**Shah Wali-Ullah (1703-1762)**

The attempt to revive Islam in the subcontinent was made by many social reformers. Among them, Shah Wali-Ullah was the most prominent and outstanding scholar, as he was also one of the first people to think about the empowerment of Muslims. His family was also well-known for being practising Muslims, so he already had a particular family influence.

**Early Life:**

Shah Wali-Ullah was born in 1703 in Delhi during the powerful rule and era of Aurangzeb Alamgir. Shah Wali-Ullah's real name was Qutub Uddin. He belonged to a very religious and practising family. His father's name was Shah Abdul Rahim, and he was a well-respected Muslim scholar among the Muslims of the subcontinent. Shah Abdul Rahim was one of the leaders who founded Madrassa-e-Rahimiya, located in Delhi. He was also a teacher there.

Shah Wali-Ullah was a respected member of Aurangzeb Alamgir's era and played an essential role in completing the 'Fatwa-e-Alamgiri'.

**Early Education:**

Shah Wali-Ullah received his early education from Madrassa-e-Rahimiya under his father and learnt about tafsir, hadith, etc. After Shah Wali-Ullah's father died in 1718, he began teaching at the madrassa for 12 years on and off.

Then in 1724, he went to Saudi Arabia for pilgrimage and to continue his higher studies in Madinah. In Madinah, Shah Wali-Ullah studied under the leadership of Sheikh Abu Tahir Bin Ibrahim and was profoundly motivated and encouraged by him.

He returned to Delhi in 1732; by this time, the downfall of the Mughal Empire had become abundantly clear, and everyone realized that it was the end of Aurangzeb.

Shah Wali-Ullah decided to revive Islam in the hearts of the Muslims.

**Causes for the Revival of Islam:**

When he returned to Delhi and saw the affairs and situations of Muslims, it saddened and disturbed him immensely. He saw that Muslims were moving away from Islam, ignoring the teachings of Islam and the Holy Quran, ignoring the practices of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H). He realized quickly that this was because they were unaware and ignorant of the Arabic language, so they could not understand or think over the verses of the Holy Quran. They could not grasp the actual teachings of the verses.

He also noticed that because the Hindus and Muslims lived together in one country, they picked up many Hindu practices, and the Hindu culture and religion were getting mixed with the Islamic culture and practices. The Muslims adopted a lot of their superstitious practices while living there.

The Marathas and the Sikhs were oppressing the Muslims, so they could not practice their religion peacefully. Muslims were forgetting their duties as rulers and as subjects. The Muslims were creating divisions among themselves, were divided into many sects, and in-fightings were becoming increasingly common. Shah Wali-Ullah wanted to act swiftly and unite the Muslims by removing sectarianism and reviving true Islam.

**Services:**

Muslims had deteriorated into a vulnerable and disorganized group of people. They had no actual role model to follow. If Muslims were to regain their power, they would require strong leadership. Shah Wali-Ullah wanted to spread awareness about politics among Muslims in India.

In his eyes, Muslims were ignorant about Islam. They were far away from Islam's teachings and the Holy Quran's lessons. By emphasizing the importance of Quranic teachings, Muslims would not only sharpen their knowledge but will also generate a feeling of unity and a sense of community among the Muslims of the subcontinent.

He provided many services to the Muslims of the subcontinent; the essential services include the following:

* The most important of Shah Wali-Ullah's services was the translation of the Holy Quran into Persian because, at the time, Persian was the primary language of Muslims of the subcontinent. He wished that Muslims should follow the actual teachings of Islam and the examples set by the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) by knowing and understanding Arabic.
* Shah Wali-Ullah wanted to unite the Muslims as one. He did excellent and hard work to increase the knowledge of Islam and their overall education. He instructed his students towards the learning and research of Islam. He wanted to create a good society based on Islamic morals and spiritual values.
* Shah Wali-Ullah's literary works include writing 51 books, mainly on 'fiqh' and 'hadith'. He wrote 23 books in the Arabic language and 28 in the Persian language. His writing in Persian made the people understand the fundamentals of Islam and Islamic teachings.
* Among his many books is his most celebrated work, 'Hujjatul-al-Baligah', in which he carefully and precisely explains the principles and fundamentals of Islam, and 'Izalat-ul-Akhfa', in which he describes the Holy Quran.
* He also initiated the concept of 'Integration' among the Muslims by asking the Muslims not to get involved in sectarianism. He also tried his best to remove the misunderstanding between Shia and Sunni, for which he was significantly appreciated.
* He emphasized economic stability and equality of justice. He wanted to create a Muslim society on the basic principle of 'Adl' (social justice) because, at that time, the low-class Muslims were not being appropriately paid and 'Tawazan' (equilibrium), which would generate money in the Muslim community by the method of Zakat.
* In 1761, the 3rd Battle of Panipat was fought between the Muslims and the Marathas. The Muslims were falling heavily in numbers. Shah Wali-Ullah wrote a letter to Ahmed Shah Abdali of Afghanistan asking for his help to crush the Marathas. Ahmed Shah Abdali came with his army, and the Marathas were defeated. Shah Wali-Ullah also tried his best to have Ahmed Shah Abdali's help against the Sikh, but he had to return to Afghanistan.

Shah Wali-Ullah's death occurred in 1762. He had three sons named Shah Abdul Aziz, Shah Abdul Rafi and Shah Abdul Qadir, who further empowered and united the Muslim community by translating the Holy Quran into Urdu.

**Conclusion:**

Shah Wali-Ullah was a well-known Muslim leader and the most successful reformer during that period because he revived Islam in Delhi and the surrounding areas. Shias and Sunnis respected him as he wanted to remove their differences. He had used the power of pen instead of the power of the sword, so he was against any harsh approach, which proved him to be more influential than others. He wanted to spread Islam peacefully according to the teachings of Islam. He was a reputed person, and the people were inspired by his gentle nature; he was a role model for other Muslims. He got most of the desired targets during his lifetime.

**Importance:**

Shah Wali-Ullah can be viewed as one of the most influential people, even today. Young adults should consider him a religious role model to follow in his footsteps and be closer to Islam. As we see in our surroundings and everyday life, the younger generation is moving farther away from Islam. We could use his teachings today about pondering over the verses of the Quran, learning Arabic or maybe learning the holy Quran in our mother tongue. Also, Shah Wali-Ullah set a great example of teaching Islam peacefully and standing up for your religion, protecting the weak and spreading justice.

Written By:

Laiba Fatima

K22-5195

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