

Q Influence of the reform movement of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi on the history of Muslim India.

Answer 1 - Prologue

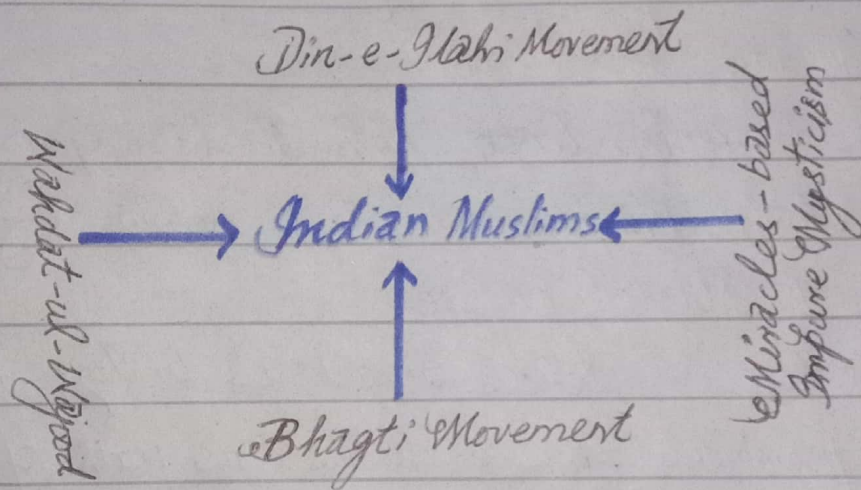
Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, famously known as "Mujaddid Alif Sani - The Reviver of Second Millennium", was born in religious family at Sirhind and his ancestral order traces back to Hazrat Umar Farooq - the second pious Caliph of Islam. He is not only truly regarded as true Islamic thinker and reformer of the sub-continent but of the entire Islamic world's Muslims. With his practical efforts, he purified the Islam in the sub-continent of the baseless traditions and also helped the Indian Muslims to restore their past glory rising from the abyssal depth of religious, political and socio-economic backwardness. He also repudiated all anti-Islamic edicts of Mughal ruler, Akbar the Great and helped Mughal court to enforce true Islamic principles during Jahangir's era. Thus, with his efficient multi-pronged preaching strategy, he refuted Din-I-Alhi of Akbar, Wahdat-ul-Wajood, Bhagti Movement and also

Kāramāt (miracles) - focused mysticism prevailed during that time. On one hand, he ensured the safety of spiritual contours of Indian Muslims, while on other hand, he helped in founding the Muslim nationalism in the sub-continent. Therefore, he is also regarded as the founder of Two Nation Theory (T.N.T.). Thus, his reform movement has profound impact on the history of Muslim India, which are elucidated in the following lines.

2- Prevailing Conditions of sub-continent during his era

Indian Muslims of the sub-continent were undergoing through serious challenges ranging from religious, political to socio-economic. The ruling emperor of Mughal - Akbar the Great - was determined to wipe out the distinct identity of Muslims through pagan philosophy for unifying religions, promoting Din-e-Ilahi in order to strengthen his political hold. Similarly, Bhāgti Movement was prevailing promoting the philosophy

of religions as equal such that all religions take followers near to God. Like Din-e-Ilahi, a threat to Muslims of South Asia, Wahdat-ul-Wajood was threatening concept for the entire Muslim Ummah and was propagating at that time. Therefore, Muslims of India were stuck in severe ideological, political and social quagmire.



3- Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi's Reform Movement and its Influence on Indian Muslim

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi is truly known as Mujadid-e-Alif Sani for his effective reform movement for the religious and socio-political revival of Indian Muslims. His main focus was based on:

i- Promoting Tauheed (Oneness of God)

- ii- To follow the true contours of Islam
- iii- Ittiba-e-Sunnā (Following the Last Prophet (Peace be Upon Him) in true essence)

Thus, keeping above premises as the basis of the reform movement, he adopted following three-pronged strategy to promote and propagate his reformation:

a- Preparing Disciples and assigning them mission of promoting true principles of Quraan and Sunnah

b- Correspondence with Muslim Governors, Amirs, Wazirs, and other prominent figures of Mughal Empire

These letters aimed at putting the prominent figures on the true path of Islam were later published under the title of Maktabat-e-Imam Rabani.

c- Taking Nobility of Mughal Empire into confidence and control.

This multi-pronged reformation strategy proved effective and efficient and brought about significant and long-lasting influence on the history of Indian Muslims. This influence is discussed in the upcoming lines:

i- Religious Contributions

↳ Wiping out Din-e-Ilahi, Opposing Wahdat-ul-Wajood, Countering Bhakti Movement)

The loyal disciples trained by Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi in Quranic principles, correspondence with the prominent stalwarts of Mughal Empire and taking the nobility into his influence helped to busy Din-e-Ilahi before the death of Akbar, the Great. Thus, Hindu efforts to erase the spiritual contours of Indian Muslims were curbed in time.

Similarly, Bhakti Movement was also effectively countered. Wahdat-ul-Wajood, a philosophy of equating Creator and Creatures, was also opposed and it was replaced with Wahdat-ul-Shahood.

Wahdat-ul-Wajood \rightarrow Pantheism
Wahdat-ul-Shahood \rightarrow Monotheism.

Thus, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi promoted Wahdat-ul-Shahood, which is propagating Tauheed (Oneness of God) in essence. In this way, he safeguarded the spiritual borders of Muslim India and strengthened the passion of Muslimhood and principles of pure Islam.

ii- Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi's Reform Movement and Socio-political Impacts

The reform movement of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi had not only influence on the religious lives of Indian Muslims but it also had profound impact on the socio-political aspects of Muslim India. He actively opposed the anti-Islamic rituals of Mughal court. He refuted Sajda-e-Tajimi, i.e., prostration in front of king in respect, himself and he was incarcerated for disrespect. Similarly, he opposed calling king as Zil-e-Ilahi (Shadow of God). He also resisted the growing influence of Hindus in the state affairs of Mughal court. His consistent, efficient and effective preaching strategy compelled Emperor Jahangir to root out Din-e-Ilahi from state affairs and re-imposed Jaziya and ended Sajda-e-Tajimi. Therefore, his reform movement helped to revive the Islamic influence in the Muslim India and motivated

Muslims to regain their socio-political status.

iii- Rise of Muslim Nationhood in Muslim India

The religious, and sociopolitical impacts of Reform Movement by Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi helped in laying the foundations of Muslim nationalism in India. His reform movement not only freed Muslims from the yoke of Hindu dominance but it also compelled Muslims of India to realize their separate identity, culture, ideology and sociopolitical and economic system. Thus, his reform movement had profound impact and role in founding and strengthening the Muslim nationhood in the Muslim India. That's why Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi is regarded as the founder of Muslim Nationhood in Muslim India and in other words a true father of two nation theory.

4. Conclusion

The Reform Movement of

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi has profound impact on the religious, social and political history of Muslim India. This reform movement wiped out the extra-Islamic rituals from mysticism and reformed Muslim society of Muslim India and promoted true Quranic principles. It also erased the impacts of the dominance of Hindu rituals and political influence from the Mughal empire's court. Similarly, he has also authored and compiled a number of books, which are still illuminating the path of guidance for Muslims.

In conclusion, the influence of the reform movement of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi was so profound on Muslim India that it strengthened Muslim nationalism and thus founded the Two Nation theory, which later on brought the paradigm shift in the history of Muslim India and separate state for Muslims - Pakistan was founded.