
Analysis of exegetic principles of Shah Waliullah Dehlvi in the light of Al-fozul kabir Fe usool Tafseer

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Abstract

Dedication of verses to specific events, it is a common way in the interpretation of the holy Quran, this does not match the universality of the message with requirement of the living societies, keeping this matter in sight, Shah Waliullah introduces the parameters for demonstrating indispensability of the holy Quran by balancing between importance of historical perspectives of revelation and inclusiveness of the message. This article deals with explanation of method introduced by him in the book al-fozul kabir, the method presented by him, gives comprehensive logic and sets parameters which are guiding human minds to recognize universality and generalization of the holy book by meeting with requirements of contemporary world and supporting human values. Basically, this is theoretical research in descriptive nature, which is based on document analysis by reflecting on the uniqueness of his work. The exploratory research method was adopted to analyze the effectiveness of way of understanding of the Quran introduced by Shah Waliullah. In nature of work, this posits a theoretical constructive to analyze the contextualization of the content presented in the fozul kabir with justification of exclusiveness of his way of thinking by highlighting his philosophy which is foundational stone of his way of understanding.

Key Words: Universality, Indispensability, Historical perspectives, Comprehensive logic, Human values. Exclusiveness. Foundational stone.

01: Introduction:

The holy Quran is to have been believed as words of God revealed upon the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the last source of revelation and the latest edition of divine knowledge. As a Muslim, individually or collectively life is to be spent as given directions contained in the holy Quran¹. So being Muslim, the main purpose of life is to understand the message of the holy Quran. It is the reason behind the history of Islam, scholars have dedicated their lives to the interpretation of it. It came into the observation that traditionally people rely on narrations or hold explanations received from scholars who came before them. This way of interpretation

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shows as the Quran is just like the book of stories, it has nothing with the universal message which is considered to be a guiding source for humanity for all generations². The way of thinking introduced by previous scholars, causes misunderstanding regarding generalization of it, it has frozen thinking minds to not go beyond the accepted limitations and take bylaws as fundamental principles. Shah Waliullah came to cure this illness by introducing logical method for indispensability of the holy Quran. His method for understanding the holy Quran is meeting with nature of human, giving objective position its verses, helping enlightened identities of contemporary world to take it as main sources of guidance for problems and issues they face in their societies. As written by qasmi: "This book is from the renovating and revolutionary works of Shah Waliullah. It's very suitable and appropriate for one who is interested in Tafseer and wants to comprehend the Holy Qur'an easily"³.

The way introduced by shah gives picture of ideas and values placed in the holy Quran, as standard criteria which still alive and be forever. He is first figure who presented his treatise on exegetic principles in complete form of document, before him, previous scholars either introduced some parameters in the preface of their commentaries or collected some glimpses as footprint for understanding the Quranic text. The dearth of this subject compelled him to come up with documented dissertation which quenches thirst of intellectual community by absorbing all areas necessary for the understanding the divine content and paying way for generations to get acquaintance with the divine text as source of guidance for their individual and social needs, as he mentions in introduction: "When window of book of God was opened on him, he felt impelled to produce a small treatise to incorporate a useful points which could help friends to understand the Quran, he hopes, with mercy of the God, by simply being aware of these rules, the students of the Quran would find wide opening before them, otherwise they would not be able to find as accurate and logical account as is given here even if they were to spent their whole life on commentaries or work of commentators who incidentally are few in the present age⁴.

02: Uniqueness of approach of Shah Waliullah:

Undoubtedly the work presented by Shah Waliullah is voluminous, he dedicated his life to scientifically interpret religion on basis of logic accepted by intellectual components of world. Same position could be realized in his understanding of the holy Quran⁵. His main objective is to picturize the universality and indispensability of the message of the Quran, by introducing method of its understanding which makes one be free from the traditional books which don't have capability to meet with requirements of minds of modern world, he introduces the principles of interpretation, which are inducted from the Quran itself⁶. In his sight, that is natural way of understanding, which have no need of any disciplinary knowledge designed in specific terms, just one thing is looking to be main source of his understanding that is practical wisdom. Practical wisdom is getting central point in his treatise on principles of understanding the Quran, it is way which is leading to the original text taking it as source of guidance. By fundamentally keeping practical wisdom, he arrived on approach to understanding the Quran with adaptation of two skills, one rational ability, second illuminated enlightening⁷. He can be observed to have dived with these two skills to find practical and universality of text into its

content, it is result of handing these two skills to open door for understanding the Quran and bring people out from previous work that they have been relying on for long time.

in this perspective his analysis is so simple but similarly complicated, he does not think like jurists who interpret it as book of law by going irrelevant depth of each verse, or book of grammar as it is habit of scholars of language and entomology, or as some considers it as book of literature, trying to find rhythmmed cohesive of words or rhymical coherence as placed in the books of literature. He argues that just having purified nature is way opens doors for understanding, his argument is full with rational justification, as he is looked to verify his argument, to say that the Quran was given to those people who were unaware of the educational riddles created through specific terminology, just people of that specific area can be able to know, if person does not have any acquaintance with that particular branch, would not be able to understand, While the companions, holder of the holy Quran, had no any familiarity with these types of terms, only on basis of natural affiliation with words synthesized in the holy Quran they were able to understand⁸.

03: Classification of his method:

It is believed in all sections of jurists that the Quran is fundamental source of constitution. Jurists divide sources of law in four sections. The book. The Sunnah. The Consensus. The analogy. Last two are indecisive due to human analysis approach. Sunnah is explanation and practical demonstration of the book. Now only one thing is remained to be fundamental source, that the book of Almighty Allah.

The method introduced by Shah Waliullah is acceptable and provides standardized version of interpretation by inducing the Sunnah from the book⁹. It means this method does not accept separation between the main sources of law. Indispensability does not degrade the position of Sunnah rather provides authenticity to Sunnah. This standardized method proposed by him is result of his understanding the book with practical wisdom, he connects the content and society on the basis of human values¹⁰. His advocacy for direct interaction with text makes his work unique and pays way to get rid of slavish reliance on other commentaries which are full with footnotes as the basic principles.

This methodology is reliable, sophisticated and determined. Through this method Shah wants to prove necessity of divine text for all periods, as he talks on this at the end of science of polemic by highlighting that the Quran is timeless document, the logic placed in the text, its reason is to encounter the preventive steps not to just deal with circumstances circulating with specific people of that era¹¹.

3.1: Meaning of five sciences.

The simplicity of his method is logically interpreted as a natural sense of understanding, it resulted in the division of the content of the Quran into five sciences: 01: Science of polemic. 02: Science of injunctions. 03: Science of favor of God. 04: Science of days of God. 05: Science of eschatological events. In this division, he is looking to have covered all types of knowledge that human history perceived, in that manner completion and universality both are highlighted

through this classification. In fact, purpose of this division is to appreciate the contextual coherence and to invite minds to focus on the original text¹². As he further elaborates this classification with comprehensive logic: In the science of polemic, he simplified the verses of disputes as they are having a conversation with four misguided sects. Polytheists, Christians, Jews and hypocrites. He does not go into the highly complicated debates as people are involved on one by one point, he came with logical reasons of verses, the main objective of this kind of verses is to make their attention on their mistakes and misunderstanding they were indulged, and remove their doubts from the clear and perfect message, which have been hindered from their eyes because they have never been able to bother for a simple and positive way of thinking, so the holy Quran talks with them in the logic of nature, not unsophisticated manner¹³.

As criticizing on polytheists with the example of daughters, when they don't like for themselves, how they believe for God, on hypocrites on their selfishness, the Quran ignites their inner sense on what they are doing, it is self-decisiveness. Similarly on Christians and Jews, bringing examples from their own acceptable sources, asking them to not follow their clerics who are not willing to present true things for sake of their selfishness, way of conversation is having simplicity for this kind of debate, as common people can easily understand that the Quran is a reflection of the true message presented in their own authentic sources, what wrong with them, it is the result of mishappening of being blindly follower of one cleric community, then the Quran gives simple examples of their daily life with comprehensive logic in order to enable them to realize their mistakes and accept what is true. It is the uniqueness of his understanding in the application of verses contained for polemic with present times as in polytheism gives examples of practices demonstrated in honoring of saints and tombs or practices of blindly following of clerics of the time. In exemplification, he wants to put light on the importance of the message pertained in the holy Quran, and highlight the false customs gripped among societies on basis of religion.

He is observed to continue his same methodology and approach in all other sciences, in science of favor which includes theology and physics, the Quran is not getting position to deepen in philosophical discussion or extensive study of theological terms, floating around intricicated systematic interpretation, rather emphasis on simple faculty of logic to recognize the nature of thing, as the Quran denounces all types of anthropomorphism with one sentence, there is nothing like God. This is comprehensible logic that everyone can understand the state of imcoparison between creator and creation¹⁴.

In the science of injunctions, he does not take the favor of terminology as it is the habit of jurists, just comes with objectives of divine injunctions, that God prescribed his rules to purify the hearts of people by enabling them to adopt good deeds and warn them to avoid devil practices, as human it is their natural need to do and avoid.

In his sight, science of injunction deals with opportunities and problems occur in personal life and in science of days of God, it deals with successful and unsuccessful of nations, it means the stories of previous nations are not subject to have any literal sweetness but to pay

attention on divine rules play role in social and political development of nation and reasons of their declined and worsen status for which they were de-screened from human history.

In science of ahtological events, Shah Waliullah interprets the philosophy of life, he believes that life is in continuity circle, never stops, it is accepted in all rational communities, just who deny, are few and having no authentic proof for end of life¹⁵. That is the reason the Quran is talking about this matter of life. Pain and pleasure both are two states of human life, as they exist in this physical life, similarly exist after this physical world, just here are in a dominant position, after this be in the absolute state, the result of this is to speak about this matter is nature of human being. It is basic of his philosophy to not divide life in physical and meta-physical, but he thinks of it in one stream, in this way he wants to make intellectual minds accept the divine scriptures as the interpretation of human nature, not as being thought just divine scripture are talking about the things which cannot be understood with the mind.

3.2: Reasons for secrecy of the Quranic text:

His methodology to present thematic analysis of the content, is being adopted in all five chapters. In this second chapter, with adoption of the thematic analysis, he provided a rational view of difference of nature of Quranic verses. First, he gives a reason for understandability of the Quran for the people of prophetic society. Their natural affiliation with words used in the book, inherited acquaintance with proverbs as traditionally conversed by each other's. People of that society did not have any need of formal education with specific terms to understand the Quran, just with natural sense of familiarity they were able to get amount of knowledge that necessary for their practical life individually or collectively. That is why Shah introduces a precious point for the words used in the Quran, by saying that the divine desire was to prepare Arabic society which demonstrates the message of God, then that society would be given responsibility to spread the message¹⁶. This is logic for that the syntax structural of the Quran was not unfamiliar for people of Arabic society rather its literal expression was subject to ignite their natural passion of understanding.

After giving comprehensive explanation for understandability of the Quranic text which was simple and uncomplicated for Arabic society, he went through the reasons occurred as obstacles to understand the text for other people. Expanding of Islam opens door for non-Arab people, then people tried to find answers of the questions which they were discussed among themselves, this kind of approach did not allow people to hold the way of understanding as first people had, but they went to deepest interpretation and complicated explanation on basis of terms, techniques by diving to linguistic exegesis. This way created a lot of issues which may appear a reasons for ambiguity of the text. Then Shah has counted some reasons for ambiguity of the text¹⁷.

In a precise way what can be extracted from this chapter is that according to him, the divine text was easy for understanding for people of Arabic society, ambiguities and secrecies appeared for people who could not proceed the method of early people, but they try to find the solution of systematic complicatedness itemized into difference terms and definitions. It means it was result of not applying natural sense of understanding rather adopting the artificial

method to adjust verses with their own ideas for getting favor to have satisfaction in rational queries.

3.3: Miraculous nature of style of the Quran:

His scientific study of religion compelled his mind to adopt practical wisdom for connecting divine text with societal norms and cultural values. It resulted in resembling the expression of the Quran with a way of messages, given by someone gradually and according to circumstances demanding to be guided. Because main objective of the divine message is to enhance capability of people of society from unknown to known or postulate the basic human values with comprehensive logical narratives¹⁸. This way of thinking led him to extract way of expression from text by covering in four forms of synthesizing, Odds, oration, letters and idioms. These four forms of expressions are deployed for convincing the people of Arabic society because they were used to share their ideas and messages in these four forms. By focusing on their sense of understanding the Almighty Allah sent book to them which is talking to them in the style with which they are familiar. This way of expression is adopted to have been focusing on the objective of revelation that is creation of environment for understanding the message. In surface this method does not provide sufficient importance to the literal sweetness rather de-values the literal coherence. That is reason for which he dedicated the third chapter to respond this reservation.

Definitely, his view about text is establishing the intellectual society by keeping their rational capacity in sight is basic principle of his philosophy, but it does not mean that the Quran does not have any literal sweetness and coherence. What is rational argument can be given is that he wants to expose the rational perspective of the text, not to hider the literal charming, but for inviting the human minds to draw attention to that perspective, because it is dilemma that most of people have been habitual to ignore the rational perspective and deepen to literal complicatedness, it created a rigidity and bigotry to not extend the measures of thinking beyond the literal and textual techniques¹⁹. As he justifies the repetition and de-compilation of sciences of knowledge to have attention on objectives, says that the main objective was to picturize the clarity and perfection of a message to the minds of people, that was not possible with literal arrangement and compilation as it is observed in the books of literature. It means the main objective of revelation is not to enchant the aesthetic sense of human with fascination of words but to make the text easily understandable though adoption of repetition and de-compilation²⁰.

It is notable that the same time he pays attention on literal sweetness by saying it is human nature to feel tranquility with listening of rhymical stream of words and rhythmic soundness of sequenced composition, it was against the wisdom to not place it with due respect, and it is miracle of Allah to put two dialectical components into one place.

It is worth to be considered that he is not getting different position from other scholars of language to prove divine authority of the Quran on the basis of literal eloquence and rhetoric composition. His uniqueness is reflected when he matches the literal expression with common sense of human nature. According to him, the Quran is not poetic composition, which has

meters and measures, but its expression is simple and with full of sweetness, this simple but sweet is placed to appreciate the nature of human beings, if it was arranged according to books of poetry, people could not have realized the literal sweetness because different people have difference parameters for the poetry, that is why poetic composition has been avoided by favoring the universality²¹.

3.4: Reasons of differences of exegetics and way of reconciliation:

His view on the differences of the exegesis meeting with logical sensibility is reflection of his deep study of all disciplines of knowledge regarding to the method adopted for the interpretation of the Quran. As he puts light on the core reason of differences to pay attention on subjectivity of scholars who confiscated themselves to circle around their own boundaries, like scholastics, jurists or literalists. After putting a little bit glance on the differences of exegesis, by declassifying the historical perspectives scattered into books of exegesis, he introduces a slandered criteria for avoiding from going to unnecessary particularization that have nothing with the actuality of the message. His classification into two components opens a new door for understanding the text and abstaining from ineffectual specification. Sometime verses are talking about the special characteristics of specific people or things, at the moment it is necessary to absorb all parts of events for the understanding, to not catch wholeness of event which may cause to ignore some characteristics, it comes with result of misunderstanding. But sometime verse is generally talking about the principles, in that position, mentioning event is to have purpose of application of that principle not to specify verses with that event. In this case position of event is like example which is result of rational adoptability of the exegetics not divine applicability to have indispensable for meaning of verse. In this classification everyone can understand the practical productivity by applying into study of exegesis, it will integrate a lot of differences and bring out the true picture of the originality of the text. It is reason for which he does not give importance of much amount of events which are mentioned by scholars of hadith for understanding the text due to have nature of application not textual requirement²². By accepting the placement of rationality in historical perspective and integrating the differences of exegetics through logical narratives are not only sign of his deepened insight on the study of exegesis literature but are exhibition of his philosophy of theory of unification and reconciliation which exploiting over opportunities of composedness of the conflicts, reduction of the amount of contradiction and showing purity of the text, are ways which are leading to have avoidance from indulging into unnecessary bondage of debates.

His critical analysis of historical perspectives on basis of rationality gives remarkable explanation of the reasons of differences between predecessors and successors by attending the attention on way of predecessors for historical background that the habit of them was to mention the background in the context of verse as its possible applicable place, not considering real reason of revelation. As he says this is the thing worthy to have differences on account of rational thinking, so this is not matter of decisiveness but leaving room for a lot of possibilities²³.

3:5: Method to get appropriate meaning of difficult words:

Like other fields he adopts the same methodology for defining the position of specific words in specific place. Though he forcefully denies the conventional depth exercised by the scholars of literature, He also accepts a rational way to find the meaning of rarities. It means in this field he is holding rational path to extracting the appropriation of word and accuracy of place. For that he sets two criteria, first the usage of words in different places is criteria to dedicate the meaning in which the word is preferably given, second the understanding of the companions is standard criteria for finding the appropriate meaning of words²⁴. It means two main tools are to be taken for encountering the obstacles occur from the difficult words, one language and second footprints of the companions. In language it is necessary to focus on both textual perspective and contextual perspective. Prioritizing from the possibilities of meaning in textual perspective is depending on use of the word in different places, it is pure rational way of understanding.

It is result of his simplification and natural query to rely on authenticity of traditional chain of narrations for getting appropriate meaning of word, means the chain of narrators of students of Hazrat Ibne Abass R.A with line of his two famous students, Ibne abe talha and zuhak as well as Nafie. After that his trust on Imam bukhari and another scholar of first period is showing way of his intellectuality for considering the early period authentic and uncontroversial, which are holding cited position in case of having any kind of differences.

04: Analysis of his method and its characteristics:

His competence to study the sources of classical collection and keeping insight on practical wisdom, led him to not be engaged with impracticable materials, rather he utilized his skills to revive the method of understanding²⁵. As Sindhi said: "Reason of his introduction of useful rules for interpretation is to not follow techniques of previous scholars who kept unnecessary restrictions, so it is not possible for common people to get sufficient share of knowledge from the holy Quran, because previous technical complicatedness does not allow them to put attention on Quranic text"²⁶. Most of work presented by previous scholars was full with improper rigidity and baseless interferences from unwarranted way of thinking, like theologian, jurists of logisticians, practically it happens that society neglected the teaching of one single-lawyer. By focusing the validity of text, he put his concern to think directly on text and provide guidelines to intellectual sections for studying the text with natural sense of understanding.

By adopting the natural sense of understanding and practical wisdom he presented revolutionary work inviting all sections of society for understanding the Quran, his approach to understand the Quran is highly standardized and perfect which leads intellectual as well as common factors of society to get attachment with message of the Quran like realizing that the Quran is talking with them. The result of the approach introduced by him, is getting rid of those multitudes unnecessary accelerations have been encumbered in previous books, one can understand his method when he was observed to have counseling on his farewell epistle that the Quran should be taught with translation but without commentaries²⁷.

Reflection of his intellectuality occurs in the approach of his understanding of the Quran, can be observed when he is talking about the causes of revelations in five sciences. He does not take a position to circulate the verses around the specific backgrounds as it has been habit of most of the commentators, he goes to depth of societal perspective, highlights the general reasons of revelation, in this way of understanding he gives comprehensive logic of universality of the Quran. As he says that the purpose of polemic verses is purification of hearts and removing false sets of beliefs inculcated in minds and purpose of verses of injunctions is to promote well-being activities and uproot anti- human practices²⁸. Actually, this approach is result of his understanding the Quran on basis of practical perspective, he tries to find the logic through societal challenges and social emergencies. In this perspective the Quran is like book of constitution, which can play revolutionary role in any society, if its interpretation is to be given according to objective –oriented perspective, because general reasons either beneficiary or harmful, are nature of humans, nature does not accept change.

It is result of his adaptation of practical wisdom as main principle of exegesis, he does not go in literal techniques and synthetically coherence but highlighting the social problems and societal issues as objectives of revelation, this is why he does not go to respond the reservations arisen from linguistics on repetitions, but he justifies the repetitions through the practical objectivity as he writes: These issues were discussed by God in positive manner in number of chapters with variety of style, no exception was made while mentioning them repeatedly. In the truth the absolute wise in the relation to these ignorant and unintelligent people should be of this type. This is a decree of powerful wise²⁹.

This classical approach led him to give logical justification for the divine injunctions, in divine injunctions he does not consider the knowledge of revelation as a book of technical complicatedness systemizing the chronically placement of words and sentences, rather he invites his attention on the purposes, as he introduces the Almighty Allah as physician who cures the sick and ill people with difference formula of treatment by considering their customs, rituals and cultural traditions³⁰. This can be further understood from his view about the Islamic laws presented by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He does not see the Islamic religious philosophy as new system but continuity of stream of Abrahamic set of values, he says Islamic laws are constituted to promote the Abrahamic principles, just difference is matter of form in the perspective of specification of commonality or jurisdiction of fundamental principles³¹. This connectivity between Islamic laws and Abrahamic values is result of his approach in which he interconnects the religion and society. This is reflection of practical wisdom.

05: Discussion and result:

It is accepted by all enlightened sections of Islamic world that the Quran is complete source of guidance, the message contains in the Quran is universal and living source of knowledge without any limitation of time and space. In this perspective it comes to knowledge that two ways of interpretations of divine latest text have been presented. In one method the Quran is not to be apparently taken as independent, understanding of it is entirely depending on other sources. This method puts unnecessary restrictions and introduces a systemized terms for the understanding. Second method is modern approach, though it talks about the Quran as

independent but its interpretation is occupied with highly subjective knowledge of the contemporary world, which leads to create a lot of misconceptions, in other words people try to understand through the concepts which they get from influential and dominant ideas. In analysis sense, in first method does not allow the minds to take the Quran as source of knowledge for every period but confiscated it with revealing time, and second method is highly self- deceptive, which is ignoring the authenticity of basic source of knowledge of Islam in the holy personality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Approach of Shah Waliullah meets with high standardized position of interpretation of the Quranic exegesis. He does not take any occupational subjectivity that ignores the authenticity of Sunnah, similarly he does not rely on narrative based interpretation which confines the Quran with specific area and events. His approach is classical which integrates both revealed and scientific methodologies. His approach characterizes the Quran as universal and indispensable in perspective of objectivity concerning the matters find in every society as he gave examples of the society in which he was living, but same time he interconnects this objectivity with the authentic subjectivity on the basis of human values and natural ethical principles. It means where his approach sheds light on the universality and indispensability of the Quran, similarly his approach gives logical understanding of the Sunnah. This is the property of his approach which integrates the whole history of knowledge throughout religious literature presented by all Muslim scholars.

06: Conclusion:

His practical wisdom acknowledges the simplified explanation of the holy Quran, regarding to that he presented his treatise on commentary to invite the intellectual community to keep concentration on the original text and get free from other books which are full with unnecessary restrictions and terms, that do not allow minds to take purity and originality of the message placed for all mankind. In his voluminous work, Shah does not introduce a set of parameters necessary for understanding the holy Quran, but provides a comprehensive set of parameters with a simple, valid and classical method through examples which are extracted from the original text and society in which it was revered as a source of divine guidance. His way of understanding on the basis of practical wisdom is connecting the text and the society, it means his method does not have subjective importance to the words but rather defining content as a source of establishing the intellectual society, this objective necessity does not only match the text with practices also this is presenting the holy Quran as it is talking with the person who tries to understand. This objective necessity gives the result to enabling people to find answers of questions and solution of problems burning in the society that they live, this is the beauty of work introduced by shah, which characterizes universality and validity to the divine message.

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