

## **Shaikhul Hind Maulana Mehmud Hasan**

**1851-1920**

**Founder**

An eminent theologian and freedom fighter who laid the foundation stone of Jamia Millia Islamia at Aligarh in Northern India in 1920, Maulana Mahmud Hasan, popularly known as Shaikhul Hind (leader of India), was born in 1851 at Bareilly where his father, Maulana Zulfeqar Ali, also a well known scholar of Arabic, was employed in the Department of Education.

He was the first student of Darul Uloom, Deoband, the world renowned institution of Islamic Sciences and one of the most distinguished disciples of the founder of this institution, Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanotvi. After his graduation from Darul Uloom in 1873, he served the same institution as a teacher from 1874 till his appointment as Principal in 1890.

Unlike the ulema of that time and his preoccupation with teaching and administrative works in Darul Uloom notwithstanding, he kept himself fully informed about the political developments in the country.

The second decade of the twentieth century was a period of great restlessness and anxiety for the Islamic world as a result of a secret pact among the Western powers to overthrow the Turkish Empire which was looked upon with respect and reverence by the Indian Muslims.

During this time, Shaikhul Hind prepared a plan to start an armed revolution against the British rule for which he launched a programme to train volunteers from among his disciples in India and abroad who joined this movement in a large number. The most eminent among them were Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi and Maulana Mohd. Mian Mansoor Ansari.

There was a general belief that war of liberation cannot be launched without arms and ammunition. Therefore, it was necessary to secure support from outside India. While Shaikhul Hind sent Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi to Kabul with a special mission and Maulana Mohd. Mian Mansoor Ansari to the independent tribes of the Frontier area to mobilize them for a war against the British rule, he himself traveled to Hijaz in 1915 to secure the Turkish support for his plan. In Hijaz, he met the Turkish Governor, Ghalib Pasha and obtained his signature on a war declaration. From Hijaz he wanted to come to the Frontier area via Baghdad and Baluchistan, but his plan was leaked and he was arrested at Mecca and imprisoned at Malta where he remained for over three years till his release in 1920.

Since the letters exchanged between Shaikhul Hind and his colleagues containing the outlines of the plan to recruit the volunteers for the liberation army and to establish a national government were written on silk, the movement launched by him is known as 'Reshmi Rumal ki Tahrik' (Movement of Silken Kerchief) .

After returning to India Shaikhul Hind joined the Khilafat Movement and issued his famous Fatwa of non-cooperation against the British rule.

In the same year (1920) in October he laid the foundation stone of Jamia Millia Islamia at Aligarh. He died on 30th November 1920.

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