

**BAYAZID ANSARI AND ROUSHANIYA MOVEMENT:
A CONSERVATIVE CULT OR A NATIONALIST
ENDEAVOR?**

This paper deals with the emergence of Bayazid Ansari and his Roushaniya Movement in the middle of the 16th century in the north-western Pakhtun borderland. The purpose of the paper is to make comprehensive analyses of whether the movement was a militant cult or a struggle for the unification of all the Pakhtun tribes? The movement initially adopted an anti-Mughal stance but side by side it brought stratifications and divisions in the society. While taking a relatively progressive and nationalist stance, a number of historians often overlooked some of its conservative and militant aspects. Particularly the religious ideas of Bayazid Ansari are to be analyzed for ascertaining that whether the movement was nationalist in nature and contents or otherwise? The political and Sufi orientation of Bayazid was different from the established orders prevailing at that time among the Pakhtuns. An attempt would be made in the paper to ascertain as how much support he extracted from different tribes in the Pakhtun region.

From the time of Mughal Emperor Babur down to Aurangzeb, the whole of the trans-Indus Frontier region, including the plain and the hilly tracts was beyond the effective control of the Mughal authority. The most these rulers, including Sher Shah, himself a Ghalji, did was no more than to secure the hilly passes for transportation. However, the Mughal rulers regarded the area not independent but subordinate to their imperial authority. In the geographical distribution, generally the area lay under the suzerainty of the Governor at Kabul, which was regarded as province of the Mughal Empire. The position of

the frontier during the initial years of Akbar rule was such that neither Mirza Hakim, the Governor of Kabul, held it firmly, nor Emperor Akbar showed any interest to subjugate it due to his own political expediencies.

Owing to the anti-state activities of Mirza Muhammad Hakim, a stepbrother of the emperor, Akbar brought about many administrative changes in the Punjab and sent several expeditions to Kabul, Swat, Buner and Tirah. In the winter of 1580-81, Mirza Hakim twice attacked the Punjab but was repulsed. The state of anarchy in Bengal and Bihar greatly favored Mirza Hakim through which he made his position stronger in Kabul. This compelled Akbar to proceed to Kabul via the Punjab and to bring the area under his firm control. At Attock he stayed for some time and ordered the construction of a fort to station imperial troops to secure the area from the Yusufzai and other Pakhtun tribe's forays. On 9th August 1581, he entered Kabul, restored his authority and stayed over there for seven days.

During these developments the Pakhtuns of the frontier region witnessed the emergence of a movement called the Roushaniya Movement. Its leader Bayazid Ansari was a charismatic and mysterious figure who mustered great support from different Pakhtun tribes. In the beginning it was a religio-cum-Sufi movement. Started from Kaniguram (South Waziristan) in the second half of the 16th century, the movement made considerable headway to some of the Pakhtun tribes including Bangash, Afridi, Mohmand, Khalil, Yusufzai etc. The devoted supporters of the movement were a source of great trouble for the Mughals in the north-west frontier throughout the reign of Emperors Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjehan.

Major writings on Bayazid and Roushaniya movement highlight some of its often repeated aspects without going into detail to discover its unnoticed dynamics. The works produced by different scholars are generally descriptive in nature. Very little analytical work is available regarding the political and nationalist aspects of the movement. Generally, three aspects of

the movement have been discussed in detail. Firstly, the focus of some writers is that Bayazid was a religious figure and Sufi saint. The findings of this section, deal with as mere a religious struggle based on his religious views. It is stated that his doctrine depict a kind of pantheistic Sufism in which the transmigration of the soul was a permanent feature. Over the years he made excessive *chillas*, went often to seclusion for long times and developed a Sufi order of his own which was based on his ideas which were very much different and challenged the established order among the Pakhtuns.¹ Secondly, the findings of another section of writers underscore that the nature of the movement was political.

In their opinion, Bayazid Ansari tried to muster the support of other Pakhtuns by making recourse to mystic activities and giving up mundane activities. He made of himself a *Pir* in the eyes of the common Pakhtun just to give them the impression of being a person with supernatural powers and embedded with extra-ordinary qualities. His purpose was to dethrone the Mughals, at least in the Frontier areas, and to establish his independent rule. The argument presented by many scholars was his incessant wars with the Mughals, his struggle to control some parts in the Pakhtun borderland and levying taxes on the population.² Lastly, there are some writers whose approach is nationalistic in the study of the Roushaniya movement. They thought that it was the first endeavor in the Pakhtun area, the whole purpose of which was to provide a single platform to the Pakhtuns against the Mughals. For them it was mere the expression of the dormant sentiments of the Pakhtun nationalism which may be traced in this movement. The support of a few Pakhtun tribes was presented as a strong argument in explaining the nationalist aspect of the movement. Some of the writers also mentioning his anti-Mughal bearing through which he won the support of many influential tribes as a clear indication of his being the first exponent of Pakhtun nationalism in the region.³

This paper would discuss the points of view of the writers whose approaches are nationalist in discussing the

contributions of the movement. A number of other issues would be dealt with to understand the rise and the subsequent resurgence of the Roushaniya movement. The hide and seek like relationship between the leadership of the movement and the Mughal rulers in Delhi would be judged to know its controversial aspects and to give a perspective based on the given evidence. It would be discussed in detail that how Bayazid developed his standing, and how he built a personality cult for himself in the society. Special reference would be made to his religious ideas which ultimately attracted thousands of people towards his movement. The aim would be to look at the nationalist content in his political orientations. At the end it would be judged that whether Roushaniya movement was a nationalist venture or mere to gain some advantages against the mighty Mughals? Whether he was aware of the combined strength of the Pakhtuns and their nationalist sentiments? In terms of Pashto literature, it contributed immensely to the Pakhtun society but it would be seen that how it affected the common masses and what kind of changes it brought which are still visible. The consequences of the movement are relevant in the present scenario which has been highlighted in the conclusion.

Birth and Early Education of Bayazid Ansari

The people of Urmar (Urmary or Bargasta speaking) or Barki tribe of the Pakhtuns largely inhabit Kaniguram, a town situated in the South Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Area of Pakistan. It is stated that some descendants of Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari also settled in Kaniguram. Generally they were called Ansari who intermingled with the local people.⁴ When Sultan Bahlul Lodi (1451-1488) ascended the throne of Delhi, a large number of Pakhtuns migrated to the Punjab and other parts of India. Majority of the people belonging to the Barki tribe went to Jalandhar in the Indian Punjab and undertook trade as their profession. They built a new town by the name of *Basti Danishmandan* after the name of Ibrahim Danishmand.⁵ Among them was Shaikh Muhammad, the paternal grandfather of Bayazid who along with other fellow-

tribesmen went to Jalandhar. He stayed with his cousin Abu Bakr.

One day Shaikh Muhammad expressed his intention to Abu Bakr if he would agree to marry Abu Bakr's daughter Amina to one of his sons. Abu Bakr happily agreed on the condition that if his son-in-law would be allowed to live in Jalandhar along with his wife. It was a rare moment of joy for both the families, and after marrying Amina, Abdurrahman son of Shaikh Muhammad, settled permanently in Jalandhar. Abdurrahman had two daughters from Amina. After some time Abdurrahman passed away and according to tribal customs his younger brother Abdullah married the widow of his deceased brother. Bayazid was the son of that new couple. Majority of the historians are of the view that Bayazid was born in 1525 (931 A.H), a year before the first battle of Panipat. He was only forty days when Abdullah went back to Kaniguram and left his wife and son at Jalandhar. In Kaniguram he joined his first wife Fatima and his two daughters and a son, Yaqub.⁶

It was the time when Mughal Emperor Babur had started his Indian campaigns and his army attacked Bhera (present day Khushab) and let loose a reign of terror on its residents. One of Bayazid's uncles Shaikh Khudadad was also among the victims. Owing to the state of anarchy prevailed at that time in Bhera; he went to Jalandhar and settled with Amina, mother of Bayazid. He was a child of four or five years when Mughals sacked Jalandhar and the people of that area had to leave the city. Bayazid along with his mother and uncle Khudadad abandoned the city and went to Turhut. Khudadad decided to take Bayazid and his mother back to Kaniguram. They started their journey to Kaniguram with a caravan. When they reached Kanauj they were stopped by the Mughal soldiers who demanded a huge amount as ransom. Khudadad collected 70,000 rupees from his companions and offered it to the commander of the troops and saved the caravan from further miseries. With tremendous difficulties, they eventually reached Kaniguram in 1530. In Kaniguram, Abdullah remained indifferent towards Amina and Bayazid, the domestic environment was very tense due to the

arrival of the newcomers for some time. Abdullah was more inclined to his second wife Fatima and eventually he divorced Amina. Thereafter she went back to Jalandhar leaving Bayazid with his father at Kaniguram. For some time Bayazid lived with his uncle Khudadad, who loved his nephew like his son. As a result of some differences between Abdullah and Khudadad, the latter left Kaniguram and went to the Dawar area and settled there permanently.⁷

In Kaniguram, the domestic life of Bayazid was unstable and miserable. Acquiring education in the prevailing atmosphere was rather impossible for him. The murder of his affectionate uncle Khudadad at Baitur in Dawar area was very shocking news for the young boy. After the sad demise of Khudadad, Abdullah took him and another son Yaqub to Mulla Painda, one of his old disciples. Mulla Painda had become his first teacher who taught him the Holy Quran and other basic books of Islamic *fiqh* (jurisprudence) including *Qudoori*, *Lubab-ul-Akbar*, *Munyat-ul-Musalli* and *Umdat-ul-Islam*. He concentrated whole-heartedly on his studies and showed great interest in religious discussion and discourse. It is stated that his stepmother became jealous of his growing interests in books; therefore, she tried to keep him away from the studies.

He was frequently kept busy in domestic affairs for the purpose of diverting his mind in some other direction. This state of affairs continued till he left the madrasa and sought his father's permission for visiting *Hejaz* to perform Hajj (pilgrimage). His father declined due to financial constraints. Rather he persuaded Bayazid to start his own business. He was left with no option but to obey and to join a trade caravan.⁸ In that capacity he undertook considerable number of business-related journeys to different parts of India and Afghanistan. Once, Mughal soldiers looted his trade caravan. He complained to its commander Bairam Khan but to no avail. From his early years he developed resentment against the setting norms and traditions. He often participated in music and dancing programs along with other people. His father reprimanded him always for these activities.

Searching for a *Pir-i-Kamil* (Perfect Spiritual Guide)

In one of his journeys, he met his first cousin Shaikh Ismael, son of Khudadad and a famous saint of Ismaeli sect. Bayazid took keen interest in his religious ideas and decided to take the oath of allegiance to him. Olaf Caroe however, provides a different discourse regarding his initial association with a mystic of Ismaeli sect. He has given the name of Mullah Suleiman in Jalandhar who developed his interest in Ismaeli doctrine.⁹ The evidence however suggested that it was not in Jalandhar because he spent few years in the city and he was not grown enough to be influenced by any priest. It was possible that he would have visited Jalandhar, for the second time, in order to see his mother. Besides, the conversion of his cousin Shaikh Ismael to Ismaeli sect shows their family's vibrant religious politicking. It is rather very uncommon among the Pakhtuns to convert into other sect or adopt other faith than Islam. However, their Ansari origin may be substantiated by this evidence.¹⁰

His father warned him against his intentions and impressed upon him to go to Multan and seek spiritual guidance from the *Gaddi Nashin* (spiritual successor) of Shaikh Baha-ud-Din Zakariya.¹¹ Against the advice of his father, he frequently visited the house of Ismael and developed understanding with his ideas and beliefs. It has been said that Ismael molded his mind and infused in him the idea that the attainment of the spiritual height was impossible without a *pir-i-kamil* (the perfect spiritual guide). Therefore, his next step was to undertake a search to find out a *pir-i-kamil* to guide him towards the attainment of spiritual heights.¹²

Religious Ideas and Sufi Order of Bayazid

During these days he demanded his share in the property from his father. He started keeping himself indulged in religious activities and meditations. He constructed a new house for himself and lived there with his bride Bibi Shamsu, his first cousin and the daughter of Shaikh Hasan. He underwent several times in excessive meditations and became to be known a mystic person in his locality. Through meditations, he sought to find the right path towards *tawhid* (belief in oneness of Allah). He

claimed of having passed through different experiences. He became seriously engaged in invoking the divine name mentally (*Ism-i-Azam*). He claimed to have heard the voice from the unknown and received inspiration from God. Gradually, he passed through the eight stages which he himself apprehended probably through reading Sufi and other philosophical literature. He claimed that these stages are essential for spiritual elevation and becoming a *pir-i-kamil*. He proclaimed himself as *Miskeen* and engaged himself invoking the Divine name of God.¹³ He started the propagation of his mission after he thought that he was a perfect spiritual guide. In this pronouncement he was elevated to the position of *Pir-i-Kamil* at the age of forty and soon became very popular by the name of *Mian Rokhan* (the lightning Syed).¹⁴ If one assume 1525 as the year of his birth then it would be round about in 1565 that he started propagation of his doctrine in the age of forty.

During these formative years Bayazid authored his famous book *Khair-ul-Bayan* in which he mentioned religious commands like the Holy Quran and Sunnah. He wrote several other books in Pakhto, Arabic, Persian and Urdu. These included *Maqsud-ul-Momineen*, *Sirat-al-Tawhid*, *Hallnama*, *Fakhr-ul-Talibeen*, *Maktoobat* and *Wajid-day-Shlok*.¹⁵ According to *Tawarikh Hafiz Rahmat Khani*, he used to say that it was not necessary to stand in the direction of Ka'aba during prayers. For him Ka'aba exists in the heart of every individual. He spread strange ideas and fixed 10 days fasting at the start of spring every year. He ordered his followers that those who were against his movement were liable to be killed like beasts as they were harmful for society. Likewise, he permitted his disciples to loot the houses and wealth of the 'unbelievers'. In his religious ideas he was more extremist towards Turkish Sunnis than Hindus. For him the unbelievers did not know their self, therefore they were ignorant of their God and His eternity. They are like dead bodies so he legalized it like war booty to loot their belongings.¹⁶

He aimed at mustering a brigade of looters. Therefore, he termed beggary as illegal. After that he recruited large number of beggars in his militant force. He used to set in a cave

with the sword of his father hanging overhead. He attracted many illiterate people due to his strange ideas. He based his religious pronouncements often on nightmares and revelations. He was shrewd enough to provide sound financial base to his movement in the very initial phase. Hence he established a *Bait-ul-Maal* and fixed a ratio of one-fifth in the 'war booty' for his followers.¹⁷

Bayazid then came out openly to propagate his religious ideas in his area. He termed the gnosis of God (*marifat*) as an obligatory duty (*fard-i-ayn*). Obedience (*att'a*), worship (*ibadat*), charities and good works are unacceptable to God without the truth. The truth can be obtained through a perfect spiritual director (*pir-i-kamil*). He called himself the one who was a man of law (*shariah*), of the way (*tarika*), of the truth (*hakika*), of the gnosis of God (*marifat*), of nearness (*kurba*), of union (*wasla*), of oneness of God (*wahda*) and of tranquility (*sukuna*). Bayazid termed these eight stages a complete code for spiritual attainment. The first four are stations and the last four are different stages of observation or feelings which were related with the present of individual. It requires meditation and cannot be attained in just reading or reciting.¹⁸

An important aspect which was often ignored by the historians was the exact activities of Bayazid during the seclusions at his home. If one analyses his way of convincing people, argumentations and religious discussions, he often quoted examples from historical and contemporary sources, divine and Sufic literature. For instance his ideas of describing various stages of his Sufic orders were greatly influenced by the *Risala-i-Ghosia* of Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani. When Qazi Khan at Kabul asked him about the divinity of *Khair-ul-Bayan*, he replied by saying that Abdul Qadir Jilani also claimed that his book was an inspiration from Allah.¹⁹ He went through the established books on philosophy, logic and Islamic traditions. His stress on the recitation of *zikh-i-khafi* (secret remembrance of God) was an indication of the influence of Ismaeli sect on his thoughts. He made it one of the basic conditions of his faith.²⁰ The idea of the transmigration of soul was taken from the Hindus

religious scripts. Olaf Caroe was of the view that his concept of *Wahdat-ul-Wajud* was greatly influenced by the Hindus religious literature.²¹

He used to say that he was the person upon whom had been revealed the truth of the divine secret. Likewise, he told the people that obeying him was incumbent on all the masses. Obeying him was obeying the Apostles of God and therefore obeying God. He would lead those who sincerely obeyed him through the above stages of *tawhid*. He claimed the title of *Miskeen* for himself which, according to him, was reserved only for him in the world. No one can claim a *pir-i-kamil* or *Miskeen* for himself because these are the upper-most stages in which the mystic becomes one with God. Only he could guide the people to the right path because he was the perfect spiritual guide.²²

Bayazid declared in his books that those who believed in him would be raised with the believers on the Day of Judgment. He termed all the other Sufis and spiritual guides as Satan because they lacked the qualities of perfect spiritual guidance. In this way he demanded unconditional obedience from all the people. In another passage he challenged the ulema of his time by stating that those who do not have faith in his book must bring a better book from God, if they were true.²³ Many writers are of the view that he opposed and reformed the religious thoughts, prevailing at that time. However the crux of the matter is that he challenged the fundamental concepts of Islam by demanding unconditional surrender to him and accepting his notions and teachings. To understand local opposition to his thoughts would better be comprehensible by going through his beliefs and teachings.

Gradually his movement got momentum and the number of his followers increased. He became a well-known figure in the surrounding areas. He organized combined meditation groups of male and female in his own home. Music programs were arranged where he along with some other people danced in the extreme emotional fervor. In the latter stages Bayazid-the dancing *pir* was so elevated that people put up arms to propagate

his ideas and to spread his message. He gathered around him some zealot followers who were extremists in their views.²⁴

His father, along with some local ulema, took a strong position against him. His relationship with his father went from bad to worse when he termed all his opponents along with his father as comrades of unbelievers. There were three categories of people, Bayazid told his cousin Muhammad Kamal; those who obeyed him were the true *momineen* (believers), then the *munkireen* (unbelievers) and the third category was those of *munafiqeen* (hypocrites). He was of the view that he was the *hadi* (true guide) and all his preaching was *ilham* (revealed truth). This sort of attitude and views in a tribal and religious society was bound to expose him to harsh opposition. As a result, some strong opponents emerged to challenge him in his locality. He was compelled to leave his hometown and went to Dawar area and then chose to stay in Tirah. On the way to Tirah, a large number of Awrakzais, Afridis and Tirahis took the oath of his allegiance. Accordingly his views divided the Pakhtuns into two rival groups; one group rendered support to Bayazid while the opponents launched a vigorous campaign against him on religious grounds. The centre of gravity of his doctrine was Bayazid himself. The opponents used to call him *pir-i-tarik* (Apostle of Darkness) for his strange views unacceptable to most of the Pakhtuns.²⁵

Bayazid sent his Messengers to Different Rulers

The Mughal perspective with regard to Bayazid Ansari is summarized by Nizam-ud-Din Ahmad Bakhshi in *Tabakat-i-Akbari* thus: “in former times a Hindustani soldiers had come among the Afghans, and set up a heretical sect. He induced many foolish people to become disciples, and he gave himself the title of Pir Roshani.”²⁶ From the beginning Bayazid was indifferent towards the Mughals. He considered the Mughals as usurpers and oppressors.

After his first meeting with Mirza Muhammad Hakim the Mughal ruler in Kabul, he came to Peshawar, but the environment of the area did not suit his activities because the

Governor of Peshawar, Masum Khan, was against his movement and he kept a vigilant eye over him. As a result, Bayazid left for Hashtnagar and won over the support of Muhammadzai tribe. He also established matrimonial relations with Bahar Khan and Pinda Khan, leaders of the tribe. Bayazid considered this area very safe and protected for the propagation of his ideas. Keeping its strategic importance in mind, he established an operational base. Following the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (SAW), he decided to send some of his khalifas (vice-regents) to different rulers. These included Mirza Suleiman of Khurasan and Emperor Akbar of Delhi. One such letter of invitation was also sent to Pir Baba.²⁷

He sent *Khalifa* Maudud to Qandahar who preached his ideas to Kasi and Tarin tribes. He also went to Sindh and Baluchistan. Then he settled in Saidpur in Sindh. Mullah Arzani visited India, while *Khalifa* Yusuf was sent with a copy of *Fakhr-ut-Talibeen* to Mirza Suleiman, the ruler of Badakhshan. *Khalifa* Dawlat was sent to Delhi with a copy of Bayazid's book *Sirat-ut-Tauhid* to deliver his message to Akbar. Dawlat was a devoted and trusted disciple of Bayazid. He presented *Sirat-ut-Tauhid* and delivered his message in the court of Akbar. Although no more details are available, it can be said that keeping in view the interest of Emperor Akbar in such sort of discussions, he was received warmly in his court.²⁸

Roushaniya Movement and Nationalist Discourse

A number of 'nationalist and progressive' writers have developed the perception of Bayazid as the first Pakhtun nationalist protagonist due to his struggle for Pakhtun unification. Ali Khan Mahsood writes in this regard:

Roushaniya Movement was the first movement in the area in which the Pakhtuns participated as a nation. Due to this movement the Pakhtun fought continuous wars against the slavery of the Mughals. Due to these reasons the Britishers also failed to subdue the Pakhtuns.²⁹

He linked-up the struggle of Bayazid with that of anti-colonial movement of Abdul Ghaffar Khan in the 20th century. Likewise Abdullah Jan Maghmoom adopted the same argument by designating Bayazid the nationalist leader of the Pakhtuns. The approach of majority of these writers is the same i.e. to establish a link between the anti-British Khudai Khidmatgar Movement of Abdul Ghaffar Khan in the 20th century and the anti-Mughal Roushaniya Movement of Bayazid Ansari in the 16th century. They anticipated Bayazid as the first manifestation of the nationalist tendencies which culminated in the emergence of Abdul Ghaffar Khan. He writes in his book:

The emergence of the Pashtoons uprising under the leadership of Khushal Khan Khattak, Aimal Khan Moomand and Darya Khan Afridi against the Mughals and that of the Pashtoons under the leadership of Bacha Khan against the British was continuation of the Rowshani movement.³⁰

The first and the foremost contradiction in the approaches of these writers is the comparable historical placement of Bayazid and Abdul Ghaffar Khan. The former was a religious and militant Sufi in his ideas while the later was secular politician propagating non-violence. It is very strange to make comparison of the two in nationalist disposition. It is a sheer historical misjudgment on the part of these writers to draw a similar ideological assessment between the two movements. Objective analysis of both the movements reveals strong ideological contradictions. Roushaniya Movement was based on the extremist and Sufic ideas of Bayazid while the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement expounded a secular and tolerant approach towards politics. Bayazid termed his obedience and accepting his cult as an obligatory on all the masses. He claimed himself the most perfect man in spiritual wisdom not in political one. One common thing between the two was their opposition to oppression by the rulers in their respective timings. To base the nationalist struggle of Pakhtuns on such extremist thoughts and concepts propounded by Bayazid is nothing other than a historical misnomer. It is possible that in future some historians would develop the same argument with regard to present day

Tahreer-i-Taliban Pakistan by interpreting it as a nationalist endeavor. The progressive writers often discarding such sacred and ecclesiastical notions in their political discourses. However, in the case of Bayazid they either overlook these tendencies or make some allowance in their nationalist endeavor.

It is pertinent to mention that if it was a cause of nationalism for Bayazid, he would have definitely promoted it instead of creating division in the Pakhtun society by presenting and imposing new religious ideas among them. His main object was to spread his militant cult. Even the response of the Pakhtuns to Roushaniya movement was purely on tribal pattern.

Some of the tribes took his cause and supported him while other vehemently opposed him and sided with his opponents. The base of his movement was spiritual and religious. Some of his steps for instance forceful taxation from the inhabitants caused great resentment in many tribes. Particularly, the Yusufzai, Bangash and the Dalazak tribes withdrew its initial support from Bayazid after militant activities of his disciples. The immediate reason was the militants' looting and plundering in these areas. The quite unblemished categorization of people by Bayazid was not on ethnic or national grounds rather it was made purely on accepting or rejecting his faith. There is not a single evidence to prove that Bayazid propagated the cause of Pakhtun nationalism. Bayazid and his movement got no support from the Pakhtun tribes in Swat. They never entered the area or influenced the religious order of the society at that time. Although, very little support was provided in the initial phase of the movement by the Yusufzais of the settled areas but afterwards they opposed it vehemently. The influence of Bayazid among the Yusufzai begun to shrink considerably even the tribal tide had begun against him in the *samah* (Plain) area because of Akhund Darweza's influence.³¹

In the preface of *Makhzan*, Syed Taqweem-ul-Haq stated that Emperor Akbar himself was interested to let Bayazid gain more influence in the area for two reasons. First, he wanted to

create troubles in the area for Mirza Hakim, the Mughal governor of Kabul and to drain his resources. Secondly Akbar was much apprehensive about the growing opposition of the Yusufzai. And he found a suitable counterbalance of their uprising in the shape of Bayazid Ansari.³² Moreover sending messengers to different rulers is an ample proof that he was not a nationalist as projected by some writers. Rather, he dreamt the expansion of his sphere of influence beyond the borders of the Pakhtun area. The discourse of the Roushaniya movement as a Pakhtun nationalism is out of place as there is no evidence to support the nationalist assertion. There is not a single word in the Roushaniya literature to support this argument. The Rowshanites' ascendancy in the Yusufzai area and Tirah for some time was not a nationalist venture at all. Neither, at any time, Bayazid or any of his successors, emerged as an undisputed leader of the Pakhtun tribes, nor was it a struggle for their unification. The mobilization of militants' support from a number of tribes should not be taken as the basis of his being a nationalist.³³

Some historians put forward the argument that Bayazid established his rule in Tirah and the Muhammadzai areas for a brief time. He started collecting taxes from local population and from the trade caravans passing through their territories. The establishment of their rule in these areas is interpreted as an indication of the dormant nationalist propensities among the Pakhtuns. However, the same argument can be rightly and more accurately placed in the case of Yusufzai struggle for the Pakhtun unification against the Mughals. The struggle of Malik Suleman Shah in Kabul during the second half of the 15th century and Malik Ahmad in the Peshawar Valley for a Pakhtun tribal confederacy, much earlier than Bayazid, is a stronger case in discussing the historical roots of Pakhtun nationalism. Their struggle was more rational, democratic and modern in contents. It was based on political and secular grounds. Religion was not an issue between them. Moreover, the establishment of a self-rule on very sound footings in the Peshawar Valley and in the entire present day Malakand division in the 16th century by the Yusufzai and their allied tribes was an ample proof that their

struggle was more national in character than that of Bayazid's. The Yusufzai sardars were much flexible and friendly and they imposed no taxation on the other tribes who wished to reside with them. In the first decade of the 16th century after their settlement in the Peshawar Valley, they encouraged the arrival of Khalil, Muhammadzai, Gadoon, Gugyani and other tribes for the cause of a Pakhtun tribal confederacy against the Mughals.³⁴

Death of Bayazid

The implications of Bayazid's extremist ideas militarized the mindset of the local population. Among them were the people of Tui tribe. They took the oath of allegiance to Bayazid under their chief, Abdul Karim. They showed deep emotional attachment towards him and indulged themselves in self-mortification, started spiritual activities and completely gave up any interest in worldly affairs. Once a trade caravan passing through their territory was looted by zealots of the tribe. They deemed it right to punish the caravan for their engagement in mundane activities. They snatched their belongings according to the teachings of Bayazid.

After the incident a battle was fought between the Rowshanites and the Mughals. Bayazid with his band of 313 followers fought with bravery and defeated the Mughal army in a place called Kalpani. The losses of the Mughal side were enormous. This battle was called the Battle of Aghazpur. The victory was a turning point for Bayazid as he thought about his own authority over some parts of the Frontier. It is evident here from the fact that he only wanted to take revenge from the Mughal soldiers for the atrocities which he suffered at their hands in certain times. That is why he named the battle as Aghazpur.

Emboldened by his first victory, Bayazid went to Tirah and drove away the local people with the help of Afridis and established his independent rule. He started collecting tributes and revenues from the local population and levied taxes on the trade caravans passing through Khyber from Central Asia and Afghanistan. He also started military preparation for another

show of strength with the Mughals. Within a short span of time, Bayazid organized different Pakhtun tribes in Tirah. Afridis, Bangash, Mohmands, Khalils and bands of some other Pakhtuns were organized to fight the Mughals. In this way Roushaniya movement drifted away to purely a political struggle based on extremist ideas.

His resources were inadequate for such enterprises. These seeming disadvantages did not damp his enthusiasm. He embarked on his task of gaining more leverages with his usual courage and optimism. At last the governor of Peshawar, Muhsin Khan's patience was tired out and he resolved for a prompt action. He started his march to get rid of Bayazid and dispersed his followers. He pursued him and a battle took place at Chora in Tirah. Bayazid got an upper hand and defeated the forces of the Mughals with 220 casualties. Muhsin Khan fled from the battlefield and escaped to Kabul. After this impressive victory over the Mughals, Bayazid realized that he could defeat the Mughals and expand his rule over some other territories. Therefore, he kept himself busy in making preparation for the conquest of Nangarhar. He established his centre in Baro which afterwards, proved very fatal for the movement.

With the intention of capturing the province of Kabul, he waged an initially successful attack on Nangarhar but got no big victory. Muhsin Khan waged the last war against Bayazid at Tora Ragma in Shinwari territory. The Rowshanites suffered defeat and Bayazid escaped through the efforts of his followers. He was affected by the hot wind and thirst. He then made his way towards Hashtnagar, and as he had been affected by hot wind and intense heat, he died in Kalpani (Mardan) in 980 A.H. (1572 A.D). But the date of his death according to *Makhzan* is 1573-74.³⁵

Conclusion

Nationalism tends to be ethnic, progressive, rational and principled. It offers the prospects of liberation struggle, national unity and independence. At various times, it has been progressive and reactionary, democratic and authoritarian,

liberating and oppressive, and left-wing and right wing. The basic characteristic of nationalism common in all its forms is that it acknowledges the central political importance of the nation. It is a cross-cutting ideology which took roots much later in the Pakhtun region. The nature of the conflict that ensued between Pakhtun under Yusufzais and the Mughal in the 15th and 16th centuries was completely political. The reason probably was that it did not operate in the paradigm of faith and beliefs. Religion was not a matter of dispute and it never occurred in the area that religious sentiments were exploited mere to arouse tribal emotion against the Mughal emperors.

The Roushaniya movement was a perfect example of schism of the Pakhtun society on religious lines which one can easily compare with the present militarization of the society. Bayazid Ansari was the first militant who took up arms against both the Mughals and Pakhtuns in the name of Islam. He injected the germs of religious militancy to the Pakhtun society by his strange religious views. It was his religious views from which his followers took inspiration and through which the elements of extremism and militancy permeated into the body politic of the Pakhtun society. To call it a nationalist movement would be a sheer injustice with the Pakhtun history. There is not a single nationalist element from which it took inspiration other than mobilization of the tribes. Neither Bayazid exploited any nationalist feeling of the Pakhtuns nor did he try to persuade other influential tribes to form a united front. In the coming years Roushaniya movement polarized the society on a pattern not existed till that time. One could describe it the first-ever uprising of a kind of religious extremists for gaining political ascendancy. In broad analysis it infused an antagonistic religious fervor into the minds of the Pakhtun masses. The formation of brigades, regimentation and militarization of the society transformed common perceptions. It was an understandable shift in the ideological paradigm and the creation of a new social order. The process then took different facets and shapes throughout history.

The implications of the movement witnessed the social forces' tilt in favor of religious figures that expanded gradually

their sphere of influence. One can trace the origin of the institutionalization of religion from this specific event. Bayazid used religion as a tool to get the support of the tribes in his endeavor to establish his rule. The imposition of a brand of extremist religious version was his permanent feature. Those Pakhtuns who upheld different views were subjected to severe punishment. Incessant looting, wars and devastation took place which shattered the entire fabric of the society. Large scale troops mobilization took place among the tribes from Tirah to that of Swabi on the bank of river Indus.

The intellectual foundation of the movement was that of the writings of Bayazid and his doctrine. It was widely and sincerely propagated by his trusted disciples in and outside the Frontier. The dark side of his policy was that he did not build a strong line of leadership to continue his struggle. After his demise the mantle of its leadership remained within the circle of his blood relatives. After the fervor died down, the Roushaniya literature was regarded as heretic and was banned in the Frontier under the pressure of orthodox ulema though some families kept the manuscripts secretly in their homes. Pakhtuns generally did not adopt his beliefs and teachings as parts of their religious system.

Notes and References

- 1 The most active exponents of this view largely those local writers who associate themselves with shrines of Pir Baba and Akhund Darwaiza Baba. They opined that it was mere his religious views which divided the whole Pakhtun society into rival sections. Some western writers considered this assertion as valid. See for instance Mian Zahir Shah, *Akhun Darwaiza Baba* (Swat: Maktaba Ghosia, 2000) and Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans*, 550 BC-1957 AD (London: MacMillan And Co, 1958), p. 200.
- 2 The crux of the view expressed by this section of scholar is that Bayazid was brought up in an extremely anti-Mughal environment. Personally he went through the Mughal cruelties and harsh experiences when he was a child. Consequently he

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- developed a sense of antipathy towards the Mughals. See for this view Pareshan Khattak, *Pakhtun Kaun?* [Urdu], (Peshawar: Pashto Academy university of Peshawar, 2005), p. 242.
- 3 For nationalist approach see Allah Bux Yusufi, *Yusufzai Pathan* [Urdu], (Karachi: Muhammad Ali Educational Society, 1973) and Bahadar Shah Zafar Kaka Khel, *Pukhtana: Da Tarikh pa Ranra ke* [Pashto] (Peshawar, Pashto Academy), Abdullah Jan Maghmoom Khattak, *The Rowshanites and Pashto Literature* (Peshawar: Pashto Academy, 2005).
- 4 Some writers mention him by the name of Mian Bayazid or Mian Rokhan. Mian is a term usually used for the custodian of Sufi shrines. However his origin was traced with Abu Ayub Ansari. It has been stated that the Barki tribe participated in jihad with Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi (970-1030). He bestowed upon them the territory of Kaniguram as a *jagir*. Hamid-ul-Haq, 'Roushaniya Movement: It Contribution to Pashto Literature', unpublished MPhil Thesis (Islamabad: NIPS, 2002),
- 5 A *murid* (disciple) of Shaikh Shahab-ud-Din Suhrawardy (1155-1191) by the name of Shaikh Ibrahim Danishmand, a decent of Abu Ayub Ansari, came to Multan from Iraq and became a follower of Shaikh Baha-ud-Din Zakariya Multani (1182-1266). He was sent to South Waziristan by his spiritual guide to spread his message in these areas. The Barki tribe provided him residence at Kaniguram. As time passed some other people belonged to Ansari tribe came and got permanent settlement with the Barki tribe. Bayazid Ansari, *Khair-ul-Bayan*, Hafiz Muhammad Abdul Quddus Qasmi, Edi, (Peshawar: Pakhto Academy, Peshawar University, 1967), p. 2. Hamid-ul-Haq, 'Roushaniya Movement. Also see Rajwali Shah Khattak, *Da Pakhto Adabi Tahrikona* [Pakhto], (Peshawar: Pakhto Academy, University of Peshawar, 1989), p. 61.
- 6 Himayatullah Yaqubi, 'Conservative Sufism in Pakhtun Borderland: Bayazid Ansari and Roushaniya Movement' *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Villanova, USA, Vol. XXXIII, No. 4, Summer 2010, p. 63.
- 7 *Ibid*, p. 65.

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- 8 Maulana Abdul Qadir, Bayazid Ansari, *Pashto*, Pashto Academy University of Peshawar, Vol. 4. (July-August-September, 1959), p. 22.
- 9 Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans*, p. 201.
- 10 Himayatullah Yaqubi, Conservative Sufism in the Pakhtun Borderland, p. 64.
- 11 Bayazid Ansari, *Khair-ul-Bayan*, p. 9.
- 12 Abdullah Jan Maghmoom Khattak, p. 75.
- 13 *Ibid*, p. 89.
- 14 Ethnically Pakhtuns and Syeds belonged to separate genealogies. Bayazid proclaimed those titles which are purely non-Pakhtun in character like Shaikh, Mian, Miskeen, and Ansari etc. According to Olaf Caroe the Ansaris of Kaniguram proclaimed Shaikh decedents from original Arab Ansaris of Medina. Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans*, p. 200.
- 15 Abdullah Jan Maghmoom, p. 6.
- 16 Pir Muazzam Shah, *Tawarikh Hafiz Rahmat Khani*, Edi. Roshan Khan (Peshawar: Pashto Academy, 1977), p. 512.
- 17 *Ibid*.
- 18 Rajwali Shah Khattak, *Da Pakhto Adabi Tahrikona*, p. 69.
- 19 Mirwali Khan Mahsood, *Maqsud-al-Momineen*, Edi. (Peshawar: n. p. 1980), p. 84.
- 20 Bayazid Ansari, *Khair-ul-Bayan*, Hafiz Abdul Quddus, Edi. (Peshawar: Pakhto Academy, 1988), p. 383.
- 21 Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans*, p. 210.
- 22 Qalandar Momand, *Da Khair-ul-Bayan Tanqidee Mutalea* (Peshawa: n. p, 1988), p. 249.
- 23 Taqweem-ul-Haq, *An Introduction to Makhzan of Akhund Darwaiza* (Peshawar: Pakhto Academy, 1969), p. m.
- 24 Himayatullah Yaqubi, 'Conservative Sufism in Pakhtun Borderland,' p. 69
- 25 *Ibid*; p. 70.
- 26 Nizam-ud-Din Ahmad Bakhshi, *Tabakat-i-Akbari*, Eng Tra. H. M. Elliot (Lahore: Sindh Sagar Academy, 1975), p. 119.

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- 27 Himayatullah Yaqubi, 'Conservative Sufism in the Pakhtun Borderland', p. 72.
- 28 Emperor Akbar was the most liberal exponents of religious tolerance in the Indian subcontinent. He used to invite peoples belongings to various religions to his *ibadatkhana* which he specially built for this purpose at Fatehpur Sikri in 1575. Probably he received Dawlat very warmly due to his liberal attitude towards ecclesiastical affairs.
- 29 Ali Khan Mahsood, *La Pir Rokhana tar Bacha Khana: Da Pukhtano Milli Mubarizi ta Katana* (Peshawar: n. p, n. d), p. 61.
- 30 Abdullah Jan Maghmoom Khattak, *The Rowshanites and Pashto Literature*, p. 8.
- 31 Sultan-i-Rome, Mughals and Swat, '*Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*' Vol. L. October-December, 2002, p. 41.
- 32 Akhun Darwaiza, *Makhzan* (Peshawar: Pakhto Academy, University of Peshawar, 1987), p. 19.
- 33 Himayatullah Yaqubi, 'Conservative Sufism in the Pakhtun Borderland, p. 73.
- 34 For Details see *Tawarikh Hafiz Rahmat Khani*.
- 35 Akhun Darwaiza, *Makhzan*, 38.

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