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THE REPRESENTATION OF STAGES AT THE GATE OF SHARIA IN THE WORKS OF SULAYMON BOQIRGONIY

Abdulla Khudoyberganov Gafurjan ugli
Teacher of the Department of Uzbek Language and Literature, Urgench State University named after Abu Rayhan Beruni

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ABSTRACT

*This article explores the representation of the stages at the gate of Sharia in the works of Sulaymon Boqirgoniy within the framework of the Yasaviya Sufi tradition. The study focuses on the interpretation of the ten maqoms of Sharia and their role in the spiritual formation of the seeker (*solik*). Particular attention is given to the reflection of the five pillars of Islam—faith (iman), prayer (salat), fasting (sawm), almsgiving (zakat), and pilgrimage (hajj)—in the poet's* hikmats*. The research analyzes how Boqirgoniy integrates Islamic doctrinal principles with Sufi teachings, presenting them in a didactic and accessible poetic form. It is revealed that Sharia is conceptualized as the foundational stage of spiritual development, preceding the path of tariqa and ensuring moral and religious discipline. Through textual and conceptual analysis, the article demonstrates that Boqirgoniy's works serve not only as religious instruction but also as a means of shaping ethical consciousness and promoting spiritual self-perfection. The findings highlight the significance of his творчество in the dissemination of Yasaviya teachings and in the development of Uzbek Sufi literature.*

KEYWORDS: *Sharia, Yasaviya order, Sulaymon Boqirgoniy, maqom, Sufism, hikmat, iman, salat, sawm, zakat, spiritual development, Islamic doctrine, moral education, tariqa, Sufi literature.*

Sulaymon Boqirgoniy was one of the most prominent representatives of the Yasaviya order founded by his teacher Ahmad Yassaviy. In his creative works, he expressed Islamic beliefs, the principles of Sharia, and the stages of Sufism through *hikmats*, similar to Yassaviy. The reason is that "the Yasaviya and Naqshbandiya paths were tariqas firmly grounded in Sunni doctrine" [3.16]. One of the distinguishing features of Islam compared to other religions is its pure faith. Islamic Sharia is a system of values that encourages human beings to become morally perfect. Sharia is "a collection of Islamic legal rulings, comprising the commands and prohibitions of Allah" [5.41]. Therefore, when we examine the essence of Sulaymon Boqirgoniy's works, we can observe that they promote Sharia and explain its practical aspects. The poet emphasizes the importance of Sharia rules and shows that a seeker (*solik*) who enters the path of tariqa must necessarily pass through the stage of Sharia and, having understood its true essence, organize his life according to its requirements. Boqirgoniy also reflects on the idea that in Sufism, Sharia precedes everything, and only after mastering the knowledge of Sharia do the doors of tariqa open.

Ruhim aytur, shariatning ilmin bilib,
Ilm birla tariqatning yo'lin bilib,
Sahar vaqtin uyog'liqni odat bilib,
O'n besh yoshdan qolmish namoz o'toyin der. [4.26]

The importance of Sharia lies in the fact that it represents the laws and regulations of Islam. The word "Sharia" in Arabic is used in two meanings. The first is "a path leading to water." In an Arabic proverb, it is said: "The easiest way to drink water is to enter the Sharia," reflecting this meaning. The second meaning is "the straight path." In the Qur'an, in Surah Al-Jathiyah (45:18), it is stated: "Then We have put you, [O Muhammad], on a straight path concerning the matter (of religion)..." [8.3], which reflects this meaning. In the above quatrain, Boqirgoniy emphasizes that the soul is in need of the knowledge of Sharia and that without it, the knowledge of tariqa cannot be attained. Knowledge (*ilm*) is a blessing superior to all others, as it organizes human life, gives it meaning, and enables understanding of existence. A seeker who follows the path of Sharia must fully observe all its rules and strictly refrain from what is prohibited. The knowledge of Sharia is such that it elevates a person to a high spiritual rank and becomes the source of countless rewards recorded in one's book of deeds.

A narration about Hasan al-Basri, one of the righteous who possessed and practiced the knowledge of Sharia, can serve as evidence that this knowledge elevates a person to a high spiritual rank. A student of knowledge once came to the land where Hasan al-Basri lived and asked for a person who was independent of others, a master of Sharia knowledge, wealthy in knowledge, and an example for everyone. A local man told him that such a person was Hasan al-Basri and showed him where to find him. When the student arrived, he saw a man wearing patched clothes and living in a ruined place. Doubting that this could be the scholar he was seeking, he refused to speak with him and returned to the man who had guided him. He said: "Why did you deceive me? I asked for a person who is the richest in Sharia knowledge and in need of no one, yet needed by all, but you sent me to a poor dervish living in ruins." The guide replied: "I did not deceive you. You asked for a scholar rich in Sharia knowledge, and I showed him to you. His wealth is in his knowledge. He is not in need of people, but people are in need of him because of his knowledge of Sharia." Indeed, a person who possesses knowledge of Sharia, in Boqirgoniy's view as well, is independent and organizes his life based on that knowledge.

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The knowledge of Sharia and its requirements constitute the starting point of all noble deeds. According to Ibn Juzayy, the knowledge of Sharia encompasses the commands, wishes, and prohibitions of Allah regarding His servants. Thus, when the poet speaks of knowing Sharia, he primarily refers to understanding the names and attributes of Allah and, through this understanding, comprehending oneself and the universe. Sulaymon Boqirgoniy's approach to Sufism is similar to that of Yassaviy, as he also reflected the principles of the Yasaviya order in his works. Just as every tariqa has its stages, it is known from Ahmad Yassaviy's *"Devoni Hikmat"* that Sufism consists of forty stages in total. Likewise, Sulaymon Boqirgoniy expresses the path of Sharia in his poetry through ten specific stages. In the Yasaviya order, the stage of Sharia includes ten maqoms, the first five of which correspond to the conditions of faith. Thus, the maqoms of Sharia are as follows:

The ten maqoms of Sharia

1. To believe (Iman)
2. To perform prayer (Salat)
3. To observe fasting (Sawm)
4. To give zakat
5. To perform pilgrimage (Hajj)
6. To possess forbearance (Hilm)
7. To acquire knowledge
8. To belong to Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah
9. To know *amr bil ma'ruf* (enjoining good)
10. To practice *nahy anil munkar* (forbidding evil) [2.40]

Sulaymon Boqirgoniy, who described the essence of the Yasaviya order in his poetry, pays particular attention to the first maqom of Sharia — "faith (iman)" — and its role in the life of a perfect human being in several of his *hikmats*.

Aziz, hor qilg'uvchi sulton sanuqsan,
Saning lutfing qamug' alvondan ortiq.
Na xush bu dunyoda Iymon-u Qur'on,
Ne bo'lg'ay dunyoda Iymondan ortiq, [4.18]

These lines serve as evidence of our argument. Boqirgoniy describes faith as the very first maqom at the gate of Sharia and as the foundation of the seeker's belief system. He presents faith as the greatest blessing in this world. In the line *"saning lutfing qamug' alvondan ortiq,"* the "grace" (*lutf*) refers to the gift of faith granted to a servant. Sincerity (*ikhlas*) is manifested in worship, belief, conviction, and actions, and it is understood as truthfulness, purity, and honesty performed solely for the sake of God, without any ulterior motive or desire [3.16].

The highest principle of Sharia is belief in Allah. The word "iman" means "faith" or "confirmation." It refers to affirming with the heart and professing with the tongue all the religious prescriptions, permissions, and prohibitions brought by the Prophet (peace be upon him) from Allah [5.41]. Thus, the first and foremost act in religion is faith. After faith, prayer holds the next position. Regarding this, Boqirgoniy provides the following insight:

Ruhim aytur, din ishin yaxshi bilib,
Ezgu, yovuz jumlasin yaxshi bilib,
Tunlar bo'lsa toat birla uro turib,
Kunduz bo'lsa, savm-u salot o'toyin der. [4.26]

In Islamic belief, the status of prayer is extremely high. It is considered one of the primary acts for which a person will be held accountable before the Creator. Concerning prayer, the Prophet (peace be upon him), the master of all creation, said: "Indeed, the least you have been given is certainty and determination in patience. Whoever is granted these two should not worry about what he misses of voluntary night prayer or fasting" [1.83]. Allah has granted the Ummah of Muhammad a limited share of steadfastness and patience; therefore, it is better for them to consistently perform night prayers. Abu Hurayra narrated that the Messenger of Allah said: "Paradise has eight gates. Whoever is among those who pray will be called from the 'Gate of Prayer' (*Bab as-Salat*), those who fast from the 'Gate of Fasting' (*Bab as-Siyam*), those who give charity from the 'Gate of Charity' (*Bab as-Sadaqa*), and those who strive in the path of Allah from the 'Gate of Jihad' (*Bab al-Jihad*)" [1.41].

In this context, Boqirgoniy describes prayer as an act that leads to happiness, fills the heart with piety, and makes one among the أهل الجنة (people of Paradise). Sharia includes both outward and inward actions, and among the outward acts, the foremost is prayer. Regarding prayer, Allah the Almighty says in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Hajj (22:77): "O you who believe, bow and prostrate and worship your Lord and do good, so that you may succeed." Salvation is achieved only through sincere deeds performed for the sake of the Creator. Among these deeds, Sulaymon Boqirgoniy also recognizes prayer as one of the foremost. For this reason, any seeker who aspires to attain perfection must first fulfill the requirements of Sharia, and the fact that prayer is presented as the second maqom at the gate of Sharia in the Yasaviya order reflects its great significance.

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In the *hikmats* of Sulaymon Boqirgoniy, the five pillars of Sharia are harmonized with the Yasaviya tariqa and are reflected in the poet's works. The third maqom at the gate of Sharia in the Yasaviya order is "fasting" (*sawm*), and its importance in regulating the life of a disciple (*murid*) who has entered the path of tariqa is very significant. Fasting is a practice characteristic of righteous people, through which the desires of the ego (*nafs*) are subdued, and the servant's closeness to the Lord is spiritually refined. Scholars have described three types of fasting. The first is the fasting of the common people (*avom*), the second is the fasting of the elect (*xos*), and the third is the fasting of the elite among the elect (*xossatan xusus*), that is, the fasting of true lovers, gnostics (*oriflar*), and ascetics (*zohidlar*). All of these contain merit (*hasanat*).

In the first type, the fasting of the common people, a person abstains from eating and drinking, but due to lack of knowledge, does not refrain from minor sins, which results in imperfections in the fast. The fasting of the elect, however, involves observing the legal rulings of fasting with proper understanding and fulfilling all its requirements. These elect individuals are also compared to merchants, as their trade is with the Creator, and the reward for their deeds serves as their capital. The third type, the fasting of the elite, is performed solely for the pleasure of Allah, and all the requirements of fasting are fulfilled completely. The reward for fasting is promised to be immense. In a hadith narrated by Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Allah the Almighty said: All the deeds of the son of Adam are for himself, except fasting, which is for Me, and I Myself will reward it" [6.2]. From the content of this hadith, it is clear that the reward promised for fasting is immeasurable. Sulaymon Boqirgoniy, understanding the significance of fasting in the life of a seeker and the high status of its reward, expresses this idea as follows:

Namoz, ro'za, tavba sani o'tdan yular,
Olam ahli sani sevin, Haqdin tilar.
Qiyomat kun, ko'rub sani olar tonglar,
Ne qul ermish bu, saodat nusrati bor. [4.11]

In these lines, Boqirgoniy depicts the high spiritual status of those who observe fasting on the Day of Judgment, as well as the respect and honor they will receive. He also emphasizes another important aspect: such a person becomes beloved among people in this world and attains a distinguished position in the Hereafter due to divine favor. Through this, Boqirgoniy encourages believers to be devoted to the act of fasting.

Among the maqoms of the Yasaviya tariqa, another stage described by Sulaymon Boqirgoniy is the maqom of "giving zakat." In this stage, the seeker is required to give one-fortieth of the wealth he has earned through labor to the poor, the needy, and the destitute. The word "zakat" in its lexical meaning conveys several concepts, the most important of which are purification, growth, and increase. In its terminological sense, it refers to giving a prescribed portion of wealth, under specific conditions, to those who are entitled to receive it [7.4]. Sulaymon Boqirgoniy also explains zakat in his *hikmats* as one of the essential Sharia obligations that a seeker on the path to Truth must fulfill, emphasizing its importance in a person's life.

Tuni kuni tinmayin qullik qilg'il,
Yotoring tor lahatdir, yaxshi bilg'il.
Boruring uzoq yo'ldir ozuq olg'il,
Ozuqing zakot turur, bermasmusan? [4.27]

In the meaning of these lines, Boqirgoniy addresses a person who is striving to follow the right path, abandoning bad qualities and moving toward goodness. He reminds that in all the wealth accumulated in worldly life, there is a share belonging to the poor, the needy, and the helpless. The poet emphasizes that the zakat given is not for others alone, but rather serves as an investment for one's own future in the Hereafter.

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