Hujwiri’s Kashf al-Mahjub

Proof of His Impressionability from Different Leaders and Sources

Abstract

The present paper will acquaint the reader with the life of the well-known character of Sufism, namely, Ali Ibn Usman Hujwiri. The author, having taken a new approach, endeavors to analyze the impression of different teachers and leaders on Hujwiri during his adventurous migration. To illustrate, Abul-Abbas Shaghani, Abu-Ahmad Mozaffar Hamdan, Abul-Ghasem Korarakani, Imam Abul-Ghasem Ghushairi and Sheikh Abul-Fazl Mohammad Ibn Hasan Khottali have effective roles in Hujwiri’s later approaches to life and religion, whose influence will be described subsequently. Furthermore, he surveys the extent to which different sources or references had influenced Hujwiri’s outlook. The reflection of these impacts will be clearly traced in Hujwiri’s masterpiece, Kashf al-Mahjub (Revelation of the Veiled). Resale ye Ghushairie by Imam Abul-Ghasem Ghushairi, Sharh al-Ta’arof by Mostamli Bokhari, Al-Loma’ by Abu-Nasr al-Sarraj and Tabaqat al-Sufiyya by Abu-Abd al-Rahman Sulami are some of the mentioned sources which formulated Hujwiri’s thought and vision in one way or another.

Keywords: Hujwiri, teachers, references, Kashf-ol-Mahjub, AlLoma’, impressionability.

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Introduction

Abul-Hasan Ali Ibn Usman Ibn Abiali al-Jullahi al-Hujwiri al-Ghaznawi titled as Daata Ganjbakhsh was born in the late 4th century, in the period of Soltan Mahmud Ghaznawi. He spent his childhood and youth in Jullah and Hujwir of Ghazni. His father Sheikh Usman Ibn Abiali was renowned in the current sciences of that time. His mother was also from a virtual family and his maternal uncle was called Taj al-O’lia. He took many trips and visited many areas within the Islamic territory. This long journey includes visiting many cities, namely, Ozkand in present Kyrgyzstan, Sarakhs, Marv, Tus, Neyshhabur, Bastam, Ghomes, Damascus, Baqdad, and Lahore. He could thus visit many parts of the Islamic territory and moreover benefited from many great mullahs. The considerate advice he took and he, being addressed as “O, Boy”, suggest that he was much younger than many sheikhs such as Abul-Fazl Khottali (453 A.H.), Mozaffar Hamdan (contemporary to Abu-Saeed) and Abul-Ghasem Korrakani (469 A.H.) (Maki, 2005: 147). His many contacts with celebrated men were different from one another, sometimes restricted only to a visit, sometimes led to association and friendship, and sometimes he served some of them and took lessons from them (Ibid., 2005: 150). We will now introduce some of the names who influenced Hujwiri.

1. Abul-Fazl Khottali

Among many sheikhs he came across, Abul-Fazl Khottali is the one that Hujwiri accepts as his leader and teacher, and it seems that soon after his acquaintance with Khottali, he joined him and stayed at his service until he was alive. Abul-Fazl Mohammad Ibn Hasan Khottali, famously called Khottal (a village near Balkh), was also named, Abul-Fazl Shami, as he spent a long time in Sham. Based on what we read in Kashf al-Mahjub. Khottali was an expert in exegeses and was
a man of God as he is addressed as “zein al-o’Tad and Sheikh al-Ibada’ (Hujwiri, 1990: 450).

Finally, he died in Beit Aljen, a village near Damascus. In his last moments of life, as he was embraced by Hujwiri, he emphatically recommended him to forgive the one, the one with whom he was in the sulks (Maki, 2005: 167).

2- Abul-Ghasem Korrakani

Abul-Ghasem Abdollah Ibn Ali Ibn Abdollah Korrakani Tusi taught in Tus and spent life by farming. He was peerless in his time and was known as “Sheikh al-Mashayekh” (شيخ المشايخ) and “Ghotb al-Madar alayh” (أعلى المبارا عليه) which is well parallel to what Ghazali describes about him: a man of God and brave against world lovers (Maki, 2005: 223). Abu-Saeed calls him “Padshah” (پادشاه), and they both revered Hallaj. The time Hujwiri was at his service, he was still consumed with youth pride; however, old Korrakani considerately
heard his speech and gave him lessons. Hujwiri warmly took his advice so that Korракани, many times, praised him and prayed for him. Korракани died in 469 and was replaced by Abu-Ali Farmadi, his son-in-law and follower, and the teacher of Mohammad Ghazali.

3. Abul-Abbas Shaghani

Hujwiri was taught by him in some fields. There was a warm amiable relationship between the two, and it seems that this intimate relation was much due to his talent and genius. Hujwiri could fathom his delicate complex speech well. Sheikh emphatically obeyed religious customs, and Hujwiri totally followed him in this route. Despite his fame, Shaghani lived a very simple life. He was busy in Neyshabur School training many students. He was praised by Abu-Saeed Abul-Kheir.

4. Mozaffar Hamdan

Hujwiri met Abu-Ahmad Mozaffar Ibn Hamdan Noghani when he was still young. Hujwiri respected him as much as Korракани and Ghushairi. Abu-Saeed praises him as: “They took us as slaves while Sheikh Mozaffar was taken by the route of God.”

"ما را به درکه بندگی بردنده و شیخ مظفر را راه خداوندی" 

Hujwiri has also lauded him as: “The Almighty, with His power, opened the door of this story to him and placed the crown of munificence on his head.”

"اندز بابش ریاست خداوندی-عزوجل-در این فصه بر یو پکشاد و تاج کرامت بر سر یو بنهاد"

And all these demonstrate his great social status (Ibid., 2005: 264).

5-. Abul-Ghasem Ghushairi

Meeting Ghushairi was undoubtedly a great achievement for
Hujwiri, though their relationship was not so deep and close. Ghushairi was a pioneer in many fields in his period so that he was titled “Ustad Imam” (استاد امام), or “Zein al-Islam” (زين الإسلام); few writers have praised him like Hujwiri. About him, he says: “And the Almighty has kept his attitude and tongue from nonsense.” (Hujwiri, 1990: 699)

"و خداوند تعالی حال و زبان وی راز حسو محفوظ گردانیده است"

In his youth Ghushairi was trained in horse riding and fighting, and to learn mathematics he travelled to Neyshabur and coincidentally came to the presence of Abu- Ali Daghgh and lost his heart with him. Furthermore, he took lessons from many other scholars in Khorasan. Among his illustrious works we may refer to “Letaf ol-Isharat” (الشف (الإشارات)) and “Al-Resaleh” (الرسلاء). Ghushairi, contrary to Hujwiri, inserts no mention of his contemporaries such as Abu-Ali Daghgh and Abu-Saeed Abul-Kheir (Maki, 2005: 179). He mentions nothing about Hallaj.

6. Impressive Sources and References on Hujwiri

Both Kashf al-Mahjub and Al-Loma’ start with praising science and scientists and proving the fact that Sufi is in pursuit of knowledge. The only difference is that in Kashf al-Mahjub, the Sufism chapter is prefaced by describing the poor and poverty.

The writer of Al-Loma’ believes that Sufi is the source of the whole sciences and virtues, and the reason for naming Sufi is not merely due to their clothes and appearance. He calls Sufis “Adaat al-Anbia” (عادات الابناء) and says (Tusi, 2001: 756):

لا أن لبص الصواف داب الابناء عليهم السلام شعار الأولياءو الاصفياء و نسبوا إلى ظاهر القياس
ولم ينسبوا إلى نوع من انواع العلوم و الاحوال التي يهم بها مترسمون لأن لبص الصوف كان داب الابناء عليهم السلام و الصديقين و شعار المساكين المتناسيمين.
In introducing the chapter of Poverty (فقر), Hujwiri is under the influence of Al-Loma’. He interprets “the high position” (مقام شريف) splendidly in Kashf al-Mahjub and just like Al-Loma’ refers to 273rd verse of sura Baqara (Hujwiri, 1980: 79):

إلى القراء الذين أحصروا في سبيل الله لا يستطيعون ضروب في الأرض...

It must be considered that though the informative and narrative form in Al-Loma’ may never parallel Kashf al-Mahjub, Kashf al-Mahjub is superior to the previous works in reason.

In Kashf al-Mahjub, Shibli (the celebrated sufi) is praised. In the chapter regarding the poor he is revered by “Rahmat Ollah Alayh” (رحمت الله عليه) whenever we come to his quotations. However, there are no quotations of him in Al-Loma’ or Al-Tasawwof. Instead, in Al-Loma’, the writer has such a look towards Junaid whenever he is quoted.

In the chapter Al-Tasawwof, Hujwiri names some reasons for which the word Sufi is used. He believes Sufi is not derived from any root, that is, it is not a compound (Hujwiri, 1982: 968):

بر مقتضى لغت، اشتقاق ابن لغت درست نگردها، هیچ معنی از آنکه ابن معنی معتمد تراس آن است که ابن را جنسی بودن از آن، اشتقاق می‌باشد، از سه، مجازات خواهند. لان الصوفي معنی عن العبارة و الاشاره.

Therefore, he calls those reaching to perfection” Sufi” ( مصدری، and the pursuers “Motesawwef (مصوری). The writer of Al-Loma’, though in the chapter

"نطلقان صوفی مرفعه - لیث (افضال ادایهم اللباس)" refers to the reason for which the word Sufi is selected. It seems that Hujwiri has referred to Al-Ta’arrof le Mazhab-e Ahl-e Tasawwof, as we read it in Al-Ta’arrof (Kalabazi, 1989: 21):
Despite the opinion that, some believe there is no mention of “suf” (مروحة) in Al-Loma’, but instead, “moragha” (مرقعه) has been used, the writer introduces ‘safa’ (صفا) and “sofeh” (صفه) as the stems of the word Sufi (Tusi, 2001: 779).

The writer of Al-Loma’ believes that wearing Moragha and Suf is not restricted to Sufis only, and that they can be covered in any sort of clothing (Ibid.: 781). The writer of Kashf al-Mahjub, on the other hand, believes that wearing Moragha is the sign of Sufism and the tradition of the holy Prophet and says (Hujwiri, 1980:61):

لاست مرقعه شعار متصوفه و سنت رسول الله (ص) است.

It must be considered, however, that Hujwiri does not put emphasis on wearing a special sort of clothing for himself and says (Ibid., 1990: 71):

اگر خداوندشان عبایی داده است یوشیده اند و آگر برده داشته است هم بوده اند... و من که علی بن عثمان الجنابی ام و فقیه الله این طریق را پسندیده ام و اندی اسفار خود همین کردیم.

One of the other similarities between Al-Loma’ and Kashf al-Mahjub is concerning the disciples of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him). In both works caliphs are praised, particularly Abubakr to whom many parts are allocated. Without imitation or accessibility, in both works he is known as the leader of Sufis (Maki, 2005: 800). Regarding this, we read in Kashf al-Mahjub (Hujwiri, 1980: 98):

امام اهل طریقت وی است خاص

Similarly, we read about Abubakr in Al-Loma’ (Tusi, 2001: 599):

اول لسان الصوفي ظهرت في هذه الامه على لسان ابي بيكر.
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Hujwiri describes Abubakr as the master of worshipers and says (Hujwiri, 1982: 98):

مشایخ وی را مقدم ارباب مشاهدات دانسته اند و عمر را مقدم ارباب مشاهدات...و مقام مجاهدت اند هنگام مشاهدات چون قطعه ای بود اندر بحری...و اقتدای این طاقمه به تجريد و تمکین و حرص بر قدر و تمبا به ترک ریاست به اوست.

He also describes Omar, the second caliph, as the leader of believers and the first who has worn Moragha and says (Ibid.:100):

او سرهناهار اهل اسلام و صعلوك جمع اهل اسلام و اندر بحر مجیت غزیه بود

مخصوص بود به صلابت و فرست...بس اقتدای این طاقه به لبس مرقعه بهدوست.

And we read in Al-Loma’ (Tusi, 2005:121):

و روی عنی ای عثمان الحنفی ان قال رایت علی عمر(رض) قمیصا فيها انتن عشره رقعه...من اختباره لبس المرقعه و الخشونه و....

And about Usman, the third caliph, in Kashf al-Mahjub (Hujwiri, 1982:101):

اقتدای این طاقه به بذل مال و حیا و تسليم الامر و اختلاص در عبادت به وي است.

In Al-Loma’ he is described this way (Tusi, 2005: 122):

اما عثمان بن عفان فقد خص بالتمکین والتمکین من اعلی مراتب المحققین و مما يتعلق به اهل الحقائق من اهل التصوف.

Furthermore, we notice that the praise of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) by Hujwiri in Kashf al-Mahjub is accompanied by more striking reverence in comparison with the other caliphs (Hujwiri,1990: 102):

فرغی بحری بلا و حراق نار، ولا و مقدادی اولیاء و اصفیاء علی بن علی ای طالب کرم الله وجهه... او را اندر این طریق شاگین عظیم و درجی رفیع است و اندر علم و معاملت امام این طریق است پس اهل این طریقی اقتدا بهد کند در حقائق عبادات و دفاعی اشارات.
And in Al Loma’ we read (Tusi, 2005: 125,126):

و لامير المومنين على (رض) خصوصيه من بين جميع أصحاب رسول الله (ص) معاني جليلة و اشارات طفيفه... فهو اول من تكلم في الاحوال و المقامات... و لعلی (رض) كبير من الاحوال و الاخلاق و افعال التي يتعلق بها ارباب القلب و اهل الامامات و اهل المواجید من الصوفيه

It seems that Hujwiri in parting Kashf al-Mahjub into chapters has obviously referred to Al-Loma’ but in each chapter he has attempted to insert different contents.


(شمع آن محمد- زین العباد- شمع الامام- جمع اهل معاذین- قبیله ی اهل بیلا- وارث نبوت- برہان اهل مشاهدات- سیف ست و جمال طریقت).

Hujwiri regards all Ahl-e Bait as Sufis but in Al-Ta’arrof le Mazhab-e Ahl-e Tasawwof, these characters are just named without any description and in Al-Loma’ there is no mention of them as Sufi leaders.

It seems that Hujwiri, though a Hanifi, believes in “Manzelaat al-Bein al Manzelayn” (منزله بين منزلين), which is a Shiite thought. Translating Imam Hassan's letter, he narrates (Ibid.: 107):

انكار تقدير مذهب قدرب و حوالی معاذین به خداد مذهب جرب پس بنده مختار است
اندر كسب خود به مقدار استطاعتین از خداد عز و جل و دین میان جرب و قدر است.

In describing “Ahl-e Soffeh” (اهل صفة), Hujwiri pays strong attention to Abu-Abdol Rahman Mohammad Ibn al-Hussein al-Sulami, the
writer of Tabaqat al-Sufiyya and says (Hujwiri, 1990: 122):

أو نقل طريقت و كلام مشايخ بوذه است تاريخي كرده است مرا اهل صفه را مفرد.

In this regard you may also refer to Tabaqat al-Sufiyya in the chapter of Tasawwof (Sulami, 1998: 47).

In Al-Loma’ the names of Ahl-e Soffeh (اهل صفه) are mentioned as well. In Al-Ta’arrof, though there is no mention of Ahl-e Soffeh, the names of three figures of Tabeien are mentioned which also exist in Kashf al-Mahjub.

In Al-Loma’ there is no mention of Sufic stages after Tabeien. In Kashf al-Mahjub, Hujwiri introduces seventy eight Sufis in an alliterative background describing their mystical powers and gives a short narrative about their life. Such a style was then imitated in Tazkirat al-O’lia by Attar, with more extended descriptions though.

One of the features of Kashf al-Mahjub is mentioning the names of the late Sufi leaders of the time and even the contemporaries with expanding on their lives which was peerless until that time.

To prove the mystical powers of men of god, in both Kashf al-Mahjub and Al-Loma’, it is referred to the palm tree by which holy Mary was fed and also the story of Jorayh who was acquitted of adultery by the baby witnessing his guiltlessness, and also the story of the cave, narrated by the holy prophet, in which three people imprisoned in a cave, could release due to their deeds, and the story of Abdullah Omar who was accosted by an angry lion on his way. He addresses it as:" O' dog. If this is the God's will, attack me,

but if not, let me pass.” The lion stood, bowed to him and let him pass (Hujwiri, 1980: 342-347) (Tusi, 2005: 277).

Both in Kashf al-Mahjub and in Al-Loma’, the two schools of Jundieh and Noorieh are mentioned immediately one after the other, without any similarity in content though.
In all these works, Kashf al-Mahjub, Al-Ta’arrof and Al-Loma’, writers elaborate on mystical powers and miracles. It is worth saying that with respect to this part, Kashf al-Mahjub and Al-Loma’ present a common tale which is about the beasts coming to the house of Sahl Ibn Abdullah Tostari to be fed.

Different branches of Sufism and their beliefs appeared in Kashf al-Mahjub for the first time and then were imitated in Tazkirat al-O’lia by Attar and Nafahat al-UNS by Jami. In Al-Ta’arrof there is no mention of Sufi branches except for Noorieh. What is intended by Noorieh is not the followers of Abul-Hassan Noori, but it means Ashab-e Soffeh.

In Al-Loma’ Abulh-Hassan Noori is introduced, without any mention of his religious branch. In fact, Hujwiri is the first writer who mentions the twelve branches of Sufism in Kashf al-Mahjub.

The writer of Kashf al-Mahjub prefers poverty to wealth; therefore, he refers to the outlooks of Yahya Ibn Maaz, Ahmad Ibn Abi al-Havari and Hazeth al-Mohasebi who reject wealth.

The writer of Al-Loma’ knows Abubakar Shibli as his leader, and the writer of Kashf al-Mahjub, too, reveres him more than the others. In both works Junaid and Shibli are recalled with splendor.

In the fifth chapter of Kashf al-Mahjub (كشف الحجاب الخاص في الصلاة) and also in Al-Loma’ there are two common narratives; one with regard to Junaid and the other about Sahl Ibn Abdullah.

In the chapter “Al-Mohabba” (لمحبة), in both of these works, Kashf al-Mahjub and Al-Loma’ it is referred to 54th verse of Sura Maeda and the 165th verse of Sura Baqara.

In the seventh chapter “Al-Som” (الصوم) two sayings are narrated from prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him), similarly in both works (Tusi, 2005: 151) (Hujwiri, 1990: 469).

Hujwiri recalls Al-Loma’ and its writer Abu-Nasr al-Sarraj Tusi
with praise, twice in Kaf al-Mahjub and says (Hujwiri, 1980: 473,503):

و فرقم تيگو كره است شيخ ابوتشر سراح رحمة الله عليه صاحب اللمع اندر كتاب خود
ميان آداب...

There are at least fifty similar headlines in Kaf al-Mahjub and Al-Loma’, and it signifies that Hujwiri has referred to Al-Loma’ as a model.

Conclusions

Hujwiri, among his masters, reveres Abul-Fazl Khottali as his leader and serves him for long. It seems that his outlook towards religious jurisprudence and his sense of forgiveness originate from his master's outlook. Korakani, has, on the other hand, impressed Hujwiri in connection to his familiarity with Hallaj. Abul-Abbas Shaghani played an important role in formulating Hujwiri's perception of the world and is considered a big force in guiding Hujwiri through the paths of Sharia and encouraging him to simplicity. In addition, Mozaffar Hamdan, establishes his position among Hujwiri's masters efficiently, particularly due to his spiritual influence on him. Hujwiri, follows Ghusairiri's outlook which is different from Hallaj's and opposite of Abu-Saeed's. Among many different books, Al-Loma’ serves as a model for Hujwiri in his composition of the chapter of Faghr (Poverty). Kashf al-Mahjub is, however, clearly superior based on its Sufi reasoning and its form of narration. Kashf al-Mahjub, as regards expounding on the word of Sufi and its true definition, resembles Al-Ta’arof the most. In both Kashf al-Mahjub and Al-Loma’ Imam Ali is admired outstandingly and he holds a strong position among the other caliphs. Kashf al-Mahjub and Al-Loma’, among the other books written on Sufism, are reckoned to be more representative. Interestingly, Kashf al-Mahjub resembles Al-Loma’ regarding its
chapters. Hujwiri takes a positive stand towards the Shiite Imams, and Shiite thoughts are lucidly reflected in his composition. Kashf al-Mahjub's content impressionability from Al-Loma’ and Al-Ta’arrof is undeniable as well.
References


