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Q#2: Critically analyze the role of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi in the religious reform movements of the subcontinent and assess his impact on socio-political landscape of Mughal India.

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi, real name Abul Barkat Badr-ud Din Ahmad, born on June 26, 1564, in Sirhind in East Punjab. His father name was Sheikh Abdul Ahad upto Hazrat Umar (Nagshbandi). He learnt his Quran from his father. Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi was a prominent Sufi scholar and theologian whose influence on the religious and socio-political landscape of Mughal India is often viewed as a reformer and critic of the religious policies at that time introduced by the Mughal emperor at that time. His efforts to revive the Islam and encounter what he saw as the dilution of Islamic principles



particularly during the reign of Akbar, were a significant part of the broader Islamic revivalism in the subcontinent.

## Religious Reform Movements

### i) opposition to Akbar's Deen-e-Ilahi

Akbar, the Mughal emperor, promoted the religious pluralism and tolerance with his concept of Deen-e-Ilahi. Deen-e-Ilahi was an attempt to reduce the religious gaps between Muslims and other religions.

However Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi strongly opposed this idea and said that "considering Ram and Rehman as one is illogical as the creator can not be the same as the creation."

He viewed the concept of Deen-e-Ilahi as a distortion of Islam. He criticised the efforts of Akbar to diminish the influence of orthodox Islam in his empire and saw his system as an affront to Shariah.



His ~~st~~ insistence on the primacy of the shariah positioned him as a staunch defender of Islamic laws and values.

### (ii) Mujaddid-i-Alf Sani:

Sikhindi was given the title of Mujaddid Alf Sani (the Reviver of the second Millennium), signifying his role in purifying Islam and countering the perceived threats from un-Islamic practices. He stressed the need for a return to pure, unadulterated Islamic principles, and practices. His reforms were grounded in the beliefs that the Muslim community needed revival and purification, emphasizing strict adherence to ~~sunni~~ sunni Islam particularly, Hanafi jurisprudence.

### (ii) Sufism and Sharia:

While Sikhindi was a Sufi associated with Naqshbandi order, he advocated a reform within Sufism ~~of~~ itself. He opposed what he saw as deviations within the Sufi tradition, such as excessive mysticism that conflicted with orthodox Islamic tenets.

Key. Unlike other Sufi orders that



emphasized the "unity of being" i.e. "Wahdat-ul-Wajood", he promoted the concept of the "unity of appearance" i.e. "Wahdat-ul-Shahad", which he recognized a distinction between God and creation. This placed him at odds with popular Sufi interpretations and brought a more orthodox and Shariah-centered focus to Sufism.

### Socio-political influence:

#### (i) Countering Akbar's policy of Sulh-e-Kul:

Akbar's policy of Sulh-e-Kul (absolute peace) sought to establish religious harmony by treating all faiths equally, which Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi vehemently opposed. He believed that Islam's superiority should be maintained, particularly in a Muslim-ruled state like the Mughal Empire.

His writings and letters addressed to various nobles and political



elites argued for the preservation of Islamic identity in governance and opposed Akbar's policies of inclusion.

## (ii) Influence on Mughal successors:

Although Akbar's policies remained influential in his reign, Sirhindi's ideas began to gain prominence during the reign of Akbar's successors. His influence became more pronounced ~~and~~ under Emperor Jahangir and later Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. While Jahangir initially imprisoned Sirhindī Sirhindi for his controversial ideas, he was later released and his thoughts began shaping court policies.

Aurangzeb reflected many of Sirhindi's ideals, adopting stricter Islamic policies that contrasted with Akbar's syncretism.

## (iii) Strengthening Muslim identity

Sirhindi's emphasis on the distinctiveness of Muslim identity and the centrality of Islamic law resonated with segments of the



Mughal nobility and ulama. His ideas contributed to shaping a more Islamic-centric Mughal State in later years, with an increasing distinction between the roles of Muslims and non-Muslims.

## ⇒ Impact:

### 1- Formation of Islamic Revivalist Movements.

Sheikh Ahmed Raza Khan's teachings laid the groundwork for later Islamic revivalist movements in the Indian subcontinent. His stress on primacy of Islam in political and social life influenced future generations of Muslim scholars and reformers such as Shah Waliullah in 18th century.

### Conclusion:

Sheikh Ahmad Raza Khan's role in the religious & reform movements of the subcontinent was pivotal in shaping the trajectory of



Islam in Mughal India. His challenge to Akbar's religious pluralism and emphasis on the revival of Islamic orthodoxy had significant consequences. His legacy while seen as a revival of Islamic purity by many, also set in motion trends that complicated the social and political dynamics of India's pluralistic society.

Q No 5: Evaluate the role of Shah Waliullah - ?

Shah Waliullah, also known as Qutub-Din Ahmed, was born on February 21, 1703 in Delhi, India. He belonged to a religious family and received education from his father, Shah Abdul Rahim, at Madrasah-e-Rahimiya. After completing his education, he went to Saudi Arabia to perform pilgrimage and pursued further studies in Saudi Arabia. During this time he decided to promote the Islamic values and present Islam in more rational manner.



among Muslims. His contributions to Islamic thought, reform, and political activism were instrumental in shaping the socio-religious and political landscape of the Muslims community during a ~~pre~~ period of decline in Mughal Empire. His efforts to save Muslims from political ~~and~~ annihilation and religious degeneration had lasting impacts on Islamic revivalist movements in Indian subcontinent.

### Context of 18th century India:

By the 18th century, the Mughal empire was in steep decline with internal corruption, weak leadership and external invasions like rise of Marathas and Nadir Shah's invasion contributing to its ~~&~~ disintegration. The muslim community which had long been politically dominant, found itself losing power and influence, simultaneously Islamic practice had become diluted ~~and~~ with widespread deviation from orthodox Islam and rise of syncretic practices.



Shah Waliullah ~~and~~ entered this context as both religious scholar and reformer, focusing on the revitalization of Islam and addressing the political fragmentation of the Muslim community.

**Preventing political annihilation:**

(i) **Call for political Unity:**

Shah Waliullah recognized that the fragmentation of Muslim power in India was a serious threat to the survival of the community.

He advocated for the consolidation of Muslim political forces to counter the growing influence of non-Muslim powers, particularly the Marathas, who were emerging as a dominant force in northern India. Shah Waliullah's letters and appeals to Muslim rulers and nobles ~~argued~~ ~~argued~~ forced them to set aside their differences and unite in the defense of Islam and the Muslim community.



## 2- Alliance with Ahmed Shah Abdali

One of the Shah Waliullah's most significant political actions was his appeal to Ahmed Shah Abdali, the Afghan Ruler, to intervene militarily in India to check the rising power of Marathas. Shah Waliullah saw the Marathas as a direct threat to Muslim rule in Northern India and he believed that only external military intervention could save the Muslim community from annihilation. Abdali's victory over the Marathas in Third Battle of Panipat (1761) temporarily halted the Maratha and safeguarded the political position of Muslims in northern India.

## 3- Reform of Mughal Nobility:

Shah Waliullah also sought to reform the corrupt and weakened Mughal nobility. He emphasized the importance of just government in accordance with Islamic principles and criticised the lavish lifestyle



and moral decadence of the Mughal elite. His writings urged the Mughal rulers to return to the ethical and moral principles of Islam in their administration, to ensure the survival of Muslim rule. His calls laid the intellectual groundwork for later Islamic political movements.

## ⇒ Religious Reforms: Countering Degeneration

### (i) Reviving orthodox Islam:

Shah Waliullah's foremost concern was the degeneration of Islamic practices in India. He believed that Muslims had strayed from the core tenets of Islam due to ignorance and corruption. Through his prolific writings, particularly his translation of the Quran into Persian, he sought to bridge the gap between the common people and Islamic teachings. This initiative was revolutionary, as the Quran had traditionally been studied in Arabic, limiting its understanding to the educated elite.



## (ii) Opposition to Sectarianism:

Shah Waliullah worked to overcome the divisions within the Muslim community, particularly the rifts between different schools of thoughts i.e. Hanafi, Shafi and between Sufism and orthodox Islam. He called for the unity among Muslims and sought to harmonize the interpretations of Islamic law to ~~pre~~ prevent sectarian conflict. His efforts were aimed at creating a cohesive Muslim identity that could withstand external threats and internal discord.

## (iii) Rejection of superstitions and innovations.

Shah Waliullah strongly opposed bid'ah, heresy, (the religious innovations) and ~~superstition~~ superstitious practices that had become common among Indian Muslims. He viewed these as corruptions of true Islamic faith and aimed to return Muslims to the authentic teachings



of the Quran and Hadith. This was particularly significant because many practices that had developed during Mughal rule blended Hindu and Islamic elements, which he sought to eliminate.

### Conclusion

Shah Waliullah played a crucial role in 18th century India by working to save Muslims from both political annihilation and religious degeneration. His religious reforms sought to purify and revitalize Islamic practice, while his political activism aimed at preserving Muslim power during a time of intense political instability. His intellectual legacy endured long after his death & influencing the ~~the~~ religious and political movements that shaped the future of Muslims in South Asia.



QNO3: Between 1937-1947, congress policies were such as to make Pakistan inevitable". Discuss.

The period between 1937 and 1947 was crucial in shaping the eventual creation of Pakistan. The policies and actions of the Indian National Congress (INC) during these years, particularly, its approach toward Muslims and Muslim League, played a significant role in making the demand for Pakistan appear inevitable to many within the Muslim community. While the congress aspired for the united India, its decisions and failures in addressing Muslim concerns contributed to the growing alienation of Muslims, ultimately leading to the Partition of India.



## ⇒ Key Congress Policies and Actions.

### (i) 1937 provincial elections and congress ministries:

The elections 1937, held under the Government of India Act of 1935 marked a significant ~~moment~~ moment in Indian politics. The Congress emerged as the dominant party, winning majorities in several provinces while the All India Muslim League performed poorly, particularly in Muslim majority provinces.

Following these elections, the Congress formed ministries in several provinces but its policies and governance alienated Muslims. Congress ministries in provinces like UP and Bihar were accused of marginalising of Muslims.



## Growth of AIML ~~and~~

The period from 1937 to 1940 saw Muslim League's Membership and ~~so~~ influence grow significantly. Jinnah began advocating for Muslims that they are a ~~sepat~~ separate nation. At Lucknow session 1937, Jinnah spoke out that "Hindustan is ~~not~~ for Hindus".

## Day of Deliverance.

In September 1939, the war between Britain and Germany broke out i.e. world war II. The viceroy of announced that India is also at war. The Congress refused and said that India would not participate unless the British government provide the congress the complete self government in India. After some failed negotiations between British and congress, ~~on~~ from September to November 1939, congress resigned from its ministries. Quaid-e-Azam declared December 22, 1939 as "The Day of Deliverance" from congress rule.



## Lahore Resolution:

At the annual session of AIMLs in Lahore in March 23, 1940, the famous Lahore Resolution, was passed by Muslim League. It formally articulated the demand for the separate homeland for Muslims. Quaid-e-Azam said, Muslims and Hindus belonged to two different religious philosophies, social customs, literatures and civilizations based on conflicting ideas and conceptions. This resolution called for a separate state. The Congress underestimated the significance of this resolution. However for Muslim League, it became a rallying point as it got widespread support among Muslims, who feared political domination by Hindu-majority Congress.

## Gipps Missions 1942:

As of the World War I, the British still wanted the cooperation of Indians in World War II. The US also required Congress and Muslim League both



To be the part of the war was  
Sir Stafford Cripps was sent  
to seek the solution to have  
the cooperation of the Indian  
leaders. He proposed that as  
soon as the war be ended,  
the new constitution will be  
constructed and new government  
would be elected. This proposal  
was rejected by both congress  
and Muslim league.

### Quit India Movement 1942.

The congress leader i.e. Gandhi,  
started a movement demanding  
the British government to  
quit the subcontinent. While  
Quaid-e-Azam demanded and used the  
slogan for "Divide and Quit" instead,  
Quaid-e-Azam knew that congress  
is forcing the British to quit  
and the whole power is transferred  
to congress leaving the league  
out of picture.



## Shimla conference 1945:

The Shimla conference of 1945 was convened to discuss the formation of interim government and a ~~new~~ new constitution. Jinnah demanded / insisted that the Muslim League ~~be~~ <sup>part</sup> be the sole representative of Muslims of India. They demanded a separate Muslim representation in future governments.

The Congress rejected this claim insisting that it represented its claim all Indians including Muslims. On 14 July 1945 the Shimla conference failed because ~~the~~ Jinnah wanted separate electorate.

## Elections 1945

Before leaving Shimla, the AIML called for fresh elections, which were held in December 1945 and January 1946. AIML won all 30 Muslim seats and 446 out of 489 Muslim seats to various provincial assemblies.



## The Cabinet Mission Plan (1946)

The British Government sent a cabinet mission to India in 1946 to propose a federal structure in India. This plan sought to ~~se~~ maintain the unity of India while giving a significant autonomy to provinces specially to Muslim Majority areas. Initially, the Muslim League and Congress both accepted the idea even with reservations. However, when the Congress rejected the grouping of provinces with Muslims, the Muslim League also ~~was~~ withdrew its support from the plan.

This rejection marked the final breakdown of negotiation between two parties further reinforcing the inevitability of partition.

## Direct Action:

The withdrawal of Muslim League surprised Congress. Muslim League declared 16 August 1946 as Direct Action Day. This day was passed



peacefully all over India but except in Calcutta there ~~was~~ were massive killings between Muslims and Hindus.

### Mountbatten Plan 1947.

By mid-1947, it became clear that India could no longer remain united. The violence and communal riots, especially after Direct Action Day demonstrated that the situation had become untenable. Lord Mountbatten, the last viceroy of India presented a plan in 1947 for the Partition of India along religious lines. The independence and the partition came about simultaneously under the 3rd June Plan.

### The Partition plan - ~~1947~~ 3rd June 1947.

On 3rd June 1947, the partition plan was announced in the House of Lords and House of Commons. The British were to transfer the power to Congress and Muslim League. On August 14, 1947, India was partitioned into two



DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

DAY: \_\_\_\_\_

Independent states, - India and Pakistan. This marked the culmination of a decadal decade of a political and communal polarization between Hindus and Muslims, making the creation of Pakistan inevitable.

### Conclusion:

Between 1937 and 1947, the Congress policies, actions, and its failure to effectively address the ~~concerns~~ concerns of the Muslim community contributed significantly to the inevitability of Pakistan.

The exclusion of Muslims from power in 1937 provincial governments, the Congress's rejection of Muslim League's political demands, the inability to prevent communal violence all convinced many Muslims that their future could only be secured in a separate state. While multiple factors led to partition, the Congress's policies during this critical decade played a pivotal role in making Pakistan seem like the only solution to Muslim political aspirations.