



Writing On Water

(A Case Study Of Shafi'i Kadkani's Book On Abu'l Hasan Kharaqani)

Dr. Anjum Tahira, Associate Professor Lahore College for Women University, Lahore

anjum.tahira@lcwu.edu.pk

Dr. Ismat Durrani, Associate Professor Department of Persian, Islamia University, Bahawalpur, Pakistan ismidurrani@gmail.com Cell: 0092+3216828433

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 Qutabalsalkin 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:

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'l Hasan Kharaqani, Muhammad Reza Shafi'i Kadkani, Neveshteh bar darya.

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:

{{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' lHasanKharraqani which includes the works of : Hazrat Ali bin UsmanHujweri(d: after 1089AD) in KashfulMahjoob; Hazrat Zia ud Din Nakhshabi (d. 75/ 1350 AD); Amir KhurdKirmani (d. 770 AH/ 1368 A); Sheikh SharfUd DinYahyaMunyari ((d. 1263- 1381); Syed Muhammad GaisooDraz; Ashraf Jahangir Simnani; and Dr. Zaheen Ahmad Siddiqui and many more.

Many Persian poets of Iran are also prominent in quoting Kharraqani like : KhawjaFaridud Din Attar(d: 1273) in TazkiratulAuliya ; AynulQazathamadani in Tamhidat; sheikh Abu SaeedAbulKhair in his Malfuz Literature; Abdullah Ansari in TabqatulSoofia ; Nurud Din Jami (1414-1492); Rumi in his Mathnavi.

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

Dr.Muhammad Reza Shafi'iKadkani, an Iranian contemporary Professor of Faculty of Literature and Humanity, Tehran University, Iran is a world renowned scholar of Persianlanguage and Sufi Literature. From his famous works I can mention the editing of Asraraltohid fi maqamatalshaikhabsaeed.¹After that he started a series of books about great Sufis-Poets of Islam and Persia. In this series of books hehas presented Persian books about BayazidBastami,Abu' lhasanKharraqani,Abu Saeedabulkhair,Sana'iGhaznavi and Attar Nishaburi.²The book Neveshteh bar darya (writing on water/river) is second in this series which was published in1384 shamsi/2005 with the sub-title "from the mystic heritage of Abu' lhasan Kharraqani".³The title of book has been borrowed from a quotation of Kharraqani, 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 comprisesof seven chapters:

1. A comprehensive preface by author about life history, sayings and teachings of Abu'lHasanKharraqani and his place in Islamic Sufism.
2. An extant from Persian text of TazkeratulAuliyaالاوليا تذكرة of Attar Nishaburi about Kharraqani.
3. Persian text of an old treatise Zekr e Qutabalsalkinذكر قطب السالكين about Kharraqani.
4. A summary of Noor'l 'uloom, a 7th century Hijra book about Kharraqani.
5. Some editions from a rare manuscript of TazkeratulAuliya of Attar Nishaburi about Kharraqani.
6. Kharraqanias quoted by others (from Qushairi to Jami).
7. Commentaryof NajmuddinRazi on a quotation by Kharraqani:

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

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



1. Abu'lHasanKharraqani and his place in Islamic mystics.
2. Kharraqani and miracles.
3. Human love of Kharraqani
4. Tolerance of Kharraqani.
5. Kharraqani and sema'.
6. Kharraqani and traveling.
7. Sincerity of Kharraqaniwith God.
8. Dialogue of "I" and "you" by Kharraqani with God.
9. His pure poetry (sayings).
10. Digression of Kharraqanifrom metaphor and focus on allegory.
11. High standards of Kharraqani like heaven.
12. Wrestling with God.
13. Fear of Kharraqani
14. Kharraqani, an illiterate sufi.
15. Kharqani and chivalry.
16. Centre of Kharraqani teachings.
17. Theoretic believes of Kharraqani.
18. Fiqh believes of Kharraqani.
19. Kharraqani and contemporary political powers.
20. Shrine (khaneqah) of Kharraqani.
21. Meeting of Ebn-e Sina with Kharraqani.
22. Kharraqani and BayazidBastami.
23. Wife of Kharraqani.
24. Works attributed to Kharraqani.
25. Analysis of quotations of TazkeratulAuliya of Attar about Kharraqani.
26. Maqamat books about Kharraqani.
27. Geographical boundaries of compilation of maqamat about Kharraqani.
28. Remains of old language of Qomas⁶ in Kharraqani's speeches and sayings.

The preface followed by four texts about Kharraqani:

- i. An extantfrom TazkeratulAuliya of Attar about Kharraqani 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 710A.H) but as far as originality of personal dialect of Kharraqaniis concerned the Aya Sophia manuscript is prefect and Dr.Kadkani preferred it.
- ii. Text of an old Persian treatise Zekr e QutabalsalkinaboutKharraqani,which is no doubt an abridgment of maqamat –e Abu'lHasanKharraqani.Manuscript of this treatise belongs to Murat Mulla Collection,Istanbul,no.1796.Zekr e Qutabalsalkin throws light on some personal events of Kharraqani's life which cannot be found in other sources such as information aboutKharraqani's wife and his son or son's name. The most important aspect of this treatise is that it reflects light on language of Kharraqani which reminds us ofQomas dialect of 1000 years ago.
- iii. "An extant from sayings of Abu'lHasanKharraqani".Dr.Kadkani adopted it from an old manuscript of TazkeratulAuliya of Attar belonging to GanjBakhsh Library of Iran-Pakistan Institute of Persian Studies,Islamabad,Pakistan (no.2775) dated 697A.H.Dr.Kadkani believes that no other manuscript of TazkeratulAuliya have such portion about Kharraqaniand GanjBakhsh 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, 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 . 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 the book comprises 34 quotations of some great Sufis and authors about Kharaqani in chronological order, starting from Abualqasem 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 " with its Persian translation and a critical analysis by Dr. Kadkani.

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

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 Qutabalsalkin) from four texts have published first time in this book and other two re-published texts (Tazkeratul Auliya and Muntakhab men Noor'l 'uloom are better than previous editions.

Footnotes:

1. Asrarul Tauheed, by Muhammad bin Munawwar Mihani, Agaah, Tehran, 1366
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:
Daftar e Rooshnaee, Baayazeed Bistami, Shafee Kadkani, Tehran, 1384
Chasheedan Tam e Waqt, Shafee Kadkani, Tehran, 1385

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

Zaboor e Farsi, Shafee Kadkani, Agaah, Tehran, 1378

Nawishte Bar Dariya, Shafee Kadkani, Tehran, 1383

4. The original words are:

بر همه چیز کتابت بُود 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 Nishapur in the sideline of Tabaristan mountains. The historic towns of this area are Dameghan, Bastam and Kharagan. See M. Moin, Farhang-e farsi, Tehran vol.6, p.1481.

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

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