The Tradition of Refutation in the Indian Subcontinent: The Critique of Mawdūdī by Muḥaddith and Educator Banūrī

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Abstract

In the modern era, intellectual disagreements among Islamic movements have led to significant debates, particularly in the Indian Subcontinent, where they took shape within the tradition of *radd* (refutation) and produced notable scholarly works. This article examines the criticisms of Muḥammad Yûsuf al-Banūrī (d. 1977), a scholar of the Deobandi tradition, directed at the contemporary thinker Mawdūdī (d. 1979). The study is based on Banūrī's work *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī wa Shayʾun min Hayātihi wa Afkārihi* and is limited to the contents of that text. Banūrī's criticisms are classified under various headings, with a focus on passages he directly references. Occasionally, references are also made to Turkish translations of Mawdūdī's works. Banūrī's identity as both muḥaddith and an educator significantly informs the background of his critiques. A committed adherent to the Ahl al-Sunna and the Hanafi school in practice, he grounds his criticisms in accordance with these principles. As a reflection of his pedagogical orientation, he frequently criticizes Mawdūdī for engaging in religious discourse without having undergone a traditional education, and he highlights the perils of expressing opinions in disciplines in which one lacks proper qualifications. The study aims to introduce the Turkish readership to an example of the refutational tradition that has flourished—so much so as to merit the appellation "a paradise of refutations"—in the subcontinent. It also highlights the need to examine influential Muslim thinkers not through blind allegiance, but through scholarly analysis and critical inquiry. While Banūrī occasionally adopts a sharp tone, he seeks to ground his arguments in evidence and calls for fairness and guidance. Emotional assumptions about intent are also present, yet the work as a whole stands as a noteworthy contribution to the literature of refutation. Such studies are valuable for grasping key themes and regional perspectives in intellectual debates of the Indian subcontinent.

Keywords

Ḥadīth, Indian Subcontinent, Banūrī, Mawdūdī, Refutation.

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Hint Alt Kıtasında Reddiye Kültürü: Muhaddis ve Eğitimci Bennûrî'nin Mevdûdî Eleştirisi

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Öz

Modern dönemde İslâmî akımlar arasında ortaya çıkan fikir ayrılıkları, zamanla ciddi tartışmalara yol açmıştır. Özellikle Hint alt kıtasında bu tartışmalar, reddiye geleneği içerisinde kendine özgü bir zemin bulmuş ve dikkat çekici eserlerin ortaya çıkmasına vesile olmuştur. Bu makalede, Diyobend Ekolü mensuplarından Muhammed Yûsuf el-Bennûrî'nin (ö. 1977), çağdaş düşünürlerden Mevdûdî'ye yönelttiği (ö. 1979) tenkitler incelenmektedir. Bennûrî'nin *el-Üstâz el-Mevdûdî ve Şey'ün min Hayâtih ve Efkârih* adlı eserine dayanan bu çalışma, söz konusu metinle sınırlandırılmıştır. Eleştiriler farklı başlıklar altında tasnif edilerek ele alınmış; kaynak olarak Bennûrî'nin doğrudan atıf yaptığı bölümler esas alınmıştır. Yer yer Mevdûdî'nin Türkçe çeviri eserlerine de atıf yapılmıştır. Bennûrî'nin, hem muhaddis hem de bir eğitimci kimliğine sahip oluşu, eleştirilerinin arka planında önemli bir etkiye sahiptir. İtikadda Ehl-i Sünnet, amelde Hanefî kabulü benimseyen Bennûrî, tenkitlerini de bu kabule uygun şekilde temellendirmektedir. Aynı şekilde, eğitimci yönünün bir sonucu olarak, Mevdûdî'nin klasik İslamî eğitimden geçmeden dinî meselelerde kalem oynatmasını birçok kez eleştirmiş; ehil olunmayan alanlarda fikir beyan etmenin sakıncalarına dikkat çekmiştir. Bu çalışma, Bennûrî'nin Mevdûdî'ye yönelik eleştirilerini ortaya koymanın yanı sıra, bir bakıma "reddiye cenneti" olarak anılmayı hak eden Hint alt kıtasında gelişen reddiye geleneğinin bir örneğini Türk okuyucusuna tanıtmayı amaçlamaktadır. Buna ilaveten, İslam dünyasında çokça tartışılan şahsiyetlerin mutlak teslimiyetle değil, ilmî bir dikkat ve sorgulayıcı bir bakışla ele alınması gerektiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Sonuç olarak, Bennûrî'nin eleştirilerini delillere dayandırmaya özen gösterdiği, zaman zaman sert bir üslup kullansa da insaf ve hidayet çağrısında bulunduğu görülmektedir. Eserde duygusal ve niyet okumaya dayalı ifadelere de rastlanmaktadır. Söz konusu eserin genel anlamda başarılı bir reddiye olduğu söylenebilir. Hint alt kıtasındaki fikrî tartışmaların mahiyetini, bu tartışmaların odak noktalarını ve bölge düşüncesinin söz konusu metinlere nasıl yansıdığını görmek açısından bu tür çalışmaların incelenmesi tavsiyeye şayandır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Hadis, Hint Alt Kıtası, Bennûrî, Mevdûdî, Reddiye.

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Introduction

The *radd*, a scholarly genre devoted to the critical refutation of certain doctrines, sects, or works with the aim of demonstrating their invalidity *(bātil),* emerged within the Islamic tradition as a response to the theological and sectarian divisions that arose among Muslims following the demise of the Prophet Muḥammad. These divergences, which led to the formation of distinct sects and schools of thought, contributed to the widespread development of the refutation as a recognized literary form, eventually becoming a salient feature of Islamic intellectual history. With the expansion of Islamic rule during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs *(al-Khulafāʾ al-Rāshidūn)*, Muslim communities began to increase contact with societies possessing diverse religious and philosophical backgrounds. This encounter catalyzed a process of mutual doctrinal critique between Muslims and non-Muslims, giving rise to a body of polemical literature.[1]

Within the historical trajectory of this scholarly tradition, the Indian subcontinent occupies a particularly noteworthy position as one of the principal centers of learning in which the refutation tradition emerged with marked vigor and also demonstrated an enduring continuity. Indeed, based on the proportional density of refutational texts, it would not be an exaggeration to describe the region as a "paradise of refutations".[2] While the practice of composing refutations in India can be traced as far back as the early Mughal period, the era in which this genre witnessed an unprecedented proliferation was the period of British colonial rule, spanning from 1858 to 1947. Several factors contributed to the revitalization and expansion of the refutation tradition during this time. Among them were Christian missionary activities, the emergence of Hindu reformist movements, the establishment of Western educational institutions, and the rise of various modern ideological currents. Furthermore, the proliferation of the printing press in the 19th century, and the resultant wide dissemination of treatises and books—especially in Urdu—greatly enhanced the reach[3] and public impact of the refutation literature. In addition to these factors, the broader context of intellectual, cultural, and socio-political crises gave rise to competing ideas. These, too, fueled the production of refutations.

With the advent of the colonial period, the scope and momentum of refutation activity expanded considerably, accompanied by an increasing diversification of its targets. Among the figures that have a central position in this tradition are many contemporary thinkers, the most prominent of whom is Abū l-Aʿlā Mawdūdī (d. 1979). Mawdūdī, both during his

1 Mustafa Sinanoğlu, "Reddiye", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2007), 34/516.

2 The term used here, while carrying an ironic undetone, also reflects a certain reality. In this context, the origin of the expression lies in the abundance of blessings in paradise. What we actually intend to convey through this usage- as noted at the outset of the main text- is the numerical density of refutations produced by adherents of various Islamic schools in the Indian subcontinent against one another. Even when considered solely through the lens of commentaries on al-Tirmidhī, one may cite, as an illustrative example, the series of refutational exchanges between Banūrī and Sanāʾullāh ʿĪsā Khān, which continued the polemical tone once found in the Kashmīrī-Mubārakfūrī debate. For some related observations, see Ayşe Esra Şahyar, "Tirmizî'nin el-Câmi'i Üzerine Yazılmış Şerhler", *Hadis Şerh Literatürü II,* ed. Mustafa Macit Karagözoğlu (İstanbul: M.Ü. İlâhiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2022), 127-129, 131.

3 S. Akbar Zaidi, *Making a Muslim: Reading Publics and Contesting Identities in Nineteenth-Century North India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 130.

lifetime and after his demise, was subjected to sustained critique by scholars affiliated with the Deobandi, Barelwī, Ahl-i Ḥadīth, and Jamāʿat al-Tablīgh traditions in India and Pakistan. His views on a range of theological and jurisprudential matters—as articulated in such works as *Rasāʾil wa Masāʾil*, *Tafhīm al-Qurʾān*, *Tarjumān al-Qurʾān*, and *Tafhīmāt*—drew significant attention. Topics such as the authority of ḥadīth and Sunnah, the infallibility (ʿisma) of the prophets, the descent of Jesus, the figure of Dajjāl, Islamic political theory, and the question of mutʿa marriage became focal points of refutation.[4] Among the numerous refutations penned in response to Mawdūdī's thought, one encounters a wide spectrum—from vehemently polemical works such as Muḥammad Zakariyya Kandhlawi's *Fitnah-i Mawdūdiyyat* and Mazhar Husain's *Mawdūdī Madhhab*, which employ stark language, to more measured and analytical critiques. One of the more notable examples of the latter is *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī wa Shayʾun min Hayātihi wa Afkārihi* by Muḥammad Yusuf al-Banūrī (d. 1977), which forms the central focus of the present article.[5] Due to the paucity of research on Banūrī in Turkish language, this study will begin with a concise biographical sketch of the author. Thereafter, his aforementioned work will be examined thematically, with special attention given to conceptual debates, theological *(kalām)* questions, issues pertaining to Sunnah and ḥadīth, jurisprudence (*fiqh)*, and various other relevant topics. In this study, the work of Banūrī will be taken as the primary focus, and in certain instances where he makes references, recourse will be made to the writings of Mawdūdī. In this way, Banūrī assessments will, in a sense, be proved. However, this practice will not be applied consistently, but rather will be adopted as a method only when deemed necessary.

1. The Life and Works of the Muḥaddith and Educator Muḥammad Yusuf al-Banūrī[6]

Muḥammad Yusuf al-Banūrī was born in 1908 in colonial India into a family steeped in religious scholarship.[7] His ancestral lineage traces back to his great-great-grandfather Ādam,[8] a spiritual deputy *(khalīfah)* of Ahmad Sirhindī (d. 1034/1624), who had settled in the village of Banur—hence the familial nisbah "al-Banūrī".[9] Commencing his education within the family circle, Banūrī formally entered Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband[10] in 1926. There,

4 Durmuş Bulgur, "Pakistan'da Mevdûdî Eleştirisi", *Mevdûdî: Hayatı, Görüşleri ve Eserleri*, ed. Abdulhamit Bırışık (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2007); Anis Ahmad, "Mevdûdî", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2004), 29/435.

5 In *Bayyināt*, the periodical journal published by Jāmiʿat al-ʿUlūm al-Islāmiyya—a seminary founded by Banūrī with the aim of articulating a scholarly response to various interpretations of Islam prevalent in Pakistan—several articles by Muḥammad Ishaq Siddiqi were published in which he critically engaged with Mawdūdī's *Tafhīm al-Qurʾān*. Irfan Moeen Khan, *The Construction of Deobandi Ulama's Religious Authority in Pakistan: A Study of Their Journal, Bayyināt, 1962-1977* (Montreal: McGill University, Master's Thesis, 2004), 70.

6 For discussions concerning Banūrī's biography, scholarly endeavors, literary contributions, and the proper pronunciation of his nisbah see Fatih Muhammet Yüksel, *Muhammed Yûsuf el-Bennûrî'nin Hadisçiliği ve Şerh Yöntemi (Meârifü's-Sünen Özelinde)* (Ankara: Sonçağ Akademi, 2024), 37-105.

7 Yüksel, *el-Bennûrî*, 42.

8 For further information see Abd al-Rahman al-Barnî, *Ulamā-i Deoband wa khidamātuhum fī 'ilm al-ḥadīth* (India: Shaykh al-Hind Academy, 2011), 173; Hamid Algar, "Benûrî", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1992), 5/466-467; Necdet Tosun, *İmâm-ı Rabbânî Ahmed Sirhindî Hayatı, Eserleri, Tasavvufî Görüşleri* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2009), 47.

9 For differing opinions regarding the pronunciation of the nisbah see Yüksel, *el-Bennûrî*, 39-42.

10 Deoband has been examined by Demirci, who characterizes it as "an attempt to restore political collapse through scholarly tradition". For the relevant discussion and further information regarding this insti-

he studied under eminent scholars such as Shabbīr Aḥmad ʿUthmanī (d. 1949) and Anwār Shāh al-Kashmīrī (d. 1933).[11] Among his teachers, it is al-Kashmīrī—widely known by the honorific title Imām al-ʿAṣr—who left the most profound impact on his intellectual ve spiritual formation.[12]

Upon completing his studies, Banūrī turned to teaching. He initially returned to his native Peshawar and engaged in political activism, a phase he would later come to regret. Following the death of his mentor Kashmīrī, Banūrī joined the teaching faculty of Jāmiʿat al-Islāmiyya in Dabhel, where he served both as shaykh al-ḥadīth and the chief instructor. In the aftermath of the partition of India in 1947, at the encouragement of his teacher Shabbīr Aḥmad and contemporary Badr ʿĀlam (d. 1965), he migrated to Pakistan in 1951.[13] Shortly thereafter, he settled in Karachi and, in 1954,[14] founded what would initially be known as al-Madrasa al-ʿArabiyya al-Islāmiyya, later renamed Jāmiʿat al-ʿUlūm al-Islāmiyya.[15] Though modest in its early years, the institution grew both physically and intellectually, as of 2023, it accommodates 12.028 students.[16] His founding such a significant center of learning reflects Banūrī's vision and his commitment to Islamic pedagogy. Nevertheless, Banūrī did not confine his efforts to the local sphere. He contributed actively to scholarly councils in various countries and participated in academic and political initiatives abroad. His international travels and involvement in religious discourse echo the dynamism of his youth, reflecting a life lived in service to knowledge, reform, and the Muslim ummah.[17]

Muḥammad Yusuf al-Banūrī authored works across a range of Islamic disciplines. A general survey of his writings reveals noteworthy features. His most renowned work is un-

tution, see Selim Demirci, *Sömürge Döneminde Hadis ve Yorum İngiliz İdaresi Gölgesinde Hint Alt Kıtası Hadis Âlimleri ve Şerhleri* (İstanbul: Ketebe Yayınları, 2024), 137-158; For certain distinguishing features of the Deoband movement see 124.

11 Yüksel, *el-Bennûrî*, 45-47.

12 Walī al-Dīn Taqī al-Dīn al-Nadwi, "al-Muḥaddith Muḥammad Yûsuf al-Banuri wa Kitâbuhû Maʿārif al-sunan sharḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī (1)", *al-Baʿs al-Islami* 51/5 (February 2006), 53; Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Shahīd al-Nuʿmānī, "Ṣilat al-imām al-Kawtharī bi-ʿulamā'-i shibh al-qārrah al-Hindīyah al-Bākistāniyah", *Uluslararası Düzceli M. Zâhid Kevserî Sempozyumu* (Düzce, 2007), 192.

13 Yüksel, *el-Bennûrî*, 48-50.

14 Yüksel, *el-Bennûrî*, 52.

15 Yüksel, *el-Bennûrî*, 50-51; For Banūrī's general views regarding the traditional madrasa curriculum, see Muhammed Kasım Zaman, *Çağdaş Dünyada Ulema Değişimin Muhafızları*, trans. Muhammed Habib Saçmalı (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2018), 145.

16 Jāmiʿat al-ʿUlūm al-Islāmiyya, "Branches of Jamiah" (Access 19 July 2025). Alongside Dār al-ʿUlūm Karachi—established by Muḥammad Shafīʿ Deobandi in the aftermath of Partition—Jāmiʿat al-ʿUlūm al-Islāmiyya is regarded as one of the most reputable madrasas among Deobandi scholars in Pakistan. However, in Western public discourse, it has gained notoriety primarily due to allegations linking one of its graduates to the murder of American journalist Daniel Pearl. Masooda Bano, *The Rational Believer: Choices and Decisions in the Madrasas of Pakistan* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2012), 85. As Ebrahim Moosa observes, despite the existence of a small number of madrasas in Pakistan with documented connections to radical groups, the tendency within Western media to portray madrasas as monolithically linked to terorism is both misguided and reductive. Ebrahim Moosa, *Medrese Nedir?*, trans. Harun Tuncer (İstanbul: İstanbul Sabahattin Zaim Üniversitesi, 2023), 18.

17 Yüksel, *el-Bennûrî*, 60-63.

doubtedly his commentary on *Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī*,[18] entitled *Maʿārif al-Sunan*.[19] This unfinished work, which he composed after deeply internalizing the insights of his teacher Kashmīrī, extends up to the Kitāb al-Janāʾiz (Book of Funerals) and is distinctly marked by a Hanafi legal orientation. Various studies have been undertaken on this commentary,[20] which clearly displays his strength as a muḥaddith. Another of his important contributions is *Bughyat al-Arīb*,[21] a work dedicated to the subject of qibla and mihrābs. Additionally, he authored *Yatīmat al-Bayān*, a treatise on the sciences of the Qurʾān. He also wrote a detailed biographical account of his teacher Kashmīrī, entitled *Nafḥat al-ʿAnbar*.[22] The central text under analysis in this study, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī wa Shayʾun min Hayātihi wa Afkārihi*,[23] is another of his important writings. In addition to these works, his qasīdas[24] (poetic compositions) and various muqaddimāt[25] (premises) have been compiled in separate volumes. It should be noted that Banūrī authored additional treatises that are not discussed here.[26] Though he did not live long enough to produce one of the extended and comprehensive works characteristic of the Indian subcontinent's classical tradition, his commentary on *Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī* stands out as a detailed and expansive contribution. It is also worth affirming that his scholarly endeavors were clearly guided by a well-defined sense of intellectual mission and a forward-looking vision. Banūrī passed away in 1977 following a heart attack. He was laid to rest in the courtyard of Jāmiʿat al-ʿUlūm al-Islāmiyya in Karachi, the institution he himself had founded.[27]

18 A commentary completion is currently being undertaken on this incomplete commentary of his. However, this work has not yet been finalized either. For the related study, see Muḥammad Zahid, *Takmilat Maʿārif al-sunan sharḥ Sunan al-imam al-Tirmidhī 1* (Fayṣalābād: Dar al-Sunnah, 2008); Muḥammad Zahid, *Takmilat Maʿārif al-sunan sharḥ Sunan al-imam al-Tirmidhī 2* (Fayṣalābād: Dar al-Sunnah, 2020).

19 Muḥammad Yûsuf al-Banūrī, *Maʿārif al-sunan sharḥ Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī* (Karachi: H. M. Saeed Company, 1413); Muḥammad Yûsuf al-Banūrī, *Maʿārif al-sunan sharḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī* (Karachi: Majlis al-Daʿwah wa al-Taḥqīq al-Islāmī, n.d.).

20 See Muḥammad Salīm Shāh, *al-Dirāsah al-muqāranah bayna Tuḥfat al-Aḥwadhī wa-maʿārif al-sunan sharḥay Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī* (Islamabad: Jāmiʿat al-ʿAllāmah al-Iqbāl maftūḥah, PhD Dissertation, 2005); Muḥammad Yaḥyá Bilāl Manyār, *Dirāsah Ḥadīthīyah fiqhīyah ʿan Maʿārif al-sunan sharḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī lil-muḥaddith al-adīb al-Sayyid Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Bannūrī al-Ḥusaynī maʿa muqāranah bi-Tuḥfat al-Aḥwadhī lil-muḥaddith al-Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-Mubārakfūrī* (Egypt: al-Jāmiʿah al-Azhar, PhD Dissertation, 2006); Yüksel, el-Bennûrî.

21 Muḥammad Yûsuf al-Banūrī, *Bughyat al-arīb fī masāʾil al-qiblah wa al-maḥārīb* (Karachi: Majlis al-Daʿwah wa al-Taḥqīq al-Islāmī, 2016).

22 Banūrī, *Nafḥat al-ʿanbar*.

23 Muḥammad Yûsuf al-Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī wa shayʾun min hayātihi wa afkārihi (1)* (Karachi: Majlis al-Daʿwah wa al-Taḥqīq al-Islāmī, n.d.); Muḥammad Yûsuf al-Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī wa shayʾun min hayātihi wa afkārihi (2)* (Karachi: Majlis al-Daʿwah wa al-Taḥqīq al-Islāmī, n.d.); for the publication of the first part of this same work in Türkiye, see Muḥammad Yûsuf al-Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī wa shayʾun min hayātihi wa afkārihi* (İstanbul: Maktaba al-Haqîqa, 2011). Unfortunately, in this edition, some of the author's statements have been omitted.

24 Muḥammad Yûsuf al-Banūrī, *al-Qaṣāʾid al-Banurīyah*, ed. Muḥammad Habîb Allah Mukhtâr (Karachi: Majlis al-Daʿwah wa al-Taḥqīq al-Islāmī, n.d.).

25 Muḥammad Yûsuf al-Banūrī, *al-Muqaddimāt al-Banurīyah ʿalá al-muʾallafāt al-ʿArabīyah wa al-Fārisīyah wa al-Urdiyah*, ed. Muḥammad Habîb Allah Mukhtâr (Karachi: al-Maqtaba al-Banuriyah, 1980).

26 Yüksel, *el-Bennûrî*, 96 vd.

27 Barni, *ʿUlamā-i Deoband,* 180-181; Suʿūd ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Sarḥān, *Muqaddimah Rasāʾil al-imām Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī ilá al-ʿallāmah Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Banūrī* (ʿAmmān: Dar al-Fath, 2013), 31; Mukhtār al-Dīn Ahmad, "Muḥammad Yûsuf al-Banūrī", *Majallat Majmaʿ al-Lughah al-ʿArabīyah bi Damascus* 56/1 (January 1981), 180.

From this point onward, the study will focus on *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī wa Shayʾun min Hayātihi wa Afkārihi*, examining the key themes and issues around which this refutation—and indeed the present research—is centered.

2. Banūrī's Refutation of Mawdūdī: A General Overview of *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī wa Shayʾun min Hayātihi wa Afkārihi*

It is evident that in order for an issue to find a lasting place in the reader's mind, it must be explained within the framework of a thematic planning. Accordingly, this section will first examine the motives that led Banūrī to author the aforementioned work.[28] Following that, the critique will be categorized according to major disciplines within the Islamic sciences, with each section illustrated by at least one representative example. In cases where a particular subheading contains an abundance of relevant examples, these will be noted briefly with appropriate references, since a detailed analysis of every instance would exceed the scope of this article.

It is well known that Mawdūdī enjoyed considerable prominence in both the Indian subcontinent and the broader Muslim world. A review of his personal life reveals a turbulent youth and a lack of comprehensive training in the traditional Islamic sciences. His principal fields of engagement were journalism, writing, and political activism.[29] Nonetheless, with all his strengths and shortcomings, Mawdūdī emerged as an influential intellectual figure who succeeded in shaping the thought of an entire generation.[30] However, specialists in Islamic sciences have not hesitated to identify the shortcomings in his scholarly method and doctrinal competence. In this regard, Banūrī attributes the earliest recognition of the potentially harmful implications of Mawdūdī's views to Husayn Ahmad Madanī (d. 1957).[31] Among those who responded to Mawdūdī's ideas with written refutations, he names figures such as Manāẓir Aḥsan Gīlānī (d. 1956) and Syed Sulaiman Nadwi (d. 1953).[32] He further notes that even some of Mawdūdī's companions-such as Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī[33] (d. 1999) and Muḥammad Manẓūr al-Nuʿmānī (1997) -eventually resigned from the association he had founded.[34] Banūrī emphasizes that he did not embark upon his refutational effort by choice, but rather out of necessity. He explains his long silence on the matter by pointing to the fact that Mawdūdī's writings included elements that resonated positively with youth experiencing religious confusion, and that the movement he led was engaged in various beneficial activities for the Muslim community.[35] However, when, in Banūrī's view, the

28 For general information about the work, see Yüksel, *el-Bennûrî*, 88-93.

29 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 5-8; For a Banūrī evaluations of Mawdūdī and *Tafhīm al-Qurʾān* in a different work of his, see Muḥammad Yûsuf al-Banūrī, *Yatīmat al-bayān fī shayʾin min ʿulūm al-Qurʾān* (Karachi: Majlis al-Daʿwah wa al-Taḥqīq al-Islāmī, 2016), 89-98.

30 See Mehmet Ali Büyükkara, *Çağdaş İslâmî Akımlar* (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2016), 184-189; For a reading of Mawdūdī through the eyes of his daughter, see Humeyra Mevdudi, *Babam Mevdudi Meyvesi Bol Gölgesi Geniş Ağaç* (İstanbul: Mana Yayınları, 2021).

31 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 11.

32 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 9.

33 Nadwi authored a refutation addressing some of Mawdūdī's views, and this work has been translated into Turkish. See Ebu'l-Hasan en-Nedvî, *İslâm'ın Siyasî Yorumu*, trans. Hakan Özkan (İstanbul: Bedir Yayınevi, 2007).

34 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 10.

35 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 11-12.

harm of Mawdūdī's thought began to outweigh its benefits, composing a refutation became, in his words, an urgent duty[36]—one he undertook solely for the sake of Allah, not in pursuit of praise or recognition.[37] From the introductory remarks in the work, it becomes clear that, in Banūrī's assessment, the roots of Mawdūdī's problematic views lay in his inadequate grounding in Islamic sciences, his insufficient command of the Arabic language, and the influence of associates such as Niyāz Fathpurī (d. 1966), whose views verged on doctrinal heresy *(kufr)*.[38] Banūrī's critiques may be organized in a variety of ways. For the purposes of this study, we have selected the following major thematic categories:

2.1. Conceptual Debates

In his well-known work *Qurʾān kī chār buniyādī istilāḥāt* (In Turkish: *Kur'an'da Dört Terim* / In English: *Four Key Concepts From the Qurʾān*), Mawdūdī presents a number of reflections on the historical development of the terms ilāh,[39] rabb, dīn, and ʿibāda. One of the central points of critique in Banūrī's refutation concerns this very treatment.[40] According to Banūrī, Mawdūdī asserts that anyone who comprehends these four terms is capable of understanding the Qurʾān correctly, whereas those who do not grasp their meanings are incapable of properly comprehending the Qurʾān, tawḥīd, shirk and the exclusive devotion owed to Allah. In Mawdūdī's view, such individuals—even if nominally believers—would possess flawed belief and practice. Mawdūdī further claims that the semantic fields of these terms have shifted from their original meanings at the time of the Qurʾān's revelation. He goes so far as to argue that due to a lack of understanding of these key terms, three-quarters of the religion has remained inaccessible to the masses. Banūrī affirms that his own translations from this work remain faithful to the original, even citing some Urdu phrases.[41] Banūrī observes that Mawdūdī did not exclude anyone from understanding the aforementioned concepts, but he also referred to philologists who lived in the Middle Ages when explaining the relevant words. Banūrī highlights this as a contradiction, asserting that Mawdūdī opens door to numerous misguidances and undermines trust in the centuries-long tradition of linguistic and exegetical scholarship. With a tone that verges on sarcasm, Banūrī questions how someone who was ʿajamī (non-Arab), whose Arabic was weak in both speech and writing, and who could only access the Arabic language through Urdu translations, could suddenly arrive at the true understanding of these terms. He finds it unreasonable to say that these terms, which are thought to be well understood by idolaters such as the worshippers of Lāt and ʿUzzā, were not understood by an ummah that received ʿilm from each other in a chain.[42]

Another related issue addressed under this heading—appearing in the opening section

36 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 12.
37 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 15.
38 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 7, 10-11.
39 Among the term that Mawdūdī emphasizes is ilah, the title in Banūrī's book contains the word Allah. However, within the text, the concept of ilah is consistently used. See Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 17; cf. 19. This is most likely a printing-related issue.
40 While Banūrī addresses this issue under a dedicated section heading, Nadwi takes the matter further by composing an independent refutation devoted entirely to it. See Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 17-23; Nedvî, *İslâm'ın Siyasî Yorumu*.
41 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 17-18.
42 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 18-19.

of the refutation—concerns Mawdūdī's interpretation of the Qurʾānic terms hudā and dīn as found[43] in various verses. Mawdūdī interprets both terms primarily through a political lens. For instance, he takes dīn to mean "state", and interprets the phrase al-dīn al-haqq as "a system in which divine commands are sovereign". Banūrī raises objections to such reductive interpretations, arguing that the term dīn encompasses belief, worship, legislation, ethics, and personal, social, and civic relations. Matters such as political, national, or international governance fall under the purview of siyāsah sharʿiyya—a legitimate but partial aspect of the religion. Connecting this to Mawdūdī's earlier assertions about the misunderstanding of certain key concepts, Banūrī's states that Mawdūdī's formulations on ilāh, rabb, ʿibāda, and dīn prepare the ground for distortions that depart from the spiritual essence of Islam.[44]

One of the relatively relevant topics to be addressed here is the meaning of the phrase "seven heavens". However, since the explanations on this matter are predominantly theological, detailed discussion will not be included under this section.[45] In conclusion, Banūrī, within the framework of conceptual analysis, focuses primarily on the terms such as ilāh, rabb, ʿibāda, and dīn, and secondarily on hudā, dīn, and al-dīn al-haqq. He highlights the problematic nature of Mawdūdī's interpretations and provides a textual basis for his criticisms using Mawdūdī's own writings. While his method of citation strengthens the credibility of the refutation, certain passages betray an interpretive approach that borders on assuming the author's intentions. Yet, given that Banūrī was a contemporary witness to Mawdūdī's activities, it can be assumed that he did not act unjustly in his assessments. Furthermore, his inclusion of the original phrases enhances the reliability of his critique. As far as we can determine, no other conceptual debates are addressed in the two parts of the refutation beyond those discussed here.

2.2. Theological Critiques (Kalāmī Discussions)

A significant portion of Banūrī's refutation of Mawdūdī is devoted to theological issues, with particular emphasis on his criticism of Mawdūdī's views concerning prophets. The first of these is his observations regarding the Prophet Muḥammad. According to Banūrī, in the final section of *Qurʾān kī chār buniyādī istilāḥāt*, Mawdūdī suggests that the command for the Prophet to seek forgiveness in Sūrat al-Naṣr stems from[46] "faults and deficiencies" in fulfilling the prophetic mission.[47] From this, Banūrī argues, Mawdūdī concludes that seeking forgiveness must necessarily imply sin, and interprets the verse accordingly. Banūrī strongly contests this reasoning, asserting that Mawdūdī—whom he refers to as this miskin (poor soul)—is unaware of the multiple contexts in which the Prophet sought forgiveness, such as upon completing prayer, or exiting the lavatory. "Did the Messenger of Allah commit a sin in these moments that necessitated seeking forgiveness?" he asks. Affirming the consensus *(ijmāʿ)* of the ummah on the infallibility of the Prophet, Banūrī contends that the

43 al-Tawba 9/33; al-Fath 48/28; al-Saff 61/9.
44 anūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 29-31.
45 On this matter, see Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (2)*, 16-19.
46 Similar expressions can also be found in his tafsir. See Ebu'l-A'lâ Mevdûdî, *Tefhîmu'l-Kur'an Kur'an'ın Anlamı ve Tefsiri*, trans. Muhammed Han Kayanî et al. (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, n.d.), 7/287.
47 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 18.

Prophet's seeking forgiveness was an expression of his awareness of Allah's majesty and his own humility before that majesty—not a result of any sin or shortcoming. This holds true even within the weighty responsibilities of prophethood. Banūrī accuses Mawdūdī of deliberately seeking opportunities to undermine the doctrine of prophetic infallibility, alleging that he harbors the view that all prophets were fallible, sinful individuals.[48] According to Banūrī, Mawdūdī portrays the Prophet Muḥammad—and indeed, all prophets—as fallible human beings who both obeyed and disobeyed, who were not protected by ʿisma. Anyone who closely reads Mawdūdī's works, he says, will come to the same conclusion. He even asserts that this attitude has permeated Mawdūdī's movement and become a defining principle within in.[49] In the second part of the refutation, Banūrī examines a written statement by Mawdūdī sent to a conference in London, in which he reportedly claimed that the Prophet was not above ordinary humanity and was not free of "human deficiencies".[50] Banūrī cites these Urdu expressions in the original. When Mawdūdī received criticism for these remarks, he attempted to reinterpret "human deficiencies" as merely "human characteristics".[51] However, Banūrī notes that Mawdūdī has used similar language regarding all the prophets.[52]

The second major theme addressed in this section concerns Mawdūdī's claim that the quality of ʿisma is not a permanent attribute of prophethood. As for other issues, brief explanations and references will suffice. According to Mawdūdī, the attribute of infallibility is not an inseparable characteristic of the prophets. Yet, prophets are protected from sin and error only when fulfilling their prophetic duties. Outside of that, he suggests, when Allah removes this quality, they are subject to the same faults as ordinary human beings. He further states that in order to emphasize their humanity, Allah sometimes suspends their infallibility, allowing them to err.[53] Banūrī strongly rejects this view as deeply dangerous. He argues that the ʿulamāʾ have reached consensus that prophetic infallibility is operative throughout the exercise of the prophetic mission, and that suggesting otherwise opens the door to undermining the credibility of the prophetic office itself. If this view were accepted, anyone could claim, "The Prophet erred at a moment when his ʿiṣma had been suspended," thereby undermining the trust placed in divine revelation. Banūrī further claims that Mawdūdī denies[54] that prophets are protected from the evil inclinations of the nafs. He cites, for example, Mawdūdī's portrayal of Prophet Dāwūd as having committed a mistake,[55] Prophet Yūnus as having failed in his prophetic duties,[56] Prophet Mūsā

48 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 21-22.

49 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 23.

50 For his response to a question posed to him on this matter, see Ebu'l A'lâ el-Mevdudî, *Fetvalar*, trans. Mahmud Osmanoğlu - A. Hamdi Chohan (İstanbul: Düşün Yayıncılık, 2015), 1/77-79.

51 For Mawdūdī's related explanation, see Mevdudî, *Fetvalar*, 1/46-47.

52 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (2)*, 32-33.

53 Mevdudî, *Fetvalar*, 1/61.

54 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (2)*, 40-41.

55 For Mawdūdī's statements on this matter and references made to his exegesis, see Bennûrî, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (2)*, 26-29, 34; cf. Mevdûdî, *Tefhîmu'l-Kur'an Kur'an'ın Anlamı ve Tefsiri*, 5/64-68.

56 For his remarks on this issue mentioned in the second part of the refutation, see Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (2)*, 24-25, Banūrī addresses this matter while noting that Mawdūdī made certain revisions in later editions of his works without providing any explanation. This issue is among those revisions. According to him, the first edition of *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān* still contains the original expressions related to these

as being impatient,[57] and Prophet Ādam as having sinned due to ambition.[58] According to Banūrī, such claims are unnecessary to demonstrate the humanity of the prophets. Their human characteristics—such as eating and drinking, walking in marketplaces, and tasting death—are sufficient evidence of their humanity. Thus, he concludes, it is neither necessary nor appropriate to attribute sin or error to them in order to affirm their human status.[59] As noted at the outset, the second part of Banūrī's refutation devotes considerable space to critiquing Mawdūdī's transgressive remarks concerning the prophets. These may be seen in the places we refer to after some of the prophets whose names are mentioned. Among the criticisms he raises are Mawdūdī's claims that Prophet Nūḥ exhibited traits of ignorance and succumbed to human weakness,[60] that Prophet Yūsuf did not merely assume a ministry of finance but aspired to a dictatorial rule akin to Mussolini's regime in Italy,[61] and that Prophet Ibrāhīm's pre-prophetic search for God—as described in the Qurʾān—was marked by confusion and hesitation.[62]

Two further issues deserve to be mentioned at the end of this section. The first concerns the expression "seven heavens". Mawdūdī, according to Banūrī, holds vague and evasive views on this matter. He asserts that human conceptions of the heavens have varied across history and that none of these interpretations can be definitively said to represent the Qurʾānic meaning.[63] Banūrī criticizes this stance as tantamount to rejecting the divine declaration found in Sūrat Fuṣṣilat: "Then He completed them as seven heavens in two days and inspired in each heaven its command." He also invokes numerous mutawātir ḥadīths, especially those relating to the miʿrāj, to refute Mawdūdī's hesitation in affirming the reality of the seven heavens. He warns that denial or re-interpretation of such matters—clear-

claims. Nevertheless, in one part of the Turkish translation, the following statement appears regarding this matter: "It is a sin for a prophet to leave the place to which he was sent without God's permission". See Mevdûdî, *Tefhîmu'l-Kur'an Kur'an'ın Anlamı ve Tefsiri*, 3/327; In another work, Mawdūdī also states that Prophet Yūnus committed a "fault" and that the incident in question occurred "while he was carrying out his prophetic duty". Mevdudî, *Fetvalar*, 2/653-655.

57 For the statements related to his and his response in the second part of the refutation, see Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (2)*, 39; Mawdūdī describes the issue of Prophet Musa accidentally killing a man before being granted prophethood as "a rather grave sin". See Mevdudî, *Fetvalar*, 1/51; However, in his exegesis, he adopts a slightly more lenient tone, emphasizing that the incident was not intentional. He further explains that Mūsā's supplication, "My Lord, I have wronged myself, so forgive me" (al-Qaṣaṣ 28/16), means: "Forgive me this sin—you know that I did not commit it deliberately; conceal it and hide it from the people". Mevdûdî, *Tefhîmu'l-Kur'an Kur'an'ın Anlamı ve Tefsiri*, 4/167.

58 For the passage in the second part of the refutation where Mawdūdī's views on Prophet Adam are discussed, see Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (2)*, 32-34.

59 For the entire paragraph, albeit with the inclusion of various additional footnotes, see Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 26-27; cf. Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (2)*, 31.

60 See Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (2)*, 29-30; cf. Mevdûdî, *Tefhîmu'l-Kur'an Kur'an'ın Anlamı ve Tefsiri*, 2/398. Banūrī cites *Tafhīmu'l-Qur'ān* as his source; however, the exact expressions he refers to cannot be found verbatim in the translation available to us. This may be understood—just as Bannūrī occasionally emphasizes (*al-Ustādh al-Mawdūdī,* 2/23)—as a reflection of Mawdūdī's practice of revising his works from one edition to another without disclosing such changes.

61 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (2)*, 37-38, Banūrī quotes from Mevdūdī's work *Tafhīmāt*. Although in another of Mevdūdī's works there is mention of his desire to assume full authority, any comparison to Mussolini and emphasis on dictatorship are notably absent. See Mevdûdî, *Tefhîmu'l-Kur'an Kur'an'ın Anlamı ve Tefsiri*, 2/471-473.

62 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (2)*, 21-23.

63 See Mevdûdî, *Tefhîmu'l-Kur'an Kur'an'ın Anlamı ve Tefsiri*, 1/61.

ly attested to by both revelation and sound ḥadīths—borders on disbelief, as belief in the truthfulness of Allah, the Qurʾān, and the Prophet is among the foundational tenets of Islam.[64] The second issue concerns the Qurʾānic narrative of Mount Tūr being raised above the Children of Israel. Mawdūdī maintains that the nature of this elevation is obscure and interprets it as a visual phenomenon rather than a physical occurrence.[65] Banūrī interprets this claim as an echo of "Muʿtazilī reasoning" and asserts that it effectively denies the sensory, tangible reality of the miracle.[66]

This section demonstrates that Banūrī's theological critique centers primarily on defending the integrity and sanctity of the prophets. Furthermore, critiques directed at the tendency to rationalize miraculous events and to explain matters that transcend reason through interpretation are particularly important.[67]

2.3. Critiques Concerning Sunnah, Ḥadīth, and the Companions[68]

Banūrī also raises several critiques against Mawdūdī's approach to the ḥadīths. Among the most prominent issues is Mawdūdī's treatment of the ḥadīths concerning the Dajjāl. Mawdūdī asserts that the Prophet Muḥammad believed the Dajjāl would appear in his own lifetime; however, since more than 1.350 years have passed without the fulfillment of this prediction, Mawdūdī concludes that the Prophet's assumption was erroneous and based merely on personal opinion *(raʾy)* and analogy *(qiyās)*.[69] Banūrī states that his words can be interpreted as denying the emergence of the Dajjāl.[70] Yet, this matter is certain with the mutawātir ḥadīths. He notes five critical issues with Mawdūdī's claim: (1) it undermines a matter that is theologically definitive; (2) it implies the Prophet erred in his judgement; (3) the emergence of Dajjāl, like the descent of Jesus, is a fundamental point of belief, inherited across all Abrahamic traditions; (4) the delay in its occurrence does not negate its eventual realization, as it is one of the recognized signs of the qiyāma; (5) the divergent

64 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (2)*, 16-18.

65 Cf. Mevdûdî, *Tefhîmu'l-Kur'an Kur'an'ın Anlamı ve Tefsiri*, 1/84; In another work, he states that this act of removal either refers to the mountain being uprooted entirely from its base or to it being tilted while remaining upon its foothills, and he emphasizes the impossibility of definitively determining which of these interpretations is intended. See Mevdudî, *Fetvalar*, 2/661-662.

66 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (2)*, 20.

67 It may be argued that Mawdūdī's attitude in certain matters—such as the one under discussion here—was influenced by several factors: his lack of a formal and systematic education in the Islamic sciences; his early intellectual companionship with figures such as Niyāz Fathpurī, whose beliefs were considered theologically problematic; the pervasive orientalist activities in the region he lived; and his search for a solution in response to contemporary criticisms regarding the "backwardness" of Muslims.

68 For his views and interpretations concerning the ḥadīth, see Yavuz Köktaş, *Hadis ve Yorum* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2011), 83-162.

69 For some of his statements on the topic, See Mevdudî, *Fetvalar*, 1/157-160; In another work, the expression he employs is "analogy and conjecture". See Ebu'l A'lâ Mevdûdi, *Sünnetin Anayasal Niteliği*, trans. N. Ahmet Asrar (İstanbul: Çıra Yayınları, 2011), 167.

70 Mawdūdī states that he does not deny the emergence of the Dajjal, that he believes in it, and that he recites the supplication for protection mentioned in the ḥadīths. However, he describes the reports about the Dajjal being bound on an island as "legend". Mevdudî, *Fetvalar*, 1/157. Nevertheless, in a later section, he objects to considering this belief as part of the essential tenets of Islamic faith. See 1/159. This naturally raises the question of how Mawdūdī understands reports transmitted through tawatur. Furthermore, as noted by Köktaş, from Mawdūdī's perspective, "the ḥadīths stating the general emergence of the Dajjal are divinely inspired, whereas those specifying when and from where he will appear are merely the result of the Prophet's conjecture and analogy". Köktaş, *Hadis ve Yorum*, 132.

reports regarding the Dajjāl's place of emergence do not indicate contradiction, but rather variation in narrative detail. Ultimately, the Dajjāl will appear in a region mentioned in the ḥadīths and travel across various lands. Banūrī closes his critique by stating that only those unfamiliar with the science of ḥadīth would find such variations troubling.[71] A second issue concerns a ḥadīth regarding a child in the cradle bearing witness to the innocence of Prophet Yūsuf. Mawdūdī reportedly dismisses the account of a miraculously speaking infant, stating that there is no sound chain of transmission and that such an event does not require recourse to the miraculous. Instead, he speculates that the witness was either a discerning adult, a judge, or someone of spiritual insight.[72] Banūrī emphasizes that if he resorted to the tafsirs in circulation, he would not dare to say that the ḥadīth was not authentic. He also affirms the soundness of the narration and references its transmission in *Musnad Aḥmad*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, and *al-Mustadrak of al-Ḥākim*—through both Ibn ʿAbbās and Abū Hurayrah. Ḥākim himself states that the ḥadīth meets the conditions of Bukhārī and Muslim.[73] Banūrī cites Ālūsī's tafsīr in support of his position.[74] Banūrī also critiques Mawdūdī's comments on the ḥadīth[75] in Ṣaḥīḥayn wherein the Prophet Sulaymān is said to have visited all of his wives in a single night. Banūrī stresses that the narration is authentic and should be understood in the context of producing a generation that would strive in the path of Islam. He asserts that interpreting it solely through the lens of sensual gratification is misguided and that Mawdūdī offers no constructive alternative, instead deepening confusion. According to Mawdūdī, the Prophet stated that the Jews held such a belief about Sulaymān. However, the Companions may not have understood this ḥadīth and may have simply relayed it as such! In this case, claiming that they couldn't understand the Prophet despite being the most intelligent members of the ummah would undermine any sense of trust placed in them.[76]

In addition to critiques related to ḥadīth, Banūrī addresses Mawdūdī's controversial statements regarding certain Companions,[77] particularly the *tulaqāʾ*—those who em-

71 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 34-36.

72 Cf. Mevdûdî, *Tefhîmu'l-Kur'an Kur'an'ın Anlamı ve Tefsiri*, 2/454.

73 For the relevant narration, see Abu Abd Allah Ahmad b. Muḥammad b. Hanbal al-Shaybānī al-Marwazî Ahmad b. Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, Critical ed. Shuayb al-Arnaud (Beirut: Resalah Publishers, 1995), 5/31 (No. 2821); Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Amr al-Bazzār, *al-Bahr al-zahhâr*, Critical ed. Mahfouz al-Rahmân Zayn Allâh et al. (Madina: Maqtaba al-'Uloom wa al-Hikam, 1988/2009), 11/276 (No. 5067); Abu Abd Allah Muḥammad b. Abd Allah b. Muḥammad al-Hākim al-Nīsābūrī, *al-Mustadrak ʿalá al-ṣaḥīḥayn*, Critical ed. Muṣṭafá 'Abd al-Qādir 'Aṭā' (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyah, 1990), 2/539 (No. 3835); In the narration reported by Ibn Ḥibbān, Ibn ʿAbbās mentions three individuals who spoke from the cradle but states that he could not recall the fourth. See al-Amīr 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Alī al-Fārisī Ibn Balbân, *al-Iḥsān fī taqrībi Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Ḥibbān*, Critical ed. Shuayb al-Arnaud (Beirut: Resalah Publishers, 1988), 7/165 (No. 2904); For the version narrated by Abū Hurayrah as reported by Ḥākim, see al-Hākim al-Nīsābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, 2/650 (No. 4161).

74 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (2)*, 25; cf. Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-Thanā' Maḥmūd ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Baghdādī al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-maʿānī fī al-tafsīr al-Qur'ān wa al-Sabʿ al-mathānī*, Critical ed. Māhir Ḥabbūsh (Beirut: Resalah Publishers, 2010), 12/285-286.

75 Abu Abd Allah Muḥammad b. Ismaeel al-Bukhari, *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ* (Damascus: Mu'assasat al-Risālah Nāshirūn, 2015), "Anbiya", 40 (No. 3424); Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī al-Nīsābūrī Muslim, *al-Musnad al-Sahih* (Damascus: Mu'assasat al-Risālah Nāshirūn, 2015), "Ayman", 22-25 (No. 1654).

76 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (2)*, 41-43.

77 For Mawdūdī's commentary on the incident of muʾākhāt (brotherhood) between ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf and Saʿd b. al-Rabīʿ—an event that exemplifies īthār (altruism) as a moral quality of the Companions—

braced Islam after the conquest of Mecca and were later appointed to administrative roles. Mawdūdī suggests that although these individuals were politically competent, they lacked moral leadership, had not spent sufficient time in the Prophet's company, and retained remnants of pre-Islamic ignorance. In response, Banūrī lists several of the tulaqāʾ by name, noting, for example, that Muʿāwiyah accepted Islam at the time of Ḥudaybiyyah and concealed his faith from his father. Although he does not delve into the issue at length, he affirms that the Prophet himself appointed such individuals to positions of responsibility, they were sincere Muslims, and they had accompanied him in battle and received his companionship. Banūrī, questioning whether further proof of their trustworthiness is needed, states that Mawdūdī "took revenge" on ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān with these words, and that he also stated that these individuals, while skilled in non-religious politics, did not deserve to be assigned duties based on religion and piety. He further questions how Mawdūdī can maintain a distinction between religion and politics in the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs—an era in which the two were inseparably intertwined. Such views, Banūrī argues, offend both Allah and His Messenger.[78]

Mawdūdī's interpretation of the reasons behind the Muslim defeat at the Battle of Uḥud is also subject to critique by Banūrī. In this context, Mawdūdī attributes the defeat to the societal spread of ribā (usury), arguing that in communities where interest becomes prevalent, various moral vices—such as greed, covetousness, miserliness, anger, and envy—inevitably emerge. He concludes that these moral failings were among the principal causes of the Muslims' setback in the battle.[79] Banūrī begins his response by noting that there is no such indication in the Qurʾānic verses addressing the events of Uḥud. Even if we accept that the young men defied their commander, interpreted his words in their own way, and preferred to share in the spoils, this raises the question of whether this situation stemmed from their greed, stinginess, envy, and hatred. Even if we accept that interest had not yet been forbidden, how could such undesirable behavior affect them, given their sincere faith? After all, according to what he stated, it was as if Mawdūdī was waiting for an opportunity to take revenge on the Companions and to ensure that they were criticized.[80]

According to Banūrī, those who carefully examine Mawdūdī's writings will readily discern his assertion that remnants of Jāhiliyyah persisted among the Companions and that they were never fully purified from its influence. In the same interpretive framework-wherein the Prophet himself is reduced to the level of an ordinary human being -Banūrī presents Mawdūdī's claim and, with due justification, poses a critical question: "If trust in religious transmission is thereby undermined, then from whom are we to receive our knowledge of the religion?"[81]

As observed here, Banūrī employed his expertise in the field of ḥadīth throughout his

and for al-Banūrī's critiques of his interpretation, see Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (2)*, 34-37.

78 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 41-42.

79 Mevdûdî, *Tefhîmu'l-Kur'an Kur'an'ın Anlamı ve Tefsiri*, 1/293-294.

80 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (2)*, 13-14.

81 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 23; For Banūrī's explanations regarding the principle—articulated within the framework of Jamaat-e-Islami's foundational tenets—that "no one other than the Messenger of Allah can be critetion of truth/right" and his view that this maxim is not as innocent as it may appear, see 43-47.

refutation, offering responses to Mawdūdī where he deemed necessary. Furthermore, recognizing the Companions' central role in the transmission of the religion, he also offered a defense of the Companions.

2.4. Critiques on Jurisprudential Matters

It would be difficult to say that Banūrī's refutation is primarily focused on jurisprudential concerns. However, two fundamental issues stand out in this regard. First, he addresses Mawdūdī's views that all acts of worship in Islam, particularly prayer (ṣalāh), fasting (ṣawm), pilgrimage (ḥājj), and almsgiving (zakāt), ultimately function as instruments toward the establishment of an Islamic state and the assumption of political authority. Banūrī points out that, if such a view were taken to its logical conclusion, one might infer that once an Islamic government is established, the performance of these acts of worship would become unnecessary. He further notes the subtlety with which Mawdūdī often couches his problematic assertions, describing them as being "like an ant crawling upon stone"—barely detectable except by those with trained discernment.[82] In another passage, Mawdūdī argues that these acts of worship are performed with the aim of liberating the individual from human sovereignty and submitting fully to divine authority, and that jihād is the exertion of all efforts towards this goal. Therefore, the relevant acts of worship are performed for the realization of this sole purpose. However, Banūrī criticizes the issues he sees as problematic here and argues that the issue is being overturned. These are not the means to the establishment of an Islamic government, but rather the Islamic government is the means to the perfect performance of these acts of worship and the establishment of justice. While acts of worship are the ultimate goal, the caliphate and government are merely means to this end. Banūrī thus poses a penetrating question: If these acts are merely instrumental, then what becomes of them once the end goal—Islamic governance—is achieved? He remarks that Mawdūdī's repeated statements on this subject across his writings reveal the consistency of his position, and he notes that ʿAbd al-Mājid Daryābādī (d. 1977) was the first to respond to Mawdūdī's view with a raddiyya on this matter. He concludes his critique by asking whether such a view represents the revival and renewal of religion, or its destruction and death.[83]

A second issue discussed under this heading is Mawdūdī's position that certain foundational principles of Islam may be altered in response to considerations of maṣlaḥah (contextual benefit). Mawdūdī'argues that the fundamentals of Islam are twofold; one cannot be changed, while the other can be modified when the best interests dictate. He emphasizes that the principle of justice between individuals and people is a fundamental principle of religion, that Allah has declared that superiority and dignity can only be achieved through piety, and that the Prophet Muḥammad acted accordingly and repeatedly emphasized this. Indeed, the Prophet appointed such individuals, whether slaves or freedmen, to administrative positions. However, when it came to state order, he abandoned this principle and declared that the head of state would be a member of the Quraysh. Arabs were not prepared to tolerate the leadership of a non-Arab, or even a non-Quraysh person. Therefore, the Prophet abandoned this principle of equality in the Quran and, in the name of establishing

82 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 20.
83 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 27-29.

the religion, prohibited his companions from acting accordingly.[84] Banūrī states that these statements amount to "misguidance and heresy," and that this implies that changes can be made to all forms of worship when the state's order requires it. He points out that he adopted this view among the principles of Jama'at-e-Islami during the elections in Pakistan, when Sayyida Fāṭima (d. 1967), [Jinnah's sister], was running against President Ayub Khan (d. 1974). In these elections, he and his community supported Sayyida Fāṭima, declaring that she possessed all the qualities required for a woman to be head of state, despite the objections of scholars and the public. This view caused considerable public uproar, and even led to the resignation of one of his closest supporters, Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī (d. 1997), due to this view.[85]

As can be understood in this context, the topics of the refutation are fundamentally related to matters of Sharia politics. The metamorphosis of religious principles based on expediency, however, is again a matter of political interpretation and is not discussed as a purely jurisprudential problem. As can be seen, Mawdūdī portrays himself as a political leader[86] on these issues, rather than as an Islamic scholar, and shapes his views accordingly.

2.5. Critiques on Miscellaneous Issues

The refutation also contains a number of critiques that do not easily fall under the conventional headings of Islamic disciplines. One such topic involves Mawdūdī's assessments of the Bayt al-Ḥarām region, its inhabitants, its governance, and the perceived commercialization of pilgrimage services. According to Mawdūdī, the present condition of this sacred region resembles that of a pre-Islamic Jāhiliyyah society. He claims that knowledge, ethics, and Islamic life have largely disappeared from the area, and that pilgrims arriving from distant lands are met with ignorance, greed, moral corruption, pollution, administrative failure, and a population devoid of dignity and humanity. As a result, he argues, many pilgrims return home disillusioned.[87] Mawdūdī further asserts that the traditional custodial duties of the Kaʿbah—ḥijāba and sidāna—though maintained since the time of Abraham and continued through the age of Jāhiliyyah, were abolished[88] by the Prophet but have now been revived. He likens the Kaʿbah's service and the ḥajj ritual to a commercial enterprise, comparing[89] the situation to the pilgrimage of Hindu idolaters to Haridwar[90] in India. Banūrī dismisses these statements as unworthy of serious refutation, asserting that Mawdūdī's words reflect more of a personal bitterness toward the region's rulers, population, and custodians of the Ḥaram than a sound scholarly critique. He stresses that the ruler of this land is known for his adherence to the Sunnah, his appreciation for religious scholars, and his

84 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 23-24; cf. Mevdudî, *Fetvalar*, 2/498.

85 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 24-26.

86 Banūrī is of the opinion that his views in this context indicate an attempt to assume the position of "the ruler of the country". See Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 31.

87 One who reads these statements is certainly entitled to ask: "If Mawdūdī were to witness the current state of the region he once lived in, would he still make the same remarks about the sacred land and its inhabitants?"

88 It is observed that at the end of Banūrī's explanations that the phrase (قضى بها) used in Mawdūdī's statements is interpreted as (قضى عليها) in the sense of "eliminating" or "bringing to an end". Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 32-33.

89 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 32-33.

90 About Haridwar, see Haridwar, "History" (Access 23 July 2025).

support for the ʿulamāʾ.[91] He describes the region as one of the most protected from fitnah, corruption, and spiritual decline, noting that the application of Islamic law there provides a unique sense of security.[92]

A related critique centers on Mawdūdī's accusations against the Saudi regime,[93] particularly his claim that religious scholars formed an alliance with the royal family at the time of the state's founding, leading to a political structure dominated by a single tribe and the emergence of privilege-based governance.[94] To Banūrī, this is a flawed approach. He responds by emphasizing that, in Islamic governance, the most sound model is one in which political leaders and religious scholars collaborate in their respective spheres.[95] The rightful division of responsibility, he argues, is for ʿulamāʾ to lead in religious affairs and statesmen to lead in administrative matters. He justifies this by noting the rarity of individuals who possess both deep religious learning and political leadership qualities. In the absence of such exceptional individuals, the best approach is for power to be divided and entrusted to those most qualified in each domain. Banūrī comparing the state to a city, emphasized that competent individuals were needed to run any branch of business in a city, and that in this case, tasks were entrusted to competent individuals. He, noting that there was a division of duties in state affairs during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, notes that Mawdūdī focused solely on the reign of the first two caliphs due to the extremity of his views on the revival and renewal of religion, resulting in his harsh criticism of the reign of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān. Mawdūdī, who in his book *Khilafat-o-Mulukiat* unacceptably criticises Caliph ʿUthmān, portrays himself as a Shīʿī taking revenge on Islam and a Rightly Guided Caliph. His guide in this regard was Sayyid Quṭub, who also criticised ʿUthmān in his book *al-ʻAdalat al-İjtimaʻiyyah fi'l-Islâm* (In Turkish: İslam'da *Sosyal Adalet*). In the aforementioned book, Quṭub combined "Shīʿism and Socialism". Banūrī, adds that he was saddened to see how the empty rhetoric of a figure whose motivation was nothing more than a love of politics and leadership deceived people.[96] Finally, he states that the Saudi government was the best government among Arab, and even Islamic countries and justifies this by adhering to religious order and utilizing the views of ulamāʾ. He emphasizes that if this characteristic disappears, the aforementioned virtue will also disappear.[97] In other words, as can be seen,

91 It is known that Banūrī undertook scholarly travels during a certain period, during which he visited the Haramayn and met with King Abd al-Aziz of Saudi Arabia. In this meeting, the King issued instructions for *Fayḍ al-bārī* by Kashmīrī to be distributed among the scholars and libraries of Hijaz and Najd. Yüksel, *el-Bennûrî*, 61; Nadwi, "al-Banuri wa Kitâbuhû (1)", 59.

92 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 33; it appears that Hüseyin Hilmi Işık, who disagreed with Banūrī's views on this particular issue and omitted the relevant sections from the published edition, sided with Mawdūdī on the matter. For the specific parts where he intervened in Banūrī's statements and for the expressions of his objection, see Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī*, 27.

93 For the related chapter, see Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 37-41, this topic is situated between sections titled "His Belief Regarding the Dajjal and the Claim That the Prophet Erred in This Matter According to Ḥadīths" and "The Companions Belonging to the Tulaqa Group and Their Alleged Unworthiness for Administrative Duties". However, in the edition of Hüseyin Hilmi Işık, this topic has been removed from the book. Cf. Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī,* 28-29.

94 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 37.

95 For an observation regarding the inclusion of political matters among the discussion topics in the scholarly gatherings of the Indian subcontinent, see Demirci, *Sömürge Döneminde Hadis ve Yorum*, 18.

96 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 37-39.

97 Banūrī, *al-Ustāḏ al-Mawdūdī (1)*, 40.

his approach on this point is not political but directly related to the principled perspective of a religious scholar concerned with the application of the Shariʿah.

It is within the right of anyone who reads Banūrī's writings to wonder what his views, which can be considered reasonable for his time, would be if he saw the current administration of the Ḥaramayn. However, his concise statement, which can be formulated as "When the distinguishing feature is lost, so too is the virtue" clarifies his approach on this point. Banūrī's statements under this heading reflect a scholar's perspective rather than a political interpretation. At the same time, considering that Banūrī also criticized Mawdūdī's views on politics, it can be argued that the issue was not merely related to scholarly methodology. It is known that his teacher, Anwār Shāh al-Kashmīrī (d. 1933), after the publication of his commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Fayḍ al-bārī*, visited the King of Saudi Arabia on one occasion; during his visit, the King reportedly purchased a number of copies of the work to be distributed among the scholars of the Haram.[98] Thus, it should be kept in mind that Banūrī received, albeit to a limited extent, some support from the Saudi authorities in the course of his scholarly activities.

Conclusion

The Indian subcontinent, with which Muslims have had contact since the earliest periods of Islam, has long been a region marked by diverse religious, intellectual, and political approaches. Following the 1857 Independence Revolt, under the heavy oppression of British colonial rule, various solutions were proposed for the salvation of the Muslim community—some political, others religious or scholarly in nature. These differing approaches often led to classifications such as Sunnī vs. Bidaʿor Traditionalist vs. Modernist. In this context, individuals tended to critique those positioned differently, giving rise to a broader atmosphere of refutation. One such example is the refutation authored by Muḥammad Yusuf al-Banūrī—a scholar and Deoband graduate—directed at Mawdūdī, whose outlook was more politically driven and, in Bannūrī's view, lacking in scholarly rigor.

Banūrī, though stating he wrote his refutation out of necessity, maintained a generally moderate tone. Occasional harshness in his style can be attributed to his religious zeal. He addressed various problematic points he identified in Maududi's works, often quoting or referencing the original texts—a commendable approach that allows readers to assess the issues firsthand. This also enhances the credibility of the refutation. Using clear and concise language, he avoids excessive detail. In this context, it can be stated that he focused on the matters he considered most essential. His calls for fairness and prayers for divine guidance reflect a conscientious attitude. The refutation includes limited conceptual and juridical criticism. This can be attributed to the overall nature of the themes that Mawdūdī chose to emphasize at this stage. Theological issues—especially those concerning prophets—take center stage. This point is closely linked to his attempt to underscore the preserved nature of the prophetic revelation and to justify the practicability of the Sunnah through a focus on the prophets' place within the Sharīʿah. Topics on Sunnah, ḥadīth, and the Companions, areas of his expertise, are addressed to a moderate extent. The limited number of aspects

98 Yüksel, el-Bennûrî, 60-61.

to criticism appears to be the primary reason for this. In addition, the relatice acceptability of Mawdūdī's approach —as demonstrated in works such as the *Sunnat Ki Aaini Haisiyat* (In Turkish: *Sünnetin Anayasal Niteliği*)—must also have been taken into account.

In conclusion, the works of Mawdūdī and similar figures—who gained significant attention in the last century—should be read not with blind acceptance, but through the lens of scholarly rigor. It is also important to recognize that their writings, which often aim at providing solutions, primarily address the crises of their own regions. Their overarching frameworks were shaped by an effort to respond to such local challenges. In this regard, examining the figures and works emerging from the Indian subcontinent and comparable contexts offers valuable insight. Such studies allow for a broader understanding of theological debates across different regions and benefit from the diverse perspectives and scholarly approaches of various researchers.

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