

Movements for Reforms / Efforts for Renaissance

Revivalism & Reformist Movements:

INTRODUCTION:

- In 16th Century Islam faced → Overwhelming threats → Deen-e-Elahi
- Deen-e-Elahi made → Orthodox Muslims → outcasts in state-affairs.
- Akbar influenced by Baiati Movement
- Muslims had deficient knowledge → Islam.
- Ulama preferred Jurisprudence → over Quran & Hadiths.

Efforts for Renaissance is divided into 3 - Categories:

1. Religious Reformist Movements: Role of Personalities:
2. Educational Reformist Movements: Role of Institutions:
3. Political Reforms: Role of Movements:

1. Role of Personalities:-

(A). Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi:

Introduction:

History itself is an evidence of fact that whenever Islam came at any danger by enemies or by Ideology; It was saved by such Personalities who through their spiritual power not only saved it, but gave it a new life, "Such is the story of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi.

Brief Life History:

- Born on June 26, 1564, at Sirhind East Punjab
- Name → Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi → Title → Mujaddid Alf Saif
- Father name Sheikh Abdul Ahad ↳ Badr-ud-din
- Descendant of second Caliph Hazrat Umar.
- Early education from Sirhind & Sailkot.
- In childhood memorized → Quran, Hadith, Tafsir, Ma'arif
- Went to Delhi at age of 36.
- Disciple of Khawaja Bagh Ullah
- "He will turn into light which will illuminate the world"
- He died on 10th Dec, 1624, in Sirhind.

Social Conditions at that Time:

Evils of Muslim Society:

- i- Populace belief in Karamat under Hindu influence. (un-Islamic Practices)
- ii- Aloofness from Sharia: Ulama refer to Jurisprudence rather than Quran & Hadith.
- iii- Dominance of Hindu Culture:
 - Promotion of Rajputs & marriages with their daughters → Akbars era.
- iv- Akbar's anti-Islamic look: Din-e-Elahi, Title of Mujahid-i-Azam & Imam-i-Adil
- v- Threat of Bakti Movement:
 - Devotion to religious concepts built around one or more gods & goddesses.
- vi- Wahdat-al-Wajood Theory:
- vii- Moral decadence of ruler:
- viii- Deviance from divine laws to man made laws:

Role of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi

for Reformation of Muslim Society:

- i- Opposition of Assimilation: Efforts against Deen-e-Elahi & Bakti Movements
- Bakti movement → loving devotion among

Vaishnava Saints.

- Deen-e-Elahi → attempt to blur the religious differences b/w Islam & other religions.
- He wrote Risala → Asbat-un-Nabuwat to oppose Deen-e-Elahi: "To consider Ram and Rehman as one is stupidity because creator cannot be one with its creation."

ii- Reformation of Islamic Society:

- A great challenge for sheikh → bring → reforms → in Indian society.
- His objective → To purify Indian Muslims from un-Islamic practices.
- Not implemented on Non-Muslims.

iii- Sharia's Superiority & Rectification in Mysticism:

- He explained → Mysticism without Sharia → was a misleading concept.
- A need was felt to reform the Sufism.
- Told differences → b/w → Wilayat & Nabuwat.

iv- Theory of Wahdat-ul-Shahud against Pantheism:

- Countering wahdat-ul-wajood → there is no difference b/w God & Creation.
- Wahdat-ul-shahud → Creator and creations

were two separate entities.

- Wahdat → Allah, wajood → Noor (light of God).
- Wahdat-ul-shahud → Unity of witness.

v- Preparation of Disciples:

- He trained groups of disciples.
- Sent them to Muslim countries & various cities of India → Purification of Indian Muslims.
- They spread teaching → emphasis → on Ittibat-I-Sunnah.
- They stressed → follow → Holy Prophet (PBUH) in their lives and worldly practices.

vi- Maktaba-e-Imam-e-Rabbani: Importance of Sheikh's Letters:

- Wrote letters → important nobles and leaders of Royal Court.
- These letters → known → Maktabat-e-Imam Rabbani
- Letters addressed nobles like Sheikh Farid, Khan-e-Azam, Abdur Rahim & Mufti Sardar Jehan.

vii- Concept of Government:

- His view, emperor → shaping → state affairs, should be free from all religious adulteration.
- Emperor role is of Custodian in Muslim state.
- "The position of the king is the same

as that of the heart in the body;
if the heart is pure the body
will be pure and if the heart is
not pure ^{how} the body can be pure."

viii- Opposition of Bidaat: Atheism and Polytheism:-

- The Ulama divided → the good innovation & the bad innovation → He dislike both.
- Strongly opposed Atheism & Polytheism.
- Started Preaching of Tauheed.
- He said "creator & creations cannot be considered as one."

ix- Two Nation Theory & Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi:

- At that time Joint Nationalism was prevalent under Indian nobility & religious leadership.
- He preserved Muslim identity → through his tireless efforts.
- He advocated Muslim exclusiveness & separateness.
- It shows he was pioneer of Two Nation Theory in India.

x- Preaching of Islam during the Imprisonment.

- In Gawalior fort → his efforts → thousand Non-Muslims accepted Islam.
- Jahangir then released him and offered gifts.

- Jahangir also listened to his advice.
- Jahangir to Shah Jahan → become disciple of Sheikh.

Influence of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi's Effort:

The efforts of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi had a deep impact upon prevailing society of Indian sub-continent;

i- Revival of Preaching & Propagation of Islam:

- The movement of Sheikh gave → new spirit & impetus → Preaching & Propagation → Islam.
- Not only champion of Islamic revival, but adopted a spirited, almost an aggressive attitude towards non-Muslims & Non-Sunni Muslims.

ii- Jihad of the Pen against Akbar: His Powerful Writing:

- Holy Prophet (PBUH): "The ink of the scholar is more sacred than the blood of the martyrs."
- His powerful writing criticized → Akbar's religious dogmas → Deen-e-Elahi.
- He forcefully denounced Akbar's policies by his writing.

- He wrote to Sheikh Farid: "The monarch is to the world (state) as the heart is to the body. If heart remains pure, it keeps the body as well pure. The purity or impurity of state depends upon its ruler."

iii- Pioneer of Muslim Self-Assertion:

- He denouncing un-Islamic practices.
- His teaching bore fruits in Aurangzeb's reign.
- His son Ichwaja addressed prince Aurangzeb through letters.

iv- Impact of Sheikh upon Mughal Emperor Jahangir:

- Jahangir imprisoned Sheikh, b/c Sheikh did not perform Sajda like act to Jahangir.
- He said: "Islam did not allow me to bow before human being."
- Jahangir released him, under the influence of Muslim leaders.
- Later, Jahangir requested to guide him in matters of religion.
- After Maghribi Sheikh were given audience to whom he talked about religious affairs.
- On his advice, Jahangir constructed

a magnificent mosque.

v- Protagonist of Two Nation Theory:

- Concept → Two Nation Theory got currency in → sub-continent, due to his efforts.
- The prevailing Period → Aligarh → Joint Nationalism → going to be popular among religious leadership, but Sheikh advocated → exclusiveness and separateness of the Muslims.
- It shows → He was founder → Two Nation Theory.

Books of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi:

- a. Asbat-un-Nabuwat (Logic & Research)
- b. Risala-e-Nabuwat
- c. Maktubat-e-Imam-e-Rabbani (Research & Ijtihad).
- d. Masarat-ud-Dunya (Shariah & Tassawuf)
- e. Need & Importance of Prophethood.
- f. Toheedi-shahedi
- g. Islamic Philosophy

Conclusion:

- It is concluded, " Sheikh Ahmad was a courageous agitator and a revolutionary religious reformer.
- He wrote about anti-Islamic activities

- He campaigned for full-blooded enforcement of shariah laws.
- His movement became the symbol of unity.
- "Mujadid" according to Iqbal, "the Call-back of Prophethood."
- Because of his movement, future movement of reforms and revival, influenced
- "When seen in the perspective of history, whether accepted by sufis or not, it is in the rejection of monism that Sheikh's claim for being the Mujadid of his age." I.H Qureshi: A short history of Pakistan.
- "Sheikh Ahmad an individual from Sirhind, rich in knowledge and vigorous in action. I associated him for few days and found marvelous things in his spiritual life. He will turn into a light which will illuminate the world."
Khawaja Bakhtiar Kaki quoted by S.M. Ikram: The Cultural Heritage of Pakistan.