

(1) DATE: 10-12-2025

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PAKISTAN AFFAIRS

Mock - 01

Part II

QUESTION: 03

It was Shiekh Ahmad Sarhindi and Shah Wali Ullah Explain.

ANSWER:

INTRODUCTION:

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah are regarded as two of the most important Muslim reformers of the Mughal era. Both worked to revive true Islamic teachings and protect the separate identity of Muslims at a time when community was facing religious and political challenges. Their efforts later laid the intellectual base for Muslim Nationalism.

Background:

During the Mughal period, especially from Akbar to the later declining emperors, Muslim experienced religious confusion, moral decline and weakening political authority. Akbar's policy encouraged mixing of Islam with other religions, while later Mughal rulers struggled to maintain unity and power. In this situation the Muslim

Community needed strong guidance to preserve their faith and identity. It was in this difficult time that Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah emerged as major reformers.

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi :

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564-1624) is known as "Mujaddid Alf Sani" (Reviver of the Second Millennium). He emerged at a time when Islam was losing its influence in the Subcontinent due to political and cultural policies under emperor Akbar.

- Akbar introduced a new religion **Deen-e-Elahi** which blended different religions with Islam (Specially Hinduism). He promoted cultural and administrative policies that empowered Hindus while weakening Muslims.
- **High positions in government** were given to Hindus, including finance, governance and administration.
- **Hindu wives** of Mughal rulers freely practiced their religion, built temples, and celebrated their festivals.
- **Intermarriages** with non-Muslims became common.
- **Abolition of Jizya** (tax on non-Muslims) weakened the distinct Muslim social

identity.

- Muslims were prohibited from carrying out ordinances such as **Cow Slaughter**.
 - Withdrawal of **patronage for Islamic institutions** and encouragement of Hindu culture in art, architecture and administration.
 - **Aggressive revival of Hindu religion**, demolishing mosques and building temples.
- overall Islamic principles were weakened and Hindus were empowered.

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi's Strategy to protect Islam

- Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi strongly supported and recommended that **Jizya** tax be brought back to protect Muslim identity.
- The **Cow Slaughter** should be allowed.
- He advised that Hindu and Muslims are **Separate Communities** and they must not be intermingled socially or culturally.
- He recommended that Muslim rulers should **distance themselves from Hindu influence** in courts and administration.
- Hindus in position of **power** be expelled from sensitive government posts to protect Muslim interests.

Methodology adopted by Sheikh-Ahmad Sirhindi:

- He delivered **Sermons** to educate and guide the Muslim Community.
- Wrote **Letters** to Mughal nobles, governors and Ulema to influence policies at the Court.
- He also wrote **Books and treatises** to strengthen Islamic thought, such as **Makubat** and other theological works.

Theological Contributions:

Wahdatul-Shuhud and Wahdat-ul-Wajood

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi clarifies the concept of Wahdatul-Shuhud and Wahdat-ul-Wajood.

Wahdatul-Wajood, promoted by some Sufi thinkers, suggesting that God and Creation are essentially the same.

Sirhindi argues that this blurs the distinction between the Creator and Creation, which could lead to misunderstandings in Islamic belief. In contrast, his

concept Wahdatul-Shuhud emphasized that Allah is separate, transcendent and above his creation, while humans witness his presence in the world without confusing him with it.

Personal Sacrifice

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi faced two year imprisonment for opposing imperial policies by Jehangir.

Success and legacy:

Sirhindi did not achieve immediate success during Akbar and Jehangir's reign. However, 35 years later under Emperor Aurangzeb, many of his recommendations were implemented.

- Jizya re imposed on non Muslims
- Patronage for Hindu fine arts and temples withdrawn
- Cows slaughter permitted according to Islamic law.
- Construction of new mosques, such as Badshahi Mosque, symbolized the revival of Islamic power.

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi's work strengthened Muslims identity and consciousness, preparing the community to think as a separate religious and political group, which laid the intellectual foundation of Muslim nationalism.

Shah Waliullah:

Shah waliullah (1703-1762) was one of the greatest Islamic reformers of the 18th century in the Indian Subcontinent.

When he was born Muslim rule was on its peak and when he died Muslim rule was declining. He witnessed how moral corruption, political decline and sectarian divisions weakened the Muslim community. His work focused on reviving Islamic teachings,

uniting Muslims and providing a practical framework for an Islamic society, including religion, politics and economy. His reforms complemented the earlier work of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi and further strengthened Muslim identity and consciousness, laying the foundation for Muslim nationalism.

Challenges during Shah waliullah time:

By the end of the 18th century, the Mughal empire was in decline. Central authority had weakened, and the empire faced internal divisions, corruption, and external threats such as the rising power of the Marathas.

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Muslims were politically and socially marginalized and sectarian differences between Sunnis and Shias created further disunity.

Shah Waliullah's Reforms and Strategy:

Shah Waliullah focused on religious, social and political reforms to restore the Muslim Community.

- one of his most important initiatives was the **translation of Quran** into Persian, the lingua franca of the Subcontinent at the time. This made teaching of Islam accessible to ordinary people, who could not understand the divine guidance directly without relying solely on scholars.
- He also emphasized the importance of **ijtihad** (independent reasoning), encouraging Muslims to apply Islamic principles to new social, political, and economic problems.
- His work reduces **sectarian differences** between Sunnis and Shias, promoting unity among Muslims.
- He wrote influential **books and treatises** including Hujjatullah al-Baligha which provided a comprehensive

framework for Islamic law, social justice and governance.

Politically, Shah Waliullah recognized that protecting **Muslim interests** required political awareness and action. He corresponded with regional rulers, including Ahmad Shah Abdali, urging intervention against threats such as Marathas, to safeguard Muslim territories and power.

Legacy and Contribution to Muslim Nationalism:

Shah Waliullah's work had a lasting impact on the Muslim community.

By uniting Muslims, spreading Islamic knowledge and advocating political and social reforms, he strengthened Muslim consciousness, pride and identity. His efforts helped Muslims see themselves as a distinct and self-aware community capable of social, political and religious organizations. These ideas formed a crucial part of the intellectual foundation of Muslim nationalism, reinforcing the sense that Muslims in the subcontinent were a separate community with their



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own identity and destiny

Conclusion:

Both Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah played a crucial role in reviving Islam in the Sub-Continent. Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi defended religious purity, clarified theological concepts and strengthened muslim identity. While Shah waliullah united muslims, made Islamic teachings accessible and provided a practical framework for society, politics and economy.

Together their reforms strengthened muslim consciousness, identity, and unity laying the early foundations of muslim nationalism in the region.
