

THE LIFE PATH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY OF SAYYID BURHONIDDIN
MUHAQQIQ TIRMIDHI

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Abstract

This article provides information about the life and scholarly activity of the great Sufi scholar Sayyid Burhoniddin Muhaqqiq Tirmidhi. He was a disciple of Bahauddin Valad and the spiritual mentor of Jalaluddin Rumi. His work “*Ma‘arif*” has reached us; however, it was not written directly by the author himself but was compiled by his disciples. Studying the life of Sayyid Burhoniddin once again confirms that Central Asia produced powerful thinkers who excelled both in secular and religious sciences.

Keywords: Sayyid Burhoniddin Tirmidhi, Sufism, scholarly heritage, Termez, Rumi, ethics, fiqh.

INTRODUCTION

After Uzbekistan gained independence, great attention has been paid to studying the lives and works of scholars who made significant contributions to science and culture. Initial information about the life and scholarly heritage of the great Sufi scholar Sayyid Burhoniddin Muhaqqiq Tirmidhi began to appear in academic publications and periodicals starting from the year 2000.

Sayyid Burhoniddin Muhaqqiq Tirmidhi was born in 561 AH / 1165 CE in the city of Termez. He belonged to the Husayni Sayyids. Born in Termez — a center of science and culture — he received his initial education from his father. In 605 AH / 1208 CE, he traveled to Balkh to study under Bahauddin Valad, the father of Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi.

During his studies with Bahauddin Valad, he was also involved in the upbringing and education of Jalaluddin. After spending 12 years in the service of his teacher, he mastered both the outward (*zahir*) and inward (*batin*) sciences. When his teacher migrated from Balkh to Konya, Sayyid Burhoniddin returned to Termez in 616 AH / 1219 CE.

After the death of Bahauddin Valad, Sayyid Burhoniddin traveled to Konya and began teaching Jalaluddin Rumi. For nine years, he instructed Rumi and also mentored Salahuddin Zarkub and Sultan Valad. His statement, “I entrusted my spiritual state to Shaykh Salahuddin and my hand to Mawlana (Rumi),” indicates the special value he placed on Salahuddin Zarkub as well. After Sayyid Burhoniddin’s death, Jalaluddin Rumi accepted Salahuddin Zarkub as his disciple and appointed him as his khalifa (spiritual successor).

The reason Sayyid Burhoniddin was called “Sirdon Tirmidhi” (Knower of Secrets) is mentioned in Shamsuddin Ahmad Aflaki’s *Manaqib al-‘Arifin*. It is reported that he was famous in Khurasan, Termez, Bukhara, and other regions. He was known for speaking about inner secrets, unseen realities, and spiritual purification.

It is narrated that on Friday, the 18th of Rabi‘ al-Akhir in 628 AH (1231 CE), while engaged in spiritual discourse, he suddenly cried out and wept, saying: “Alas, my Shaykh has departed from this earthly world to the realm of purity!” Witnesses recorded the date immediately. Later, he traveled to Rum (Anatolia), performed the funeral rites, and the scholars of the land mourned for forty days.

After forty days, he declared that Jalaluddin Muhammad, the son of his Shaykh, was now alone and that it was his religious duty to go to Rum, serve him, and deliver the spiritual trust entrusted to him by his Shaykh. These accounts justify why he was called “Sirdon.”

From Sayyid Burhoniddin Muhaqqiq Tirmidhi, a Persian Sufi work entitled “*Ma‘arif*” has survived. In 1960, it was critically edited by the Iranian Sufi scholar Badi‘uzzaman Furuzanfar. It was translated into Turkish in 1972 by Abdulbaki Gölpınarlı and in 1995 by Ali Riza Karabulut. In 2024, it was translated into Uzbek by Karomiddin Jamahmatov. In the introduction to his translation, Ali Riza Karabulut provides detailed information about the content, manuscripts, and printed editions of the work.

In this book, Burhoniddin Tirmidhi also mentions the names of scholars and poets whose words and verses he cited. Among them are Abu Bakr Warraq Tirmidhi, Muhammad ibn Hamid, and Muhammad Hakim Tirmidhi.

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