

THE ROLE OF THE WORK “MAKTUBAT” IN THE NAQSHBANDI-MUJADDIDI ORDER

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Abstract

The article reveals the role of “Maktubat” in the formation of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi order and its current significance. Also states in this article “Maktubat” served as a program in the formation of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi order. The work embodies the theoretical foundations of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi order. It is revealed that the issues of wahdatu al-wujud and other controversies in the teachings of Sufism are explained in a clear way.

Keywords: Maktubat, Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi order, sufism, tariqah, dhikr, muraqaba, pir-murid, wahdatu-sh-shuhud, wahdatu-l-wujud.

Introduction

In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi branch emerged as a branch of the Naqshbandi order. Researches had been conducted by Western and Eastern scientists on the origin, formation, history, teachings, theory, and traditions of this order based on a comparative historical, historical-analytical approaches. These methods serve as a scientific-theoretical basis for studying the history of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi order and analyzing its features. Researching the history and teachings of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi tariqah has provided important results aimed at determining the place of Sufi sheikhs in society. The Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi sheikhs had a great influence on the socio-political, religious, and cultural life of Central Asia and India. Among the people of Central Asia, India, Turkey and many other countries, they tried to strengthen the Islamic religion, and the teachings of Sufism, to unite them around a single idea and thereby to end the ideological disunity.

Ahmad Sirhindi reviewed the teachings of the Naqshbandi order based on Sharia criteria and cleaned it of various wrong beliefs and practices. His main contribution was to adapt Sufism and tariqah to the Sunni matlab, and to purge it of some heresies and superstitions that appeared in the later period. After Ahmad Sirhindi, the Naqshbandi order came to be known as the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi, that is, “renovator” or “renewed”. The scholar always tried to preserve the prestige of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi order. During his work in the tariqah, Sirhindi later established madrasahs and khanaqahs to promote his teachings. Sharia, usul, fiqh, kalam, and mysticism were taught in depth in these centers. As a result of such activities, the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi order spread widely among the Sunni population.

The role of Ahmad Sirhindi’s “Maktubat” is important in strengthening the scientific and theoretical foundations of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi doctrine. Ahmad Sirhindi systematically criticized the philosophy of wahdatu al-wujud, which was established by Muhyiddin ibn Arabi (1152-1230), and introduced the new doctrine of wahdatu ash-shuhud against it by regulating



the views of Alouddawla Simnani (died in 1336). Khoja Muhammad Porso (died in 1420), who played an important role in establishing the theoretical foundations of the Naqshbandi order, was also closely acquainted with Ibn Arabi's doctrine of wahdatu-l-wujud, and his influence can be seen in some of his works¹. The doctrine of wahdatu-sh-shuhud has a special place in the next stage of development of Naqshbandi order. After Ahmad Sirhindi, the influence of the doctrine of wahdatu-sh-shuhud began to dominate in Naqshbandi order. However, in the period from Khoja Bahauddin Naqshband to Ahmad Sirhindi, the idea of wahdatu al-wujud was put forward among the representatives of the Naqshbandi doctrine².

The scholar consistently elaborated the theory in Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi order about mythic contemplation of wahdatu-sh-shuhud, not wahdatu al-wujud based on the rule that "everything is from him". He believed that the understanding of the truth of wahdatu ash-shuhud is superior to that of wahdatu-l-wujud. As a result of the scholar's interpretation of the theory of wahdatu ash-shuhud through his letters, it spread widely in the teachings of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi order in Central Asia from the 18th to the beginning of the 19th century. With the examples from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, he also explained the Sufis' overemphasis on the issue of karamat, and their contradictory statements as a result of shatahat, their overdoing of self-confinement and malamah were wrong.

Ahmad Sirhindi's "Maktubat" has a special place in the next development stage of mysticism. Most of the letters written by the scholar are significant in that they are devoted to shedding light on mystical concepts related to the teachings of mysticism.

In many of his letters, Sirhindi highlights the ideas that reflect the perfection of the Naqshbandi order, emphasizing the need to adhere to the true principles of this path in order to achieve true perfection. He also stated that some Sufis do not know the Sharia's rules, do not follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), and notes that the heresies that they are bringing into the Naqshbandi order are very dangerous³.

Ahmad Sirhindi chose the ways of Bahauddin Naqshband in interpreting the practices of dhikr, muraqaba, pir-murid relationship, rabita, sama, continuous self-confinement, and mujahadah. Therefore, he expressed the opinion that if a person wears the khirqah of murid from a sheikh, he cannot wear it from another, but at the same time, he has the right to learn the teachings of tariqah from another sheikh and to talk with another one. Ahmad Sirhindi further developed this idea and put forward views that if the murid wants to change his guidance, he is allowed to choose another sheikh. Through his letters, he explained the superiority of hafi dhikr over dhikr jahri, and called the people to leave Naqshbandi taxes, sama and dhikr jahri. At the same time, he criticized the continuous self-confinement saying that it contradicts the principle of "khilvat dar anjuman".

Today, with the growing interest of the population in mysticism, it is noticeable that different views and practices are emerging. Ahmad Sirhindi also faced similar problems in his time and wrote "Maktubat" in order to reform them.

¹ Navruzova G. The doctrine of unity in Naqshbandi. – Bukhara: Proceedings of the Republican scientific-practical conference "Naqshbandi doctrine and our national spirituality", dedicated to the 690th anniversary of Hoja Bahouddin Naqshband. 2008. – P. 52.

² Turar U. History of Sufism. – T.: Istiqlol, 1999. – P. 157.

³ See: Imam-i Rabbani Ahmed Farouk es-Serhandi, al-Mektubat. Istanbul: Fazilet Publishing House, 2017. – P. 131.



There are conflicting opinions about fard and nafl worship in modern tariqah. If the rules of Sharia are changed according to the wishes of the people, then the greatness of Sharia will be doubted. Ahmad Sirhindi's letters describe the current issues of Sharia, ways of purifying and educating the soul, the relationship between Sharia and tariqah, fulfilling the fard deeds, following the Sunnah and manners, not paying too much attention to nafl deeds before the fard deeds, not consuming the Pir's ablution water by the murids and refraining from worshipping one's Pirs or other people.

Currently, there are perverted views that a person who joins an order does not need knowledge and even it is better to leave it. Ahmad Sirhindi's 18th⁴ letter to Muhammad Baqibillah in "Maktubat" states that there is much knowledge in the order and it is the result of people's research. The need to master all the knowledge available in the world was explained using real-life examples.

The work of Ahmad Sirdindiy which is "Maktubat" takes crucial place in reflecting the basis of Sufism. This work demonstrated as a purity of attention, spiritual and moral traits. The work not only for those times but for current period performs the task of programming. It takes important place in bringing up a perfect person in letters The mentioned virtue of science, fulfilling human duty, not to be mistaken from the way of guidance.

Some of the issues mentioned in Ahmad Sirhindi's letters, such as paying too much attention to nafl deeds instead of fulfilling the fards deeds, murids consuming the sheikh's ablution water, worshipping their pirs and performing jahri dhikr practices, contrary to existing traditions can still be seen in the activities of some tariqahs. The work "Maktubat" is important because it is an important source based on facts and exemplary evidence in explaining the main goals and objectives of mystical teachings against the ideas and practices of today's fake tariqah leaders, which deviate from the essence of Sufism.

⁴ See Ahmad al-Faruqi as-Sirhindi. Maktubot from Imam Rabbani. // Prepared for publication by Rahmi Tura. T. 1. – Istanbul: Yasin Yayinevi, 2006. – P.25.

