Q: Why did Syed Ahmad wish to revive Islam in the Sub-Continent? [7]
ANS: As a man of action, Syed Ahmad was an ideal person to act as leader to work against the British power in India and to try to ensure that the Muslims were ruled by fellow Muslims. He believed that the freedom of the Muslims could only come as a result of armed struggle against the foreign and non-Muslim forces which were oppressing them. Syed Ahmad believed that there was a need to end the evils that had corrupted Islamic society. Consequently, even when he served as an army officer he surrounded himself with the men of great piety who were prepared to reject worldly wealth and work for improving the moral and intellectual lives of Muslims.

The British had ensured that the Mughal emperors had little real power and the Sikhs were dominant in the Punjab. Sir Syed founded the Jihad Movement, which called for armed struggle to overthrow non-Muslim oppression and restore Muslim power. He believed that once this was done Islam could be rejuvenated and rescued from beliefs and customs contrary to Islamic beliefs which had crept into everyday life.

Q: Was the work of Syed Ahmad Shaheed Barelvi the most important factor in the revival of Islam in the period 1700-1850? Give reasons for your answer. [14]
ANS: The work of Syed Ahmad had been the very important factor in the revival of Islam because of many reasons. Syed Ahmad Barelvi Shaheed was born in 1786. He was greatly impressed by the preaching and thoughts of Shah Waliullah. So, Syed Ahmad Shaheed started preaching true Islam (as Shah Waliullah did). But he was of the opinion that there should be a political power behind the preaching for the revival of Islam and Muslim power in India. He founded the Jihad Movement for the restoration and revival of Muslim power in India. His main objective was the establishment of an Islamic state on proper Islamic principles. Also the aim of the Jihad Movement was to liberate the Muslims of the Punjab and N.W.F.P from the Sikh rule.
At that time (beginning of 19th century) Punjab and N.W.F.P were under the Sikh rule of Ranjit Singh. Muslims were facing great difficulty in following their religion in this area. Therefore, Syed Ahmad chose Punjab and N.W.F.P for his activities. He also expected help from the Afghan and Pathan tribes of N.W.F.P. Syed Ahmad established his headquarters at Nowshera. His first encounters against the Sikh forces took place at Okora in which the Mujahidin were successful. The jihad movement ended in 1831, but it was a brave and determined movement effort for the revival of Islam and Muslim power. Syed Ahmad’s example continued to inspire the future Muslim generations. The work of Syed Ahmad was important but the work of another two reformers was also very important for a number of reasons:

Shah Waliullah was one of the first Muslim thinkers to state the decline of Mughal Empire and the vulnerable position of the Muslims was due to the neglect of the principles of Islam. Shah Waliullah worked hard to ensure that he was a role model for other Muslims. His deep understanding about the Quran, Hadith, Fiqah and Tasawuf made him a highly knowledgeable scholar at an early age. Since he believed that an emphasis on Quranic teachings was vital to Muslims so Shah Waliullah translated the Holy Quran into Persian which was the language of educated Muslims at that time. He also wrote 51 books to explain the principles of Islam. He wrote an account about the first four Caliphs of Islam in a way in which it was acceptable to both Shias and Sunnis. He hoped that this would help to heal the divisions between them. His writings brought him great fame and prestige and enabled him to have influence in other areas too. For example: in economics he emphasized the need for social justice and for peasants and craftsmen to be truly valued for their contribution to the economy.

He advised the Muslims to give up extravagance and wasteful expenditure on marriages, deaths, births and other occasions. Wealthy Muslims were asked to look after the poor and the needy. Shah Waliullah wrote letters to the rulers of Muslim states asking them to unite and rise against non-Muslim forces. He invited the Afghan ruler Ahmad Shah Abdali to deal with Marathas who were threatening Muslims in Delhi and Punjab. Ahmad Shah Abdali defeated the Marathas in the battle of Panipat in 1761 so they were never able to rise again.

Shah Waliullah explained the importance of JEHAD to the Muslims. He gave the concept of social justice and advised the Muslims that due importance and value should be given to peasants and craftsmen.
Haji Shariat Ullah’s contribution towards religion was also very important. Haji Shariat Ullah started the faraizi movement to restore the pride of the Muslims and to remove what he thought were the Hindu practices had crept into their worship. The faraizi movement was important because it gave encouragement to the Muslims at the time when they were demoralized by the oppression they suffered from the Hindus and the British. It brought about a spiritual revival which led to a revival in the Islamic religion in East Bengal. Hindu influences were removed from the Islamic practices. It also had an important political and economic impact. The Bengal peasants became united against the harsh treatment they received. They became aware of their rights and the political unity began to grow amongst them.

Although the work of another two reformers was also important but the work of Syed Ahmad was the most important factor in the revival of Islam in the Sub-Continent.

Q: What were the aims of Syed Ahmad Tehrik-e-Jihad movement? To what extent did his teachings continue to influence Muslims of the Sub-Continent after his death in 1831? [7-14]
ANS: Syed Ahmad Barelvi Shaheed was born in 1786. He was greatly impressed by the preaching and thoughts of Shah Waliullah. He joined the private army of Nawab Amir Khan of Tonk state where he learnt the art of war. He also learnt about the European weaponry including the art of artillery.

Syed Ahmad Shaheed started preaching true Islam (as Shah Waliullah did). But he was of the opinion that there should be a political power behind the preaching for the revival of Islam and Muslim power in India. He founded the Jihad Movement for the restoration and revival of Muslim power in India. His main objective was the establishment of an Islamic state on proper Islamic principles. Also the aim of the Jihad Movement was to liberate the Muslims of the Punjab and N.W.F.P from the Sikh rule.

At that time (beginning of 19th century) Punjab and N.W.F.P were under the Sikh rule of Ranjit Singh. Muslims were facing great difficulty in following there religion in this area. Therefore, Syed Ahmad chose Punjab and N.W.F.P for his activities. He also expected help from the Afghan and Pathan tribes of N.W.F.P. Syed Ahmad established his headquarters at Nowshera. His first encounters against the Sikh forces took place at Okora in which the Mujahidin were successful. The Pathan tribes joined him and the number of Mujahidin forces swelled up to 80,000. But he decided to shift his headquarters to Balakot in order to liberate Kashmir and
Hazara. In the mean time the Sikh army attacked Balakot suddenly. The Mujahidin fought bravely. Nearly 600 Mujahidin were killed including, Syed Ahmad and Shah Ismail. The jihad movement ended in 1831, but it was a brave and determined movement effort for the revival of Islam and Muslim power. Syed Ahmad had no personal ambition, nor was the purpose to put a certain ruler on the throne. The aim was to liberate Muslim population from tyranny and oppression. Syed Ahmad’s example continued to inspire the future Muslim generations. His ultimate aim was to create an Islamic state or a homeland for Muslims in the Sub-Continent. In this sense Jihad movement was a precursor of the later Muslim nationalist in the Sub-Continent.