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SUFİSM OF SELJUKİD PERLOD;

MYTHS AND REALLTIES

(Based on the Example of Khwaja Ahmad Yasavi)

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Uzbekistan

The Seljuqs period, especially the era of "The Great Seljuqs" (1037—1157), has been marked as one of the key periods of Central Asian history of Islam whereby main directions in studies, theories and practice have been formed. They have been formalized in 13th-15th centuries having since then a significant impact on the entire Islamic history of region.

Regarding Written Historical Sources

Before going into the main subject of my presentation, I would like to bring to your attention a number of chronological and systematic issues regarding the sources that I used in my research.

Studying of historical monuments for historians is the basis for rebuilding and describing of a historical past. Contradictions are commonplace during such process, however little attention is paid to assessing the nature and root causes of the contradictions. For example, discrepancy in the chronology of a source of information (the time associated with a manuscript) and real date of when the manuscript was written. In the other words, the difference between time of written source (according to its content and authorship) and the date of real date of the write-up of the manuscript's copy is an issue that is often overlooked by researchers. .

Therefore, while describing a manuscript one has to consider at least two challenges: (a) chronological and (b) problem solving. For instance, the time described in a manuscript (or the lifetime of the manuscript's author) and an earliest version of a this source. Very often these two moments are divided by a gigantic time interval.

In relation to that I would like to give some illustrations. When we discuss the source of Sufism of 12th century we traditionally consider the work of Hamadani "Manaqib-i Khwaja Yusuf Hamadani". The logic of that is simple: an authorship of the manuscript is ascribed to Hamadani, he died in 1140 and accordingly the date of his work is 12th century. This manuscript is dated as an 12th century document at 3rd volume of the Catalogue of the Oriental Manuscripts of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbekistan, published under AA Semenov's edition in 1955.

This document has been referred to quite often as the source of history, philosophy, and cultural-spiritual heritage of Central Asia.

The problem is that this manuscript has been prepared at the end of 17th century, five century after supposed creation of original work. We assume that there were a many corrections, editing and changes throughout this timeframe.

"Risale-i shaykh al-shuyukh hazrat-i khwaja Abu Yusuf Hamadani" is another popular historical manuscript. Authorship of this Risala assigned to one of the founders of Khwajagan-Naqshbandiyya tariqat Abd al-Khaliq Gijduvani who died in 575/1179, and accordingly his work dates to 12th century. The only copy of this Risala reached us dated by 18th century.

This copy is wide known among orientalists and is often quoted. But a number of questions come to mind. We suppose that during six centuries the number of corrections, editing and changes were made by copyists according to religious specifics, political and ideological needs of that time. This appears more evident especially due to the fact that during this time political and economical situations often influenced the focus of religious studies that in turn repeatedly have changed their political and theoretical directions

One earlier source is "Maslak al-'arifin" also dated by the Catalogue of the Oriental Manuscripts to 12th century. But it also requires a critical assessment of the original date of the document. "Maslak al-'arifin" is spiritual testament (will) of Abd al-Khaliq Gijduvani. However, the Collection of Manuscripts of the Uzbekistan Institute of Oriental Studies has its copy that is dated by much earlier, namely 875/1470.

It appears that we have an earlier manuscript version of the manuscript, however the problem lies in the fact that at second part of 15th century activity of Naqshbandiyya has strongly changed. Relations with rulers became one of the basic positions of Naqshbandiyya while Abd al-Khaliq Gijduvani has been advising in his lessons to avoid any relations of such kind.. So, as one can see are numerous contradictions in theory and practice of Central Asian Sufism existed throughout its history.

Avoiding misunderstandings and serious alternative versions of Islamic manustrcipts, the ideological leadership of the Naqshbandiyya of 15th century made changes, smooth out some of the contradictions of the "Maslak al-arifin" which is listed in the in catalog source of the 12th century.

Similar situations have been observedin many other Sufi sources of Central Asia.

For example, a treatise of "Maqamat-i Khwaja Abd al-Khaliq Gijduvani" is as popular as its analog "Manaqib-i Khwaja Yusuf Hamadani" which remains only in the manuscript copy of 19th century. Popular treatise of "Manaqib-i Khwaja 'Ali 'Azizan Ramitani" considered as source of 15th century, has earlier manuscript copies dated by 19th century.

Another manuscript - "Manaqib-i Amir Kulal" is also among most famous Naqshbandi documents dated by 14th century. This work contains rich information on thehistory of the Central Asian Sufism. The earliest copy dated by 17th century. It's interesting that a lithographic copy of this document has been published at the Tashkent in the beginning of the 20th century. However, this was not only a shortened version but also presented rather an altered content.. This confirms our hypothesis about the possibility of changes in texts of manuscripts that may have taken place throughout the history of Sufism...

As an example confirming this idea we can bring some facts from the life of Khwaja Ahmad Yasavi. But before, I would like to give some explanations why I would like to draw your attention to one of the well-known Naqshbandi documents such as "Rashat 'Ain al-Hayat"..

"Rashahat 'Ain al-Hayat" as the Source on the History of the YasawiSilsila's, the Spiritual Genealogy

One of the most popular hagiographical compositions of Fakhr al-Din Ali b. Husayin al- Kashifi known under the name of As-Safi (died in 939/1532) is "Rashahat 'Ain al-Hayat" treatise (further referred to as "Rashahat"). This is one of the most trustworthy sources of that time. It should be takeninto account that author of the manuscript finished his composition in 909/1503 and died in 939/1532. The earliest copy is exists in the Collection of Manuscripts of the Uzbekistan Institute of Oriental Studies and dated by 977/1569.

"Rashahat" is on of the most rich and comprehensive compositions of the Medieval period of religious-political life of Mawarannahr . "Rashahat" is the document that played a significant role in the history of Islam of Central Asia and in shaping of the spiritual-ideological changes of the region that took place since.

"Rashahat 'Ain al-Hayat" is one the earliest sources of the Yasaviyya'shistory (from 12th century) and is the main source of life and activities one of the most famous Naqshbandiyya Sufis, namely Sheikh Khwaja 'Ubaidallah Ahrar (15th century).

Discussing the problems of chronological and systematic character one should look into a number of following issues. I consider "Rashahat" as one of the earliest sources, taking into account fact that author of the manuscript completed his work in 909/1503 and died in 939/1532, while the Collection of Manuscripts of the Uzbekistan Institute of Oriental Studies dates it by 977/1569.

As-Safi, the author of this manuscript first lists the names of 94 Sufi sheikhs, their biographies and then introduces the Silsila of Khwaja Ahrar that provides an extensive information about thelife and activitiesof the latter. There are also very valuable data on the history, culture, philosophy, and economy of the Mawarannahr, Turkestan and Khorasan in the As-Safi's work.

Today, we can easily state that "Rashahat" is one of the earliest sources on history of the Yasaviyya Sufi brotherhood. The manuscripts = gives interesting and important material about life of Khwaja Ahmad Yasavi (d. 562/1166) and his spiritual successors, referred to in the Silsila of Yasaviyya brotherhood.

"Rashahat" also provides information about social and political events of Mawarannahr of 12th – 14th centuries. This includes information about the formation of Central Asian Sufi School, in history known as as Khwajagan - "teachers", "mentors"; facts about Abu Yaqub Yusuf Hamadani (d. 535/1140), the legendary founder of this school; an finally, the stories of that Shaykhs whose names are connected with the formation and development of the Khwajagan-Naqshbandiyya brotherhood.

From our point of view, the uniqueness of "Rashahat" lies in the following: the source represents a combination of and the similarity to some historical and biographic traditions that most likely, had an original and independent beginning. Thus, in our opinion, "Rashahat" is the full, official version of the biography of Khwaja Ahrar coordinated with him in the work of as-Safi. It is especially important that during all subsequent times the estimation of Khwaja Ahrar and people's memory of him was based on these materials.

Khwaja Ahmad Yasavi's Mentors: Myth and Realities

Regarding the Sufi's traditions of the Central Asia of 12th – 13th centuries, we look at the life of Ahmad Yasavi's himself, as themost critical stage of historical development of Islamic tradition of the Central Asia is connected with his name.

As for the spiritual apprenticeship and mentorship associated with Ahmad Yasavi that is presentedin the reference and research literature, it is mostly cited in the very "Rashahat 'Ain al-Hayat" of Ali As-Safi where the following were mentioned:

Khwaja Ahmad Yasavi was the the third *caliph* of Khwaja Yusuf (referring to Hamadani). Turks called him Ata Yasavi or the Father of Turks or Turkic people. The native land of the imam is the famous Central Asian city of Jasa. A tomb of the imam is in the same place. In the childhood, under the supervision of Bab Arslan which as it is noted in the manuscript, is one of the most ancient Turkic Shaykhs (*shaykh-i qadim*). After the death of Bab Arslan, the imam Ahmad Yasavi) comes back to Bukhara and goes into an apprenticeship to Khwaja Yusuf. After a while, he comes back to Turkestan, having left, according to the as-Safi words, all associates (*ashab*) to Hazrat Abd al-Khaliq Gijduvani. As for Ahmad Yasavi, he directs his attention towards the Yasa city.

Approximately the same information is repeated in the majority of hagiographical sources of the later centuries. . The data of "Rashahat" actually represents the early data on the tradition of Yasaviyya. But nevertheless, these data are more likely to be a legend. . And this legend has been spread around not by early tradition of the followers of Yasaviyya, but by their contenders and competitors from circles of Khwajagan-Naqshbandiyya.

Thus, hagiographical sources are full of the stories representing combination and compatibility between some traditions, which most likely to be initial of an independent origin. There are plenty of examples of that. of that.

Altogether, according to the "Rashahat" the schooling of Ahmad Yasavi from Yusuf Hamadani had taken place prior to his studies with Arslan Bab. Ali-Shir Nava'i (d. 1501) also confirmed this fact of in his work "Nasaim al-muhabbat min shamaim al-futuvat" and the work of Ali Shir Nava'i. However, one can find adifference between these two medieval authors, whereby the name of Arslan Bab is absent in version of Ali-Shir Nava'i.

We can arrive to a conclusion that the history of Arslan Bab has appeared independently and has been transferred on other tradition by the author of "Rashahat". Confirming the "artificiality" is possible by noticing that Ali as-Safi misses the most obvious facts in the history of Arslan Bab and his relation with Ahmad Yasavi which appear in other medieval manuscripts.

While discussing the spiritual mentors of Ahmad Yasavi it is necessary to mention the less-known treatise of "Ta`lim al-zakirin". This document describes the rules of conduct and execution of *zikr* (*dhikr* - "invocation") in Khwajagan Silsila, advocating for loud *zikr*. This document was prepared in 947/1537-1538 and consists of 30 parts (*babs*). Acopy of this documentavailable for our research totals 26 parts.

The author of "Ta`lim al-zakirin", advocating for the of loud zikr of Ahmad Yasavi, asks how someone can reject person who was trained by two excellent instructors (such as *Suhrawardi* and *Hamadani*) and one prophet (*Hizr*). According to the "Ta`lim al-zakirin", Ahmad Yasavi had three *pirs* - for *iradat* (spiritual adherence), *halvat* (a spiritual solitude) and *tarbiyat* (spiritual training). His *pir-i iradat* was Khwaja Abu Yusuf, the *pir-i halvat* was Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi, the *pir-i tarbiyat* was Hizr.

In our opinion, the following interesting moments had been highlighted during the study of this document. The author of "Ta`lim al-zakirin" doesn't mention the name of Arslan Bab. Moreover, in this manuscript the influence

of "Rashahat" with respect of the description of the spiritual biography of Ahmad Yasavi has not been traced which makes thismedieval source rather valuable.. It is possible to draw a conclusion on the origin of the above-stated informationof "Ta`lim al-zakirin" directly from Yasavi traditions.

It is necessary to note another important detail. The treatise "Ta`lim al-zakirin" represents one of the earliest sources content the information on communications of Ahmad Yasavi with Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi. The fact is of special interest, considering importance of Suhrawardi's personality in the history of Sufism.

Later Islamic sources have been compelled with the whole cycle of messages on a spiritual apprenticeship and Ahmad Yasavi's continuity. One of the most brilliant and skillfully compiled sources is "Lamahat min nafahat al-quds". The known treatise of 17th centuries "Lamahat min nafahat al-quds" is written by Muhammad al Alim as-Siddiki al-Alim al-Alavi, known also under the name Alim-shaykh Azizan. He was born in district of Tashkent in 972/1564-1565, and has died in Samarkand on July 4th, 1635. The author had the big authority at court of Imam Quli Khan (d. 1642) from Ashtarkhanid (Janid) dynasty to which has devoted this treatise. Time of writing of the composition was 1035/1625-1626 (see. 142a-142b). The "Lamahat" begins with Ahmad Yasavi's biography and comes to the end with the various shaykhs biographies that were contemporaries of the author of the manuscript.

This treatise, despite the artificiality and compilations, on the consequence and the importance is one of very important sources of studying of Central Asian Sufism. Data of "Lamahat" represent a complete picture about Ahmad Yasavi's mentors, though also a little distinct from earlier sources mentioned by me.

The important moment of the "Lamahat" version is the statement about connection of Yasaviyya's silsila with Suhrawardiyya's. In this treatise the same as in "Ta`lim al-zakirin" three Ahmad Yasavi's mentors mentioned before have been specified. Here Arslan Bab from "Rashahat" is added. However, there is the different underlining advantage and value of "Ta`lim al-zakirin" as important hand-written historical and hagiographical source. The specific terminology of the last used for distinction of three mentors of Ahmad Yasavi in the version "Lamahat" disappears but citations from other sources are added.

Khwaja Ahrar as Reformer and Mystifier of Islamic Heritage of Akhmad Yasavi

The known representative of Muslim clergy, Naqshbandiyya Shaykh Nasr ad-din 'Ubaidallah b. Mahmud ash-Shashi, well known under the name Khwaja Ahrar (1404-1490), made a contribution as the reformer of the religious and spiritual heritage of the Central Asia in the second half of 15th century. In certain extend thanks to him there was an artificial integration of two initially independent Sufi's traditions – Yasaviyya and Naqshbandiyya that has led to the strengthening of Naqshbandiyya's positions.

In fact, the early written sources concerning the pre-Naqshbandiyya traditions do not mention not at all that Ahmad Yasavi's spiritual heritage has passed to followers of Abd al-Khaliq Gijduvani. Ahmad Yasavi is practically ignored after his departure to Turkestan, and anything especially outstanding is not described. But from the end of 15th century when activity of Khwaja Ahrar as the native of Tashkent begins and it is possible to find out an obvious mention about Sufi's spiritual heritage of Ahmad Yasavi.

For example, the data of "Rashahat" actually represents the early data mentioning traditions of Yasaviyya. But nevertheless, these data is more likely to be the legend. The author of "Rashahat" not only makes out the story about tradition of Yasaviyya in the framework of the superiority of Naqshbandiyya tradition and includes it in Naqshbandiyya's Silsila, but also adds data that an origin of Sufi traditions of Yasaviyya just is the branch allocated from sources of Khwajagan-Naqshbandiyya and which as a whole is designated as Silsila of Naqshbandiyya.

Classical appearance of this version in history of Islam of the Central Asia when the chain of spiritual continuity i.e. Silsila of Ahmad Yasavi has been included in genealogy of Naqshbandiyya, we find in "Rashahat".

The role and influence of Khwaja Ahrara on the author of "Rashahat" is traced enough accurately and clearly. For example, in "Rashahat" Ahmad Yasavi's apprenticeship from Yusuf Hamadani is anticipated by his training in youthful at Arslan Bab. The same fact is Ahmad Yasavi's apprenticeship from Yusuf Hamadani is confirmed in the works of many medieval authors. And there are still a lot of questions concerning to such important for Central Asian religious tradition figure of Arslan Bab.

As an example, we will result the treatise "Nasaim al-muhabbat min shamaim al-futuvat", belonging to Ali-Shir Nava'i (d. 1501). This work is the Uzbek version of the well-known Nur ad-Din Abd ar-Rahman Jami (d. 1492) classic "Nafahat al-uns min hazrat al-quds", devoted to the Sufis' biography. The treatise "Nasaim al-muhabbat" is one of last works of Nava'i. Having reduced the text of Abd ar-Rahman Jami, he has made to it essential additions. The treatise of Nava'i, for example, includes biographies of some Shaykhs which has lowered in the work of Abd ar-Rahman Jami. Besides, Nava'i has placed in it biographies of some Indian Sufis. And what is especially important, Ali-Shir Nava'i has provide the information about Central Asian Turkic Sufis and Shaykhs, starting from Khwaja Ahmad Yasavi till the his

time.

Nevertheless,we found out the difference between "Nasaim al-muhabbat" and "Rashahat". Arslan Bab in Ali-Shir Nava'i 's biographic versions doesn't appear!

Having tracked available circle of medieval sources, it is possible to tell with confidence that all that part of Central Asian Sufis' traditions was born, developed and has become stronger around Tashkent and connected with image of Arslan Bab. It is visible, for instance from the treatise of Nisari "Muzakkir-i ahbab" where the figure of Arslan Bab with his silsila leading to Zangi Ata is so considerable.

The author of "Rashahat" Ali as-Safi received the information for his book directly from Khwaja Ahrar. As-Safi has written down many facts and the data according to Khwaja Ahrar's information who was not only the native of Tashkent, but also the expert of local Sufi-Islamic traditions. By the way, continuing to develop thought in this direction it is possible to explain logically enough why Ali-Shir Nava'i, basically living in Herat, in his classic "Nasaim al-muhabbat" does not mention Arslan Bab.

It is clear that the history of Arslan Bab has appeared independently, on an independent basis, and has been transferred on other tradition by the author of "Rashahat" from giving and presentation of Khwaja Ahrar.

But, as a result, this version became the standard in the majority of the latest hagiographical written sources not only of Naqshbandi, but also of Yasavi origins.

Conclusion

We can make the following unequivocal conclusions despite complexities of research of a problem lifted by us.

In the described period the general development of the Central Asia has led to changes of a religious situation. Representatives of Sufism moved forward, they managed to consolidate, keep in a certain measure and further to develop Islamic tradition of the Central Asia. Ahmad Yasavi's doctrine has led to rapprochement and merge of positions of various religious - political groups and sects existing in region at that point in time.

The Yasaviyya's theory has incorporated doctrines and has united practice of spiritual views which have undergone changes and have received purely Islamic direction and coloring. On the basis of this doctrine the compromise between Central Asian groups of Shafi'i and Hanafi also has been reached and it was extremely important and excluded main bulk of serious contradictions of the Muslims in Central Asia. It unequivocally defines the historical role of Ahmad Yasavi and his doctrines.

The activity connected with a name of Ahmad Yasavi and with names of his followers, was rather favorably reflected in the general local political, social, economic situation and has helped to develop to the next stage of development of Islam in Central Asian.