Theory of Human Evolution and Social Reconstruction by Shah Waliullah

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ABSTRACT

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. Shah Waliullah has advanced two important theories of social dynamics. Firstly, his theory of evolution and secondly, his theory of revolution. In his theory of social evolution, he has described four phases through which human civilization has passed, for which he has used the term of irtifaqat. First stage of this social journey refers to a simple nomadic society in which people are able to satisfy their physical needs along with some early forms of social solidarity. Second stage refers to a relatively settled and developed society in which people have been able to manage their affairs of economic life, domestic life and occupational life. Third stage refers to a city-state in which the political organization has become a central feature of society and is responsible for administering the affairs of state. Fourth stage refers to a confederacy or commonwealth of city-states in which different city-states join for peaceful co-existence. This article aims to discuss the thoughts of Shah Waliullah on social dynamics and discusses his theory of evolution. It also discusses all the phases of human civilization in detail, explains its features and characteristics and provides an in-depth analysis of Shah Waliullah's work on social dynamics and evolution of human society. The article also discusses his theory of social reconstruction, the social pathologies and the strategies that he proposed in his writings.

Key Words: Social Dynamics, Theory of Evolution, Human society, Irtifaq

Introduction

Society is not something which remains frozen in time. It moves and this mobility of society is called social dynamics. So, one of the primary

concerns of sociological investigation is to understand the laws and mechanisms of social dynamics. Both August Comte and Herbert Spencer[1] have discussed social dynamics. To them, Sociology is equal to social statics plus social dynamics. The chief concern of social dynamics, thus, is to discover the laws of social change.

History is also fundamentally a movement of human society. Every theory of social dynamics is thus ultimately a philosophy of history [2] There are two aspects of historical movement or social dynamics. One is the series of happenings and events in time and space which can be observed and documented, and the other is the purpose and meaning-structure behind this flow of events. Movement of society and history is not aimless and purposeless. There are certain definite laws which govern the ebb and flow of history. To grasp these laws and reach the purpose of this constant movement of society is the real task of a social thinker.[3] Shah Waliullah as a social theorist has tried to grasp that purpose. He is able to see unity in the diverse social and historical phenomena. For example, he has demonstrated the essence of the message of all the prophets which was essentially the same and how it manifested itself in quite diverse forms because of diverse historical conditions. In his book *Tawil al-Ahadith*, Shah Waliullah has been able to analyse the manifestation of the essence of Prophethood in diverse circumstances from Adam to the last Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SAW).[4]

Evolution Of Human Society

The most comprehensive and significant theory of Shah Waliullah's System of thought is his theory of evolution of society. Although the concept of social evolution can be found in works of many eastern and western social theorists and historians like Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406),

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[1] Lewis A. Coser, *Masters of Sociological Thought* (Orlando, Florida: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1971), 10-12.

[2] Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, "Shah Wali Allah Dihlawi," Vol. II, in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, by M. M. Sharif (Ed.), (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1983), 1557-1559, http://alhassanain.org/english/?com=book&id=930

[3] Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West,* Abridged Edition (New York: Vintage Books, 2006)

[4] Muhammad al Ghazali, *The Socio-Political Thought of Shah Wali Allah* (Islamabad: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2001), 23-28.

August Comte (1798-1857),[5] Herbert Spencer (1820-1903)[6] and Karl Marx (1818-1883), Shah Waliullah's theory is much broader and profound and is better able to explain the link between different stages of social evolution. According to Shah Waliullah, evolution of human society and civilization is rooted in unique and peculiar characteristics of human nature. These are the characteristics which distinguish human beings from animals and these are: *al-ray al-kulli* (Capacity to generalize and to have a holistic approach)*, zarafa* (aesthetic sensibility)*, and aejad wa taqleed* (invention and imitation).[7]

Why societies evolved the way they have evolved? This is the question which Shah Waliullah wants to address. According to him there are two factors which explain the movement of human society. Firstly, there are instinctual needs and drives within the psychic structures of human beings and secondly there are challenges and impediments imposed by the physical environment. While trying to satisfy their inner needs and responding to the external challenges, human beings build strategies and devise ways and means. These strategies and devices are referred to as *irtifaqat* by Shah Waliullah. [8] He also uses this term to refer to various phases of development of human civilization. According to Shah Waliullah human civilization has passed through four *irtifaqat.*

3.1.1   First *irtifaq* (First phase of Human Civilization):

In the first stage of human civilization, following patterns begin to emerge:

  a) *Speech:* Whenever human beings come close to each other they feel a need to communicate their mental images, concepts and feelings. This need leads to the development of speech. According to Shah Waliullah language is an instrument through which man expresses something born in his mind.[9] In

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[5] Lewis A. Coser, *Masters of Sociological Thought* (Orlando, Florida: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1971), 10-12.

[6] Herbert Spencer, and Stanisalve Andreski, *Herbert Spencer: Structure, Function, and Evolution. Social Change* (New York: Scribner, 1971).

[7] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah* (Urdu Translation), Trans., Dr. Qazi Mujib-ur-Rehman, in Majmua *Rasail Imam Shah Waliullah,* vol. 8, (Lahore: Idarah Matbuat, *Badur Bazighah*, 2000), 249-250; Shah Waliullah, *Hujjatullahil Baligah,* in *Majmua Rasail Imam Shah Waliullah,* ed., Mufti Ataur Rehman Qasmi, New Delhi: Shah Waliullah Institute, 2014), 158.

[8] *Badur Bazighah*, 271; Muhammad Shafique Bhatti, "Development of Human Society. Shah Wali Allah's Concept of Irtifaqat," 39-40.

[9] Shah Waliuallah, *Hujjatullah al Baligha*, 160-161; *Badur ul Bazigha*, 281-282.

Hujjatullah al-Balighah and *al-Budur al-Bazighah,* Shah Waliullah has developed a complete theory of evolution of language. He is of the opinion that words have primarily originated from the sounds and images of related physical objects and actions. [10]

b) *Agriculture:* The next step is learning to cultivate the land and to plant trees. This was the beginning of agricultural activities which were to become the most important activities for the future development of human society. [11]

c) *Cooperation:* Agricultural activities demanded that men should cooperate with one another in order to accomplish a task. This leads to a sort of social solidarity.

d) *Division of Labour:* Human beings soon learnt that not every man can perform all the tasks and that they need to divide their work amongst themselves and this was the beginning of division of labour.[12] Both these concepts of social solidarity and division of labour are of immense importance in modern sociology and classical sociologists including Emile Durkheim and Max Weber have made them basic categories for their sociological analysis. [13]

e) *Houses and Shelters:* Challenges of the external environment soon forced them to build their dwellings using natural physical objects. [14]

f) *Family:* Males started selecting undisputed mates for sexual satisfaction and for perpetuation of their descent and this was the beginning of family.[15]

g) *Defense:* With the passage of time different groups emerged and it often happened that a group attacked another group. This led to the formation of defense strategies to guard that group.

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[10] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah,* 281-282.
[11] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah,* 282-283.
[12] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah,* 283.
[13] Nicki Lisa Cole, "How Emile Durkheim Made His Mark on Sociology on Functionalism, Solidarity, Collective Conscience, and Anomie," https://www.thoughtco.com/emile-durkheim-relevance-to-sociology-today-3026482.
[14] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah,* 283.
[15] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah,,* 283.

h) *Adjudication of Disputes:* Internal discords and disputes within a group necessitated the existence of some leader to settle the disputes.[16]

i) *Beginning of Ethical Conduct:* It was recognized that certain behaviours are appropriate and natural in certain circumstances and in the satisfaction of certain needs. This was the beginning of ethical conduct. Courage, unselfishness and thinking of the group more than one's own self were regarded as virtues.

j) *Rivalry and competition:* There was a sense of rivalry and competition amongst different individuals of the same group and also between different groups and this led to the development of leadership roles. [17]

k) *Aesthetics:* Beauty was appreciated and so aesthetic tastes started developing in the first *irtifaq.* It can be concluded that all the basic patterns and institutions which became more pronounced in the later stages of social development were present in the first stage in their preliminary form. [18]

Second *irtifaq*: (Second phase of Human Civilization):

According to Shah Waliullah, man has an innate urge towards beauty and perfection. The accomplishments of the first stage are further improved by the inherent aesthetic urge of man. Secondly, simple and homogeneous society of the first stage naturally became complex with the passage of time. This external increasing complexity of society and internal drive for refinement gives rise to the second phase of human civilization. The second phase *irtifaq* is characterized by the development of five kinds of sciences, which are:

1) *al-hikmah al-ma'ashiyyah* (wisdom of living)
2) *al-hikmah al-iktisabiyyah* (wisdom of learning)
3) *al-hikmah al-manzilliyyah* (wisdom of household)
4) *al-hikmah al-ta'amuliyyah* (wisdom of business transactions)
5) *al-hikmah al-ta'awuniyyah* (wisdom of cooperation)[19]

(1) *al-Hikmah al-Ma'ashiyyah* (wisdom of livelihood):

This is the science which deals with defining and adopting appropriate patterns of behavior governing various aspects of individual and collective life. Certain patterns of behavior are accepted while others are

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[16] Ibid., 283-284.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah,* 289.

[19] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah,* 273.

rejected on the basis of following criteria. [20]Firstly, the patterns of behavior which, through experience, prove beneficial become social norms and conventions while the patterns of behavior which through experience are proved as harmful to common goals of society are discarded. Secondly those practices and customs are reinforced which conform to the principles of morality. Thirdly, those activities and patterns are adopted which fulfill the requirements of amicable coexistence amongst the members of society. And the final criteria on which these practices and patterns are examined is their conformity to the principle of *al-ray al-kulli* (Universality of purpose), the chief distinction between man and animal.[21]

Thus Shah Waliullah in his penetrating and rigorous sociological analysis has analyzed the emergence of social norms and conventions. The major concerns of this science of livelihood are:

a) Norms of eating and drinking
b) Manners of walking sitting and sleeping
c) Manners of traveling
d) Methods of personal cleanliness
e) Conduct of conjugal life
f) Manners of wearing clothes
g) Norms of conversation
h) Methods of medication for the sick
i) Manners of celebrating the happy moments like birth, marriage, etc.
j) Manner of mourning over calamities
k) Norms of visiting the sick and the burial of the dead[22]

Shah Waliullah further states that key social norms and patterns are not specific to a particular society but are rooted in 'sane human temperaments', and therefore are part of all the cultures. This is quite a modern concept and standard text books of sociology refer to these elements which are universally present as 'cultural universals.'[23] Shah Waliullah has in fact displayed great anthropological insight in this analysis. At the same time he seems quite aware of differences and variations amongst various cultural systems. Shah Waliullah is of the

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[20] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah,* 286.
[21] Ibid., 273.
[22] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah* (Urdu Translation), 273, 288-295.
[23]https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Sociology/Book%3A_Sociology_(Boundless)/03%3A_Culture/3.01%3A_Culture_and_Society/3.1C%3A_Cultural_Universals

opinion that the same cultural universal can express itself in various forms in varying conditions of time and space.

(2) *al-Hikmah al-Iktisabiyyah* (wisdom of learning):

The crux of *al-hikmah al-iktisabiyyah* is that livelihood is earned in such a way that ease, prosperity, good quality of life and inner satisfaction is ensured. If principles of *al-hikmah al-iktisabiyyah* do not exist the result would be sheer hard work and labour without any satisfaction. Human beings soon realized that, in pursuit of various vocations, they need one another. This realization of interdependence led to a spirit of cooperation and solidarity.[24] Here Shah Waliullah is predicting Emile Durkheim's concept of Organic Solidarity.[25] They also realized the significance of division of labour. For example, the people who were engaged in agricultural activities and domestication of animals realized their dependence on blacksmiths and carpenters who were making several instruments to cultivate the land. Some people specialized in sewing clothes and they were depending on farmers who had to grow cotton to make thread, and so on and so forth. In this way with specialization in different activities, different professions emerged, like carpentry, iron-smithing, weaving and trade. Running the affairs of the city also became a profession.[26] According to Shah Waliullah there are certain professions which are inevitable for a society.[27] He describes societal needs which must be fulfilled through some professions:

- The professions relating to administration of rule of law
- Professions related to the provision of food and water
- Profession related to clothes and dresses
- Professions related to housing
- Professions related to trade and import or export of goods
- Professions related to the exploitation of natural resources[28]

Refinement in the taste of people led to further diversification of profession. Choosing a particular profession was natural for an individual,

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[24] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah,* 273, 311.

[25] Nicki Lisa Cole, "How Emile Durkheim Made His Mark on Sociology on Functionalism, Solidarity, Collective Conscience, and Anomie," https://www.thoughtco.com/emile-durkheim-relevance-to-sociology-today-3026482.

[26] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah,* 313-314.

[27]Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 315-316.

[28] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 273, 315-316; Shah Waliullah, *Hujjatullah al Balighah,* 168-169.

because, in this way, he was able to engage in an activity which suited his temperament and was in proportion to his strengths.[29]

Now the economic relations amongst these people engaged in various professions necessitated certain common medium of exchange. Owing to several beneficial qualities of the metals, gold and silver were chosen as a medium of exchange. People also practiced barter systems which were exchange of property for property. [30]

(3) *al-Hikmah al-Manzilliyyah* (wisdom of household)

This science deals with the relationships between different members of a household. Shah Waliullah also refers to it as *Tadbir-e-Manzil.*[31] The ultimate aim of this science is to develop domestic relationships in accordance with the principles of decency and mutual respect, thus, fulfilling the demands of higher ethics and *ray-kulli*. There are three subsystems of this *Hikmah*.[32]

 a) Conjugal relationships

According to Shah Waliullah instinctive drives necessitate sexual intercourse between man and woman. But due to various social and psychological factors this relationship is not considered proper unless the exclusive rights of a man over his wife are settled in the presence of witnesses. Modesty in the nature of human beings makes it necessary to avoid the direct mentioning of the ultimate purpose of marriage (i.e. sexual intercourse) and hides this purpose in various rituals and ceremonies to give the impression as if these rituals were the real purpose.[33] Marriage ceremonies of *Nikah* and *Walima* are highly functional i.e. these rituals fulfill certain social and psychological needs (functional prerequisites to borrow the term of T. Parsons).[34] For example, *Walima* is necessary in

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[29] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 273; Shah waliullah, *Hujjatullah al Balighah in* Majmua Rasial Shah Waliullah 168-169.

[30] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 273, 313.

[31] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 273-274, 296; Shah Waliullah, *Hujjatullah al Balighah*, 163.

[32] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 296.

[33]Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 296-297; Shah waliullah, *Hujjatullah al Balighah*, 164.

[34] Talcott Parson, *The Social System* (Routledge, 1991), 14; François Bourricaud (1981), *The Sociology of Talcott Parsons*, trans., Arthur Goldhammer, University of Chicago Press, 1981).

order to publicize the marriage so that all the people may know that a particular man and woman are now husband and wife.[35]

Shah Waliullah has also discussed the phenomenon of exogamy that means there is a circle of relatives with whom marriage is prohibited and has justified it on rational grounds.[36] Shah Waliullah has identified various strengths and weaknesses in the temperament of man and woman and has acknowledged that these variations in their temperaments make them complement each other. While a woman is weaker physically and intellectually, she is more meticulous and skillful in smaller things and has a greater capacity for sacrifice. On the other hand man "is well-versed in doing the hard jobs, has courage to face difficulties and is by nature inclined to rule. However, they both, despite their individual traits of character, are interdependent for the smooth running of the house administration" [37] Shah Waliullah has also identified basic traits in the roles of a good husband and good wife. A happy family life is based on mutual cooperation and love between husband and wife. However, if it becomes impossible to live peacefully in a family, marriage should be dissolved. [38]

b) Relationships between parents and children

Children should be brought up with care and consideration. Parents should attend to their physical intellectual and psychological needs. And children must respect and honor their parents, keeping in view the sufferings of parents in bringing their children up. [39]

c) Relationships between master and servants

People vary in their abilities and inclinations. While some are very bold, courageous and intelligent, others are less courageous, weak and less intelligent. These later people who lack a spirit of freedom and initiative feel it quite fitting and secure to work under some powerful person. And thus we have servants and masters. Both these groups need to cooperate with one another for a happy and successful life. [40]

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[35] Shah Waliullah, *Hujjatullah al Balighah*, 164; Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 303.

[36] Shah Waliullah, *Hujjatullah al Balighah,* 164-165; Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 299.

[37] G. N. Jalbani, *Teachings of Shah Waliyullah of Delhi* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1979).

[38] *Hujjatullah al Balighah*, 164-165; Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 303-304.

[39] *Hujjatullah al Balighah*, 165; *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 301-302.

[40] *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 300.

In conclusion it can be said that *al-hikmah al-manzilliyyah (tadbeer-e-manzil)* is concerned with the following issues:

- Functions of marriage (how does marriage satisfy physical, psychological and social needs of human beings)
- Natural differences between tendency systems of man and woman
- Rationale for ceremonies of *Nikah* and *Walimah*
- Rationale of Exogamy (Prohibition of marriage for close relatives)
- Qualities of a good husband and wife[41]
- Factors that can lead to dissolution of marriage
- Modes of reconciliation between spouses
- Procedures for divorce
- Rationale for *iddah*
- The bringing up of the children
- Rights and duties of parents
- Rationale for stratification of masters and servants
- Obligations and rights of masters and servants
- Division of legacy among heirs
- Ways to preserve the lineages and the lines of descent[42]

(4) al-Hikmah al-Ta'amuliyyah (wisdom of business transactions)

Al-hikmah al-ta'amuliyyah deals with contractual relationships between people when they are engaged in economic activities. Division of Labour and diversification of professions became a natural state for society in the second *irtifaq*. People of these different professions depended on each other and thus they started dealing with one another. Various forms and modes of business thus emerged. These business dealings were then regularized and institutionalized with the help of contracts, agreements, rules, regulations and conventions. In this way the branches of sharecropping (*Muzaraah)*, limited partnership (*Mudarabah),* hire and lease (*Ijarah*), partnership (*Musharkah*) and agency (*Wakalah*) came into being.[43] To check the deceptions, lies and delay of payments were proposed for proper documentation and witnesses.

Then there were transactions which were based on greed, treachery, extortion of money and exploitation of the weak. These transactions were prohibited, like gambling, usury (*Riba*) and bribery. In short *al-hikmah al-ta'amuliyyah* deals with following items:

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[41] Shah Waliullah, *Hujjatullah al Balighah,* 163-166.

[42] *Hujjatullah al Balighah,* 165-166; Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 296-310.

[43] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 274, 321-322; Shah Waliullah, *Hujjatullah al Balighah*, 167.

a) Rationale for various business transactions like, buying, selling and renting.

b) Regularization of these business transactions through contracts and agreements.

c) Emergence of specific forms of contract like crop sharing, hire, partnership and agency.

d) Rationale for documentation and calling people to witness.

e) Unlawful transactions and their prohibition.[44]

5) *al-Hikmah al-Ta'awuniyyah* (wisdom of cooperation)

Al-Hikmah al-Ta'awuniyyah deals with relations of mutual help and cooperation amongst members of society. According to Shah Waliullah, there were other kinds of economic transactions which were not based on business deals but were based on mutual love and sympathy. The most important of these kinds of transactions are gifts (*Hadiyah*) and charity (*Sadaqah*).[45]

With the development of these five sciences, human society completed the second stage of civilization. Being interrelated with each other these five sciences unite the members of society as one whole, giving the society the character of a single family on a large scale [46]

Third *irtifaq*: (Third phase of Human Civilization):

Interdependence amongst people of various occupations would make them cooperate with one another. This would generate a system of relationships and social ties among these groups. This system of social relationships which binds different groups of a society is actually *'Madinah'* (City/State/City-state[47]) and *'Madinah'* does not refer to walls and buildings and forts. Due to this interconnectedness, a city-state is analogous to a single organism. The survival, development, and pattern-

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[44] Shah Waliullah, *Hujjatullah al Balighah,* 167-168; Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 317-320.

[45] Shah Waliullah, *Hujjatullah al Balighah*, 168.; Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 274.

[46] Shah waliullah, *Hujjatullah al Balighah* 168; Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 274.

[47] Madinah literally means City but State seems to be more appropriate translation. Marcia K. Hermansen has translated it as City-state (The Conclusive Argument from God, p. 129). Dr. Mehmood Ahmad Ghazi has also translated Madinah as State (Ghazi 2002); Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 323.

maintenance[48] of this organism would necessitate a political structure, which is the third *irtifaq* or third phase of human civilization. Although Shah Waliullah has used the word of *Imam* (Leader), he does not mean just a single charismatic leader by this word. *Imam* refers to a political organization responsible to administer the affairs of the city-state.[49] Shah Waliullah has discussed in *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha*, what mischiefs and disorders would prevail in society if there is no single polity to administer the affairs.[50] Following are the essential departments of this political organization:

a) Judiciary

As city-state is composed of various groups and communities, it is only natural that there is a clash of interests and various other kinds of discords and conflicts. These conflicts and disputes, if not settled amicably, would destroy the city-state. Hence an institution is needed to settle these disputes effectively. This institution is the judiciary. A *Qazi* (Judge), before pronouncing any judgment, must have knowledge of the true status of the case and the positions of different parties to the case [51]

b) Executive

In order to regulate the affairs of a city-state, the Executive is needed. A manager must be both strict and forbearing and must take all the necessary measures to arrest corruption.[52]

Military or Defense force

A city-state always faces threats of internal conflicts, anti-state and anti-social activities. People of 'perverted dispositions' resort to violent activities like murder, robbery or plundering or other crimes against persons or properties. A special defense force is needed by the city-state to control these people so that peace can be guaranteed in city-state[53]

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[48] Here Shah Waliullah is very close to Parsonian Structural/Functionalism. Like T. Parsons, he first identifies societal needs (functional prerequisites) and then proceeds to explain how the existing social structures fulfill these societal needs.

[49] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 324, 328-329.

[50] Shah Waliullah, *Hujjatullah al Balighah*, 169.

[51] Shah Waliullah, *Hujjatullah al Balighah*, 175; Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 324-325, 335-338.

[52] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 326-327.

[53] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 325-326.

c) **Public Welfare and Public Works**

There are certain works which are necessary for the welfare of the city-state but which people themselves cannot accomplish privately. The administrators of city-state must develop ways and means to accomplish these tasks, for example construction of public buildings and public works, giving financial benefits to the people who are unable to work, taking care of the disadvantaged groups, building mosques and educational institutions, developing city centers and grounds where people may gather and talk to one another and may celebrate certain occasions. This institution of the government is *Niqabah.* The head of this institution is called *Naqib* or *Muttawalli.*[54]

d) **Department of Education**

People of the city-state must be imparted education (*Ta'alim)* and training (*Tarbiyyah*). These are two dimensions of education: Firstly they must be educated about skills and ideas which make their worldly life better. Secondly, they must be educated through which they may purify their inner self and may achieve the nearness of God. [55]

Fourth *irtifaq*: (Fourth phase of Human Civilization):

After the completion of the third *irtifaq,* various city states emerge and a situation arises when relationships between these city-states need to be regularized. As regularization of social ties between various communities led to the development of a city-state, institutionalization of relationships between city states would lead to the development of an international community and this exactly is the fourth *irtifaq.* [56]Fourth *irtifaq* is the natural result of the urge of peaceful co-existence amongst various city-states. In this way conflicts and contradictions between various city-states can be avoided or at least can be reduced. Hence *Khilafah* comprising many Muslim states was the characteristic example of fourth *irtifaq*[57]. In the current political vocabulary fourth *irtifaq* can be defined as a confederacy or a loose federation of various city-states which agree to abandon part of their freedom and sovereignty in order to achieve some higher collective goal.

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[54] Shah Waliullah, *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 326-327, 351-353.

[55] *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 328, 347-350

[56] *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 358.

[57] In the contemporary world, European Union is a good example of fourth *irtifaq.*

So these are the four stages through which human civilization has passed: from early nomadic society (first *irtifaq*), to a settled community (second *irtifaq*), to a city-state (third *irtifaq*) and finally to the confederacy of city-states (fourth *irtifaq*). [58]While these *irtifaqat* can be interpreted as various stations which mankind has, in its historical course, already crossed; they can also be interpreted as various levels of human progress attained by different societies. So, for example, one society can be in second *irtifaq* while the other have achieved third *irtifaq* or it is also possible that a society has achieved some characteristics of one *irtifaq* and it has got some partial traits of the next *irtifaq.*

Disturbances in Social Equilibrium (Social Pathologies):

Following are the social pathologies which, according to Shah Waliullah, lead to the social disintegration of society[59]

(a) Religious schism or sectarian strife

(b) Secret intrigues for power

(c) Violation of the sanctity of properties belonging to people, such as extortion, theft or robbery[60]

(d) Crimes of homicide and murder

(e) Slander and defamation

(f) The prevalence of immorality such as womanizing and homosexuality and taking alcohol

(g) Corrupt financial transactions such as gambling, usury, bribery, adulteration of foodstuffs, and fraudulent commercial dealings

(h) Adopting professions relating to useless pleasures and entertainment and leaving the productive professions of agriculture, manufacture, and trade

(i) Concealed forms of corruption like magic and mischief done by unscrupulous lawyers who teach people tricks of litigation

(j) Distorting the characteristics of the two genders in dress and other traits.[61]

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[58] *al- Badūr al-Bazighah*, 369-371.

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

[60] Muhammad al Ghazali, *The Socio-Political Thought of Shah Wali Allah* (Islamabad: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2001), 32.

[61] Muhammad al Ghazali, *The Socio-Political Thought of Shah Wali Allah,* 69-72.

 Decline and Fall of Societies:

Shah Waliullah in his historical analysis of Roman and Persian Empires, and in socio-political analysis of his own times has enunciated some important laws of decline and fall of societies. These laws can be summarized as follows:

(a) Loss of Values:

According to Shah Waliullah, it is greed and acquisitiveness which divert the attention of human beings from higher principles of morality and lofty aims to the baser and lower objectives. The result is the gradual weakening of human conscience which brings the decline of human values. This loss of values ultimately destroys the whole ethical structure of society causing the fall of society. [62]

(b) Economic Disparity:

According to Shah Waliullah a balanced economy is a prerequisite for a good society and if there are economic extremes in society, it would lead to destruction of collective morality and ultimately to decline of society. According to him the major reason for the decline and fall of Roman and Persian Empires was that their upper classes absorbed themselves in luxuries. He says: "When the Persian and Roman Empires continued for long, the rulers and the high-ups lost themselves in the ease and comfort of life, and completely forgot the Hereafter. Their luxurious living went to such an extent that if any chief did not have a crown worth lakhs of *dinars* to wear on his head, people used to find fault with him. You see the prevailing conditions of your country which are in no way better than theirs."[63]

(c) Heavy Burden of Taxes:

Luxurious lifestyle of the elite classes and the burden of unproductive people and groups on the state exchequer gives way to the imposition of heavy and burdensome taxes. These taxes further weaken the productive people -- farmers, traders and other professionals -- and this ruins society. [64]

(d) Decline of Primary Economic Activities:

According to Shah Walliullah a healthy society must have a proper system of distribution of labour, with the more people engaged in

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[62] Muhammad al Ghazali, *The Socio-Political Thought of Shah Wali Allah,* 72.

[63] *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*, vol. I, pp. 105-106. Quoted in G. N. Jalbani, *Teachings of Shah Walliyullah of Delhi*, (Lahore, 1979), 183-184.

[64] Ibid.

productive economic activities like agriculture. If however, with the increase in population, more and more people are inclined towards unproductive occupations, it leads to the gradual depletion of the productive base of the society. [65]

(e) Decline of leadership

When leadership in societies start ignoring the collective interests and act only to satisfy their low desires, then social institutions of *irtifaqat* become corrupt and obsolete with the passage of time.[66]

(f) Parasitism

Some people in order to secure gifts, stipends and money from the rulers, become like *Ulema,* poets, mystics, etc. These people are a burden on the public treasury.[67]

Thus according to Shah Waliullah, economic factors were the principal factors responsible for the decline of Empires: the Byzantines as well as the Mughals. This historical analysis of Shah Waliullah calls for "a reassessment of Bernard Lewis's[68] thesis that the decline of the Islamic world occurred due to intrinsic flaws in the Islamic tradition, notably the status of slaves, women, and unbelievers[69].

Social Reconstruction:

Shah Waliullah made an objective study of the society of his times. He examined in detail its social pathologies and then developed a strategy for its reconstruction. The main social problem which can arrest the progressive movement of a society, according to him, is the attitude of its elite classes. When ruling classes are intoxicated by their own pleasure and pride and start thinking only in terms of their comforts and conveniences, their burden on working classes increases to such an extent that the majority of the people are forced to live like animals. The collective morals of humanity are destroyed when they are forced to live under economic oppression. Now they would work like donkeys and oxen to earn their bread. When such a calamity befalls on humanity, God reveals some

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[65] G. N. Jalbani, *Teachings of Shah Walliyullah of Delhi* (Lahore, 1979), 87-88.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Vasileios Syros, "An Early Modern South Asian Thinker on the Rise and Decline of Empires: Shah Wal Allah of Delhi, the Mughals, and the Byzantines," *Journal of World History* 23, No. 4 (Dec 2012): 793-840.

[68] Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? The Clash between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* (New York: Perennial, 2003).

[69] Vasileios Syros "An Early Modern South Asian Thinker on the Rise and Decline of Empires: Shah Wal Allah of Delhi, the Mughals, and the Byzantines," *Journal of World History*, 839.

strategy for the emancipation of mankind. This is the time when, through revolution, the burden of such unlawful rule is removed.[70]

Thus according to Shah Waliullah, the main obstacle in the natural progress of human society is inequality. The main responsibility of this crisis lies with the ruling elite who becomes slaves to its luxuries and greed. The solution to such a crisis, according to Shah Waliullah is a complete revolution.[71] In a mystical vision explained in *Fuyuzu al-Harmain,* he says the words of *Fakku Kulle Nizam* (Destroy the whole system). Moulana Obaid Ullah Sindhi has interpreted these words as a revolutionary slogan. Every revolution, of course, starts with the destruction of previous structures and only after that construction of a new system can begin. At another place Shah Waliullah writes: "Sometimes bestial people dominate the earth and if they are not destroyed, humanity will be ruined" [72]

Yet at another place he writes: "These oppressive and tyrant rulers are like cancer of the human body. A person having cancer can never recover his health until the cancer is removed from his body. A doctor will have to conduct surgery inorder to remove the organ infected with cancer. Sometimes it becomes necessary to do a little evil when the result is a great goodness"[73]

From these quotations it can be rightly concluded that Shah Waliullah was a revolutionary thinker and he advocated a radical solution for social transformation. The same can also be deduced from his historical analysis of Roman and Persian Empires. The main problem with these empires was the exploitation of working classes in the hands of elite classes. In fact according to Shah Waliullah it was one of the principal objectives of Islam to overcome Roman and Persian Empires so that people can be emancipated from the tyranny and oppression of dominant classes.

Shah Waliullah was not just an idealist thinker, busy in developing his theoretical formulations in a society fraught with chaos, anarchy and corruption. Although he was a revolutionary in his theory, he was pragmatic and wise enough to understand that some kind of social order must be maintained in society as a first step. In his times there were three

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[70] Ibid.

[71] Shah Waliullah, *Fayuzul Harmain (Arabic with Urdu translation)* (Hayderabad: Shah Waliullah Academy, 2007); Ahmad, Aziz. "Political and Religious Ideas of Shah Wali-Ullah." *The Muslim World*, January 1962: 22-30.

[72] *Maktūbāt Shāh Walī Allāh Dihlavī Farsī* ed. Muḥammad ʿAṭā Allāh Ḥanīf. Lahore: Maktaba al-Salafiyya, 1983.

[73] Ibid.

anti-social groups which were responsible for spreading anarchy, anomie and plunder in society. These were Jats, Marahatas and Sikhs. Shah Waliullah urged rulers and bureaucrats of his times to take notice of anti-state activities of these groups. He made efforts to save the Muslim political power in India from total collapse. He wrote letters to nobles, bureaucrats and kings to play their due part. These letters were not a unilateral communication between the senders and the addressees. A study of the letters discloses that the addressees, excepting Ahmad Shah Abdali, used to refer their political problems to Shah Waliullah, and seek his advice.[74] These practical steps taken by Shah Waliullah demonstrate that he was able to transcend the dichotomy between theory and action.

 Conclusion

Shah Waliullah believed that if human history is allowed to maintain its natural flow and healthy elements of society are allowed to prevail, only then it can naturally evolve and proceed from one stage to another as described above. But if corrupt elements take hold of society and upper classes lose themselves in luxuries, working class would have to work like beasts of burden. The result of this social situation would be that the natural progress of human society would be arrested, chaos and anarchy would prevail and society would move toward decline and its ultimate fall. The only remedy to this situation is *Fakku Kulle Nizam* (destroy the whole system).[75] It means that it becomes the responsibility of the people who are able to understand this situation that they must prepare themselves for this radical change. Although, not all scholars of Shah Waliullah acknowledge this revolutionary character of Shah Waliullah's teachings, Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi has particularly worked and developed *Waliullahi* theory of Revolution. The truth is that, as is the case with any original thinker, Shah Waliullah's works invite more than one interpretation. Perhaps this is the reason that almost all the current Muslim organizations and groups associate themselves with Shah Waliullah. As Shah Waliullah's thought and mission would continue to guide and inspire various sections of Muslim societies, an intensive study of various aspects of his thought is necessary.

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[74] A. D. Muztar, *Shah Wali-Allah: A Saint-Scholar of Muslim India*, 73-78.

[75] *Maktūbāt Shāh Walī Allāh Dihlavī Farsī* ed. Muḥammad ʿAṭā Allāh Ḥanīf. Lahore: Maktaba al-Salafiyya, 1983.