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# Intellectual Modernism of Shāh Walīullah: An Exposition of his Socio-political Thought

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**Shāh Walīullah (1703-1763) ranked among the great leaders of Islamic history who by virtue of their knowledge and activities helped reconstruct the socio-political thought in Islam. Shāh Walīullah formed a bridge between the medieval and modern Islam in India and pioneered an Islamic revivalist movement during the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the subcontinent. He dedicated his whole life in disseminating the knowledge of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* to revive Islamic faith and true Islamic spirit among the Muslims. This study seeks to analyze and evaluate the socio-political thoughts and activities of Shāh Walīullah. It is believed that most of the successors of Shāh Walīullah are greatly influenced by his intellectual modernism and hence many of them have adopted his thought and program of action. The overall objective of this study is to point out the thought and socio-political contributions of Shāh Walīullah towards reawakening of the Muslims in his contemporary society and how his contributions have shaped and molded Islamic revivalism respectively.**

**Keywords:** *'Ulama'*, Sufis, *Ummah*, Mogul Empire, *Irtifaqat*.

## INTRODUCTION

Quṭbuddin bin 'Abdur Rahīm popularly known as Shāh Walīullah (1703-1763), an outstanding scholar of Islamic sciences, was one of the great Muslim thinkers and social reformers, and was born in India in the 18th century. He flourished during the decline of the Mogul Empire of India, an era when the Muslim community in India was facing a grave crisis in every walk of life, be it socio-political, religious or economic. This crisis provided Shāh Walīullah with an intellectual irritant and prompted him to discuss the Muslims problems. Based on the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (SAAS), he urged the *'Ulama'*, Sufis, Muslim rulers and *Ummah* at large to come back to the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah rejecting all kinds of exaggerations and negligence in religious matters. Shāh Walīullah, employing his research in to the depths of the Islamic tradition, came forward with many pragmatic and bold ideas and, thereby, revived the

intellectual life of his community and enriched its cumulative store of ideas. On account of his creative thinking, he put forth a great and lasting influence on the Muslim society of the Indian subcontinent, which can still be perceived among the academic circles of the country. Today, almost all of the *'Ulama'* of Indo-Pak subcontinent, despite their different religious affiliations, claim to be belonged to his intellectual lineage. The respect and influence commanded by Shāh Walīullah prompted the followers of various schools of thought to invoke his authority in support of their respective standpoints and attitudes.

## India during the Time of Shāh Walīullah

Before dealing with Shāh Walīullah's socio-political ideas,

it is important to give a clear picture of India during Shāh Walīullah's lifetime that played an important role to mould his personality. Political situation of India influenced his thought greatly. Economic suffering of masses made him to lead a war in writings against bureaucrats. His encyclopedic work *Hujjatullah al-Bāligha* is a living document for socio-political and religious condition of India. The religio-cultural situation of India led him to the various dimensions in his life. His journey to Haramayn (Mecca and Medina) was a historic attempt in his life which completely changed his mind and thought. There he came into close contact with several prominent Islamic scholars like Shaykh Abu Tāher bin Ibrāhīm of Medina, Shāh Muhammad Wafidullah and Shaykh Ibrāhīm Kurdī. He benefited from all these scholars and acquired in depth knowledge of religious sciences. However, here the overall socio-political and economic condition of Shāh Walīullah's time will clearly be defined in the following discussions.

### Social Condition

India, in the history of Islam, has a great significance for its socio-political dimensions. The conditions of the country, during the time of Shāh Walīullah were extremely critical in Islamic history. The power of Mogul Empire was in decline. The social sphere of life presented a hopeless condition for citizenry. The political instability, incapability of rulers, disunity, grouping, infighting, looting, plundering and chaos were rampant everywhere, the self-aggrandizement was the order of the day. The moral values were being trampled under feet. The Muslims, who should have been morally upright and the torchbearers of Islam, had forgotten their duties, and indulged in saint worships, superstitions and many unhealthy practices. The elites were living in extremely luxurious lifestyle and were addicted to music, dance parties and all sorts of undesirable pleasures. On the other hand the masses were being grounded under the unjust economy, and were living under extreme poverty and hardship. Besides, the Shiite-Sunni controversy had taken a very dangerous turn. This enmity that had been suppressed under the strong rule of the early Moguls had then come to the surface under the later Moguls. Consequently this very dispute at last gave the master blow to the ailing Muslim rule in India. This terrible condition of the country and the social disorder of the eighteenth century India was so deplorable that Shāh Walīullah compared it with the times of Persian and Roman Empires before Islam: In *Hujjatullah al-Bāligha* he mentioned:

"Extremely luxurious living of the high and the ruthless persecution of the low and the poor presented a gloomy and sad spectacle, which was in no way better than what it was in the Persian and Roman Empires before Islam". (Walīullah. (1378 A.H.), p.105).

### Political Condition

The political panorama in India in the same period was worsening than that of social condition. During the period (1719-1730), the political scenario of India had undergone significant changes in various dimensions. There were political instability and insecurity; thus people had no peace of mind and safety of life. The looting, plundering, and fighting had spread everywhere. The friction and disintegration had set in the Mogul Empire and the Muslims were splitting among themselves. Consequently, they suffered much at the hands of the Sikhs, Jats and Marathas. The Moguls ruled India for about two hundred years, preserved a momentous remark in the Muslim history of India. In this long period of imperial rule they produced many dynamic rulers who led India towards prosperity and success. Especially, the reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707) was considered as a golden era for the Indian Muslims for its extensive influence over the Mogul Empire. As a ruler Aurangzeb was unparalleled, at the same time he was pious and very simple in his lifestyle. Historians have shown a great tribute to him for his unequivocal role in the state affairs of Mogul as a successful ruler. Historian Tara Chand points out Aurangzeb as a unique ruler among the Mogul emperors, he says:

"For fifty years Aurangzeb held the reins of an empire unequalled in size, population and wealth among the polities of the contemporary world. In the discharge of his extremely onerous duties he had shown a devotion, assiduity, courage and calmness which remark him out as a unique ruler of men. In personal life he was the model of a good man. He was free from the vices so common among the Asian potentates and princes. He lived simply, nay, austerely. He was abstemious in food and drink, in dress and all the amenities of life. While engaged in the heavy work of imperial administration, he found time to earn money to provide for his needs by copying the Qur'an and sewing caps". (Chand, T. (1970)., p.39).

Furthermore, the great nobility of Aurangzeb was known for his devotion to the Muslim religion and observance of Islamic injunctions. It has been manifested in some of his letters written during the struggle for the succession; he claimed that he was acting "for the sake of the true faith and the peace of the realm". Soon after the ascendance of his throne, he introduced some reforms in the state, which could make his dominion a genuine Muslim state. These reforms he had undertaken can be considered as the key success for his peaceful time and S. M. Ikram spotlight the reforms as follows:

"After his (Aurangzeb) second (and formal) coronation on June 5, 1659, he issued orders which were calculated to safety orthodoxy. He appointed censors of public morals in all important cities to enforce Islamic law and he tried to put down such practices as drinking, gambling, and prostitution. He forbade the cultivation of narcotics

throughout the empire, and in 1664 he issued his first edict forbidding *sāṭī* or the self-immolation of women on funeral prayers. He also repeatedly denounced the castration of children so they could be sold as eunuchs. In the economic sphere he showed a determined opposition to all illegal exactions and to all taxes which were not authorized by Islamic law. ... in 1668 he forbade music at his court and, with the exception of the royal band, he pensioned off the large number of state musicians and singers". (Ikram. (1964)., pp.189-190).

In 1707, when Aurangzeb, the third son of Shah Jahan died, his successors began to lose their control over the province of the empire. The capital, Delhi had witnessed calamities of bloodshed in the royal palace, the years 1716 to 1719 saw three puppet kings succeeded one another on the throne and more than ten rulers ascended the throne one after the other during Shāh Walīullah's lifetime. He was a boy of seventeen, in the same year (1719) when the ruler Farrukhsiyar was slain and Muhammad Shāh ascended the throne of Delhi. (Walīullah. (1335 A.H)., p.158). Consequently, these tragic dramas, the death of Aurangzeb, defeat and disintegration among the emperors weakened the Mogul Empire and gave rise to the resurgence of regional powers. G. Allana remarks:

"After the death of Aurangzeb, the Mogul Empire was heading towards its decline, and the weakening of the Central power at Delhi had given rise to the Marathas to challenge the Mogul Emperors in open battle. The rise of the Maratha power ignited the imagination of the Hindus, who saw in its success an opportunity to lay the foundation of a Hindu Empire in Bharat". (Allana. (1983). pp.11-12).

The success of the plundering and marauding armies of the Marathas had done irreparable damage to the socio-economic structure of India, and---

"The prosperity which had been built up by long years of ordered and benevolent government under the diligent care of the Mogul Emperors was once again destroyed by anarchy and disorder. This period played a considerable part in creating the conditions of chronic poverty of the Indian masses". Allana. (1983)., p.12).

However, with the rise of Ahmad Shāh Abdālī on the scene and his military successes, the Marathas received a severe setback.

During the reign of Forrukhsiyar (1713-1719) the Jats, who inhabited between Delhi and Agra and conformed their presence on the political horizon of Mogul Empire, constructed forts for themselves and fully equipped with firearms started road robbery, and revolted. The Jats became ever more rebellious during the time of Muhammad Shāh. (Muztar. (1979)., p.43).

The rule of Huhammad Shāh (1719-1748) was comparatively longer. He was known as a pleasure seeker and drunkard and on that account he was given the title of "*Rangīla*". (Persian word, means joker-indulge in all sorts of pleasures and fun). The houses of the

nobles had turned into breeding places of illicit love affairs, and the crown of the once mighty Moguls had become just like a toy in the hands of the enterprising parties of the royal court. Consequently they ignored the real Islamic way of life, and hence fell into bankruptcy morally and spiritually. Meanwhile, the new powers, the Sikhs and the Jats, had arisen high on the political horizon of the country challenging the decaying authority of Muhammad Shāh, the ruling king on one hand, and the Marathas who had already affirmed their presence on the political arena of India. In this unpleasant situation, they were well prepared to reap benefit from the confusion and weakness of the Mogul Empire. The rise of these rival forces encouraged the half-hearted loyalties at the court to turn into an open revolt. All this dealt and impressive tragedy to the administrative machinery, and it was smashed into debris of disorder, causing a severe storm to the royal prestige. (Muztar. (1979)., p.43).

In 1739 Nādir Shāh of Persia, having conformed the unsettled condition of the south, marched to invade Delhi. Nādir's defeat of the Indian army and massacre and plunder of the capital destroyed the prestige of Mogul government and ruined it financially. This also encouraged the rebellious forces of Mogul Empire and even the provincial governors became defiant. Addressing Muhammad Shāh in a letter from Kabul, Nādir Shāh had stated that he had occupied his northwestern territory "Purely out of zeal for Islam", so that in case, "The wretches of the Deccan" again moved towards Hindustan, he might "send an army of victorious Qizilbashs to drive them to the abyss of Hell". (Ikram. (1988)., p.260). He had, in fact, given a death wound to the Mogul Empire. The massacre and the plunder done by Nādir Shāh has been expressed by Tara Chand in the following words:

"When Nādir and his officers began a systematic loot of the prominent and the wealthy and extorted money by heaping on the people indignity and torture, great anger was aroused. A small incident created a tumult and Nādir gave orders for a general massacre. Streams of blood ran through the streets, and fire indemnity, and seized gold and silver plate, jewels, the Peacock Throne, precious treasures collected by the emperors for several generations. Numerous elephants, horses and camels and some fifteen crores of rupees in cash were carried away". (Chand. (1970)., pp.44-45).

During the reign of Ahmad Shāh, the son of Muhammad Shāh, the Jats attacked Delhi, and they took away what they could lay their hands on. Shāh Walīullah and his neighbors were, however, saved from the devastation. This shows how weak and helpless the government had become. Shāh Walīullah mentioned this tragic state of affairs in one of his letters, which he wrote to Hāfiz Jārullah Punjabi when the later was in Hijaz for pilgrimage. (Nizami. (1950)., p.52).

In 1757, the Marathas captured Delhi, but the triumph did not last for long. Four years later, the third Muslim

victory at Panipat led by Ahmad Shāh Abdālī, the founder of Afghanistan, crushed for all time the power of the Marathas in northern India. (Abbott. (1968)., p.74). But the degenerate Mogul Empire could not in any way profit by it. On the other hand, the conquerors of Plassey reaped the fruits of the rout of the Marathas at Panipat. The advancing tides of British Imperialism swallowed up all the conflicting factors in the Indian polity and the chances of restoring the Muslim supremacy in India became very remote. (Yasin. (1958)., p.176). Consequently, in last of eighteenth century, the British began to establish their supremacy over both Muslims and Hindus.

### The Socio-political views of Shāh Walīullah

Shāh Walīullah was socio-political reformer in true sense and a religious mentor, whose grasp of exoteric spiritual ideas was to be revealed for the generation of the Muslim community. His role as the great reformer (*Mujaddid*) of his century, however, was not confined merely to reforming the religious and mystical life of the Muslims. His ideas for the implementation of Islamic law throughout the Muslim world were comprehensive and included not only religious matters but also took into consideration the social, ethical, economic and political lives of the Muslims. This has been clearly manifested in his writings.

Shāh Walīullah was the first Indian Muslim who, in the worlds of 'Allama Iqbal:

"Felt the urge of a new spirit in him". (Iqbal. (1965)., p.97). Within a few decades after his demise this new spirit, of which he had caught the first glimpse, became fully articulated and assumed the form of a socio-political challenge to the Muslim society and demanded a complete reconstruction of its socio-political and religious attitudes.

According to Mawdūdī:

"Shāh Sāhib (Walīullah) was the first scholar who ever understood and appreciated the real and fine differences between the history of Islam and the history of Muslims. He, in fact, has studied the history of the Muslims from the viewpoint of the history of Islam tried to ascertain exactly the condition of Islam among the communities embracing it at different times". (Mawdūdī. (1963)., p.81).

The decline of Mogul empire and the social dislocation in the Mogul capital of Delhi during the eighteenth century had a great impact on Shāh Walīullah which prompted him to undertake his vast reformation of entire Islamic system. Analyzing the conditions, then prevalent, Shāh Walīullah preferred to fight with his pen rather than with his sword. He launched a vigorous and impartial attack against all the groups, particularly, the so-called '*Ulamā*' and the Sufis who considered themselves as the upholders of Islam and the repositories of Divine mysteries.

His method in the religious matter was based upon the concept of harmony not only between reason and revelation but also between these two and the intuition. He therefore, asserted that his ideas were supported by reason, intuition, wherein lies the criteria of the inner recesses of the human mind and sound healthy tastes. At the same time, they are also supported by *naql* i.e. the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, by outstanding Islamic personalities, and by the history of human societies. (Mawdūdī. (1963), p.81).

### Social Views

Shāh Walīullah focused the structure of a social philosophy on the basis of a moral system under the heading of *Irtifāq*. ("*Irtifāq*" means a work done collectively and with cooperation). In this connection he discussed subjects like organization of family life, social etiquette, politics, judiciary, taxation, civil administration and military organization etc., and also spotlighted those causes, which help in the disintegration of a civilization.

The most outstanding and distinctive characteristic of human society, according to Shāh Walīullah, is justice, which is both an individual and a collective quality. Shāh Walīullah recognized justice as an essential moral trait of human consciousness, argued, more on collective manner than the individual level; because, moral decay is more disastrous and may even prove fatal when it extends to the society as a whole. Moreover, Shāh Walīullah's perception of justice encompasses the entire spectrum of diverse human pursuits: "When '*adālah*' (justice) is expressed in dress, manners and mores, it is '*adab*' (etiquette). When it is maintained in income and expenditure of the state, it is called politics". (Siddiqui. (1983)., p.1560).

Shāh Walīullah started his exposition of social evolution theory from the very early stage of human society. In his study he remarked that the need for food, shelter and sex is common to all man in general. The knowledge of how to meet these various needs is inspired by Allah to every human being in his innate nature. So, an instinctive knowledge of how to deal with these natural demands is similarly possessed, even by the insects, birds and other lower animals. The building of a hive by a swarm of bees, their working under on common chief, their sucking the flowers and gathering honey-all these are the result of their instinctive knowledge in these methods. The small ants know similarly by their very instinct how to assemble foods for the future, and the small birds know what to live upon, how to build nests, how to defend themselves and to multiply generation. In short, for every species there are certain laws that regulate its life and control its destiny, of which an instinct knowledge is enjoined into its individuals by their own nature. On submission to those laws depends the continuity of their race. (Walīullah. (1996), p.115).

Man according to Shāh Walīullah, is distinguished from other creatures by his 'perfect signs' or *āthār tāmma*, such as the faculty of 'generalization' and 'comprehensive opinions' about his works and activities, faculty of speech, writing and morale. Such signs are innumerable and cannot be reduced to a limited number but can be categorized based on three basic principles:

**Firstly, social welfare and sound reasoning:** It may be said that, in the case of animals the direct realization of some material ends, such as the satiation of hunger and thirsts, etc., is the only motive for their action. But in the case of man the realization of these low material ends is not all in all. In many cases the consideration of some higher and nobler end is his chief motive. For instance, the establishment of a good order in the state; the attainment of perfection in character and culture, salvation in the hereafter, and the acquisition of name and fame. (Walīullah. (1996), p.115).

**Secondly, cultural accomplishment:** The bare fulfillment of a need is the only motive with the animals. But man is not always merely contented with bare fulfillment of his natural wants. He wishes to do a thing in a polished and refined manner, so that it may be more pleasant and delightful. For example, he seeks delicious dishes for his food; luxurious building for his residence, elegant dress for clothing, beautiful wife for mating and so on. This urge is termed by Shāh Walīullah as *Zarāfa* i.e. wit.

**Thirdly, perception of utility:** The beastly arts and 'sciences' are designed only to meet economic and subsistence needs while the human sciences are sometimes directed towards the attainment of spiritual perfection and physical accomplishment.

Man aspires for perfection through the attainment of knowledge. But all men are neither equally capable in terms of knowledge nor every knowledgeable person has the aptitude for the same kind of knowledge as others. It is only the most intelligent among them, whom Allah has bestowed with various capabilities, by which they, after continuous experiment and endeavor, discover these methods; and as soon as these are discovered, people accept them wholeheartedly. (Walīullah. (1996)., pp.115-116).

A general knowledge of the fulfillment of the necessities of human life is inspired, of course, into every individual by instinct, but details and progressive methods are discovered by the scientific researches of ages and centuries. Thus, instinctive knowledge supplemented by the empirical knowledge of the scientists and great thinkers of the different ages from the code of human knowledge which is followed by the people because on this code depend their life and prosperity. This knowledge, however, is the mainspring of all progress, without which empirical knowledge is impossible. And since it is an essential factor, it exists in one way or another in every individual, and is subject to further development by experience.

### Concept of (*irtifāq*)

Shāh Walīullah's concept of society is systematic. Society in his observation is not an assemblage of units but a living organism, in which various parts are interlinked and interdependent and their movement is interactive. It is subject to health and soundness, advancement and progress, regress and weakness, and decay and death just as coordination and integration of the various faculties of the human organism. Thus, these mutual coordination and integration act as essential elements to make up a healthy and sound social unit. As the life of the individual may roughly be divided into four stages, namely childhood, adolescence, manhood and maturity, so, for the sake of convenience, Shāh Walīullah classified the emergence and formation of society into four stages as well. When a society is born, according to this theory, it passes through four stages until it reaches perfection. These stages are termed by Shāh Walīullah as *irtifāq*. Before going to discuss the details of the four stages of social evolution theory of Shāh Walīullah it is necessary to see how the previous scholars have defined the term '*irtifāq*'.

The word '*irtifāq*' is derived from the root (*rafq*), which means to be gentle, soft, gracious, courteous or civil and to serve. (Elias. (1982). The ways and means by which, with little trouble and in short time, one can tide over his social and economic difficulties are called *irtifāq*. In other words *irtifāqāt* means a work done collectively and with cooperation. Therefore, '*irtifāq*' i.e., gentleness or the use of gentleness, which means that, though the beneficial things abound in the world, they do not come to man for his use on their own accord, but he has to approach them with gentleness. (Jalbani. (1979)., p.165). Khalil 'Abdul A'la, in his thesis, reviews some of the translations or explications for the term *irtifāq* as "*al-Tadbirāt al-Nāfi'ah*" or the useful management of human affairs. Abdul Hamid Halepota defines *irtifāqāt* as 'every trait characteristic, and institution that comes under the subject of sociology'. (Hermansen. (1983)., p.20).

Shāhib Ahmad Kamālī regards *irtifāq* as "civilization and its devices" and "a whole period in history". (Kamali. (1959)., p.94). 'Aziz Ahmad sees *irtifāqāt* as growth of human societies. (Ahmad. (1964)., p.206). While, Marcia K. Hermansen translated it as 'appropriate supports of civilization'. (Waliullah. (1996)., p.116). More recently, Jacque Berque writes that it seems possible that, the plural of the verbal noun, *irtifāq*, may be translated by "uses, commodities, services". Berque further reads a rather socio-economic slant into *irtifāqāt* by the institutional section of the "collective good" (*al-Maslaha al-Āmma*). (Kamali. (1959)., p.94). It appears therefore, that this term may encompass all of these connotations depending on context and does not have a simple English equivalent.

## The Four Stage of *irtifāqāt*

The doctrine of the *irtifāqāt* occupies an extremely important position in the Walīullah's social evolution system. His social concept of *irtifāqāt* has attracted much interest among contemporary scholars of his thought. Shāh Walīullah was one of those few thinkers, who are known for their consistent and systematic approach to problems, with a comprehensive and all-rounded treatment of the subjects taken up for discussions. Some scholars have said in this respect that he was greatly influenced by his predecessors like al-Fārābī (d. 339 A. H.), Ibn Sina (d. 428 A. H.), al-Ghazālī (d. 505 A. H.), Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 A. H.), Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1034 A. H.) and others.<sup>110</sup> But the term (*irtifāq*) in his usage is unique varies contextually.

Walīullah studied the structure, and formulated a theory for the preservation of Muslim society. He divided the history of the growth of the civilization into four stages.

### The First Stage of *irtifāq*: i.e., the primitive society

The first stage *irtifāq* is that of primitive society which has a minimal code of social behavior. The urges of food and sex are basic human urges, which ensure the continuation of human existence on earth. Food keeps man's body intact while the sex-urge preserves the human race and regulates generation. Allah has also inspired mankind to build shelters to live in and to defend himself against the weather. These needs are common to all men who have an innate desire to excel in the modes of acquiring them. For this purpose different ways and means are adopted which include the use of agricultural methods, cooperating with each other, adopting civilized style of speech, cooking and monogamy. When society achieves these requirements of social development it acquires the first degree of its perfection i.e. the first *irtifāq*. An instance of this primitive stage is the life of Adam. As Allah has created him with a specific purpose that was to be His vicegerent on earth.

"God's intention in creation of Adam was that he should become his vicegerent on earth and attain his specific perfection. As regards his being prohibited from eating from the tree, the prompting by Satan of evil thoughts, his being reprimanded and finally, his expulsion from the Paradise, all these were a form of the world of similitude to that of morals". (Khatoun. (1984)., p.59).

The development of *irtifāqāt* in human society is in line with human nature. He strives to achieve perfection in a gradual style. From the level of animal his intellect develops and evolves encountering all the needs he is forced by nature to step further for development. These needs can be divided mainly into two categories: physical and spiritual. To fulfill his physical needs he looks to his surroundings where he would like to find, for instance, food and drinks of his taste, would desire beautiful

women, descent dress, a house for shelter etc. On the other hand, man needs spiritual fulfillment as well. But he is inherently unable to guide himself spiritually on his own, which is why Allah sends messengers to the human society from within in order to save them from any kinds of impediments, and guide them spiritually as well. These messengers or leaders act as agents of Allah being naturally capable of a higher kind of perfection in bringing law and order to society and curing it of evils and removing obstacles. (Waliullah. (1996)., p.120). They live a life of prosperity and decency and are prepared to work for the development of civilization. The rest of the people are to follow them. This kind of human stage is considered to be the keystone of man's social life, because no group of persons, however small it be, or dwellers of remote and far-flung areas, can be found free from this initial stage of social organization. In other words, this stage is of such a nature that it is absolutely necessary for people to abide by it, for without so doing, it is not only difficult but also impossible for them to lead a social life. (Jalbani. (1979)., pp.168-169, cf. Hujjatullah al-Baligha. (1322 A. H.)., Vol.1., p.40).

### The Second stage of *irtifāq*: i.e., the life of cities and towns

While, in the primary stage, the requirements are rude and unpolished, in the secondary stage they are more refined and polished as expansion to the former with behavioral knowledge and good morals. By means of dividing them into different classes such as domestic, social, and political etc., and testing them in the light of sound experience, high morality and the common welfare, they are rendered into such forms as make them better, more beneficial and less harmful. Therefore, the chief difference between the requirements and principles of the two stages is one of degree rather than of kind. When these first requirements are met in its refined and sophisticated way according to Shāh Waliullah, they need five sciences to usher in the second degree of social perfection. These requirements and the five sciences embraced together constitute the second degree of perfection, i.e. the second stage of *irtifāq*. The five sciences are:

**1. Economical wisdom:** As stated by Shāh Waliullah, it includes the adoption and utilization of edifying manners, new experiments and modes of eating, drinking, dress, domestic habits, dwelling, etiquette, sitting, walking, sleeping, enjoying conjugal life, travelling, the rules of cleanliness, of conversation, of medical treatment, of foresight, of festivities, of fellow-feeling, and of removing the death, etc. when those requirements, Shāh Waliullah views, are met in the proper manner and in the light of past experience it gives rise to economic wisdom.

All civilized people observe the above-mentioned items,

in some form or other and all great thinkers have tried to find out the best possible form of observing those conventions from their respective angles of vision. The naturalist, for instance, has given more importance to the natural side of these conventions. The astrologer has put much stress on the effects of the stars, while the divines have applied the principles of good and evil to decide its best form. This is why, there are so many ways followed by different people. (Waliullah. (1996)., pp.121-122).

**2. Domestic wisdom:** This wisdom shows the ways and means of preserving good relations amongst the different members of the family (society) in the secondary stage of civilization. It refers to married life, rearing children, protection, slavery, the right and responsibility to relatives, management and manners of companionship etc.

**3. Earning wisdom:** It means that everyone should pursue a distinct and separate activity appropriate to his energies and faculties, such as agriculture, trade, crafts of fellah, carpenter, smith etc.

**4. Business wisdom:** it includes matters of dealing, purchasing and selling, exchanging gifts, tenancy and hiring, landing, incurring debts, loans, or mortgage and so on.

**5. Cooperative wisdom:** It enjoins surety (security etc), bail, guarantees, co-proprietorship, commercial enterprise, power of attorney and tenure etc. (Waliullah. (1970)., pp.62-63).

All these five social wisdoms have a great bearing on the economic life and activity of a society. This shows the extent to which Shāh Waliullah gives importance to the economic dimensions of the social development. The second *irtifāq* is the most important in the process of the perfection of a society and its role is more fundamental. If the second *irtifāq* is duly achieved, its perfection in the remaining degrees is easily attainable. If these five wisdoms are practiced in a sound and suitable way give birth to innumerable developments in culture and civilization. These are various branches of mutual dealings. In some form or other, are found among the citizens of every civilized state throughout the ages. Besides, being interrelated with each other, these five departments unite the members of society, giving the society the character of a single family, i.e. *Ummatic* conception, on a large scale. (Waliullah. (1970)., p.70).

The second stage leads to a third one, which represents the pre-political stage of social organization.

### The Third Stage of *irtifāq*: i.e. nationalism

When these five wisdoms interact with the moral human excellences they give rise to the third degree of social development. This *irtifāq* is mostly based on cooperation of men so as to achieve the outcome of the five wisdoms.

Without cooperation these sciences can neither be put into practice nor produce the expected results. Cooperation is very much needed because men are not equally endowed with all sorts of qualities to work for the society. They include fools, the wise, the wealthy, the poor, the one who is capable of earning, and the one who is not. Some of them are practicing small and ordinary professions and the others do high professions, while some others have several commercial undertaking and the others are unemployed. It is just a composite figure of various professions. If these people do not co-operate with each other in realizing their socio-economic objectives their socio-economic life will be no effect. (Waliullah. (1970)., p.90).

The interaction of the five wisdoms with each other and with the moral excellence and mutual cooperation naturally leads to the emergence of a socio-political organization- Madina or state. Madina is not merely a city, if the citizens of a group of cities and towns have this interaction and cooperation their group will also be termed as Madina. Every Madina has a unity, which must be preserved in its original and perfect form, and its benefits should also be accomplished.

This unity and perfection can, in fact, be maintained and accomplished by Imam i.e. the government or the ruling group in Shāh Waliullah's terminology.

The state is not confined to its boundaries, its market-place or its edifices. The state in fact, means a special kind of relationship among various groups. This relationship is imperative and is necessitated by the five principles of the second *irtifāq*. When these groups cooperate with each other for the realization of the five wisdoms and carry on transactions and interact with each other they become like a single individual and works as a living organism. And again this unity and the organism necessitate the further evolution of society, which takes place in the direction of creation and development of a congenial government. This "corporate" individual undergoes health or illness arising from outward and inward causes. To remedy this corporate individual, i.e. the state, from its illness and to protect its health the congenial government should act as a competent and skilled state physician. The schemes for this do not only aim at safeguarding, preservation and conservation of society, its unity, state and government, are also conducive to the fullest benefit that the unity and the state and government can handle to the members of the society. (Waliullah. (1970)., pp.90-95).

This stage of social development is called the third *irtifāq*, i.e. the first stage of political organization or the state. This is the third stage where Shāh Waliullah has discussed the qualification of the *Imām* or ruler and the details of the government agencies. This, however, will be discussed later on in the political views of Shāh Waliullah.

### The Fourth Stage of *irtifāq*: the caliphate

And the final stage of social development where several states (*Mudun Kathira*) exist at a time, disagreements arise and illnesses infect the body politic of the states. Then a superior physician (*tābīd al-'atibba'*) is required to cure these inter-state diseases; he may also be called *Imam al-a'immah*. (Walīullah. (1970)., p.64). Elsewhere the *Imām al-a'immah* has been termed as *Khalifah*. (Walīullah. (1322 A.H.)., p.37). This is the fourth stage, which is, in fact, an elementary form of international politics. Defining the fourth *irtifāq*, Shāh Walīullah says:

"It is the science (*hikmah*) which discusses the policy of the rulers and kings of the states and the ways and means of the preservation of co-ordination and relationship existing among the people of various countries". (Walīullah. (1322 A.H.)., p.37).

This seems to be the social idea of Shāh Walīullah, and it is only after achieving this stage of socio-political development that the system of caliph can be properly established. Shāh Walīullah compared this situation with the state of emergency which once necessitated the Israelites to ask their prophet Samuel for a king. (Walīullah. (1996)., p.137). (See Samuel 8,19), "Send us a king so that we may fight in the path of Allah". (Al-Qur'ān 2:246). The caliph's function is naturally to see that the heads of the city-states administer justice properly and do not wage war against one another. (Walīullah. (1996)., pp.138-139).

It is now clear from the above discussion that evolution and relativity are the prominent marks of the social philosophy of Shāh Walīullah. Furthermore, he conceived and presented the evolution of society like one organic entity, and did not regard it as combined entities, held together by any external force, or artificial means of social contracts, but as a real living organism. It follows the laws of its own evolution. It has an end and a purpose. It works on lines almost parallel to those of the individual, who is subjected to states of health and ailment, progress and regression, life and death. Therefore, it is very much suitable to say that the sociological aspects of Shāh Walīullah's thought, as Saeeda Iqbāl remarks, is more in line with the spirit of the age, which is methodical, consistent and systematic. (Iqbāl. S. (1984)., p.118).

So, in short, the first *irtifāq* represents the most primitive societies or to be more specific the pre-social human existence. The second *irtifāq* represents the pre-political stage of social organization. The third and the fourth *irtifāq* are the stages of political organization of society.

### Political Views

Shāh Walīullah did not see religion and politics separately. As a scholar of Islamic sciences he conceived

religion as a way of life, and in his *Hujjatullah al-Baligha* he successfully strived to present Islam as a code of human life, spiritual as well as temporal. Matter and spirit do not make any contrast in his system of thought. *Khilāfah*. relates to both of these aspects, and as man is the *Khalifah* (vicegerent) of Allah on earth, he is duty-bound to carry out the demands of *Khilāfah*.

According to Shāh Walīullah, it is collectively incumbent (*Fard Kifāya*) upon Muslims at all times to elect and install a *Khalifah* possessing the requisite qualifications and preconditions. To support this contention he gave several arguments that can be summed up here. (Walīullah. (1378 A.H.) Vol.II., p.111).

First, the collective reason of mankind requires that a *Khalifah* should be there to look after interests which otherwise cannot be protected.

Secondly, the *Khalifah* is appointed to achieve the two categories of objectives. The prophet (SAAS) was also sent to achieve them. Therefore, after the Prophet (SAAS) passed away, a *Khalifah* or Imam was needed to succeed him and implement his injunctions and commandments. That is why obedience to the Amir or *Khalifah* is equal to obedience to the Prophet of Allah and his disobedience amounts to disobedience to Allah. This fact has also been stated in a few *Ahadith* quoted by Shāh Walīullah in this context:

"Whosoever obeys the Amir (commander of the faithful) verily he has obeyed me; and whosoever disobeyed the Amir, verily he disobeyed me". (Sahih al-Muslim, (1955) Vol.III., p.1466. Kitab al-'Iman).

"The Imam is a shield from the back of which one fights and protects oneself; if the Imam commands to fear God and guides (to the right path) his will be a big reward for this; if he orders other than this he will bear (the burden of it)". (Sahih al-Muslim, (1955) Vol. III., pp1471).

"Whosoever sees in his amir something unpleasant he should take patience; because there is no single person who parts with the community even a single inch and dies who does not die a *Jahili* (anti Islamic) death". (Sahih al-Muslim, (1955) Vol.III., p.1477).

Commenting on this last Hadith, Shāh Walīullah says that it is the distinction of Islam that it provides two categories of objectives for the achievement of which the *Khalifah* is appointed as the successor of the Prophet: otherwise the system would resemble the *Jaahiliyya*. (Walīullah. (1378A.H.)., Vol.II, p.112). In '*Izālat al-Khafā'*', he has also mentioned another *Hadith* which considers to be the clear textual commandment (*al-Nass*) in this regard, Prophet (SAAS) said: "Whosoever dies and there is no oath of allegiance (*bay'ah*) in his neck he dies a *Jahili* (anti Islamic) death". (Muslim, Vol.III., p1478). Apart from these *Ahadith*, Shāh Walīullah argued that the establishment of *Khalifah* was due to given the importance to appoint immediately after the death of the Prophet (SAAS) and even before the funeral of the Prophet (SAAS). Upon the *Khilafah* develops the following: the Jihad, the administration of justice, the



revival of Islamic science, the establishment of the pillars of Islam, the defense of the Darul Islam, and such other things which have been collectively enjoined upon the Muslim *Ummah*. (Walīullah. (1976)., Vol.I., p.2). These are the arguments advanced by Shāh Walīullah, to justify the institution of the *Khilafah*.

Unlike the early political thinkers of Islam, Shāh Walīullah makes a distinction between *Khilafah Zahiriyyah* (succession to the Prophet (SAAS) in the spiritual matters). This distinction is absent in the political discussions of as late a political thinker as even Ibn Khaldun. Shāh Walīullah is, perhaps, the first Muslim political scientist who has so elaborately dwelt upon making a distinction between the two kinds of *Khilafahs*. For a clear idea of Shāh Walīullah's conception in this regard a passage may be quoted here:

"In the life of the Prophet (SAAS) there is a noble model for all his followers. For those who are his successors in the affairs of state they have these duties: the enforcement of Islamic law: making arrangements for jihad; the fortification and security of frontiers; granting gifts; sending embassies; the recovery and allocation of *Sadaqat*; taxes and revenues; the adjudication of disputes; the protection of orphans; the supervision of *Waqf* properties of the Muslims; the construction of road, mosques and other buildings and similar matters. Those who are engaged in these services and occupations are successors of the Prophet (SAAS) in matters of this world. The successor in spiritual matters and those entrusted with teachings of Islamic law, the Holy Qur'an, and the traditions or with enjoining what is lawful and forbidden; those whose words strengthen the true religion, either through polemics and discussions as was done by the *Mutakallimun* or through preaching their company and spiritual guidance and training serve Islam and Muslims as is the case with the Sufi-saint; or those who arrange for prayers or pilgrimage or guide the people towards piety. These we call spiritual successors of the Prophet (SAAS)". (Ikram. (1957)., Vol.I. pp.495-495).

Hence, it shows that the outer caliphate relates to the temporal and the inner caliphate to the spiritual aspects of life. The *Khalifah* (ruler) as the head of the Muslim state, in true sense, is the man who embodies in his personality the virtues of *Khilafah* as a whole. (Walīullah. (n.d), Vol.I., pp.8-9). He says, the outer caliphate would be responsible for securing order and stability, whereas, the inner caliphate would guide the ruler spiritually and instruct the community accordingly. In a flawed political order, Shāh Walīullah sought an important role for the religious leadership, the kind of role he himself exemplified in advising rulers, guiding the community, and safeguarding the intellectual heritage.

Shāh Walīullah did not believe in monarchical rule. From the study of his works, such as *Izalat al-Khafa* and *Hujjatullah al-Baligha* etc., it is established that, in spite of his living in the age of monarchical government he had no faith in monarchies. To him the empires of the

Sassanid's of Persia and the Roman of seventh century A.D. were analogous to the Mogul Empire of his days in corruption and social ailments. While describing the socio-political evils that had crept into the body politic of those ancient empires he remarked:

"In the presence of all that you see in the lives of the Kings of your times there remains no need of telling the stories of your". (Walīullah. (nd)., Vol.I., p.225).

Shāh Walīullah defined the *Khilafa* in the following words:

"It is the general authority exercised on behalf of the Prophet (SAAS) for the establishment of the Din through the revival of religious sciences, establishment of the pillars of Islam, carrying out the jihad and what pertains to it of organizing the armies and paying the soldiers and allocating to them the *fay'*. Administration of justice, implementation of Hudud (or capital punishments), elimination of injustices, enjoining the good and forbidding the evil". (Walīullah. (1976). Vol.I., p.2).

Shāh Walīullah viewed that the Muslim political leader is the *Khalifah* (vicegerent), elected or selected. And again, he divided the *khalifah* into two categories: The *khalifah-i-khassah* (special vicegerent) and the *khalifah-i-'ammah* (common vicegerent). To all intents and purpose, argued Shāh Walīullah that elevated to the *khalifah-i-khassah* was sent to fulfill the functions of messengers (*rusul*). He tried to prove that the *khalifah-i-khassah* had been confined to the first two successors of the Prophet Muhammad (SAAS). However, the *khalifah-i-'ammah* was dependent on traditional conditions outlined by orthodox Sunni jurists and political theories. (Walīullah. (1976)., Vol.I., pp.18-19).

Shāh Walīullah had given procedures for the appointment of a *khalifah*. According to him *khilafah* is established by one of the following four ways:

1. Through the *Bay'ah* (oath of allegiance) by the people of loosing and binding from amongst the '*Ulama*', *quadis*, leaders, army commanders and eminent people having opinion and well-wishing for the Muslims as was established the *khilafah* of Abu Bakr (R).

2. Through the will of the outgoing or departing *khalifah*. The *khalifah* has to nominate the most highly qualified person among all the possible candidates as successor. He has to declare this choice to an injunction in this connection. This was how 'Umar, the second *khalifah* was chosen.

3. Through the *Shura* (mutual consultation) of a certain group as was established the *khilafah* of 'Uthman and even 'Ali.

4. Through the successful assumption of power by a man possessing the requisite qualities and qualifications as applicable to the Caliphs succeeding the Prophet (SAAS). (Walīullah. (1378 AH)., Vol.II, p.111).

However, it seems that Shāh Walīullah does not consider these four means as being inflexible and the method of electing a *Khalifah* is not confined to these four methods. He argued that the most important

consideration in this regard is the pleasure of the masses with the person concerned as their caliph, their consensus on him and their respect and honor towards him. If he enjoys the confidence of the masses and establishes the *Hudud*, defends the *Millat* (nation) and implements the commandment of Islam, he is the *Khalifah* in whatever way he might have become *Khalifa*. (Walīullah. (1378 A.H.), Vol.II, p.111).

Shāh Walīullah opined that *Khalifah-i-'Amma* and the *Sultan* (king) were interchangeable terms. (Walīullah. (1976)., pp.574-610, cf. Al-Mawardi. A. H. (1978)., pp.6-22). He agreed with the *Ahadith* relating to the prohibition of rebellion mentioned in the works of *hadith*, such as *Sahih* of Muslim, but stressed the following three conditions under which rebellion was permissible.

1. Should the caliph refuse to obey the rules of the faith and turn apostate, rebellion against him is the best form of jihad.

2. Should the caliph killing his people, plunder their property and rape their women, he and his followers then come under the category of robbers and as such it was imperative to defend the people and annihilate such tyranny.

3. The war against the caliph who clearly violated Islamic laws permissible in order to establish the law of *Shari'ah*.

Shāh Walīullah has given some basic guidelines for a caliph to be observed such as:

- i. Should not involve himself in problems, purely for worldly motives, nor should he destroy his followers through war in order to collect riches.

- ii. Should please the majority of his supporters and try to benefit each individual

- iii. Should not expect from a person more than his natural ability could fulfill.

- iv. Should also use both persuasion and threats to prepare them to fight the enemy. (Walīullah. (1976)., pp., 574-577).

### Qualifications of the Caliph

According to Shāh Walīullah the state affairs will not be put in order unless the majority of the influential people agree to obey a person who has his own supporters and is able to compel them to follow the prescribed law. Shāh Walīullah discussed under his third *irtifaq* about the qualifications of caliph and listed a number of virtues, which he should possess. According to Shāh Walīullah, *Khalifah* should be brave in the face of opposition from his rivals and forcefully assert his prestige among his subjects. However, a *Khalifah*, if not affable (*halim*) and wise would be unable to carry out his policies, and would ruin his *Khilafah* by reckless administration. Moreover, Shāh Walīullah added, he should have highly developed

senses of sight and hearing and should be well known and of such distinction as to arouse universal respect. Shāh Walīullah urged that unless the *Khalifah* was endowed with such virtues the rationale behind his appointment was meaningless; however, if he possess them and failed to nurture them his subjects would still become alienated. Every action of a *Khalifah* should be directed towards enhancing his dignity. (Walīullah. (1976)., pp.92-94). In regard to state affairs, no hasty step should be taken until the offender is clearly proved. He should be very kind and encouraging to the selfless and sincere government officials. (Walīullah. (1976)., pp.92-94).

In short, the ruler should be of an enlightened nature and foresighted, possessing of insight as to understand the inner self of a man at his very sight, and at the same time able to know the result of state affairs before their actual happening and so on. Besides, there are some other necessary requirements in the system of the government of the state in work for the safety and progress of the state.

1. **Judiciary:** Dispute and disagreement among the people of a state is unavoidable. Their unity jeopardizes when stinginess, envy and disregard of rights enter into social life. Hence, the state is in great need of an acknowledged institution available, to which one may resort for an equitable settlement of disputes. (Walīullah. (1970)., p.71).

2. **Executive:** When people of perverted disposition and destructive activities predominate over other people and begin to influence them, the state becomes depraved and disordered. There should, therefore, be a strong body to take deterrent and punitive measures against such people.

3. **Military or defense:** People may take to violent activities such as murder, rebellion, and robbery, and may desperately try to disturb the peace and order in a state. In order to tackle such violent situations and preserve the state from their danger, a defense force is essential in the form of an army of brave people. (Walīullah. (1970)., p.72).

4. **Public welfare and public works:** The state is in the need of some sort of institution to look after the welfare of the people as:

- a. To find out ways and means of doing the work which people are unable to do themselves like marrying orphans, protection of their properties, the distribution of alms among the needy, the division of an inheritance among heirs etc.,

- b. Construct public buildings and public works, for example, the construction of fortresses, walls, markets and bridges etc. this institution off the government is called *Nuqaba'*, and the head of the institution is *Naqib*, or *Wali*, according to Shāh Walīullah. (Walīullah. (1970)., p.71).

### Shāh Walīullah in the Contemporary Politics

Shāh Walīullah as a great socio-political religious reformer could not remain mum to the politics of his times. He seemed to have been dismayed by the intellectual and moral degeneration of the Indian Muslims, which ultimately brought the downfall of their political power and caused socio-economic backwardness. To bring about an intellectual revolution he devoted pages of his works towards suggesting his community to return to the glorious days of the *Khulafa'-i-Rashidin* and also to save the Muslim rule in India. He earnestly wished to see the political power in the hands of Muslims. Hence, he was very concerned to prevent the decay of the Mogul Empire. However, it should not be construed that he was a supporter of Mogul dynasty. He had no hope of the revival of the Mogul imperialism. He neither was linked with it nor desired it. He simply wanted to arrest its decay till a better substitute could be found for it.

In his political thinking he was a realist. According to him the state of political well-being of a country could only be attained when ethics, politics and economics stood in complete intimacy with one another. Similarly, political decay could not happen only because of the government errors, rather held each section responsible for it. We can find in his book *Tafhimat* lengthy addresses made to the people representing almost each and every section of his community. (Walīullah. (n.d.), Vol.I., pp.282-288).

In those addresses he rendered constructive criticism of their errors and for gross negligence of their respective duties enjoined on them by ethics and the law of the land and earnestly hoped for a change.

Shāh Walīullah's interest in the socio-political affairs of his country was the result of his own aptitude as well as the influence of his family surroundings. He had studied the history of human society with special reference to the history of the Muslim world. (Mawdudi. (1963), p.81). Al-Budūrul Bāzighah., Hujjatullah al-Bālighah, and especially 'Izālat al-Khafā' were the outcome of his life-long studies of the socio-political history of the Muslims. His study of man and matter was not confined to India. He had had an opportunity of travelling abroad. During his visit to Arabia he studied the socio-political conditions of the land. He had met people from various parts of the Muslim world and discussed the affairs of their countries. Referring to his experience of the socio-political conditions of the Muslim world he wrote:

"The affairs of the people of India are not hidden to me, for this country is my birth place and my abode. I have also heard about the affairs of the people of other Muslim countries from trustworthy men". (Ahmad. (1309 A.H.), p.63).

Shāh Walīullah belonged to a family that had a profound knowledge of political affairs of the country. His great grandfather, Shaykh Mu'azzam was a *Mansabdar* (officer in charge) at the Mogul court and became the lord

(*Jagir*) of Shikohpur. His grandfather, Shahik Wajihuddin was an army officer of Emperor Shāh Jahan, who sided with the Prince Aurangzeb 'Alamgir in the squabble of succession among the sons of Shāh Jahan. Even after his retirement he took an active part in the political affairs of the country. His father, Shaykh 'Abdur Rahim was a compiler of *Fatwa-i-'Alamgiri*. Though he kept himself away from the court; yet it is reported that he had a great insight into the political development and trends of the country. Some of his political predictions recorded by Shāh Walīullah bear ample testimony to this effect. (Walīullah. (1335 A. H.), p.63).

Shāh Walīullah's knowledge of socio-political conditions of India and his family background of long political experience could not fail him react to the rapid changes that were taking place on the political arena of the country. He was an eyewitness of the decay of Mogul Empire and rising of the rival forces of Muslim India such as the Jats, Sikhs and Marathas.

It was under these disturbing conditions that Shāh Walīullah took a keen interest in the politics of his day and decided that he should have a mission to bring about changes in the socio-political set up. He was inspired with the conviction that Allah had made him the spokesman (*nātiq*), the guide (*hādī*), the philosopher (*hākīm*) and the 'pivot of his age' (*qaiyyūm al-zamān*). (Walīullah. (n.d.), pp.89-90). Aided and strengthened with this conviction he believed that it was his duty to remove the abuses of his time.

It is worthy to mention here that it had been a common practice of the past among the prominent scholars and spiritual guides, to communicate through letters with their students, disciples and leaders in their country. They used this medium to educate and guide their addressees on various issues of current significance, and also to maintain personal liaison with them. In this connection, *Maktubat* (letters) of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, *Maktubat* of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, Maulana Ashraf 'Ali Thanavi's letters to Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad 'Ali Jinnah, 'Allama Iqbal's letters to Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi, and Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi's letters to Maryam Jamilah are some examples out of several others.

Shāh Walīullah also frequently wrote letters to his students, friends and notables of his time. Out of a large number of these letters some were preserved in the two volumes of collection prepared by Shāh Muhammad 'Ashiq, a cousin brother in law and close friend of Shāh Walīullah. This collection was further enlarged and edited by the former's son Shāh 'Abdur Rahman who was also a student of Shāh Walīullah. The letter brought the number of these letters to 352. (Ghazi. (1982) in *Journal of Pakistan Historical Society*. Vol.30, (April), Part-II., pp.87-88). A useful selection of political letters had been made from them by Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, which he first published in 1951 from Aligarh, India. His later brought out another enlarged and edited version of his collection, containing some forty letters, with his

introduction and Urdu translation in 1969. (See, Nizami. (1950) *Shāh Walīullah ke Siyasi Maktubat*).

These letters of political significance were addressed by Shāh Walīullah to the compiler Shāh Muhammad 'Ashiq and some other notables, rulers and kings of his time. They along with other works of Shāh Walīullah, provide an important source for the study of his political ideas, in the context of the socio-cultural environment of India at the time of their writing.

It would be useful to notice here, some important features of the political statements, contained in these letters, how far Shāh Walīullah's response to the political life of his country was in harmony with the ideas he expressed in his writings.

From Shāh Walīullah's works it is evident that he regarded the entire Muslim world as a single entity, even though it may have been under the regime of different political set-ups, independent and exclusive of each other. This is explained by the fact that Shāh Walīullah invited the rulers of other countries to the political and military intervention in the affairs of India to reform its deteriorating conditions. (Nizami. (1950), pp.42-46). This attitude of Shāh Walīullah appears most pronounced in his letter to Ahmad Shāh Abdali (d. 1772 A.D.), the founder of modern Afghanistan, informing him about deplorable decay in the state of India. Shāh Walīullah appealed to this dreadful military commander and ruler of the neighboring Muslim country to bring his armies into India, in order to subdue the forces of anarchy and disorder created by Jats, Sikhs and Marathas, who organized the militant ethnic communities among Hindus. (Nizami. (1950)., letter no.2. pp.6-17).

The letter written to Ahmad Shāh Abdali was the ever-longest letter of Shāh Walīullah among the letters, which he wrote to the political figures of the eighteenth century. This letter not only appears to us as the great political insight of him, but it also furnishes with an interesting study of his knowledge of the geography and politics. At the outset of the letter he narrated very briefly the history of the establishment of Muslim rule in the country. In the beginning of his letter, Shāh Walīullah briefly described geographical and political condition of India in such a way as could be useful only to an invader coming from outside the country. A native ruler hardly needed such information. He then pointed out in his address that this large country has been ruled by the Muslim kings with their capital Delhi over many years by appointing their governors in the provinces. The provinces are Gujerat, Ahmadabad, Thatta, Bengal, Oudh, Malwa and the Deccan had separate governors. And again, this Deccan consists of five states, which governed by the separate governors. Besides, there was another country in the subcontinent, which had never been governed by the Muslim kings, was Rajputana. The Muslim rulers only contented themselves by reducing it to their slavery. (Nizami. (1950)., p.48).

After this description of the political division of India, Shāh Walīullah has shown that the threats under which the Delhi kingdom lived were neither seemed to be from the provincial governors of Delhi nor from Rajputana. Rather the Marathas and the Jats posed the real danger to the Muslims. Therefore he felt necessary to take immediate action against them and save the Muslims from the consequences.

Informing Ahmad Shāh Abdali about the military position of the Marathas, he wrote that to defeat the Marathas was an easy task, for the number of real Marathas was small. The bulk of their armies were composed of mercenaries who could not be expected to fight jealously for their employers. They did not excel in bravery or military equipment either. But still they had created the greatest mischief. (Nizami. (1950)., p.48).

Shāh Walīullah then proceeded to give an account of the Jats, along with the brutalities and humiliations that they had inflicted upon the inhabitants of Delhi, especially the Muslims. Describing briefly the origin and the rise of the Jats, he wrote that the Jat community, agriculturists by profession, lived in-between Delhi and Agra. Since both of these cities had served as the headquarters of the Mogul kings, people living in between them were not allowed to keep arms. Emperor Shah Jahan had issued orders prohibiting the Jats to ride on horseback, carry a gun or construct a fort for themselves. But with the passage of time, due to the negligence of the Mogul administration, the Jats went far; constructed forts for themselves and having fully equipped themselves with firearms started highway robbery at the time of Aurangzeb who was busy in the Deccan campaign. On hearing that the Jats had revolted, he sent an army under the command of his grandson, Bedar Bakht, but the Rajput generals betrayed the young commander. (Irvine. (nd)., pp.296-297). During the reign of Farrukh Siyar (1712-1719) they again revolted, and during the time of Muhammad Shāh the Jats became even more rebellious. Suraj Mall, a Jat leader captured the city of Biana, which had been an important place of Muslim scholars and saints for the last seven hundred years. He forced all the Muslims to evacuate the city in humiliation. Even, finally, during the reign of Ahmad Shah Abdali, Safder Jang the governor of Oudh, revolted against the throne with the alliance of Suraj Mall, a rebel Jat leader, and raided old Delhi. All these deplorable situation created by the Jats have been mentioned in the letters to Abdali. Shāh Walīullah then mentioned the military strength of the Jats. He said that to shake their domination was not difficult. The people living under them were not happy with them because they had captured their agricultural land. Because of this if a powerful king came to their aid they would rise against tyrant Jat leader Suraj Mall. (Nizami. (1950)., pp.171-173). Besides, he gave a clear hint about the conspiracies of the Mogul nobles, the economic condition of India, the revenues of the country, the

position of the trade and industry of the country and an overall condition of the Muslims in the country.

Having described the condition of the Muslims and all the up-rising Hindu tyrants, Shāh Walīullah appealed to Ahmad Shāh Abdali to invade India in the following words:

"In this time there is no one except your Majesty (among Muslim rulers) who is sagacious and experienced in warfare, who commands power and authority and who could crush the infidel and hostile forces. Therefore, it is a duty incumbent upon your Majesty to march into India and crash the infidel (Maratha and Jats) domination and liberate the Muslims from the grips of non-Muslims. If, Allah forbade, the predominance of atheism (*kufr*) remains as such, the Muslims will disown Islam and it will not be possible for them to differentiate between Islam and *kufr*. It is also a great calamity; and there is none except you for the task of averting it. We appeal you in the name of Allah the Almighty to divert your attention to this affair and earn the glory of waging a holy war (*Jihad fi Sabilillah*) and rescue the Muslims from the hands of the unbelievers". (Nizami. (1950)., p.52).

While offering an invitation to Ahmad Shāh Abdali, Shāh Walīullah was highly conscious of the misery and destruction that might befall the Muslims during the invasion. He recalled the misfortune wrecked on Muslim India by Nadir Shah in 1739 who destroyed the Muslims and left the Marathas and the Jats intact. He believed that Nadir Shāh's invasion was a great cause to harm the Muslims of India.

He was afraid that if the same drama took place in India again then the Muslims would become still weaker and no trace of Islam would remain. Shāh Walīullah therefore, urged Ahmad Shāh Abdali to take special care and accurate measures so that the Muslims living on his way to Delhi are not molested:

"When the mighty forces: he wrote to Abdali, "arrive at a place which has a mixed population of Muslims and Hindus, sufficient number of administrative officers should be appointed there with strict instructions so that they should transfer the weak people among the Muslims, living in small villages, to a town or a city. These towns are also be guarded by officials who should make sure that the property and the honour of the Muslims are not violated under any circumstances". (Nizami. (1950)., pp.53-54):

Another important address of Shāh Walīullah's letters had been made to Najibuddawlah (d.1770 A.D), a powerful Indian Rohila chief and the chief commander of the Mogul kingdom. He was a close friend of Shāh and considered as a safeguard of Muslim orthodoxy in the subcontinent during post Aurangzeb period. (Nizami. (1950)., cf. Ghazi, 'Political Letters of Shāh Waliullah', 83., p.90). Shāh Walīullah believed that Najibuddawlah was the person who had the courage for saving the Muslim rule from a total annihilation. Najibuddawlah

successfully reigned Delhi from 1761-1770 and controlled the entire politics of Delhi. (Nizami, (1950), p. 62).

Out of a total of forty letters compiled by Nizami, seven have been addressed to Najibuddawlah. Apart from other details of their contents, certain points of the contemporary prevalent political situations of the country had also been clearly manifested in those letters. To be fair to him, it must be mentioned here that Shāh Walīullah did not ignore the safety of the non-Muslims. He was very conscious about it and his letters bore testimony to this effect that the safety of the non-Muslims was as dear to him as that of his own community. For instance in a letter to Najibuddawlah, urging him for taking measures for the protection of the people of Delhi he said:

"No wrong or mal-treatment be meted out to the city of Delhi. The people of Delhi have several times faced plunders of their wealth and property as well as dishonor and disgrace. That is why the realization of royal objectives has been delayed. For the cry of the oppressed do have its effects. This time if you want that the delayed works are done, you should strictly prohibit that no one is to tease or offend the Muslims and the *dhimmis* (non-Muslims) of Delhi". (Nizami, (1950), p.232).

In another letter to Najibuddawlah, Shāh Walīullah urged him to determine his heart to make the word of Allah exalted, to strengthen the religion of the Prophet (SAAS), and to wage a Jihad against "these accursed people" i.e. the Jats and the Marathas. (Nizami. (1950)., p.25).

Shāh Walīullah successfully diagnosed the causes of the decline of the Muslims and the Muslim rule in India separately. He believed that the reason behind the decline of the Muslim society in India was Muslims' drifting away from the real teachings of Islam, and the cause of the decline of the Mogul Empire were economic and administrative. He saw every section of the Muslim community, including ruling classes of India, leading a life of unwise and disordered economy. (Walīullah, (nd)., Vol.I., pp.282-288). This he had expressed more clearly in a letter written to the Mogul king and his nobles. In this letter he made analytical examination of the government policies relating to the economy and administration. He suggested to the Mogul bureaucracy the following measures to be taken if they wanted to rectify what had gone wrong with the kingdom:

1. The Jat annoyance should be paid immediate attention. Their strongholds dotting the districts between Delhi and Agra should be destroyed. The rebellious Jats should be brought to complete subjugation.

2. The area of the *Khalisa* lands should be extended. The whole districts from the banks of the Ganges to the confines of Sirhind should be brought the direct control of the government. It should be borne in mind that the cause of the weakness of the state these days was due to lack of funds, which had resulted because the *Khalisa* lands had shrunk.

3. The practice of giving the *Khalisa* lands on lease should at once be stopped. The lands should be placed under the supervision of honest government officers. It should be noted that the practice of giving *Khalisa* lands on lease is extremely harmful to the state.

4. *Jagirs* should be given only to the high officials. Officials of lower grade should be paid in cash, as was done in the reign of Shah Jahan, because they (the lower graded officials) were unable to control the lands. They were therefore obliged to sub-lease their holdings and they often remained poor and inattentive to their official assignments.

5. The traitors should be deprived of their *Jagirs* and offices, so that the other people should learn a lesson and remain loyal in future.

6. New reforms should be introduced in the army. The following three proposals are recommended in this regard:

i. The *Darughas* (police inspectors) should be appointed from among the people who are from noble lineage, courageous and compassionate and loyal to the king.

ii. The people who have displayed shameful behavior in the recent turmoil should be sacked and other people should be enlisted in the army.

iii. The soldiers should be paid in time, for if the payment of their salaries is delayed they are obliged to borrow money on credit. Thus a good portion of their income is wasted.

7. The office of the *Qadi* (Judge) should be given to those people who have never been charged with bribery.

8. The Imam of the mosques should be paid high salaries. Strict orders should be issued for the observance of prayers and the fasts of the month of Ramada.

The kings and his nobles should not indulge in unlawful enjoyment. They should repent for their past sins and refrain from committing any in future. (Muztar. (1979)., pp.160-162).

From these discussions, it is proved that the objectives, which inspired Shāh Walīullah in his actual life, were in total conformity with those he advocated in his writings. The most outstanding concern of his life seems to be the ascendancy of the universal mission of Islam, which could not be realized according to him, without waging the Jihad. It is this supreme objective, which constitutes the *raison d'être* of the socio-political organization of Muslim society, embodied in the agency of the *Khilafa*, in the opinion of Shāh Walīullah.

### Significance of the Political Domination

In the political spheres, Shāh Walīullah's main concern was to restore Muslim dominance in the government of India. To that end, he outlined a three-point programme:

First, the Muslims must rely on the military force to

overcome their political adversaries, such as Jats and Marathas and others.

Secondly, the Muslim society in India must be structured in accordance with the early Islamic ideals.

Thirdly, the Muslims of the subcontinent must explore the possibility of inviting Muslim intervention from outside, if necessary. (Agwani. (1986)., p.10., cf. Maktubat-i- Shāh Walīullah, Rampur, Ms.No.245).

Shāh Walīullah pointed out that one of the crucial conditions that led to the Muslim decline was that the real control of the government was in the hands of the Hindus. All the accountants and clerks were Hindus. The Hindus controlled the country's wealth, while the Muslims were destitute. In a letter written to Ahmad Shah Abdali, Shāh Walīullah mentioned that, he was the only king with sufficient manliness, gallantry and foresight for the task of annihilating polytheism. It was therefore his religious duty to declare a Jihad and liberate the enslaved Muslims. Unless this was done, the Muslims would forget their religion and would be reduced to a state, which was half-Islamic and half-idolatrous. The letter concluded with the remark:

"We beseech you (Abdali) in the name of the Prophet to fight a Jihad against the infidels of this religion. This would entitle you to great rewards before Allah the Most High and your name would be included in the list of those who fought Jihad for His sake. As far as worldly gains are concerned, incalculable booty would fall into the hands of the Islamic Ghazis (triumphant) and the Muslims would be liberated from their bonds. 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 the Muslim leaders of Delhi to mere puppets". (Nizami. (1950)., No.2).

To me, Shāh Walīullah's socio-political thought is a very systematic and rational. He tried to present Islam as a complete code of life, and hence, his utmost effort he had exhorted in reconciling religion and politics as well as labored to establish a philosophy, which is neither dogmatic nor strict. As Saeeda Iqbal remarks: "The mixture of the Sufistic with the orthodox, lends color to the one and discipline to the other. (Iqbal. S. (1984)., p.126).

### Revolution

Shāh Walīullah did not ignore revolution in such circumstance though he remarked it as a very distressful and hard job. In fact, he thought that, when the socio-political climate of the country goes corrupt to an extent that the development is debarred and the reformation by evolution is not possible, it becomes necessary to bring about a revolution. Shāh Walīullah remarked it as a cancer of the body, which needed to be removed. Shāh Walīullah said:

"A social institution, under which people are deprived of their primary needs of life, is like an abscess in the body which the sooner removed the better it would be. The persons who know wherein lies the general welfare feel it as their bounded duty to bring about revolution. But it should be kept in mind that the bringing of revolution is a very distressful and hard job, as in addition to the sacrifice of life and property one has at times to part with his beloved country. Such sacrifices can be made by those who are very sincere, self-confident and have the ability and courage to face the situations, however, serious, with patience and endurance. For the working of such a revolution, sometimes, one has to struggle through protests, at times through raising slogans, etc., and on certain occasions he has to put up an actual fight. Whatever sacrifice is made in this direction is reckoned the best of actions". (Walīullah. (1378 A. H.), Vol.II, pp.48-49).

About the significance of revolution Shāh Walīullah's view was very clear. As a reformist and revivalist he could not overlook it. He was revolutionary first and then something else. In this regard he opined that "it must be borne in mind that mere talks, prayers and pious hopes cannot bring the revolution". For that he said, people have to work ceaselessly and sometimes to undergo the hardship of exilement. But by revolution, Shāh Walīullah did not mean any untoward condition in the country; instead he meant what is a process to establish peace and prosperity in the country. He said:

"From of revolution which may bring peace and prosperity and not the one which may bring in its wake insecurity and chaos in the country". (Walīullah. (1378 A. H.), Vol.II, p.171).

The substance of his teachings and philosophy is to break the old order and replace it by the new one, which may satisfy the requirements of the changing times. Until and unless the old order is substituted by the new progressive one, there will be no proper development in the various fields of life.

Shāh Walīullah said:

".....The Prophets who were sent by Allah the Almighty were revolutionaries. Had they not been revolutionaries," he urged, "there would have been no opposition to them. But, because they wanted to introduce the law, their people did not like this and they thus rose against them. The Prophet 'Isa, for instance, who was an emblem of mercy and kindness, had also enjoined upon his followers always to keep their swords sharp and ready for fight in self defense". (Walīullah. (1378 A. H.), Vol.II, pp.171-172. Also Tafhimat., Vol.II, p.160).

## Jihad

According to Shāh Walīullah, the mark of the perfect implementation of the *Shari'ah*, is the performance of

Jihad. It is for this reason that he emphasized the necessity of the continuation of Jihad, and by Jihad he generally meant revolution (*inqilab*). He strongly recommended the retention of the spirit of Jihad for all times to come. So long as this spirit, he said, was present in the Muslims, they remained victorious and were honored everywhere, but the moment it disappeared from them, they were humiliated and hated wherever they were. He was of the opinion that in the existing times, the Muslims should in no way neglect the sacred duty of Jihad as such neglect in turn amounts to the loss of abundant good. (Walīullah. (1378 A. H.), Vol.II, p.171).

In order to show the superiority of Jihad and its excellence, Shāh Walīullah, used to quote the Qur'anic verses and the *Ahadith* one after another. The perfect law, to him, is the one which commands its followers to perform Jihad. Because, he argued, a law which does not make binding for its followers the Jihad for the sake of Allah and the raising of His word will ultimately fail to bring the desired good and benefit for men. Bearing this in mind, he recommended that the Muslims should make their worldly life strong and prosperous and appealed to them to make themselves so strong militarily that the enemy's sudden and unexpected attack be effectively repelled and its power completely crushed. For that he had been repeatedly advising in his works that full and adequate preparations for both defense and offence against aggression be made without loss of time. People should be given military training and made acquainted with the modern technique of warfare. They should be armed with the latest and the most sophisticated weapons of fight available in the world. The spirit of jihad should be infused in them, as without it such a nation could not survive for long. (Walīullah. (1378 A. H.), Vol.II, p.171).

The modern interpretation of jihad ever emphasized its defensive character. To Shāh Walīullah, it does not only mean the actual fight with the enemy, but also making preparations in advance against all evils whether they are social, economic, moral or political. This is the reason that he had been always encouraging people to launch a vigorous fight against the corrupt order and rotten society till the rule of justice is established. (Walīullah. (1378 A. H.), Vol.II, pp.171-173).

Shāh Walīullah believes that the universal domination of Islam was not possible without jihad and by holding onto the tails of cows. Not only would this be humiliating but also it would make other religions more powerful. (Walīullah. (1378 A. H.), Vol.II, p.487).

Shāh Walīullah, however, did not mean by jihad that all the non-Muslims should be converted to Islam by sword. He was pessimistic about the real depth of faith of those converted by the sword. Such converts were hypocrites and on the Day of Judgment they would be thrown to the very deepest part of Hell, together with the infidels. (Walīullah. (1996), p.327).

Islamisation by the sword, added Shāh Walīullah, did

not remove doubts from the mind of newly converted Muslims and it was always possible that they might return to infidelity. He believed that Imam (here meaning rulers) should convince the people through rational argument. The superiority of Islam should be explained in positive terms and it should be brought home to converts that Islamic laws were perfectly clear and easy to follow. (Waliullah. (1996)., p. 258).

By the time of Shāh Waliullah's death no power in the disintegrating Mogul Empire had been left to convert Hindus to Islam, but it would seem that the rising Baluch and Afghan Zamindars and the military adventures converted Hindus to Islam in their respective areas of influence. Shāh Waliullah's son Shāh 'Abdul 'Aziz claims to have Islamized hundreds of Hindus. (Dehlawi, S. A. A. (1314/1896)., p.97). They might have been Hindus living between Palith and Delhi. However, the proselytism programme of Shāh Waliullah was confined to the leaders of the Hindu community, but it was not extended to the low class of the infidels. (Waliullah. (1996)., p.257).

### 5. Conclusion

Anyway, Shāh Waliullah did not establish a clear programme of active reform for his followers. His religious and political endeavors were aimed at the traditional elite. In the early nineteenth century, the grandson of Shāh Waliullah, Shāh Muhammad Ismail, strictly observed his grandfather's system in his only major theoretical work, 'Aqabat. With no viable Muslim ruler to turn to religious and social control, Shāh Waliullah and his followers could rely on the ultimate authority of Islamic scriptures together with their individual and collective with or effort in a time of historical change. As the spokesman for the Tariqat-i-Muhammadiyah, Shāh Muhammad Ismail used the intellectual system of Shāh Waliullah as the basis for a popular purification and revival movement among Indian Muslims. (Otto. P.H. (1979)., p.40, cf., 'Aqabat-i-Muhammad Ismail, (Urdu), trns., by: Gilani. M. A. (1965).

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