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IMAM RABBANI HAZRAT MUJADID ALIF SANI

(Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi)

HMAS (the reformer of second millennium) was a great Muslim Saint and mystic of Naqshbandia Order. He challenged the might of Akbar to reestablish the glory of Islam which had been gravely threatened by the anti-islamic trends of Akbar. By 1604, the time was ripe for great reformer to appear to bring about a second millennium of the islamic era.

HAAS, whose real name was Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi was a descendant of second pious Caliph Hazrat Umar for which he also referred as "Farooqi". He was a prominent disciple of Khawja Baqi Billah, an eminent saint of Naqshbandia Spiritual order. He is popularly known as Mujadid-i-Alif Sani. He was born on June 15, 1564 at Sirhind, the Capital of Eastern Punjab. He received his education under the prominent and learned teachers at Siassot, memorized Holy Quran and then switched over to the study of Hadith. ^{During} His ^{mystical} quest of thirst for knowledge he came in contact with leading lights of Akbar court Abu-al-Fazl and Faizi. When both learnt of his brilliance and insights they tried to brought him in Akbar Court. However

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his connections with Abu Al Fazl and Faizi did not prolong - because of Abu-al-Fazl's unislamic trends. He wrote famous books Isbat-un-Nabuwat (affirmation of prophethood) in which he gave excellent explanation of prophethood.

Baqi Billah's discipleship brought him into close contacts with leading scholars of those days. Khawaja Baqi Billah was greatly impressed by his mystical qualities and wrote about him:

"Sheikh Ahmed is an individual from Sirhind, rich in knowledge and vigorous in action. I associated him for few days and found truly marvellous things in his spiritual life. He will turn into a light which will illuminate the world."

He was drawn into mysticism by his father, Sheikh Abd-al-Ahad who was a prominent Sufi and scholar. He received Khilafat from his father in a Chishtiya and Suhrawardiya spiritual order.

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Social Conditions of India:

When Akbar ascended the Mughal throne, he gradually introduced wide-ranging political, social and religious reforms policies that reshaped the empire. **Politically**, he pursued a policy of centralization and inclusiveness. He appointed Hindus, particularly Rajputs to high civil and military positions, created matrimonial alliances with Rajput princesses and abolished discriminatory taxes such as Jizya and pilgrimage tax to win the loyalty of non-Muslims.

These steps strengthened the Muslim Mughal state but also shifted the balance of power in favor of Hindus, which worried sections of the Muslim elite. **Socially**, Akbar encouraged cultural influence fusion b/t Muslims and Hindus promoting intermarriages, adopting Hindu customs at courts and participating in un-Islamic festivals. His court became a hub of cultural synthesis where music, art, literature were patronized without strict religious boundaries.

Religiously, Akbar went even further by questioning orthodox Islamic authority, reducing the influence of Ulama and promoting religious tolerance. He invited scholars of different faiths, including Hindus, Jains, Parsis and Jesuits to debate in Ibadat Khana (House of Worship).

Ultimately, he introduced his own syncretic elements of creed, the **Deen-i-Ilahi** which

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Combined elements of various religions and demanded loyalty to the emperor as a spiritual leader. While these policies enhanced Akbar's authority and promoted a cosmopolitan empire they also alarmed orthodox Muslims who felt that Islamic identity was being compromised and its law sidelined.

It was in this env. that SAS, later known as Mujaddid Alf Sani, rose as a reformer. Viewing Akbar's innovations as a threat to the purity of Islam, He stood firmly against them by advocating for the revival of Shariah and purification of Sufism and the reassertion of Muslim political and social supremacy. His movement represented a strong intellectual and spiritual resistance to Akbar's policies, aiming to safeguard Islam in the subcontinent.

Cheikh Ahmed Efforts

The task of reforming Islam and Muslim society on a spiritual and cultural pattern was really a stupendous one which required sustained efforts. He undertook the job of purifying Muslim Society of un-Islamic tendencies. He made accomplishments through his consistent efforts in following ways, by sending his students far away in Indian communities and writing letters, books, pamphlets and giving sermons.

Religious efforts:-

(ii)

Opposition of Din-i-Ilahi

He firmly opposed Nikbass deen-i-Ilahi and other unislamic innovation. He made use of his Maklubat (letters) to nobles and rulers to expose the danger of this false creed and urged them to reject it. As a striking example, when Akbar required nobles to perform Sijda as an act of royal etiquette, Shihindi condemned the practice as shirk, declaring it absolutely against Islamic monotheism.

(iii)

Wahdat-ul-Wajud and Wahdat-ul-Shahid

The philosophy of Wahdat-ul-Wajud was presented by some sufi's at Akbar's time. They believed that the entire universe is a symbol of Almighty God and a source of revelation of God's sovereignty. The advocates of this believed that

There was no living difference b/t the Man and his created God and both individually and God are not separated from each other

They also believed that every particle of Universe represented the presence of God and therefore worship the God's creature amounted the worship of God. Sheikh openly negate this and presented the principle of Wahdat-ul-Shahid that

The Creator and creatures were two different and separate entities.

(ii)

Adherence to Quran and Sunnah

Through sermons, letters and his influence in Sufi-Ziadees he encouraged Muslims to strengthen their religious observance like Namaz and Fasting. He particularly reminded them of obligations such as five daily prayers, zakat and fasting which many had neglected due to Akbar's indifferent religious env. His insistence revived these practices as foundation of Muslim life.

(iii)

Revival of true Spirit of Shari'ah

He guided Muslims to organize their personal and social affairs acc. to Islamic laws rather than foreign customs. He criticized the growing popularity of Hindu inspired marriages ritually such as fire ceremonies, astrology and elaborate festivities and instead reintroduced the simplicity of Nikkah under Shari'ah, restoring Islamic spirit in family life.

Condemnation of Adoption of Hindu practices

In his writings he clearly warned Muslims against celebrating the Holi, Rakhsha Bandhan, and applying Haldi, as well as against respecting the sacredness of cow which Akbar had promoted to win Hindu favour. By denouncing these, he reinforced distinct religious identity of Muslims and discourage dilution of Islamic traditions.

(vi)

Purification of Sufism:

As a leader of Naqshbandi order he sought to remove unislamic trends that had infiltrated Sufi-Practices. He strongly reeded the use of music, dance and qawwali; in spiritual gathering, he openly condemned grave worship and shari'ah ritual. Instead emphasized genuine spirituality through zikr, muraqaba and obedience to Sunnah. Giving Sufism a disciplined, Shariah based character.

Social Efforts:

(v)

Worked against erosion of Islamic social values

He played a vital role in reforming social fabric of Society during Akbar's reign, Muslims increasingly adopted non-Islamic customs specially in wedding centers. Marriage ceremonies were conducted and influenced by Hindu ritual such as fire sacrifices, astrological timing and long days feasting. He strongly condemn these and reminded Muslims that their lay in following modest Islamic way of way.

(ii)

Eradication of bid'at

He eradicate bid'at that had become widespread in everyday social practices. Many Muslims had developed reliance on charms, amulets and talismans for protection, or sought predictions from astrologers before making decisions. These were blended as superstitions with religion weakening Islamic spirit. He openly criticized such customs and emphasized that Muslims should turn only to Allah through dua and zika and reliance on Quran & Sunnah.

(iii)

Return to simple lifestyle

Mughal court under akbar promoted luxury and extravagance, which trickled down into daily life of people. Inspired by this culture of shauhan Muslims indulged in expensive clothing, grand feasts and unnecessary display of wealth. He encourage ^{moderation} simplicity to avoid all kinds of excesses that crept into society by discouraging such behaviour.

(iv)

Reviving strength sense of Muslim Unity and Identity

The akbar policy of Sulh-i-Kul (universal peace) and participation in Hindu & Persian festivals blurred religious boundaries. Muslims found celebrity Barant, Noroz, tilak. Sirhindi opposed such practices and remind them of their distinct identity as followers of Islam. He urged

them to stray away from these traditions and restore unity and confidence within Muslim community.

Political Efforts:

(i)

Criticism of Sulh-i-Kul

One of key pol. reform was strong criticism of Akbar's policy of Sulh-i-Kul (uni-peace) which promoted equality of all religion in state matters. Sirhindi argued that tolerance was social virtue but making Islamic and non-Islamic faith equal in governance undermine supremacy of Shariah. Like under Sulh-i-Kul Hindus were allowed to conduct their rituals even in royal court and Islamic restrictions on certain practices like cow slaughter were lifted. Sirhindi declare this ^{policy} practice as un-Islamic and worked to reverse its influence by stressing governance should be rooted in Islamic principles.

(ii)

Opposed Promotion of Hindu in Mughals Administration

Akbar give high offices to Hindus especially Rajputs at expense of Muslims. He did not deny co-existence but believed dominant political roles compromised Islamic identity in Mughal state. For instance, Raja Man Singh and Birbal held key position of power under Akbar influenced state decisions. Such favouritism ~~not~~ threatened power balance. So he urged that Muslims retain primary roles in administration.

(iii)

Urged on restoration of Islamic laws

After albars death, he saw an opportunity to influence muhal policy under Jahangir. Through his letters he urged rulers to restore supremacy of Shari'ah in gov. e.g. he encouraged reimplementation of jizya and Islamic judicial practices which had been suspended under Akbar. His writing laid groundwork for later rulers. Especially Nuruz who introduced many Islamic laws during his reign.

(iv)

Guided nobles and Officials to remain firm on Islam

He wrote letters to muhal officials to practice Islam in their political roles and advising them not to compromise with unislamic court practices and administration in line with Shari'ah. He reminded Qazis and governors to avoid bribery and favoritism. By doing so he strengthened presence of Islamic gov. within administrative machinery.

Intellectual efforts:

He adopted effective method of persuasion by writing **letters** to nobles of royal court. His letters were known as Mukhtalat-e-Imam Yabbarani. Through these he opposed Akbar un-Islamic policies and guided individuals in matters of faith, society and governance. These letters became a powerful medium to revive Islamic thought's across Mughal Empire. He sent a no. of his **disciples** in all directions to preach the true Islam. He asked them to emphasise on Hibt-i-Sunnah and Commandment of Shariah.

Alongside he delivered **sermons** and **discourses** in mosques, Sufi-gatherings and educational circles to spread his message. His Sufi gathering rejected music and dance in Sufism and replace them with Zikr and muraqaba.

Struggles and indisposition:-

His policy drew him into serious difficulties. His views of anti-Hindu were creating unrest in country so Jahanpior summoned him in his court and asked him to explain his statement. He appeared in royal court in dignified manner, explained the statements but did not agree upon performance of act of Prostration before a

human being which infuriated Jahangir and he ordered the Sheikh to be imprisoned in Fort of Gwalior. 2-years later Jahangir realised his act and released him from Fort. He was honoured with 1000 rupees and dress of honour with the option of going back or stay in royal court. Sirhindi preferred to stay in court and preach his views there.

Sirhindi and Two Nation Theory

He was a staunch advocate of separatism of Muslims and desired to maintain the distinctive image of Muslim Nationalism. He laid emphasis on separate identity of Muslims and adopted a very stern attitude against the Hindus.

Influence of Efforts:

His efforts purified the religious and practical life of Muslims. Allama Iqbal had paid rich tribute to him in his one poem for refusing to perform the act of prostration before emperor. Iqbal considered him the spiritual guardian of Muslims of India. He continued the propagation of Islam till his last breath. He was widely read scholar and a magnetic orator. He got opportunity in liberal atmosphere of Jahangir's regime to bring

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to use his powerful pen to denounce all
religious innovation.

After living 3 years with Beharigir.

He sought permission to leave for Sishind
He passed away on December 10, 1626
and buried there

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Social Conditions of India
- 3) SAS Efforts

3a) Religious

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3b) Social

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3c) Political

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3d) Intellectual

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- 4) Struggles & imprisonment
- 5) SAS and 2-Nation Theory
- 6) Influence of efforts