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Structural Functionalism in Shah Waliullah's Thought

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Abstract

Structural functionalism can be defined as the theory that evaluates or accesses society in terms of its structure and how these interdependent or interrelated parts are formulated to meet the social as well biological needs of the members of society. This theory provides an insight into how social institutions, human behaviours and their beliefs emphasize upon meeting the needs of the members of society, including education, religion, family and healthcare just to name a few. The chief purpose of this paper is to explore the elements of structural functionalism in the works of Shah Waliullah. Structural functionalism is one of the most significant paradigms of classical sociology. Infact Western tradition of Sociological thought began with structural functionalism in the nineteenth century France. Shah Wali Ullah, a prominent Muslim scholar of India, dating back to the eighteenth century predicted the essential features of structural functionalist analysis in his works. This highlights the richness and freshness of Muslim intellectual tradition and how they dominated the society back then with their ideas and perspectives. This study firstly aims to explore Shah Waliullah's concept of Man and how he defines the sociological thought-process in his writings. Secondly, this paper also highlights how the human society is formulated and how social structure comes into power. Thirdly, this paper will also provide an indepth analysis of how integral social institutions play a vital role in smooth functioning of society.

Key Words: Structural Functionalism, Shah Waliullah, Social Thought, Social Institutions, Social Statics, Social Order

Meaning of Structural Functionalism

Human society has an order and structure. Members of society are mutually connected to one another through social roles and these social roles are reasonably constant over a period of time. From these roles emerge different social norms which are patterns of expected behavior. These

patterns of expected behavior are basis of social structure. One of the primary concerns of sociological investigation is to study this social structure. This is called Social Statics by August Comte. Social Statics thus means study of society 'at rest'. The chief question raised by Social Statics is what holds society together or why there is social order at all. If society is an organism, then Social Statics is anatomy.¹ For Shah Waliullah observation of social phenomena is imperative for the in-depth comprehension of the Quran because study of these social phenomena affords the observer an opportunity to ponder over the signs of God, as history of rise and fall of nations unfolds itself.

Shah Waliullah's Concept of Man

Theology, metaphysics, sociology, psychology, political theory, and taswuf, all synthesized in one person—Shah Waliullah (1703-1762), one of the most profound scholar's Muslim civilization has produced. What makes him and his work more important is the fact that he appeared on the scene at a particular juncture of history—Muslim India was passing through social and political crisis, and, so it seems now, and generally human history was entering into a new era marked by rationality and critical thinking. Shah Waliullah, in his works, seems to us quite aware of the social and political turmoil of his society and at the same time was conscious of the advent of new age.

Man occupies a central position in Shah Waliullah's thought.² Man has the potential to ponder over his existence and the divine creation and thus can realize the ultimate objective of this creation. That is why Man has been declared as vicegerent of God on earth. Man, in its very nature, feels that he has a mission to perform. He has a natural attraction toward higher moral principles. Morality is neither a result of socialization, nor a product of pure reason. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was always fascinated by the presence of a moral order within human breast and, according to him, it is not a product of pure reason but it exists prior to reason. Shah Waliullah also declares Man as a moral being. Thus submission to God and conformity to His orders is inherent in human beings. And this moral and spiritual self makes human beings able to recognize prophets and follow them. Thus whatever prophets teach and explain is implicit in the human nature. According to Shah Waliullah, primary morals are four which are the source of all other morals. These morals are:

- (a) **Ikhbat**: It means humility and selflessness and it is the result of submission before God.
- (b) **Taharah**: It means cleanliness and purity. It has two dimensions, physical or outer cleanliness is to clean body, dress and the surroundings while inner cleanliness refers to purity of heart and honesty of intentions. *Taharah* is a necessary condition for moral and spiritual uplift.
- (c) **Samahah**: It means generosity, munificence and having a kind and benevolent heart.

¹ Lewis A. Coser, *Masters of Sociological Thought* (Orlando, Florida: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1971).

² Muhammad al-Ghazali, *The Socio-Political Thought of Shah Wali Allah* (Islamabad: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2001).

(d) **Adalah:** It means justice and equity. According to Shah Waliullah, *Adalah* is the central moral because it will ensure that individual will manifest all his qualities with a proportion and moderation and everything will have right place in his being and behavior. It is important to note that Shah Waliullah does not describe these morals only at individual level but believes that these four morals should be reflected at communal and societal level. At societal level, he particularly emphasizes the attribute of *adalah* which would mean that he is referring to the whole social structure to be based on justice and equity. According to Shah Waliullah, Man, by its very nature, is distinct from other organisms. He points out three distinct qualities of Man: ³

- a) **Al-raye al-kulli:** It means universality of purpose. Human behavior is not just triggered by immediate concerns and needs as is the case with animals which cannot go beyond immediate gratifications. Human beings can think beyond specific situations and thus can generalize and deduce laws. At the same time they can postpone their immediate gratifications for the sake of higher happiness or some ultimate principle.
- b) **Zarafah:** It means aesthetic sense. Human beings have a natural inclination toward beauty and symmetry. They, by their very nature, like cleanliness. This natural attraction towards the beautiful makes them not to just fulfill their physical desires but to fulfill them in a beautiful way. Hence they not only eat food just to fill their stomachs but eat delicious food and serve it with neat and clean crockery.
- c) **Iktasab-e-Ilm:** It means acquisition of knowledge. The third quality that differentiates man from animals is his capacity and curiosity to acquire knowledge. Knowledge of animals is instinctual, while human knowledge is acquisitional. Man always wants to acquire knowledge and skills in order to gain perfection. He has an innate urge to gain perfection. And this is the cause of development of so many sciences and arts which animals have not been able to produce. *Ijad wa Taqleed* is also important here, which means that some people are by nature leaders while others are followers and this peculiar human condition is *raison d'être* for human organization. Man has the faculty to invent and discover and at the same time he can adopt and follow things and paths discovered by others. These three attributes make homo-sapiens *human* and are bases of all the cultural progress and development. Thus, according to Shah Waliullah, 'human nature' is not a vague concept but it has precise meanings and all the cultural accomplishments and civilizational achievements are ultimately rooted in human nature. Shah Waliullah calls human individual *Insaan-e-Saghir* and humanity as a whole *Insaan-e-Kabir*, and works out his idea of the unity and oneness of mankind which he considers to be an objective of religion. All that contributes to unity and oneness of human society is a life promoting process, and whatever disturbs peace and amity tends to destroy society.

Psychological Foundations of Human Society

As has been discussed above, Shah Waliullah regards man as a moral being and this moral order is implicit in the psychic structure of man. In the same way he holds that social order is only the

³ Shah Waliullah, *al-Budur al-Bazighah (Urdu Translation)*. Translated by Dr. Qazi Mujib-ur-Rehman. (Lahore: Idarah Matbuat, 2000).

external form of what is internal in the human nature. Man, according to him, is by nature gregarious and soon builds a network of relationships with fellow human beings. And this is necessary for his physical survival. Thus society is the result of natural disposition of man. In order to understand the psychological basis of society, it is necessary to understand the inner structure of this disposition. According to Shah Waliullah, there are two basic tendency systems operating within human nature: First is called by him *Haywaniyyah* or *Bahimiyyah*, which is the animal aspect of human disposition.⁴

The other is called *Malakiyyah*, which is the angelic dimension of human nature. Man is thus between animal and angel. While angelic aspect is necessary for purification of soul and transcendence, animalistic aspect is essential for efficient behavior and external action. This is important to note that, according to Shah Waliullah, an ideal human being is not one who suppresses all his animalistic aspect and becomes an angel. Such an 'angel', while may find himself in a state of spiritual ecstasy, may not be beneficial for society. Shah Waliullah further builds his theory by adding another variable. He states that these two aspects of human nature may be related to each other by a bond harmony and coordination (*Istilah*) or by a state of conflict (*Tajadhub*). On the basis of these variables, Shah Waliullah has developed full-fledged typology of human personalities. For example, a person having high degree of animalistic aspect and high degree of angelic aspect with a state of harmony between the two aspects shall have different personality from the person who has high degree of animalistic aspect and high degree of angelic aspect with a state of conflict between the two aspects. Other personality types can be derived from these variables.

The chief purpose of spiritual practices, according to Shah Waliullah, is to subdue the animalistic aspect and to make it subordinate to the angelic aspect. It is not desirable to annihilate the animalistic aspect. Then Shah Waliullah relates these types of dispositions to social roles. Thus a strong animal aspect, under the control of a strong and high grade angelic aspect would create a disposition most suitable for leadership and for the tasks of organizations on large scale, while the angelic aspect without assistance from a strong animal aspect might lead to retirement and sainthood. The animal aspect is, by itself, at its best, good for physical labour and at its worst a source of danger to society. If the angelic aspect is dominated by animalistic aspect, a perverted disposition would be the result. Shah Waliullah's treatment of the types of disposition, in fact, is so elaborate that it would require a separate research to describe fully all the types he mentions.⁵

These various dispositions are then connected to various social roles and a network of these social roles then creates a social system. Thus social system has its roots in the dynamics of human disposition. Of course social conditioning and socialization plays its part; but even within the same environment created by same agents of socialization, different people of different dispositions will be having different experiences. All the students are sitting in the same class

⁴ Dr. A. J. Halepota, *Philosophy of Shah Waliullah* (Lahore: Sind Sagar Academy, 1970).

⁵ Ibid.

room but each one is having a unique experience of the class room. And that also explains why different people are attracted to different professions and occupations.

Social Order and Social Equilibrium

According to Shah Waliullah, society is an organic whole whose different organs cooperate and coordinate with one another in order to accomplish the societal goals. That is the reason he gives immense importance to the attribute of *Adalah* (justice or balance). According to him *Adalah* is the fundamental quality responsible for the progress of mankind. Although this quality may manifest itself in a variety of ways, but its essence remains the same. When the quality of *Adalah* is manifested in social norms and customs then it is referred as *Adab* (etiquette). When it is expressed in situations of earning and spending money, it is called economy, and when expressed in power structures we call it politics.⁶ In this way Shah Waliullah demonstrates that all the social institutions actually function to accomplish the same task and that is the attainment of a just social order or a state of social equilibrium. If any one of the social institutions is functioning without *Adalah*, the whole social equilibrium will be disturbed.

Shah Waliullah maintains that social harmony and equilibrium is a pre-requisite for societal growth. And on the other hand, controversies, religious or intellectual, paralyze society. That is the reason, Shah Waliullah used all his intellectual efforts to resolve the controversies that were dividing the Muslim community and were a threat to social order and social equilibrium. Shah Waliullah displays marvelous ability to reconcile and resolve apparently contradictory stances. In this respect, a careful analysis of his works indicates that there are three important elements of his method:

- (a) **Burhan, Wijdan, and Manqul:** He claims that his method to reconcile these conflicting and contradictory positions is based on *Burhan*, *Wijdan*, and *Manqul*.⁷ By *Burhan*, he means sound rationality and argumentation, by *Wijdan* intuition and spiritual experience after purification of heart, and by *Manqul* he means Quran and Sunnah and unbroken chain of Islamic teachings. Actually the basis of these controversies is that some scholars are scholars of *Naql*, and they simply ignore the due role of sound reasoning, while others who prefer rationality, ignore the role of intuition in reaching the correct judgment and so on and so forth. Shah Waliullah has got a privileged position in the sense that he had profound and extensive knowledge and experience in all the three sources of knowledge.
- (b) **Opinions are tied to a context:** Shah Waliullah further says that there are various contexts or perspectives of a particular opinion or judgment. In one context or perspective, a particular judgment can be made about that thing with all the certainty but with the change of context that

⁶ Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, "Shah Wali Allah Dihlawi," Vol. II, in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, by M.M. Sharif (Ed.), 1557-1579 (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1983).

⁷ Shah Waliullah, *al-Tafhimat al-Ilahiyya* (Hyderabad: Shah Waliullah Academy, 1973).

opinion is bound to change. ⁸ So by linking an opinion or judgment with its context, several confusions can be avoided and contradictions can be resolved.

- (c) **Genealogical approach:** Shah Waliullah first states and analyses different opposing positions and propositions as they are prevalent in his times and then starts tracing their historical development, and then with this genealogical approach traces the genesis of these various approaches from a common source or system, and in this way shows how the same principle has manifested itself differently in different situations.

The following controversies are particularly noteworthy which got the attention of Shah Waliullah:

- (a) **Shia-Sunni Conflict:** Shia-Sunni controversy also engaged Shah Waliullah's attention to a considerable degree. This sectarian conflict had indeed played no small part in the political decline of Muslim India. The differences between the Shias and Sunnis are rather of a fundamental nature, one must admit, and, as the long history of their disputes indicates, they are not easy to be eliminated. Shah Waliullah, although is a Sunni scholar⁹, his works however contain such indications in which at least peaceful co-existence of two communities is possible. He has given due respect and reverence to the Twelve Imams and maintains that he sees them among the people of the Holy-fold (*hazirat al-quds*). He, in his work *al-Tafhimat al-Ilahiyya* predicts a great danger to one who denies or even doubts their spiritual greatness.¹⁰ But at the same time he asserts quite logically that the doctrine of Imamate is in clash with Finality of Prophethood (*Khatm-e-Nabuwwat*). According to Maulana Manazir Ahsan Gilani, Shah Waliullah was reluctant to categorically declare Shias outside the pale of Islam and once enquired by a person, he explained that Hanafi jurists are divided on this issue.¹¹ As far as the superiority of *Shaykhayn* (Hazrat Abu Bakar Siddique and Hazrat Umar Farooq) and Hazrat Ali Murtaza is concerned, Shah Waliullah takes the position that though his natural tendency was in favour of Hazrat Ali, he was ordered to give preference to *Shaykhayn* for the reason that the first two Caliphs contributed much to the development of Islam in very difficult times. So, according to Shah Waliullah, the first two Caliphs

⁸ Muhammad Sarwar, *Armaghan-e-Shah Waliullah* (Lahore: Sind Sagar Academy, 1997).

⁹ On Shia-Sunni issue, two different portraits of Shah Waliullah's works have been sketched by researchers. Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi (*Shah Wali Allah and His Times*. Canberra: Ma'arif, 1980) maintains that Shah sahib was a narrow minded Sunni scholar who regards Shias as infidels; while S.M. Ikram (*Rude-e-Kausar*) regards Shah sahib's works as having the potential to resolve this controversy. Rizvi's coverage of Shah Waliullah and Shah Abdul Aziz lacks balance and he seems obsessed by the fact that Shah Waliullah was a Sunni scholar. Please see the reviews of his works by Francis Robinson (*Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1984), 522-525) and by Bruce B. Lawrence (*The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (May, 1984). 586-587).

¹⁰ A. D. Muztar, *Shah Wali-Allah: A Saint-Scholar of Muslim India* (Islamabad: National Commission on Historical and Cultural Research, 1979).

¹¹ S. M. Ikram, *Rud-e-Kausar* (Lahore: Idarah Saqafat-e-Islamiah, 1997).

have *afzalecat* over Hazrat Ali in terms of their services to Islam, while Hazrat Ali may have *afzalecat* in terms of his *wilayah*.¹²

(b) **Conflict between Ulema and Sufis:** There was intense conflict between legalistic Islam and mystical Islam or between *Shriah* and *Tariqah* in the times of Shah Waliullah. This conflict appeared in the form of debates between legal scholars and early Chishti Sufis like Khawaja Qutab al-Din Bakhtiar Kaki and Khawja Nizam al-Din Aulia. Ulema or legal scholars emphasized the external aspect of *Shriah* while Sufis were more concerned with the development of inner self. The tension between these two groups was the central theme of the religious history of Muslim India. While there were moderate people on both sides and there were Sufis who themselves were great scholars, there was no dearth of extreme positions on both sides. There were *ulema* for whom Islam was just a legal code, a mechanical system of prescriptions and prohibitions and any kind of spiritualism or esotericism was unIslamic, while there were Sufis for whom spiritual exercises and resultant ecstasy was the real Islam and who did not deem it necessary to conform to the injunctions of Islam. Such was the situation when Shah Waliullah appeared on the scene. He dismissed the extreme views and followed the moderate path. He gives *tatbeeq* between *Shriah* and *Tariqah* by four methods: (a) by taking insights from the Quran and Sunnah, (b) by giving rational arguments, (c) by taking insights from history; for example he traces the historical development of different spiritual orders, and (d) by taking insights from his own spiritual experiences. In fact, Shah Waliullah was the most suitable scholar for this task, as he himself was a great Sufi and simultaneously a *Muhaddith*, and a scholar of *Shriah*. He has stated his religious experiences in many works particularly in *Fuyuz al Haramayan*, *Hamaat*, and *Sat'at*.

(c) **Problem of Wahdat-ul-Wujud and Wahdat-ul-Shuhud:** Shah Waliullah not only tried to fill the gap between *Shriah* and *Tariqah*, he also tried to bridge the differences between various schools of thought within the realm of *Taswuf*, particularly between *Wahdat-ul-Wujud* and *Wahdat-ul-Shuhud*. In this connection his *Maktub-e-Madni* is remarkable in which he has successfully reconciled Ibn-e-Arabi's view and the critique on it by Hazrat Mujjaddid (Waliullah 1965). This *Maktub* is addressed to Afandi Ismail bin Abdullah Rumi and is contained in *Tafhimat-e-Ilahiya*, part 2. He proves that the controversy of *Wahdat al-Wujud* and *Wahdat al-Shuhud* is only verbal rather than real, if simile and metaphor is set aside.¹³

(d) **Differences in the four schools of Fiqh:**

Majority of Indian Muslims were followers of *Hanafi* school of law. Shah Waliullah and his father Shah Abdur Raheem were also followers of Imam Abu Hanifa. But there was a kind of extremism

¹² Shah Waliullah, *Fayuzul Harmain (Arabic with Urdu translation)* (Hayderabad: Shah Waliullah Academy, 2007).

¹³ Dr. Burhan Ahmad Faruqi, *The Mujjaddid's Conception of Tawhid* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1989).

in the *ulema* of Muslim India and they used all their scholarship and energies just to prove the correctness of Imam Abu Hanifa over other Jurists. This state of affairs was, in no way a healthy and congenial state. While Shah Waliullah remained, by and large, a follower of *Hanafi Fiqh*, he emphasized the validity of the doctrines of other schools as well. He also tried to make a *tatbeeq* between opposing views on *Ijtihad* and *Taqlid*. He was against the blind *Taqlid* for *Ulema*.¹⁴ He discussed *Fiqh* and the questions relating to it in a number of his books but particularly in *al-Insaf fi-Bayan Sabab al-Ikhtilaf*, and *Iqd al-Jid fi-Ahkam al-Ijtihad wa-l-Taqlid*. Shah Waliullah is of the opinion that *asal al-usul* of the *fiqh* is *Muwata* of Imam Malik which is the basis of Hanafi, Maliki, and Shafie *Fiqh*. Then he says that *Muwata* of Imam Malik is based on the *Fiqh* of *Ahle Madina* (people of Madina) and the *Fiqh* of *Ahle Madina* is centred around the *Fiqh* of Hazrat Umar Farooq. The result is that, according to Shah Waliullah, *Hanafi*, *Maliki*, and *Shafi* legal schools are the commentaries on the *Fiqh* of Hazrat Umar. In his work, *Izalat al-Khafa*, he declares Hazrat Umar as *Mujtahid Mustaqil* and the three jurists as *Mujtahid Muntasib*.¹⁵ In this way, by tracing all the differences from a single central point, he is able to successfully reconcile them.¹⁶

Social Institutions and Their Functions

Shah Waliullah displays a profound understanding of structure, functioning, and interrelationships of various social institutions in his works, particularly family, economy, politics, and religion. His analysis seems very close to Structural-Functionalism.¹⁷ According to him, human society necessarily generates social institutions. Social institutions are bound to appear as the society evolves. While animals and birds find their way to their modes of living instinctively, members of society realize their objectives by developing various social institutions like family, politico-economic institutions, and legal institution.

Family

Shah Waliullah looked upon family as the basic unit of society. On its health and well-being, rests the well-being of society. In a section dealing with the rights of the married couple, he analyses the impact of happy conjugal life on the family and the society as a whole. He deals at length with the social significance of respect for women in their sphere of activity. On the other hand, women should be conscious of the tremendous role they have to play in building up a family and eventually the society. Shah Waliullah uses the term of *Tadbir-e-Manzil* to refer to the management of household and regards it as *sine qua non* for a healthy and developed society.

Religion

¹⁴ Bashir Ahmad Dar, "Wali Allah: His life and Times," *Iqbal Review*, (October 1965): 1-36.

¹⁵ Muhammad Sarwar, *Armaghan-e-Shah Waliullah* (Lahore: Sind Sagar Academy, 1997).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ However it would be misleading to declare Shah Waliullah a Structural-Functionalist, though insights of this perspective can be traced in his works but ideas of other sociological paradigms are also found in his works. In fact modern categories should be applied to classical scholars with caution.

As a scholar of Islamic sciences he conceived religion as a way of life, and in his *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah* he has successfully strived to present Islam as a code of human life, spiritual as well as temporal. Matter and spirit do not make any contrast in his system of thought. According to Shah Waliullah, all prescriptions and prohibitions of religion have one of the following ends in view: either the cultivation of self, or the service and organization of society.¹⁸ He analyses the *raison d'être* of religion. He has explained in depth and in detail the role of Islam in fulfilling the needs of man and society. He believes that without religion man's life on this planet is worthless and meaningless. So religion is the highest realm of principles from which is derived all morality and values. The basic purpose of all religious practices is to purify the inner soul and to make him realize the Divine purpose of life by creating an ideal society wherein man is able to fulfill the purpose of creation by developing his potentialities to the full. According to Shah Waliullah, man cannot realize the best in him unless he develops faith in God.

He has highlighted the role of religion in integrating individual personality and in building up a healthy social system based on the ideal of human service and welfare. He thus integrates religion both as a code of personal faith and morality and as a social ideal and a source of social values. Here we observe that Shah Waliullah's sociology of religion is normative as well as objective. He sees religion as a social phenomenon and as one department in the overall structure of society and seeks to establish its relationships with other social institutions and then at the same time sees society as just one aspect of religion and the whole of social phenomenon as just one department of man's relations with God. Shah Waliullah, in conformity to the Quranic teachings, regards all authentic religions as belonging to a single religious tradition. The essence of this tradition has always been same but its manifestation was always changing according to the time and space and the genius of the particular people to which it was addressed. Hence unity of essence of religion is expressed in diverse external forms.

As far as Islam is concerned, it is the continuation of same universal tradition which has abrogated all the local traditions. Islam has also two aspects: one is the pure universal aspect based on eternal principles, and the other is the manifestation of these universal principles in the local Arab context. It is because universal principles cannot take definite form in vacuum, they need specific human environment which becomes a vehicle for those principles. This is quite revolutionary idea which was further explored by Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi who maintains that Islam should not be declared equivalent to Arabianism.¹⁹ Islam is for all societies and for all ages, so its outer cultural manifestation can acquire more than one form. Dr. Fazlur Rahman has also hinted that Islamic multi-culturalism can be deduced from this theme of Shah Waliullah.²⁰

¹⁸ Aziz Ahmad, "Political and Religious Ideas of Shah Wali-Ullah," *The Muslim World*, (January 1962): 22-30.

¹⁹ Muhammad Sarwar, *Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi: Haalat-e-Zindgi, Taalimat wa Siasi Afkar* (Lahore: Sind Sagar Academy, 1967).

²⁰ Fazlur Rahman, "The Thinker of Crisis: Shah Waliy-Ullah," *The Pakistan Quarterly* VI, No. 2 (1956): 44-48.

Economy

Shah Waliullah is of the opinion that happiness of a society rests on a healthy, just and equitable economic system. If corruption and exploitation prevails in the economic system, decline and ultimately fall of that society becomes only a matter of time. Shah Waliullah writes: "After a careful analysis I have come to the conclusion that there are two main factors responsible for the decline of Muslim culture. First, many people have abandoned their own occupations and have become parasites on the government. They are a great burden on the public exchequer. Some of these are soldiers; some claim themselves to be men of great learning and, thus, deem it their birth right to get regular financial help from the state. There are not a few who get regular donations, gifts, and rewards from the Court as a matter of past custom, such as, poets and clowns. Many of the people belonging to these groups do not contribute anything to the welfare of society, yet they are allowed to suck its blood. The sooner the state gets rid of these parasites, the better. Secondly, the government has levied an exorbitant rate of tax on the agriculturists, cultivators, and traders. Added to this is the cruel treatment meted out to the tax-payers by government officials at the time of collecting the taxes. The people groan under the heavy weight of taxes while their economic position deteriorates at an alarming speed. This is how the country has come to ruin."²¹To him, all land is like a mosque or an inn (*sarai*) which is free to all those who come there, and so all have equal share in their benefit. Whoever comes first into possession of a land, it belongs to him but this possession only means that he has prior or superior right as compared with others to get the benefit out of it. About the relations between the capitalists and the labourers he observes: "if there is no co-operation between the capitalists and the labourers in increasing wealth or such cooperation has been obtained by compulsion, the dealing is not desirable and valid because being opposed to the principle of social justice, it must be regarded as wrong and sinful."²²

Another quite significant idea of Shah Waliullah is the idea of relationship between economy and ethics. Max Weber (1864-1920) proved how Protestant (Calvinistic) ethic was responsible for the creation of capitalistic mode of economy.²³ Shah Waliullah showed the relationship between ethics and economy in the opposite direction. According to him, collective ethical conditions of a society depend on its economic system and distribution of resources (Sevharvi n.d.). Superior moral qualities of a society are the result of just and equitable economic system free of all forms of exploitation. And on the other hand, collective and natural morals of humanity are utterly destroyed when people have to live under an environment of economic oppression and coercion. A balanced and healthy economic system is imperative for the good

²¹ *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*, Vol-1, p.40; cited in *Shah Waliullah: His Religious and Political Thought* (Ed.M. Ikram Chaghatai), p.56.

²² Translation by Fazle Hameed, 'Shah Wali Allah as a Modern Thinker' *Al-Hikma*, Hyderabad, 1965-66, cited in A.D. Muztar: *Shah Wali-Allah: A Saint-Scholar of Muslim India*.

²³ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

quality of morals of masses.²⁴ Shah Waliullah is also much aware of the class-structure of society and gives it central importance in his social and historical analysis. He has used the term of *Rafahiyat* to refer to the life-style.²⁵ It is interesting to compare this concept with Marxian category of class. Marxian concept of class is based on production only: bourgeoisie class owns means of production while proletariat does not own means of production except labour. This criterion of ownership of means of production has been challenged by the advent of consumer society where consumption and not production is the social fact of primary importance. Shah Waliullah's concept of *Rafahiyat* is based on consumption, although he has also given importance to classes based on production. He has identified three degrees of *Rafahiyat*:

Rafahiyat-e-Balighah: It refers to high culture where best quality things are always consumed and it becomes a matter of taste and distinction. Here Shah Waliullah is predicting Veblen (1857-1929) and Bourdieu (1930-2002). In Bourdieu's term it means high cultural capital.

Rafahiyat-e-Naqisah: it refers to low culture where lowest quality things are consumed. In Bourdieu's term, it refers to low cultural capital.

Rafahiyat-e-Mutawassitah: This refers to an intermediate stage between *Rafahiyat-e-Balighah* and *Rafahiyat-e-Naqisah*. This is the life-style of middle classes. Shah Waliullah further says that *Rafahiyat-e-Mutawassitah* is good for society because the other two extremes usually are responsible for the destruction of moral base of society.

To conceptualize classes on the basis of their consumption practices, for example, their eating habits, their houses and furniture, their clothes and utensils is considered an important way to understand society in the contemporary sociological analysis, and, in fact, there are many important works on this whole new branch of Sociology called Sociology of Consumption.

Politics

The chief function of politics is the harmonious development of society and state as the highest political institution is responsible for the realization of this objective. According to Shah Waliullah this highest political institution has a much wider scope. Providing safety and security to its members is, of course, its primary responsibility but an ideal state must go beyond this primary function and it should actively and positively seek to build institutions for the larger progress of society. Eradicating all forms of social corruption and developing ways and means so that members of society can develop themselves intellectually and emotionally and can experience a quality life fall within the scope of a state. On the other hand such a state is justified in expecting loyalty and commitment from its members. In his book *Izalat al-Khifa an Khilafat al-Khulafa* Shah Waliullah lays down in very clear terms the duties of an Islamic State.

Macro-Micro Linkages in Shah Waliullah's Sociology

²⁴ Riyaz Siddiqui, "Shah Waliullah ka Iqtasadi Program," *Al-Wali, Hyderabad Sind*, (1972): 94-100.

²⁵ Maulana Ghulam Mustafa Qasmi, "Rafahiyat ke Teen Darjay," *Al-Wali (Hyderabad, Sindh)*, (1975): 14-16.

Macro-Micro link is a modern concept in sociology and we notice this macro-micro link is present in Shah Waliullah's social analysis. For example he demonstrates how particular psychological dispositions are associated with particular social roles and thus can generate particular social action, and then that social action at aggregate level can develop a particular social structure at macro-level. Shah Waliullah made quite serious an attempt to develop relationship between individual behavior at micro-level and social structure at macro-level. According to Shah Waliullah, there are two dimensions of spirituality: firstly spirituality is a man-God link while secondly it is man-man link. By severing one's connections from social environment, one cannot develop one's spiritual and moral self. Islam, therefore deems it quite necessary for the members of society to fulfill their social obligations within their social community in a satisfactory way to realize their spiritual potential.

Division of Labour

Shah Waliullah deems Division of Labour as an important attribute of a sane society, and in this way he predicted the sociological theories of August Comte, and Emile Durkheim.²⁶ While all the professions and occupations are necessary for society, the most vital professions are agriculture, manufacturing, and trade according to Shah Waliullah. However there must be a balance and equilibrium in this regard. If majority of people turns to trade, and cultivation is neglected, society would be disturbed. If a society wants to maintain its health and vigour, it should encourage cultivation on large scale. The cultivators should be persuaded to see to it that no piece of land remains uncultivated. The craftsmen should be continuously involved in improving their crafts. Development of professions which encourage luxurious or immoral habits should be sternly checked in the larger interest of society.

Conclusion

In the previous pages, essential features of Structural Functionalism of Shah Waliullah have been described. While Structuralism is analogous to anatomy, Functionalism is analogous to physiology. It means that structural functionalism seeks to understand different elements of social structure and their functions in the maintenance of structure. The chief question raised by sociologists is why is there social order? Every grand sociologist including August Comte, Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx and Max Weber have tried to deal with this question. Shah Waliullah's eloquent pen has also written about these questions. Shah Waliullah sees society as *sui generis* which means society is distinct from individuals but he does not take the extreme position of ignoring human agency. Societal structures definitely influence human behavior but at the same time there are human beings who change and challenge the existing structures. So Shah Waliullah's social statics does not make him see individuals as prisoners of social structures. His social statics begins with the definition of human nature in which he explores three capacities which make him distinct from animals: his capacity to generalize and to go beyond specific instances and capacity to defer his immediate pleasures for the sake of some higher principle, his

²⁶ "August Comte believed in principle that the division of labor, while it fostered the development of individual gifts and capacities, also contributed to human solidarity by creating in each individual a sense of his dependence on others." (Lewis A. Coser:1971 *Masters of Sociological Thought*, p.11)

aesthetic sensibilities which makes him constantly seek better and more beautiful things; and finally his capacity to discover and invent new things and ideas along with capacity to follow and imitate the already existing patterns. These innate unique human qualities, along with his urge to cooperate with other follow beings result in the formation of a social structure. A social structure means the recurring pattern of human behavior. It is because of social structure that we understand each other that we agree and disagree, that expectations from one another are possible; because if there is no social structure there will be no regularity of human behavior and anything can happen at anytime, which would mean utter social chaos or anomie. But we observe that this is not the case and there is social structure. Why does this structure exist? Shah Waliullah's three dimensions of human nature are an answer to this question. While analyzing social structure, Shah Waliullah displays his immense knowledge of existence and significance of various social institutions including family, religion, politics and economics. He has analyzed these social institutions just like a Structural-Functionalist sociologist. He, first, identifies several needs of society or functional prerequisites, to borrow the term of T. Parsons and then he identifies how existing social institutions contribute to fulfill these functional prerequisites. One important difference, between his and Parsonian analysis, however, is that Parsons talk of functional prerequisites only in terms of societal needs, while Shah Waliullah takes into account societal needs as well as psychological needs of human beings. Shah Waliullah also believes that social equilibrium is necessary for society. He has not only reiterated the significance of social equilibrium in his theory, he actually tried to resolve contradictions and conflicts amongst extreme positions, communities and systems of thought. In this way he proves that it is possible to transcend the dichotomy of theory and action.

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