

How the reform movement of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi influenced the history of Muslims India?

1. Introduction

Working for the revival of Islam, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, renowned as Mujadid Alif Sani, has immensely influenced the history of Indian Muslims by abolishing the newly amalgamated religion, eradicating the un-Islamic beliefs and practices, and consolidating the scattered Muslims in the light of the Quran and Sunnah. However, by religious reform movement, he successfully revitalized Islam on its real values, and elevated Muslim's separate identity and spiritual growth socially, politically, and — above all — religiously in the history of subcontinent.

2. Historical perspective

- Sufism and Un-Islamic practices (Bidat and karamat))
- Jurisprudence based on rational and empiricism laws
- Religious Agitation : Bhakti movement and Din e Illahi
- Misinterpretation of Wahdat -ul-Wujood

3. Religious Influence

- Opposed amalgamated religion Din-e-Illahi
- Revitalized Islam by promoting Quran and Hadith
- Permitted cow slaughter and re-imposed Jizya on non-Muslims
- Justified concept of Wahdat-ul-Shahood against Wahdat-ul-Wujood

4. Social Influence

- Shaped Jurisprudence according to Fiqh and Islamic principles
- Prohibited the concept of Infallible decree (emperors authority in religious matters)
- Abhorred Inter-religious marriages
- Ensured full and fair justice

5. Political Influence

- Transformed Mughal Empire towards Islamic teachings.
- Prohibited Hindus involvement in political affairs
- Proposed the concept of Two Nation Theory
- Paved the way for upcoming reformers

Introduction

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, a reformer of the second millennium, had an impregnable influence on the Muslim's history. He was the first to raised voice against the Akbar's concept of Din-e—Illahee, mystic beliefs, and un-Islamic rituals in order to secure Islamic culture with in its real values. Nevertheless, by having a bird's eye view on prevailing condition of Muslims , he observed that Muslims were distracted from the true Islamic beliefs, teachings of the Holy Quran, and Sunnah of Holy Prophet (PBUH). Instead of having faith on Allah, they believed in the miracles of saints, super natural power, and Akbar's un-Islamic laws. Such factors ultimately became the main concerns behind downfall of Muslim's culture, their spiritual strength, and the Islamic system in the Indian subcontinent. However, for retracking Muslims towards Islam, he ensured various reforms, such as formatting jurisprudence according to the Islamic laws, preventing the amalgamation of religions by creating awareness amongst courtiers, Sufis, and emperors. Moreover, he promoted the Hadith and Sunnah among Muslims through his disciples. With that, he abolished the Sulh-e-Kul (peace with all religion), and justified the concept of Wahdat-ul-Shahood against the misinterpreted concept of Wahadat-ul-Wujood to protect Muslim's identity in the subcontinent. Henceforth, by providing religious evidence, he successfully convinced the emperor Jahangir to abolish the religion of his father that was purely based on pluralism.

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Historical perspective

Nothing has devastated the Islam the way Akbar's amalgamation of religion and degraded beliefs of Sufism did. Unfortunately, Muslims remained deficient from the real teachings of Islam by following Sufism of spiritual growth. On the one hand, Ulemas were ceased by the emperor to refer the Quran and hadith in their commentaries. On the other hand, the concept of Mysticism, Pantheism, Bidat, and Karamat became the common trends of Muslim's society– diminishing the true Image of Islamic culture. Furthermore, jurisprudence based on un-Islamic laws and misinterpreted philosophy of Wahadat-ul-Wujood was the severe attack on the Muslims integrity.

In addition to this, Bhakti movement was started by Hindus to promote concept of common nationalism among all the religion. In response to the movement. Akbar introduced the new religion – Din-e-Elahi - based on Hindu-Muslim philosophies. In this way, Islam lost its glory in the subcontinent during the reign of Akbar .

Religious Influence

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi entered in the horizon of Indian subcontinent as a light at the time of darkness. His untiring efforts resulted the beliefs and teaching of Islam became the part and parcel of Muslim society. However, in order to eliminate Pluralism, Pantheism and Mysticism from the society, he brought Shariah based on Islamic principles in the life of Muslims. Consequently, Shaikh has transformed Muslim's beliefs from the miracles of Saint and material possessions to Almighty Allah and his Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He has boosted Muslim's spiritual strength through Quranic injunctions. Besides, He had presented the philosophy of Wahdat-ul-Shahood against Wahadat -ul- Wujood, which states that creator and his creations are two separate and distinct entities. With that, Muslims came close with the Islamic teachings. In addition to this, he wrote several letters to courtiers and emperor Jahangir to stat preciosity of the situations. In his letters, he explained that Muslim can only survive by following the teachings of Quran and Sunnah of Holy prophet (PBUH). By presenting religious evidence about authenticity of Islam, he successfully convinced Jahangir to abolish his father's religion. Furthermore, he stressed on lifting ban on cow slaughter, imposing back the jizya on Non-Muslims, and prohibiting the concept of Sulh-e-Kul (peace with all religions) to eliminate the traditions of the Hindus in a religion. To spread the real spirit of Islam across the subcontinent, he send his disciples to create awareness amongst Muslim regarding prevailing conditions. Thus, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhind' s role in purifying the Islam has not only enacted Muslim' s identity and consciousness close to Islam but also paved the way for the upcoming Mughal emperor — Aurangzeb.

" He the guardian of the estate of millah whom Allah awakened at right time."

— Allama Iqbal

Social Influence

Apart from his religious contributions, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi had ultimately brought the social change in terms of unity and Muslim's social integration. He had transformed the jurisprudence from the rational and Empiricism approach towards Islamic laws and principles. He emphasized on full and fair justice among all the peoples irrespective of their religious differences. For that, he assured Quran and Fiqh as the main pillars of Islamic jurisprudence. Moreover, for uplifting society, Shaikh prohibited the Akbar's concept of Infallible decree that states that emperor of the time has authority in every religious matter. In this way, he blocked all the ways of religious amalgamation and Muslims disintegration in future. Correspondingly, for eradicating the Un-Islamic social practice, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi has abolished the concept of inter-religious marriages. In last, his dedicated efforts brought unity, justice, brotherhood, and spiritual growth within the society.

Political Influence

As far as political influence is concerned, Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi empowered Jahangir with the real spirit of Islam. Along with that, he transformed Mughal empire into empire that was purely based on Islamic principles. With that, Jahangir unlike his father has prohibited the Hindu's involvement in any religious or political matter. While preaching the Islam against the amalgamated religion, he gave birth to the new political slogan that was origin of Two Nation theory. For the first time, he found that Muslim and Hindus were two different entities with opposite philosophies. In addition to this, he stressed on wide and unbribable gap between Hindu and Muslim unity. Thus, he created the distinct line between Muslims and Hindus and paved the way for upcoming reformers, like Shah Waliullah and Shaikh Ahmad Shaheed.

Critical analysis

Undoubtedly, Akbar's intention behind amalgamation of religion was a political move rather than religious one to unite all the religions under his empire. Albeit, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi - at the same time — has remained the most influencing figure in the history of subcontinent. He protected Islam from Akbar's implementation of unorthodox policies and amalgamation of religion in order to uplift Muslims socially, politically, and religiously. His motives were to abolish un-Islamic practices, abhor mystic belief, and, above all, retrack Muslims and emperor Jahangir towards the Quran and Sunnah of Holy Prophet (PBUH). Henceforth, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, along with his dedicated reformist movements, has gave birth to the new political concept — Two Nation theory – which later becomes the base for Pakistan independence.

Conclusion

In a powerful diagnosis, Akbar's newly born religion was an attack on the Islamic identity. Along with that, Degraded concept of Sufism, misinterpreted philosophy of Wahadat-ul-Wujood, Empiricism based Jurisprudence were the grave threats in the way of Islam. . However, with his reformist movements, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhind has not only opposed the joint religion — Din-e-Illahee — but also awakened Muslims through his disciple by justifying concept of Wahad-ul-Shahood against Wahadat-ul-Wujood. Moreover, he informed the severity of the issue to emperor Jahangir through his letters. Finally, with his untiring efforts, he saved the Islamic culture, values, and Muslim's identity socially, politically, and religiously, in the subcontinent's history