

Note: kindly evaluate in detail as it is my first attempt, and mention any mistakes to be improved in next attempt. Please give score too! (out of 20)

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## QUESTION # 01

How Reform movement of Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi influenced the history of Muslim India?

### ANSWER:

#### INTRODUCTION:

Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi was born in the era, when condition of muslims in sub-continent was detrimental. They were humiliated, tortured and their status was declining day by day. The prevalence of Akbar's "Deen-e-Elahi" proved fatal to Islamic ideology of monotheism<sup>and</sup> shariah. Moreover, divergent thoughts of sufism from basic principles of Islam made him to counteract and reform the condition of Indian muslims. For his keen efforts to help muslims establish their identity, he is known as "Mujadid Alf Sani" (Reformer of Second millennium). His revival movements changed the fate of Indian muslims.

They were allowed to practice religion freely, they were given higher positions in government. Although, he didn't see muslims flourishing, but his legacy is continued uphill now. His mystical reforms along with social and moral reforms reassert the influence of muslims in India.



## REFORM MOVEMENTS:

The depression of Islam in sub-continent in Akbar's rule made Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi to lead reforms for changing socio-political thought process of muslims. Some of his reform movements are mentioned below:

- Abolishment of "Deen-e-Elahi".
- Concept of "Wahdat-ul-Shahood".
- Opposition of United nationhood.
- Significance of Shariah.
- Opposition of all kinds of "Biddah".
- Promotion of ethical and moral principles.
- Attention to charity and well-fare of society.
- Nullification of ideology of Pantheism.

Shaikh's reform movements proved instrumental for indian muslim to revive their real ideology and shape the future of India as glorified islamic civilization in sub-continent. His strategy to reform was influencing most powerful people through his writings, letters, booklets. This methodology proved leverage to change the history of muslims in south-east Asia.



## IMPACTS ON THE HISTORY OF MUSLIM OF INDIA:

### → RISE OF ISLAM (IMPACT ON RELIGION):

Reform movements of Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindhi helped muslims to make Islam rise again in India. Islamic principles are based on Shariah (Quran and Hadees). Denial of Prophets or Risa "Risalat" in Akbar's era had disastrous impacts on the life of muslims. Removal of hadees from core islamic principle threatened the fate of religion. In order to protect the real ideology and charisma of Islam, mujadid Alf-sani took lead and paved path for rise of Islam. Allama Iqbal wrote few lines about his struggle which are mentioned below:

گردن نہ جھکی جس کی جیاگیر کے آگے  
جس کے نفس گم سے بے گرمی احرار  
وہ بند میں سرمایہ ملت کا نگہبان  
اللہ نے کیا جس کو بروقت خبردار

He strived to protect the real essence of Islam which is also described in above mentioned lines. His struggle was seen after his life, when Islam prevailed in sub-continent in Aurangzeb's era. Many mosques were built, sufi-saints came to India from many parts of world, muslims were free to practice religion, muslims were given respect and higher position in administration.



## → IMPACT ON NATIONALISM: BEGINNING OF TWO NATION THEORY:

Majadid Alf-Sani was the one who pointed out the need for muslims to live seperate from hindus. He was the first to establish the seed of two nation ideology. Considering the condition of that time, where hindus were appointed on administrative posts, courts, authoritative roles. He emphasized muslim to stay away from them in one of his writings:

"If the awareness of seperate national identity is not awakened in Muslim then it is feared they they would be swept away with the flood of combined nationhood."  
(Shaikh Sixhindhi)

He ensured that muslims should consider themselves as seperate nation and do not indulge in shirk or biddah and do not tringle with hindus openly. Otherwise, hindus have tendency to destroy Islam & just like they did with budhism. Shaikh Sixhindhi was pioneer to establish the concept of two-nation which later became the cornerstone in making of Pakistan.



## → REVIVAL OF SUFISM:

His efforts in revival of real essence of sufism changed the mystical approach of Indian muslims. The harm and destruction caused by the concept of "Wahdat-ul-Wujood" established by Ibn-e-Arbi proved fatal. This ideology led to many muslim ~~diverging~~ diverting from "Tauheed" or "oneness of God", some believed <sup>that</sup> it led to pantheism. His concept of "Wahdat-ul-Shahood" countered and provided buttress to the crumpled sufism in ~~the~~ sub-continent. He ensured pure sufi teachings and adherence of monotheism and Islamic orthodoxy. His reforms helped muslims to stick to basic principles of Islam and do not get confused with illusionary beliefs. This led to re-alignment of muslim's mystical approach to basic ideology of Islam.

## → PROMOTION OF TAUHEED:

Shaikh's reform movements emphasis to put "Tauheed" or "Faith in God" <sup>above all</sup> was tremendous. His promotion of "Tauheed" was in broad sense. His writings or letters showed that he wanted to teach muslims concept of monotheism in broad sense. According to him, tauheed is not just believing in one God, but maintaining the unity of His lordship, attributes and worship. This thinking was lacking in muslims, as they thought believing in one God is enough. Shaikh's teachings awakened muslims to destroy the fort of fears and insecurities, which led to strong believe and faith in only God (Allah).



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## → IMPACT ON MUSLIM POLITICAL LEADERSHIP:

Shaikh's reform movements had profound effect on the future political system of sub-continent. He influenced many political, social leader through his letters and books. Although he was detained by Thangir in Gawadiaz for two years, but he continued to preach Islam through his writings. It was later when Thangir himself forgave him and gave title of "Khalat-e-Fakhira". He continued to influence political leaders and became a core member of advisers to muslim ruler. Furthermore, his legacy was continued by his son when Akbar became Aurangzeb became his student. He revived the thought of incorporation of practicing muslims in politics.

## → IMPACT ON SOCIETY:

His core ideology of peace and humanity carved basis of ideal muslim society in India. He was of belief that muslims should promote social welfare, charity and practice lovely nature, these attributes could prosper the way for Islam in India. His efforts in this context were pronounced when many institutions for the purpose of education, food, meeting were established throughout sub-continent. Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindhi emphasized to adhere moral and ethical practices ordered by Allah can help muslims to establish ideal society and flourish Islamic civilization.



## CRITICAL ANALYSIS:

The keen efforts of Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi through his reforms initially helped muslims to come out of abyss and focus on their religious ideology and true practices. This is shown by revival of strong muslim's identity in India, powerful growth of Islam. But later on, Indian muslim forgot his teachings and real essence of Islam taught by him. His struggle to influence muslims through his thoughts and writings encouraged them to revert to basics of Islam. Although, he was successful in changing perception of people to monotheism and shariah but his theology of separate nationhood for muslims and hindus proved bedrock for establishment of separate state based on Islamic principles. The true spirit of sufism and soul of Islamic teachings can be achieved if Indian muslims stick to his ideology. ~~and~~ This will not only help muslims to strengthen their religious practices but also help entire muslim ~~community~~ community.



## CONCLUSION:

Growing under the shadow of famous sufi "Baqi Billa", he sensed the need to get muslims back on track of real Islam. He was successful in awakening of muslims in India. His reform movements changed the history influenced the history of Indian muslims. Muslims focussed more on unity of Allah or "Tawheed", practice shariah, promote peace and humanity, established real concept of sufism which did not contradict monotheistic approach of Islam, muslim rulers were more practicing than before, need to stay away from hindus was pronounced. Due to his efforts Islam prevailed to many regions of sub-continent in subsequent years. His success in his mission to change the fate of muslims in the world is beautifully described by his own teacher "Baqi Billah" as:

"Sheikh Ahmed is such a light which will illuminate the whole world."