

TOPIC: 5

Haji Shariat Ullah (1781-1840)

Biographical detail:

Haji Shariatullah was born in Faridpur *district of Bengal*, in **1781**. He was the son of an ordinary farmer. After getting his early education from his village, he went to Arabia to perform Hajj at an early age of 18 years. He stayed there from 1799 to 1818 and got his religious education. He learnt Arabic and Persian from his teacher, **Maulana Basharat**. During his stay in Arabia he came into close contact with **Wahabism** started by **Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab**. On his return to Bengal he sought to purify Islam that was impaired by the Hindu influence.

BELIEFS:

He believed that the miserable condition of the Muslims in India led to the country being Dar-ul-Harb (Country under Foreign Rule). He told that Friday prayer and Eid prayer cannot be offered here. He also believed that Muslim community had moved away from Islamic practice. He wanted them to return to what he thought was the proper observation of Islamic duties called Faraizi. This was why he started his movement was called Faraizi Movement. The Faraizi Movement supported the idea of Jihad against the non-Muslims who were undermining the true principles of Islam.

Services of HSU:

Haji Shariatullah awakened the Muslims of Bengal by initiating **the Faraizi Movement**. He started his movement among the most depressed section of the Muslim society; the farmers and the artisans. He called upon the people **to discard un-Islamic practices and customs, and to act upon the commandments of faith, the "Faraiz", or duties**. He requested them to **observe strictly the principles of faith and rules of Shariah, and to refrain from Hindu practices**. This movement was mainly religious and social in character. The growing popularity of the movement amongst the people of Bengal alarmed the Hindu landlords who stressed Haji Shariatullah. British and Hindu Landlords did not want Haji Shariat Ullah to create difficulty for them by uniting a desire to improve their lives and purify their religion so they drove Haji out of the reign to Nawabganj in Dhaka where he died in 1840

After the **death of Haji Shariatullah in 1840**, his son, **Muhammad Mohsin**, popularly known as **Dadhu Mian**, organized the movement and carried on the work of his father. He also visited Arabia at an early age but was more politically active than his father. **Dadhu Mian** popularized and strengthened the movement by organizing it in a systematic way. He acquired great influence amongst the Muslim peasants and craftsmen of Dhaka, Faridpur and Pabna districts. He **appointed Khalifahs** who kept him informed about everything in their jurisdiction. Dadhu Mian vehemently **opposed the taxes** imposed by

the landlords on Muslim peasants for the decoration of the image of *Durgah*. He asked his followers to settle in lands managed by the government. During the revolt of 1857, he was put under arrest for organizing the peasants of Faridpur districts against the British government. He went further to declare a Jihad against British government. The British arrested him & put him in prison. After his death in 1860, the *Fraizi* movement was declined.

Titu Mir:

Mir Nasir Ali, known as Titu Mir is another important figure who was moved by the sufferings of the Muslim of Bengal. After returning from Pilgrimage, Titu Mir devoted himself to the cause of his country. He made Narkelbaria, a village near Calcutta, the center of his activities. Many oppressed Muslim peasants gathered round Titu Mir in their resistance against the Hindu landlord, Krishna Deva Raj. Titu Mir was able to defeat Krishna Deva and set up government. The British aiding the Hindu landlords sent an army of 100 English Soldiers and 300 sepoy to Narkelbaria. In 1831, Titu Mir died fighting the British forces.

The death of Titu Mir did not dishearten his followers. His example rather served as a source of inspiration for them in the years to come.

EXPECTED QUESTIONS:

QUESTION NO. 1:- Who was Titu Mir?

(4) Nov. 2011 Q.1 a

QUESTION NO. 2:- Did Haji Shariat Ullah contribute more to the spread of Islam than anyone else in the sub-continent before 1850? Explain your answer.

(14) Nov. 2011 Q.2 c

QUESTION NO. 3:- Who of the following was the most important in the spread of Islam during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries:

- (i) Shah Wali Ullah;
- (ii) Syed Ahmad Shaheed Barailvi;
- (iii) Hajji Shariat Ullah?

Explain your answer with reference to all three of the above.

(14) June 2013 Q.1 c

QUESTION NO.4:

1 Read the source below carefully to answer question (a)

The authority of the Mughal emperors was declining by the end of Aurangzeb's reign in 1707. The Hindus were unhappy with aspects of his reign and after his death, began to exercise greater control over parts of the sub-continent. As a result Muslim power and influence over India, which had been so strong, began to disintegrate. Many Muslims began to feel strongly about reviving Islam, including Haji Shariat Ullah.

(a) Describe the achievements of Haji Shariat Ullah in reviving Islam

(4) Oct/Nov 2013 Q. 1 a

COMPARISONS OF RELIGIOUS THINKERS

Islam was widely spread in subcontinent by Shah Wali Ullah Syed Ahmed Shaheed Bareilvi and Haji Shariat Ullah.

Shah Wali Ullah was a religious scholar. He taught Islamic teachings in the Madrassa Rahimya. This produced a number of scholars in the sub-continent and therefore increased spread of Islam. Shah Wali Ullah also translated the Quran in Persian. Arabic was not very much understood in the sub-continent so translating Quran revived Quranic teachings in the subcontinent because Muslims and also other people could understand Quranic teachings. Shah Wali Ullah also wrote to all Muslim leaders in the subcontinent to unite and defeat the Marathas it was partly due to his persuade that Ahmed Durrani came to subcontinent and defeated the Marathas. Thus by writing letters he decreased the non-Muslim influence of Marathas and united Muslim leaders which revived Islam in subcontinent. Shah Wali Ullah wrote several books about 51. These books were extremely popular. These not only converted many people to Islam and increase understanding of religion for Muslims of Islam but also united the different Muslim sectarian such as the Shias and Sunnis. Although SWU was the great scholar and revivalist but he was not completely successful in bringing Muslim power back to subcontinent and Muslims were still being oppressed by Marathas who prevented them from obeying their religions law.

Besides SWU, Syed Ahmed Shaheed Bareilvi also played an important part in reviving Islam. He started the Jihad Movement. The Jihad Movement was a Movement started by Muslims to defeat the non-Muslim oppressors. The Movement united all the different Muslim against one common enemy (Sikhs). This showed the power of the Muslims and united the Muslim community which spread Islam. He was the man of action rather than scholar. He defeated Sikhs in many battles but in his last battle because of the treachery of local tribal lords he met with death in his last battle of balakot in 1831.

Haji Shariat Ullah was another great scholar and decided to start the Faraizi Movement. It indicated that Muslims should return to their religious teaching and perform their religious obligations. This particularly became popular in Bengal and Muslims were revived back to their religious teachings. His movement also united the Muslims of Bengal. However Faraizi movement also failed.

Haji Shariat Ullah could only bring rejuvenation in Bengal and so could not reach the entire subcontinent.

Analysis:

Although every religious thinker was quite successful in spreading the message amongst the people, Shah Wali Ullah through writings, Syed Ahmed Shaheed Bareilvi through his Jihad Movement and Haji Shariat Ullah through his Faraizi movement, yet in my opinion Shah Wali Ullah was most successful as his work was ever lasting and sowed a seed for the later "Pakistan Movement".