



BAHĀ'-AL-DĪN NAQŠBAND

BAHĀ'-AL-DĪN NAQŠBAND, ḲvĀJA MOḤAMMAD B. MOḤAMMAD BOḲĀRĪ (718-91/1318-91), eponym of the Naqšbandīya, one of the most vigorous and widespread Sufi orders. In the tradition of the order, especially in Turkey, he is known as Šāh-e Naqšband. The earliest Naqšbandī texts do not explain the meaning of the sobriquet Naqšband or how Bahā'-al-Dīn came to acquire it. It was later interpreted, quasi-unanimously, as referring to the imprint (*naqš*) of the Divine Name *Allāh* that is fixed in the heart through constant and silent invocation (see, for example, 'Abd-al-Majīd Ḳānī, *al-Ḥadā'eq al-wardīya*, Cairo, 1306/1888, p. 9). In the usage of Bukhara—the city of which he became virtually the patron saint—Bahā'-al-Dīn was often called ḲvĀja Balā-gardān (the averter of disaster), with reference to the protective powers bestowed on him by one of his preceptors, Bābā MoḤammad Sammāsī (Jāmī, *Nafahāt*, p. 385). Bahā'-al-Dīn was born in Moḥarram, 718/March, 1318, in the hamlet of Qaṣr-e Hendovān, one *farsaḳ* from Bukhara. Accounts that attribute to him descent from the Prophet, by way of Imam Ja'far al-Šādeq, are to be treated with reserve (see Ġolām Sarvar Lāhūrī, *Ḳazīnat al-aṣfīā'*, Bombay, 1290/1873, I, p. 545). The earliest sources make no mention of such ancestry, although they too indicate that Amīr Kolāl, Bahā'-al-Dīn's principal teacher on the path, was a Ḥosaynī *sayyed* (Faḳr-al-Dīn 'Alī Ṣafī, *Rašahāt 'ayn al-ḥayāt*, Tashkent, 1329/1911, p. 43). It may be that Bahā'-al-Dīn's initiatic *selsela*, which does include Ja'far al-Šādeq, was confused with his genealogy.

Three days after his birth, Bahā'-al-Dīn was adopted as spiritual progeny by **Bābā MoḤammad Sammāsī**, a master to whom his paternal grandfather owed



allegiance. Sammāsī assigned his future training on the path to Amīr Kolāl, his most prominent disciple. The chronology of Bahā'-al-Dīn's relations with Sammāsī and Amīr Kolāl is unclear, since the principal sources on his life are simple assemblages of anecdotes, unconnected by narrative thread. Bahā'-al-Dīn may not have seen Sammāsī again until it was time for him to marry, and his grandfather sent him to Sammāsī for the choice of bride to be ratified (Jāmī, *Nafahāt*, p. 381). As for Amīr Kolāl, it is said that Bahā'-al-Dīn had from him the link of companionship (*nesbat-e šoḥbat*), instruction in the customs of the path (*ta'līm-e ādāb-e ṭarīqat*), and the inculcation of *dekr* (*talqīn-e dekr*) (Jāmī, *Nafahāt*, p. 382). Bahā'-al-Dīn spent many years with Amīr Kolāl, being often upbraided for complacency with his still imperfect state and assigned, by way of chastisement, to menial tasks such as fetching the water for his master's ablutions (Mawlānā Šehāb-al-Dīn, *Manāqeb-e Amīr Kolāl*, ms. Zeytinoğlu [Tavşanlı] 169, ff. 40a-b, 49a).

It was during his association with Amīr Kolāl that Bahā'-al-Dīn had a vision resulting in a new and significant affiliation. The vision amounted to a second initiation, at the hands of the spiritual being (*rūḥānīyat*) of K̄vāja 'Abd-al-Kāleq Ğojdawānī (d. 617/1220), thus earning Bahā'-al-Dīn the additional epithet of Owaysī, with reference to the remote but powerful link between the Prophet and his Yemeni companion, Oways Qaranī. Wandering among the graves of Bukhara, Bahā'-al-Dīn saw his predecessors in the *selsela*, from the recently deceased Bābā Moḥammad Sammāsī to Ğojdavānī, K̄vāja 'Abd-al-Kāleq told him, with great emphasis, that he should adhere narrowly to the *šarī'a*, avoiding *roḳṣat* (dispensation) in favor of rigorous obedience (*'azīmat*).

The chief consequence of this command was that Bahā'-al-Dīn began restricting himself to silent *dekr* (*dekr-e kaftī* or *koḟya*), withdrawing from the circle of Amīr Kolāl whenever the dervishes began engaging in vocal *dekr* (*dekr-e jalī* or *jahrī*) (*Rašahāt*, p. 55). This led to resentment among them, but Bahā'-al-Dīn continued to treat Amīr Kolāl with the utmost reverence and enjoyed his increasing favor. On the occasion of the building of a mosque in his native village of Sūḳārī, Amīr Kolāl rebuked his disciples for their hostility to Bahā'-al-Dīn and praised him as one whom God Himself had favored above the rest (*Rašahāt*, p. 55).

Bahā'-al-Dīn's next association was with Mawlānā 'Āref Dīkgarānī, another disciple of Amīr Kolāl, in whose company he sought out the practitioners of silent *dekr* (*Rašahāt*, p. 49). He then spent time with two Turkish masters, both belonging to the Yasawī order which had in common with the line of Sammāsī



and Amīr Kolāl spiritual descent from *Ḳvāja Yūsuf Hamadānī*. His association with the first of these two, *Qoṭam Šayḳ*, was relatively brief, but with the second, *Ḳalīl Atā*, he spent as much as twelve years. *Ḳalīl Atā* appears to be identical with a certain *Qazān* (or *Ġazān*) Khan, who ruled over the Chaghatay Khanate from 735/1335 to 748/1347 (see Zeki Velidi Togan, *Umumi türk tarihine giriř*, Istanbul, 1981, p. 63). According to the *Manāqeb-e Amīr Kolāl* (ff. 34b-35a), Bahā'-al-Dīn acted as the executioner for this particularly savage ruler until he was overthrown by a military rebellion. One is tempted to see in this association an early instance of the Naqřbandī predilection for influencing rulers in the direction of implementing the *řarī'a*, as has, indeed, been suggested by Togān ("Gazan-Han Halil ve Hoca Bahaeddin Nakřbend," *Necati Lugal armađanı*, Ankara, 1968, pp. 775-84), but nothing in the evidence available permits such a conclusion. It seems rather that Bahā'-al-Dīn's time with *Qazān* represented a hiatus in his spiritual career.

His prolonged and varied apprenticeship completed, Bahā'-al-Dīn began the training of his own disciples, residing again in his birthplace of *Qařr-e Hendovān*. He left the region of Bukhara only three times thereafter. Two of these journeys were undertaken to perform the *ḥajj*; on the second of them he stayed three days in Herat to visit Shaikh Zayn-al-Dīn Abū Bakr Ṭayyābādī (d. 791/1389). On the third journey he again visited Herat, this time at the invitation of its ruler, Mo'ezz-al-Dīn Ḥosayn, to whom he explained the principles of his path while behaving with exemplary ascetic detachment (*Jāmī, Nafaḥāt*, p. 386).

Bahā'-al-Dīn Naqřband died on 3 Rabī' I 791/2 March 1389, in *Qařr-e Hendovān*, which was now renamed, out of deference to him, *Qařr-e 'Ārefān*. At a later point that cannot be exactly determined, the place acquired its present designation of *Bāvaddīn* (Bahā'-al-Dīn according to the colloquial pronunciation of the Bukharans). As the Naqřbandī order grew and Bahā'-al-Dīn's posthumous fame grew, a vast complex of buildings grew up around his tomb (K. Bendrikov, *Očerki po istorii narodnogo obrazovaniya v Turkestane*, Moscow, 1960, p. 29). More generally, the spiritual presence of Bahā'-al-Dīn was a principal factor in Bukhara's status as a center of learning and sanctity for all the Muslim regions of Inner Asia.

A number of poems and treatises have been attributed to Bahā'-al-Dīn Naqřband, almost certainly without justification. On the other hand, the litany that bears his name, *Awrād-e bahā'īya*, may indeed have been composed by him, although there is no reference to it in the early Naqřbandī texts and its



recitation has never been a pillar of regular Naqšbandī practice (there are numerous printings of the *Awrād*; see, for example, that in Aḥmad Żiā'-al-Dīn Kumuškānawī, *Majmū'at al-aḥzāb*, Istanbul, 1311/1893, II, pp. 2-14, with the commentary of Shaikh Moḥammad Sa'īd Kādemī). The verbal legacy of Bahā'-al-Dīn consists chiefly in the sayings recorded anecdotally in books of hagiography such as the *Rašahāt*, the *Nafahāt*, and Šalāḥ-al-Dīn Boḳārī's *Anīs al-ṭālebīn* and, more fully and systematically, by K̄vāja Moḥammad Pārsā, together with commentary and elucidation, in *Resāla-ye qodsīya* (numerous editions; the best is that of Aḥmad Ṭāherī-'Erāqī, Tehran, 1354 Š./1975).

Pārsā (d. 822/1420), a leading scholar of Bukhara, was one of the principal successors of Bahā'-al-Dīn, and it seems even that he was designated as his main *kalīfa* during one of the pilgrimages to Mecca. According to certain accounts, Bahā'-al-Dīn confirmed this nomination on his deathbed (*Rašahāt*, p. 57), but it was K̄vāja 'Alā'-al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār Boḳārī, already favored by Bahā'-al-Dīn through being married to his daughter, that emerged in the end as the main successor. More significant for the perpetuation of the Naqšbandī line was, however, a third *kalīfa*, Mawlānā Ya'qūb Čarkī (d. 851/1448); he initiated K̄vāja 'Obayd-Allāh Aḥrār, under whose auspices the Naqšbandīya became supreme among the Sufi orders of Central Asia and began its expansion in other areas of the Muslim world.

Precisely why K̄vāja Bahā'-al-Dīn should be seen as a central link in the *selsela* of which he is a part, rather than figures preceding or following him, is difficult to establish. According to a retrospective periodization of the *selsela*, it was known from the time of K̄vāja Yūsof Hamadānī until that of Bahā'-al-Dīn as *ṭarīq-e k̄vājagān* (the path of the masters), with reference to the title *k̄vāja* that Hamadānī and his successors bore; and from then on as *ṭarīq-e naqšbandī* (Moḥammad b. Solaymān Baḡdādī, *al-Ḥadīqat al-nadīya fi'l-ṭarīqa al-naqšbandīya*, n.p., n.d., p. 22). However, more than a century after the death of Bahā'-al-Dīn, 'Abd-al-Raḥmān Jāmī saw fit to entitle his brief treatise on the principles of the path *Sar-rešta-ye ṭarīq-e k̄vājagān* (ed. 'A.-Ḥ. Ḥabībī, Kabul, 1343 Š./1964). In one sense, the origins of the Naqšbandī path are traceable to K̄vāja 'Abd-al-Kāleq Ġojdawānī, who formulated its main principles in eight succinct Persian phrases known as *kalemāt-e qodsīya* (sacred words) and who is often referred to as *sar-ḥalqa-ye selsela-ye k̄vājagān* (the chief in the line of masters; *Rašahāt*, p. 20). Bahā'-al-Dīn's Owaysī initiation at the hands of Ġojdawānī serves, in fact, to confirm his pre-eminence. It appears to have been Bahā'-al-Dīn's insistence on silent *dekr*—practiced only sporadically by



earlier links in the *selsela*—that was crucial for the identity of the line descended from him and for the unique permanence of his imprint upon it. Later “renewers” of the Naqšbandīya such as Shaikh **Aḥmad Serhendī** (d. 1034/1624) and **Mawlānā Kāled Baġdādī** (d. 1242/1827) were seen only as originating branches of the Naqšbandī order, not as founding new and autonomous orders.

Closely linked to Bahā’-al-Dīn’s exclusive observance of silent *dekr* was his repudiation of music (*samā*) and retreat (*kalwa*) as means of spiritual progress (Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt*, p. 386). Likewise, his denial that adherence to a *selsela* is in itself meritorious; his deprecation of charismatic feats (*karāmāt*); his shunning of a distinctive form of dress for himself and his followers; his dislike for the practice of residing in a hospice (*kānaqāh*)—in short, his rejection of most of the customary appurtenances of Sufism—are all highly reminiscent of the Malāmatī movement of 4th/10th century Nišāpūr. Pārsā claimed, indeed, that “whatever holds true of the Malāmatīs holds true of our masters (*k’vājagān*) also” (*Faṣl al-keṭāb*, quoted by Sa’īd Nafīsī, *Sar-češma-ye taṣawwof dar Īrān*, Tehran, 1345 Š./1964, p. 180). This permits us to identify Bahā’-al-Dīn Naqšband as an heir not only of the figures mentioned in his *selsela* but also, in a more diffuse sense, of the Malāmatīs.

The original Naqšbandīya has accordingly sometimes been described as specifically Iranian or Khorasanian in its orientation (see, for example, Fuad Köprülü, *Türk edebiyatında ilk mutasavvıflar*, 2nd ed., Ankara, 1966, p. 93). This is justified in that the companions of Bahā’-al-Dīn were overwhelmingly Tajik-speaking urban dwellers, and the masters of the Yasawī order were contrastingly known as “the Turkish shaikhs” (*mašāyek-e Tork*; see Zeki Velidi Togan, “Yeseviliğe dair bazı yeni malumat,” in *Fuad Köprülü armağanı*, Istanbul, 1953, p. 523). There was, however, a Yasawī—and hence Turkish—contribution to the spiritual formation of Bahā’-al-Dīn, and within three generations after his death the Naqšbandīya began spreading among the Turkish peoples of Central Asia, thereby demonstrating a universal appeal.

The hypothesis of Mahāyāna Buddhist influence on the origins of the Naqšbandīya (advanced by Aziz Ahmad, *An Intellectual History of Islam in India*, Edinburgh, 1969, p. 40) must be discounted for lack of evidence.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

H. Algar, "The Naqshbandī Order: a Preliminary Survey of its History and Significance," *Stud. Isl.* 44, 1976, pp. 123-52.

Şalāḥ-al-Dīn Boḳārī, *Anīs al-ṭālebīn* (unpublished; for information on mss., see "Anīs al-ṭālebīn," *EIr.* II, pp. 76f.).

V. A. Gordlevskii, "Bakhaudīn Nakshbend Bukharskii," *Izbrannye Sochineniya*, Moscow, 1962, III, pp. 369-86. Jāmī, *Nafahāt*, pp. 384-88.

Abu'l-Ḥasan Moḥammad Bāqer b. Moḥammad 'Alī, *Maqāmāt-e Šāh-e Naqšband*, Bukhara, 1327/1909.

M. Molé, "Autour du Daré Mansour: l'apprentissage mystique de Bahā'-al-Dīn Naqshband," *REI*, 1959, pp. 35-66.

Naşrullāh Efendi, *Risāle-i bahāiye*, Istanbul, 1328/1910.

Ḳvāja Moḥammad Pārsā, *Resāla-ye qodsīya*, ed. M.-Ṭ. 'Erāqī, Tehran, 1354 Š./1975.

Moḥammad al-Raḳāwī, *al-Anwār al-qodsīya fī manāqeb sādāt al-naqšbandīya*, Cairo, 1344/1925, pp. 126-42.

Faḳr-al-Dīn 'Alī Şafī, *Raşaḥāt 'Ayn al-ḥayāt*, Tashkent, 1329/1911, pp. 54-58.

Zeki Velidi Togan, "Gazan-Han Halil ve Hoca Bahaeddin Nakşbend," *Necati Lugal armağani*, Ankara, 1968, pp. 775-84.

Tahsin Yazıcı, "Nakşbend," in *İA*.

Search terms:

□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□

baha al din
naghshband

baha aldin
naghshband

baha ol din
naghshband

bahaa oldin
naghshband