

THE SCIENTIFIC LEGACY OF KHOJA MUHAMMAD PORSA AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NAQSHBANDIYA DOCTRINE

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The spiritual doctrine of the Khojagon-Naqshbandiyya ṭarīqah, with a history spanning nearly 900 years, has left a profound spiritual legacy not only for the Muslim world but for all of humanity. Within the broader history of Islamic thought, particular importance is given to the scientific and literary works authored by the shaykhs of this ṭarīqah. Likewise, works that are dedicated to their lives describing their perspectives on religion and the world, the universe and humanity, knowledge and enlightenment, love and benevolence, as well as numerous other fields of knowledge and insight are of significant value.

One of the prominent thinkers of the Sufi tradition at the end of the 14th century was Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥāfiẓī al-Bukhārī (1349-1420), better known by the title Khwāja Muḥammad Parsa, a major representative of the Khojagon-Naqshbandiyya order. He is recognized as one of the great spiritual masters (shaykhs) of this tradition. Khwāja Muḥammad Parsa was born in Bukhara, where he studied in madrasas and acquired knowledge of the Qur'an, ḥadīth, kalām, and other religious sciences. He became one of the most distinguished scholars of his time and gained wide recognition as one of the leading exponents and disseminators of the Naqshbandī path in Central Asia after Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband.

Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, in his work *Nafahāt al-Uns*, recorded that Parsa's full name was Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥāfiẓī al-Bukhārī. The nickname "Parsa", meaning "pious," was reportedly given to him by Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband himself. According to the author of *Rashahāt*, this detail is conveyed as follows: "Muḥammad Parsa was once standing on the street awaiting the presence of Hazrat Khwāja [Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband]. A maidservant came out from inside, and Hazrat Khwāja asked her, 'Who is standing out there?' The servant replied, 'It is a pious (parsa) young man. Hazrat Khwāja then came out to the street, saw Khwāja Muḥammad, and said: 'Ah, so you are a pious man.' From that day forward, he became known among the people by the epithet 'Parsa.' In *Rashahāt*, the following account is provided about Khwāja Muḥammad: "While en route to the Ḥijāz, Khwāja-yi Buzurg (Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband) fell ill and began offering counsel. Surrounded by his companions, he addressed them: 'Everything I have received from the successors (khalīfahs) of the Khwājagān ṭarīqah and all that has been transmitted to me by our shaykhs, I now entrust to you, this humble servant. Convey all that has been received to the people of the Almighty Allah.' After returning from the Ḥijāz, he once again said in the presence of friends: 'Everything that was with us-you have fully received.' At the end of his life, he remarked: 'The reason for our birth is the coming of Muḥammad (Parsa).

That Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband designated Khwāja Muḥammad Parsa as his successor before his death is described by Khājah 'Alī Dāmād in the following way:

"During his final illness, Hazrat Khwāja Bahā' al-Dīn ordered the digging of his grave at the place where his body now rests. After the grave was dug, I went to him. A thought crossed my mind: To whom will he entrust irshād (spiritual guidance)? The shaykh immediately turned to me and said: 'My words spoken on the road to the Ḥijāz still stand. If anyone desires to see us, let him look upon Muḥammad Parsa. Khwāja Muḥammad Parsa, who attained the rank of murshid (spiritual guide), was also a distinguished scholar in various fields such as tafsīr (Qur'anic exegesis), ḥadīth, taṣawwuf (Sufism), kalām (Islamic theology), geography, literature, history, and fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence).

Nearly forty works by him have come down to us. His extant corpus can be tentatively categorized as follows: Works on the Science of Tafsīr (Qur'anic Exegesis): This category includes:

Tafsīr-i Khwāja Muḥammad Parsa - a unique manuscript authored personally by him, Tafsīr of Sūrat al-Fātiḥa, and Tarjumah va Tafsīr-i Suwar-i al-Samāwiyya (Translation and Exegesis of the Celestial Chapters). These works were composed in the Persian language.

Among Khoja Muhammad Parsa's works in the field of Hadith studies are "Risala fi silsilat al-mashayikh al-muhaddithin" a treatise dedicated to the biographies of hadith scholars "Sharh-i hadith-i al-'Uqayli - Sharh-i hadith-i kana", and "Al-Hadith al-Arba'un", among others. In the latter, the author selected forty valuable hadiths transmitted from his teachers and provided a Persian translation for each. Another of his hadith-related works was also composed in Persian.

In the field of Kalam (Islamic theology), Parsa's notable work "Fasl al-khitab bi-wusul al-ahbab", which addresses issues pertaining to Shari'a and the Sufi path (Tariqa), brought him great renown. This voluminous book was widely used by Islamic scholars as a reference manual and saw multiple reprints. The work discusses 494 contentious theological and jurisprudential questions debated within the Muslim world. Parsa resolved these issues using a diverse range of scholarly sources. "Fasl al-khitab" is considered one of his principal contributions. His "Sharh Fusus al-Hikam", written in Persian, is a commentary on "Fusus al-Hikam", the seminal work of the renowned Sufi thinker Muhyiddin Ibn al-'Arabi, which deals with the theoretical foundations and complex doctrines of Sufism.

Other theological works by Parsa include "Risala fi al-i'tiqad wa al-'amal wa al-akhlaq", "I'tiqadat", "Haftadu se firqa", and "Muqaddima li-jami' al-kalim", all of which fall within the domain of Kalam.

In the field of Qur'anic sciences, he authored Arabic treatises such as "Risala fi al-mim wuqf al-Qur'an" and "Lawazim al-waqf".

In Usul al-fiqh (Islamic legal theory), he wrote "Risala fi al-intisar li-sahib al-Tawdih", also in Arabic, which addresses the methodological foundations of jurisprudence. His contributions to Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) include Arabic works like "Risala fi usul al-din wa furudihi wa wajibatihi" and "Ghurur al-afkar sharh Durar al-bihar". In addition, he composed several important treatises in Persian, such as "Risala dar niyyat-i namaz" (A Treatise on the Intention in Prayer), "Manasik-i Hajj" (The Rituals of Hajj), and "Sharh Fiqh-i Qaydani" - all of which align with the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence. Among Khoja Muhammad Parsa's Sufi works, his most significant contribution is the "Tahqiqat", which is dedicated to the exposition of the theoretical foundations of Sufism (tasawwuf). His treatise "Risala-yi Qudsiyya" interprets the sacred utterances (kalimat-i qudsiyya) of Khoja Baha al-Din Naqshband.

A large portion of Parsa's scholarly legacy is composed of works focused on the theoretical aspects of Sufism, most of which are written in Persian. Among these are: "Az Anfās-i Qudsiyya-yi Mashāyikh-i Tariqat", "Risala-yi Kashfiyya", "Maktub-i Khoja Muhammad Parsa ba Mawlānā Zayn al-Dīn", "Risala dar Ādāb-i Murid", "Risala-yi Mahbubiyya", "Risala-yi Qudsiyya wa Wasāyā-yi Sulūk-i Mashāyikh", "Risala-yi Tariqat-i Khwājagān - Risala fi 'l-Dhikr", "Sukhanān-i Khoja Parsa", "Risala fi 'l-Tasawwuf", "Maktub", "Risalat al-Haqā'iq", and "Qawl fi 'l-Ajwiba hādhihi al-As'ilat al-Mursalā min Hirāt ilā Bukhārā", among others.

In addition, works such as "al-Fusul al-Sitta" and the Arabic translation of "Risala-yi Wujud" were composed in Arabic.

In the field of literature, Parsa authored works such as "Munsha'āt", "Tarjama-yi Ba'z az Nasr al-La'ālī", and "Sharh al-Risāla al-Ramizat al-Shāfiya fi 'l-'Arūd", which are devoted to Arabic philology and literary studies. However, the last two works are actually divans (collections of poetry),

composed of ghazals written by Muhammad Parsa himself. These reveal a lesser-known side of the renowned Sufi scholar as a poet. These two Persian *divans* are entitled “*Khuṭba-yi Dīwān-i Ūlā - Dībācha-yi Dīwān-i Awwal*” and “*Dīwān-i Sāni*”.

In the domain of biographical literature, Parsa composed several works in Persian, including: “*Maqāmāt-i Khwāja Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband*”, “*Risala dar Bayān-i Ba‘z az Kalimāt-i Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband*”, “*Manāqib-i Hazrat-i Khwāja Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshbandī*”, “*Maqāmāt-i Khwāja ‘Ala’ al-Dīn ‘Attār*”, and “*Risala-yi Silsila-yi Khwājagān*”.

Khoja Muhammad Parsa’s work *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh-i Makka* is dedicated to history, while *Risāla fī ‘l-Mazarrāt* addresses geographical subjects.

The aforementioned works have been categorized into distinct groups based on the primary sources currently available. It is possible that some of these titles may refer to the same work under different names, or that certain texts might actually address alternative themes. Furthermore, additional works by Khoja Muhammad Parsa may yet be discovered in the future. These questions remain open to further scholarly investigation, which, *inshā’Allāh*, will continue in subsequent research.

To date, it has been established that approximately two hundred manuscripts attributed to Khoja Muhammad Parsa have survived and are presently housed in libraries located in Tashkent, Istanbul, and Tehran. This fact demonstrates the significance of his intellectual legacy, particularly his role in systematizing the Naqshbandi doctrine through scholarly discourse. His writings have played a pivotal role in the cultural and intellectual history of the peoples of Central Asia, and they have been widely utilized by subsequent generations of Sufi scholars and spiritual leaders.

Among those who drew upon Parsa’s intellectual contributions are prominent figures such as Abdurahman Jāmī, Husayn Vā‘iz Kāshifī, ‘Alī Ṣafī, Shaykh Khudāyād, and Tāhir Eshān. Even in the late twentieth century, the Naqshbandi shaykh, poet, and scholar Ismā‘īlkhān Faqīrī cited passages from Khoja Muhammad Parsa’s works in his writings on Sufism. This enduring legacy underscores Parsa’s lasting presence in the spiritual and intellectual fabric of Central Asian civilization.

In summary, the study of Khoja Muhammad Parsa’s intellectual legacy and spiritual worldview contributes not only to a deeper understanding of the foundational principles of the Naqshbandi path, but also offers insight into the essence of Sufism as a whole. In particular, a close reading of his key works, such as *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb* and *Sharḥ Fuṣuṣ al-Ḥikam*, reveals that Sufism is not merely a collection of rituals, traditions, or behavioral codes. Rather, it is a comprehensive spiritual philosophy that engages deeply with major existential and metaphysical questions concerning humanity, life, society, the cosmos, eschatology, enlightenment, intellect, cognition, emotion, and divine love-topics that have captivated human attention for centuries.

In conclusion, the substance and significance of Khoja Muhammad Parsa’s scholarly contributions are of great value in understanding the history and doctrine of the Naqshbandi order, which played a crucial role in the spiritual life of the medieval peoples of Central Asia.