

Q# How the reform movement of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi influenced the history of Muslim India?

Ans INTRODUCTION (1564-1624)

Hazrat Mujadid Alf Sani's real name was Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi. He was a descendant of Second Caliph, Hazrat Umar (RA) and was a prominent disciple of Khwaja Baqi Billa. In his childhood, he memorized Quran, Hadith, Tafsis and Makul (Philosophy). He got spiritual training from Baqi Billa. He is well known for diagnosing the evils of Muslim society. He died on 10th December, 1624.

EVILS OF MUSLIM SOCIETY IN AKBAR'S TIME:

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi was the first person to recognize and pinpoint the vices and evils of Muslim society at that time. He described the following evils, which were prevalent in Indian society.

- 1) Un-Islamic practices under the Hindu influence.
- 2) Promotion of Rajputs and marriage with their daughters during Akbar's era.
- 3) Din-i-Ilahi was a great danger to Islam. This religious dogmatic system of Akbar greatly influenced and affected the beliefs of Indian Muslims.
- 4) Withdrawal of Patronage of Islam.

REFORMATION OF MUSLIM SOCIETY.

Hazrat Mujadid Alf Sani faced a great challenge to bring reforms in Indian society. His main purpose was to purify the Indian Muslims from the un-Islamic practices.

1) Sheikh Ahmed's letters and sermons.

He wrote letters to the leading nobles of the Royal Court and these letters are known as 'Maktubat-i-Islam Kabani'. He criticized Din-i-Ilahi introduced by Akbar.

In one of his letters, he wrote,

"The monarch is to the world (state) as the heart is to the body. If the heart remains pure, it keeps the body pure as well."

2) Sheikh Ahmed is the pioneer of Two Nation Theory.

Sheikh Ahmed adopted a stern action against Hindus. In order to save the Muslim separate identity, he advocated the exclusiveness and separatedness of the Muslims. Therefore, he can be called the pioneer of Two Nation Theory in India.

3) Opposition to Atheism, Polytheism and Din-i-Ilahi.

In opposing all the other religious dogmas, he started preaching Tauheed (Oneness of Allah). He strongly opposed the Hindu influence on Indian Muslims and also ridiculed the concept of Din-i-Ilahi, introduced by Mughal Emperor, Akbar.

Through his forceful articles, he exposed its fallacy and also predicted its dangerous effects for the future generation.

4) Disposition of Hindus.

Sheikh Ahmed strongly opposed the view of Indian Muslims intermingling with Hindus. He stated that Hindus and Muslims are two different nations and therefore, Muslims should distance themselves from Hindus. He also forced on re-imposing Jizya (tax) and cow-slaughter as they were banned in Akbar's era. In his view, Hindus must be expelled from court and must be removed from important positions in order to maintain Islam's hierarchy.

Conclusion:

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi tried to reform the Indian Muslim society which, at that time was under the influence of un-Islamic traditions. Although he couldn't achieve his target during his own life, but his influence remains on the later generations like, Shah Waliullah and Sheikh Ahmed Raza Khan. His dreams and point of views were realized during Aurangzeb's era.

From the above mentioned discussion, it may be concluded that Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi was a revolutionary religious reformer. He campaigned for enforcement of Shariah laws, which were absent during the regime of Akbar.