

Sociological Thought of Shah Wali Ullah

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Abstract

Shah Wali Ullah lived at a time when Mughal rule in India was trembling, and the society was in dire straits. He played dynamic role in promoting the cause of Islamic revival in South Asia. His sociological thought is based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Emphasis on the need for Ijtihad was the hallmark of his methodology. His concept for the development of society is systematic, and he used a special term Irtifaq in relation to society. Establishment of a universal society was the culminating stage of his process of social developments. He believed that Shari'ah was an ideal solution for ensuring a stable and just society.

Keywords: Shah Wali Ullah, Social Thought, Islamic Thought

A Analysis of Sociological Thought of Shah Wali Ullah:

Qutbuddin Ahmad Wali Ullah (1703-1762) , popularly known as Shah Wali Ullah, is famous for his intellectual prowess, profound learning and dynamic role in promoting the cause of Islamic Revival (Tajdid) in South Asia. He possessed a remarkable clarity of vision, and accurately analyzed social pathologies in his days. His solutions to the social evils indicated his superb knowledge of social psychology and practical wisdom. During his era, Mughal empire in India was in fast decline. Shah Wali Ullah exercised his influence to foster social order in the country. In his "Hujjat Ullah al Baligha", he presented a viable concept of Development of Society. His concept, based on rational and empirical grounds carries significance equally for contemporary sociologists and theorists of modern and post-modern societies.

Shah Wali Ullah's sociological thought calls for further research mainly with regard to his: Life and Times; Bases of Socio-cultural Thought and Methodology; Concept of Development of Society and its Implications; and Relevance of Shah Wali Ullah to Post-modernism.

Life And Times of Shah Wali Ullah:

An enormous quantity of literature is available which helps to discern the facts of his life and times, to know the factors which shaped his life, and assess the manner he met the multifarious challenges that were posed in his age. So far, seventy-three of his works have been located. Besides, his sons and some colleagues provided reliable details of his life. Shah Wali Ullah has continuously engaged the attention of numerous contemporary scholars. Translations of his works, books, dealing with his teachings, and articles on his thought are readily available.

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Life:

He belonged to a family of noble descent. His lineage can be traced to Caliph 'Umar' on paternal side and to Caliph 'Ali' on the maternal side. His grandfather, Sheikh Wajihuddin, was a pious man and a brave warrior. Emperor 'Alamgir' held him in esteem for his valour. His father, Shah 'Abd al-Rahim, was an accomplished scholar. On request of 'Alamgir' he revised the "Fatawa-i-Alamgiri" but declined to receive any remuneration for this task.

Shah Wali Ullah started his education at the age of five years. Within two years he memorized the Qur'an. He completed formal training and education, under his father, by the time he reached fifteen. His father revised formal syllabi to suit his progress of learning and comprehension. He started teaching in the school established by his father. Shah Wali Ullah related that he used to reflect on what he used to learn from the books, and, that it broadened his outlook immensely. In 1143 A.H./1731 A.D. he journeyed to Hijaz for the performance of Hajj. During his fourteen months stay there, he further studied the sciences of religion, the Traditions and Fiqh with distinguished scholars. He also gained firsthand knowledge of social conditions of Muslims under the Turkish caliphate, and general state of the Muslim world vis-a-vis marauding bands of western colonialists.

On return to Delhi in 1145 A.H./1733 A.D., he resumed his former duties at Rahimiyah College. He introduced important changes in the teaching system. His "Risala-i-Danishmandi" outlined his scheme of fighting ignorance in society, and how school as a basic social institution could be used to bring social change. The college served its role till the dissolution of Mughal Empire in 1857 A.D. According to Dr. A.D. Muztar: "Then afterwards the British levelled the building to the ground by the gun blasts. The site was auctioned and was purchased by a Hindu named Lala Kish Das. A name plate of this Hindu owner hung there till 1947 A.D."

Shah Wali Ullah led a purposeful life. A study of his "Anfus ul-'Arin" and "Risala-i-Danishmandi" suggests that basically three factors shaped his life and gave direction to it.

- (1) He firmly believed in the truth of Islam, acquired its sound knowledge, and put it into action with resolve.
- (2) He lived in a healthy family environment, and his father imparted him good "Tarbiyah".
- (3) He used education as a means to serve society.

His Times:

By the eighteenth century, an all-round decline was visible in the Muslim world. In India the situation was no better. When Alamgir died, Shah Wali Ullah was four years old. He lived to see the rule of nine kings, from Bahadur Shah to Shah'Alam.

The rich lived in luxury. Heavy taxes added to the misery of artisans, traders and the labour class. Successive corrupt governments neglected to ameliorate the conditions of Buffering citizens. The religious conditions were also no better.

Hindu Vedantism, and vile innovations had crept into Islamic teachings. The trends of rationalist thought were creating doubts about the truth of religion. According to one historian: "Like the Ottoman Turks, the Mughal power did not derive its inspirations from the Islamic Shari'ah which gave distinct rights of life, property and honour to every individual". Shah Wali Ullah's work indicates that he was fully aware of the maladies afflicting the society at that time. Reliable accounts of how he responded to his times exist till now.

In the context of social pathologies in his days, and those responsible there for, his "Al-Tafhimat al-Ilahiyah" furnished adequate details. He addressed to all the classes of people in society. Beginning with the rulers, he asked them to rule according to the Shari'ah, ensure peace in the country and improve governance. He advised the governors (amirs and those holding important posts in the state) to fear God. He castigated them for indulging in worldly pursuits and for neglecting the welfare of people. He noted that they drank wine publicly, and had set up dens for gambling and debauchery. They had failed to implement the laws of Shari'ah. He told the soldiers that they had forgotten their role of making the truth prevail in the land. They were engrossed in the accumulation of wealth and indulged in social evils. To the artisans and traders his manner of address was slightly different. He reminded them that they earned through unlawful means and lacked honesty. Besides, they neglected the rights towards their children/and families.

Shah Wali Ullah severely criticized the Ulama for not imparting the correct knowledge of religion to people. Similarly, he censured phony mystics who deceived and misled people. His harangue to the Muslim community was highly moving. He observed that the community that had declined in morals, lived beyond their means; lacked self-reliance; had lost balance in their lifestyle; had adopted harmful customs; and given themselves in to a life without self-control. Shah Wali Ullah's address to different sections of people showed a clear picture of social state at that time. Al-Ghazali, it may be recalled, had exhorted state functionaries in a similar vein.

BASES OF SHAH WALI ULLAH'S SOCIO-CULTURAL THOUGHT AND METHODOLOGY:

His magnum opus, the Hujjah, presented a well-knit scheme of religion and system of Shari'ah. His thought revolved around religion. The Qur'an and the Sunnah formed the "bases of his thought, including the socio-cultural one. And his methodology explicated the wisdom (hikmah) of these basic sources.

RELIGION AS A BASIS OF SOCIO-CULTURAL THOUGHT:

Shah Wali Ullah cited the Qur'anic verses and wrote that the root of the revealed religions (Din or Faith) is one and the same. All the Prophets have preached unanimously the belief in divine unity and in the Judgment Day. They preached the unity of moral values, obeying the laws of marriage, and prohibited fornication etc. The unity of faiths and moral values stemmed from the fact that the human nature has remained unchanged through the march of time. He stated that each Prophet brought with him different Shari'ah to suit the conditions of his own people and time.

He also explained why various prophets differed in their social codes. It may be discerned, that Shah Wali Ullah thus considered the social system as a dynamic process and subject to change.

Shah Wali Ullah mentions that God raised Prophets to teach religion, and also to eradicate bad customs in society. He noted that religion was averse to living in seclusion. To live in society and work for its progress was a part of religions. He devoted a chapter to how the laws of Shari'ah promoted socio-cultural advancement and helped improve social control.

A glance at the contents of Hujjah manifested that Shah Wali Ullah studied social deviance from different angles. With regard to social control, he suggested the need to stop deviance (tahrif) in religion. He opined that this step could ward off social normlessness. He wrote that tahrif is a chronic disease of people. Among the modes, which caused tahrif, he listed: disregard for religion in the educational system; base motives to please rulers; innovations and introducing excesses; blind taqlid; an admixture of teachings of one religion into another.

Shah Wali Ullah quoted different Traditions and argued that Islam favored moderation. He mentioned thirteen ways to achieve ease and moderation. Among these, he said, the Prophet used to set personal example and only those actions of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) are enshrined in Shari'ah which the Prophet (P.B.U.H) undertook. Shah Wali Ullah attached importance to the study of social phenomena for understanding the Qur'an. He stressed the need of adherence to the Qur'an and the Sunnah. He mentioned that such an approach could ensure the realization of social ideal of the individual, and socio-cultural progress of humanity.

His Methodology:

Shah Wali Ullah's methodology received acclaim from his contemporaries. Mirza Mazhar Jan-i-Janan writing in Persian said: "Shah Wali Ullah has enunciated a modern method and invented a particular technique for the study of sciences and probe into the secrets of agnosis." Four aspects of his methodology are considered distinct.

The introduction of the "Hujjah" indicated that Shah Wali Ullah anticipated the needs and trends in social thought during the succeeding centuries. He visualized that the coming age demanded projection of the Shari'ah with convincing arguments. Rational approach dominated his methodology. He reasoned and found cause and remedy for social ills. He did not adopt the mode of traditional argument, and instead, utilized rational and empirical methods. In his approach there is "a meeting point between inductive reason, empirical observation and religious sanctions".

He emphasized the need for ijtihad. In the Hujjah, he recorded that when the rule reached in the hands of incompetent sovereigns they came to depend on fuqaha. Thus, taqlid - rigid conformity - started sometimes after the fourth century A.H. He believed that ijtihad was vital for vigour of society and meeting space time challenges.

Shah Wali Ullah carried forward the essence of traditional Islamic thought superbly. In his introduction, to Hujjah he mentioned the names of Imam Ghazali, Khatabi, and Izz al-Din ibn Abd al-Salam with great reference. He seems to be influenced by them. According to Professor Basharat Ali: "The work left unfinished by Aurangzed was extended, systematised and, in a majority of cases, synthesized by Imam Waliullah". It may be appreciated that synthesis is a complicated venture and a positive methodological approach.

He preferred an integrative methodology. He dealt with sociology as an interdisciplinary field of knowledge in which psychology, economics, family and civic affairs, and politics were blended. In Halepota's words, "he anticipated Rousseau and the nineteenth century sociologists and preceded them in producing a synthesis and correlation of biology, psychology, sociology and ethics". Abd-al-Haq Haqqani, the translator of Hujjah into Urdu, rightly remarked in his translator's note that his (Shah's) approach incorporated all social disciplines.

Concept of Development of Society and its Implications:

Shah Wali Ullah used a special term Irtifaq (utility, benefit) in discussion on society. He was highly systematic in his approach. He wrote that God has inspired man to pursue Irtifaqat (useful, ends) concerning his necessities, since the days of Adam. Besides social life, Shah Wali Ullah extended the use of the term Irtifaqat to the laws of nature and human obligation to follow them. In this section the focus has been confined to social traits of man; stages of development of society; elements of the social system; and finally, the implications of his concept.

Some Social Traits of Man

Shah Wali Ullah provided details of human psychology and man's ability to imitate, to experiment and to use his intellect. He mentioned that man possessed two faculties - the angelic (malakiyah) and the animalistic (bahimiyah) - which constantly influence human behaviors. Both the faculties remain in a state of conflict. Angelic faculty, when developed, adds to human happiness.

Shah Wali Ullah asserted that bestial (bahimiyah) trait is kept in check by striving to acquire essential virtues. In his view well-being of social order depended on the virtues of purity and cleanliness (taharah), humility (ikhbat), sublimation (samaha), and equity and justice (adalah). He discussed how these virtues help individual and society bring normalcy in different spheres of life, and how these could be acquired.

He averred that search for food, shelter and lie mate are common instincts of animals and humans. Man has been endowed with three special faculties, which want in animals. These faculties spur humans to pursue ideals like seeking of moral perfection, striving to achieve cultural feats, and working towards creating just social order.

First Stage of Social Development:

This stage has likeness to social life of nomads, and dwellers of remote mountain peaks. These small social groups maintain closer contact through language.

They rely on agriculture, tree plantation and taming of animals in order to meet basic human needs. Gradually they devise rules of marriage, means to settle mutual disputes, and contrive means to ensure safety of the group. These fundamentals gain improvement with the passage of time, and evolution to next stage occurs.

Second Stage of Social Development:

This stage is reached by those residing in urban areas and cities. Human social organizations abound in cities, and requirements of life become more complex. Increased challenges and problems open avenues of experimentation in search of answers to the difficulties. The rulers are enabled, to draw better lessons from these endeavors.

Third Stage of Social Development:

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. No individual is in a position to shoulder the task of serving the interests of society single-handedly. Creation of the agency of government becomes ineluctable. Taxes are then imposed to run the affairs of the government. The stage is gradually set to move to next phase of social developments.

Fourth Stage of Social Development:

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.

Elements of the Social Systems:

Household: Shah Wali Ullah provided valuable information and advise about the management of the household. He considered family as the pivotal institution of society. He explained the psychological difference between the sexes, and showed how in marriage they both complement each other. He noted that wife played a distinct role in tarbiyah of progeny. He listed seventeen prominent issues that needed attention in the successful conduct of households. He emphasized the rights and duties of married persons, and accorded special consideration to the rights

of women. He devoted considerable effort in explaining ways that could create curable amity between marriage partners.

Social Affairs: Shah Wali Ullah mentioned that the range of social affairs is extremely wide. All aspects of human activity, from cradle to grave, fall in the purview of social affairs. He advised that social conduct might be assessed from the beauty of culture and nicety of social interaction. Every nation is diverse in dress and manners. He asserted that food affects the body and morality in a subtle way. The consumption of intoxicants abates intellects and boosts bestial faculties. He stated that modes of customs existed in all societies. He recorded that when families who care more for personal gains than the benefits of the society, come in power they plunge society into total social chaos. Under their protection lecherous practices, drinking, gambling, usury, reduction in weights and measures are revived. He advised that the solution lay in fighting these aberrations. He stressed that it is obligatory on righteous individuals to strive hard in the eradication of these social evils.

Economy and Vocations: He mentioned that cooperation and smooth business dealings are pleasing signs in a society. In vocations he listed agriculture, mining, tool making and many other occupations. He wrote that in commerce and trade silver and gold came to be used as standard of exchange because these metals were precious and lighter in weight. He observed that many persons find difficulty in adopting a useful vocation. They resort to gambling and larceny, as profession. He pointed out that vocational balance is essential for economic stability. For instance, if the majority of people take to commerce and trade, agriculture will fall in dire straits. He advised that professions, which encourage lewdness should be curbed in the larger interest of society. He explained that wisdom of healthy business transactions and how they promote welfare of society. He wrote that it is obligatory to ensure that human needs are met.

Politics (siyasa-al-maddniyh): He mentioned that because of close human interaction in a city, it is like a person. Groups in cities differ in their outlook. He provided details of social life in city. He dealt with ways of living, family relation, and lax management of households. He considered bribery, hoarding, reduction in weights and measures by the trader, and pressure of parasitic classes like poets etc on public treasury to be ruinous for the economy of the city. City politics becomes further chaotic when corrupt groups incite citizens to indulge in acts of arson and looting, and create harassment and fear in the public. Shah Wali Ullah emphasized the need for a strong and just administration to run public affairs. He launched many construction projects to improve social conditions. At the level of state, he suggested that the ruler should focus on both internal and external affairs of the country and well-being of citizens. Shah Wali Ullah affirmed that reform in social framework is actualized through light taxation and maintaining adequate defense of the country. Shah Wali Ullah gave a meaningful concept. The word Irtifaq is derived from Rifq (gentleness, kindness, benevolence), and it pervades in his entire sociological thought. A glance at the preceding sections here may help in crystallizing five main implications of his concept.

He critically examined the elements of social system, indicated shortcomings in each and suggested remedies. Through analysis, he aimed to ensure a dynamic process related to the structural framework of society. He argued that the socialization process followed a series of stages. In Professor Basharat's words he gave ".....a perpetual charter for the reconstruction of the Muslim society at every step of its crisis or retrogression". The perennial nature of the concept is a distinct implication. He focused on theoretical and practical issues of society as a whole, and offered a universal model of state and society. He remained concerned with the long-term and large-scale social pattern of society. Thus, in contemporary parlance he may be classed as a macro-sociologist.

Shah Wali Ullah held an evolutionary perspective with regard to social change. His concept possibly suggests new insights on evolutionary theory debate. It may be noted that he lived before the time of Western evolutionary theorists. A brief mention may be given in this context. Saint-Simon (1760-1825), who influenced Marx, Comte and E.Durkheim, held the view that the history of human society passes through three distinct stages to which correspond distinct modes of thought - polytheism and slavery, theism and feudalism, positivism and industrialism. He thought that the crisis of modern society could be solved by the development of a new religion based on positivism and under the control of a new priesthood, namely sociologists. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) developed a theory of social evolution that was broadly similar to Darwin's theory of biological evolution. Professor Sanderson has provided details of flaws in the theories of early evolutionists. He then discussed the functionalist evolutionary approach of Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) and observed that functionalist evolutionary approach tended to suffer the flaws of the nineteenth century evolutionary thinkers. For example, he wrote. " The functionalist evolutionary strategy tends to view contemporary Western society as the most highly adapted of all societies and it generally holds that small-scale simple societies have low adaptive capacity. This view is ethnocentric in the extreme". Shah Wali Ullah proposed an operable concept. In a changing world vibrating with cultural diversity, his sociological thought merits research in a comparative frame of reference.

Shah Wali Ullah related social evils that had gripped society in his days. He used ethico-social standard in deciding what, in his view, was deleterious to the society. These social ills prevail in all societies, both in East and West, at a horrendous scale. However, the viewpoint towards these social lapses varies from a society to another. According to a Western sociologist's listing of 'social order crime', "Criminal acts such as gambling, prostitution, illegal drug use, vagrancy, and public drunkenness do not impose physical suffering on others, but do offend the moral sensibilities of the majority." This approach sees social ills in a different light from that of Shah Wali Ullah. Professor Allan Mazur in choosing social problems at a global scale, from 1935 to 1990, mentioned only drugs and some other problems. Shah Wali Ullah, it may be recalled, relates the phenomena of normlessness and saw it in historical social, economic and political context. Without involving in labyrinth and jungle of sociological terms describing social evils Shah Wali Ullah's approach

signified that he reached at the root causes of social ills torturing the society. Judged on an unbiased scale, his ideas may be fallen as a new vision on the sociology of deviance.

Shah Wali Ullah hinted at another implication of his concept when he dilated upon the role of customs in bringing about the decline of societies. He presented a moving account of the fall of Byzantium and Khusraus empires. The people there considered themselves to be the world leaders in culture and unique in glory and grandeur. In Shah Wali Ullah's estimate, however, those societies had decayed in moral and transcendental values. Centuries of unfettered power had accustomed them to extravagant lifestyle. The rich contended with each other in display of wealth through lofty palaces and luxurious living. The strata of society emulated their pattern. Artisans, tanners and traders were treated as beasts of burden when forced to pay heavy taxes. Shah Wali Ullah mentioned the servile flattery and rise of parasitic classes is the product of such a state. Eventually, he stated, religion redeemed the abysmal social conditions of subjects in those empires. A contemporary American author possibly echoed Shah Wali Ullah's view on the role of religion when he wrote: "In the eight years I have spent researching and writing this book, I have come to fear that we are already in the terminal stages of decay. Moreover, I also am convinced, in view of history and basic psychology that religion is necessary for this national comeback; and I recognize the improbability of such a rebirth based on current trends."

Shah Wali Ullah's concept advocated that development of society ultimately climaxed in a universal society, where Shari'ah was the lodestar in human affairs. He considered that Jihad was integral to Shari'ah. In the wake of globalization process a host of ideas on 'world society' have emerged. Besides, social scientists continue to debate about the future of religion its marginalization or total destruction through the force of science and technology. In this scenario, relevance of his sociological thought in post-modern age becomes an interesting topic for discussion and further research.

RELEVANCE OF SHAH WALI ULLAH TO POST-MODERNISM:

In an appraisal of the relevance of the thought of this luminary to post-modernism, some basic facts may be kept in view. (1) Post-modernism is not a passing fad, as some may say. It is possibly a prelude to the decisive struggle of Western civilization to attain world domination. (2) Shah Wali Ullah's entire thought, and not just his sociological thought outlined here, may be evaluated. He was a representative of Islamic thought, and his ideas are not confined to geographical limits and time-space bounds. (3) In contrast to avowed agenda of post-modernism, Shah Wali Ullah campaigned for the total emancipation of man and bringing about a just society. His written works, the record of revivalist efforts by him and of those who followed in his footsteps bear testimony to the all time efficacy of his thought. The discussion in hand considers some main features of post-modernism, challenges of post-modernism and, finally, he relevance of Shah Wali Ullah to post-modernism.

Some Main Features of Post-modernism:

Post-modernism movement emerged sometimes in the late 1960s. Post-modernists saw themselves as reacting against modernism or modernity. In contrast to modernism, post-modernism disclaimed the notion of a coherent, objectively knowable world that can be rationally analyzed and improved. A scholar of American Studies wrote that avant-garde- writers, favouring new and unusual ideas, "found an unexpected home in the universities after the 1960s". This observation is acute because universities reportedly serve as think-tanks for the policy-makers. While discussing 'Post-modernism and Cultural Disorder', Professor Featherstone mentioned five features of post-modernism. His third feature read: "In the literary, critical, and academic fields, post-modernism implies an anti-foundational critique of all meta narratives, be it in science, religion, philosophy, humanism, Marxism or other systematic body of knowledge." This feature, so innocent on paper, when read in the long history of Imperialist geopolitics - specially, from cold war geopolitics order to new world order geopolitics, adduces evidence of its multifaceted global interaction. The empirical manifestations of post-modernism continue to sprawl in the communication media.

In "**Post-modernism and Islam: Predicament and Promise**", Akbar S. Ahmed traced the history of post-modernism in the West. He mentioned eight basic features of post-modernism namely: secular skepticism about modernity and anything-goes pluralism, modern mass media as an engine of post-modernism, the need to explore link between post-modernism and fundamentalism, a nostalgic bondage with the past, an urban culture of consumerism and materialism, lack of need for a class element, eclecticism and the resultant confusion in the name of free-for-all clarity. He then analyzed the challenges and chances of measured response to those challenges. In a later work, Ahmed discussed functional link between globalization and post modernity and how these influenced Islam. In the fast-growing literature on post-modernism, challenges of this movement are being expressed in greater clarity and the sociologists are describing the focal points of a post-modern society.

Challenges of Post-modernism:

The post-modern features delineated above, relate to the early - 1990s. Since then, post-modernist authors have been more candid. Global changes brought in through globalization pose challenges to all non-western societies and, especially, the Muslims.

Richard Borty, professor at Harvard and a leading exponent of post-modernism, opined that overwhelming power of the West justified the superiority of Western thought. It was essential to have blind faith in the truth of Western values. He stressed that previous civilizations merely wasted their energies in seeking the pleasure of God. John Dewey and Hegel redeemed us from this futile pursuit. They taught America and the West not to look towards sky and, instead, look forward. They also advised us to totally discard belief in orthodox Christianity. Rorty stated that today America is a great power because we have now removed God and taken his place. We are great because we have become God. He justified the extermination of seven million Red Indians during the forward march of American civilization.

One may not agree with Rorty in toto, but it cannot be denied that America considers itself a society with a universal mission, and morally and politically superior. As a consequence of clash of civilizations and clash with distant cultures debates, Americans have been conditioned to carry a reservoir of negative stereotypes about the Muslim world that are reinforced and perpetuated by the powerful mass media. The world of Islam ceased to pose military threat to the West since the seventeenth century C.E. In spite of this, Islam is being projected as "New Enemy" in the Western mind-set, after the demise of Communism. American strategists have depicted Islamic movements as terrorist groups and identified some Muslim countries as "rouge states".

The mood of threat to the West, and emerging confrontation between powerful Western world and disjointed feeble Islamic movements is possibly a Western propaganda ploy. The real aim of the West is to continue exploiting the resources of Muslim lands.

It is in this scenario that the relevance of Shah Wali Ullah's thought needs to be gauged. With the inroads of global media into the crevices in the privacy of almost every home, the socio-cultural challenge has become fairly complex. In addition, the global economy, according to Robinson, "is eroding the very material basis for the nation-state, yet social scientists, for the most part, stubbornly cling to outdated notions of international relation as a phenomenon in the social universe whose principal dynamic is interaction between nation-states". Muslim countries continue to cling to secular laws. Ruling elites in most countries obey Western dictates. The West is particularly sensitive to seeing modern technology in Muslim hands, who belong to the Third World. Professor Allan Mazur's views may be an eye-opener when he said: "Another antagonistic option would be to prevent Third World nations from developing nuclear arsenals through restrictions on technology transfer, clandestine operations to sabotage bomb-making facilities or preemptive strikes, if necessary. Another possibility is to co-opt the wealth, educated elites of the various Third World countries, leaving the masses impotent and in poverty". Sectarianism is another bane of Muslim society. Generally, Islam is more visible in words than in works.

Relevance of Shah Wali Ullah to Post-modernism:

World system theorists, Wallerstein and his followers, are of the view that "the presence of multinational corporations in Third World countries perpetuates a system in which the rich get richer and the poor get poorer". This neocolonialism in the form of economic domination by multinational corporations is enough to suffocate the idea of social change on a path other than the secular one. Shah Wali Ullah, in contrast, advocated that Shari'ah is the only course that ensure the dignity of man and society. Thus the horizon of post-modernism totally differs from that of Shah Wali Ullah. Before mentioning the points of relevance between the two approaches it seems apt to consider who will implement Shah Wali Ullah's thought in today's dazed world.

Implementation of Shah Wali Ullah's Thought:

He was no armchair theorist, but a man of action. He is a model to be emulated. He worked in a team and endeavoured to mobilize the masses by close contact with them. His thought awaits implementation and to bear fruits. He summons all those who are endowed with a sense of mission and wish to serve society and promote social justice in society. His written works are an all-time guide for those who may decide to work in his footsteps. Contemporary communication facilities make it easier to educate, to mobilize and guide the masses to establish a just society.

His Relevance to Muslim Society: His thought is "based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and represents the mainstream of Islamic thought. He always emphasized that the survival of Muslim society lay in the Shari'ah, which encompassed the whole garnet of human life affairs. In his "Insaf fi Bayan Sabab-il-Ikhtilaf", a work of great eruditions, he traced out the history of schools of thought in Fiqh and suggested how greater harmony could be achieved in interpretation. He noted that points of difference in interpretation were few and, that too, of minor nature. The relevance of his thought to Muslim society remains undiminished, and it seems he is writing as if present with us today. His concept of development of society, it may be recalled, culminated in the establishment of a universal society. The structure of a caliphate was dismantled in the beginning of twentieth-century possibly following a mirage of embracing modernism overnight. This change does not deter Muslim countries to find alternative arrangements for the progress of society.

His Relevance to Post-modernism: In Shah Wali Ullah's times, external challenges to Muslim society were not as colossal as they are today. Media had not reached everywhere. But post-modernism has its inherent shortfalls. It stands to eliminate ruthlessly even a minor hurdle in its hegemonic programme. It is highly allergic not only to orthodox Christianity but all Revealed religions and their revivalism. Post-modernism, therefore, has its genuine critics in the West. All those, who may wish to implement Shah Wali Ullah's thought, have to establish dialogue with those who are prepared to challenge the steamrolling of post-modernism. Shah Wali Ullah's ideas on Jihad and its necessity for Shari'ah provide deep insights into how societies survive in crisis and win.

In conclusion, it may be submitted that Shah Wali Ullah's thought, including the sociological ideas, is based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah and lights the way for a long-term goals of Islamic society and indicating signposts of the way.

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