

'Caste and caste based discriminations Among Indian Muslims' ≅

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### **Caste system pre-Islamic Arabian society:**

Before the advent of Islam, the Arabs considered the non-Arabs, inferior ('Ajmi) to them. Even Arab people pride on their own tribes. The *Quraish tribe* was servant of K'abah, so prided on them.

But their attitude was not like Indian caste system. They were marrying with different tribes. They used to do all kind of works. We can find such evidences in pre- Islamic era. Till now they use job titles with their names, like Haddad, (blacksmith/ ironsmith) Zayyat (oil presser), Najjar (carpenter), Hazza (shoes maker), Khayyat (tailor) etc.

There were two classes in pre-Islamic Arabic society i.e. free and slave. The free man could take benefits (physical relations) with slave woman but revers was not allowed.

By this example we can say that pre-Islamic Arabian society was divided into a society of upper and lower class, in other word it was based on class not caste.

A famous antheropologist Dr. Ghaus Ansari writes:

"The pre-Islamic Arabian society was devided into tribes and clans; social grades within the clan or tribe were unknown. Although rivaliries between different clans of the same tribe or between different tribes were quite common, and although inter-clan or inter-tribal fueds were also frequent, yet the the conception of superiority or inferiority of one clan or tribe in comparision to another clan or tribe was unknown in the sense it has come to acquire in existing plural socities."<sup>1</sup>

### **Caste and Islam:**

Islam is an egalitarian religion. It does not believe in casteism, racism or any kind of discrimination on the basis of nation, family, caste and creed. *The Holy Qur'an* itself says in Surah (chapter) *Al-Hujrat*:

"O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you

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<sup>1</sup> Ansari, Ghaus: *Muslim Caste in Uttar Pradesh (A Study of Culture Contact)*, Pub, The Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society, Lucknow, U.P.1960, Ch. 4.: Caste and Islam, p.28

with Allah is that (believer) who has *At-Taqwa* [i.e. one of the *Muttaqin* (pious - see V.2:2)]. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.<sup>1</sup>

*The Holy Qur'an* also says:

"The believers are nothing else than brothers (in Islamic religion). So make reconciliation between your brothers, and fear Allah, that you may receive mercy."<sup>2</sup>

The Prophet *Muhammad* (PBUH) is said to have declared:

"There are two things which can lead people to infidelity, one is weeping loudly on the dead body and another one is to consider others as low on the basis of their birth (caste)."<sup>3</sup>

A great Islamic scholar and Muhaddith '*Imam Nawwi*', put this hadith under the chapter of "*Declaring of some one as low on the basis of caste will lead people to infidelity*."<sup>4</sup>

The Prophet *Mohammad* (PBUH) said in the *Hajjat Al-weda'* (Farewell Pilgrimage/ the last Haj of the Prophet PBUH) in *Makka* [Mecca]:

"There is no superiority of Arab over non-Arab, of non-Arab over Arab, of white people over black people, of black people over white people. Superiority is only on the basis of piety".<sup>5</sup>

This concept of equality found an expression much later in Article 1 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR), 1948 which declared:

*"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."*<sup>6</sup>

Prophet *Mohammad* (PBUH) married "*Zainab Bint-e- Jahash Rz.*"<sup>7</sup> (the daughter of his real aunt from paternal side) with his free slave *Zaid bin Harthah Rz.* and *Zabaya'h Bint-e- Zubair Rz.* (the daughter of his real uncle from paternal side) with *Miqdad Kindi Rz.* (whose family profession was weaving).<sup>8</sup> After that he said:

"I married *Zaid bin Harthah Rz.* with *Zainab bint-e-Jehash Rz.* and *Zubaa'h bint-e- Zubair Rz.* with *Miqdad, Rz.* that people should know that the biggest superiority is the superiority of Islam."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Holy *Qur'an*, Surah *Al-Hujrat*, Verse: 13, (*The Holy Qur'an,49:13*). English tran. By: Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali, Ph.D. & Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, pub. Dar-us-Slam, Reyaz, K.S.A, online edition <http://www.dar-us-salam.com/TheNobleQuran/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> The Holy *Qur'an*, Surah *Al-Hujrat*, Verse: 10. (*The Holy Qur'an,49:10*)

<sup>3</sup> An-Nesa Puri, Muslim bin Hajjaj Al-Qasheri: *As-Sahih Ma' Sharah-e-hi An-Nawwi.* (Hadith Collection by Imam Muslim), Reyasat Al-Idarat Al-Buhoos Al-Islamiah. Kitabul Iman, Babo Ilaq Ismil Kufur 'Ala At-Ta'n Fin-Nasab W An-Niyahah. Vol.I, Part II, p.75.

<sup>4</sup> An-Nawwi, Muhiuddin sharf: *Sharhus Sahih Le Muslim*, Kitabul Iman, bab-o- Ilaq-e-Ismil Kufur A'la at-ta'n fin Nasab w An-neyahah al'a almyyit, pub. Reyasat-o-Idaratil Bohooth al-Islamiyah, 1/2/75

<sup>5</sup> Ash-Shaibani, Ahmad Bin Hambal, Al-Musnad, (Compendium of hadiths) Al-Maktab Al-A'rabia, Al-Maktab Al-Islami, Vol.V, p.411

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>

<sup>7</sup> Rz. Means "raza Allahu 'anhu / 'anha (May Allah be pleased with him /her.)

<sup>8</sup> Al-Aa'zmi, Habibur Rahman: *Ansab-o-Kafayat Ki sharyee hathiyat* (Caste and kafa in the light of Islamic teachings), Al-Majm'a Al-ilmi, Markaz-e- tahqeeqat W khidmat-e-Ilmiyah. Mau Nath Bhanjan, Mau, UP, India ed. 1<sup>st</sup> 1999, p.68.

<sup>9</sup> Al-Khurasani, Saeed Bin Mansoor bin Shaibah Al-Milli: *Kitabus Sunan*, bab-o-Ma Jae Fil Munakehah, Al-Majlis al-Ilmi (Samlak Dhabel, India, ed. 1<sup>st</sup>), edited by: Habibur Rahman Al-Aazmi, p.146-147 Hadith No. 585.

Even prophet made free a slave lady whose name was Juwairiyah bint Al-Harith and married her. Juwairiyah was among the booty that fell to the Muslims from Bani Al-Mustaliq. She was a portion of Thabit bin Qais bin Shammās' share. He made her a covenant to set her free at a certain time. The Messenger of Allāh (Peace be upon him) accomplished the covenant and married her.

He also had two concubines. The first was Mariyah, the Coptic (an Egyptian Christian), a present gift from Al-Muqauqis, vicegerent of Egypt. The second one was Raihanah bint Zaid An-Nadriyah or Quraziyah, a captive from Bani Quraiza.<sup>1</sup>

The prophet had grazed goats of Makkah (Meccan) people for few rupees.<sup>2</sup> His wives "Zanab bint Jahash Rz. and Maimoonah Rz. had done occupation of leather cleaning."<sup>3</sup>

There are many great companions of prophet who got confirmation of getting paradise in this world i.e. *Abu Bakr As-Siddique, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Zubair bin Awwam, Sayeed bin Zaid, Abu Obaidah bin Jarrah, Talhah bin Obaidillah and Abdur Rahman bin 'Awf* – (may Allah be please with them). But no one's name came in the *Holy Qur'an*. If any one's name came that he is a slave "*Zaid bin Harethah Rz*".<sup>4</sup>

On the day of *Makkah (Mecca)* victory, the prophet ordered *Bilal Habshi Rz.* (an African slave who was an Ethiopian born and was equal to Indian dalit) to call Aazan, on the roof of *Ka'bah*, and he offered his soulders to make ladder to ride on the roof of *Ka'bah*. Before it, he already made him muwazzin of prophets' mosque at Madinah.

## Islam in India:

Islam started to spread in South Indian by Muslim traders. Arab Muslims came into North Indian in 711 A.D. (92 A.H.). Aftr two and half centuries of the entrence of Arab Muslim in North India, non Arab Muslims came here.

When Islam came in India, because of these teachings of equality and brotherhood, many Hindus, especially Dalits and other 'low' castes, embraced Islam being victims of the Hindu caste system. As late as the early twentieth century, a Christian scholar *T.W. Arnold* remarked about the conditions of Dalits and 'low' castes thus:

"[...] In Travancore, certain of the lower castes may not come nearer than seventy four paces to a Brahman and have to make a grunting noise as they pass along the road, in order to give warning of their approach."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Mubarakpuri, Saifur Rahman, *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtum (The Sealed Nectar)*, Topic, The prophetic household, pp.216-217,

[http://www.biharanjuman.org/Ar\\_Raheeq\\_al\\_Makhtum.pdf](http://www.biharanjuman.org/Ar_Raheeq_al_Makhtum.pdf), accessed on 19.05.2011.

<sup>2</sup> Al- Bukhari, Abu Abdullah Mohammad bin Isma'eil: *Al-Sahi (Sahihul Bukhari)*, Darus Salam, Reyaz, K.S.A. ed. 3<sup>rd</sup> 2000, Ch. Kitabul Ijarah, Babu Ra'a Al-Ghanam 'ala Qarareet, Hadith No.2262.

Al-Qazweni, Abu Abdullah Mohammad bin Yazid Al-Rab'ei bin Majah: *Sunan Ibn Majah*, Darus Salam, Reyaz, K.S.A. ed. 3<sup>rd</sup> 2000, Abwab At-Tejarat, 5- Bab Al-San'aat, Hdith No.2149.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Nesapuri, Abu Al-Husain Muslim bin Hajjaj Al-Qushairi: *Al-Saheeh (Saheeh Musim)* Darus Salam, Reyaz, K.S.A. ed. 3<sup>rd</sup> 2000, Kitab An-Nikah, Bab: Nudb Man Raa, Fawaq'at fi Nafsehi , ila An Aatiya Imratahu Aw Jariyatahu, fayuwauquha. Hadith No. 1403

Al-'Asqalani, Ahmad bin Hajr: *Al-Isabah Fi tamyeez As-Sahabah*, loaded on <http://www.al-eman.com/Isamlib/viewtoc.asp?BID=397> Harf: Az-za, bab Zikru Man Ismoha Zainab, Name No. 470.

Ahmad bin Hambal: *Al-Musnad*, Hadees Abi Salmah bin 'Abd Al- Asad, Vol. 4, hadith No.15751.

<sup>4</sup> The Holy Qura'n, op.cit, Surah. Al-Ahzab, Verses: 37 (Qur'an:33:37).

<sup>5</sup> Arnold, T. W.: *The Preaching of Islam*, Low price publication, Delhi, ed. 2<sup>nd</sup> 1913. p.269.

Arnold writes about the spread of Islam in Bengal, quoting from Sir W.W.Hunter's Book "The religions of India" and another book "Wise" (p.32):

"To these poor people, fishermen, hunters, pirates and low-caste tillers of the soil, Islam came as a revelation from on high. It was the creed of the ruling race; its missionaries were men of zeal who brought the Gospel of the unity of God and the equality of men in its sight to a despised and neglected population [...] It brought in a higher conception of God and a nobler idea of the brotherhood of man. It offered to the teeming low castes of Bengal, who had sat for ages abject on the outermost pale of the Hindu community, a free entrance into a new social organization."<sup>1</sup>

Arnold further adds:

"It is this absence of class prejudices which constitutes the real strength of Islam in India and enables it to win so many converts from Hinduism."<sup>2</sup>

The first Prime Minister of independent India, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, says about the spread of Islam in India:

"The impact of the invaders from the north-west and of Islam on India had been considerable. It had pointed out and shown up the abuses that had crept into Hindu society –the petrification of caste, untouchability, exclusiveness, carried to fantastic lengths. This idea of brotherhood of Islam and of the theoretical equality of its adherents made a powerful appeal, especially to those in the Hindu fold who were denied any semblance of equal treatments. From this ideological impact grew up various movements aiming at a religious synthesis. Many conversions also took place but the great majority of these were from the lower castes, especially in Bengal. Some individuals belonging to the higher castes also adopted the new faith, either because of a real change of belief, or, more often, for political and economic reasons. There were obvious advantages in accepting the religion of the ruling power."<sup>3</sup>

Islam spread in India due to its message of equality and brotherhood. The majority of Indian Muslims are descendants of 'untouchables' and 'low' caste converts, with only a small minority tracing their descent to Arab, Iranian and Central Asian settlers and invaders. Although Islam is fiercely egalitarian in its social ethics, insisting on the radical equality of all believers, Indian Muslim society is characterized by numerous caste-like features, consisting of several castes –like groups (*jatis*, *biraderis*). Muslims who claim foreign descent, such as the Sayeds, Sheikhs, Mughals and Pathans, claim a superior status for themselves as '*ashraf*' or 'noble'. Descendants of indigenous converts are commonly referred to as '*ajlaf*' or 'base' or 'lowly' and '*arza'l* or '*Dalits*'.

## Origin of casteism:

Now the question is that if there is no existence of casteism in Islam then how and when casteism started reflecting in lives and culture of Muslims especially Indian Muslims?

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<sup>1</sup> - Ibid, pp.279-80

<sup>2</sup> - Ibid., p.291

<sup>3</sup> - Nehru, Jawaharlal: *The Discovery of India*, Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Teen Murti House, New Delhi, 1982, p.265.

According to the *Holy Qur'an*, the founder of casteism, is *Satan "Iblis"* (his real name is *Azazel*). When Allah ordered angels and Jinns, to bow down in front of *Adam* (may peace be upon him). The angels bow down in front him, but *Iblis* refused it. When Allah asked him that why didn't you do it? He replied to Allah showing his creation (caste) superiority. The *Holy Qur'an* says:

"(Allah) said: "What prevented you (O *Iblis*) that you did not prostrate, when I commanded you?" *Iblis* said: "I am better than him (*Adam*), You created me from fire, and him You created from clay [i.e., earth]."<sup>1</sup>

In one place the *Holy Qur'an* quotes his argument:

"[*Iblis* (*Satan*)] said: "I am better than he [him], You created me from fire, and You created him from clay."<sup>2</sup>

The nature of fire is to go to up and nature of clay is to go to down. This was the argument of *Satan*. Allah didn't like his caste based argument and sent him out from paradise. Allah says:

"(Allah) said: "(O *Iblis*) get down from this (*Paradise*), it is not for you to be arrogant here. Get out, for you are of those humiliated and disgraced."<sup>3</sup>

In fact, the Arab world free from caste based superiority and inferiority but it was divided into a society of upper and lower class in pre- Islamic era, as already highlighted above. When Islam started spreading in the land, it by rule prohibited any kind of discrimination on the basis of tribe, clan, caste or class and declared it as haram (prohibited). Islam proclaimed equality among every human being. It emphasized on the deeds of a person to decide one's nobility, no one was high or low except on the basis of good deeds and bad deeds.

But after the periods when Arabs were led by the prophet (PBUH) and rightly guided caliphs *Abu Bakr As-Siddique Rz.* and *Umar Al-Farooque Rz.*, this illegal thing raised its head in Arab society again.

Some scholars say that in the period of *Usman Rz.* a Jew *Abdullah bin Saba* embraced Islam and he started tribe based discrimination among Muslims. He objected on *Hazrat Usman's* ability to get caliphate on the basis of tribal affiliation and argued that since *Ali Rz.* was cousin of prophet (PBUH) and belonged to his family, he was more suitable of the post. His thoughts spread among whole of the Persian area like a wild fire and infected the already jealous people of the area who had problems with Arab. As a consequence of this, *Usamm Rz.* was murdered.<sup>4</sup>

But a famous anthropologist Dr. Gaus Ansari says (as already mentioned) that Arabian society was free from caste based superiority or inferiority. It has democratic system to form a government. It infected by caste system or monarchy because of social intercourse with other cultures. In his word:

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Qur'an*, op.cit. Surah al-A'raf: verse No.12, ( *The Holy Qur'an*,7:12.)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, op.cit. Surah Sad, Verse No. 76. ( *The Holy Qur'an*,38:76.)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, op.cit. Surah al-A'raf, verse No.13. ( *The Holy Qur'an*,7:13.)

<sup>4</sup> Hashmi, Qazi Mohammad Tahir 'Ali : *Kufu wa Nekah Bela Tamyeez-e-Zaat Paat*, (endogamy and Marriage without seeing caste) Quoted in Moin, Mazhar: *Islam Aur Zaat Paat( Islam and Casteism)* pub.Adbistan 43, Reti Gun Lahore Pakistan,p.358

“The idea of equality among Muslims was practicable only in the then prevailing conditions of Arabia. In the course of expansion of Islam and its contact with other complex cultures the democratic form of political organisation and social equality within the community gradually disappeared. The very structure of Islam itself in this process became the victim of social discrimination. At the time of the expansion of Islam, as we have already mentioned, there were two strong empires in the Near and Middle East, - Byzantine and Persia. The cultural achievement of the peoples, the Byzantine and the Persian, were also far more advanced than those of the tribal Arabian. Both these empires had the tradition of strong monarchies; after the contact with these people the tribal form of democracy could not long endure within the complex of Islam. Soon after the death of the fourth Caliph the democracy of Islam was overthrown by the monarchy. “The Caliph Muawiyah (661-680 A.D)... altered the Republican Caliphate into a monarchy, though the title of ‘Caliph’ was retained.” From that time the caliphate became a hereditary office rather than elective one; Caliph monarchs acquired autocratic functions and developed a similar form of rule. Within the fall of the Republican Caliphate social equality was automatically reduced to the status of a mere concept or ideal: the practice of social inequality returned to its previous condition. Islamic society in Persia remained divided. In this region Islam was accepted as a religion, yet the ideas of Islam, as far as social reforms were concerned, could not be substantially enforced and put into practice. The pre-Islamic social hierarchy, for example, continued even though an overwhelming majority of the Persian had embraced Islam.

In Persia, though Islam came as the religion of conquerors (Arabs), it was moulded in due course of time to the standards of the conquered (Persians). The Islam of Arabia was overcome by Persian influence; “the Caliphate became more a revival of Iranian despotism and less an Arabian Sheikdom.”<sup>1</sup>

In fact Iran was fully coloured by caste system before Islam. Iranian *Arya* and Indian *Arya* were living as one community. Iranian society was divided in four groups from the period of *Avesta*. These groups were *religious* group, *army* group, *public* and *slaves*. This was similar to Indian caste system. In the period of Sasanians (from 3<sup>rd</sup> century to 7<sup>th</sup> century) the society was divided in four groups. There was only one change that the 3<sup>rd</sup> group *public* became *government servants* and new 4<sup>th</sup> group emerged as *farmers* and *shepherds*.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Mohammad Umar writes that the concept of Islamic brotherhood and equality bow down in front of Iranian social stratification.<sup>3</sup>

It was Iran where the “*Sho’uobiyah*” movement was launched against Arab Muslims. The

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<sup>1</sup> Ansari, Ghaus: *Muslim Caste in Uttar Pradesh (A Study of Culture Contact)*, op.cit. Ch. 4.: Caste and Islam, Top. Islam: from equality to Inequality, pp.28-29.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Umar, Mohammad: *Hindustani tahzeeb Ka Musalmanon Per Asar (The Influence of Indian Culture on Muslims)*, Directorate publication division, Wazarat-e-Ittela’at W Nashriyat, Hukumat-e-Hind, ed. 2<sup>nd</sup> 1975, pp.72-73.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p.73.

followers of this movement preferred pre-Islamic Iranian history, traditions etc. on Islamic teachings.<sup>1</sup>

It was Iran where many scholars supported caste system. *Dr. Ghaus Ansari writes:*

“...the division of Persian society into four major groups has been continuous since the Avestan period. These four classes, of priest, warrior, commoner, and serfs, correspond almost identically to Indian varnas. In Sasanian Persia (3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) society remained divided into the same four classes except that the third group was composed of the bureaucracy instead of the commoner, and the fourth group was that of peasants and shepherds. The Sasanian Dynasty came to an end with the advent of Islam in 650 A.D. Islam, though proclaiming the message of equality and universal brotherhood, had to surrender in the face of the established and deep rooted institution of social segregation in Persia. Even the reputed Muslim scholars of Persia, like *Nasir-ud-Din at-Tusi* preached the division of society; his classification of society remained the same as it was during the Sasanian period. In his book *Akhlaq-i-Nasiri* (which was finished shortly before the fall of the Caliphate), *at-Tusi* considers that each of the social classes should be kept in its proper place. A seventeenth century work, *Jami-i-Mufidi*, again retains the same four-fold division of society, but it puts forward a slight change in giving precedence to warriors at the top and reducing the relative rank of priests to that of second in the hierarchy. In addition to these philosophers, the noted statesman of Persia, *Nizam-ul-Mulk*, in his *Siyasat Nama*, instructs his subordinates to maintain the people in their proper ranks.”<sup>2</sup>

We understood from above discussions that by contact of Muslims with Persian society, caste based discrimination started among Muslims. The incident of *Usman's* murder marked the promoting of tribal based conflicts/discriminations among Muslims. Subsequently it increased and gripped majority of followers of *Ali Rz.*, who are also known as “*Shia*”, They started to give baseless importance to *Ahle Bait/Sayeds*, (sons of *Ali Rz.* through *Fatimah Rz.* daughter of Prophet *Mohammad P.B.U.H.*). The *Shia* even *Sayeds* also started to claim that *Sayeds* are sons of the prophet *Mohammad (P.B.U.H.)*.

According to *Shiit's* theology, if a *Sayed girl's* nikah (marriage) has been done with non *Sayed* with permission of her and her parents. Even in this condition her nikah will be invalid. *Sayed girl's* nikah should be with *Sayed* only.<sup>3</sup>

Casteism among *Shiats* is visible everywhere. An 'alim (religious scholar) belongs to the *Sayed* caste will wear black turban, but an 'alim belongs to other caste can't wear black turban. He will wear the turban of different colour.

In fact the *Shia* sect is based on the superiority of *ahl-e-bait (Sayeds)*. I saw in India and Iran the people were saying: “*Allahumma salla 'ala Mohammad wa 'ala aal-e-Mohammad.*”

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<sup>1</sup> *Mahnamah Ma'arif (knowledges Monthly)*, Azamgarh, June 1928AD, Vol.21, Issue No.6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ansari, Ghaus: Muslim Caste in Uttar Pradesh (A Study of Culture Contact)*, o.cit, Ch. 4: Caste and Islam, Top.: Islam in the land of caste, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> *Al-Baset* Qouted in *Al-'Aini*, *Badruddin Abu Mohammad Mahmood bin Ahmad: Al-benayah fi Sharhil Hidayah (known as Al-'aini Sharhul Hidayah)*, pub. *Nawal Kishoor Lucknow*. Vol.2 p.102.

Oh Allah, put peace on Mohammad (PBUH) and his line age (ahl-e-bait/ Sayeds). They stressed on the word of aale (ahl-e-bait/Sayeds) too much.

We can see the evidence of caste system in *Umayyid* period. For example:

1. The governor of Iraque *Hajjaj bin Yousuf* ordered that no non-Arab can be an Imam in *Kofah*.<sup>1</sup>
2. The governor of *Basrah Bilal bin Abi Burdah* whipped a great non Arab a'alim (religious scholar) '*Abdullah bin 'Awn*' because he married an Arab lady.<sup>2</sup>
3. A Bedouin of *Bano Sulaim* (name of a tribe) married his daughter with a non-Arab new Muslim. *Mohammad bin Basheer Al-Kharji* went to *Madinah* and complained to the governor of *Madinah "Ibrahim bin Hisham bin Isma'il bin Hisham bin Mughirah*. The governor separated between wife and husband and whipped that new Muslim and shaved his beard and eyebrow.<sup>3</sup>

I think this reaction is due to the attitude of Persian people/ "*Sho'uobiyah*" movement against Arab and participation of non-Arabs in the wars against Umayyid caliphate in support of *ahl-e-bait/ Sayeds*.

The Abbasid dynasty finds its root of establishment in caste system itself. The main campaigner of this dynasty was *Abu Muslim Khurasani*, (Khurasan: a city in Iran) who already had a grudge against the teaching of Islam. *Nafs Zakiyah* - one of A'li Rz.'s Family - accepted this fact. He, once in his letter to Abbasid Caliph *Mansoor*, wrote:

"The caliphate is our right. You claimed it through us. You took the support of our shias to gain it. You got it through our behalf only."<sup>4</sup>

Even Caliph *Mansoor* recognizes the facts that the Abbasid movement raised the honour of *Ahle Bait* (*Sayed/the family of A'li Rz. through Hazrat Fatima the daughter of Prophet Mohammad P.B.U.H*). He replied to *Nafs-e-Zakiah*:

"....We. [Abbasid movement].... raised the superiority of the elders of *Ahle Bait*."<sup>5</sup>

The caste system was on its highest of peaks, during this period. Even *Abbasids* and *Fatmites* (people of *Ahle bait*) commented on each other caste on a regular basis, trying to prove one another of a lower status.<sup>6</sup>

The three imams *Imam Abu Hanifah*, *Imam Shafy'ee*, and *Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal*, used to live in the remote areas of the city of Prophet '*Madinah*' where caste system ran in every vein. It even reflected in their fatwas. But as *Imam Malik* lived in the heart of *Madinah*, he took his stand totally against casteism.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Undulusi, Abu Umar Ahmad bin Mohammad bin Abde Rabbehi: *Al-'Iqdul-Farid*, Loaded on <http://www.al-eman.com/islamlib/viewtoc.asp?BID=195> Vol.2 p.233.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Sa'd, Al-Imam Mohammad: *At-Tabqat-ul- Kubra*, Dar-o-Bairoot, 1958 AD, Vol.7, p.263

<sup>3</sup> Al-Asfahi, Abul-Farj: *Al-Aghani* (The songs), Loaded on <http://www.al3ez.net/vb/showthread.php?13543-%CD%E3%E1-%DF%CA%C7%C8-%C7%E1%C3%DB%C7%E4%ED-%E1%E1%C3%D5%DD%E5%C7%E4%ED> Vol.14 pp.335-336.

<sup>4</sup> Nadwi, Shah Mui'nuddin: *Tareekh-e-Islam (The History of Islam)*, pub. Darul Musann-e-Feen, Azamgarh, UP, 1983AD, Vol.3, p.35.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, Vol.3 p.40.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, Vol.3, pp.35-39.

<sup>7</sup> *Mahnamah, Burhan (Monthly Evidence)*, Delhi, February, 1973 AD Vol.7, Issue No. 2, pp.122-123. *Monthly Ma'arif (knowledge / information)*, Azamgarh, June 1928AD, Vol.21, Issue No.6.



Compilation of Fiqh was started during the Abbasid period and so one can find a numerous fatwas dominated by caste system.

Still we can find casteism /tribalism among Arab. *Dr. Yosuf Abdullah al-Qaradawi* – a known *Qatar* based Egyptian Islamic scholar-, writes about the caste system in *Egypt*. According to him:

‘If any girl is married in other caste / tribe, the people used to say that “the crocodile ate her.”<sup>1</sup>

Once he writes that when he was caught by Egyptian police because of his affiliation with an Islamic organization “*Ikhwanul Muslemoon*”( *Muslim brotherhood*) the head of intelligence of *Al-Mahallatul Kubra* “*Mohammad Shadeed*” ordered him to put his shoes on his turban. He told him that the turban is symbol of Islamic education and humiliation of it (turban) is humiliation of Islam. But the intelligence head laughed loudly abused him and told one of his men to put the shoes on his turban. *Dr. Qaradawi* asked him that he can do, if this is black turban. The intelligence head didn’t reply him.<sup>2</sup>

This incident shows us the importance of Sayed in Egyptian society, because, the black turban is symbol of *Shia Sayed* as mentioned earlier.

He also writes that in *Qatar* and *Kuait* there are Muslim tribes (in *Kuwait* their name is *Bedouin* and in *Qatar* their name is *Al-Hawlah*) who are living there without citizenship. They are facing a lot of problems for marriage, haj and travel.<sup>3</sup>

Still some of Arab has feeling of Arab nationalism or superiority of Arab. When *Saddam Husain* was hanged up in 2006, an Indian journalist Mrs. *Burkha Datt* asked a person in *Baghdad* “*how do you feel?*” He replied *it is bad, he (Saddam Husain) was an Arab and he was a Muslim.*<sup>4</sup>

He used Arab word before Muslim and Islam. Arab were in opposition of *Ottman caliphate* because of they were non- Arab. By this way *Ottman caliphate* was destroyed.

*Mr. Dileep Karanth* writes under the sub-heading of “*Caste in the Islamic World*”:

“We have already seen from the examples of the Ashraf's practices regarding marriage, or admittance to mystic brotherhoods, etc., the Ashraf also retained their own stereotypes and prejudices which cannot be traced solely to Hindu influence.

But that is not the whole story. Even if the caste structure was largely a relic from the pre-Islamic past, new castes also sometimes came into existence. The Maratha Bugtis in Balochistan are an interesting case of what may be a caste forming even under Islamic rule. There is a clan claiming descent from Marathas captives of war brought back by members of the Bugti tribe, who served the armies of Ahmad Shah Durrani (Abdali) after the fateful battle of Panipat.

In time they underwent 'Bugti-ization'and became Muslims. Although for all practical purposes they may now be considered Bugtis, and are even in the forefront in education and employment, they were once considered little better than bonded labour. They could not own or buy land. Up to two generations ago they could be

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Qaradawi, Yosuf Abdullah: *Ibul Qariyah wal Kuttab, Malamho Seerah W Maseerah, (The son of village and elementary school, features of life)* , Darush Shorooq, Cairo,Egypt, ed.1<sup>st</sup> 2004, Vol.2, p.358

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, Vol. 1 pp.355-356

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, Vol. 2 p.101

<sup>4</sup> NDTV 24 \*7

'bought' for twenty or thirty rupees. Their women were fair game for Bugtis.

The Maratha Bugtis took jobs as unskilled labourers, which their tribal overlords disdained. Over the years they have come to occupy higher positions, and their prosperity is resented by the Bugtis.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that this caste-like phenomenon has endured for more than two centuries, even in a region largely devoid of Hindus.

The Maratha Bugtis were not alone in their position as a group living in the Islamic world, with their inferior position determined by heredity. The Haratin<sup>2</sup> or Harratin of southwestern Morocco and Mauritania are "a socially and ethnically distinct class of workers". They are descended from slaves, but are now serfs, "without the privileges of freedom". (One of the people who is trying to help them to become independent is Abdel Nasser Ould Yessa, whose life and work is discussed at the following web site:

<http://www.iabolish.org/act/abol/profile/yessa1.htm>)

The facile practice of regarding all hierarchies in the Islamic world as a substratum from pre-Islamic societies does not always work. Hierarchies (in other words, castes) exist even in places like Yemen and the rest of the Arabian peninsula.

As a perusal of the informative entry on "Bedouin" in the Encyclopedia Britannica<sup>3</sup> reveals, Bedouin society in twentieth-century Arabia was also divided into various groups. While the nomads have been settled after the formation of the modern states, the societal hierarchical and patriarchal structure has been retained. The Bedouin tribes were classified on the basis of the species of animal on which they depended. Camel nomads were highest in prestige. They were spread on extensive territories in the Sahara, Syrian and Arabian deserts. Sheep- and goat-herding nomads, rank below, and live closer the cultivated zones in Jordan, Syria and Iraq. The noble tribes are proud of their ancestry, and are divided into "Qaysi" (northern Arabian) or "Yamani" groups. In addition to the noble elements, the Bedouin society also includes vassal tribes, which are "ancestorless" (i.e., tribes whose heredity is not prestigious). These groups are subservient to the noble tribes and include professional groups such as artisans, blacksmiths, entertainers, etc.

Caste-like phenomena are attested in other regions of the Arabian Peninsula, even among the sedentary populations. Paul Dresch has studied the situation in Yemeni tribal society at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> He observes that two groups of people are widely regarded as not belonging to the tribe, but are still endowed with rights and obligations. The first of them is the Sayyids - a group

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<sup>1</sup> *Marginality and Modernity: Ethnicity and Change in Post-Colonial Balochistan*, Paul Titus, (ed) , Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1996, pp. 54-55. Quoted in [http://www.infinityfoundation.com/mandala/h\\_es/h\\_es\\_karan\\_caste.htm](http://www.infinityfoundation.com/mandala/h_es/h_es_karan_caste.htm)

<sup>2</sup> "Haratin" <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?eu=40019> Quoted in [http://www.Infinityfoundation.com/mandala/h\\_es/h\\_es\\_karan\\_caste.htm](http://www.Infinityfoundation.com/mandala/h_es/h_es_karan_caste.htm)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?eu=14268> Quoted in [http://www.infinityfoundation.com/mandala/h\\_es/h\\_es\\_karan\\_caste.htm](http://www.infinityfoundation.com/mandala/h_es/h_es_karan_caste.htm)

<sup>4</sup> *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen*, Paul Dresch, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, p. 117. Quoted in [http://www.infinityfoundation.com/mandala/h\\_es/h\\_es\\_karan\\_caste.htm](http://www.infinityfoundation.com/mandala/h_es/h_es_karan_caste.htm)

claiming descent from the prophet, and the Qadis. (The Qadis are also a group defined by heredity. While elsewhere in the Islamic world the title Qadi refers to judges, in Yemen it only denotes a member of this class, whether judge or not. The Qadis or mashaykh are also said to be descended from the Prophet Hud. The mashaykh do not enjoy as much prestige as the Sayyids.<sup>1</sup>) Below the tribesmen rank the 'weak' people (dua'fa) (sing. da'if). Weak people have no prestige. They include people of various trades, some respectable and some not so respectable.

Artisans and merchants in the traditional towns tend to be highly organized into castelike guild groups that are ranked largely according to the nature of their craft. In many areas those who ply so-called respectable trades are sharply differentiated from the bani khoms, or sons of the five, practitioners of the five despised trades of barber, bloodletter, butcher, bath attendant, and tanner. In the Hadramaut artisans who handle clay, such as masons and potters, also fall into the despised group, as do sweepers, fishermen, and some others, depending on locality. Poor farm laborers also occupy a low status, but it is higher than those of the despised crafts.

The akhdam, in many areas the lowest group, are so isolated from society that they have been compared with the untouchables of India. Found especially along the Tihama coast and in southern Yemen (Sana) but also in the Hadramaut, they are often distinguished socially by their Negroid appearance and often follow the despised trade of sweeper. The akhdam appear to be descendants of slaves, although not all former slaves occupy such degraded positions. Slavery existed in the territories of the Aden Protectorate until the 1930s and persisted in Yemen (Sana) until 1962.<sup>2</sup>

The Sayyids in Yemen did not allow intermarriage with other Yemeni castes. This superiority was challenged only by expatriates in Singapore in 1905, and again under the Irshadi movement in Java in 1915.”<sup>3</sup>

### **The second part of the question as to how Indian Muslims adopted this Casteism in their society is yet to be answered.**

The Indian Muslim history states as I mentioned earlier briefly that Arab Muslim traders landed in South India i.e. *Kerala, Malabar* etc. The army of *Raja Dahir (king of Sindh)* captured seven Islamic ships which were coming from *Sarandeeep* to *Iraque* and there were Muslim male and female in it. Because of this *Mohammad Bin Qasim* attacked north India in 711 A.D. (92 A.H.) and captured *Sind* and its adjoining places.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Area Handbook For The Yemens*, Richard F. Nyrop, et al., 1977, p. 74. Qouted in [http:// www. infinityfoundation.com /mandala/h es/h es karan caste.htm](http://www.infinityfoundation.com/mandala/h_es/h_es_karan_caste.htm)

<sup>2</sup> *Area Handbook For The Yemens*, Richard F. Nyrop, et al., 1977, p. 77. Qouted in [http:// www. infinityfoundation.com /mandala/h es/h es karan caste.htm](http://www.infinityfoundation.com/mandala/h_es/h_es_karan_caste.htm)

<sup>3</sup> *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen*, Paul Dresch, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, p. 27. Qouted in [http:// www. infinityfoundation.com /mandala/h es/h es karan caste.htm](http://www.infinityfoundation.com/mandala/h_es/h_es_karan_caste.htm)

<sup>4</sup> Farishta, Mohammad Qasim: *Tareekh-e-Farishta(History of Farishtah)*, Urdu tran. by Abdul hai Khaja M.A. Maktab-e-Millat Deoband, UP. 1983, Vol.2, pp. 885-886, Mubark Puri, Qazi Athar: *Khelaft-e-bano Umayyah Aur Hindustan,( Umayyid Caiphate and India)* Nadwatul Musannefin, Urdu Bazaar, Jame' Masjid Delhi-, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1395 H.A., August 1975 AD. P.96-97,

The Arab Rule was on Sind till 995 AD.<sup>1</sup> I didn't read any evidence of the existence of caste system among Muslims, during that time. If some one knows about it, please let me know it.

After the conquering of Sind by Arab Muslims there was no further Muslim invasion on India for over two and half centuries. After two and half centuries a fresh series of attacks were launched against India by the non Arab kings i.e. Mahmood Ganzanwi and Sahahabuddin Gauri. After that Muslim kingdom was established in India by Qutbuddin Aibak the slave of the king Sahahabuddin Gauri. Even no caste system existed in the period of these three non Arab Muslim rulers i.e. *Sultan Mahmood Ghaznavi*, (d.18, April, 1030AD) *Sultan Shahabuddin Ghauri* (d.16 March, 1206AD) and *Sulatan Qutbuddin Aibak* (d.12 Oct.1210AD).

It's noticeable that *Sultan Mahmood Ghaznavi* appointed his slave "Ayaz" the governor of Punjab, and gave the title of Raja (king) to a Hindu barber and appointed him his army chief. *Sultan Shabuddin Ghauri* appointed his slave *Qutbuddin Aibak* the governor General of India. *Qutbuddin Aibak* appointed his slave *Shamsuddin Iltutmish* governor of Gwalior, Barn (*Buland Shahar*) and Nazim (manager) of *Badayun*. He even freed him and married his daughter to him.

The casteism among Indian Muslims was actually started by slave of slave *Shamsuddin Iltutmish* [d.10 April 1236AD] (*Shamsuddin Iltutmish* was slave of *Qutbuddin Aibak* and *Qutbuddin Aibak* was slave of *Shabuddin Ghauri*.)<sup>2</sup>

It is already mentioned above that in the Abbasid period, the compilation of fiqh (jurisprudence) was started, and there are many caste based fatawas in it. When the non-Arab Muslim rulers conquered India, the Muslim scholars, Sufis etc followed their path and entered along with them. They brought a totally new tradition, culture and literature. Among many books, Fiqh books (jurisprudence books) also came with these scholars. The *Hanafi Fiqh* was the official book for religious matter. The Indian land was already diseased by caste based society, making it the best suitable place for the caste based fatawas. As a result Muslims inherited casteism in their society as well, like Hindus.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Ghaus Ansari writes:

"When Islam came to stay in India in the twelt century A.D. its social

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Najeeb Aabadi, Akbar Shah Khan: *Ayina-e-Haqeeqat Noman*, (*The mirror of reality*) Tahqeeq-o-Takhrij: Abdur Rasheed Bastawi, pub. Shaikh Al-Hind Academy, Darul Oloom Deoband, ed. June 1997AD. Vol. 1 Part. 1, pp.111-124

Ikram, Shaikh Mohammad,: *Aab-e-Kauthar*, (Kaurthar Water) Adbi Duniya, No.510, Matya Mahal, Delhi, ed. 5. pp.23-24.

Al-Yaqoobi, Ahamd bin Abi Yaqoob: *Tareekh-e-Yaqoobi*, Dar-o-Bairroot, 1960AD, Vol. 3, p.34

Al-Belazri, Ahmad bin Yahya: *Fotooh Al-Buldan*, Tahqeeq W T'aleeq: Abdullah Anis Al-Tabbakh W Umar Anees Al-Tabbakh, Dar Al-Nashr Lil Jameeyen 1957 AD, Vo. I, Part.5, p.615.

Ansari, Ghaus: *Muslim Caste in Uttar Pradesh*, op.cit, Ch.3: *Rise and expansion of Islam*, top. *Islam in India*, .pp.24-25

<sup>1</sup> Najeeb Aabadi, Akbar Shah Khan, *Ayina-e-Haqeeqat Noman*, (*The mirror of reality*), op.cit., Vol. 1 Part. 1, pp.171.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, Ch.1, 2- 3 and 5, Vol.1 part 2 p.579.

<sup>3</sup> See, Umar, Mohammad: *Hindustani tahzeeb Ka Muslamano per Asar* (*The influence of Indian culture on Muslims*, op.cit. pp.71-105.)

organization had already changed. Although the conception of equality and brotherhood remained as an ideal – as an ideal it exists to this day – in practice there have been social grades within Muslim society. The twelfth century Muslim conquerors of India were distinctly divided into priests (including missionaries), nobility (ruling families and administrators) and all the others (including soldiers, merchants, artisans etc). Muslim priesthood in India in its early stages was not hereditary while the rule of succession among nobility was generally from father to son. Gradually the Muslim priesthood also acquired the rule of hereditary succession in India. Sons began to succeed fathers; thereafter, *Astane* and *Takiye* (seats of preaching and spiritual guidance) became a family monopoly.”<sup>1</sup>

## Caste Based Discriminations Among Indian Muslims:

In the centuries of Muslim rule in India, the ‘*ashraf*’ and ‘*high*’ caste Hindu converts played a key role in the state administration, as advisors, ministers, governors, army officials, and estates managers, as well as *sufis* and *ulama*. On the other hand, despite their conversion to Islam, the social and economic conditions of the mass of the ‘*ajlaf*’ and ‘*arzal*’ Muslims hardly changed and they remained tied down to their traditional occupations as artisans, peasants, labourers and sweepers. Many great *ulama* and *intellectuals*, past as well as present, belonging to the various Muslim sects and formations, including *Shia*, *Sunni*, *Aligarh Tahreek*, *Deobandi*, *Barailvi*, *Ahl-e-Hadith*, *Jamaat-e-Islami* and the *All-India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB)* supported the caste system either in the name of the supposed superiority of the *satat / ahl-e-bait* (people tracing their origin to the Prophet’s daughter, *Fatima Rz.*) or the belief that only a person of *Quraish descent* (*Sayeds and Shaikhs*) could be the Caliph or through caste-based *kufu* (endogamy).

If we read Indian Muslim history and the books of Muslim scholars we will find a lot of caste based discriminations were done and are going on to be done by rulers, historians, and Muslim scholars. Here I will focus in brief on some important personalities who oppressed SC, ST and OBC Muslims. If any one wants to know it in detail, he should read my book “*Hindustan Main Zaat Paat Aur Muslam (Muslims and casteism in India [pages: 590])*”<sup>2</sup> in Urdu and English.

### Rulers:

There are many rulers who promoted caste system, but I will focus on the important personality among them only:

Sultan Shamshuddin Iltutmish, didn’t allow ‘low caste’ Muslims to get the high posts i.e. *Khachgi*, *Musharrafi*, or *Mudabberi* in his period. He enquired the castes of his officials and dismissed 33 ‘low caste’ people from their posts.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ansari, Gaus: *Muslim Caste in Uttar Pradesh*, ch. 4, caste and Islam, topic: Islam in the lands of caste, op.cit. p.30.

<sup>2</sup> Falahi, Masood Alam: *Hindustan Main Zaat Paat Aur Musalman (Muslim And Casteism In India)*, pub. Ideal Foundation, Mumbai, Distributor: Farid Book Depot Delhi, ed.2<sup>nd</sup> 2009, The English edition is under publication.

<sup>3</sup> Barni, Sayed Ziyuddin: *Tareekh-e-Firooz Shahi (The history of Firooz Shah)*, Urdu tr.: Dr. Sayed Moinul

Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban was the follower of *Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish* in caste system. He also didn't allow 'low caste' Muslims in his kingdom to get government job. He is known to openly proclaim that his blood used to boil whenever he used to see any 'low caste' person.<sup>1</sup>

He also appointed a committee from all over India to enquire about the caste of his officials. A noted historian, *Prof. Khaliq Ahmad Nezami* (Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University) writes:

"Sayyid Ashraf Jahangir Samnani(d.1405 A.D.) writes in one of his letters that Balban had made very thorough enquiries about the families of all his officers and government servants. Expert genealogists had assembled in Delhi from all parts of the country to help him in determining the family status of the persons."<sup>2</sup>

There are separate mohallas (streets) for new comers / upper caste Muslims. We can see many mohallas in the period of Balban, for instance:

Mohalla Abbasi, Mohalla Sanjari, Mohalla Khawarizm Shahi, Mohalla Dailmi, Mohalla 'Alwi, Mohalla Aatabki, Mohalla Ghauri, Mohalla Changezi, Mohalla Roomi, Mohalla Sanqari, Mohalla Mausai, Mohalla Samarqandi, Mohalla Qasghari and Mohalla Khatayee. In the period of *Sultan Jalal Al-Uddin*, a new Mohalla was established for *Mughals*. Its name was Mughalpura. These *Mughals* are named as new Muslims.<sup>3</sup>

Even till now Muslim Mohallahas are divided by castes. I saw in villages of Bihar and U.P. that there are Mohallas, like *Faqeer Tolah*, (Beggar street) *Sheikh Tolah* (Sheikh Street), *Sayed Tolat* (Sayed street), *Julha tola* (Ansari street) etc. Even there are some villages by name of castes, i.g. there are villages "*Milik Pur*" *Mirzapur* and *Sayed Pur* in northern Bihar, few kilometers away from my village.<sup>4</sup> Then there is a station "*Sadat*" in *Ghazi Pur*, on the route of Benaras. There is also a village "*Sayed Sarawan*" in Allahabad, near *Sallah Pur*. There is a district in Bihar, which name is "*Sheikh Pura*". Even I saw the mohallas / places named as "*Sheikpura*" in Lucknow the capital of U.P. , "*Khan Pur*" and "*Ansari Nagar*" in "*Delhi*" the capital of India.

*Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq* became king after the death of *Sultan Mohammad Tughlaq*. He was surrounded by casteist ministers and 'ulama and by their support he became king. So naturally he supported caste system and promoted casteist people.<sup>5</sup>

We can imagine the badness of his casteism in his period by the word of *Maulana Sayed Ziauddin Barni* the court historian of *Sultan Mohammad Tughlaq* and *Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq*. He writes that 'with Firoze Shah Tughlaq ascending the throne "All the Syeds were blessed with a new life".<sup>6</sup>

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Haque, Urdu Science Board, Lahore Pakistan, ed.2<sup>nd</sup> 1983. P.90-92.

Nizami, Khaliq Ahmad: *Some aspects of Religion and Politics, During the thirteen Century*, Idarah-i-Adabiyat, Delhi, ed.2<sup>nd</sup> 1974 AD, p.107

<sup>1</sup> Barni, Sayed Ziauddin: *Tareekh-e-Firooz Shahi(The History of Firooz Shah)*, op.cit. pp. 79-92,

Nizami, Khaliq Ahmad: *Some aspects of Religion and Politics, During the thirteen Century*, op.cit.p107.

<sup>2</sup> *Maktubat-e-Ashrafi [The letters of Sayyid Ashraf Jahangir Samnani]* (MS) f.76a, Quoted in Nizami, Khaliq Ahmad: *Some aspects of Religion and Politics, During the thirteen Century*, op.cit.p107.

<sup>3</sup> Umar, Mohammad, op.cit. p.75.

<sup>4</sup> My village name is Dadri, police station: Nanpur, Distt. Sitamarhi Bihar.

<sup>5</sup> See, Barni, Sayed Ziauddin: *Tareekh-e-Firooz Shahi(The History of Firooz Shah)*, op.cit. pp.757-759,764-767,783-786,810-811,823.

Najeeb aabadi, Akbar Shah Khan: *Ayina-e-Haqeeqat Noman ( The mirror of reality)*, Vol.1 par 2 pp.608-611.

<sup>6</sup> Barni, Sayed Ziauddin: *Tareekh-e-Firooz Shahi(The History of Firooz Shah)*, op.cit. p.811.

The governor of *Lucknowati* 'Ilyas' rebelled against him, occupied *Lucknowati* and collected the army in *Akdalah*. But *Firuz Shah Tughlaq* didn't attack on *Akdalah* because he feared that innocent people, i.e., 'ulama, sufis and sayeds will die as a consequence of the war.<sup>1</sup>

Sultan Firoze Shah Tughlaq held the Syeds in great reverence. It is said that in order to avenge the death of three Syeds, he destroyed hundreds of families in Kathar and put to the sword literally thousands of people. He ordered the governor of the province to slay these people, and for several years he himself visited Kathar to do the same with his own hands. Farishta writes that *Kharku*, the Hindu *Chaudhri* of Kathar, near Badaun, invited Syed Muhammad, governor of Badaun, his brother Syed Alauddin, and Syed Mahmud to his house and killed them. When the Sultan learned of this he was inflamed and headed for Kathar with a large army, where he ordered that every house be destroyed. He put the inhabitants of the town to the sword, and, says Farishta, 'so many Hindus were slain that the souls of the deceased Syeds began pleading for them.' *Kharku* fled to the Kumaon hills, but the Sultan's army followed him there, destroying and pillaging on the way. Some thirty thousand Hindus, so claims Farishta, were taken as prisoners. Owing to the onset of the rainy season, the Sultan went back to Delhi, and on his return he appointed Malik Daud Afghan as governor of Sambhal, instructing him to visit Kathar every year and slay its inhabitants [muluk ko taraj karey]. This incident took place in 1380 A.D. According to Farishta, the Sultan himself returned to Khattar every year after that for the next five years to kill those inhabitants of the town whom Malik Daud Afghan had spared. In this way, thousands of innocent and hapless Hindus were slaughtered by the Sultan for the sake of the three slain Syeds.<sup>2</sup>

Sikandar Lodhi (d. 7 Zi Qadah, 923 HA/22 Nov. 1517 AD) was no less of a caste-supporter of his time. His heart was filled heavily with great respect and admiration for Sayeds. One of the incidents mentioned in *Waq-e-Aat-e-Mushtaqi* (A collection of incidents) can be referred to verify this:

"The Sayed of 'Koyel' was suspected in the corruption of government money. Though there were strong evidences against him, when he was brought before *Sultan Sikander Lodhi*, the king not only pardoned him but also allowed him to take money with him."<sup>3</sup>

When Taimur Lang with his mighty army attacked and took over India, numerous episodes of brutal killings happened throughout India, i.e. killing of thousands of innocents at his sole direction. Interestingly enough, here too once more, a king with caste driven mentality made an exception in case of Sayeds and religious group. Nonetheless, he was a strong believer in worships of Sufis and dua' (prayer) of Sayeds.<sup>4</sup>

The famous historian of Taimuri Family 'Mohammad Hashim' known as *Khafi Khan*,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p.823.

<sup>2</sup> Farishta, Muhammad Qasim, *Tarikh-e Farishta* op.cit., Vol. 1, p.464.

<sup>3</sup> *Waq-e-Aate-Mushtaqi*, (A collection of incidents) p.22, quoted in Ashraf, Dr. Kanwar Mohammad : *Hindustani Mua'ashrah Ahd-e-Usta Mein* (The Indian Society in medieval period), Urdu tran: Qamruddin, National Book Trust India, New Delhi, p. 140, Foot Note No.1.

<sup>4</sup> Ashraf, Kanwar Mohammad: *Hindustani Mua'ashrah Ahd-e-Usta eain* (The Indian Society in medieval period), Urdu tran.: Qamruddin, National Book Trust India, New Delhi. op.cit. pp.139-140, Foot Not No.3.

writes in his book “*Muntakhab-Al-lubab*”( *A selected collection of events*) that *Taimur Lang* used to give great honuor and respect to Sayeds. He was known to proclaim that ‘on the day of judgment when every one will take the sleeve of his recommender, he will take the sleeve of Sayeds.’<sup>1</sup>

Sultan Jalaluddin Akbar is favourite among Indian historians as a great secular emperor. However, his secularism didn’t stop his thoughts to get corrupted by caste based discrimination.

He, like his predecessors and other Muslim rulers, is known to give special honours to Sayeds. So much, he was casteist that once he refrained from capital punishment for one of his Sayed rebellion ‘*Shah Abu Al- Mua’li*’ because of the sole reason of him being a Sayed.<sup>2</sup>

So much was he in praise of caste driven society that he went to the extent of issuing a highly discriminating governmental order stating that:

“The low castes should be stopped in the cities from gaining education. Because (of their education) fasad (corruption) was born.”<sup>3</sup>

His ruling era saw a lot of capable new Muslim Rajput and Indigenous Muslims, only to work at lower positions. Akbar, being a great caste supporter, never allotted any important post to them, quite contrary to the treatment he gave to non-Muslim Rajputs who enjoyed the benefit extended by the mighty emperor to hold important positions. The biased emperor even made one of the non-Muslim Rajput his army commander.<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Mohammad Umar writes:

“In the period of King Akbar, a new era started to form and compile the Muslim society. For the purpose of good economy and political strength of the country, Akbar and his successors favoured every class and established the factories and gave jobs to the workers of every art. In the result of that, the old citizens of India who didn’t get place in Muslim society after embracing Islam, now they got the place in the society. But it divided the Muslim society according to the occupations. The Hindu old caste based divisions gave model to the division of Muslim society and on the same pattern there are visible occupational classes in the Muslim society. Every occupational class has own certain traditions, and started to marry in their own occupational groups. A girl can remain unmarried through out her life, but she can’t marry out side of her caste. Every occupational group started to train their children in their own occupation, so that it could be their ancestral occupation.”<sup>5</sup>

The last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar was nothing but a puppet in the hands of British rulers. Though he was surrounded by a lot of problems, but nothing still stopped him from exercising his caste mentality. He was a strong supporter of caste system. When the Ghadar / revolt of 1857 AD started, he ordered *Nawab Sayed Hamid Ali Khan*

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Najeeb Aabadi, Akbar Shah Khan: *Ayina-e-Haqeeqat Noman ( The mirror of reality)*,Vol.1 par 2, pp 678-679.

<sup>2</sup> Farishta, Mohammad Qasim: *Tareekh-e-Farishta(History of Farishtah)*, op.cit.Vol.1,p.680.

<sup>3</sup> Badayooni,Abdul Qadir: *Muntakhabut Tawrikh (A selected collection of historical events)*, Caption William Nasulesi and Munshi Ahmad Ali,College Press, Culcutta,1865AD.

<sup>4</sup> Parakash,Oom:*Aurangzeb Aik nNaya Zawiya-e-Nazar (Aurangzeb in a new study)*,Urdu trans.Faizan Rasheed,Khuda Bakhs Oriental Public Library patna, ed.2<sup>nd</sup> 1998,pp.15,22, 26-27.

<sup>5</sup> Umar, Mohammad, *Hindustani tahzeeb Ka Musalmanon Per Asar (The Influence of Indian Culture on Muslims)*,op.cit. p.76.



on 24<sup>th</sup> of May 1857 AD to prepare an army of 500 people. The *Dehli Urdu Akhbar (Delhi Urdu News Paper)* reported it as below:

“It is heard that *Nawab Itemadud -Dawlah Sayed Hamid Ali Khan Bahadur* went to the court of Sultan (king). The king ordered him to prepare an army consisting 500 people. He also mentioned that there should be only Sheikh, Sayed, and Pathan, the noble and brave caste, rather than any low caste.”<sup>1</sup>

He used to make sure that the noble caste people are appointed as his officials.<sup>2</sup>

## **Revolt against the non- casteist kings:**

The Indian Muslim history provides facts that the majority of rulers and governors in general were the biggest supporter of casteism. If any ruler tries to give the post to any low caste person, then his government was turned down by those casteist people. The daughter of *Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish* the founder of casteism “*Sultanah Raziah*”(d.25 Rabi’a Al-Awwal 638 HA / 14 Nov. 1240 AD) appointed a slave ‘*Jamalud-din Yaqoot Hamwi*’ amirul Umra ( the governor general). But Turk and Afghan leaders considered him as low caste, so they killed him and rebelled against *Sultanah Raziah*. Finally she was killed by her brother *Mui’z-zud din Bahram Shah*.<sup>3</sup>

*Sultan Mubarak Shah Khilji* (d. 5 Rabi Al-Awwal 721 HA/ 3 June 1321 AD) appointed a slave “*Malik Shaheen / Wafa Al-Malik / Wafa Beg*” his successor at the time of his journey to Dewgir.<sup>4</sup> He made a new Muslim “*Khusroo Khan*” (who belongs to a Dalit caste “Barwa / Barwari” [i.e. chamar ] of Gujrat) governor of Dewgir. He made *Malik Kafoor* (new Muslim who belongs to Dalit caste Barwa)<sup>5</sup> manager of properties of South (Dakan) and he made his brother “*Hisamuddin*” governor of Gujrat.

The ministers of *Sultan Mubarak Shah Khilji*, considered it his nourishing of low castes and conspired to murder him and appoint *Malik Asadud Din* (cousin of *Sultan A’lauddin Khilji*). When the king knew about this conspiracy he killed *Malik Asadud Din* and other ministers.<sup>6</sup>

After murder of Qutbuddin Mubark Shah Khilji, Hasan pardari – belongs to barwa (chamar) caste of Gujrat- took the power in his hand, so Barni told him ‘ bad asl’ (whose origine is not good/ bastard) along with his other bad titles.<sup>7</sup>

*Mohammad Tughlaq* was also against caste system and the true Muslim ruler who gave

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<sup>1</sup> *Delhi Urdu Akhbar (Delhi Urdu News Paper)*, 24 May 1857 AD, 29 Ramadan 1273 HA , barooz Doshambah, Quoted in Siddiqi, Atiq Ahmad: *1857 AD Ke Akhbarat Aur Dastawez (The news papers and documents of 1857AD)*. pub. Azamgarh, p.100.

<sup>2</sup> Nezami, Khaliq Ahmad: *Abdul Lateef ka 1857AD ka Tareekhi Rooz Namchah (Abdul Lateef’s Historical Diary of 1857AD)*, pub. Nadwatul Musaanifin, Delhi, ed. 1971AD, pp.124-125.

<sup>3</sup> Najeeb Aabadi, Akbar Shah Khan: *Ayina-e-Haqeeqat Noman ( The mirror of reality)*, op.cit., Vol. 1 Part. 1, pp.348-349.

Farishta, Mohammad Qasim: *Tareekh-e-Farishtah (History of Farishtah)*, op.cit. Vol.1, p.262.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, Vol.1 P.404.

<sup>5</sup> Najeeb Aabadi, Akbar Shah Khan: *Ayina-e-Haqeeqat Noman ( The mirror of reality)*, op.cit., Vol. 1 Part.2, pp.405-406.

<sup>6</sup> Barni, Sayed Ziauddin: *Tareekh-e-Firooz Shahi (The history of Firooz Shah)*, op.cit. pp.542,576,583,588, Najeeb Aabadi, Akbar Shah Khan: *Ayina-e-Haqeeqat Noman ( The mirror of reality)* op.cit., Vol. 1 Part. 1, pp.409-410.

<sup>7</sup> Omar, Mohammad: *Hindustani tahzeeb Ka Musalmanon Per Asar (The Influence of Indian Culture on Muslims)*, op.cit. p.76.

justice to every one.<sup>1</sup> He appointed many indigenous Muslims i.e. 'low' caste Muslims in his kingdom. Because of this, the ministers, ulama', Sufis, casteist people opposed him and rebelled against him all over his dynasty; even they joined hand with non Muslims. According to some historians, at the last, his kingdom turned down through his murder. There were 'ulama, Sufis, ministers including, *Sayed Khaja Nasiruddin Awdhi (Chiragh Dehlawi)*, *Sayid Ziyauddin Barni*, *Firuz Shah Tuglaq* etc. in this conspiracy. They appointed their casteist person *Firuz Shah Tuglaq* as king. In his dynasty, the casteism increased.<sup>2</sup>

In the period of *Sultan Nasirud Din Mahmood*, an indigenous Muslim '*Imaduddin Raihan*' came in power, but Turk (ashraf) Muslims killed him under the leadership of *Balban*.<sup>3</sup>

There are many stories and theories about the murder of Tipu Sultan. But a famous historian *Mahmood Ali Khan Mahmood Banglari* writes that he was murdered because of casteism.

According to him, Tipu Sultan sent marriage proposal of his brother-in-law '*Burhanuddin bin<sup>4</sup> Lalah Meyan*' to the daughter of his minister '*Badruz Zaman Khan bin Murad Khan Nayetah* the governor of *Haider Nagar*. *Badruz Zaman Khan* belonged to Nawayat caste who claims themselves as Sayed. And in his sight Tipu Sultan was razil caste i.e. '*Nayak*'.

So *Badruz Zaman Khan Nayetah* and Nawayat (people of *Nayetah* caste) disliked this marriage proposal, even his wife and daughter didn't like it. The girl committed suicide on the night of her marriage.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Battuta (Mohammad bin 'Abdullah ibn Battuta): *Rehlah Ibn-e-Batootah (Tuhfat Al-Nazzar Fi Ghara-i-b Al- Amsar w A'jaib Al-Sfar)*, [Ibn Battuta 's account of journey] Dar Al-Kutub Al-Lubnani, Beirut 1386 HA 1966AD, pp.294,313.

Ibn Battuta (Mohammad bin 'Abdullah ibn Battuta): *Rehlah Ibn-e-Batootah*, Urdu tr. By: Nadvi, Maulana Rayees Ahmad Jafri: *Safar Namah Ibn-e-batootah (Journey of Ibne batootah)*, pub. Nafis Academy, Karachi, ed. 1<sup>st</sup> 1961AD, pp.565-566,603-605,

Farishta, Mohammad Qasim: *Tareekh-e-Farishtah (History of Farishtah)*, op.cit. Vol.1 pp.425-427

Barni, Sayed Ziyauddin: *Tareekh-e-Firooz Shahi (History of Firooz Shah)*, op.cit. pp.655-657,659,717-718,

Najeeb Aabadi, Akbar Shah Khan: *Ayina-e-Haqeeqat Noman (The Mirror of reality)* op.cit., Vol. 1 Part.2, pp 499,501,

Tara Chand: *A short History of Indian People*, pp.172-173 Quoted in Ikram, Shaikh Mohammad: *Aab-e-Kathar (Water of Kawthar)*, op.cit. p.401.

Abdur Rahman, Sabahuddin, Sayid: *Hindustan Ke Ahd-e-Usta Ki Aik jhalak (A Glipse of Medieval period of India)*, Darul Musannefeen, Azamgarh, 1958AD, p212.

<sup>2</sup> Najeeb Aabadi, Akbar Shah Khan: *Ayina-e-Haqeeqat Noman (The mirror of reality)* op.cit., Vol. 1 Part.2, pp.496-497,528,525-526,531,534-538,547,554,578-579-580,608-609.

Ibn Batootah: *Rahlah Ibn-e-Batootah (Journey of Ibne Batootah)*, op.cit. pp.325-326,328.

Barni, Sayed Ziyauddin: *Tareekh-e-Firooz Shahi (History of Firooz Shah)*, op.cit. pp. 695,697,714-717,762-763,766,768,770,808-809,815.

Badayooni, Abdul Qadir: *Muntakhabut Tawrikh (A selected collection of historical events)*, Vol.1 pp.146-147.

Farishta, Mohammad Qasim: *Tareekh-e-Farishta (History of Farishtah)*, op.cit. Vol.1, pp.425-427,443-444.

Ashraf, Kanwar Mohammad: *Hindustani Mua'ashrah Ahd-e-Usta Mein (The Indian Society in medieval period)*, pp., 138,129. Foot Note.3.

Husain..Mehdi: pp.209-210 Quoted in Barni, Sayed Ziyauddin: *Tareekh-e-Firooz Shahi*, op.cit. p.747, foot note No.2.

<sup>3</sup> Omar, Mohammad, *Hindustani tahzeeb Ka Musalmanon Per Asar (The Influence of Indian Culture on Muslims)*, op.cit. p.76.

<sup>4</sup> Bin means: son of.

Nawayat were not happy with *Tipu Sultan* because of that marriage proposal. After death of the girl, they decided to take revenge from *Tipu Sultan* and started conspiracy by the help of British commander 'Lord Dalhousie'. When the battle started, they vacated the important place for entrance of British army. By this way *Tipu Sultan* was killed and Islamic kingdom got over.<sup>1</sup>

## 'Ulama and intellectuals in Muslim period:

### Maulana Sayed Ziauddin Barni:

Allah says in the Holy Qura'n:

*"It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah. Verily, Allah is All-Mighty, Oft-Forgiving."*<sup>2</sup>

The prophet (PBUH) said:

*"Allah will not finish knowledge directly from the people. But he will finish the knowledge by finishing u'lama (scholars). When there no 'alim will be remain, people will make illiterate people their leaders. They will ask them the questions and they will reply without knowledge. Then they will be misguided and will misguide the people"*<sup>3</sup>

This is the importance of 'ulama, but when it comes to caste system, majority of u'lama prefer to either keep quiet or go totally against the Islamic spirit and its teachings.

*Maulana Sayed Ziauddin Barni* - the court historian of *Sultan Mohammad Tughlaq* and *Sultan Firooz Shah Tughlaq*- was himself one of the biggest supporters of casteism.

He used to advise the king a lot of caste based instruction. He writes in *Fatawa Jahadari (The rules of the kingship)*:

*"The teachers of every kind are to be sternly ordered not to thrust precious stone down the throats of dogs or put collars of gold round the neck of pigs and bears - that is to mean, the ignoble and the worthless, to shop-keepers and to the low-born, they are to be taught nothing more than the rules about prayer, fasting, religious charity and the Haj pilgrimage along with some chapters of the Qur'an and some doctrines of the faith, without which their religion can not be correct and valid prayers are not possible. But they are to be taught nothing else, lest it will bring honour to their mean souls. They are not to be taught reading and writing, for plenty of disorders arise owing to the skill of low-born in knowledge. The disorder into which all affairs of the religion and the state are thrown is due to the acts and words of the low-born, who have become skilled. For, on account of their skill, they become governors (wali) revenue-collectors ('amil) auditors (mutasarrif), officers (farman-deh) and rulers (farman-rawa). If teachers are disobedient, and it is discovered at the time of investigation that they have imparted knowledge or taught letters or writings to the low-born, inevitably the punishment for their disobedience*

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<sup>1</sup> Banglari, Mahmood Khan Mahmood: *Tarikh saltunat-e-Khuda dad (Maysor)[The History of God gifted kingdom - Maysor]*, Himalyah book House, Delhi, ed. 1983, pp.44-45, 225-226,402-444.

<sup>2</sup> The Holy Quar'an,op.cit. Surah Fatir, Verse No.28. ( The Holy Qur'an,35:28)

<sup>3</sup> Al-Bukhari, Al-Imam Mohammad bin Isma'il: *As-Saheeh[saheeh Bukhari] (A collection of prophet tradition)*,Loaded on <http://www.al-eman.com/hadeeth/viewchp.asp?BID=13&CID=6#s2>, Kitabul 'Ilm, Bab-o- Kaifa Uqbazul 'Ilm, Hadith No.:100,

An-Nesapuri, Abu Al-Husain Muslim bin Hajjaj Al-Qushairi: *As-Saheeh[saheeh Muslim] (A collection of prophet tradition)*,Loaded on

<http://www.aleman.com/hadeeth/viewchp.asp?BID=1&CID=143#s4>, Kitabul 'Ilm, Bab-o-rafal 'Ilm W Qabzohu, W Zuhoorul Jihl W Al-Faitan Fi Aakhiriz Zaman, Hadith No.: 6970.

will be meted out to them.”<sup>1</sup>

According to Islamic teaching, the good deeds and the bad deeds are gained by human himself, during the course of life. But *Barni* evolved a theory of his own stating that it is fixed by birth. In support of his thought, he writes:

“The merits and demerits of men have been apportioned at the beginning of time and allotted to their souls. The acts and deeds of men are due to Divine Commandment; whenever Almighty God instills goodness or wickedness, virtue or voice in a man, He also endows him with the faculty of giving expression to the goodness or wickedness, virtue or voice....

This aptitude for arts, fine and coarse, is hereditary. It has been inherited by the descendants from their ancestors and in every generation the descendants have, in accordance with their quickness of intelligence and acuteness of mind, added some things that are fine and desirable to the profession of their ancestors, so that every art, craft and profession on the production of which mankind depends, has attained perfection.

And as excellences have been put into those who have adopted the nobler professions, they also are capable of virtues- kindness, generosity, valour, good deeds, good works, truthfulness, keeping of promises, protection of other classes, loyalty, clarity of vision, justice, equity, recognition of rights, gratitude for favours received and fear of God.

They are, consequently, said to be noble, free-born, virtuous, of high genealogy and pure birth. These groups alone are worthy of offices and posts in the government of the king, who owing to his high position as the supreme commander, is distinguished as the leader and chief of men. As a result of their actions the government of the king is strengthened and adorned.

On the other hand the low-born who have been enrolled for practicing the baser arts and minor professions, are capable only of vices-immobility, falsehood, miserliness, misappropriation, wrongfulness, lies, evil-speaking, ingratitude, dirtiness, injustice, cruelty, non-recognition of rights, shamelessness, impudence, blood-shedding, rascality, jugglery, Godlessness. So they are called low-born, bazaar-people, base, mean, worthless, plebeian, shameless and of dirty birth. Every act which is contaminated with meanness and based on ignominy comes elegantly from them.”<sup>2</sup>

He went to the extent of advising King to not to appoint these ‘low’ people in his kingdom on any post, as their appointments are worthless and against God-will’s and wisdom of God. Finally the king will be punished on the Day of Judgment.<sup>3</sup>

The *Holy Qur’an* says:

“Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has *At-Taqwa* [i.e. one of the *Muttaqin* (pious - see V.2:2)]. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.”<sup>4</sup>

In commentary of it, *Barni* says defending himself:

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<sup>1</sup> Barni, Sayid Ziauddin: *The Fatawa-i- Jahandari (The rules of the kingship)*, English tr. Dr. Afsar Begum (Dr. Mrs. Afsar Umar Salim Khan) included in ‘*The political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate*. By Mohammad Habib & Dr. Afsar Begum ( Dr. Mrs. Afsar Umar Salim Khan), Kitab Mahal, Delhi, Advice No. XI, p.49.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, Advice No.XXI, pp.97-98.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p.98.

<sup>4</sup> The *Holy Qur’an*, *op.cit.*, Surah *Al-H ujr*at, Verse: 13, (*The Holy Qur’an*,49:13).

“It ought to be known that in the impure and impure-born and the low and low-born, there can be no piety. If they see piety in baseborn bazaar-man, then indeed the blood (‘arq) of his ancestors must have constituted some noble blood.”<sup>1</sup>

This is the basic verse for equality in Islam. But shamelessly it was misinterpreted in the interest of the governing classes.

It is above mentioned that *Sultan Mohammad Tughlaq* appointed ‘low’ caste persons in his kingdom. *Barni* has abused him and his officials for it. He used to call his officials as ‘mean, bastard boy etc. He also joined hands with enemies of Mohammad Tughlaq to replace him by *Firooz Shah Tughlaq*.<sup>2</sup>

In the last years of his life, *Barni* realized that whatever he has done for the sake of money and post was indeed wrong and so he is getting punishment for it. He wrote:

“We (‘ulama) - who studied and had ‘ilm (knowledge) which is the base of honour, became hypocrites for the sake of wealth. We are among friends of the king. But we misguided him, advising him wrong about illegal punishment. In fear of soul and wealth which will be dead and finished, we were afraid of it and avoided to advice right path to the king. In the lust of wealth we were with the king in illegal and un-Islamic punishment. We were helping him in violation of Islamic teachings by preaching incorrect hadiths. I don’t know the condition of others, that they have suffered like me or not. The result of whatever I did and said is making me experience insults and sufferings in this old age. I am needy of every door and I am without honour. If this is my punishment in this world, then I am afraid of what will happen at the Day of Judgment and which kind of punishment I will be put to suffer.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Jahaniyan-e-Jahan Gasht:**

*Sultan Firooz Shah Tughlaq* appointed *Sayed Husain Jalaluddin Bukhari (Jahaniyan-e-Jahan Gasht)* (d. 1<sup>st</sup> Zil Hijjah 785 HA/ 25 Jan.1384AD) Shaikul Islam of his kingdom. He is famous still now as a great Sufi and religious person. He was another big supporter of caste and firmly believed in untouchability. He used to preach that *providing knowledge beyond the Holy Quran and the rules of prayers and fasting to the so-called razil castes is like scattering pearls before swine and dogs!* He reportedly insisted that *other Muslims should not eat with barbers, washers of corpses, dyers, tanners, cobblers, bow-makers, arrow-makers and washermen, besides consumers of alcohol and usurers, adducing the fake traditions (hadiths)*

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<sup>1</sup> Barni, Sayid Ziauddin: *The Fatawa-i- Jahandari (The rules of the kingship)*, op.cit. p.98.

<sup>2</sup> Najeeb Aabadi, Akbar Shah Khan: *Ayina-e-Haqeeqat Noman ( The Mirror of reality)*, op.cit., Vol. 1 Part.2, pp.496-497,528,525-526,531,534-538,547,554,578-579-580,608-609.

Ibn Batootah: *Rahlah Ibn-e-Batootah,(Journey of Ibne Batootah)* op.cit.pp.325-326,328.

Barni, Sayed Ziyauddin: *Tareekh-e-Firooz Shahi (History of Firooz Shah)*, op.cit.pp. 695,697,714-717,762-763,766,768770,808-809,815,

Badayooni,Abdul Qadir: *Muntakhabut Tawrikh (A selected collection of historical events)*, Vol.1pp.146-147.

Farishta, Mohammad Qasim: *Tareekh-e-Farishtah (History of Farishtah)*, op.cit.Vol.1,pp.425-427,443-444.

Ashraf, Kanwar Mohammad: *Hindustani Mua’ashrah Ahd-e-Usta Mein (The Indian Society in medieval period)*,pp.,138,129. Foot Note.3.

Husain.Dr.Mehdi: pp.209-210 Quoted in Barni, Sayed Ziyauddin: *Tareekh-e-Firooz Shah i(History of Firooz Shah)*, op.cit.p.747, foot note No.2.

<sup>3</sup> Barni, Sayed Ziyauddin: *Tareekh-e-Firooz Shahi, (History of Farishtah)* op.cit.pp. 664.

falsely attributed to the Prophet Muhammad to back this argument.<sup>1</sup>

## U'lama and intellectuals in non Muslim period:

After declination of Mughal dynasty, there are many Muslim intellectuals and u'lama (religious scholars) who are famous for their efforts done for Muslim community. But the same time, majority of them believed in caste system. Their aim was only to develop so called upper caste Muslims. Here we can discuss some of them in brief.

### Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan:

*Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan*, (1817-1898 A.D.) the founder of the Aligarh movement/ Muhammadan Anglo-Indian Oriental College / Aligarh Muslim University, hailed as the father of Muslim India. But his biased mentality never allowed him to think about whole of Indian Muslims. His aim was to develop ruling classes i.e. upper castes, nawabs etc. He always used to abuse 'low' caste Muslims, calling them bad-zaat (low caste).<sup>2</sup>

He is known for saying that 'low' caste Muslims were not suitable for the country and the British government. But upper caste Muslims were suitable for both of them. The upper castes Muslims were propagating the justice of British government among the Indian people.<sup>3</sup>

He tried to convey this message by his book "*Asbab baghawate-e-Hind*" (*The causes of Indian Revolt*) to the British officers that in the 1857 A.D. revolt, no upper caste Muslim participated in it, only 'low' caste Muslims took part in it.<sup>4</sup> In his word:

"Julahon ka tar to toot gaya tha jo bad zaat sab se zeyadah is hangamah mein garm josh the."<sup>5</sup>

"The power of weavers was broken completely, who "low caste"( bad zaat) were involved the most in this revolt."

He appealed to the so-called 'ashraf' not to oppose the British government, suggesting that thereby they would be able to win the favour of the colonial authorities.<sup>6</sup>

He opposed the entry of so-called 'razil' in legislatures and government employment. He argued that examinations for the high government services (civil services) should not be held in India because that might lead to people from so-called raziil castes entering government services and thereby ruling over the so-called ashraf.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jahaniyan-e- Jahangasht, Sayid Husain Jalaluddin Bukhari : *Sirajul Hedaya- Malfoozat-e- Husain Al-Marroof bi Jalaluddin Jahaniyan-e- Jahangasht (The lamp of guidance- Writings of Husain)*, compiled by: Qazi Sajjad Husain, pub. Indian Council for Historical Research, New Delhi, ed.1983 AD. Pp.77, 88.

<sup>2</sup> Khan, Sir Sayid Ahmad: *Asbab baghawate-e-Hind, M'a Moqaddamah Fauque Karimi(The Causes of Indian Revolt with the preface of Fawque Karimi)* , pub. University publisher, Muslim University Aligarh, ed.1<sup>st</sup>, 1958AD,60.

<sup>3</sup> Khan, Sir Sayid Ahmad: *Khutbat-e-Sir Sayid (Speeches of Sir Sayed)*, cop.Mohammad Isma'il Pani Pati, pub. Prof. hamid Ahamd Khan, Nazim Majlis-e-Tarqqi-e-Adab, Lahore Pakistan, ed.1<sup>st</sup>, 1973 AD,, Vol.2, pp.12-13,19,22,24-27.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, Vol.2, pp.12-13,19,22,24-27.

<sup>5</sup> Khan, Sir Sayid Ahmad: *Asbab baghawate-e-Hind i(The Causes of Indian Revolt)* op.cit,p.60.

<sup>6</sup> Khan, Sir Sayid Ahmad: *Khutbat-e-Sir Sayid(Speeches of Sir Sayed)*, op.cit. Vol.2, pp.12-13,19,22,24-27

<sup>7</sup> Khan, Sir Sayid Ahmad: *Khutbat-e-Sir Sayid(Speeches of Sir Sayed)*,op.cit. Vol.2, pp.12-13.

He also opposed the high education for 'low' caste Muslims. He opened Aligarh Muslim University, just for upper caste Muslims and Hindus.<sup>1</sup> He used to say that Aligarh College is not for weavers.<sup>2</sup> So much he emphasized on casteism that there was mentioned in the character certificate of Aligarh Muslim University till 1947 AD, that:

"The holder of this certificate belongs to the 'sharif khandan' (upper caste) of his district."<sup>3</sup>

In 20<sup>th</sup> of April 1894, Sir Sayed delivered a speech about the education of women in Jalandhar, Punjab. He spoke only about the education of 'upper' caste girls.<sup>4</sup>

In an address at the foundation laying ceremony of 'Madrassa Anjuman-e-Islamia' in Bareilly where children from the so-called 'low-caste' communities used to study, he said that he finds no use in teaching English to them. In his words:

"It is better and in the interests of the community that they are engaged in the old form of study... It appears appropriate if you teach them some writing and math. They should also be taught small tracts on everyday affairs and through which they know basic beliefs and practices of the Islamic faith."<sup>5</sup>

Even by one of his writing, one can conclude that he did not accept 'low' caste Muslims as Muslims itself.<sup>6</sup>

There were three categories in Aligarh College according to economic status and every category had separate mess menu named as "the best", "the better" and "the low". The category system created the greatest caste/class feelings among the young students. Once, a warden punished a second class hostel student and asked him to eat food with third category, but he refused to obey.<sup>7</sup> Such was the affect on young minds.

The cooks and servants though used to pray with the students in the mosque, but after prayer they were not allowed to get close to the students.<sup>8</sup> As a student of Aligarh

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<sup>1</sup> Khan, Ashfaque Mohammad (comp.) *Hindustani M'ashrah Mein Musalmanon ke Masayel(Problems of Muslims in Indian Society)*, Peteryat Publishers, Link House, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi, ed. 1<sup>st</sup> 1990AD, p.341.

*Qawmi Aawaz, daily (Urdu)( Voice of the Nation, Daily Urdu News Paper) New Delhi, 27 November 1994 AD.*

*Rashtria Sahara (Daily) Urdu (National Urdu Sahara News paper)New Delhi,30 Dec. 2001.*

<sup>2</sup> *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation?*, Christophe Jaffrelot (ed.) Manohar, New Delhi, 2002, pp. 59-60. Quoted in [http://www. infinityfoundation. com/ mandala /h es/h es\\_karan\\_caste.htm](http://www.infinityfoundation.com/mandala/h_es/h_es_karan_caste.htm). Caste in Medieval India: The Beginnings of a Reexamination<sup>1</sup>, By Dileep Karanth.

<sup>3</sup> Khan, Ashfaque Mohammad (comp.) *Hindustani M'ashrah Mein Musalmanon ke Masayel(Problems of Muslims in Indian Society)*, op.cit.p.341.

<sup>4</sup> *Aligarh Institute Gazette* 15, May 1894 AD, Vol.29, Issue No.39, Quoted in *Khutbat-e-Sir Sayid (Speeches of Sir Sayed)* op.cit.vol.2, p.279.

<sup>5</sup> Khan, Sir Sayid Ahmad: *Majmo'ah-e-Lectures and speeches (Bunch of lectures)*. Comp. Munshi Serajuddin, pub.Sadhur 1892AD, Quoted in Ateeque Siddiqi: *Sir Sayid Ahmad Khan Aik Seyasi Mutalah(A political Study of Sir Sayed)*.Maktabah Jamia Limited, New Delhi, ed.1<sup>st</sup> 1977AD, pp.144-145.

<sup>6</sup> Khan, Sir Sayid Ahmad: *Asbab baghawate-e-Hind i(The Causes of Indian Revolt)* op.cit, p.59-60. For explanation and more details, see Falahi, Masood Alam: *Hindustan Main Zaat Paat Aur Musalman (Muslim And Casteism In India)* , pub. Ideal Foundation, Mumbai, Distributor: Farid Book Depot Delhi, ed.2<sup>nd</sup> 2009, ch.9,pp.267-268.

<sup>7</sup> Husain, Mir Walayt: *Aap Beti (Auto Biography)* p.28-33, Quoted in Ateeque Siddiqi: *Sir Sayid Ahmad Khan Aik Seyasi Mutalah(A political Study of Sir Sayed)*, op.cit.pp.176-178.

<sup>8</sup> Thanwi, Ashraf Ali: *Ashraul Jawab (The collection of fatwa)*, Vol.4 p.386, pub. Maktabah Thanwi Deoband, Quoted in *Masik Pasmadah Aawaz (Voice of Backward Monthly)* (Hindi) Patna, June 2005, Vol.2, Issue No.6.

Muslim University, I saw some reflection of these un-Islamic things breathing still there.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Sayed because of his casteist nature, he didn't even avoid criticism on companions of the prophet of Islam (PBUH) Abu Baker and 'Usman (May Allah pleased with them) the first and third caliphs, who got knowledge in their lives through the prophet that they will go to the paradise.<sup>2</sup>

### **Contemporary U'lama:**

Now I will analyze the works of numerous contemporary Indian 'ulama, who are held by their followers as great intellectuals, people like *Maulvi Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilvi*, *Maulvi Ashraf Ali Thanvi*, *Maulvi Sayed Abul A'ala Maudoodi*, *Maulvi Sayed Abul Hasan Ali Hasani Husaini Nadwi* etc.

I am shocked to discover that most of them actually championed the notion of caste superiority based on birth and gave fatwas about this that went totally against the *Holy Quran*. This they did by recourse to the notion of what in Arabic is called *kafaa*, using which they set down rules about possible marriage relations between groups whom they ranked hierarchically. Thus, they argued that Muslims of Arab origin (*Sayeds* and *Sheikhs*) are superior to non-Arab or Ajami Muslims, and so while a man who claims Arab origin can marry an Ajami woman, the reverse is not possible. Likewise, they argued, a *Pathan* Muslim man can marry a *Julaha* (*Ansari*) *Mansuri* (*Dhunia*,) *Rayeen* (*Kunjra*) or *Quraishi* (*Qasai*) woman, but an *Ansari*, *Rayeen*, *Mansuri* and *Quraishi* man can not marry a *Pathan* woman since they considered these castes to be inferior to *Pathan*. Many of these u'lama also believed that it is the best to marry within one's own caste.

### **Maulana Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilwi:**

He (d.4 Oct.1921 AD) is the founder of Bareilwi sect. He was a staunch upholder of caste distinctions and of the notion of Syed supremacy. Thus, in reply to a question as to whether a teacher could hit a Syed student in order to teach him manners, he issued a fatwa that answered the question obliquely. He argued that if a Syed were convicted of even a major crime that necessitated the *hadd* punishment, the judge or *qazi* must administer the punishment 'not with the intention of punishing him', but, instead, 'with the intention in his heart that he is cleaning the dirt that has gathered on the feet of a prince'. 'If this is the command for a *qazi* implementing the *hadd* punishment on a Syed,' he went on, and if, therefore, a *qazi* could not dare punish a person of this caste with the intention of reforming him, 'what can one say about a mere teacher?'<sup>3</sup>

Needless to say, no rules of this kind are at all to be found anywhere in the Quran or in the corpus of authenticated Hadith. On the contrary, a *hadith* report in the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari teaches us quite the opposite. According to this report, the Prophet mentioned that even if Fatima, his daughter (from whom the Syeds claim descent) was guilty of

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<sup>1</sup> For more details, see Falahi, Masood Alam: *Hindustan Mein Zaat Paat Aur Musalman (Muslim And Casteism In India)* op.cit. Ch.9,pp.262-270,

<sup>2</sup> Nadwi, Sayid Sulaiman: *Heyat-e-Shibli (The life of Shibi)*, Darul Musann-e-feen, Azamgarh, ed.2<sup>nd</sup> 1970AD, 232-233.

<sup>3</sup> Khan, Ahmad Reza Bareilwi: *Al-Malfooz (Malfoozat)[Writings]*, comp. Mustafa Khan Bareilwi s/o Ahmad Reza Khan, Bareilwi, Qadri Kitab Ghar, Bareilwi Shareef, UP, ed. 1<sup>st</sup> 1995AD, Vol.3, pp.55-56



stealing, he would cut off her hand.”<sup>1</sup> The ridiculousness of Raza Khan’s fatwa is thus obvious and needs no explanation.

Maulana Ahmad Raza Khan claimed that even though Mughal and Pathan are Ashraaf but they are not the Kufu (equal/endogamy) of Sayeds.<sup>2</sup> He went on to write:

“The original good (communities) have good qualities (and manners) and it is the opposite among the razeel (low caste). It was due to this that rulers of the past did not allow the razeel (low castes) to get higher education. Now ‘look at the barbers (*nai*) and bangle-makers (*manihar*) now, who, by acquiring knowledge, are spreading all sorts of strife and chaos (*fitna*). Some bangle-makers now even claim to be Syeds and the sons of lions (*ibn-e sher*)!”<sup>3</sup>

According to him *Sayed, Sheikh, Mughal* and *Pathan* are upper caste and others are razeel castes.<sup>4</sup> He also says that only *Quraishi* (who belongs to *Quraish* tribe of *Makkah*) should be a Caliph.<sup>5</sup>

In a fatwa, Raza Khan and his son and successor Muhammad Mustafa Raza Khan Qadri, expressed their firm faith in caste discrimination and hierarchy thus:

‘Weavers (*julahe*), tanners (*khal pakane wale*), cobblers (*mochi*), barbers (*nai*) and [those associated with] such despicable (*zalil*) occupational groups [...] cannot, even if they are religious scholars (*alim*), be the *kufu*’ of the *shurafa*’.<sup>6</sup>

He also argues that if low caste man marries with upper caste woman, that nikah will not be valid and there is no need to break this nikah. It will be invalid automatically.<sup>7</sup> He argues that if the father or grandfather of a minor and immature girl married his daughter with a new Muslim (‘low’ caste), for the first time it is permissible. If he will marry his another daughter with any ‘low’ caste, then this nikah will also be invalid.<sup>8</sup>

There are many u’lama even some low caste ‘ulama in Barelwi sect who support caste hierarchy and caste based discrimination, for instace: *Maulana Sayed Hashmat Ali*,<sup>9</sup> *Maulana Mohammad Amjad ‘Ali* <sup>10</sup> *Maulana Mufti Ahmad Yar Khan Nay’imi*, <sup>11</sup> *Maulana*

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Bukhari ,Al-Imam Mohammad bin Isma’il: *As-Saheeh[saheeh Bukhari]* (A collection of prophet tradition)op.cit, Kitab Al-Hodood, Bab 12, Vol.6,p.161.

<sup>2</sup> Khan, Ahmad Reza Barelwi: *Fatawa-e-Rizwiyah* (A collection of Fatawa), Astana Press, Bareli, Tahqeeq wa Tasheeh wa Tashheeh: Maulana Mustafa Khan barelwi, Vol.3, P.118, Question No. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Khan, Ahmad Reza Barelwi: *Al-Malfooz (Malfoozat) [Writings]*, op.cit.Vol.1, P.104.

<sup>4</sup> Khan, Ahmad Reza Barelwi: *Fatawa-e-Rizwiyah* (A collection of Fatawa), op.cit. Vol.3, P.118, Question No. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Khan, Ahmad Reza Barelwi: *Al-Malfooz (Malfoozat) [Writings]*, Maktabah-e-qadria,Atwa Bazaar, Siddharth Nagar, UP.Vol.1, P.89-90.

<sup>6</sup> Khan, Ahmad Reza Barelwi: *Fatawa-e-Rizwiyah* (A collection of Fatawa), op.cit. Vol.3, P.117, Question No. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, Vol.3, P.115-116,119,122 Question No. 10,14-15.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, Vol.3, Pp.107-108,118,121,, Question No. 3,13,15.

<sup>9</sup> See Hafiz Tabark Husain & Hafiz Deen Mohammad: *Khun-e-Musawat(Murder of equality)*, p.7, Quoted in Anwar, Ali : ‘*Masavat Ki Jang*’ *Pase manzer Bihar Ke pasmandah Musalman (The Struggle for Equality Backgroung: The Backward Muslim of Bihar , Wani Parkashan Delhi, 2001)*.p.127.

<sup>10</sup> See Amjad ‘Ali, Mohammad: *Bahar-e-Shari’at,(Spring of Shari’ah)* Kutub Khanah Ahle Sunnat 98/206, Nazir Bagh, Kanpur, Vol.1,part.7,pp.45-47.

<sup>11</sup> See Na’yimi, Ahmad Yar Khan : *Shan-e- Habibur Rahman Min Aayat-i-l-Qur’an(The value of Allah’s friend (Mohammad) in Quranic verses)*,pub. Jasim book Depot,Delhi,pp.128-131.

Mufti Jalaluddin Ahmad Amjadi , <sup>1</sup> Maulana Arshadul Qadri, <sup>2</sup> etc.

### **Maulana Qasim Nanawtwi:**

The second largest group of Indian Muslims “Deobandi” sect is also not clean from the caste system. Like Aligarh Muslim University, *Darul ‘Uloom Deoband* was established for the welfare of upper caste Muslims, especially Sayeds and Sheikhs. This is mentioned in the writings of *Maulana Qasim Nanawtwi* (d.15 April 1880).<sup>3</sup>

Mrs. Barbara Daly Metcalf writes quoting the statement of *Maulana Qasim Nanawtwi* from “*Roodad Darul ‘Uloom Deoband (Reports of Darul ‘Uloom Deoband)*” p.11:

“God entrusted religious learning to these four Qaum.....[ashraf qaum i.e. Sayed, Sheikh, Mughal and Phatan] must acquire learning not merely for glory but for their livelihood as well.”<sup>4</sup>

She writes about the aim of *Deoband Madrasa*:

"The ideologies of the Deobandis were particularly congruent to the interests of the ashraf."<sup>5</sup>

In the beginning, low caste students were not allowed to take admission in *Darul ‘Uloom Deoband*.<sup>6</sup> We can still find the column of caste in *Darul ‘Uloom Deoband*'s admission form.<sup>7</sup>

### **Mufti A’zizur Rahman U’smani:**

The first Mufti of in *Darul ‘Uloom Deoband* Mufti A’zizur Rahman U’smani’ (d.1347 HA /1928-29AD) has given many fatwas based on caste. He says that if *Sayed* mature girl marries herself with ‘low’ caste boy without her parent’s permission, that nikah will be invalid.<sup>8</sup> But if the ‘low’ caste girl marries with ‘upper’ caste man without permission of her parent, then that nikah will be valid.<sup>9</sup>

The Mufti’s dogged commitment to so-called *ashraf*, particularly Syed, supremacy, is evident in yet another of his many fatwas. A woman had taken to prostitution with the permission of her father, and she had a Syed customer, who was also her lover. The two got married, although the woman’s father did not give them his approval because he wanted her to marry a man from their own caste. When the issue was taken to the Mufti and he was asked if the marriage was proper despite the woman not having received the permission or approval of her father, he replied, ‘As the husband is a *sharif*, (upper caste)

<sup>1</sup> See Amjadi, Jalaluddin Ahmad: *Khutabat-e-Muharram(The speeches of Month of Muharram)* Pub.Abrar Ahmad & his friends, Distributor: Kutub Khanah Amjadiyah, Barawn Shareef, Basti, ed.1<sup>st</sup> 1988AD,pp.14-15,239-240.

<sup>2</sup> Arshadul Qadri:*Zer-o-Zabar(Up and Down)*,Pub. Maktabah Jam-e-Noor, Delhi,ed.1986 AD.pp.455-456.

<sup>3</sup> *Kaifeeyat-e-Hashtami Salanah Madrasah Arabi ( Roodad madrasah ‘Arabiyah) Deoband*,(History of Darul ‘Uloom Deoband) 1290 HA (1873-74 AD),p.9.

<sup>4</sup> *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900*, Oxford university Press,New Delhi,India,ed.1st 2002. Ch.VI ,The Social Milieu of the Deobandi ‘Ulama, pp.239, 245.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*,top.Beyond the Ashraf.p.258.

<sup>6</sup> See for details and reference. Falahi, Masood Alam: *Hindustan Mein Zaat Paat Aur Musalman (Muslim And Casteism In India)*, op.cit.Ch.9,p.319.

<sup>7</sup> Admission form of Darul ‘Uloom Deoband’, 1424 HA /2004 AD.

<sup>8</sup> Uthmani, ‘Azizur Rahman: *Fatwa Darul ‘Uloom Deoband( A collection of Darul ‘Uloom Fatawa)*’ Comp. Mohammad Zafiruddin, pub.Shu’ba-e-Nashr-o-Isha’t, Darul ‘Uloom Deoband’ UP.ed.1<sup>st</sup> 1972AD, Vol.8, p.208,213,235214, Question No.1153-1154,1162,1194.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, Vol.8,pp.218,220-221,226.Question No.1161,1165,1176.

and the woman is a *daniyah* (low caste), the command with regard to absence of *kufu'* leading to invalidity of the marriage will not be applied because it is apparent that the husband is of *sharif* lineage.<sup>1</sup>

It is shocking to note how, although both the Syed man and this woman were adulterers, in the Mufti's eyes the man was *sharif* or 'noble' simply because of his caste and hence he considered this marriage legitimate.

### **Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi:**

The famous Deobandi 'alim *Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi* (d.4 July 1943 A.D.) shared the same mindset. He declared *Sayed, Sheikh Mughal* and *Pathan* noble caste, and *weaver, oil presser razeel* (low) caste.<sup>2</sup>

'Maulana' Thanvi's fierce commitment to caste-based hierarchy and prejudice is strikingly brought out in the following incident, recorded in a book titled *Kamalat-e Ashrafiya*, that records narratives that speak of the alleged greatness of the 'Maulana'. Once, a 'low' caste disciple and deputy of his, who was also a *maulvi*, made so bold as to collect his own sayings (*malfuzat*) together. This collection commenced with the phrase 'he pronounced' (*farmaya*). Thanvi was greatly enraged by this 'insouciance' of the 'low' caste man, and angrily scolded him, going so far as to forbid him from accepting the oath of spiritual allegiance (*ba'iat*) from his followers. Not stopping at that, he even declared that no one should talk to him or else he, too, would be subjected to the same sort of treatment. The *maulvi* entreated Thanvi for mercy. Thanvi decided to punish him for his 'impudence' by ordering that everyday after the evening prayers he must announce to the others present, saying, 'Sirs! Because I belong to the Julaha caste, that is why, because of lack of courage, I began to consider myself superior to the favours bestowed on me by my spiritual guide (*murabbi*), because of which I am now being punished.'<sup>3</sup>

He mocked weavers at many places, like once he said:

"The weaver prayed three days only and considered himself a sacred person."<sup>4</sup>

He and many leading *Deobandi* 'ulama's say, that the new Muslims were not equal to old Muslims (upper castes).<sup>5</sup> He wrote that *Sayed* and *Sheikh* are *kufu* for each other, but *Mughar* and *Pathan* are not *kufu* of them. If a *Sayed* married a non-*Sayed* girl, then the child born from her will be *Sayed*, but his he will not be equal to that *Sayed* boy whose mother and father both of them are *Sayeds*.<sup>6</sup>

The same rule was given by Manu Maharaj in *Manu Smirti* which says that a Brahman

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, Vol.8, p.206.question No.1142.

<sup>2</sup> Thanwi, Ashraf, *Imadatul Fatawa*, Kitabun Nikah, com. by Maulna Mufti Mohammad Shafi, hashiya (foot note) by Maulna Syid Ahmad Palanpuri, Idarah Talifat-e-Awliya, Deoband, U.P.Vol.II, pp.368-369, Question No. 457.

<sup>3</sup> Thanwi, Ashraf Ali: *Kamalat-e-Ashrafiyah (Achievements of Ashraf Ali Thanwi)*, Comp.'Isa Saheb Allahabadi Khalifah hakeemul Ummat, Pub.Idara Taleefat-e- Ashrafiyah,,8, Thanah Bhawan, Muzaffar Nagar,pp.174-175,Kamal No.699

<sup>4</sup> Thanwi, Ashraf Ali: *Al-Rafiq Fi Saway Al-Tareeq,(The friend on the right way)* Thanah Bhawan 1366 HA,p.15, Quoted in Muhiuddin, Momin: *Momin Ansari Beradri ki Tahzibi Tarikh (The cultural History of Momin Ansari Caste)*, Momin Dar Al-Theqafah, Mumbai, p.353

<sup>5</sup> Thanwi, Ashraf Ali: *Bahisti Zewar Ma' Bahisti gauhar, (The jewelry of paradise with the pearl of paradise)* revised ed. Taj Company Delhi, Vol.1, part 4,p.10-11.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

can marry with Shudra (dalit) girl and the child born from this marriage will be Brahman Shudra, but he will not be equal to the boy whose mother and father both of them are Barahmans.<sup>1</sup>

Maulana Thanwi also supported the most controversial book “*Nihayatul Irab fi Ghayatib Nasab*” by Mufti Mohammad Shafi Usmani. In which Mufti Shafi Usmani (d.6 October 1976AD) abused low castes.<sup>2</sup>

There are a lot of Deobandi ‘ulama supporting casteism in the name of kufu / endogamy etc. i.e Maulana Qari Mohammad Tayyib the first president of All India Muslim Personal law Board (d.17 July 1983 AD) the former manager of Darul ‘Uloom Deoband.<sup>3</sup>

### **Mufti Muhammad Shafi Usmani:**

Mufti Muhammad Shafi Usmani, (d.6 October 1976AD) of Deobandi school who later on became the Grand Mufti of Pakistan, has written a book entitled “*Nihayat al Arab fi Ghayat al Nasb*” in which he has made several statements which emphasizing the glory and magnificence of ‘Ashraaf’ and ruled that customary concept of Kufu / endogamy doesn’t violate any of the Islamic principles.<sup>4</sup>

Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi,<sup>5</sup> Maulana Sayed Husain Ahamd Madani,(d.Dec. 1957AD) <sup>6</sup> and Maulana Qari Muhammad Tayyab Qasmi<sup>7</sup> have approved Mufti Shafi’s stand on casteism and dismissed the critics as those were influenced by the West’s God-less ideologies.<sup>8</sup> It is to be noted that there was a disturbance in Deoband when this book was released and Mufti Shafi took refuge at Darul Uloom to escape the hostile crowd.<sup>9</sup>

### **Maulan Mohammad Zakaria:**

The famous Tablighi Jam’at Deobandi ‘alim, Maulana Mohammad Zakaria (d.1982A.D.), has also supported Mufti Shafi’ Usmani. He wrote a lengthy book in his support.<sup>10</sup> Even he has written some caste based things in *Fadhayel-e-A’amal (Advantage of good deeds)*, a

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<sup>1</sup> Manu: *Manu Smirti.(The Law of Manu)* Urdu translation by Lalh Swami Deyal Saheb, Matba’ Nawal Kishor Kanpur, 2nd ed. July 1908, 9:178,150-151,

<sup>2</sup> Uthani , Mohammad Shafi: *Nihayatul Irab fi Ghayatib Nasab, M’a Wasl Al-sabab Fi Fasl Al-Nasab* by Ashraf Ali Thanwi, pub. Jami’at Al-Musleheen, Saharan Pur, Revised and New ed.

<sup>3</sup> Mohammad Tayyab, Qari:*Nasab Aur Islam (Islam and Caste)* , pub. Taj al-M’arif, Deoband included in *Seh Mahi Silsaly-e-matboo’aat:( Quarterly Printing Series)* 42, March 1962 AD.

<sup>4</sup> Uthani ,Mufti Mohammad Shafi: *Nihayatul Irab fi Ghayatin Nasab, M’a Wasl-us-sabab Fi Faslin Nasab* by Ashraf Ali Thanwi, pub. Jami’at Al-Musleheen, Saharan Pur, Revised and new ed.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Madni, Sayid Husain Ahmad: *Naqsh-e-Hayat,(Auto Biography)* Maktabah Deoband, 1953 AD, Vol.1,pp.16-17,

Madni, Sayid Husain Ahmad:*Ash-Shehabuth Thaqi ‘Alal Mustariqil Kazib,(The flaming star on the liar thief)* Maktabah Rahimiyah, Deoband.p.114

<sup>7</sup> Mohammad Tayyib, Qari: *Nasab Aur Islam (Islam and Caste)* op.cit.

<sup>8</sup> Abdul Karim, : *Al-Qawlur Rafi’o Fi Zibbe ‘Anish Shafee’,(The Loud Voice in Defiance of Mufti Shafi)* dated 13 Rajab, 1353 HA, pub. unknown. P.1.

<sup>9</sup> I was informed this incident by a Deobandi Mufti of Madrasa Darul U’loom Mau Nath bhanjan, U.P, in 1998 AD. Mr. Shabbeer Ahmad Hakeem indicated to this incident in his book “ *Heyakat Ki Hekayat(The History of weaving)*,pub. Noorani Press Male Gawn, 1991AD.

<sup>10</sup> *Mahnamah, Tarjuman-e-Deoband,( mouthpiece of Deoband Monthly)*, Deoband, Saharn Pur, August 2002 AD, Vol.3, Issue 8,p.12.

famous book of *Tablighi Jama'at*.<sup>1</sup>

### **Jama'at-e-Islami:**

*Maulana Sayid Abul 'Ala Maudoodi*, (d.1979A.D.) the founder of *Jama'at-e-Islami* is also happened to be the supporter of caste system.<sup>2</sup>

The present *Jamat-e-Islami* president *Maulana Sayed Jalaluddin Ansar 'Umri* is also a castiest person. He advocated in *Radiance Views Weekly* the mouth piece of *Jama'ate-Islami India* that some castes are low and some are high.<sup>3</sup>

The mouth pieces of *Jama'ate-Islami* i.e. news papers and magazines "*Dawat*", "*Radiance*" are publishing caste based matrimonial in its regular issues.<sup>4</sup>

### **Jama'at-e-Ahl-e-Hadees:**

*Jama'at-e-Ahl-e-Hadees* is a sect in India which claims to be the most radical about Qur'an and prophet's tradition. But its 'Ulama have also given fatawas in favour of caste system.

The famous Ahle hadees 'alim *Shaikul kul Fil Kul Maulana Sayed Nazeer Husain Dehlawi* (1805-1902A.D.) invalids a nikah between 'low' caste boy and an 'upper' caste girl. <sup>5</sup> The second famous Ahle Hadees 'alim *Maulana Sayed Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan Bhopali* made joke of weavers.<sup>6</sup>

### **The All-India Muslim Personal Law Board:**

The high officials of umbrella organizations "*The All-India Muslim Personal Law Board*" which claims to speak on behalf of all Muslim sects, castes and creeds in India, is also involved in promoting caste system among Muslims.<sup>7</sup> It also upholds the Hanafi position on *kafaa* determined by birth. In May 2001, it issued a Compendium of what it called Islamic laws (*Majmooa'-e-Qawaneen-e-Islami*) mainly related to personal law issues. The *Compendium* specifically refers to *kafaa*, and insists that birth, and, therefore, family status, which also includes caste in the Indian context, is a basic ingredient of it. It says that a non-Muslim convert to Islam is of the same *kafaa* as an original Muslim, but in the

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<sup>1</sup> Zakariya, Mohammad: *Fadhayel-e-A'amal* ( *Tablighi Nesab* ( *Advantage of good deeds*), Muqaddemah (preface ), pub. Nasir Book Depot. Delhi. Vol.1, p.1., part. 5,p.34, pub. Idarah Isha'at-e-Deeniyat, Delhi, Vol.2,p.64.

<sup>2</sup> *Mahnamah Tarjuman Al-Qura'n*, (*Interpreter of Qur'an Monthly*) Sept. 1951AD, Vol.36, Issue No. 5-6,p.72. June- July 1952 ,pp.260-261,

Maudoodi, Sayid Abul A'ala: *Rasayel wa Masayel* (*The letters and problems*): Markazi Maktabah Islami New Delhi,ed.6, Feb.1983AD.

Maudoodi, Sayid Abul A'ala: *Tafheemul Qura'n*, (*Understanding of Qur'an*), Markazi Maktabah Islami New Delhi,ed.1<sup>st</sup>, 1971AD.

<sup>3</sup> *Radiance Views Weekly*, New Delhi, 23 Macrh 1997AD,8-14 June 1997AD

<sup>4</sup> *Dawat*, *bi-weekly*, New Delhi, 7,July 2000,Vol.48,Issue No.61,p.6, May 7, 2001, Vol.49,Issue No.45,p.6, June 7, 2001, Vol.49,Issue No. 05,p.6

*Radiance*, op.cit. 31 August,-6 Sept. 2003, Vol.XXXVIII,No.23,p.56.

<sup>5</sup> Dehlawi,Shaikul kul Fil Kul Maulana Sayid Nazeer Husain: *Fatawa Nazeeriyah* (*A Collection of Fatawa of Maulana Sayed Nazeer Husain*), ( translated and chapterized),pub.Idarah Noorul Iman,Delhi, ed.3<sup>rd</sup> 1409HA/ 1988AD, Vol.2,pp.477-478,501-502,Question Nos. 85,109.

<sup>6</sup> Bhopali, Sayid Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan: *Ikhteyarus S'aadah Be Itharil 'Ilm a'lal Ibadah* (*Getting goodness by preferring knowledge on worship*), pub. Unknown.

<sup>7</sup> All India Muslim Personal Law Board (comp.), *Majmooa'-e-Qawaneen-e-Islami* (*Compendium of Islamic Laws*), pub. All India Muslim Personal Law Board, New Delhi,ed.1<sup>st</sup> 2001AD, pp.95-97,187-191.

footnote it says that this applies to Arabs only. Presumably, therefore, according to this bizarre interpretation, an Indian male non-Muslim convert cannot marry a woman from an original Muslim (Sayed and Sheikh) family. Interestingly, the Board suggested that the Indian courts should accept this *Compendium* to govern Muslim personal law-related issues. Given the *Compendium's* sanction of birth-based *kafaa* this suggestion is quite unacceptable. It would mean giving legal sanction to caste inequality. It promotes casteism on the name of 'kufu'.<sup>1</sup>

A contemporary Indian Deobandi, *Maulvi Qari Habeeb Ahmed*, claims in his booklet "*Islam Aur Taraqqi*" (*Islam and Progress*) that God has made some castes as superior or sharif and others as inferior or rasil, and he claimed that there is Divine wisdom in this that must not be questioned. His fanciful argument is that if God had made the 'low' castes superior they would be filled with false pride and would forget him. And if God had made the so-called 'ashraf' 'low' they would suffer from an inferiority complex and jealousy, which would undermine their faith in Him.

The fourth President of the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board and Vice Chancellor of the *Nadwatul Ulama*, Lucknow, *Maulvi Sayed Mohammad Rabe Hasani Nadvi*, permitted the author to publish this booklet after reading it.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, in his "*M'aasharti Masail Din-e-Fitrat ki Raushni Main*" (*Problems of life in the light of natural religion [Islam]*) another contemporary Deobandi writer, *Maulvi Muhammad Burhanuddin Sambhali*, who teaches at *Nadwatul Ulama*, Lucknow quotes from a medieval Hanafi text, the "*Radd ul-Mukhtar*" to declare that it is not advisable (makruh) that people who engage in 'lowly'(razil) occupations, such as tanners and fishermen, as well as people afflicted by leprosy, should enter mosques. He claims this is the shariah position, arguing that if such people enter mosques it would cause hardship to others.

There is no any evidence in in the *Holy Qur'an* and prophet's traditions in support of this claim. But there are many prophets' traditions against this claim.

This book received a foreword by the second president of the *All- India Muslim Personal Law Board* and former Vice Chancellor of *Nadwat ul-Ulama*, *Maulvi Sayed Abul Hasan Ali Hasani Nadvi* (d.31 Dec.1999AD), after listening to the book from the author.<sup>3</sup>

In 1999 *Maulvi Qazi Mujahid ul-Islam Qasmi*,(d.4 April 2002AD) one of the best-known Deobandi scholars, the third president of *All-India Muslim Personal Law Board* and head of the *Islamic Fiqh Academy*, organized an international conference on ijthihad in Patna. One of the issues discussed at the conference was ijthihad on the question of *kafaa/endogamy*, but finally it was decided under Qasmi's leadership that the Hanafi position on the issue, except the question of *kafaa* between new Muslims and old Muslims, was correct and needs no reform.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> All India Muslim Personal Law Board (comp.), *Majmoa'-e-Qawaneen-e-Islami*(Compendium of Islamic Laws), op.cit.

<sup>2</sup> Pub.Idarah Islah-e-Mu'aasharh, Dali Ganj, Near nadwatul 'Ulama Lucknow,1995AD.

<sup>3</sup> Pub.Majlis tahqeeqat Wa Nashriyat-e-islam, Nadwatul 'Ulama Lucknow, ed.2<sup>nd</sup> 1399AH/1979AD, pp.3.,8,35.

<sup>4</sup> For details see Falahi, Masood Alam: *Hindustan Mein Zaat Paat Aur Musalman (Muslim And Casteism In India)* op.cit. Ch.9,pp.380-381.

## **Ulama and intellectuals who are against casteism:**

Unlike these casteist 'ulama, there are many 'ulama in every period who opposed caste system which includes *Sultan Mohammad Tughlaq, Qazi Sanaullah Pani Pati Hanafi, Shah Abdul Aziz Mohaddith Dehlawi, Maulana Shari'atullah, Maulana Shahw Isma'il Shaheed, Maulna Sayed Ahmad Shaheed, Maulana Sayed Sulaiman Nadvi, Maulana Habibur Rahman Azmi, Maulna Sanullah Amrit Sari, Maulana Shabbir Ahmad 'Uthmani, Maulana Hafiz Sayed Mohammad 'Ali Husaini, Dr. Sayed Abid Husain, Dr. Fazlur Rahman Faridi, etc.*<sup>1</sup>

## **Changes in caste hierarchies and its political implications**

**A basic question arises here; that caste hierarchies among Indian Muslims have been changed in present time?**

Casteism among Indian Muslims is deeply rooted. We can observe it at all fronts in the Muslim society. But there are some minor changes in it also.

Prior to independence of India, it was common that low caste Muslims were not allowed to cook good foods and even not allowed to choose good names for their children. Muslim sweepers were not allowed to pray even enter in the mosque.

Presently there are three major categories among Indian Muslims, (1) Ashraf [upper castes] (2) Ajlaf [OBCs/ Occupational Castes] (3) Arzal [Dalits/Scs/Achoolts].

Sachar Committee Report (which is published in 2006 and accepted by all sections of Indian Muslim community) reports the existence of caste system among Indian Muslims. It also categorized Indian Muslims into 3 major categories such as:

"1- [...] Those without any social disabilities, the ashraf, 2- those equivalent to Hindu OBCs, the ajlaf and, 3- those equivalents to Hindu SCs, the arzal. Those who are referred to as Muslim OBCs combined 2 and 3."<sup>2</sup>

Among these categories there are many sub-castes and *gotrs* and in every category there are low castes and upper castes like Hindu caste system.

### **Ashraf castes [upper castes]:**

**Sayed:** In Sayed caste there are many sub castes or *gotrs* like Husaini, Hasani, 'Abdi, Askari, Baqri, Kazmi, Naqwi, Rizwi, Zaidi, Chishti, Jalali, Qadri, Abbasi, 'Alwi, Hashmi, Jafri etc.

**Sheikh:** This caste has many sub castes, like Ansari (from Madinah), Farooqi, Khurasani, Milki, Qidwai, Quraishi, Siddiqi, Usmani etc.

**Mughal:** Mughal caste joins the tilte of Mirza with their names and in the last they include some sub-caste title also, i.e. Chughtai, Qazlibas, Tazik, Taimoori, Turkaman, Uzbek or Uzbek.

**Pathan:** In general this caste's people use 'khan' tilte with the names, and leave sub-caste tilte. They leave 'khan' title if they use sub-caste title, i.e. Afridi, Bangsh, Bark Zai, Bark, Dawod Zai, Durrani, Ghaur Kashi, Ghauri, Kakur, Khaleel, Lohi, Mohammad Zai, Awrk Zai, Rohelah.

**Muslim Rajpoot:** There are some sub-caste among Muslim Rajpoot, like Bhal Sultan,

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<sup>1</sup> See Falahi, Masood Alam: *Hindustan Main Zaat Paat Aur Musalman (Muslim And Casteism In India)* op.cit.

<sup>2</sup> Sachar, Justice Rajendar: Social, Economic and Educational Status of Muslim Community of India: A Report [Sachar Committee Report], Prime Minister's High Level Committee, Cabinet Secretrate, Government of India, Sardar Patel Bhavan, Parliament Street, New Delhi-01, November 2006, pp.193.

Khan Zadah, Bar Gojar, Lal Khani (a branch of Bar Gojar), Bhatti, Besan, Chandel, Chawhan, Gawtam, Panor, Raikor, Rathor, Som Bansi, Tomar.

### **Ajlaf:**

**Occupational Castes/ OBCs:** There are many castes in this category. They are: Aatish Baz, Bhand, Bhathiyara, Faqeer (begger), Gaddi or Ghosi (grazier, milk man), Mirasi (musician), Momin (Julaha/ wear) Nan Bai/ Bawarchi, (cook), Dhuniya (cotton-carder), Kabariya or Kunjra (greengrocer), Manihar (bracelet-maker), Barhai (carpenter) , Qasab (butcher), Chikwa (a caste who slaughteres animal like goat and lamb), (washer man), Halwai (sweet maker), Kumhar (potter), Lohar (blacksmith/ ironsmith), Nai (barber), Teli (oil presser) Darzi (tailor), Pamariya, Jogi, Madari, Chiri Mar, Gori, Gorkun (grave digger), Rangrez, Nalband, Seklgar, Gadhera, Tarkash Kar, Gojar, Mastoi, Bat, kala.

### **Arzal:**

**Achhoot / Untaoucable/ SCs:** There are many sub-castes in this category, like Sheik Mehtar, Lal Begi, Balmiki, Bans Phoor, Dhanak, Dehi, Ghazi Puri, Rawat, Hanhari or Hari, Hela, Paththar Phoor , Bakhkho, Khatik, Nat, Dhobi/Hawari, Banjarah.<sup>1</sup>

There are caste based discriminations among these groups and gotrs, i.e. Ashraf, Ajlaf and Araz. Even there is big discrimination within Ajlaf and Arzal in present time. Some major incidents of them are:

≅ In "Atki", "Hind Paddi" villages of district Ranchi in Jharkhand, the Arzal Muslims used to eat in a separate line in marriage ceremony.<sup>2</sup> The same condition is in Barabanki of U.P state.<sup>3</sup> My one of casteist teachers narrated the same story of his village of Azamgarh district, U.P.

≅ Dr. Ms. Azmat Siddiqi from Centre for Women Studies of Jmaia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, told in her speech that in her village "phoolpur" of Allahabd, U.P., 'ashraf' don't accept food from Sweeper/ Lalbegi /Halalkhor/ Bhangi/ Mehtar /Khakroob community. She was against casteism and once she ate the food cooked by a cook in the marriage ceremony of a sweeper, so her cousins boycotted her for few weeks.<sup>4</sup>

≅ Professor Imtiaz Ahmad told me the following incident in a meeting, even he writes it in one of his articles:

"We had a Lalbegi woman come to clean the toilets in our house. She was on the best of terms with my mother and would sit for hours together gossiping with my mother. Whenever my mother would offer her pan, she would wrap her hand with her dupatta to receive it. My mother used to drop the pan in her hand, making sure that her hand did not touch the Lalbegi woman's hand. On occasions of marriage the family would come and sit in a corner and wait until all guests had eaten and left. It would then be given

<sup>1</sup> 'Umar, Mohammad: *Hindustani tahzeeb Ka Musalmanon Per Asar (The Influence of Indian Culture on Muslims)* op.cit. pp.103-105.

Ansari, Ghaus: *Muslim Caste in Uttar Pradesh*, op.cit. ch.5, Existing castes, p.33.

*I wrote some caste's names by my self.*

<sup>2</sup> Ahmad, Imtiaz (ed): *Caste and Social Stratification among Muslims*, Manohar Publictions, New Delhi, ed.2<sup>nd</sup> 1978AD, PP.19-39.

<sup>3</sup> Danish, Abdullah: *Muslim Mo'aashre Mein Beradriwad (The casteism in Muslims Society)*.pub. Shoshan Weroodhi Manch, New Delhi ,ed.1997AD.

<sup>4</sup> She told this incident in a seminar "Protective Discrimination in favour of Muslims: Possibilities and Challenges" organized by the Centre for the Promotion of Educational and Cultural Advancement of Muslims of India (CEPECAMI), AMU, Aligarh, dated 10-11 Feb.2007AD.



food in vessels they brought with them. They did not eat the food there, but instead took it with them to be eaten at home. On sacrificial eid the family was not given any portion of the meat. It was given the intestines which were kept aside for them. It is possible that some of these forms of discrimination have changed, but there is no evidence to show that they have disappeared.

Some evidence exists to show that there is discrimination against these Muslim castes in the religious spheres. I found during fieldwork in eastern Uttar Pradesh that members of these castes did not go to the mosque for prayers and if they went they had to stand in the back rows. It has been mentioned by many observers that such groups often have their own mosques. N. Jamal Ansari notes that 'in certain areas of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar there are separate mosques and burial grounds' for these castes (paper presented at the seminar on Dalit Muslims organized by Deshkal Society, New Delhi, 2004). Establishment of own mosque would call for a level of prosperity for the groups as a whole. Whether they have attained such levels of prosperity is something on which very little information exists."<sup>1</sup>

≅ On 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2009, I visited *Nakhas Mohallah* (street) of Lucknow. This is a Muslim area. I saw a small mosque with a small madrasa, written on the mosque "*Masjid-e-Rayeen*" (*Mosque of greengrocer/Kunjra*). In front of this mosque there is an *Imam Barah* of 'Imam' *Baqir*, belongs to Shia sect of Muslim.

This small mosque shows that there is discrimination against the *greengrocer* caste, so they built their own separate mosque.

≅ There is a mosque in Meerut city of U.P, which name is "Masjid Qasiyon Wali" (mosque of butures).

≅ In "*Desna*" village of *Nalanda*, in Bihar, the low castes are not allowed to sit in the first row of the mosque.<sup>2</sup> Even low caste like *Ansari* and *kalal* castes do not allow *Pamariya* caste to sit in the first row while offering Namaz/prayer in the "*Pandara*" village of *Lohar Dagga* district.<sup>3</sup>

≅ The famous news paper "*Tehelka*" New Delhi reports in its issue dated 18 Nov.2006:

"In Bihar, the *Bakkho* sub-caste- formally a nomadic tribe- is held by other Muslims to be untouchables despite Islam categorically forbidding any such division...[ a person from *Bakkho* caste syas] when someone in an upper caste family dies; we go to his house to condole, like we would go to any other Muslim home. But when someone from our caste dies, the upper castes people never come for the same."

≅ In *Rampur Bariya* village of *Champanan* District of Bihar, a 'low' caste groom was insulted and beaten up by 'upper' caste Muslims because he had sitted on the horse.<sup>4</sup> In the same village 'upper' caste Muslims broke the mosque built by 'low' caste Muslims. They also burnt their houses.<sup>5</sup>

≅ There are various reports that 'upper' castes Muslims don't allow 'low' caste Muslims to bury dead bodies in the common graveyard for community. This is the reason that

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.dalitmuslims.com/2009/08/can-there-be-category-called-dalit.html>

<sup>2</sup> Anwar, Ali: *Masavat Ki Jang* (*The Struggle for Equality*) op.cit.-66-67.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> *Saras Slail fortnightly*, (Hindi) New Delhi, Feb. 2008 AD

<sup>5</sup> Ibid,

*Sahara Samay* (Hindi News Channel) New Delhi, Dec. 2007.

low caste Muslims, have separate graveyards.<sup>1</sup>

≡ In “*Mohabbat Pur*” village of *Vaishali* District in Bihar, *Jugal Khalifa* died. His dead body was not allowed by *Sheikh* Caste to be buried in the common graveyard as he was a *Nat*, a low caste Muslim. The police took action and arrested many of ‘upper’ caste members then only his dead body got buried.<sup>2</sup>

≡ Even in some places the ‘low’ caste Muslims are not considered as Muslims by ‘upper’ caste people. I have seen in my district *Sitamarhi*, Bihar, *Sheikh* Caste consider themselves only as Muslim and others as non Muslims. They use the term “*we Muslims*” for themselves and for others ‘low’ castes and used to call them with bad names like *Julaha, Dhuniya, Kunjda, Kasai, Nai* etc.<sup>3</sup>

≡ In some places ‘upper’ caste Muslims take “*badhuwa Mazdoori*” (work without pay) by low caste Muslims. Sometimes they abuse their women and destroy their houses etc.<sup>4</sup>

≡ There are many incidents of caste murder among Muslims. We can find many such examples in the Indian news papers e.g.

1. A boy of *Darzi* (tailor) caste and a girl of an ‘upper’ caste got married in *Munger* district of Bihar. Then the boy was tortured, beaten up and burnt by lighting cigarette by some ‘upper’ caste members and due to this he became handicapped for his rest of the life. This happened only because of his low caste. Many people and media criticized it, but All India Muslim Personal Law Board which was conducting its annual function near the place of incident on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2003, didn’t say a single word against this atrocity.<sup>5</sup>
2. The Times of India reported on 18 March 2010, that a Sayed girl “*Shabnam*” from *Saharan Pur* married with a low caste boy. The boy told her to not disclose their marriage, because he had four unmarried sisters. When the two communities came to know about their marriage, they opposed and forced the boy to retract from the marriage and he refused to accept their marital status.

Instead of being sympathetically supported by her family and the state, she was framed in a theft case by Lucknow police and even detained. After being abandoned by her husband she had gone back to her house in *Saharanpur*, but her parents turned her out for the honour of caste.<sup>6</sup>

It happened just one day before the annual function of All India Muslim Personal law Board which was held in Lucknow. But I didn’t read any critic by Muslim personal law Board president or its any member against it.

3. I know an incident that a low caste boy had physical relation with an upper caste girl, whose family was and is friend of the boy’s family. The whole village even

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<sup>1</sup> Anwar, Ali: ‘*Masavat Ki Jang*’ (*The Struggle for Equality*) op.cit ,pp.65-66.

*Rashtria Sahara* (Daily) Urdu (*National Urdu Sahara News paper*) 6, March 2003. Vol.4 Issue No.1362.

<sup>2</sup> Anwar, Ali: ‘*Masavat Ki Jang*’ (*The Struggle for Equality*) op.cit ,pp. 68-69.

<sup>3</sup> For more details and references, see Falahi, Masood Alam: Falahi, Masood Alam: *Hindustan Mein Zaat Paat Aur Musalman* (*Muslim And Casteism In India*), ch. 9, pp. 418-419.

<sup>4</sup> Anwar, Ali: ‘*Masavat Ki Jang*’ (*The Struggle for Equality*), op.cit.-68-69.

<sup>5</sup> *Mahnamah Allah Ki Pukar* (*The Voice of Allah Monthly*), July 2003 AD, Vol.10, Issue 60, p.49.

<sup>6</sup> <http://mobilepaper.timesofindia.com/mobile.aspx?article=yes&pageid=1&sectid=edid=&edlabel=TOIL&mydateHid=18-03-2010&pubname=Times%20of%20India%20-%20Lucknow&edname=&articleid=Ar00110&publabel=TOI>

<http://mobilepaper.timesofindia.com/mobile.aspx?article=yes&pageid=7&sectid=edid=&edlabel=TOIL&mydateHid=18-03-2010&pubname=Times+of+India+-+Lucknow&edname=&articleid=Ar00701&publabel=TOI>

- the families of both boy and girl knew it. The boy and girl wanted to marry. But families of both lovers allowed adultery/ illegal relation indirectly which is prohibited (haram) completely in Islam but not allowed this inter-caste marriage which is totally allowed (halal) in Islam.
4. Due to these incidents some low caste people have grudge against all upper caste people, no matter they are casteist or not. Some of them have joined hand with Maoist group to take revenge.<sup>1</sup>
  5. We can see that even among 'low' caste Muslims there are too much caste boundaries. Every caste hates each other. My friend Dr. *Abdur Rahman Ansari* told me that in *Mau Aaimah* the town of U.P. near Allahabad, *Ansari* hates other castes. They teased and boycotted a doctor only because he belongs to a *Dhuniya* caste.
  6. A young girl *Maimoon Bhaskari* from *Quraishi (Bucher)* caste and a boy *Idrees* from *Meo* caste got married in *Sudka* village of *Nooh*, Hariyana. Because of this inter-caste marriage they were attacked by their family members and villagers.<sup>2</sup>
  7. A MBBS doctor boy from *Ansari* caste and a MBBS girl from *Quraishi (Bucher)* girl of *Muzaffar Nagar* UP got married. Because of this, the girl's family cut both of them in pieces and burnt them in front of hundred people.<sup>3</sup>
  8. "*Imran*" from *Muzaffar Nagar* and "*Shaheen*" from *Meerut* got married. The brother of the girl brutally killed *Shaheen* using scissor. The reason of this brutal killing was that the boy was from *Quraishi* caste and girl was from *Teli (oil presser)* caste.<sup>4</sup>
  9. Mr. *Jawed Bharti* from *Pathan* caste wrote in one of his letters that his mother wanted to marry him with an *Ansari* girl. But the family of girl didn't agree because of his caste. (One of my (author) friends commented on it that *Ansari* family might be afraid that girl will face humiliation since she is from a 'low' caste.) Mr. *Bharti* further wrote that once the son of his *Ansari* friend knew his caste then suddenly he stopped meeting him. He said that he thought 'you are also *Ansari*'.<sup>5</sup>
  10. One of my friends who belongs to *Khan* Caste, narrated me that his grand mother (from maternal side) wants to marry his son with a girl who was classmate of her son and both of them liked each other. But girl's family didn't agree because they don't like to marry the daughter with a *Khan* boy.
  11. In November 2005, a social organization 'Allama Rafiq Trust' Delhi surveyed 100 Muslim marriages of Delhi, which were held in November-December 2005. The survey says that 98% marriages were held within the same caste. The first preference of parents is to search grooms and bride grooms within same caste. The intercaste marriage is very rare.<sup>6</sup>

There are lots of such cases of caste based discrimination among Muslims which could be read in news papers time to time.

<sup>1</sup> Anwar, Ali: '*Masavat Ki Jang*' (*The Struggle for Equality*), op.cit.-66.

<sup>2</sup> *Asian Age* New Delhi, Sept. 19 1998 AD.

<sup>3</sup> For more details and references, see Falahi, Masood Alam: *Hindustan Mein Zaat Paat Aur Musalman (Muslim And Casteism In India)*, ch. 9, pp. 425.

<sup>4</sup> *Rashtria Sahara (Daily) Urdu (National Urdu Sahara News paper)* op.cit. 25 April 2006 AD

<sup>5</sup> *Mahnamah Allah Ki Pukar (The Voice of Allah Monthly)*, op.cit. Sept. 2005.

<sup>6</sup> *The Hindustan (Hindi) New Delhi*, Nov. 14, 2005.

Despite of these incidents there are some minor changes in caste hierarchies. In my village there are 8 inter-caste marriages have been done. A Brahman boy married an OBC Hindu girl, two upper caste Muslim boys married OBC Muslim girls and One OBC Muslim boy married a non-Muslim girl who accepted Islam later on. Three OBC Muslim boys married other OBC Muslim girls. But seven of these marriages are not arranged marriages; they are based on love affair and out of the village. The boys and girls liked each other and got married in the metropolitan cities, like Delhi, Mumbai, and Hyderabad etc., where their parents had hardly any interference. At last their parents accepted them as there was no option left for them.

In one marriage, the boy liked the girl who is his friend's sister but he has no love affair with her. He told his father and he agreed for it.

There are some incidents where individuals had taken the stand for inter-caste marriages. One of my friends who belongs to low caste in Azamgarh, wanted to marry his son with another low caste girl. But his family members opposed this inter caste marriage. But he took the stand and finally he married him with that girl ignoring these oppositions.

One of my friends in Lucknow who belongs to a low caste Muslim, wanted to marry his daughter out of his caste but his sons strongly opposed him for inter caste marriage and did not allow this marriage to happen in their house. So he made all the arrangements outside and married his daughter with that boy from another place.

My friend Dr. Abdur Rahman Ansari from Partapgarh, U.P. made an organization '*Rah-e-bahisht*' (way to paradise) for matrimonial propose free of cost. By this organization he conducts arranged inter-caste marriages and till now he has conducted such 62 marriage. He has written 15 instructions on the first page of the matrimonial form. Three of them are: (1) no dowry (2) now caste (3) no barat.

An other organization *Islamic Educational & Research Organization, Allahabad, U.P. India* is also promoting the inter-caste marriage. Last year, two inter-caste marriages were done by efforts of this organization.

But there is no effort for inter-caste marriages over all India level by any Muslim organization. Despite it, we read in news papers that government is announcing prizes for Hindu inter-caste marriages especially inter-caste marriage between dalit and upper caste Hindus.<sup>1</sup> Some Hindu organizations are also arranging organized inter-caste marriages.<sup>2</sup>

Hindi movies promote inter-caste marriages among Hindus and criticized caste system, but I never see any Hindi or Urdu movies which do same thing among Muslim also.

It is interesting to note that some Muslim matrimonial published in leading news papers like Times of India, The Hindu, Hindustan Times, Islamic voice and websites say "caste no bar". But in general these matrimonial belong to highly educated and elite Muslim class who live in metropolitan cities and does not consider caste as a barrier as long as it maintains status quo. But this is not the case with rural parts of Muslim populated Indian states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal etc. where there is hardly any

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<sup>1</sup> The Hindu, New Delhi, 12, June 2005, Vol.128, Issue No.24, p.8.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 7 November, 2005, Vol.128, Issue No.262, p.4

change in caste hierarchies. Inter caste marriage among elite Muslims are common from the beginning. Not only inter caste marriage but elite Muslims do not hesitate to do inter-religion marriage as well. There are numerous such examples of this high society where boys/girls are getting married out of the religion. So these examples can't be taken as a measure for decline in caste based discrimination and changes in caste hierarchies.

It has also been seen that some arranged inter-caste marriages between upper caste girls and low caste boys have happened in recent times. But these arranged marriages have happened in only those cases where boys were either in civil services (IAS, PCS and IFS) or any other top positions and well settled. The reverse case has not been seen or it is very rare. The situation is same in Hindu society also. Many of the Islamic scholars have given fatwa on the pattern of Manu Smirti that an upper caste can marry with low caste girl but reverse is not allowed. It is evident that upper castes are marrying their daughters/girls with well settled and well established low caste boys but not marrying their sons with low caste girls.

I have asked many learned upper caste persons about this basis question and also OBC leaders as why not upper caste does inter-caste marriage among OBC Muslims. It is general perception that the majority of upper castes want to preserve and strengthen their castes and they do not like inter-caste marriage wherein it would very interesting to note that they do inter-caste marriage among upper caste Muslims and this is very common and evident in society. But inter-caste marriages within OBC Muslims are not common and not evident in society. On the basis of this fact, any one can say that the OBC Muslims also want to preserve and strengthen their own caste and they do not like inter-caste marriage within OBC Muslims.

Muslim OBCs especially Ansaris struggled for their upliftment from the British period. But after Mandal Commission their struggle on peak. It is interesting to note that prior to independence of India, Muslim OBCs were used to hide their caste identity but now they write and include their castes in names. For example they are used to keep the surnames like Ansari, Rayini, Mansoori, Idrisi, etc. Even some of them keep those caste titles which were given by upper castes to defame them like Julaha, Kunjra, Qasai, Jogi, Nat, Bhand etc.

There are many OBC political organizations also some of them are:

1. All Indian Backward Muslim Morcha (AIBMM). Now its name got changed to All India United Muslim Morcha (AIUMM) from All India Muslims United Morcha (AIMUM).
2. All India Pasmanda Muslim Mahaz (AIPMM),
3. Akhil Maharastra Khatik Samaj (AMKS).
4. Indian Dalit Muslims Voice (This is the only website available addressing Indian Dalit Muslims' issues).

After implication of Mandal commission there are many changes in Indian politics, especially in Bihar and U.P. Because of Mandal Commission Lalu Parashad Yadu ruled on Bihar more than one decade. Before Lalu's regim, there are many jokes about Yadu caste. But after his wining election, the seniorio has been changed and jokes are made on upper caste especially on Brahmans. The same condition is in Muslim society. There are a lot of jokes about low caste Muslims especially Julaha/Ansari caste, but now jokes are about upper caste Muslims.

Nitish Kumar also played caste game and applied to join OBC/SC/ST Muslims to his party and he won the election twice. He selected two OBC Muslim leaders as M.P. He divided Dalits between Dalit and Maha Dalit categories. He also declared an upper Muslim caste "Mallik" as OBC after making him oil presser. He also tried to declare another upper caste Muslim "Sheikh" as OBC, but after much opposition by OBC organizations, this process is stopped.

Mulayam Singh Yadu also played caste game in U.P and ruled more than a decade. The same card was played by Mayawati in the beginning. In the beginning her slogan was "Jis ki jitni sankhiya bhadi, uski utni bhagedari", (the share in the government will be according to the population). She was against upper caste, her slogan was "Tilak (Brahman) Tarazu (Baniya) aur Talwar (Rajput) un ko maroo jote char", (Brahman, baniya and rajput should be beaten by shoes). But now she changed her slogans: "jis ki jitni tayyari, uski utni bhagedari" (the share will be according to preparation). "Hathi nahi Ganesh hai, Brahma, Vishnu Mahesh hai, Pandit Sankh bajaayega, Hathi barhta jayega" (the elephant [symbol of BSP] is not only an elephant, but he is gods Ganesh, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. Pandit [Brahman] will blow sankh and the elephant will move ahead). Brahmans said to reply her: "Brahman ki yah hi pukar, Mayawati chawthi bar" (Brahman want Mayawati as a chief minister for fourth times).

Really she won the election and ruling till now. This is big changing in caste politics in U.P and Bihar.

This is an evidence of changing of caste politics that U.P. Bihar, A.P assemblies have passed that Muslim Dalits should be put in SC category. Before some year's ago Muslim leaders / writers did not accept caste boundaries among Indian Muslim society. Now not only OBC Muslim term even Dalit Muslim term are accepted.

It is also noticed that in some places of Bihar and U.P, when upper caste Muslim comes for election, he asks vote on the name of Islam. Muslim organizations also appealed for him and all Muslims give vote him. But when any OBC, SC ST Muslim comes for the election, then upper caste Muslims do not give vote, saying that "Ham loog itne gir gaye hain ki Jula, Dhuniya ko vote dengen" (we are such bad that we will give vote Jula, Dhuniya [i.e. low castes]).<sup>1</sup>

But it is not applicable for all places and all times, exception is everywhere. It is also noticed that some times upper caste Muslims gave vote to OBC Muslim, if the seat is reserved for OBC.

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