

Question. 02

Q: Keeping in view the Socio-Political Circumstances, discuss the role of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi (Mujadid Alf Thani) who revived Islamic Ideology and established Muslim identity in Sub-Continent. (CSS-2024)

[1]. Introduction :

During the reign of Emperor Akbar, the Bhakti Movement significantly influenced the atmosphere of Sub-continent. In response, Akbar introduced the concept of Deen-e-Elahi, which blurred the clear distinction between Islam and other religions of Sub-continent. Thus, revival of true Islamic principles became the pressing need of those times. Consequently, Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi, answered this call for revival. He emphasized upon the fundamental tenets of Islam as anchored in Quran, Sunnah and Shariah to restore the Islamic Ideology and social fabric of muslim communities. and most importantly to reaffirm its distinct identity.

[2]. Overview Of Socio-Political Circumstances At The Time Of Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi:

During Akbar's era, Deen-e-Elahi blurred the lines between Islam and other religions of Sub-continent. This weakened the true practice of Islam and Muslim identity. Besides, Muslims felt sidelined as Mughal rulers were more focused on political stability than on up-holding Islamic values. Moreover, economic inequality also grew among people which causes unrest. Gradually, Muslims began adopting Non-Islamic customs and inter-faith marriages, leading to loss of Muslim identity.

[3]. Imperative Role Of Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi In Reviving Islamic Ideology And Establishing Muslim Identity:

3.1) Akbar's Deen-e-Elahi Sparked Sirhindi's Opposition :

Akbar's introduction of Deen-e-Elahi in 1582, blurred the boundaries of Monotheism (Tauheed). Resultantly, Sirhindi condemned this Syncretism.

~ (Maktubat, Volume 01, letter 01)

3.2) Naqshbandi - Reform :

Sirhindi, later joined the Naqshbandi Silsilah in 1593. He rejected the concept of wahdat-ul-wujood (Unity of being), and aligned tasawwuf with Shariah.

~ (Maktubat, Volume 01, letter 05)

3.3) Pilgrimage To Mecca and Spiritual Leadership :

After performing Hajj in 1598, Sirhindi emphasized upon the Tazkiyah-al-Nafs (purification

of Soul) and provide guidance of spirituality of to Ummah.

~ (Maktubā, Volume 02, letter 30)

3.4) Restoration Of Shariah and Sunnah, after Akbar's Death:

Post-1602, Sirhindi urged upon strict adherence to Sunnah and Shariah, under Jahangir's rule.

~ (Maktubā, Volume 01, letter 03)

3.5) Revival Of Islamic Scholarships During Jahangir's Regime:

Sirhindi focused on ihya'-al-ulum (revival of knowledge) and urged scholars to prioritize the Quran and Sunnah, over mere Fiqh Formalism.

~ (Maktubā, Volume 01, letter 07)

3.6) Restoration Of Muslim Identity:

Sirhindi Stressed

upon the preserving the Muslim identity against religious syncretism.

~ (Maktubā, Volume 01, letter 10)

3.7) Campaign Against Social Syncretism:

Sirhindī condemned the adoption of Muslims, the Non-Islamic customs and inter-faith marriages.

~ (Maktubā, Volume 02, letter 20)

3.8) Advocacy for Economic Inequality:

Sirhindī advocated against Mughal's exploitation of taxation system & urged for fairness.

~ (Maktubā, Volume 02, letter 25)

3.9) Political Engagement Through Letters:

Sirhindī greatly influenced the Mughal's policy through his dialogues & letters and avoiding rebellion.

~ (Maktubā, Volume 01, letter 15)

3.10) (Refusing Ceremonial Prostration (Sajdah-e-Ta'zimi))

Sirhindī refused the Sajdah-e-Ta'zimi (Ceremonial - Prostration) to Jahangir led to imprisonment.

~ (Maktubāt, Volume 03, Letter 35)

[4]. Contemporary Significance Of Sirhindī's Legacy:

- i) Influenced the Creation of Pakistan through emphasizing upon distinct Muslim identity.
- ii) Inspired later revivalist movements like Shah Wali-ullah and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan.
- iii) Shaped Global Naqshbandi Sufi exercise.
- iv) Informed modern debates on religious pluralism.
- v) Up-holding Shariah in Muslim Societies.
- vi) Peaceful diplomacy through letters exemplified Islam as Non-Violent Religion.

discuss this part in a bit more detail. also add references/examples.

[5]. Conclusion:

Sikhindi's nuanced and Steadfast response to political, Social and religious challenges of this era, to preserve Islamic Ideology and solidifying the Muslims identity, left lasting legacy to continue to shaped muslims ideology. As Hazrat Khwaja Baqi Billah, predicted that:

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

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