

Syed Ahmad Shaheed A Partisan of Allah and His Jihad Movement

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to explore and critically examine Syed Ahmed and his movement's role in the motivation and awakening the Muslim of Subcontinent. The decline of the Mughal Empire started with the demise of Aurangzeb Alamgir in the beginning of the 18th century and it accelerated in the early 19th century. The contemporary of Muslim society was, on the other hand, declining rapidly. The latter Mughal rulers had become so weak, incompetent and unimpressive that they could not present even a mere shadow of the sterling qualities of their great grand fore-fathers and were unable to stop the inevitable. The British were casting vicious looks towards the throne of Delhi and dreaming to succeed as future rulers of India, while the Sikhs were dominating the Punjab where the Muslims were at their mercy. During this unfortunate period of despair and distress, Syed Ahmad Brelvi came to the limelight on the horizon of Muslim India., launched the Jihad Movement to rid the Muslims of the impending danger of their extinction; replace the government of corrupt, hereditary and autocratic rulers with an Islamic state based on the principles of the Quran and Shariah and frustrate ambitious designs of the British and the Sikhs. The objective of this study is to highlight the aims of the movement, its hazardous course, causes of its failure and its impact on the future generations.

Key Words: Punjab, Syed Ahmad Brelvi, Shah Ismail, N.W.F.P (K.P), Ranjit Singh.

After the death of Shah Waliullah heavy responsibility to shoulder and continue his movement fell on the shoulders of his eldest son Shah Abdul Aziz who was seventeen years old. In the beginning, after the death of his father, Shah Abdul Aziz devoted himself to complete his education. He had very carefully studied the principles and objectives of the revolutionary movement started by his father. Shah Abdul Aziz was a very learned man who made unrelenting efforts to spread the message of the revolutionary movement amongst the Muslims in order to prepare them for the struggle to revive the pristine glories of Islam and their dignified survival in the subcontinent. When he assumed leadership of the movement the political Scenario of the country was going under radial changes. The emerging anti-Islamic forces were gaining momentum while the tottering Mughal Empire was confined to the out-skirts of Delhi after the battle of Buxar, in 1864.

The Muslim society was undergoing a big social transformation which was altogether un-Islamic. The simple monotheistic teachings of Islam were subverted and ignored. New innovations and un-Islamic practices had crept into Muslims society, became vogue and were glorified. Muslim customs and traditions were made subservient to Hindu practices and were venerated. It appeared as if the Muslims had compromised with it and accepted all these innovations.

The Muslims of the Punjab had been living dignified lives in the province for the last several hundred years; were now subjected to tyrannical Sikh rule. The Punjab was made hell for the Muslims on the earth where they were denied freedom to perform and practice their religion. Azan (call to prayer) was not permitted and prayer in congregation was not allowed. The mosques were polluted and locked; prayer could only be offered within four walls of the home. The Badshahi Mosque of Lahore, one of the biggest and the most beautiful in the world, was badly damaged. Its vast courtyard was converted into stable for army horses and eighty 'hugras' about the courtyard were used as quarters for army soldiers¹. James Abbot depicting the hapless conditions of the Muslims in the Punjab wrote:

“Any Musalman praying in public was liable to be slain on the spot by any armed Sikh. The calls to worship and attendance of the Masjid (Mosque) were forbidden while the slaughter of a cow or bullock was punished by death.”²

Lahore which remained capital of the Punjab under the Muslim rule for a long time contained many beautiful masterpieces of Islamic architecture which was a rare and precious Islamic heritage. All these picturesque representations of Islamic culture were deliberately destroyed

by the rowdy Sikhs with the intention to purge Lahore of all the charming specimens of Islamic heritage so that the posterity could never know that the Muslims ever ruled over this part of India. Thus, the Sikh rule was oppressive and showed extreme intolerance of Islam and the Muslims”.³ The hapless Muslims were unable to do anything about it but to compromise and let the inevitable happen. Their condition in the Punjab was like a critical patient kept on artificial breathing in an oxygen tent. The remaining country was directly or indirectly controlled by the British.

The only panacea of this calamity was some drastic steps in arms to get out of such intolerantly inhumane conditions. I.H. Qureshi is of the view, “Ultimately an armed struggle had to be organized, because no government could be dislodged merely by wishful thinking or wide spread disaffection, unless the disaffection was channeled into an active armed rebellion”.⁴ For this purpose the immediate need was a daring leader with an impeccable and clean character who could command confidence and unflinching support of his people.

Syed Ahmed was destined to assume this responsibility. He was born on 29 November 1786 at Rai Breli, a small town close to the famous cities of Lucknow and Allahabad. His father Muhammad Irfan was known for his kindness, religious learning and was widely respected. His great grand-father Syed Ilamullah lived during the reign of Aurangzeb Alamgir and was a celebrated saint of his time. Takiyah-i-Ilmullah was the ancestral Khanqah of family and was a center of guidance for the people of the area.

Syed Ahmad had very good physical and mental capacities. “Ever since his childhood he had developed excellent qualities of character and piety”.⁵ Traditional system of education could not attract him. Shah Abdul Aziz once said, “Syed Ahmad would learn little through formal education and his knowledge would come through spiritual means”.⁶ “On many occasions in later life he surprised more learned men by his understanding and exposition of complicated problems”.⁷ He was inspiring and motivating in his sermons. It was the strength of his character and devotion to Islam which made him widely respected by the people and scholars alike.

Syed Ahmad was immensely disturbed by the miserable and merciful conditions of the Muslims. He was, moreover, very much inspired and motivated by teachings of Shah Waliullah for the renaissance of Islam and emancipation of the Muslims from the anti-Islamic influences. He set himself to the task of reviving Islam under the light of the teachings of Shah Waliullah.

During these days of despondency, he saw a ray of hope in Nawab Amir Khan of Tonk and joined his army at a young age of seventeen. “It was in Amir Kahn’s camp that he acquired proficiency in the art of war as known to the progressive commanders of the subcontinent”.⁸ This training proved very useful to him when he took to the battle-field later on. The Syed tried to persuade Amir Khan to support the Muslims and come to their rescue. He was very much disappointed “when Amir Khan settled down as the feudatory ruler of Tonk; there was little left that the Syed could do in his service”.⁹ He quit the service and returned to Delhi in 1817 where “he was received by Shah Abdul Aziz and his group with great cordiality”.¹⁰

Shah Abdul Aziz had observed that the Syed could be the fittest man to lead the movement. However, it was felt essential to associate with him people to guide and advise him. “The first person who was directed to accept Syed Ahmad as his spiritual preceptor was Maulana Muhammad Yusuf of Phulat, who was a grandson of Shah Waliullah’s elder brother, Shah Ahlullah”.¹¹ When Maulana Yusuf reported that the Syed was a completely competent preceptor, Maulana Abdul Haye and Shah Ismail also became his disciples. “The fact that members of Shah Abdul Aziz’s family accepted Syed Ahmad as their preceptor had a tremendous impact upon the people and added greatly to his reputation and prestige”.¹² The three - Maulana Muhammad Yusuf of Phulat, Maulana Abdul Haye and Shah Ismail - remained devotedly attached to the Syed and served under his commend till their death.¹³

The Syed had heard a great deal about sufferings of the Muslims under the atrocious Sikh rule which has already been discussed. He had already decided to start Jihad against the Sikhs to rescue the Muslims of their misfortunes. But an extremely shocking incident shook him and he determined to take an immediate action against the Sikhs. When the Syed was touring Rampur to seek support of the Muslims for his mission, he came across some of the Afghans who narrate him a very pathetic incident. They told him that while passing through the Punjab they saw in a village that some ladies were drawing water from a well. They approached them and requested for some water to quench their thirst. These ladies told them in Pushto that they were Muslim women from Afghan families. The Sikhs raided their areas and forcibly kidnapped them; converted them into Sikhism and married them by force. The Afghans, after narrating this pathetic story to the Syed, implored him to do something to save the Muslim women from such disgrace.¹⁴ The Syed replied that he would, Insha Allah, soon start Jihad against the Sikhs.

Before launching Jihad, he decided to perform Haj. On July 30, 1821 he left Breli for Calcutta, enroute to Hijaz, with 400 companions comprising of men, women and children. While going to Calcutta he stayed at Allahabad, Banaras, Patna, Bhagalpur and Mongir, preaching righteous life and devoted adherence to the principles of Islam and motivated them with inspiring sermons. When they started their journey for Haj, they were penniless but they were so generously supported by their admirers and devotees that their journey to and from Hejaz was quite comfortable.

On his return from Hejaz he started making preparations for Jihad against the Sikh rulers of the Punjab. He then, devoted himself to two major tasks; reformation of Muslim society and “preparing his followers for Hijrat (migration) to trans-Indus tribal areas (North West Frontier) for Jihad.”¹⁵ The Muslims were in majority in the Punjab. The oppressive Sikhs were still expanding their rule over Pathan areas in the North – West and there was a considerable fear and frustration in the people. The Pathans were excellent fighters and it was expected that they would cooperate with the Syed. Moreover, quite close to this area, a Muslim country Afghanistan was located; any help or reinforcement would be available from there. Apart from these, in the words of I.H. Qureshi “If the Muslim majority areas of the Punjab and the Pathan territories could be liberated, this could form a nucleus for further activities.”¹⁶ Therefore, Syed Ahmad was very much justified in making the North-Western areas (present Khyber Pakhtoon Khawa) as base of the Jihad activities. “It was not possible to reach Pathan areas through Sikh territory; therefore, he had to choose a circuitous route through Gwalior, Rajputana, Sind, Baluchistan, Qandhar, Ghazni and Kabul.”¹⁷ The Nawab of Bahawalpur and the Mirs of Sindh were so much afraid of the Sikhs that they could not support the movement. “However, the party reached Nowshera through Peshawar and established its headquarter there on 19 December 1826.”¹⁸

Before commencement of hostilities the Syed issued an ultimatum to Ranjit Singh which the latter ignored. The operations started against the Sikhs. The Sikh forces outnumbered 700 Mujahidin. “The Sikh Lashkar consisted upon 7000 to 10000 soldiers under the command of General Budh Singh. The first assault of the Mujahidin was very carefully planned, for it was thought that if it were successful it would generate great enthusiasm amongst the Muslims”.¹⁹ The Mujahidin was consisted of Hindustanis, Qandharis and local tribesmen. The attack of the Mujahidin was launched in the early hours of 21 December, 1826 and carried the day with a grand victory. General Budh Singh withdrew from the battle-field with his Lashkar leaving behind 700 dead bodies against 82 losses

among the Mujahidin. This grand victory enhanced reputation of the Mujahidin which impressed the local people who joined the party and became Syed Ahmad's disciples. Various Sardars and Khans of the area also swore allegiance and announced their all support to the Syed. The prominent personalities among them were Fateh Khan Panjtri, Raee of Khadukhel and Ashraf Khan Raees of Hund offered their support and pledged to be loyal to the Syed. On the invitation of Khadi Khan Syed Ahmad decided to shift his headquarter at Hund which was considered a prominent center of power due to strong fortress and a formidable force.²⁰ After this victory some problems came to the surface. The local tribesmen among the Mujahidin appeared to be more interested in acquiring booty than in fighting. It was, therefore, imperative that some authority had to be established in order to curb this undisciplined propensity.

After the impressive victory of Akora the local people requested Syed Ahmad to invade Hazro which was a flourishing market under the control of the Sikhs. The Syed permitted its invasion. A successful assault was made on Hazro. But, there again the story of loot and plunder by the tribesmen was repeated. So, a dire need for enforcement of discipline in the ranks of tribesmen was felt imminently. A powerful central authority was required for the successful prosecution of Jihad in a disciplined way. "At a meeting of chiefs, scholars and other personalities among the Mujahidin and local populace it was decided to accept the Syed as Imam. The Imam was without prejudice to the authority of the local chiefs and Sardars; it was only a supreme authority created for the specific purpose of prosecuting the Jihad. The Imam served the purpose, not only strengthening the Muhahidin forces but also stimulating the reform movement in religious and social spheres. The chieftains accepted the obligation to enforce Islamic laws and contribute to the funds for Jihad."²¹

With the introduction of Imamatus the Jihad received a fresh impetus. The number of warriors under Syed Ahmad's command rose to 80000. The most important amongst the Sardars who offered allegiance to the Syed and joined the movement was Yar Muhammad Khan of Peshawar. The laws of Shariah were enforced in the area. "This step also justified in the beginning by its results. In place of tribal confederacy helping the Syed, there was now a properly organized government which raised taxes and organized an army for a short while as much 80000 strong".²²

In the beginning it appeared that Syed Ahmad's Imamatus had converted the entire territory into a well-knit state under a strong central Government where the big Sardars had to

surrender their absolute authority. This loss of authority generated a feeling of jealousy in the chiefs against the Syed and the Mujahidin although they had accepted Imamat of Syed Ahmad but they were busy in clandestine intrigues with the Sikh Darbar at Lahore.

Soon doubts began to arise in the minds of the neighboring Pathan chiefs about the nature of the state and its territorial limits. The Syed soon became aware of these fears and proclaimed through his letters and otherwise that he did not want to deprive anyone of his territories; he was a ‘faqir’ and had no ambition of becoming a king or an emperor that this sole purpose was to recover Muslim territories from the hands of the infidels who persecuted the Muslims.²³ I.H. Qureshi wrote, “there is not the slightest doubt that the Syed was sincere and said what he meant; but the average chief must have thought that after the establishment of his supremacy he might change his mind”.²⁴

To avenge their defeat at Hazro the Sikhs were gathering forces with more than 35000 fully armed soldiers, at Shaidu. Syed Ahmad also recognized his Muhahidin to combat the enemy. In early March 1827, he left Hund for Shaidu to fight against the Sikh forces stationed here under the command of Budh Sing. Sardar Yar Muhammad Khan Durrani of Peshawar, Sultan Muhammad Khan the ruler of Kohat and their brother Pir Muhammad Khan also joined the squad with their 20000 men, thus making the number of fighters 10000 under the leadership of Syed.

In the eve of the battle Syed Ahmad was poisoned and there were reasons to believe that Yar Muhammad Khan Durrani was responsible for it.²⁵ In spite of severe sickness and critical condition the Syed led the Mujahidin at the battle-field. The initial attack of the Mujahidin was very severe and successful during which they killed a large number of the enemy soldiers. Despite the Sikh superiority in arms and training, the Mujahidin gave a plucky fight and things were not going well for the Sikhs. When the battle was at the full swing in the final stage and Mujahidin’s victory was quite in sight; Yar Muhammad Khan Durrani under the conspiracy with Budh Singh withdrew his forces from the battle-field and ran away. This betraying action of Yar Muhammad Khan Durrani changed the whole scenario of the battle. The Mujahidin lost the morale and began to retreat. In this confused situation a few dedicated Mujahids who were sincere to the cause stayed in the battle-field to give fight. “Yar Muhammad Khan had in fact been won over by threats and promises by the Sikhs”.²⁶ In this battle 6000 Mujahidin were martyred due to Yar Muhammad Khan’s betrayal.²⁷ After the treacherous betrayal, Yar Muhammad Khan was afraid of retribution and

started making preparations against the Mujahidin, Syed Ahmad also took action against him in self-defense and Yar Muhammad Khan was wounded in the battle of Zaida and died soon after. "The Mujahidin captured a large amount of booty in the shape of guns, swords and cannons".²⁸

After the battle of Shaidu the Syed had not only to face the Sikhs but also treacherous Sardars of Peshawar and the local people. He was seriously ill due to poisoning in the battle of Shaidu. He needed rest for recuperation. So, he left for Swat and Buner and stayed there at different places for some time. During this stay "he visited and preached to the people in the surrounding areas of Buner and Swat, so as to reform them and pursued them to gain his mission".²⁹ "During this visit about 400000 people pledged the oath of allegiance on his hand".³⁰ He also wrote letters to the rulers and prominent people seeking their support for Jihad.

After staying at different places in Swat and Buner, on the desire of Fateh Khan of Panjtar, he made Panjtar his permanent base and headquarters. Panjtar is a central place in Khadu Khel territory and located in the north-west corner of Mardan. It is naturally secure and defensible place being surrounded by mountains. "Panjtar means a place covered from five sides, as this place is surrounded by five mountains".³¹

Plans were, now, made to annex the fort of Attock which had great strategic importance. If the Sikhs could be dislodged from the fort, Frontier would be liberated from the Sikh domination and the door would be opened for an assault on the Punjab. But the plan leaked out and could not be materialized. A Sikh force led by French General Ventura, who was in the service of Ranjit Singh, launched an offensive against the Mujahidin in Panjtar. The Mujahidin gave a valiant fight using the tactics of mountain warfare with the result that the larger Sikh lashkar had to retreat. "It was a significant victory for the Mujahidin, for it demonstrated how a small but determined group could overpower a larger and a better equipped force".³²

Sultan Muhammad Khan, brother of Yar Muhammad Khan, decided to fight a decisive battle against the Mujahidin and started preparations. The Syed tried his best to realize him to follow a peaceful course instead of treading on dangerously bloody path, but he ignored it. Both the forces confronted each other in the battle-field of Mayar. After a bloody battle Sultan Muhammad Khan was defeated and the Mujahidin were crowned with victory.

This victory placed the entire area from Khyber to Amb under the control of Mujahidin who had a regular income from revenue and could muster a sizable army.

After the battle of Mayar the Syed turned towards Peshawar which was the most important city after Lahore and Kabul in the north–west. When Sultan Muhammad Khan came to know that the Mujahidin were about to invade and annex Peshawar, he left the city along with his family. Peshawar was annexed at the end of 1830. Maulvi Syed Mazhar Ali Azimabadi was appointed Qazi of Peshawar. He enforced the laws of Shariah as directed by the Amir, Syed Ahmad. The introduction of Shariah brought about a radical social change in the life of Peshawar. All shops of intoxicants like wine and opium were closed; the prostitutes disappeared. The city was purged of all the vices and social evils to the relief of the people.³³

Sultan Muhammad Khan implored for forgiveness and promised to enforce Shariah and be loyal if he was restored in Peshawar. However, when he submitted, his territory was restored to him against the advice of many.³⁴ The Syed did it to demonstrate that he was not after anyone's territory.³⁵ But, Sultan Muhammad Khan proved quite insincere and thankless. He was under the pressure of his family to avenge the death of his brother, Yar Muhammad Khan. He could not resist this pressure and set aside all the solemn promises made with Syed Ahmad; the tribal notions proved stronger than the dictates of Islam and even plain gratitude.³⁶ "At Sultan Muhammad Khan's instigation, the local population rose and killed all the officers appointed by the Syed".³⁷ It was a wholesale massacre of the helpless and unarmed 'amils' of Syed Ahmad. Pen fails to portray the scene of the innocent being butchered mercilessly and tongue refuses to tell the pathetic tales of this horrible and gruesome carnage unprecedented in the annals of human history. Under a pre-planned scheme they were taken by surprise and slaughtered the 'amils' like animals of prey without remorse. Thus, 150 amils of Syed were killed in one night.³⁸ It was a fatal blow to Jihad movement.

This treacherous massacre had given a grave mental shock to the Syed; he decided to migrate from this place. He gathered the Sardars, Ulema and his devotees at Panjtar and discussed the unfortunate incident with them. He was convinced that his people were absolutely innocent and that the native people were traitors and not sincere with them. He, therefore, made up his mind to migrate. When the news of his migration was made known, the faithful and local people were shocked and became up-set. His devotees came to him in groups and requested him not to migrate. But they could not shake his resolve.

He selected Kashmir to make center of his future activities to continue Jihad. He took along with him the survivals and the faithful who did not like to leave him alone in the movement of trial. Kashmir is a vast and safe valley; from its location, a wise and a sharp leader can draw maximum advantage in the battle. On the one hand influence on India can be exercised through Kashmir and while on the other hand contacts with the Muslim states of the Middle-East can also be made.

Balakot, situated in the south of the Valley of Kaghan, was an important place through which access to Kashmir was easy. It was again a hazardous journey. He left Panjtar and passing through a very rough rude and a zigzag course reached Balakot on 17 April, 1831. The Sikhs decided to attack Balakot. There were two routs leading to Balakot; one which had long abandoned and the other through a bridge. The steps which the Syed had taken to guard the route was inadequate. General Sher Singh, son of Ranjit Singh, was deputed to lead and command the attacking Sikh Lashkar. Strategically location of Balakot was in favor of the Mujahidin which disappointed General Sher Singh. He wanted to return without fighting.³⁹ But some of the local people guided him to reach Balakot. Thus, the Sikh Lashkar reached Balakot on 6 May 1831 through the abandoned route, which was covered by bushes, after overpowering the guards posted by the Mujahidin.

A fierce and bloody battle took place culminating in hand to hand fighting. The large Sikh army was firing volleys of bullets like hailstorm. The Mujahidin fought desperately but in the end the weight of numerical strength and superiority of weapons prevailed to decide fate of the battle. Syed Ahmad and Shah Ismail drank from the cup of martyrdom fighting valiantly in the cause of Islam and freedom. Shah Waliullah had stared his movement on 5th May 1731 and exactly after one hundred years his grandson Shah Ismail and his comrades led by Syed Ahmad Brelvi sacrificed their lives and kept the cause of the movement alive in the hearts of the succeeding generations.

There were many factors which led to the disastrous debacle of the movement in the frontier. Some of the important causes are narrated here. The Mujahidin though very sincere and dedicated to the cause of the movement but they made some mistakes for which they paid heavily. They could not understand and consider the prevailing customs and traditions in the tribal area. There was tribal mode of life in the territory. The people were in the tight grip of the Khans and Malik's who had kept them in the most miserable conditions. Their perpetual poverty had completely deprived them of awareness about better and progressive life. Their

poverty and ignorance had sapped the spark of their life. They were so simple and ignorant that they considered their ancient customs and traditions as the dictates of Islam which ought to be respected. Among the Mujahidin there were some Ulema who could not understand and appreciate the pressure behind the tribal norms in vogue and being practiced. Since they were not fighting for any personal gain or motif but for the establishment of an Islamic state in an area where the infidels had extended their control, therefore, they deemed it necessary that the terrorists which had accepted suzerainty of Syed Ahmad must be brought under the complete jurisdiction of Islamic laws. But, according to I.H. Quershi, "They ignored the fact that the Quran had not been applied to the Arabs in one day and to make a people true Muslims requires a good deal of spadework if the hold of other customs and ideas had been strong on them".⁴¹ The tribesmen should have been properly prepared and mentally trained before the Jihad was launched. Mental preparation of masses is an essential prerequisite of a successful popular revolution of masses. Therefore, they could not live up to the expectations vested in them.

Selfishness and consequent defection of Pathan chiefs, particularly by Yar Muhammad Khan and Sultan Muhammad Khan gave a big setback to the movement. They played a double game again and again with the Syed and betrayed him. According to the observation of Jehanzeb Khalil, "Chieftains of Peshawar were neither sincere to the Syed nor to Islam".⁴² While tracing causes of the failure of the movement I.H. Qureshi attributes it to the narrow selfishness of the tribal chiefs to be the main cause.⁴³

The tribal area has always been a hot bed of tribal feuds and conflicts. The mutual tribal conflicts had made the territory quite weak and vulnerable which encouraged the Sikhs to extend their control in the area. Rivalry amongst the tribal chiefs had made them so blind that "if one sided with the Syed the other decided to oppose him".⁴⁴ A notable example of this fact is that chief of Und who initially supported the Syed, but due to jealousy against the Khan of Panjtar he "considered shifting the Mujahidin base from Hund to Panjtar as a personal affront" and started to support the Sikhs against the Mujahidin".⁴⁵ Ayesha Jalal writes, "Defection now came thick and fast. From the front Khadi Khan took the lead by striking a deal with the Sikhs".⁴⁶

Lack of weapons, proper training and paucity of funds was another notable factor which led to the movement's debacle. The Sikh forces were better equipped, better trained and better disciplined. The Mujahidin though brave and pregnant with the spirit of Jihad were

drawn from different parts of the subcontinent; lacked in proper training and equipment. On the other hand the Sikh army was well-equipped with the latest weapons and was much larger in size. Moreover, they were given quality training by the British and French military officers. Ranjit Singh had hired the services of French General J.P. Ventura and General Francis Allard. They trained a large Sikh army in the art of latest warfare. As it had already been narrated, the weight of numerical strength and superiority of weapons made the difference and decided the battle in favor of the Sikhs.

There is an old tradition of vendetta amongst the tribesmen which involves them in perpetual feuds and strife's lasting long from generation to generation. These mutual conflicts did not let them unite even against a common enemy. "The Sikhs took advantage of their inter-tribal dissensions and rivalries; created split in the ranks of the Mujahidin through bribery and intrigue".⁴⁷ According to I.H. Qureshi, "Only through the combined action could the Punjab be conquered, but if one tribe sided with the Syed, another for that reason felt hostile towards him".⁴⁸ Apart from it the Mujahidin had stringency of funds. The main chunk of their meager funds was raised by their friends and devotees in India. The tribesmen seldom contributed with pleasure. All these difficulties coupled with some others made the campaign still more difficult. Commenting on it I.H. Qureshi has beautifully remarked, "These factors made this one of the most tragic and romantic ventures in history."⁴⁹

The Pathans were not used to an organized system of government. The enforcement of Islamic system and the consequent application of the Islamic commandments in economic and social spheres of life led to create resentment among them. The Shariah laws, in fact, came in direct or indirect conflict with the customary laws of the tribal territory. I.H. Qureshi writes, "The populace was not used to the observance of any law beyond what was approved by the tribal usage and custom; it could not tolerate the establishment of any government based upon a law to be uniformly administered restraining high or low alike from taking it into their hands."

The local people were against the appointment of the Indian Muslims to the position of authority. But, difficulty with the Syed was that all the personnel required for the new administration and to organize the campaign with satisfaction were not available from the local population. It became another source of bitterness of the Pathans".⁵⁰

Some reforms were introduced by Syed Ahmad which were not welcomed by the Pathans and they expressed resentment against them. There was a custom among the Pathans

that they married their daughters for handsome money from the families of the bridegrooms. Some families of the bridegrooms were unable to pay the required amount after legal rites (Nikah). So, the girl could neither join her husband nor could she marry another. This was a great injustice to the girls. Pressure was exerted on the parents of the girls to wave the demand for money and attempts were made to get the girls married without any financial gains to girl's family. "If the local men were not forthcoming, perhaps because of girl's age, she was married to a non-local".⁵¹ This was resented by the Pukhtoons and was looked upon as a forced marriage. The Mujahidin, perhaps, had acted a bit fast to enforce the reforms in the area without preparing ground and taking the local people in confidence that were their aids in the campaign, Jamiluddin Ahmad also endorses this view when he says, "it was necessary to adopt a more cautious and tactful approach to the question of religious and social reforms among the people whose support was sought for the Jihad".⁵² The factors, as narrated above, led down the movement, saved the Sikh rule in the Punjab and delayed the establishment of an Islamic state. The Mujahidin fought dauntlessly against heavy odds, laid their lives at the altar of freedom. Such movements with lofty ideals do not die out with the sacrifices of their leaders and followers. On the other hand their blood keeps the flame of freedom burning in the hearts of the posterity and becomes a great source of inspiration for them. Although it seems that the movement came to an end, but in fact, it continued working for advancement of the Muslims with great success. "It reformed the Muslims society to a great extent and went a long way in organizing and uniting them. It generated true spirit of freedom amongst the Muslims".⁵³ And according to Jamiluddin Ahmad, "Whatever the result of the military operations, Syed Ahmad Shaheed's movement cannot be regarded as a failure for it set an example of selfless devotion and dedicated effort in pursuit of idealism and lit an undying flame which guided the future generations in quest and achievement of liberty".⁵⁴ Syed Ahmad's struggle for idealism, at last, culminated in the form of Pakistan on 14 August, 1947 under the dynamic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

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