**Question: What do you mean by syncretism? Discuss the factors responSsible for syncretism between Hindus and Muslim tradition in India.**

**Meaning:**

The meaning of syncretism implies the combination or synthesis of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought in a particular region. It is a composite culture which evolves when people of multiple religions, language, and culture live together for long period of time. In other word it is multiculturalism which evolves when different sections of people belonging different religions, language and heritage live together for a long period of time. It assumed significance during Muslim and Christian rule in India. People of India in origin were Hindus. So, there was no problem at that time. But, when Muslim and thereafter the Christian migrated to India, lot of political problems emerged. The Muslim rulers faced strong challenges than the Christians. It happens due to complete opposite religious doctrine between Hindus and Muslims. Within these problems different political school of thought came out to, establish social harmony, good governance and religious tolerance and resultantly syncretism was established in India. In this context, Hindu Bhakti movement and Sufi movement within Islam played important roles in promoting syncretism in India. From these movements many political thinkers like Kabir Das, Gurunanak, Ramananda, Nam Dev, Takaram, etc. came out to maintain social harmony among different sections of people in India. In contemporary India, syncretism has acquired even bigger meaning- the unity in diversity, which is must to perpetuate the idea of India.

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| **Syncretism: Synthesis of Hindi and Muslim Traditions**  **Factors for syncretism in India**  No single factor is there for syncretism has evolved in India. There are various factors responsible for the evolution of syncretic Indo-Islamic culture in India. These factors are explained as follows;   1. **Political Factor:** Political factor was one of the most important factors for the growth of syncretic Indo-Islamic culture in India. It was required for both the ruler and the ruled. For rulers it was very essential to rule and maintain social harmony in the state. It is religious tolerance which helps to maintain social harmony in state. Again for ruled people also the syncretism was important. If the ruled adopting culture of rulers it will help them to gain favour of the state, employment, to get out of rigid caste system, particularly the protection of lowers caste from persecution of upper etc. So, the ruled people accept the culture of rulers. In other words, it can be said that both for the rulers are ruled syncretism was beneficial on political ground. 2. **Living together of two Cultures:** Another important factor is that two cultures are living in India side by side for a long period of time. It is more or less 1300 years that both Hindus and Muslim are living together in India. During Muslim rule bulk native people were and Hindus. During Mughal period many people converted to Islam and it is especially from lower caste people. Due to living together for long period of time the Hindu Muslim marriages have become an easy matters and this factor also contributed for the growth of syncretism. 3. **Bhakti and Sufi traditions:** **Bhakti and Sufi traditions** also played a significant role for the growth of syncretism in Indian. Both these movement were reformist and inclusive. These two movements were liberal and were against any discrimination in society. They rejected ritualism, rigidness, external pretentions, and pompousness of mainstream Hinduism and Islam. The Sufis adopted and promoted local languages, local cultures, traditions and practices. Sufism presented softer, liberal, and inclusive face of Islam, to which the subjects of Muslim rule could relate easily. Therefore these movement attracted devotees from both the religion and helped to grow syncretism in India. |