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**Misunderstanding Jamaluddin Afghani by Muslims of South Asia: The  
Radical Interpretation**

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**Abstract:**

Sayyid Jamaluddin Afghani is one of the great features of Islamic reformism, Pan Islamism, and anti-colonialism in the nineteenth century who with the great and revolutionary thoughts has overshadowed all the intellectual and political groups in the Muslim world. This revivalist of the time with numerous trips to distant lands and nearly everywhere sought to awaken Muslims and the Eastern nations to eradicate roots of the Western colonial powers. Indian sub-continent was the primary goal for Jamaluddin Afghani. In his first trip to the sub-continent and the major cities of British India, he tirelessly sought to awaken the Muslim population in that country. He had also dealings with Indian people at the time when he was living outside the sub-continent. Jamaluddin had awakened the generations of his own time and the next. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Ubaidullah Sindhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Abul A'la Maududi, respectively, the prominent figures of pan Islamism, radical Islam, and Islamic modernity, in South Asia are impressed by Afghani's thoughts. But the above-mentioned generations failed to transfer his original ideas of to the present Muslim generation of the Indian sub-continent. This paper attempts to discuss the relationship of Jamaluddin Afghani with the Indian sub-continent and the influence of his thought on the generations from the past to the present.

**Keywords:** Sayyid Jamaluddin Afghani, Indian Sub-Continent, South Asia, Pan Islamism, Muhammad Iqbal, India, Pakistan.

**1. Introduction**

The nineteenth century is known as the climax of nationalism in which anti-colonial responses of the eastern nations to the western domination resulted in the emergence of famous

strugglers; Midhat Pasha, Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan, Shah Waliullah Dehlawi, Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Reza, were the major faces. Among them, the role of Sayyid Jamaluddin Afghani compared to all is more prominent in the transformation of intellects of the next generations. All the above-mentioned figures have tried to fill up the vacuums of underdevelopment through intellectual and practical concerns; the development and modernization of the eastern lands were positioned as the axis goal in their thoughts. The decline of East versus West, the weakness of Islam versus Christianity, the fall of Egypt by Napoleon Bonaparte, and generally domination of the British and French empires on North Africa southwestern Asia, and West as the colonial powers ended to revivalism and awakening. Therefore, the prevailing circumstances of the century on the Islamic society made Sayyid Jamaluddin Afghani one of the most prominent Muslim reformers and the main proponent of the idea of modernization. As a result, he proposed political activism arose from religious principles to prescribe for the underdevelopment and backwardness of the Muslim community. The struggle of Afghani is followed by the resistance against the influx of Western culture on the culture of Islamic communities and to oppose colonial influence over Muslim policies. As a reformist and activist in Afghanistan, Iran, India, Egypt, and Turkey and intellectual in London, Paris, and St. Petersburg, he was always busy looking for a solution for the east, especially Islamic society.

He was a man of all the seasons. Many people around him believed that Sayyid Jamaluddin Afghani was a man of special characters like strong spirit, ambition, and struggle oriented. He had better self-confidence. With these characteristics, he began to fight colonial challenges.

Thus, Sayyid Jamaluddin Afghani believed that the root causes of the decline of the East against the West, especially the Muslim nation can be identified both internally and externally. On one side, the internal dimensions of the eastern challenges are lack of knowledge, lack of legislation, lack of freedom and solidarity among the peoples of the East, and on the other side, Western colonialism was recognized as the main factor of underdevelopment (Ali, 1385). To exit out of this crisis, modernism and revivalism are the two drugs given by Jamaluddin Afghani as the treatment of diseases of the East and of the Islamic world who believed to avoid recession and decline.

For Afghani, modernity was both a process and aim by which to awake the eastern nations, introduced Jamaluddin Afghani as a pioneer for Muslims and non-Muslims anti-colonial and leftist activists who have regarded him as a savior today. Especially when the decadent of the East is considered, this community believes that the modernity of Afghani is the best drug on

the East upon which development strategy will be provided. The idea of modernism was attracted not only by the Muslim activists, but non-Muslim scholars and activists also grabbed it. The matter did not end here; non-Muslim scholars have even theorized the idea of Islamic awakening within the discourse of modernity. Although the idea of awakening was defined to revive the glory and power of the Islamic world.

Pankaj Mishra, the Indian critique and writer who believes colonialism is the only factor behind the natural and gradual underdevelopment of the east, has discussed the modernism proposed by Afghani as the main way to compensate for damages. Shireen T. Hunter believes, using Islam as a tool of political mobilization by Jamaluddin Afghani was conscious, because he was aware of the position and influence of Islam among the masses. Therefore, as a means to incite people against the government, he used it (Mishra,2012). Nikki Kiddie writes Jamaluddin used to take advantage of Islam as a tool to answer the challenges of imperialism (Keddie, 1972). He went so far in her interpretations and even said that the achievements of modernity are originally Islamic. Albert Hourani also writes that Jamaluddin Afghani's intellectual efforts were to persuade Muslims to believe that Islam inherently has the power to redefine its components and can be harmonized with the modern world (Hourani, 1970).

The most important factor which made famous Jamaluddin Afghani thinkers, leaders, and writers other than Muslims in India is probably his prudent behavior regarding Hindus, in the critical phase of the struggle against imperialism. Upon his return from Turkey to India, while he was the prophet of Pan Islamism, who was campaigning, the unity of the Muslim of the world under the *Ottoman Caliphate*, in no meeting of the Indo-Islamic elites, he did not speak the Caliphate, although he had met many of his Muslim followers or student in different cities of India. However, he believed in the critical situation between Muslims and Hindu in India, and also in any letter, he didn't mention the issue (Aziz Ahmad, 1969).

As far as Muslims are concerned, the idea of Islamic Awakening is interpreted differently by different Islamic scholars, leaders, and organizations and then as an intellectual framework used in their charter as a guideline. The Cultural and political struggles of Afghani have elevated him a more outstanding leader for Muslims compared to other reformers and thereby has been named as the father of the Islamic Renaissance (Halabi, 1372 hizri). Jamaluddin Afghani prescribed the people's pain abbreviated to three main principles:

- a. Change of authoritarian rule to a constitutional system in which the law is replaced by individual commands,
- b. Elimination of religious divisions and sectarianism and the revival of Islamic unity,

c. Overt and brutal fight against colonialism (Muhit, 1350 hizr).

Although the three above-mentioned principles were announced within a certain timeframe when the Islamic world had faced decadent and repression and was ruled by the colonial sword. But the continuous circumstances of decadence and the transformation of the heritage of colonialism from western societies to the east resulted in new interpretations of Afghani's thoughts.

However, Jamaluddin Afghani had not imagined great ideals of modernity and reforms in the organizational and party-based courses. What he believed was the unity of Islam, headed by the *Ottoman* Caliphate, leading the Muslim world with a modern intellectual approach like Christian Protestantism. The disciples and followers of Afghani have changed the politics of their teacher and introduced the changed and distorted opinions of Afghani to the next generation. Rashid Reza, the Syrian thinker and one of the main followers of Afghani who has lived and witnessed the demise and end of the *Ottoman* Caliphate, formalized the political thoughts of Afghani into a pragmatic and strategic program for the political organizations and announced to use it for the achievements of the goals (Laidi & Salam, 2002). Later on, this look entered Azhar University and other Islamic universities around the world and gradually reflected in the next political movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood. However, in the course of time and the continued decline of the Muslim world, the ideas would seem more radical. As far as, in the current situation, it is difficult to find similarities between the ideas of Jamaluddin Afghani and Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban movement.

With this introduction, this paper has sought to prove the following hypothesis which, today anti-imperialists and Islamic enthusiast picture is portrayed from Sayyid Jamaluddin Afghani in Indian sub-continent (South Asia). Although as a struggler, Afghani is forgotten from the common memories the representatives of his ideas have continued to use his approaches several times. Nevertheless, this paper seeks to answer the following sub-questions:

- What is the nature of Afghani's thoughts while he was living in India?
- Which groups of Muslims were influenced by the ideas of Afghani in the Indian sub-continent?
- Which figures have contributed to the introduction of Afghani's thought to today's generation among South Asian Muslims?
- In what measurement do the radical Islamists use the distorted ideas of Afghani in the borders of Afghanistan/Pakistan?

The following lines would respectively answer the above mentioned

## 2. Sayyid Jamaluddin and the Indian sub-continent

*"India is a precious gem as a piece of Asia!  
which has been considered by the colonialists since the ancient time"*  
(Jamaluddin Afghani)

Almost all the contemporary Islamic movements are influenced by the ideas of Jamaluddin Afghani. South Asia is no doubt, not an exception. His birth, adolescence, and youth have passed in South Asia. This brings Afghani closer to the Indian sub-continent than other parts of the world. Sayyid Jamaluddin Afghani was born in Kunar province, eastern Afghanistan in 1838 A.D. (Safi, 1995). Undoubtedly, Afghan's anti-colonial thoughts being formed under the two conditions when he was too young and living in Kabul; firstly, the situation where, the Afghan freedom fighters were struggling at the first line against colonial rule and defeated the British army in Kabul and secondly, he had experienced the defeat of Mutiny Revolution in India in 1857. Later on, staying in Egypt, he wrote his views and eyewitnesses on the role of British policies of divide and rule in Afghanistan in a book, the History of Afghan.

Of all that, as the nations of Afghanistan, Iran, Egypt, and Turkey have known Sayyid Jamaluddin, and honor him as a national figure, of course, he is forgotten by the peoples of the Indian sub-continent. Except for a few political-religious elites or some scholars in countries like India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, he is faded up in the common memories of common men. In the other words, except for a few intellectuals, Jamaluddin Afghani is unknown to the rest of the people.

Unlike Afghans, Egyptians, Turkish, and Iranians, who have known Afghani a revivalist and reformer, in the sub-continent he has still recognized as an anti-colonial figure who has passed his life in struggle and transformed the same ideas to the later generations. Due to this recognition from Afghani, he is always regarded in discourses like anti-colonialism. This generally is because of the nature of political activities he was doing during his stay in India. In the other words, Afghani was engaged in political activities than reformism (Afghani,2014). His reformism and revivalism are more polished and advertised in Egypt and then Turkey and Iran. That is why; the Indian intellectuals and political elites also know him as a reformer outside the boundaries of South Asia. For example, Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian politician, and the writer did not mention Afghani when talking about nationalism and colonialism in India. But once he discusses Egypt then he writes on Afghani. He wrote:

*“The greatest reformer of the nineteenth century in Egypt, Afghani was a religious leader who had established a new face of Islam by conciliating the religion with the expedients of modern-day. His efforts are like that of Hindu reformers in India (Murtada, 1353 hizri).*

Between the years 1878-1882, Jamaluddin Afghani has visited the Indian sub-continent four times. The first trip coincided with the Indian Army revolt in 1857 against the East India Company. The Indian magazines of the time have given information about this trip. According to these papers, it was the Mutiny revolt that invited Afghani to India. He visited the Indian sub-continent providing opportunities to promote his ideas and then apply them, although, the rebellion was suppressed strongly by the East India Company and Afghani instead, seemingly changed his goals to cultivate the new ones. According to Abrahamian, Afghani was disappointed by the failure of the **Indian Mutiny** and came to three principal conclusions from it: (1) after India’s conquer of British imperialists, Muslim nations of Western Asia is also under threat. (2) that the Asian nations can prevent Western powers’ domination of eastern land by adopting the modern technology of the West, and (3) that Islam has the potentialities to mobilize the public against the imperialists (Abrahamian,1982).

He settled in Calcutta for about a year and a few months, learned the science of the day. This knowledge includes the terms and concepts which were the dominant paradigm of the British presence in India (Hossain, M. A., & Chowdury, S. R. H., 2015).

Afghani could digest and analyze the issues of his time in India. Therefore, during his stay in India, he was centered on the Muslim clerics who were stranded due to the highly scientific and political decline. Very soon, Afghani’s fame spread up in all parts of India. As a result, many believers came towards him. This was mainly because he would understand the needs of Indian Muslims and especially, the religious class. He had felt the weak position of the religious groups who became helpless and powerless to defend their religious opinions and not able to provide a reasonable response to the opposition. In response to the denial of God by the atheists and establishment of confidence to the worshipers, he wrote the book, “The Rejection of Naturism” or *Radd e-Nichariyat*, proposed by an unknown professor at the School of Hyderabad, Deccan. This writing was published by popular Indian magazines, several times. The reflection of the anti-materialistic thoughts of Afghans in different magazines in India led to his further reputation all around India. People read his thoughts and welcomed him warmly. Several Indian publications and magazines published information on different angles of Jamaluddin Afghani’s life and thoughts. Among them, the *Civil-Military Gazette* magazine published the details of Afghani (Murtada, 1353 Hizri). The rapid fame of Afghani in different

parts of India terrified British India's power. This caused close observation of Afghani's activities by the colonial agents. The British Indian police narrowed vast aspects of work to Afghani. This condition made him tired. Therefore, in a speech, complaining government, he told:

*"I didn't come to India to terrify the state, nor do I have the power and ability to revolt. Even I am too unable to criticize the actions of the government. In any case, the state is afraid of a person like me who is an isolated traveler... this justifies that the intention of the state is disabled... justice and social security don't govern. In reality, the state which rules in India is weaker than its people... if all the peoples of India come together and swim like turtles in the Indian ocean, the English island will sink...the total number of British Army is not more than ten thousand (Murtada, 1353 Hizri).*

The revolutionary language of Afghani led to the forced expulsion of him from India. The representatives of the British Indian government warned him that he can only stay one day more in India. As a result, he left for Makkah to fulfill the ritual of Hajj (Keddie, 1983). Or maybe he wanted to go elsewhere to continue his campaign. Therefore, without delay, after the Hajj pilgrimage, he left for Egypt to find another chance to grab a chance. He also travelled to Turkey, Iran, France, and Russia. Everywhere he was looking for fertile land to be able to cultivate the seeds of his thoughts. But staying anywhere he kept his relationship with India's political and religious elites. He had letter contacts with Indian elites inviting them to fight against the colonial power. In these letters, he also called the Indian political elites to follow his political ideas and approaches (Keddie, 1983).

### **3. Sayyid Jamaluddin and his Indian Contemporaries**

Jamaluddin Afghani had two kinds of introduction with his contemporaries. In other words, two groups of Indian Muslim elites were dealing with Afghani. The first group was the religious-political elites who welcomed Afghani's anti-colonial thoughts and gathered around him. The members of this group either had a direct introduction with Afghani or were introduced through his opinions by others. The second group was those who are recognized as the rivals of Afghani. They used to criticize Afghani's anti-colonial approaches and announced their models. Among them, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan is the prominent one.

The disagreement between Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan and Jamaluddin Afghani was the differences in the approaches to the Islamic awakening in the Indian sub-continent. Ahmad Khan believed to promote and simulate Indian Muslims like the British so that they can leave

their superstitions and find new cultural habits. From this point of view, Sayyid Ahmad Khan established Aligarh University with English style and technique to educate young Muslims. But Afghani criticized this action of Ahmad Khan and called it safety value to the British colonial power. Thus, he attacked the ideas and writings of Khan. For example, in one of the articles printed in *Urwatul Wuthqa*, Paris, he hardly attacked Sayyid Ahmad Khan and called him the agent of colonialism and aliens (Keddie, 1983). In alternatives, Sayyid Jamaluddin believed that whoever behaves and deals with Islamic customs, will be both civilized and a good Muslim. Afghani also criticized Ahmad Khan's style of Qur'an interpretation and in response, he wrote *Tafsir-i Mufasssir*. These two approaches have divided the Muslims of India into two camps that continued to influence Indian society for long years until the emergence of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. (Keddie, 1983).

The two mentioned groups have attacked each other and continued their enmity as much that even the institutions were condemned. Afghani blamed the modernism, reformism, and rationalism of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan which was reflected in the Aligarh Muslim University. He called the university a place for the production of colonized minds. Therefore, the knowledge produced by Aligarh Muslim University was not valued by Afghani. He believed that the Muslims of India need self- confidential knowledge so that they can revive their past glories (Keddie, 1972). He wrote in response to Khan that there is no difference between Islamic and Western knowledge and principally knowledge is not the monopoly of any nation (Afghani, 1988).

#### **4. The Impact of Afghani's Ideas in the Sub-continent**

To the belief of Bernard Louis, the famous orientalist of Princeton University, if in the nineteenth century, someone from outside the Earth, would have looked at it, the impression would have been created that the whole earth is occupied by Muslims. This was because of the *Ottoman*, *Safavid*, and *Mughul* empires; the three great kingdoms of the time. But in the first half of the twentieth century, the decline of empires began, and the sun of Islam went to dawn. Muslims and Islam once again face a power vacuum like the post-Abbasid period.

One of the main empires was the Baburids (the Mughals) of India which was ruling the vast territories of the sub-continent since the year 1256 AD. Empire into the hands of the British forces and weakening of Muslim power in India led to the idea of the restoration of power and glory and the Muslims sought to recover it. Many Muslim scholars and elites have prescribed ways to restore power; reformists like Sayyid Ahmad Khan had thought to compensate for the



decline by reconciling Islam with modern-day sciences and founded the strategy of his way based on this target. Some others had given priority to the unity of Muslim *Umma* and based on Islamic solidarity fight for the restoration of glory. However, these attempts have gradually been weakened by the day-to-day empowerment of East India Company and faded up the desires of Muslims, but the Muslims of India didn't lose hope and in anyhow they continued their struggles to achieve demands.

Since the Plessey War in 1756, in which the Baburids government of India was defeated against East India Company's army, models, policies, and practices are presented by the Muslims for the revival of Muslim power in the sub-continent. The continuous efforts and their failures led to the dispersion of Muslims in South Asia. A group of Muslim elites chose the path of tolerance and looked for salvation from humility in tolerance and cooperation with other nations and religions of the Indian sub-continent. In other words, they were the Muslims who were believed to be the children of their time. But the other group of Muslims belonged to extremism that didn't leave Jihad to fight for survival and glory. There has been a third group who believe to achieve salvation joining the Muslim *Umma* throughout the world.

What is important in this writing is that all these groups are in fact, the margins of Afghani's thought. In other words, all Islamic groups in South Asia except Sufis are influenced by the ideas of Afghani. Therefore, overall, we can say that presently there are three groups of Muslims in the sub-continent respectively: Pan Islamists, Extremists, and Modernists.

The First Group are the pan-Islamists who under the influence of Jamaluddin Afghani demand a single and universal identity for all Muslims of the world including the removal of the political boundaries of the Islamic states. The considered representatives of this group in the Indian sub-continent are Allama Muhammad Iqbal and Sayyid Abul Hasan Nadawi.

The second group is the fundamentalists or Islamists who also can be addressed as conservative traditionalists. They are petrified and passive and hardly react against extrinsic motivations in Islam. Traditionalism is historically oriented who are inspired by the earlier tradition to take the same stand today. They look to the past as the golden age through which the future must be based upon it to return. The main representatives of this group in the sub-continent are Ubaidullah Sindhi and Abul A'la Maududi of *Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan*.

The third group includes a group of modernists, progressives, and reformists who are religiously plural, dynamic, pragmatist, and have the adaptability of religion in the world believes systems. They are struggling for a better future. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Chiragh Ali, Sayyid Amir Ali, Shebli Nu'mani are the pioneers of modernity in South Asia. But after a while,

this group was limited to Abul Kalam Azad as a character. This famous scholar and political figure of the Indian sub-continent emerged as the preacher of modernity with the ability to merge the ideas of Afghani and Ahmad Khan and known as the representative of modernism in the Indian sub-continent (Chowdury, S. R. H., & Göktaş, V., 2021).

(Figure 1) The Triple Groups of Muslims in South Asia

Groups	School of Thought	Leaders in Sub-continent	Different Factions
Group I	<b>Pan Islamism</b>	1- Allama Iqbal 2- Shebli Nu'mani 3- Sayyid Amir Ali	Jamaat e-Tabligh
			Association of Islamic Affairs
			Hiz e-Tahrir of Sub-continent
Group II	<b>Conservatism</b>	1- Mahmud Hasan 2- Abul A'la Maududi 3- Mahmud Arshad Madani	Deoband School
	<b>Fundamentalism</b>		Misbah ul Uloom
	<b>Traditionalism</b>		Jama't Islami Pakistan
	<b>Historicism</b>		Sub-continent Fundamentalists
Group III	<b>Modernism</b>	1- Ubaidullah Sindhi 2- Abul Kalam Azad 3- Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari 4- Wahiduddin Khan	Nudwatul Ulema School
	<b>Progressivism</b>		Aligarh University
	<b>Reformism</b>		

*Schedule made by the author*

The next part of the article is trying to figure out the role of Jamaluddin Afghani on the ideas of the above different factions of Muslims in South Asia individually. Also, the interpretations of Afghani's followers of his ideas will be studied. Therefore, it will be seen

how the *intermediate generation* has transferred the original ideas of their teacher to the present generation.

### 5. Sayyid Jamaluddin and the Pan-Islamists of Sub-continent

*“It is a thousand pities that despite all the Islamic states having closeness together and related to each other, they do generally have been unaware of the situation of the other. An Afghan less often tries to be informed from the situations of his Iranian brothers. Both of them are unaware of what is the situation of their Hindustani brothers. Of this unawareness, they have lost many opportunities!”* (Murtada, 1353)

Islamic unity is the main centerpiece of Jamaluddin Afghani’s thought; through which he was looking to renew the dignity of Muslims. The editorials of *Urwatul Wouthqa* Journal published in Paris were emblazoned with the words and terms spreading the idea of unity among Muslims across the Islamic world. Although the idea of Islamic Unity of Afghani was an understanding and reconciliation between Muslims and the followers of different religions under the leadership of the *Ottoman* Sultan Abdul Hamid, gradually the view was shifted its directions towards Pan-Islamism, in response to the Pan-Germanism and pan-Turkism during the nineteenth century by the followers of the Afghani. Based on Afghani’s Pan Islamism, the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent established the *Caliphate* Movement at the end of the Second World War and the total disintegration of the *Ottoman Caliphate*. The aim behind *Caliphate* Movement in India was the revival of Islamic greatness (Sakafi, 1384). Allama Muhammad Iqbal of Lahore and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad are the most known figures of the pan-Islamic movement that emerged as followers of Jamaluddin Afghani in the Indian sub-continent. Abul Kalam would publish the Pan Islamic ideas of Afghani in his magazines; *Al Hilal* and *Al Balagh*. (Rahman, 2014)

The courtesy and honor of Sayyid Jamaluddin Afghani in respect to the Hindu nation of the sub-continent found through his writings, motivated Abul Kalam Azad to develop Muslim *Umma* alongside the Hindu nation and together struggle for the development of India. Especially Azad didn’t find any message in Afghani writings on Pan Islamism about the partition of the Muslim minority from the majority Hindus. The perception of Azad from Afghani’s Pan Islamism was the living of Hindu-Muslim within a single territory called the nation-state of India. But at the same time, Azad believed that the Muslims of India have to tie cultural-ideal relationships with the rest of the Islamic *Umma*.

By studying Sir Sayyid Ahmad's views and discovering the roots of carving an Islamic state from the majority of Hindus, Azad tilted his way from Sir Sayyid Ahmad; he was more fascinated by the beauty of Afghani's thoughts. Maulana Azad did not involve in the Muslim separatist politics of Hindu-Muslim backed by Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He believed that the development of the east is followed by the unification of all the nations of the East and the separatism of some of the nations does not cure the pain. On the other hand, Azad had recognized that the Hindu-Muslim divide is very difficult to do. For him, it was not possible to separate Hindu and Muslims by homes and houses and then send them to the new territories. The philosophical principles and teachings of Iqbal's thoughts are reflected in the books of *Asrar e-Khudi* (the Secrets of the Self) *Rumooz e-Bekhudi* (The Secrets of Selflessness) (Murtada, 1353 Hizri) and *Javid Nama* (Book of Eternity). The influence of Jamaluddin Afghani's opinions is seen in the above-mentioned writings of Iqbal. In these books, Allama Iqbal speaks about the course of his ideas and reveals the inspirations he was received. For example, in *Javid Nama* (visitation to the Spirits of Jamaluddin Afghani and Sa'id Halim Pasha) Iqbal speaks on Participation and Ownership from the language of Afghani:

*Westerners have lost heavens and looking for clean souls in desires*

*The souls do not take color and smell from the body, but a pure spirit does not share*

Afghani's travels to the Islamic world and his close observations from Muslim *Umma* defined the Muslims of all states as a single nation. This thought influenced Allama Iqbal deeply and repeated Afghani's statement "You have to be melted in your nation since you have found your oneness" in the book *Asrar e-Bekhudi*. In the interpretation of this statement of Afghani, Iqbal writes, the nation of a Muslim is his Islamic society, but not this or that state (Murtada, 1353 Hizri). Teacher and student relationships of Afghani and Iqbal don't end here. In the spiritual journey of Allama Iqbal, Afghani always seems like a master in the realm of imagination. As in *Javid Nama*, in Venus Afghani teaches Iqbal on the partition of Muslim

*Umma* from the teaching of the Quran and the Prophet's behavior:

*The purpose of the Quran is something while the rituals of Muslims is something else,*

*There isn't the light of love in his heart,*

*Mustafa (Prophet Mohammad) is not alive in his heart.*

Also, in *Javid Nama* stating the Afghani language of the Western Islamophobia policy, Iqbal says:

Lord of the West, the one who is canon,

*He teaches the concept of home to the religious men,*

*he thinks of power and center and you the divisiveness,  
Leave the concepts of Syria, Palestine, and Iraq.*

The complete defeat of the *Ottoman Caliphate* and the rise of secular Ata Turk in Turkey, the partition of Pakistan, and later Bangladesh from India as motherland gradually resulted in the change of Pan Islamism to extremism in South Asia. Soviet Red Army invaded Afghanistan in 1979, invited the Pan-Islamist to militant Islamists. The Islamic Movements from across South Asia joined the Jihad of Afghanistan against the Soviet invasion. After the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan in 1996, Mulla Mohammad Omar as entitled as *Amir al Mu'minin* (the Leader of Believers) called all pan Islamists of south Asia to surrender for the new Islamic *Caliphate* centered in Afghanistan. The *Harakutl Jihadi Islami* in Bangladesh started the slogan of the Islamic government in Dhaka and proclaimed Kabul the capital of the Islamic world. This group confirmed their goals by keep repeating the slogan "We are Taliban, Bangladesh will be Afghanistan (Sharma & Behera, 2014).

## **6. Sayyid Jamaluddin and Islamists of Sub-continent**

As mentioned earlier, the movement led by Afghani was cast in the frame of modernism and reformism in which the Islamic nation followed to leave behind traditionalism and scientific stagnation. But these ideals were hijacked over time and under certain circumstances, the ideas were misinterpreted. From the three principles of Jamaluddin Afghani who introduced to save Islamic *Umma* from decline, the last principle was a frank struggle against colonial power and its friends. This principle was welcomed by the fundamentalists and Islamists of the sub-continent. The idea is relevant even in the present condition as the modern Islamist leaders believe that although today Third World nations are not colonized by the Western imperialists the domination is still continuous. For them, the current domination of Western colonialism changed its significance from physical to cultural aspects. In other words, the indirect cultural and economic dominance of the West over Islamic states is also colonization. Besides colonialism, on the one side, Afghani seemed unhappy about the situation of Muslim states, and on the other side, he didn't have good memories of Muslims' religious thoughts (Sayed, 1383). The Social conditions and the way of thinking of the Muslim nation had severely hurt him. Therefore, the two dimensions of both the culture and the religion of Islam also engaged him to build up a prescription to reform. Therefore, in this context, he did many efforts. The cultural-religious and political movement of Afghani made a great impact on the ideas and strategies of Islamic parties in South Asia. Among them, Abul A'la Maududi, the leader of

Jamaat e-Islami Pakistan was strongly influenced by the Afghani's thoughts. Inspiring from These thoughts, he established his party to reform his contemporary Islamic thoughts.

Abul A'la Maududi's works entered the South Asian countries through which the religious leaders of the sub-continent are affected. For example, Abdul Rahman, the head of Jamaat al-Mujahedeen of Bangladesh while defining the principles of the party, says: to fight near enemies (followers of democracy and secularism) is preferable to begin jihad against the United States of America and its friends (Sharma & Behera, 2014). Maududi's ideas spread out to different parts of Bangladesh and influence the youths. Therefore, secular parties like Jamaat JOYKA JYOTI of Bangladesh have banned the writings of Maududi and declared them illegal (Sharma & Behera, 2014).

Sayyid Jamaluddin Afghani was not only influential among the Islamist groups in the field of political Islam, but many other movements and the traditional religious schools also been deeply affected by his thoughts. Among them is the Deobandi religious school in South Asia as one of the most influential Madrasa. The relation between Jamaluddin Afghani and the Deobandi School was formed by Ubaidullah Sindhi. This reformist leader of the Indian sub-continent was heavily influenced by the ideas and thoughts of Afghani and recognized him as the rescuer of Muslim nations. Right at the climax of colonialism in the sub-continent, Sindhi was invited by Mahmud Hassan, the leader of the Deobandi School (1909) to *Jamaat ul-Ansar*, gathering the former students at the school to fight the British colonialism in India (Azad, 1999). Sindhi was also seeking to advance the objectives of the struggle against colonialism; he published the opinion of Jihad among the Deobandi students for decolonization (Göktaş, V., & Chowdury, S. R. H., 2019).

The influence of Sindhi in the Deobandi School led to the spread of Jamaluddin Afghani's thoughts in the domain of Aligarh University (center of Sayyid Ahmad Khan's thoughts, Jamaluddin Afghani greatest opposition). Mahmud Hassan established a dialogue between Deobandi and Aligarh in the decade of 1900 only to unite Muslim *Umma*. In this dialogue, the issues of the Islamic world and the position of Britain in the Indian sub-continent were discussed majorly (Sharma & Behera, 2014). it is unlikely that in such a discussion, Jamaluddin Afghani as the most famous anti-colonial and pan Islamist leader who was also known to Indian media, especially Urdu newspapers, and was frequently referred to, remained unknown for students.

It was also Ubaidullah Sindhi who has spread Afghani's thoughts on the predominantly Pashtun areas of the Northern sub-continent. Sindhi had given great importance to the northern

areas of India. This importance was taught by Mahmud Hassan. Sindhi believed that the North-West Frontier Province who lives near the Indian Territory has always resisted the British Indian Army (Rizbi, 2005). The presence of Sindhi in this region and his meeting with Hanafi Ulema resulted in the spread of two new ways of thought respectively Deobandi traditionalism and Afghani's Jihadism. However, later, Sindhi migrated to Kabul and established the government of India in migration but the influence of his traditionalism and Jihadism remained till date among the tribal areas. Ubaidullah's initial visit and affections in Pashtun areas have changed the people on the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan. The rationalism and pluralism of the Hanafi School transformed to the traditionalism of Shah Waliullah and Jihadism of Afghani. Although this affection has been unexpected and the people who belong to this region know lesser about traditionalism and Jihadism. They see Jamaluddin Afghani as a historical figure and hardly understand his influence over themselves.

Following Ubaidullah Sindhi, Maulana Mohammad Mansoor Ansari, and Abul Kalam Azad also visited Peshawar and its surrounding and published mindset of jihad against British India. Maulana Azad's meeting with important people like Maulawi Safi ur-Rahman of Mohmand tribe and Sahib Toorangzai was critical. Azad encouraged them to fight against colonialism and foreign invasion (Sabir, 1990). The focus of Indian Muslim elites towards its northern borders and the tribal areas resulted in the encouragement of Jihad among its people. Although India won independence, Pakistan was formed and the Afghan Mujahedeen defeated the Soviet army, but the spirit of militancy in the region remained alive. The reason for the survival of the spirit of Jihad is Jamaat e-Islami of Pakistan encouraging and inciting the people against the secularism of Muhammad Ali Jinnah in Pakistan, Civil war in Afghanistan, and at last presence of the USA in this country.

### **7. Sayyid Jamaluddin and Islamic Modernism in Sub-continent**

The colonial policy of Jamaluddin Afghani and shortening its hands from eastern lands were highly regarded by the modernist leaders and thinkers of South Asia. Among them are The Muslim leaders like Abul Kalam Azad from Indian National Congress (1888-1958) and Ubaidullah Sindhi (1872-1944) whose thoughts were more affected than others by Afghani's thoughts. Thus, the two Muslim thinkers have presented a humanistic interpretation from Jamaluddin Afghani's thoughts in which the non-Muslims participated anti-colonial struggles and merged to overthrow imperialism (Jalal,2008). Maulana Azad is the most important figure of Islamic laws and ethics that emerged not only the political elite on the eve of independence

but also during the tenure of post-independence India he was recognized as the most secular leader (Jalal, 2008). He served as India's first Education Minister during the prime ministership of Jawaharlal Nehru. Ubaidullah Sindhi, contemporary to Maulana Azad, was a Hindu Sikh and a fresh Muslim, who sought to reform Shah Waliullah's Salafi movement. He declared a common Jihad concept, wanted to destroy British Empire from the Indian sub-continent followed up by Afghans, Turks, Russians, and Germans (Jalal, 2008).

With High credibility, the recognition of Ubaidullah Sindhi and Maulana Azad from Afghani as a modernist thinker was influenced by Sayyid Hussain Belgirami, a Muslim thinker based in Hyderabad, who in 1883 had introduced Afghani to the English residents in India as a French-style thinker and more open having socialist tendencies (Ahmad, 1969). This description of the Afghani was contrary to Islamism and anti-colonialism and was attracted by modernist thinkers. Thus, the new definition of Afghani placed him with modernists of Aligarh University. But the most important factor then this was the needs and desire that Sindhi felt. Introducing modernists like Azad, Mohammad Ali, and Ansari, Sindhi also converted to the modernism of Afghani (Hajjan, 1986).

This led to the inspirations of Azad who inherited modernistic thinking from the two lights in the Indian sub-continent. With the emergence of new Muslim generations, a new thought was created that Afghani and Sayyid Ahmad had the same thoughts about the development of Muslim *Umma*. According to them, the only difference between them was only in the political arena (Hajjan, 1986). Ahmad Khan has said that it was not because of the love and loyalty that collaborate with the East India Company but was the need to keep saving the Muslims of India against the anger of British policy. In other words, Khan was of the idea that British Empire would not let any rival live in peace under its rule. Therefore, in total, for Ahmad Khan, the only way of development was working in the shade of colonial power. This interpretation of Ahmad Khan was very similar to the Afghani interpretation of colonial power who once wrote about British imperialism *"imperialism is like a dragon that has swallowed twenty million people. Also has drawn up the waters of the Ganga and Sindh rivers... but still it's thirsty. Still looking for a way to swallow waters of Oxus and Nile"* (Ahmad, 1960)

The anti-colonial slogans of Afghani reverberated across India soon. The Indian famous and widely read publications such as *Al Hilal* and *Al Balagh* of Abul Kalam, *Comrade* and *Hamdard* of Maulana Mohammad Ali, and *Zamindar* of Moulana Zafar Ali Khan (1873-1956) changed to become a tribune of Jamaluddin Afghani. The Indian Socialist Muslims also



celebrated Jamaluddin Afghani as the anti-colonial face and gave the *Comrade* magazine at his service to publish his ideas (Jalal, 2008).

## 8. Conclusion

Sayyid Jamaluddin Afghani is known as a pan-Islamic thinker and anti-imperialism in the nineteenth century. His deep observation of the Islamic world and the vacuum of a focused power was the only reason behind his underdevelopment. He was struggling to prescribe for the removal of this pain. To achieve this goal, he left Afghanistan to travel around the world with the hope that he can find fertile land to cultivate the seeds of his ideas. India was the first purpose of Afghani. The uprising of Urabi Pasha in Egypt and fear of British company lead to close monitoring of foreign travelers in India. That is why the company feared him and was forcibly expelled from India.

The presence of India formed the first period of his life. In this period Jamaluddin was just out of his land and still pro theatre anti-colonial struggle could be seen in the minds of irreconcilable manmenith these incentives, he traveled to India to spread the desire for freedom among the people of the sub-continent. In this period of Afghani's life, there is no record of Pan Islamism. He was looking to defeat British imperialism and defend his beliefs and principles of Islam. He wrote the book "Naturism" in reply to the questions that rose against Islam.

Out of India, in numerous trips, Afghani didn't cut off contacts with Muslim elites of the sub-continent. In his stays in Egypt, Turkey, Iran, France, and Russia he had never forgotten his followers in South Asia. Especially during his trip to Paris, he found an opportunity to publish *Urwatul Wothqa* to organize his thoughts. Here he attacked Sayyid Ahmad Khan's modernism and called him an agent of colonialism.

In India, Afghani's thoughts didn't remain deprived after his death. Especially the continuous presence of British colonial power in India ended this the knees of Sayyid Ahmad Khans' thoughts. As a result, the followers of Aligarh University were also added to the students of Afghani. The new generations of the Muslims of India after Afghani's death interpreted his ideas in different ways and became representatives of Pan Islamism, Extremism, and religious modernism.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal is the representative of Pan-Islamism, Maulana Abul A'la Maududi is the representative of Islamic fundamentalism, and Abul Kalam Azad and Ubaidullah Sindhi are of the modernism that all together have played their roles to transfer

Afghani's thought to our contemporary South Asian Islamic movements. Among them, Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi contributed more to the transformation of Afghani's ideas in tribal areas of modern Pakistan. Sindhi is an intermediate generation who have diverted Afghani's thought to Jihadism and melted with Salafism of Shah Waliullah under circumstances that remained unhandled until now. Today there are no similarities between the views of Afghani and the tribal interpretations of Afghani thoughts. Therefore, there is a strong need to invest in the tribal areas so that they can have access to the original thoughts of Sayyid Jamaluddin Afghani.

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