

Q2 Give an account of the life and services of Shah Waliullah. How did he save the Indian Muslims from political annihilation and religious degeneration?

1. Introduction:

In the eighteenth century, the Muslims of the Indian Subcontinent were socially, politically, spiritually, and economically in a sinister condition. The Mughal Empire was also on a decline that further deepened the conditions of the Muslims. Shah Waliullah, the conqueror of modern Islam in the subcontinent, came forth to eradicate the problems of the Muslims. He regenerated the Islamic teachings into people's lives by translating the Holy Quran into the Persian language, the language of the time. His works cover a wide range of topics including economics, politics, social issues, metaphysics and theology.

2. Life and Services Of Shah Waliullah:

i) Early Life:-

Shah Waliullah, also known as Qutb al-Din Ahmad, was born on February 21, 1703, near Delhi in India. He came from a religious family and received education from his father, Shah Abdul Rahim, at Madrasa-i-Rahimiyyah. After completing his education, he went on pilgrimage and pursued further studies in Saudi Arabia. During his time there, he decided to promote Islamic values among Muslims and present Islam in a rational manner. Upon his return to India, he started working towards these goals.

ii) Services of Shah Waliullah:-

1) Educational Services:-

In 1738, he translated the Holy Quran into Persian to respond to the questions raised by Christian Missionaries. In his famous work

called "Aqad-al-jaiyad-fi-Ahkam-al-Ijtihad wa-al-Taglid," he encouraged the use of Ijtihad instead of blindly following others (Taglid).

2) Religious Services:-

During his time, there was a lot of hostility between Shias and Sunnis, and this was causing divisions among Muslims. To address this, Shah Waliullah wrote "**Izalat-al-Akhifa**" and "**Khilafat-al-Khulafa**" to help clear up misunderstandings between Shias and Sunnis.

3) Political Services:-

During 18th century, the Marathas became a powerful political force and posed a threat to take over the rule in Delhi. Shah Waliullah wrote a letter to Ahmed Shah Abdali, asking for help in protecting the Muslims. As a result, in the Third Battle of Panipat, Ahmed Shah Abdali decisively defeated the Marathas.

4) Economic Services:-

Shah Waliullah talked about four basic ideas in economics: producing wealth, using wealth, sharing wealth, and exchanging wealth. He believed that wealth should be distributed among the entire nation because everyone contributes to its production.

3. Shah Waliullah Saves Indian

Muslims from Political Annihilation:-

The political context of Shah Waliullah's time was marked by the decline of the Mughal Empire and the rise of regional powers, which threatened the political and social stability of Indian Muslims. He realized that political stability was crucial for the survival of Islam in India and took several steps to address these challenges.

1) Correspondence with Muslim Leaders:-

Shah Waliullah wrote letters to various Muslim leaders, urging them to unite against

the encroaching Marathas and other non-Muslim forces. He highlighted the importance of political solidarity among Muslims to preserve their religious and cultural identity.

2) Alliance with Ahmad Shah Abdali:

One of his most notable political actions was inviting Ahmad Shah Abdali to invade India. This move was aimed at curbing the rising power of the Marathas, who posed a significant threat to Muslim rule in northern India. The subsequent Battle of Panipat in 1761, where Abdali defeated the Marathas, was a turning point that temporarily checked the decline of Muslim political power in the region.

3) Promotion of Islamic Governance:

He advocated for the establishment of a governance system based on Islamic principles to ensure justice and moral integrity. Therefore, his contributions in the political field are

worth remembering.

"Balance and Uniformity
in the system is a must."

4. Shah Waliullah Saves Indian

Muslims from Religious Degeneration:-

Shah Waliullah regained the lost glory of Islam through his services in British India.

1) Translation of the Quran.

The most influential work of Shah Waliullah was his translation of the Quran into the Persian language. Afterwards, his sons translated the Holy Quran into Urdu. It helped the Muslims of the Indian Subcontinent to learn closely from the Quranic teaching in every field of life.

2) Bridged Gap between Mystics and Religious Scholars:-

Shah Waliullah bridged the gap between mystics and religious scholars, emphasizing their differences. He also forbade people to avoid blind taqlid rather than consulting the Quran and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). In his outstanding book, **Hujjatullah al-Baligha**, he told people how to live their lives according to the codes of the Quran.

3) Open the doors of Ijtihad:-

He opened the doors of Ijtihad. Thus, he stands a top to revitalize eighteenth-century India's Islamic teachings through his moderate thinking.

"His approach was so liberal as it was difficult to understand which school of thought he belonged."

5. Critical Analysis:-

Undoubtedly, Hazrat Shah Waliullah lay

the foundation of modern Islam in the subcontinent. During his time, Islamic society was on the verge of destruction after the death of Aurangzeb, the last powerful Mughal emperor. However, he revived the Islamic values in the subcontinent through his far-sightedness in religious and worldly matters. Furthermore, his practical work on Islamic values won him the honour of rejuvenator of Islam. Nonetheless, his work for socio-political and economic uplift for the people and the empire is still written in golden words.

"What defines us is how well we rise after falling."

6. Conclusion:

Conclusively, recuperating Islam in the Indian subcontinent in the 18th century was only possible through the selfless struggles of Hazrat Shah Waliullah. He emphasized adopting the Islamic values in life and translated the Holy Quran and Hadiths to set practical examples to adopt

morals easily. However his political services by stopping the growing threat of Marathas, Sikhs and Hindus also proved fruitful. Nevertheless, he wrote fifty-one books to carry the legacy for future generations.