Muslims in the Sub Continent.

Q. How Sheikh Ahmed Sirhandi influenced the Indian Muslims living in the subcontinent?

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SHEIKH AHMED SIRHINDI

INTRODUCTION

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhandi (1564-1624) known as Mujaddid-Alf Thani (The reformer of the Second Millenium, profoundely influenced the Indian Muslims by reversing the syncretic policies of the Mughal Empire, and laying the ideological foundations for Muslims separatism in South Asia.

RELIGIOUS AND THEOLOGICAL INFLUENCE

Sirhandi's primary contribution was the purification of Islam from what he viewed as unIslamic accretions that has gained during the reign of Akbar.

Countering Din-i-Illahi:

The proclaimation of Din-i-Illahi by Emperor Akbar is considered to be one of the biggest controversies of Islamic history in the subcontinent American historian Powel price expressed the

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more realistic views about it: He writes:

"In 1582CE Din-i-Ilhi was founded. This new religion was an abstract and unequivocal shape of the doctrine of Tawhid-i-Wujudi in which beliefs of different religions are included. It is a mixture of Zorastrian, Jain Hindu, Budhist religion and Islam theory of Tawhid was included only for the name sake."

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhandi saw Din-i-Ilhi as a deviation from Islamic teachings and a dangerous attempt to blend religions, which he actively resisted.

Wandat-ut-Shuhood:

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhandi refuted the doctrine of Wahad-ul-Wajood (unity of being), which suggests that all religions were essentially the same. He purposed Wahdat-ul-Shahood (unity of appearance), emphasizing that while the creation reflects the Creator, God remains distinct from his creation.

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ELIMINATION OF UN-ISLAMIC INNOVATIONS:

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhandi held that "every slackness and irregularity that has taken place in the matter of shariah in his age, and every obstruction which has hindered the growth & expansion of Islam, is due to the wickedness of the 'Ulama-i-Su and the result of their incompetence. To turn for the better of society Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi cited these verses of Holy Quran and the sayings of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) as:

"Today I've perfected the religion for you and have completed my favor upon you." (Quran)"

"The best discourse is the discource of Allah and the best way is the way of Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H) and the worst things are the inventions and every innovation in the religion is misleading" (Hadith)

Reform the Sufism:

While a high-ranking member of the Naqshbandi order, Sirhandi criticized "unorthodox" Sufis who neglected the Shariah in favor of spiritual ecstasy or miracles. He emphasized that true spiritual progress is impossible without complete adherence to Islamic law.

Political Influence On The Mughal Court

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhandi shifted the ideological direction of the Mughal state through strategic engagement rather than open revolt.

Maktubat-i-Imam Rabbani:

He wrote a large number of letters to government personalities emphasizing the need of true teaching of Islam. In high circle especially in high ranking officials and ministers of the government were involved in a large number of evils due to their attachment with the worldly gains. The teaching and preaching of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi fully showed its influence on the ministers. &

high ranking officials and indirectly Jahangir was also influenced. To the Sadar-i-Jahan, who had entered Jahangir before and enjoyed his confidence as the highest religious authority, he wrote:

"Now that things have changed and the hostility of the people has subsided, it is the duty of the leaders of Islam, the Sadar-i-Islam and the Ulma, that they work for the implementations of the Shari'ah."

Ref: Ibid, vol. I, Letter, 195

INFLUENCE ON SUCCESSIVE RULERS:

During the stay in court of Jahangir, Sheikh Ahmed Sirhandi found the unique opportunity to preach King. In many sessions, which he had with Jahangir, he read out the Quran to him, explained its messages, discussed the principles of faith and explained the rules of Shariah. The Emperor and the people of the Mughal court were fully influenced by his teachings. and broad-minded Emperors and people of Mughal court became an Orthodox Muslims.

Re-imposition of Jizya:

Under the influence of Sheikh Ahmed Sishandi, Jizya was re-imposed on the unbelievers in order to spread Islam and put down the practice of infidelity. Thus the tone of administration changed and the liberalism of the day of Akbas had stopped.

Elimination of un-Islamic cultures:

Under the influence of Sheikh Ahmed Sishandi's, the age limit for massiage imposed by King Akbas was abodished. Stanley Lane Poole said that Jahangir also restored the hijuah chronology which his father had abondoned.

Reconstruction of Holy Sites:

The efforts of Sheikh Ahmed Sishandi bore fruit during the reigns of Jahangir. The mosques that had been abolished were rebuilt and Arab and Islamic learning was encouraged.

> He was the guardian of the Muslim faith in India, whom God had given a timely warning

Social And Political Legacy And Two Nation Theory:

Due to the following reasons, Modern historians regard Sheikh Ahmed Sirhandi as the earliest pioneer of Two-Nation Theory.

Preserving Musim identity:

Mujaddid-Alf Thani's core argument was that Hinduism and Islam are two fundamentally different and distinct religions and cultures, with unbridgeable gaps in belief systems, practices and worldviews. He believed any form of 'joint nationalism' or religious synthesis would lead to the dissolution of the Muslim identity in the Subcontinent

By clearly defining Muslimness as a collective, exclusive and self-governing identity, he provided the early intellectual and theological framework for Muslim Separatism.

Aptly, said;

> "Sheikh Ahmed is a light which will illuminate the whole world"
>
> Khwaja Baqi Billah

Foundation of Two Nation Theory:

His ideas directly influenced subsequent leaders like Shah Waliullah, Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, and his emphasis on the separate civilization identity of Muslims provided the intellectual bedrock for the 20th century Pakistan Movement.

Teachings of Sheikh Ahmed for Modern-day Pak:

The teachings of Shaikh Ahmed Sirhandi (Mujaddid-Alf-Thani) is need of modern-day Pakistan, one can focus on institutional integrity, adherence to Shariah and Sunnah and educational renewal. Following Sirhandi's emphasis on separate Muslim identity, Pakistanis can maintain their unique Islamic cultural and religious practices, without assimilation into non-Islamic and western customs.

Concusion:

In Summary, Sheikh Ahmed Sirhandi remain one of the most influential Islamic reformers in the Subcontinents history. His legacy is not confined to his own era, but

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continues to inform how Muslims in South Asia understand their identity, their history and their relationship with the state. At a time, when assimilation appeared inevitable and religious boundaries were being blurred For imperial convenience, Sirhandi quietly restored confidence, coherence, and conviction to a community that risked losing its distinct character. His contributions are not loud but lasting, not political in the conventional sense but deeply ideological and it remains a defining moment in the long struggle for Muslim self-definition in the Indian Subcontinent.

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhandi (1564-1624).

Introduction.

Influence of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi

Religious And Theological Influence.

- Countering Din-i-Ilhi
  - Elimination of Un-Islamic innovations (Bidat)
- Wahadt-ul-Shuhood
- Reform of Sufism

Political Influence on the Mughal Court.

- Maktubat-i-Iman Rabbani
  - Influence on Successive rulers.
- Reimposition of Jizya.
- Reconstruction of Holy sites.

Social And Political Legacy.

- Preserving Muslim Identity
- Foundation of Two Nation Theory
- Teachings for Modern-day Pakistan.

Conclusion.