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Keeping in view the Socio-political circumstances of the Sub-continent, discuss the role of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi who revived Islamic ideology and established Muslim Identity in Sub-continent.

1 INTRODUCTION:

During the Mughal rule in Sub-continent, the prostration before a ruling King had become a law. Although it was un-Islamic, the person who refused bow down faced punishment. Historically, one person is known for his refusal to prostrate before Jahangir, a Mughal King, and regarded as great reformer. This person is Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi who not only revived the Islamic ideology but also established distinct Muslim identity in the Sub-continent.

2 Who was Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi?

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi also known as "Mujaddid Alf Thani" is a great reformer of Islam. He was born in 1564 and died in 1648. He was a disciple

Khawja Baqi ullah. Khawaja had predicted about him that:

"He will turn into a light that will illuminate the whole world"

3 How Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi revived Islamic ideology of Islam and established Muslim identity

Socio-political background of Sub-continent

- Babar
- Humayon
- Akbar → Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi

The socio-political situation of Sub-continent was standing on the verge of collapse. The Deen-i-illah of Akbar has casted its shadow over the social and religious life of muslims. Politically, Akbar was enhancing its contacts with Hindus. AS a result of this, muslims were going far away from their religion.

Role of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi in reviving Islamic ideology

i) opposed Deen-i-Ilahi

Akbar, a mughal King,

in order to achieve the sympathy of different communities following different religions formed a new religion called Deen-i-Elahi. It included different aspects of all religion

Mixture of Christianity, Jainism
Buddhism, Islam → Deen-i-Elahi

It was completely against the true spirit of Islam. Therefore, Sheikh Ahmad started to oppose it in order to revive the true spirit of Islam.

ii Opposed Wahdat ul Wajood

Wahdat ul Wajood was a philosophy popularised by IBNE-ARABI. It means that creator and creation are inseparable. According to this philosophy, God is present in everything. Even Hindus and non-muslim communities were considered comparable to muslims due to this philosophy. This philosophy was threatening the foundation of Islam. Therefore, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi opposed it

iii Promulgated Wahdat ul Shahood

In reaction to wahdat ul wajood, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi popularised what the philosophy of wahdat ul Shahood that was

aligned with the Islamic principles. This philosophy make it clear that the creator and creation are separable

Wahdat ul Wajood	Wahdat ul Shuhud
• "Creator and creation are inseparable"	"Creator and creation are separable"

The philosophy of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi was very much like the Islamic principles. It saved muslim from ^{going} astray.

iv Deposed innovation in Religion

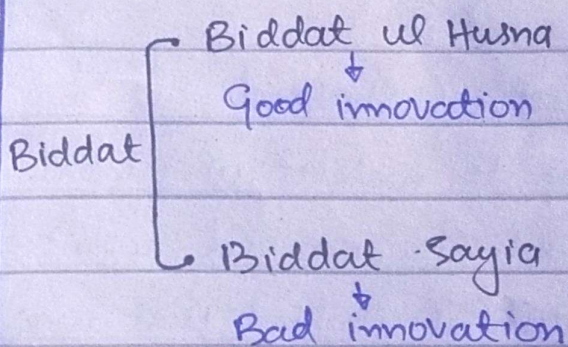
According to Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, there is no need of innovation in Islam because it has been completed.

In reference he has presented this ayat:

Today, I have completed religion for you (Al-Quran)

By keeping in view the verse of Holy Quran, Sheikh had deposed innovation in religion.

Biddat ul Sayia and Biddat Husna both are not allowed



v Letters to Nobles: To draw their attention to Islam

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi was aware of the fact that the Deen-i-Elahi had been reached in the courts of elite people of that time. Therefore, he thought it would be a better service to Islam that the nobles could be attracted to Islam. DR. Mubarak Ali, a renowned historian, has argued that the efforts of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi to revive Islamic ideology was turned into reality due to the attention of elites of that time. (AKbar's India, Akbar Ka Hindustan)

Role of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi in preserving distinct Muslim identity

i) Opposed the construction of Temples

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi opposed the construction of Hindu temples in Muslim community areas. In Akbar's period, temples were also being erected on places of mosques. Sheikh bitterly opposed this move of Akbar. He used to said:

"the strengthening of Hindus will weaken Muslims"

Sheikh had conjectured that the Hindus had no mercy for muslim.

ii Opposed Hindu practices among Muslims

Due to interaction with Hindus, Muslims had developed various Hindu practices among themselves. These practices were against the religion of Muslims. For instance, Akbar had married with Hindu princes. Moreover, he had idols in his palace due to having Hindu wives. These moves of Akbar were alarming for the survival of Islam. Therefore, Sheikh had bitterly opposed the activities of Akbar.

iii Highlighted the distinction of Muslims: Demand of jizya and cow slaughter

Akbar had banned cow slaughter and jizya to gain the sympathy of Hindus. These moves of Akbar were aimed at eradicating the distinct identity of Muslim and merge them into different Indian communities. But Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi raised a voice against it and secured Muslim identity. These two bans were removed by Aurangzeb under the influence of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi's teachings.

iv Provided the foundation of Two nation Theory

The promulgation of distinct identity of muslim during that period provided a base for two nation theory. Later, this two nation theory caused the partition of Sub-continent. The architects of partition of also regard him as the first person who promulgated Two nation theory.

4 Conclusion

The teachings of Sheikh Ahmad Rishindi had revived the muslim identity and provided solid basis for the return of true Islamic spirit. The teachings of Sheikh Ahmad Rishindi are still applicable and provide information in various fields. Therefore, he is regarded as a reviver of Islamic ideology.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has rightly said about him:

"He is the most influential reviver of Islam" (Tazkira)