

## Re-Partition CSS-2016

Q.NO.2 Give an account of the life and services of Shah Waliullah. How did he save Indian Muslims from political annihilation and religious degeneration?

Answer:

### Introduction:

In the eighteenth century, the Muslims of Indian subcontinent were socially, politically, spiritually and economically in a sinister condition. The Mughal Empire was also on decline that further deteriorated the conditions of the Muslims. Shah Waliullah Dehlvi - the conqueror of modern Islam in the subcontinent, came forth to eradicate the problems of the then Muslims. At that time a constant decline of the Mughal Empire, lawlessness, immorality, corruption, gambling and above all parting away from the Quranic teachings darkened the lives of Muslims. In the meantime, Qutb al-din Ahmed, known as Shah Waliullah, regenerated the Islamic teachings into people's life by translating the Holy Quran into the Persian language, the language of times.

Moreover, the Muslims were divided into sectarian fights, and he united them through the teachings of Khulfa e Rashid. He also stressed the true essence of Sufism and dedicated Ulema to work according to the principles of Islam.

### Life sketch of Shah Waliullah:

Qutbuddin Ibn e Abolul Raheem, popularly known as Shah Waliullah was born on 21st February 1703 in respectable family of Delhi. His father was a leading Hanafi jurist, Islamic scholar and founder of Madrasa e Rahimiya. Shah Waliullah memorized Holy Quran at the age of seven. In 1730 performed Hajj. He contributed in the reconciliation of Shia, Sunni, Sufi and Ulema. He promoted the concept of Ijtihad in place of Taqlid and wrote 51 books of various topics in Arabic and Persian. His famous books include Hujjatullah -il-Balighah and Al-Fawaid Kabees. He was died on Friday 20 August 1762 at Jumma prayer.

### Historical background:

Shah Waliullah lived during a



significant period of India's history, marked by complex social, economic, and political dynamics. India at that time was characterized by its diverse <sup>religious</sup> landscape, with Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism which brought about tensions and conflict. India was deeply ingrained in caste based discrimination. Along with this economic and social conditions of the subcontinent were also facing European colonial impacts. Administrative collapse was the main problem of that century due to Mughal Empire's decline. Muslims were distressed between educational backwardness and religious sectarianism. Moral, social, and religious decline of Muslims led Shah Waliullah to take step for the safety of Muslims.

### Services of Shah Waliullah:

#### (i) Promotion of unity and cooperation:

Shah Waliullah emphasized the importance of unity among Muslims, urging them to set aside their internal differences and work together to address common challenges. He believed that a united front would be better.

equipped to counter external threats and  
and preserve the interests of Muslim  
community. He stated that "Shias"  
are not "Kafirs" and are Muslims.  
He said that the divisions between  
them has weakened the Muslims and  
nations like Marathas are becoming  
stronger and overtaking Muslims

### (iii) Translation of Islamic texts:

To address the issue of limited  
access to Islamic knowledge, Shah Waliullah  
encouraged the translation of Islamic  
books into local languages. He translated  
Holy Quran into Persian, a language  
more widely understood in the region.

### (iv) Educational Reforms:

Recognizing educational backward-  
ness of Muslims Shah Waliullah  
established Madrasahs and educational  
institutions. He believed that a well  
educated community would be better  
equipped to face the challenges of  
their time and contribute to society.  
He himself served as a dean at



his father's "Madrasah Al-Rahimya".

#### (iv) Checking Maratha's rise:

To counter the rising influence of Marathas, who posed a threat to Muslim community, Shah Waliullah advocated for a stronger response and recognized the need for external support. He extended an invitation to the Afghan ruler, Ahmed Shah Abdali, to invade India.

His efforts to save Muslims from Political annihilation and Religious degeneration;

#### (a) Shah Waliullah's Political efforts:

Shah Waliullah was the Political thinker of the world, proving himself through practical examples. During his tenure, the Mughal Empire was collapsing and Muslims were under the threat of alienation and identity loss. The attack of Nadar Shah in 1739 depicted the weak conditions of the empire. The threat of

Marathas who were growing power by invading Punjab needed to be encountered. Critically evaluating the circumstances<sup>red.</sup> he wrote the letter to Ahmed Shah Abdali, an Afghan ruler, asking him to help to counter the Marathas. Ahmed Shah upon his request, after three years, attacked the Marathas in the third famous battle of Panipat in 1761 in which he won and saved the Muslims. Thus it was Shah Waliullah's intellectual behind the political rehabilitation of the empire. Alongwith this he criticized the lavish life of Muslim rulers and emphasized to follow Quranic teachings.

### (b) Religious efforts:

Shah Waliullah regained the lost glory of Islam through his services in the sub continent. The most influential work by him was the translation of Holy Quran into Persian language. It helped the Muslims of the sub-continent to learn closely from the Quranic teachings in every field of life. Muslims were divided

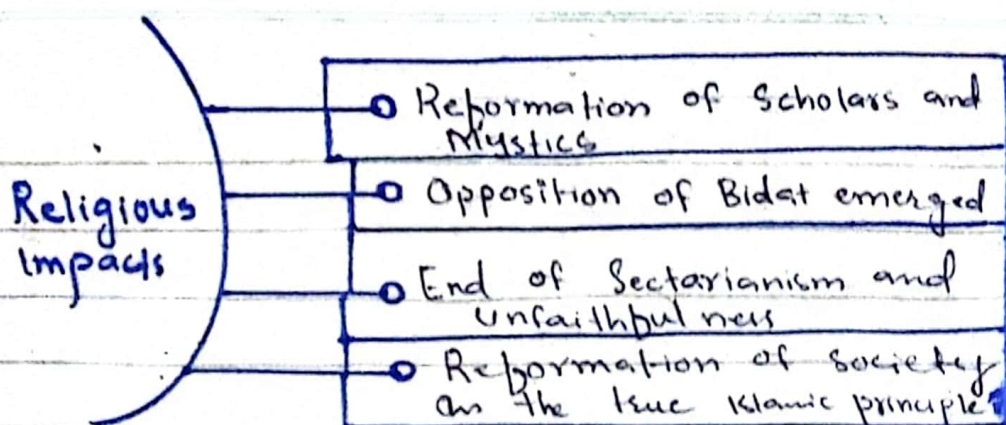


into Hanafi, Shia, Sunni, Barelvi etc. sects and were too rigid in their views. He tried to unite them by bridging the gap between mystics and religious scholars, emphasizing their differences. He also forbade <sup>asizing</sup> the people to avoid blind taqlid (following people) rather than consulting Quran and Sunnah. In his outstanding book Hujjatullah - al-Baligha, he told people how to live their lives according to the codes of Quran. In addition to it, he arranged the Hadith to prescribe to make it very easy for Muslims to seek guidance. Above all, he again opened the doors for ijtihad. Thus, he stands atop to revitalize eighteenth century India's Islamic teachings through its moderate thinking.

## Impacts of the efforts

### Political impacts

Start of Muslim Nationalism	— Weakening the power surge of Rajputs and Marathas
Propagation of government as a necessity	— Laying of foundation of political movements on the ideology of two nation theory



## Critical Analysis:

Undoubtedly, Hazrat Shah Waliullah lay the foundation of modern Islam in the sub continent. During his time Islamic society was on the verge of destruction after the death of Aurangzeb, the last powerful Mughal emperor. However he revived Islamic values in the subcontinent through his foresightedness in religious and worldly affairs. Furthermore, his practical work on Islamic values won him the honour of rejuvenator of Islam. Nonetheless, his work for social, political and economic uplift for the people and the empire is still written in golden words.

## Conclusions

Conclusively, Shah Waliullah played



a pivotal role in recapturing Islam in the Indian subcontinent in eighteenth century. He emphasized adopting the Islamic values in life and translated the Holy Quran and Hadiths to set practical examples to adopt morals easily. He rejuvenated the Islamic values by eliminating differences among different sects and differentiating the works and duties of Ulama and Sufis to define their working boundaries clearly. However, his political services of stopping Marathas, Sikhs, Hindus and Christians also proved fruitful. Nevertheless, he wrote fifty one books to carry the legacy for future generations. Hence, his principles of theology are followed in both Persia and India.

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