

# WALI ALLAH: HIS LIFE AND TIMES

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WALI ALLAH was born in a family of great saints and scholars, some of whom had distinguished themselves in learning while others were famous in the field of battle. He traces his lineage from 'Umar, the Second Caliph. <sup>1</sup>The first of his ancestors who came to India was Mufti Shams al-Din. He settled at Rohtak, a town about thirty miles west of Delhi. Ratak had been a populous town since early arrival of Muslims in India and people of eminent families had settled there. Shams al-Din was probably the first of the family of the Quraish who chose this town for habitation. He was a great scholar and mystic and opened an institution for the dissemination of Islamic learning; people flocked to it in large numbers. He belonged to the Chishti order of mystics and was appointed Qadi. <sup>2</sup>The descendants of Shams al-Din retained this judicial rank (*Qada'*) for several generations. One of them, Qadi Qadan, <sup>3</sup> became the mayor of the town (Ra'is-i Baldah). Shaikh Mahmud, the son of Qadi Qadan, bade farewell to the ancestral office and decided to join military service of the king. For four or five generations, the members of the family retained this love for military life. But it seems that the tradition of mysticism was never given up by the family. It is related that Shaikh Ahmad, Shaikh Mahmud's son, was brought up by Shaikh 'Abd al-Ghani who was a mystic of great renown and was, as Khwajah Muhammad Hashim Kashmi (author of *Zubdat al-Maqamat*) relates, a contemporary of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's father whom the former met while he was on a visit to Sirhind. Both had an intimate discussion on some important mystic problems. <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This account is based mostly on Wali Allah's book, *Anfas al-'Arijin*, Matba'-i Mujtaba'i, Delhi, 1335/1917. It consists of seven smaller tracts. Parts 1 and 2 deal with the account of the life and activities of his father and uncle; part 3 deals briefly with his ancestors; part 4 deals with the family of his father on maternal side; part 5 with his own maternal lineage and the last part deals with his teachers at the Hejaz. *Hayat-i Wali* by Hafiz Rahim Bakhsh (Maktaba-i Salafiyah, Lahore, 1955), is mainly based on *Anfas* but some other sources have also been utilised.

<sup>2</sup> Wali Allah states (*Anfas*, p. 159) that every prominent Muslim who *came* from outside to settle in these towns was asked to participate in the political and civic life of the town, as a Qadi, Muhtasib or Mufti in an honorary capacity.

<sup>3</sup> Wali Allah thinks this is perhaps the transformation of 'Abd al-Qadir or Qiwam al-Din (*Anfas*, p. 159).

<sup>4</sup> *Anfas*, pp. 160-61.

Shaikh Wajih, the grandfather of Wali Allah, was a soldier of great eminence as well as a mystic of high standing. During the reign of Shah Jahan, he won great laurels while fighting under the command of a Mughal general, Syed Husain, in Malwa. In this campaign he succeeded in defeating and killing turn by turn three brothers in single combats. The aged mother of these brothers later on entreated Wajih al-Din to look upon her as his mother—a pledge which he fulfilled till the end. ‘Abd al-Rahim relates that he took this aged woman as his real grandmother. Shaikh Wajih took part in the battle of Khajwah (1070/1659) on the side of Aurangzeb and played a decisive role in the defeat of Shah Shaja‘ And yet when he was offered a special increase in his rank, he politely refused. In spite of such a life, Shaikh Wajih was a man of high moral calibre. Throughout his life, whether at home or abroad, he used to read two parts (*paras*) of the Qur'an daily. When in old age his eyesight became weak, he managed to have a copy of the holy book written in bold letters. In his latter life he gave up active military service and spent his days in religious exercises. He once received indication in his prayers that he was destined to die a martyr. At this he started for the Deccan, thinking that he had been asked to participate in the holy war against Siva who was desecrating Muslim institutions in his domains. On the way he had to fight a gang of highwaymen in which he met a martyr's end.<sup>5</sup>

The wife of Shaikh Wajih belonged to a family of eminent scholars and mystics. The family had settled at Uch, Multan, but Shaikh Tahir came to Bihar in search of knowledge and then settled at Jaunpur. His son, Shaikh Hasan, set up a school for imparting religious knowledge. He was the disciple of Sayyid Hamid Raji Shah, a well-known Chishti Sufi.<sup>6</sup> It was at the request of Sultan Sikandar Lodhi that Shaikh Hasan came to settle at Delhi. He died in 909/1503. One of his sons, Shaikh Muhammad, known as Khayali, was a mystic of great renown, who spent many years in Medina. Shaikh Aman Allah Panipati, the well-known mystic who upheld Ibn ‘Arabi's *Wandat al-Wujud*, was one of his Khalifahs. The second son of Shaikh Hasan was Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Aziz (d. 975/1567) who in course of time attained a high

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 162-67.

<sup>6</sup> Raji Shah was the disciple and Khalifah of Shaikh Hisam al-Din Manakpuri, who was *the* disciple and Khalifah of Shaikh Nur Qutb-i ‘Alam of Bengal (d. 813/1410). This great renowned mystic is a different person from Shaikh Qutb-i ‘Alam whose grand-daughter was the grandmother of Wali Allah.

status in mysticism. One of his mystic teachers explained to him the mysteries of Ibn 'Arabi's *Fusus al-Hikam* and initiated him into the Suhrawardi order. Later on he came under the influence of Sayyid Ibrahim Irchi who initiated him into almost all the mystic orders, but he was specially attached to the Qadiri order. Shaikh Abd al-'Aziz, therefore, also joined this order. But he never gave up the role of a scholar. Like his ancestors, he continued to teach in his school at Delhi. His son, Shaikh Qutb-i 'Alam, started his career as a scholar, teaching in the ancestral school. Khwajah Baqi Billah, the famous Sufi who introduced Naqshbandi order in India, was one of his pupils, and it was at his advice that Baqi Billah went to Khurasan and was initiated into the Naqshbandi order. Shaikh Qutb-i 'Alam in his latter life became the disciple of Khwajah Baqi Billah. Shaikh Rafi' al-Din Muhammad, the son of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Aziz, was a scholar as well as a mystic. Though in the beginning he was initiated into the Chishti order under the guidance of his father, he later on came into intimate contact with Khwajah Baqi Billah who, being the pupil and later on the mystic teacher of his father, had a special affection for him. In spite of his old age and physical weakness, he undertook an arduous journey to participate in the marriage ceremony of Shaikh Raff al-Din. The mother of 'Abd alRahim was the result of this wedlock which was blessed by the presence of very eminent mystics.

'Abd al-Rahim was born in 1059/1641<sup>7</sup> and received his early education from his father, Shaikh Wajih, and his elder brother, Abu Rida (d. 1101/1689).<sup>8</sup> Abu Rida started his life after the pattern of his father in the service of the State. He got the customary education but all of a sudden he decided to give up the world and adopted the life of a mystic. He was the disciple of Khwajah Khurd, the son of Baqi Billah. He used to deliver sermons on Fridays based on three traditions which he would first translate into Persian and then into Hindustani for the advantage of the audience. During the early part of his life he used to lecture on almost all subjects but later on he confined himself to the commentary of Baidawi and *Mishkat* among the books of traditions. He upheld the doctrine of *Wandat al-Wujud* and gave his own interpretation of it. He was fond of discussing among the *elite* abstruse points in the works of the mystics.<sup>9</sup> It is related that Mulla

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<sup>7</sup> *Hayat-i Wali* (p. 303) puts it as 1054/1644 and his death as 1131/1718 (being 77 years).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 320

<sup>9</sup> Some of the points are mentioned, discussed and explained in *Anfas*, pp. 99 ff.

Ya'qub, a contemporary scholar of great repute, had certain doubts about *Wandat al-Wujud*; these were cleared when he came to his assembly.<sup>10</sup> He held that *Wandat al-Wujud* could easily be proved through mystic intuition and experience; those who raise objections against it are really not able to appreciate its truth through argumentation.<sup>11</sup> The spirit of *tabiiq* (compromise)—the trait that is manifest most conspicuously in Wali Allah—can be seen in Abu Rida's approach in the doctrine of the vision of God. The Mu'tazilites and the She'ites both deny that God can be visible, for, according to them, it implies direction. For them, however, complete manifestation is the result of lifting of all veils. The Ahl-i Sunnah assert that the vision of God without quality and direction is possible and this, according to them, is complete manifestation. Thus the controversy, as he puts it, is only verbal and not real.

'Abd al-Rahim started his education under the direction of his brother, Abu Rida,<sup>12</sup> and later under Mir Zahid of Herat,<sup>13</sup> with whom he read *Sharh Muwafiq* and all other books of *Kalam* and *Usul al-Fiqh*.<sup>14</sup> His natural abilities helped him attain eminence in this sphere very soon and he became the object of envy to his companions. He was able to point out some discrepancies in the text of *Fatama-i Alamgiri* which nobody else was able to do. Naturally his companions felt disgusted and manoeuvred to get his name struck off the list of workers.

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He says, "Sometimes by the repetition of 'There is no god but God' or through ecstasy one gets to the state of *Wahdat-i Shubudi* but it is not trustworthy" (*Anfas*, p. 109).

<sup>10</sup> *Anfas*, p.98. At another place (p. 101), it is said that Abu Rida once presented the doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wujud* before a select audience and supported it by rational arguments derived from the Mutakallimin and quoted traditions, etc., without mentioning the controversial term *Wahdat al-Wujud*, and everybody agreed with this exposition.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14. Mirza Muhammad Zahid was a great scholar of Shah Jahan's time. He has written commentaries on several of the classics of philosophy and *Kalam*. In Sufism he was a Naqshbandi. He was a pupil of Mulla Muhammad Fadil of Badakhshan and Mulla Sadiq Halwai of Kabul. In philosophy he received instruction from Mulla Mirza Jan of Shiraz, and in *Hikmah* he was the pupil of Mulla Yusuf who was an authority on this subject (*ibid.*, p. 33).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

In Sufism ‘Abd al-Rahim was from the beginning initiated into the Naqshbandi order.<sup>15</sup> At the advice of Khwajah Khurd,<sup>16</sup> he attached himself to Hafiz Sayyid ‘Abd Allah,<sup>17</sup> one of the Khalifahs of Shaikh Adam Bunnuri (d. 1050/1640) and later on to Khwajah Khurd himself. Wali Allah has clarified the position of his father in this respect. He says that his father preferred the Naqshbandi order of Khwajah Baqi Billah to other systems, for he had been initiated and trained in this system throughout.<sup>18</sup> Later on, he had the opportunity of being initiated into other orders. Quoting his father, Wali Allah says, "The *nisbah* that I received from Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qadir Jilani is purer and subtler; the *nisbah* that I received from Khwajah Naqshband is more overpowering and more effective; the one that I received from Khwajah Mu’in al-Din [Chishti] is nearer to love, and more conducive to the effect of Names [of God] and the purity of *Khatir*."<sup>19</sup>

He had high regard for Ibn 'Arabi and claimed that he would explain the doctrine (of *Wandat al-Wujud*) presented in *Fusus alHikam* in away that its incompatibility with the Qur'an and traditions would be removed and all doubts in this respect totally resolved. He, however, still preferred to make these problems a topic of discussion, for, as he alleged, the majority of his contemporaries could not understand them and were thus prone to be led astray. He emphasised the importance of the study of the books dealing with

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<sup>15</sup> It is said that a Naqshbandi Sufi Khwajah Hashim, who came from Bukhara and began to live in the street where ‘Abd al-Rahim lived, took a fancy to him and tried to teach him a prayer which he claimed to be very effective. ‘Abd al-Rahim was at that time about nine or ten years of age (ibid., p. 4).

<sup>16</sup> Khwajah Khurd, the younger son of Khwajah Baqi Billah (d. 1012/1603). After the death of his father, he was initiated into Sufism by Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, from whom he got the necessary permission. Later on, he became the disciple of Khwajah Hisam al-Din and Shaikh Allah Dad, the disciples of Khwajah Baqi Billah (ibid., p. 18). Khwajah Hisam al-Din (d. 1043/1633), after the death of Khwajah Baqi Billah, joined the circle of Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind. See Ikram, *Rud-i Kautbar*, p. 205.

<sup>17</sup> Sayyid ‘Abd Allah was one of the best *Qaris* of the Qur'an in those days, which art he had learnt from a Sufi of the Punjab.

<sup>18</sup> It is very difficult to agree with this interpretation of Wali Allah. Khwajah Khurd and Khwajah Hisam al-Din were both the disciples of Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind. Hafiz ‘Abd Allah was the disciple of Shaikh Adam Bunnuri who was one of the leading disciples and Khalifah of Shaikh Ahmad. The real reason seems to be that Shaikh ‘Abd al-Rahim had a predilection for *Wabdāt al-Wujud* which was criticised by Shaikh Ahmad and his disciple and therefore naturally he preferred the one to the other.

<sup>19</sup> *Anfas*, p. 77.

this subject. Under his guidance Wali Allah studied *Lawa'ih* (of Jami) and the commentary on *Lum'at* (of 'Iraqi) and the controversial problems were thoroughly discussed and debated. *Naqd al-Nasus* (of Jami), a commentary in Persian on *Fusus al-Hikam*, was taught by 'Abd al-Rahim to a group of people and Wali Allah had the opportunity of attending some of these lectures.

Wali Allah mentions particularly one or two problems which 'Abd al-Rahim used to discuss. One is the problem of relation of the one and many, God and His creatures. The Intelligible Forms (*Suwar-i 'Ilmiyyah*) that we see are not possessed of external reality; their reality is dependent on our knowledge; it is our knowledge that has appeared in so many forms. We can neither say that they are identical with knowledge, for knowledge was and these forms did not exist; nor can we say that they are different from knowledge, for these different things need some cause (*mansba'*) and ground (*qayyum*) and that is knowledge. Knowledge is without quality and multiplicity and all this multiplicity does not stand in the way of its nature which is free from all quality and multiplicity.

God says in the Qur'an that "He is with you" (lvii. 4). The problem is to determine the nature of this withness (*ma'yyat*). According to 'Abd al-Rahim, this "withness" is not only intellectual *Cam*<sup>o</sup>; it is actual also; but this is not like the association of a substance with another substance, or of an attribute with another attribute or of a substance with an attribute. God's withness with the creatures is quite different from it—one that is not within human comprehension. He explains that different people have interpreted this withness in different ways. Some think that God encompasses everything through His knowledge, power, hearing and sight, as it is said in the Qur'an.<sup>20</sup> Some say that every action and reaction, movement and quality, that is visible in the world is from God, as is said in the Qur'an.<sup>21</sup> Others say that

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<sup>20</sup> "Nowhere is there a secret counsel between three persons but He is the fourth of them, nor (between) five but He is the sixth of them, nor less than that nor more but He is with them wheresoever they are . . ." (MU. 7).

<sup>21</sup> "Say: All is from Allah" (iv. 78); "And whatsoever favour is (bestowed) on you it is from Allah" (xvi. 53).

everything that exists is He and that there is nothing in existence except He, as is mentioned in the Qur'an.<sup>22</sup>

He held that attributes are identical with His essence and everything in the world is good in itself and evil is only relative. For instance, the sharpness of the sword is good in itself and possesses beauty as a piece of iron, but when it is used to kill a person wrongfully, it assumes evil character.<sup>23</sup>

In religious matters 'Abd al-Rahim was a man of liberal views. Generally he followed the Hanafi school but in certain respects he accepted the decisions of other schools on the basis of traditions or his own judgment (*wijdan*, intuitive insight). One of the disputed points is whether, in prayer, the assembly should recite Surah Fatihah (first Surah of the Qur'an) or keep silent, as the Imam is expected to recite it. According to the Hanafi school, the assembly should remain silent. Shaikh 'Abd al-Ahad, a grandson of Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind, who was a staunch and uncompromising adherent of the Hanafi school, adduced the same argument in discussion with 'Abd al-Rahim which Shibli ascribes to Abu Hanifah.<sup>24</sup> But 'Abd al-Rahim contested that the real function of prayer, viz. purification of heart, sense of submissiveness before God, cannot be fully achieved without reciting the Fatihah.<sup>25</sup> In mysticism also he claimed to follow independent views in certain respects. One day Khwajah Naqshband, a grandson of Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind, asserted that the mystics of their times were mere imitators of the ancients and had nothing new to their credit. 'Abd al-Rahim contested this statement and said that the mystics of the day did possess something new which the ancient mystics lacked. Thereupon he elaborated his own particular stand in contrast to what had been handed down from the ancients.<sup>26</sup>

Unlike his father, 'Abd al-Rahim led the life of a true mystic free from worldly entanglements and never liked to associate with kings. Aurangzeb once expressed a wish that 'Abd al-Rahim should see him, but he refused in

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<sup>22</sup> "Everything is perishable but He" (xxviii. 88); "He is the first and the last, the Apparent and the Hidden" (lvii. 3). For a detailed discussion of this topic, see *Anfas-i Rahimiyyah* (Matba'-i Ahmadi, Delhi, n.d.), pp. 8-10.

<sup>23</sup> *Anfas*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>24</sup> Shibli, *Sirat al-Nu'man* (M. Thana Allah, Lahore), pp. 112-113.

<sup>25</sup> *Anfas*, p. 70.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

the best tradition of renowned mystics.<sup>27</sup> When Shaikh Hamid, one of his classmates in the school of Mirza Muhammad Zahid, came to his house and offered him to work jointly in the revision of the *Fatawa* on a certain daily remuneration, he flatly refused. When his mother heard of this, she asked him to accept the offer in view of economic stringency. Due to her exaggerated insistence he was forced to accept the offer. When his mystic teacher, Abu al-Qasim, heard of it, he advised him to renounce it. 'Abd al-Rahim explained that he could not, though he wished it, because of his mother. He requested his teacher to pray to God that this should terminate of itself. In the course of time, his name was struck off and he was offered a piece of land in its stead which also he refused.<sup>28</sup> And yet he did not lead the life of an anchorite. As Wali Allah puts it, he possessed in abundance the wisdom of the hereafter as well as the wisdom of this world;<sup>29</sup> his was a life of the golden mean.<sup>30</sup> His attitude regarding the Shi'ah-Sunni controversy was definite and clear; he regarded the Shi'ahs as misguided but he did not try to spoil the atmosphere by importing fanaticism in the discussion. Once he had a chance of meeting an emigree from Iran, one 'Abd Allah Chalpi. Before the discussion started, he said plainly that his approach would not be sectarian at all; his standpoint would be the search for truth in an objective way, accepting whatever is true and rejecting whatever is wrong. He claimed that with this approach he was able to convince the Shi'ahs without raising any unnecessary commotion. In the end 'Abd Allah Chalpi became his disciple.<sup>31</sup> But his aversion towards the Shi'ah sect remained unabated.<sup>32</sup> Abd al-Rahim died in 1131/1719.

Wali Allah<sup>33</sup> was born in 1114/1703. As is the usual custom among Muslims, he began to attend school at the age of five. After two years, i.e. at the age of seven, he was asked to say his prayers and keep Ramadan fasts. By

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 69. He quoted the famous statement of Chishti saints: "When a person's name is written in the court of kings, his name is struck off from the court of God."

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>29</sup> Wali Allah has given some precepts of 'Abd al-Rahim in *Anfas*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>33</sup> His other name was Qutb al-Din Ahmad after the name of a Sufi saint who had informed 'Abd al-Rahim about the birth of a son and advised him to give him his name. His name from which his date of birth can be numerically calculated was 'Azim al-Din (ibid., p. 44).



the end of the seventh year he finished the Qur'an and started studying Persian texts along with Persian grammar. Thereafter the gates of knowledge were opened before him and he made full use of it. Wali Allah relates that at this stage he used to enjoy the company of boys of his age. One day they decided to go for an outing. When he returned his father expressed regrets at his having spent the day unprofitably while during this period he had repeated blessings (*darud*) on the Holy Prophet so many times. Thereafter Wali Allah never had the desire for such things.<sup>34</sup> He took interest in his studies which was exceptional for a boy of his age.<sup>35</sup> When fourteen he was married.<sup>36</sup> At the age of fifteen he was initiated into mysticism at the hand of his father and he devoted himself to the mystic practices, particularly of the Naqshbandi order. He studied the following books on different subjects as detailed by himself:

In Hadith, he studied the whole of *Mishkat*, a part of Bukhari's *Sahih* (from the beginning up to the chapter on Cleanliness) and attended the classes where *Shama'il al-Nabi* was read by others in the presence of his father.

In Tafsir, he studied a part of Baidawi, and a part of *Mudarik*. But his greatest asset was the study of a part of the Qur'an in the school under the guidance of his father with particular emphasis on understanding the meaning and significance of the text, along with the study of the situational context with the help of commentaries. It proved of greatest help to him in understanding the holy book. In Fiqh, he studied almost the whole of *Sharh Waqayyah* and the *Hidayah* except a few pages. Similarly, he got through all the common text-books on *Usul al-Fiqh*, logic, Kalam, mysticism, medicine, theosophy (*Hikmah*), etc. His originality and creative spirit became evident very early in his life. "During this period of learning," he says, "I began to

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>35</sup> He tells us that his father repeatedly expressed his desire to pour all knowledge into his heart. It was due to this, perhaps, that, as he briefly states, he was able to finish the prescribed courses without any difficulty.

<sup>36</sup> Wali Allah explains the reason of his early marriage. His father had a foreboding and he insisted that this marriage should take place as early as possible. Immediately after this marriage most of his near relations, including his uncle, Abu Rida Muhammad, died. A few years later, his father also died (*Anfas*, p. 202)

have ever-new ideas in these fields and, with a little effort, the scope of development increased enormously."<sup>37</sup>

When Wali Allah completed his studies at the age of fifteen, his father celebrated the occasion with proper ceremonies, inviting people to a grand feast. This function signified the successful completion of his education as well as the grant of permission to assume the responsibility of running the *Madrasa*, so far run by his father. During his last illness, his father gave him the authority to receive *bai'ah* from others and to guide others in mystic exercises and contemplation.

For twelve years after the death of his father, i.e. from 1131/1719 to 1143/1731, Wali Allah carried on the work of the school, teaching books on religion and philosophy. It was during this period that he had the ample opportunity of going deep into what he had learnt and read. In the classical system of education where the teacher and the pupils work on the most personal and intimate level, and where questions are raised and discussions follow, an intelligent person like Wali Allah was able to formulate his own point of view in every subject. He would often sit at the grave of his father and thus received abundance of mystic illumination which helped to broaden his vision and gave depth to his thought. A thorough study of the books of all the four schools of jurisprudence, their *usul* and the traditions on which their inferences are based, enabled him to grasp the basic principles of jurists and traditionists.<sup>38</sup>

Wali Allah succeeded to the headship of the ancestral school at the age of sixteen in 1131/1719, the year when Farrukh Siyar was blinded and dethroned by the Sayyid Brothers, an event which, as Wali Allah himself says, brought about a great chaos in the affairs of the State.<sup>39</sup> Only nine years before Wali Allah assumed this sacred charge, the Rajput princes, in an assembly in 1122/1710 near Ajmer, decided to renounce their loyalty to the Mughal crown, and determined to wage an open war against the Muslim power.<sup>40</sup> The Sikhs under Bunda, determined like Rajuts to destroy Muslims, perpetrated untold cruelties on the innocent Muslim population wherever

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., pp. 203-04.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>40</sup> Hafiz Malik, *Muslim Nationalism in India and Pakistan*, p. 104.

they went. In 1122/1710 the town of Sirhind "was pillaged for four days with ruthless cruelty, mosques were defiled, houses burnt, the women outraged and the Muslims slaughtered."<sup>41</sup>

The imperial court was dominated by people who were thoroughly corrupt and unscrupulous. A man like Asad Khan, who had been a minister of Aurangzeb for thirty-seven years, was in the regular pay of the British to safeguard their interests in the court.<sup>42</sup> In the War of Succession after the death of Bahadur Shah, Asad Khan and his son Zulfiqar Khan played a very fiendish and treacherous role in supporting the most incompetent of the princes, Jahandar Shah, and when later on, having been defeated by Farrukh Siyar, he sought their protection, they handed him over to the new king in order to retain their privileges.<sup>43</sup> The same was the case with most of the nobles who wielded authority at the centre. The court was also the scene of constant strife between the Turani nobles which reflected itself unfortunately in Sunni-Shi'ah conflicts. This rivalry was a legacy of the foreign policy of the Mughals, as they had to deal with Safawid kings who were Shi'ahs and the Uzbeks of Central Asia who were Sunnis. The Mughal kings treated alike all people who came to settle in India, whether from Iran or Turkestan, but naturally when relations with the Safawids were strained, the Iranian element had to go down before the Turani element. This pro-Turani policy became marked during Shah Jahan's reign, due to his quarrels with Persia. It continued during Aurangzeb's reign.<sup>44</sup> The pro-Shi'ah temperament of Bahadur Shah<sup>45</sup> and later the rise of the Sayyid Brothers, worked in favour of Irani-Shi'ah element. This conflict played no mean part in the disintegration of the State. Fearing lest the TuraniSunni party might rise against him in Delhi, Husain Ali brought with him to Delhi (in 1132/1719) a Maratha army

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<sup>41</sup> *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 322.

<sup>42</sup> S.M. Ikram, *History of Muslim Civilization*, pp. 328-29.

<sup>43</sup> *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 329.

<sup>44</sup> 'Abbas II incited the Deccan rulers to rise in revolt against Aurangzeb. See Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environments*, p. 43.

<sup>45</sup> Bahadur Shah (r. 1119/1707-1125/1712) ordered that the title of *Wasi* should be added after the name of 'Ali in the Friday sermon. It meant the repudiation of the Sunni creed according to which the Caliphate was the legitimate right of Abu Bakr. This happened when he was at Lahore during his campaign against the Sikhs. This undiplomatic move of Bahadur Shah led to a revolt of the people of Lahore which was ruthlessly quelled. S.M. Ikram, *History of Muslim Civilization*, p. 333; *A History of Freedom Movement*, Vol. I, p. 85.

of eleven thousand soldiers under Balaji Wishwanath the Peshwa. No doubt, at this time, the Marathas proved timid and weak and were slaughtered in great numbers but the way was opened for their later attacks and expansion at the cost of the Mughal Empire. A year later in 1133/1720 when Baji Rao succeeded his father as Peshwa, he united, on the basis of anti-Muslim feeling, the local Hindu rulers and neighbouring Rajputs of Jaipur and Mewar, against the oppressors of their common religion.<sup>46</sup> The result of mutual rivalries of the courtiers thus contributed to the strength of the Marathas and eventual dismemberment of the Empire. The Jat menace was also raising its head. Seeing the inefficiency of the officers of the State, the Jat chiefs began to indulge in highway robbery and in spite of repeated efforts their lawlessness could not be brought under control. In 1135/1722 Nizam al-Mulk was invited from the Deccan, offered the post of Wazir, and requested to set the affairs of the State straight. He put forward the following proposals for the consideration of the Emperor:

- (1) Farming out of the *Khalsab* lands should be discontinued.
- (2) Bribes under the name of offerings upon appointments to office should cease.
- (3) The number of assigned lands (*Jagirs*) should be reduced and should be given to really capable and powerful nobles.
- (4) The Emperor should help the ruler of Persia in repelling the domination of the Afghans who might one day turn their attention to India.<sup>47</sup>

It is significant that Wali Allah, in one of his letters addressed to the king, the wazir and the nobles, suggested almost identical proposals for the reform of administration. Among other things, he says:

- (1) The *Khalsab* lands should be greater in area. All or most of the area around Delhi, extending to Agra, Hissar, and the Ganges up to the boundaries of Sirhind, should be included in it. Lesser *Khalsab* lands which automatically lead to impoverishment of treasury become the cause of weakness of the central authority.
- (2) *Jagirs* should be given only to nobles of higher rank; nobles of lower

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<sup>46</sup> Hafiz Malik, op. cit., p. 104.

<sup>47</sup> Yusuf Husain, *The First Nizam*, p. 128.

ranks should be paid in cash, for they cannot keep their lands under proper control.

- (3) The custom of giving *Khalsab* lands on contract should be abolished. This custom destroys the land and impoverishes the people.<sup>48</sup>

These wise counsels fell on deaf ears. Nizam al-Mulk could achieve nothing in face of opposition from the king and his favourite courtiers. After about two years' futile stay in the capital, he left for the Deccan in the last month of 1723. During his absence the intrigues of the courtiers led to a further deterioration in the administration. The Marathas became bolder and attacked and even looted Delhi. The Emperor gave Muhammad Khan Bangash, the Nawab of Farrukhabad, charge of Malwa in order to stem the tide of Maratha aggression. In spite of his successes against the enemy, the Amir al-Umara tried to belittle his efforts and advised the king to appoint Raja Jai Singh in his place as the governor of Malwa, one of the most important parts of the country where Marathas could be successfully resisted and pushed back. The appointment of Rajput princes to the governorship of key provinces like Malwa and Gujerat were most deplorable,<sup>49</sup> for most of them were in league with the Marathas.<sup>50</sup>

It was in this atmosphere of moral chaos and political instability that Wali Allah had been working in Delhi. In 1143/1731, during the reign of Muhammad Shah, he decided to go to the Hejaz.<sup>51</sup> His object seems to be not only to pursue higher studies but to get proper inspiration for his future work which perhaps he had not been able to define and formulate. He had already realised that the Muslims of this land had been cut off from the main source of their tradition, i.e. the Qur'an, and before they could be infused

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<sup>48</sup> K. A. Nizami, *Wali Allah Ke Siyasi Maktubat*, pp. 94-95.

<sup>49</sup> Wali Allah in his famous letter to Abdali mentions the importance of these provinces, the governorship of which was given by later Mughal kings to non-Muslims through short-sightedness (*ibid.*, pp. 99).

<sup>50</sup> During the governorship of Muhammad Khan Bangash, Raja Jai Singh wrote the following letter to one Nandlal Chaudhury: "Thousand praises to you that at my word alone you and the rest of the sardars protected our religion in Malwa by driving out the Moghals from there. . . ." (Yusuf Husain, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-69).

<sup>51</sup> He was accompanied on this journey by his friend and co-worker, Muhammad 'Ashiq of Pehlat. See 'Abd al-'Aziz Muhaddith, *'Ujalia-i Na'fiab* (Persian), p. 22, and *Fuyuz ai-Haramain* (Urdu) by Professor Sarwar, p. 130.

with the dynamic spirit of their religion, they must learn directly what the Qur'an wanted them to know and follow. For this purpose, he considered a good translation of the Qur'an in Persian necessary so that all the people, scholars as well as others, could benefit from it. He made a thorough search for such translations and, failing to get any good one, he decided to do it himself, keeping all these points in view. This work was undertaken before he went to the Hejaz, but it could not be completed before 1150/1737, five years after his return to Delhi from pilgrimage.<sup>52</sup>

Wali Allah's decision to go to the Hejaz was a revolutionary step in itself. Muslims of India had sufficient contacts with the Muslims of Iran and Central Asia but had almost no deeper contacts with the people of the Hejaz. During the days of Akbar, Mulla 'Abd Allah Sultanpuri had declared the Hajj to be no longer obligatory because of the danger of the European pirates in the Indian Ocean and the control of the land route (i.e. Iran) by the Shi'ite Safawids.<sup>53</sup> Shaikh 'Abd al-Haqq Dehlvi (959/1551-1052/1642) took a bold step during that very period and his stay in the Hejaz proved highly fruitful not only to the Shaikh himself but also to the Muslims of India, for his contacts with the scholars and mystics of the Hejaz brought about very far-reaching formative influence on his thought. It was in the Hejaz that he came into contact with Shaikh 'Abd al-Wahhab Muttaqi who was responsible to a great degree in producing in 'Abd al-Haqq a balanced view regarding the controversy about *Wandāt al-Wujūd* of Ibn 'Arabi. It was this sojourn in the Hejaz that prompted 'Abd al-Haqq to pay more attention to Hadith. After a labour of six years, he completed in 1025/1616 (i.e. twenty-six years after his return from the Hejaz) a commentary in Persian on *Mishkat* and concentrated his attention on popularising literature about Hadith which, according to him, was the only and sure antidote against moral and intellectual chaos of the time.

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<sup>52</sup> Introduction to *Tafsir Fath al-Rahman*. The story related by Rahim Bahsh in *Hayat-i Wali* (p. 418, footnote ff.) that the orthodox Mullas of the time were enraged at this Persian translation of the Qur'an and decided to kill him seems to be a fabrication. His visit to the Hejaz was not, as is alleged in the story, motivated by any idea of escape from these storms of protests; the visit was a part of his spiritual training. The translation was completed, as stated by the author himself, five years after his return from the Hijaz.

<sup>53</sup> *Rud-i Kautbar*, p. 90.

The same proved to be the case with Wali Allah.<sup>54</sup> When he entered the Hejaz, the country was in a total chaos, both morally and politically.<sup>55</sup> But he was fortunate in having met really great scholars and mystics there. The outstanding among them was Abu Tahir Muhammad b. Ibrahim Kurdi (d. 1145/1732) who inherited the scholarship and piety of his father, Shaikh Ibrahim (d. 1041/1631). The latter was a great scholar as well as a mystic. He was eminent as a jurist of the Shafi'i school and Hadith. During discussion of the problems of *Hikmah* he would present the mystic point of view and express his preference for the latter, for, as he said, the philosophers could not reach the truth through mere discursive reason. He had great regard for Ibn 'Arabi.<sup>56</sup> Abu Tahir distinguished himself as a scholar both of Fiqh and Hadith which he acquired from his father and many other scholars of eminence like Shaikh Hasan 'Ajami<sup>57</sup> (d. 1113/1701), Shaikh Ahmad Nakhli<sup>58</sup> and Shaikh 'Abd Allah Basri<sup>59</sup> (d. 1134/1721). He had an opportunity of studying the books of Mulla 'Abd al-Hakim Sialkoti and Shaikh 'Abd al-Haqq Dehlvi (d. 1052/1642) through the help of Shaikh 'Abd Allah Lahori who had gone to the Hejaz for pilgrimage and who had acquired proper authority from the authors themselves. He was characterised by piety and *ijtihad* (independent judgment) like the pious ancients and always tried to be objective in discussion. One day while studying Bukhari, the discussion started about the difference between the traditions and Fiqh. Abu Tahir

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<sup>54</sup> In *Fayyuz al Haramain*, p. 131, he states that the Ka'bah is one of the manifestations of God's *taballi* and therefore a means of attaining nearness to God. Pilgrimage is the last stage on this journey of nearness to God.

<sup>55</sup> For situation at Mecca, see Gerald de Gaury, *Rulers of Mecca*, London, 1951, pp. 165 ff. The war between the Ottomans and the Safawids had their effect on the people of the Hejaz. See *ibid.*, pp. 166-67.

<sup>56</sup> *Anfas*, pp. 191-92.

<sup>57</sup> He was a Shaikh-i Hadith and had met Shaikh Ni'mat Allah Qadiri and other mystics. He was a Hanafi in Fiqh but in practice a man of independent judgment. He used to combine the two prayers of noon and afternoon as well as evening and night while on journey; he also recited the Fatihah in prayers after an Imam—both being forbidden in Hanafi Fiqh (*ibi*, 193-95).

<sup>58</sup> He was master of both esoteric and exoteric sciences. He was a great scholar of tradition, specialising in Bukhari and *Muwatta*. In mysticism he preferred Naqshbandi order (*ibid.*, pp. 195-97).

<sup>59</sup> He devoted his life to the preservation of the books of traditions, especially of Imam Ahmad. He revived the ancient method of preserving Hadith by committing it to memory and transmitting it to the pupils (*ibid.*, pp. 197-98).

replied that the personality of the Holy Prophet was marked by a tendency towards a synthesis of divergent elements and therefore these differences could be easily reconciled.<sup>60</sup> Besides receiving instruction and authority in traditions, Wali Allah got initiation through him in almost all mystic orders. As related in *Intibah fi Salasil al-Awliya' Allah'* he received *kbirqah* from him in Qadiriyyah, Naqshbandiyyah, Suhrawardiyyah, Kibruya, Shadhiliyyah and Shattariyyah orders.<sup>61</sup> Wali Allah's regard for Abu Tahir can be realised by the fact that when in 1145/1732 he decided to leave for India, he went to him and recited the following verses:

نیست کل طریق کنت اعرفه  
الا طریقاً یودینی الی ربکم

[ I have forgotten all the paths that I knew

Except the one that leads to your place]

On hearing these words, Abu Tahir began to weep bitterly and his cheeks became red with excitement, choking his throat. The letter of condolence which Wali Allah wrote to Ibrahim Madani, on the death of his father, Abu Tahir, reveals the depth of his love and extent of his attachment to his teacher.<sup>62</sup>

Another scholar from whom Wali Allah learnt traditions by way of *Sama'*, *Qir'at* and *Ijazab*<sup>63</sup> was Muhammad Wafd Allah who was the son of

<sup>60</sup> This insight of Abu Tahir seems to have influenced Wali Allah greatly. His life work seems to be a practical demonstration of this basic truth.

<sup>61</sup> *Intibah*, pp. 16, 29, 101, 119, 126, 134, 137. See also *Anfas*, p. 204. The authority of initiation into most of these orders, Abu Tahir had got from his father, Ibrahim, who got it from Shaikh Ahmad Qashashi (d. 1071/1660) and the latter got it from Shaikh Ahmad Shinawi (d. 1028/1616). Both were scholars of Hadith as well as great mystics, upholding the doctrine of Ibn 'Arabi but in a way which was not antagonistic to the Shari'ah (*Anfas*, p. 185).

<sup>62</sup> *Anfas*, p. 200; *Hayat-i Wali*, pp. 513, 517, where Wali Allah's letter to Ibrahim Madani is given in full. The same feelings are expressed in other letters. See *Hayat-i Wali*, pp. 518-26.

<sup>63</sup> These are some of the forms of learning Hadith. In *al-Sama* the student attends the lectures of a traditionist which may be in the form of simple narration of traditions, or accompanied by dictations of the same. In *al-Qir'at*, a student reads to a traditionist the traditions which have been narrated or compiled by him or he may hear these traditions recited by another student before the teacher. *Al-Ijazab* is getting permission of a traditionist



Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Sulaiman al-Maghribi. The latter was a *Hafiz* of traditions, and introduced for the first time the method of correcting the books of traditions in the Hejaz. It was before Muhammad Wafd Allah that Wali Allah read the whole of Malik's *Muwatta* as narrated by Yahya b. Yahya.<sup>64</sup> In one of his letters, written after his return to Delhi, to Muhammad Wafd Allah, Wali Allah writes, "I have come to know from your son, Shaikh Rashid, that you met in your early age Shaikh Muhammad b. 'Ala' al-Babuli<sup>65</sup> (d. 1077/1666) from whom you got *ijazah* of all his true traditions. If it is a fact, then it is in reality a *sanad* (authority) of the highest order. I would request you to grant me a brief as well as a detailed *ijazah*. I request you also to let me know your *isnad* and continuous chain of transmitters (*Musalsalat-i Muttasilah*)."<sup>66</sup>

The third teacher from whom Wali Allah received instruction in Hadith was Shaikh Taj al-Din Qal'i Hanafi (d. 1144/1731). He was a great scholar of Hadith who had acquired it from different teachers of eminence and had *ijazah* from them and especially from Ibrahim Kurdi. Wali Allah attended his lectures and got *ijazah* from him with regard to Bukhari, a part of *Muwatta* of Malik, the six canonical works, *Musnad* of Darimi, *Kitab al-Athar* of Imam Muhammad and his *Muwatta*.<sup>67</sup>

Wali Allah performed Hajj for the first time in 1143/1730. Thereafter he spent some months, probably three, in Mecca. In Rabi' al-Awwal 1144 (1731) he visited the house in Mecca where the Holy Prophet was born.<sup>68</sup> In the month of Safar he had a dream which is significant in that it opened for him a new chapter in his life. As recorded in his autobiography, the period of twelve years before his journey to the Hejaz was spent in teaching books on religion and philosophy and in thinking over different problems of religion, Fiqh and mysticism.<sup>69</sup> Most probably he wrote nothing during this period.

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to narrate to others the traditions compiled by him. See Dr. Muhammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Hadith Literature* (Calcutta University, 1961), pp. 158-59.

<sup>64</sup> *Anfas*, p. 191.

<sup>65</sup> Shams al-Din Muhammad b. 'Ala' al-Babuli was a *Hafiz* of ahadith. Regarding *Muwatta* and Bukhari, he had an authority from a continuous chain of transmitters and similarly with regard to other books of traditions (*Anfas*, pp. 189-90).

<sup>66</sup> *Hayat-i Wali*, pp. 528-29.

<sup>67</sup> *Anfas*, pp. 201-01.

<sup>68</sup> *Fayyuz*, pp. 99, 115.

<sup>69</sup> *Anfas*, pp. 203-04.

The only thing that we know definitely in this respect is that he had begun dictating the Persian translation of the Qur'an which, however, remained incomplete.<sup>70</sup> The period of writing started after his return which is symbolically prophesied in this dream, recorded in *Fuyuzal-Haramain*. "It was 10 Safar 1144 (1731) in Mecca," he records, "that I dreamed that Hasan and Husain both came to my house. Hasan had a pen, the point of which was broken. He stretched his hand in order to give it to me saying that it belonged to the Holy Prophet. But then he withheld it saying: Let Husain mend it because it is now not so good as when Husain first mended it."<sup>71</sup> Then a cloth (*chadar*) which had white and green stripes was placed before them. Husain took it up and saying that it belonged to his grandfather, the Holy Prophet, put it over and around me "<sup>72</sup> In *al-Durr al-Thamin*, the following significant words are added in the end: "From that day, my breast was expanded for writing books on religious problems."<sup>73</sup> 'Abd al-'Aziz relates that the people who were familiar with Wali Allah's teaching before he left for the Hejaz noticed a great change in him: his lectures were now totally different in form and contents.<sup>74</sup> He continued his connection with his institution but his mode of work now totally changed. He had prepared several people in different branches of learning and handed over the work of teaching pupils in these subjects to them. He spent most of his time in writing books and discussing abstruse problems of religion.<sup>75</sup> He would sit

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<sup>70</sup> It was completed in 1150/1737, about five year after his return to Delhi from the Hejaz. See Introduction to his Persian translation of the Qur'an.

<sup>71</sup> In another book, *al-Durr al-Thamin* (Arabic) which records some revelations (*Mubashsharat*) from the Holy Prophet, this sentence is differently stated as follows: Let Husain mend it, because nobody else can mend it so beautifully as Husain does. See *al-Furqan* (*Shah Wali Allah Number*), 1359/1940, p. 214. Here pen refers to the pen made out of reed that was usually used in writing in the East and was mended by knife to make its point suitable.

<sup>72</sup> *Fuyuz*, pp. 99-100. See also *Maljuzat-i Shah Abd al-'Aziz*, p. 158.

<sup>73</sup> *Al-Furqan*, op. cit., p. 218. "Expansion of heart," a Qur'anic term (vi. 126; xx.25; xciv. 1) signifies (i) illumination of the heart with wisdom and the characteristic of its receptiveness to divine message; and (ii) courage to face with equanimity the severe, struggle and opposition to be met in life. See note 2761 (p. 1187) in Muhammad Ali's English translation of the Holy Qur'an (Lahore, 1951). In the twelfth experience, Wali Allah himself states that he was given the ability to derive, understand and explain the basic spirit behind the laws and principles of the Shari'ah according to the circumstances and capacities of the

<sup>74</sup> people (*Fuyuz*, p. 149). *Maljuzat*, pp. 158-59.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. "Ma'arif" literally means knowledge which is revealed in *Kashf*, intuition. As explained by 'Abd al-'Aziz, Wali Allah wrote whatever he saw in *Kashf* after meditation.

down in the early hours of the day and continue doing his work till late in the noon.<sup>76</sup>

The *Fuyuẓ al-Haramain* contains the record of forty-seven spiritual experiences. The first eight were experienced during his stay at Mecca in the early months of 1144 (1731), the next twenty-five were experienced during his stay at Medina while pursuing his studies with his different teachers, some at the mausoleum of the Holy Prophet and some at the graves of Ahl-i Bait and the last fourteen were experienced again at Mecca in the latter months of 1144 (1731) where he then performed the second pilgrimage.<sup>77</sup> This book is remarkable in several respects. It is probably one of the earliest books that he wrote after his return to India.<sup>78</sup> It gives us a glimpse of the way his mind was working in the field of philosophy, politics, Shariah, Fiqh and Sufism. As a result of these experiences, he had to forgo some of the ideas that he previously held.<sup>79</sup> Here we meet Wali Allah tackling almost all the problems, religious as well as social and political, that were dividing the Muslim community in those days, problems that brought about division, animosity, hatred, attacks and counter-attacks, and thus weakened the community at a crucial period of its history, when its very life was at stake.

(1) The first was the problem of *Wandat al-Wujud* and *Wandat al-Shubud*. This controversy had reached its height during those days and the Sufis were generally divided into two warring camps. Mazhar Jan-i Janan, a contemporary of Wali Allah and follower of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, was the leader of the advocates of *Wandat al-Shubud*,<sup>80</sup> while Wali Allah's father and uncle were protagonists of *Wandat al-Wujud*.<sup>81</sup> These controversies, according

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>77</sup> This division is in most cases definite, based on specific references to one place or the other but in other cases only probable.

<sup>78</sup> It is, of course, very difficult to arrange his books in a definite chronological order on the basis of any external or internal evidence. There are stray references in his works to different books written earlier. For instance, in *Fuyuẓ*, he refers to only one book, *al-Qaul al-Jamil* (p. 238). Perhaps, the Persian translation of the Holy Qur'an, completed in 1150/1737, only five years after his return from the Hejaz, was done before these books.

<sup>79</sup> *Fuyuẓ*, p. 226.

<sup>80</sup> See *Kalimat-i Tayyabat* (Mujtaba'i Press, Delhi, 1309/1891), pp. 16 ff., for the letters of Mirza Mazhar Jan-i Janan and others in which the doctrine of *Wabdāt al-Shubud* is presented and its criticism explained.

<sup>81</sup> See *Anfas*, pp. 3, 157.

to Wali Allah, were not germane to the maintenance of the spirit of Sufism; especially the protagonists of *Wandat al-Wujud* (a doctrine true in itself, as he held) have erred so much in some respects that they have generally tended to miss the very object for which Sufism was devised, viz. moral transformation of the self.<sup>82</sup>

(2) The differences in the four schools of Fiqh were equally a cause of conflict. The majority of Indian Muslims followed the Hanafi Fiqh while the scholars whom he met in the Hejaz were mostly Shafi'ite or Malikiite. Emphasising his personal allegiance to the Hanafite Fiqh,<sup>83</sup> he tried to establish the validity of the doctrines of other schools as well.<sup>84</sup> He even tried to accommodate that group which does not claim to owe allegiance to any school at all.<sup>85</sup> But the main spirit behind this attempt of his was that the conflicts and differences in the *Ummah* should be resolved amicably.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> *Fayyuz*, pp. 53-57.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 175-76, 220, 337.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 123-25.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 124-26. This school of thought later came to be known as Ahl- i Hadith.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

(3) The spirit of Sufism permeates throughout the book. This spirit he inherited from his father and uncle and was confirmed and developed during his stay in the Hejaz. But he was aware of the many defects in the current mystic life. He had to face criticism of mysticism from several 'Mama of the Hejaz and tried to answer it but he was forbidden by the Holy Prophet to undertake this job because, as he understood and interpreted this negative order, these critics were not far wrong and that they were serving the cause of the Muslim community perhaps in a better way.<sup>87</sup> He often emphasises at different places the superiority of the way of the 'Ulama which he calls the way of the prophets, to the path of the Sufis.<sup>88</sup> The main purpose, here again, was to remove the tension between the 'Ulama and the Sufis,<sup>89</sup> though Wali Allah was ordered by the Holy Prophet to adopt the way of the prophets,<sup>90</sup> because, as he puts it, the Holy Prophet did not like the way of the Sufis.<sup>91</sup> And yet he hastens to add that if, from one point of view, one is superior to the other, from another point of view, both are equally valid and useful and there seems to be no reason to prefer one to the other.<sup>92</sup>

(4) The Shi'ah-Sunni controversies were so much intense and the conflicts, both political and social, as a result of the controversies had assumed such dimensions in those days that Wali Allah could not rise above them and propose a higher synthesis in which Shi'ah Fiqh could be accommodated as he did with regard to the other four schools of Fiqh.<sup>93</sup> In

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., pp. 179-80.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., pp. 181, 184.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 221.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., pp. 81-82.

<sup>93</sup> It is often claimed by some people that Wali Allah "laid down lines of approach best calculated to remove the sectarian differences and to assist in the building of common, harmonious nationhood." Cf. S. M. Ikram, "Shah Waliullah," in *A History of Freedom Movement*, Vol. I, p. 499. This opinion seems to be based on a superficial acquaintance with the works of Wali Allah. A thorough study of *Izalat al-Khifa'*, *Qurrat al-'Ainain* and the letters of Wali Allah in *Kalimat-i Tayyabat* will reveal that Wali Allah called the Shi'ahs as *zindiq*, *nanabit* and *mubtadi*, i.e. heretics and innovators in religion, as did Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind. The books that Wali Allah wrote about this controversy were purely from the Sunni point of view, as was done before him by Ash'ari and Ibn Taimiyah. Nowhere do we find any attempt by him to bridge the gap between the Sunnis and the Shi'ahs, or between the Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites, as, for instance, claimed by S. M. Ikram (*Rud-i Kautbar*, p.

*Fuyuz al-Haramain*, he refers to only one aspect of the Shi'ah-Sunni controversy, viz. the superiority of Abu Bakr and 'Umar over 'Ali. He says that personally he was inclined to regard 'Ali as superior to the other two caliphs,<sup>94</sup> but he was ordered by the Holy Prophet to regard Abu Bakr and 'Umar as superior to 'Ali, because, as he interpreted this order, the former followed the path of the prophets.<sup>95</sup>

One point, however, must be noted. At one place he refers to the fact that "it is the will of God that He should bring unity among the different scattered units of the *Ummah* through you." He adds that he was also advised, first, not to indulge in discussions which would provoke others to a refutation of his stand and condemnation of his attitude and, secondly, not to take any stand in minor religious affairs (of Fiqh) that would be against the attitude of the Muslim nation.<sup>96</sup> Whether this advice covered the Shi'ahs is doubtful. Similarly, at another place, he emphasises that, according to the Prophet, as he understood it, all the schools of Fiqh are equally valid and, even if a person does not follow any of these schools, the Holy Prophet would not express his displeasure. The crucial point, however, as he concludes, is that nothing should be done which may lead to division in the community and breed conflicts and controversies.<sup>97</sup> I think that Wali Allah interpreted this advice to be applicable only to the different schools of thought within the Sunni world and made no concrete efforts, on the plane of thought at least, to accommodate Shi'ah attitude in Fiqh within any higher synthesis.

(5) Another very important point discussed, of course briefly, in this book is the sharp division that he draws between the functions of the 'Ulama

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516). These books of his intensified the Shi'ah-Sunni controversy and his son 'Abd al-'Aziz was forced to write another and more comprehensive book, *Tuhfat Ithna' Ashriyyah*, to defend Wali Allah's stand in these controversies which had assumed a more menacing form in his days. See *Rud-i Kauthar*, pp. 567-74.

<sup>94</sup> In *Fuyuz* (pp. 183 ff.) and later on in *Qurrat al-'Ainain*, he ascribes this belief in the superiority of 'Ali over Abu Bakr and 'Umar to the mystics, but in both these books he tries to prove that the superiority of a person with regard to the adoption of the mystic path is only partial, while true superiority lies in the adoption of the way of the prophets, in which case Abu Bakr and 'Umar were superior to 'Ali.

<sup>95</sup> *Fuyuz*, pp. 183, 228.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 124-25.

and the politicians, the spiritual and the worldly caliphs respectively, both of whom, of course, will find their true pattern in the life of the Holy Prophet. The functions of the politicians are enumerated as follows: to enforce the laws of the Shari'ah; to make arrangements for war; to protect the frontiers of the State; to send embassies abroad; to collect charities and revenues (*kharaj*) and to spend the money thus collected on appropriate needy persons; to decide cases through legal procedures; to look after the orphans, the *anqaf* of Muslims, roads, mosques, etc. The role of the 'Ulama is to disseminate the teachings of the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the Shari'ah; to enjoin what is good and to forbid what is evil. The Mutakallimin who are engaged in controversies and defend Islam against the attacks by people of other faiths, the preachers who exhort people to the right path through their sermons, the Sufis who strengthen the faith of the people through personal contact and those virtuous people whose upright life inspires others to lead a life of virtue, are all included among the 'Ulama. Then he goes on to explain that the 'Ulama should send their deputies to different parts of the country to perform these functions. He refers to the similar practice of the Holy Prophet who sent Abu Musa Ash'ari, Abu Dharr Ghaffari and others to different tribes of the Arabs. The concluding lines are very significant. He says, "The Holy Prophet did not entrust them with any responsibility that was within the sphere of the Khilafat al-Zahirah (worldly khilafah). Their function was *only* to call people to Islam and teach them the Qur'an and the Sunnah."<sup>98</sup> These lines clearly show that Wali Allah wanted that the 'Ulama should scrupulously maintain this division of work in the light of the policy adopted by the Holy Prophet.

Wali Allah claims that he was entrusted with this Khilafat-i Batini.<sup>99</sup> He claims that he was also made a *Mujaddid* (Renovator), *Qutb* (Pole), *Wasi* (successor of the Prophet by nomination) and leader of the *Tariqah*, etc.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., pp. 237, 239.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 234.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., pp. 127, 151, 160, 229. Sometimes the word *Qutb* is used singly (e.g. pp. 151, 160) and at other places it is qualified by the word *Irshadiyyah*, viz. a *Qutb* whose function is to guide people to the right path (see pp. 127, 229) to distinguish it from the purely theosophic conception of *Qutb*. S.M. Ikram states that his "mission did not include any claim or ambition for himself. A major difficulty even with great and sincere religious leaders in Indian Islam has been that, while aiming at the revival of Islam, they have made their own claims a part of their teachings. It is characteristic of Shah Waliullah that he resisted these

Another important dream which Wali Allah experienced a month before his last pilgrimage, in Mecca (on 21 Zi al-Qa'dah 1144/5 May 1732) reflects his reaction to the social and political chaos prevalent in India and maybe, in other Muslim countries. He sees that non-Muslims have gained political and military dominance over Muslims; their properties have, been confiscated, their children have been enslaved and their religion and its laws have been replaced by the religion and laws of non-Muslims.<sup>101</sup> This situation produced a state of extreme revulsion and rage in him which, as Wali Allah puts it, was the reflection of the similar state produced in an ideal form in the *Mala'ih A'la*. This state of rage was then transferred to the crowd of people who had gathered around him. They asked him what the will of God was in such circumstances. He replied: Total and complete revolution. They asked: For how long? He replied: Till my rage subsides. At this, a total battle and destruction started in which town after town were conquered and destroyed. Ajmer was won and the king of the non-Muslims was defeated and captured. At the order of the king of the Muslims, the defeated king of the non-Muslims was killed. At this his rage subsided and he saw peace and *sakinah* descended on the hearts of the Muslims who had taken part in the battle. Then a person stood up and asked: What should be done with the Muslims who have fought along with the non-Muslims against their brethren? He remained silent and did not like to give any reply.<sup>102</sup>

This dream reflects very beautifully the anguish and anxiety of Wali Allah at the political and social disintegration of the Muslims of India in those days. In a way it prophesies the pattern of events that were to unfold

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temptations" (*A History of Freedom Movement*, Vol. I, p. 495; see also *Rud-i Kauthar*, p. 492). In the light of what has been said above, it is perfectly clear that this judgment of Mr. Ikram is totally wrong. Wali Allah claimed not only to be a *Mujaddid* here as well as in other works but also to be a *Khatim al-Hukama'* (the perfect thinker) (see *Khair-i Kathir*, p. 129) and *Qa'im al-Zaman* (an instrument through whom God's will to bring about good is realized in the world). See *Fuyuṣṣ*, p. 297.

<sup>101</sup> In the dream, Ajmer has been used as a symbol for the centre of Islam due to the historical fact that the missionary activity of Khwajah Mu'in al-Din Chishti started from Ajmer and from there spread over other parts of India.

<sup>102</sup> *Fuyuṣṣ*, pp. 297-99.



before his eyes in 1175/1761, in the shape of the Third Battle of Panipat in which Abdali succeeded in defeating the Marathas.<sup>103</sup>

But this great event was still far off—full three decades of total misery and wretchedness were yet to pass when Wali Allah after his pilgrimage returned to Delhi in 1145/1732. The Maratha menace had assumed dangerous dimensions and, in this fateful year, they had occupied a part of Gujerat, partitioned Bundelkhand and overrun Mewar. The imperial forces could do nothing to check their advance and very soon they were in virtual control of the country from Gwalior to Ajmer. In 1150/1737 Baji Rao Peshwa even dared to reach and plunder the suburbs of Delhi. In these circumstances Muhammad Shah decided to call Nizam al-Mulk back. He returned to Delhi in 1151/1738 when the danger of Nadir Shah's invasion was already visible.<sup>104</sup>

The Amir al-Umara' invited Raja Jai Singh and other Rajput princes to help the King at this crucial moment but none of them responded. It is a sad reflection on the intelligence of those nobles who were unable to understand the new trend of ideas among the non-Muslims which was apparent to almost everybody then. Wali Allah in his letters clearly points out that the non-Muslims in no circumstances would side with and fight loyally for the Muslims.<sup>105</sup>

Under these circumstances Nizam al-Mulk tried to arrive at some agreement with Nadir Shah who agreed to leave India if he got fifty lakhs of rupees. But during these negotiations Khan-i Dauran died and the Emperor,

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<sup>103</sup> Usually this dream is interpreted to refer to the Battle of Panipat only. But if we look deeply into the matter, we shall find that it is more universal in its application. The defeat of the Marathas did not bring peace and security to the country; it led to the rise of the British in India and in other countries of the Muslim world and naturally the Muslims suffered everywhere and their religion and its laws were subdued. The Muslims fought on the side of non-Muslims against Muslims almost everywhere and such a situation exists even to this day. The recipe of Wali Allah—total and complete revolution—therefore still stands until God causes Islam to prevail over all religions, however averse the non-Muslims may feel over it (Qur'an, ix. 33).

<sup>104</sup> The contemporary records show that the two parties at the court, the Turanis headed by Nizam al-Mulk and the Hindustanis headed by Khan-i Dauran, accused each other of inviting Nadir Shah. Other records put the blame on Sa'adat Khan, the first Nawab of Oudh. See Ashirbadi Lal Srivastva, *The First Two Nawabs of Oudh*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>105</sup> *Siyasi Maktubat*, pp. 121-22, 149.

in view of the services rendered by Nizam al-Mulk, conferred on him the rank of Amir al-Umara', a rank formerly promised to Sa'adat Khan. When the latter heard this news he got enraged and jealousy so blinded him that he went to Nadir Shah and advised him to raise his demand. This led to the imprisonment of Nizam al-Mulk and forcible extortion of money from the King. The general massacre of the population of Delhi was the most gruesome part of this tragedy, described by a contemporary chronicler: "For a long time the streets remained strewn with corpses.... The town was reduced to ashes and had the appearance of a plain consumed with fire. The ruin in which its beautiful streets and buildings were involved was such that the labour of years alone could restore the town to its former state of grandeur." After quiet was restored, the invading army started collecting money from the people. No house was left. Every quarter of the city had to contribute. The collections were made in a most remorseless manner and people had to bear great persecution. Many committed suicide. The North-West India was sucked dry of wealth; industry and trade were so completely paralysed that they were not restored to their former prosperity for a long time to come.<sup>106</sup>

The main result of Nadir Shah's invasion was that the central authority was weakened beyond repair. The provincial governors became almost independent and, in their dealings with foreigners, they never cared to refer to the royal authority at Delhi. It was this weakening of the central authority that ultimately led to the rise and growth of the unruly Sikhs, Jats and Marathas and, above all, the crafty and the unscrupulous British. The same opinion is expressed by Wali Allah: "Nadir Shah destroyed the power of the Muslims but left the power of the Marathas and the Jats intact. After Nadir Shah, the Muslim armies disintegrated and the central government became a child's play."<sup>107</sup>

After Nadir's departure, the conflict between Iranian and Turanian parties assumed very dangerous proportions. Becoming increasingly suspicious of the Turani party, the Emperor began to patronise the Irani party. Nizam al-Mulk<sup>108</sup> became totally disgusted and left for the Deccan in

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<sup>106</sup> Yusuf Husain, op. cit., p. 198.

<sup>107</sup> *Siyasi Maktubat*, pp. 52, 106.

<sup>108</sup> Wali Allah had a very high opinion of Nizam al-Mulk. "We have great expectations from you," he wrote to him in one of his letters, "and like that through your efforts oppression

1153/1740 and Safdar Jang, the second Nawab of Oudh, became the virtual Wazir. Ahmad Shah succeeded to the throne in 1161/1748 after the death of Muhammad Shah. At the death of Nizam alMulk in May 1748, Safdar Jang became Prime Minister. This appointment accentuated the already present Turani-Irani or Sunni-Shi'ah conflict. In order to safeguard his position, Safdar Jang sought the help of the Marathas and the Jats against his enemies, the Turanis and the Ruhillas. The latter, on their part, tried to bring Safdar Jang into disgrace, plotted against his life and forced him to take steps which he should not have taken (and which he might not have taken if the situation had been normal), merely to save his life and prestige.<sup>109</sup> His unjustified opposition to Mu'in al-Mulk, the viceroy of the Punjab, who happened to be the late Wazir's son, unfortunately led to the creation of confusion and chaos in the Punjab which helped in the revival of Sikh lawlessness to such a degree that it could never again be put down by the Mughals. He desired to drive the Afghans out of the Punjab and Multan with the Maratha assistance and place the latter, as imperial governor, in charge of the north-western frontier province—a scheme which if successful would have made the Marathas the virtual rulers of northern India.<sup>110</sup> These intrigues and counter-intrigues went so far that Safdar Jang raised the banner of revolt against the King and for six months (in 1166/1753) this civil war went on. On the side of the King, Ahmad Shah,<sup>111</sup> Najib Khan Ruhilla was the new emerging leader of the

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and cruelties will be removed, good established and evil suppressed because you seem to be by nature efficient, well-disposed and inclined towards good. . . ." (*Siyasi Maktubat*, p. 147).

<sup>109</sup> There is sufficient evidence to prove that Safdar Jang started his career with a great ambition of arresting the disintegration of the Empire. See Srivastva, op. cit., p. 131; also *A History of Freedom Movement*, Vol. I, p. 215.

<sup>110</sup> When Safdar Jang could not pay the Marathas as promised they began to plunder Delhi and the villages around it. "Every morning they would issue out of their camp in small foraging parties, ravage the country as far as they could reach and return laden with plunder in the evening. Most of the villages to a distance of 40 miles around Delhi were plundered and the capital itself lay at the mercy of the Deccanis" (Srivastva, op. cit., p. 203).

<sup>111</sup> Ahmad Shah had great respect for Wali Allah. In one of his letters to his friend and pupil, Muhammad 'Ashiq, he relates that Ahmad Shah and his mother both visited him in the mosque after Friday prayers, stayed there for about four hours and took their meals there. He sought Wali Allah's advice on certain public welfare measures (*Siyasi Maktubat*, pp. 126-28). The estrangement between the King and Safdar Jang may have been the result of the advice given by Wali Allah who did not like his policy, based as it was on hostility towards the Afghans and *rapprochement* towards the non-Muslims, and also because of his being a

Afghans who later rendered meritorious service to the cause of the State. Safdar Jang called the Marathas and the Jats to his aid who plundered the city most ruthlessly. This plunder and loot was so ferocious and universal that the people of Delhi could not forget it even as late as the early years of the nineteenth century.<sup>112</sup> In one of his letters, Wali Allah says that this plunder went on for two months—a great calamity in which property was looted and houses were burnt but "God kept me, my family and my house safe from them."<sup>113</sup>

The real cause of this chaos was that Safdar Jang regarded the growing power of the Afghans in the person of Abdali as a great menace for the Mughal Empire and looked upon the Afghan colonies within the Empire like the Ruhillas as outposts of the traditional enemies of the Mughals. He wanted to fight the Afghans with the help of Marathas and the Jats, a policy which was not acceptable to his opponents who did not like to solicit Hindu help against the Muslim Afghans. The position of the Muslims *versus* the non-Muslims was so marked and definite that nobody could claim to be ignorant of the real intention of the Hindus. In the letter written to Abdali between April 1756 and June 1757,<sup>114</sup> Wali Allah relates that wherever the non-Muslims had succeeded in securing power they had invariably tried to destroy the Muslims and their mosques. He specifically mentions that when the Jats gained control of the city of Biyana, where the 'Ulama and the Sufis had been living for seven hundred years, they turned out all the Muslims from that land. Throughout their territories nobody was allowed to call the people to prayer. The Muslims, he goes on to relate, have become mere hewers of

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Shi'ah. The part played by Najib during all this period seems to be equally inspired by Wali Allah, as revealed by many letters addressed to him in *Siyasi Maktubat*.

<sup>112</sup> "At his (Safdar Jang's) instigation, the Jats . . . so thoroughly plundered old Delhi by piecemeal that nothing was spared, not even the house of Shah Basit, the spiritual preceptor of Safdar Jang, from their merciless hands. The whole of the old city, of which the population was a bit larger than that of Shah Jahan's town, was utterly ruined and was left without a lamp" (Srivastva, op. cit., pp. 230-31). Wali Allah refers in one of his letters to this sad state of affairs. "Safdar Jang Irani rebelled, making an alliance with Suraj Mal Jat. They attacked Delhi and plundered the entire population of the city" (*Siyasi Maktubat*, pp. 49, 102).

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., pp. 89, 153.

<sup>114</sup> The letter refers to Siraj al-Daulah as the young and inexperienced ruler of Bengal (*Siyasi Maktubat*, pp. 103-04). Siraj al-Daulah succeeded 'Ali Verdi Khan at the latter's death on 10 April 1756 and died in the Battle of Plassey on 22 June 1757. It shows that the letter was written between 1750 and 1757.

wood and drawers of water. "All the services are in the hands of the Hindus who have amassed great wealth while the Muslims are reduced to utter poverty."<sup>115</sup> In another letter to Najib al-Daulah, he explicitly warns him that the Hindus in his service did not wish that Najib al-Daulah should take any initiative which might impair their interests as against the Muslims.<sup>116</sup> In another letter to Taj Muhammad Khan Baloch, he categorically states that the main cause of the weakening of Muslim power was that the Muslims had ignored national interests for the sake of their selfish ends and allowed the Hindus to interfere in and control their affairs.<sup>117</sup> It is evident, he adds, that the Hindus could not countenance destruction of the non-Muslims. To be liberal is good, he concludes, but it is wrong to follow this policy when the non-Muslims are conquering one town after another and destroying the Muslims.<sup>118</sup>

Naturally, the policy of Safdar Jang, which implied fight against the Muslims with the help of the non-Muslims, could not be palatable to the general body of the Muslims. The intensity of the hatred and aversion felt by Wali Allah at this policy can be realised from the derogatory words used by him for Safdar Jang in his letters.<sup>119</sup>

Imad al-Mulk, the grandson of Nizam al-Mulk, succeeded him as Wazir but he was not a whit better than his predecessor. In order to gain his ends he raised the question of Shi'ah-Sunni differences. Claiming to support Sunni

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<sup>115</sup> *Siyasi Maktubat*, pp. 102-05.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 121, 122, 124.

<sup>117</sup> Some people seem to frown at Shaikh Ahmad's uncompromising attitude towards the non-Muslims. See S.M. Ikram, *Rud-i Kauthar*, pp. 267 ff. On p. 549 he says that Wali Allah's attitude in this respect was not so uncompromising. This judgment is definitely based on a superficial reading of Wali Allah's works.. With regard to non-Muslims, Wali Allah's advice, as shown in the text, was not a bit different from Shaikh Ahmad's. If the latter tried to dissuade Shaikh Farid from mixing very freely with the Hindus, Wali Allah equally advised Najib al-Daulah to beware of the intrigues of these people.

<sup>118</sup> *Siyasi Maktubat*, p. 149.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 102-03. Sarkar says of him, "Safdar Jang was the malignant star in the Delhi firmament. Devout of far-sighted statesmanship, patriotism or devotion to the throne, he was destined to ruin the Moghal empire by pursuing a policy of self-aggrandizement. . . . The Persian party among the nobles, with Shia recruits of other races, was to be installed in office everywhere" (*Fall of the Moghal Empire*, Vol. I, p. 234). At another place he says, "Safdar Jang . . . raised a host of enemies by trying to keep every office of power and emolument out of the hands of Turani chiefs and their followers" (*ibid.*, p. 254).

orthodoxy he tried to destroy Shi'ah influence at the Mughal court, and prohibited Shi'ah processions in the month of 'Muharram, which had been allowed since the reign of Farrukh Siyar. On the other hand, he was in alliance with the Marathas who came to dominate the whole of northern India. Through their help, he deposed Ahmad Shah in 1171/1757 and a son of Jahandar Shah under the title of 'Alamgir II was raised to the throne. Five years later (in 1173/1759) he murdered the King for co-operating with Najib al-Daulah and placed a puppet prince on the throne with the title of Shah Jahan III. When Abdali defeated the Marathas in 1175/1761, 'Imad al-Mulk took shelter with Suraj Mal.<sup>120</sup> Abdali nominated 'Ali Gauhar, the son of 'Alamgir II, as Emperor under the title of Shah 'Alam. Najib al-Daulah was made Amir al-Umara', and became regent of Delhi.

Najib was a remarkable personality. Sarkar has paid him rich tributes: "Najib Khan rose by sheer ability and strength of character to the highest position in the realm and guided the fortune of the Empire of Delhi as its supreme regent for a full decade. In the combination of first-rate military and administrative capacity, diplomatic skill and tact in dealing with others and, above all, in his instinctive perception of the realities of the politics of his days and concentration on the essentials, he had no equal in that age except Ahmad Shah Abdali."<sup>121</sup> But what is more important in his life is his unflinching loyalty to the cause of Islam and the Muslim nation of India. Keeping in view Safdar Jang's attempts to destroy Ruhillas in collusion with the Marathas, he felt no aversion in approaching his son Shaja' al-Daulah to enlist him in support of Abdali whom he looked upon as perhaps the sole means of restoring Muslim supremacy in the country. Shaja' al-Daulah was aware that Abdali had been defeated during Muhammad Shah's reign through the efforts of his father and perhaps the Afghan king might be harbouring some grudge against him. He wanted therefore to be neutral in the coming conflict which in the eyes of Najib was not a conflict between two persons or two factions but a challenge to the every existence of Islam and the Muslims in the sub-continent. Being an extreme Sunni, he did not allow his sectarian differences with Shaja' al-Daulah to stand in the way of

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<sup>120</sup> Some glimpses of 'Imad al-Mulk's character can be had from the letters of Mriza Mazhar Jan-i Janan. The Mirza says that he was totally unreliable, mean and crafty, and the public had to suffer great oppression during his ministership (*Kalimat-i Tayyabat*, pp. 58-61, 66, 70).

<sup>121</sup> Sarkar, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 305.

forging a united front against the Maratha confederacy which he was clear-headed to perceive as a "conflict between Islam and infidelity."<sup>122</sup> His final words which moved Shaja' al-Daulah to the core and won him over to his side are worthy of note: "Do one of the two things now: either come to the help of Abdali or here is my sword and here my neck: cut it with your hand."<sup>123</sup> These noble words reveal his deep conviction in the righteousness of his cause. His enthusiasm for the safety and integrity of the Muslim nation proved contagious and other noble souls joined him. His unflinching loyalty to the cause of Islam is revealed by another event. When the Marathas realised that their cause was almost lost, Bhao decided to beg for peace. He gave a *carte blanche* to Shaja' al-Daulah and was willing to accept any terms. Abdali's Wazir was inclined to agree for a large sum of money. When Najib heard of this, he opposed it tooth and nail. He declared, "I have girt up my loins for Jihad in the service of God." This bold stand of Najib and the encouraging words of Qadi Idris, who endorsed his stand, decided the matter and the peace offer was rejected.<sup>124</sup> It is not without reason that Wali Allah had great expectations from him and there is no doubt that the spirit of devotion to Islam that he manifested in his life was all due to the influence of Wali Allah. It is not also without reason that in his letters Wali Allah calls him the "leader of the warriors in the cause of God."<sup>125</sup>

No doubt the Marathas were defeated in the Battle of Panipat (January 1761) and Wali Allah advised Najib to tackle the Jats and Sikhs with equal vigour.<sup>126</sup> But the efforts of Abdali and Najib and the prayers of Wali Allah could not put fresh blood in the veins of the dying Empire. Four years before this decisive event in the north, the British had defeated, through treachery and intrigues, "the young and inexperienced ruler"<sup>127</sup> of Bengal at the Battle of Plassey (1171/1757) and thus in a way sealed the fate of Muslim rule in India. Shah 'Alam, the new Emperor, was unworthy of the throne on which he was placed by Abdali. Wali Allah died on 29 Muharram 1176 (1762) without seeing any tangible result of his effort.

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 197.

<sup>123</sup> *A History of Freedom Movement*, Vol. I, p. 287; Sarkar, op. cit., Vol II, p. 198.

<sup>124</sup> *A History of Freedom Movement*, Vol. I, p. 291; Sarkar, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 232-33.

<sup>125</sup> *Siyasi Maktubat*, pp. 115 ff.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., pp. 118 ff.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., pp. 103-04.

In the introduction to his *magnum opus*, *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*, describing the reason for writing it, he says, "Time has come when every order of the Islamic Shari'ah and every teaching of Islam should be presented before the world in a rational way... ." <sup>128</sup> Some people think that this statement implies some influence of the new learning of the West on Wali Allah, which, they allege, might have reached him through the presence of the Westerners on the Indian soil of his day.

It is true that the intellectual revolution in the West has given birth to rationalism and enlightenment in almost all spheres of knowledge—science, law, education, technology, religion and philosophy. People like Descartes (1596-1650), Kepler (1571-1630), Newton (1642-1727), Voltaire (1694-1778), Hobbes (1588-1679), Locke (1632-1704), Spinoza (1632-1677), Rousseau (1712-1778) had absolutely changed the intellectual atmosphere of the West and completely new ideas in the field of religion and politics were being presented, criticised and defended. But it is also an historical fact that till the early decades of the eighteenth century, these ideas had not yet travelled to the East. No doubt, the Ottoman Turks and the Safawid rulers of Iran in the last decades of the seventeenth and the early decades of the eighteenth century were not so powerful politically as before, but they were not yet inferior to the West as to feel the necessity of looking towards them with a view to learning what they had to offer.

The contact of the Europeans with the local people of India was for long confined to the field of commerce and trade. A Portuguese delegation came to the court of Akbar for the propagation of Christianity but their efforts were shortlived. Their presence in the sea and coastal regions was later on felt as merely disturbing factors in the even flow of pilgrimage traffic. Sir Thomas Roe came to India in 1615, Sir William Norris in 1613/1701 and John Surman in 1626/1714 visited the Mughal court, <sup>129</sup> but their missions were purely political and commercial. No trace of any cultural contact between the Europeans and the Indians can be found prior to 1688/1774. <sup>130</sup> The only exception perhaps is that of Bernier (the disciple of the French thinker Gassendi) who came to India in 1669/1659 and lived in

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<sup>128</sup> Urdu translation, p. 120.

<sup>129</sup> *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. V, pp. 104, 105, 111.

<sup>130</sup> A Yusuf Ali, *A Cultural History of India during British Period* (Bombay, 1940), p. 29.



Delhi for five or six years. He relates that a courtier of Aurangzeb, Nawab Danishmand Khan, was very much interested in philosophy and *Hikmah*. Bernier had translated into Persian books of Descartes and Gassendi and both used to discuss the problems of philosophy. Descartes, no doubt, gave a new look to the problems of medieval philosophy, but, as a matter of fact, he was much indebted to Ghazali, and his thought was in reality a continuation of Muslim thought as represented by the Mutakillimin.<sup>131</sup> The spirit of new learning began to be felt in India long after the first decade of the nineteenth century.

Moreover, *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah* was written perhaps within ten years of his return from pilgrimage in 539/1145. It is unimaginable that any influence from Western sources should have reached him at such an early date. He was definitely aware of the presence of the Europeans on the soil of India as is evident from his reference to them in his letter to Abdali,<sup>132</sup> but it does not warrant us to assert that at this date there was any permeation of Western cultural influence among the people of India.

In order to understand the real position, we must try to define the true significance of what Wali Allah means by the word "rational" in this context. The exact word used by Wali Allah in *Hujjat* is "*burhan*" which means rational ground of a thing. We can easily understand the significance of this word used here by reference to *Tafhimat* (Book I, No. 31). He calls himself *Wasi* which he defines as one who is able to understand the real and hidden significance (*asrar*) of the laws of the Shari'ah, etc., and who, along with *Mujjadid* and *Wall*, is the successor of the prophets and is able to expound the laws of God in a language and a mode that are prevalent during his days. When in any age people are fond of eloquence of speech, the *Wasi*, the *Mujjadid* and the saint will address the people through eloquent speech; when people are inclined towards reason, they shall expound the laws of the Shari'ah in rational categories.

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<sup>131</sup> Professor M. M. Sharif, "Muslim Philosophy and Western Thought," *Iqbal* (July 1959), pp. 1-14.

<sup>132</sup> *Siyasi Maktubat*, p. 47.

اولاد نظام الملک مرحوم... گایے فرنگیاں را با خود رفیق گرفته

This letter was written, as stated earlier, between 1169/1756 and 1170/1757.

Explaining this principle, Wali Allah says that the *Wasi* (i.e. Wali Allah) is born in an age which is distinguished by three characteristics. The first is argument and reason (*burhan*). This is, he says, due to the influence of Greek philosophy and the extra attention paid by the ancient scholars in the field of *Kalam*, as a result of which all discussions about '*aqa'id*' permeated through and through with rational arguments.<sup>133</sup> From this it is conclusively proved that when Wali Allah refers to rational approach in the study of religion, he does not mean rational in the sense of Western thought but in the sense in which it had been current among ancient and later writers on *Kalam*.

The second characteristic is emphasis on mystic intuition (*wijdan*). The people of the East and the West have accepted the Sufis as their guides so that they prefer the sayings and deeds of these Sufis to everything else and even to the Qur'an and the Sunnah. He who does not talk in terms of mystic parlance is not looked upon as a pious man. The preacher in a mosque refers to their ideas, the scholar thinks over the problems posed by them and even in the assemblies of the rich discussions centre round the experiences they have expressed in the peculiar language and terms they employ.

The third characteristic is attachment to what is received on authority (*naql*) from ancient scholars. But now-a-days people show strange independence of spirit and follow their own opinions. Although they are not proficient in knowledge and are totally ignorant of the problems of theology, yet they are bent upon learning the deeper significance of the laws of the Shari'ah and manifest an inclination towards speculative thought. Every man has formulated his own opinion and follows it with the result that conflicts and differences have appeared everywhere with no prospect of compromise.

Wali Allah claims to possess through God's grace a methodology by which he can explain the laws of the Shari'ah in a way which is liable to remove these conflicts. This methodology comprises of (1) rational method, (2) mystic intuition and (3) reliance on authority (*nag*<sup>o</sup>). He is thoroughly conversant with the knowledge prevalent in his day and therefore is able to put forth his ideas in a language which appeals to the people.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> *Tafhimat*, Book I, No. 31.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid*

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