

PAK-AFFAIRS

25-June-2025

—/—/— 6th

How the reform movement of Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindi influenced the history of Muslim India? (CSS-2020)

1-Introduction:

Sheikh Ahmad Sarhind was born in 1564 in Sarhind and also known as Mujaddid Alf Sani. This title was given to him by Khawaja Baavi Billah (a prominent personality of Naqshbandia order). He got his early education about Islam from Sarhind and then he went to Delhi where he met and became the favorite disciple of Khawaja Baavi Billah.

2- Situation at the time of Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindi:

Mughal emperor Akbar had launched his own 'Deen-i-Ilahi' at that time. Due to which, the teachings of Islam was mixed up with this man-made theology. Deen-i-Ilahi was totally opposite

1/1/20

to the spirit of Islam. According to it, liquor and gambling was haram. Hajj was no longer a pillar necessary for Muslims ~~as~~ which is a pillar of Islam. It also encouraged Hindus to ridicule Islam and they also started interfering in state's affairs. Mysticism was also prominent at that time among Muslims. Sheikh Ahmed Sarhindi cleansed Islam from this adulteration.

3- Sheikh's reforms:

Sheikh Ahmed Sarhindi brought many reforms in order to bring Islam in its original shape which are discussed below.

(a) Concept of Wahdat-ul-Shahood:

Sheikh gave the concept of Wahdat-ul-Shahood to counter the concept of Wahdat-ul-Wajood. Wahdat-ul-Wajood was a concept (introduced by Ibn-e-Arabi) which

//_/20

considered that the unit being of all thing is god: there is nothing except Allah. Sheikh countered this narrative by giving the idea of Wahdat-ul-Shuhood which clarified that Allah and his creation are two different things they could not be mixed together.

(b) Countering Deen-i-Ilahi:

Deen-i-Ilahi was an attempt to change the true spirit of Islam and is inspired by the Bhakti movement (Hindu religious movement). It was tried to create a theology which could offer things or beliefs that were accepted by all the citizens. In general, it was a step taken by Mughal emperor Akbar to strengthen his rule. Sheikh effectively countered it by writing letters to the Ulema of India to aware them with the sensitivity

1/1/20
of this issue.

"Ram and Rahman cannot be considered one because creator cannot be one with its creation"

~ Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindi

(C) Opposition of united Nationhood:

The main goal of Sheikh Ahmed Sarhindi was to cleanse the Islam from the alteration, but he also emphasized the recognition of Muslims as separate nation. He was concerned that the Hindu and other cultures will affect the teachings of Islam. According to Sheikh, "If the awareness of separate national identity would not be awakened within the Muslims, it is feared that they would be swept away with the flood of combined nationhood. Islam would be destroyed like Buddhism and Hinduism."

(d) Shariah's superiority to Mysticism:

Mysticism was too common

___/___/___

among Muslims at that time. It was due to lack of knowledge about Islam. He taught them that the way to achieve the love of Allah is to lead the life according to the life of prophet (PBUH) and his companions. Companions of Prophet never spent an hour of meditation (tafakkur), instead they taught us to ^{fulfill} ~~offer~~ our obligation like Salat, Fasting, Zakat and Hajj with sincerity. Sheikh also emphasized to adopt a moderate approach towards Islam as none of companions of prophet (PBUH) emitted a cry, went into ecstasy and behaved abnormally.

(e) Concept of government:

After the reign of Akbar, Jahangir handled the affairs of government. There were some differences of Sheikh with the emperor in the start. After some time, Jahangir would grant him audience after

___/___/___:00

Maghrib prayers where Sheikh would talk about religion. His views about government was that emperor holds key importance in shaping the affairs of state so he should be free from any adulteration. Also, the emperor or king is the custodian of the state according to him.

These were the reforms or efforts of Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindi which influenced the Muslims of India and paved the way for upcoming Ulema to preach the teachings of Islam.