The Recovery of Muslims’ Past &
the Others
Islamic Perspective of History

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# TABLE OF CONTENT

*Foreword from the Editor. i-ix*

*Acknowledgement. ix*

**Chapter 1. 1-14**
Arshad Islam, *Shah Walil Allah Delhavi: Life and Thoughts of Islamic Counter-Esotericist in the waning Timurid India.*

**Chapter 2. 15-74**
Ataullah Bogdan Kopanski, *The colonial crimes against humanity and massacres of Muslims in the French-Italian occupied Maghreb. 1832-1962 CE*

**Chapter 3. 75-95**
Fauziah Fadhil, *Islam in the Land of the Rising Sun: Spread, history and issues.*

**Chapter 4. 97-146**
Ghassan Taha Yaseen, and Djamel Dilm, *Sino-Arabic script in Islamic Art and Architecture of China with special reference to Xi’an Mosque.*

**Chapter 5. 147-168**
Noordalela bint Baharudin, *Vestiges of the western European heraldry and vexillology in Malaysia.*

**Chapter 6. 169-190**

**Chapter 7. 191-218**
Ataullah Bogdan Kopanski, *The political myth and origin of the Anglo-American Israelitism.*

**Chapter 8. 219-232**
A. Rahman Tang Abdullah, *Development of Waqf institutions in the colonial and post-colonial Malaysi*

**Chapter 9. 233-248**

**Chapter 10. 249-280**

Discourse:

Chapter 11.281-306
Caksu Ali, Ibn Khaldun versus Hegel: Theodicy and Casuality in History
Muhammad Ismail Christopher Marcinkowski, Remarks on Herbert Illig’s Thesis of “Phantom centuries”.

Chapter 12. 307-326
Ahmed Abu Shouk
Hassan A. Ibrahim,
Hafez Zakaria,

Afterword 327

Contributors’ brief curricula vitae 329
CHAPTER 1
Shah Wali Allah Dehlavi (1703-1762CE): Life and Thoughts of the Islamic Counter-Esotericist in the waning Timurid India.

By Arshad Islam

Shah Wali Allah Dehlavi was a distinguished alim and polymath of the Islamic India. Unlike the Sufis of his times, he did not withdraw himself to his hujrah (cell). His century was one of the most difficult periods in the history of Muslims in the Indian subcontinent, during which they lost much of their political influence there. Shah Wali Allah sensed the danger ahead and tried to instill an intellectual awakening among Muslims not only in their socio-religious and economic fields but also inculcated Islamic ethos in their daily life; with power slipping from them to the Sikhs in the north-west and to the Marathas in the south-west, the Shah tried to awaken the Muslims from their political slumber. He was an intellectual and visionary reformer of the waning Muslim power in India who had his unique ideas on the transformation of the increasingly decadent ruling elite of power and the rapidly pauperized society. His thoughts are found in his magnum opus Hujjatullah al Baligha in various chapters particularly in Shariah, Adalah (justice), Iritfaqat (social evolution), khilafoh and ijtihad. This paper examines Shah Wali Allah’s selected thoughts from his Arabic and Persian writings, including secondary works in Urdu and English.

Keywords: Reformer, philosopher, political thinker, ijtihad and iritfaqat.

Family Background