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## **Emergence of Modern Kashmir, A Study of Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah's Role**

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### **Abstract**

The demands of Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah for modernization of administrative machinery, freedom of press, platform and religion, improvement in education and health care all indicates matured political mentality of Shaikh Abdullah. Undoubtedly, in his formative phase he had relied much on Punjabi Muslim Organizations and Public opinion and used Islamic institutions and symbols to create a mass base and a pressure on state but it should not be counted as a lacunae since mass psyche was such that nothing except religion would have much influenced there mind. Also, with the development of political consciousness, Shaikh Abdullah too switched on to use economic and other non-religious issues to propagate his political philosophy. He also distanced himself from the Punjabi organizations once he realized that these were turning more com munal and were more concerned for their own betterment and less of Kashmiri masses.

**Keywords:** Emergence, Modern Kashmir, Shaikh Mohd Abdulla, Role etc.

### **Introduction**

#### **Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah's Early Life**

The Sixth son of Shaikh Mohammad Ibrahim, a pashminn merchant, Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah was born in village Sourn on 5 December 1905, two weeks after the death of his father on the 17th of JG & mber 1905. Village Soura (now an urban center) is at a distance of about five miles from Srinagar towards the North and is situated on the shores of famous Anchar Lake on the road to Ganderbal. His ancestors were Muslim Converts from a Brahmin family.

Shaikh Abdullah was brought up by his widow edm other (the third wife of his father) and by his elder brother Shaikh Mohammad Maqbool, who served as a Drawing master in the Amar Singh Technical Institute, Srinagar. 'The environment both within and outside his home was totally uncongenial and suffocative. He was born in a joint family which was all dominated by his elder brothers who w ould share nothing but the ill will and hatred w ith Abdullah and his mother. Outside home there was poverty misery, hunger and starvation and misadministration of Dogra Raj. From his childhood, Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah was diligent student and never wasted his time in useless pursuits. He received his earlier guidance from his elder brother an F. A. pass and his pious mother, Khiar-un-Nisa. They were deeply religious and offered five time prayer and recited Quran. Abdullah's mother had great organizational ability and was a strict disciplinarian and survived her husband by thirty years. At the age of Persian under the affectionate guidance of a Sufim inded Aakhon (teacher) Mubarak Shah. It was during this time that he learnt to recite Quran in a manner which would entrance the people (and irritate the mullahs who discovered that he was beating them at their own game). When a little older, he was sent to the Islamia Primary School run by Anjum an -i-N usrat-ul-Islam. After doing his fifth class he joined the State High School, Fateh Kadel from where he passed his Matriculation Examination in 1922. Abdullah was a sensitive child and what he saw around him was poverty and injustice being perpetrated on the Muslim masses. When he was about twelve years old, there occurred some incidents which brought him face to face with the prevailing conditions of exploitation of the poor. "One fine morning' recalls Shaikh Abdullah, "I went to the market in my locality. I saw a person employed at the custom duty picket beating a villager mercilessly.

It was winter and the poor villager had brought some ponies loaded with fire wood for sale in the city. After the payment of custom duty the villager began to move, but the official on duty further demands the thickest pieces of the wood. He, therefore, hesitated and the man on duty began to beat him and the poor villager helplessly started crying. I went there to confirm the cause of the episode. The helpless woodcutter burst into tears and told me that after the payment of custom duty he had already given some pieces of wood free of cost to them on duty but that did not satisfy him and he began to snatch away, the thickest pieces of his wood." The young Abdullah fired with the natural sense of justice, intervened and gave a bit of mind to the Octroi-Post official.

Soon another incident followed when an official of the Food Control Department called for most respected man in the locality for giving ration tickets, it happened to be none other than Abdullah's elder brother-Shaikh Mohammad Khalil. But no sooner did he come forward, the official slapped him. Abdullah saw his brother being humiliated and, though the official apologized, the incident left deep and indelible impression on his mind. This incident proved beyond doubt, a commonplace practice among officials to insult their subjects, even the most respectable among them. It is thus, that the Muslims of Kashmir demanded that "in case the Muslims of Kashmir are not considered fit for such appointments like Governors and Superintendents of Police and customs, an Englishman or no-local Muslim should be assigned these responsibilities."

Shaikh Mohammad Maqabool had an ambition to make his younger brother a Doctor. As such he used the influence of his boss to obtain admission for him in a science class. It was with great difficulty and after several meetings with the Education Minister that he secured admission in the Sri Pratab College, Srinagar, the only College then in whole Kashmir province. After having passed his F. Sc. in 1924, he applied to the state government for deputation to some Medical college, outside the state as a state nominee. But his application was rejected and the seat was given to a Pundit student. Abdullah felt sad and approached various officers but all in vain. After it, he applied for admission in to B. Sc. in the Prince of Vales College, Jammu, because science had not been introduced at degree level in Srinagar, but it was refused on the ground that the seats had been already allocated. Actually one seat was vacant which was later given to the son of an officer who was not a state subject. He protested but no one came to his rescue.<sup>10</sup> He was completely disgusted and had lost all the faith in the Dogra State. He was now convinced that there was no place for a Muslim in the state to improve his socio-economic lot and to go for higher education. As such he joined the B. Sc. Class in the Islamia College Lahore in 1924, with the support of some Muslim philanthropists.

His stay at the Islamia College did help in molding his political future. In the words of Shaikh Abdullah, "when I got a chance to breath in the free air of Lahore, I began to compare the life of the Punjab's with the life of the Kashmir's. I felt ashamed at the pitiable conditions under which the Kashmiris lived. Grief stricken, I asked myself: 'Have we Kashmir's any, right to live as human beings? Is there any race more captive than us?'"

The Kashmiri Muslim students studying in different Universities of India were deeply moved by the pathetic conditions of the migratory Kashmiri Muslim peasantry.

Shaikh Abdullah, who was one among these sensitive students, recalls his heartrending experience

"My stay at Lahore, for other reasons, awakened me from the slumber and made me familiar with new sprites. I saw Kashmiri Muslims in big bands leaving their beautiful land for the hard plains of Punjab in search of livelihood. These laborers had to cross on foot the snowy mountains of Mari and Banihal and had to face thousands of odds in their way. Sometimes, while crossing the mountains, these people were perishing as a result of snow storms. These unfortunate people were dying unwept, unsung and their bodies were eaten by the vultures and other carnivorous birds and animals. Some people possessing strong physique luckily succeeded in reaching the plains, but there they had to face numerous odds and worries. During the day they wandered through the streets in search of work some, worked as wood cutters, some as helpers to the shopkeepers, some carrying heavy loads on their backs while some of them did grinding. After doing hard work during the day, they earned very little money of which maximum was spent on their meals. They passed their nights either in any inn or mosque, where they were harassed like dumb driver cattle. Many a time I found some Kashmiris begging for meals. I felt ashamed and asked one of them, "Why are you begging? Don't you get any work? The laborers replied "yes Sir! We definitely get it. We earn about 12 to 16 *annas* a day but we have to collect and save this amount because on our return we have to pay land revenue to the state, buy clothes for our children and carry some food items for our families. If we spent this money on our meals, we can not make both ends meet."

These Kashmiris frequently discussed the fate of their mother land and shared the miseries which they had to face in an alien land. This broadened the vision of Shaikh Abdullah regarding the Kashmir and its poor masses.

Shaikh Abdullah reached Lahore in the aftermath of the Khilafat and the Non-cooperation Movements where in lakhs of Muslims had suffered imprisonments, privations, confiscation of property, migration to Afghanistan and even death. This was besides the provocative pronouncements of some Hindu nationalities like Tilak and Madan Mohan Malvia that Muslims were into a political stream of their own. It was in this background and in this atmosphere that Shaikh Abdullah studied at Lahore and had his political schooling.

### **Role as Muslim Conference President**

With the establishment of Muslim Conference, it was not only Abdullah's fame which grew rapidly, but also "his thinking began to mature at an ever faster pace." He started realizing that his movement had to be given a proper shape if it is to become a successful one. Accordingly, in his first presidential address to the Conference, he besides other things, emphasized upon three important issues. Firstly, he called on Kashmiri Muslims to unite, and to end all sectarian strife. Secondly, he was aware that the movement had to represent the whole of Kashmir and not just the Muslims in order to become a freedom struggle rather just a sectarian protest. Thus, emphasizing that Kashmiri Movement was non-communal; he went on to accuse the administration of holding communal views. He reminded the ordinance

*"Our-movement is not-directed against the minorities. I assure all of my countrymen, be they Hindus or Sikhs that*

*we shall always try to redress their grievances. But they must also respect our just rights."*

Thirdly, Abdullah firmly believed that socio-economic and political lot of poor Kashmiri masses could not be improved unless there is a 'qualitative structural change' within the government, if not its complete end. Thus, in a moderate tone he would say: "I also want to make it clear that we have no grievances against the person of Maharaja Bahadur. Instead, we are faithful to him in every respect. Our demand can never be called anti-Government. In every civilized country the king always provides some rights to his subjects at his sweet will and the subjects often demand for more rights. But in spite of that their subjects are treated loyal and there is no doubt about their loyalty. The real faithfulness is that the ruler of the time should be acquainted with the aspirations and wishes of his subjects." Thus, Shaikh was demanding the establishment of a responsible government in the state.

To the big misfortune of the Muslim Conference, and the freedom Movement in Kashmir, Mirwaiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah raised the banner of revolt against Muslim Conference in general and its moving character Shaikh Abdullah in particular, and founded a new organization Azad Muslim Conference, which however, because of its pro-establishment stance soon lost its popularity. Besides the overshadowing and threatening popularity of the Shaikh Abdullah, there were several other factors, which also played a role in the Mirwaiz's decision to separate himself from the movement. For example, Abdullah's political orientation was becoming increasingly anti-government, despite his repeated claims of loyalty to the Maharaja, and the Mirwaiz Kashmir had no intention of alienating the government and jeopardizing the traditional financial patronage enjoyed by his family. Also His traditional family rival, the Mirwaiz Hamadani of Shah-i-Hamadan shrine, supported Abdullah which too contribute to create a wedge between the leadership. 10 The dominating role that Ahmadiyahs played immediately after the events of 1931 in Kashmir politics and their whole-hearted support to create the persona of Shaikh Abdullah was another factor for Mirwaiz's decision to carve out a separate political base. It is pertinent to mention here that Mirwaiz was more sympathetic towards *Ahrars*, archrival of Ahmadiyahs. Significantly, also, the trader class who financed the Mirwaiz family's philanthropy and formed its primary basis of support, was in favour of remaining aloof from Shaikh Abdullah and the Muslim Conference, a movement that was increasingly putting forth the demands of the peasantry and laboring classes. It goes without saying that the 'divide and rule' policy followed by government and the role-played by some Pundits equally contributed to the decision of leadership.

This factionalism turned Muslim politics into "a battle field of politicians in which muck-racking and mud slinging were the cheap weapons." And thus, it gave the first blow to the progress of national Movement in Kashmir, and the efforts of Shaikh Abdullah to create a united Muslim Community.

The second important thing to which Shaikh Abdullah was equally concerned was his belief that in order to ensure a successful movement, non-Muslims are to be taken into confidence. From the very inception of the Muslim Conference, Abdullah left no stone unturned to win over the non-Muslims. But unfortunately, the politics of the non-

Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir begin as a reaction to the mass movement which the Muslims launched under the Abdullah against the economic injustice and political servility of the Dogra rule. They characterized the Muslim movement as communal and against the non-Muslim interests. Kashmiri Pundits had received a rude shock, not so much through the events of 1931, as through the durbar's previous and subsequent "pro-Muslim" actions. Since they had believed that their pro-regime stance and their fact of being Hindu would keep their position within the state administration intact.

The worst part of the reaction was the role that Maha Sabha played in provoking the Hindu mind of India against the Muslim subjects of Kashmir whom the Hindu Maha Sabha dubbed as sheer communalists bent upon destroying the Hindu state of the Maharaja of Kashmir. It was this fear which led the leaders of the Sabha to save the Hindu cause only by undoing the freedom movement in Kashmir.

In March, 1932 the Glancy Commission's report was published. With its publication the Kashmir Pundits got perturbed over the findings of the report. They started a vigorous agitation as a mark of protest against the report and urged the Maharaja to reconsider it.

Abdullah was accused for using religion as a mark of identity and for provoking Muslims masses. This is true, but it needs to be understood in its proper context. The fact that Kashmir masses particularly Muslims were lacking the political consciousness, and thus, could not be provoked on economic and political grounds hence, religion was an effective instrument used by leaders to politicize them. With the progress of the decade we see Abdullah avoiding the religious mobilization and using other issues of secular nature. Secondly, and equally important thing for using religion in political discourse was particularly because the Dogra state defined itself and its right to rule solely based on its religious affiliation, and much like its counterpart in British India, categorized its subjects singularly on the basis of their religious affiliations.

Again the allegation held a little ground if we consider the fact that pundits backed Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah against Abdullah, who was more religious in orientation than the later. However, some progressive Pundits did work within the framework of the Muslim Conference for the goal of responsible government also illustrates that the movement was not exclusivist in nature.

Notwithstanding these early challenges, within and outside the Conference, Shaikh Abdullah took lead in pressurizing the Dogra Maharaja to bring about some institutional changes in his administration important thing to modernize state. In response to Glancy Commission recommendations, which had, besides other things proposed that a Legislative Assembly be constituted. The government had appointed a Franchise Committee under the Chairmanship of the Chief Justice of the state Sir Barjour Dalai on 31 May 1932.

Shaikh Abdullah in the presidential address of the first session of Muslim Conference complained of the non-fulfillment of the promises by the government and demands immediate establishment of the constituent Assembly and an increase in the powers of the proposed Assembly.

However, disgusted with the lethargic attitude of the state to implement Glancy Commission recommendations and the slow pace of Franchise Committee's functioning led Abdullah to call for Civil disobedience in March 1933. Unfortunately the call was overshadowed by the sectarian

clashes which were followed between the supports of the Azad Muslim Conference and Muslim Conference backed by two Mirwaiz's -Molvi Moham mad Yusuf Shah and Mirwaiz Ham dani respectively. Shaikh Abdullah delivered fiery speeches in which he criticized both the state and the pro-establishment policies of Mirwaiz Moham mad Yusuf Shah. On May 31, Shaikh Abdullah addressed a gathering of about 14,000 people at Khanqah-i-Mualla where he called for the removal of the Revenue Minister V. N. Mehta (who was represented by Abdullah as being mainly responsible for the Durbar's procrastination on the Glancy Report) and condemned the "peace-disturbing attitude of Yusuf Shah". Immediately after the meeting was over, he along with Bakshi Ghulam Moham mad and Gulam Nabi Gilkar was taken into custody and sent to Udhampur Jail.

Abdullah's arrest sparked off a new wave of violence and in the first half of June, 192 Muslims were jailed and 59 caned under the draconian provisions of Ordinance 19-L, 23. Therefore, the tempo of agitating began to slow down, despite the Abdullah's early release on 7 August. Agitation was resumed by Muslim Conference in 1934, after the working Committee suspended the constitution of Conference and appointed Choudhry Ghulam Abbas as "Dictator."<sup>24</sup> The movement's lethargy was mirrored by its leader. For much of the time Abdullah stayed at Lahore, leaving the Civil Disobedience campaign in the hands of his lieutenants. By mid-April almost all leaders including Choudhry Abbas and excluding Shaikh Abdullah who was still in Punjab all the workers of the Conference were behind the bars.

It will be in place to mention here that Shaikh Abdullah was not in favour of resumption of the agitation in early 1934, rather he suggested that "it was time to come to an agreement with the authorities in the Kashmir State". His policy of "moderation" was probably influenced by three main factors. The internal dissension in the Conference, Abdullah's long standing relationship with the Ahmadiyahs, who were at this time not in a mood to fight against Maharaja and a budding association with the Indian National Congress which had just ended its Civil Disobedience Movement and wanted Shaikh to follow the suit.

However, Abdullah's new policy was not entirely thrust upon him; it also reflected his belief that the electoral reforms foreshadowed by the Franchise Commission offered a real chance for people to better themselves by constitutional means. The Franchise Report of February 1934 envisaged a 75-seat legislative Assembly (Praja Sabha) of its sixty non-official representatives only thirty-three were to be elected, twenty-one Muslims, ten Hindus, and two Sikhs. <sup>30</sup> The Maharaja had the majority, not the electorate. In any case, a bare three percent of the people had been given the right to vote. Women and illiterates were completely excluded. Only those with a minimum annual income of Rs.400 were eligible for the franchise. Then, just to make doubly sure, section 3 reserved all existing legislative, executive and judicial powers in the Maharaja himself. Section further clarified that no measure passed by the Praja Sabha could become law without the maharaja's consent and indiscretion was beyond challenge. Shaikh Abdullah had no illusion about the true worth of the Assembly. Thus, on 29 January 1934, he protested, "the people of this country did not spill their blood for such a mock show what hopes can the people of this country have

in this kind of Representative Assembly where the dead weight of the official and nominated majority will always be ready to crush the popular voice?"

Desirous to see the state Legislature a truly responsible institution the Abdullah pleaded for introducing various reforms:

The Assembly should have the right over all the items of the budget, except foreign affairs and personal expenditure of the Maharaja such items over which opinion of expression is forbidden should always be placed on the floor of the Assembly for discussion. The Assembly should pass all laws and regulations. Ministers should be responsible to the Assembly and the elected members of the Assembly should elect at least two ministers. Such a minister against whom Assembly would pass vote of no confidence should be treated as being expelled from the cabinet. The Maharaja would be within his rights to reject any decision taken by the Assembly. But if the Assembly would pass any bill in two successive sessions the Maharaja would kindly accept it. The permanent tillers have been given rights to vote but it is not clear whether they have been included in the voter list. The laborers have not been given proper representation. The proposed constitutional reforms were certainly less than Abdullah had hoped for, but he was heartened by the Report's provision for further constitutional change and consoled by the fact that the arrangements represented an advance on the position in all but a handful princely states. Thus, he "advised Muslims not to lose hope and to stand for the elections."

It appears that the Government had conveyed to Shaikh Abdullah, unofficially, that in case Muslim Conference decided to contest elections, political prisoners were to be freed through a general amnesty.<sup>35</sup> But unfortunately only three hours before the 11th May deadline for the nomination of candidates, the Durbar's Inspector-General of police phoned to say that political prisoners would not be released in time to contest the elections-as previously promised thereby forcing the Muslim Conference to fall back on "second-rate people". Result? The Kashmir government wants to squeeze me (out) by pouncing upon me? But of course, he had to prove that he represented the popular voice, he decided to participate in the elections and won nineteen out of twenty one Muslim seats. The results gave a shattering blow to the prestige of Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah, whose Azad Muslim Conference lost all its contested seats. <sup>39</sup> It also showed unmistakably how a man (Shaikh) totally unknown four years back had, by sheer dint of sacrifice and selfless dedication to the 'cause' of his people, shattered the influence of a family which was undisputed and supreme for over a century.

The newly formed Assembly held its first session on 17 October 1934 at Shargarhi in Srinagar and very soon it proved beyond any doubt that it had no powers to its disposal.<sup>41</sup> The leader of the Muslim Conference legislative body, Main Ahmad Yar expressed dissatisfaction of his party over the Franchise Committee Report as well as the limited powers of the legislature. He expressed the will that the people of the state deserved better treatment. <sup>42</sup> Outside the legislature, Muslim Conference continued to build its pressure on the Government for introducing more constitutional reforms so that the aspirations of the common masses could be accommodated. For example, in its Annual sessions which were to follow, the Muslim Conference leaders demanded wider franchise, larger powers for

Assembly, immediate establishment of the district boards, reform action in the municipal Committees and a fair Treatment to all communities.

Hence, it is clear that the foundation of Praja Sabha was not the final goal for which Shaikh Abdullah and his organization was fighting for rather it was beginning to achieve the "responsible Government in the state," Although the demand for the responsible Government was first made by Young Men's Muslim Association - a radical youth wing of the Conference it assumed a definite shape on March 29, 1935, when twenty-nine elected members excluding the elected representatives of Kashmiri Pundit community presented a joint Memorandum to the Government, requesting it to change the constitution in such a way as to make the executive responsible to the legislature. The joint demand made by Muslim Conference and the Liberal Group - though conditional to the minority safeguards - was ample evidence that major problems of the Kashmiris were secular in nature.

The demand for responsible government was surely influenced by the passing of the 'Government of India Act 1935, which had guaranteed internal autonomy to the states, under the Congress pressure. On May 8, 1936, 'the Responsible Government Day' was observed throughout the length and breadth of the state. The day was featured with the organization of large public meetings, processions and other forms of demonstrations. Knowing about the benefits of co-operation with non-Muslims in the fight for Responsible government, Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah issued an appeal to all the non-Muslims inviting them to participate in the movement for Responsible Government. He assured them that Muslims were "prepared to give you the same safeguards, weightage and all that is necessary in the constitution for the minorities that Indian national Congress is prepared to give to the Muslims of British India and other minority communities.

Perhaps would be more liberal. Let the dead past bury the dead. "48 Pundit Nehru, who later on turned to be the mentor of Abdullah to become a nationalist, also backed Shaikh Abdullah's call when he advised Kashmiri non-Muslims that, "they should give up their narrow communal outlook and think of their own welfare in terms of the welfare of Kashmir as a whole, that is to say of the great majority of the people of Kashmir. I would advise them not to seek any special protection or weightage or reservation of seats in the state services, no special electorate or the like. They will get far more through good will and co-operation with other communities."

These appeals were not made without any effect. For at many places, notably Srinagar, Poonch, and Jammu non-Muslims too participated in the protest meetings. Later on some Pundit leaders enthusiastically supported the demand for Responsible Government. For instance Sardar Budh Singh wrote in 1938: "it is madness to think that the demand for Responsible Government is a religious demand. No religious body or communal organization can singly achieve it. It is a National demand and is, therefore, common to all". The second anniversary of the Responsible Government Day was observed on 5 August 1938. The main slogan shouted everywhere was the establishment of the *Azad* (independent) Assembly.

Maharaja Hari Singh professed great surprise that his crumbs had not been considered adequate and condemned the "popular hunger as greed." Although, the movement for

responsible government does not achieve immediately anything due to cold response of the state, but it was an indicator of the matured national movement and had set the tone for its next stage, which we shall discuss in the next chapter.

It will be in place to mention here, that Shaikh Abdullah used his organization not only to bring about a modern outlook in the state's body politic, but he simultaneously fought for the rights of down trodden sections of the society notably peasants and workers thus, creating a strong mass base for himself and his organization. Shaikh Abdullah fully realized the importance of education in bringing about political consciousness and healthy behavior of the masses, which is evident from his presidential address to the first annual session of the conference:

Let us strengthen press and encourage Muslims towards education so that the number of conscious workers would increase day by day. Islam and ignorance is a divergent phenomenon... we should pay due attention to the female education (also). It is said that women had played a great role in the transformation of different societies and have changed the destinies of nations and empires.

While expressing his deep anguish against the lethargic attitude of the state in the dissemination of modern education he said:

"The problem of educational backwardness is the most crucial problem of the nation. The progress of nations and individuals is subservient to education. In present times the spread of education is not the responsibility of the people but, as observed in the recent past, it has been the duty of the government. But the government of Kashmir has become notorious in view of its apathetic attitude towards the education of Muslim masses. For the last twenty-five years there has been greater realization among the Muslims in favour of modern education. However, there are many impediments, but the Government has never taken any step to remove them.

He also took a very serious note for the non-implementation of the Sharp Commission recommendations. Desirous to see the state education system responsive to the modern challenges of the time, and an instrument to the social and economic upliftment of the masses, Shaikh Abdullah strongly pleaded for the change of syllabi, which was still showing traditionalistic features besides making agricultural education compulsory in village schools. His other demands include, increase in the number of schools and colleges, standardization of education from top to bottom, introduction of job oriented courses and special arrangements for female education.

### Conclusion

With the development of political consciousness, Shaikh Abdullah too switched on to use economic and other non-religious issues to propagate his political philosophy. He also distanced himself from the Punjabi organizations once he realized that these were turning more communal and were more concerned for their own betterment and less of Kashmiri masses.

The demands of Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah for modernization of administrative machinery, freedom of press, platform and religion, improvement in education and health care all indicates matured political mentality of Shaikh Abdullah. Undoubtedly, in his formative phase he had relied much on Punjabi Muslim Organizations and

Public opinion and used Islamic institutions and symbols to create a mass base and a pressure on state but it should not be counted as a lacunae since mass psyche was such that nothing except religion would have much influenced there mind. Abdullah was accused for using religion as a mark of identity and for provoking Muslims masses. This is true, but it needs to be understood in its proper context.

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