

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

Introduction:

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi was born in 1564 in Sirhindi, India. He also known as "Mujjaddat Alif Sanni" which literally means "reviver of Islam during the second millennium". He played a vital role in reviving and reaffirming Islam in India during the rule of Emperor Akbar. SM Ikram said about Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi that

The most forceful and original thinker in India, before Shah Waliullah and Allama Iqbal.

At the age of 36, Sheikh Ahmad went to Delhi and joined the Naqshbandiya Silsilah under guidance of Khawja Baqi Billah. Khawja Baqi Billah predicted that

Sheikh Ahmed would be a guiding light for the entire world.

Condition OF India during His time of Akbar's Era:

During the Akbar's era the condition of Muslims of India became very worse.

→ Akbar started to married with Hindus

ladies for peace and political benefits.

As a result, a number of Hindu customs and practices had become the part of the state.

→ Akbar waived Jaziya which was implemented on Non-Muslims.

→ In his era, Hindus was in the court, worshipping places, and they started to rebuilt the construction of Hindu temples.

→ Scholars had deviated from the core teaching of Islam. For example, some scholars declared alcohol and gambling permissible, and eating during Ramdan was allowed.

→ Ban on cow slaughter.

Akbar's policies strengthened the Hindus and weakened the Muslims.

→ One of the biggest things that happened, Akbar proclaimed "**Din-i-Illahi**" a new religion or divine faith. In order to find a middle ground between Hinduism and Islam, Akbar proclaimed "Din-i-Illahi" in 1581. Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi strongly opposed this idea.

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi referred to this era as

"The age of Islamic Poverty".

He emphasized on the urgent need of a reformer who could guide the emperor and the Muslim society as a whole.

Sheikh's Reforms:

After Akbar passed away and Jahangir became the new ruler, Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi emerged as a reformer aiming to eliminate the practices and beliefs that were not in the line of Islam.

Methodology:

→ He wrote letters to the nobles in Jahangir's court, many of whom had served in Akbar's court as well.

→ He used sermons and wrote books to guide the people.

As a result, Sheikh was summoned to Jahangir's court and asked to bow down.

However, he refused, saying that bowing down to anyone other than Allah was against the preaching of Islam. This refusal angered Jahangir, he imprisoned Sheikh Ahmed for two years.

Preaching of Islam during Imprisonment:

He continued preaching of Islam during the imprisonment. Due to his efforts thousands Non-Muslims accepted Islam. Jahangir was under the influence of his Islamic writings released him and offered huge gifts to him.

He demand following before the audience of Emperor:

→ Sajidab before the emperor should be abolished.

→ Reimposing Jaziya and cow slaughter.

→ Hindus to be expelled from the court and removed from important positions.

→ Muslim shouldn't inter-mingle, inter-dine and intermarry with Hindus.

Influence of Sheikh Ahmed's Reform Movement:

Religious Influence:

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi opposed the philosophy of Bhakti movement, Din-i-Illahi and Sulh-i-kulh that was against the Islamic teaching. He said that

To consider Ram and Rehman one is stupidity because Creator cannot be one with its creation.

He gave the concept of Wahdat-ul-Shahood and declared that God and man are two separate entities and man has always been subservient to God. He opposed the concept of Wahdat-ul-Wajood.

- These efforts of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi caused for the revival of Islam in India. Aurangzeb Alamgir established the Muslim society in his rule according to the teachings of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi.
- Several madrasas and educational institutions were established to encourage Islamic learning in sub-continent.
- His reforms purified the religious and practical life of Muslims.

Political Influence:

- Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi gave the **Two-Nation theory** he said that Hindu and Muslim are different people. Muslim rulers should distance themselves from Hindus. If they not do this Muslim rule would be end. → These (thn) influenced on the Muslim rulers, Jahangir and Aurangzeb, and also this is ^{guidance} for upcoming Muslims rulers.
- On the basis of this theory Muslim got their own homeland Pakistan.

Social Influence:

His reform also influenced the Muslims for social activities.

→ He prohibited the Muslims to not intermarry with Hindus because this is not fruitful for society and also for Muslim rules.

→ He gave freedom to follow Islamic rituals and traditions. He also tried to spread the Islam in society.

This guided the Muslims to spread the Islam in society where they lived.

Conclusion:

Sheikh Ahmed Raza Khan played a significant role in reviving of Islam in India. Sheikh openly discussed the social, political and religious matters by adopting true Islamic values.

He helped Muslims have a distinctive identity from Hindus. He gave concept of Two-Nation theory, on which Muslims successfully secured a separate homeland, Pakistan.