
Socio-political and Religious Contributions of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan

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ABSTRACT

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan is considered well known intellectual of India and he served as most remarkable educational reformer during Colonial era. Sir Syed considered an important Muslim leader in India who had good collaboration with English Statesmen after 1857. With socio-political contribution, Syed Ahmad Khan, who had profound a political insight presented his religious ideas. Although his religious concepts created different conspiracies among the Muslims of India, especially the religious class opposed his religious theories and declared these stance against the spirit of Islam. This paper is an analytical study about the religious thoughts of Sir Syed which critically explore the religious thoughts of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.

Keywords: *Sir Syed, India, Religion, Thoughts, Deoband, Nature, Colonial, Education.*

Introduction

After the down-fall of Mughal government in Subcontinent, there was a state of excitement among the Muslims. The Muslim society was religiously also in chaos. The Muslims were completely defeated by the British. Even after that, the English forces ended the War of Independence in 1857 when only the Muslims were declared as the protagonists of the war. In these unfavorable political conditions, Muslims were suffering from a worse life, which was also expressed by Dr. Hunter¹. In these circumstances, Sir Syed's personality was well received by Muslims and government circles and he emerged as a thinker. While in government service, Sir Syed also acquired a certain influence in government officials.. As a result of which he was seen as valuable even in government circles In the War of Independence in 1857, under the guise of justice, he generously

helped the British. He sheltered them in his own and his Awan Wansar's houses and earned a reputation for taking them to safe places. Also, in order to please the British, he named the 1857 War of Independence as the "Indian Rebellion" and wrote a book on its causes and events, in which the stand of Muslims was wrong. On this work he became popular among the officials as one of them Colonel Graham translated it into English. In view of this cooperation and services, Syed Ahmed Khan was awarded titles like "Sir" Khan Bahadur", "Sir's Advisor", "Justice of Peace of India" and "Doctor of Law" by the British government. In almost all the educational institutions as well as in the minds of the people and individuals, one name is prominently brought forward in terms of the war of independence and that is that of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. But only this one side of the picture is kept in front of the people. While it was not explained about his concept about religious thoughts which he presented in his writings. Different religious scholars rejected his ideas and stated him controversial person. Even some religious scholars charged him with false beliefs which are completely against the teachings of Islam are not told to the people. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan formulated a false religion which he called "Naturism". Belief in any one of their twisted beliefs makes disbelief necessary, while insolence is an exception. As it is mentioned about his faith about God is different. He wrote God is the custodian of all and he is not biased as he does not linked of any sect. God is for all and he only like Islam because Islam is the only favorite religion to God. He explained about this philosophy as that Allah also said in his book the Quran, " ان الدين عند الله الاسلام " ² According to Sir Syed:

Allah, says in His words that his favorite religion is Islam but Sir Syed is not satisfied with it. He says: "What is the religion of our God is our religion." God is neither a Hindu nor an alias Muslim, nor an imitator, nor a religionist, nor a Jew, nor a Christian, He is a fully convinced about nature³. He also said "Nature is the work of God and religion is His word and the word and work of the true God can never be opposed. That is why religion and nature must be united⁴.

He also had a different view about the prophet hood of the Prophet (ﷺ) as he wrote "Prophet" is defined in almost all theological books as follows: "A prophet is a man sent by Allah Almighty to preach the commandments." and this meaning is well-known and well-known among the people and this is the right, but Sir Syed says: "Prophecy is a natural thing... There are thousands of types of human kingdoms." Sometimes a certain queen is so strong in a certain person due to nature and nature that he is called his imam or prophet, a blacksmith can be an imam or prophet of his art, a poet can also be an imam or prophet of his art. A physician can also be an imam or a prophet of his art⁵.

After retiring from his job in 1876, he started writing this commentary, but life did not support him and he could only write the first seven parts of Tafsir al-Quran before he passed away. Surah Al-Imran, Surah Al-Nisa and Surah Al-Maidah in the third part, Surah Inam and Surah Araf, in the fourth part Surah Anfal, Surah

Towa and Surah Yunus, in the fifty-fifth part Surah Hud, Surah Yusuf, Surah Raad, Surah Ibrahim, Surah Al-Hijr. And Surah Al-Nahl, Surah Bani Israel in the sixth part and the commentaries on Surah Kahaf, Surah Maryam and Surah Taha in the seventh part, the book under review is the first part of Tafsari al-Quran. Sir Syed also adhered to it in his writings. In his writings, Athar al-Sanadid, Reasons for the Revolt of India, Khutbat Ahmadiyya, Tafsir al-Quran, Tarikh Sarkshi Bijnoor are very important. "Athar al-Sanadid" is a valuable document regarding the ancient historical buildings of Delhi, while "Reasons of the Revolt of India" contains accounts of (Ghadar) revolt. Through this book, he tried to remove the suspicion of the British. In 'Khatbat Ahmadiyya', there is a reply of this Christian writer who tried to distort the image of Islam. 'Tafsir al-Quran' is a controversial book by Sir Syed in which he gave a rational interpretation of the Qur'an and denied miracles. As he said, Sir Syed writes about the reality of revelation: "It is also Muslim that the Holy Qur'an was literally revealed to the heart of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or was revealed, even if it is accepted that the angel Gabriel conveyed it to the Holy Prophet. That the religion is that of the general scholars of Islam, or that the angel of Prophet hood, who is interpreted as the Spirit of God, inspired the Prophet's heart, as is my particular religion⁶. While discussing the reality of Jabriel, he says: "So revelation is something that has been imprinted on the heart of Prophet-hood by the source of natural prophet hood." The same heart distinction is sometimes heard by the external ears like a speaking voice, and sometimes the same heart image appears in the form of another speaker, but there is no voice or speaker other than himself. This proves that the name of the queen of prophecy that God has created among the prophets is Jabriel⁷. Insolence in the glory of the Holy Prophet: "Listen to the plight of an orphan child who did not enjoy the comfort of his mother's side, nor tasted the love of his father, was born in a desert country and was surrounded by camel herders. He didn't see anything of the ghost and didn't hear anything of the voice calling out to God, but he himself never went astray⁸. He wrote about prophets and did not chose suitable words as he wrote Beliefs related to Prophets and insolence in the glory of Hazrat Ibrahim: "Hajj which was established in commemoration of the worship of this great (Hazrat Ibrahim) god-worshiper, then it was decided to perform this worship in the same way and in the same clothes, as and in which In the dress he wore, Muhammad (peace be upon him) maintained this barbaric appearance and barbaric dress in the memorial of our great grandfather's worship even in the age of early civilization⁹. While he described about Hazrat Musa (عليه السلام), As he said, "So if Musa did not know any rule of trigonometry and he made a mistake in his statement, then there is no loss in his prophethood and inspiration because he did not know trigonometry or Was not a master of astronomy. He was so ignorant in these matters that he did not even know the geography from the edge of the Red Sea to Canaan, and this was his pride and this was the proof of his being the Prophet of Ulu Al-Azam¹⁰. Similarly he charged against Hazrat Easa, as he wrote against the glory of Hazrat

Isa : Till date, the Nation of Islam agrees that Hazrat Isa was born without a father, but Ahmad Khan says. According to me, his fatherlessness is not proven from the Holy Quran. And I think she had a husband and Hazrat Maryam became pregnant by her husband Yusuf according to the law of human nature¹¹. In the same way, Sir Syed also closed his mouth on the miracles of the prophets and did not consider them to be reliable, rather Sir Syed often denied miracles. As if he is reluctant to accept the ascension of the Prophet¹². Even regarding Quran he is not confirmed about its miracle as he said, it is a mistake to consider the unparalleled eloquence of the Holy Quran as a miracle¹³. We have not found any such order in the Quran, so we say that there is no abrogation or abrogation in the Quran. Beliefs about angels: The angels mentioned in the Quran cannot have any real existence, but rather the appearance of God's infinite powers and the strong ones that God has created in all His creatures of various kinds. Angels say. There is no angel named Gabriel, nor did he bring revelation, but it is the name of a force that exists in the Prophet. While he denied about Hazrat Easa as said about the denial of Jesus' Miracles: According to the Qur'an's explicitness, Islam still agrees that Jesus (as) resurrected the dead, gave sight to the blind, and made a living bird by blowing into a clay idol. It is proven, but Ahmad Khan denies all of them and says that "Hazrat Isa (peace be upon him) used to make clay animals while playing with the boys as a child, and sometimes even now, while playing, children say that God I will die, they would also say in the same way, he has denied that Jesus (peace be upon him) used to heal the blind and lepers and did not believe that he used to raise the dead¹⁴. He has denied the miracles of Hazrat Ibrahim and writes that "Our scholarly commentators interpreted the verses of the Holy Quran in this way that Hazrat Ibrahim was thrown into the fire and came out of it safely, although in a verse of the Holy Quran it is said that It is not written that Hazrat Ibrahim was thrown into the fire¹⁵. Although it is said in the Holy Quran, "He (Hazrat Ibrahim) said to God in a dream, 'Show me how you will bring the dead back to life.'" He mixed them and placed them on the mountains and then when called, they all came alive separately. Similarly, calling a real event a dream is a denial of a miracle and a distortion of the Quran, which is the practice of the Jews¹⁶. Just as the creation of jinn has been recognized by Muslims, the existence of such a creature is not proven by the Quran. The devil is not a separate creature, but a force existing in the human being that leads to evil is called Satan¹⁷. Beliefs about the punishment of the grave: If in the punishment of the grave snakes are described as clinging and biting the sinners, then this does not mean that in reality the snakes that we see in the world cling to the dead, but the state that Soul is gained by sins. Its condition is created by the example of suffering, pain and despair in humans, which happens to humans due to the bite of snakes in the world, common people and Kit Mala think that it is really a snake. Similarly, the Day of Judgment, the punishment of the grave, the same scale, the bridge of the road, deeds and intercession have also been denied. While Belief about Imam Mahdi: One of the false stories that are known among Muslims is the story of the birth of Imam

Mahdi in the end of the world and they were not meant to give good tidings of a Mahdi who is imagined by Muslims and who is believed to be close to the Day of Resurrection. God cannot be seen in this world with these eyes, nor with those eyes which are called the eyes of the heart, and no one can see God in the Day of Judgment. Quran says as, In which there is "Some mouths will be refreshed on this day seeing their Lord"¹⁸. It is useless to try too much on Mirza Qadiyani,, he is an old ascetic and a blessed man... Respecting and politeness to him is necessary due to his greatness and goodness. Similarly, he also tried to somehow prove himself loyal to the British government. Therefore, he writes for better relations between the Muslims and the English government. However, I wished that there should be love between Muslims and Christians, because according to the Holy Qur'an, if any sect can be our friend, then they are Christians¹⁹. Although friendship with them is prohibited in the Qur'an and it is said, whoever befriends them is one of them, and Allah does not guide the wrongdoers²⁰. Though the British had to fight many battles to rule India, but in fact they got the rule here by force and there is no deception. Rather, the reality was that India needed a ruler in its true sense, so this need made India their subject. He also wrote, I am not a supporter of the Muslims who used the government's (British) salt and malice. I am very angry with them and find them extremely evil because this commotion was such that the Muslims should have lived with the Christians according to their religion who are the People of the Book and our brothers.²¹ Sir Syed has written a book "Khalq al-Insan" i.e. about human birth, in which he explained Darwin's theory of evolution about human creation as correct. It is clear that Darwin's theory was that man was first a monkey and then gradually became human. Although all religions oppose this view. According to the teachings of the Qur'an, Hadith, Torah and Gospel, man is the offspring of Adam and Eve, and Adam was created from clay. According to Sir Syed's "Autobiography", Sir Syed's belief about Satan was that he is a force in man that turns man away from the right path. It is within, not separate from man, Sir Syed mentioned the stay of Hazrat Adam (peace be upon him) in Paradise, prostration of the angels, appearance of Hazrat Jesus (peace be upon him) and Imam Mahdi (R.A), arrival of Dajjal, blowing of the trumpet of the angel, day of retribution, Maidan Hashroo, Bridge of Sarat. the intercession of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), the vision of Allah Almighty has denied all these beliefs. The Kaaba is one of the rituals of Islam, the virtue of which is Muslim, and its blessings have been described in the Qur'an and Hadith, but Sir Syed wrote in his Tafsirul Qur'an: "Those who think that the four pillars made of this stone There is such a contagious blessing in the house that where one goes around it seven times and goes to paradise, this is their crude imagination. What is going on around this square house? Camels and donkeys are also roaming around it, so they have never been pilgrims." Kareem and Sahih hadiths, but Sir Syed writes: "Praying facing the Kaaba is not a real command of Islam. The direction of the Qibla in prayer is not a real command of the religion of Islam."²² When Sir Syed presented the doctrines based on his distortion in the name of Tafsir

of the Holy Quran written by Sir Syed and it reached the public, the scholars also came into the field and they responded by describing this Tafsir as misguidance. Explained with arguments that this is against Islam. In response to these beliefs, Imam-ul-Hind Hazrat Maulana Ahmed Raza Khan Barelvi strongly rejected Sir Syed's beliefs and declared them out of Islam. He was so fascinated by the western culture and society that he gave a different interpretation to the Muslim Islamic rules. Molana Abdul Haq wrote a commentary called "Fath al-Manan", known as Tafsir Haqqani, and explained the true meaning of these verses of the Holy Quran. . He says that "Sayyid Sahib left the meaning of the Quran and went on a different path, unlike the Salaf and the successors, and opened his heart and entered his independent thoughts."²³ Scholars have collectively criticized Sir Syed's beliefs as anti-Islamic, misguided ideas. Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali has refuted these thoughts in "Al Burhan Ali Tajheel Min Qal without Knowledge of the Quran". Zahidi Hasan Jarullah writes that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and his members were Syed Amir Ali Mu'tazili. The Shia commentator Abu Ammar Ali Raees wrote the commentary "Umdat al-Bayan" in response to Sir Syed's views, which gained great fame and popularity. Sheikh Muhammad Ikram writes, "Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Maulvi Chirag Ali and Syed Amir Ali were against the Muslims." Similarly, he also writes that Mirza Qadiani was of the same opinion. "Sir Sayyid has considered Miraj and Sadr to be the function of dreams (dreams). All the Qur'anic sayings about calculation, balance, heaven and hell have been described as metaphors and similes. Iblis and Angels do not mean any existence. It has been said about Hazrat Isa that no verse of the Qur'an proves that he was born of the Father or raised to the heavens alive."²⁴ In Hali's opinion, Sir Sayyid made some mistakes while writing the commentary, which caused a lot of damage to his mission. Maulana Altaf Hussain Hali, a follower and believer of Sir Syed himself, writes that Sir Syed has stumbled over and over in this commentary and at some points there have been serious slips.

Similarly, Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali writes about Sir Syed's commentary that the contents of this book are not supported by scholars regarding the literal translation and interpretation of the Holy Quran. Maulana Wahid-ul-Zaman Waqar Jang wrote that "A person appeared in Aligarh who has denied heaven, hell, and angels." The miracles of the Prophets have been described as talismans and talismans. He interpreted the verses of the Quran in such a way that is against the Companions and the followers and as atheists and mystics. There are four main sources of religion, but Sir Syed Ahmad Khan considered only the Qur'an as the source. Hadith, Ijmaa and Qiyas etc. were not included in the principles of religion. He declared only the Holy Qur'an as the true example of Islam and rejected all the collections of hadiths apart from it. Perhaps the reason for this was that the hadiths could be evidence against the arbitrary interpretation of the Qur'an. The ideas were generally rejected by the scholars, but a section of their imitators also developed, including scholars like Maulvi Chirag Ali, Syed Amir Ali, Aslam Jirajpuri, Muhammad Ali Lahori, Ghulam Ahmed Parvez. These gentlemen were

naturalists. And they used to deny the hadith. During the period of Ghulam Ahmed Parvez, the temptation of denying hadith reached its peak. He also wrote a commentary called "Meaning of the Qur'an" in which there was a deviation from the exact ideas of Islam. To prove the validity of denying hadith, he He also wrote a book called "Maqam Hadith".

Conclusion

Summarizing the discussion on the subject, it is clear that Sir Syed, who was not personally well versed in religious education and was simply applying philosophical thinking to religion and Islam due to study and being influenced by Western ideas. was busy finding new justifications contrary to the basic beliefs of the Prophet, then the Tafsir Qur'an written by him was a collection of controversial ideas which were rejected by Islamic scholars Tafsir Quran of Sir Syed is discussed and faced severe criticism. One of the reasons was Sir Syed's lack of religious understanding and apparently the purpose of this commentary seems to be merely the end of sympathy with the Colonial government and therefore to declare religious beliefs as a matter of general social style in this commentary. Trying to ignore the facts. Although Sir Syed got sympathy and acceptance from the government, but he was viewed with disapproval by the Muslims, especially the religious class. And Sir Syed's religious beliefs and ideas seem to be against the Muslim spirit of Islam.

¹ W. Hunter, *Our Indian Muslims*,

² *Al-Quran*:3:19.

³ *Maqalat-e-Sir Syed, Vol-15, Majlis Tarqi-e-Adab, Lahore, 1862, P.147.*

⁴ *Lahorei, Zia-u-Din, Afkar Sir Syed Khud Navisht, Fazli Sons, Karachi, 1998, P.59.*

⁵ *Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Tafseer-ul-Quran, Volume 1, Rafah Aam Steam Press Lahore,, P.23*

⁶ *Tafseer-ul-Quran, P.4*

⁷ *Ibid, 20*

⁸ *Ibid, P.19*

⁹ *Ibid, P..206.*

¹⁰ *Maqalat -e-Sir Syed, P.396.*

¹¹ *Tafseer-ul-Quran, P.30*

¹² *Sir Syed, Khutabat, Majlis Tarqi-e-Adab, Lahore, 1862, P. 427*

¹³ *Sir Syed, Tasaneef Ahmadiya, Vol.1, Agra, India, 1903,P.21*

¹⁴ *Tafseer-ul-Quran, P.159*

¹⁵ *Ibid, P.171*

¹⁶ *Maqalat-e-Sir Syed, Vol-2, Majlis Tarqi-e-Adab, Lahore, 1862, P.180*

¹⁷ *Sir, Syed, Tahzeb-ul-Akhlaq, P.165*

¹⁸ *Al-Quran,2:20-22*

¹⁹ *Maktoob-e-Sir Syed Ahmad Khan,*

²⁰ *Al-Quran, 6:51*

²¹ *Hali. ALtaf Hussain, Hiayat-e-Javed, Lahore, P.363*

²² *Tafseer Quran, P.1*

²³ *Ibid, P.14*

²⁴ *S. M. Ikram, Moj-e-Kausar, Idara Saqafat Islamia, Lahore, 1992, P.161*