

An Analytical Study of Kashf-ul-Mahjub

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Abstract:

"Mysticism (Tasawwuf) is an outstanding subject to study in contemporary religious society. it addresses the spiritual and moral values of human life. Tasawwuf is a process purification of self called (تزکیہ نفس) in Islamic teachings, a basic requirement to be a true Muslim. A big collection of literature is found by prominent Sufis and researchers which is a great achievement. The very first book on Tasawwuf in Indo-Pak is "*Kashf-ul-Mahjoob*" written Syed Ali Hajveri^(*) known as Data Ganj Bukhsh who played an important role to guide the people of subcontinent in the light of Islamic message. In the following article, the writer throws light on the unique status of "*Kahsf-ul-Mahjoob*."

Hazrat Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya Mahboob-e-Ilahi (R.A), a splendid beam of spiritual order of Sub-continent (d.725 A.H.) says:

”اگر کسے راہگیری نہ باشد چوں ایں را مطالعہ کند اور اپید اشود۔“⁽¹⁾

(One who has no spiritual guide will get him if one studies this book)

The leader of the caravan of spiritualism, knowledge and wisdom, and mystic path and divine knowledge in Sub-continent As-Shaikh As-Syed Ali bin Usman Al-Hujwari well known as Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh (R.A) (d.1073 A.D, 465 A.H) came to Lahore and lighted the lamp of Islam in the darkness of India. In

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the same region he (R.A) wrote his diversified book, *The Kashf-ul-Mahjub*, based on the principal of divine law, divine knowledge, secrets of spiritualism and learning and wisdom. This book is a precious treasure (and an excellent contribution). This popular and reliable book appeared due to the queries of his near and dear companion Hazrat Abu Saeed Hujweri (R.A) about spiritualism. It is the first book written on the subject of spiritualism in Persian language. It got a distinct place in the saintly courts and the meetings of the scholars. To Barni, among the selected books of interest of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, *The Kashf-ul-Mahjub* had been at the top.⁽²⁾

He (R.A) has written the *Kashf-ul-Mahjub* under the grace of Almighty Allah. It is a precious treasure of the issues regarding Islamic Jurisprudence, mystic path, knowledge of reality and divine knowledge. It is a fine collection of the auspicious circumstances and divine teachings of the preceding saints. Moreover it is the first book written on spiritualism and good deed in Persian and the holy saints and the divine spiritual people have rated it as an unequalled book on spiritualism. *The Kashf-ul-Mahjub* is a guide for those on the path of Perfection as well as it is a perfect spiritual inspirer to the raw and uninitiated. Therefore general people by its study get the wealth of discernment and certainty and those who wandering in the valley of doubt and uncertainty get faith and certainty, and by its repeated study, the veils are removed and there appears new disclosures.⁽³⁾

Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh in the very beginning of the *Kashf-ul-Mahjub* describes the aims, objectives and reason of writing his book:

”قال الشيخ ابو الحسن علي بن عثمان بن ابي علي الجلابي ثم الهجويري وفقني الله تعالى: ” طريق استخارت سپردم واغراضى كه به نفس مى بازگشت - از دل ستردم و به حكم استدعاى تو - اسعدك الله - قيام كردم و بر تمام كردن مراد تو از اين كتاب، عزمى تمام كردم، و مراين كتاب را كشف انجوب نام كردم، مقصود تو معلوم گشت، و سخن اندر غرض تو - در اين كتاب، مقصوم گشت - و من از خداوند تعالى استعانت و خواهم توفيق اندر اتمام اين كتاب - و از حول و قوت خود - تبرا كنم اندر گفتار و كردار، و بالله العون والتوفيق -“⁽⁴⁾

(Abul Hassan Ali bin Usman bin Ali al-Jullabi al-Hujwari says: "I prayed Allah for dream serving as augury and cleared my hearts of desires of my self and may Allah bless you (Shaikh Abu Saeed / R.A) with good fortune, resolved to write this book. I entitled it *Kashf-ul-Mahjub*. I managed to divide the book in sections suitable to your purpose. I pray Allah to aid and prosper me in it's completion and divest myself of my own strength and ability. Allah only is my supporter and He is my helper.)

Mentioning the prayer for dream serving as augury, he (R.A) has preached and introduced the practice of the ancestors according to which before beginning of any task, help and guidance of Allah is sought in the shape of prayer for dream serving as augury. Thus neither any other book could get such recognition nor perform so valuable services for the followers of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) as have carried through this book, particularly regarding real spiritualism. This book is ranked very high. The present conditions and extremities in the affairs of shrines have bedimmed this beautiful and pure atmosphere of spiritualism. These shrines had been the guardians of love and proclaimers of affections. But, now hostilities and ignorance are thriving there. Those who had to support others are themselves unsettled. In these conditions, the *Kashf-ul-Mahjub*, being the custodian of whole Islamic mode of life as well as the monastic concepts, is leading the world to the straight path and also making this path of knowledge of reality and Divine knowledge conspicuous which is being distracted (by them).

In the light of the saying of Kha'jah Nizamuddin Auliya it has really become a "Perfect Spiritual Guide".

Abdur Rehman Jami a leader of the world of love, because of it's same diverse qualities and excellences, describes in *Nafhat-ul Unas*:

”کنیت وے ابو الحسن است عالم و عارف بوده، مرید شیخ ابوالفضل بن حسن نخلی است و صحبت بسیارے از مشائخ رسیده است و صاحب کتاب کشف المحجوب است کہ از کتب معتبره مشہورہ این فن است از وے کہ لطائف و حقائق بسیار در آن کتاب جمع کرده است۔“ (۵)

(Abul Hassan is his family name. He was a scholar as well as a devout, spiritual disciple of Shaikh Abul Fazal bin Hassan Khutli(R.A). He joined the company of many mystics. He(R.A) is the writer of the *Kashf-ul-Mahjub*, which is one of the most reliable and well known books on this topic. He has collected many subtle remarks and facts in this book).

Keeping in view the importance and utility of this book, the *Kashf-ul-Mahjub* has been translated in almost all languages of the world. Professor Nicholson translated the *Kashf-ul-Mahjub* in English, which was published for the first time in 1911 by Gib Memorial, London. In 1936, the second revised edition was published. Professor Nicholson writes about the *Kashf-ul-Mahjub*.

"It's object is to set forth a complete system of Sufism, not only to put together a great number of sayings by different Shaikhs, but to discuss and explain the doctrines and practices of the Sufis."⁽⁶⁾

The learned writer of the article publish in *Daira-e-Muarif-e Islamia*, Punjab University has, thus jotted down the qualities and excellences of the *Kashf-ul-Mahjub*:

"The *Kashf-ul-Mahjub* presents a very high standard of Islamic Sufism, The miracles and supernatural events of the grand saints have been put together herein. Moreover many true and brilliant examples of their noble qualities like patience and endurance, selflessness and generosity, courage, carelessness, truth and sincerity alongwith their many sayings and advices have been extended. They are the proof of the bounty and dignity of these saints as well as the greatness of Islamic civilization and ethics. Moreover the writer liked research work and his standard of research (offered in his book) is very high. The fields of knowledge related to divine metaphysics and ethics are found in abundance in the shape of allegories. It is not possible to give their details here. Along this all this same way he (R.A) has pointed out at many places the weaknesses of human Psyche to which the sight of the

practicing mystics only could access."⁽⁷⁾

The *Kashf-ul-Mahjub* is so effective and clear due to the attraction of its subject and uniqueness of its narration that there is no ambiguity or suspicion in religious issues and tradition left. Instead, the misconceptions arising between spiritualism and divine law are completely and resolutely put down. He (R.A) says in the *Kashf-ul-Mahjub*:

”رکن اول از شریعت کتاب است لقوله تعالیٰ ” مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُّحْكَمَاتٌ “،^(۸) دیگر سنت است، لقوله تعالیٰ ” وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا “،^(۹) و سدیدگراجماع امت است لقوله صلی الله علیه وسلم ” لا یجتمع امتی علی الضلالة علیکم بالسواد الاعظم “،^(۱۰)

(The first pillar of the divine law is the book of Allah, as Allah (Himself) has said that "Here are clear revelation", the second pillar is the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) as has been said in the Holy Qur'an: "What so ever the messenger giveth you, take it. And what so ever he forbade, abstain from it." The third pillar is the consensus of the Muslim community. The Holy Prophet (SAW) has said: "My Ummah does not unite itself on seduction (therefore) side with a huge faction."⁽¹¹⁾

The above mentioned reference has manifested the orientations of Hazrat Hujwari's (R.A) research pattern that on what basis he (R.A) is resolved to arrange his thoughts and views. As has already been mentioned The *Kashf-ul-Mahjub* was in fact, compiled replying some questions asked by his companion, Hazrat Abu Saeed Hujwari (R.A). He asked to describe the following issues;

”قال السائل وهو ابو سعید الهجویری: ” بیان کن مرا اندر تحقیق طریقت تصوف، و کیفیت مقامات ایشان، و بیان مذاهب و مقالات ایشان، و اظهار کن مرا رموز و اشارات ایشان و چگونگی محبت خداوند، عزوجل، و کیفیت اظهار آن برد لها، و سبب حجاب عقول از کنه و ماهیت آن، و نفرت نفس از حقیقت آن، و آرام روح با صفوت آن، و آن چه بدین تعلق دارد از معاملات آن، “،^(۱۲)

"Tell me about:

- a- Reality of the Path of Sufi'ism;
- b- Nature of the "ranks" of the Sufis;
- c- Explain their doctrines and dissertations;
- d- Their allegories and hints;
- e- The nature of Divine Love. And how it is manifested in human hearts;
- f- The veils of intellect and the self, interfering the divine knowledge of the nature of Divine Love;
- g- Then the methods of uncovering of veils; disgust from the veils of 'self' and satisfaction of spirit.

Here is presented a brief introduction of the *Kashf-ul-Mahjub* through its contents and chapters so that a brief sketch of the book may become clear in the mind of the readers:

- 1- Chapter first (a).On the Affirmation of knowledge, (b).Knowledge of reality, nature of knowledge, classifications of knowledge, knowledge of Devine Law, Maxims of the Sufis.
- 2- Chapter on Poverty (*Faqr*), Affirmation of Poverty, Veneration of Dervesh, Maxims of Sufis on Poverty and True wealth (*Ghina*)
- 3- The Sufism, discussions related to the nature of Sufism in the light of Qur'an and Hadith are presented here in. The words Sufi, *Mutasawwif* and *Mustasawwif* are discussed.
- 4- Chapter on the wearing of Patched Frock (Khirqa, where in the superiority of wearing 'patched Frock' and tattered quilt are stated.
- 5- Chapter on Poverty (*Faqr*) and Purity (*Safa*), here in issues concerning poverty and purity are described
- 6- Chapter on Blame (*Malamat*).
- 7- Chapter on Leading companions and their Followers and their Successors. In This chapter the superiority of pious Caliphs, the worthy Companions, their Sufi thoughts and inclinations are stated.
- 8- Chapter on mention of the leading members belonging to the House of the Prophet (SAW) (*Ahl-i Bayt*). Here in the mention of Family of the Prophet (SAW) is found.
- 9- Chapter mentioning the People of the Veranda (*Ashab-i Suffah*).

- 10- Chapter mentioning the leading persons who belonged to the followers and the Ansars. Here in those persons are mentioned who learnt the Knowledge of *Tasawwaf* and spiritualism from the companions.
- 11- Chapter on the mention of the leading followers of the successor of the Prophet (SAW) down to his age. In this chapter under about 63 sub heading the circumstances of the successors of the followers have been given and proved that they pursued sufi way of life.
- 12- Chapter on the contemporary Sufis.
- 13- A brief account of the modern Sufis of the later Centuries.
- 14- Chapter concerning different Sufi sects and their doctrines, distinctions, ranks and anecdotes. Here in the thoughts and doctrines of different orders of Sufis are mentioned.
- 15- Chapter concerning Repentance.
- 16- Chapter concerning Love.
- 17- Chapter concerning Generosity (*Ghina*).
- 18- Chapter concerning Hunger.
- 19- Chapter concerning Contemplation.
- 20- Chapter concerning Company (*Suhbat*).
- 21- Chapter concerning the Rules of the Company.
- 22- Chapter concerning the Rules of Company affecting Sojourn.
- 23- Chapter concerning Company during Travel.
- 24- Chapter concerning Rules of Eating.
- 25- Chapter concerning Rules of Walking.

Chapters 15 to 39 describe in detail the issues as: repentance, love, generosity, hunger contemplations, company, rules of company, rules of sojourn, rules of company in journey, journey and sojourn, speech and silence asking and relinquishing questions, marriage and celibacy, the audition of the Qur'an, poetry, melodiousness, commands about audition, differences about audition, rules of audition, reality of audition, fit of religious frenzy (*Wajd*) and dancing etc.⁽¹³⁾

To Syed Khurshid Gilani:

"This book is a nosegay of spiritualism which is decorated with different flowers. Every flower has different colour and unique fragrance. In this book Makhdoom Hujwari has pursued those so-called Sufis

who in guise of spiritualism became the cause of infamy of spiritualism and disgrace of Sufis. This book is a beautiful collection of knowledge and practice, which is needed in all ages. It serves as lighthouse for the travelers of straight path. It may be claimed that its complete study is enough to fully comprehend spiritualism, everything becomes clear and there remains no difficulty."⁽¹⁴⁾

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