

In the Realm of Tajdeed-o-Tajaddud

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'Reconstruction' is a familiar term, but the concise Oxford English Dictionary has three meanings for this particular theme. These are:

- a- To build or form again
- b- To form a mental or visual impression of (past events) by assembling the evidence for them.
- c- To reorganize. (1)

In famous Arabic lexicon "AL-MUNJAD" **تَنْكَل** means to draw a picture while **تَنْكَل** carries the meanings of "taking up shape". (2)

Keeping in view the above descriptions it comes out that displaying any things in a new while retaining its meanings and spirit is Reconstruction. Therefore, reconstruction does not mean derivation of new principles rather it is inventing new principles so as to harmonize religion with new era.

It is important to note that reconstruction is not an old religious term, rather this term is popular among the modern thinkers due to frequent use of English –literate circle. The term reconstruction is used in the same sense as the phrase "Jadeed" is used in Islam. Since the issue of re-orientation of Islamic disciplines is related to Ijtihad and tajdeed, hence the term of reconstruction became prevalent in the modern educated classes, equal to revival. In this

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10. cf. Shah, M.S., *Hadrat Khawaja-i-Ajmer: Ghayr Muslimun ki Nazar mein, Ma'arif-e-Auliya* (Lahore: Religious Affairs & Auqaf Deptt, 2003) vol, No.4, pp 79-88.
11. Arnold, Sir Thomas W., *The Preaching of Islam* (Lahore Shirkat-i-Kalam, 1956), p.281
12. e.g. Dr. Tara Chand, K.S. Lal, Dr. Fauja Singh. cf. Shah, M.S., "Homage Paid to Shaykh Baha al-Din Zakariyya by Non-Muslim Writers" *Al-Adwa'* (Lahore Sheikh Zayed Islamic Centre, University of the Punjab, January 2005) vol xv, No.22, pp. 28-34.
13. Jagan Nath Azad has written beautiful verses in the praise of Khwajah Mu'in al-Din Chishti, Khawaja Nizam al-Din Auliya, Ala' al-Din Sabir Kalyari, Shaykh Kalim Ullah, Shaykh Jamal Hanswi and Mujaddid Alf-i-Thani, cf. Azad, J.N., *Nasim-i-Hijaz*

The writer has regarded the Mujaddid as a sufi reformer and an important early seventeenth century figure in the history of Indian Naqshbandi order.

subcontinent became progressively more clearly defined, in part due to Mujaddidi political influence and alliances, even though the patronage of non-Muslim religious institutions was continued under Aurangzib (d. 1118/1707) and later rulers.” (40).

Pnina Werbner

Pnina wrote a book “Pilgrims of Love—The Anthropology of a Global Sufi Cult” published by Indiana University Press in 2003 for the first time. The Pakistan branch of Oxford University Press has published its second edition this year. Hadrat Mujaddid has been mentioned at a number of places in this book. While discussing the reform movements in Islam, she tells her readers that the Naqshbandi reform movement was spearheaded by Ahmad Sirhindi in South Asia in the seventeenth century. The author introduced the Mujaddid in the following words:

“Ahmad Sirhindi, known also as ‘Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani (the Renewer of the Second Millennium) was a highly complex and somewhat ambiguous historical character whose life and writing are open to many different and often conflicting interpretations. While he elaborated and developed Sufi cosmology and theosophy even beyond—and in argument with—their original formulation by Ibn ‘Arabi, Sirhindi also stood out as a strong proponent of strict Shari‘at observance. Although arguably a sufi above all else, he famously involved himself in the affairs of the Mughal State and defended the dominance of Sunni Muslims, their purity and ascendancy, in relation to Shi‘as, Hindus, and other religious groups in South Asia.”(41)

“Suif Heirs of the Prophet: The Indian Naqshbaniyya and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Shaykh”.

By the blessing of Almighty Allah, the author has embraced Islam. His Ismalic name is Salim Abdullah but he uses his original name on his writings. That is why, he is being considered as orientalist. He has introduced Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi as under:

“Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (971/1564-1034/1624) initiated third stage of Naqshbandi history, when the Naqshbandiyyah became an Indian lineage known as “the renewer of the second millennium” (Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani), he was the most famous of Baqi Billah’s disciples and exhibited his extraordinary spiritual aptitude by becoming a successor to Baqi Billah in less than three months. More than any other Indian Naqshbandi after Bahauddin, both redefined the role of sufi practice in society and elaborated naqshbandi mystical exercises. The renaming of the path to Mujaddidiyya reflects the significance of Sirhindi’s influence; he is regarded as a co-founder by the later Naqshbandiyya.” (39)

Buehler has highlighted the Mujaddid’s influence upon Mughal empire. Elaborating this he writes:

“To unify the Indian Muslim community, Sirhindi defined its boundaries according to the Sunni dogma (aqā’id) to counteract the universalizing of all religious communities through Mughal political structures. Many members of Akbar’s court were among Sirhindi’s large circle of disciples. After Akbar’s death, Muslim self-identity in the

period considerably strengthened the Shia element, and it was against them that Ahmad Sirhindi wrote his first treatise, even before he was formally initiated into the Naqshbandiyya.”(36)

Schimmel has introduced Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's famous collection of letters entitled "Maktubat". She writes:

“Although Ahmad Sirhindi composed a number of books, his fame rests chiefly upon his 534 letters, of which 70 are addressed to Mogul officials. They were, like many letters by mystical leaders, intended for circulation, with only a few of them meant for his closest friends. He gave utterance to ideas that shocked some of the defenders of orthodoxy, as can be seen from some treatises published against his teachings in the late seventeenth century. The letters have been translated into Arabic, Turkish, and Urdu from the original Persian, and from them Ahmad gained the honorific titles mujaddid-i-alf-i-Thani, “the Renovator of the Second Millennium” (after the hijra), and imam-i-rabbani, “The Divinely Inspired Leader.”(37)

Marigan Mole

Dr. Annemarie Schimmel has narrated that Marijan Mole had interpreted Ahmad's theology well and explained the tauhid-i-wajudi as an expression of 'ilm al-yaqin and tauhid-i-shuhudi' as 'ayn al-yaqin.(38) Mole's original work is in French language. His seven publications are mentioned in different bibliographies.

Dr. Arthur F. Buehler

An American scholar Aurthur F. Buehler has published his doctoral dissertation entitled below:

mystically tinged Islam which yet retained its pristine purity without any admixture of pagan, that in this case, Hindu elements.”(34)

About the Mujaddid’s interest in Indian politics Schimmel observes:

“Ahmad Sirhindi, like many other Naqshbandi leaders, certainly had political ambitions, and this political role of his, which proved important for the development of Indo-Muslim self-consciousness, has been highlighted during our own century by the defenders of the Two Nation Theory: that the Muslims of India form a closed community, sharply distinguished from the Hindu majority.”(35)

Schimmel’s book “Mystical Dimensions of Islam” comprises a chapter about “Sufism in Indo-Pakistan”. The orientalist has mentioned Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi in the following paragraph:

“It was Baqi billah’s disciple Ahmad Faruqi Sirhindi (1564-1624) who was destined to play a major role in Indian religious and, to some extent, political life. Ahmad had studied in Sialkot, one of the centres of Islamic scholarship during the Mogul period. In Agra he came in touch with Faizi and Abu’l-Fazl, Akbar’s favourite writers and intimate friends, who were however, disliked by the orthodox because of their “heretical” views. Ahmad Sirhindi, like a number of his compatriots, had an aversion to the Shia, to which persuasion some of the southern Indian rulers belonged and which became more fashionable at the Mogul court in the late days of Akbar’s rule and in the reign of Jihangir (1605-27), whose intelligent and politically active wife, Nur Jihan, was herself Shia. The constant influx of poets from Iran to India during the Mogul

revert again to the long forgotten Islamic customs; his fervour for the purity of faith made him even work against the very influential group of Shi'a like the empress Nur Jahan and her father who were practically ruling the country. Notwithstanding these political effort, Ahmad Sirhindi's most important contribution to Indian Islam is the strict refusal of the doctrine of monistic pantheism (whadat al-wujud) which had been laid in Ibn 'Arabi theories submerging almost all the other mystic movements in the Islam world from the 13th century onward -----He advocated the doctrine of wahdat ash-shuhud, "testimonarian monoism", essential monoism expressing, according to him, only a subjective experience, not a metaphysical truth. His influence has, through Naqshbandiyyah, reached even Turkish Muslims and impressed them deeply. Iqbal too, was a great admirer of Imam Rabbani." (33)

Annemarie Schimmel has explained the central place of the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be peace and greeting) in Muslim life, mystical thought and poetry in her book "And Muhammad is His Messenger". The eleventh chapter of this book is regarding the "Muhammadan Path" in which she has told about the entrance of Naqshbandiyya order in India as follows:

"The Naqshbandiyyah reached India via Afghanistan in the late sixteenth century; the major figure in this development was Khawaja Baqibillah, a friend of many intellectuals in Akbar's days. Ahmad Sirhindi joined the order and soon began to preach against the tendencies of the Emperor Akbar, which seemed to many to blur the borders between Islam and "Infidelity". He would not accept any religious way as valid with the exception of Islam. His concept was that of a

Sirhindi's successors and followers successfully worked to penetrate into the court circles. Shah Jahan's second son, Aurangzeb Alamgir, lent his ear to their advice, and fought against the ideals which led his elder brother Dara Shikoh to his attempts of mystical reconciliation between Islam and Hinduism."(31)

Dr. Schimmel has mentioned Ahmad Sirhindi in his other books. She published "Gabriel's Wing" about the thought of Philosopher- poet Allama Dr. Muhammad Iqbal published in 1963 upon which she was awarded "International Iqbal Award" by Iqbal Academy Lahore. In this book, she has expressed her views about Iqbal as under:

"The Orthodox protest was personified in the person of Ahmad Sirhindi who entered the religio-political scene at the end of Akbar's reign, and pursued his struggle under his son Jihangir (1605-1627). Ahmad Sirhindi was called by his admirer, the Mujaddid-i-Alf-I Thani, the Reformer of the second Millennium, because he appeared at the beginning of the 11th century of Hijra. He utilized for his taching the order of Naqshbandiyya which had come from Central Asia and had been popular with the first Moghul Emperor as well as with their Uzbek adversaries, and propagated his ideas through this rapidly spreading order." (32)

Hadrat Mujaddid Alf-i-Thani was the favourite spiritual personality of Allama Muhammad Iqbal. Therefore, he has mentioned Shaykh Sirhindi in prose and poetry. Schimmel wrote:

"The Mujaddid draw a clear distinction between Islam and infidelity, and urged the government to

Khawaja Baqi billah, one of the leading masters of the order, came to India and gained a number of disciples very soon. Among them was Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624), who tried to attract members of the Mughal court to the Naqshbandi path. Imprisoned for a year at Gwalior, he was soon released and eventually gained the favours of the Emperor Jhangir. His aim was to go back to the pure teaching of Islam, which excludes a 'Unity of Being' but admits of the possibility of 'Unity of Vision,' *Whadat ash-Shuhud.*"(30)

The author has tried to evaluate the effects of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi and his successors upon the Indian Muslims under Mughal dynasty. Schimmel writes:

"Ahmad Sirhindi has been called, by great philosopher Abdul Hakeem Sialkoti, the mujaddid-i-alf-thani, the 'Renovator of the 2. Millennium', since he appeared at the beginning of the second millennium of the Islamic era in order to restore orthodox Islam; and he has been praised by his admirers even in Turkey as the Imam-i-Rabbani, the Divinely bestowed leader of the community. However, the claims of saintship and charismatic leadership which Ahmad Sirhindi uttered, are expressions of such a fantastic self-consciousness that he, with his theories of restoration of the first m of Muhammad's name, and his claim to be the qayyum by for surpasses the limits of what we would normally call 'orthodox Islam'. He saw himself and three of his descendants as divinely invested beings, higher even than the qutb, the 'Pole' of the traditional mystical hierarchy, and destined to guide the Muslim people as qayyum. This remarkable self-consciousness of Naqshbandi leaders, together with their skill in politics made them more and more influential in India. Ahmad

“Dr. Friedmann, no doubt, deserves congratulations for writing a good thesis on the Shaykh, but he could really write much better if he could have an access to the work supposed by him as not extant.”(27)

Professor Dr. Muhammad Masood Ahmad considers this work as a worth-reading because it is written by a Jew author.(28) Friedmann has also written some unauthentic things about the Shaykh. For example, he wrote in the thesis:

“Because of his scholarship he was later invited to the court of Akbar at Agra. He stayed there for an unspecified period of time, during which he assisted the famous wazir and writer Abu-al-Fazl in his literary work.”(29)

The above quoted statement is false. The Emperor Akbar never invited Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi to his court. Similarly, he did not help Abu'l Fadl in any of his literary work. This fact is that the Shaykh himself went to Akbar's court on his own accord and helped Faizi in his undotted exegesis.

Dr. Anne marie Schimmel

Schimmel was a German scholar who wrote a number of books about Islam, the Prophet of Islam (upon whom be greeting), Islamic mysticism and Iqbaliyyat. In her famous book “Pain and Grace” she writes about Shaykh Sirhindi as:

“The activity of the Naqshbandis in the subcontinent was limited during the first century of Mughal rule. More emotional orders played a greater role. Only towards the end of Akbar's days,

C.E. Bosworth

Bosworth writes in "The Encyclopedia of Islam" about Sirhind as under:

"Sirhind is also famous as the birthplace in 971/1564 of the religious revivalist and reformer Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi." (26)

Dr. Yohanan Friedmann

Friedmann completed his doctoral thesis in 1966 at the Institute of Islamic Studies of McGill University Montreal (Canada) under the title cited below:

"Shaykh Ahmad Sirhind : An Outline of His Thought and a Study of His Image in the Eyes of Posterity"

This thesis was published by McGill Queen's University Press, Montreal & London in 1971. It comprises 130 pages. This is the first research work conducted for Ph.D from any non-Muslim scholar. Friedmann has divided his thesis in the following chapters:

1. The Sources
2. The Concept of Tajdid and the Millennium
3. The Self-image of Ahmad Sirhindi
4. Prophecy and Sainthood
5. Sirhindi's Views of the Islamic Tradition-I
6. Sirhindi's Views of the Islamic Tradition-II
7. The Indian Environment
8. Sirhindi and the Mughal Court
9. Judgement of Posterity
10. Conclusion

Dr. Ghulam Mustafa Khan has reviewed this research work as follows:

most zealous in urging Muslims to restore by words and arms the paramouncy of the Shari'a."(23)

However, the Naqshbandiyyah order is considered less popular than the mystic orders introduced before it. In the above-referred book this is stated as follows:

"At the beginning of the seventeenth century the sufi order of the Naqshbandiyya was introduced into India, but it never became so popular as the older orders."(24)

J. Spencer Trimingham

Trimingham, a famous orientalist, wrote a book on mysticism entitled "The Sufi Orders in Islam". While introducing two branches of Naqshbandiyyah order in India, he has mentioned Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi and his contribution in the following paragraph:

"Of the various lines diverging from Baqi billah two, which contrasted greatly in outlook, were that through his son, Husam ad-din Ahmad (A.D. 1574-1633), following a pantheistic line, and a somewhat bigoted Sunni movement inspired by Baqi's pupil, Ahmad Faruqi Sirhindi (A.D. 1563-1624), nicknamed Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani (Reformer of the second Millennium), who, within his sphere of influence, attacked the link of Sufism with antinomian mysticism and advocated what came to be known as the Shuhudiyya doctrine derived from as Simmani. His reaction against Akbar's tentatives towards religious syncretism earned him the Emperor's disfavour, but his reformist outlook won the support of subsequent Mogul Emperors."(25)

“Among the problems over which orthodox and Sufis quarreled was one that had appeared long before, and one that Shaikh Ahmad had maintained that the mystics were wrong when they argued in such pantheistic terms as the unity of existence; this was all illusion. There was instead, he argued, a duality of existence; Creator and the Created were separate. Nevertheless, many Sufis did not accept his argument, and this old dispute continued to simmer.” (21)

D. N. Marshall

Marshall wrote about Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi in his book “Mughals in India” published in 1967 as under:

“Ahmad Faruqi Sirhindi ----- was imprisoned at Gwalior in 1028/1619 but later pardoned and received from Emperor Jahangir a Khil’at and a present in cash.”(22)

Unesco History Writers

Louis Gottschk and other writers have compiled “History of Mankind” published by Unesco in 1969. Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi has been introduced in this book in the following words:

“In the seventeenth century Ahmad Sirhindi attempted to reintroduced freedom of speculation and discussion into the tariqas of India but won a following chiefly because of the great intensity of his mysticism. He launched the doctrine of Wahdat al-Shuhud (unity by witness) as against that of Wahdat al-Wujud (unity by existence), thus attempting to reconcile on the metaphysical level the very personal experience of the mystic with an intensely social activism. As the power of Islam declined in India, his followers were among the

“The Naqshbandi order did not attain such a vogue in India as the others mentioned above; it was introduced there by Sheikh Ahmad al-Faruqi, who died at Sirhind in 1625, and there are several other shrines of saints of this order in India, notably that of Shah Musafir (1698) at Aurangabad.” (19)

H. A. R. Gibb

Prof. Margoliuth published a book entitled “Muhammadanism---An Historical Survey” which was later published by H. A. R. Gibb in 1949 with a number of additions and changes. In this book Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi has been described as a reformer along with some other outstanding figures of Islam. Gibb writes:

“During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a succession of remarkable scholars strove to restate the bases of Islamic theology in a manner which broke away from the formalism of the orthodox manuals and laid new stress upon the psychological and ethical elements in religion. Among the more outstanding figures in this movement, which has not yet received attention it deserves, were the Syrian Abd al-Ghani of Nablus (1641-1731) and Indians Ahmad Sirhindi (1583-1624) and Shah Wali-Allah of Delhi; (1702-62).” (20)

Prof. Freeland Abbott

Freeland Abbott, a Professor of history at Tufts University Medford published a research paper “The Decline of the Mughal Empire and Shah Waliullah” in April 1962 in an American quarterly journal “The Muslim World”. This orientalist writes about Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi and his philosophy as follows:

endeavoured to know how Islam spread in India and other parts of the world. He presented his research in a book entitled "The Preaching of Islam" published in 1896. He had paid homage to Muslims Sufis who dedicated their lives for the cause of Islam. He mentioned a number of Muslims saints who preached Islam in India. While introducing Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi as a preacher, he observes:

"In the reign of the Emperor Jahangir (1605-1628) there was a certain Sunni theologian, named Shaykh Ahmad Mujaddid, who especially distinguished himself by the energy with which he controverted the doctrines of the Shi'ahs: the latter, being at this time in favour at court, succeeded in having him imprisoned on some frivolous charges; during the two years that he was kept in prison he converted to Islam several hundred idolaters who were his companions in the same prison." (17)

T. W. Arnold has mentioned Hadrat Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi in his article "Missions (Muhammadan)" published in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. He describes Shaykh Sirhindi's success in preaching in the following words:

"In India, in the 17th Century, a theologian, named Shaykh Ahmad Mujaddid, who had been unjustly imprisoned is said to have converted several hundred idolaters whom he found in the prison." (18)

Arnold wrote another essay "Saints and Martyrs" in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* in which he wrote about Shaykh Sirhindi and other Naqshbandi saints as follows:

Oriental Spiritualism” published in 1868 A.D. for the first time. Later on, H.A. Rose edited and published it in 1968. Appendix-I entitled “Some Problems in Naqshbandi History” contains the names of disciples of Hadrat Khawaja M. Baqi billah Berang, among whom the name of Shaykh Sirhindi is inscribed as follows:

“Imam Rabbani Mujaddid Alif Sani Sh. Ahmad Faruqi Sirhindi”.(14)

In the supra-mentioned book, the Naqshbandi order has been described as one of the successful tariqa of Islamic spiritualism. The author writes about this sufi fraternity in the following words:

“The history of the Naqshbandi order would be of some interest if it could be recovered, not merely because it has played an important part in Muslim thought, but also because it has had no little influence on the political vicissitude of India, Mesopotamia, and, to a less extent Turkey.”(15)

Shaykh Ahmad’s political influence on Mughal dynasty is evident from the historical record of Emperor Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb.

Sir Thomas W. Arnold

Arnold was a famous orientalist who spent some time in India. He taught philosophy at Government College Lahore where the national poet of Pakistan Allama Dr. Muhammad Iqbal had been his student who later on composed some beautiful Urdu verses in his memory. (16) Arnold was a philosopher and

The non-Muslim writers of India have written several treatises about the life and teachings of famous Muslim mystics. Some have mentioned them in their books. For example, Hadrat Ali bin Uthman Hujwiri(9), Khawajah Mu'in al-Din Chishti of Ajmir,(10) Baba Farid al-Din of Pakpatten, (11), Hadrat Baha' al-Din Zakariyya of Multan (12) etc. Some Hindu poets have even composed beautiful poems in the memory of these saints. (13) But Hindu and Sikh writers have not expressed their views regarding this Muslim gnostic of India. It is due to the following reasons:

1. Ahmad Sirhindi was a strict follower of Islamic Shari ah and disliked relations with non-Muslim community unnecessarily.
2. He wanted to segregate un-Islamic ways from the lives of Indian Muslims.
3. His intent was to revert the effects of Akbar's efforts for the unification of Islam and Hinduism.

On contrary to Hindu and Sikh writers the western scholars have expressed their views about Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi. The orientalist manifest special interest in the life and achievement of the Shaykh especially his influence upon Indian mysticism and politics. In the following pages it has been endeavoured to reflect what the orientalist think about this great mystic of India. Their views have been amassed only from the available sources.

John P. Brown

Brown was perhaps the first orientalist who mentioned Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi in his book entitled "The Darivishes or