

Chapter – 54

Shahabuddin Suhrawardy

(1144 - 1235 AD)

The name of Sheikh-ul-Islam is Shahabuddin and Kunniya is Abu-Hafs 'Umar. Born in Suhraward, an Iraqi town on the outskirts of Zanjan city. His date of birth is stated to be Sha'ban, 539AH/1144AD. His genetic tree reaches in 13 steps leading to Abu Bakr Siddique. His religious education and spiritual training was taken up by his uncle Abdul Qahir Abu an-Najib Suhrawardy. He did receive direct educational benefits from Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani as well. Sheikh Shahabuddin was always fond of getting knowledge of Ilm-ul-Kalam (*religious knowledge based on rational arguments*), but after meeting Abdul Qadir Jilani, his passion was changed to Ilm Ladunni (*mystic knowledge*). In a very short period he was mastered in Tafseer (*Elucidation of Quran*), Hadith, Jurisprudence and other Islamic subjects. In his time, he was considered to be a great Muhaddith and Faqih. He had taken countless hardships for the religious knowledge. In order to get Halal provisions he had to carry water for the people..

He used to follow the Shafi'i belief. As regards his way of life, he was the perfect follower of Sunnah of the Prophet. Besides his uncle, Sheikh Shahabuddin also received the Khilafat from Hazrat Abu Mohammed Abdullah Basari and Hazrat Abu Madyen Maghrabi. In 564AH/1168AD, he achieved the spiritual leadership of Baghdad and was declared as the second founder of the Series of Suharwardiyah mysticism.

Hazrat Sheikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardy also continued his compilation of books. In most of his writings, "Awarif al-Ma'arif" has the highest position in the world of mysticism. He wrote it in Makkah and Madinah Munawwara. This book was originally written according to the need of the hour for the people from Hijaz, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt. It was also aimed at to give proper guidance to these people. The Mysticism or Tasawwuf of Sheikh is in fact a combination of Shariat and Tareeqat, as well as the union of commitment and worship. It is also the fact that neither Tareeqat can be separated from Shariat nor the requirements of Shariat are fulfilled without being acted on Tareeqat.

Numerous slaves of God received the favor from Shahabuddin Suhrawardy. People generally reached to see him but eventually attain the ranks of his servants. In the eyes of the government of that time he was having a great position. He was assigned as Ambassador by Amir Nasiruddin Ahmad Abbasi and he visited to several countries. At that time, differences were created with the Khwarizm Shah, so he met him and advised him that it is not appropriate for Muslims to fight each other. Nevertheless, Khwarizm Shah invaded Baghdad. Sheikh didn't want a Muslim sword to be raised to cut a Muslim's throat, so he prayed Allah, and said, 'O Almighty Allah! Make Khwarizm fail in his desires. Allah accepted his prayers and the army of Khwarizm was still on its way that the sky became extremely cloudy and a very dense fog with heavy snowfall continued for 20 days, and by that soldiers of Khwarizm were forced to return.

According to the teachings of Sheikh Suhrawardy, it was his sayings that *"It is but obvious for the public to hit upon a reason and it is also their right to question. Allah's servant is powerless, and he does not know other than Allah. He looks*

towards Allah's action and waits for His command. In this case, Allah's door of bestows opens towards him. In this situation he starts getting revelations, which is a level of proximity to God. After that he reaches to get unveil His attributes and His Persona. in this way he first met with annihilation and then gets eternal survival."

He also says that *"Service for the people has preference over the non-obligatory prayers. The servant's place to which he is favored is a rare place. Some servants reach to their goal and objectives, some do not. The reason for this lacking is that they lose their intentions. The servant who purely loves does not care for his own self, and is not afraid of any reproach or criticism in the work of Allah."*

Sheikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardy performed the last pilgrimage in 628AH/1230AD. A large number of eligible Iraqis accompanied him on this trip. After returning from Hajj, his routine of life continued. Then he met with his Creator on the first of Muharram, 632AH/1235AD.

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