

Give an account of the life and services of Shah Waliullah. How did he save the Indian Muslims from political annihilation and religious degeneration?

Introduction:

"It was the effect of thickening gloom and growing desolation that the founder of third school of thought flourished. Shah Waliullah was one of the most critical and constructive thinker of Muslim History" (I. H. Qureshi)

Shah Waliullah was political, social and religious thinker of 18th century. He born in 1703 and grown up in the environment of Muslim decline. And Hindus and Sikhs were rising up against Muslims. He did alot of intellectual efforts, wrote many books and reformations efforts to bring back the power of Muslims. He was the first who identified the causes of Muslim decline. He wrote letters to the various classes of Muslim society and to Ahmed Shah Abdali to save the Muslims and Islam in sub-continent. His efforts to save religious degeneration

were unity among Shia and sunis, motivated muslims for Jihād and focus on Jihād instead of taqleed.

Early Life of Shah Waliullah:

Shah waliullah was born in 1703 in Delhi. His father was a religious scholar. He got his early education from his father and then admitted in Madrasah-e-Rahimiya. When his father died, he took care of Madrasah, and produced hundreds of Ulama. He belonged to the Fiq Nazashbandiya.

Situation at that time:

When Shah waliullah was growing up, he saw the Muslim decline. Hindu Reformatist movements were at peak. He observed that the Muslims were all living in luxurious life and Islam is in danger in sub-continent. There was a threat to Muslims and their rule from missionaries, Sikhs, and Marahattas. Muslims culture was declining and Hindu's culture got dominance over that of Muslims. In this situational context, Shah waliullah started to reform Muslim

society. Muslims were away from Shariah and involved in a number of social evils.

Services of Shah Waliullah

1. Reformation of Muslim Society:

Shah Waliullah gave the **Fuk-ul-Nizam** which illustrated that the complete revolution is required to reform the Muslim society altogether. While, keeping in mind the social evils, he was of view of revolutionary approach.

2. Unity of Muslims Society:

Shah Waliullah was a keen advocate of unity and togetherness of Muslims to get their power back. He thought that three ingredients are important for unity in a society which are justice, equality and strong economy.

3. Worked for true education of Muslims:

Shah Waliullah worked for the true education of Muslims to invoke in them the importance of education. He wrote almost

50+ books for the betterment of Muslims.

How he saved Muslims from political annihilation:

1. Identification of cause of Muslim decline:

Shah Waliullah after growing up in an era of Muslim decline, he started analyzing the causes behind it. He concluded that the culture of lords, feudalism, bankruptcy and excessive taxation are among the basic causes of Muslims fall in India.

S. M. Qureshi in book "The cultural heritage of Pakistan", wrote

"Shah Waliullah was the first Muslim who identified the causes of Muslim decline."

2. Steps against rise of Marhallas:

At that time, Muslims were declining and Hindu-reformist movements were at peak. Marhallas's insurgency was continued. He wrote letters to Mughal rulers to not give property to the governors who are with Marhallas in reality.

3. Called Ahmad Shah Abdali to fight for Muslims:

Keeping the weak status of Mughals and insurgency of Marhallas upfront, Shah Waliullah wrote letters to Ahmed Shah Abdali to come India and fight for the Muslims and Islam. That is why, **3rd battle of Panipat in 1751** was fought.

4. Arose political consciousness through his writings:

Shah Waliullah wrote almost 50+ books to wake up the Muslims. His intellectual work was enough to arise political consciousness in the Muslims of India. Later on, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Alama Muhammad Iqbal was also influenced by his political ideology. Hafeez Malik said,

"He gave the political philosophy which is still alive in Pakistan. It was the base of formation of Pakistan."

5. Negated Muslims absorption into Hindus:

Shah Waliullah negated Muslim

of India that amid the weakening state of Muslims in the sub-continent, do not mix up with Hindu culture. He advised Muslims to rather retain their separate identity.

6. Forceful voice against Muslim Rulers:

Shah Waliullah arose a strong voice against Mughal rulers, who were concerned about themselves. They imposed heavy taxes on public and they themselves lived a life of luxury. So, he (fought) arose forceful voice against Muslim rulers to wake up and worked for their public's welfare.

How he saved Muslims from religious degeneration

1. Translation of Quran in Persian:

Muslims were unaware of the true meaning of Quran due to language barrier. To save Muslims from wrong interpretation of Quran, he translated Quran into Persian due to which he faced a lot of criticism too.

2. Fought against Sectarianism:

Shah Waliullah saw the disunity and sectarian differences among the Muslims division i.e. Shias and Sunnis. He illustrated three things which are common between all sects of Muslims i.e. Quran, God and Prophet. In his books, **Hijjat-ul-Baligha** and **Azalat-ul-Khifa**, he explained about Sectarianism.

3. Focus on Jihad:

Shah Waliullah stimulated the Muslims to take their sword out and fought till infidelity ends. He wrote letters to the soldiers of Mughal army to fight Jihad till regain Muslims and Islam's glory in subcontinent.

4. Promoted Ijtihad instead of Taqleed:

Shah Waliullah was strong advocate of ijtihad. According to J. H. Qureshi in book "The Short History of Pakistan",

"Believing in universalism of Islam, he wanted to interpret Islam in time and place."

5. Efforts for moderation: of

Shah waliullah incited Muslims to adapt the path of moderation. He opposed the practices of extremism.

Historian Waheed-uz-Zaman said,

'His approach was so liberal that it was difficult to find that to which Fiqh of sect he belonged to.'

6. Foundation of Institutional basis:

Shah waliullah laid down the basis of institution formation. He founded the base of federation of Madrasah and constructed the curriculum for academic purposes.

Conclusion:

Shah Waliullah founded the base for political, ethical, social and economic thinking for Muslims.

As, Allama M. Jafar said about him, **"he was first Muslim, to find use of true spirit in him."** He worked for the political, social and religious progress of Muslims in India.

His political ideology had great impact on Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Allama Muhammad Jafar. His ideas were the base of independence movement of Muslims started after 1920s.