

## FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN COLONIAL INDIA: *JEHAD* OF MAULVI FAZAL ELAHI

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### Abstract

*British rule in India in nineteenth and twentieth centuries was resisted by the followers of Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed in the name of Jihad. Seeking freedom from British domination, they based themselves in Tribal Area now called FATA of Pakistan and continued to amass men and matter from India surreptitiously. Fazal Elahi, one of the adherents of the group, initially collected funds and recruits and finally assumed leadership responsibilities at Chamarkand (Bajaur). His struggle against the British tells the tale of Jehadi activities of that time. This article describes as to how he turned a Mujahid and how he struggled against an imperial power.*

**Key Words:** *Jihad*, religiosity, fighting, sufferings, politics.

### Introduction

*Jihad*, a *Quranic* word, connotes a selfless struggle in the way of Allah, the Almighty, on the side of virtue and against evil. The word has been interpreted differently by different groups in the annals of Muslims, yet a religious touch has always been there. The Sikh rule in Punjab in early nineteenth century is known for enslavement, tyranny and oppression on Muslim population. The religious elite of the time drawn chiefly from the *Madrassa* of Shah Waliullah of Delhi launched a *Jihad* Movement under the leadership of Sayyid Ahmad of Rai Bareilly (India) with the object to liberate Muslims from Sikh atrocities. Fighting against the Sikhs, Sayyid Ahmad received martyrdom at Balakot (Hazara) in 1831. The Sikhs in Punjab were succeeded by the British in 1849. Following the unsuccessful War of Independence fought against the British in

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1857, the Muslims were held responsible for organizing the rebellion. The British then subjected Muslims to ruthless vengeance. Challenging the British, the followers of Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed, based themselves in Hazara, Buner, Bajaur and Waziristan areas with a view to wage *Jihad*.

Maulvi Fazal Elahi of Wazirabad (Gujranwala) Punjab, inspired by the mission of Sayyid Ahmad, challenged the British Indian Government in the twentieth century. Having developed a high *Jehadi* sense, Fazal Elahi went from pillar to post to collect funds for *Jihad* in Punjab and elsewhere in India and to convey them clandestinely to the *Jamaat-e-Mujahideen* headquartered in Asmas, Buner area. Motivated for the cause of *Jihad*, he influenced the minds of the elite of Muslims in India and prepared them to make contribution both financially and physically. Because of his efforts, youth from Punjab migrated to the Asmas Colony and joined the *Mujahid* force. In the mature years of his life, he demonstrated a high sense of politics. Surreptitiously visiting India, he met the Congress leaders to make a common cause against the British. In the 1930s, however, in disagreement with Congress, he espoused Jinnah and Muslim League to gain a sovereign state for Muslims. He supported the Faqir of Ipi in his struggle against the British, but when he came to know that the latter wanted to divide Muslims on ethnic lines, he tried to dissuade the Faqir from the execution of his plan of establishing an independent *Pukhtun* state. He had a passion to liberate Muslims from tyranny and oppression at the hands of alien powers and to restore them their rights. Having authored two books namely *Masala-e-Jihad-e-Kashmir* and *Ghaltihai Adeemul Misal-e-Jehan*, Fazal Elahi proves himself a scholar and a *Mujahid* concomitantly.<sup>1</sup>

### **Early Life of Maulvi Fazal Elahi**

Maulvi Fazal Elahi, "one of the most dangerous leaders of the *Jihad* Movement"<sup>2</sup> was born at Wazirabad (Gujranwala), in 1882. Wazirabad, constructed by the Mughal minister, Wazir Khan, and having the reputation of a cantonment under the Sikhs, is located on the eastern bank of river Chenab at a distance of about 100 kilometers north of Lahore. Fazal Elahi's father, Haji Miran Bakhsh, was an ex-Sub-Inspector of the North-Western Railway and originally a follower of the *Hanafi* Jurisprudence was converted to the *Ahl-e-Hadith* faith by Hafiz Abdul Manan (1851-1916) of village Karoili Sayyadan (Jehlum). The Hafiz having visited a number of places had passed through Mianwali and settled down in Wazirabad. Blind but learned and pious, the Hafiz had opened a private religious school in Wazirabad, which had charm for students from far flung areas such as Tibet, Kashmir, Bukhara (Turkistan) and even Arabia<sup>3</sup> for obtaining certificates in Hadith proficiency. The Hafiz was reported to have read out to his students *Sahah-e-Sitta* (six books on *Hadith*) fifty times and the book of *Bukhari* one hundred times. Haji Miran Bakhsh, father of Maulvi Fazal Elahi, had acknowledged Hafiz Abdul Manan as his *Pir* (spiritual mentor) and hence wielded influence on his entire family. Fazal Elahi as such visited Hafiz Abdul

Manan in his *Madrassa* and having adopted the *Ahl-e-Hadith* faith received instructions from him who moulded his life on religious lines.

### **His Schooling**

Fazal Elahi began his vernacular education in the Qazi School in Wazirabad at an age of seven years in 1889. Here he passed the Primary examination at about the age of thirteen years. In 1894, he joined the Scotch Mission School in Wazirabad where he passed the Entrance examination (Matriculation) of the University of Punjab in 1900. While in Third Middle Class, he abandoned education for good under the influence of Sufi Wali Muhammad of Fatuiwala (Lahore), an illiterate person, but "gifted with marvelous strength of character and very convincing"<sup>4</sup>. In 1898 Sufi Wali Muhammad visited Wazirabad and spoke to Hafiz Abdul Manan in the Mosque at great length on the life after death, admonishing the latter to repudiate luxuries in life and devote himself entirely to the promotion of the life Hereafter as was practiced by Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). The talk was in such a detail and with so much appeal that it deeply affected the young mind of Fazal Elahi who resolved to change the manner of his future life on the lines indicated by Sufi Wali Muhammad. He as such abandoned going to school and began living a lonely life, keeping himself entirely away from other people either in Mosque or other solitary places. He involved himself deeply in thoughts about death and the life Hereafter. His father, then stationed in Hafizabad was unaware of Fazal Elahi's this state of mind. Upon learning, he came and made his child to resume his studies. He ultimately passed his Matriculation Examination<sup>5</sup>.

### **His Service in Government**

Having done his Matriculation, his father got him appointed as an apprentice in the Canal Department to learn survey work and was posted at the Baganwala quarry where he worked for about ten months. He then left the work and stayed at home for a few months. He was again put as an apprentice in the office of the Sub-Divisional Officer, North-Western Railway at Wazirabad. In 1902 he was able to learn some drafting skills. Thereafter, a clerical vacancy with a monthly salary of 25 rupees occurred in the office of the Permanent Way Inspector Sangla for which he made an application and got appointed<sup>6</sup>.

### **Preparation for *Jehad***

Meanwhile Sufi Wali Muhammad of Fatuiwala kept in touch with Fazal Elahi and privately instructed him in Sufism. As a result of this association, Fazal Elahi developed into a staunch *Mujahid*. In the beginning of 1903 while working in Sangla, he was visited by S. Wali Muhammad who told him that there was a great saint called Saiyyid Ahmad of Barielly who had fought against Raja Ranjit Singh to save Muslims from his atrocities. Sayyid Ahmad, he was informed, had

been disappeared since then, but his followers lived in some hilly area, waiting and praying for the reappearance of Saiyyid Ahmad to lead them. Fazal Elahi was invited to join in the cause to serve them. As Fazal Elahi was religiously inclined, he promised to contribute all his salary less the sum necessary for his daily expenses for help of the *Jamaat-e-Mujahidden*. Sufi Wali Muhammad gave him his address and asked him to write to him occasionally<sup>7</sup>.

Wali Muhammad then supplied him with a copy of the history of Saiyyid Ahmad together with the famous book on *Hadis*, the *Mishkat Sharif* and a *Quran* with a translation in Urdu. He also gave him instructions how to offer prayers with concentration, caring for its meaning. The history of Saiyyid Ahmad had a marked effect on his personality. He was convinced and believed beyond any shadow of doubt the truth of everything the book carried concerning the personality of Saiyyid Ahmad. "It is my belief, states Fazal Elahi, that he (Saiyyid Ahmad) is alive but invisible and that he will reappear when God wills. I rank him equal to Jesus Christ as regards the miracles he performed"<sup>8</sup>. Subsequently, he influenced the mind of a person in Wazirabad about the piety of S. Wali Muhammad to whom he paid one hundred pounds as help for the *Jamaat-e-Mujahideen*. This raised the prestige of Fazal Elahi as a devoted *Mujahid*. Henceforth, Fazal Elahi was considered as the right hand man of the *Jamaat* of Saiyyid Ahmad which began to consult him in collecting financial help for the *Jamaat*.

### **His Visit of *Amirul Mujahidden* at Asmas**

In 1905, Fazal Elahi wrote to Sufi Wali Muhammad, expressing his desire to see M. Abdul Karim, the then *Amirul Mujahideen* at Asmas. He took one month's leave and in the company of Sufi Wali Muhammad passed through Hari Pur, Darband, Ghazikote, Ghat and then to the Hassanzai territory to Karma where the *Mujahideen's* colony was said to be stationed. Arriving at Karma, however, they were informed that the *Jamaat-e-Mujahidden* had been shifted to Asmas (Buner). From Karma they then went to Asmas where they met the *Amirul Mujahideen*, M Abdul Karim, the youngest son of M. Walayat Ali to whom Fazal Elahi was introduced by S. Wali Muhammad. The *Amir* treated them as his special guests.

During his stay in Asmas, the *Amirul Mujahideen* used to advise them to abandon worldly pleasures and do things that were essential for one's eternal life. The *Amir* explained the qualities that raised a person to the standard of a Prophet, or the *Khalifa* of Prophet. He, at the same time, warned them not to speak ill of any *Hanafi* or the follower of any other sect, even though their own *Jamaat* was criticized by the followers of other sects<sup>9</sup>. The *Amir* pointed out that Islam and all other religions in India were dependent on the laws made by British Government, and that a true Muslim was one who liberated himself as to attend freely to the commandments of God. He said that quarrelling between the Muslims pleased the non-Muslims which was objectionable. As a result of the *Amirul Mujahideen's* advice, Fazal Elahi set aside all religious prejudices and there

seemed to be a great change in his feelings. From that moment onward, he began offering his prayers according to the *Hanafi* system<sup>10</sup>. Fazal Elahi then returned to his home in Wazirabad and resumed his duties at Sargodha. About a year later in 1907, having served the Government for five years, he resigned his post in the Railway owing to some disease in his eyes. Thereafter, he began to study the Quran, learning part of it by heart in the religious school of Hafiz Abdul Manan in Wazirabad.

### **His Services for *Jehad* in Punjab**

In 1908, the *Amirul Mujahideen*, Maulvi Abdul Karim, sent from Asmas a *Mujahid* named Abdul Karim to see Fazal Elahi and take him to Seith Abdullah, a wealthy merchant of Bombay for collection of funds for *Jamaat-e-Mujahideen*. Fazal Elahi, accompanying the guest, visited many prominent places in India including Cawnpore, Kanuj and Lucknow and collected about 3000 Rupees. A contribution of Rupees 2000 was made by Saiyyid Irfan, the grandson of Saiyyid Ahmad, who lived at Tonk in Rajputana. The messenger left for Asmas, taking the money to the *Mujahideen* Colony and Fazal Elahi returned to his home in Wazirabad<sup>11</sup>.

Fazal Elahi then visited Lahore following an invitation from Maulvi Abdul Aziz, chief of the *Jamaat* in Punjab. On arrival, Maulve Abdul Aziz, Sufi Wali Muhammad, Maulvi Abdul Awal and others made him trustee of the *Mujahideen* fund<sup>12</sup>. In 1912, Fazal Elahi again visited Asmas and returned to Wazirabad after a few days. In October, 1914, he once again visited Asmas to see *Amir* Abdul Karim. The *Amir* was seriously ill who issued instructions to Fazal Elahi as to the management of the *Mujahideen* affairs in the case of latter's death. Having stayed for a few days in Asmas, he then returned home.

In early 1915, Fazal Elahi sought the help of his brother, Muhammad Elahi, then Permanent Way Inspector at Haripur, to facilitate the safe travel of the *Jehadi* students of Islamia College Lahore to the *Mujahideen* Colony. He also helped Maulvi Abdur Rahim alias Maulvi Bashir of Lahore to have a safe travel to the *Mujahideen* colony and accompanied him to a place called Mahabar Basti on the Hazara border<sup>13</sup>. While in the Mahabar Basti, on his way to Asmas, Fazal Elahi was informed that Maulvi Abdul Karim, *Amir* of the *Mujahideen*, had passed away. He then returned to Wazirabad. The return journey was very tough. Having walked a distance of about 150 miles on foot, on arrival at home, he fell ill due to exertion<sup>14</sup>.

Shortly after-wards, he again proceeded to Asmas to take *Baiat* (oath of allegiance) at the hands of the new *Amir*, Niamatullah. Owing to the apparent weaknesses in the conduct of Niamatullah, Fazal Elahi was not prepared to take *Bait* at his hands. After the persuasion of the *Jamadars* and the assurances of Niamatullah, he agreed for a *Biat* on condition that Fazal Elahi would obey the commands of Niamatullah so long as the latter followed Quranic commands.

After a stay of about two days at Asmas, he then returned to his home. On his way home, at Darband, he got severe pain in his kidneys. According to the wishes of Niamatullah, Fazal Elahi then made a short tour in the Punjab and

United Provinces for the purpose of informing the *Mujahids* about the death of Amir Abdul Karim and taking *Baiat* for the new Amir.

Also, in 1915, Fazal Elahi conveyed a message from the *Amir* of *Mujahideen* to Maulvi Mahmudul Hassan of Deoband, inviting him to emigrate to Asmas and execute his anti-British scheme from there. Mahmudul Hassan, also called *Sheikhul Hind*, however, declined this invitation, informing Fazal Elahi that he preferred to go to Madina<sup>15</sup>. This decline on the part of *Sheikhul Hind* has been termed by Maulvi Fazal Elahi as one of the unprecedented blunders ever committed by Muslims in their history. According to Fazal Elahi, one million *Yousufzais* and three lakh tribal force was ready to assist *Sheikhul Hind* in his attack on British India. Had *Sheikhul Hind* accepted this offer, the course of events in India could have been different<sup>16</sup>.

The same year, Fazal Elahi interviewed the *Nawab* of Amb to ascertain his views about the *Mujahid* colony. The *Nawab* was suspected to be in league with the British Government. It was apprehended that he was intriguing to arrest the *Amir* and hand him over to the Government. After the interview, Fazal Elahi warned the *Amir* to have a cautious dealing with the *Nawab*<sup>17</sup>.

### **Arrest of Fazal Elahi and Subsequent Release**

On November 7, 1915, Fazal Elahi was arrested by the Government<sup>18</sup>. The Government detained him under the Ingress Ordinance 1914 and was kept in the Jullandhar Jail. The Government wanted to have a statement of Fazal Elahi but he stood firm and refused to make a statement for three years. In May 1918, however, it was discovered that he was clandestinely corresponding through Jail warders with some of his associates outside the jail premises, attempting thereby to revive the "*Wahabi* conspiracy" with the *Mujahideen*. Being caught red handed, "his fortitude gave way" and he eventually gave a long statement, outlining his multifarious activities in the cause of *Jehad*. In November 1918, he was released from internment and restricted to the limits of the Wazirabad Tehsil. His name was brought on the Punjab list of prominent agitators<sup>19</sup>.

In about the middle of 1920, he was reported to have "slipped off" to Asmas or Smasta (cave), headquarter of the *Mujahideen* in Buner area. The headquarter, as it was called, was a colony of *Mujahideen* where they lived with families and was situated near a village called Sulaimani in proximity to the Barandu stream at a distance of about 30 miles from Darband, west of the river Indus. Fazal Elahi then made frequent visits to Kabul where he got in touch with the Russian Embassy and the Ghadar Party agents<sup>20</sup>. Having come to know that a secret deal between *Amir* Niamatullah and the British government was effected, he with the help of Maulvi Bashir at Chamarkand, publicized the issue, blaming *Amir* Niamatullah of being on good terms with the British Government. He criticized the treaty as "injurious" to the interests of the *Mujahideen* in particular and of Islam in general.

### **Fazal Elahi as *Amir* of Chamarkand *Mujahideen***

In 1921, *Amir* Niamatullah, wanted to withdraw *Mujahideen* from Chamarkand. Maulvi Abdul Karim, *Amir* of Chamarkand *Mujahideen* and three fourth of the fighting strength there were thus recalled on the plea of starting *Jehad* in Thakot. Maulvi Fazal Elahi resisted the move. In the absence of an *Amir*, Fazal Elahi "proclaimed himself" to be the *Amir* at Chamarkand. *Amir* Niamatullah, having withdrawn Maulvi Abdul Karim from Chamarkand, demanded from the British the promised reward worth Rupees three lakhs<sup>21</sup>. But the Government tagged payment of reward with recalling Fazal Elahi who had been refusing to agree to any treaty. Niamatullah then gathered all the *Jamadars* on Shaban 24, 1339 A.H (May 3, 1921) and asked them to arrange 40 to 50 armed men for killing Maulvi Fazal Elahi and his supporters. On the appointed day, when a contingent of 50 young armed men waited for *Amir* Niamatullah's orders to proceed to Chamarkand, Maulvi Muhammad Yousuf, who also feared murder at the hands of Niamatullah, entered Niamatullah's private room and asked him for a talk in isolation. Niamatullah accompanied him into a nearby garden where Maulvi Muhammad Yousuf fired upon him with a pistol, resulting in Niamatullah's instant death. The guards of Niamatullah then caught hold of Maulvi Muhammad Yousuf and killed him on the spot (Shah, 2000: 161). Fazal Elahi was blamed to have a hand in the murder of *Amir* Niamatullah<sup>22</sup>.

As the Chamarkand *Mujahideen* under Maulvi Fazal Elahi posed a danger to the British Indian Government, it concentrated its efforts to break the colony. Maulvi Fazal Elahi then got in touch with the Bolsheviks and opened an Agency at Khuai for disseminating the Bolshevik literature. This and two other similar agencies were financed from Kabul<sup>23</sup>.

In September, 1921, Fazal Elahi informed the Russian embassy in Kabul that Mahmud Beg and Ghafur Beg, sub-Inspectors of Police, NWFP with eight Afghans and six European officers, all in disguise, had started for Tashkent via Kashmir for espionage, two of whom had sworn to put Lenin to death. On the direction of Russian Consul, Maulvi Fazal Elahi as such sent a party of six men from Chamarkand, under the guidance of one Nur Elahi, with revolvers and bombs in pursuit of the enemies of Russia. After passing through Darband and Agror between August 30 and September 4, 1921, Fazal Elahi's men continued their search of the spies through the mountains of Chitral and Badakhshan<sup>24</sup>.

### **Murder of Maulvi Bashir**

In October 1923, bitter dispute arose between Maulvi Bashir and Fazal Elahi, reportedly over the leadership of the Chamarkand party of *Mujahideen*. Describing the cause of dispute, Abadshapuri says:

"Maulvi Fazal Elahi differed with the policy of Maulvi Bashir since the former was still (working) in India. Maulvi Bashir stood for all those means that could cause the success of the Movement... When a communist revolution

occurred in Russia, he befriended the Russians. He thought that to make a league with Russians, Mujahideen could prove a big danger for the British. On the other hand, Maulvi Fazal Elahi was deadly opposed to getting Russian help. In his view, if British were overpowered with the help of Russia, in that case the success would not be of Mujahideen, but of Russians. In the event of success, India was to be passed in to the hands of Russians and to liberate India from Communist clutches seemed to him impossible".<sup>25</sup>

This cause of dispute, however, seems untrue in the presence of certain Government reports of 1921 cited in the preceding paragraph.

Any way, Maulvi Fazal Elahi felt himself highly insecure at Chamarkand. He had to construct bomb proofs over his house and Mosque to avoid possible attack by the opponents. A report making an assessment of the situation at Chamarkand, described the events in the following terms:

"The years 1924 and 1925 marked a period of rivalry for power between Fazal Elahi and Bashir... Bashir constituted himself the sole representative of the *Mujahideen* at the Afghan Headquarters. The usual donations from the *Amir* (of Afghanistan) all passed through Bashir's hands and Fazal Elahi lost touch which he formerly maintained through minor agents before. The Bolsheviks found Bashir more useful and Fazal Elahi's attempts to maintain personal contact proved futile...As Bashir progressed in his external influence, matters became difficult for Fazal Elahi internally, and his attempts to found a school, a hospital etc failed. Bashir further succeeded in suborning the allegiance of Fazal Elahi's following. Thus he made his ground easy, and, in a recent tour, he obtained verdicts from the leading tribal *Mullahs* that Fazal Elahi was responsible for the murder of Amir Niamatullah of Asmas; with this theory he obtained consent from the present *Amir* of Asmas to evict Fazal Elahi from Chamarkand. Realizing the weakness of his power, Fazal Elahi has abdicated; it will now be seen how Bashir manages Asmas and Chamarkand for the *Amir*, or the Bolsheviks, whoever employs him in his anti-Government pursuit".<sup>26</sup>

In 1934, the Chamarkand colony witnessed severe infighting. A Bureau Report of April 15, 1934, said:

"on 4th Instant (April, 1934), with the permission and approval of the *Amir* of *Mujahideen* of Buner, Maulvi Muhammad Bashir forcibly took possession of the houses which were in use by Maulvi Fazal Elahi in Chamarkand. Upon this Maulvi Fazal Elahi went to the Shinwari and Musa Khel *Mullahs* to get their sympathy and help; likewise Maulvi Muhammad Bashir tried to bring the people of Charmang on his side to defend him. The *Lashkars* gathered but it was decided that the matter should be postponed till the return of Gul Sahib of Babra from Kabul"<sup>27</sup>. Subsequently on April 11, 1934, a follower of Maulvi Fazal Elahi, named Muhammad, quarreled with Maulvi Bashir while the latter was busy in collecting members of the Chamarkand Party to give them certain instructions about *Jehad*. Maulvi Bashir was then the *Amir* of the Chamarkand Party. The



moment the offender tried to fire at Maulvi Bashir, he was caught by the nearby *Mujahids*. The people of Chamarkand Bala then took him to their village and kept him in custody<sup>28</sup>. This was followed by another incident of a similar nature. On June 15, 1934, a person called Malang of Mardan, a follower of Maulvi Bashir, made an attempt on the life of Maulvi Fazal Elahi as the latter was considered to be responsible for the incident of Dak looting one and a half months ago. Fazal Elahi, however, escaped unhurt. Thereafter sever fighting lasting for about two hours continued between the followers of Maulvi Bashir and Maulvi Fazal Elahi. The inhabitants of upper and lower Chamarkand intervened and stopped the fighting. No casualties were suffered by either side<sup>29</sup>.

Following this incident, Maulvi Bashir, while sleeping in his house in the Chamarkand Colony, was killed by his orderly on the night between December, 9 and 10, 1934 (first night of *Ramazan* 1353 A.H. a little before dawn), and the killer made good his escape taking with him four rifles and two revolvers belonging to the Maulvi<sup>30</sup>. A Government report of December 12, 1934 stated that this murder was arranged by Prince Barkatullah on his return from Kabul with one Lali, brother of Malik Inzar Gul of Bar Chamarkand, who had recently been seriously taken to task for robbing the Chamarkand Dak meant for the Afghan Government a few months ago<sup>31</sup>. On December 10, 1934, the blood stained body of Maulvi Bashir was laid in grave by Bad Shah Gul, the son of Haji Sahib Turangzai. After the *Namaz-e-Janaza* (funeral prayer), the followers of Maulvi Bashir informed Badshah Gul that Maulvi Fazal Elahi, Muhammad and the watchman were involved in the murder of Maulvi Bashir. They argued that this plot was masterminded by Maulvi Fazal Elahi because he had been deposed from the *Amarat* (leadership) of Chamarkand Mujahideen seven years ago, and expelled from the Jamaat owing to the charge of his involvement in the murder of Amir Niamatullah. They contended that as Maulvi Bashir had been appointed as the new *Amir* on his stead, none but Fazal Elahi was responsible for this murder<sup>32</sup>.

### **Difficulties of Maulvi Fazal Elahi at Chamarkand**

The death of Maulvi Bashir at Chamarkand put Fazal Elahi in further difficulties. The *Qanooni Jarga* (legal council) decided to expel him from Chamarkand. Fazal Elahi, however, declared that he was prepared to swear his innocence on the *Quran*<sup>33</sup>. His assurances bore no fruit. On 12th December, 1935, a bomb was dropped in the house of Mir Afzal of Kuz Chamarkand with a view to kill Maulvi Fazal Elahi. In January, 1936, Fazal Elahi approached the Faqir of Alingar and sought his support but Mian Maaz, his opponent, approached Mullah Muhammad Yousuf of Saida Shah to counteract his effort. Mullah Muhammad Yousuf then visited Chamarkand and held consultations<sup>34</sup>. The Shinwaris and Musa Khel Mohmands showed sympathy with Fazal Elahi while Mullah Muhammad Yousuf and Badshah Guls were in favour of Mian Maaz.<sup>35</sup> Fazal Elahi and Mian Maaz then agreed to settle their dispute on Shariat (Islamic Law).

In March 1936, considering himself unsafe at Chamarkand<sup>36</sup>, he visited Malik Said Khan of Mitai with the object to stay there permanently. He then visited Shamoza Chingai to purchase some land for building a residential house there. In August, 1936, Fazal Elahi, Badsha Gul 1, Qazi Abdul Hamid and Mullah Muhammad Yousuf of Saida Shah, wrote to Maulvi Barkatullah, Amir of Asmasa colony of Mujahideen, stating that Fazal Elahi was innocent regarding Maulvi Bashir's murder and therefore he be pardoned<sup>37</sup>, but Fazal Elahi was not safe at Chamarkand.

For fear of his life, he then left Chamarkand for Alingar to settle there permanently where the Faqir showed sympathy but the residents of Alingar were opposed to him. The residents of Alingar "tortured" him and he felt perturbed over this treatment. On March 4, 1937, he then left Alingar for Charmang in order to obtain from Dilawar Khan of Kotkai a site where he could construct a residential house and a school for imparting religious education to Muslim youth there<sup>38</sup>. He then returned to Chamarkand with 14 followers and again left for Sheikh Baba where he purchased a house from Malik Aimal Khan<sup>39</sup>.

### **Fazal Elahi Seeks Repatriation to His Home**

In 1938, Fazal Elahi reportedly got in touch with Dr. Satyapal, president of the Punjab Congress Committee, Lahore, to obtain permission for his return to India. At the same time, his brother K.S. Muhammad Elahi, approached the late Sir Sikandar Hayat and other Muslim members of Legislative Assembly and requested them to obtain permission for Fazal Elahi's return to British Territory<sup>40</sup>. Consequently, on 18th February 1938, Dr. Satyapal, approached Asaf Ali (member central Legislative Assembly) of Delhi, to make efforts for the return of Fazal Elahi to India. It was argued that his thoughts had changed and he believed in constitutional measures for the welfare of the country<sup>41</sup>. Fazal Elahi also was reportedly prepared to apologize for his past deeds<sup>42</sup>. Having discussed the matter in Government circles, "it was decided that there was no authority for excluding an Indian subject from India in perpetuity or merely as a general precautionary measure."<sup>43</sup> The Government of India therefore informed Mr. Asaf Ali that they would not stand in the way of Maulvi Fazal Elahi's return to India. It was recommended that should Maulvi Fazal Elahi approach British Legation at Kabul and apply for travel facilities for India, "he may, if his Majesty's Minister has no objection, be granted an Emergency Certificate or a single journey Passport to enable him to return to India."<sup>44</sup> The permission of his return to India, however, could not be availed. In a subsequent letter, Fazal Elahi enquired from his brother, Muhammad Elahi about the question of his return to India and at the same time informed him that he was invited to Waziristan to work for Muslim cause<sup>45</sup>. On 9th April, 1939, the All India Ahrar Political Conference, held at Peshawar, adopted a resolution, requesting the Government to permit Fazal Elahi to return to India<sup>46</sup>. It was, however, believed that this had been done through the efforts of his relations and that Fazal Elahi had given up the idea of coming back to India and was once again up to his old activities<sup>47</sup>.

### Fazal Elahi Joins the Faqir of IPI

Mirza Ali khan, popularly known as Faqir of Ipi, rebelled against British Government and launched *Jehad* in Waziristan. In 1937, he invited Maulvi Fazal Elahi, then in Chamarkand, to join him and to make a common cause against the British. In pursuance, Fazal Elahi moved to Waziristan accompanied by Lalai of village Gohati, his disciple, later known as Ghazi Abdul Karim, to join the Faqir of Ipi, taking with him some arms and ammunitions. Sending his family back to Wazirabad, he proceeded to Waziristan via Afridi Orakzai, Tirah, and Thal in Kurram.

In early 1939 Fazal Elahi arrived at Musatalbar with Gagu, Tori Khel, and Ali Badshah, Malla Khel Orakzai, two known lieutenants of the Faqir of Ipi (Government of NWFP, 1940: 13). Possessing a type writer, he made correspondence with leaders of public opinion and made propaganda among the Afghans of Southern Province in order to win support for the Faqir of Ipi and collect funds for him<sup>48</sup>.

On February 20, 1939, however, Fazal Elahi wanted to proceed from Musatalbar to Inzari in the vicinity of the Durand Line to see the Faqir of Ipi<sup>49</sup>. The Faqir, however, suspected Fazal Elahi as British agent and declined to grant him an audience on the ground that Fazal Elahi was not in sympathy with the Afghan government. On 1st April, 1939, Fazal Elahi again proceeded from Musatalbar to Gurwekht to see the Faqir of Ipi but with no success. The Faqir informed Fazal Elahi that he was in *Khilwat* (solitary meditation) and asked him to come again after the *Khilwat* was over. The Afghan Intelligence officer, Khost, also received information that Fazal Elahi was living with hostiles at Musatalbar and was busy in collecting information in the southern province regarding the attitude of the tribes towards the British and Afghan governments<sup>50</sup>.

Why the Faqir of Ipi turned suspicious of Fazal Elahi? The situation has been clarified by Maulana Raghieb Ahsan, *Amir Jamaat-e-Mujahideen*, East Pakistan thus:

"*Jamaat-e-Mujahideen* at one time sympathized with Congress and *Khilafat* Committee on account of their enmity with the British and suspected the Muslim League as pro-Government party. In 1937, Congress Ministries were established in several Indian provinces and this disillusioned the *Jamaat-e-Mujahideen*. The *Jamaat* then believed that the Congress party was as inimical and hostile to Islam and Muslims as were the British Government, and this completely changed the outlook of the *Jamaat*".<sup>51</sup>

The Faqir of Ipi was playing the politics of the All India National Congress as well as of the Afghan Government and Fazal Elahi differed with him on this question. The Faqir, in fact, wanted to establish a separate *Pukhtun* state and for this he had the support of the Indian National Congress as well as the Government of Afghanistan. "Separatist elements led by Faqir of Ipi launched

subversive activities with the backing and support of the Afghan Government. The Faqir declared in May 1948 that Pakistan was creation of the British. Some Afridi tribesmen gathered at Tirah Valley of Khyber Agency on August 12, 1949 and announced the establishment of a new nation, *Pukhtunistan* or *Pushtunistan* for which they adopted a flag with a red mountain fronting a rising sun<sup>52</sup>. This was disliked by Fazal Elahi. In a letter of Shawal 17, 1366 A.H. (September 3, 1947), addressed to the Faqir of Ipi, Fazal Elahi said :

“In 1937 you invited me through your relative Shaista Khan Mehmood Khel from Chamarkand. When I arrived in your presence after a journey of two months on foot and having encountered thousands of dangers, you did not seriously listen to my advice... Today, after a lapse of ten years, on the occasion of the death of your elder brother, Sher Zaman Khan, I once again came to your presence with a view to mutually find out solution whereby our utmost weak and helpless brothers, sisters and children can get security... but this time too you shut your doors and refused to listen to my advice... but I consider this treatment from your side as an endowment from God Almighty and continue to pray for you all along... You please take pains and listen to my talk. I say that Pakistan is an endowment and a divine gift in favor of the whole Muslim world. Therefore its strengthening is the responsibility of every follower of Islam whether he is the resident of India or Tribal area or of Afghanistan. To take up arm against this state is tantamount to a rebellion against Islam and (a death in such a state) is a death of ignorance... If, God forbid, Pakistan does not survive, in that case *Pathanistan* and Afghanistan will also not be able to survive because the survival of both these states is dependent on Pakistan. I, therefore, strongly advice to you that even then if you want to take steps against Pakistan, you need to fully think and make an *Istikhara* (seeking Divine guidance in dream) in this regard. This old stranger (alluding to himself) is prepared to meet you any time and at any place to discuss with you the fact of validity of Pakistan and the non-validity of *Pathanistan*. *Inshallah* (if God wills) I will never hesitate in doing so”.<sup>53</sup>

Fazal Elahi supported the Faqir of Ipi when the latter asked for his help against the British Indian Government. But when the Faqir wanted to establish a separate *Pathan* state in the north of India, Fazal Elahi left no stone unturned to break the wish of the Faqir as he thought it detrimental to the interest of Islam and Muslims.

### **Fazal Elahi Proceeds on *Haj***

Maulvi Fazal Elahi performed *Haj* in 1942<sup>54</sup>. Accompanied by Baba Muhammad Din, he travelled to Saudi Arabia under the fake name of Maulvi Abdur Razaq. At Saudi Arabia, the Baba facilitated him to meet the Italian Ambassador<sup>55</sup>. On return to India he met the Congress leaders at Wardha, Calcutta, Delhi, Lahore and Madrass posing as an agent of the Faqir of Ipi, collecting funds for him. The money he collected in India on his return from *Haj* was sent to the Faqir by two Mujahideen namely Lalai, alias Abdul Karim and

Gulzamir of Chamarkand.

Fazal Elahi then stayed with Abdullah, alias Sufi of Lyallpur at Chak Pagwan Wadanwala, Mandi Tandianwali, R.S. Mamun Kanjan, where the Sufi had opened a *Madrasa*. The Sufi, formerly a tailor at Chamarkand, also collected funds for Maulvi Fazal Elahi and the Faqir of Ipi<sup>56</sup>. The British Government took steps to arrest Fazal Elahi. On January 25, 1943, a copy of the photograph of Maulvi Fazal Elahi (obtained on November 3, 1939 at Para Chamkani area, Waziristan), was sent to the Deputy Inspector General of Police, Punjab with instructions to detain him under section 129 of the Defense of India Rules and orders of the NWFP and Punjab Governments be obtained as to what action was finally to be taken against him. On March 6, 1943, another order of his arrest was made, but with no success.<sup>57</sup>

### **The Tail End of His Mission**

Maulvi Fazal Elahi left Waziristan for Mangir (Bihar) where he lived clandestinely. He established close relationship with Hussain Shaheed Sohrawardy, subsequently Prime Minister of Pakistan. He also kept in touch with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the then President of All India National Congress. "A little before independence, Maulana Azad approached the Viceroy of India and pleaded the case of Maulvi Fazal Elahi, requesting him to allow the latter to move freely in British territories"<sup>58</sup>, but with no success. On Partition of India in 1947, Fazal Elahi moved to Pakistan on April 27, 1948 and was arrested. His arrest in Pakistan was, however, severely criticized and condemned. Maulana Daud Ghaznavi, Member Legislative Assembly, met the authorities in West Punjab and enquired about the reason for his arrest. It transpired that he had been arrested in a case registered against him during the British period. Iqbal Shaidai, General Secretary, World Muslim Association of Pakistan, also protested the arrest of Maulvi Fazal Elahi. He sent telegrams to the then Governor General of Pakistan and pleaded his case. The Government of Punjab then quashed the cases registered against Fazal Elahi and consequently he was released from Jail.<sup>59</sup>

### **Maulvi Fazal Elahi and *Jihad* in Kashmir**

On the eve of Partition of India in 1947, *Jihad* started in Kashmir, resulting from the Dogra ruler's repressive measures against Muslim population there. As Maulvi Fazal Elahi had influence over the tribes, he sent a message through his servant, Lalai alias Ghazi Abdul Karim to the people of the tribal areas called FATA, asking them to rise and help their Muslim brethren in Kashmir<sup>60</sup>. The tribes responded positively and *Jihad* activities intensified. In spite of his old age Maulvi Fazal Elahi used to go to the war front in Kashmir<sup>61</sup>. Maulvi Fazal Elahi has composed a book on Kashmir titled *Masala-e-Jihad-e-Kashmir awar Iski Mukhtasar Tareekh* (1948) wherein he has dealt at length on the issue, justifying it as a holy war for all Muslims. A message issued in the name of Independent tribes of Pakistan and Afghanistan, Maulvi Fazal Elahi

said," It is incumbent upon Independent Tribes in particular and the Governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan in general to make the present *Jehad* in Kashmir a success...otherwise there is no alternative to avoid the danger of ascendancy of Hinduism there<sup>62</sup>. The Maulvi also urged the Government and people of Pakistan to amass weapons and keep them standby as such advice contained in Quranic verses<sup>63</sup>.

### **Death and Burial of Maulvi Fazal Elahi**

Maulvi Fazal Elahi suffered from diabetes and tuberculosis (T.B.) in the last days of his life. Owing to shortage of medical Doctors in his native village Wazirabad, he moved to the house of his younger sister in Jehlum where he died on May 5, 1951 at the age of about seventy years. His funeral prayer was offered at Wazirabad, Rawalpindi and finally at Balakot. According to the will of Maulvi Fazal Elahi, he was buried in Balkot beside the tomb of Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed on the right bank of river Kunhar<sup>64</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

Muslim community in India, in the days of their decline and degeneration, looked to their past history and received inspiration from it. As Jihad is enshrined in the Quran, seldom Muslim youth could remain indifferent to the call of Jihad in case a need was felt. Maulvi Fazal Elahi, having received his early training in a religious environment, was no exception. The literature supplied to him by Sufi Wali Muhammad together with occasional visits of the latter to guide Fazal Elahi had a marked effect on his personality. He devoted his everything to the cause of jihad and bore the burden of difficulties in the course of his struggle. A study of his conduct reveals that he shared the sorrows and sufferings of Muslims across the globe and had the passion to come to their rescue.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 15

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