

# SIR SYED AHMED KHAN

## (Questions)

Q) Aligarh Movement injected a new life in the dead body of Muslims and helped to regain its lost glory and prestige?  
Discuss?

Q) Steps initiated by Sir Syed which later on became the Agenda points of the movement? of a part how did these steps orient the political system in Pakistan?

Q) Evaluate the importance or impact of the services rendered by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan towards the regeneration of Muslims?

Q) Sir Syed believed in "Firmness of Ideas" in loyalty, devotion and aloofness? Discuss in perspective of reform movement?

Q. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was pro British. Agree or disagree answer your question with argument?

Q) The Aligarh Movement was pure educational venture but it had deep impact on Indian politics? Discuss?

## Introduction:

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was born on October 7, 1817 in Delhi. He belonged to a family that has been associated with the Mughal court at Delhi. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan learned Holy Quran at home. He received his early education from his grandfather Khawaja Farid-ud-Din who was for 8 years, prime minister at the Mughal court. Sir Syed Ahmad's father died in 1838 forcing him to look for a government job to meet family expenses. In February 1839, he joined the commissioner's office as Naib Munshi (Deputy reader). and soon after in 1841, became Sub Judge in Fatehpur Sikri. He was transferred to Bijnor in 1855. Only three years later, he was promoted as Sadr-us-Sadar. 1861 saw him rise in rank to become judge of the lower court.

By this time, Sir Syed had established himself as a person of some potential. His son Syed Mahmud, a promising young man won a government scholarship to go to England for higher studies. This opportunity helped Sir Syed Ahmad to proceed to England with his son.

Sir Syed lived a vigorous and eventful life working as a public servant he found time to write books on topics as varied but as important as religion, history, politics, archeology and literature. He left behind a treasure of 42 books that influenced and inspired movements in thought, and generated a lot of heat through intellectual debates in his life time as well as in the times to come. To crown his achievements there are large number of organisations and societies that contributed to speedy reawakening of Muslims of India which resulted in resurgence of Muslim Nation hood through length and Breadth of Indian sub. continent. In 1888, he was made a knight commander of the Star of India. He died on 27 March, 1898.

## The need of Aligarh Movement

After the war of Independence, the British had held the Muslims responsible for the war of Independence and therefore, adopted a cruel policy to punish them for their role in war. The Hindus and other nations <sup>who</sup> were equally responsible for war, were let off and no revengeful action was taken <sup>against</sup> them. The Muslims because of the British policy, fell from their past position of eminence and their social and economic and political conditions deteriorated. They

lost their previous power, glory and distinction as a nation. Their properties are confiscated and their jobs are withdrawn to further aggravate the situation the British replaced Persian and implemented English as official language.

Sir Syed felt aggrieved over the deplorable social and economic condition of the Muslims of India. He desired to see them at respectable position in society and decided to guide them in struggle for the revival of their past position and glory.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan observed that the present condition of the Muslims was mostly because of their own extremist, and conservative attitude. Indian Muslims had always considered the British as their enemies and avoided interaction with them which had created a great deal of misunderstanding among them. The Muslims should adopt the lenient attitude towards them to change the situation between British and Indian Muslims.

Sir Syed also realized that Muslims were lagging behind in the education because of their conservative approach towards the English and modern knowledge to compete with the Hindus. Sir Syed began the movement by diluting suspicion and misunderstanding between the Muslims and the British.

The elimination of Muslims as a nation, economically, politically, social and culturally and religiously.

## The Educational Aspects Of the Aligarh Movement

The Supreme interest of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was Education. - in its widest sense. He began by establishing schools at Muradabad (1858). He was on the point that Muslims are lagging behind due to absence of modern and English education. The Muslims were not in the condition to compete with the Hindus. Sir Syed took some steps to uplift the Muslims of India. The steps taken by Sir Syed Ahmed were.

### 1) Scientific Society:

Sir Syed Ahmed founded the Society on January 9, 1864 during his stay in Muradabad. Its purpose was to translate books of foreign languages and to search for rare and valuable books of Asian authors and in particular, those books which discussed the rise and fall of nations and publish them. The first ever meeting of the society was held on January 9, 1864 at which the Duke of Argyll was appointed in its patron. With the transfer of Sir Syed to Aligarh in 1864 the Society was

also shifted to Aligarh and continued their objective.

## 2) Tahzeeb Akhlaq:

Syed Ahmed established a magazine on December 29, 1870 on the lines of the Spectator of London under the title "Tahzeeb Akhlaq". The purpose of this magazine was to motivate the Muslims to acquire civilization to its perfection to neutralize the hatred with which civilized nations viewed them so that they may also be regarded as respectable civilized nations.

## 3) Committee for the better diffusion and advancement of learning Among the Mohammedans of India:

Sir Syed Ahmad dilemma. In this regard, appeared unsurmountable his first task was to know and Analyze the reasons of the Muslim reluctance to send their child to government schools. Keeping this problem in view, a committee calling for the Muslim educational uplift was formed in Benarus. The purpose or the aim of the committee was

to know why the number of Muslims students in school and colleges was so low, why they had lagged behind in classical eastern learning and why they showed little interest in modern science.

## The MAO School, Aligarh.

The MAO School, Aligarh was inaugurated on May 24, 1875 which coincided with Queen Victoria's birthday. In the beginning of M.A.O school offered courses in Arabic, Persian, English, Mathematics, History and Geography. So, in this school modern and western education was given. Sir Syed worked diligently to raise the school to the college level. In 1877, the school was upgraded to the status of a college and was inaugurated by Lord Lytton. The college was open for both Muslims and Non-Muslims students, who came from all parts of the country. Sir Syed wanted to see the college raised to a university level, which was fulfilled after his death in 1920 when the college became the Aligarh Muslim University.

## The Political Aspects Of Aligarh Movement

The Aligarh movement also served the Muslims for the safeguard of their political interest. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan after the war of Independence in 1857 had advised the Muslims to stay away from politics of the country as long as they don't equip themselves with the necessary education. He told them that Hindus have advanced in the political field only because they were more educated than the Muslims. and also <sup>warned</sup> advised the Muslims to compete with Hindus in politics with your present education standard, and would easily lead to the failure of Muslims.

## 1-HINDU MUSLIM RELATIONSHIP:

Sir Syed was a strong advocate of Hindu Muslim unity. It explains why there was never any discrimination between Hindus and Muslims in either Aligarh Scientific Society, Aligarh school or college. He used to refer to Hindus and Muslims are two beautiful eyes of a charming bride. But Urdu Hindi controversy exerted so deep an influence on his thought and activities and changed his political outlook altogether that it can be regarded as a turning point in his public career.

later, Sir Syed realized that these two nations are different and can never be co-existed. Once Sir Syed said to his friend



Shakespeare that, "I am now convinced that these two Nations will never participate in anything together from their heart. This enmity and conflict through less emphatic at present will gain in intensity with the passage of time due to educated people, He who lives, will see".

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan believed that the survival of Urdu is very important for the Muslims and several steps are required to maintain it.

## 2. Opposition Of Indian National Congress:

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan strongly opposed the Indian National Congress and suggested Muslims to stay away from it. Sir Syed called the congress "Misnamed National Congress" in his letter on Feb 18, 1888. Demands of the congress was the election of the members to legislative councils and holding of the civil service examination in India as well. Sir Syed kept silent on these demands for two years but in 1887 he raised his voice against these demands from the platform of the AMEC for the first time in its meeting held in Lucknow. The

demands which were appeared very innocent and democratic but actually were aimed at the complete elimination of Muslims from the Indian Society.

He therefore, emphasize on the Muslims to fully concentrate on the acquisition of knowledge and equipt themselves with modern techniques of politics and then they should embark upon the political participation.

## Steps for good understanding between the Muslims And British.

After the war of Independence 1857 developed a great deal of mistrust and suspicions about the Muslims among the British and the British were considering Muslims as their deadliest enemies and were bent upon scrapping the Muslims as a nation.

Sir Syed wants to develop a good mutual relationship between Brit and Muslims. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan explain the real causes of the war in *Rasala-i-Ahli* *Baghawat-i-Hind* and said that Muslims and other nations are equally responsible for the war so only blaming Muslims is not

a right option. In 1866, Sir Syed formed British India Association of Aligarh. The object of this organization was to express the grievances and point of view of Indians to the British people and the British parliament.

## Religious Services of Aligarh Movement

- William Muir's wrote book "Life of Muhammad" in which he wrote irrelevant things about the life of Holy Prophet so Sir Syed in response to it went to England and collected material he wrote "Essays" on the life of Muhammad as Khutbat-i-Ahmadiya and published them.

- Also wrote philosophical commentary on bible known as Tasabeer-al-Kalam. In this work he highlighted similarities between <sup>Hebrews</sup> ~~Christians~~ and Muslims.

## Social Services of Aligarh Movement

- Sir Syed published most influential magazine "Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq" in which he highlighted the <sup>ethical</sup> ~~classical~~ aspects of Muslims life.
- Opened a number of Orphan houses
- Worked on promotion of Urdu and founded "Anjuman-i-Tariki-i-Urdu" which

worked on the protection of Urdu.  
- wrote another magazine as Akhram-i-Taam-  
r-Ahle-Kitab. in which the principles and  
etiquettes of eating and dining in Islam  
were discussed.

## Pioneer Of Two Nation Theory

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was a large hearted and  
open minded person. He was a true patriotic  
person of India and wanted India to be  
united as one nation and was great advocate  
of Hindus and Muslims. Speaking at the meeting  
of Indian Association he said,

"I look to both Hindus and Muslims with the  
same eyes and consider them as my own eyes."

However, the attitude of Hindus and Congress  
compelled Sir Syed Ahmad to give a second  
thought to his ideas regarding Hindu Muslim  
unity and about one nation. He was extremely  
disappointed to see the Congress and Hindus  
working against Muslims.

In 1867 Some Hindu leaders of  
Benarus thought that the use of Urdu as an  
official language should be discontinued

and should be replaced by Hindi language written in Devanagiri script. The Government surrendered and declared Hindi as an official language.

It was the occasion when Sir Syed realized Hindus and Muslims are two different nations and can never exist together. He said;

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During these days when Hindi and Urdu controversy was going on in Benaras one day I met Shakespeare who was posted as Divisional Commissioner. I was saying something about the Education of the Muslims, and Shakespeare was listening with an expression of amazement. When at length he said, This is the first occasion when I have heard you speak about the progress of the Muslims alone. Before you always been about the welfare of countrymen in general, I said now I am convinced that both communities will not join wholeheartedly.

The Urdu Hindi conflict made Sir Syed realize that both are different nations and will never be sincere to each other due to cultural, social and religious differences. They want to replace Urdu by Hindi due to a reason to eliminate Muslims as nations.

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He therefore, use the word "Two Nations" for the Hindus and the Muslims in

1868 for the first time and this gave his famous Two Nation theory which became the basis of the Pakistan Movement.

## Conclusion:

The Aligarh Movement injected a life and fervence in the dormant body of the Muslims. Nation and helped them to regain their lost glory. It revived confidence among the Muslims to fight for their economic and social rights. The Aligarh movement was a board movement which left its impact on every phase of the Muslims life. All these was possible only because of Sir Syed efforts. His precepts and examples revived hope and self confidence showed new ways to progress and opened doors for the Muslims to modern education and economic prosperity.

Sir Syed died on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1898. After rendering invaluable services for the Muslims renaissance in India, he laid the foundation for the Movement which turned into the Pakistan Movement in later stages.