CHAPTER III

Shaikh Baha-ud-din Zakariyya.

Shaikh Baha-ud-din was born in Fort Court Croar. He received his early education at his home. But after the death of his father, at the age of eleven, he came to Khurasan for further studies, and he remained there for seven years. After that he proceeded to Bokhara where he completed his formal education and attained a high reputation as a scholar. Due to the profound learning and piety of Shaikh Baha-ud-din the people of Bokhara called him Baha-ud-din, the angel.

Having completed his formal education, Shaikh Baha-ud-din left for the pilgrimage of Kaba. For fifty three years together he served in the capacity of an attendant at the sepulchral monument of Prophet Mohammad. During that period he thoroughly mastered the knowledge of tradition under the inspiring guidance of Shaikh Kamal-ud-din Yamani. From Medina, Shaikh Baha-ud-din came to Baghdad where he was initiated into the order by Shaikh Shihab ud-din Suhrwardi. For his inner development Shaikh Baha-ud-din surrendered himself to the service of his director whose instructions and guidance enabled him to traverse the difficult path of mysticism. Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya remarks about Shaikh Baha-ud-din, Within seventeen days, Baha-ud-din secured so much spiritual bounties in the company of his director, that it is difficult for others to attain even within the
duration of an year. The director said about his disciple that Shaikh Bahā-ud-din was a dry wood which caught fire at the first striking.

Shaikh Shihab-ud-din bestowed upon Shaikh Bahā-ud-din his robe (khirqa) and deputed him as his Khalīfa in Multan for the work of preaching and guidance. Shaikh Bahā-ud-din discharged his duties so efficiently that not only the people of Multan embraced Islam in overwhelming numbers, but people thronged to him from Sindh and Balochistan. It is for this reason that Baba Farid named the regions of Multan, Sindh and Balochistan as the territory of Bahā-ud-din Zakariyya.

It is a matter of great pity that we are in possession of very scanty material regarding such an eminent and illustrious personality. We find some references about Shaikh Bahā-ud-din in Fawa'id-ul-Fu'ād, but that is hardly adequate for our purposes. Siyar-ul-'Arifin provides us with some material about the Shaikh, but it is not sufficient to enable us to draw any philosophical sketch of the Shaikh's ideas. Akhbar-ul-Akhyar makes some mention of Shaikh Bahā-ud-din but in a very brief manner. All the above mentioned books just give us a glimpse of the attitude of Shaikh Bahā-ud-din towards the people in general, towards the wandering dervishes (Qalandars), and towards the kings and wealth. It will not be out of place here to mention some facts about the attitude of the Shaikh with regard to these matters as it would enable us to differentiate the Suhrawardi order.
from the Chishti order.

Attitude towards the people in general:

Shaikh Bahā-ud-din did not welcome the people in general. People, according to him, can be divided into two categories; the general masses and the selected few. He had nothing to do with the general masses⁷. He was only concerned with the selected few who visited him and attained spiritual benefits according to their abilities⁸. But the Chishti saints, on the contrary, welcomed the people in general without any distinction of caste and creed. Every one was received by them with an affectionate heart and with the warmth of love⁹.

Attitude towards wandering dervishes:

Wandering dervishes were not allowed to visit Shaikh Bahā-ud-din freely¹⁰. Shaikh Mizān-ud-din says, "Only few wandering dervishes were allowed to visit Shaikh Bahā-ud-din, but every one whether he was a wandering dervish or monk (dervish) was allowed to visit Bahā-Farid"¹¹.

Attitude towards the king:

Suhrawardi saints formed a close association with Sultans. They believed that one could attend to temporal affairs without any harm to spiritual development. Shaikh Bahā-ud-din Zakariyya accepted the office of Shaikh-ul-Islam under Ilutmish¹². When Qabacha, the governor of Multan hatched a conspiracy against the Sultan Shams-ud-din Ilutmish,
Shaikh Baha-ud-din wrote a letter to Sultan in this connection. His grandson, Shaikh Rukun ud-din, also held the post of Shaikh ul-Islam under 'Allaud-din Khilji. But the Chishti saints adopted an attitude of complete indifference towards the courts and camps.

Attitude towards wealth:

Shaikh Baha-ud-din was himself a man of wealth. He led a richly life and did not observe unobligatory fasts generally. Shaikh Nizam-ud-din commenting on Shaikh Baha-ud-din's way of life quotes this verse, "Eat from the pure and good things and perform good actions."

A dialogue between Shaikh Hamid-ud-din, a Sufi, and Shaikh Baha-ud-din clarifies the views of each with regard to wealth. The discussion is as follows:

Shaikh Hamid-ud-din: What is the reason of wealth being associated with the serpent when there is neither any external nor any internal relation between them?

Shaikh Baha-ud-din: Though there is no external relation between them yet they are internally related to one another. As the serpent possesses the deadly poison, so wealth reduces many people to dust.

Shaikh Hamid-ud-din: If wealth possesses the characteristics of a serpent, the person who cares for wealth, in reality, cares for the serpent. (This was a direct attack on Shaikh Baha-ud-din as he was himself in possession of wealth).
Shaikh Baha-ud-din: Though wealth has been characterised as serpent, yet the poison of serpent has no effect on the man who knows the charm.

Shaikh Hamid-ud-din: Where is the sense in taking care of the dirty poisonous animal and of being in need of a charm.

(Shaikh Baha-ud-din acknowledges it as a mild defect but justifies it as a protection against the evil eye of the malicious and retorts with the following counter attack against the dervishees of the Chishti order)

Shaikh Baha-ud-din: Dervishees of your order are not so beautiful as to be affected with the evil eye. But the dervishees in our order possess such perfection and beauty that if they do not apply the black spot on their face, there remains the danger of their being affected with the evil eye.

Shaikh Hamid-ud-din: Beauty is only the attribute of your dervishees; it is not their essence, because the beauty which is the essence cannot be affected with the evil eye.

This dialogue clearly shows that Baha-ud-din was not against the possession of wealth. The only condition which he laid down was its proper use. Wealth, in his opinion, was not harmful for a man, provided he knew its right use.

But almost all the saints in chishti order, from Khwaja Mu'in-ud-din to Shaikh Nizam-ud-din despised wealth. They led an indigent life and considered wealth as a great
hindrance in the spiritual progress of the individual. Thus, the attitude of Sheikh Bahā-ud-dīn Zakarīyya towards secular authority and wealth clearly proves that he emphasized the spiritual development of the human beings. It was his firm belief that a man spiritually developed cannot be overpowered either by associating with the secular authority or the possession of great wealth. On the contrary, such spiritual beings dominate over kings and worldly powers.