

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi: An Account of his Biography and Works

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Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi belonged to a distinguished family which traced its descent from the Caliph 'Umar bin al-Khattab¹ 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 the kings or *Salatin* of Kabul.³ Farrukh Shah, known for his zeal and love of Islam, is reported to have visited India with the army of king of Kabul as an important officer. Among his descendants was the famous Chisti saint, Sheikh Farid al-din Ganj-Shakar.⁴

Imam Rafi-ud-din⁵ was another great ancestor of Sirhindi. He was a distant descendent of Farrukh Shah Kabuli and a khalifa of Sayid Jalal al-din Surkh Bukhari generally known as Makhdum-i-Jahaniyan.⁶ When the latter was on his way to Delhi, Imam Rafi-ud-din accompanied him and met Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq (752-790 AH) in Delhi. After sometime the sultan sent Imam Rafi-ud-din back to Sirhind and asked him to lay the foundation of a fortress and establish a town there.⁷

Sheikh Ahad Faruqi,⁸ father of Sirhindi, was the fifth descendant of Imam Rafi-ud-din. 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 north 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.⁹ He had command over all mystic and traditional works like, the *Fusus al-Hikam*¹⁰ of Shiekh Mohiuddin Ibn al-'Arabi and *'Awarif al-Ma'arif*¹¹ of Sheikh Shahabuddin Suharwardi.¹² Sheikh Ahad had

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