

Q#02

How Sirhindi's Reforms Influenced Muslims in India?

Ans

. Outline

1. Introduction
2. Context of Sirhindi's monumental efforts
3. Influence of his reforms of Indian Muslims
 - 3.1 Basis of 'Two Nation' Theory
 - 3.2 Pioneer of Wahdat-ul-Shukh
 - 3.3 Role of religion in state affairs
 - 3.4 Islamic activism
 - 3.5 Watchful against 'bid'at' in Islam
4. Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi played a seminal role in his services to Islam, thereby influencing the Muslims of India. Follower of Naqshbandiyah spiritual order, he was under discipleship of Baji Billah who said of him: "He will turn into a light which will illuminate the whole world." He was born during Mughal reign and concentrated his efforts in preserving the core values and traditions cherished by Islam. With those seminal efforts, he erected a veritable

monument of himself which inspired subsequent muslim's lifestyle, thought and endeavours. This is borne out by appearance of two-nations theory and Islamic activism all the way extending towards his climactic pioneering of philosophy of phenomenological monism - Wahdat-ul-Shuhud. In short, judging by influence he had on muslims of sub-continent and the services he rendered thereof, he is deservedly called Mujadid - Alf - Thani - the Second Millennial Reformer.

2. CONTEXT OF IMAM RABBANI'S EFFORTS

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi began his endeavours during Mughal reign, when Akbar was the emperor followed by Jahangir. At that time the region was swept by Hindu-Muslim integration efforts as seen in Bhakti movement and Akbar's newly found religion, Din-i-Ilahi. In a bid to liberalize the religion of Islam to make it more readily acceptable to the locals, the people in false gear of reformers rendered disservice to Islam by corrupting the core essence of Islam. As for Akbar, he concocted a religion to rule his diverse, expansive swathes of territories by uniting his subjects with hybrid religion. It was the original character of Islam that was being sacrificed on the altar of political ends.

3. His INFLUENCE AS SEEN IN:

3.1. BASIS OF TWO NATIONS THEORY

Sirhindī's - the Reformer - biggest achievement was preservation of Islam as a distinct and pure religion with unadulterated traditions and values of its own. It is for these efforts that he is conferred by some historians, as the founder of two-nations theory. During his life, the sub-continent was swept by ungodly trends that sought to absorb Islam and what it stood for in the push of local religions. For instance, Muslims had started to celebrate holidays, indulge in fireworks, bow ~~and~~ heads at shrines and believe in karamat (miracles). Had this not been for Sirhindī's vocal efforts and preaching, two-nations theory would have lacked its essential fodder without the unique distinctiveness of other nations.

3.2. PIONEER OF WAHDAT-UL-SHAHID:

His pioneering achievement was refuting the philosophy of ontological Wahdat-ul-Wajūd. (also known as Ham-e-oost) Those who believed in this belief were the one who legitimized bowing head at shrines. As a substitute and corrective measure, he staged the philosophy of Wahdat-ul-Shahid (aka Ham-e-azost) that stood for separation of God's and man's existence, emphasizing oneness of God but not

-entangling creation with the Creator. This crowning achievement fed into new literature and intigated debates across the entire Muslim world, beyond shores of sub-continent as well. Interestingly, Allama M. Iqbal was also a Wahadat-ul-Shuhadi and his poetry is its testimony. By implication, it is the corroboration of Suhmudi's far-reaching influence.

3.3. ROLE OF RELIGION IN STATE AFFAIRS

Moreover, the Sheikh constantly reviewed and criticized the emperor's policies of abolishing jizya, banning cow slaughter and propagation of Din-e-Ghazi. It sent him to gallows, at fort of Gwalior, for audacious resistance to imperial policies. Nonetheless, it set a precedence for keeping checks and balances on an incumbent ruler whose initiatives may harm their values and efface their very character. It encouraged and mobilized subsequent muslim generations to keep an eye open for state affairs.

3.4. ISLAMIC ACTIVISM:

By extension, his efforts established exemplary role non-violent Islamic activism can play in purging unislamic activities and reigning in behavior incompatible with broader interests of Islam. Khilafat movement is one

example of such activism that can be paralleled with Sirhindi's proactive role in similarly imperial era that imperilled Islam.

3.5. WATCH AGAINST 'BIDAT':

Importantly, in thus keeping watch and standing guard for purity of Islam, he effectively fought against 'BIDAT' (unwanted impurities). It kept muslims' head above water and not be drowned in the whirlpool of litany of unislamic innovations. For one purpose of preachers is to not just ~~do away~~ proselytize but in doing so, they must not do away with its basic tenets that lend to Islam an identity unique yet egalitarian in nature.

4. CONCLUSION

Influencing Islam is influencing Muslims. By supporting purity of Islam and discarding sham innovations, Sirhindi stood for distinct and discrete identity that, history is evidence, led to creation of separate homeland for the muslims of India.