Ahmad Sirhindi

Imām Rabbānī Ahmad Sirhindi

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<th>Born</th>
<th>26 June 1564</th>
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<td>Sirhind, Punjab region, Mughal Empire</td>
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<td>Died</td>
<td>10 December 1624 (aged 60)</td>
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<td>Mughal India</td>
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<td>Main interests</td>
<td>Implementation of Islamic Law, Islamic Statehood</td>
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Imām Rabbānī Shaykh Ahmad al-Farūqī al-Sirhindī (1564–1624) was an Indian Islamic scholar, a Hanafi jurist, and a prominent member of the Naqshbandī Sufi order. He has been described as the Mujaddid Alī saānī, meaning the “reviver of the second millennium”, for his work in rejuvenating Islam and opposing the heterodoxies prevalent in the time of Mughal Emperor Akbar. While early South Asian scholarship credited him for contributing to conservative trends in Indian Islam, more recent works, notably by ter Haar, Friedman, and Buehler, have pointed to Sirhindi’s significant contributions to Sufi epistemology and practices.

Most of the Naqshbandī suborders today, such as the Mujaddidī, Khālidī, Saīfī, Tāhirī, Qasimiya and Haqqānī sub-orders, trace their spiritual lineage through Sirhindi.

Sirhindi’s shrine, known as Rauza Sharif, is located in Sirhind, India.

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Early life and education

Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi was born on Friday\(^7\) 26 June 1564 in the village of Sirhind,\(^3\) into an ashraf family claiming descent from the caliph Umar, Ahmad as-Sirhindi, son of ash-Shaykh 'Abdul Ahad s/o Zainu-l'Abidin s/o A'bdul Hayy, s/o Habibullah, s/o Rafi'uddin, s/o Nasiruddin, s/o Sulayman, s/o Yusuf, s/o Ishaq, s/o A'bdulrahman, s/o Shu'ayb, s/o Ahmad, s/o Yusuf, s/o Shihabuddin, known as Farq Shah al-Qabidi, s/o Nasiruddin, s/o Mahmud, s/o Salman, s/o Mas'ud, s/o 'Abdullah al-Wa'iz al-Asgar, s/o 'Abdullah al-Wa'iz al-Akbar, s/o Abdul Fattah, s/o Ishaq, s/o Ibrahim, s/o Nasir, s/o Abdurahman, s/o Umar.\(^7\)

He received most of his early education from his father, Shaykh 'Abd al-Ahad, his brother, Shaykh Muhammad Sadiq and from Shaykh Muhammad Tahir al-Lahuri.\(^4\) He also memorised the Qur'an. He then studied in Sialkot,\(^3\) in modern-day Pakistan, which had become an intellectual centre under the Kashmir-born scholar Maulana Kamaluddin.\(^5\) There he learned logic, philosophy and theology and read advanced texts of Tafsir and hadith under another scholar from Kashmir, Yaqub Sarfi (1521-1595), who was a sheikh of the Hamadaniyya Silsilla (Sayyid Sadaat Salar Ajum Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani order).\(^10\) Qazi Bahlol Badakhshani taught him jurisprudence, Muhammad's biography and history.\(^11\)\(^12\)

Sirhindi also made rapid progress in the Suhrawardi, the Qadiri, and the Chistī turūq, and was given permission to initiate and train followers at the age of 17. He eventually joined the Naqshbandi order through the Sufi missionary Shaykh Muhammad al-Baqi, and became a leading master of this order. His deputies traversed the length and breadth of the Mughal Empire in order to popularize the order and eventually won some favour with the Mughal court.\(^13\)

Views

Part of a series on Islam

Sufism and Tariqat
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Sufi orders
• Akbari
• Alevi
• Alians
• Ashrafia
• Azeemia
• Ba 'Alawi
• Bayrami
• Bektashi
• Burhaniyya
• Chishti
• Galibi
• Gulshani
• Haqqani Anjuman
• Hurufi
• Idrisi
• Issawiyya
• Jelveti
• Jerrahi
• Khalidi
• İskenderpasa
  - İsmailağa
• Khalwati
• Kubrawi
• Madari
• Malamati
• Melevi
• Mouridi
• Noorbakshia
• Naqshbandi
• Naqshbandi Haqqani
• Nasuhi
• Ni‘matullāhi
• Nuqtavi
• Qadiri
• Qalandari
• Rifa'i
• Safavi
• Sarwari Qadiri
• Shadhili
• Shattari
• Suhrawardi
• Sunbuli
• Sīlaymaniyya
• Tijani
• Ussaki
• Uwaisi
• Zahedi
• Zikris

List of sufis
• Notable early
• Notable modern
  • Singers
Ahmad Sirhindi's teaching emphasized the inter-dependence of both the Sufi path and Shariah, stating that "what is outside the path shown by the prophet (Sharia) is forbidden." Arthur Buehler explains that Sirhindi's concept of sharia is a multivalent and inclusive term encompassing outward acts of worship, faith, and the Sufi path. Sirhindi emphasizes Sufi initiation and practices as a necessary part of sharia, and criticizes jurists who follow only the outward aspects of the sharia. In his criticism of the superficial jurists, he states: "For a worm hidden under a rock, the sky is the bottom of the rock."[14]

Importance of Sufism in Sharia'h

According to Simon Digby, "modern hagiographical literature emphasizes [Sirhindi's] reiterated profession of strict Islamic orthodoxy, his exaltation of the sharia and exhortations towards its observance."[15] On the other hand, Yohanan Friedmann, apparently oblivious to the fact that Sharia and Sufism are not mutually exclusive terms, questions how committed Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi was to sharia by commenting: "it is noteworthy that while Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi never wearies of describing the minutest details of Sufi experience, his exhortations to comply with the shariah remain general to an extreme."[16] Friedmann also claims "Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi was primarily a Sufi interested first and foremost in questions of mysticism."[17]

Oneness of appearance (wahdat ash-shuhūd) and Oneness of being (wahdat al-wujūd)

Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi advanced the notion of wahdat ash-shuhūd (oneness of appearance).[18] According to this doctrine, the experience of unity between God and creation is purely subjective and occurs only in the mind of the Sufi who has reached the state of fana' fi Allah (to forget about everything except Almighty Allah).[19] Sirhindi considered wahdat ash-shuhūd to be superior to wahdat al-wujūd,[4] which he understood to be a preliminary step on the way to the Absolute Truth.[20]

Despite this, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi still used Ibn al-'Arabi's vocabulary without hesitation.[21]

Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi writes:

I wonder that Shaykh Muhyī 'l-Dīn appears in vision to be one of those with whom God is pleased, while most of his ideas which differ from the doctrines of the People of truth
appear to be wrong and mistaken. It seems that since they are due to error in *kashf*, he has been forgiven... I consider him as one of those with whom God is well-pleased; on the other hand, I believe that all his ideas in which he opposes (the people of truth) are wrong and harmful.\[22\]

**Reality of the Quran (haqiqat-i quran) and Ka'ba (haqiqat-i ka'ba-yi rabbani) versus The Reality of Muhammad (haqiqat-i Muhammadi)**

Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi had originally declared the reality of the Quran (*haqiqat-i quran*) and the reality of the Ka'ba (*haqiqat-i ka'ba-yi rabbani*) to be above the reality of Muhammad (*haqiqat-i Muhammadi*). This caused fury of opposition, particularly among certain sufis and ulama of Hijaz who objected to the Ka'ba having exalted spiritual "rank" than the Prophet.\[23\] Sirhindi argued in response that the reality of the Prophet is superior to any creature. The real Ka'ba is worthy of prostration since it is not created and is covered with the veil of nonexistence. It is this Ka'ba in the essence of God that Sirhindi was referring to as the reality of the Ka'ba, not the appearance of the Ka'ba (*surat-i ka'ba*), which is only a stone.\[24\] By the latter part of the nineteenth century, the consensus of the Naqshbandi community had placed the prophetic realities closer to God than the divine realities. The rationale for this development may have been to neutralize unnecessary discord with the large Muslim community whose emotional attachment to Muhammad was greater than any understanding of philosophical fine points.\[25\]

**Sufi lineage**

**Naqshbandi chain**

Naqshbandi Sufis claim that Ahmad Sirhindi is descended from a long line of "spiritual masters" all the way up to the Prophet Muhammad.\[26\]

1. Prophet **Muhammad**, d.11AH, buried Medina SA (570/571 - 632 CE)
2. **Abu Bakr**, d.13AH, buried Medina, Saudi Arabia
3. **Salman al-Farsi**, d.35AH buried Madaa'in, Saudi Arabia
5. **Jafar Sadiq**, (after which moves to Iran) d 148AH buried Medina, Saudi Arabia.
8. Abul Qasim Gurgani, d.450AH buried Gurgan, Iran.
9. Abu Ali Farmadi, (after which moves to Turkmenistan) d 477AH buried Tous, Khorasan, Iran.
10. Abu Yaqub **Yusuf Hamadani**, d 535AH buried Maru, Khorosan, Iran.
18. Ala'uddin Attar Bukhari, buried Jafaaniyan, Mawranahar, Uzbekistan.
19. Yaqub Charkhi, d 851AH buried in Tajikistan
20. Ubaidullah Ahrar, d 895AH buried Samarkand, Uzbekistan.
22. Durwesh Muhammad, d 970AH buried Samarkand, Uzbekistan.
23. Muhammad Amkanaki, (after which moves to India) d 1008AH buried Akang, Bukhara, Uzbekistan.
24. Razi üd-Dīn Muhammad Baqī Billah, d 1012AH buried Delhi, India.
25. Ahmad al-Farūqī al-Sirhindī, d 1034AH buried Sarhand, India (1564–1624 CE)

See also

- Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani
- Mujaddid
- Ali Hujwiri

References

19. ^ Encyclopaedia Britannica:
http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/10170/Shaykh-Ahmad-Sirhindi

• Classical Islam and the Naqshbandi Sufi Tradition, Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, Islamic Supreme Council of America (June 2004), ISBN 1-930409-23-0.
• Shari'at and Ulama in Ahmad Sirhindi's Collected Letters by Arthur F. Buehler
• NFIE Research

External links

• Biography of Hadrat Imâm Rabbâni
• Biography of Imam Rabbani Ahmad al-Faruqi as-Sirhindi (from the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi Order).
• Translations of Imam Rabbani's Letters in various languages

Categories:
People from Fatehgarh Sahib
Punjabi people