

Subject:- PERSIAN

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Unit-V

Topic- Study of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan

Online Class Materials

By

Dr. Sk Md Hafijur

Guest Lecturer

L. S. College Muzaffarpur

Syed Ahmad Khan

Syed Ahmad Taqvi bin Syed Muhammad Muttaqi (Urdu: سید احمد خان; 17 October 1817 – 27 March 1898), commonly known as Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was an Islamic pragmatist, Islamic reformer, philosopher, and educationist in nineteenth-century British India. Though initially espousing Hindu-Muslim unity, he became the pioneer of Muslim nationalism in India and is widely credited as the father of Two-Nation Theory which formed the basis of Pakistan movement. Born into a family with strong debts to the Mughal court, Ahmad studied the Quran and Sciences within the court. He was awarded an honorary LLD from the University of Edinburgh in 1889.

In 1838, Syed Ahmad entered the service of East India Company and went on to become a judge at a Small Causes Court in 1867, retiring from 1876. During the Indian Rebellion of 1857, he remained loyal to the British Raj and was noted for his actions in saving European lives. After the rebellion, he penned the booklet *The Causes of the Indian Mutiny* – a daring critique, at the time, of various British policies that he blamed for causing the revolt. Believing that the future of Muslims was threatened by the rigidity of their orthodox outlook, Sir Ahmad began promoting Western-style scientific education by founding modern schools and journals and organising Islamic entrepreneurs.

In 1859, Syed established Gulshan School at Muradabad, Victoria School at Ghazipur in 1863, and a scientific society for Muslims in 1864. In 1875, founded the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, the first Muslim university in Southern Asia.[13] During his career, Syed repeatedly called upon Muslims to loyally serve the British Raj and promoted the adoption of Urdu as the lingua franca of all Indian Muslims. Syed criticized the Indian National Congress.

Syed maintains a strong legacy in Pakistan and among Indian Muslims. He strongly influenced other Muslim leaders including Allama Iqbal and Muhammad Ali Jinnah. His advocacy of Islam's rationalist (Mu'tazila) tradition, and at broader, radical reinterpretation of the Quran to make it compatible with science and modernity, continues to influence the global Islamic reformation. Many universities and public buildings in Pakistan bear Sir Syed's name.

Aligarh Muslim University celebrated Sir Syed's 200th birth centenary with much enthusiasm on 17 October 2017. Former President of India Pranab Mukherjee was the chief guest.

Early life

Do not show the face of Islam to others; instead show your face as the follower of true Islam representing character, knowledge, tolerance and piety.

— Sir Syed Ahmad Khan

Syed Ahmad Taqvi 'Khan Bahadur' was born on 17 October 1817 in Delhi, which was the capital of the Mughal Empire in the ruling times of Mughal Emperor Akbar II. Many generations of his family had since been highly connected with the administrative position in Mughal Empire. His maternal grandfather Khwaja Fariduddin served as Wazir (lit. Minister) in the court of Emperor Akbar Shah II. His paternal grandfather Syed Hadi Jawwad bin Imaduddin held a mansab (lit. General)— a high-ranking administrative position and honorary name of "Mir Jawwad Ali Khan" in the court of Emperor Alamgir II. Sir Syed's father, Syed Muhammad Muttaqi, was personally close to Emperor Akbar Shah II and served as his personal adviser.

However, Syed Ahmad was born at a time when his father was regional insurrections aided and led by the East India Company, which had replaced the power traditionally held by the Mughal state, reducing its monarch to figurehead. With his elder brother Syed Muhammad bin Muttaqi Khan, Sir Syed was raised in a large house in a wealthy area of the city. They were raised in strict accordance with Mughal noble traditions and exposed to politics. Their mother Aziz-un-Nisa played a formative role in Sir Syed's early life, raising him with rigid discipline with a strong emphasis on modern education. Sir Syed was taught to read and understand the Qur'an by a female tutor, which was unusual at the time. He received an education traditional to Muslim nobility in Delhi. Under the charge of Lord Wellesley, Sir Syed was trained in Persian, Arabic, Urdu and orthodox religious subjects. He read the works of Muslim scholars and writers such as Sahbai, Rumi and Ghalib.[citation needed] Other tutors instructed him in mathematics, astronomy and Islamic jurisprudence. Sir Syed was also adept at swimming, wrestling and other sports. He took an active part in the Mughal court's cultural activities.

Syed Ahmad's elder brother founded the city's first printing press in the Urdu language along with the journal Sayyad-ul-Akbar. Sir Syed pursued the study of medicine for several years but did not complete the course. Until the death of his father in 1838, Sir Syed had lived a life customary for an affluent young Muslim noble. Upon his father's death, he inherited the titles of his grandfather and father and was awarded the title of Arif Jung by the emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar. Financial difficulties put an end to Sir Syed's formal education, although he continued to study in private, using books on a variety of subjects. Sir Syed assumed editorship of his brother's journal and rejected offers of employment from the Mughal court.