

Shah Wali Allah: Father Of Muslim Modernism

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Abstract

Shah Wali Allah serves as a lighthouse for evolution of Islamic thought and reforms in the subcontinent and beyond. Be it the modernists like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan or the revivalists like Maududi or the traditionalists' troika of Deoband, Barailvi and Salfi, all owe allegiance to him as his constructs are a marvelous blend of reason, intuition, and tradition, but with a few exceptions all hold a sectional view of him which suits their particular inclinations and sectarian cult. His methodology of Tatabiq Principle is both his strength as well as weakness and though his broad-gauged scholarship outdid his predecessors like al-Ghazali, Ibn Taimiyya and Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, the utmost respect and subtlety he showed in his critique of and departure from the predecessors created such an optical illusion for his heirs that as a confused lot they fell back on Asharite Kalam, Razi's determinism, al-Ghazali's personalism and Ibn al-Arabi's theosophic and pantheistic Sufism. However, his Irtifaq and Iqtirabat theories are his singular achievement wherein not only the applied monotheism of the Quran with its socio-economic and political connotations recovers its genuine elan but the fully-developed sociology, psychology and cosmology of the Quran and its scientific treatment of life, nature and history come alive in his theories with the props of his mystic metaphysics. The continuity of tradition is so close to his heart that sometimes a tradition, despite being tapered off by his sharp critique, necessarily retains its existence as is evident in his stand on "juristic doctrine of abrogation" and his infatuation with "quantified action", which is so strong that he considers even zakat rate -- which is subject to changing socio-economic conditions and a main source for meeting state expenditure in Islam -- as fixed for all times. However, all constitutive elements of Islam come alive in a systematic, properly juxtaposed logical order if not as an organic whole in his thought process and entire endeavor. This paper is based on qualitative research and it intends to bring out Shah Wali Allah's legacy in modern scholarship.

Keywords: Islam, Revivalism, modernism, fundamentalism, Irtifaq, Iqtirab, applied monotheism, socio-economic justice, spiritual evolution, westernism

Introduction

As an aftermath of decolonization and the devil-may-care attitude of Muslim states towards a genuine restatement of Islam, the Muslims at large, are either in the titanic grip of the dead hand of the medieval content of Islam or have already crossed the Rubicon -- accepted Western modernism lock, stock and barrel as an ultimate truth. The development partly owes to the non-too-sober character of classical Islamic modernism which manifested in 1) pure westernism and 2) revivalism. The two served to scuttle the development of Islamic thought in different measures. The western modernity gave birth to secular modernism and fundamentalism, a trend worse than medievalism and even secular modernism for it separated Sharia from science and philosophy that ensured essential supply of reason to religious studies. The revivalists' literalism on the other hand has denuded religion of reason so much so that instead

of an essential human trait reason has come to be considered as something thoroughly western.

"This [fundamentalist's] intense idealism, combined with insufficient intellectual equipment and enlightenment, is fixed into what may be called a form of "neo-Kharijism". Partly it owes its existence to a comparatively none-too-thoughtful radical reaction of those who [Abul kalam Azad and Shibli etc.,] stigmatized old scholastics as "Greece-riden", and modernists as "Western-riden". Hence Islam is a story of tension between these two trends from the second decade of 20th century onwards, with conspicuous scarcity of genuine modernists who might have fused modern ideals with Islamic ethos.

Undoubtedly, the few genuine modernists Muslim subcontinent can boast of today are an intellectual progeny of Shah Wali Allah (1703-1762) whose freshness of thought

and impeccable reforming spirit makes him the only modern thinker in the entire Muslim world in the 18th century when colonisation had already tightened its grip in a number of states. Wali Allah's purely theological legacy culminated into the famous College of Deoband; his push for political revival of Islam generated a vigorous and virile "purificationist" movement led by Syed Ahmad Brailvi and his dialectics found expression in the first great Muslim modernist Sir Syed Ahmad Khan but unfortunately his intellectual heritage stands torn into shreds today thanks to piecemeal, truncated, and atomistic approach of his intellectual progeny who are more concerned with the loom rather than the ultimate fabric being woven out of his thought, hence "the intellectual thread has as yet to be resumed from him, at a high level."²

Born at the critical juncture of history, a few years before the death of Aurangzeb (1618-1707), the last great Mughal Emperor, Wali Allah had a unique opportunity "to attempt an over-all re-integration of the value structure of Islam"³ amid disintegration and decay of the Muslim political power in India, which was wreaking havoc with all facets of Muslim life -- social, economic, ethical, spiritual, and religious. Being well-entrenched in the Quran and Sunna, well-versed in orthodox, mystic and philosophic tradition of Islam, a sociologist par-excellence, well-grounded in philosophy of history he reached down to the very roots of the different maladies afflicting the society with an intuitive, intellectual and scientific approach and emerged with a comprehensive theological framework accommodative of new elements and realities, a sort of compound prescription for all malaises.

Wali Allah: Logical Culmination of His Illustrious Predecessors

Wali Allah rose to the occasion to formulate a fitting response to the challenges of his time. The enormity of his task and modernity of his thoughts stand out when juxtaposed with the works of his great predecessors. Of course, Al-Ghazali was a culmination of the long developing history of Islam, his constructs cemented the crumbling elements of Islam i.e. law, theology and mysticism into an undifferentiated mass, which has though held the world of Islam hostage and condemned it to personalism down the centuries. Ibn al-Arabi's theosophical intuitionism and syncretic Sufism had rendered the religion almost a non-serious fact while Ibn Taimiyyah had collapsed the extremes of historical Islamic formulations of Kharijiism versus Murijiism, Ashariism against Mutazillite theology, mysticism and law, theology and fiqh, free will and predestination etc. into middle grounds and laid stress on an integrally reconstituted community of Islam. Taimiyya's message, however, remained dormant for centuries until a truncated and moth-eaten message attributed to him was

resurrected by the 18th century Arab reformer Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahab -- precursor to almost all pre-modern and modern reform movements in Islam -- into a "purificationist" movement, which only aimed at puritanical reform while the real élan of Islam issued forth in the rich mystic experience of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi who very justifiably called himself "The Innovator of the 2nd Millennium". He shattered the inertia instilled by Ibn al-Arabi's monism that had struck a strong bond with patent Hindu Vedantic monistic doctrine and culminated into Akbar's Din-e-Elahi, still he can hardly meet the criteria for a reformer. For one, whatever he preached was limited in scope and impact, and secondly, the major thrust of his message was to establish the reality of this world against the age-long Sufi doctrine of God-world identity⁴ hence he discouraged positive knowledge but his message could not turn into a mass movement due to constraints of his social milieu. In the final analysis, none of the Wali Allah's illustrious predecessors meet the requisite conditions for a reformer.

Wali Allah saw Islam as a unity and believed the idea of monotheism must manifest in all aspects of human life -- moral, social, economic, political etc. Since the Quran descended on Muhammad as a unity and an organic whole (44:2-4; 94:1-3; 97:1-5) in the cave of Hira, and then continued to be revealed in response to different situations, the Prophet's very first address to his people was based on a complete idea of applied monotheism i.e., belief in one God and its essential corollary of socio-economic justice for the creation of an egalitarian society. The idea of one God and socio-economic justice based on strong humanism were organically linked up and were inseparable constituents of Quran's monotheism. Hence, a strong reaction from political, mercantile and religious elites was natural when they came to know that the central plank of Muhammad's reform strategy is the elimination of socio-political inequalities and economic disparities which necessarily requires assumption of power. They did all they could to preempt the threat but failed to stop Muhammad who was dead sure his movement would not only dominate the Arabian Peninsula one day but would also vanquish Byzantium and Persian empires to supplant their corrupt socio-economic structures. His belief turned into a reality within the 30 years of inception of Islam from Muhammad to Ali.

Later, with the dissolution of caliphate the dynastic rulers saw their advantage in having a symbiotic relationship with orthodoxy and mysticism to better serve their interests though it cut at the very roots of this wholesome idea. A truncated monotheism was the logical outcome and the great minds of classical Islam negligently owned the new development. The post-formative developments deepened this moth-eaten monotheism in the Muslim conscience,

which over time became part and parcel of the hereditary memory genes of the community. It asserted its pernicious presence once again even several centuries afterwards when the 18th century pre-modernist reform movements, Wahabism and the various types of fundamentalism it inspired, raised slogans of Ijtihad to set Islam's course aright and understand how much Muslim community had deviated from the Quran's monotheism but unfortunately "the concept of monotheism rediscovered from the Quran by these reformists was highly truncated, shorn as it was of its basic moral, social and economic implications. There is hardly a trace in the writings of Ibn Abd al-Wahab, the founder of "Wahabism", or any other Middle Eastern fundamentalist reformer, of this basic original élan of the Quran."⁵

They reinterpreted Islam on a bound basis. This being so, because "the received formulation of Islam which came to its full fruition in the fourth century of Islamic era and which has ever since been regarded as being most uniquely and decisively Islamic, has proved to be a most formidable barrier to any change or fresh version of Islam. This classic interpretation of Islam is so fully equated with Islam that I do not know of any parallel in the history of any other religion. And yet, there is a definite period in history where the received interpretation of Islam settled down as Islam, as a system, almost burying underneath it the genuine personality of the Prophet Muhammad and his actual struggle."⁶ The classical Islam (1st to 4th Hijra) grew and evolved out of historic factors of socio-political and economic motivations and "yet it appears to have taken the place, once and for all, of revealed Islam and Muhammad."⁷

"Perhaps the first Muslim who felt the urge of new spirit in him was Shah Wali Allah of Delhi."⁸ He was a sui generis thinker in the entire history of traditional Islam for no one before him attempted integration of the total Islamic structure. Having a keen sociological sense that tradition can neither be changed nor replaced but reformed -- it is a rope through which believers are to be threaded together -- and that Islam is entering upon a new era, not only politically but spiritually and something must be done about this, he "mapped out" the old elements and made "a desperate effort to save the crumbling past in the face of an unknown future"⁹. The political vacuum in India during Wali Allah's time engendered an immense crisis but at the same time it proved a blessing for him as it kept the ruling dynasty from exerting its influence on his scholarship. In his Islamic weltanschauung, Islam and community became identical terms just as could be seen in the whole drift of Prophet's career and of the first two caliphs. Being a man of prodigious learning, rich mystic tradition, sterling insight born of deep dredging of the medieval content of Islam, he managed to

loosen the grip of the dead hand to retrieve the real moral élan of the Quran and Muhammad from the debris of history.

He was the first theologian Islam ever produced who had complete grasp over the idea of applied monotheism and viewed socio-economic justice within the context of religion inevitable for the organization and development of society. The monotheism of Muhammad was essentially different from the idea of Tawhid some contemplative souls had arrived at in Mecca. The conception of one God cherished by Hanifs, as Quran refers to them while pointing out fermentation of religious ideas in the city before the advent of Islam, was poles apart from Muhammad's message. "For Muhammad's monotheism was, from the very beginning, linked up with a humanism and a sense of social and economic justice whose intensity is no less than the intensity of the monotheistic idea, so that who(ever) carefully reads the early revelations of the Prophet cannot escape the conclusion that the two must be regarded as expressions of the same experience (107:1-7)¹⁰". Hence, "the Quran's goal of an ethical, egalitarian social order is announced with a severe denunciation of the economic disequilibrium and social inequalities prevalent in contemporary commercial Meccan society. The Quran began by criticizing two closely related aspects of that society: the polytheism or multiplicity of gods which was symptomatic of the segmentation of society, and the gross socio-economic disparities that equally rested on and perpetuated a pernicious divisiveness of mankind. The two are obverse and converse of the same coin: only one God can ensure the essential unity of the human race as His creation, His subjects, and those responsible finally to Him alone."¹¹

Hence, whereas there was a vague monotheism before Muhammad, no direct or circumstantial evidence reveals that it had any social bearing on or was instrumental for any movement for social reform. But Muhammad's religious experience was unique as his idea of monotheism had ethical, social, economic, political and spiritual implications, and he had this prescient conviction that the ultimate objective of his call was creation of a society on the basis of One-God-one humanity formula. Unlike idealistically altruistic and selfless reformers, Muhammad had this acute awareness that unless his theoretical monotheism translated into socio-economic equilibrium on practical realm he would fizzle out from the page of time because, he believed, partial or truncated monotheism was a proof of immature spirituality. Thus, his monotheism rises and falls with its degree of capacity to shape social life. This wholesome idea failed to find its due place in the most cherished constructs of classical Islam while in post-classical Islam al-Ghazali's personalism -- how to be a good person and nurture all private virtues on a strong foundation of personal faith -- reigned supreme throughout the centuries since it appeared

and continues to influence minds till this day. Ibn Taimiyyah and Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi sacrificed their lives for Islamic positivism. However, in the entire chain of Muslim theologians it was Wali Allah on whom dawned the holistic monotheism of the Quran and Muhammad with all its socio-economic, politico-cultural and spiritual connotations.

His theory of Irtifaq (socio-economic security) and Iqtirabat (spiritual evolution) i.e., “socio-cultural-political development¹²” and “support of civilization¹³”, makes him the first theologian Islam ever produced who based the organization and development of society on social and economic factors within the context of religion. He moved away from long established traditional doctrine of soul-body dualism or the dichotomy of matter and spirit as his metaphysical system does not recognize any sharp distinctions between the material and the spiritual. He naturalizes the supernatural and, conversely, supernaturalizes the natural -- for example, emotions cause physical changes and physical changes entail spiritual effects.

Before him, it was Ibn Khaldun who had pioneered discussion on the organization and development of society but it was based on positivism i.e., done from the historico-civilizational viewpoint while our thinker constructs the socio-economic structure theologically. “For the first time we see an orthodox theologian developing a concept of Natural Law -- not merely of physical nature but of sociologico-moral nature -- in order to find a secure basis for the spiritual development of man. Indeed, for these two aspects of human life he uses two distinct terms Irtifaq and Iqtirab. So closely are these two spheres related to each other in his mind that he finds one main justification for the appearance of Islam in the moral necessity of destroying the corrupt socio-economic structures of Byzantium and Persia. The categories within which society is discussed are, of course, medieval -- they could not be otherwise -- but the orientation is strikingly new, refreshingly modern.¹⁴”

The theologians before Ghazali had advanced arguments for the rational defense of religion to counter heretical claims but these were elementary and half-baked. Ghazali was the “first thinker to utilize the science of logic in offering a coherent exposition and rational defense of religious faith¹⁵”. He indeed, pioneered the philosophy of religion. “Henceforth, often a great theologian and a great Sufi was one and the same person, a development which produced in due course a series of original thinkers who reconstituted Muslim theology on a new and more integral basis, than the old formal Kalam.¹⁶”

Wali Allah's Groundbreaking Theories

As Ghazali lacked grounding in the Quran and Sunna, the task of vetting the sharp edges of his religious philosophy fell to Ibn Taimiyyah and Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi. But, the man who was to judge the medieval content of Islam, weave Bayeux tapestry of Islamic thought and precisely resume the thread from the Quran and Muhammad was Shah Wali Allah. In his thought Irtifaq (socio-economic) and Iqtirab (spiritual evolution) of humanity and man's share in it qua individual are not only allied and closely related terms but are indispensable to each other, for there is no privileged point in the history of human thought and achievements where evolution hits dead end. At each stage of its development when nature has fulfilled its potentialities the Creator bestows upon it new possibilities and potentialities, and this is true of all evolution, biological, moral or scientific. The two spheres i.e., Irtifaq and Iqtirab into which he divides life does not represent dichotomy between the material and the spiritual. “Indeed, the spiritual is not even something which “supervenes” on the material: life is ultimately one whole, spiritual in its constitution, its career and its destiny, and the “material” is really nothing more or less than the spiritual within a certain context.¹⁷”

Deduced from the Quran and Seerah and draped in progressive sociological-moral intellectualism, Wali Allah's theological structure is creative, original and non-totalizing, hence a clear departure from the Greece-ridden metaphysics of Muslim philosophers as well as age-long mystic theology. To him, life is a metaphysical spiritual principle which, in its totality and comprehensive sweep, includes all creative, purposive, evolutionary or moral values of the universe. The principle is the aspect of Deity which sustains all operations of life (55:29) and is concerned with the evolution of universe, which he terms Hazirat-ul-Quds. No dry or wet of the universe excludes its scope. However, Wali Allah employs this term to state the relationship of man's development with the creative forces of the universe and he terms this manwardness of the Divine as Metaphysical Man. What differentiates Wali Allah from the Platonized Aristotelianism of Muslim philosophers and mystic theologians is that the Metaphysical Man instead of being a bleak and cold ideal of Platonists or a static explanatory formula of the universe is active and creative. Assuming moral role in the history of man the Metaphysical Man of our thinker is in an intimate touch with history, who, in the words of Ibn Taimiyyah, “speaks and acts”.

On the other hand, this principle is not only absolute and transcendental but cumulative and evolutionary. It accepts the positive achievements of men as its content hence its eternal and transcendental status is not indifferent to the passage of time. Thus its relationship to man is ever-changing and ever-evolving for the thoughts and achievements of bygone men have entered into it as its

components or at least as its auxiliary forces. The history of religious evolution from Adam to Muhammad manifests that the quality of relationship of this principle to man ten millennia ago was not quite the same as it is now, and what it is now will not be ten millennia hence.

Wali Allah terms this transcendental principle -- i.e. metaphysical plus cumulative fund of creative volitions and true thoughts of bygone generations thus achieved in each period of human history -- "Supernal Plenum", which is a constellation of the closest angels and the spirits of the most righteous persons who join this august assembly after death (89:27-30). It produces a halo of great sublime light for the entity termed al-Ruh (Gabriel) by the Quran and it is this sum total which guides the development and evolution of man. "We shall teach you, and you will not forget [aught of what you are taught] save what God may will [you to forget] (87:6-7). The verse, says Muhammad Asad, points to the intellectual evolution of man in generic sense and not to the doctrine of abrogation, which has been wrongly built over it. How the knowledge, skills and expertise are bestowed upon men, how the same become redundant and forgotten after the fulfillment of potentialities, and new ones of better import are granted to keep the mankind at each step progressing and evolving¹⁸.

To Wali Allah, this is how the Supernal Plenum guides the evolution of man continuously and successively. For all knowledge -- intuitive, intellectual and scientific -- comes from God. Two important conclusions may be drawn from this theory. First, it allows a new outlook on history which, instead of being a static view, becomes a dynamic and evolutionary process, making history cumulative and evolutionary, and treating the entire historic movement like a spiral and not a cycle. Secondly, it puts before man prospects of higher destiny: he can acquire the status of creative force and become a factor within the constitution of Reality. Consequently, whether man entrenches himself in evil or goodness (92:5-11) the transcendental principle facilitates him in either way he assumes since evil is necessary to attain the greater good in Divine schema though it is only incidental to good and relatively small compared to the abundance of good.

Wali Allah's view of history as a dynamic evolutionary process inexorably leads to the conclusion that Muhammad being the last in the whole chain of prophets had the most direct and comprehensive contact with the Supernal Plenum and the religion he proclaimed is the mean avoiding all extremes (2:143); and in it the dialectic movement of religious insight is finally resolved (3:110; 3:104; 22:41). In the ultimate analysis, perhaps Wali Allah's concept of Hazirat-ul-Quds and Supernal Plenum suggests "that the Spirit is the actual content of Revelation: "Even so have We revealed to you a Spirit of Our Command (42:52)"; He casts

the Spirit of His Command upon whomsoever He wills (40:15). Perhaps the Spirit is a power or a faculty or an agency which develops in the Prophet's heart, and which comes into actual revelatory operation when needed, but it originally does "descend" from "above"." For the "Command" or "al-Amr" is nothing but what the Quran terms "the Hidden Book", the "Mother of all Books" or the "Preserved Tablet", which is the all-encompassing book of the universe, it leaves out nothing, be it small or great, dry or wet whence comes guidance or content related to mankind.

The Quran employs the term al-Ruh, Ruh-ul-Quds, the Spirit of His Command exclusively for the agent of Revelation which differs from the angels perhaps in quality and weight. God inspires or sends Revelation to angels themselves to encourage believers when they are in distress: "when [in the battle of Badr] God revealed to [or inspired] the angels [saying], I am with you, so give courage to the believers." But so far as all the great prophets preceding Muhammad are concerned they had the benefit of God's Spirit, who gave them Revelation (16:2). Yet, believers too, "on whose hearts Faith is firmly inscribed" are supported by God's Spirit (58:22). However, to Ashraf Thanvi the Quran has employed the term Ruh in the meaning of "Knowledge" as well (2:87). "It is this knowledge which the Quran constantly terms Nur or light and Hidayah or guidance (5:47-48; 24:40). It literally supplies man with inner eye with which to see his path (22:64)." In a nutshell, this account or nature of Revelation described by original modernist thinker Dr. Fazlur Rahman and traditional scholar Ashraf Thanvi is perhaps derived from and can be best understood in the context of Wali Allah's discourse on Hazirat-ul-Quds and Supernal Plenum whereby cumulative and evolutionary development of human society and universe is presented in both natural and religious idioms with such a finesse that defies description. **It at best seems "Natural philosophy" developed and enveloped in religious idiom.**

"The scholastic profundity of Shah Wali Allah, according to Shibli Numani, which is reflected, inter alia, in his contribution to Kalam overshadows men like Ghazali and Razi¹⁹". His theological framework deals with real issues of life i.e., socio-economic, political and spiritual development of man viz. creative forces of the universe. He seldom touches upon the archaic, imaginary issues of the old Kalam such as eternity of the Quran, indivisibility of Divine essence and attributes, free will and predetermination etc. He draws parallels between the corrupt socio-economic structure of Byzantium and Persia and the socio-economic deluge that disintegrated and decayed the Mughal Empire, the immediate society before him. He concludes that as Islam appeared as a moral necessity of destroying the existing corrupt structures and reestablishing afresh just socio-

economic moral order at that juncture of history, the situation before him in Mughal India demands the same moral élan and measures. "Had the categories of time and space demanded I was capable of waging war to set the course of history aright, he wrote.²⁰" But he utilized all his energies for the restatement of Islam. The old Kalam deals with the issues of belief but Wali Allah goes beyond this narrow scope and supplies Sharia with sound rationale. He not only finds organic link between belief and Sharia but also establishes connection between Sharia and the innate urges of human nature.

However, in so far as the nature and destiny of individual is concerned, Wali Allah neither owes allegiance to Asharite theology which reduces man to impotence in the interests of saving God's omnipotence nor lends credence to the idea of arbitrary theistic determinism of Razi and Ghazali who "vied with one another in producing ever fresh arguments to prove that man can be said "to act" only metaphysically, not really, since the only real "actor" is God.²¹" To him, each individual has ultimately a definite "place" in the structure of Supernal Plenum and he has to contribute to Reality i.e. the personality attains salvation only by emptying itself into the Universal Soul-substance. Human personality survives the shock of death but personal survival is not merely to suffer pain or enjoy spiritual pleasure. The pain purifies and rectifies which the personality has to undergo until its relative perfection is attained and its full potential realized. However, when that stage is reached, human self does not sit idle with its own blissful state but continues to contribute to the advancement of good by taking its due place in the Supernal Plenum. After clarifying the nature and destiny of the human Ego, Wali Allah turns to the Quranic concept of Taqdir which in the popular Muslim parlance had degenerated into pure fatalism called Kismet. Man on the one side represents and exemplifies an ideal man before whom angels prostrated; he is an individual that he is, on the other.

Hence, Taqdir is the fulfillment and realization of a person's potentialities regarding both these capacities. Thus, Taqdir is the realization of the total ideals of the personality. "There is a sense in which Taqdir is a deterministic principle for at each stage of the development of the individual and of the species of man, the personality has to act within a certain context and with a given volume of potentialities. But it is a purely relative determinism, for the fulfillment of the potentialities of a certain stage leads to the creation of new potentialities.²²" What Wali Allah establishes is that Taqdir changes with progression to the new phase. Long before 'Natural Philosophy' found supporters in Europe, Wali Allah conceived the doctrine of evolution in nature in both religious and natural idioms. All evolution whether biological, moral or scientific is based on the premise that at

each stage of its development when nature has fulfilled its potentialities, it leads to the creation of new potentialities in natural idiom and in the religious idiom the Creator bestows upon it new possibilities and potentialities.

To him, Taqdir is all about moral strife and responsibility which he terms Taklif. Man is essentially a "moral being" unlike merely a "social animal" of Aristotle²³. It is al-ray al-kulli i.e. universality of purpose, which motivates altruism in man and determines his priorities. Animals, on the other hand pursue al-ray al-juzi, immediacies of biological existence. "Man is urged by nature to voluntarily abide by a moral law to achieve certain objectives beyond his immediate selfish needs of food, shelter, and sex.²⁴" The primary fact of human life that distinguishes man from the rest of creatures is that **man is capable of choice and unceasing endeavor (90:4)**. Being a "moral being" man is squarely charged with an unceasing moral struggle for creating a moral social order on earth, which the Quran describes as "Trust" (33:72). It is such a gigantic task that mountains despite their firmness, earth despite its vastness, heavens despite their heights cringed away from carrying because of the burden involved, but man hastened to bear it, drawing a tender rebuke from God in the words of the Quran "unfair to himself and foolhardy --- for man "has certainly not yet fulfilled God's Primordial Command²⁵" (80:23).

The task of establishing "moral order" on earth was an unmistakable objective of the pristine Islam but soon after the imposition of dictatorial rule on the Muslim community, orthodoxy was institutionalized contrary to the spirit of Islam to safeguard the interests of dynastic rule. Unfortunately, the orthodoxy, together with Sufis, left no stone unturned to build and propagate a pervasive narrative of arbitrary theistic determinism, which was bound to annihilate even the last shred of moral responsibility among Muslims as a community.

Hence, moral initiative proved to be the first casualty of dictatorial rule in Islam. Yet, Wali Allah rediscovered the revealed religion and actual Muhammad from the debris of history in so far as the moral responsibility of establishing moral social order on earth is concerned. Both reward and punishment revolve around this responsibility and no amount of casual human behavior can obliterate its primary moral character -- for it is what it means to be human.

Wali Allah's Bibliography

Wali Allah is distinguished from others in the long chain of theologians by intellectual depth, vast learning and rich mystic consciousness. The courage he showed in translating Quran into Persian speaks volumes for the originality of his thought and clarity of conscience. He did not flinch from risking his life to accomplish what he believed was

necessary. Though brought up in Hanafi tradition, “he considered Muwatta to be the most authentic source of the legal opinions of Umar, the Second Caliph, whom he regarded as the absolute Mujtahid in the true sense of the term. The founders of the other four legal schools were in his opinion, mere followers of Umar’s School of fiqh and exercised Ijtihad within the framework of his legal opinions²⁶”. After the Quran, perhaps he attached the greatest importance to Muwatta, which he deemed the most valuable source of tradition as well as authentic legal opinions of the early Islamic era, and wrote two commentaries on the book, i.e., al-Musawwa (Arabic) and Musaffa (Persian). He is so indebted to al-Ghazali [whom he pays rich tribute in the introduction of another of his magnum opus Hujjatullahul Baligha] that at first glance his Hujjat seems a pale copy of Ghazali’s al-Ihyaul Uloom and one get a feeling that one is dealing with a dilettante in Wali Allah but a careful perusal of his thought soon evaporates this notion when one catches hold of his central ideas which are linchpin of his system of thought. “The methods of Shah Wali Allah and al-Ghazali make an interesting comparison: both were temperamentally and consciously synthetic spirits, appropriating rather than rejecting, absorbing rather than exchanging. While al-Ghazali moved from problem to problem, absorbing and appropriating material as he went, Shah Wali Allah used and adapted data from all directions simultaneously to produce a system that was, despite its difficulties, whole and synthesized.”²⁷ In an ultimate analysis we clearly see that “Wali Allah supported the religious stand of true Islamic orthodoxy, rather than that of Sufism; of the Sharia (Law) rather than that of abstract and inward spirituality; of Ibn Taymiyya rather than that of al-Ghazali.”²⁸

Wali Allah also owes much to al-Farabi [al-Muallim al-Thani or The second Teacher, the first being Aristotle] in so far as the compatibility or fusion of reason and tradition is concerned. So great was the impact of al-Farabi on Muslim thought that four centuries after him Ibn Taimiyya declared when he was able to grasp the gist of his philosophy that there was no conflict and inconsistency between Sarih al-Maqul, a rationally established fact, and Sahi al-Manqul, an authentic religious doctrine. Wali Allah chooses to stand alongside Ibn Taimiyya not only against popular theosophical intuitionism but orthodox mystic tradition as well that defied or discouraged the role of intellect in rationalization of Sharia sciences and drew sharp lines between religious and worldly sciences. “Wali Allah’s teaching on the development of human society and the role of politics and religion therein has something novel despite his debt to al-Farabi and Ibn Khaldun. For one thing, his discussion of the human psychological typologies and their role in the development of the religious-political-cultural

complex is definitely a new contribution to “ethics” in Islam²⁹”.

In order grasp Wali Allah’s socio-religious reconstruction French anthropologist Levi Strauss’ concept of “Bricoleur”, “Engineer” and “Eclectic” is greatly helpful. Bricoleur is a type of worker who mends and maintains machinery or takes old materials and improvises new uses for them. Strauss deploys this engaging metaphor in social parlance with reference to two processes: first, the appropriation of cultural elements from the dominant culture; and second, the transformation of meanings through ironic juxtaposition and innovative use in order to challenge and subvert existing meanings. Thus, the result of a series of improvisation might be that a multiplicity of very culture-specific meanings and norms is refashioned into a coherent unity. Being a bricoleur is different from being an eclectic. The crucial difference is this: in order for any performance or idea to be deemed eclectic, the provenance of the borrowed artifact must still be very visible to the observer in the composite product. In fact, the borrowed idea does not develop a life of its own within the new setting. Lacking coherence, it sits uncomfortably in its new habitat as if it had been mechanically inserted into the new setting. By contrast, a bricoleur relocates artifacts in such a way that they form an integral part of the new environment. A bricoleur demonstrates originality in the process of refinement and adaptation, making the borrowed artifact synthetically fit in with the new surrounding as if it had been there all the time and belonged there in the first place. The best example of bricolage is honeybee’s process of making honey. It draws from a diverse source pollen and nectar in order to produce a synthetic product that reflects all the colors and fruits of its immediate habitat. While the honey produced is in some way the aggregate of many diverse types of nectar, it is simultaneously something very new and unparalleled. The bee not only produces honey but also furthers reproduction through cross pollination that in turn generates new flowers and restarts the cycle for the future production of honey (see verses). However, an engineer always attempts to go beyond the constraints imposed by a particular moment in civilization. Hence a prophet generally, and an apostle particularly, is engineer on the realm of social morality for “his way is not to classify facts and discover causes: he thinks in terms of life and movement with a view to create new patterns of behavior for mankind³⁰”. The foremost task ahead of Wali Allah was to attempt an over-all re-integration of the value structure of Islam. As we know, no one before him attempted integration (Tatbiq) of the total Islamic structure. Al-Ghazali at the crucial juncture of Islamic history had integrated law, theology and mysticism which was owned and augmented by the later generations of theologians as an admitted fact. But “the most strikingly new feature in Wali Allah’s application of the principle of Tatbiq

is his concern with the socio-economic basis of the human society within the context of religion³¹”.

Hence, in so far as the four law schools are concerned, he assumed the role of an eclectic; his legal eclecticism had votaries in some scholars but it practically failed to attract the masses. He writes “Fiqh Shafii and Hanafi are the most famous and majority of Community owes allegiance to them. Traditionalists (Muhadith), doctors of law, theologians, Hermeneutics, and Sufis for the most part follow Shafi. States and masses follow Hanafi. At this time what suits and is concordant to “the Supernal Plenum” is that both be unified, verified on the touchstone of authentic Hadith books. What is justified (be) kept secure, other be omitted. After critical analysis what comes true and supported in both schools must be held with teeth, if both differ, both opinions be accepted and obeyed.”³² Islamic law appeared to be in the tight grip of the dead hand of classical Islam which Wali Allah himself was seen at times struggling to loosen in his holistic weltanschauung. Maliki, Shafi and Hanafi traditions of law despite being almost contemporaneous and contiguous to each other, developed freely in response to native lands’ needs, times and climes of Hijaz, Iraq and Egypt in line with the precedent set by the Prophet, the Quran and righteous caliphs.

Critique on Wali Allah’s Thoughts

Wali Allah either failed to pay heed to Imam Shafi’s complete reversal of the natural process of Sunna-Ijma-Ijtihad to Sunna-Ijtihad-Ijma or the extreme respect traditionally accorded to early Imams and sanctity of established law schools arrested his wit, otherwise the sharpness of intellect kneaded in his socio-political zeitgeist and acute sense of history and courage in expressing his thoughts that he displayed in his holistic outlook on Islam make him capable enough to lay the foundation of an independent law school provided he had sufficient human resource and state patronage at his disposal.

To grasp the pervasive impact of Imam Shafi’s step, we will have to delve a little deeper into the issue. A tradition (sunna) emerges in a particular region by the consensus of community and assumes the status of Ijma, but later if it loses validity in the light of new realities it undergoes Ijtihad wherefrom emanates a new tradition which then assumes the status of Ijma after consensus and the process continues until it demands another Ijtihad. It was Shafi who reversed this natural process of Sunna-Ijma-Ijtihad to Sunna-Ijtihad-Ijma perhaps to bestow uniformity on the administrative wheel of the empire. He found an individual verse of Quran or individual hadith with a single narrator suffice to derive law and extended the status of finality not only to the Ijma of Companions but to every consensus once reached by the community [Ijma and Ijtihad turned into a one-off activity

pertaining to any issue]. His overemphasis on hadith ushered in period of a splendid Hadith-collection movement that brought forth for the most part a decontextualized compendium of hadiths, a development bound to mar the prospects of a holistic view of Islam though it created unprecedented and impressive uniformity in Islamic civilization in human history from Morocco to Malaya but at the cost of originality and creativity.

However, on the realm of overall reintegration of the value structure of Islam Wali Allah raided all archives of knowledge available to him and like a bricoleur presents a synthesis of all the disciplines traditionally cultivated by Muslims such as philosophy, logic, theology, psychology, sociology, law, Sufism, and, indeed history. He himself describes his academic prowess in the following words:

“You should know, brethren, may God have mercy on you, that every age is characterized by a special kind of knowledge in the distribution of the mercies of God, the Almighty. If you consider the conditions of the early phase of this blessed Community when none of the Sharia sciences had been systematized and compiled, nor the various branches of literature, nor yet much discussion about them had taken place, but divine inspiration continued to appear in their minds. One kind of knowledge after another in accordance with His wisdom for each age, this point should be clear to you. My lot, in this particular age, in the distribution of God’s mercy is that in my mind come together all the branches of knowledge [cultivated by] this Community- its rational sciences, traditional sciences and spiritual sciences, and that all of them be synthesized and their sharp edges of differences become smooth in such a way that each science falls into its proper place. All praise to God.”³³

True to his claim Wali Allah for the most part seemed passionately determined to smooth sharp edges of differences of traditional sciences with the help of the principle of Tatbiq but attributes his viewpoint to the Supernal Plenum in order to make it acceptable and established perhaps because of the mystery-mongering temperament of his Community. “Reason, tradition and intuition appear in full harmony when Shah Wali Allah articulates his religious point of view.”³⁴ It is largely true on theoretical plane but in so far as concrete issues of life are concerned his balance largely tilts toward tradition and intuition, the stock-in-trade of his age. In his theological framework socio-economic security (Irtifaqat) and spiritual evolution of mankind (Iqtirabat) go hand in hand in the whole gamut of human affairs so much so that “while Ibn Khaldun perceived luxury as what led to the decay of society through diluting its solidarity and corrupting its values, Shah Wali Allah is willing to consider it in both its positive and negative implications.”³⁵

He contends man in contradistinction to other animals is equipped with the quality of Zarafah, i.e., aesthetic sense. He desires beautiful spouse, delicious food, elegant dresses and a lofty house. But the only condition is that it must not conflict with the moral responsibility i.e., *raison detre* of man. To limit the extravagance of luxury he resorts to the most outstanding attribute of human society i.e., “justice”, the locus of which is “conscience” that is truly “as central to Islam as love is to Christianity”³⁶. Wali Allah’s conception of Justice (*adala*) encompasses the entire spectrum of diverse human pursuits. “When *adala* is expressed in dress, manners, and mores, it is *adab* i.e., etiquette. When it is maintained in matters relating to income and expenditure, it is ‘economy’. Its observance in the affairs of state is called ‘politics’.”³⁷ Hence, to Wali Allah luxury is good or bad depending on the context. It is a convincing argument for there is no privilege point in human history where man should claim that he has reached the point of moral fulfillment (80:23), or his aestheticism has touched the highest possible mark for according to Wali Allah at each stage of its development when nature has fulfilled its potentialities the Creator bestows upon it new possibilities and potentialities. Hence, the prospects of socio-economic cum political development and spiritual evolution of man are in human sense almost unending.

In Wali Allah’s socio-religious world-view socio-economic cum political development and spiritual evolution of man seemed indispensable to each other hence luxury (*Turfah*) too is a justified part of human evolution unless it triggers competitions, conflicts, toil and exertion; turn man away from the Creator, and disrupt his plans for the next life. Even in its negative sense Wali Allah perceives luxury as leading to worldliness and conflict, rather than to a loss of group solidarity. “Unlike the model of Ibn Khaldun, where the rise and decay of societies followed a model of growth and fall of the biological cycle, Wali Allah only considers progress up to the fourth *Irtifaq* and does not speculate on what follows. While he admits that a society may have to temporarily fall back on previous stage he does not consider it inevitable or cyclical³⁸”. Toynbee concurs with him as he believes that communities’ existence depends on how they respond to the challenges, so long as they continue to respond they exist and flourish, otherwise they weaken and perish. In the light of this astute observation, the principle of *zakat* as laid down in Quran can work wonders in establishing socio-economic equilibrium if applied in letter and spirit. Why then does Wali Allah accept without questioning the categories of *zakat* expenditure as fixed and immutable under a hidebound tradition that has rendered *zakat* necessarily defunct in the course of time.

Wali Allah writes one should know that the Law-Giver [Prophet] has given us two types of knowledge. One of them

is the knowledge of salutary and un-salutary in the acquisition of qualities like managing household, ethics of earning livelihood and running the affairs of state. He simply encouraged praiseworthy conduct and did not specify any given quantity of actions. He lauded the virtues of cleverness, courage, kindness, mutual affection and moderation in earning one’s livelihood but he did not define the required amount of these qualities. The second type of knowledge is that of positive laws, penalties, and legal obligations which the Sharia has explained by way of quantification, “quantified actions” rather than on “the purposes.” If salutary purpose is given priority over the “quantified action”, it may affect the sphere of rites of worship and cohesiveness of community. To Wali Allah the “quantified actions” besides their inherent salutary effects have become anchoring points for the cohesiveness of community and thus cannot be abandoned over some individuals’ reasoning.

He seemed to suggest that as freezing and boiling points of water have been decisively quantified at 0c and 100c in Alam e Amr, so is the case with “quantified actions”. We do not know, what is the status of these quantifications in Supernal Plenum or in the “sacred Precinct” [Hazrat-ul-Quds], unless through an explicit statement of revelation. Hence “quantified actions” are in the category of “imponderables”. “Yet, no matter how important the “quantified actions” may be in the “religious” sector proper, in the social sector it is lethal for the individual and even more for the community to substitute them for salutary purposes. In case of *zakat* this substitution has wreaked such havoc that it has destroyed the efficacy of this universal institution³⁹”, writes Fazlur Rahman.

Muslim jurists attached supreme importance to the concept of quantified action of the Prophet i.e., 2.5 % of the total amount collected per annum. The small amount was enough for addressing simplistic needs of that society but was certainly not sufficient to meet the purpose of the Quran of provision of all services for the welfare of communities. Wali Allah accepts traditional view on *zakat* lock, stock, and barrel. “For the Quran, at least, it is a tax to be spent not only on the welfare of the poor, but on a multitude of purposes like education, jihad, on facilitating better communications and even winning the opponents’ hearts. How could such an institution, conceived in this comprehensive sense of dire realism, be mere charity? What other social purposes could the Prophet have in those days? The principle of *Zakat* constitutes the principle of interference in private wealth in the larger interests of the community. But this obviously does not mean and cannot mean that you take money from the rich and simply spill it over the un-earning members of the community who are otherwise capable of earning. This would make nonsense of the whole purpose of this principle.

According to the Quran itself, “weaklings” were only those who were to benefit from it. In the tribal parlance in those days, it referred either to disabled persons or real economic outcasts. For the rest, people have to be enabled to earn, they have to be made to earn. So far as the Prophet is concerned, his goal was to secure such measure of socio-economic justice as the limited wants of his society required. For the rest, he left businessmen and landowners to themselves and encouraged them in their pursuits.⁴⁰ The million dollar question arises when Umar, the second caliph, only a few years after Muhammad refused to divide land of Iraq among the warriors as booty and declared it public property in changing conditions despite guidelines of the Quran and practice of the Prophet to the contrary – it seems at face value a clear deviation from the Quran and Prophet’s method but it in reality it serves the broader values of social justice and fair-play inherent in the Quran and sunnah, a center of gravity of the value structure of Islam -- then why Wali Allah sees real value in “quantified action” of the Prophet, i.e. 2.5% despite the fact that socio-economic conditions of the Muslim community demanded urgent remedy based on revolutionary measures after the disintegration of Mughal Empire. The answer is Wali Allah’s Tatbiq principle, which seeks solace in the worn-out hidebound tradition of the Muslim jurists rather than the model of Umar whom he declares **absolute mujtahid**. Yet, Wali Allah perhaps deserves concession as he had not had the opportunity to observe the modern world unfolding though Britain had already entered Bengal and extended its suzerainty to as far as Allahabad. His followers too locked horns with Sikhs but turned a blind eye to western material and spiritual advancements.

“The Quran’s verse (9:60) that lays out the heads of zakat expenditure covers all the departments and activities of a modern welfare state: 1) the poor and needy; 2) the civil service (literally, tax-collectors; but the tax-collectors were in the Prophet’s days the only civil service, since his government was a simple, informal, and undifferentiated form of government); 3) diplomatic expenditure “to win goodwill” for Islam; 4) to free Muslim war-captives; 5) to relieve the chronic debts of people who cannot free themselves from debt; 6) expenditure “in the path of Allah”, a phrase which in the Quran means both Jihad, i.e. defense and expenditure on social wealth, for example, health and education etc.; and finally, 7) “facilitating travel”, i.e. communications expenditures.”⁴¹

Hence so far as the numerical value and expenditure heads of zakat are concerned Wali Allah not only failed to break the scholastic shell of medievalism but marred the prospects of a vibrant fiscal system the Quran had founded by banning usury and encouraging Sadaqat (grand cooperative spirit and socio-economic justice rather than nourishing the beggars)

to strike socio-economic equilibrium as is evident in “Muaakhat-e-Madina” i.e. “Muslim brotherhood” and subsequent reforms, which are the be-all and end-all of Muhammad’s monotheism, but Wali Allah’s over-emphasis on the hidebound tradition obscures his vision to such an extent that he fails to perceive inadequacy of his stand. It is because the Tatbiq Principle serves more to re-arrange, re-adjust and re-order the existent constitutive elements of Islam and less to re-adapt and re-invent the moral élan of Islam which emerges from the Quran and Prophet’s life as a unity and an organic whole.

For “In every society, of course, there must be an element of conservatism for mere social change and growth cannot even take place without the controlling hand which supplies the element of continuity amidst change. But just as no society can live on mere change, similarly no society can survive for long by mere conservatism.⁴²” Even though it might be capable of crushing mountains out of existence for its so called claims of providing social cohesion and profound equilibrium. The medieval content that in the course of time translated into conservatism “arose actually in history and has its full significance only within that historical, situational context. Divorced from that situation and eternalized, it blocked and could not fail to block progress in all the spheres of life: political and moral principles, spiritual life, intellectual activity and education.”⁴³

In the realm of mystic experience and mystic metaphysics, Wali Allah had obtained some great successes but encountered some acute problems as well. Unlike Ibn Taimiyya and Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, Wali Allah sought to apply his Tatbiqi (integrative) instincts to Ibn al-Arabi’s latitudinarian spirit and resultant syncretic Sufi movement that amassed with reckless voraciousness all intrinsic and extrinsic materials that came its way to help build a gigantic glacier of monism. Ibn al-Arabi’s theosophical intuitionism based on the gnostic principle that drew sharp line between reason and “Kashf” (intuition), claimed the latter supposedly unassailable citadel for itself and termed “reason” to be absolutely fallible, finds solace in Wali Allah’s discourse and likewise, the pantheistic content of Sufi-theosophy that defies positive religion invokes moral relativism and leaves no place for real religion insinuating that a good Muslim, a good Hindu, or a good Buddhist are no different from one another and the community is under no obligation first to set its house in order and establish world moral order on earth as envisioned by the Quran.

Most of Wali Allah’s well-reasoned articulations are clothed in Sufi claims, which according to the Bible of Sufi-theosophy, are ultimate truths hence not subject to further deliberations. The idea of the “grades of truth” has been accepted in the domain of pure thought but not in the field of mysticism; not as a rule, theory or principle. The

deliverances of mystic insight are said to be direct and immediate, entailing a character of incorrigibility and infallibility. On this premise Sufis disparage rational knowledge, which as opposed to mystic experience, never carries within itself any token of its findings being the final truth. Sufis though conferred status of finality upon mystic deliverances in favour of privileged cognitive claims over rational thought, however, **in practice**, Sufism, has always been critical and corrective of both its methods and findings. Hence what Sufism tacitly recognized it disdained in theory and sought to reject while Sheikh Ahmad has recognized in principle and put it forward as a theory.

When it is true in the realm of general knowledge why should it not be true of mystic knowledge? When the Quran declares all knowledge -- intellectual, scientific, or intuitive [David's expertise of making coats of mail, 21:80; Joseph's expertise of interpreting dreams, 12:37; scribes' knowledge of writing who write documents of agreements, wills, 2:282] -- comes from God how different categories of knowledge can be quarantined in different airtight compartments. How can one be different from the other? Intuition is the highest form of intellect; reason and intuition are organically related; their difference lies in degree not the quality thus both intellectual and intuitive forms of knowledge are subject to further testaments and deliberations. "There need be no quarrel that a mystic experience has a great sense of authority and a feeling of extraordinary certainty for the subject, but, equally this need not entail that a particular mystic experience cannot be challenged and partly falsified by a subsequent one."⁴⁴ Hence, Sheikh Ahmad's theory of the relativity of truth of mystic experience is a great contribution to higher Sufism and modern psychology and it cannot be refuted on the ground that it cannot claim absolute truth for itself for it may be subject to correction.

Ibn Taimiyya and Sheikh Ahmad are Sufis par excellence. The latter experimented with new Sufi techniques of Naqshbandi order different from the conventional methods and the process bestowed unprecedented richness upon Sufism by purging it of all superstitious notions and mystery-mongering cults. Still, both seldom seek endorsement of their religious views from Supernal Plenum or heavenly inspired dicta. As for Wali Allah, perhaps pressed by his audience's receptibility for theosophical intuitionism which was stock-in-trade in his time, he preferred Ibn al-Arabi over and against Ibn Taimiyya and Sheikh Ahmad on this plane, otherwise his reasoned enunciations seldom need such corroborations. Had he been cognizant of and updated about the intellectual developments of the modern west knocking at his door, quite novel and upgraded would have been the inspirations of Supernal Plenum to him as according to his own theory,

man's relationship with the august council is cumulative and evolutionary.

Recent research amply proves that Ibn al-Arabi's monism clothed in Avicenna's philosophy travelled to India through Iran and its fertilization with patent and exceptional native Hindu Vedantic monism gave birth to Akbar's Din-i-Ilahi on political plane, which was an attempt to roll back the role of positive religion and impose uniformity on diverse subjects in the interests of the ruler. The attempt, however, was thwarted by Muslims as well as Hindus who also showed little enthusiasm and overall indifference to it as the syncretic religion too was undergoing a series of transformations from 10th century onward despite the fact that Kabir Das and Guru Nanak had lent a helping hand to Akbar's program. "Badauni who was in attendance at the Imperial Darbar tells us that among the clauses of the religious manifesto, which the Emperor and his associates had drafted but which was never publicly issued, one stated that the Muslim rites of worship were not necessary since their purpose was to civilize the barbarian Bedouins of Arabia."⁴⁵ What else could be expected from the fusion of Ibn al-Arabi's and Vedantic monism? Were it not for a personality like Sheikh Ahmad who defeated the doctrine of monism and Unity of Being (Wahdat al-Wujud) on the realms of metaphysics -- which is directed against Ibn al-Arabi and his mystic experience and through him against all Sufis who declare the unitive experience to be the highest and truest fact of mystic life -- Islam would have become extinct in India. Metaphysically, he refuted the God-World identity which explains the conflict of good and evil in terms of the waves that arise from the sea, collide with each other, and then fall back into the same sea, leaving no scope for positive religion at all. Hence, whereas modernity had condemned God to oblivion in western hemisphere and Descartes was trying to rationally establish God's existence which had been thrown into doubt and east was in the titanic grip of the dead hand of monism which had rendered this gigantic machine of universe only an attenuated carbon copy of God, Sheikh Ahmad was resuscitating into real existence the world which was slowly getting sucked into the black-hole of Sufic-Vedantic monism.

In the realm of mysticism, Sheikh Ahmad exposed insufficiencies of unitive experience which he deemed a genuine mystic fact and could not be denied but must be transcended. Unless it is transcended it impoverishes the personality and becomes harmful. To him, the experience is genuine and valuable, Ibn al-Arabi had this experience, but by declaring it to be the last word, and, further by building a speculative philosophy around this mystic insight, he did incalculable harm. "No doubt, utterances of unity and union (with God) have come from Sufis under the seizure of intoxication (i.e. in the state of ecstasy) and they have cried

out 'I am God' or 'Glory be to me', but they have not been able to formulate and express the (precise) manner of this union and unity. The Sheikh has, therefore become the confirmation of the earlier Sufis and the argument for the latter ones." ⁴⁶ Ibn al-Arabi and Sufis of his ilk term saintliness higher than prophet-hood. They divide the whole created universe into the realm of word or spirit (alam al-Amr) and the realm of empirical objects (alam al-khalq). The first is eternal, the second is the temporal world. "To obtain a state of bliss and happiness, they say, man must renounce or "abstract from" the changing world of time and abide in the eternal realm of the spirit. Being in the eternal world is to be with God, they hold, and away from the world of time and its manifold contingencies and changes. The prophet's task is to bring order into this temporal world of empirical objects; in doing so he necessarily sinks below the level of the saint who abides in the realm of the spirit. The life of the Sharia is, therefore, necessarily at a lower level than the saintly life." ⁴⁷ Hence Ibn al-Arabi's latitudinarian spirit based on this specious argument concludes that the beginning of the saintliness is the end of prophet-hood.

To establish the meaningfulness of the prophetic experience, Sirhindi has enunciated a law of higher religious experience which he repeatedly applied to himself. "This law states that 'the descent occurs proportionately to the ascent' and can be called Law of the Proportionality of Experience and Creativity. The prophet comes down to act in the flesh and blood of the temporal, simply because he has gone the highest: which fact bestows an inherent impulsion and fecundity upon his experience to become historic. The pure mystic never comes down quite to the earth, because he has never been quite in the heaven: in its downward movement saintship does not wholly (ba-kulliyat) face the creation: only its exterior is with the world while its inner is with God. The reason is that a saint starts moving downward without having completed all the stages of the ascent. Inevitably, then, he is constantly being held back and haunted by his care for the side of ascent and cannot fully be with the world. The Prophet, on the other hand, comes back after having been 'there' and hence can devote himself entirely to his mission to humanity." ⁴⁸

The Sheikh further draws the wind out of their (saints) sails by saying that this seemingly lowly world is much nearer to God's heart than the Realm of the Spirit, for the ultimate interest of God in creating the world of the Spirit is to redeem the world here below since the world is the purpose of the whole creative process. The Sheikh rebukes those who despise the Realm of empirical objects, "the world of causes", and want to live in the Realm of Spirit where anything can happen for the annulment of the causes is the annulment of reason and wisdom. It is the world of reason and wisdom which leads one to say "O Lord you have not

created this (world) in vain" (3:191). This is because our Sheikh terms the mystic state of annihilation, ignorance "by which mystic has left out of his mind what his real status in the scale of being is. In order, therefore, to do justice to his own and his fellow-beings' real situation, he must "return" from that state. Otherwise, he would be guilty of the worst and dangerous ignorance. He would be like a man who is standing on the edge of a cliff but is so engrossed in the contemplation of the panorama down below that for a moment he thinks that he is an actual participant in that panorama, forgetting his own perilous position."⁴⁹ As the mystic's state snatches moral responsibility and initiative from the subject, the Sheikh terms it ignorance and he calls "return" from that state "the state of knowledge" that is the return to work, the stated goal of life, since the purpose of causal processes is to make man endeavor whereby he both realizes his own capacities and truly appreciates the meaning of God for the world.

Hence, our Sheikh is, in his reaction to Akbar's heresy, closer to Ibn Taimiyya, who evaluated Ibn al-Arabi "as the epitome of all that is anti-Islam"⁵⁰ as "the deluge of Ibn al-Arabi's pantheistic theosophy had all but submerged the orthodox aspects of Islam"⁵¹. Ibn Taimiyyah, in sharp contradistinction to al-Ghazali and Ibn al-Arabi, "seeks to go back to the Quran and the Sunna and the freshness of his spirit is equaled only by the harshness of his tone. With this new inspiration from the original sources he not only attacks Ibn al-Arabi but also demolishes some of the central theses of the orthodox Asharite Kalam on the questions of human free will and the rationality and purposiveness of the Sharia-commands."⁵² Yet, in so far as Islamic positivism is concerned Sirhindi seems an improved version of Ibn Taimiyyah since whereas to the latter Ijtihad of Ulama and the Kashf of Sufis are initially on a par and both must struggle for Sharia validation, Sirhindi declares in crystal clear terms that on all points where the Ulama differ from the Sufis, the truth lies with the Ulama and Sufis are in error. "This is not a mere thought construction but based on actual mystic experience of his own, he brings out the uniqueness of the prophetic experience (which, he insists, is qualitatively different from the mystic experience) and the centrality of the Sharia-values."⁵³

Thus, on one side is aggressive humanism of Ibn al-Arabi, a sure way to moral relativism and moral laxity bound to eliminate all differences between good and evil leaving no space for real religion at all and no concern about the state of socio-economic injustices, and on the other side is Islamic positivism of Ibn Taimiyya and Sirhindi, the single, sole and sane concern of which is to redeem the balance of history by striking world moral order on earth, to remove socio-economic disparities and political inequalities -- an unmistakable stand of pristine Islam. Still, Wali Allah looks

at the apparent difference in their respective positions as simply a problem of semantics. To him, both Ibn al-Arabi and Sirhindi, ultimately arrive at the same conclusion. This line of thought is a direct result of the limitations of Tatbiq Principle, which is a cumbersome dialectic aimed at reconciling the irreconcilables.

However, Sirhindi's scholarly makeup seems to be quite different from that of Ibn Taimiyya. Whereas Ibn Taimiyya being as he is a great Muhaddith, an eminent jurist and an accomplished Mutakallim was an epitome of traditional learning, Sirhindi was not. He was steeped in Sufi thought, so his instrument and method was Sufic and theosophical. Hence both differ in examining the legacy of Ibn al-Arabi: whereas Ibn Taimiyya terms him an epitome of everything un-Islamic, Sirhindi envisages him as a saint in cardinal error, a verdict that was possible only for a Sufi, not for Muhaddith or theologian, says Fazlur Rahman.

In the ultimate analysis, Sirhindi's "work demonstrates, through a genuine dialectic of religious experience, the true organic nature of the inner experience and the reality of the external world, necessitating a subsumption of the former to the latter, of the intuitive perception to the moral order. Sirhindi thereby proved the Supreme status of Sharia -- the moral command of God. A century and a half later, Wali Allah gave a new solution by accepting the premises of Ibn Arabi but by reinstating at the same time the full reality of the moral order within this framework.⁵⁴" However, after accepting the monistic principles of Ibn Arabi and failing to refute in clear terms his endorsement of Ashari's theistic pre-determinism, Wali Allah's genuine vision of Inshiqaq al-Takleef min al-Taqrir (How obligation flows from determinism) loses magnitude and momentum. Had Wali Allah not accommodated Ibn Arabi in his weltanschauung, the movement inspired by Sirhindi's thought which ultimately led to the creation of Pakistan would perhaps not have remained content with a mere piece of land. It would certainly have led to the translation of Islam into a living reality.

Wali Allah's Tatbiq if and buts took physical form in the college of Deoband, which quite expectedly pursued a truncated legacy of Wali Allah and hence failed to grasp the real value of his thought as an organic whole. Its backlash against the medieval content of Islam left little scope for Islam as a pragmatic social proposition. Of course, the followers of Wali Allah proved epitome of personal piety, rendered great sacrifices for Islam but they fared little well on the realm of Islamic intellectualism -- an anomaly responsible for all their ills. During the struggle for Pakistan, they assumed nationalist posture and joined Hindu congress. When Pakistan was established, writes Ayub Khan, "some of the nationalist Ulema decided to stay in India, others hastened to Pakistan to lend a helping hand. If they had not

been able to save the Muslims from Pakistan, they must now save Pakistan from the Muslims⁵⁵".

Secularist scholars of Sufi inclinations believe had there not been Sirhindi on the panorama of Indian Islam the broad-gauged latitudinarian spirit of Sufi movement would have absorbed almost all Hindus into its fold. But history suggests otherwise. The extraordinarily generous latitudinarianism and great solubility of Hinduism had before dissolved religions of the invaders in itself and had Sheikh Ahmad not reined in the free Sufi impulse Islam too would have been no exception. "Of course, if one wants to push back the sharp Muslim-Hindu division in the subcontinent, and hence trace back the seeds of the India-Pakistan division, one can logically go back to the Mujaddid's teaching.⁵⁶" "Iqbal had, in a concrete sense, inherited the legacy of Sirhindi and Wali Allah, his basic thought being but a restatement of Sirhindi's philosophy in twentieth century terms. And his own thought, in the same concrete sense, begot Pakistan. The thrust that had started with Sirhindi reached its final goal in altering the world map in August 1947"⁵⁷, for "with all the richness of his thought, Iqbal has but simply rendered in magical poetry what Sheikh Ahmad, the Majaddid, had preached as his central theme three hundred years before.⁵⁸"

Wali Allah rendered a great service to Islam by delivering "al-Foz al-Kabeer" on hermeneutics of the Quran. His understanding of the Quran is not restricted to any single principle. He, being an epitome of traditional learning, exploits all available traditional sources and approaches the Quran as Muhaddith, theologian, jurist, grammarian, sociologist, psychologist, historian, Sufi and philosopher equipped with zeitgeist. Hence, an unprecedented and undiluted crystal clear philosophy of Islam comes alive in his Islamic worldview. If various constitutive elements of Islam apparently lack organic unity in his weltanschauung, proper juxtaposition of these constituents seems to be an accomplished feat in his program. Yet, whereas Tatbiq and Talfiq principles are elements of his strength by which he supplies inner elasticity to law schools and philosophic traditions simultaneously they seemed his Achilles heel as well. For example, look at his stance on the 'juristic doctrine of abrogation'. When the practice of earlier generation to address their problems by appealing to the Quran in its entirety gave way to atomism (to invoke individual verse or hadith to derive law instead of taking into account the entire tenor and elan of the Quran and Sunnah) in later period and a single verse or hadith (Nass) was deemed sufficient to derive law or direction, this angle of vision was bound to distort the object of the vision, and when this impairment hit the jurists, theologians and Sufis at the scale of a plague, the worst sufferer of the malaise was undoubtedly the moral vector of the Quran and Seerah. This atomism, the practice of treating individual verses in isolation, gave rise to the

problem of seemingly insoluble contradictions in the message of some verses, hence juristic doctrine of 'abrogation', which functions on the pattern of the doctrine of necessity, was developed to smooth out the apparent differences in the import of certain verses.

The orthodoxy gave a carte blanche to the rulers to act as they wished in socio-economic and political affairs of the state, rendering religion a private affair and restricting its role to shape social life. It was a development bound, in the course of history, to reduce religion to a level of minimal Islam (five pillars) and negative Islam (penal Islam) to the great advantage of the enterprise of dynastic rule. Unfortunately, it has remained since the cherished course of history in the absence of true reformers. In Islam, the integrity of state and the solidarity of community are identical and indivisible. "It is not the case that [under the Prophet] religion and state were sisters; nor can it be said that they "cooperated" with one another. The state is nothing at all by itself; it is a reflex of those moral and spiritual values and principles called Islam. The state is not an "extension" of religion; it is an instrument of Islam, a transparent instrument which vanishes when one tries to regard it per se. The actual case is much stronger: ideally, the state per se cannot exist in Islam where it is only a reflex or a transparent instrument of religion. Religion (Islam), therefore, is that which directly permeates and directs all spheres of human life."⁵⁹ Atomism de-contextualizes the religion and initiates the tradition of interpreting Islam on a bound basis. The emergence of contradictions between the verses of the Quran and inconsistencies between Quran and hadith and within hadiths was the logical outcome, which as logical consequence gave rise to the juristic doctrine of abrogation.

The earlier medieval sources like Suyuti and Ibn al-Arabi had expanded the scope of this juristic doctrine to 500 verses. Wali Allah criticised their standards for declaring a verse abrogated and argued that an unlimited number of verses could be consigned to the 'abrogated' class by using their methods. It showed that even though he was able to notice the apparent error in the doctrine, he did not reject it outright on the basis of the true elan of the Quran but preferred to put his Tatiq Principle to use only to limit the number of such verses, first to twenty and then to five alone⁶⁰. So firm a hold the abrogation theory has had on the minds of Muslim intelligentsia down the centuries up till this day that even the most brilliant scholar Dr. Fazlur Rahman, if not wholly but partially, succumbs to it as he inclines to accept the incident of al-Gharaniq⁶¹ which Hussain Haikal refutes on justified grounds in his "Life of Muhammad".

The great commentator of the Quran Abu Muslim Isfahani rejects the doctrine -- built on the rigged premises of 2:106; 22:52; 53:19-20; 13:39; 16:101; 87:6-7 etc -- on the basis of 18:27 and other similar verses⁶². As for us, we believe that

though Satan did intrude into the thoughts of the messengers (22:52) but God never allowed (such intrusion) to turn into words i.e., revelation until it was substituted or rectified on the level of idea. On this genuine premise, the incident of Gharaniq has not only no basis at all but is the worst allegation against the personality of Muhammad who rejected all offers of compromise whatsoever presented to him by Meccan pagans. Muhammad's applied monotheism was conceived in a comprehensive sense of dire realism i.e., One God-One humanity, an enterprise whose implementation is next to impossible unless social inequalities, economic disparities and political disequilibrium or imbalances are eliminated once and for all from the society. Hence, both he himself and his opponents knew that social reform on this scale will require his assumption of political power, and there is no doubt that the opposition was largely caused by this situation. In part, this opposition was rooted in fierce inter-clan rivalry: the Prophet being from the clan of Banu Hashim of the larger Quresh tribe, other clans feared that recognition of Muhammad as a political head would entail rule by Banu Hashim. Short of recognizing him as the absolute religio-political head, they offered him an effective share in the decision-making city council of Mecca, an offer which he refused⁶³. In his later years in Mecca (before emigrating to Medina), the upper-class Meccan merchants made an offer that they were ready to accept his faith provided he got rid of his poor and weak followers. The Quran condemned such offers and warned against them; he, of course, refused to accept them⁶⁴.

Ibn Ishaq also corroborates the fact citing details of the Prophet's significant second meeting with the Madinese at the Aqaba before the Hira. The Prophet was accompanied by his uncle Abbas, who had though not accepted the faith at that time, told the Madinese delegation that Muhammad and his cause were being entrusted to them for aid and were not surrendered to them since Muhammad had enough protection at Mecca⁶⁵. Thus, the Prophet's being from Banu Hashim was a natural shield of defense which his tormentors could break into only at serious risk to their clans as despite the fact Banu Hashim was relatively poor but equally noble clan and it was unimaginable to challenge it to total war. Hence, very belatedly and as a last resort his enemies obtained consent of all clans and tribes to attack Muhammad but by that time arrangements for emigration to Medina had been made and by the holy inspiration of Allah, the Prophet along with Abu Bakr also left the city. Against this backdrop, how can one imagine that Muhammad would demolish the central plank of his mission with his own hands by declaring pagan goddesses as "exalted swans whose intercession [with God] is to be hoped for [tilka al-ghariniq ul ula wa inna shafa atuhunna la-turtaja]". This apparently concocted line was believed to be abrogated by (53:21-23). They tell us the incident occurred after emigration to Abyssinia and the

Prophet apparently and allegedly succumbed to it to lessen the growing persecution of his followers and that too in the face of dire realism of the Quran which foretells such upheavals (29:2-3). If the 'doctrine of abrogation' had not been formulated by later generations, the fanciful story of al-Gharaniq would have never come to the surface.

Muhammad Asad refutes the 'doctrine of abrogation' on the basis of unassailable premises. Commenting on 2:106 he writes "the principle laid down in this passage -- relating to the supersession of Biblical dispensation by that of the Quran -- has given rise to an erroneous interpretation by many Muslim theologians. The word ayah ("message") occurring in this context is also used to denote a "verse" of the Quran (because every one of these verses contains a message). Taking this restricted meaning of the term ayah, some scholars conclude from the above passage that certain verses of the Quran have been "abrogated" by God's command before the revelation of the Quran was completed. Apart from the fancifulness of this assertion -- which calls to mind the image of a human author correcting, on second thought, the proofs of his manuscript, deleting one passage and replacing it with another -- not a single reliable Tradition exists to the effect that the Prophet ever, declared a verse of the Quran to have been "abrogated". At the root of the so called "doctrine of abrogation" may lie the inability of some of the early commentators to reconcile one Quranic message with another: a difficulty which was overcome by declaring that one of the verses in question had been "abrogated". This arbitrary procedure explains also why there is no unanimity whatsoever among the upholders of the "doctrine of abrogation" as to which, and how many, Quranic verses have been affected by it; and, furthermore, as to whether this alleged abrogation implies a total elimination of the verse in question from the context of the Quran, or only a cancellation of the specific ordinance or statement contained in it. In short, the "doctrine of abrogation" has no basis whatever in historical fact and must be rejected. On the other hand, the apparent difficulty in interpreting the above Quranic message disappears immediately if the term ayah is understood, correctly as "message", and if we read this verse in conjunction with the preceding one, which states that the Jews and the Christians refuse to accept any revelation which might supersede that of the Bible: for, if read in this way, the abrogation relates to the earlier divine messages and not to any part of the Quran itself.⁶⁶

The upholders of the "doctrine of abrogation" present a specious argument citing the replacement of 4:43 with 5:90 and limiting the scope of drunkenness to the use of alcohol or drugs. However, "the term sukr, in its wider connotation, signifies any state of mental disequilibrium which prevents man from making full use of his intellectual faculties: that is to say, it can apply also to a temporary clouding of the

intellect by drugs or giddiness or passion, as well as to the state metaphorically described as "drunk with sleep" in brief, to any condition in which normal judgment is confused or suspended. And because the Quran insists throughout on consciousness as indispensable element in every act of worship, prayer is permitted only when man is in full possession of his mental faculties and "knows what he is saying". Moreover, man has been created weak (4:28), "his lapse from the way of virtue is always a possibility, and it is to prevent him from adding the sin of praying while in a state of drunkenness."⁶⁷

However, despite his peculiar unconditional allegiance to tradition on certain issues, as mentioned above, Wali Allah stands tall among all Muslim reformers [Ghazali, Ibn Taimiyya, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi etc.]. In his constructs, reason, tradition and intuition fall in their proper place on justified premises and all constitutive elements of Islam come alive in a proper juxtaposition even though they lack organic linkages at certain points. "His discussion of the human psychological typologies and their roles in the development of the religio-political-cultural complex [encapsulated in his concepts of *Irtifaq* and *Iqtirab*] is definitely a new contribution to "ethics" in Islam⁶⁸.

On socio-political plane, despite his debt to al-Farabi and Ibn Khaldun we find novelty in his ideology. His socio-political milieu [disintegration of Mogul empire in India] resembles to that of Ibn Taimiyya [seizure of central caliphate at Baghdad by Mongols], so his socio-political thought bears striking resemblance to his but again we find uniqueness in his thought. "Since Muslims no longer had any central government, in the thought of both, the Sharia and the Muslim community gained prominence rather than any government. Ibn Taimiyya states that it is not necessary for the Muslims to have one global government under a caliph; it is essential, however, that various Muslim governments cooperate closely with each other. But he puts special emphasis on the Muslim community and the implementation of its constitution, the Sharia of Islam. Shah Wali Allah's emphases are slightly different; nevertheless, his central point of stress is also the Sharia and community, although he does emphasize the necessity of an international world political order of Muslims, to which the national or regional Muslim states will be subordinate."⁶⁹ In contrast, pragmatism had got the better of Ibn Taimiyya in whose time independent regional powers had guaranteed safety and security of the community at large and Islam had become reflex of state. However, in Wali Allah's view, the universal message of Islam (7:157) was not restricted to a particular territory and race and the community of Islam -- as viewed by the Quran and shaped by the Prophet -- was a homogenous lead-filled wall against the forces of evil and the solidarity among the community and the integrity of state

-- as taught by the Prophet and followed by the first two caliphs, Abu Bakr and Umar – were identical and, indeed, indivisible. For as we see, “under the third caliph, the integrity of the state was, however, shaken, and so was that of the community, while under Ali the state was dismembered, and so was the community.”⁷⁰

The classical and post-classical modernists as well as fundamentalists except for secularists who are comfortable with western values and hegemony are confronted with the same situation and in their endeavors to make Islam master of its own destiny they look to these two most influential thinkers as a signpost. Yet one must remember that neither Ibn Taimiyya is the same which after laying dormant for centuries was resurrected by the Wahabi movement of Arabia under Muhammad bin Abd-al-Wahab, nor Wali Allah is the same as conceived and augmented by Deoband College of India. For, integrally reconstituted Muslim community was at the centre of both reformers’ entire endeavors. Whereas in Wahabi reforms in Arabia, truncated and distorted views of Ibn Taimiyya were adopted – neither conditions set by him for rebellion were observed in Arabs’ rebellion against Ottomans nor concerns for the solidarity of Muslim community at large were taken care of -- while the followers of Wali Allah in India also did not fare better. Wali Allah was highly determined to restore Islam’s political power but his followers brushed his revolutionary ideas under the carpet and for the most part held onto Asharite theology and Razi’s determinism lock, stock and barrel. It appeared Wali Allah’s dynamic view of Islam had fallen on deaf ears and when the crucial moment arrived, his followers put their weight in the balance of Hindu Congress -- now under Hindutva, the chickens of that short sightedness, convenience and expediency has finally come home to roost.

Hence, to this writer Ibn Taimiyya and Wali Allah’s legacy runs through the resounding weltanschauung of Syed Jamal al-Din Afghani which fully conforms to the dynamic tradition and impulse of Islam and equally responds to the challenges of western modernity and imperialism. Having a direct exposure to western thought and culture in contradistinction to his predecessors he was well equipped with his own and archrival’s intellectual traditions and at an advanced stage of evolution of thought, which played a crucial role in his intellectual make-up. Thus, whereas like Ibn Taimiyya and Wali Allah he is acutely concerned about the solidarity of Muslim community and consolidation of its political power and is equally cognizant of the power of positive socio-economic and political thought behind western socio-political cum cultural complex galvanizing imperialism. Afghani urged Muslims to raise their intellectual and moral standards if they intended to defy western expansionism. While the generality of Muslim intelligentsia and political dispensations found the cause of

the Muslim reversals against imperial west in its scientific-technological cum industrial progress and highly trained and disciplined military, Afghani believed they had failed to reach the heart of the real issue and could not see beyond the symptoms.

Ottomans opened scientific and technological colleges, hired trainers and technology from the west to equip their military with modern weaponry and strict discipline yet they failed to withstand European aggression. To Afghani the loci of the western powers were constitutional governments and democracies at home for while the western soldier fights for himself and his people, for a Muslim soldier all the losses and death were his own but all his gains at the battlefield were of the king. Afghani asserted in so far as the colleges of science and technology were concerned, they could deliver aught if philosophy, the comprehensive governing soul of all sciences which employed each of the sciences in its proper place, was not taught there. “The Ottoman Government and the Khedivate of Egypt have been opening schools for the teaching of the new sciences for a period of sixty years, and until now they have not received any benefit from those sciences. The reason is that teaching the philosophical sciences was impossible in those schools, and because of the nonexistence of philosophy, no fruit was obtained from those sciences... the first Muslims had no science, but, thanks to the Islamic religion, a philosophic spirit arose among them, and owing to that philosophic spirit they began to discuss the general affairs of the world and human necessities. This was why they acquired in a short time all the sciences with subjects that they translated from the Syriac, Persian and Greek into the Arabic language...The first defect appearing in any nation that is headed toward decline is in the philosophic spirit. After that deficiencies spread into the other sciences, arts, and associations.”⁷¹

Activist to the marrow of his bones Afghani could not remain content with loud sermons. He fought war on all four fronts, on the one hand he locked horns with imperial west and despots at home and on the other he took head on the secular Muslim elite clung to western values and hegemony and conservative orthodoxy comfortable with dumb medieval scholastic tradition. He engaged in dialogue with Great Britain and native despots, fought tooth and nail for constitutional governments in Egypt and Iran and explored other audacious avenues as well, like engagement with Russia. In order to raise an Islamic bulwark against western aggression, he left no stone unturned in bringing Sunni Ottomans and Shia Seljuk onto a common platform of Muslim unity. He emphasized Hindu-Muslim unity in India against Britain on the basis of common language and thousand years’ shared history and issued a warning against seeking education at British secular institutions which were

intended to produce tamed subjects and spooks of imperial power, now termed “coconut syndrome” i.e., brown from the outside and white from the inside. He proposed the establishment of Urdu university imparting knowledge in Urdu both to Muslims and Hindus for the revival and reform of their culture and identity. The initiative of Usmania University, Hyderabad, with a huge translation department was taken on his recommendation but both Muslims and Hindus failed to grasp the far-reaching idea of the project, which required patience, sustained efforts, and consistency to bear fruits. But convenience and expediency soon took over and people started heading to Aligarh and other institutions imparting education in English for the sake of jobs and livelihood, which was still a norm in South Asia. Muslims along with Hindus went in a wrong direction at this crucial juncture of their educational development. Muslims, particularly cut themselves off their own religious-intellectual higher cultural roots by failing to develop Urdu into an adequate medium of higher instruction and scientific and philosophic thought. Cultural schizophrenia or cultural bastardy was the logical outcome. That is because, in so far as higher education is concerned, South Asia is indeed a land without language till even this day.

Hence, we can safely conclude that if the task of removing the dust of time from the eye-brows of medieval scholastic Islam and addressing the transgressions and regressions on its socio-economic and political-cum-cultural planes with efficacious intellectual and practical efforts was accomplished by Ibn Taimiyya, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Wali Allah, it fell to Afghani to carve a way forward for the 19th century subject lands of Islam though the dominant cultural currents and crosscurrents of western modernity. Thus, whereas followers of Wali Allah, after certain miscalculated and abortive efforts for liberation from colonial rule, reduced him to a puritanical reformer, Afghani’s theses of Islam still stands out like the presence of a lion among terrified asses (74:49-51) if one takes his discourse on the “History of the Materialists” as his major work representative of thoughts. Westernism though has a dazzling exterior, its innards are bloody and its upholders seemed as if they are, in the parlance of the Quran, timbers [firmly] propped up (63:4).

Afghani was equally concerned about all the occupied territories and communities irrespective of their caste, colour and creed, hence besides being a pan-Islamist in a true sense he was a pan-orientalist as well since he spoke for all Asia and Africa which were submerged in western imperialism during his lifetime. He, indeed, was “an Islamic response to Western imperialism”. Thus, whereas Wali Allah being an inheritor of the cumulative intellectual and cultural tradition of Islam proved to be a “Father of Muslim Modernism⁷²”, Afghani “a man of enormous force of character, prodigious

learning, untiring activity, dauntless courage, extraordinary eloquence both in speech and writing and an appearance equally striking and majestic⁷³” advantaged by his exposure to western thought and culture demonstrated himself to be the “first genuine Muslim modernist⁷⁴” in the history of Islam. Wali Allah approached Islam in the spirit of Umar -- the first critical and independent mind in Islam -- who, at the last moments of the Prophet, had the moral courage to utter these remarkable words: “The book of God is sufficient for us.”

However, thanks to cherry-picking by orthodoxy and interpreting him on a bound basis, the original Shah Wali Allah like Muhammad (PBUH) and the Quran itself, lays buried deep underneath the glacier of dumb heritage, anxiously waiting to be recovered from the grip of the dead hand of those who seek and secure “stability in rigidity” at all costs. His uniquely devised and delivered “schema” of Irtifaqat and Iqtirabat is a scientifically formulated unprecedented contribution to the fund of religious philosophy and near impossible to be refuted by any world religion at large or even empiricists. It is a valuable addition to Ghazali’s religious thought and Ibn Khaldun’s perspectives on socio-logico-historical development of human society.

Wali Allah’s statement that Islam appeared at the centre of world geography i.e., Arabia where Asia, Europe and Africa join hands, as a moral necessity of destroying the corrupt socio-economic structure of Persian Empire and Byzantium to set the course of the world history aright takes us back to the **applied monotheism** of Muhammad and the Quran after a long hiatus of over a millennium. This practical monotheism [belief in God linked up with humanism and socio-economic justice] distinguished Muhammad poignantly from the theoretical monotheism [belief in One God that does not bother with social inequalities and economic disparities of society] of those whom the Quran terms Hanifs.

After the imposition of dictatorship in Islam triggered political cynicism it was bound to strike at the hard-won delicate balance and unravel the socio-economic equilibrium of society, leading to truncated monotheism – a distortion par excellence which failed to surface for addressal in the whole chain of Muslim philosophers, theologians, Sufis, and doctors of law. Ghazali’s thrust on personalism and personal piety was bound to serve the interests of the state and dynastic rule knowingly or unknowingly rather than Islam or the Muslim community. Vision of an integrally reconstituted Muslim community was at the centre of Ibn Taimiyya’s entire endeavor, yet the applied monotheism which guarantees the fulfillment of this task [One God-One mankind paradigm] (80:23) finds no takers. The metaphysical thought of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, who is

otherwise most genuine and modern scholar, with an organic blend of mystic outpourings of pure religious viewpoint and ratiocinated authentic Sharia values -- articulated with such a finesse that defies description -- had no traces of applied monotheism. But Wali Allah who despite entertaining an inflated Sufism and tall Sufi claims and accepting Ibn al-Arabi lock, stock, and barrel had complete realization of the applied monotheism, belief in human intellectual and spiritual evolution i.e., the natural instinctive guidance (Ilhamat tabiyya) and luxuries (unlike Ibne Khaldun) as a factor corroborating human civilization and spiritual advancement -- unless it begins to numb moral faculties. These are the main feathers in his cap which earn him the highest place in the entire range of Sufi theologians.

Since the worldly and religious sciences from an early medieval era -- otherwise an indivisible holistic and organic life -- had been divided into two disparate, discrete, and distinct parts i.e., religious, and secular in water-tight compartments, the inertia of which had refused to break in al-Ghazali (1058-1111), Ibn Taimiyya (1263-1328), al-Shatibi (1320-1388), and Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi's discourses (1564-1624) regained their lost status in the constructs of Wali Allah, who by naturalizing the supernatural and super-naturalizing the natural not only dispels the sharp distinction between the material and the spiritual but social and spiritual progress assumes an indiscrete and an indistinguishably identical compound identity or symbiotic relationship in his weltanschauung. Though, in practice the traditional dichotomy does exert influence on his mind as "while the syllabus of Nizam al-Din (d.1747) under the long influence of importations from the North-West Central Asia is weighted toward "rational sciences", that of Shah Wali Allah under India's growing contacts with Hijaz since 16th century is weighted toward the core traditional sciences of Islam -- law, theology, and Hadith -- with the innovation that he formally includes works of Sufism at the end of the syllabus, a novel feature in the orthodox educational system⁷⁶".

Theoretically speaking, his theory of Irtifaqat and Iqtirabat eliminates the gulf between the material and the spiritual and evaporates the distinction, if any, between the religious and the secular sciences. Sirhindi believed, in the heyday of Muslim power in India, it was suffice to learn only basic operations of arithmetic that were used in daily-life transactions as reason had been a persecuted subject in mainstream Islam since the days of internecine disputations between Mutazilla and Asharite Kalam, which probably led Ghazali to overstress personal piety at the expense of collective good. Ibn Taimiyya later managed to collapse the two extremes into the middle but Wali Allah was not encumbered by such compulsions hence his work bears no such burden. Cognizant of gradual Muslim decline in India,

he believed the roots of all the decline material or spiritual, lie in intellectual foundations, hence he put special emphasis on acquiring knowledge of core traditional sciences lest Islam lose its mark in the very land where it had remained at the helm of affairs for a little less than thousand years. Unfortunately, Wali Allah's followers rendered his intellectual heritage to diminution, but with the endeavors of al-Afghani, he was bound to find its feet in Iqbal and full expression in Dr. Fazlur Rahman who further augmented it.

Though a great many works have been written on Wali Allah he is still a stranger among his own admirers who have taken Wali Allah's vague synchronization with Asharite Kalam, Razi's determinism, al-Ghazali's personalism and Hanfite law school for the pivot of his entire system of thought and failed to grasp the real thrust of his ideas. It happened because the kind of transparency of thought self-evident in crystal-clear positions taken by Ibn Taimiyya and Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi is conspicuously absent in Wali Allah's opinions which are often punctuated with multiple ifs and buts. Hence, we find his self-proclaimed intellectual heirs flaunting a truncated Wali Allah, broken into shreds with insides out and upside down. A full-blown Wali Allah derived and distilled from the entirety of his thought and endeavor still awaits his retrieval from the tight clasp of speculative truths.

As I see it, Wali Allah's theory of Irtifaqat and Iqtirabat is the pivot of his thought which envelops whatever is intended by the Quran and expressed in Seerah in its comprehensive sweep. If the rise and fall of Islam represents nothing but a measure of its capability to shape social life, Wali Allah's theory offers the best panacea for the contemporary crisis of statesmanship, which is making vain attempts to establish a human order with human reasons -- inspired by the Greek materialist thought --, stationing man on the moon but leaving his problems on the earth unresolved.

His theory in fact marked a watershed event in the history of development of thought in Islam. In order to be able to fully appreciate it we will have to review the evolution of thought up till his time and the regression that had crept in after tacit acceptance of duality principle during medieval period. The dichotomy of religious and worldly sciences in medieval Islam led to spiritual and social progress going in opposite directions and heavy doses of Sufi theosophy and the syncretic Sufi movement of Ibn al-Arabi had not only created a wide gulf between reason and intuition (Kashf) but also stalled spiritual and social advancement and as a corollary they began to prosper at the expense of each other. Thus, the process of combining metaphysics with social reality, theology with history, and injecting spirituality into the flesh and blood of history which had once oxygenated the petrified bloodstreams of this sensory realm and was an unprecedented singular achievement of early Islam, came to

a grinding halt after this dichotomy drove a wedge between social and spiritual life.

“The immense cultural importance of Islam lies in the fact that it finally brought together the two great intellectual (i.e., the Semitic religious and the Greek pagan) streams which had flowed independently in ancient times. Previous attempts, as I have already indicated, had failed. Jews and Greeks had mixed in Alexandria, but, although the former had learned the language of the latter and that one of their learned men, Philo, had made a deep study of both traditions, there had been no real fusion. The Christians had not succeeded any better, because of their single-hearted devotion to the new Gospel, which reduced everything else to futility in their eyes. Now, for the first time in the history of the world, Semitic religion and Greek knowledge combined in the minds of many people. Nor was that integration restricted to a single city or country; the new culture spread like a prairie fire from Baghdad eastward to India, Transoxiana and further still, and westward to the very edge of the world.”⁷⁹

Therefore, when binary typology of religious and worldly sciences together with an abhorrence for pure philosophy took roots at Nizamiyya College (1065, Baghdad) under the heavy influence of illustrious al-Ghazali, the development took a heavy toll on positive knowledge. With the religious sciences thus losing touch with mainstream knowledge, they gradually slid down to a blind alley only to get petrified, ossified and quarantined there. What other fate could befall Islam after the development of that great schism. So overwhelming was the influence of al-Ghazali that this insidious development went not only unheeded by latter theologians but was further strengthened with an ever-burgeoning gap between metaphysics and social fact. The relationship between theology and history has ultimately reached an inflection point today and the world of Islam with a dumb medieval heritage at its disposal for last five centuries is only shifting bones from graveyard to graveyard in search of elixir and waiting for a miracle to happen contrary to the spirit of Quran which offers a scientific view of Life, Nature, and History. It is not only a man’s duty but the *raison d’être* of his very being to materialize his potentials to “discover the laws of, and thus get mastery over, nature - - or in the Quran’s terminology, “to know the names of all things” -- and then use this mastery, under the human moral initiative, to create a good world order.”⁸⁰ Quran says all knowledge -- intellectual, scientific, or intuitive -- comes from God and philosophy, “the governing soul of all sciences”⁸¹, is, in Galileo’s words, “...written in mathematical language⁸²”. Yet the dichotomy of worldly and religious sciences that developed during the last quarter of 4th and early quarter of 5th century Islam, was bound in the course of time not only to cleave asunder as a logical

outcome the unity of knowledge but also the integrity of the state and community. No wonder then if entire Muslim Asia and Africa fell like a ripened fruit into the lap of Western imperialism.

So entrenched had become this dichotomy in the zeitgeist of the times that even acutely astute minds of Ibn Taimiyya, al-Shatibi and Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi failed to notice its implicit negative impacts manifested in their schemes of thought seeing pursuit of positive knowledge as somewhat areligious endeavor if not irreligious and their discourses smacking of annoyance for rationalism. Sufis, with a few exceptions, monopolized theological realm and positivism lost its luster after al-Ghazali when Ulama too surrendered to popular Sufism and receded ground for the latter. Just imagine what destruction it can wreck in intellectual realm, if positive knowledge that constructs the world anew and acts equally as a contributory force to spiritual progress becomes *disciplina non grata* and the scope of mathematics, which is at the base of the splendid edifice of today’s cyber era and is the major factor behind man’s conquest of seas, space and celestial bodies, is restricted – in Sufi thought of even our otherwise highly brilliant Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi - - to basic arithmetic functions useful for carrying out daily life calculations only. Is Islam more ascetic, monastic and introvert than Hinduism, whose adherents invented arithmetic and geometry and not only gave decimal system to the world but also discovered meridian circle and zodiac, which was unimaginable without perfection in geometry? In its essence, Islam not only emphasizes the deciphering and harnessing of the laws of nature, forces of history and energies of human psyche to build this world anew but also offers a comprehensive moral world view that puts a high premium on the moral vectors which lead scientific and technological advancements towards positive ends i.e. the establishment of a moral social world order. However, nothing harms more this positive trajectory of human progress than the duality of religious and secular which gives *carte blanche* to science and technology to give life in retail and kill wholesale.

Judged with this perspective (stated above) in mind, one can see that Wali Allah is the first in the whole range of Sufi theology, who flung open the gate of this petrified dualism of religious and worldly sciences and exposed it to fresh air of socio-economic cum political-cultural ideals of the Quran. Before him Sufism had opted to remain neutral to social reality and even if it occasionally awoke from the deep slumber it kept itself confined to pure religion and remained least concerned with social development for the truncated monotheism shorn of socio-economic and political bearings had ruled the roost in the realm of Sufi theology during the long and tortuous history of dictatorial rule in Islam. Dictatorship takes a heavy toll on positive moral energies of

man which the Quran intends to maximize to an optimum level. Great Sufi theologians like Ibn Taimiyya and Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi who rose to break the Sufi-induced moral inertia and restore the moral balance of their fellow beings laid down their lives in the custody of dictators. Syed Jamal al-Din Afghani, who was believed to come under deep influence of Wali Allah's thought during his stay at al-Azhar University in Egypt where the latter had been taught for almost two centuries, met the same fate under Ottomans.

Wali Allah made the most of the relative freedom of thought the prevalent political conditions marked by a vacuum of political power in India provided him. He found the social milieu wherein he was not under any compulsion to preserve interests of the dynastic rule nor was the clergy forced to make Islam a reflex of the state. Hence, the integrity of state and the solidarity of community assume identical status in his weltanschauung in perfect agreement with the spirit of Quran and Seerah whose tone and tenor urge believers to demolish dualism of the social and the spiritual, the worldly and the religious sciences and the religious and the secular, which is in fact the first step forward toward society and state building in Islam.

Hence, the pristine Islam unfolds itself on Wali Allah with its essential sociological and historical underpinnings characterized by its ability to assimilate, reject, amend and then adjust to the new situation in its long developing trajectory in the full sweep of history. His discourse makes a subtle difference between normative and historical Islam and elucidates a fully developed concept of applied monotheism of pristine Islam with just socio-economic connotations conformed and endorsed by his mystic metaphysical thought, which had in fact resurfaced in his weltanschauung after a hiatus of centuries. This development was simultaneously bound to recover the long lost organic fusion of the two intellectual streams of metaphysics and social fact, transcendence and social reality, intellectual, intuitive and scientific knowledge and pure thought and religious matrix of socio-economic reforms. Hence, social development and spiritual evolution being indispensable to each other as an organically linked unified phenomenon develop symbiotic relationship in Wali Allah's theory of Irtifaqat and Iqtirabat. Social progress and spiritual development instead of being discrete and disparate experiences become one and the same, two sides of the same coin, two facets of the same reality unidentifiable from each other, wherein intensity of the one is not less than the strength of the other, the two expressions of the same experience.

Wali Allah's man -- unlike Aristotle's social animal, or Karl Marx's economic unit -- is a **moral being** having angelic and animalistic characteristics in equal proportion. Total elimination of animalistic attributes as sought by extreme

Sufism is inimical to spiritual and social development, therefore, it requires a balanced synthesis i.e., an equilibrium of both to help man remain in the middle. The moral man is the chief agent in Wali Allah's Irtifaq which refers to collective and cooperative effort toward society and state building, progressing into the establishment of just social moral world order. Wali Allah uses Irtifaq to mean "socio-cultural-political development" which must move alongside moral and spiritual development of man because without a corresponding solid Irtifaq-substructure for materializing socio-economic cultural and political ideals moral and spiritual development cannot occur.

Wali Allah's moral man is to cultivate four major virtues i.e., Tahara (cleanliness), Ikhbat lillah (surrender to majesty and awe of God), Samaha (generosity and benevolence) and adala (justice and equity), common in all religions that constitute the essential nature of humanity (30:30) upon which rests the development of other seven virtues of hikmah (wisdom), shujaah (bravery), iffat (chastity), diyanah (truthfulness), samaha (magnanimity), fasaha (eloquence) and samt-al-salih (harmony in character).

Wali Allah enunciates that the best loci of the genesis and development of these virtues is society. Physical purity and cleanliness is the condition closest to nasama, the Arabic equivalent of Greek pneuma -- subtle body, vapor of life, carrier of the "spirit of life", (ruh al-hayat) and instrument of sense-perception and imagination -- inside coarse material body. Being near to Supernal Plenum, its spiritual development which entails social progress depends on its transactions with the same, therefore physical filth and an atmosphere of squalor depresses it and renders it incompatible with itself. Ikhbat lillah (the sense of humility before God), as a psychological phenomenon, is the characteristic of human spirit closest to the condition of Supernal Plenum in their worship of God and their losing themselves in His majesty. The phenomenon is so rational and sensical that it requires only neutral observation of the universe pregnant with signs of God (3:190-191) to grasp it and make oneself one with it. Samaha, the third virtue is the magnanimity (greatness of mind and heart), the capacity of a person to easily get over the sense of loss of a precious thing and the ability to transcend the myopic effects of being temporarily immersed in physical pleasure or anger or in an ultimate analysis the ever-preparedness of a person to lose everything of whatsoever importance for the love of the One he has surrendered to. Finally, adala (justice and equity), the fourth virtue enables a person to fit in social life with positive results for his own self and for social weal. The virtue is the central requirement of Supernal Plenum, and highly esteemed in the eyes of God who wants it to be upheld even for ones' worst enemies particularly after having overpowered them as it had occurred amid Islam's ultimate

triumph against pagans of Mecca (9:8) in 630 C.E. When man fully develops this capacity and accomplishes the assigned task for the welfare of society, he becomes a member of the Supernal Plenum.

In the scheme and constitution of universe man is endowed with universality of purpose which motivates him to do altruistic deeds in sharp contradistinction to animals which pursue individual purposes relevant to the immediacies of their biological existence. Man, according to Wali Allah, has furthermore the quality of zarafah i.e., aesthetic sense. He seeks joy and happiness out of material life which keeps him moving, evolving and making ceaseless efforts to achieve the best of the best with no end in sight. His desire for beautiful wife, delicious food, elegant dress, and lofty house is a case in point.

The Irtifaqat theory lays out an intended socio-economic political and cultural structure of human organization conducive to general development to be achieved in a manner that both social and spiritual development, instead of supplanting or substituting each other, -- as it transpired under the influence of extreme Sufism and medieval Islam's political cynicism -- become consubstantial and coextensive as they were in early Islam and enhance, and augment one another. Spiritualism without a corresponding Irtifaq-substructure leads to a social void that one can experience in the societies pursuing Vedantic Hinduism, monastic Buddhism and monkish Christianity, while on the contrary materialistic socialism without a corresponding Iqirab-superstructure translates into cannibalistic capitalism which produces islands of opulence in an ocean of poverty as being witnessed today in western and westernized societies.

Wali Allah, a sociologist par excellence, elaborates the development of human society from the primitive condition to the most advanced state in terms of Irtifaqat or cultural development and distinguishes four stages, which discovers new dimensions of the sociology of religion in general and of Quran in particular. Modern science and sociology heavily influenced by the dominant secular ideology and social milieu of modern west theorize that in early stages of existence a person devoid of all religious instinct had a strictly individual life, while Russian biologists were ordered by Stalin to emphasize the influence of environment over heredity in glaring mockery of science. Scientific investigations in all fields of knowledge have become instruments of power instead of being tools for finding objective truth in western countries, which are being used to draw, by a travesty of truth, conclusions that suited ideology and interests of imperial west. Thus, science and sociology in the service of dominant secularism seek to establish areligious condition of primitive society. What else complaints Emile Durkheim may have entertained against the irreligiosity of the west? For Wali Allah humankind had

a gregarious life, however rudimentary, from the very beginning, and some sort of instinct based natural religion with a corresponding elemental socio-political organization. Quran points to that primitive human society when it declares that there was a time when mankind was one single community on account of relative homogeneity of instinctive perceptions and inclinations. "Since that homogeneity was based on a lack of intellectual and emotional differentiation rather than on a conscious agreement among the members of society, it was bound to disintegrate in the measure of man's subsequent development. As his thought-life became more and more complex, his emotional capacity and his individual needs, too, became more differentiated, conflict of views and interests came to the fore, and mankind ceased to be "one single community" as regards their outlook on life and their moral valuations: and it was at this stage that divine guidance became necessary (2:213)⁸³".

Wali Allah's four stages of Irtifaqat are organically linked to each other wherein all specific human requirements find expression with the only difference of getting more refined, well-tuned and sophisticated in later stages transforming the quality of life, but not its very nature. Whereas the first Irtifaq or stage describes the conditions of primitive human relationships -- social or political -- gradually becoming more refined, organized, and complex in the subsequent stages of Irtifaq. Arts and crafts develop, means of productions change, values change form, aesthetic sense becomes more refined and differentiated, education and communication undergo changes, which is self-evident in the journey of human evolution from Stone Age to Iron, Agrarian, Industrial and down to our Cyber age.

In the second Irtifaq, family life becomes a central concern, better shelters, variety of foods, and medical art take a definite shape as a patriarchal society with marital and other social institutions taking roots. Primitive tribalism or city states were the best manifestation of the second Irtifaq.

In the third Irtifaq, the ideas of a sort of nationalism, political institutions like "kingdoms" comprising shared geography, ethnicity, language, and common aspirations of people become well-organized and fully-functioning under refined administrative structures. In this stage -- termed Axial Age by historians --, when man produced surplus food and grain, markets emerged, the problem of just distribution of wealth and assets arose and the interests of the landlord began to conflict with those of the tillers. Hence, God sent Abraham to the Middle East, Zoroaster to Iran, Confucius to China and, Buddha to India to help safeguard the interests of the oppressed. The agrarian era which spanned over several millennia had been the longest stable stage of human evolution. Hence almost all prophets, with a few exceptions, came during this period when man had attained maturity in

moral and religious sense and become capable of discerning truth better, and learning to transcend the immediate here and now to universality of purpose, which motivates altruistic actions. Selfish individual and tribal interests gradually subside, and judgments become more and more universalized or universalizable.

Wali Allah perceives Irtifaqat on the analogy of human childhood, boyhood, adolescence, and old-age hence in the first Irtifaq humans were like children but not like beasts as many biological evolutionists believe. In fact, the very survival and development of humanity requires that laws of our specific form and nature express themselves for "God is He Who gives unto everything [that exists] its nature and form, and thereupon guides it [towards its fulfilment] (20:50). However, western modernism founded upon the ashes of religion, is the first of its kind in history which stands in sharp contrast to everything religious. So, it stole *raison detre* of man from religion by calling it an obstacle to progress. In search of scientific formulation of man's existence, it posed questions of high magnitude, whether man was a mere plaything in the hands of economic forces and urges, whether he was grandchild of ape or a chance product of matter or the immediate cream of creation of an omnipotent and good God, whether he was a mere victim of his direct and camouflaged sexual urges? As the fetus of modernism was essentially anti-religion, the scientific hubris of modern man's inflated ego led him to throw the baby with bath water and he was ready to accept any definition of man other than religious. Hence, Adam Smith, Freud, and Darwin etc. won the field and had a tight hold on modern minds. Now, as "Communism, in its classical statement, is only a systematic and extreme orthodox form of the absolute and uncompromising character of this western modernity⁸⁴", gradually but surely, man through new sociological doctrines and new concepts of human progress, was destined to be conceived as an essentially economic unit and human progress as essentially economic progress -- a dominant and decisive factor in western parlance and self-evident reality in rising China's moral principle of shared prosperity in its Belt & Road initiative. Hence, Karl Marx, in real sense stands as a genuine father of present generation all the world over.

Wali Allah assigns to economy its due share in social and spiritual development of mankind, yet to him the be-all-and-end-all of individual and corporate personality of human community is the realization and fulfilment of laws ingrained in its primordial nature (20:50) and set in Primordial Covenant (7:172), which the Quran terms remembrance of God. In medieval age, Islam's focus was shifted from work per se as a value to deeds as good and bad. Wali Allah restored the worth of an initiative or work and assigned grand value to it on the premise that sins of

omission are as bad as the sins of commission (82:5), which insinuates that every man is to be held answerable for all the good he did and not did. "It is essential for the economic welfare of community that no one, so far as possible, should remain idle, making no contribution to the welfare of society. The drain on the state treasury or on people's property caused by such people is detrimental to the state economy as well as to the welfare of society and is not only uneconomical but unethical.⁸⁵" He admits there still are and always will be "defective specimens" whose matter disobeys the laws ingrained in their primordial forms or the constitution inscribed on their hearts. Majority of people respond readily to the ingrained laws by contributing creatively to human progress in all spheres -- spiritual, moral and cultural --, and form a solid link between the living community and the Supernal Plenum through all stages of human history.

Since the early Judaic-Christian teachings, the idea of monotheism has made mankind mature enough to transcend racial and territorial boundaries, ready to embrace simultaneously a world political order and a universal religion with its common mores and universal or universalizable law. Hence, Wali Allah perceives the advent of Islam as an ideology aimed at establishing a socio-political, cultural, and moral world order for the message of Muhammad was universal (7:157), not restricted to a particular race and territory as were the messages of Moses and Jesus before him. The ultimate purpose of Islam, therefore, is to establish the fourth Irtifaq, the ultimate stage of human development where the humanity will have a world political order and a universal religion. "It is, therefore, the sacred duty of all Muslims throughout the world to work hard and spare no pains for the establishment of the Islamic international organization which could successfully face the combined opposition of evil forces. The completion of favors (*Atmamtu alaikum naimati*) takes practical shape only when such great force is created."⁸⁶

The religion [Din], i.e., monotheism, is the same from Adam down to Muhammad and its fundamental teachings boil down to "do constructive deed with belief in the judgment day". Thus, Wali Allah reaches the idea of universal goodness with acute perspicacity and remarkable clarity and unravels the universalism of Islam saying "Islam is not the name of any group or section. Any person irrespective of his birth, caste, and creed, if he believes in God, His Apostles, has faith in life to come and does good works is certainly within the bounds of Islam⁸⁷". With breadth of vision unparalleled in all world religions Islam lays stress on the idea of "success" not "salvation" like Christianity and makes the faith conditional upon three elements only: belief in God, belief in the Day of Judgment and righteous or constructive action in life (2:62; cf. 5:69). Hence, the only true religion in

the sight of God is Islam (3:19), which means an overall behavior i.e., [man's] of self-surrender unto Him, not in the sense of Muslim religion, the meaning it assumed later in history. The idea of universal good reaches its apex in the interpretation of Muhammad Asad which equally strikes a new and powerful chord in modern minds.

Conclusion

Shackled by the chains of later medieval tradition of Islam in his social milieu and enamored of the sheer burden of its gigantic weight, Wali Allah adamantly applied his methodology of Tatiq Principle to keep the link with that significant but enormous legacy alive, which crushed new and independent thought out of existence under its sheer weight but found great appeal among his heirs who were wrongly led by his constructs back to Ashari Kalam, Razi's determinism, Ghazali's personalism and Ibn al-Arabi's extreme theosophic and pantheistic Sufism. Though his followers failed to perceive their master's gentle critique of and subtle departure from the predecessors, his legacy nevertheless found a powerful voice in al-Afghani in so far as his thrust on inward reforms and outward political unity and communal solidarity is concerned. His thoughts left strong imprints on Iqbal and proved a shot in the arm for Dr Fazlur Rahman whose body of thought is an elaboration and perfection of Wali Allah's entire endeavor in systematic order as an organic whole. Finding subtle clues in the Irtifaq-Iqtirab structure wherein Wali Allah insinuates an ultimate integration of mankind in reserved and layered undertones, Iqbal with the full sweep of his composite nationalism not only seeks unity and common platform among monotheistic Abrahamic family of religions but also includes Zoroastrianism and other like-minded communities in the same with a belief that an ultimate integration of humanity on the grand ethical principle of Tawhid (Oneness of God) is the final and ultimate destiny of mankind. Dr Fazlur Rahman turn this theoretical framework into a pragmatic social proposition of Islam and differentiates between normative and historical Islam keeping sociological and historical background of the Quran in sight.

He dismisses eternity of the enmity of Judaism and Christianity towards Islam on the basis of 2:120 as flawed interpretation and contends that their state of animosity was specific to particular conditions of an age. Therefore, since the Prophet and his revelation never lost hope of winning the two monotheistic communities over to Islam or creating a probable working relationship with them for the sake of an egalitarian and just moral social world order till the very end of his life, the Quran's call for cooperation between like-minded communities: "O People of the Book! Come [let us join] on a platform [literally: a formula] that may be common between us -- that we serve not except God" (3:64) has eternal import with universal posture, scope and bearing.

Though an apparently well-devised world order with United Nations institutions is somewhat in order, yet, Iqbal deems this world order a mockery, a contrivance based on the divisive ideology of nationalism and secularism and argues that the forum needs representation of humans on the basis of common parentage of Adam and Eve rather than based on caste, colour, creed and ethnicity on which the idea of nation state had evolved. Dr Fazlur Rahman, however, presents a concrete solution for the true realization of the fourth Irtifaq with sound TORs informed by the Quran and Seerah. To Fazlur Rahman, "this invitation (3:64) is for cooperation, in building a certain kind of ethico-social world order and is not of the nature of contemporary forms of "ecumenism" where every "religious" community is expected to be nice to others and extend its typical brand of "salvation" to others as much as it can! For Islam, there is no particular "salvation": there is only "success [falah]" or "failure [khusran]" in the task of building the type of world order we are describing. It is striking, indeed, that even in "ecumenism", Christianity which never envisioned any social order, thinks inevitably in its own terms, and will envisage inter-confessional relationships only within the parameters of those terms which primarily surround the cult of Jesus.⁸⁸ "But I believe something can still be worked out by way of positive cooperation, provided the Muslims hearken more to the Quran than to the historical formulations of Islam and provided that recent pioneering efforts continue to yield a Christian doctrine more compatible with universal monotheism and egalitarianism.⁸⁹" But "born out of a violent spiritual break with its immediate parent, European medievalism, Western liberalism is a law unto itself and, therefore, will seek no negotiation with any spiritual system or moral ideology.⁹⁰" However, there is a realization as William Montgomery points out, "the recent occidental conception of a purely 'spiritual movement' is exceptional. Throughout most of human history religion has been intimately involved in the whole life of man in society, and not least in his politics. Even the purely religious teaching of Jesus -- as it is commonly regarded -- is not without political relevance.⁹¹"

In sharp contradistinction to western modernity -- which has an ineluctable trajectory of a rare combination of imperialism and epistemicide with the West still uniquely poised to force its values on the rest in an unprecedented phenomenon in the history of civilizations, killing diversity, however unique -- Wali Allah's fourth Irtifaq, from the standpoint of genuine sociologists, "does not envisage or recommend that all societies merge to form one colorless humanity and lose their cultural distinctions. He stresses the importance of customs distinctive to every culture and that these customs, unless they become harmful and distorted, must be retained. When customs do become distorted, he

says, they ought to be reformed rather than abrogated and replaced.”⁹²

The bane of western modernity is its contemptuous approach to everything religious and old, an attitude which -- with a hubris born of scientific, atheistic impulse -- has though supplied humanity with wings to fly but has its very feet cut and transcendental dimension lost, depriving it of walking as a normal human does. This transcendental dimension is in reality a firm foothold to rely on that creates humility in success and gives hope in distress.

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