

Date: _____

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What influence Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi has left on the history of Muslims of India? Discuss critically.

**He was the custodian of Milet's wealth
Whom Allah had awakened at the exact
Before Jahangir, who refused to bend his neck
Passion of nobles is due to the warmth ^{said} of him.
(Allama Iqbal)**

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhind was born on 26th June, 1564 (973 AH) in Sirhind (East Punjab). He contributed significantly towards protection of Muslim society from un-Islamic values. It was Sheikh Ahmad's untiring efforts that persuaded the Muslims to return to the accepted tenets of Islam. Sheikh Ahmad's influence was spread to Afghanistan, Central Asia and Ottoman Empire. For his services, he hailed as Mujadid Alf Sani (reformer of second millennium).

Date:

Early Life:

Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi was born in 1564 in Sirhind. His family lineage join with Hazrat Umar Farooq, the 2nd caliph of Islam. He received his early education at home. He learnt Holy Quran by heart at an early age. He studied tafseer, hadith and maqul (philosophy) from his father at age of seventeen. He arrived in the capital city Akbarabad in 1589, where he met two personalities of Royal Court of Akbar, Shaykh Abu-al-Fazi, and his brother Fayzi. He carried along with them good time but when they drifted him from norms of Shariah (Islamic law), he parted company with them and dedicated his life to reviving of Islam in its true pristine form.

Date: _____

Conditions at that time :

"Allah shall raise for this Ummah at the head of every century a man who shall renew (or revive) for its religion."

(Sunan Abu Dawood)

The Muslim society had degenerated when Mujaddid Alf Sani appeared on the horizon. A number of Hindu customs and practices had become part of their creed. The commandments of Shariah and Sunnah were being flouted. Moreover, the Mughal emperor Akbar had adopted controversial policies in Islamic history. He introduced Din-e-Ilahi in 1581, emphasising monotheism tinged by pantheism, adoration of sun, fire and artificial lights. Muslims were practising many un-Islamic practices such as a widespread in different karamat and miracles of saint, Ulama

Date: _____

had ceased to refer Quran and Sunnah; jizya on non-Muslims had been lifted, ban on cow-slaughter, high offices were being occupied by Hindus, inter marriages between Muslim and Hindus, stagnant Muslim society. The doctrine of Wahdat-ul-wajood was highly misleading and opposite to the teaching of Islam.

**"In previous regime
all types of darkness
and disturbance
were only because
of the avaiice of
the Ulama-i-Sa"**

In short, these events led Sheikh Ahmad Sirhind to endeavour to restore the pure doctrine of Islam.

Religious Influence:

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhind venture to restore the

Date: _____

pure doctrine of Islamic thought and comp~~el~~^{ed} the Muslims to follow Shariah and Sunnah in letter and spirit. He raised his ~~voice~~^{voice} against prevailing evils and ceased religious amalgamation. In this regard, he wrote letters called Makh^hutabati-Imam rabhani to nobles and rulers conveying his ideas. He exposed the fallacy of Din-e-Elahi and came out to curb its influence. He persuaded the Muslim to adopt simple lifestyle in light of Quran and Sunnah. He renewed the importance of Namaz and fasting. He emphasized the concept of Tauheed and philosophy Wab^hat-ul-Shahid against philosophy of Wadat-ul-Ulapod. As a result of his struggle, all Islamic rituals again became part of society, all Islamic. The great practice of slaughtering cows, ordering Khutbas, and constructing eminent mosques

Date: _____

started again due to Shaikh's reform movement. Thus, these were his religious struggle that purified the religious and practical life of the Muslims.

"For about a century Islam is so oppressed that the infidels are not satisfied with the mere promulgation of the practices of Kufr but they even want Islamic norms and practices to be totally abolished, and Islam and Muslim completely rooted out. The situation is so serious that if any Muslim follows the path of Islam, he is assassinated (Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi)"

Political Influence:

Although he was a religious reformer and never took part in politics, his political influence was of great importance. He briefly elaborated on the unbridgeable gap between Islam and Hinduism that in turn gave birth to Two Nation Theory. At same time,

Date: _____

a number of Muslim reformers gave rise to the concept of joint nationalism - in order to popularise Islam. This trend proved injurious to the separate and distinct national image of the Muslims. Consequently, Shaikh Ahmad put end to the concept; he laboured to keep the national and religious identity of the Muslim intact. He was a staunch advocate of Muslim separatism and adopted stern attitude towards the Hindus. He with help of orthodox Jahangir, re-imposed Jizya on Hindus. Thus, Shaikh Ahmad was first torch bearer of Islam, who inspired other reformers, such as Shah Waliullah, Syed Ahmed Shaddeed etc in working towards a valued goal of the Two Nation Theory.

"The letters of 'Mujadid-i-Aij-i-Sani' cover a vast field ranging from technology and metaphysics to politics and missionary activities"

(Prof. Shaikh Abdur Rashid)

Date: _____

Social Influence

Shaukh Ahmed Sirhind was not only a great religious scholar but also a social reformer. He contributed to the protection of Muslim society from the looming perils of religious amalgamation. He prohibited the concept of inter-religious marriages that was foundation of all social evil. With his spiritual power the conditions of Muslim society soon became better. The Muslim persuaded-previously inhibited-Islamic rituals and adopted simple habits in light of Islam and Sunnah. As a result, the supremacy of Islam was restored in subcontinent.

Critical Analysis:

AKhar's un-Islamic activities led the Muslims toward destruction. His policy of Din-e-Ilahi and philosophy of Adalat-ul-Majood welcomed anti-Islamic ideologies. At the hour of turmoil, Mujadid Alf Sani

Date: _____

came in front to restore and receive the glory of Islam through concept of Two-Nation Theory the philosophy of Wadat-ul-Shahid, and revival movements. Indeed, his initiative of supremacy of Islam was so rational and true that later it was continued by his sons and other emperors like Jahangir, Shah Jahan etc.

Conclusion:

In short, Sheikh Ahmad restored Shariah and lost the glory of Islam. He purified the socio-political-religion sphere of the communities of India in the time of Akbar.

He himself bore all difficulties during the reign of Akbar, but he never prostrated before him. He was first who could be called a propounder of Muslim Ummah. Dr Abdul Hamid Abhari explains Mujadid in following words:

"Mujadid Alf Sani never wanted to topple government and always tried to teach the rulers and masses about the message of virtue and goodness"