

Subject:- PERSIAN

M.A. IInd Semester

Course No. Per 205

Unit-V

Topic- Study of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan

Online Class Materials

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Syed Ahmad Khan

Career

Having recognized the steady decline in Mughal political power, Sir Syed decided to enter the service of the East India Company. He could not enter the colonial civil service because it was only in the 1860s that Indians were admitted. His first appointment was as a Serestadar (lit. Clerk) at the courts of law in Agra, responsible for record-keeping and managing court affairs. In 1840, he was promoted to the title of munshi. In 1858, he was appointed to a high-ranking post at the court in Muradabad, where he began working on his most famous literary work.

Acquainted with high-ranking British officials, Sir Syed obtained close knowledge about British colonial politics during his service at the courts. At the outbreak of the Indian rebellion, on 10 May 1857, Sir Syed was serving as the chief assessment officer at the court in Bijnor. Northern India became the scene of the most intense fighting. The conflict had left large numbers of civilians dead. Erstwhile centres of Muslim power such as Delhi, Agra, Lucknow and Kanpur were severely affected. Sir Syed was personally affected by the violence and the ending of the Mughal dynasty amongst many other long-standing kingdoms. Sir Syed and many other Muslims took this as a defeat of Muslim society. He lost several close relatives who died in the violence. Although he succeeded in rescuing his mother from the turmoil, she died in Meerut, owing to the privations she had experienced.

Social reforms in the Muslim society were initiated by Abdul Latif who founded "The Mohammedan Literary Society" in Bengal. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan established the MAO College which eventually became the Aligarh Muslim University. He opposed ignorance, superstitions and evil customs prevalent in Indian Muslim society. He firmly believed that Muslim society would not progress without the acquisition of western education and science. As time passed, Sir Syed began stressing on the idea of pragmatic modernism and started advocating for strong interfaith relations between Islam and Christianity.