



THE CORE IDEAS OF NAQSHBANDIYA TEACHING AND ITS CONTINUITY WITH THE KHWAJAGAN TRADITION

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Abstract. *This article analyzes the core ideas of the Naqshbandiya doctrine and its genetic continuity with the Khwajagan tradition. The study demonstrates that the foundations of Khwajagan teaching laid by Yusuf Hamadani and systematized by Abdulkhaliq Ghijduvani through eight rashes (principles) were preserved, deepened, and enriched by Baha' al-Din Naqshband through three additional principles and the restoration of silent dhikr. The research argues that the relationship between the Khwajagan and Naqshbandiya stages constitutes not simple continuity but a dialectical unity of preservation and innovation, expressed above all in the motto "Dil ba yor-u, dast ba kor" (Heart with God, hands at work).*

Keywords: *Naqshbandiya; Khwajagan; Abdulkhaliq Ghijduvani; Baha' al-Din Naqshband; rasha; silent dhikr; silsilai zahab; Central Asian Sufism; social activism; Islamic ethics.*

INTRODUCTION

Sufi traditions occupy an exceptionally important place in the spiritual-cultural history of Central Asia. From the twelfth century onward, among the more than fifty Sufi tariqas that emerged across the Islamic world, four the Yassaviya, the Khwajagan-Naqshbandiya, the Kubraviya, and the Ishqiya originated precisely in Central Asia. Among these Sufi schools and tariqas, the Khwajagan-Naqshbandiya holds a special place (Rahimov, 2021:12–15).

The Khwajagan-Naqshbandiya is rooted in local soil as a successor to the Central Asian Sufi school tradition and was influenced by such Sufi thinkers as Hakim

al-Tirmidhi (205/820–320/932), Abu Bakr al-Kalabadhi (305/917–385/995), and Mustamli al-Bukhari (d. 434/1043) (Komilov, 1996:42–48). What distinguishes this tariqa is that it did not confine itself to abstract theoretical teaching but developed practical principles directly connected with everyday human life. The Naqshbandiya doctrine draws its roots from Khwajagan traditions, and the continuity between these two stages is of crucial significance for understanding the essence of the tariqa.

The article aims to analyze the core ideas of the Naqshbandiya doctrine, demonstrate its genetic connection with the Khwajagan tradition, and illuminate the nature of the innovations introduced by Baha' al-Din Naqshband. The principal sources employed are “Rashahat Ayn al-Hayat,” Abdurrahman Jami’s “Nafahat al-Uns,” and Alisher Navoi’s “Nasayim al-Muhabbat” (Jami, 2001:242–243). The methodological approach combines historical-comparative, hermeneutic, and systematic-structural analysis.

METHODS AND SOURCES

The study applies historical-comparative, hermeneutic, and systematic-structural analysis. Primary sources include “Rashahat Ayn al-Hayat” (Kashifi, 2004), “Nafahat al-Uns” (Jami, 2001), “Nasayim al-Muhabbat” (Navoi, 2001), “Maqamati Yusuf Hamadani” (Ghijduvani, 2003a), and “Vasiyatnoma” (Ghijduvani, 2003b). Secondary sources include the scholarly works of Komilov (1996), Rahimov (2021), Bertels (1965), Trimmingham (1989), and Algar (2012). The chronological scope covers the period from the first half of the twelfth century (the formation of the Khwajagan tariqa) to the second half of the fourteenth century (the formation of the Naqshbandiya stage).

RESULTS

Yusuf Hamadani and the foundations of the Khwajagan tradition. The emergence of the Khwajagan-Naqshbandiya tariqa as a specific organization is directly connected with the activity of Khwaja Yusuf Hamadani (440/1048–535/1140) (Kashifi, 2004:97–98). Originally from Hamadan, Hamadani came to Mawarannahr to disseminate his teaching and train disciples. He opened a khanqah in Bukhara, establishing his own Sufi school there. In his teaching, honest labor and earning one’s livelihood occupied the foremost

place; he himself practiced handicraft and cobbling. According to “Maqamati Yusuf Hamadani” by Abdulkhaliq Ghijduvani, Hamadani had memorized many books on Qur’anic commentary, hadith, fiqh, usul, and kalam, and had sat with two hundred and thirteen shaykhs (Ghijduvani, 2003a:8–12). Of his many disciples, four are regarded as his principal students: Khwaja Hasan Andaqi, Khwaja Abdullah Barraki, Khwaja Ahmad Yassawi, and Khwaja Abdulkhaliq Ghijduvani (Rahimov, 2021:38–41). Of these four, the Yassawi and Ghijduvani tariqas developed independently, while the principal tamoyils of Hamadani’s teaching strict adherence to sharia, honest labor, self-discipline, and ascetic lifestyle subsequently formed the core of both Khwajagan and Naqshbandiya teaching.

Abdulkhaliq Ghijduvani and the eight rashes. Khwaja Abdulkhaliq Ghijduvani (ca. 496/1103–575/1179) is recognized as the direct founder of the Khwajagan tariqa (Ghijduvani, 2003b:14–18). His great service lies not only in establishing a new tariqa but also in aligning Sufism with sharia: he reformed the tariqa in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet, cleansed it of various innovations (*bid‘ah*), made adherence to sharia the principal rule, rejected seclusion and isolation in favor of participation in the community, and set honest labor that everyone must earn their livelihood through their own work as the tariqa’s fundamental requirement. As the author of “Rashahat Ayn al-Hayat” notes, Ghijduvani was “the founder of the Khwajagan order,” and Alisher Navoi likewise observed that their path was “a proof in the tariqa for all, and they always walked in the way of truth and sincerity, in following the sharia and sunna of the Prophet Muhammad, and in opposing innovation” (Navoi, 2001:118–120).

The theoretical basis of the Khwajagan doctrine consists of eight rashes (“drops”) principles established step by step by Yusuf Hamadani, Abdulkhaliq Ghijduvani, and Baha’ al-Din Naqshband (Komilov, 1996:85–90). Subsequent research confirms that the first four rashes belong to Yusuf Hamadani and the remaining four were developed by Abdulkhaliq Ghijduvani. The first rasha is “Hush dar dam” (alertness in breathing): the wayfarer must keep God in mind with every breath, not succumbing to heedlessness, for every breath is a particle of human life and to pass it without remembrance of God is a spiritual loss (Trimingham, 1989:62–64). The second rasha is “Nazar bar qadam” (attention to the step): the wayfarer must keep his gaze on his feet while walking, not looking around unnecessarily, which means in spiritual terms that a person must place

every step in life consciously (Komilov, 1996:78–82). The third is “Safar dar vatan” (inner journey): true travel occurs not in the outer world but in the person’s own inner world, on the path of spiritual perfection through the seven stations of the nafs. The fourth is “Xilvat dar anjuman” (solitude in the crowd): one of the most distinctive principles of Khwajagan-Naqshbandiya teaching, whereby the wayfarer must remain inwardly with God even while among people this principle is directed against world-renunciation and calls the person to active participation in society (Rahimov, 2021:55–60). The fifth through eighth rashes “Yodkard” (keeping dhikr in memory), “Bozgasht” (returning), “Nigohdosht” (guarding the heart), and “Yoddosht” (constant remembrance) were developed by Ghijduvani and form the practical-spiritual dimension of the doctrine (Kashifi, 2004:130–135).

Baha’ al-Din Naqshband: innovations and continuity. Khwaja Baha’ al-Din Naqshband (718/1318–791/1389), the seventh and final pir of the Khwajagan tariqa, elevated this teaching to a qualitatively new stage (Bertels, 1965:113–115). Naqshband first accomplished a significant change within the Khwajagan tariqa: in place of the audible dhikr (dhikri jahri) that had been introduced from the time of Khwaja Mahmud Anjirfaghni, he restored the silent dhikr (dhikri xafi) established by Abdulkhaliq Ghijduvani (Komilov, 1996:95–100). This restoration was not mere conservatism but a movement to reclaim the original essence of Khwajagan teaching. The most important innovation in Naqshband’s doctrine was the addition of three new rashes to the existing eight: “vuqufi zamoniyy” (awareness of time), “vuqufi adadiyy” (awareness of number), and “vuqufi qalbiyy” (awareness from the heart), raising the total to eleven and forming the complete theoretical system of Khwajagan-Naqshbandiya teaching (Rahimov, 2021:72–78).

“Vuqufi zamoniyy” requires the wayfarer to be fully aware of his time, to not let a single moment of life pass in vain; as described in “Rashahat,” “the wayfarer must be aware of his state at all times whether it is appropriate to gratitude or not” (Kashifi, 2004:145–150). “Vuqufi adadiyy” requires adherence to order and discipline in dhikr practice, understanding the interconnection of all things created with divine wisdom (Rahimov, 2021:85–90). “Vuqufi qalbiyy” means that the person must always be aware of his heart, purifying it as the mirror of divine manifestations. Naqshband himself embodied the social teaching in his own life: he farmed a small plot near Ghijduvon, kept nothing in his house, slept on rushes in winter and on a mat in summer, earned his

livelihood with his own hands, and gave whatever he earned to orphans and the poor (Bertels, 1965:120–125).

The golden chain and the motto. The most important indicator of continuity between the Khwajagan and Naqshbandiya stages manifests through the concept of “silsilai zahab” (the golden chain) the unbroken spiritual chain that begins from the Prophet and, passing through Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, the Companions, and the seven pirs from Ghijduvani to Naqshband, preserves the integrity of spiritual authority within the tariqa (Ahrar, 2004:22–28). The entire essence of the Naqshbandiya doctrine is expressed in its central motto: “Dil ba yor-u, dast ba kor” (Heart with God, hands at work). Research confirms that this idea was originally advanced by Abdulkhaliq Ghijduvani and was made the central principle of the tariqa by Baha’ al-Din Naqshband making it one of the clearest examples of the continuity between Khwajagan and Naqshbandiya (Algar, 2012:934–939).

This motto marked an important turning point in Sufi history. While many other tariqas propagated world-renunciation, seclusion, and asceticism, the Naqshbandiya teaching did the opposite advancing social activism and honest labor. A person must on the one hand worship God and on the other engage in work beneficial to society; these two aspects do not contradict but complement each other. In Naqshbandiya teaching, the true Sufi is not one who has fled the world but one who lives in the world yet is inwardly bound to God. Ghijduvani had practiced the craft of weaving; Naqshband farmed; Hamadani had practiced cobbling all Khwajagan pirs remained faithful to the tradition of earning their livelihood through honest labor (Rahimov, 2021:95–105).

DISCUSSION

The relationship between the Khwajagan and Naqshbandiya stages should not be understood merely as simple continuity. In this process, both continuity and innovation manifest in dialectical unity (Komilov, 1996:105–110). In terms of continuity: the Naqshbandiya preserved and developed all the core principles of Khwajagan teaching fidelity to sharia, honest labor, silent dhikr, self-discipline, and opposition to world-renunciation. These principles were acknowledged and applied in practice by all pirs

from Ghijduvani to Naqshband. In terms of innovation: Naqshband restored the silent dhikr, added three new rashes that deepened rather than contradicted the existing eight, and strengthened the principle of social activism (Algar, 2012:940–942; Bertels, 1965:120–125).

The social orientation of the Naqshbandiya doctrine is the principal feature that distinguishes it from other Sufi tariqas. This characteristic enabled the tariqa to spread widely not only among urban populations but also among trading and craft strata and nomadic pastoral communities in the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries. After Naqshband, his caliphs Khwaja Alouddin Attar (d. 802/1400) and Khwaja Muhammad Parsa (749/1348–822/1420) made major contributions to the cohesion and organizational consolidation of the tariqa (Rahimov, 2021:110–118). Parsa’s works “Risala-i Qudsiya” and “Fasl al-Khitab” took their place among the principal sources of Naqshbandiya teaching. Subsequently, under Khwaja Ubaydullah Ahrar (806/1404–895/1490), the Naqshbandiya achieved considerable economic and political power in Mawarannahr and became not only a spiritual-moral but also a socio-political force (Ahrar, 2004:35–42).

From the fourteenth century onward, the Naqshbandiya teaching began rapidly spreading to India and other Islamic lands via Afghanistan (Trimingham, 1989:80–85). Through Khwaja Muhammad al-Baqi Kabuli (d. 1605) and his disciple Ahmad Faruq Sirhindi (1563–1624), it spread widely in India, with Sirhindi founding the Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiya branch (Sirhindi, 2012:55–62). Today, various branches of the Khwajagan-Naqshbandiya operate in Turkestan, Iran, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Turkey, Iraq, North Africa, and even the Congo (Algar, 2012:943–947). This global spread is directly connected with the solid doctrinal foundation based on Khwajagan traditions (Rahimov, 2021:130–140).

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the analysis presented above, the following conclusions can be formulated. First, the Naqshbandiya doctrine is in deep and uninterrupted connection with the Khwajagan tradition, and this continuity is manifested through the silsilai zahab (golden chain), the continuity of the rasha system, and the commonality of doctrinal

principles. The eight rashas developed by Abdulkhaliq Ghijduvani form the core of Naqshbandiya teaching, and the three rashas added by Naqshband further strengthen this core. Second, the seeds planted by Yusuf Hamadani took shape through Ghijduvani as the Khwajagan tariqa, with the eight rashas developed and the direction of practical Sufism grounded in sharia consolidated. Third, Baha' al-Din Naqshband elevated the teaching to a qualitatively new stage by adding three new rashas, restoring the silent dhikr, and strengthening the principle of social activism innovations that represent not a contradiction of but the logical continuation and refinement of the Khwajagan teaching. Fourth, the relationship between Khwajagan and Naqshbandiya is not simple continuity but a dialectical unity of continuity and renewal. Finally, the motto "Dil ba yor-u, dast ba kor," embodying the harmony between spiritual perfection and social activism, must be assessed as the most vivid expression in Sufi history of the unity of these two dimensions an expression that has not lost its significance today (Komilov, 1996:115–120).

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