



**THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUFISM AND SUFI ORDERS IN THE
EMIRATE OF BUKHARA**

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Abstract. *This article examines the development of Sufism and Sufi orders in the Emirate of Bukhara and analyzes their role in the religious, social, and political life of society. Particular attention is paid to the position of the Naqshbandi order during the Emirate period, the activities of Sufi centers, khanqahs, and pilgrimage sites, as well as their influence on the spiritual life of the population. Furthermore, the study investigates the characteristics of Sufism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and evaluates its historical significance based on scholarly sources.*

Keywords: *Emirate of Bukhara, Sufism, Sufi order, Naqshbandiyya, khanqah, shaykh, disciple, pilgrimage site, spirituality, Transoxiana.*

**BUXORO AMIRLIGIDA TASAVVUF VA TARIQATLARNING
RIVOJLANISHI**

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Annotatsiya. *Mazkur maqolada Buxoro amirligida tasavvuf va tariqatlarning rivojlanish jarayoni, ularning diniy, ijtimoiy va siyosiy hayotdagi o' rni tahlil qilingan. Tadqiqotda Naqshbandiya tariqatining amirlik davridagi mavqei, tasavvuf markazlari, xonqohlar va ziyoratgohlarning faoliyati hamda ularning jamiyat ma'naviy hayotiga ta' siri yoritilgan. Shuningdek, XIX asr oxiri – XX asr boshlarida tasavvufning rivojlanish xususiyatlari va uning tarixiy ahamiyati ilmiy manbalar asosida tahlil etilgan.*

Kalit so'zlar: *Buxoro amirligi, tasavvuf, tariqat, Naqshbandiya, xonqoh, shayx, murid, ziyoratgoh, ma'naviyat, Movarounnahr.*





РАЗВИТИЕ СУФИЗМА И СУФИЙСКИХ ТАРИКАТОВ В БУХАРСКОМ ЭМИРАТЕ

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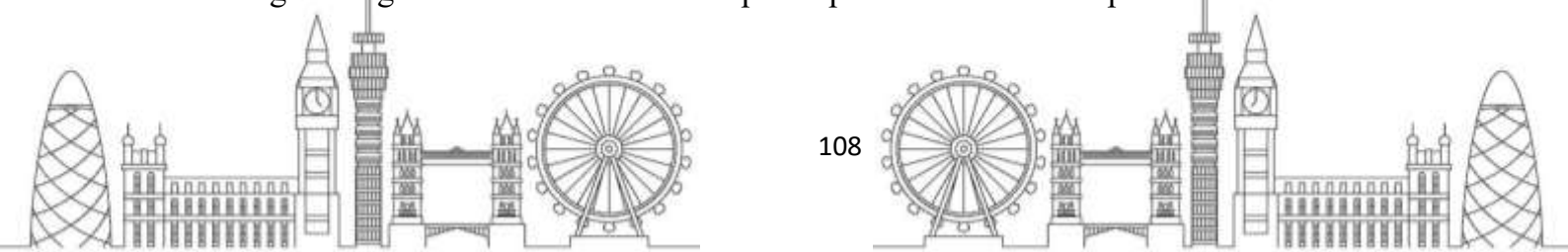
Аннотация. В данной статье рассматривается процесс развития суфизма и суфийских тарикатов в Бухарском эмирате, а также анализируется их роль в религиозной, социальной и политической жизни общества. Особое внимание уделено положению тариката Накибандия в период эмирата, деятельности суфийских центров, ханак и священных мест паломничества, а также их влиянию на духовную жизнь населения. Кроме того, на основе научных источников исследуются особенности развития суфизма в конце XIX – начале XX века и его историческое значение.

Ключевые слова: Бухарский эмират, суфизм, тарикат, Накибандия, ханака, шейх, мюрид, место паломничества, духовность, Мавераннахр.

Introduction. The Emirate of Bukhara was one of the major political and cultural centers of Central Asia and played a significant role not only in state administration but also in the development of religious and educational life. In particular, Sufism and Sufi orders served as important factors in strengthening Islamic values, enhancing the spiritual life of society, and shaping moral education within the emirate. As the spiritual and ethical dimension of Islam, Sufism promotes the ideas of spiritual perfection, purification of the soul, love for Allah, and the attainment of moral excellence. For centuries, it has occupied a prominent place in the lives of Muslim peoples.

The formation and development of Sufism in Transoxiana dates back to the ninth through twelfth centuries. During this period, several influential Sufi orders emerged, including the Yasawiyya, Kubrawiyya, and especially the Naqshbandiyya, all of which exerted a profound influence on the religious and spiritual life of the region in subsequent centuries. The city of Bukhara gained a special status as one of the leading centers of Sufi learning and activity. The Naqshbandi order, founded in the fourteenth century by Bahouddin Naqshband, later spread widely throughout Bukhara and its surrounding territories, becoming one of the most influential religious and spiritual movements during the period of the Emirate of Bukhara.

From the second half of the eighteenth century until the beginning of the twentieth century, Sufism and Sufi orders became deeply embedded in the lives of various social groups within the Emirate of Bukhara. Sufi shaykhs and spiritual leaders were not only religious figures but also influential participants in social and political affairs. In some





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cases, the emirs relied on the advice and guidance of prominent Sufi leaders in matters of governance and domestic policy. Khanqahs, shrines, and madrasas functioned as important centers of religious education and spiritual training.

Studying the development of Sufism and Sufi orders in the Emirate of Bukhara provides valuable insights not only into religious history but also into the spiritual life, social relations, and political processes of the society. Furthermore, the legacy of Sufism continues to constitute an important component of the people's spiritual values, religious traditions, and cultural memory. Therefore, the scholarly investigation of this subject remains highly relevant from the perspectives of both historiography and religious studies.

The aim of this article is to examine the development of Sufism and Sufi orders in the Emirate of Bukhara, analyze their role in religious, social, and political life, and explore the position and activities of the Naqshbandi order during the Emirate period on the basis of historical sources. The study also seeks to evaluate the influence of Sufism on the spiritual life of the Emirate, the main directions of activity pursued by Sufi orders, and their contribution to the development of society.

Main part. Sufism began to take shape in Central Asia from the earliest period following the spread of Islam and, by the 9th–12th centuries, had become an important component of the region's religious and spiritual life. The city of Bukhara emerged as a major center of Islamic learning where jurists, hadith scholars, and Sufi thinkers carried out their activities[3]. Particularly from the Samanid period onward, the development of a strong religious and educational environment in Bukhara created favorable conditions for the spread of Sufi teachings.

Between the 12th and 14th centuries, several influential Sufi orders, including the Yasawiyya, Kubrawiyya, and Naqshbandiyya, emerged in Transoxiana and gained considerable influence among the local population[1]. These orders promoted spiritual perfection, honesty, diligence, patience, contentment, and service to society. Among them, the Naqshbandiyya eventually became an integral part of Bukhara's religious life.

During the rule of the Shaybanids and the Ashtarkhanids in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the political influence of the Naqshbandi order increased significantly. Representatives of the order began to play an important role in state administration. This tradition continued after the Manghit dynasty came to power in the eighteenth century[2]. Consequently, during the period of the Emirate of Bukhara, Sufism became an inseparable part of the religious, spiritual, and social life of society.

Several factors contributed to the widespread popularity of Sufism. First, Sufi orders played a major role in disseminating religious knowledge among the population. Second, they contributed significantly to moral education and the strengthening of ethical values. Third, they functioned as social institutions that united people from different social strata. Therefore, during the Emirate of Bukhara, Sufism represented not only a religious movement but also an important social phenomenon.





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Among the Sufi orders active in the Emirate of Bukhara, the Naqshbandiyya occupied the most influential position. Founded by Bahouddin Naqshband (1318–1389), its teachings spread widely throughout the Muslim East in subsequent centuries[4].

The principal motto of the Naqshbandi order is “Dil ba yor, dast ba kor” (“The heart with God, the hands at work”). This principle distinguishes the order from many other Sufi traditions. Rather than advocating withdrawal from society, the Naqshbandiyya encouraged active participation in social and economic life while maintaining spiritual devotion.

During the Emirate period, representatives of the Naqshbandi order were actively involved not only in religious affairs but also in political processes. Emirs often sought the approval and support of prominent Sufi shaykhs because of their immense influence among the population. In some cases, leading religious figures directly affected state policies and internal political affairs.

During the reign of Amir Shammurad (1785–1800), special attention was given to Islamic values. He sought to present himself as a defender of Islamic law and actively supported religious scholars and Sufi leaders. As a result, the prestige of the Naqshbandi order increased even further. This tradition continued under subsequent rulers[5].

The strong influence of the Naqshbandiyya remained evident throughout the nineteenth century. Numerous mosques, madrasas, and khanqahs in Bukhara, Samarkand, Qarshi, Karmana, and Gijduvan operated under the spiritual influence of this order.

Khanqahs and sacred shrines played a crucial role in the spread of Sufism throughout the Emirate of Bukhara. Khanqahs served as centers where Sufis resided, disciples received education, and religious ceremonies were conducted. They functioned not only as religious institutions but also as centers of moral and spiritual training.

The Bahauddin Naqshband Complex near Bukhara was among the most revered pilgrimage sites during the Emirate period. It attracted not only ordinary believers but also emirs and high-ranking state officials.

Likewise, the mausoleums of prominent Sufi figures such as Abdulkhaliq Gijduvani, Arif Revhari, and Mahmud Anjir Faghnavi became important pilgrimage destinations.

Within these khanqahs, students studied the Qur’an, Hadith, Islamic jurisprudence, ethics, and Sufism. Disciples underwent spiritual training under the supervision of their shaykhs, progressing through various stages of spiritual development. This process contributed significantly to the dissemination of religious knowledge throughout society.

In the Emirate of Bukhara, Sufism evolved beyond a purely religious doctrine and became an essential component of social and spiritual life. Through Sufi teachings, virtues such as honesty, justice, generosity, patience, contentment, and diligence were widely promoted.

Representatives of Sufi orders also played an active role in assisting the poor and those in need. Many khanqahs operated through waqf endowments and provided free services to travelers, students, and disadvantaged individuals.





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Sufism also helped foster spiritual unity among different social groups. The relationship between shaykhs and disciples was based on respect, loyalty, and moral responsibility, which contributed to social stability and cohesion[2]. Furthermore, Sufism had a significant impact on literature, architecture, and the arts. Many religious and literary works produced during the Emirate period reflected Sufi ideals and spiritual concepts.

The expansion of the Russian Empire into Central Asia during the second half of the nineteenth century significantly altered the political landscape of the region. Nevertheless, this development did not eliminate the activities of Sufi orders. On the contrary, many religious leaders sought to preserve the spiritual unity of the population.

During the reigns of Amir Muzaffar (1860–1885), Amir Abdulahad Khan (1885–1910), and Amir Alim Khan (1910–1920), the Naqshbandi order maintained its prominent position[3]. Religious educational institutions continued to operate, and pilgrimage sites remained popular among the people.

The emergence of the Jadid reform movement in the early twentieth century introduced new perspectives into the religious sphere. Although some Jadids advocated reforms in traditional religious education, they did not reject the ethical and spiritual values of Sufism. As a result, traditional Sufi practices and reformist ideas coexisted to a certain extent within Bukhara society.

Following the abolition of the Emirate of Bukhara in 1920, the political influence of Sufi orders declined considerably. Nevertheless, Sufi traditions remained deeply embedded in popular memory and continued to survive as an important part of the region's spiritual and cultural heritage.

Conclusion. In conclusion, Sufism and Sufi orders occupied a significant place in the religious, social, and political life of the Emirate of Bukhara. During the eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, Sufism was not merely a religious movement but also an important social institution that contributed to the moral education of society, the preservation of Islamic values, and the strengthening of spiritual unity among the population. Through their teachings and activities, Sufi leaders played a crucial role in shaping the ethical and cultural foundations of the emirate.

Among the various Sufi orders active in the region, the Naqshbandiyya held a particularly influential position. Its emphasis on spiritual devotion combined with active participation in social life enabled the order to gain widespread acceptance among different segments of society. The close relationship between the ruling elite and prominent Naqshbandi shaykhs further enhanced the order's authority and influence within the state. As a result, the Naqshbandiyya became one of the principal pillars of the emirate's religious and spiritual structure.

The activities of khanqahs, shrines, and madrasas played a vital role in disseminating religious knowledge and providing moral guidance. These institutions served as centers of learning, spiritual training, and social support, thereby contributing to the stability and





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cohesion of society. In addition, Sufism exerted a lasting influence on literature, architecture, and cultural traditions, leaving a rich spiritual heritage for future generations.

Although the political influence of Sufi orders declined following the abolition of the Emirate of Bukhara in 1920, their spiritual and cultural legacy continued to endure. The traditions, teachings, and values associated with Sufism remain an integral part of the historical and cultural heritage of Central Asia. Therefore, the study of Sufism and Sufi orders in the Emirate of Bukhara not only enhances our understanding of the region's religious history but also provides important insights into its social, cultural, and intellectual development.

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