

THE SERVICES OF *SHAH WALI ULLAH'S* FAMILY IN THE PROMOTION OF QURANIC STUDIES IN THE SUB-CONTINENT (A CRITICAL ANALYSIS)

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ABSTRACT

With the emergence of the 18th Century, although the Muslims of the Sub-continent were politically weak yet Allah the Exalted did a great favor to Muslims by creating Shah Wali ullah among them. The distinction of the comprehensions of the Holy Quran belongs to Shah Wali ullah's family. He is the pioneer promoter of the Quranic Studies (Uloom ul Quran), the Hadith studies (Uloom ul Hadith) and the interpretative trend setter as well in the sub-continent. This unique distinction also belongs to his family. The first ever Persian translation of the Holy Quran named "Fath ur Rahman" was compiled by Shah Wali ullah. Shah Wali ullah has compiled many books. But in this Article, his only two books in the field of the Quranic studies (Uloom ul Quran) named "Fath ur Rahman Fi Tarjmatul Quran" and "Al Fauz ul Kabeer Fi Usool e Tafseer" shall be analyzed exploratory. Shah Wali ullah had compiled a sequel of "Al Fauz ul Kabeer" named "Fath ul Khabeer" which has been published along with "Al Fauz ul Kabeer" later. This book, due to its benefits has been taught equally in Islamic traditional Institutes and in the public sector universities as a compulsory part of curriculum. Basically, this book was compiled in Persian. But later on, many scholars translated it into Urdu and Arabic languages and it has been published as well.

Field of Research: *Shah Wali ullah, Quranic Studies, Translation of Quran, Sub-continent*

Introduction

Shah Wali ullah's family is a unique literary family in the sub-continent who had devoted themselves to illuminate the Quranic and Hadith studies. Shah Wali ullah's elder son Shah Abdul Aziz also compiled a Persian translation and interpretation of the Holy Quran named "Tafseer e Azizi". And with the conduct of the Urdu language in the Sub-continent, Shah Wali ullah's son Shah Rafi ud Deen compiled the Literal meanings of Quran in Urdu Language while Shah Abdul Qadir compiled the Terms Meanings of the Holy Quran. In the Sub-continent, after these two Scholars, all the interpretations of Holy Quran either compiled yet or shall be compiled in coming days, shall live under debit of Shah Wali ullah's family for the promotion of the norms (of translation/ interpretation).

The actual name of *Shah Wali ullah* is Qutab ud Deen and his dynasty belongs in the series of thirty third to *Umar Bin Khattab*. He was born in 4th Shawal 1114AH according to February 1703AD in Delhi.

His grand family was famous due to the quest of knowledge and learning. The majority of his family members belonged to the courts of Kings of that time and they had worth recognition in the courts. His father *Shah Abdur Rahim* was counted towards the most renowned personalities of that time. He also established a unique school of thought in his area and this most famous institution of learning imparted the learning of Quran and Sunnah. The name of this learning institution was *Madrassa Rahimia*.

"Shah Wali ullah learnt the Holy Quran by heart at the age of six and after that he showed his fabulous tendency towards the knowledge of Arabic and translation work. After some period he got distinction indifferent fields of knowledge as Tafseer, Hadith, Fiqh, the learning of knowledge, literature and philosophy. In the period of 1720 he also started his work as teacher in *Madrassa Rahimia* and at that time his age of only 17 years. He also paid attention towards the work of administration of that educational institution."*(Ahmad, Dr. Iftikhar 2014. P.110)*

In 1730 he also performed Hajj and he also got the knowledge of Hadith for the period of 14 months by *Shaikh Abu Tahir Bin Ibrahim*. He was also expert in the knowledge of Hadith Nabvi. After that he came back to India and he started his learning and imparting activities in *Madrassa Rahimia*.

He also wrote outstanding Islamic books and the following are his major literary works:

1. *Fath ur Rahman fi Tarjaman ul Quran*.
2. *Alfauz al Kabeer fi asool altafseer*.
3. *Almusffa* (Arabic interpretation Mou'ta Imam Malik)
4. *Almusawwa* (Persian interpretation Mou'ta Imam Malik)
5. *Al durrathmeen* (Tasawaff)
6. *Sata'at* (Tasawaff)
7. *Alqaol ul jameel* (Tasawaff)
8. *Lama'at* (Tasawaff)
9. *Hajja tullah ul Baligha* (Politics ,sociology and advices)

"The credit of proper understanding of the Holy Quran in the Sub-continent goes to him and in terms of the knowledge of Tafseer and Hadith he is the first man in Sub-continent who established its roots and developed as well. After him his sons also imparted the knowledge of Quran and translated it in Urdu language. The majority of the people are being benefited by his glaring efforts. He also developed some basic principles in order to translation and understanding of the Holy Quran."
(Jamila, Maryam 2000 p.194)

The thought provoking ideas and efforts are still alive in the world after the lapse of almost two hundred and fifty years and the public is also getting knowledge and guidance by his superb work. His work would pave the ways towards understanding of Quranic knowledge and understanding. His special efforts towards understanding and translation of Quran and Hadith e Rasool are still in practice and people are following them with great excellence. He and his family have unique background and efforts towards the propagation of Islamic thoughts. *Shah Wali ullah* is considered

the Imam of all Islamic personalities in the Sub-continent. He has touched all fields of Islamic learning and has given his special reasoning to the Islamic propagation. He has also paved the way towards the understanding to Islamic thoughts in Sub-continent. In the present developed age he has also given his complete understanding of Islamic teachings. The movements as "Back to the Quran" is also considered the unique one and actually he is behind such superb efforts. He is the great personality who laid down such movements. He is known the father of such movements.

So the present great literary personality *Syed Abul hassan Ali Nadvi* has written as:

"The efforts for the propagation of Islamic knowledge for all and though such efforts he has created revolutionary spirit in the hearts of Muslims. He has also created a superb spirit and revolution for Islamic teachings and understanding. His Masterpiece literary work *AlFauz ul kabir* is the unique and complete book in its sense." (Nadvi, Syed Abul Hassan Ali 1984, p. 150/5)

We do not such a unique and comprehensive book over the topic of *Usool e Tafseer*. It is often observed the thinkers write some pages over such topics but the book of *Shah Wali ullah* is very short but it has comprehensive grip over all topics. He has also given comprehensive note as preface as:

"He has hope with the blessing of Allah as the students may get excellent knowledge over this booklet and its understanding. The student should grip over its basic thoughts. He would also find such an unlimited way of understanding of Quranic knowledge as if they would spend their entire life then they could not be able to understanding it fully." (Dehlvi, Shah Wali ullah 1970, p. iv)

The biggest and outstanding aspect of this book is that he first time divided the Quran in five big chapters or headings. So we do not find such a great distribution of Quran in other author's work. In addition to this *Shane Nazool* he has different point of view as the evils presented in the society of the period of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) are also available in the present society.

So the background (*Shane Nazool*) regarding dignity of the Holy Quran is that it is for all periods and it has universal reality. So he has also reduced the cancelled (*Mansookh*) verses from five hundred to just only five.

"Having read out his book (*Al Fauz ul kabir*) the previous religions showed the evils of the society and weaknesses. Therefore, in the presence of the teachings of the Holy Quran the Muslims generations can enhance their beauty and curb down the evils from the society. The Muslim generation should also think that the evils of the past periods may not involve in the Islamic thoughts." (Nadvi, 1984, p. 153/5)

Shah Wali ullah has translated Quran in Persian language and this translation was the outstanding one in its sense. It was complete and comprehensive translation work. In addition to this he has also written a very outstanding written work. This book has also distinction that it is part of a syllabus in the most famous traditional Islamic educational institution and universities of Sub-continent. The name of this book is *Al Fauz ul kabir*. But actually this book is in the Persian language. After that this book was also translated in Arabic language by famous learned people. Great scholar *Muhammad Munir Aldmashqi* who also translated it in Arabic and he belonged to Al Azhar University

Egypt. Its one translation was also made by *Suleman Nadvi Alhusaini* and it is completed by all respects and it also considered the masterpiece of Arabic books.

Shah Wali ullah has also written a literary description of *Al Fauz ul kabil* which is also famous by the name of *Fath ul khabeer*. He also took the attention of the Islamic students and he has written in the preface of the Quran's translation as:

"If you work according to the spirit of justice then the gist of the Quran is that guideline and spiritual light should be got by the teachings of Quran. The accent of Quran is not required although it is also important. The Muslims do not understand the theme and deep meanings of the Holy Quran so such person cannot get the actual guide line by the Holy Quran as who does not understand the meaning of the Holy Quran." (Dehlvi Shah Wali ullah 1973 p.iiiv)

The object of the Holy Quran is that people should pay attention over the theme of the Holy Quran. They should recite it, understand it, and mold their lives according to the spirit of its teachings. He believes on this reality that the recitation of the Holy Quran, its understanding is so simple but it is the reality and fact for the restoration of the soul of human being. It also purifies the soul of human being. He also says that:

"This point should be kept in mind that the Quran was sent for all human being. The prosperity and establishment of mind is under Quranic message. It has no discrimination about Arabic or no Arabic people, even for villager or a citizen." (Dehlvi, Shah Wali ullah 1970, p. 41)

Dr. Saeeda Iqbal had described the thought provoking ideas of *Shah Wali ullah* in following wordings:

"His first principle is simple one. Religious knowledge is not a paradox. It is basically for the guidance of the common man. Hence as far as possible (and the possibility is stretchable to a very great extent) take the literal, common sense meaning of the Quran and refrain from interpretation. The people have become so interested and absorbed in interpretations and in analyzing the allegories and similes of the Quran that the real purpose of the language i.e. of guidance, of reformation and purification of individuals and society, is totally overshadowed...As the teacher of the Quran in his father's school, he practically experienced that the intent of the language of the Quran is lost sight of and the people have become busy in a game of words and equivocations." (Iqbal, Dr. Saeeda 1980, p. 90)

The third son of *Shah Wali ullah*, Shah Abdul Qader was born in 1163AH, according to 1769AD in Delhi.

"Shah Abdul Qader got his basic teachings and learning by his father and when his father died his elder brother Shah Abdul Aziz gave him education." (Kashmiri, Anwar Shah 1982, p. 205/2)

Shah Abdul Qader died at the age of 63 in 1230AH according to 1814AD. Their teachings and services are superb and they cannot be ignored at any cost. All such efforts were made in the declining period Shah Abdul Qader had deep love and dedication to Quran. Therefore, he imparted the knowledge of Islamic for the period of forty years. He gave such basic teachings in a mosque *Akbar Abadi*. During this period he also translated Quran in Urdu language. His work is "*Mouzah ul Quran*" which has showed his deep love and dedication and thought provoking love to Quran and its teachings. The advantages of such teachings are unlimited and they are also comprehensive.

Deputy Nazir Ahmad wrote about his sons as:

"When people got three translation work of the Holy Quran, one was in Persian language by *Shah Wali ullah*, two more translation by one Shah Abdul Qader and one by Shah Rafi ud Deen, then everyone got encouragement to translation work of the Holy Quran. But except the members of the Shah's family no one can claim as interpreter of the Holy Quran. Their translation work is only the translation or copy of the Translation work of Shah's sons. They have changed some extent and made minor amendments in them and showed their own work." (Dehlvi, Dupty Nazeer Ahmad 1998, p. 9)

Dr. Molvi Abdul Haq writes about "*Mouzah ul Quran*":

"The translation work of Shah Abdul Qader is so much outstanding and superb and the other works have not such outstanding value. But it is beyond comprehension that why the need of other translation works was felt." (Haq, Dr. Molvi Abdul 1984, p. 172/2)

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan how also translated the Holy Quran and he also wrote in his book "*Athaar u Sanadeed*" that:

"His translation work of the Holly Quran is the biggest Identification of Urdu Dictionaries" (Khan, Sir Syed Ahmad 1974, p. 262)

Syed Salman Nadvi has also described about the translation of Quran of Shah as:

"The Translation of Shah Abdul Qader can be judged in a better understanding by those people who have a little bit understanding of the Holy Quran." (Feroz Son's, Urdu Encyclopedia 1984. P.633)

Therefore the translation work of the Holy Quran by *Shah Abdul Qader* is a milestone towards the learning and teaching of the Holy Quran. Shah had deep and devout love and affection to the Holy Quran. He studied the Holy Quran for a long time and he consider its all fundamental and basic points. He also remained in the Mosque of "*Akbar Abadi*" for long time for this purpose during this period he imparted the knowledge of the Holy Quran to other people. His outstanding work "*Mouzah ul Quran*" was his fabulous literary work towards the comprehensiveness in its depth. Therefore his superb Quranic Literary will be the source of Knowledge for coming generation.

The dignity of the translation work of the Holy Quran of Shah Abdul Qader is that its positive aspects are uncountable. But it was the work of human being so there are some opinion and description about these work and some school of thought have not appreciated them, as the verse of the Holy Quran يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ (Al Bakarah2: 275) and verse كَالَّذِي اسْتَهْوَتْهُ الشَّيَاطِينُ (Al Anam6: 71)

Shah Sahib has described both verses regarding devil (Shaitaan) as Jin which has not been proved by commentators of Quran (Mufasssireen) or companions of Prophet.

The grand personality of Shah Abdul Qader has deep understanding about the religious and social matters he also proved himself regarding solution of the fiqh problems he also followed the Imam Abu Hanifa and his religious mutual understanding about the solution of the Islamic issues. Therefore he is considered to follow the single entity and cult, which is not regarding to the great Islamic personality i.e. Shah Abdul Qader.

Conclusion and Future Recommendation

Concisely, this movement of *Shah Wali ullah* become successful in ideological and scholastic fields, translations of Quran by his sons is its proof and after which encouraged the other people of Sub-Continent of such Quranic service likewise to create passion among the public for the comprehension of Quran, the succession for the Quran lecture which was established, was also started by the family of *Shah Wali ullah*. Shah Abdul Aziz was its pioneer but practically this movement achieved its greatest exploit that was it first time in the history of Sub-Continent, Shah with his substantial argument made it acknowledged this rule the purpose of Quran if discipline of self and character building then to present it before the public for direct study is the pertinent strategy. Every person who keeps an eye on ideological history of Sub-Continent has acknowledged his success.

Attempts should be made to promote scholarly exploits of *Shah Wali ullah* and his family on world level. New researches should write their thesis on various literary facets (Quran, Hadith, Islamic Jurisprudence, and Sophism) of *Shah Wali ullah* in MPhil and PhD. In contemporary era, on the basis of books of Sophism by *Shah Wali ullah*, world peace can be obtained.

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