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Q: Describe : contribution of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi to Muslim Society of India.

INTRODUCTION :

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, also known as Mujadid Alf Sani, left a remarkable impact on the history of the then Muslims of India. Undoubtedly, he earned the title of Mujadid Alf Sani, the reformer of the second millennium, for his selfless efforts to purify Islam from Akbar's amalgamation of Deen-i-Elahi and widely prevalent philosophy of that time, Wahdat-ul-Wujud. He preached the importance of spiritual values in man's life by reviving people's interest in the Shariat. For instance, he brought a lot of reforms including the Reformation in Sufism, the concept of Wahdat-ul-Shahadah, Muslim Nationalism, Implementation of Islamic principles, and religious reformation to bring back the Muslims of India on the right track. As a result of his sustainable efforts, un-Islamic practices got eradicated from the Indian Subcontinent and the history of the Muslims received a new dimension. Thus, the mission of Mujadid to revive the teachings of Islam, was undoubtedly a great success.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

During the time of Akbar, Islam faced challenges and Muslim plight was exacerbated by the controversial policies of Akbar which some saw as compromising Islamic traditions. Nonetheless, Akbar in the beginning was a religious man, but certain events, such as marriage with Hindu ladies, the presence of Ulama and Mashaikhs - who used to call each other Kafir, completely changed his view towards Islam. Therefore, to find a middle ground between Islam and other religions, especially Hinduism, he came out with his proclamation of Divine Faith of Dīn-i-Ilāhī and Policy of Sulh-i-Kul (peace with all religions).

In fact, he abolished the Jizya tax on Non-Muslims and pilgrimage tax, and gave high ranks to Hindus in his court. He also practiced withdrawal of patronage of Islam and banned cow slaughter. According to SM Ikram, "Non-Muslims carried out aggressively the ordinances of their own religion in a Muslim state and the Muslims were powerless to carry out the ordinances of Islam; If they carried them out, they were executed."

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In short, all these events in general and the philosophy of Wahdat-ul-Wujud and Din-i-Elahi, in particular, vitiated the Islamic teachings and gave rise to aggressive Hindu religious revival. At that time, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi came and endeavoured to restore the pure doctrine of Islam.

MAJOR SERVICES OF SHEIKH AHMED SIRHINDI:

• Criticism on Din-e-Elahi:

Though many Ulama, Sufis and scholars flourished there and even enjoyed Akbar's closeness and intimacy, none of them is reported to have openly come and in his opposition. But Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi reacted against his religious experiment and ideology. He was concerned that empowerment of Hindus would weaken Muslim rule and end it eventually. Therefore, his reaction to Akbar's thoughts and activities was most powerful and he openly criticized his attitude towards Islam and Muslims. As Holy Prophet (SAW) said;

"He who invents something false which has no linkage with the religion of Islam is forbidden." (Hadith)

• Countering the Bhakti Movement:

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi, at various places in his Maktubat-e-Imam-e-Rabbani raised his voice against the increasing revivalist Hindu forces and cautioned his co-religionists (Muslims) to be alert and careful of their aims and intentions. Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi said,

"The work of these wicked persons (kafirs) is nothing to laugh at; Islam and Muslims. If they get opportunity, they make us abandon Islam or kill all of us or make us kafirs again."

• Criticism on the Fabricated concept of Wahdat-ul-Wajood:

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi propounded a strong philosophy of Wahdat-ul-Shuhud to counter the negative effects of Wahdat-ul-Wujud in India. It is through this philosophy that he was able to revive Muslim identity in India, which is why he was given the title of "Mujaddid Alf Sanii".

According to SM Iqbal, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi was the most forceful and "original thinker" in India before Shah Waliullah and Iqbal.

• Criticism on Ulama:

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi said that most of the Ulama of that time had given rise to innovations in the religion, and forgotten the way of Sunnah. The love of worldly things and desire for wealth and dignities had so badly demoralized and dispirited these Ulama that they could easily be agreed to issue any type of urdu, fatwa, to please Emperor Akbar. He looked upon the rulers as "all soul" and the people as "all body". According to him if the soul goes wrong, the body is bound to go astray. The Sheikh declared,

The King being on the right path means that the world is on the right path; his waywardness is the waywardness of the whole world."

use specific and self explanatory headings.

STRATEGY OF SHEIKH AHMAD SIRHINDI:

Sheikh Ahmad advocated reimposition of Jizya on non-Muslims and cow

slaughter. For the first time it was realized by Sheikh Ahmad that Hindus and Muslims are different people and they should not live together which laid the foundation of Two Nation Theory. It is no doubt that Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi is one of the earliest founding fathers of Two-Nation Theory and Pakistan. He further insisted that Muslims should not intermingle, intermarry and intermarry with Hindus. Moreover, he stated to expell Hindus from the court and removed them from important positions.

METHODOLOGY OF SHEIKH AHMAD SIRHINDI :

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi gave his messages through sermons, wrote letters to influential people, nobility, governors, ulema and Mashaikh. His collection of letters to Mughal rulers and other contemporaries is known as "Maktubat-e-Imam-e-Rabbani". He also wrote booklets, books and treatises. Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi made great efforts to revive Muslim identity, but paid a price for his views and actions, facing imprisonment of 2 years by Emperor Jehangir.

SUCCESS AND LEGACY OF SHEIKH AHMAD SIRHINDI:

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi could not achieve his targets during his life time but his dreams were realized when Aurangzeib became the emperor in 1659. Aurangzeib's policies and regime are considered to be influenced immensely by his ideas. Jizya and pilgrimage Tax was re-imposed. Patronage of Hindu fine arts and temples was withdrawn. Cow slaughter was allowed and new mosques were built to manifest prominence of Islam like Badshahi Mosque in Lahore.

add more arguments in this part

CRITICAL ANALYSIS:

Akbar's un-Islamic activities became the reason of Muslims plight in the subcontinent. His policy of Din-e-Elahi and philosophy of Wahdat-ul-Wujud welcomed anti-Islamic ideologies. At that hour of turmoil, Mujadid Alf Sani came in front to restore and revive the glory of Islam through his concept of Two-Nation Theory, the philosophy of Wahdat-ul-Shahud, and revival movements. Indeed, his initiation of the supremacy of Islam

was so rational and true that later it was continued by his sons and other emperors like Jahangir, Shah Jahan, etc.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi restored Shariah and lost glory of Islam. He purified the socio-political-religious sphere of the communities of India in the time of Akbar. He himself bore all difficulties during the reign of Akbar, but he never prostrated before him. He was a prominent reformer. His ideas influenced later movements, including those led by Shah Waliullah and Syed Ahmad Shaheed, which contributed to the intellectual groundwork for the Pakistan Movement.

add more arguments.

a 20 marks answer should have around 15 arguments and be on 7-9 pages.

Q: What is the geo-political importance of Pakistan? (20-marks)

attempt and upload a single qs at a time for evaluation.

INTRODUCTION:

Pakistan, located at the crossroads of South Asia, plays a significant geostrategic and geopolitical importance in the region. The geostrategic location of Pakistan enhances its worth in every corner of the world. One of the key features contributing to its geostrategic importance is the country's territorial border with the world's two economic giants, the Central Asian Republics (CARs) and the Middle East. Moreover, CPEC, a flagship project of BRI, has brought a billion dollars of investment into the country. The project has developed the rail and road infrastructure, special economic zones, energy projects, and Gwadar port. Additionally, Pakistan's geographical position has made it an important player in regional security dynamics. It shares a complex relationship with neighbouring India, characterized by the historical disputes, including the long-standing Kashmir conflict. Similarly, border tensions regarding Afghanistan have also been a menace to the

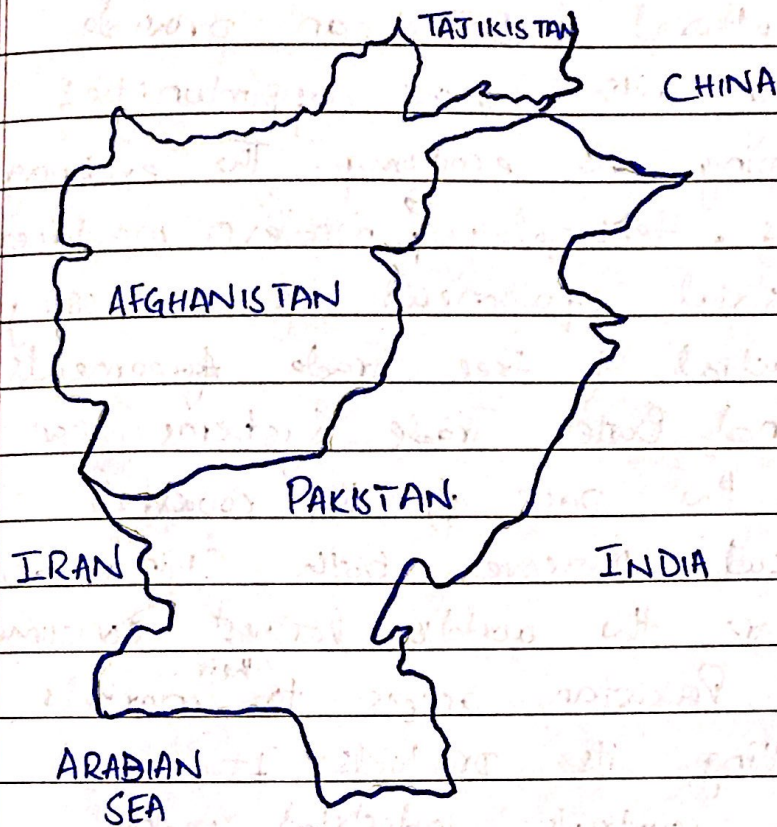
national integration of the country. Hence, these conflicts and tensions have made Pakistan a focal point of regional security concerns. According to American political scientist Stephen Cohen: "while history has been unkind to Pakistan, its geography has been its greatest benefit."

A GLIMPSE OF GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF PAKISTAN:

Pakistan, being located at the crossroads of South Asia, is a key player in regional and international affairs. It has a territorial border with China, Iran, Afghanistan and India. China is located in the northeast, India in the East, Afghanistan ^{in the west} and Iran in the south-west, and the Arabia Sea in the south.

Furthermore, it is connected with Central Asian Republics (CARs) via the Wakhan corridor and provides these landlocked countries with access to the sea routes.

Besides that, it is located in proximity to the Persian Gulf and also has a shared sea border with Oman. Therefore, the country's location on the intersecting point of central Asia, South West Asia, and the countries of South Asia makes it important for the region and the world.



GEOPOLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF PAKISTAN

Pakistan occupies a key geostrategic and political location in the South Asian region and remains an important country for the world.

• Border with the two Economic Giants:

Pakistan's proximity to prosperous neighbors like India and China provides opportunities for Pakistan's own economic growth and development. China - the second largest economy, and India - the fifth largest economy, because of their

advancements in industrial, technological and agricultural sectors can provide the country with various opportunities for developing its economy. The exchange of goods, technology, modern machinery, and industrial equipment by harnessing the potential of Free Trade Agreements (FTA) and Better Trade Systems can increase the pace of the country's development. Moreover, both China and India are the world's largest consumers providing Pakistan access to ^{their} markets for selling its products. It would help the country's industrial sector flourish and ultimately lead the country towards a sustainable economy.

- Connects Central Asian Republics with the Indian Ocean:

The CARs are landlocked but rich in energy resources. Pakistan can provide them the shortest path through which they can export their energy resources to the world. These countries are connected with Pakistan via Wakhian corridor. By providing transit corridors to CARs, Pakistan can easily overcome the challenges of energy security and economy. Due to its geo-strategic position, it has become a part of

the Turkmenistan - Afghanistan - Pakistan - India (TAPI) pipeline project. The project was expected to be completed in 2020, but because of various hurdles, it has not yet been completed.

• Influence in Afghanistan:

Pakistan shares a porous border with Afghanistan, and developments in Afghanistan have direct implications for Pakistan's security and stability. Pakistan's support or influence over various Afghan factions has been a significant factor in the Afghan conflict and peace processes, influencing regional dynamics. In this scenario, Pak-US relations have also remained a matter of concern as Pakistan has been a mediator and peace seeker during the whole Afghan peace deal. Afghanistan in the current scenario has become a boiling point where peace is a necessity not only for Pak-Afghan relations but also for Pak-US relations and to maintain regional stability especially when the Hindu supremacy is uprising in the neighbouring borders of Pakistan vehemently. Meanwhile, the violence against human rights under the Taliban-led Afghanistan has raised further challenges which pose a threat to the region.

• Access to the Arabian Sea:

Pakistan has a long coastline along the Arabian Sea, offering it access to vital sea routes. The deep-water port of Gwadar, developed in partnership with China, holds strategic importance for regional trade and energy transportation, particularly as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) initiative.

• Proximity with the Middle East:

Pakistan is located in proximity to the Strait of Hormuz, which is considered the crucial choke point of the oil trade. It is the world's most important oil artery. According to the Vortex report, around 20.5 million barrels per day (bpd) crude oil, condensate and oil products passed through Strait of Hormuz in January-September 2023. Almost a fifth of the world's total consumption of oil passes through this route per day. Due to the significance of the Strait of Hormuz, Pakistan is an important factor that can help streamline the world oil trade. Moreover, Pakistan is also dependent on

the Middle East to fulfill its oil needs, so being present in its proximity helps the country to meet its needs easily.

• CPEC a Game Changer:

CPEC, a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), has added greater value to the strategic position of the country. CPEC, a 63 bn dollars project, was started in 2015 and is expected to be completed in 2030. The project has developed the country's rail and road infrastructure, established Special Economic Zones (SEZs), constructed Energy Power Plants, and developed Gwadar Port. China has invested in the country because it provides the shortest and safest route for its transportation of oil and Trade with Western Countries. Thus, the completion of the project would become a game changer for Pakistan and help it significantly in driving towards a sustainable economy.

CONCLUSION:

In a nutshell, Pakistan, being located at the crossroads of South Asia, has great geostrategic importance. Its proximity with Central Asia, West Asia, and the world's two largest economies gives it a key standing in the region and the world. Nevertheless, the strategic location of the country has significantly affected its social and political institutions and inflicted various benefits and losses on them. Its location has given it a centric role in the regional and international political arena. On the other hand, geostrategic location has become a challenge for countries in developing balanced relations with foreign countries.