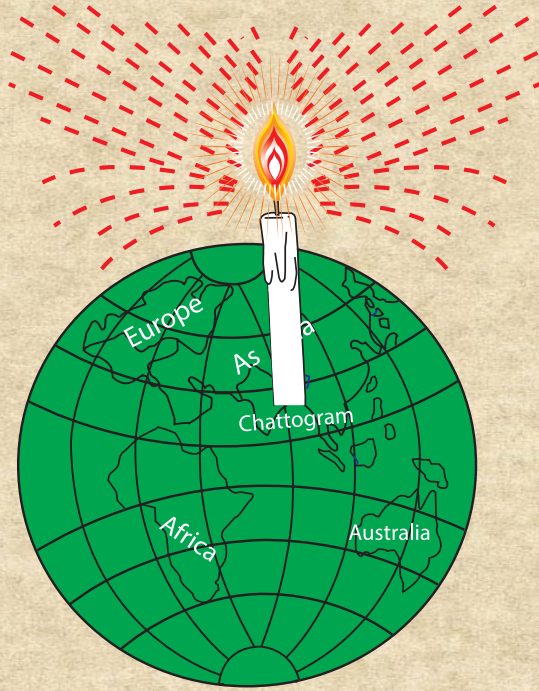


Wilāyat-e-Muṭlaqa



Khademul Foqara

Syed Delawor Hossain

Maizbhandari

Wilāyat-e Muṭlaqa



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Dedication To

Hazrat Mawlana Shah Sufi

Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari (q.)

Who is the murshid of my murshid, my liege lord

Hazrat Mawlana Shah Sufi

Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari

As his humble disciple

“I have been waiting and will be waiting. If not here, then surely over there. If not in light, then surely in darkness, as only in darkness, the moon shines. I have been yours, it is time you became mine. If you are not happy with my smile, my tears are yours. You will talk, I will listen. Let me know what you want. I want to want what you want.”

Muhammad Muhi Uddin

Patron's Note

Allah is the one, who deserves all praises and gratitude. Salutation and peace be upon His prophet Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh). I also offer my salutation to Ghawthul Azam Hazrat Syed Ahmad Ullah Maizbhandari (q.).

The concept and nature of civilization, culture and ideology have changed in our contemporary world. Once they were closely related with geographically restricted population. However, with the blessings of technological advancements, human society is witnessing an unprecedented inter-mingling of the cultures and ideologies that contributed in shaping human behaviour. Our cognition, perception, moral values and behaviour are going through a historical transformation. Humanity is in dire need of guidance and spiritual nurturing that can guide it through this transformation. Spiritual teachings of Ghawthul Azam Syed Ahmad Ullah Maizbhandari (q.) have the criteria to offer that universal platform, as they are sourced in Holy Quran and Hadith. Therefore, Maizbhandari Tariqa and its teachings have to be presented before the world population according to their understanding and capacity.

My honourable *murshid* and father Hazrat Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari (q.) outlined the philosophy of Maizbhandari Tariqa in his book *Wilāyat-e-Muṭlaqa*. Since it was written in Bengali, its knowledge has been

limited to the Bengali readers. I would like to commend my *murīd* Muhammad Muhi Uddin, who took the initiative to translate it into English and to convey the message of Ghawthul Azam Maizbhandari (q.) to the wider audience. I sincerely pray that may Allah accept his contribution and grant him the blessings and effusion of Hazrat Ghawthul Azam Maizbhandari (q.).

I would also like to thank every dedicated soul, who has been working hard to make this project successful. I earnestly pray for their success in this world and hereafter. May Allah bless them with the effusion of Hazrat Ghawthul Azam Maizbhandari (q.).

I would also like to mention my Nayeab Sajjadah Nasheen Syed Irfanul Hoque for his contribution. He successfully took the initiatives to preach and practice Maizbhandari teachings and culture not only in its original adobe, but also in academic sphere. I pray for him and for everyone around him.

Syed Emdadul Hoque

Sajjadah Nasheen, Gausia Ahmadia Manzil

Maizbhandari Darbar Sharif

Fatikchhari, Chattogram, Bangladesh,

Trustee, Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI)

Date: 15 January 2023 AD, 1 Magh 1429 Bangla

Editorial: Second Edition

All praise and gratitude are due to The Almighty Allah. We send abundance of salutations and blessings to His beloved prophet Muhammad (pbuh). I offer my sincerest respect and veneration to Gawthul Azam Hazrat Mawlana Syed Ahmad Ullah Maizbhandari (Q.)

The book *Wilayat-e-Mutlaqa*, authored by Hazrat Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari (r.), is one of the classical primary sources to study Maizbhandari Tariqa and its philosophy. It is also considered as one of the earliest contributions to Sufi Studies in Bengali language.

This book navigates a wayfarer in his spiritual journey, detailing temporal and spiritual instructions for inner-purification to face off the challenges he may face in his spiritual wayfaring. The author's ingenious presentation made it more relevant to our everyday life, as he crafted it in the context of modernism, whereby, an individual's religiosity is constantly challenged by scepticism, atheism and religious bigotry and fanaticism.

Its English translation was published by Darul Irfan Research Institute and the project was supervised by the incumbent Sufi Master of Maizbhandar Darbar Sharif Hazrat Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari (May Allah extend his merciful shadow on us). Since the first edition was out of stock in a very short time, we took initiative to

publish its second edition to meet the demands of the readers and the researchers. In addition to this, we have already published its e-copy.

No efforts have been spared to correct the mistakes and errors of the first edition; nonetheless, we would be obliged if the valued readers enlighten us with their feedbacks and suggestions.

May accept our efforts, love and contribution, and bless us with best of rewards.

Regards

Syed Irfanul Hoque

Managing Trustee, Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI)

Nayeb Sajjadah Nasheen

Gausia Ahmadia Manzil

Maizbhandari Darbar Sharif

Fatikchhari, Chattogram, Bangladesh

Date : 5 June 2024 (27 Dū al-Qa‘dah 1445)

Editor's Note

Allah is the owner of all praises for all the favours and mercy He has bestowed upon us. May His blessings be upon His chosen friend and Messenger Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh), who guided us out of darkness. My sincere salam be upon the great saint Ghawthul Azam Hazrat Syed Ahmad Ullah Maizbhandari (q.)

Maizbhandari Tariqa is one of the fastest growing Sufi orders in Bangladesh and its teachings and spiritual radiance are now spreading out in different continents. This Tariqa promotes tolerance, respect, cohesion, justice, equality, adherence to divine ordinance, compassion, divine love, performing religious rites and many more qualities that are central to build a peaceful and safe society. Thus, it inherently has the qualities to bring people from different background to a united platform without hindering anyone's diversity.

Our honourable *murshid* Hazrat Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari established Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI) to enhance and deepen the practice and understanding of Maizbhandari Tariqa and to disseminate the aroma of Maizbhandari spirituality to the wider communities. Under his spiritual shelter and guidance, DIRI has been able to achieve many

remarkable milestones within short period of time since its inception in 2019. Given its importance, translating the book *Wilāyat-e-Muṭlaqa* was one of our priority projects. We are grateful to Allah that DIRI is able to present its English translation. We hope that non-Bengali researchers and readers will benefit from this valuable resource.

Wilāyat-e-Muṭlaqa is a phenomenal work in Bengali authored by Hazrat Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari (q.) popularly known as the vice-gerent of Ghawthul Azam Maizbhandari (q.). This book takes its readers to the deepest sanctuary of spirituality and devotion, outlining the path of a wayfarer's journey to their lord. The book, a unique source to understand maizbhandari ideology and teachings and one of the earliest Bengali publications on Sufism, is perhaps the most popular book among the maizbhandari devotees.

In addition to this project, DIRI has, so far, successfully arranged three international e-conferences on Sufism. It regularly facilitates Sufi dialogues, inter-faith dialogues, research seminars and workshops, Sufi publications and academic scholarships at post-graduation and PhD level.

I would like to extend my cordial appreciation and thanks to the translator, composer and everyone involved in this project for their sincere efforts and contribution. I pray that with the *wasila* of our *murshid*, may Allah shower us with the *fayd* and blessings of

Hazrat Ghawthul Azam Syed Ahmad Ullah
Maizbhandari (q.)

This is a provisional edition. We will be obliged, if the
valued readers and scholars notify us of any mistakes or
improvements.

May Allah accept our good deeds and forgive our sins
and mistakes.

Regards

Syed Irfanul Hoque

Nayeb Sajjadah Nasheen, Gausia Ahmadia Manzil
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Managing Trustee, Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI)

Date: 15 January 2023 AD, 1 Magh 1429 Bangla

Translator's Note

All praises are due to Allah for His gracious favour and blessings. Peace and salutation be upon the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh). I offer my sincere salutation to the founder of Maizbhandari Tariqa Ghawthul Azam Hazrat Syed Ahmad Ullah Maizbhandari (q.)

Hazrat Mawlana Shah Sufi Syed Delawor Hossain Maizbhandari (q.) is undoubtedly one of the most authentic thinkers in Maizbhandari sphere, who managed to set himself as a precedence in defining the Maizbhandari culture. His masterpiece, *Wilāyat-e-Muṭlaqa*, carries his legacy of spiritual and scholarly contribution. It is one of the earliest publications in Bengali on Sufism in general and on Maizbhandari Tariqa in particular.

I am humbled and honoured that Allah granted me the opportunity to translate this important work into English. It is one of the richest texts that I have had the pleasure to translate and the one that will always stay with me. I tried to remain truthful in my translation and to be as close as possible to the original text; however, my primary objective has been to communicate the inner meaning of the text to keep the reader in touch with the spiritual background of the script. Nonetheless, there were some places where the source text seemed highly metaphorical and uncertain, and henceforth, the translation could only

be provisional in some respect. I confess that there have been many areas that posed formidable challenges that can only be overcome with further study and mercy from Allah. If there is any shortcoming, it should be attributed to the translator, not to the honourable author. Regarding the translation, I note the following:

- ✓ The honourable author frequently quoted texts from Sufi literatures such as *Fususul Hikam*, *Mathnawi* of Rumi, *Gulistan* or *Diwan-e-Hafiz* etc. He translated them into Bengali with his own flavour. In English edition, I translated the quoted texts from their original source and put Hazrat Syed Delawor Hossain's (q.) additional explanation within the bracket to retain the flavour. Hopefully, the reader will be able to distinguish between the two.
- ✓ In terms of translating the quotations in *Wilāyat-e-Muṭlaqa*, I would like to acknowledge taking help from *The Seals of Wisdom* by Aysha Bewley, *Mathnawi* of Jalal Uddin Rumi by R. Nicholson, *Divan of Hafiz* by Gertrude Lowthian Bell and *Kanzul Iman* by Imam Ahmad Riza Khan (r.).
- ✓ I endeavoured to cross check the quotations mentioned in the Bengali edition. The references are mentioned in the footnotes according to my verification and are based on contemporary publications. This is why references, such as volume or page numbers are different from the Bengali edition.
- ✓ In Bengali edition, original texts of the quotations including the verses of the Quran were mentioned in the footnotes, whereas they are mentioned in the

main text in the English edition. Hopefully, it will make cross check and references comprehensible to the readers.

- ✓ In some places, I added my explanations followed by ‘translator’, so that they can be distinguished from the main text.
- ✓ In some places, the honourable author only mentioned the number of a verse or a part of a Hadith. I took the liberty to mention the full text of the Hadith or the verse in the footnotes. So that the readers can easily find and sequence the evidence.
- ✓ I understand that there is another English translation of *Wilāyat-e-Muṭlaqa*. With utmost respect and honesty, I would like to confess that as of today, I intentionally have not read that translation. From academic perspective, it can be deemed as a wrong decision. However, I wanted my translation to be authentic and not influenced by any precedence.

I, humbly and with utmost humility remember my Murshid Hazrat Mawlana Shah Sufi Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari, whose blessings and *du‘ā* have been the provisions and destination of my journey.

I also offer my sincerest gratitude to his spiritual heir Syed Irfanul Hoque Maizbhandari, who inspired me when I was depressed; who encouraged me when I was frustrated; who guided me when I felt lost; whose selfless involvement and continuous guidance deserve all the credits.

This translation greatly benefitted from the critical insights and meticulous attention to details of Professor

Kazi Md. Siful Aspea, who has the rarest ability to turn any argument a pleasure. I wish one day I would be able to sit with him and argue the whole day. Special thanks to Professor Mohammad Mahbubul Alam, Sheikh Shakil Mahmud and all those who supported in publishing of this book. I pray to Allah that He gives them the best of rewards.

My daughters Nabiha (9) and Madiha (5) have always been patient and supportive despite their young age and often would guard the door so that their *Baba* (father) was not disturbed. One day they will be grown up and will, Insha Allah, read this book. May Allah bless them and protect them with the *wasīla* of Hazrat Ghawthul Azam Maizbhandari (q.)

I pray for my *marḥūm* parents. May Allah forgive them and grant them to *jannah*.

Muhammad Muhi Uddin

Birmingham

United Kingdom.

Sunday

15 January 2023AD

1 Magh 1429 Bangla

Transliteration Table

Following method was applied in Romanization of Arabic words.

b = ب	z = ز	f = ف
t = ت	s = س	q = ق
th = ث	sh = ش	k = ك
j = ج	ṣ = ص	l = ل
ḥ = ح	ḍ = ض	m = م
kh = خ	ṭ = ط	n = ن
d = د	ẓ = ظ	h = ه
dh = ذ	‘ = ع	w = و
r = ر	gh = غ	y = ي

Short: a = اَ; i = اِ; u = اُ

Long: ā = اَآ; ī = اِي; ū = اُو

Diphthong: ay = اِي; aw = اُو

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Dedication (Bengali Edition)

To my honourable grandfather, pioneer of the saints, *Ghawth-ul-Azam*, Shah Sufi Mawlana Syed Ahmad Ullah (Q.), whose noble teachings inspired me to indulge in an arduous task like penning ‘*Wilāyat-e-Muṭlaqa*’.

I dedicated all rights to *Anjuman-e-Muttabayin-e-Ghaus-e-Maizbhandari*, an organization that bears his holy ethics and ethos, with an intention for its universal development.

I shall feel obliged if the *Anjuman* strives to make the great wisdom of ‘*Wilāyat-e-Muṭlaqa*’ comprehensible to the general people.

Syed Delawor Hossain

Statement of Third Edition

I would like to express my gratitude to Allah, The Almighty, with Whose unlimited mercy, I could publish the third edition of '*Wilāyat-e-Muṭlaqa*', after its second edition had been out of stock.

Additional discussions have been added in some places to give an elaborative explanation to the readers, who, as a result, will be swayed by the universal light of this *Sufi* civilization.

It will also help to realize the role and importance of Hazrat Aqdas's spiritual guidance, *Uṣūl-e-Sab'a*, for the salvation of deluded humanity in this era of ethical declension.

The valued reader will also be able to understand his spiritual status. He endeavoured to steer the course of the noble hearts by introducing 'Sevenfold Salvation Methods' to safeguard the intellects of world civilization from destruction.

He strove to enrich mankind by replacing their animalistic nature with the treasure of humanity and elevate their moral health and character in this temporal world. This is enforced by the power of unity and creativity.

In the sphere of spiritual excellence, he sat on the throne of divine communion, by exerting uncountable miraculous activities. Like Hazrat *Piran-e-Pir* said, "The sound of my triumph echoed in the heaven and the earth. The morning sun of good fate has risen for me."

I founded *Anjuman-e-Muttabeyene Ghause Maizbhandari* with a noble intention. I donated, as before, two thousand copies of the third edition so that it may achieve the goal it was established for.

With kind regards

The Author

Author's Reflections

I begin with the name of Allah, who is worthy of all praises, who blessed mankind with lingual eloquence to articulate the jewels of the intoxicated hearts. Peace and salutation be upon His beloved one, pioneer of the universal humanity, the prophet (pbuh) along with his descendents and companions. I offer my sincerest gratitude to Allah.

I also pay my tributes to His beloved ones, who left an everlasting legacy in the spiritual world of Divine knowledge through their rigorous perseverance, and perfectly embodied individual freedom, peace, discipline, obedience and sincerity. In every age, they were successful in their spiritual struggles and were honoured as the *khalifa* of Allah.

Subsequently, it was transformed into '*wilāyat-e-muṭlaqa-e-aḥmadi*' and was manifested in the personality of the Final Ghawthul A'zam Hazrat Mawlana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah (Q.).

I aspired to author this book to shed light on such a spirituality whose revolutionary influence has naturally been able to awaken the hearts and sway them with Divine love, aspiration and frugal endurance, even after the demise of Hazrat Maizbhandari (Q.).

More people than before continued to embrace, in myriad, the main stream of this spirituality, through the contribution and deputation of many perfected saints, who were enlightened and honoured with this spirituality.

By the passage of time, his companions gradually passed away. At the same time, the rays of this spiritual sun naturally illuminated people of far and wide in Asia, Europe and America, and they developed interests in understanding and knowing this *wilāyat*.

There are many questions surrounding this *wilāyat*; ‘its exclusiveness and speciality; and its contributions to the world humanity. Is it a part of traditional Sufism or is there something new? What are the principles of the followers of the founder of this *wilāyat*?’

In order to get answers to those questions, the former district magistrate of Chittagong, Mr. Macanangi CSP visited Maizbhandar Darbar Sharif with three other guests to attend the 52nd ‘*urs sharīf*’ of Hazrat on Friday 10th of Magh 1364 Bangla, 24 January 1958. They took some pictures of ‘*urs sharīf*’ and the fairs, among which three pictures of Juma Prayer were noteworthy.

In a meeting with me in the lounge, they said, “we heard many negative accounts about Maizbhandar during our visit in Bangladesh. But from what we had witnessed at Maizbhandar, we realized that Maizbhandar is everything.

We are visiting on behalf of our religious mission to gather information about Maizbhandar in Pakistan and Azmir in India. We hope we will be able to provide them with correct accounts that may quench their thirst for knowledge about this *wilāyat*. It will also help us in our discussion in forthcoming World Religious Conference’ organised by us”.

The following year on 23/01/1959, an American guest, Mr. Robert Fowler wrote in the comment book:

“I am extremely happy to have been a guest in the home of the religious leader and to view the activities of a great

festival as is taking place. We are appreciative of your wonderful hospitality.

Sd./ Robert W. Fowler.

J.C.A Agriculture Adviser

23.1.59

Many reliable saints, who had his companionship, and could answer those inquisitive questions, have passed away. Many among the later generations, who did not have his companionship or attendance, resort to fabricated narrations and vague activities because of their ignorance about this *wilāyat*.

The Holy Quran says,

فخلف من بعدهم خلف أضاعوا الصلاة واتبعوا الشهوات فسوف يلقون غيا

“And after them came the unworthy successors who squandered prayer and pursued their own desires, so they will soon encounter the forest of Gai in hell.”¹

Because of the prevalence of such people in the society, it is natural that the societal structure will take a distorted shape. World renowned scholar Bernard Shaw was once asked as to why he did not accept Islam. He replied, “Where can I go? Muslims are not as in Islam. If there is any true Islamic society, I would definitely have gone there”.

After close scrutiny of the commentaries and activities of some people, who claim to be the next in line of succession, it appears that they are in pursuit of presenting a distorted form of this *wilāyat* for a reason whatsoever, which naturally makes the truth seekers confused and misguided.

¹ Surah Maryam, 59

Apart from that there are some vagabonds, who claim themselves as Maizbhandari or Azmiri only to cover up their alcoholism, laziness and disqualification; because, these two Sufi Orders allow songs with honest intention.

Although singing innocent songs with music is not forbidden in any religion, the respected *mawlawīs* (scholars) generally have been forbidding all types of music. The abovementioned people try to claim affiliation to these Sufi Orders as an easy way to cover up their alcoholism and other bad traits. However, they might not have any master-aspirant affiliation with these two holy darbars. On the other hand, the professional *pīrs*, who earn their sustenance by giving religious speech or in the name of mosque and madrasa, propagate indiscriminate propaganda against Maizbhandar Sharif and Azmir Sharif, only to incite social provocation against someone or to please the audience.

There are also some people who are unable to distinguish between true and false and have bought into the one-sided blatant propaganda, consequently, they become used to slandering this Order, wrongly thinking it as non-compliant with the *sharīʿah*.

It seems that their misconceptions, propaganda and unnecessary conflicts will intensify day by day. In order to answer the questions of the missionary guests and for the benefit of the seekers and wayfarers, I was morally compelled to take the initiatives to present the true image of this *wilāyat*, as I was made the Sajjada Noshin by Hazrat Shah Sufi Mawlana Syed Ahmad Ullah (Q.) and as his only living descendent (only living son of his late son Mawlana Syed Foyzul Hoque). I was blessed to have had his direct companionship, attendance and spiritual effusion.

In the third edition, I added some elaborative discussions in some places according to my little knowledge in order to make the book easily understandable for the general people as well as to simplify complex issues. I tried to keep the quoted texts and their translations as closer to their originals without any change or annexation. I am only a narrator in this regard.

Inasmuch as physical health and functional organs are important and necessary for a man, well-being of his mental health and positive outlook should also be paramount, whose absence causes an individual to grow to be a fanatic in both worldly and religious affairs.

As a humble exponent of *ṭarīqat*, I humbly present this book, as a symbol of spiritual service, to the seekers of the truth, who would read it to ponder over the truth with a positive perception and neutral attitude.

I would feel obliged if they feel benefited. I pray you would forgive any mistakes.

Regards

The Author

Chapter 1

Sunnat-e-‘Uẓmā

Nabuwwat and Wilāyat

The greatest human being, the rescuer of the worlds, the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was blessed with two greatest blessings from the Almighty and Ever Merciful Allah. They are *nabuwwat* and *wilāyat*, through which he was granted the highest status and was referred to as the most beloved one of Allah, and eventually was bestowed upon with unrestricted Divine witnessing during the night of ascension (*mi‘rāj*).

The leader of the prophets and the last of them Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) was titled as the concluder and seal of *nabuwwat*. He was the one who first explored the path of unrestricted divine communion with the power of *wilāyat*, and opened the door to achieve the ultimate goal of creation. As a result, prophets, saints, *jinn* and humans prayed to Allah to include them among his *ummah*. This divine gift of him is called *sunnat-e-‘uẓmā*.

Nabuwwat

Nabuwwat is derived from the word ‘*naba*’ (نَبَأَ). It means ‘to inform’. ‘*Nabī*’ is an active participle which means ‘informer’. *Nabuwwat* can be understood as the greatest state of humanity and the nearest one to Allah that correlates with His commands. *Nabuwwat* is a special attribute, which

cannot be achieved through ascetic struggles as Allah bestows it upon whomever He wishes.

There were two types of prophets.

1. **Mursal** (مرسل): Who received divine book.
2. **Ghayr Mursal** (غير مرسل): Who did not receive any divine book and was a follower of the previous prophet.

Nabuwwat is of two kinds.

1. **Nabuwwat-e-‘Āmmah** (النبوة العامة): Which was sent for the whole mankind.
2. **Nabuwwat-e-Khāṣṣah** (النبوة الخاصة): Which was sent for a particular nation.

Wilāyat

The word *wilāyat* (ولاية) is derived from the word ‘*walā*’ (ولاء). ‘*Walā*’ means nearness, a relation of love and intimacy. *Wilāyat* is defined as the close relation with Allah.

Wilāyat is of two kinds:

1. **Wilāyat-e-Īmān** (ولاية الإيمان): This is a general relation with Allah. Every believer can achieve this type of *wilāyat*.
2. **Wilāyat-e-Iḥsān** (ولاية الإحسان): *Wilāyat-e-Iḥsān* is the cherished mystical divine relation and authority bestowed by Allah. Only the prophets and the saints can attain this type of *wilāyat*.

Both *nabuwwat* and *wilāyat* were perfected in the personality of the prophet Muhammad (pbuh). There will

be no prophet after him and there will be no need for one.
But *Wilāyat-e-Iḥsān* will continue to endure forever.

Types of *Wilāyat*

In respect to its methods of attainment, *wilāyat* is classified into four kinds.

1. ***Wilāyat bil Aṣālat*** (الولاية بالأصالة): This type of *wilāyat* is attained naturally. According to Sufi terminology it is called ‘*madarjat*’ or ‘by birth’. It is attained without any ascetic struggle and is bestowed by Allah as a predetermined mercy. This *wilāyat* is usually bestowed in its due time, in line with natural evolution and Divine determination. The saint of this kind is called as ‘*azlī walī*’ or ‘*madarjat walī*’ –born saint.
2. ***Wilāyat bil Warāthat*** (الولاية بالوراثة): It is bestowed by means of spiritual inheritance. It is also termed as ‘*bil Walāyat*-(بالولاية)’.
3. ***Wilāyat bid Dirāsāt*** (الولاية بالدراسات): *Wilāyat bil Dirāsāt* is the mystical knowledge (علم لدنى) achieved through exoteric and esoteric study and spiritual initiation. The Holy Quran confirms that Hazrat Musa (a.) learned about esoteric knowledge from Hazrat Khidr (a.) through external study. Ghawth-e-Samdani Piran-e-Pir (q.) said,
درست العلم حتى صرت قطبا * ونلت السعد من مولى الموالى
“I studied knowledge till I became a pole- *qutb*
And I attained felicity from the Lord of lords.”

4. **Wilāyat bil Malāmat** (الولاية بالملامات): According to Sufi terminology, attaining *wilāyat* through self-blaming and resistance to one's aptitude is called as 'ḥuṣūl-e-mukhālafāt-e-nafs' (حصول مخالفة النفس) or gaining dissent of egoism. In essence, *bil Malāmat* (بالملامات) is the divine power gained through inner struggle and intimidation of *nafs* by continuous resistance to its aptitudes.

A saint who achieved sainthood through such method is called 'malāmiyya walī' (ملامية ولي). Hazi Emdadullah referred to it as 'Sattāriyya'.¹ Hazrat Abu Saleh Hamdullah Qassar (271 A.H.) established 'Malāmiyya Ṭarīqa'.²

Other saints referred to it as 'Ṭayfūrī' or 'Qalandarī'.

'Qalandarī' is attributed to Hazrat Bu Ali Qalandar. His shrine is located in both Kali Sharif and Pani Path in India, where he was buried on the very same day. He supported the concept of 'tawḥīd-ul-adyān' (توحيد الأديان). There is a detailed discussion about 'tawḥīd-ul-adyān' in the book 'Taṣawwuf-e-Islām' in pages 249-250.

The true fact is that all different religions are similar in their essence despite their circumstantial differences. Although they apparently differ in their outward appearances, the essence of religion is one and identical, as the ultimate goal of all religions is Creator. Different groups exist in different

¹ Ziaul Qulub, p. 6

² Taṣawwuf-e-Islam, P- 223-230.

religions. The existence of various groups in different religions is the will of Allah.

This concept is affiliated with Mohiuddin Ibn Arabi (r.), Hazrat Amer bin Faris (r.), Hazrat Jalaluddin Rumi (r.), Hazrat Abdul Karim Jili (r.), Abu Yazid Bostami (r.) et al.

Ṭayfūriyya is related to Hazrat Abu Yazid Bostami (r.). He passed away in 261 AH.¹

Levels of *Wilāyat*

There are three levels of *wilāyat*.

1. *Al Wilāyat al Ṣughrā* (الولاية الصغرى): The saints of this level attained *wilāyat* and achieved a spiritual status higher than that of the general believers.
2. *Al Wilāyat al Wusṭā* (الولاية الوسطى): The saints of this middle level attained *wilāyat* and enjoyed the status higher than that of the angels.
3. *Al Wilāyat al ‘Uẓmā or Kubrā* (الولاية العظمى): The saints of this level are awarded the highest authority. They are authorized to exert influence and spiritual power over all creation. A saint who attained such status is titled as ‘the great saint’ or ‘the holder of *al wilāyat al ‘uẓmā*’.

The *mashrab*-مشرب (temperament) of these saints is further classified into two distinctive categories: namely, *Qutubiyyat*- exertive spiritual authority and *Ghawthiyyat*-rescuing spiritual authority.

Ghawthiyyat (الغوثية): The saint who was awarded the highest rank of rescuing spirituality is titled as *Ghawth-ul-A‘zam*

¹ Aeyna-e-Bari, P. 676:

(الغوث الأعظم) He is bestowed with *wilāyat* naturally (*bil aṣālat*) and he, by the order of Allah, appears as the rescuer of the creation.

Qutubiyyat (القطبية): The saint who was awarded the highest rank of the exertive spirituality is titled as ‘*qutub-ul-aqtāb*’ (قطب الأقطاب). He is authorized, by the order of Allah, to exert his spiritual power to maintain discipline among the creation.¹

The prophet (pbuh) had two attributive names; *Muhammad* and *Ahmad*. Since the dawn of the creation, ‘*Ahmad*’ (pbuh) existed in the concealed spiritual world as the nucleus of the Divine creation. On the other hand, *Muhammad* (pbuh) was sent to the universe as the merciful rescuer. All prophets and saints are categorized into ‘*aḥmadī*-أحمدی’ and ‘*muḥammadī*-محمدی’ mashrab due to the influence of these two attributive names. *ghawthiyyat* and *qutubiyyat* are sourced into the ‘*muḥammadī* and *aḥmadī mashrab*’ respectively.

It is noteworthy that ‘*muḥammadī mashrab*’ and ‘*aḥmadī mashrab*’ started with the prophet Adam (a.) and the prophet Shish (a.) respectively. Among the two names of the prophet (pbuh), the name ‘*Aḥmad*’ is related with his (pbuh) *wilāyat* and was Allah’s first creation.

1 و قطب العالم و صاحب الزمان و قطب المدار نام ایک شخص است کہ کلید عرفان است بالا صلاۃ و اقطاب کہ در اصل موصل الی (1)

(اللہ اندیہ نیابت قطب الاقطاب باشند خواهند بدو خواهند سلب کند. مطالب رشیدیہ ص- 268)

The Almighty Allah told Hazrat Musa (a.), “Oh Musa, tell *Bani Israil* that whoever rejected ‘Ahmad’ and came to me, I will surely cast him into the hell fire.”

Hazrat Musa (a.) asked, “Oh my Lord, Who is Ahmad?”

Allah replied, “I swear by My honour and might that none is more respected before Me than him. I had written his name beside Mine on the throne two millions years before I even created this universe.”¹

It is narrated in *Diwan-e-Nur-Muhammadi* that Mawlana Rumi (r.) said,

زاده ثانیست احمد در جهان * صد قیامت بود اندر او نهان

“Ahmad is the twice-born in this world:

He was manifestly ha hundred resurrections.”

Triads of the Prophets

A careful study on the prophecies of three prophets; Hazrat Ibrahim (a.), Hazrat Isa (a.) and Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) will help understand their respective ‘*mashrab*’.

Abrahamic Prophethood

Hazrat Ibrahim was a Prophet belonging to ‘*muḥammadi mashrab*’. His spiritual attributes can be best described as ‘*shahūdiyya mashrab*’- (شهودیة مشرب) or observational attitude. He observed the sun, the moon etc. and concluded that they are ephemeral, not worthy of being worshiped, which, eventually, led him to realize and submit himself to the Eternal Supreme Entity- Allah, the Almighty. His method consisted of observation, knowledge and rational,

1. Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanovi, *Nashrut Tayyib Fi Dhikril Ḥabīb*, P 315-316.

and had a closer relation with *nabuwwat*. What is achieved through such method is called ‘*muḥammadī mashrab*’.

Prominent prophets like Hazrat Adam (a.) Hazrat Nuh (A) and Hazrat Musa (a.) belonged to this *mashrab*. The religion preached by Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) is called ‘*Dīn-e-Ibrāhīmī*’ or ‘Abrahamic religion’.

The Holy Quran says describing the forbidden foods:

اليوم أكملت لكم دينكم وأتممت عليكم نعمتي ورضيت لكم الإسلام دينا
فمن اضطر في مخمصة غير متجانف لإثم فإن الله غفور رحيم

“This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour upon you, and have chosen Islam as your religion; so whoever is forced by intense hunger and thirst and does not incline towards sin, then indeed Allah is of Forgiving, Most Merciful.”¹

The verse of the Holy Quran confirms that Allah has perfected the religion of Islam which correlates to ‘*muḥammadī mashrab*’ featuring the qualities of observation, knowledge and rational. It is also understood from the verse that Islam advocated for three essential qualities; justice, equality and mercy.

Rislālat or *sharī‘ah* is institutionalized on preventative worships (‘*ibādāt-e-mutanāfiya* - العبادات المتنافية) and rational interactions of people (*mu‘āmalāt-e-i‘tibāriyyah* - المعاملات الاعتبارية) that are related with the principles of knowledge, observation and rational. They make the main pillars of *rislālat* or *sharī‘ah*.

1 Surah Maidah: 3

Sharī'ah is related with the condition of the *nāsūt* and is meant for its people, which forms the part of monotheistic governance ('*shaūnāt-e-tawhīdī* - شئونات توحیدی) and existential interactions (*mu'āmalāt-e-wajūdī* - المعاملات الوجودية).

The last part of the above mentioned verse affirms that whoever is forced by intense hunger or thirst and does not have any alternatives will not be subjected to the rules mentioned previously. It indicates that religious rulings change according to the conditions. And it is a grace and mercy of Allah.

The Prophethood of Isa (a.)

Hazrat Isa (a.) was a prophet of '*aḥmadī mashrab*' rooted into the realm of spirituality. The appearance of the angel Gabriel (a.), a spiritual being, in disguise of a human body before Hazrat Maryam (a.) caused the birth of Isa (a.). Hazrat Isa (a.) was inclined to mysticism more than he would towards formal commands. He would prefer reclusive life to social interaction and would prefer love of pure hearts to external rituals.

Once, Hazrat Isa (a.) asked a group of worshipers, "Who are you?"

"We are hermits." It was answered.

He again asked, "Who are you worshipping?"

"We fear the hell-fire of Allah and are striving for salvation." They replied.

He moved forward and came across a group of monks. He asked them, "Who are you worshipping?"

“We are looking for meeting with Allah. We are striving to secure the heaven which Allah created for His friends.” They replied.

Hazrat Isa said, “You have right upon Allah. May Allah fulfill your needs.”

He again moved forward and met another group of ascetics who were engaged in worships as well. He repeated the same question.

They answered, “We are the lovers of Allah. Neither the fear of hell-fire nor the longing for heaven made us worship Him. We only love Him and bow before His might.”

Hazrat Isa asserted, “You are the true friends of Allah. I have been ordered to accompany you.”¹

It is evident that there are certain similarities between the attitudes of Hazrat Isa and his ascetic devoted companions and that of Islamic Sufi civilization. Hazrat Shis (a.), Hazrat Idris (a.) and Hazrat Ishak (a.) etc. can be considered among the prophets belonging to ‘*aḥmadī mashrab*’, which is related with the prophet’s (pbuh) mystical concealed name ‘*Aḥmad*’ manifested in the first phase of creation.

Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanobi supported this discussion with a Hadith Qudsi in his book ‘*Nashrut-Ṭayyib-Fī-Dhikri-Al Ḥabīb*’ in the pages 315 and 316.

According to Sufī terminology, this method is called ‘*wazūdiyya*’ or introspective method. It is evident that the method of ‘*Wazūdiyya Ṭarīqa*’ is a shadow of the prophecy of *aḥmadī mashrab*, just as like a tree exists in a seed and a seed exists in a tree with all of their qualities.

1 Taṣawwuf-e-Islām, (Urdu), P. 92, 93, 94.

Rayees Ahmad Jafari said in the article ‘Excellence in Spiritual Life’¹, “Realizations/awareness that expose diverse conditions of human life to oneself is called spiritual life.”

Sufism and divestment are the mirrors of spiritual endeavor. For example:

1. *Mujāhada-tun-nafs* (مجاهدة النفس): Continuous struggle against one’s own egoism.
2. Unveiling the consciousness.
3. Purification of the heart.
4. Liberate one’s *nafs* from the propensities of amorousness and sexual lust and forsaking all worldly attachments that eventually cut off the relation between the Creator and the creation.

This spiritual journey is such a way of life whose teachings compel an individual to contemplate about the reality of this world and the goal behind its creation.

Perfection in the spiritual life elevates human existence closer to the Divine communion and creates an everlasting communication with the Higher Entity, stimulating a sentient self-consciousness that is beyond any doubt.

Although the religious creeds of Gautama Buddha are not fully in line with the concept of ‘*tawḥīd-ul-adyān*’ or Sufism, nor are they in full odds. It is quite evident from his advices.

According to Buddha, the main goal of the religion is self-development and benevolence is essential to achieve such goal. He taught ‘Noble Eightfold Path’, by practicing them man can advance in the religious path. They are: right view,

¹ Taṣawwuf-e-Islām, P. 17.

right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right *samadhi*- ‘total self-collectedness.

Gautama Buddha was born in Kapilavastu in the pediment of Himalaya in 556 BC. His father’s name was king Shuddhodana and mother’s name was Maha Maya. His boyhood name was ‘Siddhartha’.

At first, he studied Hinduism with a scholar named ‘Aral’. Later, he returned to the royal palace and accepted pupilage of an ascetic named ‘Rudrak’ in a cave. He spent six years practicing the life of extreme asceticism, first in the village of ‘Urubilbo’ and then under a ‘Bodhi Tree’ near Goya.

Fortunate Siddhartha succeeded in his quest. His anxiety disappeared. He was able to realize the true face of the soul. Desire ended with the end of anxiety and the influence of senses ended with the end of desire. Both happiness and sorrow were annihilated. Siddhartha attained ‘Nirvana’. Siddhartha, by gaining successes (siddha) became knowledgeable (Buddha)’.

Mawlana Rumi (r.) said,

چیشته دنیا از خدا غافل بودن * نه قماش و نقره و فرزند وزن

“What is this world? To be forgetful of God;

It is not merchandise, silver, weigh-scales and women.”

Mohammedan (pbuh) Prophethood

Nabuwwat-e-muḥammadī is a combination of concealed spirituality and circumstantial religious commands; thus, making it perfect and great in its manifestation. It was manifested in the prophethood of Hazrat Solaiman (a.) and Hazrat Yusuf (a.).

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is hoisted as the confluence of two seas (*marajal baḥrayn*) where two distinctive prophetic seas- *aḥmadī* and *muḥammadī*- are flowing concurrently.

The prophet (pbuh) said, “There is no prophet after me- (ﻻ ﻧﺒﻰ ﺑﻌﺪﻯ).” It is evident from his proclamation that he (pbuh) was the last of the prophets (*khātimun nabiyyīn*).

‘*Marajal baḥrayn*’- a confluence where the divine seas of *zāhir*- apparent (*nabuwwat*) and *bāṭin*- concealed (*wilāyat*) merged- is the station of *Khiḍr* (a.). Hazrat *Khiḍr* (a.) is the beneficent holder of Allah’s Divine decree in the prophetic era. This is the perfect manifestation of ‘*wilāyat-e-‘uṣmā*’ during the era of the prophethood.

Although *nabuwwat* and *wilāyat* are different attributes, the latter aggregates in the personality of the prophet at the station of *nabuwwat*. And when exposed separately, it apparently may not follow the rules of the prophetic *sharī‘ah*. Because they prefer Divine wills to His exoteric order and are empowered and authorised to act according to religious wisdom and benefit. Allah likes it.

It is evident from the story of Musa and *Khiḍr* (a.) narrated in the Holy Quran. In the incident of Sameri, the Divine words implied to it as it is compiled in the *Mathnawi*: Allah told Musa (a.) in the mountain of *Tur*:

تو براے وصل کردن آمدی * نہ براے فصل کردن آمدی

“You came to connect mankind to Me.

Or did you come to separate?”

Sameri’s spiritually intoxicated statements were incongruous with the religious commands and knowledge of the prophet

Musa (a.). Similarly, actions of Hazrat Khidr (a.) mentioned in the Holy Quran were forbidden according to the *sharī'ah* of the Prophet Musa (a.). However, Allah's concealed wills and wisdom was given preference in these incidents to the exoteric religious commands. Through such actions, the essence of the *sharī'ah* was observed. It was also observed in the life of Ghawthul A'zam Maizbhandari.

The prophet (pbuh) said,

لى مع الله وقت لا يسعنى فيه ملك مقرب ولا نبي مرسل

‘I often have such an intimate relation with Allah wherein no prophet or intimate angels have any accesses.¹

It is the state of *wilāyat-e-‘uẓmā* of the prophet (pbuh), wherein no angels or capability of *nabuwwat* has any power or influence in this state. The incident of *Mi'rāz*, for example, did not take place to other prophets (a.). Therefore, we can conclude that *nabuwwat-e-‘uẓmā* and *wilāyat-e-‘uẓmā* aggregated in the personality of the prophet Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa Ahmad Mujtaba (pbuh).

After the demise of the prophet Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh), this eternal truth, *wilāyat*, kept circulated naturally through the perfected saints. All kinds of *wilāyat*, especially, *wilāyat bil warāthat* centralized in the personality of Hazrat Ali (a.). The prophet (pbuh) said,

من كنت مولاه فعلى مولاه

1 The hadith is taken from ‘Gulistan’ by Sheikh Sadi. (the hadith is narrated in a number of tafsir and Sufi books. Tafsir Ruhul Bayan: Surah Nisa V. 93, Surah Araf 43, Surah Nahl 124, - Translator)

“Of whomsoever I am the master, Ali is his master.”¹ (the author translated the word ‘*mawlā*’ into Bengali as ‘beloved’-Translator)

انى قد تركت فيكم ما ان اخذتم به لن تضلوا بعدى كتاب الله بايديكم واهل بيتى

“I am leaving among you that which, if you hold fast to it, you will never go astray after I am gone: the book of Allah and my family members. (The Prophet (pbuh), Hazrat Ali, Fatema, Hasan, Hossain (r.) and their descendants)²

Hazrat Ali (r.) sacrificed his body and soul for that of the prophet (pbuh) by lying down on the bed of the prophet (pbuh) and covered himself with his (pbuh) sheet in the night of migration; thus, he passed the test of love.

The prophet’s (pbuh) spiritual power which was dormant under the veil of *nabuwat* bloomed in the personality of Hazrat Ali (r.). His comment also proved this fact. He said,

رضينا قسمة الجبار فينا * لنا علم وللأعداء مال

“I was pleased with the distribution of the Almighty. I was bestowed with knowledge while the enemies got the wealth”³.

The gate of eternal spiritual exploration of the prophet (pbuh) was opened through the personality of Hazrat Ali (r.).

The prophet (pbuh) said,

انا مدينة العلم وعلى بابها وفى رواية انا دار الحكمة وعلى بابها

¹ Sunan Tirmidhi, V-6, P-74; Mushkalul Athar, V. 2, P. 307.

² Mushkalul Athar, V. 2, P. 307.

³ Diwan-e-Ali, P 85

“I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate”. In another narration it is said, “I am the house of wisdom and Ali is its door”¹

This highest spirituality - *wilāyat-e-‘uẓmā* - paved its natural way and flourished in the personality of Hazrat Piran-e-Pir Abdul Qader Jilani (r.). He said, “I became ‘*quṭb*’ by attaining spiritual knowledge”.

Since his era, *ghawthiyyat* represents both *nabuwwat* and *wilāyat*. These *ghawthiyyat* and *quṭbiyyat* coexisted as an active spiritual force in the holy personality of the prophet (pbuh) during his prophetic era. There were occasions when this spiritual power of *wilāyat* emerged independently from *nabuwwat*. Several stories narrated in the Holy Quran support this fact, such as, the story of bringing the throne of Queen of Seba during the prophetic era of the prophet Solaiman (a.), the story of the people of Cave, and the story of Musa (a.) with Khidr (a.).

Because of the evolvment and changes caused by the passage of time, people started moving away from religion, aspiration, spiritual affiliation and love. Even individuals who were interested in religion became oblivious of the importance and benefit of *wilāyat-e-‘uẓmā*, because of the sectarian conflicts and groundless propaganda. Such circumstances demanded the emergence of a spiritual leader. On the verge of such juncture, the leader of the saints Quṭbul Aqṭāb Gawthul Azam Pīrān-e-Pīr emerged to reignite the spiritual aspiration in the hearts and to conduct reformation.

Allah said in the Holy Quran,

¹ Sunan Tirmidhi, V 6, P 82; Al Musdarik ala Sahihayn, V 3, P 137.

ألم يأن للذين آمنوا أن تخشع قلوبهم لذكر الله وما نزل من الحق ولا يكونوا كالذين أوتوا الكتاب من قبل فطال عليهم الأمد فقست قلوبهم وكثير منهم فاسقون اعلموا أن الله يحيي الأرض بعد موتها قد بينا لكم الآيات لعلكم

“Has not the time come for the believers to surrender their hearts to Allah’s remembrance and to this truth that has come down? And do not be like those who were earlier given the Book(s) and when a long term passed over them, their hearts became hardened; and many of them are sinners. Know that it is Allah Who revives the earth after its death; We have indeed illustrated the signs for you, for you to understand.”¹

The scholars talked about a circle of five to six hundred years for evolution and rise or fall of a nation affected by the coordination of stars and passage of time. This is supported with evidence by the famous historian Ibn Khaldun in his ‘*Al Muqaddima*’ and by Hazrat Mohiuddin Ibn Arabi in his ‘*Fuṣūṣul Hikam*’.

Allah said,

إن في خلق السماوات والأرض واختلاف الليل والنهار والفلك التي تجري في البحر بما ينفع الناس وما أنزل الله من السماء من ماء فأحيا به الأرض بعد موتها وبث فيها من كل دابة وتصريف الرياح والسحاب المسخر بين السماء والأرض لآيات لقوم يعقلون

“Indeed in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the continuous alternation of night and day, and the ships which sail the seas carrying what is of use to men, and the

¹ Sura Hadid, 16-17

water which Allah sends down from the sky thereby reviving the dead earth and dispersing all kinds of beasts in it, and the movement of the winds, and the obedient clouds between heaven and earth – certainly in all these are signs for the intelligent.”¹

It is observed that Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) was born around six hundred years after Isa (a.). And Hazrat Abdul Qader Jilani (r.) was born five hundred years after his (pbuh) demise. Circumstances and Divine decree compelled *wilāyat* to take the responsibility of guidance of messengership in order to disclose the truth.

Hazrat Piran-e-Pir said in his famous *Qaṣīdah Gawthiyyat*:

وكل ولي على قدم واني * على قدم نبي بدر الكمال.

فمن في اولياء الله مثلي * ومن في العلم والتصريف حالي

نا الجيلاني محي الدين اسمي * واعلامي على رؤس الجبالي

“Every saint follows my foot steps and I follow the footsteps of the moon like Prophet (pbuh). There is none among the saints equivalent to me, where I am unmatched in divine knowledge and asserting divine influence. I reside in Jilan. My title is ‘the reviver of the religion’. My flag is on the highest mountain.”

He was the greatest saint gifted with *ilhām*, reformer and the holder of *wilāyat-e-‘uẓmā* for proposing this claim before the people of *nāsūt* to conduct spiritual guidance.

According to Sufi terminology, such great personality is titled as *Ghawthul A‘zam*. He became known as the first *Ghawthul A‘zam* in the Islamic World. Since he had

¹ Surah Baqara, 164

knowledge of Allah's creation from 'ālam-e-lāhūt to 'ālam-e-nāsūt and was crowned as the introducer *Ghawthul A'zam*. It was essential that everyone knew him and got benefitted from him. Therefore, like prophethood, it was necessary to claim *ghawth-e-ʿaẓmiyyat* and to perform many miracles. Otherwise, common people would not understand his status and consequently, nothing will be done correctly.

Based upon this, it has been observed that such spiritual status was claimed by only Piran-e-Pir in the era of *wilāyat-e-muqaiyyada*, and then by Hazrat Gawthul Azam Maizbhandari Mawlana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah (q.) in the era of *wilāyat-e-muṭlaqa*. No other saint dared to claim such absolute spiritual knowledge or *ghawth-e-ʿaẓmiyyat* and they did not perform such great numbers of miracles as well.

In line with the context of the verses 23/24 of Surah Baqarah, a challenge can be thrown in that if there are any other claimants, bring them forward; but you cannot. Fear Allah in your false claim. Stop spreading fabricated information in the name of a saint, which is a great sin. Contemplate what Allah said in the Holy Quran:

كبر مقتا عند الله ان تقولوا ما لا تفعلون

‘How despicable it is in the sight of Allah that you may preach what you do not practice.’¹ According to hadith, suspicion or assumption is a kind of sin.²

¹ Surah Şaff, 3

² There are numerous narrations from the prophet (pbuh) that warn the believers against suspicion or assumption. For example: He (pbuh) said, (إياكم والظن فإن الظن أكذب الحديث) Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is tantamount to a lie. (Sahih Bukhari, V 7, P 19)

Chapter 2

Spiritual Journey

Spiritual journey is an individual's advancement towards the Merciful Allah through his spiritual development.

It is of three kinds.

1. *Sayr ila Allah* (السَّيْر إِلَى اللَّهِ) or one's advancement towards Allah.
2. *Sayr fi Allah* (السَّيْر فِي اللَّهِ) or to remain annihilated in the Divine Oneness.
3. *Sayr ma'a Allah* (السَّيْر مَعَ اللَّهِ) –being permanent with Allah to attain spiritual authority to assert divine power over the creation.

The saint who accomplished these three spiritual progressions is the great saint. Although such spiritual progressions may as well be accomplished by the saints of various states (*ḥāl*) in *ghawthiyyat* and *qutubiyyat*, the one who accomplished the both is acknowledged as the *Ghawthul A'zam*. According to this criterion, both Piran-e-Pir Syed Abdul Qader Jilani (q.) and Hazrat Mawlana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah Maizbhandari (q.) were understood to have attained this status. Above all, they claimed the status of *ghawth-e-ʿazmiyyat* and allowed

others to address them as such. When Mawlana Abdul Hadi Kanchanpuri sang his *ghazal*:

“My beloved Ghawth is enraptured with intoxication,
along with Hadi.”

he corrected him and told him to say:

“Hadi is enraptured with intoxication.

With my beloved Ghawth.”

There were numerous miracles performed by them in each level of progression. Because of this, animals, the inanimate, trees, even the *jinn*s and angels were under their authority. Everyone obeys their orders. (See his Biography for details)

It proves the fact that religious wisdom is the ultimate and eternal objective among the four reasons for which Allah sent down prophets and messengers to the religious spiritual world. The Holy Quran says:

لقد من الله على المؤمنين إذ بعث فيهم رسولا من أنفسهم يتلو عليهم آياته
ويزكيهم ويعلمهم الكتاب والحكمة وإن كانوا من قبل لفي ضلال مبين

“Allah has indeed bestowed a great favour upon the Muslims, in that He sent to them a Noble Messenger (Prophet Mohammed -pbuh) from among them, 1) who recites to them His verses, 2) purifies them, 3) teaches them the Book and 4) wisdom (spiritual physiology); and before it, they were definitely in open error.”¹

¹ Surah Ale Imran, 164.

The Holy Quran also says,

الشيطان يعدكم الفقر ويأمركم بالفحشاء والله يعدكم مغفرة منه وفضلا
والله واسع عليم- يؤتي الحكمة من يشاء ومن يؤت الحكمة فقد أوتي خيرا
كثيرا وما يذكر إلا أولو الألباب

“The devil scares you of poverty and bids you to the shameful; and Allah promises you forgiveness from Him, and munificence; and Allah is Most Capable, All Knowing. Allah bestows wisdom on whomever He wills; and whoever receives wisdom has received abundant goodness; but none heed advice except men of understanding.¹

Ghawthul A'zam is assigned to provide intellectual guidance of *nabuwwat* and inspire motivational wisdom of *wilāyat*. It is essential that intoxication-*jadhab* (جذب) and sobriety-*sulūk* (سلوك) manifest simultaneously in his personality and that he conducts actions and colloquies that give evidence to the status of spiritual rescuer. Otherwise, mankind will be deprived of Divine acquaintance and blessings of the saints, described as the loftiest mercy of Allah in the Holy Quran.

The friends of Allah are supported by the divine powers such as *kashf*, *ilhām*, *‘ilm-ladunnī*, *firāsāt*, *wijdān* and *hāl-jadhba*.

¹ Surah Baqarah, 268-269)

Shaykul Akbar Allama Mohiuddin Ibn Arabi said in the explanation of the verses 3 and 4 of Surah Baqarah that the Quran guides the believers in unseen.

ذلك الكتاب لا ريب فيه هدى للمتقين الذين يؤمنون بالغيب ويقيمون الصلاة ومما رزقناهم ينفقون

“This is the exalted book (the Holy Quran), in which is no place for doubt; a guidance for the pious. Those who believe without seeing (the hidden) and keep the (obligatory) prayer established, and spend in Our cause from what We have bestowed upon.”¹

أي: بما غاب عنهم الإيمان التقليدي، أو التحقيقي العلمي، فإن الإيمان قسمان: تقليدي وتحقيقي. والتحقيقي قسمان: استدلالی وكشفي، وكلاهما إما واقف على حد العلم والغيب، وإما غير واقف. والأول هو الإيقان المسمى علم اليقين. والثاني: إما عيني، وهو المشاهدة المسمى عين اليقين، وإما حقي، وهو الشهود الذاتي المسمى حق اليقين. والقسمان الأخيران لا يدخلان تحت الإيمان بالغيب²

Faith in unseen is of two types:

1. *Īmān-e-Taqlīdī* (الإيمان التقليدي): To believe in something following someone else's guidance.

¹ Surah Baqarah, 3,4

² Tafsir Ibn Arabi, V-1, P-33.

2. *Īmān-e-Taḥqīqī* (الإيمان التحقيقي): To believe in something based on evidence acquired after investigation.

Such investigation is again of two types:

First: *istidlālī* (استدلالي) or inferential investigation that is based on believing in something after deductive and inductive reasoning. It gives knowledge of certainty *‘ilmul yaqīn* (علم اليقين)

Second: investigation based on unveiling or *kashf* (كشف).

Faith based on unveiling is again of two types.

1. *Mushāhadatul musammā* or witnessing the definite. (مشاهدة المسمى): It is to witness the object or the person that has been mentioned. It is called *‘ainul yaqīn* or certainty itself (عين اليقين).
2. *Shahūd-e-dhātī* (الشهود الذاتي): or subjective witnessing. It is to experience the witnessed entity closely. It is called *haqqul yaqīn* or reality of certainty (حق اليقين).

The last two types are related with the experience of the hearts, as they do not fall within the criteria of ‘faith in unseen’ (*īmān bil ghayb*). Therefore, they (the Sufis) only accept what they know or understand through unveiling. They might not accept the evidence produced by only mimicking or through blind following (*taqlīd*)

Imam Ghazali's opinion regarding this 'ilmul yaqīn (علیم الیقین) was discussed in the book 'Tasawwuf-e-Islami p 276. He said that amongst the three types of belief and certainty, the beliefs of the perfected ones do not have any veil. For example, it can be accepted if a trusted person informs that someone is in the house. If you hear the sound of the person, it can also be trusted. However, witnessing the person by entering the house provides an unveiled doubtless certainty and knowledge which is called 'ilmul yaqīn or 'ainul yaqīn. Furthermore, an extensive experience of this certainty (yaqīn) leads to attaining 'reality of certainty' or 'haqqul yaqīn'. It was also narrated in the above mentioned book that Hazrat Zunnun Misri (r.) had similar opinion which contradicted with that of the Egyptian jurists; as a result, he was expelled from Egypt.

A closer study of *Alif*, *Laām* and *Mīm* (ا - ل - م) also supports this idea.

Alif means Allah. The circle of worship (*dāira-e-ulūhiyyah*); Me, the reality of humanity, I.¹

Allah said in a hadith *qudsi*,

الإنسان سري وأنا سره

عارف ہستی حق را در جمیع احوال و اوقات معاینہ کند ہر شے اور احباب نشو واز¹
رویت حق و رویت حق مگر از رویت اشیاء زیرا کہ عارف بحقیقت انسانی خود کہ الوہیت است
(رسیدہ است)

‘Man is my secret and I am his’.

The Arabic word ‘*insān*’ (إنسان) is derived from the word ‘*uns*’ (أنس) that means ‘amiability’.

It is said in a hadith ‘I was concealed. When I intended to create, I wanted to introduce myself. I created.’

The first creation ‘*nūr-e-muḥammadī*’ kept saying ‘*aḥmadu*’-I am praising (أحمد) till it became ‘the praised one- *muḥammadu*’ (محمد). The meaning of *aḥmadu* (أحمد) is ‘I am praising’. Through this the divine attributive luminescent shape, the essence of humanity manifested.¹

Laām (لا) means the angel Gabriel- the first knowledge-who is tasked with responsibility to communicate between the Creator and the creation-bearer of revelation.

Mīm (ميم) means the saviour of the world Muhammad (pbuh). He is the manifestation of the Divine mercy for the apparent world or *raḥamatullil ‘ālamīn* (رحمة للعالمين).

It said in the book *Tafsir-e-Haqqani* p-75 v-2, “He is the absolute grace- *fayḍ-e-muzarrad* (الفيض المجرد). Because of this, the first man moulded with *muḥammadī* shape

¹ منظور کے پردہ میں خدا بول رہا ہے

من تو شدم تو من شدی من تن شدم تو حبا شدی

(تاکس گوید بعد ازیں من دیگرم تو دیگر)

qualified to be the representative of Allah and deserved the prostration of the angels. Hence, the denier of this divine supremacy of Adam is regarded as cursed. Accordingly, the denier of the divine excellence of the perfected human is also regarded as being cursed. Therefore, it is necessary to obey the perfected human Muhammad (pbuh) for the safety of this world.

Chapter 3

Evolution of Epoch

Wilāyat-e-Muqayyadah

During the time of the prophet (pbuh), Sufism was being practiced latently under the veil of his *sunnah* (*sunnat-e-muṣṭafā*). After his (pbuh) demise the same Sufism continued to be practiced through the practice and Sufi orders of the pious saints. However, it was contained by the influence of the Islamic Governance and the Muslim jurists; therefore, the era is termed as the age of *wilāyat-e-muqayyada-e-muḥammadī*.

The Rise of the Age of *Wilāyat-e-Muṭlaqa*

Because of the gradual transformation of the ages, huge gap of around six hundred years since the time of Piran-e-Pir (q.) and separation from the state power, the universal structure of Muslim world suffered from internal cracks and *sharīʿah* provisions became weaker and inert.

In 14 October 1760, the British established their rule in Bengal and people again fall confused about the religion and deserved divine reprehension. Muslim society lost support of the state in its observance of religious rituals and social interactions, and consequently, it gradually became inert and was facing numerous problems. It was necessary to replace such an era of weak and lifeless *sharīʿah* governance with the era of *wilāyat-e-muṭlaqa-e-ahmadi* which is more centred

round religious morality. This spirituality prefers Divine wills to the outward religious ordinance, rites, or rituals. The holder of this spirituality is the ender of the era of *wilāyat-e-muqayyada*, the beginner of the era of *wilāyat-e-muṭlaqa* and the supporter of the concept of *tawḥīd-e-adyān* or religious equality (धर्म साम्य) .

Shaykhul Akbar Allama Mohiuddin Ibn Arabi (r.) titled this personality as ‘*khātim-ul-walad*’ (خاتم الولد).

The Holy Quran says,

وللآخرة خير لك من الأولى

‘And indeed the latter is better for you than the former’¹. This is the glad tiding of the extended period of spirituality.

Inspired through *ilhām*, Qutub-e-Zaman Hazrat Mawlana Shah Sufi Safi Ullah said, ‘Sir, do you know? What do you know? Such a friend of Allah has not arrived in this world for the last six hundred years’.

This observation is a clear affirmation about the spiritual status of Hazrat Aqdas and is compiled in the section ‘comments of the renowned scholars’. Similarly, the Hindus also have the prophecy of the last saviour or the kalki avatar.

Therefore, this era can be termed as the age of *wilāyat-e-muṭlaqa* or unchained Sufism.

Wilāyat-e-Muṭlaqa

Nabuwwat is a position of honour bestowed upon by Allah, contextualised with place, time, circumstance and subject.

On the other hand, *wilāyat* is infinite. *Al-Walī* (ولی) is an attribute of Allah as well. Allah’s attributes are infinite and

¹ Surah Duha, 4.

intransient as much as He Himself is infinite and intransient. Likewise, *wilāyat* is also perpetual and infinite. In reality, *wilāyat* is the life of *nabuwwat*.

The Holy Quran says,

والله ولي المؤمنين

‘and Allah is the Guardian of the believers’¹.

وهو الولي الحميد

‘He (Allah) is the Most Praiseworthy friend (of the believers).’²

Allah does not have any attribute as ‘*nabī* (نبي) or *rasūl* (رسول), whereas He has an attribute of ‘*Al-Walī* (الولي)’.

Hazrat Shaykhul Akbar Mohiuddin Ibn Arabi said,

(A)

وخاتم الأولياء الولي الوارث الآخذ عن الأصل المشاهد للمراتب وهو حسنة من حسنات خاتم الرسل محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم مقدم الجماعة وسيد ولد آدم في فتح باب الشفاعة فعين حالا خاصا ما عمم وفي هذا الحال الخاص تقدم على الأسماء الإلهية فإن الرحمن ما شفع عند المنتقم في أهل البلاء إلا بعد شفاعة الشافعين

“The Seal of the saints (*Awliyā*) is a *walī* and the heir (of the prophet (pbuh), who takes directly from the source (Allah), contemplating the ranks (and stations of the *wilāyat*). (He is the ender of the old age of impeded spirituality.) He is the most beautiful of the beauties of the Seal of the messengers,

¹ Surah Ale Imran, 68

² Surah Shura, 28

Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, the overseer of the community, and the master of the sons of Adam by reason of opening the door of intercession. He specified a particular state which is not universal; in this special state, he has precedence over the Divine Names. Because the Divine name ‘*Rahmān*’ will not intercede with the Avenger (Allah) for the people of affliction (in order to maintain the Divine discipline).¹

Example: A thief’s disposition is to steal. Consequent upon his action, he will be brought to justice. The judge sentences him according to the law and the nature of his crime; however, the judge cannot show any leniency. In such case, the thief himself, in reality, determines the severity of his sentence by the nature of his own crime. Henceforth, the thief is the determiner of the consequence of his own action and thus, influences over the process of the prosecution. The judge cannot show any mercy, let alone, intercede with the claimant.

(B) It is also narrated in *Fasusul Hikam*:

اسم اللہ تمام اسموں کو شامل ہے اور وہی اسماء میں باعتبار مرتبہ الہیہ اور اپنے ذات اور مرتبہ کے دوسرے اسماء پر مقدم ہے پس اسم اللہ کا مظہر بھی دوسرے اسماء کے مظہر پر مقدم ہوگا

“The Divine name ‘Allah’ assumes all other Divine names and is pre-eminent over all other Divine names due to its affiliation with His Self and His worship. Consequently, its manifestation is also pre-eminent over that of all other names.”²

¹ Fasusul Hikam, 64

² Fasusul Hikam, 59 (Urdu Translation)

Therefore, the name in which the Divine name ‘Allah’ manifested is pre-eminent above the manifestation of Allah’s all other names. For example: the name ‘Ahmad Ullah’ consists of the word ‘Allah’.

(C) It is also narrated in *Fasusul Hikam*:

فالعلى لنفسه هو الذى يكون له الكمال الذى يستغرق به جميع الأمور الوجودية والنسب العدمية بحيث لا يمكن أن يفوته نعت منها وسواء كانت محمودة عرفا وعقلا وشرعا او مذمومة عرفا وعقلا وشرعا وليس ذلك إلا لمسمى الله تعالى خاصة

“The individual who is high in himself is the one who possesses the perfection in which all matters (spiritual status) of existence are absorbed, as are all non-existent relations, inasmuch as it is not possible that any of these attributes be lacking in him, be they praiseworthy by custom, human intellect, or *sharī‘ah*, or blameworthy by custom, human intellect or *sharī‘ah*. That belongs only to the one (a *walī*) whose name consisted of the Divine name ‘Allah’.¹

(D) It is written in the page 91 in *Fasusul Hikam*: The distinction in the view of the Seal of Saints:

وما يراه أحد من الأنبياء والرسل إلا من مشكاة الرسول الخاتم ولا يراه أحد من الأولياء إلا من مشكاة الولي الخاتم حتى أن الرسول لا يرونه متى رآوه إلا من مشكاة خاتم الأولياء فإن الرسالة والنبوة أعنى نبوة التشريع ورسالته تنقطعان والولاية لا تنقطع أبدا

“The messengers and prophets only see it from the niche of the messenger who is the seal. The saints only see it from the

¹ Fasusul Hikam, 79.

niche of the *walī* who is the seal. Even the messengers only see it to the extent that they see it from the niche of the seal of the *awliyā*. For message and prophethood-by which I mean the prophethood of bringing the *sharī'ah* and its message- ceases (because of the advent of a new *sharī'ah*), but *wilāya* never ceases. (As *wilāya* is an ever-lasting bond with Allah)".¹

It is described in the second chapter, page 92 of *Fasusul Hikam* by Allama Mohiuddin Ibn Arabi (r.) that the seal of the saints or *khātimul wilāyat* is considered as the final brick of a brick wall (Islam), whereas the prophethood (*nabuwwat*) is regarded as its first brick. Prophethood is a set of *sharī'ah* ordinance received through the mediation of the angel Gabriel and is considered as a silver brick. However, *wilāyat* is received by the seal of the saint directly from the Very Source from which the angel Gabriel would bring the revelations (*waḥī*). It is, therefore, considered as a golden brick. The structure of Islam is, thus, completed with the bricks of *nabuwwat* and *wilayat* that consist of revelations (*waḥī*) and inspiration (*ilhām*).²

‘It is like the prophet (pbuh) in relation to brick wall which was complete except for one brick, and the prophet was that one brick although he himself only saw the place for the single brick. The seal of the *awliya* must also have this sort of vision. He sees the same as the messenger of Allah (pbuh) saw but he sees a place for two bricks in the wall, and that the bricks are made of gold and silver. He sees that there are two bricks missing in the wall, and he sees that they are a silver brick and a gold brick. He must see himself as being

¹ Fasusul Hikam, 62

² Fasusul Hikam, 63

disposed by nature to fill the place of these two bricks. The seal of the awliya is these two bricks by which the wall is completed. The necessary reason for which he sees himself as two bricks is that he follows the *sharia* of the seal of the messengers outwardly-which is the place of the silver brick. This means the outward *sharia* with all that pertains to it of ordinances which are taken from Allah by the secret, according to the outward form which conforms to the secret because he sees the matter for what it really is. He must see the matter in this manner, for it is the place of the golden brick in the inwardly hidden. It is taken from the source from which the angel brought it, the same angel who brought the revelation to the messengers. If you have understood what I have alluded to then you have indeed acquired useful knowledge!')

Chapter 4

Prophecy about the Advent of the Universal Saint Ghawthul Azam Hazrat Mawlana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah (q.)

Because of the long gap of around five hundred years after the demise of the first Ghawthul A‘zam Shaykh Abdul Qader Jilani (q.) and establishment of British rule after the collapse of Islamic government, the need for a reformer spiritual saint was paramount.

Hazrat Mohiuddin Ibn Arabi prophesied about the advent of this universal *walī* at the end of the Chapter Shith in his famous book ‘*Fasusul Hikam*’:

وعلى قدم شيث يكون آخر مولود يولد من هذا النوع الإنسانى وهو حامل أسرار
وليس بعده ولد فى هذا النوع فهو خاتم الأولاد.

“It is in the footsteps of Shith that the last of this human species will be born, and he will carry his secrets. There will none of this species (of such status) born after him, so he will be the seal of the begotten. (He will be the last begotten with such status.)”¹

¹ Fasusul Hikam, 67.

According to Shaykh-e-Akbar, *walad* (begotten) is the one who inherits the secrets of his father.

الولد سر لأبيه

The son is the secret of his father¹

The one who successfully translates his father's ethics into his personal life is also called *walad*. Hence, the son who fails to uphold the teachings cannot be considered as *walad*.²

The Holy Quran narrates:

ولا يلدوا إلّا فاجرا كفارا

“and their descendants, if any, will be none except the wicked, very ungrateful”.³

Their conducts were not in line with the ethics of Hazrat Nuh (a.); rather it was obscene and denial.⁴

Qenan's conducts were not in line with the teachings of the prophet Nuh (a.), therefore, the Holy Quran does not recognise him as his (a.) *walad* or among his (a.) family members (اهل) or. It is said in the holy Quran,

إنه ليس من أهلک

“he is not of your family.”⁵

Although Salman Farsi (r.) was of Persian descendant, the prophet (pbuh) accepted him among his (pbuh) family member (اهل).

¹ Fasusul Hikam, 66.

³ Surah Nuh, 27

⁴ Fasusul Hikam,

⁵ Surah Hud, 46.

The Quran narrated the doa of Hazrat Nuh (a.):

وقال نوح رب لا تذر على الأرض من الكافرين ديارا

“And prayed Nuh, “O my Lord! Do not leave any of the disbelievers dwelling in the land.”¹

In essence, he (a.) prayed to Allah that He does not let any liars live on this earth, who promotes evil deeds and rejects the truth, as their motives and understandings are not productive; rather, they are diametrically opposite of the ethics of the perfected one.

It can be concluded that ‘*walad*’ or ‘*ahl*’ is the one who upholds the ethics. The one whose actions are contrary cannot be considered as a ‘*walad*’ or ‘*ahl*’. From this perspective, *khātemul walī* (the seal of the saints) is the *khātemul walad* (seal of the begotten).

It is said in *Tazkira-e-Shaykh-e-Akbar* (p. 21) and in *Fatūhāt al Makkiyyah* chapter 73 that the loftiest inheritance of the prophet (pbuh) is the seal of the sainthood (*khātemul wilāyat*). This sealing or perfection is of two kinds:

First, Hazrat Isa (a.) is the first or the greatest, as he is the holder of both message (*risālat*) and *wilāyat*. He is the seal of all spirituality and the final sign of the judgement day as he will appear in the last days.

Philosophy of the Seal of the Saints (*Khātemul Walī*)

The second is the seal (*khātem*) of the *wilāyat-e-muqayyada-e-muḥammadī*. He will be an esteemed one in his region and family. I met him in 595 A.H. He showed me the seal of *wilāyat* on his body. The commoners will not accept his divine spiritual utterances. Although sign of his *khātem-e-*

¹ Surah Nuh, 26.

wilāyat (seal of wilāyat) is beyond the sight of the common people, he exists in my time as well.

Based on this, the seal of the saints has been the *wali* since the time when Hazrat Adam (a.) was being mixed in the water and clay.

وكذلك خاتم الأولياء كان وليا وآدم بين الماء والطين¹

It is narrated in *Fasusul Hikam*:

وخاتم الأولياء الولي الوارث الآخذ عن الأصل المشاهد للمراتب وهو حسنة من حسنات خاتم الرسل محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم

“The Seal of the saints (*Awliyā*) is a *walī* and the heir (of the prophet (pbuh), who takes directly from the source (Allah). He is the most beautiful of the beauties of the Seal of the messengers, Muhammad (pbuh).”²

فالعلي لنفسه هو الذي يكون له الكمال الذي يستغرق به جميع الأمور الوجودية والنسب العدمية بحيث لا يمكن أن يفوته نعت منها وسواء كانت محمودة عرفا وعقلا وشرعا او مذمومة عرفا وعقلا وشرعا وليس ذلك إلا لمسمى الله تعالى خاصة

“The individual who is high in himself is the one who possesses the perfection in which all matters (spiritual status) of existence are absorbed, as are all non-existent relations, inasmuch as it is not possible that any of these attributes be lacking from him, be they praiseworthy by custom, human intellect, or *sharī‘ah*, or blameworthy by custom, human intellect or *sharī‘ah*. This (encompassing spirituality)

¹ Fasusul Hikam, 64.

² Fasusul Hikam, 64

belongs only to the one (a *walī*) whose name consisted of the Divine name ‘Allah’.¹

As the holder of the spirituality of Khidr (a.), he is the solitary of the solitaires or *fardul afrād* (فرد الأفراد), who absorbs both divine transcendence and similarity- *tashbīh and tanzīh* (التشبيه والتنزيه).² There is no higher spiritual station than this. The seal of the saints is the final brick with which structure of Islam became perfected.³

It is evident that the finisher of *wilāyat-e-muqayyada-e-muḥammadī* is the seal of the begotten. Since the highest attributes of spiritually shined in his personality, it is not possible for any higher attributes to appear. Therefore, he is the seal of the begotten or *khātemul walad*.

It is narrated in *Fasusul Hikam*:

وتولد معه أخت له فتخرج قبله ويخرج بعدها يكون رأسه عند رجلها ويكون مولده بالصين ولغته لغة أهل بلده ويسرى العقم فى الرجال والنساء فيكثر النكاح من غير ولادة ويدعوهم الى الله فلا يجاب. فإذا قبضه الله تعالى وقبض مؤمنى زمانه بقى من بقى مثل البهائم لا يحلون حلالا ولا يحرمون حراما يتصرفون بحكم الطبيعة شهوة مجردة عن العقل والشرع.

“A sister will be born with him, and she will emerge before him, and he will follow her with his head at her feet. He will be born in China, and he will speak the language of his country. Sterility will spread in men and women, so there will be much marriage without conception. He will call

¹ Fasusul Hikam, 79.

² Maṭālib e Rashidī, 268.

³ Fasusul Hikam, 63.

people to Allah, but will not be answered. When Allah takes him and the believers of his time, those who remain will be like beasts, not knowing what is lawful from what is unlawful. They will act according to their natural instincts with lust, devoid of reason and law.”¹

It seems that the aforementioned prophecy was indeed meant for Hazrat Aqdas (q.) for the following reasons:

1. According to Ibn Arabi, Hazrat Shith (a.) was a prophet of *aḥmadī mashrab*. Likewise, Hazrat Aqdas was a saint of *aḥmadī mashrab*. It has been discussed in the chapter ‘Triad of the Prophets’.
2. He had a sister born before him.
3. He spoke local language.
4. During his time, birth control was introduced.
5. He called upon mankind regardless of their religion or ethnicity to the spirituality and to the right, easy and simple path of Allah.
6. People failed to understand his message properly and he did not receive a wide response.
7. After his demise, people lost their religiosity and conscience and do not hesitate to live the life of animals. They accepted a secular life style which lacks kindness, equality or justice.
8. Chittagong was referred as the frontier of China. During the time of ibn Arabi, this area was ruled by the Chinese descendants. Details will be discussed in the next chapter.
9. Hazrat Aqdas acknowledged that different religions have a common ground on morality. Therefore, he never talked against the rituals of any religion. All of

¹ Fasusul Hikam, 67.

his contemporary communities, regardless of their faith or caste, were charmed by him and championed his greatness. It is part of his religious reformation. (Please see his biography for details)

As mentioned in the book *Maṭāleb-e-Rashīdī* p. 268, solitary of the solitaires (*fardul afrād*) assumes the exoteric and esoteric aspects of *muḥammadī wilāyat*. He was distinguished among his class.

For these reasons, he can be titled as the *khātem-e-wilāyat-muqayyada-e-muḥammadī* in four ways.

1. *Khātemul walī* or the seal of the saints follows the religion of *khātemun nabī*, the seal of the prophets. None of his son survived him. It resembles that of the prophet (pbuh).
2. He is also *khātem* as the holder of the teachings of Hazrat Shith (a.). The birth of Hazrat Shith (a.) was a miracle; similarly, his teachings (*wilāyat-e-muṭlaqa*) marked the dawn of a new era. After the death of Hazrat Abdul Gani Nablusi (r.) in 1143 A.H., in the era of religious moral dissention, religious ethics and ethos were revived with the advent of Hazrat Gawthul Azam Shah Sufī Syed Ahmad Ullah. Influence of his universal *ghawsiyyat* eliminated hypocrisy and deceptions.
3. He accumulated the transcendence and similarity (exoteric and esoteric) of all faiths and was respected and accepted by all contemporaries; hence, he is the owner of *wilāyat-e-muḥammadī fardul afrād*.
4. He encompasses the religious aspects of the past and future and holds the encompassing *wilāyat* or *wilāyat-e-muṭlaqa*. It is called *nisbatain-e-‘admī*.

Since this divine blessing of the highest spirituality (*wilāyat*) manifested in his personality once, it is not possible for it to re-manifest elsewhere. Its manifestation and existential requirement have been perfected here and it exhausts here.

Therefore, he is the concluder of *wilāyate-e-muqayyada* and the founder of the era of *wilāyat-e-muṭlaqa*. He is the last Ghawthul Azam who introduced the revolutionary method of sevenfold principle that hails universal religious equality.

Chapter 5

Birthplace

According to Hazrat Mohiuddin Ibn Arabi's prophecy, this universal saint's birth place is situated at what has historically and geographically been considered as the frontier of China. It is situated near equator between plain lands of Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts and on the east of Sitakunda, a pilgrimage destination for Hindus. It was known as the residence of the Buddhist.

Ibn Batuta named this town as the 'Green City'. Arab merchants called it 'Chattal' and the hilly Buddhist used to call it 'Chatang Gong'. Urdu poets referred to it as 'Chatgam', while the Hindus called it 'Chattala'. It was known as 'Chattagram' among Bengali Muslim. The English named it 'Chittagong'.

History of his birthplace Chittagong confirms that in the past, Chinese descendants, who were known as Tibetan Burmese, used to live here. They arrived in Chittagong through the river Brahmaputra. (Please, see the book '*Purana Amal- Old Days*' by the famous novelist, former Sub-Registrar Mawlana Mahbubul Alam)

The temperament of the locals in Chittagong is quite unique that they are flexible freethinkers. They usually welcome positive elements from different cultures and adapt them into their own and their language has been enriched by different

languages as well. Its door has always been open to all nations and civilizations. It has been the garden of the saints and hermits and a manifestation of the Lord's mercy, making its residents lenient towards Sufism. Its landscape is a miniature of world topography.

When I was studying in Mohsenia Madrasa in 1911, I found a bronze coin of Ahom dynasty half dug in the madrasa campus. I sent it to a professor at the Department of Pali Language in Chittagong Government College through Mawlana Abdus Salam of Daroga Bari in Chandanpura. He commented that the coin was indeed from the era of Ahom dynasty and sent it to the Calcutta Museum as a souvenir.

Physical appearance and colour of the hilly tribes living in Chittagong Hill Tracts indicate that they descended from them. They are very simple and follow a non-violent religion.

During 10th century A.D. there were some strange mosques known as 'Buddha's Moqam' in the coastal areas stretching from Eastern side of the River Meghna and South of the River Brahmaputra to Malaya Peninsula. These mosques were revered by both Chinese Buddhist and Muslims.¹

During the reign of Buddhist Emperor Samudra Gupta in 377 A.D. Hindu civilization started spreading in Bengal. From 1097 A.D. to 1159 A.D. Bijoy Sen son of Hemonto Sen reigned over the coastal area of South Bengal, opening the door for Hindu civilization to spread in Bengal.

Their reign came to an end after Bokhtiar Khilji conquered Bengal in 1193 A.D. On 14 October 1760, the British rule

¹ Notun Itihash by Abdus Sattar p 88. Published in 1957 in 244 Nobabpur, Dhaka. (Historically, influence of Chinese civilization lasted until the end of twelfth century.

was established and a new secular government system was introduced. After the failed Sepoy Mutiny in 1857, the opportunity to re-establish a religious state was diminished. As a result, the relation between the religious authority and state power ceased and, at the absence of a religious government, the influence of Islamic *sharī'a* governance gradually became weaker.

Beginning of a New Era

The new government system was alien to religious customs and ethos and led to the beginning of a new era. In 1826, Hazrat Ghawthul Azam Mawlana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah (Q.) was born, whose birth in that era was inevitable as the saviour of the religion. Historically, this era is proven to be the era of *wilāyat-e-muṭlaqa*. During this time, hilly tribes used to rule in the North-Eastern part of Chittagong.

Introduction to Hazrat Ibn Arabi

Hazrat Shaykhul Akbar Allama Mohiuddin Ibn Arabi was born in Spain on Monday in 1166 A.D. and 27 Ramadan in 560 A.H. He was a renowned scholar and saint, who received special blessings from Hazrat Piran-e-Pir (q.). Hazrat Shaykh Abdul Qader Jilani (q.) named him as 'Mohiuddin-reviver of the religion' after his own title and referred to him as his own son. He has written many books and Tafsir in Arabic. In 637 A.H. he wrote the book '*Fususul Hikam*' after being ordered by the Prophet (pbuh) in his dream. He died in 1240-41 A.D. and 638 A.H.

Turkish-Afghan Sultanate

During this time, Bengal was under the reign of Turkish-Afghan Sultanate. Grand Trunk Road built by Sher Shah and King Nasrat's Dighi are among the remnants of historic Muslim influence that stretched over the coastal area of

Chittagong. Two hilly kingdoms exist to this day next to Fatikchhari of Chittagong. It is noted in the book '*Purana Amal*', that during 1229 A.D., the rulers of Chandra dynasty in Chittagong maintained their independence, and that during 1343 A.D. they were giving away the lands. The prophecy of Allama Mohiuddin Ibn Arabi (q.) appeared to be contemporaneous with this.

Signs of Hilly Rulers

The vast area on the eastern side of Sitakunda is known as Fatikchhari. Once it was a marshy land and was ruled by the hilly tribes-Mogh and Chakma. There are still some areas named after their names like Mogh Pukur, Mogh Vita, Malumer Tila, Domdoma etc. as well as the names of the rivers and springs of Fatikchhari like 'Lelang', 'Dhurung', 'Halda' etc. bear the name of the hilly tribes. The area 'Fatikchhari' was named after a mountain spring. Mountain springs gradually turned these marshy areas into a fertile agricultural land. Moghi Calender and Zamindar system bear the signs of the hilly kings. It is understood from these that these areas were ruled by them.

'Chatong' means 'peace' and 'gong' means the great or the head. Therefore, 'Chatong Gong' means 'the greatest peace'. The hilly Chinese used to come to Chittagong and would try to charm the nomads travelling to the south by showing them the natural beauty of the area. This is why they used to call it 'Chatong Gong' in hilly language.¹

'Khakan' is the title of the Chinese descendant rulers of Turkmenistan; for example, 'Khakan-e-China or Khakan ibn Khakan etc. It was a custom to read '*khutba*-Friday sermon'

¹ A school teacher and Headman of the village 'Mamfruli', Babu Sadak Kumar told me about the meaning of 'Chatong Gong'.

in the name of the last Caliph Sultan Abdul Hamid of Turkey, which can be seen in the *khuṭba* book compiled by ibn Nabata. The Turks are also a branch of Chinese Mongols.

Based on these, it can be concluded that Shaykh Mohiuddin Ibn Arabi (r.) was correct describing this area as the frontier of China, which he attained through his unveiling.

This district was also known as ‘*Chatgam of Badar Pir*’ and ‘Islamabad’ during the time of Muslim rulers. The geography of this district miniatures the world geography as it consists of mountains, islands, peninsula and plain lands. It has been the spiritual centre and pilgrimage destination for the saints and hermits as if the area has been decorating itself to welcome the great saint. The abundant resources of the area resemble his abundance of divine mercy.

There are many springs in this region to satiate the thirst of the thirsty people. The rivers flowing from the mountains are generously giving away their wealth and fill up the houses. As the Holy Quran says,

ولكم فيها ما تشتهي أنفسكم ولكم فيها ما تدعون

“in it for you is all that you may wish for, and for you is all what you ask.”¹

This green land with its rugged mountains, meadows, rivers and fountains mesmerizes the onlookers; making the human hearts thank Allah for His bounties and keep uttering the Quranic verses:

ما خلقت هذا باطلا

“O our Lord! You have not created this without purpose.”¹

¹ Surah Fussilat, 31

There must have been a goal behind such creation, indeed, this is what happened later.

Hazrat was born in ‘Fatikchhari’. ‘Fatik’ means crystal and ‘chari’ means stream or flow; (Crystal Stream). The Holy Quran describes the springs of the heaven as ‘Salsabil and Zanjabil- (سلسبیل - زنجبیل)

These springs originated from high mountains and they are like the breast milk of the mothers; pure, charming, and digestive.

The monsoon floods these springs and purifies the whole country by cleansing its dirt and waste and carry the mountain wealth-alluvium. Those rivers are flowing to thwart the might of the sea and to humble its pride before the Mighty One.

Responding to the humble prayers of the rivers, this tidal water flux leaves alluvium and fishes in the ponds, marshes and canals.

After monsoon this alluvium calls upon the people and silently tells them:

عشر أمثالها

‘ten times, ten times’.²

O farmers! The life of the country! Take ten times rewards of your hard work.’

After hard work, when the farmers see that there is more than 240 grain in every stalk, they sing with a rapt heart:

Nowhere else a place of such luminous glories

¹ Surah Ale Imran, 191

² Surah Anaam, 160

This is the best of all lands on earth

This is the land of my birth.

اگر فردوس بروئے زمیں است

ہمیں است وہمیں است وہمیں است

“If there is a paradise on earth

It is this, it is this, it is this.”¹

In the village Maizbhandar under Fatikchhari Thana of paradisiacal Chittagong was born Hazrat Ghawthul Azam.

The meaning of ‘maizbhandar’ is ‘middle warehouse’. It was established as a supply hub for the Muslim army fighting against the Mogh Kings. In the passage of time, this ‘maizbhandar’ became the centre of spirituality and famous as the birth place of the great saint, the flag bearer of ‘*tawhīd-ul-adyān* spirituality’, who accumulates the main principle of the religion and avoids religious discrimination and conflicts. It is a peaceful serene green village. It is the resident of the saint, who bridged between the ethics of the religion and its rituals. It is the repository of the morality and humanity.

Birth of the Universal Saint

By the will of Allah, a saint named Hazrat Syed Ahmad Ullah was born in this village at Zuhre time, on Wednesday the 1st of Magh, 1233 Bengali, 1188 Moghi, 1244 A.H and 1826 A.D.

He is the introducer saint of the last era and an unparalleled qualified son of Chittagong.

¹ There is ambiguity about the original author of this couplet. Some refer it to Amir Khosru, while the others refer it to the Emperor Shahjahan.

At the conclusion of the first half of religious epoch which was influenced and guided by the *nabuwwat*, Hazrat Mawlana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah (q.), the holder of *wilāyat-e-aḥmadī* came to this world to start the beginning of the final half. Therefore, he is the reformer saint of this era and the solitary of the solitaires- *fardul afrād*.

It can be concluded that according to Ibn Arabi's prophecy, he is the seal of *wilāyat-e-muqayyada* and the beginner of the era of *wilāyat-e-muṭlaqa*. He also named him as 'the seal of the begotten' - *khātamul walad*.

Importance of Name

His name was 'Ahmad Ullah', a combination of the Prophet's (pbuh) name 'Ahmad' and Allah's greatest (*ism-e-a'zam*) and autonomous name 'Allah'. His father's name was Mati Ullah, resembling his (pbuh) father's name 'Abdullah'. His mother was Khairunnesa, which was in fact the title of Hazrat Fatima Khairunnesa (r.). His only son Mawlana Syed Foyzul Hoque passed away before him survived by two sons; Mawlana Syed Mir Hasan and Syed Mawlana Delawor Hossain. It is similar to the prophet (pbuh) that none of his (pbuh) son survived. At the time of his demise, his only daughter Anwarnunnesa was alive, like Hazrat Fatema Khairunnesa (r.) was alive at the time of the demise of the prophet (pbuh).

The date of his demise is 27th of Dhū al-Qa'dah while the Prophet (pbuh) went for *miraz* on 27th of Rajab and the Holy Quran was revealed on 27th of Ramaḍān.

There is also a resemblance between the dates of his elder grandson Mir Hasan's death (9th of Muḥarram) and that of Hazrat Imam Hasan (r.)

There are resemblances in lunar dates in respect to the date of his demise (27th of Dhū al-Qa‘dah), and revelation of the Holy Quran on 27th night of Ramaḍān at the Cave Hira’ and the incident of *mi‘rāz* on 27th night of Rajab.

Family Tree

The universal saint Shah Sufi Mawlana Syed Ahmad Ullah (q.) was the descendant of the universal prophet Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh). His ancestors arrived at ‘Gora’, the than capital of Bengal, after their stay at Baghdad and Delhi. During a pandemic at Gora in 1575, Qazi Syed Hamid Uddin Gori settled in Potia Thana of Chittagong. One of his sons Syed Abdul Qader moved to village Azimnagar in Fatikchhari Thana to take the position of imam. His son and grandson were Syed Ataullah and Syed Tayeb Ullah respectively. The second son of Syed Tayeb Ullah, Syed Motiullah settled in the village Maizbhandar. He was a pious Islamic scholar. He was the father of the universal saint Ghawthul Azam Hazrat Mawlana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah (q.). His mother was Syeda Khairunnesa Bibi.

Education

He started his primary education at the village maktab. He finished his intermediate study under the supervision of Mawlana Muhammad Shafi of village Azimnagar, who was a famous Islamic scholar with unveiling power.

He was admitted to Calcutta Alia Madrasah in 1260 A.H. In 1268 A.H. he graduated from the madrasah with excellence in Quran, Hadith, Tafsir, Fiqh and other subjects.

During his study at Alia Madrasah, he stayed at the house of a pious Muslim scholar named Sufi Nur Muhammad.

In 1269, he was appointed as a Qazi in Jashor District. Afterwards he resigned from the post, and started teaching at Munshi Bu Ali Madrasah at Matia Buruj in Calcutta. During this time, he received *ghawthiyyat* effusion and *khilafa bil wirāthat* from Sheikh Syed Abu Shahama Muhammad Salih Qaderi Lahori, who was a sheikh of *Qaderia Tariqa* and a descendant of Ghawthul Azam Syed Abdul Qader Jilani (q.). Later he attained effusion of *qutubiyyat-e-itteḥādī* from his master's elder brother Hazrat Shah Sufi Syed Delawor Ali Pakbaj Muhajir-e-Madani, who was considered as his *pir-e-tafayyuz*. Hazrat Syed Ahmad Ullah became spiritually perfected and qualified to bestow perfection upon others. He was a born saint. He attained *wilāyat* through the companionship and deputyship of his spiritual master. He reached the state of *wilāyat bid dirāsāt* by attaining '*ilmul ladunnī*' and effusion of union through his apparent and concealed study and practice. He was also crowned as the *malāmiyya mashrab* universal saint of the highest level of the four levels through his rigorous spiritual endurance and his struggle against the ego, which is called *bil malāmat*.

He passed away at the age of 79 years at 1 am on Monday night, 10th of Magh, 27th of Zilqad, 23rd of January 1906.

Remarks of Some Famous People

His contemporary scholars as well as those from later generations expressed their high opinions about him after they had experienced his spirituality. Following observations will help us know about him and understand his status.

Mawlana Zulfiqar Ali of Calcutta was the former superintendent of Chittagong Mohsenia Madrasah and father of the former principle of Chittagong College, Kamal Uddin Ahmed M.A. (London). He sent a stone engraved with

eulogy after the demise of Hazrat, which is attached on the archway of the shrine entrance.

He wrote in Persian: “With the grace of the breath of Ghawthul Azam, the residents of East became pious and attained spiritual attraction. Man could achieve the state of Divine love that encompassed their body and soul. Because of the blessings of his holy shrine, mausoleums of the saints became illuminated and *Jalāl*.

He is the leader of the saints, whose title is Gawthul Azam

After asking about the date of his demise, Zulfikar heard a heart rending remarks. It was revealed to him that it was 27th of Zilqad and 1323 A.H.

Allah’s grace and mercy be bestowed upon his holy soul.

It was revealed when asked about the date of his demise.”¹

Mufasssir-e-Quran, Mawlana Ayub Ali of Farhadabad, who was the former sub-registrar, a famous literature, translator of the holy Quran, wrote a poem in praise of Hazrat Shah Ahmad Ullah with the title ‘Hazrat Ghawthul Azam Shah Ahmad Ullah Sahib Chittagong’ on 7-1-28 A.D.

Excise Custom Inspector Mawlana Muhammad Yunus Miah of Nadimpur and Mawlana Syed Abu Taher of Nanupur once

1

از دم فیض غوث میبهندار * شرقتیان سالک اند و صاحب حال
 تربتش راز می اثر سه منزه و * در مزارات رونق و احبال
 ذوالفقار این شنید از ان سر و ش * چونش از سال نقتل کرد سوال
 احمد الله شاه سرور درویش * غوث اعظم صفت شدش چون وصال
 بست و هفت شب ذی قعدة بود * بست و سه سیزده صد سال
 بر و انش رواند مادام * رحم و رضوان حق تمام و کمال

visited Hazrat Mawlana Shah Sufi Safi Ullah, who was a retired teacher of Calcutta Alia Madrasa.

He asked them about their residence.

They said, 'Chittagong'.

He asked them, 'Do you know Hazrat Shah Ahmad Ullah (q.).'

'Yes, we do.' They replied.

He turned into the state of spiritual intoxication and kept saying, "Miah, you know? How much do you know? There has not been such a great saint in this world for the last six hundred years".

It appeared that he was talking about 'six hundreds years' related with the period of Hazrat Abdul Qader Jilani (q.) and Hazrat Moin Uddin Chishti (q.). It is in line with the interlude between the circles of *wilayat-e-uzma*.

Mawlanna Abdul Gani (r.) was born in the village Kanchanpur of Fatikchhari Thana in Chittagong. He was an Islamic scholar and a great saint. His contemporary would call him 'the ocean of knowledge'. He was among the aspirants of Ghawthul Azam Maizbhandari (q.) and received deputyship from him. He wrote many invaluable analytical books on the status of Ghawthul Azam Maizbhandari (q.) and his *tariqa* in Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Bengali. Among them are *Gyan Dorpon*, -Mirror of Knowledge, *Prem Dorpon*- Mirror of Love, *Atto Pat*-Studying thyself, Know thyself-*Atto Porichoy*, *Gulshan-e-Ush-Shaak*-The Garden of Lovers, *Ayena-e-Bari*, The Divine Mirror, *Mushaheda-e-Maqbuliya*- Accepted Witnessing, *(Fayuzat-e-Ghawthiya)*-Grace of the Savior, *Diwan-e-Sufi*, Narration of the Saints, *Diwan-e-Maqbul*- Narrations of the Accepted, *Mojaq-e-Ishq*-

Taste of Love, *Tanqihul Maḥmum*- Correcting the Understanding, *Sharh-e-Kulliyat-e-Khakani*.

A short excerpt of Tawallud-e-Ghawthiya from his book *Ayena-e-Bari* is quoted as an example.

“The sun of the Great Lord has arisen. The Divine Secrets have manifested in the human form. Today rose of hope has bloomed, for whose arrival the whole universe has been awaiting. Today the source of the mystic knowledge was born, whom the Prophet (pbuh) would boast about.¹

It is mentioned in page 138 in *Ayena-e-Bari*,

Hundreds of greetings, Ghawth of Allah has arrived to this world,

The beloved one, the aspiration of the saints, the leader has arrived.

Hundreds of greetings unto him, the sun of exalted throne has arrived,

Radiance of the Divine has arrived to this world.

Both worlds are like shoes in his feet,

Such an exalted king has arrived in this world.

His grace makes the impossible possible,

Such a wish-master arrived to this world.²

¹ *Ayena-e-Bari*, P 140

آفتاب عرش عز و اعتلا پیدا ہوئے
صورت انسان میں سرخدا پیدا ہوئے
ارزومیں جنکے تھے چرخ برین و عرش و منرش
آج وہ شاہ گل باغ منا پیدا ہوئے
انبیاء میں فخر چکا کرتے تھے احمد رسول
آج ہی وہ زبدہ اہل صفا پیدا ہوئے

² *Ayena-e-Bari*, P 138

It is also mentioned in the page 136 of that book

O Our Saviour! Success is at your hand, we are advancing towards you.

Peace from Allah be always upon you, continuously and successively.

O the great friend of Allah. Oh the friend of the Giver!

Our greetings be upon you for present and future.

You are the best saviour and Allah's respected pole.

You are the sole owner of all honour.

(O the great guest!) We are expecting your arrival.

(Soon it will become true.)¹

In the page 151, it is mentioned,

مدمرحباصل علی غوث خداپیداہوے
 جہان جہان و قبلہ اہل صفاپیداہوے
 مدمرحبانور رشید عرش اعتلاءپیداہوے
 عالم میں اب توجہلوہ شان خداپیداہوے
 دونوں جہان پائے مبارک کا ہے جسکی کفش آب
 عالم میں وہ سلطان ملک اعتلاءپیداہوے
 فیض نظر سے جسکی ہوتی ہے رواحاجات خلق
 اب عالم دنیا میں وہ حاجت رواپیداہوے

¹ Ayna-e-Bari, 136

غوٹنا الفوز لیدیك * نحن مقبل اليك
 فصلوات الله عليك * بالتواتر والتوالی
 یا حبیب الله العالی * یا خلیل ذی النوالی
 فسلامنا عليك * فی الحال والمال
 انت غوث الأعظم * أنت قطب الافخم
 أنت فرد الله الأکرم * خیر مقدم تعال

حضرت محمد مصطفیٰ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم خاتم الانبیاء اور سلطان المرسلین ہیں یہ ولی بھی اولیاء کرام رحمہم اللہ تعالیٰ میں خاتم الاولیاء اور سلطان الاولیاء اور غوث الثقلین اور وارث خلیفہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم ہیں

Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) is the seal of the prophets (a.) and the leader of the messengers of Allah. Likewise, this saint (Hazrat Ghawthul Azam Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah) is the seal of the saints (seal of the era of *wilāyat-e-muqayyada*). He is the leader of the saints and the great saviour of the two worlds. He is the inheritor of the Prophet (pbuh).¹

Mawlana Aminul Hoque (r.) of the village Farhadabad of Hathazari Thana in Chittagong wrote about the status of Hazrat Ghawthul Azam Maizbhandari (q.) in the first and second pages of his Arabic book '*At Tawḍīḥātul Bahiyya*'. Some extracts are translated below.

“My respected guide and honoured master is the confluence of perfection and the Divine grace. He is the core of spiritual grace and his influence existed everywhere through his miracles. His inner beauty shines on the face like the mount '*Ṭūr*'. His demeanour is light. His attributes radiate innocent effusions. His spiritual secrets are the effusions attained by the Prophet (pbuh) during his (pbuh) meeting with Allah on the night of ascension (*mi'rāj*). His witnessing is the emanation of the knowledge of the Prophet (pbuh) during *mi'rāj*. He is attributed with the Divine Attributes. He is appointed as the great saviour –Ghawthul Azam in the realms of Allah. May Allah grant us the shade of the blessings of that Ghawthul Azam.”

¹ Ayna-e-Bari, 151

Mawlana Aminul Hoque Farhadabadi (r.) was a perfected spiritual Islamic scholar and a Mufti. His fatwa was appreciated by the scholars of Al-Azhar University in Egypt.

Mawlana Syed Abdul Hamid Baghdadi introduced him to the Arabs in the yard of ‘*Haram*’ and said holding his right hand, “these thin hands are not made of bones; rather, they are of diamond. His writings are as sharp as diamond. I have not seen such qualified Islamic scholar in Bengal. Though, I do not agree with him in some issues”.

Hazrat Qibla said about him ‘From my six books, I have given one to my Amin Mia. He signed in one of his books titled as ‘*Tohfatul Akhyār*’ and made supplication to Allah for its acceptance. Remembrance of Allah was always active in his heart. His acquaintances testified that he was a simple, pious, perfected Islamic scholar. He wrote below mentioned books

1. Shawahidul ibtelat fi Tardide ma fi rafyul Ishkalat.
2. Dafiyyus Shobhat fi Jawajil Istijare ala Taat.
3. Tohfatul Akhyar.
4. Tawjihatul Bahiyya.
5. Rafiul Gashabi.
6. Gayatut Tahqiq fi ma yatallaqu bihi talaqut taaliq.
7. Miratul Fanni Sharhi Mulla Hasan.

Alhaj Mawlana Azizul Hoque al Qaderi (Sher-e-Bangla) was a resident of Hathajari Thana. He was the president of the then East Pakistan Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamat. His poem ‘Nazre

Aqidat' regarding Hazrat in Persian language is quoted below with translation.¹

1

حضرت شاه احمد اللہ قادری * قطب الاقطاب بلاد مشرقی
 غوث الاعظم ان شاه میجھندری * ان چراغ امتان احمدی
 سایہ اوچوں همان سایہ بدال * بود او کبریت احمر در جہان
 تاج بودہ بدست سرور پیغمبر ال * یک نھادہ بر شہر شاه احمد اللہ بیگان
 زین سبب او غوث الاعظم در بلاد مشرقی * فیض یاب روضہ اش جن و پری و آدمی
 تاج دیگر بر سر ان شاه جیلانی نھاد * زان سبب برگردن ہر اولیاء پائش نھاد
 در شب معراج محبوب خدا برگردنش * پانھادہ رفت بر عرش برین ان رفرش
 اندر ان آدم گفت محبوب خدا از معجز بیان * تو محی الدین ہستی تحفہ خدمت بدان
 نام ناظم گرتو خواہی شیر بگالہ بدان * ای خدا محفوظ دارش از شر و دشمنان
 ہزار ان مر حباورد ز بانم * بر اے احمد اللہ غوث الاعظم
 بقطب مشرق مشہور عالم * از و پر فیض شد اطراف عالم
 کراتش برون حد شمار ست * بسا ناقص ز فیضش پر کمال ست

Hazrat Shah Ahmad Ullah Qaderi, he is the qutubul aqtab shined in the Eastern Region.

He is on the throne of Maizbhandar with the title of Ghawthul Azam.

He is the torch of guidance for the *ummat* of the Prophet Ahmad (pbuh).

His spiritual blessing is like the influence of ‘*huma*’ bird.
(Transforms unlucky as lucky)

For the whole universe, he is like the red sulphur.

The Prophet (pbuh) had two spiritual crowns.

(Two crowns of *wilāyat-e-‘uẓmā* understood as *wilāyat-e-muqayyada-e-muḥammadī* and *wilāyat-e-muṭlaqa-e-aḥmadī*).

بمبجھنڈا ر شدہ آرام گاہش ** عزیز الحق بجان و دل فدائیش

خداوند بحق غوث الاعظم ** عزیزش را بگردان غوث الاعظم

بھران سلطان پاکستان ہزاران مر حبا ** خواجہ ما احمد اللہ غوث الاعظم مر حبا

از شہنشاہ مدینہ ایں خطابش آمدہ ** از زبان اولیاء مردہ چنان مسموع شدہ

وصف اورا کی تواند این عزیزنا تمام ** از وجودش ملک بنگالہ شدہ روشن تمام

یا الھی جنت الفردوس اورا کن عطا ** ایں دعا مقبول کردان از طفیلی مصطفیٰ

نام ناظم گر تو خواہی شیر بنگالہ بدان ** منکران اولیاء را سم قاتل بیگمان

One of the crowns is undoubtedly on the head of the Hazrat Shah Ahmad Ullah (q.)

For this reason, he is the Ghawthul Azam who appeared in the East. His shrine is the source of Divine grace for man and jinn.

The other crown is on the head of Sheikh Syed Abdul Qader Jilani (q.)

This is why his feet are on the shoulder of all saints. (All saints have to obey him)

On the night of *mi'rāj*, the beloved (pbuh) put his feet on his neck,

He went to the throne on the *raḥraf*.

(The Prophet (pbuh) reached to '*arsh*' through his *wilāyat-e-uzmā* or *raḥraf* which was preserved for Piran-e-Pir.)

At that time, the Prophet (pbuh) miraculously told him, 'you are the reviver of religion for your spiritual contribution'.

Know that the writer of this poem is Sher-e-Bangla.

Oh Allah, save him from the harm of enemy.

Thousands of greetings be in my mouth,

for Ghawthul Azam Hazrat Shah Ahmad Ullah (Q.)

He is the pole in the East.

His effusions shined in every corner of the world.

His miracles are numerous.

Many incomplete became perfect with his effusion.

He rests in peace at Maizbhandar Sharif.

Azizul Hoque is sacrificed body and soul to him.

O the Great Lord! for the sake of Ghawthul Azam,

let Aziz be annihilated in Ghawthul Azam.
Thousands of greetings for the king of Pakistan,
Our master Hazrat Ahmad Ullah Ghawthul Azam.
This title was announced from the king of kings in Madina.
This is resonated in the words of the saints
His attributes are beyond the perception of Aziz.
With whose radiance the Bengal has been illuminated.
O Allah! Grant him Jannatul Firdaus.
Accept my prayer for the sake of the Prophet (pbuh).
Know that the writer of this poem is Sher-e-Bangla
Who is a poisonous killer for the enemies of the saints.¹

At the early stage of his spiritual exposure, a man brought a big watermelon to him as a token of devotion, which he sent to his childhood teacher Mawlana Muhammad Shafi (r.) of Azimpur. The teacher was delighted that Hazrat still remembered him and supplicated to Allah that the people of the world may remember him as he had remembered him. Mawlana Ahmadur Rahman of Silonia, the grandson of Mawlana Muhammad Shafi (r.) narrated it to Hafiz Muhammad Dowlat Khan of Haidchoikha.

Mawlana Nazir Ahmad of Hathazari wrote in the book ‘Al Hadi’ published by ‘Nadwatul Muallifin’ that Hazrat Shah Ahmad Ullah Maizbhandari (q.) of the village Maizbhandar in Chittagong foretold about Hathazari Madrasah and measured its lands and vicinity long before it was established.²

¹ Diwan-e-Aziz

² Mawlana Nazir Ahmad, Fazel e Jamia Islamia, Surat, Bombay, Nazim of Nadwatul Muallifin, Hathazari, Chittagong, 1954.

Evidence of Hazrat's Encompassing Spirituality

Abdur Rahman, son of Abdul Aziz, a descendent of the founder of the famous mosque 'Junir Baper Mosque' in Fatikchari of Chittagong narrated, "One day in New Delhi, I came across a beggar on the side of the road. I was holding one *ana* in my hand. The beggar told me, "Give me my one *ana*". When I gave it to him, he requested me to count his coins. I counted them; it was ten *ana* short of one *paisa*. The beggar asked me to count them again. I recounted them and it was ten *ana*.

The beggar told me, 'You have a coin of eight *ana*. Exchange it with my coins of eight *ana*. My coins became a burden for me'.

Afterwards the beggar told me to give his hands and feet a massage as they were hurting. I obeyed.

He told me again to bring him nun bread and pea soups for one *ana*. I did it as well.

Later the beggar said, 'Do not worry. You will get your money receipt in Calcutta. Your wife went to the circumcision ceremony of your nephew and she is fine and is enjoying. Help me get up. You go your own way'. He then disappeared."

The narrator said, "After a long time, I went to Bombay where I saw that man walking with a stick and went over to him.

'Do you know me?' asked the man. 'But I do not know you. What did Khawaja Baba told you?'

'I know you. I am a Bengali. I did not understand what Khawaja Baba said in Arabic.' I replied.

He said, ‘Did he not say that different garlic cloves have the same root?’ ‘That root is in Bhandar (Maizbhandar)’, he continued. ‘You should go there.’

The narrator also added that he spent a long time with Shah Motiur Rahman, who used to tell him, ‘You should go to Binajuri. He kept rice pot for you. Do not come to me.’

Hafiz Dowlat Khan son of Aminur Rahman of Haid Chokia in Fatikchari narrated: “I heard from Munshi Abdus Sobhan son of Munshi Anowar Ali of neighbouring Azimpur that once both his brother and sister got fever at the same time. His father sent him to Faqir Mawlana at Maizbhandar. He saw him resting in his *daira sharif*. He was waiting for his chance to talk. After a long time, Hazrat ordered the attendant, ‘Call the boy from Azimpur.’

When he stood before him, he ordered, ‘Bring a *lota* of water.’

He poured the water on a plant and then brought another *lota* to pour on the plant and a third to make ablution. He told him to return home.

At home, he later came to know that his mother went to the nearby pond leaving the patients at home. After returning home, she saw that the beds of the patients were wet. She accused an unfriendly female neighbour for doing it, which she vehemently denied. The patients also said that they did not have any idea where the water came from. But they were feeling better after the water touched their body. They also said that they were hungry.

When Abdus Sobhan (the narrator) returned from Darbar Sharif, they understood that it was the spiritual blessing of Hazrat.

Opinion of Mawlana Syed Abdul Karim Madani (r.)

A retired railway officer, Sheikh Mosleh Uddin of Nalapara narrated:

“One day Syed Abdul Karim told him, ‘I have been travelling many countries including Indonesia (except Arab). My quest ends here in Chittagong. I have not met such a great saint like Mawlana Syed Ahmad Ullah (q.) of Maizbhandar.’”

Opinion of Mawlana Hafiz Syed Sirikoti

Advocate Mahmud Jalal son of Mawlana Abdul Halim of Anderkilla in Chittagong narrated:

“One of his aspirants one day asked Mawlana Sirikoti, ‘the followers of Maizbhanari Tariqa practice *samā*’ with musical instruments and they dance in the state of intoxication. What do you think of them?’

He replied, ‘Look, he is the supreme saint of this era. Everything is under his governance. What possibly can I say?’”

Another aspirant of Mawlana Sirikoti, Amir Hossain, son of Asghar Ali, Abur Kandi, Comilla District, who also serves in the Police Service, narrated:

“The *pīr* (Mawlana Shirikoti) used to say, ‘There are two paths in Maizbhandar. Do not go to the North one. You may go to the South. However, it is better for you not to go.’”

This is why I have not come for so long. At the end, on 15/2/1969, I received the order to come; which was repeated again on 5/3/69 saying, ‘Come, my descendent is here.’

Hence, I came today (6/3/1969) to meet you and to visit the shrine of Hazrat.”

Mawlana Abdul Hoque Maryam Nagari narrated:

Son in law of Mawlana Safiur Rahman once mocked Mawlana Abdul Hoque Maryam Nagari as a ‘Maizbhandari’. Mawlana Safiur Rahman was upset about this; he scolded him, and told his son in law not to say anything about Maizbhandar Darbar Sharif. He said that its status is so high that it is beyond their grasp.

On 5th of April 1956, Urdu Poet Tofael Ahmad ‘Nayyori’ penned a poem about the miraculous incident of throwing the *lota* on the face of the tiger to rescue the aspirant. After reciting it he handed it over to me. It is quoted below without any change.

Summary of the Urdu Poem

“I penned a miracle of the saint in Bhandar, which took place about one of his *fana fi sheikh* aspirant. He was very poor. One day he wanted to sell some wood and bring some milk to his master. He went to the hill to collect wood where a ferocious tiger was about to attack him. He screamed for help from Hazrat Ghawthul Azam.

At once, a *lota* hit on the face of the tiger and it flew away.

Hazrat Qebila was doing ablution at the bank of a pond at home. The man brought that *lota* to Darbar Sharif and narrated what happened.

Hazrat smiled and said, ‘I will help unconditionally whoever asks for help. This scheme of my *ghawthiyyat* governance will continue till the day of judgment.’

Among his contemporary pious scholars were Mawalana Hafiz Ahmad and Mawlana Shahabuddin who was the descendent of Mawlana Keramot Ali. They visited Hazrat Ghawthul Azam Maizbhandari (Q.) and attained his blessings. They also expressed their high opinion about him. Famous Gazipuri Shah Saheb and Mohajer-e-Makki, the

author of *Dalael* made their respectful observation about him which is compiled in his biography.

Among the Hindu ascetics Tylongo Shwami¹ and Tara Charan also expressed their high opinion about his great spirituality.

There were many incidents and occasions that show the extent of respect and veneration devoted to him by his contemporary scholars and nobles.

Songs and qasidah composed by his ardent devotees show the depth of their devotion and respect towards him. Among them Mawalana Abdul Hadi Kanchanpuri, Mawlana Abdul Gani Kanchanpuri, Mawlana Aminul Hoque Harbangiri, Mawlana Kazi Asad Ali, Amiruzzaman Shah of Patia-Chittagong, Mawlana Syed Mosaheb Uddin Shahpuri, Mawlana Bajlul Karim Mondakini, Poet Abdul Hakim and Fazlur Rahman are prominent. From later generation Poet Babu Ramesh Shill became famous.

Likewise, people of his own village and surrounding areas also showed their fervent veneration. For example Nazirhat Jamea Millia Ahmadia Senior Madrasa bears his holy name. His spiritual status ‘ghawthiyyat’ is also celebrated in the name of ‘Nanupur Gausia Senior Madrasa’. Its founder Mawlana Tofael Ahmad’s father Mawlana Obaidur Rahman was an aspirant and *khalifa* of Hazrat.

Maizbhandar Ahmadia High School at Charalia Hat also proudly proclaims his name. Bhandar Sharif Ahmadia Primary School was established in his name. D. B. Road connecting to C & B Road that connects five unions to

¹ He was a famous ascetic in Kashi. His name was Tylongo Dhor. He died in 1887. He authored a book named ‘Mohabakka Rotnaboli –The Great Pearls of advices

Chittagong Town was also named after him ‘Shah Ahmad Ullah Road’. Because of this road, this small village is connected with the Nazirhat Rail Station and Ramgor Road in the West, and in the East it is connected by Isapur Road, with Chittagong Hill Tracts in the North and with Kaptai Road in the South.

The blessed local people regularly offer their veneration and devotion to him by witnessing his memoirs and their benefits.

Hazrat was a ‘*majdhūb-e-sālik* of *sayr m’a* Allah saint. Following the footsteps of the Prophet (pbuh), he was able to mix up with the general people. He was the great beneficial saviour (Ghawthul Azam).

The seekers and the visiting people would usually mention their names, address and needs. Their needs would usually get fulfilled once he invokes his kind well-wishing spiritual power to the higher world. The general people call it *doa* and the Sufis call it ‘*taṣarruf*’ or exertion.

It requires the quality of knowledge, well-wishing deliberation and active spiritual power to be accumulated in one entity.

Therefore, Hindus and Buddhist used to call him ‘thought reader Faqir Mawlana’ and the Muslims call him Ghawthul Azam.

Because of his spiritual status, the village ‘Maizbhandar’ transformed into ‘Maizbhandar Sharif’ and proclaims his spiritual pride. With the command of Allah, his *darbar* became the repository to fulfil the desires of the devotees. He is the conqueror of the hearts and possesses the qualities of the spiritual realm.

Hafez Siraji said,