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Q. How reform movement of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi influenced the history of Muslim India?

Answer:

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I. Introduction :

Reform movement " also called as 'Revivalism of Muslim India', it starts with the efforts of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi. He, undoubtedly, played a significant role in the reformism of Muslim India. Muslims reached to zenith due to his teachings and works. There were various unislamic practices and heresy ^{adopted} in Islam at that time, but he successfully repulsed it. The early Mughal Kings, such as Akbar, Jehangir, Shah Jehan and later Aurangzeb followed his teachings. He was an influential person of that era. He openly opposes Deen-i-illahi, Hindu-Naturalism, and ultra-Sufism (Pantheism). Due to his teachings and production, Muslims ~~is~~ becomes aware of two nation theory, label, which led to the independence of

India and Pakistan.

II. Life sketch of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi :
 (1564 - 1624) : Sheikh Ahmad ^{was} born
 in 1564 Sirhind, Patiala (a town in India).
 His name was Ahmad and his surname was
 Bado-al-Din. His father's name was Sheikh Ahmad Shah.
 He received a traditional Islamic education at home
 and later at Sialkot. He also worked for some
 time in Lahore. At age of 36 years, he went to
 Delhi and joined Naqshbandia Silsila under the
 discipleship of Khwaja Baghi Billah. Hazrat Khwaja
 Baghi Billah predicted, " Sheikh Ahmad is such a
 light which will illuminate the whole world. "

III. Situation at His Time : Muslims were faced
 with several problems in situation at ~~him~~ his time.
 King Akbar had introduced Deen-i-Ilahi, which damages
 Islamic values. Ulama and some scholars had
 taken some unIslamic teachings and steps. For
 instance, liquor and gambling were declared halal,
 eating in Ramzan was allowed, Tinn o Malak were
 declared false and so on. Sirhindi labeled this
 age as " the age of the Islamic poverty ". He
 helps the society by cleansing the adulteration
 made in the religion. He refused to bow
 down before Emperors in their court.

IV. Influence of Reform Movement of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi Over the History of Muslim India :

Sheikh Ahmad is considered as Pioneer of Reform movement in Muslim India. His reform movement has a great socio-economic and political impacts over the history of Muslim India. Some of the effects are as follows.

(1) Preaching of Islam during the Imprisonment :

He was jailed for two years in Gwalior fort. Due to his efforts, thousands of non-muslims accepted Islam. He was titled as Khilafat-e-Fakhira with 1000 Rupees prize. Jehangir appointed him as Scholar of his state, and asked his Son Shah Jehan to become a spiritual disciple of Sheikh.

(2) Negation of Deen-i-Ilahi :

He openly criticized and rejected Deen-i-Ilahi. He wrote in his book Asbat-e-Nabuwat, "to consider Ram and Rahman one is stupidity because creator cannot be one with its creation." He refused to prostrate before the King in his court. His efforts help in restoration of true values of Islam.

(3) Aurangzeb Alamgir Followed his Instructions :

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After King Shah Jahan, who remained spiritual disciple of Sirhindi, Aurangzeb followed his religious teachings. Thus, Islam spread to most part of sub-continent.

(4) Opposition to Bidaat :-

He openly termed every kind of heresy (innovations in Deen) as dust, dust and darkness. He advised scholars from doing such things.

(5) Concept of King and Government :-

Sirhindi urged emperors to be free from any kind of religious adulteration and Heresy. Moreover, he said, "the position of the King is the same as that of 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."

(6) Superiority of Shariah to Mysticism :-

He opposed extreme Sufism and suggest a balanced way between Prophetic way bet and mysticism. Moreover, he said that there is happiness and pleasure in both Shariah and mysticism. He prohibited Muslims to not solely rely on Sufism.

(7) Opposing United Nationhood :

Sheikh Sirhindi said that, if Muslims want to live as a nation then they have to quit talk of sheik and Bid'at and stay away from Hindus. If Muslims did not awakened for separate national identity, then they would be swept away with the flood of combined nationhood. Islam would be destroyed like Buddhism and Hinduism.

(8) Idea of Two Nation Theory :

Sirhindi urged Muslims to have their separate nation and identity. Therefore, his thoughts are considered as pioneer of Muslim nationalism in the history of sub-continent. Indeed, later, which was translated into independent country - Pakistan.

(9) Promoting Islamic Practices and negation of Un-Islamic Practices :

His preaching and efforts revive the real image of Islam and thus Muslims of South-Asia stopped un-Islamic practices. Hence, original Islamic practices prevail.

(10) Support Wahdat-us-Shuhud and Negate

(6)

Wahded-ul-Wajood.

(11) Social Equality: His efforts ~~start~~ brought sense of equality in all the sects of sub-continent inhabitants.

(12) changed the direction of Muslims: His teachings make muslims aware of their condition and they changed their direction from wrong practices into the right path. Muslims, in short, get beneficial from his contributions.

V. Critical Analysis: Mujaddid Alf-e-Sani effects influence the history of Muslim India positively. It brought improvement in the socio-economic and political aspects of Muslim life. False religious practices were brought under control. Muslims followed the true spirit of Islam. His teachings gave them the idea of separate nationhood to Muslims of India. Overall, reform movement was founded by him, which was followed by Shah-Wahidullah and Sir Syed. Hence, reform movement had a great influence over the history of Muslim India.