

STRIPES OF SHEIKH UMAR BAGHISTANY

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Crossref

<http://dx.doi.org/10.26739/2433-202x>

Issue DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.26739/2433-202x-2017-5-5>

Article DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.26739/2433-202x-2017-5-5-11>

Abstract: In this article, based on medieval sources studied activity of well-known representatives of Nakshbandite Tariqah Shaykh Umar Bagistani (XIII-XIV), his son Sheikh Havand Takhur (XIV), as well as other well-known representative of the Naqshbandi Haji Ubaydullah Ahrar (1404-1491). It analyzes the modest life of the family of Sheikh Umar Bagistani as an example of imitation and its role in spreading feelings of devotion, generosity, mercy, and kindness.

Key words: Bagistan, Sheikh, Umar Wali, Havand Tahur, Haji Ahrar, Shash, Tashkent, Sufi, molla, Muslim, perfect person.

Medieval Tashkent was a city where lived and worked more than 100 scholars in Islamic sciences. In this regard we can emphasize on great *mutasawwif* (Sufi acholar) Sheikh Umar Baghistany (13th-14th centuries), his son Sheikh Khovand Tahur (14th century) and a prominent representative of Naqshbandiya order Khoja Ubaydullo Ahror (1404-1491). All the above-mentioned scholars are from the stripe of Sheikh Umar Valiy Baghistany.

The village Baghistan, literally "land of gardens", is located between the villages Nanay and Burchmulla of Bostanliq district (Tashkent province). The complex of Umar Valiy or a place of pilgrimage known as Mozori-Shakhmar Buva is located at the intersection of Mozorsay and Pskam rivers [9, p.89].

One of the representatives of tasawwuf born in locality of Baghistan in Tashkent province and the one who was favored by Bahouddin Naqshband was Sheikh Umar Baghistany. He was known as a great scholar of his time

and titled as Sheikh. The birth date of the Sheikh is unknown; he died in 691H/1291[2, p.5.] C.E.

In search of knowledge, Sheikh Umar Baghistany went to Bukhara. There he met Sheikh Hasan Bulghariy and became his disciple. During three years, Sheikh Umar Baghistany studied at Hasan Bulghariy and attained spiritual perfection. Since he reached the level of *Valiy* he was awarded a title of Sheikh like his preceptor [6, p.6.].

After attaining perfection in Tasawwuf Sheikh Umar Baghistany returned to his homeland Baghistan, and began admonishing his compatriots to right path and encouraging them to gain true knowledge.

Sheikh Umar Baghistany was a father of Sheikh Khovand Tahir. Sheikh Khovand Tahir learned basics of Tasawwuf from his father. The genealogy of Sheikh Khovand Tahir shows that he was linked to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through sixteen descendants and to the second Caliph Hazrat Umar bin Hattab.

Mawlana Muhammad Qazi had noted about it in his work "Silsialt ul-Arifin wa Tazkirat us-Sadiqin": *"The mother of our lord (Khoja Ahrar) was the daughter of Khoja Davud. Khoja Davud was a son of Sheikh Khovand Tahir. (In his turn) he was son of Hazrat Sheikh Umar Baghistany. He, through sixteen means, ascended to Abdullah ibn Umar (r.a.). The mother of Khoja Davud in her paternal lineage was Sayyid (descendent of Prophet). The mother of Sheikh Khovandi Tahir was also of Sayyid origin"* [7, p.41-a.].

There are many tales about the birth and name of Sheikh Khovand Tahir. One of the scholars who lived in the 17th century namely Sheikh as-Siddiqiy describes one of them in his work "Lamahot min Nafahot al-Quds": *"Sheikh Zainiddin Kuyiorifon Tashkandi is reported to have said that anyone who wished to have children should visit our grave and if they asked the Creator for child they indeed would have one"*. In accordance with it Sheikh Baghistany, along with his wife had visited the grave of Sheikh Zainiddin and asked Allah for a child. After a certain time by the will of Allah they were granted a child. When Sheikh Umar brought the child to Sheikh Zainiddin's grave doves began cooing like 'at-tahur, at-tahur'. Sheikh Umar had seen a sign in this and named his son 'Tahur'.

Russian orientalist A.Semionov in his articles written in 1914 and 1916 mentioned this event. When Sheikh Umar had brought his son to the grave of Sheikh Zainiddin a flock of doves nearby flushed into air and their wings produced noise resembling 'tahur'. Sheikh Umar had added Tahur to the first

name of his son – Khovand. Khovand is derived from Khudovand and means a pious man.

A scholar, historian Fakhruddin Ali Safiy has written about Sheikh Khovand Tahur that "...because of his father's upbringing and support he has reached a high degree of people of valoyat (sanctity)..." [6, p.11-b]. As it was mentioned in the work called "Rashahat", Sheikh Umar Valiy Baghistany had been an example for others because of his modest life. He was engaged in agriculture and gardening and earned for his life working fairly. It was not honour for him to become a great mullah or sufi and he was not interested to be well-known: but he tried to be a common and true man, we may see a proof of it in his exhortation to his son Khovand Tahur.

In his "Rashahat" Fakhruddin Ali Safiy mentioned following sayings of Umar Baghistany to his son Khovand Tahur: "*Tahur, do not become mullah nor Sufi, do not become this nor that, but become a true Muslim*" [2, p.271.]. These sayings of Sheikh Umar Valiy Baghistany has not lost its importance even in our days. Because of this exhortation, Sheikh Khovand Tahur has reached a great degree among other sheikhs.

There is no any information that Sheikh Umar Baghistany had written books. However, his aphorisms are saved in written and verbal forms.

Particularly, in a narration it was said: "*One man came to Sheikh Umar from a far land to learn secrets of tariqat. Sheikh Umar asked this man:*

Is there a mosque in your land?

He answered: Yes, there is.

Sheikh Umar asked: Do you know the pillars of islam?

He said: Yes, I do.

Then Sheikh Umar said: Why did you come here in this case? While the pillars and place of a prayer is known, go back to your land and continue what you are doing".

The following aphorism of Sheikh Umar Valiy Baghistany in this context is also very popular among people:

"We release follower's soul from other things and turn it towards only tawheed (Allah). Allah does all of these things, we are only reasons for it" [2, pp. 270-271.].

Sheikh Umar Valiy's tomb is situated in a beautiful garden. There are two sacred places in the ancient garden: tombs of Sheikh Umar Valiy and Sheikh Davud. There is a brown grindstone decorated with an Arabic inscription in a naskh script near the tomb. Nobody knows how this grindstone has appeared here. On the grindstone, there is a date of 1186/1773 and name of late Azizkhodja:

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. A sinner, poor, unworthy and weak man wrote it. Azizkhodja. 1186/1773-74.

Sheikh Davud's tomb is under a sacred fir tree. According to the legend spread among local people, it is Khodja Ahror¹ who planted all the trees in the garden. They are considered as a symbol of his good intentions. That is why the local people have taken care of ancient trees as a symbol of the everlasting life and fertility up to our days [9, p.89.].

Sheikh Umar Valiy Baghistany's tomb is always crowded with people who come from the different points of the region.

As we know, spiritual leaders in sufi order must be the ones who reached perfection. Only after that, they can reach their followers to perfection. If a spiritual leader is imperfect, then his student also will be imperfect.

Following sayings of Sheikh Khovand Tahur also stimulates the sense of real nobility and magnanimity: *"Go and gain your enemy's heart. Is there any need to gain the soul of a friend?"*. This saying means that people must please their enemies and live with them in peace, but there is no any need to check friends, because they have already experienced such kind of tests. If you are a person who pleases his enemy, then you have already pleased your friends. So, do not check your friends without necessity, because it causes them to have doubts about you and it damages your friendship.

We may see such kind of noble notions in the poetry of Khodja Hafiz Shirazy [10, p.53-b.]:

*Osoyishi du giti tafsiri in du harf ast
Bo duston muruvvat, bo dushmanon madoro.*

Its meaning: "Peace of the both worlds consists of these two sayings: to be indulgent to friends and to be reconciled with enemies".

Sheikh Khovand Tahur wrote in both prose and poetry. Khodja Akhror Valiy mentions his following poem [2, p.274.]:

*Nigohboni du chashm ast chashmi dildori,
Nigohdor nazar az rukhi digar yori.
Holo mabod, ki chashmash ba chashmi tu nigarad,
Daruni chashmi tu binad hayoli agyori.*

Its meaning: "The Lords eyes are observing your eyes. Keep your glance from turning to another lover. Be careful, when His eyes look at your eyes, let Him to know that there is nobody except Him in your eyes".

¹ Khodja Akhror is a descendent of Umar Valiy Baghistaniy. Sheikh Khovand Tahur was a son of Sheikh Umar Valiy, Khodja Akhror's mother was a daughter of Khodja Davud. Khodja Davud was a son of Sheikh Khovand Tahur.

*Sher zod beshai ishqam qaviy dar kori khesh,
K-av harifi man, biyo to zurbozu bingarad.*

Its meaning: "The shrubbery of my love has given birth to a perfect lion, Oh, my enemy, come to me and see its struggle".

We can see information about Sheikh Khovand Tahir in several sources. Among them "Masmuot" ("hearings") written by Sayyid Abdulavval in the 15th and in the beginning of the 17th centuries, "Silsilat ul-Orifin" ("The chain of knowers") by Muhammad Qadi, "Rashahat aynil-hayat" ("Drops of a spring of the life") by Ali Safiy, "Lamahat min nafahotil-quds" ("Moments from the saint zephyr") by Oliy Sheikh Siddiqiy. Besides these works, we know that there is a treatise which consists of two pages and written by a unknown author in the 19th century and "Khazrati Sheikh Khovand Tahir" written by Muhammadjon Urazayev in Uzbek which consists of one page. In 1915, A.A.Semenov published a paper named "Sheikh Khovand Tahir from Tashkent and his conical cap".

In the middle of 20th century, Academician M.E.Masson carried out an investigation in the monumental complex of Sheikh Khovand Tahir and mentioned about it in his book. A scholar and architect Abdujabbor Yahyayev also researched historical buildings of this complex and wrote some papers about it.

According to the data, Khodja Ahror Valiy built a mausoleum on the tomb of Sheikh Khovand Tahir in the beginning of the 15th century. When the mausoleum was damaged, it was repaired in 18-19th centuries.

Another member of Sheikh Umar Valiy Baghistanys family - Khodja Ahror Valiy is a distinguished representative of Naqshbandiya sufi order. He is famous in the world of Islam, especially for rising the wise motto "Dil ba yoru, dast ba kor" ("Your soul must be with Allah and your hands must be with work") of this order to its highest level.

There is rare information in several sources about this great person as a leader of the people of Tariqat, the best of bests, a leader and thoughtful of the people. For example, Fakhruddin Ali Safiy in his "Rashahat" mentioned that Khodja Ahror's grandfather Khodja Shahobuddin Shoshiy was engaged in agriculture and trade. Feeling the coming of his own death, Khodja Shahobuddin called all his relatives for asking forgiveness. At that time, Khodja Ahror was very young and was brought covered with khirqa (clothes of dervishes). Khodja Shahobuddin glanced at Ubaydulloh and has become excited shedding tears, and then touching his forehead, he said: "This baby will possess the world in the future, he will spread Sharia and develop Tariqat, and

all kings will do what he will say. He will predict all miracles which all late sheikhs could not do” [8, p.13.].

Khodja Ahror was born in 806 Hijri (on Mart, 1404) on the month of Ramadan in the district of Baghistan, in Shah – Tashkent province. His father Khodja Mahmud and grandfather were well-educated people and were engaged in agriculture and trade. His mother was a daughter of Khodja Davud. Khodja Davud was a son of Sheikh Khovand Tahur.

Khodja Ahror acquired first education in madrasahs of Tashkent. When he was 20, his uncle Khodja Ibrahim led him to Samarkand. There he studied different subjects. Khodja Ahror was especially interested in Sufism. This interest led him to Herat when he was 24. There he met with representatives of sufism. One of them was a famous Sufi and poet from Tabriz, Sayyid Qosim Anwor (died 1433). Khodja Ahror also met with Bahauddin Umar (died 1453) and Sheikh Zaynuddin Khavafiy (died 1439) [4, p.208.].

During the period of Sultan Abu Said Mirzo and his son Sultan Ahmad Mirzo, Khodja Ubaydullah hold the high position. Amin Ahmad Raziyy writes about it in his work named “Haft Iqlim”: *“Khodja Nosiruddin Ubaydullah was more superior than all Sheikhs of Turkestan and Maverannahr, because of his position, greatness and abundance of his followers and wealth. He took irshad from Maulana Yaqub Charkhiy and Maulana Nizomuddin Khomush... and rulers and kings of that time were very devoted to him. They hold firmly every saying said by him as a secret pearl. Especially, Mirzo Sul-ton Abu Said was guided by his advices in all deals of ruling and he was never against his notion. Mirzo Sul-ton Abu Said walked on his foot when he was with him” [1, p.520-b.].*

Three treatises by Khodja Ahror are saved up to our days. One of them is known with the name as “Faqarot ul-orifin” (“Extracts from knowers’ sayings”) which include some notions about Tariqat of Khodja Ahror and other representatives of Sufism. The second treatise called as “Volidiya” (“An ode for a father”) [5, p.52.] – consists of good manners of a sufi as well as the terms of faqr and fano. Zahiruddin Bobur has translated this treatise from Persian into uzbek in the poetical way. The third treatise is named as “Havroiya” which is devoted to interpretation of a quatrain of Abu Said Abulkhayir, started with a word of “Havro” (“Houris” or “Angels”).

Besides, several letters of Khodja Ahror to his contemporaries are also saved to our days. The most important one of them is called as “Majmuai muosalot”. This collection was composed under the guide of Alisher Navai, which is the reason of calling them as “Navai collection”. A doctor of historical sciences A.Urinbayev has translated these letters into English in cooperation with an American scholar, professor of the University of New

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Jersey, Jo Ann Gross and his book named “Letters of Khodja Ubaydulloh Ahror and his followers” was printed in the famous publishing house of “Brill” in Netherland, in 2002.

As a conclusion, we can say that members of Sheikh Umar Valiy Baghistany family were exalted as a saint man not only in our country, but in whole Central Asia too. We can see it in the following factors:

Firstly, Sheikh Umar Valiy Baghistany’s family has preached people for such values as charity, fairness, modesty, generosity and perfection with their own modest life style, scientific and spiritual advices. This spiritual heritage has an important place even in our days.

Secondly, the saying of Naqband Tariqat, “Dil ba yoru, dast ba kor” (“Your soul must be with Allah and your hands must be with work”) was the main rule in the life for the members of this family. Khodja Ahror has perfected this wise idea in practice.

Thirdly, today, a tomb of Sheikh Umar Baghistany located in Bustanliq district of Tashkent region and a tomb of Sheikh Khovand Tahur located in Shayhantahur district of Tashkent city are places for pilgrimage. These scientific and spiritual places have been crowded with people for many centuries and it shows people’s respect towards these places.

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