



WRITING ON WATER

(A case study of Shafi'i Kadkani's book on Abu'l Hasan Kharaqani)

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Abstract: Dr. Muhammad Reza Shafi'i Kadkani, Professor of Tehran University, Iran is a worldly renowned scholar of Persian and Sufi Literature. In a series of books about great Sufis of Islam and Persia he presented a Persian book about Abu'l Hasan Kharaqani (d.425 /1033) entitled *NEVESHTEH BAR DARYA* (WRITING ON WATER or RIVER), Published by Sokhan, Tehran, 2005 in a series of publications "from the heritage of Iranian Sufism". The book comprised of 7 chapters:

1. A comprehensive preface by author about life history, sayings and teachings of Abu'l Hasan Kharaqani and his place in Islamic mystics.
 2. An extract from Persian text of *Tazkeratul Auliya* of Attar Nishaburi about Kharaqani.
 3. Persian text of an old treatise *Zekr e Qutab alsalkin* about Kharaqani.
 4. A summary of *Noor'l 'uloom*, a 7th century Hijra book about Kharaqani.
 5. Some editions from a rare manuscript of *Tazkeratul Auliya* of Attar Nishaburi about Kharaqani.
 6. Kharaqani was quoted by others (from Qushairi to Jami).
 7. Commentary of Najmuddin Razi on a quotation by Kharaqani: الصوفى غير مخلوق
- Dr. Kadkani concluded his book with some detailed notes, indexes and bibliography.

The book is a great scholarly effort by author about life history and teachings of Abu'l Hasan Kharaqani and latest research work on Abu'l Hasan Kharaqani.

Key words: Abu' lhasan Kharaqani, Muhammad Reza Shafi'i Kadkani, Neveshteh bar darya.

I. INTRODUCTION

Hazrat Ali bin Ahmad bin Jaffar bin Salman Abu' l Hasan Kharaqani (352-425/ 963-1033) was a famous saint and disciple of Abu – al –Abbas Qassab Amili and a spiritual disciple of Hazrat Bayazid Bistami. A very amazing and famous quote is written on the door of his Khanqah:

برکه در این سرا در آید نانش بدهید نانش دهید و از ایمانش می‌رسید
چه انکس که بدرگاه باریتعالی بجان آرزد البته بر خوان بوالحسن به نانی آرزد

Whoever comes to this home ,feed him and do not ask his/her religion, For whoever is given life by Allah , Off course deserves to eat from the table of Abu' l Hasan.

Much has been written about the life history, quotes in detail and a short commentary about Hazrat Abu' l Hasan Kharaqani which includes the works of : Hazrat Ali bin Usman Hujwari(d: after 1089AD) in *Kashful Mahjoob*; Hazrat Zia ud Din Nakhshabi (d. 75/ 1350 AD); Amir Khurd Kirmani (d. 770 AH/ 1368 A); Sheikh Sharf Ud Din Yahya Munyari ((d. 1263- 1381); Syed Muhammad Gaisoo Draz; Ashraf Jahangir Simnani; and Dr. Zaheen Ahmad Siddiqui and many more.

Many Persian poets of Iran are also prominent in quoting Kharaqani like : Khawja Farid ud Din Attar(d: 1273) in *Tazkira tul Auliya* ; Ayn ul Qazat hamadani in *Tamhidat*; sheikh Abu Saeed Abul Khair in his

Malfuz Literature; Abdullah Ansari in *Tabqat ul Soofia* ; Nur ud Din Jami (1414-1492); Rumi in his *Mathnavi* .

Dr. Muhammad Reza Shafi'i Kadkani is also a great admirer of Kharaqani ' s personality and he has written a wonderful detailed book on Abu lhasan titled: *Nawishte bar Dariya* (Written on Water) .This book discribes a detailed overview of Kharaqani s life and his teachings.

Dr.Muhammad Reza Shafi'i Kadkani, an Iranian contemporary Professor of Faculty of Literature and Humanity, Tehran University, Iran is a world renowned scholar of Persian language and Sufi Literature. From his famous works I can mention the editing of *Asrar altohid fi maqamat alshaikh abi saeed*.¹ After that he started a series of books about great Sufis-Poets of Islam and Persia. In this series of books he has presented Persian books about Bayazid Bastami, Abu' lhasan Kharaqani, Abu Saeed abul khair, Sanai Ghaznavi and Attar Nishaburi.² The book *Neveshteh bar darya (writing on water/river)* is second in this series which was published in 1384 shamsi/2005 with the sub-title "from the mystic heritage of Abu' lhasan Kharaqani".³ The title of book has been borrowed from a quotation of Kharaqani, in which he said "writing is possible on everything except on water and if you cross across the river, make writing by your blood on water".⁴

The book comprises of seven chapters:

1. A comprehensive preface by author about life history, sayings and teachings of Abu'l Hasan Kharaqani and his place in Islamic Sufism.
2. An extanct from Persian text of *Tazkeratul Auliya* تذكرة الاوليا of Attar Nishaburi about Kharaqani.
3. Persian text of an old treatise *Zekr e Qutab alsalkin* ذكر قطب السالكين about Kharaqani.
4. A summary of *Noor'l 'uloom*, نور العلوم a 7th century Hijra book about Kharaqani.
5. Some editions from a rare manuscript of *Tazkeratul Auliya* of Attar Nishaburi about Kharaqani.
6. Kharaqani as quoted by others (from Qushairi to Jami).
7. Commentary of Najmuddin Razi on a quotation by Kharaqani: الصوفى غير مخلوق

The basic idea of this research by Dr.Kadkani was cross checking of life history of Kharaqani as mentioned by Attar in *Tazkeratul Auliya*. But at the end of day he produced a valuable complete separate book on Kharaqani or as he said "he analyzed and edited everything he found about Abu'lhasan kharaqani."⁵

In his comprehensive preface the author discussed many aspects of life, sayings and teachings of Abu'l Hasan Kharaqani and his place in Islamic mystics. The author categorically discussed these matters in his preface:

1. Abu'l Hasan Kharaqani and his place in Islamic mystics.
2. Kharaqani and miracles.
3. Human love of Kharaqani
4. Tolerance of Kharaqani.
5. Kharaqani and *sema'*.
6. Kharaqani and traveling.
7. Sincerity of Kharaqani with God.
8. Dialogue of "I" and "you" by Kharaqani with God.
9. His pure poetry (sayings).
10. Digression of Kharaqani from metaphor and focus on allegory.
11. High standards of Kharaqani like heaven.
12. Wrestling with God.
13. Fear of Kharaqani
14. Kharaqani, an illiterate sufi.
15. Kharaqani and chivalry.
16. Centre of Kharaqani teachings.

17. Theoretic believes of Kharaqani.
18. *Fiqh* believes of Kharaqani.
19. Kharaqani and contemporary political powers.
20. Shrine (*khaneqah*) of Kharaqani.
21. Meeting of Ebn-e Sina with Kharaqani.
22. Kharaqani and Bayazid Bastami.
23. Wife of Kharaqani.
24. Works attributed to Kharaqani.
25. Analysis of quotations of *Tazkeratul Auliya* of Attar about Kharaqani.
26. *Maqamat* books about Kharaqani.
27. Geographical boundaries of compilation of *maqamat* about Kharaqani.
28. Remains of old language of Qomas⁶ in Kharaqani's speeches and sayings.

The preface followed by four texts about Kharaqani:

i. An extant from *Tazkeratul Auliya* of Attar about Kharaqani based on manuscript dated 5 Rabi' alsani 716A.H belongs to Aya Sophia Collection, Istanbul (no.3136). Dr. Kadkani is aware that this manuscript is 6 years later than Nicolson's edition based on manuscript (dated 710 A.H) but as far as originality of personal dialect of Kharaqani is concerned the Aya Sophia manuscript is prefect and Dr. Kadkani preferred it.

ii. Text of an old Persian treatise *Zekr e Qutab alsalkin* نكر قطب السالكين about Kharaqani, which is no doubt an abridgment of *maqamat -e Abu'l Hasan Kharaqani*. Manuscript of this treatise belongs to Murat Mulla Collection, Istanbul, no. 1796. *Zekr e Qutab alsalkin* throws light on some personal events of Kharaqani's life which cannot be found in other sources such as information about Kharaqani's wife and his son or son's name. The most important aspect of this treatise is that it reflects light on language of Kharaqani which reminds us of Qomas dialect of 1000 years ago.

iii. "An extant from sayings of Abu'l Hasan Kharaqani". Dr.Kadkani adopted it from an old manuscript of *Tazkeratul Auliya* of Attar belonging to Ganj Bakhsh Library of Iran-Pakistan Institute of Persian Studies, Islamabad, Pakistan (no.2775) dated 697 A.H. Dr.Kadkani believes that no other manuscript of *Tazkeratul Auliya* have such portion about Kharaqani and Ganj Bakhsh manuscript is unique in this respect. It comprises some short phrases and speeches of Kharaqani which cannot be found in other sources.

iv. A summary of *Noor'l 'uloom*, كتاب نور العلوم, منتخب من كتاب نور العلوم, a 7th century Hijra book about Kharaqani. *Noor'l 'uloom* is an old Persian text about Kharaqani which is often wrongly attributed to Kharaqani himself. Dr.Kadkani believes that *Noor'l 'uloom* was made up from the *maqamat* books of Kharaqani by a person or several persons. The original name of this *maqamat* book was *Noor'l 'uloom* and someone made a brief version of it by the name of منتخب من كتاب نور العلوم. The only manuscript of this version is available in British Museum, London (Or.249), dated 698 A.H and has been published three times before Dr. Kadkani's edition.⁷ Dr. Kadkani's edition is better than other editions because of its accurate and authentic text.

Following this Dr. Kadkani included a short appendix containing some sayings of Kharaqani in a manuscript of *Tazkeratul Auliya* dated 1241 A.H which belongs to the personal collection of Dr.Kadkani. The sixth chapter of book comprises 34 quotations of some great Sufis and authors about Kharaqani in chronological order, starting from Abual Qasem Qushairi (5th century hijra) and ends with Abdul Rehman Jami (9th century hijra).

The last chapter of the book contains the commentary of Najmuddin Razi called *Najm Dayeh* (573-654 A.H) on famous quotations made by Kharaqani "الصوفي غير مخلوق". This commentary contains an Arabic treatise of Najm Daya titled

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with its Persian translation and a critical analyses by Dr.Kadkani.

The book concludes with some scholarly foot notes, indexes and bibliography.

II. CONCLUSION:

I can sum up this paper by these comments that Dr.Kadkani included all available first hand information about Shaikh Abu'l Hasan Kharaqani from 5th century to 9th century in his book and left nothing. His preface is an example of high quality of scholarship and research about life, history and works of Kharaqani. Two texts (one version of *Tazkeratul Auliya* and *Zekr e Qutab alsalkin*) from four texts have published first time in this book and other two re-published texts (*Tazkeratul Auliya* and *Muntakhab men Noor'l 'uloom* منتخب من نور العلوم) are better than previous editions.

Footnotes:

1. اسرار التوحید فی مقامات الشیخ ابی سعید تالیف محمد بن منور میهنی با مقدمه، تصحیح و تعلیقات دکتر محمد رضا شفیعی کدکنی، انتشارات آگاه، تهران، ۱۳۶۶ ش.

2. Publisher of this series of books is *Sokhan*, Tehran, who published all of these works with high quality printing and presentation standard. Author/publisher named this series as the "heritage of Iranian Sufism". The books published so far are as following:

۱ دفتر روشنائی، از میراث عرفانی بایزید بسطامی، محمد رضا شفیعی کدکنی، تهران، سخن، ۱۳۸۴ ش

۲ چشبین طعم وقت، از میراث عرفانی ابو سعید ابوالخیر، محمد رضا شفیعی کدکنی، تهران، سخن، ۱۳۸۵ ش

Dr.Kadkani's other books which have been published by *Agah*, Tehran, are as following:

۱-زبور فارسی، نگاهی به زندگی و غزل های عطار، محمد رضا شفیعی کدکنی، تهران، آگه، ۱۳۷۸ ش

3. نوشته بر دریا، از میراث عرفانی ابوالحسن خرقانی، محمد رضا شفیعی کدکنی، تهران، سخن، ۱۳۸۴ ش

4. The original words are:

بر همه چیز کتابت بود مگر بر آب، و اگر گذر کنی بر دریا، از خون خویش بر آب کتابت کن تا آن کز پی تو آید داند که عاشقان و مستان و سوختگان رفته اند .

5. Kadkani, *Neveshteh bar darya*, Tehran, 1384s, p.15

6. Qomas قومس is a vast area of Iran between Ray and Nishabur in the sideline of Tabarastan mountains. The historic towns of this area are Dameghan, Bastam and Kharaqan. See M.Moin, *Farhang-e farsi*, Tehran vol.6.p.1481.

7. Other three editions by E.Bertels, 1929; Mujtaba Minarvi, Tehran, 1354s; Abdul Rafi'Haqiqat, Tehran, 1377s. Dr. Kadkani mentioned only the first 2 editions in his book (p.106).

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3. Shafee Kadkani, Muhammad Raza, *Nawishte Bar Darya, Miras e Irfani Abul Hasan Kharaqani (Wrinting in the Water)*, *Sukhan*, Tehran , Iran, 1384/ 2005
4. *Shoaib Ahmad , Dr. , Kharaqani in the Sufi Literature of the Sub- Continent*, Oriental College Magazine , Vol: 87, Issue:03, pp# 2-10
5. Moeen Nizami, Dr. Love and Divine Love in the Teachings of Sheikh Abu al- Hasan Kharaqani, *Mujallah Tahqiq , Reseach Journal of the Faculty of Oriental Learning , Vol: 36, Sr. No. 99, April- June 2015, p# 3-12*
6. Muhammad Bin Munawwar Mihani, *Asrar Altauheed fi Maqamat e Sheikh Abi Saeed*, edited by: Shafee Kadkani, Muhammad Raza, Aagah pblcations, Tehran, Iran, 1366 /1987