between the adherents of opposing 'systems.' As has been shown in this thesis, religious disputes were increasingly projected not at the singular adversarial 'alim or controversial text or custom, but at entire alternative religious systems themselves.

It can be seen how this sense of the objectification of Islam in India post-1800, or the expression of particular beliefs or practices as components of entire systems, contributed to one theme seemingly consistent through the work of many major Indian Muslim reformists: the absolute unity (*tauhid*) of God. It was a theme elaborated upon by such important pioneers as, among others, Shah Wali Ullah, 'Abdul 'Aziz, Sayyid Ahmad Bareilvi, Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Shibli Numani.⁹ However, it could be further argued that the evocation of God's indivisibility went hand-in-hand with the articulation of the singularity of Islam. In complete contrast to that scholarship which has emphasised the diversity and adaptability of Indian Islam,¹⁰ Muslim reformists themselves more often evoked themes such as the essential oneness of the Islamic *millat* and aspired to perfection located in the unity of the community and uniformity of practice. In other words, the increasing evocation of Islam as a 'system' meant that the normative differences of sect, culture and custom were seen as a privation of perfection, rather than its fulfilment. The underlying conviction of all doctrinal groups of the singularity of Islam, and by extension the rightness of their own interpretation over that of other sects, meant that religious reformists, speakers and protagonists positioned themselves not

⁸ Ibid, pp.650-651.

⁹ See especially Christian W. Troll, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan: a reinterpretation of Muslim theology* (New Delhi, 1978), pp.194-8.

¹⁰ As has been discussed above, such syncretic aspects have long been given prominent place in scholarship on Indian Islam. For instance, Imtiaz Ahmad, 'Introduction,' in Imtiaz Ahmad ed., *Ritual and religion among Muslims in India* (Delhi, 1981), pp.1-20; Mushirul Hasan, *From pluralism to separatism: qasbas in*

simply as spokesmen for a particular sect, but for the entirety of Islam.¹¹ Sectarianism was not a debate between actors mutually incorporated into the *millat* of Islam, but rather a battle between different 'systems' claiming the single mantle of legitimacy. Religious disputation was generally less a debate on the correctness or otherwise of particular Shi'a or Sunni tenets, more an attempt to assert one entire system against another.

Only by understanding that during the colonial period Shi'a and Sunni Islam were increasingly conceived less as doctrinal groups within the same Islamic *millat* and more as singular systems, with separate and unconnected tenets and traditions, can we understand the passion with which sectarian disputations were often fought. Opponents were denounced not as merely misguided but as un-Islamic; the *'alim* or *anjuman* entered into disputations not merely to debate the minutiae of belief and practice, but to rebut those who sought to eject them from the pale of Islam. Instances of fluidity and negotiation in thought and practice were increasingly severed, and clearly delineated religious boundaries separating alternative religious systems erected in their place. Debates and conflicts within Islam were abstracted and standardised, redirected from details towards the whole system itself. Indeed, the description of conflicts and disputations between Muslims under the term 'sectarianism' is somewhat misleading, since it implies that the wrangling sects are, ultimately and essentially, encompassed into a common and greater whole. By contrast, according to these modern understandings, Shi'a and Sunni Islam in colonial India were understood not as variations within a common Islamic tradition, but independent, singular religious systems themselves. Sectarianism in the Indian context should perhaps be interpreted less as a fratricidal conflict within Indian Islam, and more as a conflict between alternative religious

colonial Awadh (New Delhi, 2004).

¹¹ To give one example, even such a responsible scholar as 'Ali Naqi describes the murderers of Husain as 'non-Muslims,' rather than as Sunnis. He writes: 'These so-called "Muslims" threw ugly defamations upon these people under the guise of Islam, yet in ultimate fact there is absolutely no connection between them and Islam. This is historical truth... and after this the occasion for the question of whether these people were Sunni or Shi'a no longer exists. Once the Sunni-Shi'a division is replaced by the shared facts and faith of Islam, and when the veil has itself been lifted from Islam, then it will be realised this is not an opportunity for division of Sunni and Shi'a.' Sayyid 'Ali Naqi, *Qātilān-i-Husēn kā mazhab* (Lucknow, 1932-3), p.16. While this was perhaps meant as a reconciliatory move to Lucknow's Sunnis, it could well have provoked more animosity by dismissing the inclusion of some of their leaders in the community of Islam.

communities.

Epilogue: sectarianism in South Asian Islam after 1939

By suggesting that the religious conflicts between Muslim doctrinal groups in colonial India were not simply revivals of primordial passions, and by revealing why religious conflict became a crucial component of the construction of alternative visions of modernity, this thesis demands a more vigorous investigation of inter-Muslim conflict in South Asia than has hitherto often been current. That this thesis has discussed the foundational period of sectarianism in Islam from the close of the 1880s until the 1930s is intended in no way to underplay the significance or impact of sectarianism after this point, and it is worth concluding with a brief assessment of the implications of this study for studies of Islam and Muslim sectarianism for the later period.

The volumes written on the 'Pakistan movement' of the 1940s, constantly evoking the unity of the Islamic 'nation' in India, have often given the impression that Shi'a-Sunni quarrels were vanquished, or at the very least indefinitely postponed pending the creation of the new state. In such a vein, one author writes that 'issues of sectarian significance were not prominent in the course of the Pakistan movement,'¹² while another writes that Shi'as 'hitched their fortunes with the League bandwagon.'¹³ In the light of the depth of Shi'a-Sunni tension in the Muslim League's supposed heartland of Lucknow described in this thesis, especially in the 1930s, the assumption that Shi'a-Sunni differences were so efficiently buried by the Pakistan demand seems increasingly improbable.¹⁴ By contrast, Shi'a aversion to the Muslim League apparently remained strong from around 1937 and appeared to increase further during the 1940s. This may, as discussed in the previous chapter, owe to the visible role of prominent local Muslim Leaguers such as Chaudhury

¹² Muhammad Qasim Zaman, 'Sectarianism in Pakistan: the radicalization of Shi'i and Sunni identities,' in *Modern Asian Studies* (36, 3, 2000), p.691.

¹³ Mushirul Hasan, 'Sectarianism in Indian Islam: the Shia-Sunni divide in the United Provinces,' in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* (27, 2, 1990), p.222.

¹⁴ I have discussed Shi'a political responses to the Muslim League and Pakistan movement, in far more detail than is possible here, in my M-Phil thesis, 'Sectarianism and identity politics among the Shi'a Muslims of Lucknow in late-colonial India,' (unpublished M.Phil thesis, Cambridge, 2003), *passim*.

Khaliqzaman in the call for *madh-i-sahaba* in the late-1930s. It may have owed to the Shi'a Political Conference's constant rebuke of the Muslim League's claim to represent all Muslims, and their demand for separate Muslim representation at the centre. No less important, it may reflect the influence of a *fatwa* issued by the *mujtahid* Nasir Husain in 1939 enjoining all Shi'as to break links with the Muslim League, a move that prompted some other Shi'a *'ulama* to denounce the organisation and which was said to be 'far reaching in effect.'¹⁵ Central to Shi'a antipathy towards the party, however, was the Muslim League's deliberate abstention from efforts to bring the *madh-i-sahaba* or *tabarra* controversies to a close. Fearing the damage the dispute could inflict upon his party's principle of Muslim unity, Jinnah and some leaders of the provincial Muslim League chose to remain entirely disengaged from the dispute and blame Congress machinations, a decision which did little to earn any confidence from Shi'as. At the session of the Shi'a Political Conference at the end of 1939, the Conference declared that 'as a sect, [Shi'as] have never considered the Muslim League to be their representative' and that 'the Muslim League... has always trampled upon the feelings and susceptibilities of the Shia minority.'¹⁶

No significant rapprochement was seemingly achieved between Shi'as and the Muslim League in subsequent years. In 1945, a council of numerous Muslim *anjumans* was convened in Lucknow under the title of the All Parties' Shi'a Conference, closely linked with Lucknow's Shi'a Political Conference and presided over by Husain-bhai Laljee of Bombay. Around 800 religious, social and political organisations were invited,¹⁷ and the meeting was widely identified as 'the most representative Conference of the Shia community ever held in the political history of this country.'¹⁸ The meeting agreed that the Muslim League should be pressed to outline its recognition of the need for Shi'a

¹⁵ Mariaj Husain to Jinnah, 10 April 1939, Quaid-i-Azam Collection, Ior. Neg. Pos. 10773, OIOC; *National Herald* (Lucknow), 11 April 1939, CSAS. As with many contemporary Sunni *'ulama*, the *fatwa* perhaps reflected suspicion of the secular professionals and landowners at the heart of the organisation in U.P., as well as the additional concern that the Muslim League was Sunni-dominated.

¹⁶ *Indian Annual Register, July to December 1939* (Delhi, 1940), p.355.

¹⁷ 'Statement issued to the press' by Hosseinbhoj Laljee, 13 October 1945, Public and Judicial Files (L/PJ) 8/693, OIOC. Of these, it was claimed that almost 600 attended.

¹⁸ Statement by Mirza Ja'far Husain, General Secretary of All India Shi'a Political Conference, in *The Moonlight* (Lucknow), 27 October 1945, *ibid*; 'Resolutions passed at meeting of All Parties Shia Conference, Lucknow,' 14-16 October 1945, *ibid*.

representation, something which the Muslim League persistently refused to do. Muslim League disrespect for Shi'as was described, with instances such as the alleged conversion of *ta'ziya* processions into Muslim League victory rallies interpreted as 'clear indication[s] that the Shias should not... hope that their religious rights would be safe in Pakistan, which is going to be Sunnistan.'¹⁹

The 1945-6 elections perhaps offer the best barometer for testing Shi'a political opinion preceding the creation of Pakistan. Sayyid 'Ali Zaheer, long-term president of the Shi'a Political Conference, stood for the Lucknow seat against Chaudhury Khaliqzaman while, complementing this attempt to 'emphasise our separate identity and policy.' Husain-bhai Laljee stood against Jinnah for election to the Viceroy's Central Legislative Council in Bombay.²⁰ It was perhaps inevitable that the 1946 elections in Lucknow should be 'contested mainly on the Madhe Sahaba issue'; the issue was revived during the election campaign and Sunnis recited the proscribed verses.²¹ Khaliqzaman, aware of his associations with the Sunni cause,²² attempted to run the League's campaign on a platform of Muslim unity, even meeting with Shi'a religious leaders in an attempt to persuade them that the League stood on a fully unitary platform.²³ However numerous Shi'a organisations, among them the Shi'a Political Conference, Shi'a Students' Federation and the Tanzim-ul-Mominin, all united in issuing similar declarations of mistrust.²⁴ Khaliqzaman's ultimate victory in the Muslim seat was predictable, but the fact that Zaheer won 17% of the Muslim vote²⁵ perhaps exposes the vacuity of

¹⁹ Statement by Sayyid Zahirul Hasan Rizvi, *National Herald* (Lucknow), 17 January 1946, CSAS; Directive by Hosseinbhoj Laljee, *ibid*, 21 January 1946.

²⁰ Syed Kazim Zaheer ed., *The memoirs of Sayyid Ali Zaheer* (New Delhi, 2004), p.20.

²¹ 'Fortnightly report for the second half of November 1945,' Frampton to Porter, and 'Fortnightly report for the first half of December 1945,' Frampton to Porter, Frampton papers, CSAS; c.f., *National Herald*, 13 December 1945 and 11 March 1946, CSAS. On the eve of elections, one member of the Ahrars even suggested that the organisation could 'retard Muslim League propaganda by creating internal religious differences.' Ayesha Jalal, *Self and sovereignty: individual and community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London, 2000), p.458.

²² 'It is gathered that Ch. Khaliqzaman wanted to avoid contesting the Lucknow seat, which he represented in the last Assembly, in view of the general resentment among the Muslim public against the part he played in the Madhe-sahaba dispute.' *National Herald*, 10 January and 11 March 1946, CSAS.

²³ Choudhry Khaliqzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan* (Lahore, 1961), p.339.

²⁴ *National Herald*, 17, 21, 31 January 1946, CSAS.

²⁵ J.M. Goodman, B.D. Graham, P.D. Reeves, *Handbook to elections in Uttar Pradesh, 1920-1951* (Delhi, 1975), p.345.

Khaliquzzaman's claim that 'Shias voted in good numbers for the League,'²⁶ and the truth of Zaheer's that he secured a 'large percentage' of the Shi'a votes.²⁷ While the absence of appropriate Census statistics make it difficult to ascertain the proportion of Shi'as who ultimately made the *hijrat* to Pakistan, many have assumed that Shi'as moved to Pakistan in approximately similar proportions to Sunnis.²⁸ Some accounts, however, indicate that certainly in Lucknow the great majority stayed behind.²⁹ The creation of Pakistan was evidently an event greeted with considerable uncertainty by many Shi'as who feared Sunni domination, a fact little acknowledged but one with an important bearing upon our knowledge of the Pakistan movement and of post-colonial South Asia more broadly.

Henceforth, sectarian rivalries dragged on in Lucknow long after the transfer of power. While the political formations involved have changed, sectarian differences have continued to hold a bearing on Muslim society and politics in Lucknow. Sunnis during the 1950s-70s largely allied with Congress, the latter winning their support by making several concessions including a 1969 ban on *ta'ziyadari*. Accordingly, during the 1970s the Bharatiya Jan Sangh made efforts to infiltrate Shi'a voting constituencies by upholding the right to *ta'ziyadari*, a tactic continued by the Bharatiya Janata Party today.³⁰ Thus, locally focused sectarian differences have continued to shape wider political allegiance, and parties have continued to exploit the sectarian fissure in order to gain a foothold in the key constituency of Lucknow, solidifying further sectarian tensions as a political issue.³¹

Perhaps even more interesting is the implication of this thesis for current work on Islam

²⁶ Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan*, p.339.

²⁷ Zaheer ed., *Memoirs of Syed Ali Zaheer*, p.22.

²⁸ E.g. Juan R. I. Cole, *Roots of north Indian Shi'ism in Iran and Iraq: religion and state in Awadh, 1722-1859* (California, 1988), p.289.

²⁹ *Moharram in two cities, Lucknow and Delhi, Monograph Series, Census of India 1961* (Allahabad, 1963), p.9.

³⁰ Imtiaz Ahmad, 'The Shia-Sunni dispute in Lucknow, 1905-1980,' in Milton Israel and Narendra K. Wagle eds., *Islamic society and culture: essays in honour of Professor Aziz Ahmad* (Delhi, 1983), pp.34-8; Keith Hjortshoj, 'Shi'i identity and the significance of Muharram in Lucknow, India,' in Martin Kramer ed., *Shi'ism, Resistance and Revolution*, (London, 1987), pp.300-5.

³¹ This is the perspective of Theodore P. Wright, 'The politics of Moslim sectarian conflict in India,' in

in Pakistan. A thriving body of literature has considered the growth of Muslim sectarianism in Pakistan between Shi'as, Sunnis and Ahmadis. However, such studies have tended to explain these occurrences in terms of fresh, momentary developments in the modern history of Pakistan. Some have interpreted sectarianism as a consequence of the state's flirtation with Islam as a potential source of national legitimacy, especially the Islamisation programme of Zia-ul-Haq, and Shi'a resistance to its perceived standardisation of society according to a narrow interpretation of Sunni Islam.³² Others have interpreted sectarianism as an abstracted manifestation of the social and political rivalries between, for instance, landed Shi'a aristocracies and urban Sunni commercial entrepreneurs in Punjab, or between immigrant *muhajirs* (immigrants from north India) and indigenous populations.³³ Still other studies have related the conflicts to the proxy-war between Saudi Arabia and Iran after 1979, contested within Pakistan through the patronage of Shi'a and Sunni *madrasas* and other religious institutions by these powers.³⁴ Without denying the importance of any such factors, all these explanations share the assumption that 'it was... after the creation of Pakistan that [sectarian issues] forcefully surfaced.'³⁵

This thesis has perhaps demonstrated that such sectarian conflicts did not simply newly arise in Pakistan but, perhaps surprisingly considering this interpretation of the recent national origins of sectarianism in Pakistan, possess a powerful continuity with the formative period of sectarianism in colonial India. Muslim sectarianism in Pakistan has continued to bear the mark of the expansive religious polemical traditions fostered in colonial U.P.. For example, the Sunni renewal in Pakistan can be attributed in no small part to the so-called 'Madani Group' of Deobandi *'ulama*, named after the *'alim* who

Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (Spring, 1980), pp.67-73.

³² Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, 'The rise of Sunni militancy in Pakistan: the changing role of Islamism and the ulama in society and politics,' in *Modern Asian Studies* (34, 1, 2000), pp.139-80; Muhammad Qasim Zaman, 'Sectarianism in Pakistan: The radicalisation of Shi'i and Sunni identities,' in *Modern Asian Studies* (36, 3, 2000), pp.689-716.

³³ Mariam Abou-Zahab, 'The Sunni-Shia conflict in Jhang,' in Imtiaz Ahmad and Helmut Reifeld eds., *Lived Islam in South Asia: adaptation, accommodation and conflict* (New Delhi, 2004), pp.135-48; Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and militants: fun and urban violence in Pakistan* (Princeton, 2004).

³⁴ Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, 'The Iranian revolution and changes in Islamism in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan,' in Nikki R. Keddie and Rudi Matthee eds., *Iran and the surrounding world: interactions in culture and cultural politics* (Washington, 2002), pp.327-54.

played a central role in the *madh-i-sahaba* agitation and consequent counter-Shi'a tone of the Deobandi school during the following decade. After 1947 and especially during the 1970s, this group sought to craft a space for itself in Pakistani politics as the conscience of Islamic discourse, and focused upon the exclusion from Islam of numerous Muslim minority groups, including Shi'as, in an attempt to isolate other traditions and establish its own hegemony.³⁶ The hand of U.P. is perhaps even more visible in the rise of sectarian organisations in the 1980s. The Sipah-i-Sahaba, an organisation directed against the society and polity of Shi'as and founded out of Deobandi anti-Shi'a polemic, was influenced in its early years by a continuing anti-Shi'a discourse flowing out of Deobandi and Nadvi propagandists in Lucknow.³⁷ Simultaneously, Shi'a sectarian organisations alluded to similar attachments to colonial Lucknow. Ja'far Husain, the founder of the Shi'a organisation Tehriq-i-Nifazi-i-Fiqh-i-Ja'fariya, received his education in colonial Lucknow, while it is widely acknowledged that immigré *muhajirs* composed a prominent section of the membership of such organisations.³⁸ In other words, the connection between sectarianism in colonial India and post-colonial Pakistan was perhaps not simply intuitive or thematic, but shared a tangible continuity of personages and organisations, and perpetuated the institution-building style of Shi'a and Sunni organisation established in the colonial period.

International events in the twenty-first century are likely to generate a continuing wealth of literature on the subject of Muslim sectarianism, much of it vindicating the conclusion of this thesis that sectarianism in its modern manifestations has been fabricated as an alternative discourse of modernity, a clash not between doctrinal groups but between alternative self-encompassing Islamic systems, each possessing its own narrative of religious renewal and modernisation. However, the perspective of much of the contemporary media and literature, depicting the world stage as being shaped by a conflict between a monolithic 'Shia revival' and Sunni counterpart and focused in the

³⁵ Muhammad Qasim Zaman, 'Sectarianism in Pakistan,' p.691.

³⁶ Nasr, 'The rise of Sunni militancy in Pakistan,' pp.169-79.

³⁷ Ibid, pp.161-3.

³⁸ Zaman, 'Sectarianism in Pakistan,' pp.693-5.

Middle East and the Gulf,³⁹ runs the risk of oversimplifying a phenomenon which, as described in this thesis, is one of consider local and regional diversity. Such a focus falsely depicts manifestations of Muslim sectarianism in South Asia as directed by events in the regions to the west, with India and Lucknow especially placed on the very peripheries of relevance. This thesis has consistently, in contrast to some studies, assessed Shi'ism not according to the cross-national supra-structures of a 'Shi'i International,' but within the borders set by the locality and nation, in which the religion was most immediately experienced. It was Lucknow, it has been steadily argued throughout, that provided the closest thing to a 'centre' of Indian Shi'ism as lived in innumerable towns in colonial north India. A final implication of this thesis, then, is that modern Muslim sectarianism in South Asia deserves to be understood according to a tradition which was nurtured, first and foremost, in the *muhallas*, *madrasas* and meeting-halls of colonial Lucknow. Given Nawabi Lucknow's association with its esteemed historical *tehzib*, communal assimilation and cosmopolitanism, it is perhaps one of the ultimate ironies of Lucknow's twentieth-century decline that this construction and ordering of Shi'a-Sunni difference and polemical discourse, originating here and imparted throughout the subcontinent, has instead become one of the city's most enduring legacies.

³⁹ Vali Nasr, *The Shia revival: how conflicts within Islam will shape the future* (New York, 2006).

SELECT GLOSSARY

(words are written as they appear in the text)

ajlaf – the indigenous castes of Muslims, as opposed to *ashraf*.

Akhbari – one of the two main branches of 'Isna 'Ashari Shi'ism, most associated with the Safavid era. It asserts that only the two recorded sources of Qur'an and *hadis* (collectively known as *akhbar*) can be used as sources for jurisprudential reasoning.

akhlaq – moral or mannerly correctness.

'*alehda* – separate, exclusive.

'*alim* (pl. '*ulama*) – a learned man, a scholar of Islamic knowledge.

'*amal* – action, custom, practice.

Amir-ul-mominin – 'leader of the people,' a title used by Shi'as to refer to the first Imam 'Ali and by Sunnis to refer to the supposed successors of the Khilafat, among them the Ottoman Sultan.

'*aql* – reasoning, the intellect.

arti – form of Hindu devotional worship.

'*atabat-i-'aliyat* – the Shi'a holy shrines in Iraq at Karbala, Najaf, Kazimain and Samarra.

anjuman – a voluntary public association or society.

ashraf – the high-caste, respectable Muslims, consisting of Sayyids, Sheikhs, Mughals and Pathans, descended from the Prophet's family or from Muslim ruling classes.

'*Ashra* – the first ten days of Muharram.

'*Ashura* – the tenth day of Muharram and the central moment of the festival, upon which the death of Husain is commemorated and *ta'zias* buried.

asl – principle, root of religion.

auqaf – see *waqf*.

azadari – the practice of mourning for Imam Husain observed during Muharram.

azan – the call to daily prayer.

baradari – brotherhood.

Bara-Wafat – the anniversary of the death of the Prophet.

bazm – meeting.

begam – a married *sharif* Muslim woman.

bid'ah – innovation.

bila fasil – 'without interruption,' a phrase used periodically by Shi'as to describe 'Ali's succession of Muhammad.

Caliph (Khalifa) – the personages charged with rightful succession of the Prophet according to Sunni Islam, the first and most important of whom are Abu Bakr, 'Umar, Usman and 'Ali.

char-yari – 'four comrades,' the names of the first four Sunni Caliphs.

chowk – often denotes the central market area of a city.

daftar – office.

dar-ul-Khilafat – a term often used to denote an Islamic state.

dar-ul-'ulum – an 'abode of knowledge,' a *madrasa*.

darbar – in the colonial context, a public audience with the Viceroy or Governor.

dargah – a Sufi shrine or tomb of a *pir*.

dars-i-Nizamiya – the curriculum of learning of many *madrasas* in north India, associated primarily with Firangi Mahal of Lucknow, with a particular emphasis on rational disciplines and sciences.

din, dini, diniyat – religion, religious, religious studies.

du'a – prayer, recitation.

duldul – effigy of the steed upon which Husain was mounted at Karbala.

dunya, dunyawī – world, worldly.

fatwa (pl. *fatawa*) a binding legal pronouncement issued by a *mufti*.

fazil (pl. *afazil*) – distinction, glorification, often denoting the degree gained from education within a *madrasa* or under an elevated *'alim*.

fiqh – the science of Islamic jurisprudence.

firqa – sect, faction.

gadda'i – backwardness.

gali – lane.

ghaib – absence or concealment, used to describe the state of the twelfth Imam.

ghair – non-, un-.

hadis – the written traditions of the Prophet and his Companions or, in Shi'ism, of the Imams.

hafiz – one able to recite the Qur'an from memory.

Hanafi – the branch of Sunni jurisprudence dominant in South Asia, encapsulating schools such as Deobandi, Bareilvi, Firangi Mahal and Nadva't ul-'Ulama.

haram – forbidden.

hashr – congregation.

hazrat – Muslim notables, elites.

hijrat – exodus in the name of religion to the *dar-ul-Islam*, the abode of the faithful.

hukum – order, dictat.

husainiya – alternative term for an *imambara*.

idfah – a qualified form of *jihad*, which can be practised in the absence of the Imam.

ijaza (pl. *ijazat*) – certificate authorising its recipient to transmit *hadis* on the authority of his teacher and/or exercise *ijtihad*.

ijma' – consensus, one of the roots of *fiqh* according to some schools.

ijtihad – the autonomous religious effort of a qualified *mujtahid* on a point of *shari'at*.

ikhraj – expulsion, exclusion.

ikhtilafat – contradiction, disputation, opposition.

'ilm (pl. *'ulum*) – religious knowledge.

Imam – in Shi'ism, one of the descendants and legitimate successor of the Prophet, beginning with 'Ali and ending with the twelfth Imam, the personages at the doctrinal and devotional heart of Shi'ism.

imam-i-jum'a – leader of Friday congregational prayers.

imama – 'turban,' denotes the qualification of a *mujtahid*.

imambara – the edifices in which Muharram is observed, and eulogies for Imam Husain recited.

intizam – arrangement, organisation.

islah – guidance.

- 'Isna 'Ashari* – 'Twelver,' the branch of Shi'ism that subscribes to the authority of the twelve Imams, the two major branches of which are Usuli and Akhbari Shi'ism.
- istiftah* – binding legal declaration issued by a qualified *mujtahid*.
- ittefaq* – agreement.
- ittehad* – unity.
- 'izzat* – honour, respect.
- jadid* – modern, modernity.
- jalsa* – meeting.
- jama'at* – party, group, community.
- janaza* – funeral.
- jatha* – deputation.
- jhanda* – flag, standard.
- jihad* – effort or struggle, often used in the context of holy war in defence of Islam.
- juda/ judagana* – separate/ separateness.
- juloos* – *ta'ziya* procession enacted during Muharram.
- kafir* – unbeliever, infidel, non-Muslim.
- kalam* – the discipline of dialectical theology.
- karbala* – a piece of ground symbolic of the land in Iraq where Imam Husain was martyred, where *ta'ziyas* are buried during Muharram.
- khanaqah* – a Sufi order.
- khatib* – one who delivers the *khutbah* from the *mimbar* after Friday prayers.
- Khilafat* – office of the Caliph.
- khutbah* – the sermon or oratory delivered together with Friday prayers, and on other occasions. It generally contains Arabic exaltations of God, the Prophet and other personages, after which its content is left to the discretion of the *khatib* delivering it.
- kifan* – burial shroud.
- madh-i-sahaba* – 'praise of the Caliphs,' a distinctly Sunni incantation.
- madrusa* – an educational institution of the Islamic sciences, training *'ulama*.
- majlis* (pl. *majalis*) – council or gathering, or in the case of Shi'ism congregations of mutual mourning for Husain.
- maktab* – an institution of elementary religious education.
- ma'mum* – congregation.
- mantiq* – the discipline of logic.
- Marja' / Marja' ul-Taqlid* – 'pole of emulation,' one who is singularly qualified in Shi'ism to be followed in all points of religious practice and law by ordinary individuals. According to some interpretations, only one individual at any one time is entitled to this status, and becomes a universalistic leader.
- marsiya* – a mostly Shi'a genre of poetry associated with Muharram and especially famous in Lucknow, in which the glories of Husain are recited and his suffering evoked.
- mas'um* – 'sinless,' an attribute of the Imams.
- mashk* – a replica of the empty leather water-carrier said to have been carried by Husain's daughter Sakina at Karbala, a replica of which was a feature of Muharram processions in some U.P. towns, carried upon a *tir*.
- masjid* – mosque.
- mataht* – on behalf of, subordinate to.

- matam* – the practice of self-flagellation in mourning for Imam Husain.
- maulud* – see *milad*.
- maulvi* (pl. *maulavis*) – religious speaker or preacher; learned man.
- Maulana* – designation of religious distinction and authority.
- mazhab* – religion, faith.
- medan* – ground.
- Mehdi* – in Shi'ism, the absent twelfth Imam, whose revelation is awaited.
- mehfil* – social or literary gathering, congregation.
- mela* – fair.
- mi'raj* – the ascension of the Prophet.
- milad* (pl. *maulud*) – predominantly Sunni tradition of congregation to celebrate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad.
- millat* – denotes the global Islamic brotherhood or 'nation.'
- mimbar* – the stand from which preachers speak in a mosque.
- minhaj* – system, curriculum.
- momineen* – 'followers,' often used in juxtaposition with the leading *sadat* of Shi'ism.
- mu'afidar* – a holder of revenue-free grants of land.
- mubahasa* – verbal disputation.
- muballigh* (pl. *muballighin*) – missionary.
- mufti* - one entitled to issue a *fatwa*.
- muhajir* – one who performs *hijrat*.
- muhalla* – quarter of a city.
- Muharram* – the first month of the Muslim calendar, observed by both Shi'as and Sunnis in distinct ways, during which the martyrdom of Imam Husain and other personages is commemorated.
- mujahid* – one who engages in *jihad*.
- mujtahid* – one qualified to perform *ijtihad*. In Shi'ism, the title denotes the leading religious authorities, qualified to make rulings on the *shari'a* and subjects of allegiance for the Shi'a community.
- mumtaz* – distinct.
- munazara* – religious disputation or debate.
- munsif* – judge.
- muqallid* – the individual adherent of a chosen *mujtahid* or *marja'*.
- mut'a* – a form of contractual temporary marriage sanctioned by Shi'a religious law.
- mutawalli* - the trustee of a *waqf* or, sometimes, of another religious institution.
- namaz* – Islamic prayer.
- namaz-i-jum'a* – Friday congregational prayers, which according to Usuli Shi'ism can only be conducted in one mosque in each city.
- naql* (pl. *naqul*) – imitation.
- nechri/ nechri'at* – atheist, materialist/ atheism, materialism.
- nigrani* – supervision.
- nisab* – the curriculum of an institution of Islamic learning.
- peshnamaz* – leader of congregational prayers.
- purda* – the veiling or seclusion of women.
- qasba* – the Muslim-dominated rural towns and settlements of the North Western Provinces and Awadh.

- qaum/ qaumik* – a collectivity of individuals, usually translated as ‘community’ or ‘nation’ / the adjectival form, ‘communal’ or ‘national.’
- ra’is* – rural landholder.
- risala* (pl. *rasa’il*) – treatise, tract.
- sadat* – see Sayyid.
- sadr* – president, principal.
- sahaba* – denotes the Companions of the Prophet, including the Caliph.
- sajjada nashin* – successor to the leadership of a religious establishment.
- satyagraha* – form of civil disobedience, practised by Gandhi and evoked during the *tabarraḥ* agitation of 1939.
- Sayyid* (pl. *sadat*) – a descendant of Muhammad or of the Imams, the *ashraf* community from whom all Shi‘a *mujtahids* and most Indian Shi‘a elites originate.
- shahid/ shahadat* – martyr, martyrdom.
- shakh* (pl. *shakhen*) – branch.
- shari‘a* – the law of Islam.
- sharif* – denotes *ashraf* status.
- shikast* – defeat.
- shirk* – idolatory, polytheism or other contradiction of the oneness of God.
- shuddhi* – Hindu proselytising movement of the 1920s.
- Sufi/ Sufism* – respectively a Muslim mystic, and the strand of mystical Islam associated with the *pirs* and *khanaqahs*.
- surah* – chapter of the Qur’an.
- swaraj* – independence, self-rule.
- tabarraḥ* – the Shi‘a cursing of the Sunni Caliphs and their denunciation for their usurpation of ‘Ali.
- tabligh* – dissemination/ proselytisation of Islamic knowledge.
- tabut* – a Shi‘a procession performed in some towns such as Lucknow, in which a horse is adorned as the steed of Husain and led in the *juloos*.
- tafsir* – the science of Qur’anic exegesis.
- tajdid* – Islamic religious renewal or reform.
- takhlus* – the name of authorship.
- talaq* – divorce.
- talib* – student.
- ta‘lif* – compendium of the writings of exalted past scholars, distinct from *tasnif*.
- taluqdar* – a large-scale landowner whose proprietary rights were established by the British after 1857.
- tamasha* – show, spectacle.
- tanzim* (pl. *tanzimat*) – organisation or regulation of religious doctrine, practice or community.
- taqiyya* – in Shi‘ism, the concealment or dissimulation of true religious beliefs in circumstances of potential danger or humiliation from other religious communities.
- taqlid* – in Shi‘ism, the emulation of or subservience to a chosen *mujtahid* in matters of religious law; the forsaking of personal *ijtihad* in preference for that of others.
- taqvim* (pl. *taqavim*) – order, organisation.
- tarjumah* – translation.
- tasawuf* – Islamic mysticism/ Sufism.

tasnif – newly authored tract, distinct from *ta'lif*.

tauhid – the oneness of God.

ta'ziya/ ta'ziyadari – an effigy of the tomb of Imam Husain, symbolically revered and sometimes interred during Muharram/ the practice of carrying the *ta'ziya* in a procession to its site of burial, conducted during Muharram.

ta'ziya-khanah – a smaller structure in which the martyrdom of Imam Husain is commemorated, differing from an *imambara*.

tazkirah – a genre of biographical writing in Arabic, Persian and Urdu.

tehrif – alteration, corruption.

tehsildar – collector, revenue collector.

tehzib – culture or etiquette, a term heavily associated with Lucknow.

tir – see *mashk*.

'ulama – see *'alim*.

'ulum – see *'ilm*.

ummah – worldwide Muslim community.

'urs – the death anniversary of a Muslim *pir*.

ustad (pl. *ustaden*) – religious teacher.

usul – see *asl*.

Usuli – the dominant branch of 'Isna 'Ashari Shi'ism since the eighteenth century. It differs from Akhbari Shi'ism in that it accepts forms of intellectual and analogical reasoning as legitimate methods of jurisprudence, and in consequence has come to imbue its religious leaders with a greater degree of legal and charismatic authority.

vatan – homeland, often denoting one's ancestral region or *qasbah*.

Wahhabi – a reformist school dating from the eighteenth century, renowned for their zealous and uncompromising opposition to any custom deemed to undermine the oneness of God.

wa'iz (pl. *wa'izen*) – the preacher of sermons in a mosque.

wajib – compulsory.

waqf (pl. *auqaf*) – a religious endowment directed to the upkeep of institutions such as mosques, *madrasas* and *imambaras*.

wasifa – scholarship

wasiqa/ wasiqadar – pension offered by the Government of India/ in Lucknow, the disenfranchised former nobility of the Nawabi Court.

waza'if – charity.

zakir – one who remembers God by reciting his names and praises; in Shi'ism, the term often refers to a preacher who recites the glories of the Imams during Muharram.

zamindar – landholder.

ziarat – in Shi'ism, most commonly denotes pilgrimage to the shrine cities, or a visitation to other sacred ground.

zikr – the 'remembrance' of God; the practice of reciting the names of God and, in the case of Shi'ism, of the Imams.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIVATE PAPERS AND MANUSCRIPTS

NEHRU MUSEUM AND MEMORIAL LIBRARY, NEW DELHI (NML)

Private papers of Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi

Private papers of Muhammad Sha'fi Daudi

Private papers of Sayyid Husain Bilgrami (Imad-ul-Mulk)

ORIENTAL AND INDIA OFFICE COLLECTIONS, LONDON (OIOC)

Butler Collection, Mss. Eur. F.116

Haig Collection, Mss. Eur. F.115

Hailey Collection, Mss. Eur. E.220

Hartog Collection, Mss. Eur. E221

Linlithgow Collection, Mss. Eur. F.125

Meston Collection, Mss. Eur. F.136

Mitchell Collection, Mss. Eur. F.255

Quaid-i-Azam Collection, Ior. Neg. Pos.10760-10826

CENTRE OF SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES, CAMBRIDGE (CSAS)

H.A.N. Barlow Papers

Frampton Papers

OTHER

Private collections of Maulana Mustafa Husain Asif Ja'isi, Lucknow

Private collections of Maulana Sajjad Nasir 'Abaqati, Lucknow

Private collections of Sultan 'Ali Sadiq, Lucknow

Private collections of Sayyid Kazim Zaheer, New Delhi

OFFICIAL RECORDSORIENTAL AND INDIA OFFICE COLLECTIONS

Departmental Annual Reports (V/24):

Educational and Police Departments

Information Department Proceedings (L/I)

Public and Judicial Department Proceedings (L/PJ):

Fortnightly reports of Governors, Chief Commissioners and Chief Secretaries (L/PJ/5)

Annual files (L/PJ/6-8)

United Provinces Native Newspaper Reports (UPNNR) (L/R/5)

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI (NAI)

Government of India, Home Department Files:

Judicial, Public, Revenue and Sanitary Proceedings

Government of India, Home Political Files

UNITED PROVINCES STATE ARCHIVES, LUCKNOW (UPSA)

Proceedings and files of the Government of the United Provinces:

Education Department

General Administration Department (GAD)

Political Department

Public Department

Public Information Department

OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS AND ORGANISATIONAL PROCEEDINGSEnglish

Nevill, H.R. *District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume III: Muzaffarnagar* (Allahabad, 1903)

District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume VIII: Agra (Allahabad, 1905)

District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume XIV: Bijnor (Allahabad, 1908)

District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume XVI: Moradabad (Allahabad, 1911)

District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume XVII: Shahjahanpur (Allahabad, 1910)

District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume XXIII: Allahabad (Allahabad, 1911)

District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume XXVIII: Jaunpur (Allahabad, 1908)

District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume XXXVII: Lucknow (Allahabad, 1904)

District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume XLI: Hardoi (Allahabad, 1904)

District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, volume XLIII: Fyzabad (Allahabad, 1905)

William, J.Charles, *The report on the Census of Oudh, Volume I* (Allahabad, 1869)

Census of India 1881, North-Western Provinces and Oudh, Part I: Report (Allahabad, 1882)

Census of India 1901, North-Western Provinces and Oudh, Part I: Report (Allahabad, 1902)

Census of India 1911, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Part I: Report (Allahabad, 1912)

Census of India 1921, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Part I: Report (Allahabad, 1923)

Census of India, 1931, United Provinces, Part I: Report (Allahabad, 1933)

Census of India, 1941, United Provinces, Part I: Report (Delhi, 1942)

Census of India, 1951, Volume II Uttar Pradesh, Part I-A, Report (Allahabad, 1953)

Census of India 1961, Monograph serie, no.3: Moharram in two cities, Lucknow and Delhi (Delhi, 1962)

Gazetteer of the Rampur State (Allahabad, 1911)

The Indian Annual Register (multi-volume, Delhi. 1930-1944)

Urdu

All India Muhammadan Educational Conference, *Rō'idād-i-sālāna chhatā ijlās, 1891* (Aligarh, 1892)

Rō'idād-i-athāvīn sālāna ijlās, bēmaqām Mādrās, 27-30 December 1901 (Aligarh, 1902)

Rō'idād-i-tristīān sālāna ijlās, munaqīda 26 October 1902 (Aligarh, 1902)

Rō'idād-i-athāvīn sālāna ijlās, bēmaqām Luckna'u, 1904 (Aligarh, 1905)

Rapōrt-i- ijlās-i-sālāna-i-Āl Indiā Muhamadān Anglō-ōrī'ēntal Ejūkeshanal Kānferans, 27-29 December 1906 (Aligarh, 1907)

Rapōrt-i- ijlās-i-sālāna-i-Āl Indiā Muhamadān Anglō-ōrī'ēntal Ejūkeshanal Kānferans, bēmaqām Luckna'u 28-30 December 1912 (Aligarh, 1913)

All India Shi'a Conference, *Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-awal-i-Āl Indiā Shī'a Kānferans* (Lucknow, 1908)

Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i- dōm-i-Āl Indiā Shī'a Kānferans (Lucknow, 1909)

Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i-chārhom-i-Āl Indiā Shī'a Kānferans, munaqīda 10-12 October 1910 (Lucknow 1911)

Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i- chhatā-i-Āl Indiā Shī'a Kānferans, munaqīda 18-20 October 1912 (Lucknow, 1913)

Rō'idād-i-ijlās-i- hashtim-i-Āl Indiā Shī'a Kānferans, munaqīda 18-20 October 1914 (Lucknow, 1915)

Beg, Agha Haider Ali, *Imāmīa Ejūkeshanal Kāngrēs kā ijlās-i-awal ma'rūf jalsa-i-gulshān-i-ta'līm-i-Imāmīa* (Fategarh, 1892)

Imāmīa Ejūkeshanal Kāngrēs kā jalsa-i-sālāna imtehān sāl-i-dōm 1310, ma'rūf jalsa-i-gulshān-i-ta'līm-i-Imāmīa (Fategarh, 1892)

Imamiya Mission, *Sālāna rapōrt-i-Imāmīa Mishan Luckna'u: bābta-i-sāl-i-awal* (Lucknow, 1933)

Nadva't ul-'Ulama, *Kāravā'ī-i-daftar-i-Nadva't ul-'Ulamā, ya'nī jamā'at-ul-'ulamā* (Lucknow, 1894)

Rō'idād-i- jalsa-i-dōm-i-Nadva't ul-'Ulamā (Lucknow, 1895)

Rō'idād-i- jalsa-i-sōm-i- Nadva't ul-'Ulamā (Lucknow, 1896)

PRINTED PRIMARY SOURCES

English

Ali, Syed Ameer, *The Personal Law of the Mahomedans (according to all the schools), together with a comparative sketch of inheritance among the Sunnis and the Shiahhs* (London, 1880)

Tagore Law Lectures, 1884: The law relating to gifts, trusts and testamentary dispositions among the Mohammedans, according the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafei, and Shiah schools (Calcutta, 1885)

Arnold, Thomas W., *The Caliphate* (Oxford, 1924)

Khaliquzzaman, Choudhry, *Pathway to Pakistan* (Lahore, 1961)

Khan, Hamid Ali ed., *The certificates etc of Hakim Mohamed Amjad Ali Khan, Hakim Mohamed Niaz Ali Khan, Khan Bahadur Sheikh Altaf Hasan Khan, and Munshi Shaukat Hasan* (Lucknow, 1899)

Khan, Mirza Sajjad Ali ed., *Why 14,000 Shias went to jail? U.P. Congress Government and justice, "Fundamental rights of people overthrown", severe repression of the Shia minority* (Lucknow, circa 1939)

Khan, Mushtaq Husain, *Inter-religionary amity, or is it possible to be friendly and affectionate to aliens in religion?* (Lahore, 1891)

Laljee, Hosseinbhoj A., *Shia Muslims' case* (Bombay, circa 1950)

Mulk, Zafar-ul, *Shia-Sunni dispute: its causes and cure, a critical analysis of the presidential address of Sir Sultan Ahmed* (Badaun, circa 1940)

Sleeman, William Henry, *Journey through the kingdom of Oude in 1849-1850: with private correspondence relating to the annexation of Oude to British India* (London, 1858)

Smith, William Cantwell, *Modern Islam in India* (Lahore, 1963)

Zaheer, Syed Ali ed., *The dead past* (Lucknow, 1950)

Abstracts of the proceedings of the Mahomedan Literary Society of Calcutta: lecture on a question of Mahomedan law involving the duty of Mahomedans in British India towards the ruling power (Calcutta, 1871)

Collection of papers relating to the Hooghly Imambara, 1815-1910 (Calcutta, 1914)

Urdu

Ahmad, Shamraluddin, *Shikast-i- 'azīm bā' i-ādā-i-Qur'ān-i-karīm* (Lucknow, 1920)

'Ali, Sa'id Abid, *Fāzilāt-nāma-i-ta'ziya* (Bahraich, 1908)

'Ali, Sayyid Hamza, *Hāq kī kasōtī* (Delhi, 1916)

Tashīh ul-aqā'id (Amroha, 1919)

Ansar, Haji Sayyid 'Ali, *Masā'il-i-Ja'firīya* (Fyzabad and Jaunpur, 1915)

Aqa, Sayyid, *Taqrīr-ul-'alī'atēn* (Lucknow, 1895-6)

Bijnori, Muhammad Rahim-ullah, *Ibtāl-i-usūl-ul-Shī'a* (Bijnor, 1903)

Farooqi, Abdul Shakoor, *Tehrīf kī khāna sāz haqīqāt kā jawāb* (Lucknow, 1933)

Hasan, Aqa, *Khazāna't ul-masā'il ul-fiqhīya* (Lucknow, 1894)

Hasan, Aqa, *Tarjuma-i-Imād-ul-Islām hēsa-i-awal: kitāb-ul-tōhīd* (Lucknow, circa 1905)

Hasan, Nur-ul, *Tawārīkh shahān-i-ma'zīya-i-mazhab-i-'Isnā 'Asharīa* (Lucknow, 1896)

Hasan, Sayyid Shafiq, *Asl-ul-usūl* (Bijnor, 1918)

Hashmi, Mahmud Ahmad, *Tārīkh-i-Amrōha* (Delhi, 1930)

Hilli, Ja'far ibn Sa'id-ul, *Jāmi' ul-Ja'frī: sharī'at-ul-Islām* (Lucknow, circa 1870s).

Husain, Habib Husain ibn Ahmad, *Sawānih-i-'umrī-i-Ghulām Hasnēn Kintōrī* (Lahore, 1904)

Husain, Sa'id Sajjad, *Aijāz-i-Dā'ūdī* (Delhi, 1912)

Husain, Sayyid Muhammad, *Budra-i-Hēdarīya li-naqz-i-fēsla-i-Abī Bakrīya* (Muzaffarnagar, 1910)

Husain, Sayyid Mumtaz, *Risāla-i-kifan-pōsh līdaran—i-qōm* (Amroha, 1915)

Husain, Sayyid Nasir, *Mō'izā-i-sābi'a* (Lucknow, 1904)

Husain, Shaikh Ahmad, *Ba'z Musulmānōn ki afsōsnāk ghalat fehmi* (Lucknow, 1897)

Ba'z Musulmānōn kī afsōsnāk ghalat fehmi (2nd edition: Muzaffarnagar, 1915)

Imamiya Mission, *Khatīb-i-āl-i-Muhamad* (Lucknow, 1933-34)

Jarchvi, Sayyid, Aja'iz Husain Rizvi, *Anjuman-i-Wazīfa-i-Sādāt-va-Mōminīn silvar jūbilī nambar* (New Delhi, 1937)

Jauhar, Sayyid Mujahid Husain, *Hayāt-i-niswān* (Amroha, circa 1928)

Masnawi Mēwā-i-Shīrīn (Amroha, 1915)

Kazim, Sayyid Amir, *Ehqāq-ul-hāq-ul-ibtāl-ul-bātil* (Bijnor, 1906)

Kazim, Shaikh Muhammad, *Tanqīd-ul-taqlīd* (Jaunpur, 1915)

Khan, Amjad 'Ali, *Kanz ul-ma'rifāta* (Lucknow, 1891)

- Shāms-ul-Tawārīkh* (Lucknow, 1898)
- Khan, Ghulam Haider, *Tehqīq-i-Ja'farī*, (Lucknow, 1888)
- Khan, Hakim Ahmad 'Ali, *Azādārī-i-māh-i-Muharam* (Lucknow, 1905)
- Lucknawi, Sayyid Muhammad Hadi, *Wazī'dārān-i-Luckna'u* (Lucknow, 1908)
- Mehdi, Sayyid Agha, *'Alī ōr Ka'ba* (Lucknow, 1933)
- Naqvi, Jamal Ahmad, *Tārīkh-i-sādāt-i-Amrōha* (Hyderabad, 1934)
- Naqvi, Sayyid 'Ali Naqī, *Qātilān-i-Husēn kā mazhab* (Lucknow, 1932-3)
- Tehrīf-i-Qur'ān kī haqīqāt* (Lucknow, 1932-3)
- Tazkira-i-hifāz Shī'a, hēsa-i-awal* (Lucknow, 1933)
- Ittehād ul-farīqēn* (Lucknow, 1933)
- Tijārat ōr Islām* (Lucknow, 1933)
- Rizvi, Akbar Husain, *Madrasa 't ul-Wā'izēn kī āwāz* (Lucknow, circa 1928)
- Rizvi, Sayyid Aal Ahmad, *Tārīkh-i-Amrōha kē ēk nōt par ijmālī nazar* (Aligarh, 1930)
- Saddiqi, Muhammad Ashfaq Husain, *Mujādala hasna* (Moradabad, 1918)
- Safi, 'Ali Naqī, *Sahīfa 't ul-millat-i-ma'rūf be-lakhat jagir* (Lucknow, undated)
- Sadr ul-Din, Sa'id Isma'il bin, *Sīrāt-ul-Mustaqīm* (Lucknow, 1898-9)
- Sufi, Sa'dat Ali, *Tazkira-i-Imāmēn* (Moradabad, 1898)
- Zuberi, Abid, *Bāl-i-Humā* (Lucknow, 1940)
- Shī'a-va-Sunī kē munāzarē san 1328 hijrī par tehqīqī nazar* (Lucknow, 1910)
- Shī'a swārāj ōr is kē vāqī'āt qābil-indirāj* (Qadian, circa 1925)
- Tārīkh-i-Khilāfāt* (Lucknow, 1924)

RE-PRINTED PRIMARY SOURCES

English

- Ali, Mrs. Meer Hasan, *Observations on the Mussalmauns of India* (Karachi, 1978)
- Aziz, Kursheed Kamal, *Ameer Ali: his life and work* (Lahore, 1968)

Muslims under Congress rule, 1937-1939: a documentary record (vol.I, Lahore, 1978; vol. II, Lahore, 1979)

Barrier, N. Gerald, *Roots of communal politics* (New Delhi, 1976)

Fyzee, Asaf A.A., *Outlines of Muhammadan Law* (New Delhi, 2003)

Gandhi, M.K, *Hind swaraj*, in Anthony J. Parel ed., *Hind swaraj and other writings* (New Delhi, 1997)

Hunter, W.W., *The Indian Musulmans* (New Delhi, 2002)

Mian, Syed Mohammad Mian, *The prisoners of Malta (asira'n-e-Malta)*, translated into English by Mohammad Anwer Hussain and Hasan Imam (New Delhi, 2005)

Naqvi, Syed Ali Naqi, *History of Islam*, translated into English by Murtaza Husain (Delhi, 2002)

The leading lights of Islam: English translation of Rahnumayane Islam (Delhi, 2002)

Pirzada, Syed Sharifuddin, *Foundations of Pakistan* (Vol I and II, Karachi, 1970; Vol III, Karachi, 1990)

Sharar, Abdul Halim, *Lucknow: the last phase of an oriental culture* (London, 1975)

Smith, William Cantwell, *Modern Islam in India: a social analysis* (Lahore, 1947)

Islam in modern history (Princeton, 1957)

Tirmizi, S.A.I., ed., *The paradoxes of partition (1937-1947): Volume 1, 1937-1939* (New Delhi, 1998)

Wasti, Syed Razi ed., *Syed Ameer Ali on Islamic history and culture* (Lahore, 1968)

Zaheer, Syed Kazim ed., *The memoirs of Syed Ali Zaheer* (New Delhi, 2004)

Urdu

Ali, Rahman, *Tazkira-i-'ulamā-i-Pākīstān va Hind* (Karachi, 1961)

Sharar, Abdul Halim, *Guzashta Luckna'u yā mashrīq kē tamadun kā ākhirī numāna* (Delhi, 1985)

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

English

Bombay Chronicle (Bombay), CSAS

Dawn (Delhi), CSAS

The Independent (Allahabad), CSAS and OIOC

The Leader (Allahabad), CSAS and OIOC

National Herald (Lucknow), CSAS

The Pioneer (Lucknow), NML

Tribune (Lahore), CSAS

Urdu

Aligarh Institute Gazette (Aligarh), CSAS

Al-Hilal (Calcutta), NML

Hukumaran (Lucknow, 27 April 1939), Proscribed Publications (Urdu), OIOC

Sarfaraz (Lucknow), NML

BOOKS, ARTICLES AND UNPUBLISHED THESES

English

Abaqati, Abbas Nasir Saeed and Murtaza Nasir Saeed, *Mazar-e-Shaheed-e-Salis* (Lucknow, circa 2000)

Abou-Zahab, Mariam, 'The Sunni-Shia conflict in Jhang,' in Imtiaz Ahmad and Helmut Reifeld eds., *Lived Islam in South Asia: adaptation, accommodation and conflict* (New Delhi, 2004), pp.135-48.

Ahmad, Aziz, *Islamic modernism in Indian and Pakistan, 1857-1964* (London, 1967).

Ahmad, Imtiaz, 'Introduction,' in Imtiaz Ahmad ed., *Ritual and religion among Muslims in India* (Delhi, 1981), pp.1-20.

'The Shia-Sunni dispute in Lucknow, 1905-1980,' in Milton Israel and Narendra K. Wagle eds., *Islamic society and culture: essays in honour of Professor Aziz Ahmad* (Delhi, 1983), pp.335-350.

- Ahmad, Mumtaz, 'Islamic fundamentalism in South Asia: the Jamaat-i-Islami and the Tablighi Jamaat of South Asia,' in Martin Marty and Scott Appleby eds., *Fundamentalisms observed, Volume 1* (Chicago, 1991), pp.457-530.
- Amir, Safia, 'Semantics of the word Qawm: a study of Sir Sayyad Ahmad Khan.' in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* (49, 4, 2001), pp.53-61.
- Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London, 1991)
- Ansari, Khizar Humayun, *The emergence of socialist thought among north Indian Muslims 1917-1947* (Lahore, 1990)
- Ansari, Sarah F.D., *Sufi saints and state power: the pirs of Sind, 1843-1947* (Cambridge, 1992)
- Ansari, Wali-ul-Haq, *Cambridge of India: Farangi Mahal, past and present* (Lucknow, 2004)
- Arjomand, Said Amir, 'Ideological revolution in Shi'ism,' in Said Amir Arjomand ed., *Authority and political culture in Shi'ism* (Albany, 1988), pp.178-212.
- Bayly, Christopher A., *The local roots of Indian politics: Allahabad 1880-1920* (Oxford, 1975)
- 'The small town and Islamic gentry in north India: the case of Kara,' in Kenneth Ballhatchet and John Harrison eds., *The city in South Asia, pre-modern and modern* (London, 1980), pp.20-49.
- Rulers, townsmen and bazaars: north Indian society in the age of British expansion 1770-1870* (New Delhi, 1983)
- 'The pre-history of "communalism"? Religious conflict in India, 1700-1860,' in *Modern Asian Studies* (19, 2 1985), pp.177-203.
- Empire and information: intelligence gathering and social communication in India, 1780-1880* (Cambridge, 1996)
- Bayly, Christopher A. and Fawaz, Leila, 'Introduction: the connected world of empires,' in Leila Tarazi Fawaz and C.A. Bayly eds., *Modernity and culture: from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean* (New York, 2002), pp.1-27.
- Bhatty, Zarina, 'Status and power in a Muslim dominated village of Uttar Pradesh,' in Imtiaz Ahmad ed., *Caste and social stratification among the Muslims* (New Delhi, 1973), pp.89-106.
- Brass, Paul R., *Language, religion and politics in north India* (Cambridge, 1974)
- The production of Hindu-Muslim violence in contemporary India* (New Delhi, 2003)
- Brennan, Lance, 'The illusion of security: the background to Muslim separatism in the United Provinces,' in Mushirul Hasan ed., *India's partition: process, strategy and mobilisation* (New Delhi, 1993), pp.322-60.
- Brown, Judith, *Gandhi's rise to power: Indian politics 1915-1922* (Cambridge, 1972)

- Chatterji, Joya, *Bengal divided: Hindu communalism and partition, 1932-1947* (Cambridge, 1994)
- Cole, Juan R. I., *Roots of north Indian Shi'ism in Iran and Iraq: religion and state in Awadh, 1722-1859* (California, 1988)
- 'Iranian culture and South Asia, 1500-1900,' in Nikki R. Keddie and Rudi Matthee eds., *Iran and the surrounding world: interactions in culture and cultural politics*. (Washington, 2002), pp.15-35.
- Sacred space and holy war: the politics, culture and history of Shi'ite Islam* (New York, 2002)
- Cole, Juan R.I. and Keddie, Nikki R., 'Introduction,' in Juan R.I. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie eds., *Shi'ism and social protest* (New Haven, 1986), pp.1-29.
- Copland, Ian, *The princes of India in the endgame of empire, 1917-1947* (Cambridge, 1997)
- Dalmia, Vasudha, *The nationalisation of Hindu traditions: Bharatendu Harischandra and nineteenth-century Banaras* (New Delhi, 1996)
- Duben, Alan and Behar, Cem, *Istanbul households: marriage, family and fertility 1880-1940* (Cambridge, 1991)
- Eickelman, Dale F., 'Mass higher education and the religious imagination in contemporary Arab societies,' in *American Ethnologist* (19, 4, 1992), pp.643-55.
- Enayat, Hamid, *Modern Islamic political thought: the response of the Shi'i and Sunni Muslims to the twentieth century* (London, 1982)
- Ewing, Katherine, 'The politics of Sufism: redefining the saints in Pakistan,' *Journal of Asian Studies* (42, 2, 1983), pp.251-68.
- Farooqi, F.U., *Lucknow: a centre of Arabic and Islamic studies during the nineteenth century* (New Delhi, 1999)
- Fattah, Hala, 'Islamic universalism and the construction of regional identity in turn of the century Basra: Sheikh Ibrahim Haidari's book revisited,' in Leila Tarazi Fawaz and C.A. Bayly eds., *Modernity and culture: from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean* (New York, 2002), pp.112-29.
- Fischer, Michael M.J., *Iran: from religious dispute to revolution* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1980)
- Fisher, Michael H., *A clash of cultures: Awadh, the British and the Mughals* (Delhi, 1987)
- Forward, Martin, *The failure of Islamic modernism? Syed Ameer Ali's interpretation of Islam* (Bern, 1999)
- Friedmann, Yohanan, *Prophecy continuous: aspects of Ahmadi religious thought and its medieval background* (New Delhi, 1989)
- Freitag, Sandra, 'Ambiguous public arenas and coherent personal practice: Kanpur Muslims

1913-1931,' in Katherine Ewing ed., *Shari'at and ambiguity in South Asian Islam* (New Delhi, 1988), pp.143-63.

Collective action and community: public arenas and the emergence of communalism in colonial north India (Berkeley, 1989)

Ganju, Sarojini, 'The Muslims of Lucknow – 1919-1939,' in Kenneth Ballhatchet and John Harrison eds., *The city in South Asia: pre-modern and modern* (London, 1980), pp.279-99.

Geertz, Clifford ed., *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays* (New York, 1973)

Ghosh, Anindita, *Power in print: popular publishing and the politics of language and culture in a colonial society* (New Delhi, 2006)

Gilmartin, David, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the making of Pakistan* (Delhi, 1989)

Goodman, J.M., Graham, B.D., Reeves, P.D., *Handbook to elections in Uttar Pradesh, 1920-1951* (Delhi, 1975)

Gooptu, Nandini, *The politics of the urban poor in early twentieth century India* (Cambridge, 2001)

Gopal, Sarvepalli ed., *Anatomy of a confrontation: Ayodhya and the rise of communal politics in India* (New Delhi, 1991)

Gould, William, *Hindu nationalism and the language of politics in late colonial India* (Cambridge, 2004)

Haq, Mushir-ul, *Islam in secular India* (Simla, 1972)

Hardy, Peter, *The Muslims of British India* (Cambridge, 1972)

Hasan, Amir, *Palace culture of Lucknow* (Delhi, 1983)

Hasan, Mushirul, 'Religion and politics in India: The *ulama* and the Khilafat Movement,' in Mushirul Hasan ed., *Communal and pan-Islamic trends in colonial India*, (Delhi, 1985), pp.1-26.

'Nationalist and separatist trends in Aligarh, 1915-47,' A.K. Gupta ed., *Myth and reality: the struggle for freedom in India 1945-47* (Delhi, 1987), pp.116-52.

'Sectarianism in Indian Islam: the Shia-Sunni divide in the United Provinces,' in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* (27, 2, 1990), pp.209-28.

Nationalism and communal politics in India, 1916-1928 (New Delhi, 1991)

'The Muslim mass contacts campaign: analysis of a strategy of political mobilisation,' in Mushirul Hasan ed., *India's partition: process, strategy and mobilisation* (New Delhi, 1993), pp.133-59.

Legacy of a divided nation: India's Muslims since independence (London, 1997)

'Traditional rites and contested meanings: sectarian strife in colonial Lucknow,' in

- Violette Graff ed., *Lucknow: memories of a city* (New Delhi, 1997), pp.114-135.
- From pluralism to separatism: qasbas in colonial Awadh* (New Delhi, 2004)
- Hashmi, Masroor Ali Akhtar, *Muslim response to Western education: a study of four pioneer institutions* (Delhi, 1989)
- Hasnain, Nadeem and Husain, Sheikh Abrar, *Shias and Shia Islam in India: a study in society and culture* (New Delhi, 1988)
- Hill, John L., 'Muslims and the Congress organisation in Lucknow, 1885-1905,' *The Congress and Indian nationalism: historical perspectives*, ed. John L. Hill (London, 1991), pp.133-57.
- Hjortshoj, Keith, 'Shi'i identity and the significance of Muharram in Lucknow, India,' in Martin Kramer ed., *Shi'ism, resistance and revolution* (London, 1987), pp.289-308.
- Hollister, John Norman, *The Shi'a of India* (London, 1953)
- Hourani, Albert, *Arabic thought in the liberal age, 1798-1939* (London, 1962)
- 'Introduction: the Islamic city in the light of recent research,' in A.H. Hourani and S.M. Stern eds., *Papers on Islamic history I: the Islamic city, a colloquium* (Oxford, 1970), pp.9-24.
- 'Ottoman reforms and the politics of notables,' in Albert Hourani ed., *The emergence of the modern Middle East* (London, 1981), pp.36-66.
- Husain, S.M. Azizuddin, *Medieval towns, a case study of Amroha and Jalali* (New Delhi, 1995)
- Jalal, Ayesha, *The sole spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge, 1985)
- 'Exploding communalism: the politics of Muslim identity in South Asia,' in Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal eds., *Nationalism, democracy and development: state and politics in India* (Delhi, 1997), pp.76-103.
- Self and sovereignty: individual and community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London, 2000)
- 'Negotiating colonial modernity and cultural difference: Indian Muslim conceptions of community and nation, 1878-1914,' in Leila Tarazi Fawaz and C.A. Bayly eds., *Modernity and culture: from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean* (New York, 2002), pp.230-60.
- Jones, Justin, 'Sectarianism and identity politics among the Shia Muslims of Lucknow in late colonial India' (unpublished M.Phil thesis, Cambridge, 2003)
- Jones, Kenneth W., *Socio-religious reform movements in British India* (Cambridge, 1989)
- Joshi, Sanjay, *Fractured modernity: making of a middle class in colonial India* (New Delhi, 2001)

- Juergensmeyer, Mark, *Religion as social vision: the movement against untouchability in twentieth-century Punjab* (Berkeley, 1982)
- Keddie, Nikki R., *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din Afghani: A political biography* (London, 1972)
- Modern Iran: roots and results of revolution* (Yale, 2004)
- Keddie, Nikki R. ed., *Religion and politics in Iran: Shi'ism from quietism to revolution* (Massachusetts, 1983)
- Khan, Abdul Rashid, *The All-India Muslim Educational Conference: its contribution to the cultural development of Indian Muslims* (Karachi, 2001)
- Kozlowski, Gregory C., *Muslim endowments and society in British India* (Cambridge, 1985)
- Kumar, Nita, *Artisans of Banaras: popular culture and identity, 1880-1986* (Princeton, 1988)
- Kurzman, Charles, *Modernist Islam 1840-1940: a sourcebook* (New York, 2002)
- Larson, Gerald James ed., *Religion and personal law in secular India: a call to judgement* (Indiana, 2001)
- Laws, Rama Amritmal, 'Lucknow, society and politics, 1856-1885,' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of New South Wales, 1979)
- Lelyveld, David, 'Three Aligarh students: Aftab Ahmad Khan, Ziauddin Ahmad and Muhammad Ali' in *Modern Asian Studies* (9, 2, 1975), pp.227-40.
- Aligarh's first generation: Muslim solidarity in British India* (Princeton, 1978)
- Liebeskind, Claudia, *Piety on its knees: three Sufi traditions in South Asia in modern times* (Delhi, 1998)
- Litvak, Meir, *Shi'i scholars of nineteenth-century Iraq: the 'ulama of Najaf and Karbala'* (Cambridge, 1998)
- Llewellyn Jones, Rosie, *A fatal friendship: the Nawabs, the British and the city of Lucknow* (Delhi, 1985)
- Mahmudabad, Raja Muhammad Amir Akhtar Khan, 'Some memories,' in Mushirul Hasan ed., *India's partition: process, strategy and mobilisation* (New Delhi, 1993), pp.415-26.
- Makdisi, Ussama, *The culture of sectarianism: community, history and violence in nineteenth-century Ottoman Lebanon* (London, 2000)
- Mallat, Chibli, *The renewal of Islamic Law: Muhammad Baqer as-Sadr, Najaf and the Shi'i International* (Cambridge, 1993)
- Mathur, Y.B., *Muslims and changing India* (New Delhi, 1972)
- Masselos, Jim, 'Change and custom in the format of the Bombay Muhurrum during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries,' *South Asia* (5, 2, 1982), pp.47-67.

Mervin, Sabrina, 'The clerics of Jabal 'Amil and the reform of religious teaching in Najaf since the beginning of the twentieth century,' in Rainer Brunner and Werner Ende eds., *The Twelver Shia in modern times* (Leiden, 2001), pp.79-86.

Metcalf, Barbara Daly, *Islamic revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Princeton, 1982)

'Introduction,' in Barbara Daly Metcalf ed., *Moral conduct and authority: the place of adab in South Asian Islam* (London, 1984), pp.1-22.

'Meandering Madrasas: education, itinerancy and the Tablighi Jama'at,' in Nigel Crook ed., *The transmission of knowledge in South Asia* (New Delhi, 1996), pp.49-61.

'Reinventing Islamic politics in interwar India: the clergy commitment to composite nationalism,' in Mushirul Hasan and Asim Roy eds., *Living together separately: cultural India in history and politics* (New Delhi, 2005), pp.389-404.

Metcalf, Barbara Daly ed., *Islamic contestations: essays on Muslims in India and Pakistan* (New Delhi, 2004)

Metcalf, Thomas, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge, 1994)

Land, landlords and the British Raj: northern India in the nineteenth century (Berkeley, 1999)

Minault, Gail, *The Khilafat movement: religious symbolism and political mobilisation in India* (Columbia, 1982)

'Sayyid Karamat Husain and education for women,' in Violette Graff ed., *Lucknow: memories of a city* (Delhi, 1997), pp.155-164.

Secluded scholars: women's education and Muslim social reform in colonial India (New Delhi, 1998)

Misra, Amaresh, *Lucknow: fire of grace, the story of its renaissance, revolution and the aftermath* (New Delhi, 2004)

Moaz, Moshe, *Ottoman reform in Syria and Palestine, 1840-1861: the impact of the Tanzimat on politics and society* (Oxford, 1968)

Mohapatra, Prabhu, 'Unmaking the coolie: resistance and accommodation among Indian labour in the Caribbean,' in Arvind N. Das and Marcel van der Linden eds., *Work and social change in Asia: essays in honour of Jan Breman* (New Delhi, 2003), pp.149-197.

Momen, Moojan, *An introduction to Shi'i Islam: the history and doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism* (New York, 1985)

Mujeeb, M., *The Indian Muslims* (London, 1967)

Mukerjee R. and Singh B., *Social profiles of a metropolis: social and economic structure of Lucknow, capital of Uttar Pradesh, 1954-56* (London, 1961)

Nakash, Yitzhak, *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton, 2003)

Nasr, Seyyed Vali Reza, *Mawdudi and the making of Islamic revivalism* (New York, 1996)

'The rise of Sunni militancy in Pakistan: the changing role of Islamism and the ulama in society and politics,' in *Modern Asian Studies* (34, 1, 2000), pp.139-80.

'The Iranian revolution and changes in Islamism in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan,' in Nikki R. Keddie and Rudi Matthee eds., *Iran and the surrounding world: interactions in culture and cultural politics* (Washington, 2002), pp.327-54.

The Shia revival: how conflicts within Islam will shape the future (New York, 2006)

Oberoi, Harjot, *The construction of religious boundaries: culture, identity and diversity in the Sikh tradition* (Delhi, 1994)

Oldenburg, Veena Talwar, *The making of colonial Lucknow, 1856-1877* (Princeton, 1984)

Ozcan, Azmi, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain 1877-1924* (Leiden, 1997)

Page, David, *Prelude to partition: the Indian Muslims and the imperial system of control, 1920-1932* (Delhi, 1982)

Pandey, Gyanandra, "'Encounters and calamities": the history of a north Indian *qasba* in the nineteenth century,' in Ranajit Guha ed., *Subaltern studies III: writings on South Asian history and society* (New Delhi, 1984), pp.231-70.

The construction of communalism in colonial north India (Delhi, 1990)

Pinault, David, *Horse of Karbala: Muslim devotional life in India* (New York, 2001)

Powell, Avril Ann, *Muslims and missionaries in pre-Mutiny India* (London, 1993)

Qureshi, M. Naeem, 'The 'ulama of British India and the Hijrat of 1920,' in *Modern Asian Studies* (13, 1, 1979), pp.41-59.

Reeves, Peter. D., *Landlords and governments in Uttar Pradesh: a study of their relations until zamindari abolition* (Bombay, 1991)

'Lucknow politics: 1920-1947,' in Violette Graff ed., *Lucknow: memories of a city* (New Delhi, 1997), pp.213-26.

Rizvi, Saiyid Athar Abbas, *Shah Wali-Allah and his times: a study of eighteenth century Islam, politics and society in India* (Canberra, 1980)

Shah 'Abd al-Aziz: Puritanism, sectarian polemics and jihad (Canberra, 1982)

A socio-intellectual history of the Isna 'Ashari Shi'is in India, Volumes I and II (Delhi, 1986).

Rizvi, Syed Najmul Raza, 'Shi'a Madaris of Awadh: historical development and present situation,' in Jan-Peter Hartung and Helmut Reifeld eds., *Islamic education, diversity and national identity: dīnī madāris in India post 9/11* (New Delhi, 2006), pp.104-31.

Robinson, Francis, 'Consultation and control: the United Provinces' government and its

allies, 1860-1906,' in *Modern Asian Studies* (5, 4, 1971), pp.313-336.

Separatism among Indian Muslims: the politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, 1860-1923 (Cambridge, 1974)

'An-Nizāmiyya: a group of Lucknow intellectuals in the early twentieth century,' in Christopher Shackle ed., *Urdu and Muslim South Asia: studies in honour of Ralph Russell* (London, 1989), pp.101-12.

'The re-emergence of Lucknow as a major political centre, 1899-early 1920s,' in Violette Graff ed., *Lucknow: memories of a city* (New Delhi, 1997), pp.196-212.

'Introduction,' *Islam and Muslim history in South Asia* (Oxford, 2000).

'Islam and the impact of print in South Asia,' in Francis Robinson ed., *Islam and Muslim history in South Asia* (New Delhi, 2000), pp.66-104.

'Islam and Muslim separatism,' in Francis Robinson ed., *Islam and Muslim history in South Asia* (New Delhi, 2000), pp.177-209.

'Religious change and the Self in Muslim South Asia since 1800,' in Francis Robinson ed., *Islam and Muslim history in South Asia* (New Delhi, 2000), pp.105-121.

'The Congress and the Muslims,' in Francis Robinson ed., *Islam and Muslim history in South Asia* (New Delhi, 2000), pp.210-30.

The 'ulama of Farangi Mahall and Islamic culture in South Asia (Delhi, 2001)

Saiyid, A.R., 'Ideal and reality in the observance of Moharram: a behavioural interpretation,' in Imtiaz Ahmad ed., *Ritual and religion among Muslims in India* (New Delhi, 1981), pp.113-42.

Sanyal, Usha, *Devotional Islam and politics in British India: Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi and his movement, 1870-1920* (Delhi, 1996)

Seal, Anil, *The emergence of Indian nationalism: competition and collaboration in the later nineteenth century* (Cambridge, 1968)

Searle Chatterjee, Mary, "'Wahabi" sectarianism among Muslims of Banaras,' in *Contemporary South Asia* (3, 2, 1994), pp.83-93.

Shah, S. Y., *Higher education and politics in colonial India: a study of Aligarh Muslim University, 1875-1920* (Delhi, 1996)

Shaikh, Farzana, 'Muslims and political representation in colonial India: the making of Pakistan,' in *Modern Asian Studies* (20, 3, 1986), pp.539-57.

Community and consensus in Islam: Muslim representation in colonial India (Cambridge, 1989)

'Millat and mahzab: rethinking Iqbal's political vision,' in Mushirul Hasan and Asim Roy eds., *Living together separately: cultural India in history and politics* (New Delhi, 2005), pp.366-88.

- Sikand, Yoginder, *The origins and development of the Tablighi-Jama'at: a cross-comparative study* (New Delhi, 2002)
- Sluglett, Peter, *Britain in Iraq 1914-1932* (London, 1976)
- Stark, Rodney and Bainbridge, Sims, 'Of churches, sects and cults: preliminary concepts for a theory of religious movements,' in *Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion* (18, 1979), pp.117-33.
- Stern, S.M., 'The constitution of the Islamic city,' in A.H. Hourani and S.M. Stern eds., *Papers on Islamic history I: the Islamic city, a colloquium* (Oxford, 1970), pp.25-50.
- Stoler, Ann Laura, *Carnal knowledge and imperial power: race and the intimate in colonial rule* (Berkeley, 2002)
- Talbot, Ian A., 'The growth of the Muslim League in the Punjab,' in Mushirul Hasan ed., *India's partition: process, strategy and mobilisation* (New Delhi, 1993), pp.233-58.
- Thomas, David A, 'Lucknow and Kanpur 1880-1920: stagnation and development under the Raj,' in *South Asia* (5, 2, 1982), pp.68-80.
- Tripp, Charles, *A history of Iraq* (Cambridge, 2002)
- Troll, Christian W., *Sayyid Ahmad Khan: a reinterpretation of Muslim theology* (New Delhi, 1978)
- Tyabji, Husain B., *Badruddin Tyabji: a biography* (Bombay, c.1952)
- Verkaaik, Oskar, *Migrants and militants: fun and urban violence in Pakistan* (Princeton, 2004)
- Vinogradow, Amal, 'The 1920 revolt in Iraq reconsidered: the role of tribes in national politics,' in *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (3, 1972), pp.123-39.
- Waines, David, *An introduction to Islam* (Cambridge, 1995)
- Watt, Carey, *Serving the nation: cultures of service, association and citizenship in colonial India* (New Delhi, 2005)
- Walbridge, Linda S. ed., *The most learned of the Shi'a: the institution of the Marja' Taqlid* (New York, 2001)
- Wright, Theodore P., 'Muslim kinship and modernisation: the Tyabji clan of Bombay,' in Imtiaz Ahmad ed., *Family, kinship and marriage among Muslims in India* (New Delhi, 1976), pp.217-38.
- 'The politics of Moslim sectarian conflict in India,' in *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* (Spring, 1980), pp.67-73.
- Zaman, Muhammad Qasim, 'Sectarianism in Pakistan: The radicalization of Shi'i and Sunni identities,' in *Modern Asian Studies* (36, 3, 2000), pp.689-716.
- The ulama in contemporary Islam: custodians of change* (Princeton, 2002)

Zavos, John, *The emergence of Hindu nationalism in India* (New Delhi, 2000)

Urdu

Hasan, Sayyid Sibte-ul, *Tazkira-i-Majīd, ahwāl-i-shahīd* (Agra, 1962-3)

Husain, Sayyid Murtaza, *Matla'-i-Anwār: tazkira-i-Shī'a afāzil-va-'ulamā, kabār-i-bar-i-saghīr-i-Pāk-va-Hind* (Karachi, 1981)

Ja'isi, Mustafa Husain Asif ed., *Khāndān-i-ijtihād nambar, shumāra che* (Lucknow, 2005)

Mian, Sayyid Muhammad, *'Ulama-i-Hind kā shāndār māzī*, Volume IV (Delhi, 1985)

Rizvi, Salamat, *Sayīd-ul-'ulamā: hayāt ōr kārnāmē* (Lucknow, 1988)

Rizvi, Sayyid Muhammad Naqī, *Farishtgān jahān: tazkira-i-khānwāda-i-Sayīd Muḥamad Bāqir Rizvī Kashmīrī Bāqir-ul-'Ulūm* (Lucknow, 2005)

Shamsi, Shakil Hasan, *Shī'a-Sunī qazīya: kitnā mazhabī kitnā sīyāsī?* (Lucknow, circa 2005)

Firdōs-i-Makān kā tazkira (Lucknow, circa 1960).

