

Shah Waliullah (1703-1762)

Shah Waliullah was born on February 21, 1703 near Delhi in India. He was also known as Quth al-Din Ahmed.

Historical Background

Introduction:-

The start of 18th Century can be attributed to decline of Muslim rule in the Indian Subcontinent.

The Then Situation:-

After the death of Aurangzeb Alamgir, the Mughal Empire was a mere husk. There

- There was a series of incompetent rulers.
- Marhattas were gaining power.
- Sikhs were uprising.
- British East India Company also strengthened its foothold.
- There were traitors among Muslims.

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- Strong governors separated their areas from the Empire.

Background:-

- The Un-Islamic trends and practices were flourishing.
- Ignorance of Islam, Quran and Hadith.
- Tussle between Shia and Suni Sects.
- Mughal Empire after the death of Aurangzeb was in the hand of incapable successors.

Introduction:-

Shah Waliullah emerged in chaotic time to bring peace and stability in Muslim society of India.

Services Of Shah Waliullah:-

Social Contributions:-

Socially he made exceptional contributions; through his reforms, he aligned society towards success. He eradicated sectarianism from society and struggled against the prevalent innovations (Bidaat) in Islam.

He wrote many books such as

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Izalat al khafa, to end these groups misunderstandings. Due to Hindus, the concept of dowry was on the rise. He made them realize that these practices are not allowed in Islam. Inter-religious marriages between Hindus and Muslims were increasingly becoming a norm. Shah Wali-Ullah declared a ban on inter-religious marriage practice. He completely opposed the accumulation of wealth. He believed that the Islamic system of Zakat was the best remedy for this evil and encouraged Muslims to practice it.

Political Contributions:-

Politically, his foresight and wisdom created a political enlivening of Muslims, and despite being an Islamic Scholar, he emerged as political leader of Muslims. He worked tirelessly for the protection of Muslim rule. He foresighted that if Sikhs and Mughals are not tackled properly, they will ruin the identity of Muslims. He ~~was~~ wrote letter to heads of different states and at his request, Ahmad Shah Abdali came from Afghanistan and crushed rising power of Mughals at

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The 3rd battle of Panipat in 1761. Shah Waliullah voiced against the hereditary kingship and he believed that the decision making of the government should be based on merit. Those people should be promoted who deserve to be rather than product of nepotism. He played a pivotal role in making Muslims learn about their authentic culture and heritage. He proposed that a system should be created in which all the matters should be carried out according to the teachings of Islam. He created separate national identity among Muslims and rejected combine unity. The religio-political ideology of Waliullah made a permanent crack in Hindu-Muslim relation.

Religious Contributions:-

Religiously, being an Islamic scholar, Shah Waliullah always worked for the consolidation of Islam. He believed that Muslims should not only lead the Quran but also understand it, and he always opposed the concept of blind following and promoted logical understanding of concepts.

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He set himself task of spiritual awakening of muslim society. He promoted the concept of Jihad and demanded that soldiers should be taught of real jihad and they should practise it in wars.

He strongly supported the need of Ijtihad and believed that the solution of the newly confronted problems lies in practice of Ijtihad. He also worked to create a balance between different sects. He wrote "Al-Insaf fi Bayan Ashab al-Ikhtlaf", highlighting the common points among sects. He refused to call out Shias as non-believers. He introduced the people again to main sources of Islamic doctrine and law.

In order to make it understandable to all, he translated the Quran into Persian.

He established a school for study of Hadith. He selected Imam Malik's 'AL-MUWATTA' as the most authentic of all the collections of Hadith and took step to popularize its study.

Literary Contributions:-

Literarily, he did wonders

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with the help of his writings. One of his remarkable contributions is translating the Holy Quran into Persian. He wrote a book called 'Hujjat Allah al Baligha', in which he mentioned the factors responsible for downfall of Muslims. He wrote 'Fuyuz Al Halmain', in this book, he described his dream in which he was told about his charge.

He published another book named 'Khilafat al Khulafa'. The main idea behind this book was to end misunderstanding between Shia and Sunnis. The literature published by Shah Waliullah proved to be a turning point for Muslims.

Economic Contributions:-

Shah Waliullah pointed out that economics played a vital role in the social life of human being. He raised voice for economic equilibrium, removal of inequalities and equal distribution of wealth. He was against heavy taxes and accumulation of wealth. He asked traders to adopt fair principles of trade.

In his book "Hujjat-Ullah-al-Balighah", he pinpointed the causes of pressure on public treasury. He pinpointed the heavy taxation on peasants, merchants and workers. According to him, a state can prosper only if there were light and reasonable taxes.

Critical Analysis And Conclusion

Critical Analysis:-

In a pragmatic diagnosis, he made unforgettable efforts to protect Muslims' survival. His guidance saved them from brunt of Mughals. His idea of understanding of Quran gave a new life to belief of Muslims.

Conclusion:-

In a nutshell, Shah Waliullah is among those personalities whose services protected the identity of Muslims. He made Muslims realize their separate existence and saved them from their ideological death by avoiding their amalgamation in Hindu Society.