

Q1:-

Critically Analyze the Role of Religious reformers in the Socio-political Awakening of Indian Muslims in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. How did their efforts contribute to the formation of Muslim identity in the Subcontinent?

### 1) Introduction:

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, there emerged muslim reformers who saved the muslims of the subcontinent, who had long forgotten the true principles of Islam and fell prey to fallacious religious principles.

Three main muslim reformers contributed in the spiritual, cultural and political awakening of muslims.

### 2) Historical Background:

In the reign of Mughals emperors, the true spirit of Islam was losted. Sheikh Ahmad Sirhind, Shah Waliullah and Syed Ahmad Shaheed are the true reformers of Islam in the subcontinent. Mughal emperor Akbar had institutionalised the pluralism and syncretism principles in the roots of the Islam, which were a great threat to the muslim faith. Akbar had introduced

**Deen-e-Ilahi**, which was based on his wrong interpretation of Islam. His ideology of **Sulh-e-Kul** regarded him as the interpreter of Islam which threatened the credibility of ulema and endangered their existence and their fatwas based on their vast knowledge.

Akbar claimed himself as **Imam-e-Adil (Just Imam)** further deteriorated the interpretation of Islamic Fiqah. His anti-Shariah policies based on the mutual co-existence of diversified religious policies of different religions.

### 3) Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi as a reformer. (1564-1624)

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, widely known as, **Mujaddid Alf Sani**, the river of the Second Millenia, was the staunch supporter of Islamic theology. He was a philosopher, thinker and Sufi reformer.

**M. Ikram** declared him as the most original and forceful Sufi philosopher and reviver of Islam which laid the foundation of **Islamic Orthodoxy** in the Second Millenia.

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi strongly criticised the **heterodox** principles of Akbar and presented the Islamic orthodoxy and theology by writing letters to ulema, philosophers, Sufis and nobles. Despite 2 years imprisonment by Akbar, he continued his strive for reviving Islam.

### (a) Eradication of Innovation (Biddah)

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi wrote several treatises for preaching true Sharia of Islam. His famous book in this regard is **Maktubat**, where he emphasized the true spiritual values and stride for elimination of Bidahs.

### (b) Reversion of Reconciliation of Islam with other religions:

His negotiations with Akbar and outspoken arguments led him to incarceration. But his efforts for reversal of reconciliation of Islam with other religions marked a solid foundation of Islamic theology. He asserted on forbidding intermingling of Muslims with Hindus, **intermarry** and intercast relations.

### (c) Promotion of Islamic Shariah and Sunnah:

By writing letters to nobles, scholars and elites, he emphasized on the actual implementation of Islamic Shariah. He strived for imposing Taxation (Jizya) and pilgrim Taxation, allowed slaughtering cow and forbid Muslims to do Hindu practices.

### (d) Elimination of the Concept of Religious Incarnation:

Shiekh Ahmad Sirhindi also targeted metaphysical beliefs, Wahdat-ul-Wajood, everything is the manifestation of God and in counter established the doctrine of Wahda-tul-Shahood, emphasizing monotheism (oneness of God) and preserved the transcendence of God.

### (4) Shah Waliullah (1703-1762):

Shah Waliullah was the true reviver of pristine values of Islam. His realization about

the revival of the Renaissance of Islam is based on the re-educating and re-orienting muslims was the foundation of his Islamic doctrine.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century when muslim power was deteriorating and Marhattas and Sikhs were uplifted, his efforts were true landmark revival of Islam.

Mughal decline was accompanied by loss of political power of muslims, social influence was declining and sectarian conflict (Shia-Sunni).

He studied all school of thoughts of Islam and advocated **Ijtihad**.

He repudiated the concept of imitation (Blind taqleed)

He criticized social evils, corruption, economic exploitation of marginalized class and strongly opposed the idea of accumulation of wealth.

(a) **Literary & Scholarly Contributions:**

He translated Quran in Persian, later his son followed his legacy; Shah Abdul Aziz; translated Quran in Urdu. He authored 51 Books. **Hujjatullah al-Baligha** and **Izalat al-Khalifa** are his major contributions.

## (b) Bridged the Secetarian Fissure:

He played a key role in bridging Secetarian conflicts. He wrote letter to peasants, Workers, artisans, Soldiers, and muslim masses to bring them under one umbrella of Islam.

## (c) Political role:

He wrote letter to Ahmad Shah Durrani urging him to fight against Marhattas and Sikh, in this way he temporarily halted Non-Muslims expansion and save the muslim territory. This served a strong reason of rescuing the true spirit of Islam in the Subcontinent.

## (d) Legacy

His efforts in intellectual, religious and educational served the Renaissance of Islam. He later inspired the Scholars and political leaders. His reforms influenced the Islamic revival in the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century.

## (5) Syed Ahmad Shaheed (1786 - 1831)

The emperors in Delhi lost their power, they were just ceremonial head under British control, caused Regional vacuum which was most notably filled by Sikhs.

Syed Ahmad Shaheed in 18th-19th Century consolidated the foundation of Islam by merging intellectual, religious and military prowess.

### (a) Religious awakening and vision:

Syed Ahmad's contribution in the religious awakening were rooted in the belief that political independence and spiritual reform are inseparable. He sought to purify Islam from innovation and Biddah. He united Muslims under the banner of **Tawhid** and made governance on the base of Islamic structure.

### (b) Formation of Jihad Movement:

Syed Ahmad gained training of military and learned to use European weapons. In addition to excelling in **Quran and Sunnah**, he emphasized on Jihad. He won battle against Sikhs; the Battle of Akora

Khattak in peshawar and integrated islamic sharia, imposed taxation, revitalized and reinvigorated the Spirit of Islam. He served his later life in Jihad for preaching of Islam.

"Faith is not complete Without Action and action is not complete Without Jihad". (Syed Ahmad shaheed)

### Conclusion:

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, various philosophers, scholars and intellectuals emerged but Shiekhmad Sirhindi, Shahwallullah and Syed Ahmad shaheed played the pivotal role in the renaissance of Islam. They remind us that without true principles of Islam a community is fragile. Blind imitation of biddah leads to chaos and blur the boundary of Islam with other religions and lastly with Military power and political strength Islamic principles reinvigoration is impossible.

Q.3:-

Evolution of Muslim League from a Moderate constitutional party to the principal voice for Muslim Separatism in India.  
Key events 1906-1947 Transform their ideology and objective:-

1) **Background:** Muslim League was founded in **December 1906** at Dhaka under the leadership of Nawab Samiullah of Dhaka.

The founding came in the aftermath of the Partition of Bengal (1905), which had created a muslim majority province and raised hopes for the muslim advancement.

2) **Objectives:** As per 1906 Session :-

- To promote the loyalty to the British
- To protect the rights and interests of the muslims
- To prevent hostilities towards other communities

At this stage, the league's aim was moderate and constitutional. It aim to preserve muslim political rights and Safeguard of their representation not demand for self-rule.

### (3) The Lucknow Pact and Early Cooperation With Congress: (1916)

The reversal of Bengal's partition (1911) disappointed the Muslims.

Muslims were long demanding for separate electorates for safeguarding the Muslims' political rights.

Lucknow Pact was occurred between AIML under Jinnah and INC, they reached an agreement on joint constitutional demands.

The Congress accepted the demand for separate electorate while Muslims agreed to joint political action for self-government.

It lasted impact on AIML as a representative of Muslims within united India.

### (3) Disillusionment and Rise of Communal Consciousness (1920-1930):

The Khilafat Movement (1919-1924) temporarily united Hindu-Muslims under Gandhi's Non-cooperation movement. However its collapse leads to communal riots of the 1920s deepened Muslim

political alienation.

The detention of Maulana M. Ali and Maulana M. Shaukhat Ali (1921) as Karachi detention deepened the mistrust on British Raj and Congress.

Later, Jinnah's exit from INC in 1920 symbolized a split between Hindus and Muslims political identity. Jinnah had been a strong supporter of Hindu Muslim unity, even earning the title of "Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity", but after the National obedience movement launched by Gandhi which combined Nationalist politics with religious overtone, marked a radical departure from Jinnah's constitutional approach.

#### 4) The Nehru Report (1928):

After the British announcement that Indians should draft the constitution, the All parties conference, drafted the Nehru Report. It proposed dominion status for India and a unitary form of government also abolished the separate electorates for Muslims. The Nehru report

deepened the communal polarization and muslims saw All-India muslim league as their gauranter of rights.

### (5) Jinnah's 14 points (1929):

Nehru's report pushed Jinnah to present his 14 points at the AIML Session in Delhi. The points supported muslim's constitutional demands that would ensure political safeguard within Indian Federation. The Fourteen points became the charter of Muslim political rights. It laid the foundation for the league's later federal and eventually separatist demands.

### (6) Allahbad Address (1930)

Allahbad's address marked a historical Paradigm shift as it entirely altered the perception of muslims. Allama Iqbal demanded Muslim majority States in the N-W India.

The league asserted itself as a sole representative of Muslims in the Indian federation.

## (7) The Round table conference (1930-1932):

Round table conference reinforced the communal division as political representation became organized for the particular religious nation. AIML was representative on the behalf of Muslims political and constitutional rights.

## (8) (1937-1939) Congress Ministries:

After 1937 provincial elections, Congress was leading with majority of votes. Congress betrayed the AIML and refused to establish coalition government. In major provinces Congress framed the government.

Congress Ministries cleared the blurr vision of muslims during their Raj in provinces that congress is the sole representative of Hindus. Congress disregarded muslims, created Hindu dominance and threatened muslim's religion, civilization, cultural values by deteriorating them.

This horrendous experience convinced Jinnah and the league that Muslim political rights couldnot be safeguarded within a Hindu

majority system.

### (9) Lahore Resolution (1940):

The league formally adopted the demand for independent state and clearly stated the two Nations theory and demanded a separate homeland. AIML was the explicitly representative of Muslims.

### (10) WWII Aftermath:

The demand for Quit India Movement (1942) accelerated by Congress which was contrasted with the Britishers Narrative.

Amid this league strengthened its foot for gaining support from local masses.

### (11) 1945-1946 Elections:

1945-1946 election showed clear victory of AIML. The Cabinet Mission (1946) briefly offered a confederal solution but failed.

### (12) The Direct Action Day (1946)

1946 was the direct action day, but communal violence made it inevitable.

### 13) (13-14) Aug Culmination day:

After unjust and unfair partition by Lord Mountbatten, Pakistan deprived of its major areas having majority population of Muslims, but at the cost of losing some states. Jinnah and the League prioritize the independent Muslim state for Muslims, where they can pursue their religious practices freely. 14 August Marked the day of Creation of Pakistan.

### 14) Conclusion:

Between 1906-1947, the Muslim League evolved from moderate to the principal voice for Muslims.

ATML evolved into a mass Nationalistic Movement demanding an independent Muslim state.

The transformation was not sudden but it gradually progressed. By 1947, the Muslim League had become the principal voice of Muslim separatism.