

## **Sheikh Ahmed Sarhindi – 1564 - 1624**

### **Mujaddid Alf Sani**

#### 1. Introduction

- History

#### 2. Tribulations of Society at his time

- Religious
- Social
- Spiritual
- Political

#### 3. Results of Tribulations

- Belief in Karamat
- Denial of Shariah
- No referral to Qur'an and Hadith
- Promotion of Hinduism

#### 4. Role of Sheikh Ahmed Sarhindi as a reformer

- Preaching of Religion
- Emphasizing on Sunnah
- Resistance of Mysticism
- Wahdat ul shahud & Wahdat ul wujud
- Successful Jihad against Deen-e-Elahi
- Opposition of Akbar's concept and Imprisonment.
- Maktubat-e-Imam Rabbani (Writing Letters)
- Books and Magazines (Risala)
- Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi & Two Nation Theory

#### 5. Conclusion

## Brief Note

The first of the great reformers, Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindi al-Farooqi an-Naqshbandi, was born in Sarhind on June 26, 1564. He belonged to a devout Muslim family that claimed descent from Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA). His father Sheikh Abdul Ahad was a well-known sufi of his times. Sheikh Ahmad received his basic education at home. His initial instructions in the Holy Quran, Hadith and theology were rendered in Sarhind and Sialkot. Later, he devoted most of his time to the study of Hadith, Tafseer and philosophy. He worked for some time in Lahore as well. But the greater part of his life was spent in Sarhind, where he was to become the champion of Islamic values. It was not until he was 36 years old that he went to Delhi and joined the Naqshbandiya Silsilah under the discipleship of Khawaja Baqi Billah.

During this period the Muslims in India had become so deficient in the knowledge of true Islam that they had more belief in Karamat or miracles of the saints than Islamic teachings. The Ulema and theologians of the time had ceased to refer to the Quran and Hadith in their commentaries, and considered jurisprudence the only religious knowledge. Akbar, the Mughal king had started a series of experiments with Islam, propagating his own religion Din-i-Ilahi, an amalgamation of Hindu and Muslim beliefs. In these circumstances, Sheikh Ahmad set upon himself the task of purifying the Muslim society. His aim was to rid Islam of the accretions of Hindu Pantheism. He was highly critical of the philosophy of Wahdat-ul Wujud, against which he gave his philosophy of Wahdat-ush-Shuhud.

He entered into correspondence with Muslim scholars and clerics and laid stress on following the true contours of Islam. To him, mysticism without Shariah was misleading. He stressed the importance of Namaz and fasting. Through preaching, discussions and his maktubat addressed to important nobles and leaders of religious thought, he spread his message amongst the elite in particular. As he and his followers also worked in the imperial camp and army, he was soon noticed by Jehangir. Jehangir, unlike his father, was a more orthodox Muslim. But he still insisted on full prostration by all his subjects. Sheikh Ahmad refused to prostrate before him, as result of which he was imprisoned at Gwalior Fort for two years until the Emperor realized his mistake. Jehangir then not only released Sheikh Ahmad, but also recalled him to Agra. Jehangir thereafter retracted all un-Islamic laws implemented by Akbar.

Sheikh Ahmad's greatest contribution was undoubtedly the task of countering unorthodox Sufism and mystic beliefs. He organized the Naqshbandiya order to reform the society and spread the Shariah among the people. He wrote many books, including his famous works, Isbat-ul-Nabat and Risal-i-Nabuwat. His greatest work on Islamic philosophy was the Tauheed-i-Shuhudi. Sheikh Ahmad continued preaching Islam till the end of his days. He urged people to adhere to the accepted and clearly laid down path of Islam. He passed away in 1624.