Family Background

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi belonged to a distinguished family with a long scholarly tradition. His family traced its descent from the caliph 'Umar bin al-Khattab\(^1\) and Sirhindi being the twenty-eighth in the lineage.\(^2\) One of his ancestors, Sheikh Shahabuddin 'Ali, commonly known as Farrukh Shah Kabuli, was among the great nobles and ministers of Salatin of Kabul.\(^3\) He is reported to have

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\(^1\) Some historians have called Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi as Sayyid Ahmad Sirhindi which is incorrect, because his descent is not traced to Prophet’s family. For instance see, Qiyammdin Ahmad, *Wahabi Movement in India*, Calcutta, 1966, pp 12-13.

\(^2\) The genealogical chain of Sirhindi is as follows:-


\(^3\) Kishmi, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
visited India with the army of Kabul as an important officer.¹ Farruk Shah was known for his zeal and love for Islam. The famous Chisti saint Sheikh Farid al-din Ganj-Shekar² was also his descendant.³

Another great ancestor of Sirhind was Imam Rafi-ud-din,⁴ a remote descendent of Farrukh Shah Kabuli and a Khalifa of Sayid Jalal al-din Surkh Bukhari generally addressed as Makhdum-i-Jahaniyan.⁵ When the later was on his way to Delhi, Imam Rafiuddin accompanied him and met Sultan Firoz Shah Taghlaq (752-790 AH) in Delhi. After sometime the sultan sent Imam Rafiuddin back to Sirhind and asked him to lay the foundation of a fortress and establish a town there.⁶

¹ Ibid.
³ Kishmi, op. cit., p. 89.
⁴ According to Kishmi he was a pious man, devoted to religion and spiritual persuits.
⁵ He was born on 15th Sha‘ban 707/89th Feb. 1308, and was an eminent Chisti as well as a Suhrawardi saint of medieval India. He belonged to Bukhara. He is reported to have had deep impact on Sultan Firoz Shah Taghlaq. For details, see, Ziauddin Barni, Tarikh Firoz Shahi, Calcutta, 1891; K.A. Nizami, “The Suhrawardi Silsilah and its Influence on Medieval Indian Politics”, Medieval India Quarterly, Vol. III, Jul-Oct, 1957, p. 131.
⁶ According the Hashim Kishmi, when Makhdum-i-Jahaniyan and Imam Rafiuddin were enroute to Delhi, they passed through the village Sirhind and made a sojourn there. The people accorded warm welcome to the saints, and requested them to make recommendation before Sultan Feroz Shah for establishing a town there. The Sultan accepted the recommendation. See Kishmi, op. cit., p. 90. According to Burhan Ahmad Faruqi, once in the reign of Sultan Feroz Shah, the royal treasury was passing through a forest under the Imperial guard. A saint was traveling along with the treasury. When the caravan reached the spot where Sirhind is now situated, the saint had inspiration that a very great saint will be born at the place. The news reached the king. He therefore ordered the construction of a town there (Burhan Faruqi, op. cit., p. 7)
Sirhindi's father Sheikh Ahad Faruqi, was the fifth descendant of Imam Rafiuddin. He was a renowned sufi and scholar, and impressed his contemporaries both by his spirituality and scholarship. He had established his own seminary at Sirhind, which with the passage of time had become a recognized center of Islamic theology in northern India. A number of students from different parts of India, Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asia flocked around him to acquire knowledge and slake their spiritual thirst. He is reported to have thorough command over all mystic and traditional works like, the *Fusus al-Hikam* of Sheikh Mohiuddin Ibn al-'Arabi and *'Awarif al-Ma'arif* of Sheikh Shahabuddin Suhaarwardi. Abdul Ahad had thorough command over the concept of *wahdat al-wajud* and taught it to his students with great zeal, giving scholarly explanations of all subtleties. He was a prolific writer also and

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1 According to Rizvi, he belonged to the Naqashbandi Silsila (*Muslim Revivalist Movement in Northern India*, p. 202). But according to *Zubdat al-Maqamat*, (p. 116), he did not belong to the order.

2 Kishmi, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

3 It is considered one of the most difficult works of Ibn al-'Arabi. Written in 1230 A.D. in Arabic language, it deals with the teachings of eminent prophets. The book is divided into twenty-seven chapters, each being named after a prophet. A number of commentaries have been written on it, in different languages. For detail see, Nizami, *Tarikhi Maqalat*, pp. 24-31

4 It has been used as manual for the study of Islamic mysticism by the sufis of all silsilahs and is considered one of the best works produced by Muslim saints. It was first published at Cario in 1888.

5 Born in 539/1145, he was the nephew, khalifa and the spiritual successor of Sheikh Abdun Najib Suhaarwardi. He studied under Sheikh 'Abdul Qadir Jeelani and other eminent 'Ulama and Masha'kh of the time. The Sheikh visited extensively. He died in Baghdad in 1234-35.

his works like *Kanz al-Haq’aq*¹ and *Asrar-i-Tashahhud*², reveal his profound understanding of the literature on Islamic mysticism and his calibre as a researcher.

Sheikh ‘Abdul Ahad had been initiated into various sufi orders.³ Thus he was a Khalifa of Sheikh Ruknuddin, the son and successor of Sheikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi,⁴ in the Chisti silsilah.⁵ He also received the Khilafat in the Qadiriya order by the distinguished Sheikh Kamal Qadri of Kaithal.⁶ As a devout sufi Sheikh ‘Abdul Ahad traveled to various cities and called on eminent saints of different silsilahs.⁷

On his sojourn at Sikandara,⁸ he married a pious lady and then left to Sirhind along with his wife.⁹

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¹ According to Hashim Kishmi, the treatise deals with tasawwuf and sheds valuable light on various spiritual themes.(p. 117). Sirhindi himself refers to the treatise in one of his brochure *Risalal-i-Tahliliya*, (Published from Karachi, 1965, p. 28).

² It is considered one of the standard works dealing with the ascension (*Me’raj*) of the Holy Prophet of Islam. It gives a scientific discussion on the subject in Arabic language. Kishmi has reproduced its opening and concluding paragraphs. (Kishmi *op. cit.*, p. 118-20).

³ It may be noted that it was a tradition in medieval period to be initiated into various sufi silsilahs at a time.

⁴ He was a renowned saint of the Sabiriya branch of the Chisti silsilah. He was first the resident of Rudauli but in 1491 AD, migrated to Shahabad near Ambala in Punjab, where he lived for 30 years. Finally, in 1526, he settled in Gangohi where he died in 1536-37. He is author of *Maktubat-i-Qudusiyah*. See Nizami, *Tarikh Masheikh Chist*, Vol. I, pp. 272-4.

⁵ Kishmi, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-96.

⁶ He was an eminent saint of the Qadiriya Silsila and played an important role in popularization of order in India. He died in 1573.

⁷ Kishmi, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

⁸ A town near Etawah in present Uttar Pradesh.

⁹ Kishmi, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
Birth of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi was born on Friday, the 14th Shawal 971 AH/26th May 1564 A.D., at Sirhind.1 His father named him ‘Abul Barakat Badruddin Ahmad.2 As the father was devoted to Sheikh Kamal Qadri of Kaithal, he took the infant to the saint who was staying in Sirhind at that time, and obtained his blessings and spiritual favours.3

Sirhindi received his early education from his illustrious father, acquiring knowledge of Islamic sciences and memorizing the Holy Qur’an.4 He was then sent to Sialkot (present Pakistan), an important seat of learning in those days. Here he learned logic, philosophy and some works of tafsir and hadith like Azdi and Imthala, under the guidance of Maulana Kamal Kashmiri.5 Later, he came in contact with another renowned scholar of Kashmir, Sheikh Yaqoob Sarfi,6 and acquired

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1 Ibid., p. 127. Kishmi gives the chorographic term “KHASHE” which reveals 971 A.H.
3 Kishmi, op. cit., p. 127.
5 He was commonly known as Maulana Kamal Kashmiri. He was a famous ‘alim of Kashmir who migrated to Sialkot in 971/1563 where he established a seminary where a number of students studied. Kashmiri had among his students the last great theologian of Islam, ‘Abdul Hakim Sialkoti (d. 1067/1656), the writer of a super-commentary on the Shark al-Maqasid of Jurjani, besides other treatises.(Ansari, op. cit., p. 140). Kashmiri died in 1010/1601 and was buried in Lahore.
6 Sarfi was born in 908/1501-2, in Kashmir. He was one of the renowned scholars and ‘ulama of his time and a well-known poet as well. He was the spiritual successor of great Kubrawi saint Sheikh Husain Khawarizmi. He received from Ibn Hajar the authority to give instructions in Hadith. He traveled far and wide. He died on 18th Zeeq’dal 1003/25th July 1595. He was the author of some sublime and beautiful works and wrote many treatises. He wrote a commentary on the Sahih al-Bukhari. He is also said to have written a commentary on the Holy Qur’an. See Badayuni, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 142-9. Also, A.Q. Rafiqi, Sufism in Kashmir, Delhi, 1976, pp. 116-24. Sirhindi also joined the mystic discipline of and received Khilafat from Sarfi in the Kubrawiya and Suhrawardiya orders. (Badr al-Din Sirhindi, op. cit., p. 18)
knowledge of hadith from him. It is maintained that Sarfi had deeply influenced and laid great impression upon Sirhindi. It was due to his association with Sarfi that Sirhindi always insisted on Prophet’s Sunnah and raised voice against sh’ite sect and ideology.1 Sirhindi read some advanced texts of tafsir and hadith from Qadi Bahlul Badakhshani.2 Under the supervision of Qadi Bahlul, he studied Tafsir-i-Wahidi3, Tafsir-i-Baizawi,4 Sahih al-Bukhari,5 Mishkat-i-Tabrizi,6 Shamail-i-Tirmizi,7 Jame’ Sagheer-i-Siyuti,8 Qasida-i-Burda9 and Mishkat al-Masabih.10 Sirhindi completed his education at the age of seventeen and returned home as an erudite scholar and divine.11 At home he started imparting instruction in his seminary, benefiting students with his scholarly and divine guidance.12

1 Rafiqi, op. cit., pp. 221-2. According to Rafiqi, it might be possible that Sirhindi wrote his Risala Radd-i-Rawafiz under Sarfi’s deep influence.
2 Kishmi, op. cit., p. 128.
3 Famous tafsir of the Qur’an and still taught in the traditional Muslim educational institutions.
4 Also a famous tafsir of the Qur’an and still taught in the traditional Muslim educational institutions.
5 The full name is al-Jami’ al-Sahih al-Musnad al-Mukhtasar min Umir-i-Rasul-Allah. It contains 7000 traditions collected in about 16 years.
6 Also a collection of Ahadith.
7 Another famous collection of Hadith by Imam Tirmizi.
8 It is one of the most important texts included in the syllabus of Islamic theology.
9 A famous poem composed by al-Busiri. No other Arabic poem has attained such fame. About ninety commentaries of it have been written in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Berber.
10 Also a famous collection of Hadith, compiled by Abn Muhammad al-Husain bin Mas’ud bin Muhammad al-Baghawwi (ob. 510/1116), a renowned shafi’ite scholar. It contains 4436 Hadith and was first published in 733/1336. Its first English translation by A. N. Mathew appeared in 1810 from Calcutta.
11 Badr al-Din Sirhindi, op. cit., p. 18.
12 Ibid; Kishmi, op. cit., p. 129.
Later in 990/1582, Sirhindi went to Agra (Capital of the Mughals) and stayed there for a long time. At Agra he had first hand information about the deteriorating religious conditions within and without the Mughal court. He also established contacts with the eminent nobles of the time, such as poet Laureate Faydi (951/1547-1004/1595) and his younger brother, Abul Fadl (958/1551-1011/1602), a distinguished writer and an informal secretary of the Emperor Akbar.

Both the brothers Faydi and Abul Fadl had great regard for Sirhindi. Sirhindi frequently visited them. It is said that once at Faydi's residence, he found him involved in certain intricacies, while writing Qur'anic exegesis, Sawati al-Ilham, being written in dot less words. Sirhindi helped him out and wrote a few pages of it.

At another time Sirhindi while discussing the importance of philosophy especially the Greek philosophers, their metaphysical thought and rational approach, Abul Fadl defended the philosophers and their philosophy. Quoting Imam Ghazali, Sirhindi criticized their thought. Enraged, Abul Fadl abused the great philosopher-scholar.

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1 Exact period of stay at Agra, although not known, but historical events show that it was from 990/1583 to 998/1591 (eight years).

2 According to Youhanan Friedman, Sirhindi had been invited to the Mughal court. (Youhanan Friedmann, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, London, 1971, p. XIII). But the author of Rauzat al-Qaiyyamiya, does not agree to the view (p. 62).

3 A commentary on the Holy Qur'an with the distinction of being free from letters containing diacritics. It has been characterized by critics to be almost a "useless piece of Arabic writing". It is reported that on its completion (in 1002/1593) many contemporary 'Ulama raised their voice and submitted petition against its author. See Badayuni, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 300. Also The Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol. II, p. 871.

4 Badr al-Din Sirhindi, op. cit., p. 19.
Annoyed and shocked by this comment, Sirhindi left and did not met him for few days.\(^1\) In another encounter with Sirhindi, Abul Fadl denied the necessity of prophecy,\(^2\) repudiated the shari‘ah, condemned worship as hypocrisy, regarded every religion as equally bad, and pinned faith in reason.\(^3\) The former contested his ideas and argued the case for prophecy. To counter this trend Sirhindi wrote his first book, *Ithbat-i-Nubuwah*, (Defence of Prophecy).\(^4\) At Agra, Sirhindi left deep impression of his personality.

During his sojourn at Agra in 998/1591, his father asked him to leave the place, having stayed there for a long period of time, and returne to Sirhind.\(^5\) Consequently Sirhindi left Agra for Sirhind. On their way back they met Sheikh Sultan Thanesari.\(^6\)

In Sirhind, Sirhindi started his family life. He imparted education to the students in his ancestral seminary and spent most of the time in offering prayer and meditation. Very often he consulted his father (‘Abdul Ahad), in various matters of Islamic theology and mysticism. The

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\(^1\) Sheikh Muhammad Ikram, *Rud-i-Kauthar*, Delhi, n. d., p. 228.

\(^2\) Such ideas were held by many others in royal court. (Ansari, *op. cit.*, p. 18).


\(^4\) Ansari, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

\(^5\) Kishmi, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

\(^6\) He was well versed with those branches of learning, which depend on memory. He acquired the honour of performing pilgrimage to Mekka and Medina. For a long time he was in the Imperial service. He worked for four years alone and without any co-adjustor, in the project of the translation of *Mahabarta*, which is known as *Ramz Nama*. He was appointed Karori of Thanesar and Karnal by Akbar. (Badayuni, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 118-19).
father himself imparted Sirhindi, the intricacies of spiritual process of different sufi Silsilahs. Sirhindi studied *Fusus al-Hikam, Futuhat-i-Makkiya* and *Awarif al-Ma‘arif*, under his father’s guidance.\(^1\) Meanwhile Sheikh ‘Abdul Ahad initiated his son into his own mystic discipline and conferred the *Khilafat* in the Chistiya, Suharwardiya and the Qadiriya silsilah upon him by declaring him his spiritual successor.\(^2\) Sheikh ‘Abdul Ahad Faruqi passed away on Wed. the 17\(^{th}\) *Jamad I* 1007/6\(^{th}\) Dec 1598, at the age of eighty years. Sirhindi was then unanimously accepted as the spiritual head of his father’s disciples and followers.\(^3\)

**The Discipleship of Baqi-Billah and Initiation into the Naqashbandiya Silsilah**

After the death of his father Sheikh ‘Abdul Ahad, Sirhindi decided to fulfill his old desire to perform Hajj. On his way to Mekka and Medina (in Oct. 1599), he met Maulana Hasan Kashmiri\(^4\) at Delhi, who was one of his fast friends, and class-fellow during his studies at Sialkot. Kashmiri spoke to him about Khawaja Baqi-Billah who had recently settled down in Delhi and had become very popular in the cross-section of Delhites. Developing keen desire to meet Baqi-Billah,\(^5\) Hasan Kashmiri

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4. He originally belonged to Kashmir but permanently resided at Delhi where he himself had joined the mystic discipline of Khawaja Baqi-Billah.
5. Khawaja Muhammad Baqi-Billah (actual name Syed Raziuddin) was born in Kabul on 5\(^{th}\) *Zil Hijja* 971/16\(^{th}\) Dec. 1563. (Kishmi, *op. cit.*, p. 5). His father Qazi Abdus Salam, genealogically a Quraishi Syed, was famous for piety and scholarship. (*Ibid.*) After having completed formal education, he spent considerable time in mystic travels. He visited Hindustan, Lahore, Afghanistan and met eminent saints, benefiting from their spiritual experiences. He also visited Kashmir and remained there for about two years Contd. on page 69........
took him to the saint, who put deep impression upon the thought of Sirhindi, and was "the source of all the latter Muslim revivalist movements in Indian sub-continent".

Sirhindi was received warmly by Khawaja Baqi Billah when the former called upon him, with Maulana Hasan Kashmiri. Ordinarily Baqi Billah never showed any interest in enrolling novices for spiritual training, but deviating from his usual practice, he persuaded Sirhindi to spend sometime with him. Accordingly, Sirhindi undertook spiritual practices and meditation under Baqi Billah's mystic guidance, and within a short period of time Sirhindi was enlightened enough by the saint and he turned a devout mystic. He was so impressed by Baqi Billah that he expressed the desire to be enrolled (bi'at) as a disciple for undergoing

in the company of Sheikh Baba Wali (Wali was a Naqashbandi saint and belonged to Khawarism. He came to Kashmir in 999/1590-1 and stayed at the khanqah of Syed Ali Hamadani). He finally settled down in Delhi in 1008/1599, and devoted himself to the popularity of the Naqashbandiya silsilah. He died in 1012/1603. (Kishmi, op. cit., p. 18). Baqi Billah did not participated in the Mughal politics but maintained cordial relation with the ruling class.

Baqi Billah laid great emphasis on the adherence to Kitab-wa-Sunnah and considered Tasawwuf a complete devotion and surrender to it. He maintained that no one could become a perfect saint without following the shari'ah. He advised his disciples to earn livelihood through legal means and personal efforts. (Kulliyat-i Baqi Billah, pp. 20-22). He strongly favoured tawakkul (trust in God) and considered it one of the significant features of Islamic mysticism. He also laid emphasis on rabita or tasawwur-i-sheikh and enjoyed to practice it regularly. (Kishmi, op. cit., p. 17). It appears that Baqi Billah believed in wahdat al-wujud, within the framework of the shari'ah. But it is said that during the last days of his life he changed his views. (Sirhindi, Maktubat, Vol. I, Letter No. 43).

3 It is reported that Baqi Billah had been spiritually informed of Sirhindi's visit to him. (Kishmi op. cit., p. 141)
spiritual training in the Naqashbandiya discipline.\(^1\) Baqi Billah initiated Sirhindi into the Naqashbandiya silsilah as his murid and in the month of Rajab, 1008/Jan. 1600, he conferred his Khilafat upon him.\(^2\) During his first stay with Baqi-Billah, Sirhindi “acquired perfection in outward and inward knowledge and was rewarded with a speedy ascent from one stage to another in the realm of spirit difficult to be expressed in words”.\(^3\)Having benefited from his stay with the saint, Sirhindi returned to Sirhind, fully imbibed with the Naqashbandiyah doctrines.

Both Khawaja Baqi Billah and Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi considered their (first) meeting with each other, a great event in their spiritual career. Baqi Billah expressed his sentiments, in a letter to a friend, and wrote, “a man from Sirhind named Sheikh Ahmad has recently come. He is very learned and has great spiritual power. He has lived with me for some days; on the basis of what I have seen of him in this period, I hope that he will be in future a lamp which will illuminate the world.”\(^4\)Similarly, Sirhindi also wrote in a letter to Khawaja Muhammad Hashim Kishmi that, “when I felt spiritual thirst, I fortunately reached the Khanqah of Baqi Billah who taught me the lesson of Divine Names”.\(^5\)Moreover, in another letter to Maulana Hasan Kashmiri, Sirhindi thanks the latter with great humility and says that it was he, (Hasan Kashmiri)

\(^1\) Ansari, op. cit., p. 13.

\(^2\) Sirhindi, Mabda-wa-Ma’ad, pp. 141-46.

\(^3\) Nadwi, op. cit., p. 155.

\(^4\) Kulliyat-i-Khawaja Baqi Billah, op. cit., p. 130. Also Kishmi, op. cit., pp. 144-45.

through whose guidance he reached the threshold of Baqi Billah and attained higher and higher spiritual stages.\(^1\)

At home Sirhindi, pursued \textit{Sayr} and \textit{Sulk}, as his spiritual mentor had suggested. He dispatched many letters to Baqi Billah, describing his spiritual progress therein. It is learnt that the famous letter in which he threw light on the various stages of his spiritual development and which later on became the main point of the controversy between him and the other `ulama, sufis and even Emperor Jehangir, was also written during these days.\(^2\)

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi visited Baqi Billah again in \textit{Ramadhan} 1009/February 1601, and stayed with him for three months. Now Baqi Billah held him in high esteem and paid him great honour. It is said that once in a reply to Sirhindi, Baqi Billah replied, “It is me your servant Muhammad Baqi”.\(^3\) During his whole stay with his spiritual mentor, Sirhindi continued meditation and benefited from his radiance as


\(^2\) In the beginning of the letter, Sirhindi throws light on the initial stages of his mystical journey. Then he describes its second phase and says, “Now I reached some higher stages, the stage of `Uthman Zenurain, the third pious caliph. Other caliphs are also authorized to live in this stage. It too is the stage of perfection and direction (\textit{maqam-i-takmil-o-irshad}). Later on I saw another station, higher to the previous one. I was told that it was place of the second pious caliph, `Umar al-Faruq and then there is the station of Abu Bakr, the first pious caliph. I visited that very place also. At this stage I found myself accompanied by Khawaja Muhammad Bahuddin Naqashband. And above all there is the stage of Holy Prophet(s). Below this stage and above the stage of Abu Bakr, there was a bright and luminous stage, which I had not seen. I came to know that it was \textit{Maqam-i-Mahbubiyat}, the stage of divine love and I experienced this stage also. Thence I found myself like air and clouds. Khawaja Bahauddin Naqashband resides in the stage of Siddiq Akbar. (Sirhindi, \textit{Maktubat}, Vol. I, Letter No.11).

\(^3\) \textit{Kishmi, op. cit.}, pp. 153-154.
well as his discourses. Now, when he intended to return, Baqi Billah asked
him to teach the tariqah, and placed some disciples in his charge. Sirhindi
was hesitant to take up the responsibility, but Baqi Billah testified his
suitability for the task. Sirhindi bowed to his judgement and started the
work.¹

In the same year, most probably the first half of 1010/1601, Sirhindi
was conferred upon with the Khilafat in the Qadiriya silsilah by
Shah Sikandar Qadiri, the grandson and spiritual successor of Shah Kamal
Qadiri.² Sirhindi, once sitting in the mosque, was presented by Sikandar
Qadri, the spiritual religious garment (Khirqa). Many supernatural events
are said to have occurred, when Sirhindi wore this garment.³ It may be
mentioned here that, though in the beginning Sirhindi initiated disciples in
all the mystic orders but subsequently he confined the practice to the
Naqashbandiya order.

Sirhindi visited his spiritual preceptor third time in the
beginning of 1012/1603, when the latter was seriously ill. Baqi Billah,
however, accorded a warm welcome to his favourite disciple, by walking
some distance to welcome him.⁴ He is also reported to have sought his
blessings and favours for himself, his infant sons and both the wives.⁵
Baqi Billah then appointed Sirhindi as his chief khalifa and spiritual

¹ Ibid., p. 141.
² Ibid., p. 134.
³ Ibid., p. 135
⁴ Nadwi, op. cit., p. 156.
successor, and enjoined rest of his disciples to strictly follow and associate himself with Sirhindi.

Later on, when Sirhindi left for home Baqi entrusted his sons to him for spiritual guidance. At Sirhind, he spent some days with his family and then proceeded to Lahore. There he met a number of ulama, sufis and scholars of the time. Maulana Tahir a famous 'alim of the town joined the spiritual circle of Sirhindi. Khawaja Farrukh Hussain of Transoxiana and Mir Syed Nasir Ahmad of Rum also did the same. A large number of local inhabitants are reported to have been benefited from and enlisted in the mystic discipline of Sirhindi.

Khawaja Muhammad Baqi Billah died in Delhi, on 25th Jamad al-Thani 1012/20th Nov. 1603, when Sirhindi was still in Lahore. The sad demise of the saint greatly shocked and caused grief to Sirhindi and he immediately left for Delhi, to attend the funeral ceremony. At Delhi, he visited his master's grave and mourned his death with his sons, wife, khulafa and disciples. All of them later accepted him as their supreme head and Baqi Billah's chief successor, though few are reported to have objected to it.

Sirhindi then returned to his native land and engaged himself in academic activities and spiritual exercises. It became his usual practice to visit Delhi every year in the month of Jamad-i-Thani to take part in the

1 Ibid.
2 Kishmi, op.cit., p. 32.
3 Ibid., pp. 158-60.
'Urs of Khawaja Baqi Billah. Simultaneously, he made contacts with the eminent nobles of the Mughal Empire and started correspondence with the important political and religious figures of the time.

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi as Chief Patron of Naqashbandiya Order in India

As the chief patron, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi organized the Naqashbandiya order in India in a systematic manner. He deputed his followers (Khulafa') to important cities and towns in India, to establish and flourish the Naqashbandiya silsilah. They were successful in spreading the ideology and message of the order in various regions of the country.

Among the prominent and senior most khulafa' of Sirhindi was Mir Muhammad Nu'man. He was sent to Burhanpur, a famous town of Deccan (present Madhya Pradesh state), which had been an important center of sufis and sufism since its very foundation.1 Accordingly Nu'man reached Burhanpur and established a khanqah there, and devoted himself to the spread of Naqashbandiya silsilah in the region. According to the author of Mirat-i-Jahan Numa, a large number of people were benefited from the spiritual radiance of Nu'man and consequently many of them joined his mystic fold.2 After the death of Muhammad Nu'man in 1058/1648, his disciple and son-in-law Khawaja Muhammad Hashim

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1 The town was built by Nasir Khan Faruqi, the ruler of Khandesh, in 1400 A.D., in the memory of Sheikh Burhanuddin Gharib, a Khalifa of Sheikh Nizam al-Din Awliya. See Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Farishta, Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi (Tarikh Farishta). Lucknow, 1322 AH, p. 279.

2 Muhammad Baqa, Mirat-i-Jahan Numa, (MS, in British Museum), Rotograph in the Research Library, Department of History, A.M.U.
Kishmi took over the charge of the Naqashbandiya silsila in Burhanpur. The latter is the author of famous work *Zubdat al-Maqamat.* The work occupies a significant place in the sufi literature of medieval India and is considered a *magnum opus* of the Naqashbandi-Mujaddidi saints. He also compiled the third volume of *Maktubat-i-Imam Rabbani.*

The next important place, which Sirhindi chose for the propagation of Naqashbandi teachings, was Agra, the capital of Mughal Empire. Sheikh Badi'udin Saharanpuri was deputed for the task. Instead of the civilian people, Badi'udin under the instructions from Sirhindi chose the Mughal army to be addressed for religious and mystic propagation. Another team was sent to Jaunpur—an important city of medieval India, under Sheikh Tahir Badekshani, to introduce the order there. Syed Mohibullah, another khalifa of Sirhindi was sent to Allahabad for popularizing the Naqashbandi order.

The other deputations sent by Sirhindi to propagate the Naqashbandiya silsilah were, that of Sheikh Ahmad to Deoband, Sheikh Hameed to Malda (Bengal), and Sheikh Nur Muhammad to Patna (Bihar). The sons of Sirhindi, Muhammad Sadiq, Muhammad Sa'id,

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1. He is also the author of *Nusmot al-Quds.* The manuscript of this work belongs to the Leningrad University Library, USSR. (See C.A. Storey, *Persian Literature*, London, 1972, p. 990).
Muhammad Ma‘sum played vital role in spreading the order in their native land Sirhind (Punjab).\(^1\) Khawaja Muhammad Sadiq of Badakshan was sent to Lahore (Punjab), who was later succeeded by Sheikh Tahir Lahori.\(^2\) Sheikh Adam of Banur (Punjab), was deputed to his native land to propagate the Naqashbandiya order there.\(^3\)

**Sirhindi and the ‘Ulama of Kashmir**

The author of *Zubdat al-Maqamat* and *Hadhrat al-Quds* do not give any information about Sirhindi’s missionary activities in Kashmir. So far as Sirhindi’s relation with the Kashmiri ‘ulama and sufis are concerned, he had been in close contact with some of them during his studies at Siyalahot. Both Maulana Muhammad Kamal and Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi Kubrawi, under whose guidance Sirhindi completed his higher education, belonged to Kashmir. Sirhindi’s fast friend Maulana Hasan Kashmiri, who first introduced him to Khawaja Baqi Billah, came from Kashmir. It may be mentioned here that, as to what extent was Sirhindi influenced in his ideas and actions by Kashmiri friends and teachers can be a study of great interest.

All the representatives of Sirhindi deputed to different regions of the sub-continent worked zealously for the development of Naqashbandiya order and attracted a large multitude to their master’s mission. On the one hand, they fulfilled the spiritual urges and religious

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\(^{1}\) Badr al-Din Sirhindi, *op. cit.*, p. 201ff.

\(^{2}\) Kishmi, *op. cit.*, pp. 343-46.

expectations of the masses, on the other hand, they also wielded a considerable and generally sobering influence on the ruling elite which helped them in the organization of their mystic order. The good character of the delegation also impressed the people around them. As they enjoyed respect and reverence from cross-section of the Muslim society, a large number of people joined the Naqashbandiya silsilah. Thus we see that thousands of people joined the Naqashbandiya silsilah and spread far and wide in India, practically in the sub-continent, under the powerful and influential patronage of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi.

The Last Days of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi

_Zubdat al-Maqamat_ of Muhammad Hashim Kishmi, which is our main source about the biography of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, has described the daily routine and the regular worship of the later in detail. According to him Sirhindi strictly followed the Shari‘ah and performed all the religious rituals according to the Qur‘anic ordinances and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (s).

As a routine matter, he used to get up at the mid night, performed ablution and offered the _Tahajud_ (the namaz offered after midnight). Just before the sun rise Sirhindi offered his morning prayer in his mosque situated in the premises of the Khanqah. After _Fajr_ (morning prayers) he turned the beads of rosary, reciting the litanies. Thereafter he performed meditations (maraqabah) for some time. Later on, he met his

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1 _Ibid._, p. 196.
family members and inquired about their problems and necessities.\textsuperscript{1} He took his breakfast there and spent sometime with them. Then he sat alone and recited the Qur'an and then taught his students.\textsuperscript{2} He had his lunch before the noon prayer (\textit{Zuhr}) and followed it by the recitation of the Qur'an. He offered his afternoon prayers (\textit{Asr}) just after the time began and then he meditated with his companions for half an hour.\textsuperscript{3} After saying \textit{Maghrib} prayers (just after sun-set), he loudly recited the \textit{Kalima}, i.e., the declaration of faith.\textsuperscript{4} Having offered the night prayers (\textit{Isha}) and completed all the \textit{wadh'if}, Sirhindi went to bed.\textsuperscript{5}

On Monday and Friday nights, Sirhindi repeatedly recited the \textit{darud} (invoking of God's blessings and peace for the Holy Prophet(s)).\textsuperscript{6} He offered the congregational Friday prayer in the main mosque of Sirhind whereas the prayers of \textit{'Idd al-Fitr} (the festival on the eve of completion of Ramadhan) and \textit{'Idd al-Azha} (the festival of sacrifice remembered in the honour of Hadhrat Ibrahim and Isma'il, AS), were offered in his own mosque.\textsuperscript{7} During the first ten days of the month \textit{Dhil-Hijjah}, he neither shaved his head nor cut the nails.\textsuperscript{8} Sometimes he visited

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 197.
\item \textsuperscript{2} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 199.
\item \textsuperscript{3} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 202.
\item \textsuperscript{4} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 204.
\item \textsuperscript{5} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 205.
\item \textsuperscript{6} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 206.
\item \textsuperscript{7} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 208.
\item \textsuperscript{8} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 209.
\end{itemize}
the graveyards of the town and prayed for the dead. Previously he would kiss his father's grave but later he gave up this practice.¹

According to Khawaja Muhammad Hashim Kishmi, during his last days, Sirhindi spent his time mostly in his house and usually did not come out except for the purpose of offering five-time Namaz and the congregational Friday prayer. Only his sons and three or four followers were allowed to see him inside the house.² Meanwhile Hashim Kishmi sought his master's permission to depart to Burhanpur to look after his family. The Sheikh permitted him to leave. When Kishmi asked him to invoke for their next meeting in the near future, Sirhindi drew a sigh and said, "I invoke that we may gather in the hereafter."³ The words caused great sorrow and grief to Kishmi.

In Sha'bán 1033 AH/May 1624 A.D., Sirhindi confined himself to a particular place in his house. Now he appeared outside only on Friday to offer the weekly congregation whereas daily five time prayers were performed inside the home along with some devout followers, and his own sons.⁴ Badr al-din Sirhindi, the author of Wisal-i-Ahmadi states that in 1303 AH/1624 A.D., near about six months before his death, Sirhindi wrote a letter to some Sadiq Khan, wherein he wrote, "You should know that since the Emperor has released me and departed from the royal camp, I have been leading a secluded life. By God's grace I

² Ibid., p. 284.
³ Ibid., p. 284.
⁴ Ibid., p. 285.
am passing my time with great satisfaction. As there occurs a natural calamity in this city, it seems that I may not survive this year. Be you pleased and happy”.

When his seclusion completed after six months, the asthma disease, which would attack Sirhindi every year in winter, started to attack him again. He also suffered from high fever on the 17th Zil Hijjah 1033/20th Sep., 1624. He felt weakness. Afterwards he recovered to some extent. After about a month he again suffered from high fever. He therefore went to bed but still got up to offer Tahajud. He is said to have stated that it was his last mid-night prayer.\(^1\) Despite his deteriorating physical condition, Sirhindi did not miss any of his prayers and litanies. He asked his family members and followers to perform every rite and ritual in accordance with the rules of Shari'ah. He also desired to be buried either at any unknown place or near the grave of his father. But on his sons’ submission he left the matter to them.\(^2\)

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi died on Tuesday 28th Safar 1034/30th Nov. 1624, in the morning between the sunrise and the meridian.\(^3\) Sirhindi’s dead body was washed and shrouded in accordance with the shari‘ah. Khawaja Muhammad Sa‘id, the elder son of Sirhindi, led the funeral prayer of his father. The corpse was buried in a tomb, near the mosque inside the saint’s own khanqah, where his eldest son Khawaja

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\(^1\) Ibid., p.10.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 15.
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 290; Badr al-Din Sirhindi, op. cit., p. 190.
Muhammad Sadiq already lied buried. A number of supernatural events (karamat) are alleged to have occurred at the time of Sirhindi’s death.¹

**Works of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi**

*Maktubat-i-Imam Rabbani*

The most important work, which is also the most important source of thought of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, is the collection of his letters, known as *Maktubat-i-Imam Rabbani*. Sirhindi wrote numerous letters to his contemporary ‘ulama, sufis, nobles, statesmen and masses. The *Maktubat* give expression not only to his (Sirhindi) heart-felt affections, sentiments and thoughts but also his research in the realm of spiritual realities. It bears witness to his intellectual gift and the originality of thought. It has been one of the most esteemed and popular works in the circles of sufis, many of whom have made it the principal book of study. The *Maktubat* throws light on religious, mystical, social and political themes. In the words of Professor Sheikh Abdur Rashid, the letters of *Mujaddid Alf-i-Thani*, cover a vast field ranging from the technology and metaphysics to politics and missionary activities. According to him these letters are a mirror of the intellectual and spiritual ferment which swept over the spiritually saturated Indian Muslim Society.² The *Maktubat* also form a very important source of Indian history and reflect the socio-political environment of Akbar and Jehangir’s reign. These also shed a flood of light on the revivalist efforts

of Sirhindi and his followers and disciples, primarily on mystical subjects.\footnote{Zawwar Husain, \textit{Hadhrat Majaddid-i Alf-i Thani}, Karachi, 1975, p. 683.} Most importantly, the \textit{Maktubat} are the powerful exposition of the ideas of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi.

The 536 letters of \textit{Maktubat} are divided into three volumes. The first volume entitled \textit{Durr al-Ma'rifat} contains 313 letters and was compiled by Sheikh Yar Muhammad Badakhshi Talqani in the year 1025/1616. The second volume \textit{Nur al-Khalayiq}, was compiled by Khawaja Abdul Haiy in 1028/1619, on the suggestion of Khawaja Muhammad Ma'sum. It contains 99 letters. The third volume known as \textit{Ma'arifat al-Haqayiq}, comprise of 114 letters. It was compiled by Khawaja Muhammad Hashim Kishmi in 1031/1622. Ten more letters were later added to this volume.\footnote{The \textit{Maktubat-i-Imam Rabbani} have been frequently published. A complete Persian text was published from Lucknow, Nawal Kishore, 1877. Again published by Sher Muhammad Khan from Delhi, Matba' Ahmadi in 1871. Amritsar, 1331-4 AH; Delhi, Matba' Murtadwi in 1873; Lahore, Nur Company, 1964 and Istanbul (Turkey), 1977.}

Other important works of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi are:

\textit{Ithbat al-Nabuwat}\footnote{The brochure is reported to have been written in 990-1/1582-3, at Agra (Zawwar Husain, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 676-77). It has been published in 1303/1963 by the Kutb Khana Idara Mujaddidyah, Karachi along with Urdu translation.}: Written in Arabic, the work sheds light on the necessity of prophecy in general and the prophecy of Muhammad(s)
in particular. It also gives Sirhindi’s assessment of the situation of Islam in India during the Mughal period.¹

**Risala Radd-i-Rawafiz²**: The Persian treatise, written in 1002/1593-4,³ in refutation of the Sh'ia beliefs. It also discusses the superiority and importance of *Khulafa-i-Thalatha* (Hadhrat Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman) over all the Companions of Prophet (s). It also describes the different sects of sh’ia and early history of sh’ias in India. Shah Waliullah has written a commentary on this work.⁴

**Mabda-wa-Ma’ad⁵**: Written in Persian between 1008/1599-1600 and 1019/1610. It contains fifty four short chapters dealing with the various sufi subjects, such as *Bi’at*, “Qutbi-Irshad”, *Adab-i-Tariqat*, *Kamalat-i-Auliya*, *Haqiqat-i-Ka’ba*, and *Haqiqat-i-Qur’an*, etc.⁶ Sirhindi frequently refers to the brochure in the first volume of his *Maktubat*. Both the authors of *Zubdat al-Maqamat* and *Hadhrat al-Quds*, quote extensively from it.⁷

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¹ Friedmann, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

² Published in 1964 from Lahore, by Idarah Sayyidiyah Mujaddidiya. Also published by Hashmat ‘Ali Khan from Rampur, in 1964, with Urdu translation by Ghulam Mustafa Khan along with the text.


⁵ Published from Delhi, 1889; Amritsar 1912; Karachi, 1968.


**Risala-i-Tahliliya**: An Arabic treatise, written in 1010/1601-2. It deals with the importance of *Kalima-i-Ta'iyyiba*—the Muslim confession of faith. Sirhindi is reported to have written the brochure at a time when Akbar and his followers had removed “Muhammad is the Prophet of God” from the *Kalima* and introduced “There is no God but God and Akbar is God’s representative”. The *Risala* sheds light on *Tawhid* (Monotheism) and *Risalat* (Prophethood).

**Ma'arif Ladunya**: The subject of the Persian work is mysticism. It is said to have been written after Sirhindi had joined the Naqashbandiya order. It defines the secrets of Divine attributes and sheds light on the hidden meaning of some Qur'anic verses.

**Makashfat al-'Ainiya**: It was compiled by Muhammad Hashim Kishmi in 1641. It is a collection of different *Ijazat namas* (written authority or permission) that Mujaddid gave to his khalifas from time to time. It also contains the *Shajras*, spiritual as well as genealogical trees of different silsilahs—Chistiya, Naqashbandiya and Qadiriya.

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1 Published from Lahore in 1965 by Idarah Sayyidiyah Mujaddidiyah. First Urdu translation along with the text by Idarah Mujaddidyah, Karachi, in 1965.
3 Published from Rampur 1889; Lahore 1956-57; Karachi 1965. Urdu translation along with the text was published from Karachi, Idarah Mujaddidyah, 1968.
4 Friedmann, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
6 The text with Urdu translation was published from Karachi, Idarah Majaddidyah in 1964.
7 Zawwar Husain, *op. cit.*, p. 792.
**Sharh Ruba’iyat** (Persian): It is a commentary on two quatrains of Khawaja Baqi Billah, first by Khawaja himself and the second by Sirhindi. Another commentary on the *Sharh* was written by Shah Waliullah under the title of *Kashf al-Ghain fi Sharh Ruba’ytain*. It has been printed by Mujtabai Press, Delhi, in 1310/1892.²

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¹ Published from Lahore in 1965. The text with Urdu translation published from Karachi, in 1966.

² Nadwi, *op. cit.*, p. 401.