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Shah Wali Ullahs (1703-1762) was a great Muslim thinker of eighteenth century. His time was one of the most emotional chapters of Islamic revivalist movements in Indian subcontinent. The on going Hindu-Muslim communal controversy in contemporary India is deeply rooted to his political Islamic theory. The most significant contribution of Wali Ullah (Allah) for his community is that his teachings kept alive the religious life of Indian Muslims linked with their inner spirit for re-establishment of Islamic political authority in India.

Historically, Wali Ullah's political thought was to meet the political need of his time, but its relevance in the changed social scenario is one of the most important reasons that Indian society is not free from the emotional disorder. If the society has not developed the attitude of let bygones of the dark history of Indian subcontinent be gone, then Wali Ullah's political Islam is also responsible for it. His emphasis on Arabisation of Indian Islam did not allow the emotional integration of Indian Muslims with rest of the population of this country. Regressively affecting the Muslim psyche, his ideology debarred it from a forward-looking vision. His political thought however, created " a sense of loyalty to the community among its various sects" ((The Muslim Community of Indo-Pakistan subcontinent by Istiaq Hussain Qureshi, 1985, page 99).

Born (Muzaffarnagar-Uttar Pradesh) in a family loyal to Mogul Empire Wali Ullah claimed his lineage from Quraysh tribe of Prophet Mohammad and of Umar, the second caliph (Religion and Thought of Shah Wali Allah by J. M.S.Baljon - E.J. Brill 1986, page 1). Inheriting the Sufi tradition of Sunnism he succeeded his father after his death in 1719 as principal of Madrasa Rahimiyya at Delhi at the age of 14. He went for pilgrimage to Mecca and Madina in 1730 and pursued deep study of Hadith and Islamic scriptures during his 14 months stay

there.

On his return to India from the epicentre of Islam in 1732, Shah Wali Ullah was found more concerned with the political disorder and fading glory of Muslim power. He wanted the Muslim society to return to the Prophet era for the political unity of the then Muslim rulers. His religio-political thought was based on the 'Perso-Islamic theory of kingship' (Shah Wali Ullah and his Time by Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, page 397) and Mahmud Ghazna and Aurangzeb were his heroes among the Muslim rulers. His objective was to re-establish the Islamic cultural hegemony in the Indian sub-continent.

Shah Wali Ullah realised the political rise of non-Muslims like Maratha, Jat and Sikh powers and the fading glory of Islamic rule as danger to Islam and therefore, any loss of political heritage of Muslim was unbearable to him. He was the first Arab scion in India, who raised Islamic war cry for stalling the diminishing glory of Mogul Empire. His religio-political theory inspired a large number of successive Muslim scholars, who carried forward his mission and resultantly gave birth to Islamic politics in India. The slogan of 'Islam is in danger' - is profoundly embedded to his hate-non-Muslim ideology.

Wali Ullah "grew up watching the Mogul Empire crumble. His political ambition was to restore Muslim power in India more or less on the Mogul pattern. Pure Islam must be re-enacted, a regenerated Muslim society must again be mighty" (Islam in Modern History by W.C.Smith, Mentor Book, 1957, page51-52).

In the face of the fading glory of Mogul Empire and indigenous resurgence of non-Islamic forces like Maratha, Jat and Sikh in Muslim dominated India Wali Ullah decided to re-evaluate the Muslim dilemma. He realised that sectarian divisions and dissensions in the community and struggle for power among the various Muslim rulers were the major factors responsible for the diminishing pride of Mogul Empire. Forging unity among them with an overall objective to restore political dominance of Islam therefore, became his intellectual priority. The main thrust of his extensive writings was to present an integrated view of various Islamic thoughts.

Giving a call for 'a return of true Islam' and asking the Muslims to go to the age of Quran and listen to its literal voice sincerely, Wali Ullah boldly asserted that " the Prophet's teachings were the result of the cultural milieu then prevalent. He opined that today (that is in his days) every injunction of the Shariat and every Islamic law should be rationally analysed and presented" (Muslim Political Issues and National Integration by H. A.Gani, 1978, page 184).

Being proud of his Arab origin Wali Ullah was strongly opposed to integration of Islamic culture in the cultural mainstream of the sub-continent and wanted the Muslims to ensure their distance from it. "In his opinion, the health of Muslim society demanded that doctrines and values inculcated by Islam should be maintained in their pristine purity unsullied by extraneous influences" (The Muslim Community of Indo-Pakistan subcontinent by Istiaq Hussain Qureshi, 1985, page 215). "Wali Ullah did not want the Muslims to become part of the general milieu of the sub-continent. He wanted them to keep alive their relation with rest of the Muslim world so that the spring of their inspiration

and ideals might ever remain located in Islam and tradition of world community developed by it". (Ibid. page 216).

On principle Wali Ullah had no difference with his contemporary Islamic thinker Abd-al-Wahab (1703-1787) of Saudi Arabia, who had also launched an Islamic revivalist movement. Wahab, who is regarded as one of the most radical Islamists has a wide range of followers in India. He *"regarded the classical Muslim law as sum and substance of the faith, and therefore, demanded its total implementation"* (Qamar Hasan in his book - Muslims in India -1987, page 3).

Wali Ullah also supported the rigidity of Wahab for strict compliance of Sharat (Islamic laws), and shariatization was his vision for Muslim India. He maintained that "in this area (India), not even the tiniest rule of that sharia should be neglected, this would automatically lead to happiness and prosperity for all" (Shah Waliullah and his Time by Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, 1980, page 300). However, his theory of rational evaluation of Islam was only a sugar coated version of Islamic fundamentalism for tactical reasons. He was guided more due to the compulsion of the turbulent situation for Muslim rulers at the hands of non-Muslim forces around them than any meaningful moderation of Islam, which could have been in the larger interest of the subcontinent.

Glorifying the history of Muslim rule as triumph of the faith, Waliullah attributed its downfall to the failure of the community to literal adherence to Islamic scriptures. His movement for Islamic revivalism backed by the ideology of Pan-Islamism was for the political unity of Indian Muslims. His religio-political ideology however, made a permanent crack in Hindu-Muslim relation in this sub-continent. Subsequently non-Muslims of the region viewed his political concept of Islam as an attempt to undermine the self-pride and dignity of integrated Indian society.

The religio-political theory of Wali Ullah was quite inspiring for Indian Muslims including the followers of Wahhabi movement. It drew popular support from the Ulama, who were the immediate sufferers from the declining glory of Muslim rule in the subcontinent. The popular support to his ideology "has seldom been equaled by any Muslim religious movement in South Asian subcontinent" (The Genesis of Muslim Fundamentalism in British India by Mohammad Yusuf Abbasi, 1987, page 5). He was of the view that the lost glory of the faith could be restored if the Muslims adhered to the fundamentals of Islam literally.

Contrary to Akbar's 'conciliatory' policies in the governance of multi-religious and multi-ethnic Indian society, Wali Ullah wanted "a return to the ideals of the first two successors of Prophet Muhammad" as the only answer to the social conflicts. Laying stress on adherence to "the orthodox religious principles of Sunnism" he was against seeking any cooperation from Hindus or even Shi'is (Shah Wali Allah and his Time by Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, 1980, page 394). He invited Ahmad Shah Abdali of Afghanistan to attack the Maratha in third battle of Panipat and advised his collaborator Najib al Dawla to launch jihad against Jats.

Eulogizing the barbaric persecution of non-Muslims in medieval India as glory of Islam, he did not believe in Indian nationhood or any national boundary for Muslims and therefore, invited Shah Abdali, Amir of Afghan to attack India (Third battle of Panipat 1761), in which

Marathas were defeated. In his letter to the Afghan king he said, *"...All control of power is with the Hindus because they are the only people who are industrious and adaptable. Riches and prosperity are theirs, while Muslims have nothing but poverty and misery. At this juncture you are the only person, who has the initiative, the foresight, the power and capability to defeat the enemy and free the Muslims from the clutches of the infidels. God forbid if their domination continues, Muslims will even forget Islam and become undistinguishable from the non-Muslims"* (Dr. Sayed Riaz Ahmad in his book 'Maulana Maududi and Islamic state' - Lahore People's Publishing House, page 15 - 1976).

He further wrote:

"We beseech you in the name of Prophet to fight a jihad against the infidels of this region... The invasion of Nadir shah, who destroyed the Muslims, left the Marathas and Jats secure and prosperous. This resulted in the infidels regaining their strength and in the reduction of Muslim leaders of Delhi to mere puppets" (*Shah Wali Allah and his times* by Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, page 305).

He also instigated Rohillas leader Najib al Dawla against his Hindu employees alleging that they were sympathetic to Jats. "Shah WaliUllah pointed out that one of the crucial conditions leading to the Muslim decline was that real control of governance was in the hands of Hindus. All the accountants and clerks were Hindus. Hindus controlled the countries wealth while Muslims were destitute" (*Shah Wali Allah and his times* by Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, 1980, page 304). In his letter he advised Abdali for " orders prohibiting Holi and Muharram festivals should be issued" (Ibid. page, 299) exposed his hostility towards both Hindus and Shias.

Reminding the Muslim rulers of the dominant role of Muslims even in a multi-religious society Wali Ullah said, "Oh Kings! Mala ala urges you to draw your swords and not put them back in their sheaths again until Allah has separated the Muslims from the polytheists and the rebellious Kifirs and the sinners are made absolutely feeble and helpless" (Ibid. page 299)

Noted historian Dr. Tara Chand remarked:

"He (Wali Ullah) appealed to Najib-ud-Daulah, Nizamul Mulk and Ahmad Shah Abdali - all three the upholders of condemned system - to intervene and restore the pristine glory of Islam. It is amazing that he should have placed his trust in Ahmad Shah Abdali, who had ravaged the fairest provinces of the Mogul empire, had plundered the Hindus and Muslims without the slightest compunction and above all, who was an upstart without any root among his own people" (History of the Freedom Movement of India, volume I, 1970, page 180).

Even though the defeat of Marathas by Abdali could not halt the sliding decline of Mogul Empire, it made Wali Ullah the hero of Indian Muslims and he emerged as main inspiring force for Muslim politics in this country. His Islamic thought was regarded as saviour of the faith and its impact left a deep imprint on Indian Muslim psyche, which continues to inspire them even today. Almost all the Muslim organisations in this country directly or indirectly draw their political inspiration from Wali Ullah.

Wali Ullah died in 1762 but his son Abd al Aziz (1746-1823) carried his mission as a result India faced violent communal disorder for decades. Considering Indian subcontinent no longer Dar-ul-Islam (A land, where Islam is having political power) and British rule as Dar ul-Harb (A land, where Islam is deprived of its political authority), he laid emphasis on jihadi spirit of the faith. Saiyid Ahmad (1786-1831) of Rai Bareilly a trusted disciple of Abd al Aziz launched jihad on the Sikh kingdom but got defeated and killed in battle of Balkot in May 1831. Tired with their failures in re-establishing Muslim rule the followers of Wali Ullah preferred to keep their movement in suspended animation for decades, when the Britishers established their firm grip on this country.

The Sepoy mutiny of 1857 was a turning point in the history of Islamic fundamentalism in India. With its failure Indian Muslims lost all hopes to restore Muslim power in India. But successive Ulama in their attempt to keep the movement alive turned towards institutionalised Islamic movement. Some prominent followers of Wahhabi movement like Muhammad Qasim Nanauti and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi drew further inspiration from the religio-political concept of Wali Ullah and set up an Islamic Madrassa at Deoband in U.P. on May 30, 1866, which grew into a higher Islamic learning centre and assumed the present name of Dar-ul-Uloom (Abode of Islamic learning) in 1879. For last 135 years Dar-ul-Uloom, which is more a movement than an institution has been carrying the tradition of Wahabi movement of Saudi Arabia and of Wali Ullah of Delhi. Even Sir Sayid Ahmad drew inspiration from the tactical moderation of Islam from Wali Ullah in launching Aligarh movement. The Muslim politics as we see today in Aligarh Muslim University is deeply influenced with the Islamic thought of Wali Ullah.

Most of the Muslim scholars and Islamic historians have projected Wali Ullah 'as founder of Islamic modernism' and a reformer of faith because of his emphasis on rational evaluation of Shariat. His attempt to present an integrated view of the various schools of Islamic thought was however, more a tactical move for the political unity of Muslims to restore the political authority of Islam than for overall development of an integrated Indian society. His insistence for not diluting the cultural identity of Arab in a Hindu-majority environment shows that his so-called reform of Islam was only for a political motive. His obsession to extreme Sunnism of Sufi tradition exposes the theory of Islamic modernism. His political objective that followers of Islam should not lose their status of dominant political group in state Wali Ullah was against the concept of civilised democracy.

Contrary to his projected image of a reformer, Wali Ullah like other militant group of Islamic intellectuals did not appreciate any cultural and social reconciliation with non-Muslims in an integrated society. His communal bias against the political rise of non-Muslim powers like Maratha, Jat and Sikh goes against the theory that Wali Ullah was a Muslim thinker for Islamic moderation. His exclusivist theory favouring political domination of his community all over the world with starting point in India vindicates this point. In the background of his hate-Hindu political move, Wali Ullah may not stand the scrutiny of being a Muslim thinker for rational evaluation of Islam and its moderation.

By and large Muslim intellectuals have eulogized Wali Ullah that he was deeply hurt with the plight of his community particularly after "Nadir Shah's sack of Delhi and the Maratha, Jat and Sikh depredation" (The Muslim Community of Indo-Pakistan subcontinent by Istiaq Hussain Qureshi, 1985, page 199). But they ignored the communal bias of Wali Ullah, for whom Maratha, Jat and Sikh revolts were "external danger

to the community". Wali Ullah hated Nadir Shah for his barbarous invasion but he was more so because of him being a Shia Muslim.

According to Dr. Sayed Riaz Ahmad, a Muslim writer, the Muslim leaders like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Mohammad Iqbal, Abul A'la Maududi and others, who participated in freedom movement were followers of Wahhabi school and carried the tradition of Wali Ullah with slight re-adjustment. Thus, the nostalgic appeal to Muslim fundamentalism had a direct or indirect influence of Wali Ullah on the overall psyche of Indian Muslims. Unfortunately, the fundamentalist interpretation of Islam by Wali Ullah gradually widened the gap of mistrust between Hindus and Muslims of this sub-continent.

Creation of Pakistan was against the pan-Islamic concept of institutionalised fight for restoration of pure Islam. Dar-ul Uloom hardly made any attempt to abandon its pan-Islamic ideology and therefore, nationalist forces viewed its opposition to partition as a tactical move to ensure the growth of the institution by aligning with the freedom movement. Since Wahabi movement and Islamic thoughts of Wali Ullah did not sanction the concept of Indian nationalism, the claim of Dar-ul-Uloom that its leaders were 'nationalists' is not based on sound logic, as they always considered Islam above the nation.

Religion is by and large known as a path in search of spiritual truth but religious fundamentalism begins where spiritualism ends. Wali Ullah was confronted with the problem of division and dissension among the Muslim rulers. He wanted to bridge the sectarian gap within the community for restoration of the political glory of Islam and interpreted his faith accordingly. His interpretation of faith was hardly linked to any spiritual search even though it is contrary to his tradition of sufism. The theory of Islamic moderation might have been helpful to his political objective but in long run it pushed Indian Muslims away from modern outlook and also created a dilemma for them. On the other hand it also created suspicion in non-Muslim world against this fourteen hundred-year-old religion. His suggestion for strict adherence to the precepts of Quran and Hadith practiced during the period of Prophet Mohammad and his Caliphs known as classical age of Islam ('622 AD to 845 AD') is still a major obstacle against modernisation of Indian Muslims.

Combination of Islamic extremism of Wahhab and religio-political strategy of Wali Ullah has become the main source of inspiration for Islamic terrorism as we see today. So long the Muslim leaders and intellectuals do not come forward and re-evaluate the eighteenth century old interpretation of faith any remedy for resolution of on going emotional disorder in society is a remote possibility. It is the social obligation of intellectuals to awaken the moral and economic strength of entire society without any religious prejudice.

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