

## **Anjuman i Khuddam al-Sufiyya: Establishment, Objectives and Early History**

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### **Abstract**

*The Anjuman I Khuddam I al-Sufiyya was a popular organization in the early twentieth century Colonial Punjab, aiming to foster unity among diverse Sufi orders. This research article explores the early history, foundation, objectives, activities, branches and structural framework of Anjuman I Khuddam al-Sufiyya through meticulous examination of historical documents and primary sources. This abstract examines the proactive stance of the Anjuman against proselytizing movements during colonial times, elucidating its efforts in preserving the essence of Sufism in a changing socio-religious landscape. Furthermore, it explores how the Anjuman bravely confronted ultra-orthodox ideologies of Wahhabism, aiming to safeguard the pluralistic nature of Islamic practice and culture. The Anjuman's response to the Ahmadiyya community is also discussed. By delving into the organizational structure, this research dissects the sophisticated layers that govern the functioning of Anjuman I Khuddam al-Sufiyya. By analyzing the Anjuman I Khuddam al-Sufiyya's establishment, objectives and early history, this abstract throw*

*light on its noteworthy contributions to inter-Sufi unity, countering radical influences, and promoting a harmonious coexistence of diverse Islamic beliefs. As a result, this research provides a valuable resource for scholars, historians, and enthusiasts interested in understanding the rich tapestry of Anjuman I Khuddam al-Sufiyya journey from its inception to 1951.*

**Keywords:** Anjuman I Khuddam al-Sufiyya. Pir Saiyyid Jamā‘at Ali Shah. Islam. Sufism. Wahhabism. Christianity. Hinduism. Ahmadiyya community.

## Introduction

In the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, India witnessed complex historical developments affecting almost all spheres of life, particularly on religious and spiritual aspects in Muslim of South Asia. The advent of the British colonial power radically altered the dynamics of state and society. Owing to the colonial takeover in 1857, both the Muslims and the Hindus felt threatened, as power and authority slipped from their hands. The British gradually introduced representative political institutions, which were based on the numerical strength of the two communities. The census further sharpened the religious identities, neatly dividing them into the Muslim and Hindu communities (Stewart, 1951, p. 51). Consequently, the communalization of Indians led to competition among the Muslims and the Hindus to preserve their religious traditions and culture in the face of modernity. It resulted in the emergence of Hindu and later Muslim communal organizations in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. One such Muslim organization was *Anjuman-i-Khuddam al-Suffiya* established in 1901 in Lahore and later on it was shifted to Alipur Sayyidan, Sialkot, by Saiyyid Jamā'at Ali Shah, who was a religious leader, and a Naqshbandi Sufi Shaykh in British Punjab. The *Anjuman-i-Khuddam al-Suffiya* played a significant role in political, social and religious life of the Muslims of India in general and Muslims of Punjab in particular.

The primary purpose of this study is to explore the establishment, objectives and the early history of *Anjuman-i-Khuddam al-Suffiya* and to analyze the religious, social, and political role-played by this it. This study offers a brief overview of the religious orientation of its founder, as well as religious, educational and social services of the *Anjuman*. Moreover, this study also examines the religious and spiritual role of this

*Anjuman* for the revival of Islam in its pristine form, as envisioned by its founder, Saiyyid Jamā'at Ali Shah. This study will help in understanding of the efforts of Muslims religious and for the revival of Muslims' religious and spiritual institutions and the uplift of the Muslim community. The study will help how the efforts of Muslims religious leaderships played its role for the revival of Muslim community in South Asia.

As far as the research method is concerned, this research is qualitative mainly relying on historical accounts to frame and shape the policies. It is inter-disciplinary research wherein both educational and historical accounts are the points of consideration. It is qualitative for the reason that it entails non-statistic data to investigate the proposed targets. The historical method opted for this research is 'descriptive' and 'interpretive' as it aims to elucidate factual descriptions to forward potential recommendations. The *Anjuman i Khuddam al-Sufiyya* holds a significant place in history due to its contribution for uplifting the Muslim community. The organization's primary sources, such as "*Sirat i Amir i Millat*" by Syed Akhter Hussain Shah and "*Rudad i Anjuman i Khuddam al-Sufiyya's*" by Mawlana Karam Elahi, *Tazkirah i Shah Jama'at* by Syed Haider Hussain Shah, shed light on its origins and early years. These sources reveal the key figures involved, including the founder, and outline the objectives that guided the organization's activities.

The establishment, objectives, and early history of *Anjuman i Khuddam al-Sufiyya* are integral to understanding its importance within the religious and social landscape of the time. By examining primary and secondary sources, we gain a deeper understanding of its role and contributions to the evolving religious narrative in Colonial India.

## Historical Background

The presence of mystical traditions in many great religions of the worlds is a well-attested phenomenon. As far as Islam is concerned, its religious, spiritual and mystical tradition is called *Tassawwuf*, which is translated and anglicized as Sufism. However, Sufism is not simply the purification of heart and soul and improvement of individual character, rather it has social dimensions that contribute particularly to societal life. The origin of many doctrines and practices of Sufism can be traced back to the *Quran* and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH) (Ed-Din, 2008, pp. 223-225). However, historically these doctrines and practices developed further when Muslims and the Sufis came into contact with other religious, social and cultural traditions. In mediaeval times, many Sufi doctrines and practices became controversial, since they were contested by the religious scholars, philosophers and jurists. In particular, the fourteenth century *Hanbali* jurists Taqi al-Din Abu al-Abbas Ahmad ibn Abdul Salam ibn Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) contributed to anti-Sufi discourse. Later during the eighteenth century another *Hanbali* scholar, Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab (d. 1792) tried to 'reform' Islam and declared Sufism as an innovation. Under the influence of Ibn Taymiyya he opposed Sufism and the Sufis. Later on many modern Muslim thinkers and 'reformers' were of the opinion that Sufism was not an integral part of Islam. Some blamed Sufism for the decline of Muslim civilization. A modern Muslim reformer and thinker argues that Sufism, as a popular religion, became a religion within a religion, keeping Muslims away from socio-ethical religious practices and becoming a reason for the decline of Muslim civilization (Rahman, 1979, pp. 153-154).

Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab opposed rituals related to the veneration of Muslim Sufis and pilgrimage to their tombs and shrines. This practice of tomb worship was widespread amongst the people of Najd (Mishra, 2019, p. 16). The name Wahhabi was given to the movement mainly by its critics, and was not accepted by the followers of Abd al-Wahhab; they called themselves the *Muwahhidun* (those who believe in the oneness of God) (Mishra, 2019, p. 16).

In 1744, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab formed a pact with a local leader, Muhammad bin Saud (d. 1765), a politico-religious alliance that sustained for the next 150 years, culminating politically in the proclamation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932 (Salame, 1987, p. 310). His movement would ultimately arise as one of the most influential eighteenth century anti-colonial reform trends that blowout across the Middle East, South Asia and West Africa; advocating a return to pristine Islamic values based on the Quran and Sunnah for re-generating the social and political prowess of Muslims; and its revolutionary themes influenced numerous Islamic revivalists, scholars, pan-Islamists ideologues and anti-colonial activists (Ahmed, 2020, pp. 29-30).

There is variety of opinions about the advent of Islam in India but majority of the historians are agreed with the opinion that Islam's entrance in south Asia was due to the advent of Arabs' traders in the early phase of Islam. Although in 712 Muhammad bin Qasim brought political Islam in India. But the expansion of Islam happened under the influence of the Sufis, who had started roaming to India from Central Asia, Persia and other parts of the Muslim world, even before the establishment of Turkish rule in north India. The most important Sufi *silsila* in north India during this period was that of the Chishtis, which was popularized in India by the twelfth-century Sufi, Khawaja

Moinuddin Chishti (d. 1234) of Ajmer. Sufism shaped the contours of Islam in India, giving it a more tolerant, peaceful and syncretic form over the course of these early centuries of Muslim presence in the Indian heartland. The other early Sufi *Silsila* was Suhrwardiyya, which was popularized in India during the pre-Mughal era (Anjum, 2011, p. 3). In Mughal India, the Qadri and Naqshbandi Sufi *Silsila* were popularized in north India.

The medieval state in pre-Mughal and Mughal eras did not make any large-scale, organized effort for conversion of the non-Muslims to Islam (Mishra, 2019, p. 16). Most of those who embraced the Islamic faith did so primarily under the influence of the Sufis, who had always formed the backbone of Islam in India. It might even be argued that modern ideas of conversion and of religious identities were largely non-existent for both the Hindus and the Muslims during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Only some scholars who believe that Islam spread in South Asia by ‘force’ or ‘sword’ (Perhaps the most widely circulated examples of forced conversion to Islam in history come from South Asia. The American historian Will Durant asserted in 1935 that “the Mohammedan conquest of India is probably the bloodiest story in history,” explaining that “millions of Hindus were converted to Islam by sword during this period” (i.e., 800-1700 CE). (Interestingly, Durant also stated that “most history is guessing, and the rest is prejudice.”) but majority of the historical researchers are agreed that Sufis attracted people to faith by their simple way of life, their stress on equality, fraternity and universal brotherhood. Poetry in vernacular languages to attract the indigenous people in the fold of Islam. The miracle they were said to perform and their ‘syncretic’ management of Hindu and Muslim customs and tradition (Powell, 1997, p. 17).

## Challenges to the Muslim Community in Early Twentieth Century

There are many challenges which Muslim community of India was facing in late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Present paper will focus on four important issues namely; conversion of Muslims to Christianity, Wahhabism and creation of Ahmadiyya ideology.

### Christian Missionaries

The arrival of British empire in India brought about various reforms into social, political and educational culture of India. Britishers discouraged traditional educational, social and civilizational institutions by introducing modern scientific knowledge. The loss of political rule was not so easy for the Muslims of India to digest. Moreover, Christian missionaries began to proselytize the local population of India to Christianity. In 1833 a well-known missionary Wolff under the patronages of the society for stimulating Christianity among the Jews reached Lucknow (It was directed the East India Company through Charter Act of 1813 that missionary efforts be permitted if not actively supported. Missionaries showed untiring patience in engaging receptive minds in the hope of gaining converts. They had enough money for the purpose of setting up institutions. For detail see Avril Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries*, pp. 119-20.). In those days Lord William was sympathetic to Missionary Cause. Due to this reason his lectures were actively learned by the British officials. He was warmly welcomed by the missionaries stayed in the Northern India (The translations of Bible into Urdu, Arabic and Persian by Martyn were circulated among the ulama of Lucknow and Delhi. He reached India in 1805 as a padre of East India Company. He was scholar of linguistics. Martyn also engaged with Shia ulama Sayyid Muhammad and Tasadduq Hussain at Lucknow. See Avril Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries*, pp. 119-20.).



missionaries believed that the route of Indian progress lay in western religion and culture (Robinson, 2011, p. 47). The Presbyterian Church of United States of America set up a mission at Ludhiana on November 5, 1834 under John Lowrie. In 1835 this mission set up a Punjabi Press, the first of its kind in the Punjab. This press became the most active center for the production of literature of missionary character in Punjabi (Talbot, 2000, p. 61).

The count of Protestant 'Native Christians' residing in the North-Western Provinces and Punjab was initially recorded as a mere two thousand in 1852. Over the subsequent decade, by 1862, this figure had only marginally increased to five thousand, despite heightened evangelical efforts in the Punjab following its annexation. It wasn't until the final decade of the nineteenth century that a significant phenomenon known as 'mass conversion' began to take place, primarily among adults, often in rural settings, in the North-Western Provinces and Punjab. Consequently, by 1901, the population of 'Native Christians' in the Punjab alone had surged to over forty thousand (Powell, 1997, p. 17). This demographic shift, coupled with various socio-educational transformations, caught the attention of different Muslim groups. Some supported the British in their pursuit of educational advancement and material progress for Muslims, while others were alarmed by these developments and strove to reestablish 'pure' Islamic religious and spiritual institutions and a traditional way of life.

### **Spread of Wahhabism**

Another challenge to the Muslim community was facing was the rising tide of Wahhabism. The Wahhabism became a force in India, it must be noted that the revivalist

ideology, as propagated by Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab and Shah Waliullah Dehlavi (d. 1762), found some vehement protagonists in eighteenth and nineteenth-century India. After the death of Shah Waliullah in 1762, his son Abdul Aziz (d.1824) focused on spreading the teachings of his father amongst the faithful, especially the orthodox elite Muslims in India. Sayyed Ismail Shahid was a person who started to refute Sufism by calling them, “*Ahl i Biddat*” on the podium (*member*) of the *Jamia* (main) Mosque of Delhi (Naumani, 2005, p. 61). He spread the philosophy and teachings of Wahhabism as per his maximum capacity and being seated in the center. It challenged the century old Sufi tradition of India which was quite near to the mind and souls of Muslim population.

Sayyed Ahmad Shahid (d.1831) started similar movement in India as Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab led a movement in Arabia almost three-quarters of a century earlier (Ahmed, 2020, p. 30). However, he was the most important figure in the spread of Wahhabism in India, in the early nineteenth century. He was amongst those who inspired by Abdul Aziz to arrest the widely perceived decline of Islam in India with the help of an ideology that promised to revive true Islamic faith from the days when Islam was supposedly pure and uninfluenced by other religions or cultures. Sayyed Ahmad’s reformist teachings were set down in two works that soon achieved wide circulation. The “*Sirat’ul Mustaqim*” (the Straight Path) was compiled by Muhammad Ismail in 1819. The second work, “*Taqwiyatul-Iman*” (Strengthening of the Faith) was written directly in Urdu. The two works stressed above all the centrality of *Tauwhid*, the transcendent unity of God, and denounced all those practices that were held in any way to compromise the most fundamental of Islamic tenets. God alone was held to be omniscient and omnipotent. Sayyed Muhammad Hussain Wilayet Ali, Farhat Husain, Yahaya Ali,

Ahmadullah, Mubarak Ali, Muhammad Hasan, Abdul Rahim, these were the persons on whom the *Khilafat* of Sayyed Ahmad Shahid devolved. “It may be considered to have formed a kind of an executive of the Wahhabi Movement in India” (Aziz, 1992, pp. 204-205). According to the followers of Sayyid Ahmed there were three sources of threat to this belief: false Sufism, *Shiá* doctrines and practices, and popular custom (Metcalf, 1982, pp. 56-57). As a result, Wahhabism rejected all forms of Sufi mysticism as opposed to the doctrine of *Tawhid* (Oneness of God), and opposed all forms of popular religion, which it regarded as *bid’ah* (innovation) and *shirk* (Mishra, 2019, p. 16).

Dar ul Uloom Deoband (established in 1866 by Qasim Nanautvi (d. 1880) and Rasheed Gongohi (d. 1905), in the beginning, was a seminary (*madrasah*) of moderate *ulema* of Islam who followed the path of *shari’a* and *triqa* simultaneously. Inspirational figures of the *Madrasah* like Imdadullah Muhajir Makki (Nizami, 2017, p. 197), (Haji Imdadullah holds a crucial place in the religious history of South Asian Muslims. He established his authority within his immediate community of Islamic scholars and Sufi masters who were drawn together into an inter-woven community. In these turbulent times, these religious scholars and Sufis were struggling to re-assert the relevance of their socio-religious heritage. Haji Imdadullah was remarkably successful in that he was accepted as a respected leader of both Sufis and ulama. ) Mawlana Rasheed Gangohi, Muhammad Yaqoob Gangohi, Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanvi (d. 1943), Mawlana Faiz ul Hassan Saharanpuri, Shaikh ul Hind Mawlana Mahmood ul Hassan and Mawlana Hussain Ahmad Madni were equally inclined toward Sufism.

## Emergence of Ahmadiyya Ideology

Another big challenge that the Muslim community facing was the creation of Ahmadiyya community. According to majority of the Muslims it challenged the basic tenet of Islam which was finality of the Holy Prophet of Islam. *Ahmadiyya* sect of Islam (later on declared non-Muslim in 1974) also influenced the population of Lahore city, Punjab. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908) established the Community (*Jamā'at*) on 23 March 1889 by formally accepting allegiance (*Bait*) from his supporters (Khalid, 2011, p. 25). Mirza Ghulam Ahmad claimed to be the *Mahdī* (a figure expected by some Muslims at the end of the world), (Khalid, 2011, p. 91) the Christian Messiah (Khalid, 2011, p. 12), an incarnation of the Hindu god Krishna, and a reappearance (*Buruz*) of Muhammad SAW. The formulation of doctrine of *Ahmadiyya* movement was against the basic tenets of Islam. It was damaging the religion of Islam more deeply than any other anti-Islam movements because it had been generated under the canopy of Islam and majority of the adherents of Mirza belonged to Muslim community (Maududi, 1998, p. 35).

## Hindu Revivalist Movements

Yet another challenge came to Muslim community was from Hindu revivalist movements. *Arya Samaj* was one of the pioneer organizations amongst many others, which started its work in Punjab in 1875. It was established in Mumbai in 1875 by Sawami Dayanand Saraswati (d.1883) and after two years its headquarters had been shifted to Lahore (Barrier, 1967, p. 363). The major objective of this organization was the revival of Hinduism through a reinterpretation of its history and sacred literature. Sawami claimed that the *Vedas* were given to the Aryan at a time when India stood first in

knowledge and cultural achievements (Barrier, 1967, p. 363). “*Arya Samaj* asserted its superiority over all religions and adopted an aggressive programme to put an end to the proselytizing of Islam and Christianity” (Dua, 1970, p. 1767). *Arya Samaj* was commenced with some moderate objectives but with the passage of time it gave birth to *Shuddhi* and *Sangthan* movements. These were militant and aggressive in nature. *Shuddhi* was founded in Punjab and spread all across the India. The main point of contention was the reconversion of Malkana Rajput in Western United Province. The first target of the *Bharatiya Hindu Shuddhi Sabha* was the Malkana Muslims, a new Muslim community of some 300000 people, living in the western districts of United Provinces. *Shuddhi* work among the Malkana began in 1923, and by 1927, when campaign reached on its apex, some 123000 Malkana were reported to have been brought into the Hindu fold (Sikand, 2003, p. 103). As a result, the movement became controversial and antagonized the Muslims populace.

### **Foundation of the *Anjuman i Khuddam al-Sufiyya***

Religio-political scenario of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century of the Punjab compelled the moderate Muslim community to form an organization to encounter the threats those were discussed earlier in this paper. These challenges required a collective response from Muslim intelligencia. *Pir Jama‘at* Ali Shah (d. 1951) along with some other Sufis of different orders materialized this dream of the Muslims of Punjab. In 1901, an organization with the name of *Anjuman i Khuddam al-Sufiyya* was established (Elahi, Rudad I Anjuman I Khuddam I Suffiyya, 1924, p. 12). The first session of the Anjuman held in Badshahi mosque Lahore. A big number of Sufis of different orders all across the India participated in this session, few among them were following; *Sahibzada*

M. Siddique of Choorah Sharif, *Sajjadah nashin* Kachhochha Sharif, *Mufti* Deedar Ali Alori, *Mufti* Naeemuddin Muradabadi, Mawlana Syed Ahmad from Lahore, Syed Willa'yt Shah from Gujrat, Dr. Allah Ditta from Gujrat, Mawlvi Muhammad Yar of Bahawalpur, Hafiz Anwar Ali of Rohtak, Mawlana Muhammad Husain of Kasur, Mawlvi Khair Shah of Amritsar, Molvi M. Azeem Gakharvi, Molvi M. Azeem Ferozpuri, Hafiz Zafar Ali Pasruri, Molvi M. Khoob Ahmadabadi, Molvi M. Sharif of Kotli, Molvi Ghulam Ahmad Amritsari, Hakim Khadim Ali Sialkoti, Mawlana Imaduddin Roypuri, Molvi Abdul Majeed Kasuri, Molvi M. Umar Achharvi, Qazi Hafeez ud-din of Rohtak, Molvi Abdul Ghafoor Hazaarwi, etc (Hussain, 2014, p. 353).

### **Brief Introduction of Pir Saiyyid Jamā'at Ali Shah as Founding Father of the *Anjuman***

Jamā'at Ali Shah was one of the important religious and spiritual personalities who played imperative role in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Punjab's religious, social and political life. He was born in 1834 in Ali Pur Saidan District Narowal. His father Sayyed Karim Ali Shah was a pious and Sufi. Jamā'at Ali Shah belonged to *Naqashbandiyya Silsila* (Shah, 2008, p. 93). He became a disciple of Hazrat Baba Faqir Muhammad Naqashbandi of Chora Sharif in Attock District, (Hussain, 2014, p. 67) and thus joined the *Silsila Naqashbandiyya*.

*Taşawwuf* (in Arabic) is a religious and spiritual tradition within Islam. It emerged as an ascetic and mystical stream in the very early stages of the development of Islam and “subsequently took a wide variety of devotional, doctrinal, artistic, and institutional forms” (Knysh, 2017, p. 1). Many early Sufis were involved in activities

such as personal austerity, fear of God, much recitation of the Quran and offering of ritual prayers, and personal ethical and moral development (Melchert, 2015, p. 3).

Jamā'at Ali Shah followed the *Naqashbandiya Mujadaiyya Silsila*, a branch of *Naqshbandiyya Silsila*; he insisted the following of the way of Shaykh Ahmad Sirahindi popularly known as Mujaddad Alif Sani (d. 1624). According to him, the spirit of *Tasawwuf* is to follow the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and remembrance of God. Controlling *nafs i amara* (sensuality) is the most difficult task. According to him, to fight against unbeliever is *farz i kifaya* (collective duty) and to fight one's own *nafs* is greater jihad, which is *farz i ain* (strict obligation). Jamā'at Ali Shah said, the real *Naqashbandia Silsila* is to follow *Shariah* and to kill one's *nafs* (Hussain, 2014, p. 227).

According to Pir Jamā'at Ali Shah, the real *Tasawwuf* is to follow *Shariah* with satisfaction of heart. His conception of *Tasawwuf*, was not based on seclusion, rather it was based on engaged Sufism in which the social and worldly interaction was essential part of life. He wore descent dress, ate good food, and tried his best to live his life according to *Shariah* and *Sunnah* of

Jama'at Ali Shah contributed significantly during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century for the religious, social and educational betterment of the Muslims of south Asia. During the Shahidganj mosque agitation in 1935 he was appointed as the *Amir-e-Millat* (leader of the nation or leader of Muslims of India) and he led the movement from the front (Gilmartin, 1979, p. 510; Malik, n.d., p. 125) ("It is claimed by the Muslims that this mosque was built during the Mughal regime. After Sikh's occupation of Punjab, the mosque was seized and a Gurdwara was built in its compound. The mosque became a bone of contention between the Muslims and the Sikhs when all the claims of Muslims were

rejected by the Courts. The tension reached to its extreme when, in 1935, the Sikhs decided to demolish the mosque”) (Malik, n.d.). His appointment as *Amir-i-Millat* brought support from other *Pirs* such as *Pir* Fazal Shah of Jalalpur and *Pir* Ghulam Mohiuddin of Golra Sharif as well. As *Amir-i-Millat*, he toured Punjab, Ajmer, Bareilly and UP to garner support for this cause (Malik, n.d., pp. 132-153). He worked enthusiastically for the rehabilitation of mosque. He established *Majlis i Ittehad Millat* (organization of united nation) in 1938 (Hussain, 2014, p. 459). After his departure for performing *hajj* and non-cooperative behavior of other Muslim organization like *Tehrik i Eharar* led it to failure but this movement made *Pir* Jamaat Ali Shah a prominent leader of Muslim community of colonial India. He participated in the Pakistan movement and praised Quaid-e-Azam (d. 1948) for his efforts for Muslims’ cause and Muslim league (Gilmartin, 1979, p. 510). He also preached those Muslim students who were studying in modern English schools and were not aware of Islamic way of life because they were not trained well in their homes. He concentrated on reforming those young people. He travelled widely for this purpose and visited schools and colleges and advised and taught young students. Once he was at a college at Lahore, he gave ten-rupee *wazifa* (scholarship) to someone who never trimmed his beard (Hussain, 2014, p. 232). He encouraged students to follow Islamic rituals and practices.

He was awarded the epithet of *Sanusi i Hind* because of his determination and courage, against the Hindus and their Shuddhi movements, and his role against the *Ahmadiyyat* (Hussain, 2014, p. 414).



**Objectives of *Anjuman-i-Khuddam al-Suffiya*:**

The primary aim of the Anjuman was to promote Islam and showcase its true essence in response to those who posed a challenge to it, whether they were from different religions such as Christianity and Hinduism or from within Islam, such as the Ahmadiyya community and the Wahhabi movement. The most effective part of Islam by which Islam spread in the world especially in South Asia was Sufism and *Anjuman-i-Khuddam al-Suffiya* had been formed to serve Islam and Sufism more systematically and articulately. Four major objectives of the Anjuman were following:

**Coordination amongst Sufi Silsilas**

Practices of all Sufi orders could be different but determination was same to attain the love of Beloved (Allah). *Anjuman-i-Khuddam al-Suffiya* worked toward establishing a sense of cohesion among all the Sufi *Silsilas*. The endeavors of the Anjuman included inter-order dialogues, joint gatherings, and collaborative projects that promoted community welfare. It created a united front against the anti-Islam forces and focused on charity, education amongst the Muslims. It also promoted preaching of Islam and Sufism to counter various ideologies. This unity not only helped safeguard Sufi traditions from external dangers but also provided a united front against Christian missionaries' projects and Hindu proselytizing movements. The Anjuman aimed to take all Sufi orders under single canopy, the canopy of love and respect for each other so that all these Sufi orders could operate according to their particular disciplines without criticizing each other (Elahi, 1924, p. 12).

### **Preaching of Islam and Sufism**

The primacy of this organization was to make the people acquainted with the spiritual Islam and enlightened their conscience esoterically rather than exoterically. It was not appreciating non-conformist Sufis. The Anjuman emphasized direct Sufi experience and sought to bridge the gap between Islamic teachings and Sufi practices. Through its teachings and spiritual practices, the Anjuman made efforts to spread the message of Islam and Sufism across various regions of colonial India, fostering a deeper understanding of Sufism and connecting people to the core principles of Islam (Elahi, 1924, p. 12).

### **Countering the Propaganda against Islam and Sufism**

After establishing a strong political rule by British, many missionary groups moved to the next stage in which they started a proselytizing movement in India, which shook the local population of India. This gave an impetus to the revivalist movement of Hinduism, which started to attack on Christianity and Islam simultaneously. And on the other hand some orthodox Muslim ulema and their followers started to attack on Sufism as an innovation. The Anjuman's third objective was to answer to the fabricated accused on Islam made by Hindu revival movements and draw a pragmatic line in the defense of Sufism against rigid approach of some Islamic scholars (Elahi, 1924, p. 12).

### **Rejection of Religious Ideologies like *Ahmadiyya* in India.**

The relationship between the *Ahmadiyya* community and mainstream Islam in colonial India had been complex and contentious. The Ahmadiyya community held

beliefs that were considered outside the mainstream Islamic doctrines. However, their unique beliefs regarding the finality of prophethood was the main concern for the Muslim community of India. The center of this community was Qadyan, Punjab and it was extending its roots with every passing day. It was challenging the core of Islam that was the finality of Muhammad (PBUH). To challenge the fabricated propagation of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Anjuman led the Muslim community from front and challenged the *Ahmadiyya* community to come to the arena and debate with them on the matter of last prophethood (Hussain, 2014, p. 353). Therefore, the *Anjuman* effectively challenged Ahmadiyya ideology with full force.

### **Organizational Structure of *Anjuman i Khuddam al-Sufiyya***

In the inception of the organization, its body was consisted of three main offices; the office of the president, the office of general secretary and the office of finance secretary. On some occasions, according to work load of the annual processions the post of joint secretary has been generated but it did not look permanent part of the body (Hussain, 2014, p. 353). *Yaran i Treeqat* (companions of *Treeqat*) was last part of this organization. Pir Saiyyid Jamā'at Ali Shah occupied the office of the president till his death and later on it was occupied by his son named Muhammad Hussain (Shah, 2008, p. 93).

Hafiz Zafar Ali Pasruri occupied the office of general secretary on the time of the establishment of the *Anjuman*, and he served this office until his death. All the arrangements of processions, define the agenda of processions, sending invitation letters to the participants, accommodations of *Mashyaikh* and Sufis those arrived from far furlong areas, all the assignments were entrusted to the general secretary. After the death of Hafiz Zafar Pasruri, Mawlana Karam Elahi filled his vacant post. Next general

secretary of the Anjuman was Hafiz Noor Ahmad Qasoori and to lessen his burden, Professor Manshad Ali had been appointed first joint secretary of the *Anjuman* (Shah, 2008, p. 353). Mawlana Muhammad Husain (Elahi, 1924, p. 12) Alipuri worked as the finance secretary of the Anjuman. He kept the account of the Anjuman maintained and performed this duty without charging a single penny.

### **Activities of Anjuman I Khuddam al-Sufiyya**

Anjuman I Khuddam al-Sufiyya played a significant role in promoting various activities that encompass religious, educational, social and charitable causes. The Anjuman, driven by the principle of Islam, engaged in a wide array of initiatives that not only strengthen the bonds within Muslim community but also contribute energetically to society at large.

### **Annual Meetings**

The Anjuman's most important activity was to hold annual processions, which used to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of May every year. In its inception this procession was held in Badshahi mosque Lahore but after three years it was shifted to Alipur Saiydan, district Narowal, Punjab. It was responsibility of the committee to invite different Sufis and ulema across the colonial India for addressing to the processions. All the preparations from the selection of venue to dining and accommodation of the guest speakers and audience were the responsibility of the Anjuman (Hussain, 2014, p. 350).

### **Preaching of Islam**

This organization, as it is clear by its name, was founded to serve Islam and Sufism. Pir Saiyyid Jamā'at Ali shah was the founder of the *Anjuman* and it was his

routine to travel across the different regions of colonial India for the sake of preaching of Islam and wherever he realized the further need of preaching, he sent a deputation of Muslims scholars those were working under his supervision. By adopting a holistic approach that combined education, community involvement, and cultural outreach, the *Anjuman* effectively promoted the message of Islam in colonial India.

### **Countering Anti-Islam Propaganda**

During the late nineteenth century many Hindu revival movement launched false propaganda against Islam. They portrayed Islam as the religion of barbarian that spread by sword. They criticized the concepts of female slaves, cow slaughtering, etc. in Islam. *Tableeghi jamaat* (preaching organization) of the Anjuman always remained in standing by position to foster replication to this false propagation of Islam.

### **Debate with the Ahmadiyya Movement**

As discussed earlier Ahmadiyya movement was one of the greatest challenges for the Muslim of India. As Ghulam Ahmad initiated his movement in Punjab, he had to face severe response from the Anjuman. Every time a delegation of the Anjuman was ready to challenge the Ahmadiyya movement, wherever the preaching of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was reported, this delegation would reach the spot and invite him for discussion and instruct people to stay away from him (Hussain, 2014, p. 253).

### **Countering Proselytizing Activities of the Hindus**

The Hindu revival movements like Shuddhi and Sangthan were very active in colonial India in the second decade of twentieth century. The new Muslims of Malkana of Agra were their soft targets. Anjuman I Khuddam al-Sufiyya sent first delegation to

Agra on May 21, 1923 to counter the proselytization Hindu organizations. The delegation of the Anjuman was led by the founder of it Pir Saiyyid Jamā'at Ali Shah, this delegation stayed in Agra until the abolition of the Shuddhi movement which ended with the murder of the Saraswati Shardhanand on 23 December 1926 (Hussain, 2014, p. 429).

### **Scholarships for Students**

The Anjuman started a massive program to finance needy students. By offering educational scholarships, the Anjuman view it as a way to invest in the future of their community and beyond, endorsing social and intellectual growth. As a result, Muslim students who benefit from these scholarships not only receive monetary aid but also gain a sense of belonging and love for their religious community. The Anjuman visited the remote areas and convince the Muslim community to send their children to schools. in case of financial problems, they were advised to contact the *Anjuman* for financial support. Those who could not afford anything then those were brought to Alipur Saiyyedan, the head office of the Anjuman where a madrassah had been established in 1916 in which the facilities of residence and dining had been offered (Hussain, 2014, p. 361).

### **Statement of Income and Expenditures**

There was no formal source to get calculated income. The followers of *Pir Jama'at* Ali Shah used to contribute as per their will. Nobody was asked to deposit single penny. He never demanded for fund for any good deed but it did not mean that people never supported him. Besides that, there is not exact estimate of expenditures of the processions of the *Anjuman*. Once a devotee asked how much money were spent on the

procession this time. *Pir Jamā'at* Ali Shah replied; I did not spend calculatedly but excluding the crops of rice and wheat belonged to my home, there was twenty-five hundred rupee, which I had to pay to the shopkeeper of rice (Hussain, 2014, pp. 353-354). Elder son of *Pir Jamā'at* Ali Shah named Muhammad Hussain was finance secretary of the Anjuman and he performed this duty honestly without taking any financial benefit from the Anjuman. The following is the list of the annual expenditure of the *madrasah* under Anjuman from 1916 to 1922 (Elahi, 1924, p. 12):

<b>Year</b>	<b>Pay of Head-Teacher for one year</b>	<b>Pay of vice-head teacher for one year</b>	<b>Pay of Hafiz for one year</b>	<b>Pay of cook for one year</b>	<b>Per Student pocket money for four months</b>	<b>Total</b>
1916	360		120	36	105	621
1917	360		120	36	105	621
1918	360	240	120	36	120	876
1919	360	240	120	36	108	864
1920	360	240	120	36	126	882
1921	360	240	120	36	120	900
1922	360	240	120	36	123	903

**Madrassas**

Various branches of Anjuman were established across the colonial India. As *Anjuman i Khuddam al-Sufiyya* came to know about any anti- Islam activity in any part of India, it spotted it and established branch of the Anjuman to encounter it. It is not possible to mention the names and areas of all branches but some prominent branches were following;

*Pir* Sayyed Wilayat Ali Shah was the first president of Gujrat branch. He was *khalifa* of *Pir* Jama'at Ali Shah. He laid the foundation of a *Naqshbandiyya Madrasah* in which he used to taught Quran and Islamic education. His son Ahmad shah also joined his father for this pious assignment. The responsibility of the arrangements of processions of this branch was assigned to Zia Ullah Nomani, *Khalifa* of elder son of *Pir* Jamaat Ali shah, who performed it very efficiently. Ferozabad town was specified for holding the processions of the Anjuman. Kunjah branch was formed by Dr. Allah Ditta, *khalifa* of *Pir* Jama'at Ali Shah. The annual meeting of the Branch used to be organized in a grand manner. After the death of Dr Allah Ditta, it was run by Captain Muhammad Amin.

The Kohat branch of the Anjuman had been started under the supervision of Sardar Khan and Syed Saeed Shah. Every Friday, *Yaran i Tareeqat* (the spiritual followers of *Pir* Jamaat Ali shah) used to arrange a meeting of *dhikr* (remembering the name of Allah collectively) at the house of Babu Ghulam Hussain. The Peshawar branch had been established by Hafiz Sultan Ahmed, *khalifa* (spiritually successor) of *Pir* Jamaat Ali Shah.



After the establishment of Rawalpindi branch of the Anjuman, Muhammad Shafi had been appointed the president of it. After the death of Muhammad Shafi, *Shaykh* Zain ul Aabidain and Dr. Muhammad Yaseen had been appointed president and vice-president of the branch respectively. After the death of *Sheikh* Zain ul Abidain, vice-president had been promoted on the office president. The weekly meeting of the branch used to be held at house of *Sheikh* Farhat Ali Shoq Saddiqi. The remarkable achievement of this branch was the republication of “*Barkaat Ali puri*” (Hussain, 2014, p. 358).

Mawlvi Qutabuddin, AbdulRehman and Haji Luqman used to run this branch collectively. An annual procession used to be held in which *Yaran i Tareeqat* across the country. *Pir* Jama’at Ali Shah along with his other family members used to participate in this procession. The services of residence and meal to the participants of processions were provided in best way as per existing resources (Hussain, 2014, p. 358). Atta Muhammad and Haji Allah Wadhaya had run the branch of Loyalpur (Faisalabad). The meeting for *dhikr* was not fix at single house but followers of *Pir* Jama’at Ali Shah made a turn system and every Friday it was arranged by different followers at their houses. Sheikh Hussain Bakhsh, Ghulam Nabi Khan and Hafiz Abdul Latif, held the office of president of Sialkot respectively.

The branch of the Ajuman of Karachi was managed by Noor Muhammad, after his demise *Bakhshi* Mustafa Ali Muhajir Madni *khalifa* of *Pir* Jama’at Ali Shah held the office of president. Later on, Mawlana Haji Hamid Hassan Qadri ran it and Zakir Ali was working as president of the branch of the Anjuman nowadays. The remarkable achievement of this branch is, its meeting of *dhikr* on daily basis.

Lahore was the capital of Punjab and center of all religions--- Islam, Hinduism, Christianity and Sikhism, therefore dozen of the branches of the Anjuman was established in it to accomplish the necessity of circumstances. *Hakim* Mubarak Ahmad (khalifa of *Pir Jama'at* Ali Shah), *Haji* Ghulam Jilani and Sufi Mushtaq were grand guardians of all the branches of Lahore. Timetable of all processions in Lahore used to be issued by this body of the branches of Lahore (Hussain, 2014, p. 359).

The branches of Multan had been presided by *Hafiz* Saddique Anwar and Wali Muhammad. Both were *khalifa* of *Pir Jama,at* Ali Shah. The Branches of Anjuman I Khuddam I Sufiyya of Amritsar, Jalandhar, Banglore, Maysore, Hyderabad, Ahmadabad, Muradabad were presided by Ahmad shah, Munshi Behlol, Bakhshi Mustafa Ali Khan, Mehbub Peer'an, *Qari* Shahabuddin, Mawlvi Muhammad Khoob and *Haji* Muhammad Tahir respectively (Hussain, 2014, p. 362).

### **The Mouthpiece of the *Anjuman*—The Magazine “*Anwar al-Sufiyya*”**

Central *Anjuman i Khuddam al-Sufiyya* launched a magazine in 1904 with the title of, “*Anwar al-Sufiyya*” (Elahi, 1924, p. 6). The first editor of the magazine was Mawlvi Hassam ud-Din of Qila Sobha Singh; Mawlvi Muhammad Azeem Lahori followed him. The third editor of the magazine was Mawlvi Imam ud-Din Roypuri, *khalifa* of *Pir Jama'at* Ali Shah. *Haji* Karam Elahi performed the duties of editor and general secretary of the Anjuman simultaneously. He was first general secretary of the Anjuman and fourth editor of the Magazine. Mawlvi Ghulam Rasool was fifth editor as per information of written history (Hussain, 2014, p. 360).

In the commencement of the publication of the Magazine, office was established in Lohari Mundi Lahore. But later on, its office had been shifted to Kashmiri Mohalla, Sialkot, at the house of Master Karam Elahi, fourth editor of the Magazine and general secretary of the Anjuman. After the death of Master Karam Elahi, once again its office had been shifted to Kot Usman Khan, Qasur (Hussain, 2014, p. 360).

*Pir Jama'at* Ali Shah offered to pay all the expenditures of the first edition of the Magazine voluntarily and asked *Yaran i tareeqat* (companions of sufism) to pay every one of them for the single edition so that in the initial year it could be published and distributed free of cost. All the companions responded positively and in the first year of the publication of this magazine it was distributed without any charges (Hussain, 2014, p. 359).

The major themes of *Risalah*, “*Anwar al-Sufiyya*” were; Islam, Sufism, lives of the Sufis, services of the Sufis regarding Islam, essays of *ulema* on Islam and *malfuzat* of *Pir Jama'at* Ali. The main objective of the publication of this magazine was to make people aware with the current scenario of that time and invoked the spirit of Islam to counter Christianity, Hinduism and Ahmadiyya movement. Therefore, this magazine used to be especially distributed in such areas where above mention anti Islam activities had been taking place effectively (Hussain, 2014, pp. 360-361). This magazine played a crucial role in countering the propaganda of Christianity, Wahhabism, Hinduism and Ahmadiyya ideology and highlighted the true spirit of Islam.

Some other magazines were published from different braches of the Anjuman but could not survive for a long time. “*Risalah i Muballigh*” a monthly magazine had been

started by Mawlvi Ghulam Rasul Gohar from Qasur branch of the Anjuman but after couple of years it could not carry on (Hussain, 2014, p. 359). Sialkot branch launched a magazine with the title of, “*Risalah I Lamhat ul-Sufiyya*” another monthly magazine, under the supervision of Abdul Aziz and it was closed with the death of Abdul Aziz. A weekly magazine named, “*Al-fiqqiyya*” was launched by Amritsar branch of the Anjuman under the presidency of *Hakim* Miraj ud Din and it got closed with death of *Hakim*. Another magazine was published on the name of *Pir* Jama’at Ali Shah, “*Jama’at*” from Amritsar but after few months it could not survive further (Hussain, 2014, p. 360). Two more magazines were published on the special recommendation of *Pir* Jama’at Ali Shah; these magazines exhibited his love and respect for his elders in the *Naqshbandiyya* order. First magazine was published to pay tribute to Hazrat Bahauddin Naqshband with the title of “*Al-takshaf un Mohimmat al-tassawwuf Aneea al-talibeen*” (saying of Hazrat Bahauddin Naqshband) and second was “*Rafiq al-salikeen*” (saying of Hazrat Mir Kalal) (Hussain, 2014, pp. 360-361).

## Conclusion

In India, the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, Muslims of India were in dire need of leadership for their revival of religious and spiritual tradition and betterment of social and political conditions. The Muslim community of Punjab was hijacked not only socially, politically but religiously as well. The Christian missionaries started to proselytizing the Hindu and Muslims communities to Christianity. This action generated a reaction in the form of revival movements in India especially in Punjab. *Arya Samaj* which was formed in the response of Christin missionaries flourished more rapidly in

Punjab than any other place, created more fears for the Muslim community of Punjab. At the same time, Ahmadiyya ideology posed a new challenge for the Muslims of Punjab.

*Pir Jamā'at* Ali Shah was one of the towering figures of this period who played a significant role in this respect of reviving Islamic religious and spiritual traditions and working for the political, social betterment of the Muslims. His *Anjuman i Khuddam al-Sufiyya*, was a unique organization in that period of Muslims in India that contributed greatly for the educational, social and political good of the Muslims. This organization challenged Ahmadiyya movement that professed threat to Muslim identity and threat to the religious understanding and practices of Islam. Also, the Hindu through their *Arya Samaj*, *Shuddi* and *Sanghatan* movement tried to corrupt Muslim religion and tried to wipe out Islam from India. *Anjuman i Khuddam al-Sufiyya* established religious and educational institutions in India especially in Punjab for clear and better understanding for Muslims and to counter the propaganda of Hindus. The purpose of establishing branches of *Anjuman i Khuddam al-Sufiyya* in many cities was to propagate spiritual vision of Islam which gave solace and help to the Muslims during those very difficult times for the Muslim community in India.

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