

The Recovery of the Muslims' Past and the Others

Islamic Perspective of History

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2011CE/1453AH

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IIUM Press

Published by:
IIUM Press
International Islamic University Malaysia

First Edition, 2011
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Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Ataullah Bogdan Kopanski: The Recovery of Muslims' Past & the Others
Islamic Perspective of History

ISBN: 978-967-418-061-4

Member of Majlis Penerbitan Ilmiah Malaysia · MAPIM
(Malaysian Scholarly Publishing Council)

Printed by :
IIUM PRINTING SDN.BHD.
No. 1, Jalan Industri Batu Caves 1/3
Taman Perindustrian Batu Caves
Batu Caves Centre Point
68100 Batu Caves
Selangor Darul Ehsan
Tel: +603-6188 1542 / 44 / 45 Fax +603-6188 1543
EMAIL: iiumprinting@yahoo.com

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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 stupor. 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), *Irtifaqat* (social evolution), *khilafah* 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 *irtifaqat*.

Family Background