

Shah Waliullah (1703 – 1762): The Man and his Mission

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How many historical figures have India produced who won the respect of the whole Muslim Umma? Was not Shah Waliullah one of those who wielded a lot of influence among all sects of Muslims? If yes, what gave him such a unique status and immortalized his name in the world of Islam? Why poet philosopher like Allama Iqbal could not fail, despite some differences, to recognize his efforts for the revival of Muslim Umma? What has he left to posterity and how have his descendents contributed to the Muslim freedom movement in India in its embryonic stage? How justified was Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani to say that after the death of Shah Waliullah, there was no undisputed leader among the Muslims of India? What did he mean by Khilafat-e-Kubra¹ and whether this concept was identical to that of Khilafat-e-Rashida?² How many Islamic revivalist movements were inspired by his work? To what extent his efforts bore fruit in his life and subsequently? An attempt is made in this paper to provide plausible answers to these questions.

Introduction

A descendent of Umar Farooq the Great, Shah Waliullah was son of a renowned scholar of Islam, Shah Abdul Raheem. When Aurangzeb

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1 Shah Waliullah presented concept of Khilafat-e-Kubra in his famous book *Hujat-Ullah al-Baligha* in which he suggested that if it is impossible to unite every Muslim state under one leadership but it is possible that all or most of the Muslim states should establish consensus on some points and a confederation system. Detail is available in his book, (Delhi: Bijnoor Press, 1937), p.42.

2 Khilafat-e-Rashida was the system of ideal Islamic states which sustained for 30 years after the death of Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him). Shah Abdul Haq, Mushkaat. (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1963), p.97

Alamgir constituted a board of Muslim scholars to compile a work dealing with problems of daily life and providing solution to them in the light of Islamic injunctions, the end result of that effort was “*Fatawa-i-Alamgiri*”.³ Shah Muhammad Ishaq, the grandson of Shah Waliullah, described the ‘*Fatawa*’, though written for the service of Muslim community, elitist in its purport and undertones. Shah Abdul Rahim had only separated from that board but also started to educate the next generation to prepare them for the future challenges. He thought Aurangzeb was the most formidable barrier to Muslim decline in the subcontinent, but had doubts about his successors’ ability to sustain power. Therefore, he deputed some disciples to most parts of Muslim India to preach his mission urging intra-Muslim unity and discouraging the schism which was detrimental to the Muslim supremacy.⁴

Shah Waliullah was only four when Emperor Aurangzeb died and a battle for throne started among the royal siblings. Succession wars, characteristic of the Sultanate and Moghal periods in India, intensified as soon as Aurangzeb died causing endless misery, dislocation and fragmentation of power. A privy to the Muslim decline, Shah Waliullah could not conceal his grief which he expressed through powerful writings and intellectual discourse.

Contribution of Shah Waliullah

Having memorized the Holy Quran at seven, Shah Waliullah started teaching in the Madressa Rahimia in 1721. Later, he went to Mecca where he studied *Hadith* and other disciplines of Islam like *Fiqah* (Jurisprudence and comparative study of different sects of Islam). To further his knowledge of *Hadith*, he met Sheikh Abu Tahir Madni, a leading Islamist who was his contemporary.⁵ Apparently, he also met Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab but some of Shah Waliullah’s disciples denied it. According to Ashiq Hussain, Sheikh Muhammad bin

3 This book deals with the problems of daily life of a Muslim and presented solution of these problems in the light of Islamic injunctions. Shah Abdul Raheem did not want to keep it confined to the problems of daily life but he wanted to identify the evils which were being emerged due to weakness of Indian Muslim in general and elite class in particular.

4 Ashiq Hussain, *Sarguzasht-e-Rahimia* (Delhi: Bijnor Press, 1937).

5 Some of the scholars opine that periods of Sheikh Muhammad Bin Abdul Wahab (the spiritual leader of Saudi dynasty), and Shah Waliullah were the same i.e. 1703 – 1793. Although there is no any clear evidence through which it can be proved that Shah Waliullah met with Sheikh Muhammad Bin Abdul Wahab but it is obvious that Sheikh Abu Tahir Madni and Sheikh Muhammad Bin Abdul Wahab had similar ideas. Therefore, influence of Wahabi movement is found in his ideas except mysticism which was used as the device of reformation.

Abdul Wahab was not permitted entry in Hijaz by the Turkish Caliph and that Shah Waliullah never visited Najad.⁶ However, it was just a coincidence that Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab was also a student of Sheikh Abu Tahir Madni. Regardless of whether or not the two luminaries ever met, they differed in their understandings of Islam and its articulation. Shah Waliullah believed in mysticism like the followers of Ahmed Sarhandi (Mujjadid Alf-i-Sani), whereas Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab was a strict puritan who opposed mysticism and any compromise on the word of Quran and *Hadith*.

Shah Waliullah twice stayed in Mecca and Madina for two years on each occasion in 1730-1732 and 1734-1736. According to Ashiq Hussain, Shah Waliullah wanted to stay there forever like successors of Shah Abdul Haq Mohadiss Dehlavi but Sheikh Abu Tahir Madni had ordered him to go back to India and lead the Muslims towards the righteous way, the way of Allah and his Prophet⁷ (PBUH).

Thus, Shah Waliullah came back to India in 1737 and started preaching as advised by his teacher, Sheikh Abu Tahir Madni. He adopted a three dimensional strategy of reformation:

- a. He started delivering sermons of Jumma prayer, and used the pulpits of the mosque to convey his message to the Muslims as well as their rulers.
- b. He founded an organization Hizb-e-Walliullahi, through which his religious ideas were conveyed to other parts of India.⁸
- c. He urged that the Holy Quran and other literature of Islam be translated into Persian, then official language.

He himself translated the Holy Quran into Persian, an effort that was not welcomed by the traditional ulema.⁹ He criticized social and political hierarchies of the time and thus provoked negative reaction. According to Maulana Khalil Ahmed, the administration of Delhi tried its best to restrain Shah Waliullah from delivering religious sermons and speeches. Shah Waliullah, besides speeches started writing on different aspects of life in the light of Quran and Sunnah. His works revealed that

6 Ashiq Hussain, *Wahabi Movement in India* (Patna: Patna University Press, 1942) p.37.

7 Shah Waliullah, *Hujjat Ullah Baligha*, (Preface).

8 According to research of Dr Ashiq Hussain of Patna, spiritual guide of Tipu Sultan was also member of this organization.

9 Some of the followers of Shah Waliullah claimed that the first effort of translating the Holy Quran was made by Shah Waliullah but it was proved that Mukhdoom Loo was the first person who translated the Holy Quran in Persian.

he was not a blind follower of any particular Imam but was inclined more to Hanafite School of Islamic Law. Representing a blend between the orthodox ulema and eclectic Sufi, Shah Waliullah earned the sympathy of Sunnite Muslims within India and abroad¹⁰.

Shah Waliullah adopted the way of Sufi. However, his mysticism was not passive but proactive in both doctrinal and temporal matters. Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi regarded him as the first among the leading ulema who declared monarchy as un-Islamic, inhumane and immoral.¹¹ According to Basharat Mirza, it was Shah Waliullah, who clearly described the four phases of development of mankind. The author considered him the first sociologist and anthropologist of modern world whose views, unfortunately, neither published on time nor did they receive the due attention by Muslim scholars. A chapter in "*Hujatullah Al-balighah*" namely "*Irtifaqat*" is a pointer to the *alim's* grip on matters not strictly religious but also falling in the purview of sociological sciences.

In his book, Shah Waliullah defined politics and differentiated it from government. He narrated the qualifications of *Khalifa*, Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Army Chief and real soldier of Islam. He insisted that army should be organized as a separate and professional organization. He was opposed to the weaponisation of the civilians. In his view a *Khalifa* should come preferably from the tribe of Quraish but in case of non-availability of an eligible Quraish, others may be elected.

He also described the qualities of chief justice, judges and the whole structure of judiciary. He was of the view that the root cause of Muslim decline lay in the weakness of judiciary and criminal negligence of the rulers to impart modern education to the masses. He abhorred the pernicious status quo and demanded a system adapted to the need, dignity and honour of Muslim India.

He had no qualms in seeking an end to the contemporary governments in Muslim countries and their replacement by a system of government based on Quran, Sunnah and pristine example of Khilafat-e-Rashida¹². Such a system he would name as Khilafat-e-Kubra. Knowing that Khilafat-e-Kubra cannot be established at present due to the so-

10 Shiites Muslims, the second largest Muslim sect, nevertheless did not subscribe to his views.

11 Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi, *Shah Waliullah ki Syasi Tehreek*, edition 13, (Delhi: Bijnor Press, 1939) p.23.

12 He made it clear that Khilafat-e-Rashida had ended with the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali. He included Hazrat Hassan and Hazrat Omer bin Abdul Aziz with some reservations.

called national interests of Muslim states, he urged a loose arrangement whereby harmony, community of interest and internationalism could be promoted in Islamic world. Only such a converse, added Shah Waliullah, would help realize the ultimate goal of Khilafat-e-Kubra.

Invitation to Ahmed Shah Abdali for Invasion of India

Shah Waliullah was concerned that Marathas had occupied the whole of Muslim India except Red Fort by 1760, yet the Mughals had failed to rise to the occasion. He wrote to Ahmed Shah Abdali to attack India and to check Maratha menace. A special messenger was sent to Qandahar carrying the letter of Shah Waliullah to Abdali¹³, who had invaded India thrice before and was well aware of political predicament of Indian Muslims. Abdali responded to this call for Jihad and inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Marathas.

There are two schools of thought about the consequences of this step. The first school has argued that Abdali's conquest was momentary in effect as it did not establish a strong Muslim rule despite the destruction of the Marathas. It was rather British who filled this political vacuum. This school holds Abdali as responsible for facilitating the British imperialism in India. On the other hand, partisans of Waliullah have argued that Maratha force was staunchly anti-Muslims; it had resorted to ethnic cleansing and forcible conversion; it had forced the Muslims to live as second-rate subjects under Hindu domination. They regarded British as lesser evil who being aliens were bound to leave in time. Thus Pakistan was the natural corollary of events leading to the defeat of Marathas, rise of British and partition of India or birth of Pakistan. Shah Waliullah did not want to establish British rule in India. His intention was to save the Muslim rule even if it would entail aggression from a brotherly Muslim ruler. What Waliullah could not achieve in his life, the founding fathers of Pakistan did two centuries later subscribing to his political philosophy that Islam and Hinduism are antithetic to each other and cannot become the basis of a common nationality.

Intellectual Legacy

Shah Waliullah was a prolific writer. He had written 143 books out of which 86 were published. The manuscripts of the remaining 57 books were found in the personal libraries of different scholars. Those works, if published, would have enhanced our knowledge on various aspects of his struggle and views. It is no wonder that even Allama Iqbal had to say,

13 Original letter sent by Shah Waliullah is preserved in Peshawer Museum.

“We can understand easily the *“Hujat”* but not *“Tafheemat”*. Waliullah’s work ranged from *hikmat* to mysticism to politics, history, hadith, principle of interpretation of Holy Quran and Arabic grammar. Three main groups of Muslim theologians of subcontinent regard him as their spiritual and intellectual guide. *Ahle Hadees* and Ulema of Deoband claim to be real successors of Shah Waliullah. Likewise, the Brelvi sect of Sunnite Muslims also considers him as their mentor. Besides this, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Syed Jamaluddin Afghani, Ayatullah Khumaini and many other stalwarts of religio-political movements seemed to have imbibed from the intellectual discourses of Shah Waliullah. Shah Waliullah was born two centuries ago, therefore, his work did not receive the deserved attention. The Arabic *“Hujatul al Baligha”* focused on socio-economic, political, religious and anthropological fields of knowledge. Lacking knowledge of Arabic, Muslim scholars as well as European Islamists could not appreciate its worth.

In another book *“Al-Badoor al-Bazigha”*, scolding the rulers of that time, Shah Waliullah said “you retreat from the enemy of Islam and attack the helpless communities of the Muslims. Blood of the poor Muslims is sucked from their bodies which has developed your stomachs bigger with the passage of time. You have lost your honour to such extent that you invite the enemy of Muslims and Islam to crush other Muslim brothers. I predict that Allah has decided to destroy wholly this unholy”. No doubt Shah Waliullah was opposed by the contemporary elites but majority of the Muslim learned classes had great respect for him and even the poor Muslim masses gathered around him.

Shah Waliullah also wrote a book about the four pious caliphs of Islam. A perusal of *“Al-Farooque”* by Maulana Shiblee Noumani¹⁴, it would reveal that most of the material used in his work was borrowed from the biography of Omer the Great, written by Waliullah. Moreover, he compiled forty Hadiths with their translation. All of these Hadiths deal with the norms of daily life and do not have any concern with controversial or disputed matters.¹⁵

Another valuable book by Shah Waliullah deals with mysticism. A single reading would not suffice to understand this book. As Iqbal had said, “Shah Waliullah of *Hujat* can be understood but Shah Waliullah

14 Syed Abul Hassan Ali Nadvi, *Musلمانon kay Syasi Afkar*, edition 13, (Lucknow, Nadva Publications, 1927) p.22.

15 Apparently, 40 hadiths look very small in numbers but these were selected alongwith the detailed chain of narrator of these hadiths. Therefore, it does not mean that this book consists of only the text of 40 hadiths without any reference. This way of narration is called “San’ad”.

of *Tafhimat* is hardly understandable for us”. Despite that the book, “*Tafhimat-e-Ellahia*” is so important that it has undergone 26 editions. Indeed, it is a rare book on mysticism.

Shah Waliullah’s “*Al-Fouzul Kabeer*” seeks to explain the Holy Quran and basic principles. This book cannot be understood without help from a seasoned teacher of Islamic Studies. Shah Waliullah was of the view that some misled Ulema tried to verify some scientific truths mentioned in the Holy Quran but forgot that the Holy Quran is not a book of geography, mathematics or physics. It is revealed by Allah on His Prophet (PBUH) to purify the spirits of its readers and reform the socio-cultural aspects of their life. Whenever some geographical and other scientific facts are narrated in the Quran, these are based on the observations of the Arabs. Therefore, name of mango, apricot and other fruits which are not found on the soil of Arabia have not been mentioned as paradise fruit. Only it is told that “you will find taste of every fruit favourite to you”.

According to Shah Waliullah, concept of paradise was given as incentive to those people who do not worship Allah for the sake of His pleasure. It is a known fact that the man is inspired to act any virtuous or good act due to fear or greed. A small number of people can be persuaded to please Allah for the reason that He is our creator, sustainer and benefactor of such type that could not be counted in spite of our all efforts. The person who wants to write any Tafseer should not involve himself in scientific discoveries which he supposes to be conformed in the Quran. Facts may develop changes with the passage of time, therefore, it is feared that reader of such Tafseer may get confused and become victim of doubts. Hence, he should try to avoid such debates and the Holy Quran should be presented as the book of reformation and purification of soul.

Another point is taken as weaker weapon in the hands of anti-Islamic elements that Quran provides the guidance to the *Muttaqeen* (pious persons) only. They have exploited this point that the person who is not pious cannot receive guidance from the Holy Quran. Whereas the merits of the *Muttaqeen* are given in the other verses of Quran through which this fact can be established that “*Muttaqeen*” mean the people who have impartial minds by nature like the justice and honesty. If it was not so, then how could millions of those persons who had no knowledge about the alphabets of conventional *Muttaqeen*, embraced Islam and dedicated their lives for its preaching. This concept of *Muttaqeen* is also new and unique for modern researchers.

Shah Waliullah's work "*Al-Irshad fe Ilmul Iqtasad*" (Some Instructions about the Economics) defined economic ideas according to the need of the hour. He predicted that a time would come when religion would be replaced by money and wealth. He also advised that amount of *Deyyet* should be determined in the form of coins instead of camels, goats and other kinds of animals and that the system of *Zakat* and *Ushr* be revised because of changes in economy. He also foresaw that a time will come when agricultural economy will be replaced by industrial goods and products. Just as coins have replaced the barter system, it is just possible that other easier and lighter items are introduced with the passage of time. Therefore, we should prepare ourselves for that time. He also mentions in this book that earth and other natural resources have been bestowed by Allah equally for the mankind. When a person owns more than average members of society, it means that he has acquired the share of another man. Therefore, Allah says that the resources exceeding your needs must be spent for the welfare of the poor because you have fetched their shares too. Sounding egalitarian, Shah Waliullah is seen sometimes as the first communist of Muslim India.¹⁶

Another revolutionary idea floated by Shah Waliullah was that war between privileged and deprived classes is not new phenomena but had started since the origin of the mankind. Prophets of Allah were mainly supported by the poor class as Prophets championed their cause. Carl Marx had based his defense of the proletariat on atheist foundations while Waliullah sought his inspiration from Quran or hadith. He saw every aspect of human life with the eyes of a mystic and a true Muslim. His work predated Communist Manifesto in which theory of class conflict was presented by Marx in 1848, whereas *Ilmul Iqtasad* was written in 1757. To ensure a welfare state, he proposed that *Zakat* and *Ushr* could be spent on particular heads and that additional taxes may be levied to meet the revenue demands of the state. He suggested that surplus wealth should be collected from the rich classes and distributed among the poor. This is the only way to prevent the accumulation of wealth in few hands attendant with its immoral and social consequences.¹⁷

Impact of the Ideas of Shah Waliullah

Shah Waliullah was regarded as main inspiration for every Islamic movement to reform and revive the Muslim Ummah. His religious ideas

16 Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi, *Shah Waliullah ki Syasi Tehreek*, edition 13, (Delhi: Bijnor Press, 1939) p.23.

17 This theory was introduced by Robert Peel to prevent communism in Britain.

were adopted by the Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadees sect. He issued a *Fatwa* (religious decree) that every Muslim youth should study the modern science and technology which was *Farz-e-Qifaya*.¹⁸ He was the pioneer in the world of Muslim theologians to emphasize the updating of the old and outdated research of past Muslim scholars. Among others, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan seemed to have imbibed his ideas in urging modernity or re-interpretation of Islamic thoughts, although he could not establish an institution where real Islamic teaching along with modern science and technology could be provided.

Shah Waliullah's four sons also served the Muslim Community. The eldest was Shah Abdul Aziz who conducted research on Hadith and tried his best to unite all the Muslim sects. His second son, Shah Abdul Qadir, translated the Holy Quran into Urdu with its brief explanation, named as *Mouze-ul-Quran*. His third son, Shah Rafiud Din, also translated the Holy Quran without any comments. Perhaps he wished the reader to get help for learning the Arabic of Quran through this translation. His fourth son, Shah Abdul Ghani, though blind, was educated under the supervision of Shah Waliullah. He was a good preacher, orator and debater. He did not leave behind any book as his legacy but a son,¹⁹ Hazrat Shah Ismail, (the grandson of Shah Waliullah) who launched the Mujahideen Movement alongwith Sayyid Ahmed against the tyrannical Sikh rule²⁰ in the Punjab. Shah Ismail succeeded initially and occupied the whole (present) NWFP and parts of Kashmir. He crossed the Indus River and defeated Sikh Army near Hazro (Attock). This movement was encountered by the weapons of treachery. Sectarian differences were created. Shah Ismail was projected as an outsider who cared least for traditions and conventions of local peoples. Consequently, this movement suffered from internal problems. Shah Ismail and his spiritual guide Syed Ahmed were martyred by the Sikhs and their Muslim collaborators. The amber of the movement nevertheless

18 According to Islamic injunction, Farz Qifaya is such a duty on Muslims which can be paid by the representative of city, village or different groups and the rest of the Muslim community can be excused by Allah to perform this duty.

19 According to new research, it is found that Shah Abdul Ghani also left great legacy in form of books. Though, he could not write but some of his followers helped him write dozens of books but these are hardly found in the shape of publications. Moreover, authenticity of these books is needed.

20 During their period, Sikhs desecrated Muslim holy places and converted Shahi Mosque of Lahore into a stable of horses. Moreover, they kidnapped Muslim girls and subjected them to all sorts of humiliations.

remained till 1947 when its last Ameer, Haji Fazal Ellahi Wazirabadi declared its formal ending on August 14, 1947.²¹

Syed Jamaluddin Afghani who was born in 1839 adopted Shah Waliullah's concept of Khilafat-e-Kubra in the form of a Pan-Islamic movement. Although he failed to see its translation into a successful movement, his followers followed his message in every part of the Muslim world to liberate it from Western colonialism and imperialism. Ayatullah Kashani of Iran had started a movement culminating in the Iranian revolution of 1979. A great figure of the Iranian revolution Dr. Syed Ali Shareyati claimed, "We are followers of Syed Jamaluddin Afghani who was the disciple of grandson of Shah Waliullah, Shah Muhammad Ishaq". Shareyati paid a great tribute to Allama Iqbal, who was no less impressed by Shah Waliullah by saying, "He had restless soul and anxious mind but could not see fruits of his efforts".²² A great freedom fighter, Mufti Muhammad Abdur Rabbuhu had started an anti-imperialist movement in Egypt which spread throughout Muslim Africa in the form of an intellectual as well as armed struggle. In effect, Libya, Morocco, Algeria and rest of Muslim Africa were liberated from colonialism.

No doubt, spiritual, religious and ideological basis was provided to the Pakistan Movement by the ideas of Shah Waliullah. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the founder of the two nation theory, had started studying Holy Quran with the help of Shah Ghulam Ali, the grandson of Shah Waliullah. Similarly, founder of Deoband, Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanotawi, was a student of Maulana Mumloq Ali who used to teach Islamic Studies in Aligarh.

Allama Iqbal was also a great admirer of Shah Waliullah. Mufti-e-Azam of Pakistan Maulana Shabeer Ahmed Usmani said on the eve of Quaid-i-Azam's death, "None of the Muslim leaders after Shah Waliullah had been like Quaid-i-Azam over whom the whole Muslim community was agreed and accepted him as their leader irrespective of sectarian and communal differences".

No doubt, Shah Waliullah is counted among the rare figures of Muslim India, however, his work is not above criticism. According to Maulana Syed Abu'al Aala Modudi, he was the great physician and diagnosed exactly but proposed such prescription through which Muslim society became victim of moral degeneration and sectarian conflict, i.e.,

21 Fazl-e-Mehmood Makhfi, *Mujahideen Movement* (Lahore: Idara Muarif Islami, 1956) p.57

22 Riaz, *Ma o Iqbal*, (Islamabad: Allama Iqbal University, 1976), pp.39-41.

mysticism.²³ According to Fateh Muhammad Malik, Shah Waliullah did nothing wrong because it was the most effective device of that time when Shah Waliullah started reformation of society.²⁴ A renowned American Muslim convert, Maryam Jamila says that Shah Waliullah was the person who opened the doors of *Ijtihad* which had been closed three centuries ago but when he wrote about mysticism, he forgot what he had written in “*Hujjatullah al Baligha*” and “*Al-Badoorul Bazigha*”.²⁵ This contradictory approach may also be seen in the work of Shah Ismail (the grandson of Shah Waliullah). He also forgot what he had written in “*Sirat-e-Mustaqeem*” while he wrote “*Taqviatul Eiman*” and “*Mansab-e-Imamat*”. Such dichotomy of views is found in the works of several Muslim scholars. However, according to Yousaf Islam (formerly Kate Stevens), he was Mujadid of his own era.²⁶ In the words of Dr. Hameedullah, “Real reformer is the one who creates rebel against his socio-political and economic scenario”.²⁷ By the same token, Waliullah deserves to be called Mujadid of the eighteenth century.

23 Maulana Abul Aala Maududi, *Tajdeed-o-Ahyae Deen*, (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1967) pp.56-57.

24 Fateh Muhammad Malik, *Ta'assubat*, (Islamabad: Idara Adbyat Pakistan, 1981).

25 Maryam Jamila, *Islam in Theory and Practice*, (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1963), p.292.

26 Interview with Yousaf Islam, *The Asia Weekly* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1973).

27 Dr. Hameedullah, *Khutbat-e-Bahawalpur*, (Lahore: Idara Muaraf e Islami, 1974) p.71.

SHAH WALIULLAH AL-DEHLAWI: THOUGHTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Necessity of the reformation is when the downfall happens in the course of time and place. But the reformation is not meant to bring something new. Their responsibility is bringing the community back to proper and strong path. The deviation of Muslim Ummah, formidable challenges that they face and necessity of the time are the main the reasons of the presence of the reformers. They will be the guiding lights of the community. The history is big eyewitness of the presence of the reformers. The verdict of holy prophet Muhammad (PUBH) about the reformers (mujaddids) has been happening.

Shah Wali Ullah

Qutb al-din Ahmad known as Shah Wali Ullah was born in 1114/1703 four years before the death of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb .His genealogy can be traced back to the family of pious Khalifah of Islam Umarul Faruq .The forefathers of Shah wali Ullah are said to have migrated to India and found their settlement here at Rohtak village, when the Tatars started the destruction in Iraq and Iran .His grandfather Sheikh Wajihuddin was a military officer in the army of Shah Jahan and a deep lover of the Quran . In the war of succession, he supported Aurangzeb.Shah wali ullah's father sheikh Abdul Rahman was greatly loved and respected by the people for his profound knowledge of the traditions and Islamic jurisprudence. That is why he was entrusted by the emperor AlamgirAurangzeb with the delicate and important task of revising the Fatawa-Alamgiri.he established a school in Delhi known as Madrassa Rahmania .the forerunner of the present Darul-ulum Deband.Shah Wali Ullah soon mastered the different branches of learning. He learnt the Qura by heart up to the age of ten. At the age of 14 he read a part of bauzayi and the major part of Mishkawah. He got the graduation from Rahmaniaschool at the age of 15.te prescribed syllabus of the school lad great stress on theQuranic studies its lesser aid from commentaries .he became the teacher of this very school of his father at the age 17. Only two years later, on the death of his father, ShahWali Ullah occupied his father's chair in madrassa Rahmania. He prepared his lectures after extensive study of various Islamic disciplines and sciences, and provided guidance on the problems of varied nature. In the year 1143/1731 he went to the Hijaz on a pilgrimage and stayed

there for 40 months studying Hadith and Fiqh under such distinguished scholars as Abu al-Kurdi al-Madani, Wafiq Allah al-Makki and Tajuddin al-Qali. He returned to Delhi in 1145/1733 where he spent the rest of his life in producing numerous works till his death in 1176/1763 during the reign of Shah Alam II.

Political thoughts of Shah Wali Ullah

Shah Wali Ullah felt the impact of decay and decline in every walk of life, analyzed the causes of downfall and suggested the ways and means to arrest them. Firstly his aim was to restore the Islamic political thought. His continual attempts for the implementation of the Islamic politics made a huge impact in history. His explanation of the Islamic politics is below

- 1) The earth belongs to God. Property that nobody has a right to usurp or interfere with another's property
- 2) All men are equal. Nobody is good enough to rule over others or enslave them.
- 3) The head of the state is just like the manager of a state. He has right to take as much money from the treasury as it is necessary to pass the life of an ordinary man
- 4) It is the duty of the state to provide the means of sustenance, i.e., bread and butter, clothes housing and such other basic facilities so that every one may keep a family in a befitting way
- 5) The above mentioned rights are fundamental and every body, irrespective of race, religion, caste and class is entitled to them
- 6) Justice is to be meted out to all. The state should provide protection of life, property, respect and other civil rights to all the citizens of the state
- 7) The language and culture of every class, tribe or section of people should be promoted
- 8) Every state is an independent unit which should be perfectly free in its internal and external affairs. Every unit should be strong enough to defend itself from every sort of aggression, both from without and within

Shah Wali Ullah's revolutionary religious thought led the community to get the clear awareness about Islam and its rules. He reiterated the sovereignty of God must have to be obeyed and the traditions of the Holy Prophet and his unequalled life must have to be imitated. His victory of life and balanced attitudes towards the issues would be found by these sources. The real mission of Shah Wali Ullah was to purify Islamic ideals of all unhealthy influences and providing them a fresh intellectual ground to meet the challenge of the time. Shah Wali Ullah explained some significant

factors which should be aware about:

1. The truth and Din are identical as both of them spring from one the same origin
2. The advocates of truth have blessed the earth in every age in every nation, and as such, all of them should be respected
3. Sexual anarchy is a moral crime in every religious sect. It should be curbed as much as possible
4. Jihad is a sacred duty for every Muslim. It means that in order to defend the sanctity of principles and policies, one should cherish the passions of dedication and devotion so much so that one should lay down one's life for them

Philosophical Interpretation

Shah Wali Ullah's philosophical interpretation caused the resurgence of Islamic revivalism. His attempts to deviate the Muslim Umma from the influence of non Islamic philosophies and exegeses made wide impact in Islamic philosophical atmosphere. In the specific conditions of India, Shah Wali ullah criticized the grass rooted influence of Hindu mythology and its philosophical interpretation which was embarrassed by many intellectuals. Therefore he clarified the philosophical stand of Islam.

- 1) The Quran calls for a revolutionary system of life. Those who would follow it in letter and spirit, would reap the same harvest as was reaped by the companions of the prophet of Islam (PBUH) in the era of the four pious caliphs
- 2) The life of Muhammad (PBUH) or the *uswah-i-rasul*, should be taken as an the life of the three pious caliphs should be emulated (Ali, the fourth caliph is conspicuous by absence)
- 3) the Shi'a interpretation and practices of Islam should altogether be discarded, as they are misleading to the people at large
- 4) The betterment of one's life and life-hereafter is based on the following four moral imperatives:
 - a) Purity of body and soul
 - b) Worship of only one God through prayers and other recognized rituals and practices
 - c) Self-restraint or *Dabt-i- nafs*
 - D) Justice; there can be no justice in a society where the bread-earners, laborers and the working classes are forced to work and taxed beyond their physical and mental capacities
- 5) in order to resuscitate the revolutionary Quranic system of life, to is

minutest details, implications and ramifications, one has to follow the moral and economic systems, habits and behavior of the illustrious companions of Muhammad (PBUH)

Socio-economic thoughts

Shah Wali Ullah tried to find out the relationship between social ethical and economic system. He described the spirituality that it has two aspects: first, it is a personal relation of man to god, secondly, it is man's own relation to his fellow-beings. Shah Wali Ullah emphasized the achievements of social justice is a prerequisite for the development of the individual. Al-Adl (justice, balance), in his thought is the essential feature of the harmonious development of the human race. To narrate the socio-political theory, Shah Wali Ullah uses the term *Irtifaq* (devices). He illustrated four *Irtifaq* to demonstrate the socio-political evolution of man. The first *Irtifaq* places human beings in accordance with what Wali Ullah calls a *madhab al tabi'i* (natural law). The second relates to the organization of the family. The third describes the political institutions which form city (*Al-Madinah*). Under fourth *Irtifaq* man learns to regulate devices and rules to overcome the conflicts and rivalry between the cities.

Shah Wali Ullah discusses the problems of human relations, developments of culture and civilizations, agriculture, art of irrigation, cultivation, inclemency of weather and seasons and establishment of state and duties of states like the eradication all sorts of social evils, e.g., gambling, adultery, usury, bribery etc. He indicated the balanced socio-economic system and remarked the causes of decline of Muslim Ummah: "after a careful analysis I have come to the conclusion that there are two main factors responsible for the decline of the Muslim culture. First, many people have abandoned their own occupations and have become parasites on the government. They are a great burden on the public exchequer. Some of these are soldiers; some claim themselves to be men of great learning and, thus, deem it their birthright to get regular financial help from the state. There are not a few who get regular donations. Gifts and rewards from the court as a matter of past custom, such as for example, poets and clowns. Many of the people belonging to these groups do not contribute anything to the welfare of society, yet they are allowed to suck its blood. Secondly, the government has levied an exorbitant rate of tax on the agriculturists, cultivators, and traders. Added to this is the cruel of treatment meted out to the tax-payers by government officials at the time of collecting the taxes. The people groan under the

heavy weight of taxes while their economic position deteriorates at an alarming speed. This is how the country has come to ruin”.

Shah Wali Ullah strongly criticized the concept of poverty which was common among Muslims that they believed the poverty is loved by God and have no good Muslim should make an effort to become rich. He points out: “Islam teaches that this strong concentrated individuality, sharpened and steeled through a life of active experience, should not become obsessed with self-aggrandizement; it should rather be devoted to the service of God and through this to the good of mankind. Islam never preaches its followers to submit themselves ungrudgingly to an oppressive social system. It is social justice rather than poverty which is eulogized by the Holy prophet- justice which not only safeguards an individual against an attitude of arrogance and self-conceit, but develops in him a power to spurn the temptations, bribes, and snares with which an unscrupulous ruling clique tries cynically to corrupt the mind and character of the subjects”

Islamic economic system is unequal. The perfection of transmission of the money and its distribution to society, these are important factors were considered by Islam. Ubadullah Sindhi summarized his economic thought:

1. The wealth originates from labor
2. The laborers and farmers are the fountains of labor and consequently of wealth; the civic and civil life depends on the cooperation of the laborers and the farmers. Christ had once observed that ‘you will not eat, if you do not earn’. In the same way, Shah Wali Ullah was of the opinion that one who would not work for one’s nation or country, would not be entitled to get any thing from the national wealth
3. The dens of gambling and the centers of debauchery should altogether be smashed, because in their presence, the system of distribution of wealth could not be organized on right and sound lines. Instead of increasing the national wealth, such evil practices help concentrate wealth into few hands
4. The laborers, farmers and those who render intellectual services to the society, rightly and richly deserve a pretty share from the national wealth which they produce. The forces which hinder the performance of the working classes, should be crushed mercilessly
5. A government which do not properly and justly manage the system of prices, wages or salaries of the working classes, should be up-rooted
6. The working classes should not be exploited; every one should be paid on the principle of mutual cooperation
7. The production and income which is not based on mutual cooperation is not valid
8. The working hours of the working classes should be fixed. They should

get time to improve upon their moral and spiritual life

9. One of the greatest means of mutual cooperation is trade, commerce and business. No businessman is allowed to indulge in black-marketing, smuggling, hoard in and price⁰ raise, etc., similarly, the government is prohibited to tax them beyond their capacity

10. The business which helps concentrate wealth into few hands and hinders the circulation of in the society, is harmful and it would be checked.

11. The royal, aristocratic or luxurious system of life or standard of living which hinders right distribution of wealth in society, should be crushed as early as possible.

Crucial attempts

One of main contributions of Wali Ullah is his deep-rooted study about the life of various Muslim societies and empires from sociological point of view. He tried the best for the existence of Mughal Empire and to restore the sense of unity of community. Another grave problem which he faced that is the religious differences from amongst various Muslim factions, especially conflicts between Sunnis and shias. Shah Wali Ullah was anxious to reduce the Sunni- Shia differences to a minimum. This was possible only if the leaders of two sects approached the problem in a catholic spirit.

Shah Wali Ullah opines that an unhealthy conditions which had impact in Muslim beliefs, thoughts, practices, morality, culture and socio-political administrative, lay in two things:

1) The transfer of political authority from the caliphs to absolute monarchs; and

2) The irrational following of Islam in the absence of Ijtihad. Neither the scholars of Islam could adjust the needs and demands of time with Shari'at nor Shari'at could be interpreted in such a national way as to solve the issue and problems which naturally cropped up with the passage of time.

Letters to Leaders

Shah Wali Ullah criticized contemporary politics and he suffered for the decline of Mughal empire. After the death of Aurangzeb, his successors could not control their superiority well. Sha Wali Ullah wrote the letters to leaders to escape the Mughal empire and Muslims and non Muslims from attacks of Jats and Marathas. Those letters are good documentary proof to know the contemporary political system and he bravely criticized the Mughal rulers:

Oh Amirs! Do you not fear God? (How is that) you have so completely thrown yourself into the pursuit of momentary pleasures, and have neglected those people who were committed to your care. The result is that the strong are devouring the (weak) people..... All your mental faculties are directed towards providing yourselves with sumptuous food and soft skinned and beautiful women for enjoyment and pleasure. You do not turn your attention to anything except good clothes and magnificent palaces. But those leaders did not consider the attempts of Shah Wali Ullah. His letter to Ahmad Shah Abdali is the most important. In this letter Shah Wali Ullah motivates that great warrior to escape the Ummah from decline and to give them the strong position to stand upon their own legs: "In these days there is no king except your majesty who wields authority, and power, and competent to defeat the armies of the kafirs. It is, therefore, obligatory upon your majesty to invade India and crush the kafirs like the Marathas in order to liberate the down trodden Muslims from their chains. If God forbid, the grip of kufr remains firm, the Muslims will forget Islam and become such a nation that cannot differentiate between Islam and un-Islam. It is a great calamity, which cannot be getting rid of through any power except one that is bestowed upon you by God."

Shah Wali Ullah's some famous works

- 1) Hujjathullahi-l-baligha
- 2) Izalatul-khifa
- 3) Tha'vilul-ahadih
- 4) Faizul-kabir
- 5) Budur al-bazighah

Shah Wali Ullah translated the Holy Quran into Persian despite the prejudice against translations of Holy Quran.

Conclusion

Shah Wali Ullah was a prolific warrior of Islam. He bravely challenged the problematic contemporary situations. Shah Wali Ullah did not hesitate to analyze the formidable political atmosphere. His encyclopedic knowledge and steadiness in practical life are the great models for the Muslim world. As Allamah Muhammad Iqbal remarks he was the first Muslim to feel the urge for rethinking the whole system of Islam without any way breaking away from its past.

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