




SHAH WALIULLAH AND HIS THEORIES



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Shah Waliullah(1702-1763)

Introduction

Shah Waliullah was born on 21 February 1703 to Shah Abdur Rahim, during the reign of Emperor Aurengzeb. He was known as Shah waliullah because of his piety. A prominent Sufi and scholar of Delhi. He memorized the Qur'an by the age of seven. Soon thereafter, he mastered Arabic and Persian letters.^[4] He was married at fourteen.^[4] By sixteen he had completed the standard curriculum of Hanafi law, theology, geometry, arithmetic and logic.^[4] He lived during the time when Fatawa-e-Alamgiri^[5] was being compiled and he was asked to join the team of scholars that was working on it, however, credible sources reveal that he joined the team but for a very brief period of time and then he dissociated himself from the task. His father, Shah Abdur Rahim was the founder of the Madrasah-iRahimiyah. Shah Abdur Rahim was on the committee appointed by Aurangzeb for compilation of the code of law, Fatwa-e-Alamgiri.^[6] His grandfather, Sheikh Wajihuddin, was an important officer in the army of Shah Jahan.

Early life

Shah Waliullah received his early education from his illustrious father, who was his teacher as well as his spiritual guide. Being a precocious child with a retentive memory he committed the Holy Quran to memory at an early age of 7 years. On the death of his father in 1131 AH when he was hardly 17 years old, he started teaching in his father's 'Madrassa-i- Rahimiya' and carried on the work for 12 years when he left for Arabia for higher studies. He was a brilliant scholar; during fourteen months' stay in Makkah and Madina, he came into contact with the outstanding teachers of Hejaz. His favorite teacher was Sheikh Abu Tahir bin Ibrahim of Madina, from whom he obtained his Sanad (Degree) in Hadith. The Sheikh was an erudite scholar, possessing encyclopedic knowledge; Shah Waliullah benefitted much from him too and speaks highly of his piety, independence of judgement and scholarly talents.

During his stay at Makkah, Shah Waliullah had a dream in which the Holy Prophet (sws) commanded him to work for the organization and emancipation of the Muslim community in the subcontinent. He, therefore, returned to Delhi on July 9th, 1732 and started his work in real earnest. His was an uphill task in a period when Muslim India was passing through the most critical phase of its history and its entire social, political, economic and

spiritual fabric was torn to pieces. On his arrival in Delhi, he started training pupils in diverse branches of Islamic learning and entrusted them with the missionary work of enlightening people with the true nature of Islam.

Work categories

His works may be classified into six categories. The first deals with the Holy Quran. It includes his translation of the Holy Book into Persian, the literary languages of the subcontinent of those times. According to him, the object of studying the Holy Book is 'to reform human nature and correct the wrong beliefs and injurious actions'. The second category deals with Hadith, in which he has left behind several works including an Arabic and Persian Commentaries on "Mu'atta", the well-known collection of the traditions of the Holy Prophet (sws) compiled by Imam Malik. He attached great importance to this collection of traditions by Imam Malik, even greater than those of Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim. He is an outstanding Muhaddith (Traditionist) and links of all modern scholars of Hadith in the subcontinent may be traced to him. Foremost among these modern Traditionalists was his son and successor Shah Abdul Aziz and Syed Murtaza Bilgrami. Shah Waliullah wrote a number of books and pamphlets dealing with Hadith. The third category deals with 'Fiqh' or Islamic Jurisprudence, which includes "Insaaf-fi-bayaan- i-Sabab-il- Ikhtilaaf" which is a brief but a very interesting and informative history of the Islamic Jurisprudence of the last five centuries. The fourth category deals with his works based on mysticism. The fifth category pertains to his works on Muslim philosophy and Ilm-i-Kalam. He also wrote a pamphlet on the principles of Ijtihad (independent interpretation) and Taqlid (conformity) . In his "Principles of Ijtihaad" he clarifies whether it is obligatory for a Muslim to adhere to one of the four recognized schools of Islamic Jurisprudence or whether he can exercise his own judgement. In the opinion of Shah Waliullah, a layman should rigidly follow his own Imam but a person well versed in Islamic law can exercise his own judgement which should be in conformity with the practice of the Holy Prophet (sws). But the most outstanding of all his works "Hujjat-Ullah- il-Baalighah" which deals with such aspects of Islam that are common among all Muslim countries. In its introduction he observes: 'Some people think that there is no usefulness involved in the injunctions of Islamic law and that in actions and rewards as prescribed by God there is no beneficial purpose. They think that the commandments of Islamic law are similar to a master ordering his servant to

lift a stone or touch a tree in order to test his obedience and that in this there is no purpose except to impose a test so that if the servant obeys, he is rewarded, and if he disobeys, he is punished. This view is completely incorrect. The traditions of the Holy Prophet (sws) and consensus of opinion of those ages, contradict this view.' The sixth category deals with his works on the Shia-Sunni problem which had become somewhat acute in those days. His writings on this subject have done a great deal in simplifying this problem. His theories pertaining to economics and socialism are of revolutionary nature and he may be considered as the precursor of Karl Marx. Writing about his works in the History of the Freedom Movement, Sheikh Muhammad Ikram states: 'Shah Waliullah wrote learned works and initiated powerful and beneficial movements, but perhaps no less important are the invisible qualities of approach and outlook, which he bequeathed to Muslim religious thought in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. His work is characterized by knowledge, insight, moderation and tolerance, but the quality on which he laid the greatest emphasis, in theory and in practice, was Adl or Adalat (justice, fairness). His works and views bear ample testimony to the ways he observed this principle in practice and he lost few opportunities of emphasizing in theory its role in maintaining the social fabric.'

Books

Shah Wali Ullah was a prolific writer and wrote extensively on Fiqh and Hadith. He eventually wrote 51 books; 23 in Arabic and 28 in Persian. Among his famous works are the Hujjat-ullah-il-Balighah and Izalat-ul-Khifa.

Death

He died on Friday 29 Muharram 1186 AH/ 20 August 1762 at Zuhr prayer in Old Delhi, aged 59.

His works relate to aqidah and fiqhHanafi. He states:

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punished. This view is completely incorrect. The traditions of the Prophet and consensus of opinion of those ages, contradict this view."^[5]

Q:write the theory of human society or evolution according to shahs point?

According to Shah Waliullah,

“The present society did not come into existence automatically but has gained the collective shape slowly. Adam’s family, a dwelling, a village, a town, a state and then a vast kingdom came into existence slowly. Afterwards, kingdoms were divided into states because of differences and their several kingdoms came into existence. This collective life concept is present in animals also but man has the power to think, to have self-dense, to show and to have feelings and emotions and to use natural abilities but such things are not found in animals. Therefore, there is no evolution, no sense and no emotion in the animals. Man’s social life started from forest life having no clear, cut difference between animal and man’s life but mutual exchange and cooperation present in human nature gave a form of Gregation to human groups which resulted in the form of society by increase of population.

EVOLUTION OF SOCIETY :

Shah Waliullah says about evolution, “Human society in its beginning was not much different from animal life but sense and understanding which is present in human beings by nature completed the stages of evolution by mutual cooperation. Human society has never been still at one situation but has been dynamic always.” Human evolution has been a stage- wise action and it is a journey to be completed by stages. With the passage of time, his life goes on becoming better than before. He has divided life from evolutionary point of view into four stages because of characteristics and structure of society.

Four Stages of Society

1. First Stage of Society (family)

family has been called by Shah Waliullah as first evolution in society. This is a preliminary stage with the following characteristics

small groups

i. Individuals live in small groups and change their residence because of change in weather.

Residence

ii. Simple residence, dress and simple way of cooking, utensil, making art living on fruit, vegetables and hunted animals and grain. They knew the art of domestication of animals and executing work from these animals.

Marriage

iv. Marriage rituals are under collective customs where man's will is kept in view. Marriage is to satisfy natural sexual desires and is a source of survival of race

Second Stage of Society (society)

Shah Waliullah says that, "The first stage of society is the state of helplessness and a man wanders to satisfy his desires with more labour but less achievement but at the second stage the wise class guides him to fulfil the desires with ways and means and principles are made which get the status of collective and cultural morals and are transferred from generation to generation."

These approved morals have been divided into three parts at the second stage by Shah Waliullah:

i. Guiding principles:

These are such points of the morals which are adopted in daily collective social life like eating, drinking, dressing and living manners and rituals of festivals.

ii. Mutual cooperation :

It is that of morals where relations between families are established, which are based on respect from relation principles are set up, principles for training of individual are set up. Customs are abided by and stability is brought in collective

iii. Mutual exchange :

The individuals of a society transfer their emotions, experience, skills and material things according to collective principles of life. Different professions came into existence and; mutual dependence among individuals increases making the desires completion easy.

3. Third Stage of Society (state)

This stage of social evolution follows the successful completion of stage two. Mutual interaction among citizens continues. Jealousy and protraction sets in bargains, which results in denial of the rights of others. In society, individuals obsessed with base passions and others with inborn trait to kill and plunder come forth. Such a state of affairs is not conducive to the well-being of society. He set up a political system that fulfils the following needs:

i. Safety of approved morals :

To settle mutual quarrels, enforces the approved morals through power and reduces such incidents.

ii. Penalties :

Political system sets up norms and sanctions to check the activities of individuals of a society from violating approved morals to save others from this to make the life of the society free of fear and dispersion.

iii. Jihad :

Shah Waliullah has given the policy of Jihad to prevent internal dispersion and disorder and to check external attackers. The wealth and welfare of a society, incites the external forces to destroy the collective life of a society, having the aim of getting wealth and occupation over the country. The political system should prepare the dauntless and brave people of the country. for Jihad every time.

iv. Achievement of public welfare :

According to Shah Waliullah, "To maintain the collective life in a better condition, the aim of collective life is determined by the opinion of the wise

of the first stage. The political system maintains the approved morals and provides guidance and training.”

4. Fourth stage of society (international state)

According to Shah Waliullah, “The world is passing through these three stages to reach the fourth stage of complete society with the following characteristics:

This stage covers the nature and kind of relations that exist among citizens of different countries. It also describes the quality of governance and the state of rule of law prevalent in each country. The need for this stage arises when independent rulers are tempted to extend the boundaries of their countries. This temptation could be the result of personal gain of the ruler, hostility against the neighboring ruler, or the desire for preference for warlike means in settling disputes. Under such conditions, the populace feels the urge for the establishment of the office of an authority superior than the existing ruler. Shah Wali Ullah mentioned numerous qualities required of the superior authority (khalifah). Ability to rule justly was considered to be the prime quality in him. Shah Wali Ullah was of the view that in the evolution process societies do not evolve mechanically. Also it is not essential that every society moves through each stage. Societies may be judged from the existing level of social development, and accordingly decide with regard to their particular stage of development.

Theory of diseases of the society.

Shah Waliullah holds that the secret of successful social life lies in the cooperation of people, in the use of abilities for serving other's needs. To material these qualities, a particular place is needed where people should live and fulfil the needs of each other and he calls this place Madina which is not a particular place but any place for above. activities. MADina extends into a state which is Called collective life where stability and dispersive forces work together. Dispersive forces create social ills and thus make the society unbalanced. It is very difficult to find out the reasons of ills of a society and to establish a healthy society.

Shah Waliullah has given three basic and dispersive ills which become a serious danger for collective life of a society :

1. Bad Customs :

Customs play an important part in the collective life of city life for mutual cooperation and transfer and keep balance and harmony in the society but the wrong use of customs by the society because of its bad and cruel actions, these become bad for collective life. Shah Waliullah describes the forms of customs:

a. Such customs which are to become a hindrance for good actions to cause, to submit, to power and to depress the abilities of correct leadership.

b. Such customs which are to make a collective custom for the achievement of needs through wrong means. Theft, deception, the occupy others property, etc. sexuality, adultery and vice versa and people in authority willfully tolerate because of certain preference then the situation becomes of an ill-society.

c. Such customs which are to take away religious acts, to make the people busy in business matters more and more, to make relations with God very weak then such a situation creates disorder and uncertainty and a society suffers many ills.

2. Economic Unbalance :

Shah Waliullah calls economic unbalance as the greatest ill in the collective life. This is such a social condition where a specific class owns wealth more than its need and a large number of people become unable to meet basic needs and people are demoralized. When a person is obliged by economic unbalance, the morality of collective life suffers destruction. Such a society will be called a seriously ill-society and will fall a prey to moral and economic depression.

3. Crimes :

Social and economic bad actions are called crimes. According to him, usury, profiteering, hoarding, blaming, magic-shop, riot-ism and unnatural acts are bad actions and a society, suffering from these ills, will be called an ill-affected society.

Shah Wali Ullah has divided these bad acts into six parts as given below:

a. Physical actions :

Such actions which are hurting body and creating a fear for collective life just as beating, quarrelling and murder.

b. Social actions :

Such actions as hurting the economic condition of men making the getting of needs of life difficult. For example, theft, deception, usury, profiteering and hoarding.

c. Moral actions :

Such actions which are affecting the individual and group life rights making the individual mentally worried and restless. For example, blaming, mischief and magical acts.

d. Unnatural acts :

Such acts which are against human nature and are damaging to the unity of a society. For example, adultery, drinking, adoption of men's ways by women and vice versa.

e. Secret acts :

Such acts that are being done to damage the society like magic and gambling etc.

f. Ethnocentric acts :

Such acts that damage the unity and cooperation of the society and collective life is in danger of losing its peace like ethnocentrism, language superiority, caste system, religious sects and cultural prejudices etc.

The Concept of Consummate Society

Shah Waliullah has presented a concept of a society keeping in view the ills of the society.

According to Shah Wali Ullah, collective life is in the nature of man. So collective life should be according to natural demands to satisfy these in the best way without suffering from any deviation.

He has described four characteristics of human morals :

- a. Piety (Physical and mental).
- b. Humility (Worship of God whole-heartedly).
- c. Control oneself (From bad acts).
- d. Justice and balance (Correct doing of acts and balancing avoidance from greed).

He says that consummate society is not possible without a consummate caliphate and a government state needs such a sultan (caliph).