

Shah Waliullah's Influence on the Thought of Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi

ABUL KALAM MOHAMMAD SHAHED

ABSTRACT

By utilizing the library research method, this paper aims at analysing the influences of Shah Waliullah on the thoughts of Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi. Shah Waliullah (1703-1762) was one of those great Islamic thinkers who by the virtue of their knowledge and activities helped reconstruct the socio-political and religious thought in Islam. Waliullah bridged between medieval and modern Islam in India. He was a socio-political reformer, a great Islamic scholar, a Sufi, a reformist and an Islamic missionary worker, all at the same time. Mawdudi (1903-1979) was greatly influenced by the thought and teachings of Waliullah. He was an expounder of Islam during the 20th century. Both of them have presented Islam as a complete code of life with solutions to all problems faced by mankind. In line with Waliullah's thought, Mawdudi chalked out a strategy to establish an Islamic State and initiated a powerful movement to translate Islamic ideology into a realizable term for the reconstruction of socio-political life in accordance with Islamic ideology. However, Mawdudi did not accept every thought of Waliullah uncritically. He disagreed with Waliullah on several issues including Islamic mysticism. Yet, similarities in their thoughts are overwhelming. Both initiated a process of socio-political change in their respective times, inspired by Islamic ideal. This paper focuses on the similarities of thought between the two scholars in terms of ideology, socio-political and religious reform, emphasis on the independent judgement or the Ijtihad.

Keywords: socio-political reformer, Islamic state, Islamic ideology, religious reform, religious reformist

Pengaruh Shah Waliullah ke Atas Pemikiran Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi

ABSTRAK

Dengan menggunakan metode kajian perpustakaan, tulisan ini bertujuan menganalisis pengaruh Shah Waliullah ke atas pemikiran Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi. Shah Waliullah (1703-1762) adalah seorang daripada ahli fikir Islam yang ulung kerana ilmu dan aktiviti mereka yang menolong membangun semula pemikiran agama, politik dan sosial dalam Islam. Waliullah menjadi

jambatan yang menghubungkan di antara Islam abad pertengahan dengan Islam moden di India. Beliau adalah seorang pembaharu politik dan sosial, ilmuan Islam yang ulung, seorang Sufi, reformis, pendakwah Islam pada masa yang sama. Mawdudi (1903-1979) adalah sangat dipengaruhi oleh pemikiran dan ajaran Waliullah. Beliau adalah seorang penjelas kepada Islam pada abad ke-20 Masihi. Kedua-dua mereka telah mengemukakan Islam sebagai kod kehidupan sempurna dengan penyelesaian kepada semua problem yang dihadapi oleh manusia. Selari dengan pemikiran Waliullah, Mawdudi menggariskan satu strategi untuk membentuk sebuah negara Islam dan memulakan satu gerakan yang berpengaruh untuk menterjemahkan ideologi Islam kepada istilah yang dapat direalisasikan untuk pembinaan kehidupan sosial dan politik mengikuti ideologi Islam. Walau bagaimanapun, Mawdudi tidak menerima setiap pemikiran Waliullah secara tidak kritikal. Beliau tidak setuju dengan Waliullah dalam banyak isu meliputi mistisisme Islamik. Tetapi, persamaan dalam pemikiran mereka melebihi perbezaan. Kedua-dua mereka memulakan satu proses perubahan sosial dan politik dalam tempoh hidup mereka yang diinspirasi oleh Islam yang ideal. Tulisan ini memfokuskan kepada persamaan pemikiran di antara dua ilmuan in dalam ideologi, pembaharuan sosial, agama dan politik yang menekankan ijtihad.

Kata kunci: pembaru sosial-politik, negara Islam, ideologi Islam, pembaharuan agama, reformis agama

INTRODUCTION

In the Indo-Pak subcontinent, the development of a progressive Islamic movement can be attributed to Shah Waliullah al-Dahlawi, the 18th century Muslim reformer and political activist. He lived during a critical period for Indian Muslims, when the power of the Mughal Empire was in decline. The Muslim community faced not only the disintegration of its political rule, challenged by Hindu and Sikh uprisings, but also the internal disunity of conflicting factions: the Sunnites and Shiites, the traditionalists, the jurists and the Sufis.

Waliullah was a member of *Naqshabandi* order, who followed the footsteps of the great revivalist of the seventeenth century India, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564-1624). Like Sirhindi, he asserted on the need for the Muslims to purify their lives from un-Islamic practices and to reform popular Sufi practices, which he believed, were responsible for much of the religious backwardness that threatened the identity, moral fiber, and survival of Islamic spirit in its true form. Like other revivalists, he felt the urge for the purification and renewal of Islam returning to the pristine *Shari'ah*, which

encompasses all areas of life. During that dismal and critical moment Waliullah's emergence was a ray of hope for the Muslim community. He observed the decadence and moral degeneration of the Muslims from the right angle. His dealings with current issues, handling of prevailing doubts, confusion and rigid conformity; and his vehement criticism of unethical and immoral life style, and exotic culture brought a long lasting effect on the Muslim community. This sincere and devoted effort of Waliullah brought about a remarkable change among the intellectuals and left a great impact on the thought of his contemporaries and successors. He propounded Islam as a complete code of life, and firmly believed that without the implementation of Islamic law, this fruit cannot be enjoyed.

The greatest legacy of Waliullah or his major contribution to Islamic modernist thought was his condemnation of blind imitation of the past jurists and his emphasis on the reopening of the way of independent legal judgment. He used his principle of reconciliation to resolve the differences among the Sufis and between the Sunnites and the Shiites; and his teachings regarding the independent legal judgment was significant to the resolution of a long-standing conflict between the jurists and the traditionists. Waliullah has often been regarded as the father of modern Indian Islamic thought because of his condemnation of *Taqlid* and his advocacy of personal interpretation (*Ijtihad*). In this regard, he paved the way for his successors like Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898), Mohammad Iqbal (1876-1938), Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi and many others.

Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi, a 20th century socio-political and religious scholar, was considered as one of the chief architects of contemporary Islamic resurgence. He was the most outstanding Islamic thinker and writer of his time. He devoted his entire life to explain the meaning and message of Islam and to organize a collective movement to establish Islamic order. During the twentieth century, Mawdudi occupied a key position in the movements for Islamic revival in South Asia. He held modern outlook within the framework of Islamic rigidity. His thoughts represent the concept of Waliullah in many aspects and hence, it seems that he was greatly influenced by him.

Most of Waliullah's biographers and historians agree that he was the pioneer to formulate the idea for reconstruction of socio-political and religious movement in the Indian subcontinent. All the Islamic movements in the Indian subcontinent, regardless of their

form and context, have been greatly influenced by his thought. A. D. Muztar remarked that Shah Waliullah's impact on the religious history and thought of the subcontinent of Indo-Pakistan can be viewed in the claims pronouncing association with him by almost every school of thought (Muztar 1979: 120). Historian I. H. Qureshi also remarked that Shah Waliullah did succeed remarkably in kindling a flame that lighted the way of many who came after him and worked for the preservation of the religious beliefs and the ideological entity of the Muslim community. And this success was more lasting than any castles that could have been built with the shifting and loose sands of politics (Qureshi 1974: 126).

It is therefore, believed that the origin and development of socio-political thought and religious reformation in the Indo-Pak subcontinent can undoubtedly be attributed to the Waliullahi school of thought. In this respect, a serious analysis is required to find out how far Mawdudi was impressed by the thoughts and writings of Waliullah.

THE INFLUENCES OF SHAH WALIULLAH ON MAWDUDI'S THOUGHT

Ideologically, Waliullah and Mawdudi were against moral deterioration of the Muslims, and in response to that both of them called the Muslim community to a complete return to the teachings of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. They wanted to stop the decadence and moral degeneration of the Muslim community throughout their lives and to achieve this noble aim, they tried their best to bring about a dynamic change in the socio-ethical and political order in line with Islamic principles in their respective contemporary eras.

In spite of differences in their reform methodology due to difference of time, context, and socio-political conditions, yet both of them shared the same ideas, and stressed on the complete reformation and reconstruction of the contemporary society.

According to G. N. Jalbani:

“His (Waliullah) standard for judging religious issues was the Holy Qur'an and the sound Tradition. He was of opinion that every problem for dispute should be thoroughly analyzed and tested on the touchstone of the Holy Qur'an and the sound Tradition. If it be found in conformity with them, it should be accepted; otherwise it should be rejected outright” (Jalbani 1980: 71).

Waliullah's strong adherence to the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* was equally echoed in Mawdudi's thought and works. Like Waliullah, he relied upon the teachings of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. He was never in a position to find out the answers for religious matters from anything else except the Holy Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAAS). It is clearly depicted in the following statement of Mawdudi:

"I have sensibly understood the *Din* by a direct access to the Holy Qur'an and the *Sunnah* and not from the exegesis of the present or the past. Therefore in order to know, sensibly, what the *Din* expects and demands of me, I shall never try to quote the answer given by certain scholars, or the examples laid by others. I shall only try to ascertain, 'What does the Qur'an say; and what did *RasuLullah* do'" (Gilani 1984: 56).

Both of them gave equal stress on knowledge and practice. They shared the idea that Islam is not a matter of uttering certain words or names of any particular group or section. Islam is neither a claim by birth nor bearing any Muslim name, rather a true Muslim is the one, who believes in Allah (S.W.T), His apostles, knows what Islam stands for and believes in it with full conviction. In this regard Waliullah said:

"Islam is not the name of any particular group or section. Any man irrespective of his birth, caste and creed, if he believes in God, His Apostles, has faith in the life to come and does good works is certainly within the bounds of Islam" (Waliullah 1936: 127).

The same idea expressed by Mawdudi in this way:

"Islam consists of two things, firstly, of knowledge and secondly, of putting that knowledge into practice. The matter of being a true Muslim is not by birth, nor bearing Muslim names, nor dressing like Muslims and calling yourselves Muslims is not enough to make you Muslims; true Muslims know what Islam stands for and believes in it with full consciousness" (Mawdudi 1985: 50).

The above discussion obviously shows that Mawdudi was greatly influenced by the thought and ideology of Waliullah. Both the scholars were very much practice oriented and struggled to implement Islam in the practical life of the Muslims.

Waliullah's idea of social reconstruction opened a new panorama for the later researchers in the history of Indo-Pak subcontinent in particular, and in the history of the Muslim world in general. This statement has been supported by Mawdudi very nicely.

He commented that Shah Waliullah indeed ranked among the great leaders of human history who by dint of their intellectual powers carve out a clear and straight highway of knowledge and action out of the jungle of confused ideas and thoughts. Thereby, on the one hand, they created restlessness in the world of mind against the prevalent ideas and customs, and, on the other, they presented such a scheme for reconstruction that the resurgence of a movement to eradicate evil and enjoin good and justice becomes inevitable. Seldom have such leaders initiated a movement themselves on the basis of their ideas, and, shattering the ailing world built a new one on its debris. History does not present more than a few instances of this. The main task before such leaders seems to have been this that by means of their critical faculty and analytical powers, they cleansed the truth of centuries old misgivings, illumined minds with a new light, smashed the wrong but firmly established patterns of life, and presented before the world the real and everlasting human values (Mawdudi 1981: 72).

Waliullah dedicated himself to the social reform through his writings, even he would not hesitate to wage jihad against it if the situation demanded him. This can be supported by *Tafhimat-i-Ilahiyyah* where he declared that:

“I would not hesitate to take up arms even, if the circumstances demanded me practical endeavor to reform the condition” (Waliullah 1970: 101).

Although Waliullah did not establish any organization to fight the vices in the practical field, all his energies and capabilities were directed towards the reconstruction of socio-religious thought in Islam through constructive criticism and writings. For a critical appreciation of the Islamic history, Waliullah wrote *Izalat al-Khafa' 'an Khalifat al-Khulafa'*. He commented on the merits as well as shortcomings of different periods of the Muslim history. He pointed out in this book how conflicts entered into the beliefs, thoughts, sciences, ethics, civilization and politics of the Muslims. He then tried to explore the basic faults which degenerated the Muslims, and finally he put his finger on two things; first, the transformation of *Khilafah* to kingship, second, the dying away of the spirit of *Ijtihad* and the domination of a rigid conformity (*Taqlid*) on the minds of the Muslims (Waliullah (a) 1286 A.H.: 122-158).

The reform works and the style of constructive criticism which was adopted by Waliullah can be seen in almost all the writings of

Mawdudi. Like Waliullah, Mawdudi also made a critical revision and comparison between the unhealthy and healthy elements of the society and tried to find out a time befitting solution for the contemporary problems from the Islamic point of view. For instance, in the context of present time, Mawdudi diagnosed social evils like secularism, nationalism and democracy. In his analysis he found that the whole modern civilization is based on these three principles. He strongly rejected the notion of the secularists that 'religion is a personal relationship between the individual and Allah'. He presented the superiority of Islam over all those man-made ideologies, and viewed that only Islam can guarantee a just, moral and stable society which is based on the belief that 'no separation between faith in Allah and adherence to His social, political and economic injunctions' (Mawdudi 1963: 254-256). He rejected secular nationalism by focusing attention on its essential contradiction with the universal tenets of Islam. The concept of nationalism is an irrational approach, which destroys deeper bonds between human beings. It divides humanity into racial groups, sets up barriers of languages within one single religious community and demarcates artificial territorial boundaries. By contrast, Islam held the idea that the entire earth is the abode of mankind, and thereby dissolves all these artificial divisions. Its teaching announces the brotherhood of man who is God's representative and lieutenant on this earth (Mawdudi 1978: 9, 26).

Mawdudi convincingly distinguished Islamic democracy from western democracy. While the western democracy is based on the concept of popular sovereignty, the Islamic democracy rests on the principle of popular *Khilafah*. In the secular democracy, sovereignty vests on people; while in Islam, it rests on Allah. Under Islamic democracy the basic laws are contained in *Shari'ah*, in secular democracy laws are made by the people. Islamic democracy stands for enforcing the Will of Allah, whereas the Western democracy is a kind of absolute authority with no control; Islamic democracy is subject to limitations imposed by the *Shari'ah* (Mawdudi 1973: 152).

Furthermore, the study revealed that, the writings of both the scholars have an immense influence upon the Muslim community. By reading their writings, one can easily be equipped with necessary knowledge for performing a similar task by developing the capability of handling it and can guide people to eradicate the deep-rooted shortcomings among the members of the community.

Regarding the importance of politics, both Waliullah and Mawdudi held the view that the politics is inseparable from Islam, and endeavored to explain that Islam is a complete code of conduct for mankind.

Waliullah presented Islam as a way of life, which encompasses all aspects of life, mundane as well as spiritual. He did not see any contrast between worldly life and spiritual life. He explained that vicegerency (*Khilafah*) relates to both the aspects and man as the vicegerent (*Khalifah*) on earth is bound to carry out the demands of vicegerency (*Khilafah*). He said:

“*Khilafah* has two aspects: external (*Zahiri*) and internal (*Batini*). The external relates to the temporal and the internal to the spiritual aspect of life. The *Khalifah* as a head of Muslim state, in true sense, is the man who embodies in his personality the virtues of *Khilafah* as a whole” (Waliullah (b) 1286 A.H: 178).

Waliullah saw politics as one of the means to establish *Shari‘ah* on earth. He regarded political authority as an indispensable element for the Muslim community. In support of this view he further explained that:

“The reason that promoted Allah to create Islamic community originally was, mainly a political one. Allah wishes that no religion superior to Islam should exist on earth and that Islamic laws including those regarding different forms of punishment should be adhered. The chief reason for fixing the blood-money for killing an infidel at half that of killing a Muslim was necessary in order to firmly establish the superiority of the latter; moreover, the slaughtering of infidels diminished evil amongst the Muslims” (Waliullah 1286 A.H: 440).

Waliullah’s sole anxiety all the time had been to see the Muslims powerful and strong so as to withstand the opposition of all the combined hostile forces. Due to the dynamic and charismatic leadership of the first two great caliphs – Abu Bakr (R) and Umar (R) Roman and Persian Empires were defeated and the domination of Islamic power was firmly established in the world politics. He was always optimistic about the force of Islam and wanted to see perpetual Muslim domination internationally. He was of the view that ... “the truth is that Islam could expect its superiority only when the Muslims become an unbeatable nation and possess a very strong political power” (Waliullah 1936: 198-199).

In fact, he believed that the main purpose of religion is to follow the Will of Allah, both in personal as well as in socio-political and

economic life by adhering to the principles of piety (*Usul al-Birr*), God fearing, balance between material and spiritual life and improving social institutions (*Irtifaqat*) (Waliullah (b) 1286 A.H: 182 f., 193, 222).

Similar views were reflected in Mawdudi's thought. He also believed that politics is inseparable from religion. He was of the view that the Muslims' gradual deviation from true Islamic teachings and real spirit is due to the separation of religion from politics; and he said, "...politics divorced from religion was satanic" (*Shahab*: 1962. 25th February).

Mawdudi, like his predecessor Waliullah, presented Islam as an embodiment of all aspects of human life. He emphasized that the guidance given in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* embraces the entire life of man and the personal relationship between man and God, thus, Islam is a complete and comprehensive way of life. He viewed:

"A Muslim is not required only to submit him before Allah (S.W.T) in places of worship, but also in all places and all times; be it in his home and on the street, on the battle field and around the conference table, in schools and colleges and universities, in centers of business and finance, and politics; and so on so forth" (Mawdudi (a) 1976: 109-111).

Mawdudi argued that the Islamic way of life is superior and much more conducive to man's happiness and self fulfillment in this world and his salvation in the life hereafter (Mawdudi (b) 1976).

From the views of both scholars it has become clear that they wanted to see the rule of *Shari'ah* on earth as a dominant power. If the politics was separated from religion, it would certainly be synonymous to disobeying the injunctions of Allah in politics as well as in the affairs of government.

Waliullah's thought had a direct impact on Mawdudi. Both had the common understanding that the separation of politics from religion was the sole cause for degeneration of the Muslim society. Like Waliullah, Mawdudi not only personally took part in politics but also stressed on the importance of politics in almost all of his writings. Perhaps Waliullah's concept of combination between religion and politics paved the way for Mawdudi to establish his socio-political and religious based organization named *Jama'at-i-Islami* in 1941.

In this way, Mawdudi tried to show a comprehensive solution for the contemporary society. His own investigation revealed that

the Muslim society has been gradually drifting away from the ideal order established by the Prophet (SAAS), which continued and developed along the same line during the period of *al-Khulafa' al-Rashidun*. In his findings, the first important change in the body politics of Islam is a change from *Khilafah* to a more or less worldly monarchy with very important consequential changes affecting the role of religion in the socio-political life. Gradually the very idea of unity of life is becoming weak and consciously or unconsciously a degree of separation between religion and politics taking place. Thus these resulted in a separation between politics and religion. In his opinion, the second major change is the transformation of educational system into the secular system. This secular system had a deep impact on Muslim society through the gradual division among the Muslims into various factions (Ahmad and Ansari 1979: 376-378).

Waliullah did not follow blindly any of the established schools of jurisprudence (*Madhahib*), rather adopted a way of conciliation and compromise in dealing with the controversy on jurisprudence. In this regard he held a balanced and moderate view, free from all extremes and biasness. He judged the opinions of the scholars on the touchstone of the holy Qur'an and *Sunnah* and if it is found inconformity with, and close to both the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, he used to prefer that and the rest he did not follow. He consciously observed the fact that immutable application of the law of any single school of Muslim jurisprudence could not serve the purpose. He was of the view that recourse to different schools of thought in different matters was permissible as circumstances demanded or as it is suited to one's conviction in a particular situation. On being asked which of the four schools of thought he belonged to, Waliullah replied:

"I try my best to combine all the points of arguments in all the schools and in matters of variance I adhere to what is proved by the genuine *Ahadith* which, thank God, I can do. If anybody asks me for a *Fatwa* (religious verdict), I give it according to whatever school he wishes" (Nizami 1971: 100).

Mawdudi was greatly influenced by this reconciliatory method of Waliullah. In his book 'A Short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam' Mawdudi attributed his remarks of tributes and appreciation to the balanced views of Waliullah in the following words:

“If he has favored a particular school in a certain case, he has done so on account of some arguments, and not because he wanted to plead for it. And if he has differed with the others he has done so because reason went against it and not on account of some ill will or prejudice. It for this reason that now he appears to be a Hanafite, now a Shafiite or a Malikite or a Hambalitie” (Mawdudi 1981: 82).

Waliullah also disagreed with those people who totally refused to recognize the other jurists (Waliullah 1892: 44). However, he did not disapprove the peoples' right of *Taqlid* in such cases where they are not capable to exercise their own judgment. But he condemned *Taqlid* of 'Ulema' in this respect (Waliullah n.d.: 11).

Mawdudi practically did not follow any specific Imam; rather he recognized and stressed on the following of all the four established schools of thought equally. Like Waliullah, he was also against *Taqlid* and held the view that it is an improper act for an Islamic scholar. But of course, for the general masses, he found *Taqlid* is most proper and right course for them to follow the *Shari'ah*. He said:

“According to my school it is improper, nay sinful, even something beyond a sin, for a duly lettered and learned man to resort to *Taqlid*... Be it understood that to follow a great Imam on the satisfaction of one's own verification is another matter, and, to take a vow that he shall never follow an Imam at all, is another matter. And I do not approve of the later one” (Gilani 1984: 57).

In his *Tarjuman al-Qur'an*, Mawdudi expressed his views very clearly as to which school of thought he belonged to. He stated that he was not particularly attached to any school of thought. He believed that an intelligent man should base his judgment directly on injunction of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. While arriving at the judgment he should avail of the views of the past jurists and scholars. In controversial issues he stressed on undertaking research with open mind. According to him one should study the views of the four Imams with respect, but should adopt that view which appeals to him most. “As for myself”, he said, “I approach such matters with an open mind. I do not regard *Ahl al-Hadith* to be in the right when they hold that no attention should be paid to the rulings of the four Imams. He added, I do not restrict myself to any particular school, the Hanafites, the Shafiites and so on”. Moreover, he made it clear for the member of the *Jama'at* as “it is not necessary that the member of the *Jama'at-i-Islami* should conform to my views in the matter of *Fiqh*. It is open to them to follow any school of thought they like,

without creating sectional differences” (Tarjuman 1965: July-October).

From the above-mentioned discussion of both scholars regarding the schools of thought, it can be said that there is a nice harmony between the views of Waliullah and the views of Mawdudi. Both of them held a view which is balanced, moderate, unbiased and free from all extremes. The main argument of the both scholars was that, small differences in interpretation are not of such tremendous importance as to cause serious disputes or divide Muslim society into hostile factions.

Ijtihad has an immense importance in Islam. Realizing the importance of *Ijtihad* both reformers received it as an endeavor to understand the derivative principles of religious law. According to Waliullah, a changing society cannot be confined to old rules and values. He emphasized the need for *Ijtihad* in legal matters as a means for restoring the purity of Islam. Waliullah felt that every age must seek its own interpretation of the Qur’an and the *Sunnah*. (Halepota 1975: 5). He pointed out that one of the major causes of Muslim decay was the rigid conformity to interpretation made in other ages (*Taqlid*). In this respect, he did not differ much from his orthodox predecessor Shaykh Ahmad of Sirhindi (1564-1624), or from Muhammad Ibn ‘Abdul Wahhab of Saudi Arabia (1703-1792), who also considered *Taqlid* of mediaeval authorities as an element of weakness in Islam (Irfani 1985: 40).

Waliullah’s preference for the beneficial usage of theory and practice in *Fiqh* does not only guarantee the removal of prejudices and narrow-mindedness, but it also provides an urge to investigate and research. Mawdudi highly appreciated this moderate approach of Waliullah in the following way:

“The great advantage of adopting such a moderate approach is that, on the one hand, it puts an end to all kinds of prejudice, narrow-mindedness, rigid conformity and fruitless discussions and wrangles; and, on the other, it opens new ways for research and *Ijtihad* with a broad outlook. Along with that the Shah Sahib has emphasized the necessity of undertaking *Ijtihad* in almost all his writings” (Mawdudi 1981: 24).

The study shows that Waliullah appreciated the writings of the Imams of the schools of thought and emphasized on referring to those writings in the light of the Qur’an and the *Sunnah* in many of his writings. His review on *Muwatta* of Imam Malik is, to a

great extent, an effort to open new vista of *Ijtihad* before a speculative mind. In the introduction of the *Musaffa*, a commentary of the *Muwatta*, he emphasized on the need of independent interpretation. He opined that *Ijtihad* is obligatory for the Islamic scholars of every age, because with the passage of time, human life comes across numerous problems, and the solutions are naturally required for state and society. Waliullah considered *Ijtihad* as an obligatory for because every age has its own countless peculiar problems and to him, cognizance of the Divine injunctions with regard to them is essential. He added, the material, which has already been written and compiled, is not only insufficient but also embodies many differences of opinion. These differences cannot be resolved without resorting to the fundamental of the *Shari'ah*, as also because the chain of authenticity leading back to the *Mujtahid* is probably disrupted. Therefore, the only way open is to review and reassess these differences against the principles of *Ijtihad*" (Waliullah N.D. 11).

Waliullah, not only spook of *Ijtihad*, but contributed many remarkable writings in the field of *Ijtihad*. One of the valuable outcomes of his *Ijtihadic* work is his translation of the Qur'an into the Persian language. All his *Ijtihad*-based works were produced for those who have some knowledge of the literature on the exegesis of the Qur'an and *Hadith*, and intended to correct their misconceptions. Waliullah observed that the common people should learn the Qur'an and understand its meaning with the help of a good translation if he does not know sufficient Arabic (Qureshi 1974: 118).

According to Waliullah, the Qur'an is not just addressed to the community of the Prophet (SAAS), or to the succeeding generations, its injunctions have universal and eternal application and thus are relevant to contemporary society. Scholars of the Qur'anic interpretation should discuss basic principles only and avoid wasting energy on old tales (Waliullah 1383/1963-64: 37-41).

Waliullah opined that the Qur'an reforms the social, economic and political corruptions and deprivations of the society, and warns against the different types of sins, both heinous and minor. (Waliullah 1383/1963-64: 42-43).

Mawdudi highly appreciated the views of Waliullah regarding *Ijtihad*. His views are not much different from the views of Waliullah. He was also against stopping the process of *Ijtihad* at any stage. He

believed that any person (intellectual or scholar) has a right to make an independent judgment and explain the Qur'an in relation to changing needs, in opposition to the blind *Taqlid*. Like Waliullah, he also believed that *Ijtihad* is a natural reaction to the changes in society. This emphasizes the flexibility of Islam in coping with the modern needs. Mawdudi said:

“The purpose and object of *Ijtihad* is not to replace the Divine Law by man-made law. Its real object is to properly understand the Supreme Law and to impart dynamism to the legal system of Islam by keeping it in conformity with the fundamental guidance of the *Shari'ah* and abreast of the changing condition of the world” (Mawdudi 1980: 76-77).

Mawdudi's scholarly works are many, and among these, his monumental work is his *Tafhim al-Qur'an*. It is a six-volume translation of the Holy Qur'an, along with a detailed commentary. In the preface of the *Tafhim al-Qur'an*, he mentioned that the aim of this *Tafsir* is neither directed at scholars and researchers, nor is aimed at assisting those who have mastered the Arabic language and the Islamic religious sciences. Instead, he intended to write it for average educated person, who is not well-versed in Arabic and unable to make full use of the vast treasures of the Qur'an (Mawdudi 1988:1).

Undoubtedly, there is a clear similarity between Waliullah and Mawdudi regarding the translation of the Qur'an into a foreign language in an easy and simple way for the common people. Appreciating Waliullah's approach in this regard, Mawdudi mentioned in his preface of the *Tafhim* that:

“Literal translation has been abandoned in favor of a relatively free interpretative reading of the Qur'an. This does not imply any objection to literal translation as much. Several distinguished scholars have already used this approach admirably. For example, the translation of Shah Waliullah in Persian and the translation of Shah 'Abdul Qadir, Shah Rafi'uddin, Mawlana Mahmudul Hasan, Mawlana Ashraf 'Ali and Hafiz Fath Muhammad Jalandhari in Urdu. For this reason little useful remains to be done in this sphere. There are, however, certain needs which are not, and cannot, be met by a literal translation and it is to these that this work seeks to respond” (Mawdudi 1988:1).

Thus, the purpose and objective of writing *Tafsir* according to both, Waliullah and Mawdudi, are as follows: (1) to serve the need of the common people and (2) to make people understand the Qur'an in an easy manner so that it can reach the core of their hearts.

To meet the need of the people, Waliullah presented the Qur'an in word-by-word translation. On the other hand, Mawdudi, appreciating the service of Waliullah in the field of explanation of the Qur'an, felt it necessary to present the Qur'an in such a language which is more appealing, impressive and motivating to the people. He thought that word by word translation would not serve this noble purpose. Therefore, he employed explanatory and interpretative exposition of the Qur'an.

It is an undeniable fact that Mawdudi is greatly influenced by the thought and *Ijtihadic* spirit of Waliullah. Mawdudi appreciated the exposition of *Ijtihad* presented by Waliullah. He is of the view that the study and perusal of Waliullah's books not only acquaints one with principles of *Ijtihad* but also equips him with the necessary education of those principles in this regard. Mawdudi placed him above all his predecessors by the following words:

"These two aspects of the work are such as had been accomplished before the Shah Sahib also. But the aspect in which he has a claim to originality is that he tried to present in a codified form the complete intellectual, moral, religious and cultural system of Islam" (Mawdudi 1981: 85).

Waliullah, as a member of '*Tariqat-e-Naqshabandi*', tried to reform Sufi practice in a sense for making an attempt to reconcile it with the tradition of Prophet (SAAS). In order to check the moral and spiritual decadence of Islam, he reformed the Sufi practice, reorienting it on the basis of the prophetic *Ahadith*. He presented himself in such a role that he became a living embodiment of a great Sufi, a prominent Islamic scholar and a socio-political and religious reformer.

According to Waliullah, the involvement of common people in Sufi practice without comprehensive higher level of spiritual knowledge was one of the causes of deterioration of religion in his society. In his Last Testament (*Musaffa*) particularly, he condemned both the unorthodox Sufis of his day and the gullible masses:

"One should not become a disciple of contemporary Sufi because they are engaged in varieties of *Bid'ah* (impious innovations). Do not be taken in just because they pretend to work miracles and the masses are impressed by them. The zealotry of the masses is due mainly to their sheepish imitation, which is always at variance with reality. With the exception of a few, these contemporary miracle-mongers regard magic and tricks as miracles" (Waliullah 1973: 110).

Most probably, the political and social disorder of the eighteenth century was the result of greater popular participation in ecstatic Sufi practices surrounding the tombs of local saints. But Waliullah pointed out such Sufi practices as social evils or sickness of his time. He said:

“In summary, it can be stated that an excessive involvement in the domains of annihilation and eternity, and the mystical practices of almost everyone is a deep evil among Muslims. May God have mercy on those who have genuine spiritual qualities and want to wipe out this” (Waliullah 1973: 113).

If Waliullah did not invalidate the natural order of the eighteenth century Indian society, a severe disorder would appear in the proper functioning of the Indian Muslim society. Besides this, there would also invite a serious problem among the leaders of the spiritual hierarchy, as he referred in his Last Testament:

“In the contemporary period, however, there is no *Shaykh* commanding perfection in all spiritual matters... One should accept what is clean, and discard everything that is covered with dust. The contacts of the Sufi are a great blessing but their practices have no value. This statement might offend many people, but I must say that I am called upon to say without elaborating what other people might have said” (Waliullah 1973: 111).

These statements clearly show that Waliullah never admitted any title like (*Shaykh*) in Islam; rather, he dared to speak up the truth and boldly expressed his disgust against them. Waliullah’s unwillingness during his final days to acknowledge any supreme leader in the spiritual hierarchy as well as in the worldly hierarchy does not mean that he rejected the natural order, but it does point to a significant change in religious attitude.

Realizing the consequences of ultimate result of the Sufi practice and becoming *Shaykh*, he recommended that his followers ultimately should rely on *Shari‘ah* to restore the proper functioning of religion and society. At the outset of his Last Testament, he stated:

“In matters of faith and action, this humble person believes that one should strictly adhere to the Qur’an and *Sunnah*” (Waliullah 1973: 109).

Hence, Waliullah’s philosophy of religion was clearly in conformity with the Islamic system of morality and culture. Mawdudi, was not only influenced by the philosophy of Waliullah, but also firmly opposed those people who misinterpreted Waliullah and tried to defame him. With the strong conviction Mawdudi declared:

“The cardinal point of the Shah Sahib’s philosophy is that he has tried to present such a picture of the universe and of man in it that it fully conforms to and accords with the genius of the Islamic system of morality and culture. In other words, the Shah Sahib’s system may be linked to the root of a ‘genealogical’ tree of Islam whose stem and branches are, as it were, in complete logical harmony with it and in natural relation to each other. I am simply bewildered when I hear some people saying that ‘Shah Waliullah tried to provide a philosophic basis for the emergence of a new Indian nationalism by conjoining Vedantaism with Islamic thought’. I have, however, would, by God, have dethroned the Shah Sahib from the ranks of the *Mujaddids* of Islam and placed him among the innovators” (Mawdudi 1981: 86).

The study revealed that Mawdudi always tried to aim at the greater glory and success for the future Islamic movement. All his efforts were devoted towards reviving Islam by adopting such roles regarding the Sufi practices, which are free from all kinds of misleading ideas and misconceptions. He saw *Tasawwuf* as one of the barriers to the greater success of the future Islamic movement. He believed that the failure of great revivalist movement of past in the subcontinent was due to misunderstandings of the masses about true form of *Tasawwuf*, and their morbid attachment to *Tasawwuf* (Mawdudi 1981: 92).

Mawdudi observed that during the time of Waliullah the practice of *Tasawwuf* was at its peak. Waliullah himself was a member of Sufi order. He tried his level best to bring about changes in the Sufi practices. Later he became disgusted with the Sufi teachings which were confusing for the common people. Hence he advised the people not to go to any Sufi. But unfortunately his initial inclination to *Tasawwuf* left a significant influence on the common people. That is why immediately after his death some of his followers distorted his views and opinions. His followers attributed the title “*Qayyum*” (eternal) to him, though the title ‘*Qayyum*’ is exclusively applicable for Allah only! Mawdudi, though did not disregard Waliullah and others contribution towards genuine *Tasawwuf*, yet he felt that a great damage was done to the Muslim community due to some of their mystical hints and metaphorical usage of certain Sufi terms which, to Mawdudi, could have been avoided and some other form and languages should have been adopted instead. Mawdudi observed that the way of inclination towards *Tasawwuf* by Waliullah and some of his immediate

successors was appeared to be one of the main causes for the failure in their struggle of Islamic revivalism (Mawdudi 1981: 92-93). His sincere hope for safeguarding the future generation from facing any unpleasant situation in undertaking a successful plan of action for Islamic resurgence was:

“Now, therefore, if somebody wishes and plans to revive Islam, he must shun the language and terminology of the Sufi, their mystic allusions and metaphoric references, their dress and etiquette, the saint-disciple institution and all other things associated with it. Indeed he must make the Muslims abstain from these abuses just as a diabetic is warned to abstain from sugar” (Mawdudi 1981: 94).

Because of the bitter experience of the past and his farsightedness, Mawdudi did not practice *Tasawwuf*, rather he abstained from *Tasawwuf* and discouraged others to follow it.

CONCLUSION

From the above presentations and discussions, it can easily be summed up that Waliullah and Mawdudi were the creation of their contemporary days as reaction to the overall socio-political and religious condition of their times. Both of them shared the same Islamic ideology and adopted the methods of reconciliation within the limits of the Holy Qur’an and the Prophetic traditions for the elimination of socio-political and religious backwardness and weaknesses of their Muslim communities during their lifetimes.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, K. and Ansari, Z. I. *Islamic Perspectives*. U.K: 1979. “Mawlana Sayyid Abul A’la Mawdudi. An Introduction to His Vision of Islam and Islamic Revival”. The Islamic Foundation.
- Gilani, Asad. 1984. *Mawdudi Thought and Movement*. Lahore, Pakistan: Islamic Publications (Pvt.) Ltd., 1st ed.
- Halepota, A. J. 1975. *Philosophy of Shah Wali Allah*. Lahore: Sind Sagar Academy.
- Irfani, Suroosh. 1985. “The Progressive Islamic Movement” in *Islam Politics and the State: The Pakistan Experience*. London: Ed. Asghar Khan, Zed Books LTD.
- Jalbani, G. N. 1980. *Life of Shah Waliyullah*. Delhi: Idarah-i-Adabiyaat-i-Delhi.

- Muztar, A. D. 1979. *Shah Wali Allah: A Saint Scholar of Muslim India*. Islamabad: National Commission on Historical and Cultural Research.
- Mawdudi, Sayyid Abul A'la. 1981. *A Short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam*. Delhi: 2nd ed., Markazi Maktaba Islami.
- Mawdudi, Sayyid Abul A'la. 1978. *Bayna al-Da'wa al-Qawmiyya wa al-Rabita al-Islamiyya*. Cairo: Dar-al-Ansar.
- Mawdudi, Sayyid Abul A'la. 1973. *Political Theory of Islam*. Delhi.
- Mawdudi, Sayyid Abul A'la. (a) 1976 *Tahrik-i-Azadi-i-Hind awr Musalman* Lahore: (Freedom Movement of India and the Muslims), vol. I, 5th edition.
- Mawdudi Sayyid Abul A'la. (b) 1976. *The Religion of Truth*. Lahore: 4th edition.
- Mawdudi Sayyid Abul A'la. 1985. *Let Us Be Muslims*. U.K. Ed. Khurram Murad. The Islamic Foundation.
- Mawdudi, Sayyid Abul A'la. 1988. *Tafhim al-Qur'an*, Vol. 1, Trans., and ed., by Zafar Ishaq Ansary, The Islamic Foundation.
- Mawdudi, Sayyid Abul A'la. 1980. *The Islamic Law and Constitution*. Lahore, Pakistan: Translated and ed., by Khurshid Ahmad. Islamic Publications Ltd. 7th ed.
- Nizami, K.A. 1971. Socio-Religious Movements in Indian Islam (1973-1898), in *India and Contemporary Islam*. Simla: Edited. S.T. Lokhandwalla, Indian Institute of Advanced Study.
- Qureshi, I. H. 1974. *Ulema in Politics*. Karachi: Ma'aref limited.
- Shahab*; 1962. 25th February.
- Tarjuman* 1965: July-October.
- Waliullah, Shah. 1936. *Al-Budur al-Bazighah*. Bijnor.
- Waliullah, Shah. 1970. *Tafhimat-i-Ilahiyyah*, (English Translation), Haydarabad. 2 Vols.
- Waliullah Shah. (a) 1286 A.H. *Izalat al-Khafa' 'an Khalifat al-Khulafa'*. Bareli.
- Waliullah, Shah. (b) 1286 A.H. *Hujjatullah al-Baligha*. Cairo: Vol. I. Dar al-Turath.
- Waliullah, Shah. 1963. *Al-Fawz al-Kabir fi Usul al-Tafsir*. Karachi.
- Waliullah, Shah. n.d. *Al-Musaffa*. Delhi: Vol. I.
- Waliullah, Shah. "*Shah Waliullah's last Testament: Al-Maqalat al-Wadiyya fi al-Nasiha wa al-Wasiyyah*, Translated with an introduction by Hafeez Malik, In *Muslim World*. 1973. 43.

Dr. Abul Kalam Mohammad Shahed
Center for University Requirements Courses
International Islamic University Chittagong
Chittagong, Bangladesh
Email: drakmshahed@yahoo.com