

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'l (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 price 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. Shah 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 the 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.

Bibliography

1. A history of Muslim philosophy-v:11 M.M.Sharif
2. Political thought of Shah Wali Ullah An analytical study
Abdul Rashid Bhat
- 3) Encyclopedic survey of Islamic culture –
- 4) History of Islam. Prof. Masudul Hasan