

How the reform movement of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi influenced the history of muslim India?
(PAK AFFAIRS 2020)

Introduction:

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi widely famous as Mujadid Alf Sani was born in East Punjab in 1564. He was prominent disciple of Khwaja Baqi Billa. He predicted about Sheikh: "He will turn into a light which will illuminate the whole world." He was only person who represented two sufi orders Chishtia and Naqshbandiya. While living in same society muslims have adopted various un-islamic practices and they were living under Hindu's influence. Mujadid Alf Sani was the first person to oppose diagnose evils of muslims society. He openly opposed Akbar's Deen-e-illahi, ^{Akbar} and ^{who} assumed the titles of "Mujadid-e-Azam" and "Imam-e-Adil" for himself.

His only goal was to purify muslims from un-islamic practices. He brought many reforms in muslim society, wrote powerful writings against existing prejudices and dogmas introduced by Akbar. He advocated for separate identity of muslims and emphasized on muslim's self assertion. He began champion of Islamic revival.

Reform movement of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi:

Muslim Indian Society was entangled in religious dogmatic system which had greatly influenced their muslim beliefs. Mujadid Alf Sani Struggled for eradication of these practices and revival of Islamic beliefs according to Quran and Shariah.

a) Criticism to Din-e-Ilahi:

He became very popular among people for ridiculing DEEN-e-Ilahi of Emperor Akbar. He wrote very criticising and forceful

articles to expose the fallacy of his din, also predicted its future's dangers. He showed the misconceptions of Akbar's din and came out with full strength to curtail the influence of this static faith.

b) Initiated Struggle against Atheism and Polytheism:

He strongly opposed the ideas of Atheism and polytheism. He preached Tauheed (Oneness of God). He wrote letter to Hurvey Ram and wrote "Ram and Krishna and such like personalities are creation of God. They were born of their parents. Rama was son of Jasereth and husband of Sita. When Ram could not protect his wife who could he help others?" How can the creator and creations be considered as one.

c) Sending number of disciples:

He sent number of students to various parts of India.

for guidance of muslim society.

The emphasis was made on ittehat-i-sunnah in their teachings.

They stressed to follow Quran and sunnah in life.

d) Propagation of Islamic habits:

During Mughal era muslim society was involved in several Hindu customs and practices which were anti Islamic. He stressed upon muslims for adoption of simple and Islamic habits and revealed the importance of Namaz and Fast.

e) Rectification in mysticism:

He explained mysticism and told the difference between sainthood and prophethood. He gave the concept of Wahdat-ul-Shahood.

He tried to rectify un-islamic practices in mysticism and guide muslims. Allama Iqbal called him guardian of muslim millah.

"He the guardian of the Estate of millah in India whom Allah awakened at the right time"

f) Propagation of Islam:

"Sheikh Ahmed became not only a champion of Islamic revival but adopted a spirited, almost an aggressive attitude towards non Muslims"

(S.M. Ikram, Cultural heritage of Pakistan)

His teachings gave a new spirit to propagation of Islam in sub-continent.

g) Pioneer of muslim self-assertion:

He started denouncing and opposing un-Islamic practices which were existing in Indian muslim society. Therefore he is called as pioneer of muslim self-assertion.

His teachings bore result in era of Aurangzeb which is regarded as embodiment of Islamic practices. Many historians claim that Aurangzeb was disciple of Khawaja Muhammad Masum son and successor of Sheikh Ahmed. According to Allama Iqbal "Mujadid was the call-back of prophet hood"

h) Denial to perform Sajda to Jahangir:

Sheikh Ahmad did not perform sajdah to Emperor Jahangir and refused on the basis of point that; Islam did not allow to bow before human beings. He was arrested and released after two years. Jahangir later requested him to become his religious guide. On his advice Jahangir built a magnificent mosque.

i) Impact of Sheikh Ahmad's Letters:

His letters are known as Muktabat-e-Islam Rabani which he wrote to noble courts' royals. In one of his letters he wrote to Sheikh Farid against Emperor Akbar. "The monarch is to the state as heart is to body. If heart remains pure it keep the body pure as well. The purity or impurity of state depends upon its ruler. You are aware of what muslim suffered in previous reigns"

(I. H. QURESHI, A Short history of Pakistan)

j) Protagonist of Two nation theory:

Two nation theory which later became the basis of creation of separate state for muslim originated from Mujadid Alf Sani. He created a significant and long lasting impact on separate identities in sub-continent. It shows that he was the pioneer of Two Nation theory. In the words of I. H. Qureshi

"Mujadid laid great stress on the wide and unbridgeable gulf between Islam and Hinduism"

He opposed the prevailing concept of joint religion in Akbar's Era

Conclusion:

In a nutshell, the teachings of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi created a ripple effect in society and eradicated religious, social and political evils of that time. He indeed countered unorthodox sufism and mystic beliefs. He continued his struggle and teaching Islam till the

end of his life. He wrote against anti-Islamic activities propagated in Akbar's Era. He complained for establishment of muslim society where laws of Shariah are enforced widely. He drew discrepancy between Hinduism, Aethlism and Islam.

He advised saints, scholars and rulers of that time to mend their ways. It was under the influence of Mujadid Alf Sani that future movement of reform and revival represented by Shah Wali Ullah and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan.