

Pre-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 "essence of Sufism" and motivated Ulema to work according to the principles of Islam.

Life sketch of Shah Waliullah:

Qutbuddin Ibn e Abul 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 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-Fawazil 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 ^{religious} 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 Madrasah 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 annihilation and identity loss. The attack of Nadar Shah in 1739 depicted the weak conditions of the empire. The threat of

Discuss this part in detail by giving subheadings

Marathas who were growing power by invading Punjab needed to be encountered. Critically evaluating the circumstances he wrote the letter to Ahmed Shah Abdali, an Afghan ruler, asking him to help 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 lead 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 asking 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 apart to revitalize eighteenth century India's Islamic teachings through its moderate thinking.

Impacts of the efforts

Political impacts

Start of Muslim Nationalism	Wakening of the power of British and Marathas
Propagation of government as a necessity	Laying of foundation of political movements on the ideology of two nation theory

Religious Impacts

- Reformation of Scholars and Mystics
- Opposition of Bidat emerged
- End of Sectarianism and Unfaithfulness
- Reformation of society on the true Islamic principle

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 Muslim 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 being a servant 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

Improve the structure of the answer

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 Mughals, 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 Pakistan and India.