

CHAPTER - VIII

C O N C L U S I O N

In the Preceding pages we had tried to study the over all personality of Sir Syed. However, we will summarise and clarify some of the steps Sir Syed has taken in course of his Aligarh Movement. Sir Syed was a child of revolution who has seen the fall of Mughals and the emergence of British power in India. In fact, the Muslim political power had been declining from the beginning of the 18th Century and after 1857, the whole structure of the Muslim Society changed. The catastrophe of 1857 left a deep impact on the mind of Sir Syed and he began to think over the devastated condition of the Muslims and to find out the solution of it. Ultimately, Sir Syed found the panacea of all the ills of the contemporary Muslim Society in education. But the Muslims were not ready for any kind of fundamental change in their educational ideals. B. Sheik Ali writes, "He (Sir Syed) been me aware of the wretched conditions of his people and also the reasons for that position. It was their ignorance, deeprooted traditionalism, unwillingness to change, and a chronic opposition to Western learning whereas the Hindus from the time of Raja Ram Mohan Roy were reconciled to Modernism, the Muslims resisted strongly its impact. Whereas the majority was marching in the direction of progress, the Muslims were withdrawing more and more into thier own narrow shell".¹

As a matter of fact, Muslims were "economically

poor, politically defeated, educationally and culturally different from their new masters, the Muslims did not surrender themselves to the new regime and even successive waves of suppression could not reconcile them to their new rulers. The Muslim stubbornness had hardened the Government's attitude towards them and the Muslims now stood in the lowest ebb of degradation after the great change."²

Aligarh Movement was the brain child of Sir Syed. They were inseparable and for that he worked hard. He gathered people of the same thought, told them to eradicate the educational backwardness of the Muslims and this led to the Aligarh Movement. No movement would have survived in the absence of finance. The handful men of Sir Syed led deputations all over India to collect money and it is because of the financial assistance from Raja and Nawabs that the movement gained strength. He founded a tiny Madarasa in 1875 and elevated it to a College in 1877 with a heavy support of the British Government.

Pan-Islamism³ and Wahabism⁴ were the two main obstacles to his plan as the British took them as enemies to their expansion. But Sir Syed was a courageous man. Syed Jamaluddin Afgani propagated the idea of Muslim brotherhood. The idea of Pan-Islamism might have lived even before Afgani, but Afgani was the man who vigorously took it toured the whole of the Islamic countries, founded societies to oppose British imperialism which to him

was the only enemy of Islam. Jamaluddin Afgani is said to have visited India also and preached pan-Islamism. But Sir Syed's dominating personality did not accept his views. To Sir Syed the British Government was the only one under whose control Muslims of India could have lived peacefully. Sir Syed considered India Dar-ul-Islam since the Muslims enjoyed peace and had the liberty of praying according to their own faith. Similarly Wahabism was not a doctrine opposed to British. It was simply a movement for the purification of Muslim society. The British took the Moulvis as their opponents; called them Wahabis and acted against them harshly. Sir Syed took challenged of the British. Posed himself as a Wahabi and proved by his writings that Wahabism was not opposed to British.

Similarly in his educational pursuits he came in clash with the Indian National congress. Sir Syed wanted parity between Hindus and Muslims in education and commerce. He believed that any political agitation against the British administration would retard the progress of India and endanger the Aligarh Movement which was despite his best efforts in a go-cart stage. He said that the revolution of 1857 had receded the progress of India and had it not taken place, many of the Indians would have got highest offices in the British administration. Sir Syed believed that political agitation would lead to revolution and revolution in those days was injurious to Indian. Hence he sincerely felt that let all the communities be equal

in education and only then the political process would be successful. It is not correct to dub him a stoog of the British, neither he can be called communalist or opposed to Hindus. He considered Hindus and Muslims as two eyes of India and said that India would lose its glamour 'if one is lost. Democracy presupposes the educational parity among all its natives. If one community is advanced the interest of the Weaker would always suffer. Such examples are not wanting in Indian history. Sir Syed treated both Hindus and Muslims alike and one can not cite a single example when he had opposed Hindu. Congress was not a Hindu body. Muslims equally supported it. There was only a section of Hindus and Muslims which supported Sir Syed.

The impact of the Aligarh Movement on Muslims and Hindus was great. Both the communities joined Sir Syed's college and got education there. With the educational development there was a social reform among the Muslims Sir Syed through his writings in Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq told his people to shun obscurantism and encouraged him to take to modernism. Sir Syed felt that his religion would become a target of attack from the west if his people would cling to the out moded ideas. For that a reorientation of Islamic values was a crying need of the time and which he did. A great scholar of Islamic theology, he wrote massively on all subjects which contradicted science and nature. This helped much in reforming the Muslim society who started thinking on lines of modernism.

He corrected many mistakes in the historical version in his Asar-us-Sanadeed and encouraged the non-Muslims to go abroad for business.

Moreover, the people of different places were united by the movement in one rope. C.F. Andrews and Girija Mukherjee say that "The movement was by no means confined to Aligarh though that was made its centre. For in every city of the North India and in other parts of India also, the new spirit spread rapidly".⁵ Hundreds of schools came into existence and down trodden class was brought to the level of conscious people.

Sir Syed accepted the importance of women's education and was aware of the urgency of it. But he regretted that the means at his disposal were not satisfactory. He thought that his movement would die if the women's education was taken simultaneously.⁶

Infact, the Aligarh Movement left its impact in almost all walks of life. P.N. Chopra writes, "Aligarh has produced all types of political figures - Rightists, Leftists, Radicals, Nationalists, Communists, Communalists, Congressists, Leagners etc reflecting all shades of public opinion in the country : Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew, Khaliquzzaman, Nawab Hamidullah Khan (Of Bhopal), Khwaja Nazimuddin, the Ali Brothers, Rafi Ahamd Kidwai, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, President Ayyub Khan (of Pakistan), Dr.

Syed Mahmood etc. It has similarly produced some of the most eminent figures in the field of education, journalism, literature and science : Maulana Majid Daryabadi, Maulvi Abdul Haque (Baba-i-Urdu or the Great old Man of Urdu), Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Josh Malehabadi, Rasheed Ahmad Siddiqui, Dr. Ziauddin, Zafar Ali Khan, Qazi Abdul Ghaffar, Ali Ahmad Suroor, Sadar Ganda Singh, Khawaja Ahmad Abbas, Asmat Chuglai, Professor Hadi Hassan, Mohammad Habib, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad etc. ⁷

The Aligarh Movement is in many respects was similar to the 15th Century Renaissance in Europe. The movement succeeded to a great extent in demolishing the foundation of medievalism, turned ignorance into intellectual awakening conservatism into enlightenment and superstition into reason. In fact, it heralded the dawn of a new era for the Indian Muslims.

The Aligarh Movement is basically an educational movement. The relevance of it has not diminished even after about a century. Sir Syed had firm faith that education was a powerful instrument for social, economic, and cultural transformation of any society.

Sir Syed's philosophy and views on education are valid today as were in his own days. His thoughts and ideas about the objectives and pattern of education are also relevant. His ideas about its new methods and techniques that developed with the emergence of modern Science

in 17th Century, are in keeping with the views of contemporary educationists and thinkers. He highly emphasised the need of scientific method - observation, experiment and analysis - to replace the old scholastic method in the altered situation and changed context.⁸ Prof. Shan Muhammad writes, "Sir Syed's age was a time of science and reason. With the advent of the British in India everything began to be tested on the touch-stone of reason and the impact of scientific approach on every walk of life was severely felt. Even religion could not escape scrutiny and it needed a reorientation in the light of scientific development in the West. Sir Syed was conscious of the Western liberal ideas and felt that if a reorientation of Islamic values were not attempted in India, it would retard his community's progress."⁹

Sir Syed was right in stating the importance of national education for the progress and prosperity of people. Prof. K.A. Nizami says, "Sir Syed's educational ideas and ideals are as relevant today as they were revolutionary in his days. He stands out unique in the history of modern India as one who first propounded a national policy of education. It was firm conviction that unless a national system of education was evolved the country as a whole could not be extricated from the meshes of ignorance, inertia and obscurantism."¹⁰

Sir Syed gave a call for mass education - a call for education to all sections of the society and not the elite one and without mass education it is impossible

for a native to become civilized and honoured.¹¹ Prof. Ale Ahmad Suroor says, "Sir Syed's Movement or the Aligarh Movement continues to be relevant as long as the total transformation of mind, goal of 100% literacy, social and educational reforms, establishment of an order that has the quality of being just and which produces men and women with a sense of values and vision without distinguishing caste and creed, is not realised".¹² Moreover, Prof. Riazur Rahman Khan Sherwani says, "In the field of education the Muslims still need to be encouraged to acquire particularly scientific and technical knowledge and for this purpose new institutions have to be opened for them throughout India."¹³

One of the main purposes of the Aligarh Movement was to propagate the modern scientific education among the Muslims. At present there is no controversy over any aspect of it. Majority of the Muslims have fully changed their attitudes towards scientific education. But the religious groups particularly the Ulema still are not in favour of science and they have not completely changed. The teaching of scientific education is prohibited in their religious institution. Not to speak of teaching the scientific education, in some of the religious institutions, still today even teaching the English language is considered Kufr (atheistic)¹⁴.

But the Ulema do not hesitate to use the things invented by the science, though they considerable change in the traditional system of education in keeping with

the views of time which is the high demand of the day and the scientific education should be made a part of the religious curriculum at any stage. Regarding this Sir Syed's advice is still useful and fruitful.¹⁵

Sir Syed was rational and practical. He understood the reality of the situation correctly but the traditional religion scholars particularly the Ulema failed to understand it. Alhaji Adeleka Dirisu Ajijola in his essay 'The problem of Ulema' writes, "Many of the Ulema who have become Muslim Leaders have themselves lost the true spirit of Islam. They do not have the ability to interpret the principles and law of Islam in the light of changing conditions."¹⁶ Further he says, "They were merely interested in condemning the evils of Western civilization without appreciating the good in it."¹⁷ Unless and until they realize the importance and necessity of modern secular and scientific education, no social mobility and development is possible.

Unfortunately even today by education some of the traditional Ulema mean basically religious and preparation for the next world. This is the reason that neither they send their children to secular institutions nor do they change their syllabus in their own educational system. Therefore, the very concept of education should be changed according to the educational ideas of Sir Syed and they should include both religious and secular scientific education. The Quran does not prohibit to do so.

There is a saying that there is no final or last word in politics. This is correct with Sir Syed too. His policy of loyalism is not relevant today but his policy of cooperation with the Government is still relevant.

So far as the Indian Muslims are concerned, the Aligarh Movement is still relevant in bringing about modernisation in their mode of thought and life style. They have to be reawakened with a rejuvenative process in their sociocultural and religious life.

Sir Syed was the supporter of scientific temper of mind, rational and enlightened view of life. He laid emphasis on reinterpretation of religion according to the spirit of the time without compromising on fundamental tenets. He introduced comparative study of religious and stressed supremacy of reason in all matters - spiritual and temporal. Sir Syed adopted rational and academic approach in order to defend Islam against any uncharitable criticism by the people of other faiths. He stood for religious tolerance, reviewing traditions, customs and the value system of the society with the spirit of time. He was in favour of taking good things from other developed civilizations for keeping the society progressive and dynamic. Sir Syed's enlightened views are as important today as they were in his time. Apart from these, he formed a new Ilm-ul-Kalam (Scholastic Science) for writing commentary on the Quran. He followed rationalism and scientific spirit of the 19th century and the traditions

of Mutazilite school of thought. Ibn Rushd, Imam Ghazali and Shah Waliullah were his guides for his rational writings and commentary. He also laid the foundation of comparative religious studies by writing Taibain-ul-Kalam, a commentary in Urdu on the old and new Testament, which bears testimony to his belief in the essential unity of all the revealed religions. He revived the spirit of Dara Shikoh and Alberuni in the realm of religious thought. One of the most significant points may be noted here that he wrote Khutbat-e-Ahmadya as a refutation to William Muir's derogatory book 'Life of Mohammad'. The book severely pained Sir Syed and his deep agony and anguish were reflected in the letters which he wrote to Viquarul-Mulk from London. The most striking point is that he neither launched any campaign against the book nor submitted any memorandum to the government nor even protested against it in any other way. He could have raised a storm with his mighty pen against William Muir's book. But he did nothing of this sort and silently undertook a voyage to England, stayed there and studied in the British Museum and the India Office Library. He also collected materials from the Turkish and Egyptian Libraries and then finally produced the Khutbat. For this he had to pay much but the work proved very costly. Moreover, he had to sell all of his belongings of his house and borrow heavily to meet the cost of publication. The Khutbat consists of twelve lectures based on a scientific historical study and it demolished all the charges of William Muir levelled against the Prophet Muhammad. Both the book shows the unbounded love

of Sir Syed for the Prophet (PBUH) and his religious tolerance too. Sir Syed was a brave and courageous person who wrote Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind and made the British responsible for the revolt of 1857. He wrote the book at a time when freedom of speech and expression was unthinkable. He often criticised the British for their racial arrogance and advised his countrymen not to compromise with injustice and indignity. Sir Syed had the highest sense of self-respect who left Darbar at Agra in protest against lower seats assigned to Indians. Moreover, he wrote a critical review on W.W. Hunter's book "The Indian Musalmans" and characterised the book as unhistorical and mischievous. The man who wrote his 'strictures' on the present Educational system of India' that was published for private circulation in England in 1869 and who committed a great Sin in the eyes of the British by recording his vote in favour of the Ilbert Bill which sought to invest the Indian Magistrates with the power of trying European criminals was no other than Sir Syed.¹⁸

The greatest relevance of the Aligarh Movement even today is in the field of social reform. B. Sheik Ali writes, "Social reformation (of Sir Syed) is an extension of educational programme.... The vital difference between education and social reform is, in education we pour knowledge and experience into empty buckets; children do not know anything and we teach them. Social reformation is purification of a cesspool; there is already something in the society, but it is all rotten filling empty bucket is not difficult, but the removal of bad

habits, superstition, apathy, inertia and ignorance and improvement of morals, manners, attitudes and behaviour, would perhaps require wisdom of socrates, strength of Samson and courage of Alexander,¹⁹. Sir Syed along with his associates did this great task and showed a new path to the new generation.

Sir Syed was not a dreamer but a practical man. What he believed and preached, he practised. He supported secularism and it was an ideal of his life. The MAO College established by him was open to the all communities of India and the world in respective of caste and creed. This practice has been continuing from the very beginning. No where within the campus, any kind of distinction was made between the Muslims and the non-Muslims. In order to maintain Hindu - Muslim unity, he prohibited the slaughte of cow within the premises of the MAO College. In an article on 'cow slaughter' he advised the Muslims : If the giving up of cow slaughter will establish amity and friendship between Hindus and Muslims, then please do not sacrifice cows which is a Thousand time better.²⁰ The other important event also showed his love of Hindu - Muslim unity is shown by the fact that when his grandson, Ross Masood, read the kalima at his Bismillah ceremony from the lap of Sir Syed's intimate Hindu friend, Raja Jai Kishan Das. It was undoubtedly a remarkable incident in the history of Hindu - Muslim relations. Sir Syed was so generous that he maintained a seperate kitchen for Raja Jai Kishan Das in his house in order that he

could maintain his faith. Moreover, Raja Jai Kishan Das had been the secretary of the Scientific Society at Aligarh after Sir Syed. Apart from these, the most important event which occurred in North Western provinces was that a Cholera broke out there and Sir Syed worked day and night looking after Hindus and Muslims without any distinction with such dedication that members of all communities admired his humanitarian attitude and spirit. Once Sir Syed wrote a letter to Mohsinul Mulk from England on the 29th April 1870, "My temperament is such that I want the welfare of all inhabitants of India whether Hindu or Muslim". And as a member of legislative council he served all the people of India alike.

Sir Syed was one of the Indians who conceived India as a secular nation. He had the greatest respects for all religions and faiths. He also believed that the development and progress of the country could be ensured only through the united efforts of all the people of India.²¹

Sir Syed contributed some elements of permanent values to the Indian society like his views about secularism, nation and Hindu Muslim unity or communal harmony. These significant views are much more relevant today than in his own time. Today the country is at the brink of disaster and strife. Generally we observe in the mass media that the properties of crores of rupees are destroyed in the communal violence. Fascist and subversive forces are bent upon destroying the unity and integrity

of the nation. The greatest need of our time is the man like Sir Syed, a champion of Hindu-Muslim unity and his teaching would surely serve as the beacon light in this direction. Unfortunately Sir Syed was highly misunderstood by some of the critics like M.S. Jain, A.L. Srivastava²² and many others. But some of the Indians like Pt. Jawaher Lal Nehru who fully appreciated and admired the predicament of Sir Syed and observed in his book 'The Discovery of India'. He writes "He was in no way anti-Hindu or communally speratist".²³ Supporting Sir Syed Nehru writes in his 'An Autobiography' "Sir Syed's decision to concentrate on Western education for Muslims was undoubtedly a right one".²⁴

From the above discussion it can safely be concluded that the importance of Sir Syed has not diminished with the passage of time. Infact, his ideals, policies and teachings are much more relevant today than in his own time and his ideals are relevant not only to the Muslims of India but to the Indian society as a whole.

In line of the Aligarh Movement the present socio-political situation needs more such Movements.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Ali, B. Sheikh A Leader Reassessed : Life and Work of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan,
Mysore : Sultan Shaheed Educational Trust, 1999, P. 352

2. Muhammad, Shan Successors of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan
Delhi : Idarah-i-Advayat-i-Delhi, 1981, P. 1

3. see Ahmad, Aziz Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.
In the above work the disagreement between Sir Syed and Jamaluddin Afgani has been mentioned in details PP. 56-66.
For the origin and development see Narayan, B.K. Pan-Islamism, New Delhi : S. Chand & Company Ltd., 1982, PP. 215.
also see Razzaqui, Shahid Hussain Afganistan Ke Pahle Marde-e-Mujahid Syed Jamaluddin Afgani Hayat Wa Afkar, New Delhi : Islamic Book Foundation, 1992, PP. 204.
also see Taher, Mohamed (edited) Encyclopaedic Survey of Islamic Culture, New Delhi : Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd., PP. 105-116.

Pan-Islamic Movement was launched by Syed Jamaluddin Afgani to Unite the Muslim country of the World against the British and other Colonial countries under one Caliph. But Sir Syed did not support him.

4. see Houtsma, M.TH, First Encyclopaedia of Islam, Wensinck, A.J. et al (edited) Leiden : E.J. Brill, 1987.
- Wahabism in India : Wahabi doctrine was introduced into India by Saiyid Ahmad (1786) of Rai Bareli. The Wahabi Movement condemned sufism and saint-worship. P.1089
- also see Nadvi, Masood Alam, Hindustan Ki Pahli Islami Tahreek, Delhi : Markazi Maktaba Islami, 1994, PP. 159
- also see Kabiraj, Narhari, Wahabi and Farazi Rebels of Bengal, New Delhi : People's Publishing House, 1982, PP. 127.
- also see Sannyal, Usha, Devotional Islam & Politics in British India, Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1996 Chapter - VIII, PP.231-267.
- For details see, Ahmad, Qeyamuddin, The Wahabi Movement in India, Calcutta : Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1996, PP. 375.

5. Andrews, C.F. & Mukherjee, Girja The Rise and Growth of Congress in India, Meerut : 1967, P. 27
6. Gujrati, Md. Imamuddin (edited) Mukammal Majmua Lectures Wa Speeches of Sir Syed from 1863 to 1896, Lahore : Mustafai Press, 1890- 1900 PP. 213-217
7. Chopra, P.N. Role of Indian Muslims in the Struggle for Freedom, New Delhi: Light & Life Publishers, 1979, PP. 165-166.
also see Muhammad Shan, Education and Politics, New Delhi : APH Publishing Corporation 2002, PP. 267-268.
8. Qureshi, Ishrat Ali The Aligarh : Past and Present, Aligarh : Aligarh Muslim University 1992, PP. 15
9. Muhammad, Shan Successors of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan Op.cit. P. 8
10. Ziaurrahman, Syed (edited) The Glowing Legend of Sir Syed: A Centinial Tribute, Aligarh: Non-Resident Student's Centre Aligarh Muslim University, 1998, P.55
11. Panikkar, K.N. Culture, Ideology, Hegemony: Intellectual and Social Consciousness in Colonial India, New Delhi: Tulika 1995, 1998 P. 14

- also see Ziaurrahman, Syed Op.cit. P.257; see Qureshi, Ishrat Ali op.cit, P.15; also see Graham, G.F.I. The Life and Work of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, London, 1885, P.152
- 12.Ziarrahaman, Syed op.cit. P. 55
- 13.Ibid, P.57
- 14.Hanafii, Shamim (editor) Risala Zamia, New Delhi : Dr.Zakir Hussain Institute of Islamic Studies, Zamia Millia Islamia, July - September 1998, P.316.
- 15.Ibid PP. 316-317
- 16.Ajijola, Alhaji Adeleke Dirisu "The Problem of 'Ulema'" in Kurzman; Charles, Liberal Islam : A Source Book, New York : Oxford University Press, 1998, at P.239.
For details see, Husain, Syed Abid Hindustani Musalman Ayenei Ayyam Mein, New Delhi : Dr. Syed Abid Husain Memorial Trust, 1991,PP.384
also see Faruqui, Ziaul Hasan, The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan, Bombay : Asia Publishing House, 1963, PP. 1-21.
- 17.Ibid P. 240.
- 18.Qureshi, Ishrat Ali op.cit, P.16

19. Ali, B. Sheikh op. cit, P. 145
20. Mauglori, Tufail Ahmad
Musalmannon Ka Roshan Mustaqbil,
Delhi : Kutub Khana Aziziya, 1938, 1945
PP. 316-317. see The Aligarh Institute Gazette, 12th June, 1897.
21. For details see Nizami, K.A.
Secular Traditioin at Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh: Aligarh Muslim University Press, 1991, PP.44
22. Muhammad, Shan
Education and Politics, op.cit, P.260
23. Nehru, J.
The Discovery of India, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982, P.345.
24. Nehru, J.
An Autobiography, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982, P.462.