

How the reform movement of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi influenced the history of Muslim India?

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi, also known as Majjadat Alf Saani or Reformer of the second millennium, rose as a ^{Muslim} reformer in 'the Age of Islamic Poverty' as put by Sirhindi. He served the Muslims by transforming their minds and beliefs that were put forward and widely practiced during the reign of Jalal-ud-Din Akbar. He courageously rose against the then Mughal Emperor and openly put forward his stance, which is the true message of Allah, in front of people as well as the rulers. His efforts led him to gain the title of Majjadat Alf Saani or the first Muslim reformer of subcontinent.

Historical Background: The Events which Gave Birth to the First Reform Movement in India Muslim

During the reign of Akbar, Muslims were detracted from their true path and instead started following the wrong practices. ~~and~~ Muslims at that time were at the inferior position and Hindus enjoyed all the privileges. Muslims were not allowed to practice their religious practices and Hindus worshiped freely, even in the courts. They were

very much involved in the affairs governed by the king. Moreover, Muslims could not fast during Ramadan or slaughter cows while Hindus were free to keep their fasts and Muslims could not eat in front of Hindus during their fast. Furthermore, Mosques were destroyed; temples were built, Jizya tax was removed. ~~These, these conditions,~~ and pilgrimage

~~eventually, made Muslims to follow intermingling~~
~~order Hindus.~~

Thus, as quoted by **SM Ikram:**

“Non-Muslims carried out the ordinances of their own religion in a Muslim State and the Muslims were powerless to carry out the ordinances of Islam; if they carried them out they were executed.”

These conditions eventually made Muslims to intermingle with Hindus and they started considering the 'new teachings' as right and followed them blindly. This situation demanded a Muslim reformer to redirect Muslims to the right path.

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi's Reform Movement and its Religious Implications.

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi negated Akbar's concept of Din-e-Ilahi and made Muslims to realise their actual teachings.

He wrote in his Risala 'Asbat-e-Nauwwat' that:

"The ~~can~~ consider Ram and Rehman as one is stupidity because creator cannot be ~~can~~ one with its creation."

~~His~~ ~~view~~

He also rose against the misconception that people developed about the concept of Wahdat-al-Wujood (oneness of being), which was politically manipulated and inculcated wrong practices among Muslims. To counter their beliefs, Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi introduced the concept of ~~oneness~~ **Wahdat-al-Shuhood** (oneness of witness).

Moreover, he emphasized on ~~abolish~~ reimposing jizya and pilgrimage tax. He preached about **Ittibat-e-Sunnat** through his letters and sermons. In short, he did much efforts for the revival of Muslim practices and abandonment of Hindu practices.

Political Implications of the Movement

He was the first person who introduced the concept of Two-Nation Theory. He said:

“ If Muslims want to live as a nation than they have to quit the talk of shirk and biddat and stay away from Hindus. If the awareness of separate national identity is not awakened in Muslims then it is feared that they would be swept away with the flood of combined nationhood. Islam would be destroyed like Buddhism and Hinduism.”

Thus, he emphasized Muslims to stay away from Hindus i.e. to not inter-mix, intermingle and do intermarriages with Hindus.

He also worked to alleviate the positions of Muslims in courts, which ~~were~~ previously had Hindu majority.

Social Implications of the Movement

~~He gave the Muslims~~
He prevented the ~~the~~ identity of Muslims of India which is ~~gave~~ bestowed upon them by Islam. He actually made Muslims to realize their true identity and as put by Allama Iqbal, in his poem “Punjab kay Peerzadun kay Naam”, that:

"He was the guardian of Muslim faith in India whom God gave a timely warning."

Impacts on Mughal Rulers

Although Jahangir was not moved by the movement of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi and imprisoned him for two years for ~~not~~ bowing in front of him and for disobeying him; but this movement had significant impacts on his successor Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb reimposed jizya and pilgrimage tax. He started reconstruction of Mosques, **Badshahi Mosque** is one of them. Not only that, he also wrote a book "**Fatwa-e-Alamgir**" with the help of other scholars. It was based on Islamic code of life. So, he was the one who took practical steps for reimposing Islamic values, which unfortunately Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi could not witness during his life time.

Conclusion

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi did not have any political intentions behind his reform movement, instead, it was started to

make Muslims realise the true worth of their religion and their identity. He had great contributions for the Muslims of India as said by **S.M. Ikram:**

“ He was the most forceful and original thinker in India, before Shah Waliullah and Iqbal.”

