

KHOJA MUHAMMAD PARSA'S METHOD OF UTILIZING THE WORKS OF IMAM  
ABU 'ISA AL-TIRMIDHI

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**Annotation.** The article is dedicated to the scientific and sufi legacy of Khoja Muhammad Porso (1349–1420) at the end of the 14th century, as well as his significant contribution to the development of the Naqshbandi tariqa. The author analyzes Khoja Muhammad Porso's main work – *Fasl al-Khitab*, examining the sources of the hadiths and their role in Islamic scholarship. The article compares it with Imam Abu Isa al-Tirmidhi's *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, highlighting Khoja Muhammad Porso's methodology in hadith studies and his scholarly approach. It is also emphasized that Khoja Muhammad Porso's scientific heritage holds great importance not only in Sufism but also in Islamic sciences, including hadith studies and theology (kalam). The article aims to deepen the understanding of the theoretical foundations of the Naqshbandi tariqa and its place in contemporary scholarship.

**Keywords:** Khoja Muhammad Porso, Naqshbandi tariqa, *Fasl al-Khitab*, hadith studies, Imam Abu Isa al-Tirmidhi, Islamic sciences, sufism, murshid rank.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the most prominent scholars who played a significant role in the development of Sufism and Islamic sciences in Central Asia at the end of the 14th century was Khoja Muhammad Parsa (1349-1420). He was not only a leading representative of the Naqshbandi Sufi order but was also renowned as a learned scholar possessing profound knowledge in matters of both Shari'a and Tariqa. His works, such as *Fasl al-Khitab*, serve as important sources in the history of Islamic sciences of that era, enriched with rare studies and commentaries on the science of Hadith. This article thoroughly analyzes the scholarly legacy of Khoja Muhammad Parsa and his contributions to the discipline of Hadith.

## MAIN PART

Among the theorists of Sufi teachings in the late 14th century, Khoja Muhammad Parsa whose full name was Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Mahmud al-Hafizi al-Bukhari (1349-1420) was one of the great figures of the Khwajagan-Naqshbandiyya order. Born in Bukhara, Khoja Muhammad Parsa received his education in madrasas where he deeply studied various Islamic sciences such as the Qur'an, Hadith, and Kalam (Islamic theology). He became one of the leading intellectuals of his time. After Baha' al-Din Naqshband, he emerged as the most prominent representative and theorist of the Naqshbandiyya order in Central Asia. Having attained the rank of Murshid (spiritual guide), Khoja Muhammad Parsa was not only a Sufi but also a skillful scholar in various fields such as Tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis), Hadith, Sufism, history, and Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence). He authored more than twenty scholarly works<sup>1</sup>.

One of Parsa's most renowned and widely acclaimed works, devoted to issues concerning Sharī'a and Ṭarīqa, is his book entitled *Fasl al-Khiṭāb bi-Wuṣūl al-Aḥbāb* (The Decisive Discourse on Attaining Union with the Beloved). The work addresses 494 individual issues, all of which are considered controversial or debatable within Islamic scholarship. In this treatise, Parsa

<sup>1</sup> Fakhr al-Dīn 'Alī Ṣafī. *Rashaḥāt 'Ayn al-Ḥayāt*. – Tashkent, 2003, p. 85.

systematically resolves these matters by referring to a broad range of classical Islamic texts. In his analysis, the author cites passages from the works of numerous eminent scholars, including Imām al-Bukhārī, Imām Muslim, Imām al-Tirmidhī, al-Ḥākim al-Tirmidhī, Imām al-Ghazālī, Yūsuf al-Hamadānī, and Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, among others.

Fasl al-Khiṭāb is considered one of the author's principal works. Owing to its substantial volume and scholarly depth, the book served as a comprehensive manual for Islamic scholars. Thirteen manuscript copies of the work are currently preserved in the Manuscript Collection of the Al-Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies in Tashkent<sup>2</sup>. The work was published several times in the early 20th century. Notably, one of its editions was printed at the "Ghulom Hasan Orifjonov" printing house in Tashkent<sup>3</sup>.

In composing Fasl al-Khiṭāb, Khwaja Muhammad Parsa made effective use of various hadiths narrated in Imam Abu 'Īsā al-Tirmidhī's Sunan al-Tirmidhī, employing them at different points to substantiate his own reflections and arguments. In this article, we aim to present several such examples. For instance, in the chapter of Fasl al-Khiṭāb that discusses tawḥīd (divine unity), Khwaja Muhammad Parsa articulates his views and then states: "The evidence for these words lies in the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). He has clearly stated this in an authentic ḥadīth"<sup>4</sup>. In Sunan Termizi hadith 2849:<sup>5</sup>

(٢٨٤٩) عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال أشعر كلمة تكلمت بها العرب كلمة ليبيد ألا كل شيء ما خلا الله باطل

It is narrated from Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said The best verse recited by the Arabs in poetry is the line of Labīd: Behold! Everything besides Allah is false

The Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) analyzed the poetry of Labīda poet who lived during the pre-Islamic (Jāhiliyyah) era and declared that this particular verse of his was the best among the poetry composed by other poet

Likewise, in the section of Fasl al-Khiṭāb that describes the qualities of Paradise, a ḥadīth narrated by Imām al-Tirmidhī is also quoted as follows

و روي ايضا في هذا الباب باسناده عن عبد الله بن حميد قال ح شباية عن إسرائيل عن ثوير قال سمعت ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما يقول قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إن أدنى أهل الجنة منزلة لمن ينظر إلى جنانه وأزواجه ونعيمه وخدمه وسريره مسيرة ألف سنة وأكرمهم على الله عز وجل من ينظر إلى وجهه غدوة وعشية ثم قرأ رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم { وجه يومئذ ناضرة إلى ربها ناظرة } قال أبو عيسى رحمه الله هذا حديث غريب و رواه غير واحد عن إسرائيل مرفوعا مثل هذان

Moreover, in this chapter, Imām al-Tirmidhī also narrates from his teacher 'Abdullāh ibn Ḥumayd, who said: "Shabābah narrated to us from Isrā'īl, who narrated from Suwayr. Suwayr said: 'I heard 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) say: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: 'Indeed, the person of the lowest rank among the people of Paradise will gaze upon his gardens, spouses, blessings, servants, and couches, and the distance of his view will stretch as far as a thousand years. As for the most honorable of the people of

<sup>2</sup> Khwaja Muhammad Parsa. Fasl al-Khiṭāb. – Manuscript Collection of the Institute of Oriental Studies named after Abu Rayhan al-Biruni, Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Hereafter: UzR AS IOS Manuscript), Codices: 3133; 11605; 4335; 1450; 5766; 584; 2238; 1449; 11682; 3188; 5547; 5546; 522/VI.

<sup>3</sup> Khwaja Muhammad Parsa. Fasl al-Khiṭāb. – Tashkent: Ghulam Hasan Orifjonov Publishing House, [n.d.].

<sup>4</sup> Khwaja Muhammad Parsa. Fasl al-Khiṭāb. – Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>5</sup> Imam al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū 'Īsā Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā al-Tirmidhī. Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī. – Riyadh: Dār al-Salām, 2009, p. 841.

Paradise in the sight of Allah, the Almighty and Majestic, they will continuously behold the Countenance of their Lord morning and evening.”

Then the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) recited the following verses: “Some faces on that Day will be radiant, gazing at their Lord”<sup>6</sup>.

After citing the ḥadīth, Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā also transmits Imām al-Tirmidhī’s evaluation, quoting him as saying: “Abū ‘Īsā (may Allah have mercy on him) said: This is a gharīb (uncommon) ḥadīth, though others have also transmitted it marfū‘ from Isrā’īl.” This demonstrates that Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā not only transmitted the ḥadīth but also conveyed the critical commentary of the hadith master.

When we compare the version of this ḥadīth found in Fasl al-Khiṭāb with that of the modern editions of Sunan al-Tirmidhī, it becomes evident that Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā adhered strictly to the accepted methodologies and etiquette of hadith scholarship. Consequently, the version recorded in Fasl al-Khiṭāb appears to be more complete and precise. For example, in the tafsīr chapter of Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Imām al-Tirmidhī narrates many hadiths from his teacher ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ḥumayd, originally from Kash (modern-day Shahrīsabz). However, in modern printed editions, this narrator’s name often appears in an abbreviated form as “‘Abd ibn Ḥumayd.” In contrast, Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā consistently refers to him with his full name, “‘Abd Allāh ibn Ḥumayd,” in Fasl al-Khiṭāb. Given that the use of “Abd” alone as a personal name is highly uncommon in our region, it is likely that the correct full name is indeed “‘Abd Allāh ibn Ḥumayd.” This enhances the scholarly significance of Fasl al-Khiṭāb as a reliable and precise source.

This observation also leads to the conclusion that a local edition of Sunan al-Tirmidhī, based on manuscript sources, should be prepared and published to ensure greater textual accuracy.

In addition to citing hadiths narrated by Abū ‘Īsā Imām al-Tirmidhī, Fasl al-Khiṭāb also includes narrations from another prominent scholar of Tirmidhī al-Ḥākim al-Tirmidhī (may Allah have mercy on him). For instance, in the section discussing the merits of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (may Allah be pleased with him), Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā transmits relevant material from al-Ḥākim al-Tirmidhī:<sup>7</sup>

قال الشيخ الامام العارف الولي ابو عبد الله محمد ابن علي الحكيم الترمذي رحمه الله في قوله صلى الله عليه وسلم اني لا ادري ما بقائي فيكم فاقتدوا بالذين من بعدي (و اشار الى) ابي بكر وعمر رضي الله عنهما اخرجه الامام ابو عيسى الترمذي رحمه الله فهما رضي الله عنهما و من يمثل حالهما قد لزم طاعتهم الخلق لان قلوبهم قد وصلت الى الله عز و جل و صارت في القبضة و لهم الثبات من القبضة فاذا نطقوا فبالحق ينطقون و اذا حكموا بذلك الحق فبالعدل يحكمون

Shaykh, Imām, Gnostic (‘Ārif), and Saint (Walī) Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Ḥākim al-Tirmidhī (may Allah have mercy on him) expressed his reflections on the ḥadīth narrated from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him): “I do not know how long I will remain among you, so follow those who come after me.” In this narration, he indicated Abū Bakr and ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both). He added:

“It is incumbent upon people to obey them (may Allah be pleased with them) and those leaders who are in the same state as them. This is because their hearts are connected to Allah, the Exalted and Majestic, and are under His divine control. They remain firmly established in that state. Hence, whenever they speak, they speak the truth; and whenever they judge, they judge justly.”

<sup>6</sup> Shaykh Abdulaziz Mansur. The Translation and Tafsir of the Meanings of the Noble Qur’an. Tashkent: 2007. (Sūrat al-Qiyāmah, Verses 22–23).

<sup>7</sup> Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā. Fasl al-Khiṭāb. — B. 437.

In composing *Fasl al-Khiṭāb*, Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā consulted the intellectual legacies of numerous earlier scholars and referred to several of them with great reverence. In particular, when mentioning al-Ḥākim al-Tirmidhī, he extols him with honorifics such as Shaykh, Imām, ‘Ārif, and Walī, reflecting the high esteem in which he held him.

What is especially noteworthy is that Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā, after quoting this ḥadīth from al-Ḥākim al-Tirmidhī, adds: “This ḥadīth was narrated by Imām Abū ‘Īsā al-Tirmidhī (may Allah have mercy on him),” thus acknowledging the authoritative position of Imām al-Tirmidhī in the science of ḥadīth. This form of scholarly recognition is not limited to *Fasl al-Khiṭāb* alone but is consistently observed across Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā’s other works as well.

Although Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā’s method of citing ḥadīths from Imām Abū ‘Īsā al-Tirmidhī does not significantly differ from the general approach of other scholars, as previously mentioned, certain variances appear such as the names of transmitters and, in some instances, the textual content of the ḥadīths which diverge from those found in contemporary printed editions of Sunan al-Tirmidhī. These differences underscore the scholarly and source-critical value of Pārsā’s writings from the perspectives of both ḥadīth studies and textual heritage.

Studying the intellectual heritage and views of Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā not only deepens our understanding of the foundational doctrines of the Naqshbandī tradition but also enriches our grasp of the authentic essence of ḥadīth scholarship. In particular, the analysis and investigation of his works such as *Fasl al-Khiṭāb*, *al-Ḥadīth al-Arba‘ūn*, and his *Sharḥ of Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* from the perspective of ḥadīth sciences deserve special scholarly attention. Such endeavors will allow us to better assess Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā’s standing as a muḥaddith and to illuminate the scholarly relationship and continuity between him and Imām Abū ‘Īsā al-Tirmidhī. This opens the door for further research topics and future articles.

## **CONCLUSION**

Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā was a distinguished scholar who held a prominent position in both the Naqshbandī Sufi order and the field of ḥadīth studies in Central Asia. In his works particularly *Fasl al-Khiṭāb* he offered profound analyses of issues related to Sharī‘ah and Ṭarīqah, drawing extensively on the writings of various earlier scholars and enriching them with his own insights. His intellectual legacy constitutes a significant source not only for the development of Sufi thought but also for the science of ḥadīth. His writings provide valuable information on ḥadīth texts and transmission methods, making them an important resource for academic researchers.

Moreover, Pārsā’s scholarly activity contributed greatly to the flourishing of the Islamic intellectual tradition in Central Asia, and his works continue to be esteemed as part of the scholarly heritage. Thus, Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā’s scholarly contributions and literary output remain a subject of interest for contemporary researchers, and the study of his legacy continues to support the advancement of Islamic sciences.