

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi's Concept of the Shari'ah

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Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi's (971/1564—1034/1624) thought, which is basically revivalistic in character, emanates from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and attempts at the revival of the doctrines of Faith and social practices of the community. It aims at curbing the greatest menace of the time by re-asserting the abiding truth of Shari'ah and restoring conviction in the Prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ). As a serious scholar of his time, he explains the truth of Shari'ah as he belonged to the age where the trend was to overlook, rather reject Shari'ah over *tariqah*. The former was supposed to sub-serve the latter, as 'India being the home of *yoga* and asceticism there was no dearth of misguided mystics who had blended mystic practices with philosophical meditation reposing trust in self-mortification, spiritual ecstasy and direct intuition.¹

Sirhindi being a qualified scholar (*'ālim*) of his time was expected to write on the Islamic subjects like Shari'ah etc., but there were other reasons behind the elucidation of the concept of Shari'ah by him. At his time, there was a common misunderstanding of the concept (of Shari'ah), either due to the ignorance of the *'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* or due to the

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