A BIOGRAPHY OF

ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI

A LIFE FORLORN

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A LOYALIST

Abdullah Yusuf Ali was an unabashed admirer of British imperialism, the British Indian Empire and British culture and political acumen. Some have turned this into a serious accusation, charged him with being a lackey of the British, and condemned him. The historical facts are as follows:-

Between 1860 and 1947 a majority of the top-ranking Muslim leaders in India were convinced that it was in the interest of their community to co-operate with the British rulers. There was hardly any important political or political-cum-religious party or any organized group of Muslim intellectuals and men of religion which, at one time or another, hesitated to express its loyalty to the government, on some occasion in language quite nauseating.

It is well known that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan entertained for the British a deep loyalty which he constantly offered as a virtue and preached as a necessity. Some of his declarations must be documented and reproduced. On 1 November 1858, when Queen Victoria's royal proclamation to India was read out in Allahabad, Sir Syed wrote, "Undoubtedly God's hand rests upon the head of our Queen Empress. Undoubtedly this beneficent declaration has been issued under Divine inspiration [*ilhám*]."[1] In 1884, in toasting W.S. Blunt, he said, "We hope that wherever you went [in India] you found our community [*qaum*] loyal to the British Crown and well wishers from its heart [*dili khairkhwáh*] of Queen Victoria, the Empress of India . . . . British rule was established in India at a time when poor India had become a widow and was in need of a husband. Therefore, she herself chose to make the English nation her husband, so that they could join together to form one body according to the concordat of the Gospel . . . . The English nation came to our vanquished country as a friend, not as an enemy . . . . It is our wish that English rule should last in India, not just for a long time but

[1] *Maqálát-i-Sir Syed Ahmad Khan*, Lahore, Vol. 9, 1962, p.106. Most of the sources quoted here are originally in Urdu. I have rendered them here in a literal translation, even if the result is stylistically clumsy, because I want to convey the flavour and nuance of the original word.

eternally. This desire is for the good of our own country, not for the English nation."[1]

In the same year Sir Syed toured the Punjab and delivered lectures at various places in which praise of British rule and loyalty to it were the dominant themes. "I have not rendered my services to the Government", he said, "in whatever I have done I have merely carried out the instructions (*hukum*] of my holy [*pák*] religion and true Prophet. Our true Prophet has ordered us to obey, to wish well and to be loyal to the government under which you are living. Thus, whatever service I have been able to render to the government has really been a service to my faith.[2]

In 1911 the influential Lahore newspaper, *Paisa Akhbár*, wrote, "Over ten crore [one hundred million] followers of Islam are loyal to Emperor George. This number is greater than the combined populations of the three largest states, Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan. On this basis the British Empire is known as the world's greatest Islamic monarchy [*saltanat*]."[3]

The *Sufi* was a respected and influential journal of religion and politics, issued in 1909 onwards from Pindi Bahauddin, a small town in district Gujerat in the Punjab. It was launched, owned and edited by one Malik Muhammad-un-Din Áwán. It was a liberal paper which carried complimentary articles on Hinduism and Sikhism, and its main point of reference was mysticism, hence its title. But its approach to the British rulers of India was one of unwavering loyalty. In August 1911 it distributed prizes worth Rs.8,500, sent a telegram of congratulation to King George V and carried a flattering article by Khwaja Hasan Nizami. During World War I it sold premium bonds; it issued a special silver jubilee number on 6 May 1935.[4]

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, the fearless editor of *Zamindar* of Lahore, who prided himself on his love of Islam and his hatred of Christian rule over India, wrote to King George V in an open letter on 22 November 1934, "Sire, I fully know the deep feelings

[1]Cited in Altaf Husain Hali, *Sir Syed Ahmad ki Kaháni, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan ki Zabáni*, compiled by Ziauddin, Lahore, 1982, p.71.
[2]*Sir Syed Ahmad Khan ká Safarnámáh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1961, reprint, p.65.
[3]*Paisa Akhbár*, Lahore, 22 June 1911.
[4]See Sibgha Faruq, *Mujalla "Sufi" Muslim Saháfat ké Áiéné mén*, Lahore, 2001, pp.11-15

of the eight crore [eighty million] Musalmans of India who accept Your Majesty as their emperor."[1]

In 1935 the Ahrars, one of the most ardent pro-Congress nationalist groups ranged against the Muslim League, were receiving help from the Punjab Government and especially from its Criminal Investigation Department, of course for a *quid pro quo*.[2]

Iqbal's writings provide us with several proofs of his deep-seated and unconcealed allegiance, even obsequiousness, to the British. On Queen Victoria's death on 22 January 1901 (which day was also the *id-ul-fitr*), he composed an elegy of 110 couplets, praising the deceased Empress, paying servile tributes to her, grieving for the loss, and calling her death a *muharram* for the Muslims of India.[3] The poem was published at government expense. Encouraged by official approval, Iqbal himself translated it into English under the tide of "Tears of Blood".[4]

In reply to an inquiry made in 1910 by Ali Gohar, Secretary of the Anjuman-i-Islamiah Hazara, in the *Paisa Akhbár*, whether it was advisable for the Indian Muslims to participate in the proposed World Islamic Conference to be held in Egypt, Iqbal argued against such participation, and added that "the peace and freedom enjoyed by the people of India because of British rule were denied to other countries . . . The Message of God [Quran] enjoins upon the Muslims to live in peace and amity; they are not even permitted to consult each other in secret".[5]

[1]The letter was published in full text in *Zamindar*, Lahore, 22 November 1934. On 25 November it was read out to a large gathering at the Friday mosque in Aligarh.

[2]This is the evidence of Sir Fazl-i-Husain; see *Diary and Notes of Mian Fazl-i-Husain*, ed. Waheed Ahmad, Lahore, 1977, pp. 141, 165.

[3]Full text in *Sarod-i-Raftah*, eds. Ghulam Rasul Mehr and Saiq Ali Dilawari, Lahore, 1959, pp, 183-91, It must be explained to the non-Muslim reader that *Muharram* is the month of mourning in the Islamic calendar for all Muslims, and particularly for the Shias, because of the tragedy which occurred in this month at Karbala in Iraq when the Prophet's grandson, Imam Husain, was butchered along with his family by the army of the Mu'awyah ruler.

[4]See Munshi Din Muhammad, *Kitab-i-Yádgár-i-Durbár-i-Dilli Tájposhi 1911*, Lahore, 1912, p. 507; Sayyid Nazir Niazi, *Dana-i-Raz*, Lahore, 1979, p. 361, and *Iqbaliat* (Journal of the Iqbal Academy of Pakistan), July-September 1988, p. 13.

[5]*Paisa Akkbar*, Lahore, 21 July 1915; this was a reprint of his written opinion given in August 1910 and published in the issue of 22 August 1910.

On 22 June 1911 the coronation of King George V was celebrated by the Muslims of Lahore at a gathering in the Royal Mosque of the city, and among the speakers was Iqbal who emphasized the Muslims' bounden duty to bear allegiance to the ruler of the day. "The goal of the Muslims is not rulership [*saltanat*]", he said, "but the maximum spread of their religion, and under British rule this is permitted."[1] In May 1918 the Punjab Government convened a meeting in the Town Hall of Lahore to collect funds and encourage recruitment for the war. The Governor of the province, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, was in the chair. Iqbal delivered a speech in praise of the virtues of the British Empire, and then recited a poem swearing sincere and unselfish obedience and true fealty, offering the sacrifice of his own life if that could save the Empire, and praying for the grant of an eternal lease to British rule.[2] In a couplet of 1925 he paid homage to Sir Malcolm Hailey, the Governor of the Punjab.[3]

In July 1931, in a letter to Sir Francis Younghusband, he wrote, "I shall have no objection to be ruled by the Hindu if he has the tact and the ability to govern, but I can't worship two Gods. It must be either him alone or the British alone, but not the two together."[4] On 24 November 1932, in a speech delivered at a reception given in his honour by the National League of Britain in London, he said, "Muslims have courage and have always shown loyalty and affection to Great Britain."[5]

Lesser men were echoing the same sentiments. Iqbal's teacher Shams-ul-Ulema Mawlawi Mir Hasan, issued a *fatwa* (religious edict) in favour of loyalty to the British, calling their rule kind, just and a gift from God, and concluding with the remark that it was a

[1] *Ibid.*, 24 June 1911.

[2] *Ibid.*, 5 and 11 May 1918 gives an account of the proceedings of the meeting. The poem "Punjab ká Jawáb" is reprinted in *Sarod-i-Raftah*, pp. 55-57; it first appeared in the *Wakil* of Amritsar, 11 May 1918.

[3] Faqir Syed Wahiduddin, *Rozgár-i-Faqir*, Lahore, 1950, p. 173. The couplet ran: *"Punjáb ki kishti ko diá us né sahárá/Tábindah hameshah rahé Hailey ká sitárah'.*

[4] The letter, originally published in *The Civil & Military Gazette* of Lahore on 30 July 1931, is reproduced in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. Latif Ahmed Shirvani, Lahore, 3rd. rev. ed., 1977, p. 207.

[5] Reproduced in *Letters and Writings of Iqbal*, ed. B. A. Dar, Lahore, n.d., p. 70.

matter of pride to be born under such a government.[1] Maulana Shibli Naumani, one of the most highly respected *'ulemá* and men of letters, while welcoming the Governor of Agra and Oudh to his Nadwah in 1902, assured the guest that "we look upon our loyalty and goodwill [*khairkwáhi*] to the Government as our religious duty".[2] A history of the Deoband School, published in 1917, carried the following exhortation: "Every virtuous Musalman [*momin Musalmán*] is requested that he must [*zarur bil zarur*] pray, day and night, standing and sitting, in short every moment and instant [*her lahza aur sá'at*], for the rule under whose governance every person is leading a life of luxury and ease [*'aish aur árám*] and on account of whose gift of freedom the garden of Islam is green and fruitful – Oh God: Thou keepest it in power for ever and ever."[3] It must be remembered that the Deoband School was firmly allied to the Indian National Congress, preached the doctrine of a united Indian "nationalism", opposed the Aligarh Movement at every step, and opposed the creation of Pakistan until 1947.

In 1887 Khwaja Altaf Hussain Hali, the well-known poet and literary critic, wrote a eulogy of British rule in which he offered a prayer that God may always keep the family of the ruler in His safekeeping and the ruler may always keep India under his shadow [*sáiah*].[4]

The Nadwaht-ul-'Ulema was established with the express purpose of bringing together all the doctors of religion of Islam so that they could play their true part in the progress and advance of Islam in India. The foundation stone of the college (*dár-ul-'Ulúm*) of the Nadwah was laid by the Lieutenant Governor of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh on 28 November 1908. Describing the function Shibli Naumani wrote with pride, "Our eyes have

[1]This was done in a speech delivered on 4 April 1897 in Sialkot at a meeting to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria; see Dr Syed Sultan Mahmud Husain, *Allama Iqbal ké Ustád Sham-ul-Ulemá Mawlawi Syed Mir Hasan: Hayát-o-Afkár*, Lahore, 1981, pp. 77-79.

[2]*Wakil*, Amritsar, 14 November 1902.

[3]Muhammad Rafi, *Deoband ki Sair aur us ki Mukhtasar Tárikh*, Delhi, Shawwal 1335 A.M. (1 September 1917).

[4]*Kulliát-i-Nazm-i-Hali*, ed. Dr Iftikhar .Ahmad Siddiqui, July 1968, pp. 353 ff. The poem is entitled "Marsia Malikah Victoria", 1901. The eulogy was presented to Queen Victoria on behalf of the Anjuman-i-Islamia of Lahore.

witnessed the glitters of [many] fantastic spectacles, many pageants of authority and might [*jáh-o-jalál*], the enthusiasm and zeal of [many] conferences and societies, many congregations where moving sermons were given and homilies [*wa'z-o-pand*] were preached, but what we saw on this occasion was more astonishing, more strange and more inspiring [*bil asar*] than all these. This was the first time that turbans and Turkish caps were together. This was the first time that the revered [*muqaddas*] *'ulemá* were bowing respectfully and with gratitude in their hearts before a Christian ruler. This was the first time that the foundation stone of a religious school [of Islam] was being laid by a non-Muslim. The Pulpit of the Prophet's mosque was also the work of a Christian." The address written in Arabic presented to the Lieutenant Governor declared that "religious tolerance is a characteristic feature of the British Government", and submitted that "we maintain it as our belief that loyalty to the Government is our proven stance. Through the *'ulemá* produced by this school Muslims will advance in their obedience and submission to the Government."[1] About the speech made by the Lieutenant Governor in reply to the address of welcome the *'ulemá* of Nadwah said, "Each and every word of it is Water of Life [*áb-i-hayát*] for the Nadwah."[2]

In 1928 the Maharajah of Mahmudabad, speaking at the All India Muslim League annual session in Calcutta, said, "The application of the doctrine of independence in the sense of the severance of British connection is, to my mind, a hopelessly unworkable proposition. India's place in the British Commonwealth is a valuable asset and, in my judgement, it will be a folly to destroy this precious commodity with our own hands. It is my conviction that there is plenty of room for growth, development and expression of Indian nationalism within the orbit of India's connection with England."[3] The

[1]For fuller details see *al-Nadwah* (journal of the Nadwahtul-'Ulema), December 1908, pp. 1-4.

[2]*al-Nadwah*, November 1908, p. 6; the journal was then edited by Shibli Naumani and Habib-ur-Rahman Khan Shirwani.

[3]*The Times of India*, Bombay, 27 December 1928. Jinnah paid a warm tribute to the Maharajah of Mahmudabad at the meeting: "I can assure you that among Mussalmans there is not a truer friend of the Muslims nor a greater well-wisher of the Muslim community than the Maharaja."

Maharajah's personal and political predilections marched together. His residence was named "Butler Palace" after Sir Harcourt Butler, the Lieutenant Governor of the province.

There is no evidence available yet that the Punjab Unionist Party, which ruled the province for two decades and kept the Muslim League out of the Punjab with conspicuous success, was a British creation; but only an addle-pated historian will call it an anti-British group. Sahibzada Sir Abdul Qayyum Khan, the maker of modern North-West Frontier Province and its first Prime Minister, had served the British administrators of the province as their *munshi* and agent throughout his official career and showed his loyalty in every respect after entering public life. The same can be said of nearly every important politician and minsiter in every province of India.

The myth that the Muslims were loyal because they were toadies and anti-nationalists can easily be shown to be a false assumption by looking at the predicament in which Muslim India found itself at the time of the commencement of British rule, and then throughout the course of Indian politics. The following considerations are relevant to this inquiry.

During the testing days that followed the revolt of 1857 Muslims were convinced that their only salvation lay in practising loyalty. Sayyid Ahmad Khan foresaw that the Muslim minority was no match for the progressive Hindus, and that if it also alienated the sympathies of the rulers its ruin would be complete. He brought forth many arguments from his religious study and social experience in justification of his pro-British attitude. This might have been a conscious or unconscious rationalization of his political views, but there is no doubt that Sayyid Ahmad passionately believed in the desirability, practicability and necessity of a Muslim-British understanding.

With the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 the Muslims redoubled their efforts to prove their loyalty in fear lest the Congress might be accepted as representative of all educated Muslim opinion. They were alarmed by the Congress and what it stood for, for any advance towards self-government would imply their relegation to the position of an insubstantial minority. During the Hindu unrest of 1905-11 they supported the

government unstintedly. The greatest test of Muslim constancy came in 1911 when the partition of Bengal was annulled. Muslim India was shocked and some leaders talked of extreme retaliatory measures. But even in this crisis the tradition of years prevailed and the leading Muslims, though irate and indignant, instructed their followers not to agitate against the decision.

After the "disloyal" interlude of the Khilafat Movement the old habit reasserted itself and at the Round Table Conferences Muslims were by and large so co-operative as to evoke from the Congress the charge of being reactionaries and toadies. In 1931 just before the opening of the second conference, a striking article appeared in the *Empire Review* which stands as a faultless testament of Muslim loyalty. The author's background underlined the significance of what he said. It was written by Maulana Shaukat Ali, one of the famous Ali brothers who had led the Indian Khilafatists into a virulent campaign against the British. Now as a delegate to the Conference, he made a stirring appeal for Muslim-British friendship. "We both need each other", he wrote. "We should grasp that hand and Islam would stand with Britain, a good and honourable friend, a brave fighter and a staunch ally . . . Should Hindus and Muslims live together a thousand years, there is no chance of the two cultures merging into one. This is adamant, bedrock fact, which cannot be glossed over . . . At the back of every Muslim mind, based on our experience of the last fifteen or twenty years, is the fear that Great Britain had lost something of her old virility, and that she may let us down . . . We want no handicap against anybody, including the British."[1]

What lay behind such expressions of loyalty? What was the philosophy of loyalty? Was there indeed any coherent thought behind it at all?

First, loyalty was the safest course of action for a minority which was backward and helpless. Either it could co-operate with the Hindus, which it would not, or it could keep on good terms with the rulers. To alienate both the present and the future rulers would have been unmitigated folly.

[1]Shaukat Ali, "An Appeal from the Muslim World to the British People", *Empire Review*, November 1931, pp. 807-9.

Second, paradoxically the fact is that the Muslims, universally characterized in the West as a militant body, were the only constitutionally-minded group in India. Without trying to resolve this paradox (which may have been a reaction to the unsuccessful Mutiny), we must notice that the Congress was, except in the first few years of its existence, an agitational organization. *Satyagraha* was often portrayed as a peaceful movement; but to break the laws of a country is unconstitutional, whether the deed is done by making women volunteers lie down on the road or by leading a band of mutinous riflemen. In fact, *Satyagraha* is more deadly - for it is planned and cold-blooded – than open agitation which may be due to the heat of the moment. Muslims were not fond of agitating, first under the influence of Sayyid Ahmad Khan, and later under that of Jinnah, both of whom were, for different reasons, almost constitutional martinets.

Third, the Muslims were sceptical both of the genuineness of the Hindu agitation and of the likelihood of its successful outcome. The agitation was for greater democracy, which to the Muslims meant greater oppression. The agitation was also unlikely to achieve its end because the rulers were strong and because all India was not on the side of the agitators. It was thus both unwise and fruitless to stand with the agitators and incur the displeasure of the government.

Also, most Muslims appreciated the fairness with which they had been, or were being, treated by the British. Between the Hindus and the British they chose to trust the latter, and on the whole found that this policy paid dividends.

In terms of religion, Christian rulers were closer to the Muslims than were the idol-worshipping Hindus. As religion was a vital factor in the awakening of their nationalism this affinity tended to throw the Muslims on to the side of the British.

In social matters, again, the Muslim found himself in more congenial company among the British. The two could, and did, intermarry, interdine and intermix in society without disagreeable taboos. With the Hindu one was always on one's guard against breaking some caste restriction or polluting a Brahmin household. Social mixing is as essential an ingredient of friendship as aloofness is a creator of misunderstanding.

The educated among the Muslim community were greatly influenced by English literature, history, philosophy and art. This intellectual and academic deference paved the way to political loyalty. The British ruled the country and held power and patronage in their hands. The Muslims, as a minority, wanted safeguards, and the British alone could grant them. The Islamic injunction of obeying the ruler of the time may have weighed with a section of the Muslims. Disobedience to those in authority is not permitted unless the ruler interferes with the religious rites of the Muslims.

Finally, Britain was the greatest "Muslim Empire" in the world, and had intimate relations with all independent and semi-independent Muslim states. As the Indian Muslims formed a part of the world Muslim community it was important for them to remain on good terms with Britain.[1]

Thus the Muslim leadership was not ploughing a lonely furrow, nor echoing a minority view, in choosing to work within the framework of British connection. This policy of co-operation defined and reflected the essence of Indian Muslim politics. The Muslim was a realist who was convinced that, given the ground rules of current politics and the minority status of the Muslims, the protection of Muslim rights and the advance of their interests lay in co-operation with those in authority who could fulfil Muslim needs and demands rather than in confrontation with the only source of power and arbitration.

Nor were the Hindus themselves as consistent and steadfast in their anti-British and anti-imperialist opinions and activities as they would like others to believe. The Congress itself, during its early years, was a completely and unashamedly loyal body, and at every annual session passed a resolution in praise of British overlordship. Many Indian nationalists and patriots of impeccable credentials cultivated the British Viceroys and Governors with unremitting zeal. Does that make them toadies?

A few parallels between the actions of the Aga Khan (the greatest loyalist) and those of some eminent Hindu nationalist leaders culled from modern history confirm the point I am trying to make here.

[1]The last two pages have been drawn from my *The Making of Pakistan: A Study in Nationalism*, London, 1967, pp. 70-5. The reader will find scattered references to the subject in my *A History of the Idea of Pakistan*, Lahore, 1987, 4 vols.

The Aga Khan was convinced that British governance of India was beneficent; so did all the leaders of the first generation of the Indian National Congress and of the Indian Liberal Federation throughout its career. The Aga Khan, however, never allowed any Englishman to preside over any session of the All India Muslim League or the All India Muslim Conference; but we know that the Indian National Congress gloried in the leadership of Hume and Wedderburn. The Aga Khan received many titles and honours from the British court; so did such elder statesmen of the Congress as Surendranath Banerjea, such liberal leaders at the top of the tree as Tej Bahadur Sapru and Chimanlal Setalvad, and such literary giants as Rabindranath Tagore. The Aga Khan was a Privy Councillor; so were Congressmen like Srinivasa Sastri and Hindu Mahasabhaists like M. R. Jayakar. If these decorations did not bring a reproach to their nationalism, how could they dilute the Aga Khan's Islam or love for India?

Syed Ameer Ali may be added to the "loyalists" who rendered most valuable services to the cause of Islam, the Ottoman Empire, the Khilafat and Muslim India. He believed that British rule was benign and its continued existence was in the interest of Indian Muslims. But, like Abdullah Yusuf Ali, he criticized the foreign rulers when he felt that an injustice was being done to the Indians or the Indian Muslims.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the creator of Pakistan, had a bifurcated political career. Till his departure for England after the Round Table Conference he spoke like a Congress nationalist, accusing the British of oppressive imperialism. After his return to India when he reorganized and led the All India Muslim League and soon become the icon of Muslim Indian politics, his speeches underwent a change in tone and content. His targets were now the Hindus and the Sikhs and the Congress, not the British. Does that make him a "loyalist" too?

It was not only the politician, the journalist or the doctor of religion who bowed his head to the ruling power. The man of letters and the creative writer followed the prescribed wisdom. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was the saint of the Aligarh movement and all his followers walked in his footsteps. Altaf Husain Hali, Deputy Nazir Ahmad, Maulana Muhammad Husain Azad and many more kept

up the tradition. In the words of a critic belonging to the Progressive Writers' Movement, all of them were following a "colonial agenda".[1]

The Progressive Writers themselves fell a prey to the trend. Faiz Ahmad Faiz and M.D. Taseer wore the uniform of the British Indian Army. The Urdu language could not escape the Muslim tradition, and generally it preferred to conform than to protest. The protest part was left to the Punjabi language.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan is a dubious figure among the heroes carved by Pakistan. He was radical in his theological views and a crusader in the cause of education, but his other "services" and views are controversial. His blind loyalty to the foreign rulers cast a long shadow and influenced the emergence of military and civil dictatorship in Pakistan. His campaign against female education and emancipation kept the Muslim society two generations behind the Hindus. His spokesmanship of the *ashráfiya* and his contempt for the ordinary Muslim and particularly the *bábus* of Bengal (all Muslims) affected future politics and barred the way to the emergence of democratic ideas. Pakistan today is witnessing the full impact of his doctrines.

And yet our schools and colleges continue to tell the young minds that Pakistani culture is inspired by the Aligarh movement and the demand for Pakistan was inextricably linked with the protection and expansion of the Urdu language. As a result the Pakistani intellectual, in his zeal for Urdu and a mythical ideology, refuses to acknowledge Sindhi and Pathan identity and Punjabi culture. One cataclysmic outcome of this approach was the breakup of Pakistan in 1971. The Bengali Pakistani was incensed at the official and West Pakistani relegation of his leaders like Syed Ameer Ali and of his language as non-Muslim. I pointed out this discrepancy and its evil consequences in a book published in 1992[2], but my documented investigation was not granted access to official attention.

If Abdullah Yusuf Ali was a "loyalist" he was not a blind faithful like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. In one of his books, he used strong language on the racial discrimination rampant among the non-official British living in India. "Their claim gave the most

[1]Abul Kalam Qasimi, "Nauábádiáti Fikr aur Urdu ki Adabi wa Shi'ri Nazriasázi", *Dunyázád* (Karachi), March 2008, pp.31-43.

[2]See K.K.Aziz, *The Murder of History*, Lahore, 1992.

offence", he wrote, "as, without being rulers, they claimed the status of a ruling race."[1] This is not the voice of a "loyalist".

So "loyalism" was a well-vested tradition of Indian Muslim politics, not a defect in Abdullah Yusuf Ali's character, as Dr. Sherif, in his otherwise admirable book, impertinently insists fifty times within the space of less than one hundred and fifty pages.

A HUMANIST

One remarkable dimension of Abdullah Yusuf Ali's character was humanism; remarkable because it is rarely so well-expressed even by the most liberal thinkers and writers. He interpreted the Quranic description of the creation of man (verses XVIII, 12-16) in a most fascinating way.

The progress of man, he said, is charted in the Book through seven stages: (1) an extract of fine clay (*Salalat*), the dust of which man is made; (2) the seed of physical life; (3) a clot of blood; (4) a lump; (4) bones and skeleton; (6) the filling out of the bones with flesh and limbs; and (7) the breathing of the Divine spirit into this creature.

The fine clay may be taken as the basis of physical matter, and then we see in this progression the relation of the origin of the physical man with the material world. The following stages Nos. 2-6 describe the physical growth and are related to the modern science of physiology.

Here the point to ponder is how this understanding of the creation of life joins the three kingdoms of natural, animal and human life. They are neither different in nature nor normally on different planes. The physical nature of man is not despised by Islam or made a subject of apology. However high man may arise in the spiritual sphere, his physical nature links him also with the animal world, and therefore he is responsible for all manifestations of life; and he must take pride in them. He must recognize his kinship with the animal world and grant it all the rights and fulfil all the duties which that kinship demands.

There are numerous anecdotes about the Prophet's (PBUH) kindness to animals, the most meaningful being his treatment of

[1]Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *India and Europe*, p.82.