

**Journal of Religion & Society (JR&S)**

Available Online:

<https://islamicreligious.com/index.php/Journal/index>

Print ISSN: 3006-1296 Online ISSN: 3006-130X

Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)

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**Waliullahi Tehrik and its line of action for the revival and uplift of Muslims in India  
(1731-1831)**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Imam Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (RA) was the great sufi and janshīn of his father, Ḥazrat Shah Abd-ur-Rahim Dehlawi (RA). So, he had to fulfill the responsibility of spiritual training of disciples of the khaqah after the death of his father. Moreover, he also administered his father's established Madrasah Rahīmiyah. He observed both the rise and fall of the Muslims in the Subcontinent because the decline of the Mughals had started in his life. He established his jamā'at, and introduced a clear and complete system of thoughts and philosophy to get rid of decline. After him, Ḥazrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz (RA) and Ḥazrat Shah Ishaq Dehlawi (RA) continued the struggle and followed the same line of action, set by Ḥazrat Shah Waliullah Dehalwi (RA). Most of the religious and religio-political groups in Pakistan associate themselves with Imam Shah Waliullahi Dehlawi (RA) and his movement in order to strengthen their intellectual superiority, religious identity and historical legitimacy. This research attempts to explore the footprints and line of action of Waliullahi Tehrik, and how it played its role for the revival and uplift of the Muslims. Following the historical research method, the data was collected from different sources, including the writings and biographies of Walīullāhi Ulama. The data analysis shows that Walīullāhi Mashaikh served in three spheres of ShjddPoliticalari 'at, Tarīqat and Politics.*

**Key Words:** *Walīullāhi Tehrik, Shah Waliullah Dehlawi, Madrasah Rahīmiyah, Politcal Role*

**Introduction and Background History**

Ḥazrat Imam Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (RA) was born on Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> February 1703 in the morning. His mother, Fakhar-un-Nisa, was the daughter of Shaikh Muhammad Phulti (Al-Azhari, 1967). He was named Qutb-ud-Din Ahmad after the name of the famous sufi Qutb-ud-Din Bakhtiar Kaki (RA) and Azeem-ud-Din was his historical name (Ali, 1961).

However, he got fame in the name of 'Shah Waliullah'. His father Ḥazrat Shah Abd-ur-Rahim Dehlawi (RA) was eminent religious scholar and *sufi* who participated in the preparation of '*Fatawa Alamgiri*', a 17th-century *Shari'ah* based compilation on statecraft, general ethics, military strategy, economic policy and justice which served as the law and principal regulatory body of the Mughal Empire, during the reign of the Mughal emperor Muhammad Muhiuddin Aurangzeb Alamgir. He had genealogical link with Ḥazrat Farooq-e-Azam (RA), the second *caliph* of Islam, on his father's side and with Imam Musa Kazim (RA), the seventh imam in Twelver *Shia* Islam, on his mother's side. He completed his education in the age of fifteen. Meanwhile, he got married with the daughter of his maternal uncle, Shaikh Abdullah Phulti (RA), and the sister of Shaikh Ashiq Phulti (RA). God blessed him with a son, Shaikh Muhammad, and a daughter, Umat-ul-Aziz. He did a second marriage in 1152 AH. God blessed him with four sons, Shah Abd-ul-Aziz Dehlawi (RA), Shah Rafi-ud-Din (RA), Shah Abd-ul-Qadir (RA) and Shah Abd-ul-Ghani (RA) from his second wife (Barakati, 2011).

Shah Waliullah (RA) served as a teacher at his father's established '*Madrasah Rahīmiyah*' for twelve years. '*Madrasah Rahīmiyah*' was not only a *madrasah* for the promotion of *shari'ah* knowledge but also a *Khanqah* for the spiritual training of disciples. His father was the great *sufi* of his time. He was accepted as the *janshīn* of his father. So, he became responsible for fulfilling the spiritual needs and training of the disciples of the *Khanqah*. He performed Hajj in the last months of 1143 AH. He also benefited from the *shaikhs* of *ḥadīth* during pilgrimage when he was thirty years of age. In 1144 AH, he again performed Hajj and returned to India in the early months of 1145 AD (Phulti, 1997). In the journey, he deliberated well regarding the renaissance of Muslims in the subcontinent and laid down the foundation for the formulation of *Waliullahi* thoughts and philosophy. So, after his return, he advised the Muslims for the renewal and revival of Islam because he had observed long before that the fall of the Muslims was at its peak and social restructuring was inevitable in India. In this regard, he entrusted the teaching responsibilities of '*Madrasah Rahīmiyah*' to his son Shah Abd-ul-Aziz Dehlawi (RA) and got involved in writing activities. Therefore, after deeply observing the conditions of the subcontinent, he introduced a clear and complete system of thoughts in his several books. According to Maolāna Naseem Ahmad Fareedi, Shah Waliullah (RA) wrote 61 books. He has also mentioned 8 books wrongly attributed to him (Dehlawi et al., 1998/2010). But Dr. Muhammad Mazhar Baqa considers that 73 books are at his credit (Baqa, 1986). However, he also admits 8 wrongly attributed books. Rahim Bakhsh, the first Urdu biographer of Ḥazrat Shah Waliullah (RA), considers that more than 100 books are on his credit but he mentioned only 45 books in his writings (Dehlawi et al., 1998). In this way, he contributed for 61 scholarly written books in 28 years of his 61-year life.

Shah Waliullah (RA) suffered from mortal disease when he was in Budhana, a town and one of the constituencies of the UP Legislative Assembly in Muzaffarnagar. He came to Delhi for treatment on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1762 and stayed at the house of his disciple and pupil, Baba Fazalullah Kashmiri. He died on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> August 1762 (29<sup>th</sup> Muḥarram 1174 AH) at noon and was buried by the side of his father (Al-Azhari, 1967). After him, his son Shah Abd-ul-Aziz

Dehlawi (RA) introduced his father's thoughts at the public level and formed a *jama'at*, which became famous with the name of *Waliullahi Jama'at*, to pass these thoughts to future generations (Dehlawi et al., 1998/2010).

Imam Shah Waliullah (RA) was an eyewitness of the rise and fall of the Muslims because the decline of the Mughals had started in his life. In this way, he observed both the rise and decline of the Muslims in the Subcontinent. On the contrary, other great thinkers and *mujtahidīn* were born either in the period of rise or in the period of decline. Highlighting the importance of Waliullahi philosophy, Qazi Javed writes that:

*"Shah Waliullah belongs to the period between the decline of the Mughal Empire and the economic, cultural, psychological and political domination of the subcontinent. From this point of view, his position is like a bridge between the old and the new period of the Muslims in India."* (Javed, 1977)

Aurangzeb Alamgir died in 1707 after his fifty-year rule over India. After his death, the glory of the Muslims began to decline gradually. The Political, economic, social and educational situation became worse. In this context, Mufti Abd-ul-Khaliq Azad writes that:

*"Shah Sahib observed the conditions of the era when he got maturity and found out that the nearly seven hundred years old state institutions, which had organized and the Indian society with great virtue on strong foundations, had suffered from turmoil after the death of wise and strong administrator Aurangzeb Alamgir."* (Azad, 2005)

Imam Shah Waliullah (RA)'s era was the period of Muslim decline in politics. Eleven Mughal kings ascended the throne after the death of Aurangzeb Alamgir which shows the political instability and decline of the Mughal empire (Baqā, 1986). The weakness of the central government invited state intrigues and external conspiracies. So, some regions declared independence due to the weakness of Delhi. The detail is given as under:

Bengal and Bihar were captured by Alivardi Khan.

Oudh was captured by Burhan-ul-Mulk and Safdar Jang.

Nizam-ul-Mulk established the government in the Deccan.

These autonomous provinces also divided the gross revenue of the subcontinent which caused the gradual weakness of the central government. Apart from these autonomous provinces, Rohillas, Marathas, Sikhs and Britishers were also damaging the subcontinent. Imam Shah Waliullah (RA) discussed the political situation in his letter to Ahmad Shah Abdali. Qazi Javed writes that:

*"It seems that Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Dehlawi (RA) was not well aware about the power and plans of the British.....He discussed and analyzed the political circumstances and different political powers in a letter to Ahmad Shah Abdali but he did not mention the British surprisingly in the letter."* (Javed, 1977)

Perhaps, Qazi Javed has not studied the letter carefully because Imam Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (RA) mentioned the Britisher in the same letter while mentioning the descendants of Nizam-ul-Mulk (Nizami, 1969). However, it is true that he did not discuss the British in the same way as he mentioned the *Marathas*, *Jats* and *Sikhs*. But it cannot be concluded that he was not aware of their growing power and conspiracies. In this way, some so-called

researchers have tried to damage the spirit by giving the impression that *Waliullahi Tehrik* was against the local political groups only and particularly against the *Sikhs*. The fact is that his thoughts were not related to any specific group. According to Hazrat Ubaidullah Sindhi RIP (shortly: Hazrat Sindhi), he did not emphasize on the British because the government East India Company (EIC) had not influenced Delhi in his time. Furthermore, His purpose was not to shield the Mughal government against *Jats*, *Marathas* and *Sikhs*. But his main objective was to counter all such imperialist forces that were accelerating the decline by destabilizing the region to make it possible to establish a righteous political system in the future. In this context, Syed Qasim Mahmud writes that:

*“Shah Sahib did not have any hope for stability of the Mughal rule, however he wanted to hinder the political decline of the Muslims until the alternative setup under internal civil conditions.” (Mehmood, 2012)*

In this context, Professor Muhammad Sarwar writes that Imam Shah Waliullah's movement was not to support the declining Mughal rule because he had observed that the monarchy had become outdated and was unable to meet the requirements of the time. Therefore, he was disappointed for its revival. But his struggle was for the common Muslims as he wanted to prepare them to run the state instead of the already occupied ruling elite. (Sarwar, 1944, pp. 19-20)

It's an admitted fact that Hazrat Shah Waliullah Dehalwi (RA) and his descendants were *sufis* and religious scholars who served for the promotion of *shari'ah* knowledge and fulfilled the spiritual needs of disciples. Therefore, the research has a special focus on investigating the political role of *Waliullahi Tehrik* for the uplift of the Muslims.

This paper tries to explore the footprints and line of action of *Waliullahi Tehrik*, and how it played its role for the revival and uplift of the Muslims. The research would provide a framework to researchers for evaluation and analysis of the religious and religio-political groups in Pakistan who associate themselves with Imam Shah Waliullahi Dehlawi (RA) and his movement in order to strengthen their intellectual superiority, religious identity and historical legitimacy.

### **Methodology**

This research uses a historical method to analyze the published sources of the time. It evaluates primary and secondary sources to conclude by applying descriptive and analytical approaches. The sources like letters, biographies, autobiographies and books, written by *Waliullahi Ulama* are analyzed to draw conclusions.

### **Historical Evolution of the Waliullahi Tehrik and Philosophy**

The *waliullahi* philosophy, which Imam Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (RA) shaped according to the social requirements of his time, has its journey of evolution and historical continuity. After him, it's the reality that *Waliullahi Jama'at* considered the need of its time regarding the practical formulation of the philosophy but the founding principles of philosophy remained the same during its evolution. It's also important to clarify that the concern of *waliullahi* philosophy was not about any specific class, group or sect because all the imperialist and

tyrannical forces hindering the development of society, philanthropy and justice have been identified in the philosophy. Due to this reason, Ḥaẓrat Shah Waliullah (RA) and his *jamaʿt* simultaneously struggled for an ideological war on both internal and external fronts. They played a prominent role in the cause of humanity. Sindhi (1944/2016) divided the historical evolution of *waliullahi* philosophy and thoughts into the following periods.

The first period was started in 1731 by Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Dehlawi (RA) and ended with the Sayyids movement in 1831. This period is based on a hundred years of struggle.

The second period was started in 1831 by Shah Ishaq Dehlawi (RA) and ended after the arrest of Ḥaẓrat Shaikh-ul-Hind Mahmud Hasan Deobandi RIP (shortly: Ḥaẓrat Shaikh-ul-Hind) in 1919.

The third period was started in the early months of 1920 by Ḥaẓrat Shaikh-ul-Hind (RA) and ended in 1947.

### **Waliullahi Tehrik (1731-1831)**

According to Sindhi (1944/2016), there were three *imāms* during this period. The period is also called '*Sayiden ki Tehrik*', mentioned in his book '*Shah Waliullah aur un ki Sayasi Tehreek*'. The following three *imāms* appeared during the period:

- a) Imām Shah Waliullah Dehlawi RIP (1731-1763)
- b) Imām Shah Abd-ul-Aziz Dehlawi RIP (1763-1824)
- c) Imām Shah Muhammad Ishaq Dehlawi RIP (1824-1846)

Imām Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (RA) founded his *jamaʿt* in 1731. On one side, he was formulating his philosophy; on the other, he was aware of the practical implementation of his philosophy. He knew better the importance of *jamaʿt* and the philosophy to change the nation's destiny to eliminate the fall. That is why, he established his *jamaʿt* on his philosophy and his *jamaʿt* further carried out his mission. He made innovations in *Sufism* and introduced a new trend for *bai'at* in which a disciple had to accept *jamaʿt*'s political philosophy and system. Ḥaẓrat Sindhi (RA) explained the *waliullahi* strategy and struggle as follows:

*"In other words, bai'at of Taṛīqat means that the disciple has accepted the political system of jamaʿt. That is why Sufism has been given a high religious status in his political thoughts. The point is that one cannot fight and establish a new system of government without the required skill and capacity to run the affairs of the government. Every new movement inevitably has to practice 'Non-Violence' at the initial stage to propagate its message among the masses. He started structuring his jamaʿt on this principle and succeeded in it."* (Sindhi, 1944/2016)

There were forty-seven members of Ḥaẓrat Shah Waliullah (RA)'s *jamaʿt*, according to the list prepared by Hakeem Mahmud Ahmed Barakati (Barakati, 2011). Moreover, thirty-five members have also been mentioned in *Al Qaul-ul-Jali* (Phulti, 1997). Similarly, Maolāna Naseem Ahmad Afradi has mentioned thirty-nine members of *Waliullahi Jamaʿt* (Dehlawi et al., 1998). Moreover, he also mentioned Maolāna Muhammad Ashiq Phulti, Maolāna Noorullah Bhudanvi, Maolāna Muhammad Amin Kashmiri, Shah Abu Saeed Rai Bareilly, Shah Abd-ul-Aziz Dehlawi, Maolāna Sana Ullah Panipati, Baba Fazal Ullah Kashmiri, Muhammad Amin Thathvi, Muhammad Moin Thathvi, Muhammad Usman Kashmiri,

Murtaza Zubaidi Balgrami and Jarullah Lahori among the prominent members of the *jamaʿt*. Ḥazrat Shah Waliullah (RA) also established training centers to raise a movement based on his thoughts along with the formulation of his *jamaʿt*. In this context, Zahoor-ud-Din expressed as:

*“His (Ḥazrat Shah Waliullah Dehlawi) political insight and foresightedness had revealed to him that the mosque which was also a Madrasah in the Indo-Pak Subcontinent could be used to achieve the great goal of freedom. On this basis, he established such madrasahs in different regions of India which became the centers of freedom fighters after his death.” (Butt, 2006)*

Ḥazrat Shah Waliullah (RA) has given great importance to the mosque in the promotion of Islamic thought. He wished for every mosque to play the role of ‘*Masjid-e-Nabawi*’, the second-holiest mosque in Islam, by considering the mosque and *madrasahs* a source for the transfer of knowledge and consciousness (Dehlawi et al., 1998/2010). Therefore, he established training centers all over India and the details of the important ones have been given below:

- a) The first center was ‘*Madrasah Rahimia Delhi*’ which was an important center for the training of disciples on his thoughts. After his death, the center played its role till the War of Independence-1857 under the supervision of his *Waliullahi Tehrik* (Mian, 2010).
- b) Town *Daira Shah Alamullah*, District Rai Bareilly UP, was the second important center of *Waliullahi Tehrik*, which got fame with the name of ‘*Takia Shah Alamullah*. Sultan Tipu Shaheed also had a spiritual relationship with the center (Hasani, 1430 AH/2009 CE).
- c) The third important center was ‘*Madrasah Najeebabad*’. It was founded by Nawab Najeeb-ud-Doula, which was the major source as a training center on *Waliullahi* thoughts for students (Khel, 1924).
- d) Lucknow, the capital city of Oudh, was the fourth important center where Maolāna Mukhdoom Lucknowi, an important member of his *jamaʿt*, used to publicize his thoughts for half a century (Sindhi, 1944/2016).
- e) The fifth center was ‘*Madrasah Mulla Muhammad Moin*’ which was established in Thatta, Sindh (Mian, 2010).

Ḥazrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz Dehlawi (RA) was the son of Ḥazrat Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (RA). He was born in 1747, and at the time of his birth, his father was 45 years old. According to his statement, he was an expert in 150 different feeds of knowledge. He transferred the *Waliullahi* philosophy into the next phase and compiled books to publicize it in the light of *Usool al-Tafsir*, *Usool al-Hadith* and *Usool al-Fiqh*, introduced by Ḥazrat Shah Waliullah (RA). He also prepared *Waliullahi Jamaʿt* to resist because, during his time, British imperialism came to the fore. He died in 1823 at the age of 79 years. (Butt, 2006)

The sons of Ḥazrat Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (RA) played a vital role in the promotion of his thoughts. However, Ḥazrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz had particular importance among them. He got his education under the supervision of his father, but his father died when he was only 16 years old. Then, he learned the *waliullahi* philosophy from Maolāna Muhammad Ashiq

Phulti, Maolāna Noorullah Bhudanvi and Maolāna Muhammad Amin Kashmiri because his father entrusted all the responsibilities of his *madrasah* to them in his life. After his father's death, he became the Imām of *Waliullhi Jama't* and introduced the *waliullhi* philosophy at the public level. Ḥazrat Sindhi (RA) explained his role in the promotion of *waliullahi* philosophy as follows:

*"Imām Shah Waliullah (RA) introduced the upper class of Delhi to his thoughts. However, Imām Shah Abd-ul-Aziz (RA) awakened the middle class to be aware of the reality.....If Imām Shah Abd-ul-Aziz (RA) had not mobilized the thoughts of his father Ḥazrat Imām Shah Waliullah (RA) regarding fiqh, Sufism, philosophy and politics, it would not have been easy to find a person with the understanding of waliullahi philosophy."* (Sindhi, 1944/2016)

Ḥazrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz (RA) mobilized the young generation to learn the *waliullahi* philosophy. Among those youngsters, he attached Ḥazrat Shah Rafi-ud-Din (RA), Shah Abd-ul-Qadir (RA), Shah Abd-ul-Ghani (RA), Maolāna Abd-ul-Hayy (RA), Maolāna Muhammad Ishaq (RA), Maolāna Muhammad Yaqoob (RA) and Shah Ismail Shaheed (RA) with the philosophy of Ḥazrat Imām Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (RA). According to Hakeem Mahmud Ahmad Zafar:

*"'Fako Kule Nizam,' the concept of a comprehensive system, was confined to a few minds. However, it had become the public's passion by the time of Ḥazrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz's death and thousands of youngsters have devoted their lives to it. It had become popular in faraway countries of Asia outside India."* (Zafar, 2007)

Ḥazrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz (RA) reshaped the pattern of struggle according to the contemporary requirements and entered the *Waliullahi Jama't* into the new phase. He introduced the following method for the training of the disciples:

- a) Teaching of *Waliullahi* philosophy
- b) Spiritual training
- c) Public gatherings

Very soon after his father's death, Ḥazrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz (RA) established such a *jama't* that was not to be intimidated by anyone. There were hundreds of members in his *jama't*. However, Ḥazrat Shah Rafi-ud-Din (RA), Shah Abd-ul-Qadir (RA), Shah Abd-ul-Ghani (RA), Maolāna Abd-ul-Hayy (RA), Maolāna Muhammad Ishaq (RA), Maolāna Muhammad Yaqoob (RA), Shah Ismail Shaheed (RA), Syed Ahmad Shaheed (RA), Mufti Sadrudin Aazurda, an Islamic scholar, leader of the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and poet during British era, and Mufti Ilahi Bakhsh Kandhlawi, a distinguished student and disciple of Shah Abd-ul-Aziz Dehlawi, were prominent among them. (Mian, 2010).

During the era of Ḥazrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz (RA), British imperialism was emerging as a new power in the region by defeating all other external forces. It was taking advantage of the internal weakness and gradually taking control of state affairs. So, at first, the East India Company (EIC) defeated Mirza Muhammad Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah in the Battle of Plassey, the last independent *Nawab* of Bengal, reigning from 1756 to 1757. The end of his reign marked the beginning of the rule of the EIC over Bengal and, later, almost all of the Indian

subcontinent. Then, it defeated the combined army of Mir Qasim, Shuja-ud-Daulah and Shah Alam-II in the battle of *Buxar*. Finally, it defeated the ruler of Mysore Tipu Sultan on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1799 when the British stormed and captured Tipu's capital, Seringapatam, after a month-long siege, supported by the army of their Indian ally, the Nizam of Hyderabad. Then the EIC introduced the model of the monarchy that the Parliament of England had taken for its king. So, the Mughal king and crown remained intact but powers were conceded to the EIC. Therefore, it became the question of every mind whether India would be called *Dar-ul-Islam* (Sovereign State) or *Dar-ul-Harb* (Slave State). In these circumstances, the *Walīullāhi Jammat* changed its strategy for the practical formulation of Ḥaẓrat Shah Waliullah's thoughts. Ḥaẓrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz Dehlawi (RA) issued a fatwa in 1803 when the English occupied the capital city (Sindhi, 1944/2016). In which, he declared India as '*Dar-ul-Harb*' and mentioned the following reasons for the call of *Jihād* in the fatwa.

- a) The British had established their rule in the subcontinent unabatedly
- b) All legislative powers were entrusted to the British
- c) Respect for religion had been abolished.
- d) Civil liberties had been taken away

According to the fatwa, it was the duty of every patriot to declare war against the alien power and considered to live in the country forbidden till the expulsion of the British. This fatwa highlighted the true meaning of freedom and liberty among the people of the subcontinent and fulfilled the duty of their religious guidance. Dr. Suraiya Dar rightly wrote that it was like liberating them from the shackles of slavery by declaring India as *Dar al-Harb* (Dar, 2005). Syed Abu-al-Hassan Ali Nadvi writes in his book as follows:

*"He (Ḥaẓrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz Dehlawi RIP) is the first person, according to our knowledge, who dared to declare India as a 'Dar-ul-Harb' at that time and while making a realistic assessment of the situation in the light of jurisprudence and principles jurisprudence, presented the best solution to the problem, which also expresses his insight and moral and spiritual wisdom."* (Nadvi, 1969)

It is the reality that Ḥaẓrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz Dehlawi (RA) exposed the colonial ambitions of British imperialism and played a prominent role in the freedom struggle. Due to his realistic taste, he did not want to make mere sentimentality and hatred a part of his movement. Instead, he advised the Muslims to develop their capacity and learn modern sciences. Therefore, besides opposing British imperialism, he also gave a fatwa for education in their colleges. Sheikh Muhammad Ikram writes as:

*"When the East India Company established the Delhi College, people were reluctant to study there. He (Shah Abdul Aziz) cleared all their doubts and allowed them to study in English educational institutions fifty years before the establishment of the Aligarh College. (Akram, 2005)*

It was the insight and foresight of Ḥaẓrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz Dehlawi (RA) that he believed that if not today, then tomorrow, the imperialist plan regarding the division of education would be implemented. He did not confine himself to teaching and fatwas as he also participated in the practical struggle for the withdrawal of the British and to establish an Islamic state on *walīullāhi* philosophy when he declared India as *Dar-ul-Harb*. Therefore, he



reshaped *waliullahi* thoughts according to the era's requirements and laid down the foundations of organizational structure in the light of *waliullahi* thoughts. He further divided it into two branches because he realized that in the changing conditions of India, an organized struggle would have to be carried out by establishing a military and organizational wing to defeat the newly emerging imperialist power. So, he appointed Syed Ahmed Shaheed (RA) as the military wing's '*amir*' and Maolāna Abd-ul-Hayy and Shah Ismail Shaheed as advisers to help him. The wing had to fulfill the following responsibilities.

- a) To mobilize the Indian people for a revolutionary spirit by touring the country
- b) Recruiting volunteers from all over the country and conducting their military training
- c) Managing financial affairs and arranging for the provision thereof
- d) To establish relations with other countries
- e) To take military action whenever advised by the leadership

Hazrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz Dehlawi (RA) remained intact with the organizational wing being its leader and kept Maolāna Muhammad Ishaq (RA) with him in every matter. The wing's responsibilities were as follows:

- a) To handle the affairs of the headquarters (Delhi)
- b) To maintain the continuity of educational and training activities
- c) To create a favorable revolutionary atmosphere in the country
- d) Brainstorming of new volunteers on *Waliullahi* footprints

Hazrat Sindhi (RA) said in this regard as:

*"Syed Ahmad Shaheed (RA) was appointed as the 'amir', whereas Maolāna Abd-ul-Hayy (RA) and Shah Ismail Shaheed (RA) as advisors to deal with the military affairs. Imām Shah Abd-ul-Aziz Dehlawi (RA) advised his jama't to follow their decision like the decision of Imām Shah Abd-ul-Aziz (RA) if it had done with the consensus of all three. However, he engaged Maolāna Muhammad Ishaq Dehlawi (RA) with him to deal with every matter of the organizational Wing which was a clear sign that his decision would be considered as his own decision."* (Sindhi, 1944/2016)

Syed Ahmad Shaheed (RA) was appointed as head of the military wing on the basis of his ability and experience in the field. Otherwise, he had no comparison with Shah Ismail Shaheed in terms of knowledge and grip on *waliullahi* thoughts which illuminates the discipline of *jama't* and negates nepotism. However, the military wing fulfilled its responsibilities and managed a large number of revolutionary supporters by mobilizing public opinion for the sacred cause of freedom. Meanwhile, Shah Abd-ul-Aziz (RA) also did the work for social reforms excellently as he trained the *Waliullahi Jama't* on the principles of philanthropy, service to people, equality of rights and non-violence. In 1822, the military wing set out for the Hajj under the supervision of Syed Ahmad Shaheed (RA). In those days, the movement of Shaikh Abd-ul-Wahab Najdi was at its bloom and had influenced most of *Hijāz*. Due to the propaganda of the British, some so-called researchers claimed that Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed had become a disciple of Abdul Wahab Najdi. So, *Waliullahi Tehrik* was influenced by the *Wahabi* movement. Moreover, they also claimed that the movement was against the *Sikhs* in real instead of the British (Dehlawi, 1932). However, these claims are contrary to

historical evidence and facts and tantamount to distorting history as the fatwa '*Dar-ul-Harb*' was against the British, not against the *Sikhs*. In this regard, Ḥaẓrat Sindhi (RA), Maolāna Ghulam Rasool Mehar (RA) and Syed Muhammad Mian (RA) have refuted and negated these claims with solid arguments (Nadvi, 1977). Ḥaẓrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz Dehlawi (RA) died on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1824 at the age of sixty-three years when the caravan returned to Delhi.

Shah Muhammad Ishaq Dehlawi (RA) was accepted as the *janshīn* of Ḥaẓrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz Dehlawi (RA). The military wing also accepted him as *imām*. Under his leadership, Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed (RA) and Shah Ismail Shaheed (RA) established a provisional government at Balakot in 1831 at the golden jubilee of *Walīullāhi Tehrīk* (Butt, 2006). According to some historians, it was the personal achievement of Syed Ahmad Shaheed (RA) but Ḥaẓrat Sindhi (RA) denied it in the following words:

*"I believe that it was the outcome of Ḥaẓrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz (RA)'s movement to establish a provisional government across the border. In some circles, Syed Sahib (Syed Ahmad Shaheed) has been presented as the imām of the entire movement by highlighting his knowledge and dignity, which is against reality. Because Ḥaẓrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz (RA) was the imām of jamā'at in the true sense."* (Sindhi, 1944/2016)

To reconnect Delhi and Kabul, Ḥaẓrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz wanted to seek help from Afghans against the *Sikhs* in following the footprints of Ḥaẓrat Shah Waliullah (RA) who sought help from Ahmad Shah Abdali to defeat the *Marathas*. Although it was tough because British imperialism had deepened the geographical lines under its neo-colonialism system and the situation was not the same as before. So, the movement suffered irreparable damage due to improper estimation of circumstances and faced setbacks after initial successes. Ḥaẓrat Sindhi (RA) has also criticized some decisions (Sindhi, 1944/2016). In 1831, the movement suffered from a temporary defeat at Balakot. Ḥaẓrat Sindhi (RA) was not disappointed by the failure of the movement. He writes that:

*"In earlier times, we used to whine after reading these events and grumbled about the times but after reading the history of revolutionary movements in Europe allayed all our fears. We have seen that revolutionary movements fail again and again before reaching the destination."* (Sindhi, 1944/2016)

Although the militant wing was defeated in 1831, however, the organizational wing remained intact and continued its work. Therefore, about twenty-five years later, those who participated in the War of Independence in 1857 were directly or indirectly linked with this wing.

## Conclusion

In view of the above discussion, it is clear that *Walīullāhi Mashaikh* served in three spheres of *Shari'at*, *Tariqat* and *Politics*. They contributed for scholarly written books on tafsir, hadith, fiqh and translation of the holy Quran in local languages i.e. Persian and Urdu. Moreover, they also promoted the *Shari'ah* knowledge by establishing *madāris* in different cities. These *madāris* and education centers were also used for the spiritual training of the disciples. *Walīullāhi Mashaikh* also resisted the rule of EIC as Ḥaẓrat Shah Abd-ul-Aziz Dehlawi (RA) issued fatawa *Dar-ul-Harb*. Syed Ahmad Shaheed (RA) and Shah Ismail Shaheed (RA) established a provisional government at Balakot in 1831 at the golden jubilee of *Walīullāhi Tehrīk*.

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