



THE INFLUENCE OF SUFI LITERATURE FROM THE ERA OF MIRZO ULUG‘BEK ON LATER PERIODS

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Annotation: The spiritual heritage of the peoples of Uzbekistan possesses a great history and rich scientific-traditional foundations. This article analyzes the development of Sufi scientific heritage in Central Asia during the Timurid era and subsequent centuries, focusing especially on the activities and scholarly works of the Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiya tariqa. Information is also provided on the Sufi teachings of prominent thinkers such as Sheikh Khudoydod and Musokhon Dahbedi and their works. The article emphasizes the importance of studying historical sources, tafsirs, and scientific heritage. This research serves as a basis for broader investigation into the legacy of Uzbek and Central Asian scholars.

Keywords: Timurids, sufism, Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiya, Sheikh Khudoydod, Musokhon Dahbedi.

Introduction

The spiritual heritage of the peoples of Uzbekistan and Central Asia holds great value, making its study highly important. This region has produced great scholars and thinkers such as Khwarazmi, Al-Biruni, Ibn Sina, Mirzo Ulughbek, and Alisher Navoi, who have made significant contributions to scientific and spiritual progress. In the 17th and 18th centuries, extensive research was also conducted in the field of Sufism in Central Asia. The Naqshbandi and Yasavi Sufi orders, along with the works of scholars associated with them, remain important sources to this day. This article aims to provide a brief overview of the scientific, spiritual, and Sufi heritage of Central Asia.

Main Part

The spiritual heritage of the peoples of Uzbekistan has an ancient and rich history, and it remains an urgent issue to study it comprehensively based on primary sources. Indeed, the written legacy created by great thinkers and scholars from distant past times and preserved until today contains important scientific information for current research.

In this regard, our President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, speaking from the high podium of the United Nations, emphasized the value of peace and the necessity of preserving it, highlighting the appropriateness of widely promoting the scientific heritage of the thinkers who emerged from our land. In particular, on



September 19, 2023, at the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, the President stressed:

“Our homeland rightfully takes pride in being the birthplace of great scholars and thinkers such as Khwarazmi, Al-Biruni, Ibn Sina, Imam Bukhari, Mirzo Ulughbek, and Alisher Navoi, who made invaluable contributions to the development of world science and presented Islam as a religion of knowledge, enlightenment, and peace” .

It is well known that the period of Amir Temur and the Timurid dynasty's rule in Central Asia was an era of significant political, socio-economic, and cultural development. Among the scholars who lived during this time, numerous valuable works in various scientific fields have been preserved. These works remained relevant in subsequent centuries, serving as important references and sources for scholars composing new books. In particular, the Sufi texts written during the Timurid era played a crucial role in the development of Sufi knowledge in later periods. This is why many eighteenth-century sources also mention Sufi works created during the Timurid period.

Research shows that during the era of Mirzo Ulughbek, numerous Sufi sources were also produced. These texts subsequently served as guides for later Sufi practitioners. In this article, we limit ourselves to briefly presenting some of these works, since the topic requires comprehensive, dedicated study, which cannot be fully covered in a single article.

In the centuries following the fall of the Timurid dynasty in Central Asia, two main Sufi orders the Naqshbandiyya and the Yasaviya were particularly active. Among the sheikhs who wrote scholarly works, many lived during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As prime examples of prolific authors, we may mention Sheikh Khudoydod and Musokhon Dahbediy.

Sheikh Khudoydod Toshmuhammad oğlu Azizon Khorazmiy Bukhari (whom some researchers also refer to as Khalifa Khudoydod) was a Sufi sheikh and a distinguished spiritual guide of the Yasaviya order, which held a significant place in the spiritual life of the peoples of Central Asia.

Very little information about his life and scholarly activity is found in the works of the scientific figures of his time. For instance, Mulla Jumaqli Urguti (born in 1190 AH / 1776-77 CE, alive in 1269 AH / 1852 CE), a contemporary of Sheikh Khudoydod, mentioned him as one of the sheikhs who practiced the jahr (audible) form of dhikr in his work Tarikhi Khumuliyy Regarding this, he wrote:

“The greatest sheikhs (kubaro) of the jahr-practicing sheikhs of this century are Qutb al-Waqt Islamshaykh, Mawlavi Khudoydod Khorazmiy, and Mir Mahdum Saripuli”.



As a representative of the Yassawiyya Sufi order, Shaykh Khudoydod actively promoted the principles of this tradition. He authored several scholarly works in which he substantiated the teachings of the Yassawiyya path and the methods of dhikr (remembrance of God) from a scientific and theological perspective. When necessary, he cited examples from the Noble Qur'an and Hadith, and he widely applied foundational principles of Islamic jurisprudence such as *ijma'* (scholarly consensus), and *qiyās* (analogical reasoning). Among his works on Sufism are: *Bahr al-'Ulūm* ("The Ocean of Sciences"), *Pisand-i Dhikr-i Jahr* ("The Merit of Vocal Dhikr"), *Firdaws al-'Ulamā'* ("The Garden of the Scholars"), *Bustān al-Muḥibbīn* ("The Garden of the Lovers"), *Tanbīh al-Ḍallīn* ("Admonition to the Misguided"), *Jāmi' al-Baḥrayn* ("The Confluence of the Two Seas"), *Ṭarīqat al-Wuṣūl ilā-Llāh* ("The Path to Attaining God"). Of these, the first four have survived to the present day. According to his own statements in the prefaces to his works, Shaykh Khudoydod composed these writings at the request of his friends and disciples, and in response to the socio-political needs of his time.

According to his own statements at the beginning of his works, Shaykh Khudoydod authored his writings in response to the requests of his friends and disciples, and in consideration of the socio-political demands of his time.

In addition to the abovementioned scholarly works, Shaykh Khudoydod also engaged in construction efforts, overseeing the building of mosques and madrasas.

Another exemplary figure we wish to mention is Shaykh Musakhon Dahbediy, a prominent representative of the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya order in the 18th century. He authored a number of scholarly treatises elaborating the core principles and theories of this Sufi path. The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya order entered the region of Mawarannahr toward the end of the 17th century through Hāji Habibullah Bukhari (d. 1111/1699–1700), a disciple and successor of Muhammad Ma'sūm Sirhindī (d. 1079/1668), the third son and spiritual heir of Ahmad Sirhindī. This Shaykh, also known by the title Eshon Hāji, became widely known in the region. In his work *Makhāzin at-Taqwā* ("Treasures of God-Consciousness"), Mir Ḥusayn ibn Amīr Ḥaydar refers to Hāji Habibullah as the mujaddid (renewer) of the 12th century AH. Among the disciples (*khalīfas*) of Hāji Habibullah were Khālīfah Nawruz, Sufi Allāhyār (d. 1720), and Muḥammad 'Ābid (d. 1160/1747), who actively propagated the teachings of the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya order in the Bukhara Khanate during the first half of the 18th century.

Sufi Allāhyār, in particular, authored works covering topics in jurisprudence (*fiqh*), creed (*'aqīdah*), and Sufi ethics and etiquette, such as



Maslak al-Muttaqīn (“The Path of the God-Fearing”) and Thabāt al-‘Ājizīn (“The Perseverance of the Weak”).

“He also authored the works Murad al-‘Āshiqīn (“The Desire of the Lovers”) and Makhzan al-Muṭī‘īn (“The Treasury of the Obedient”). In recent years, we have written a commentary on the work Thabāt al-‘Ājizīn and published it.

By the mid-18th century, among the Mujaddidiyya sheikhs in Mawarannahr, Musokhon Dahbedi (d. 1190/1776), the khalifa of Muhammad Obid, and Jon Muhammad Kolobi (d. 1174/1760), the khalifa of Sofi Allohyor, continued the teachings of the Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiyya tariqa. At the same time, Muhammad Obid was not only an author of several works but also the spiritual guide (murshid) of the tariqa sheikh Mirza Mazhar, known as Joni Jonon (d. 1195/1781). Musokhon Dahbedi was a prominent sheikh in the spiritual life of Mawarannahr in the second half of the 18th century. His pen produced numerous works on Sufism, among which the following are notable:

Ashraf al-Khaliq (“The Most Honorable Servant of the Creator”), Tazkirat Kasir al-Fawa’id (“Memorandum of Many Benefits”), Durar al-Asror wa Masnad al-Abrar (“Pearls of Secrets and the Support of the Righteous”), Durr al-Maknun (“The Hidden Pearl”), Mukhtasar dar Tasawwuf (“A Concise Treatise on Sufism”), Makzan at-Ta’aruf (“The Treasury of Knowledge”), Ayn al-Ma’ani (“The Spring of Meanings”), Nawadir al-Ma’arif (“Rare Knowledge”).

These works are attributed to him and constitute an important source for understanding his Sufi teachings and perspectives.

It is known that Mirza Mazhar (Joni Jonon), the khalifa of Musokhon Dahbedi, also authored Sufi works such as Diwan-i Mazhar and Risala dar Bayani Lata’ifi Ashara (“Treatise on the Explanation of the Ten Subtle Points”).

Considering that most of these works were written after the 1770s, it can be concluded that by the last quarter of the 18th century, Sufism in Mawarannahr especially the teachings of the Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiyya tariqahad developed quite steadily. One of the reasons for the increased influence of the Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiyya tariqa compared to other Sufi orders was the direct patronage of Amir Shohmurad towards this tariqa.

Most of the above-mentioned works used earlier treatises written during the Timurid period as source materials. Below, we briefly touch upon some of these sources.

One of the important Sufi works is Silsilat al-‘Arifin wa Tadhkirat al-Siddiqin (“The Chain of the Gnostics and the Memorandum of the Truthful”); authored by Muhammad ibn Burhanuddin ibn Khojamuhammad



Rizomhammad al-Qazi (d. 921/1515). Born in Samarkand, he moved to Andijan in 1510, where he lived until his death. He was a disciple of Khoja Ubaydullah Ahrar and served as the spiritual guide (pir) of Muhammad Haidar, the author of *Tarikh-i Rashidi*. Muhammad Qazi is also the author of *Maqamat-i Khoja Ubaydullah Ahrar*. The *Silsilat al-‘Arifin* was written in 885/1480 and consists of an introduction, three chapters, and a conclusion .

The next work is *Rawzat al-Ulama wa Nuzhat al-Fuzala* (“The Garden of the Scholars and the Excursion of the Virtuous”). It was authored by Abu Ali al-Husayn ibn Yahya al-Bukhari al-Zandawisti (d. 864/1459), who wrote this treatise in Arabic on theology and Sufism within the framework of the Hanafi madhhab. The work consists of two parts, containing 107 chapters along with their detailed index.

In *Bahr al-Ulum*, the aforementioned work is explicitly mentioned by name, and numerous quotations from it are cited in all chapters. Therefore, it can be concluded that this work was one of the primary sources relied upon by Shaykh Khudoydod.

Another significant work is *Hisn al-Hasin min Kalam Sayyid al-Mursalin* (“The Strong Fortress from the Words of the Chief of the Messengers”), authored by Shamsuddin Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Jazari. The author composed several treatises dedicated to the recitation (Qira’at) of the Qur’an. Following the defeat of Sultan Bayezid (d. 805/1402), Shamsuddin Muhammad was brought to Samarkand as a captive of Amir Timur. He also lived in Shahrissabz for some time. After the death of Sahibqiron (Amir Timur), he moved to Iran and died in Shiraz in 833/1429.

In the introduction of *Hisn al-Hasin* (folios 1b-3a), the author explains the reason for composing and naming the work. He recounts that during the conquest of Damascus by Amir Timur, while sitting in a corner of the battlefield, he recited blessings (salawat), which protected him at the time of death. *Hisn al-Hasin* was written on Saturday, 22 Dhu al-Hijjah 791 AH (12 December 1389), in Damascus.

Shaykh Khudoydod effectively utilized *Hisn al-Hasin* in *Bahr al-Ulum*, particularly in chapters addressing purely Sufi topics such as “Advice to Disciples” and “Saintship (Wilayah)”.

Minhaj al-Muttaqin wa Mi’raj al-Mukhlesin (“The Path of the God-fearing and the Ascension of the Sincere”) is a work authored by Sarimuddin Dawud ibn Kamil al-Mihlabiy. The treatise is written in Arabic and addresses topics related to Sufism.

Shaykh Khudoydod made effective use of *Minhaj al-Muttaqin* in composing chapters 7 and 29 of his *Bahr al-Ulum*, which discuss generosity and benevolence. He quotes from this work: “Junayd al-Baghdadi (d. 297/909)



said that four qualities elevate a person to the highest ranks, even if their knowledge and deeds are minimal: forbearance, humility, generosity, and good character”.

Besides this, Sufi authors such as Shaykh Khudoydod and Musokhon Dahbediy also utilized Qur’anic commentaries (tafsirs) produced during the Timurid era when composing their works.

By the time of the Timurid rule, there was an increasing demand for tafsir literature, as evidenced by the considerable number of tafsirs produced during this period. A distinctive feature of many tafsirs written at this time is their composition primarily in Persian, often employing an esoteric (ishari) style of commentary. Initially, these tafsirs contained explanations for a limited number of surahs, but gradually the number of surahs covered expanded, and the volume of the tafsir works grew accordingly.

Regarding tafsirs authored during the Timurid dynasty, the earliest known tafsir is titled Tafsir-i Khwaja Muhammad Porsow. The author of this work was Khwaja Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Mahmud al-Hafizi al-Bukhari, famously known as Khwaja Muhammad Porsow. He was a spiritual guide (pir) of the Naqshbandi order and authored numerous works across various fields of knowledge. The author composed this tafsir in the year 823 AH (1420-1421 CE) in Bukhara. The tafsir is written in Persian and includes commentary on only eight surahs of the Qur’an: Al-Fatiha, Al-Qadr, Al-Bayyina, Az-Zalzala, Al-Waqi’a (Al-Wadiyat), Al-Qaria, At-Takathur, Al-Asr, and Al-Humaza.

The next work attributed to a Sufi author is the Tafsir al-Charhiy, written by the renowned Sufi scholar Allama Yakub ibn Usman ibn Mahmud ibn Muhammad Ghaznawi Charhiy (d. 851 AH / 1447 CE). Allama Charhiy authored numerous works on Naqshbandi teachings and various religious sciences. In his Tafsir al-Charhiy, only 49 surahs of the Qur’an are commented upon, from Al-Fatiha to An-Nas. This work has been preserved to the present day, and manuscript as well as printed copies are kept in many libraries worldwide.

Compared to the aforementioned works, a more comprehensive tafsir covering 66 surahs of the Qur’an (from Surah Qaf to Surah An-Nas) and written in Arabic was authored by Abdurahman Jami (1414–1492). It is well-known in scholarship that Jami composed numerous works, some of which have been studied extensively. Although his contributions to Qur’anic exegesis remain relatively less explored, it is likely that later scholars referred to his tafsir alongside his other writings.

Conclusion

Overall, during the reign of Amir Timur and the Timurid dynasty, alongside other fields, science and culture in Central Asia flourished



significantly. Among these developments, the teachings of Sufism advanced, and the Naqshbandi order, which remains active to this day, was firmly established. The Sufi scholars who lived during the era of Mirzo Ulughbek authored scholarly works that illuminated the theoretical foundations of this order. These works subsequently served as foundational reference sources for Sufi sheikhs in the following centuries.

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