

# An Objective Study on Some Aspects of Shah Waliullah & Sayyid Abul A'La Mawdudi's Thought

Dr. Abul Kalam Mohammad Shahed\*

## Abstract

*This paper aims to undertake an objective study on some aspects of Shah Waliullah (1703-1762) and Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi's (1903-1979) thought. Both are ranked among those great muslim thinkers who by virtue of their knowledge and activities helped reconstruct the religious and political thought in Islam. The famous eighteenth century Islamic scholar, Waliullah formed a bridge between mediaeval and modern Islam in India. He was a socio-political reformer; a great 'alim, a sufi, a mujaddid and a da'i. This study reveals that Sayyid Mawdudi, the famous Islamic scholar of 20<sup>th</sup> century was greatly influenced by the thought and teachings of Waliullah. Like Waliullah, he presented Islam as a complete code of life with solutions to all problems faced by mankind. In the line of Waliullah's thought, he chalked out a strategy to establish an Islamic state. Following the footstep of Waliullah, he waged a pouierfui movement to translate Islamic ideology into a realizable term and to construct socio-political life in accordance with it. However, Mawdudi did not accept Waliullah's thought uncritically. He disagreed with Waliullah on the several issues including that of Tasawwuf. Yet, similarities in their thoughts are overwhelming. Both initiated a process of socio-political change, inspired by Islamic ideal, in an age, which was becoming increasingly secular in their respective eras.*

---

\* The writer is a senior faculty of Islamic Studies, Manarat International University, Dhaka.

## Introduction

In the South Asian countries, the development of a progressive Islamic movement can be attributed to Shah Waliullah al-Dehlawi, the 18th century Muslim reformer and political activist. He lived during a critical period of Indian Muslims, when the power of Mughal Empire was in decline. A Muslim minority community faced not only the disintegration of its political rule, challenged by Hindu and Sikh uprisings, but also the internal disunity of conflicting factions: Sunnite and Shiite, *hadith* and legal scholars, ulemas and sufis.

Waliullah was a member of *Naqshbandi* order. He followed the footsteps of the great revivalist of the seventeenth century India, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564-1624). Like Sirhindi, he asserted the need for Muslims to purify their lives of 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. As with other revivalist, he felt the urge for the purification and renewal of Islam on a return to the pristine *Shari'ah*: the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, 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, as well as his vehement criticism of unethical and immoral life style and align culture brought a long-lasting effect to the *Ummah*. This sincere and devoted effort of Waliullah has brought about a remarkable change in society in the intellectual field and had left a great impact during his time and onward. He propounded Islam as a complete code of life and firmly believed that without the implementation of Shari'ah, this fruit cannot be enjoyed.

The great legacy of Waliullah, and his major contribution to Islamic modernist thought, was his condemnation of *taqlid* (blind imitation of the past jurists') and his emphasis on the reopening of the gate of *ijtihad* (independent judgment). He used his principle of reconciliation to resolve differences among Sufis and

between Sunnites and Shiites, and his teaching regarding *istihad* was significant to the resolution of a long-standing conflict between jurists and traditionalists (*ahl al-hadith*). 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. In this, he opened the door for many reformers like Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898), Mohammad Iqbal (1876-1938) and Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi.

Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi, a 20<sup>th</sup> century socio-political and religious scholar, is 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 expound 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 resurgence in South Asia. He held modern outlook but within the framework of Islamic rigidity. His thoughts represent the same concept of Waliullah in many aspects and hence, it seems that he was greatly influenced by him.

Most of Waliullah's biographers and historians are unanimous that he was the pioneer to formulate idea for establishing such socio-political and religious movement in the subcontinent. And all the movements during his lifetime to date in the subcontinent, regardless of their form and context are greatly influenced by his school of thought.

According to A. D. Muztar : "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 said: ..... 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).

Therefore, we may say that having traced the origin and development of socio-political thought and religious reformation in Indo-Pakistan subcontinent one must refer to that of Waliullahi school of thought. In this respect serious analysis is required to find out how far Mawdudi was impressed by the thoughts and writings of Waliullah and what are the views appreciated or reviewed by him.

This paper will focus mainly on the following points:

### **Ideological harmony**

Waliullah and Mawdudi in general, were against internal deterioration and in response to that both of them called the Muslim community to return to the teachings of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. In other words, they wanted to arrest the decadence and moral degeneration of the *Ummah* throughout their lives. 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.

Though there might have been some differences in their methodology due to change in time, context and socio-political conditions, both of them shared the same ideas, 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 the opinion that every problem for dispute should be thoroughly analyzed and tested by 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).

This rigidity of Waliullah on the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* 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 matter's from anything else excepting the Holy Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the

Prophet (SAAS) directly. In his words:

"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).

They also stressed on knowledge and action equally. Both shared the idea that Islam is not a matter of uttering certain words or names of any particular group or section. It is neither a claim of by birth or bearing any Muslim name, rather a true Muslim is the one, who believes in Allah, 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).

Mawdudi expressed the same idea and more clearly defined 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 there is a nice ideological harmony between Waliullah and Mawdudi. Both scholars were very much practical idealists rather than the theoretical and hence, struggled to present Islam in action into the practical life of the Muslims.

## Social reformation

As a social reformer, Waliullah's idea of social reformation has opened a new vista for the later researchers in the history of Indo-Pakistan subcontinent in particular and in the history of world of Islam in general. Let it see from the Mawdudi's words:

"Shah Waliullah indeed ranks 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 create a restlessness in the world of mind against the prevalent ideas and customs, and, on the other, they present 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 cleanse the truth of centuries old misgivings, illumine minds with a new light, smash the wrong but firmly established patterns of life, and present before the world the real and everlasting human values" (Mawdudi 1981: 72).

In fact, Waliullah directed his reformation work in accordance with the time and condition and choose to undertake this work with his powerful pen in the work of reconstruction. He made a mention of it in his *Tafhimat-i-Ilahiyyah* that he would not hesitate to take up arms even, if the circumstances demanded him practical endeavour to reform the condition (Waliullah 1970: 101).

Although Waliullah did not establish any organization to fight the vices in the practical field, yet all his energies and capabilities were directed towards the reconstruction of 'socio-religious thought in Islam through his constructive criticism and writings.

For a critical appreciation of the Islamic history Waliullah wrote *Izalat al-Khafa* 'an Khalifat al- Kiiulafo', He commented upon the merits as well as shortcomings of different periods of the Muslim history. In retrospect he pointed out almost all the conflicts had entered into the beliefs, thoughts, sciences, ethics, civilization and politics of the Muslims. He then tried to find out from amongst these wrongs, the basic faults which degenerate others, and finally he put his finger on two things; first, the transformation of KhilaJah to kingship, second, the dying away of the spirit of *ijtihad* and the domination of a rigid conformity on the minds of the Muslims. (Waliullah (a) 1286 A.H: 122-158).

The reformation works and the style of constructive criticism which had been adopted by Waliullah could be seen in almost all the writings of Mawdudi. By following Waliullah's style, Mawdudi also like Waliullah, critically revised and compared between the unhealthy and healthy elements of the society to have an Islamic solution for these problems suited to the time and context.

For instance, in the context of modern age Mawdudi diagnosed such social evils as secularism, nationalism and democracy. In his analysis, the whole modern civilization is based on these three principles. He critically analyzed the presence of secularism, nationalism and democracy in the society and its weaknesses for the society. He strongly rejected the notion and belief that "religion is a personal relationship between the individual and Allah". He finally presented the superiority of Islam, upon all those manmade systems and viewed that Islam can only guarantee to form a just, moral and stable society 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 refuted secular nationalism by focusing attention on its essential contradiction with the universal tenets of Islam. The whole conceptual system 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 views the entire planet earth as the abode of humankind, thereby dissolving all these contrived divisions. Its teachings announce the brotherhood of man, God's representative and lieutenant in this world (Mawdudi 1978: 9, 26).

He 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 secular democracy, sovereignty vests in the people; while in Islam it rests in Allah. Under Islamic democracy the basic laws are contained in the *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 checks; Islamic democracy is subject to limitations imposed by the *Shari'ah*, (Mawdudi 1973: 152).

Indeed, the writings of both scholars have an immense influence upon the Muslim community. By reading their writings one can easily get equipped with the know-how necessary for performing a similar task and insightness in handling it, and what lines he should pursue in order to eradicate the deeprooted shortcomings among the members of the community.

### Political thought

Waliullah and Mawdudi held the same idea that the religion and politics are inseparable in Islam. Both the scholars were firm in their conviction that Islam is not merely a religion and confined to certain rituals and rites rather it is a complete code of conduct for mankind.

Waliullah presented Islam as a way of life, which encompasses all aspects of life, spiritual as well as material. He did not see any contrast between mundane and spiritual life. He also believed that *Khilafah* relates to both of these aspects and man as the *Khalifah* on earth is bound to carry out the demands of *khilafah* as he said:

*"Khilafah* has two aspects: external (*zahirin*.) 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: 178).

Waliullah tried to establish this idea from the Islamic point of view. He saw politics as one of those means to enforce the law of Allah to establish the *Shari'ah* on earth. He regarded political authority as indispensable for the health of the community, without which the implementation of *Shari'ah* is quite impossible. In support of this view he further explained that:

"The reason that prompted 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: 440).

Waliullah's sole anxiety all the time had been to see the Muslims as powerful and strong as to withstand the opposition of all the combined hostile forces. Due to the dynamic and charismatic leadership of the first two great caliphs, Roman and Persian Empires were successfully overrun 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 invincible nation and possess a very strong political power" (Waliullah 1936: 198-199).

Verily, the cardinal purpose of religion to him was 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 (*irtifaqatj*) (Waliullah (b) 1286: 182 f., 193, 222).

Similar views echoed in Mawdudi's thought. He also did not see politics as a separate entity from religion and believed that Muslims gradual deviation from true Islamic teachings and real spirit is due to separation of politics from religion. He opined that according to Islam, "politics divorced from religion was satanic" (*Shahab*: 1962. 25<sup>th</sup> February).

Mawdudi, like his predecessor Waliullah, also presented Islam as a way of life which is the embodiment of all aspects of human life. the major point he emphasized was that the guidance embodied 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 way of life that it is a complete and comprehensive way of life. He viewed:

.. A Muslim is not required only to submit him before Allah 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).

Hence, Mawdudi urged that, it is for this reason that the Islamic way of life as laid down in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* is superior and much more conducive to man's happiness and self fulfilment in this world and his salvation in the Hereafter. (Mawdudi (b) 1976).

From the above mentioned statements and the views of both scholars it is clear that they had the same vision and mission i.e., to establish the rule of *Shariah* on earth as a dominant power. Hence, Islam as a complete code of life, it is unthinkable to separate religion from politics, if so, then it will be tantamount to disobeying injunctions of Allah in politics as well as in the affairs of government.

As a successor of Waliullah, Mawdudi had a direct impact of him on his thought to hold the same idea. 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 he stressed in his almost all writings on the importance of politics. Moreover, following the footsteps of Waliullah and to materialize the idea of unifying politics and religion into the practical shape, Mawdudi formed his socio-politico-religious based organization named *Jama'at-i-Isiami* in 1941.

Mawdudi paid a comprehensive analysis on the contemporary situation. His own investigation revealed that the Muslim society has been gradually drifted away from the ideal order established by the Prophet (SAWS), which had continued and developed along the same line during the period of *al-Khulafa' al-Rashidun*. According to his findings, the first important change in the body-politic of Islam was 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 began to be weakened and consciously or unconsciously a degree of separation between religion and politics was brought about. There also led to a bifurcation of leadership into political and religious leadership, with separate domains and areas of influence for each.

The second major change, to him, was occurred in the system of education into secular system. It had a deep impact on Muslim society creating schism and tensions and thus gradually dividing the Muslim society into the various factions (Ahmad and Ansari 1979: 376-378).

### **Schools of thought and taqlid**

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 his views were balanced, moderate, free from all extremes and biasness. He judged their differences of the opinions by the Holy Qur'an and the *Sunnah* and if he found any of these are very close to both the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* he preferred that and the rest he did not follow.

Waliullah consciously observed the fact that immutable application of the law of any single school of Muslim jurisprudence could not

serve the purpose ; he opined that recourse to different schools of thought in different matters was permissible as circumstances demanded or as it suited one's convenience 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 argument 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". (Nizmi 1971: 100).

Mawdudi was greatly impressed by this balanced and reconciliatory method of Waliullah. From his appreciation and tribute to Waliullah in his book "*A Short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam*" it shows that he was very much influenced by Waliullah. His sincere appreciation was in the following words:

"If he has favoured a particular school in a certain case, he has done so on account of some argument, and not because he wanted to plead for it. And if he has differed with the other he has done so because reason went against it and not on account of some ill will or prejudice. It is for this reason that now he appears to be a Hanafite, now a Shafiite or a Malikite or a Hanbalite" (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 incapable to exercise their own judgment. But he condemned blind imitation (*taqlid*) of the '*ulema*' in this respect (Waliullah n.d: 11).

Like Waliullah, Mawdudi also did not follow any specific school of thought; rather he recognized and stressed on the importance of all the four established school of thought equally. He was also against *taqlid* for the '*ulema*' and viewed it as an improper act. Of course, for the general masses he also did not see any harm to

follow any specific Imam and regarded it as proper and right course for them to follow the *Shariah*. 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* (following a *Mujtahid* Imam without reservations)". 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 *Tarjutmari 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 the injunction of the Qur'an and the *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 an 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-hadith* to be in the right when they hold that no attention should be paid to the rulings of the four Imams. Again he added, I do not restrict myself to any particular school, the Hanafites, the Shafiltes and so on". Moreover, he was very frank to held the opinion that "it is not necessary that the members 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* 1964: July-October).

The study reveals that both scholars' were always tried to eradicate all sorts 'Of differences among the Muslim community. Both's ardent effort was to find out the reconciliatory method in this regard. This approach had more clearly exposed in Mawdudi's words thus:

"The different schools of Hanafites, Shaflites, *Ahl-hadith* and so on which you see among Muslims all

acknowledge the Qur'an and *hadith* as their final authority and derive injunctions from them according to their own understanding. It may be that one school's understanding is correct and another's is incorrect, I myself am a follower of one of these schools and argue with those who are opposed to it in order to explain to them what is correct in my view and prove wrong what I consider to be wrong. But it is one thing for somebody's understanding to be wrong and it is quite another to expel him from Islam. Every Muslim has the right to follow the *Shari'ah* according to his understanding. If ten Muslims follow ten different methods, all of them are surely Muslims as long as they believe that they must submit to the law of God. They constitute one *Ummah* and there is no reason for them to form separate sects" (Mawdudi 1985: 132).

From the above statement it shows that Mawdudi tried to present such a view regarding schools of thought which could help the Muslims to be united, being free from all kinds of narrow-mindedness. Indeed, there is a nice harmony between the views of Waliullah and the views of Mawdudi. Both scholars held the 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.

### **Independent Judgment (ijtihad)**

Both reformers accepted *ijtihad* as an endeavour to understand the derivative principles of religious law. According to Waliullah, a changing society could not forever be bound 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).

Indeed, one of the major causes of Muslim decay, he believed, was rigid conformity to interpretation made in other ages. In this respect, he did not differ much from Shaykh Ahmad of Sirhindi

(1564-1624) his more orthodox predecessor, or from Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahab of Arabia (1703-1792), who also considered blind following of mediaeval authorities to be an element of weakness in Islam (Irfan 1985; 40).

The beneficial usage of the theory and practice preferred by Waliullah in fiqh does not only guarantee an end to prejudices, narrow-mindedness, it also provides an urge to investigation and research. This moderate approach was highly appreciated by Mawdudi, in his own words:

"The great advantage of adopting such a moderate approach is that, on the one hand, it puts an end to all kinds of prejudices, 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 emphasised the necessity of undertaking *ijtihad* in almost all his writings" (Mawdudi 1981: 24).

Waliullah did not ignore the high worth of the writing of the Imams of the schools of thought, but rather he believed they should be used in the light of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. His work 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 laid a great emphasis on the need of independent interpretation. (Waliullah N.D. 11). In his opinion *ijtihad* is obligatory for the *ulema* of every age, because with the passage of time and condition human life comes across with numerous problems unprecedented in history. The state and society naturally require answers to them. In such circumstances Waliullah said:

"The reason why I have spoken of *ijtihad* as obligatory is that every age has its own countless peculiar problems, and cognizance of the Divine injunctions with regard to them is essential. The material, which has already been written and compiled, is not only insufficient but also embodies many differences cannot be resolved without resort to the fundamental of the *Shariah* 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 *ytihad*" (Waliullah N.D. 11).

His another valuable *ytihadic* work was his translation of the Qur'an into Persian language. All his *ijtihadic* works were made for those who had some knowledge of the literature on the exegesis of the Qur'an and the *hadith*, and intended to correct their errors. For the common man Waliullah thought it sufficient that he should learn the Qur'an and understand its meaning with the help of a good translation if he did not know sufficient Arabic. (Qureshi 1974: 118).

According to Waliullah the Qur'an was not just addressed to the community at the time of the Prophet (SAWS) or to succeeding generations. Its injunctions had universal and eternal application and thus were relevant to contemporary society. The tradition in which Prophet was reported to have told later generations of Muslims to follow the path of earlier (pious) communities was still applicable 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 prevailing at the time and bring to mind the different types of sins, both heinous and minor (Waliullah 1383/1963-64: 42-43). What Izutsu describes as the "Islamization of non-Islamic elements in the period of *Jahiliyyah*" (Izutsu 1988: 74).

Mawdudi had not only appreciated the views expounded by Waliullah in this regard, but also it is found very much vivid in his thought. His views are not much different from that of Waliullah. He was against stopping the process of *ijtihad* at any stage. He believed that any person (intellectual and 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*. The conception of *ytihad*, to him like Waliullah, is a natural reaction to the changes and growth in society. This emphasis on the flexibility of Islam in coping with the modern needs, he 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).

Though, Mawdudi's scholarly works are many, his magnum opus is his monumental work *Tajhim al- Qur'an*. It is a six volumes translation of the Holy Qur'an, along with a detailed commentary. He made a mention in the preface of the *Tajhim al-Qur'an* that his work for *Tafsir* was neither directed at scholars and researchers, nor was aimed at assisting those who having mastered the Arabic language and the Islamic religious sciences. He felt that such people already have plenty of material at their disposal. Instead, he intended to write it for the lay reader, the average educated person, who is not well-versed in Arabic and so is unable to make full use of the vast treasures to be found in classical works on the Qur'an. For this reason many subjects prominent in the more technical works of Quranic exegesis have not been treated, therefore, it has been written with two objectives. First, to acquaint the reader with certain matters which he should grasp at the very outset so as to achieve a more than superficial understanding of the Qur'an. Second, to clarify those disturbing questions that commonly arise in the mind of the reader during the study of the Qur'an (Mawdudi 1988: 1).

Undoubtedly, there is a clear similarity in the understanding and ideas of Waliullah and Mawdudi in undertaking such a translation of the Qur'an into a foreign language in an easy and simple way for the common people. Appreciating Waliullahi approach in this regard Mawdudi mentioned in his preface of the *Tajhim* that:

"Literal translation has been abandoned in favour 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 Tajsir according to both, Waliullah and Mawdudi appears the view that (1) to serve the need of the common people and (2) to make them understand the Qur'an in an easy manner which can reach the core of their hearts easily.

Waliullah found it necessary to present the Qur'an in word-by-word translation and that was based on the needs of the people of his time. 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 at the same time. He found that word by word translation couldn't serve this noble purpose. Therefore, he employed explanatory and interpretative exposition of the Qur'an. He transformed the language of 'Arabi Mubin (perspicuous Arabic Language) into Urdu Mubin to create the same appeal of the Qur'an into the hearts of modern readers of his time.

Verily, it is undeniable fact that Mawdudi was greatly influenced by the thought and ijtihadic spirit of Waliullah. The exposition of ijtihad presented by Waliullah, to Mawdudi is unique and unparalleled in the whole history of Islam. Mawdudi opined that the study and perusal of Waliullah's books not only acquaints one with principles of *ijtihad* but also equips one with the necessary education of those principles. Mawdudi placed him in these aspects above all his predecessors. He said:

"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).

## Taswwuf

Waliullah as a member of *'Tariqat Naqshbandi'*, tried to reform sufi practice in a sense that he made an attempt to reconcile it with the tradition. In order to check the moral and spiritual decadence of Islam he reformed the sufi practice, reoriented it on the basis of the prophetic *Ahadith*. In his life he presented such a role which made him as a great sufi as well as a prominent *'alim* and a socio-political and religious reformer.

The involvement of common people in sufi practice without having comprehensive higher level of spiritual knowledge, according to Waliullah, was one of the causes of deterioration of religion and society in his time. In his *Last Testament* particularly, he condemned both the unorthodox sufis of his day and also the gullible masses:

"One should not become a disciple of contemporary sufi because they are engaged in varieties of *bida*" (impious innovations). Do not be taken in just because they pretend to work miracles and the masses are impressed by them. The zealousness 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).

It is probable that the political and social disorder of the eighteenth century resulted in greater popular participation in ecstatic sufi practices, especially those associated with the tombs of local saints. But Waliullah perceived such changes as a definite evil of even sickness of his day:

"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).

In deed! if the social situation of eighteenth century India did not invalidate the natural order for Waliullah, it certainly represented

a severe disorder in the proper functioning of a Muslim society. Besides this, a serious problem also existed among the leaders of the spiritual hierarchy as he related 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 cult (*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 did not mean that he had forsaken the natural order, but it does point to a significant change in religious attitude.

Having realising the consequences of ultimate result of the sufi practice and becoming *Shaykh* he recommended that his followers ultimately could only rely on the *Shari'ah* expressed in authentic *Ahadith* 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 Qu'ran and *Sunnah*" (Waliullah 1973: 109).

Hence. Waliullah's philosophy was pure, clear and fully in conformity with the genius of the Islamic system of morality and culture. Mawdudi, the famous 20<sup>th</sup> century successor of Waliullah was not only influenced by this pure philosophy of Waliullah, but also he firmly opposed the misconception of some people who had been trying 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 Shahib'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 Vadantaism 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 reveals that Mawdudi always tried to look at the greater glory and success for the future movement. His all efforts were devoted towards reviving Islam and hence tried to adopt such roles in this respect, which are pure and free from all kinds of misleading ideas and misconceptions. In conjunction with this, he found *Tasawwuf* as one of the barriers for the greater success of future Islamic Movement. In his sincere analysis he spotlighted the causes and weaknesses behind the failure of great revivalist movement of the past in the subcontinent were due to misunderstandings by 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. he himself was a member of sufi order. But soon he realized that some reformation must be done. He tried his best to bring reformation in sufi order. Later he was disgusted with the sufi teachings that were confusing for the lay man. Hence he advised the people not to go to sufis. But unfortunately his initial inclination to *Tasawwuf* played a significant influence on the masses. That is why immediately after his death some of his followers distorted his views and opinions and despite his disagreement, attributed to him and his successors the title of '*Qayyum*' the first' and '*Qayyum*' the

second' respectively, whereas, '*Qayyum*' being used as an attribute of Allah! Thus, though Mawdudi did not disregard the contribution of Waliullah and others to genuine *Tasawwuf*, yet, he felt a great damage had been done to the *Ummah* due to their mystic and metaphorical usage of certain terms which in his opinion, could have been avoided and some other form and languages could have been adopted for its expression. Mawdudi's observation was that inclination to *Tasawwuf* by Waliullah and his successors were one of the failures in the struggle of reviving Islam. (Mawdudi 1981: 92-93). His sincere hope for the future generation 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).

The bitter experience of the past lessons and farsightedness of Mawdudi did not allow him to practice *Tasawwuf* and prescribe it to his fellow Muslims. Rather he abstained from its practice and made the Muslims abstain from its abuses.

## Conclusion

From the above discussion it can easily be concluded that both were the creation of their days as reaction to the overall lamenting socio-political and religious condition of their contemporary eras who shared the same ideology that by adopting reconciliatory method within the limits of the Qu'ran and *Sunnah*, the socio-political and religious backwardness of the Muslims should be eliminated.

## 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.
- GHani, Asad. 1984. *Mawdudi Thought and Movement*. Lahore. Pakistan: Islamic Publications (Pvt.) Ltd. 1<sup>st</sup> ed.
- Halepota, A. J. 1975 *Philosophy of Shaah Wali Allah*. Lahore: Sind Sagar Academy.
- Irfan, Suroosh. 1985. "The Progressive Islamic Movement" in *Islam Politics and the State: The Pakistan Experience*. Lonton : Ed. Asghar Khan. Zed Books LTD.
- Izutsu, J. 1988. *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an*. McGill.
- Jalbani, G.N. 1980. *Life of Shah Waliullah*. Delhi : Idarah-i- Adabtyat-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. 1985. *Let Us Be Muslims*. U.K: Ed. by Khurram Murad. The Islamic Foundation.
- 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. 1963. "Bayna al-Hadaratayn al-Gharbiyya wa al-Islamiyyah", *Al Musiim'ri*. 8. (2.3).
- Mawdudi Sayyid Abul A'la. 1978. *Bayna al-Da'ua al-Qawmiyya wa al-Rabi 'a 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-Hinci awr Musalman*. Lahore: (Freedom Movement of India and the Muslims). vol. 1. 5<sup>th</sup> edition.
- Mawdudi. Sayyid Abul A 'la (b) 1976. *The Religion of Truth*. Lahore : 4<sup>th</sup> edition.
- Mawdudi, Sayyid Abul A'la. 1985 *Let Us Be Muslims*. U.K. Ed. Khurram Murad. The Islamic Foundation. P 132.

Mawdudi, Sayyid Abul A'la 1980. *The Islamic Law and Constitution*. Lahore, Pakistan: Translated and ed., by Khurshid Ahmad. Islamic Publications Ltd. 7th ed.

Mawdudi, Sayyid Abul A'la. 1988. *Towards Understanding the Quran*. U.K : Vol. I, English translation of *Tafhim al-Qur'n*, Trans. and ed., by Zafar Ishaq Ansari, The Islamic Foundation.

Nizarni, 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.

*Tarjumari al-Quran*. 1964. .July-October.

The Weekly *Shahab*. 1962. 25th February.

Waltullah, Shah. 1936. *Al-Budur al-Bazighah*. Bijnor.

Waliullah, Shabo 1970. *Tafhimat-i-Ilahiyyah*. Haydarabad. 2 Vols.  
Waliullah, Shah. (a) 1286 A. H. *Izalat al-Khaja 'an Khalifat al-Khulaja'*. Bareli.

Waiullah, Shah. (b) 1286 A. H. *Hujjatullah ol-Baliqha*. Cairo: Vol. 1. Dar al-Turath.

Waliullah, Shah. 1892 *Al-Iqd al-Jid*. Delhi.

Waliullah, Shah. n.d. *Al-Musaffa*. Delhi: Vol. 1.

Waliullah, Shah. 1383/1963-64 *Al-Fawd al-Kabir fi Udul al-Tafsir*. Karachi.

Waliullah, Shah. "Shah Waliullah's *last Testament: Al-Maqalat al-Wadiyya fi al-Nasiiia wa al-Wasiyyah*, Translated with an introduction by Hafeez Malik. In *Muslim World*. 1973. 43.