

“Kashkuli Salimiy” – a Pearl of Our Spiritual Heritage

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Abstract: In this article, you will get acquainted with the analysis of the work “Kashkuli Salimiy” by Mirza Salimbek, a historian and poet who served in various positions in the Bukhara Emirate. In the work, the author reflects on the behavior of a Muslim, good deeds, and harmful vices.

Keywords: Islam, faith, heaven, hell, Prophet, sin, reward, charity, patience, gentleness, sincerity, poverty, hypocrisy.



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INTRODUCTION

Mirza Salimbek ibn Muhammad Rahim (1848–1930) was a historian, poet, statesman, and diplomat who lived during the Bukhara Emirate and the Bukhara People’s Republic. He served as governor of several districts and provinces within the Emirate of Bukhara, carried out diplomatic missions on behalf of the emirs, and participated in negotiations with the British. After the Red Army’s Bukhara operation in 1920, he was arrested, but released a year later. He then worked as an administrator under the Bukhara People’s Soviet Republic, participated in historical research, and managed the library of ancient manuscripts. In his memoirs, Mirza Salimbek describes the history of the Bukhara Emirate, the conditions in its provinces, the historical geography of various regions, and the activities of the Jadids in the Emirate of Bukhara.

ANALYSIS OF LITERATURE AND METHODS

Mirza Salimbek’s scholarly activity, his historical perspective, and socio-cultural views — especially his focus on historical events and the history of the Bukhara Emirate — hold a significant place in his writings. Given the broad and topical nature of this subject, numerous academic studies have been conducted. The literature related to this topic can be grouped and studied under the following categories:

1. Research conducted during the Soviet period:

In this era, the personality and scholarly work of Mirza Salimbek were often either overlooked or approached with ideological bias. The studies of the time, largely based on Marxist-Leninist methodology, tended to disregard or criticize Islamic worldviews. Salimbek’s works received little attention, and when discussed, efforts were sometimes made to portray him as opposing the Jadid movement. The treatment of historical events in his memoirs was often one-sided in these studies.

2. Works published in the post-independence period in Uzbekistan:

After Uzbekistan gained independence in 1991, there was a renewed effort to reassess the legacy of historical figures. Mirza Salimbek's writings were re-examined in a more balanced and scholarly manner. His works such as "Tarikhi Salimiy", "Tavorikhi muttaqadimin va muttaakhirin", and "Kashkuli Salimiy" became subjects of academic interest. Researchers like A.R. Bukhariy and K. Rakhimov published articles highlighting his historical and publicist activities¹. Translation and commentary efforts made his writings more accessible to a broader readership.

3. Studies conducted abroad:

Some foreign orientalists have also referred to Mirza Salimbek's activities within the context of broader research on the history of Bukhara. Although not dedicated solely to him, these studies sometimes cite his works as valuable historical sources. In particular, his writings are occasionally used to illustrate the political and religious atmosphere of the Bukhara Emirate.

Methodological Foundations:

This research is based on principles of historicity and systematization. The sources were examined through a critical and analytical lens. A comparative historical approach was used to evaluate Salimbek's accounts alongside those of other contemporaneous authors. Contextual analysis (considering the socio-cultural environment of the time) played a key role in interpreting the texts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research demonstrate that Mirza Salimbek was a prominent intellectual and historian of his time. He had a deep understanding of the internal and external dynamics of the Bukhara Emirate and analyzed events within the cultural and intellectual framework of his era. As an eyewitness to many important events, Salimbek drew meaningful conclusions from his experiences. This lends his works a unique value as primary historical sources.

In his memoirs, historian Narzulla Yo'ldoshev, who worked as a research associate at the Bukhara Regional Museum in 1958, recounts how he first became acquainted with the works of Mirzo Salimbek. At that time, Salimova, the daughter of the late Mirzo Salimbek, was employed at the museum as a supervisor. One day, noticing several old manuscript books that the scholar had purchased at the local market, she asked him, "Can you read and understand these books?" Yo'ldoshev replied that he had learned to read Arabic script from his mother at an early age.

Upon hearing this, Salimova told him, "There is a book left by my father. He wrote it himself. I have preserved it through many hardships. If possible, I would be grateful if you could transcribe it into modern script and translate it." The following day, she entrusted the manuscript to Yo'ldoshev.

The manuscript, beautifully written in Mirzo Salimbek's own hand in nasta'liq script, contained two of his works compiled into a single volume: "Kashkul-i Salimiy" and "Tavorikh-i Mutaqaddimin and Muta'akhhirin". The manuscript was written in Tajik-Persian and, except for the missing first folio and the last three to four pages, the remaining 318 pages were preserved in full.

During the Soviet era, the publication of such religious and historical texts was nearly impossible. As a result, this manuscript remained unpublished for many years and was preserved in private hands. Only after Uzbekistan gained independence did attitudes toward historical and spiritual heritage change, allowing Yo'ldoshev to begin translating this rare work into Uzbek.

¹ Бухорий А.Р. Рахимов К. Мирзо Салимбек колдирган мерос // Мозийдан садо, 2006. № 1.

He notes that certain Arabic sentences and Qur'anic verses in the manuscript were not translated by the author himself, and for this reason, he did not include their translations either².

The first **180 pages** of the manuscript consist of various narratives and sections devoted to religious and ethical matters, including moral teachings, spiritual advice, and reflections rooted in Islamic thought and Sufi philosophy. In this portion, the author emphasizes personal development, ethical conduct, and moral responsibility.

The remaining 154 pages are historical in nature and cover a broad range of topics, including the history of Ancient Iran and Turan, the history of Central Asia from the era of Genghis Khan to Amir Olimkhan, as well as selected episodes from the histories of Russia and the Ottoman Empire. This section reflects Mirzo Salimbek's historical perspective and his understanding of regional and global developments.

The first part of the work is currently preserved at the Manuscript Fund of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan under inventory number №4714³.

In "Kashkuli Salimiy", the author emphasizes ethical education through religious narratives. This gives the work not only historical but also moral and didactic significance.

The educational value of this book lies in its inclusion of stories and legends about our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the spiritual leaders of the Sufi path (tariqat). These narratives serve as moral lessons for young people and play a significant role in shaping their national ideology.

Mirza Salimbek draws meaningful conclusions from every event and occurrence he personally witnessed. He used a wide range of books and manuscripts in compiling this work. The historian Narzullo Yo'ldoshev translated "Kashkuli Salimiy" from Persian-Tajik into Uzbek. The translator rendered the historical and educational text in a clear, fluent, and accessible language. Complex sentences were explained, and historical figures and events were annotated.

"Kashkuli Salimiy" is written in the traditional Islamic scholarly style. The title means "The Dervish's Bag of Salimiy." The work consists of 49 chapters, focusing mainly on Islamic teachings. Below is the list of chapter titles:

Chapter No.	Chapter Title
1	The Virtue of the Phrase "A'udhu billahi min ash-shaytan ir-rajim"
2	The Virtue of the Phrase "Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim"
3	Explanation of Faith and Islam
4	The Statement "La ilaha illallah"
5 ⁴	Explanation of Repentance, Praise, and Supplication
9	The Virtue of Sending Blessings upon the Prophet (Salawat)
10	The Virtue of Reciting the Qur'an
11	Explanation of the Virtue of Knowledge
12	Description of the Angels' Qualities
13	Creation of Adam (peace be upon him)

² Мирзо Салимбек. *Кашкули Салимий (Таворихи муттақадимин ва муттаахирин)* / Нарзулло Йўлдошев таржимаси. – Бухоро: "Бухоро" нашриёти, 2003. – Б. 4.

³ Епифанова Л. П. *Рукописные источники по истории Средней Азии периода присоединения её к России.* – Ташкент: Изд-во «Наука» УзССР, 1965. – С.46.

⁴ In the manuscript, chapters VI, VII, and VIII are missing. However, this omission does not appear to be the result of lost pages. It is likely that the author skipped the numbering of chapters VI to VIII and moved directly from chapter V to chapter IX. This assumption is supported by the uninterrupted sequence of page numbers (28–29), which suggests that no folios were removed or lost at that point in the text.

14 About Prophet Noah (peace be upon him)
15 Story of Prophet Abraham and the Tyrant Nimrod
16 Story of Prophet Job (Ayyub)
18 Construction of the Al-Aqsa Mosque
— ⁵ Repentance and Seeking Forgiveness
— About Ablution
— About Prayer
— The Virtue of Friday
25 On Torment and Punishment
26 About Fasting
27 On the Virtue of Hajj
28 On Zakat and Truthfulness
29 The Virtue of Poverty
30 Condemnation of Worldliness and Hoping in God
31 Sincerity and Avoidance of Hypocrisy
32 Humility, Nobility, and Astonishing Qualities
33 About Blame, Envy, Weakness, and Grudges
34 On Backbiting and Other Vices
35 The Virtue of Hunger and the Harm of Gluttony
36 On Brotherhood, Companionship, and Parents' Rights
37 On Love and Charity
38 Promotion of Virtue (Amr bil-Ma'ruf)
39 On Piety and Abstinence
40 The Association of Usury and Intoxication
41 Narration of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) Migration
42 Fear and Severity of Death
43 Torment of the Grave
44 Seeing the Deceased in Dreams
45 Description of the Day of Judgment
46 Description of the Fire of Hell
47 Description of Divine Mercy
48 About Paradise
49 Narratives and Stories

In the first chapter, the author discusses the virtues of saying “A‘udhu billahi min ash-shaytan ir-rajim”, citing traditions from the Prophet’s companions. He explains the seven names of Satan, including ‘Ibad (worshipper), Sajid (prostrator), Khashi‘ (humble), and others.

The second chapter focuses on the virtues of the phrase “Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim” and includes descriptions of paradise. The third chapter summarizes the principles of faith and Islamic laws. The fourth chapter, which is 7 pages long, is dedicated to the phrase “La ilaha illallah”, emphasizing its power to erase sins.

In the fifth chapter, the miracles of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the story of Rayhan ibn Malik’s conversion to Islam are narrated. The ninth chapter discusses the importance of sending blessings upon the Prophet, and the tenth explains the virtues of reading the Qur’an.

⁵ The structure of the manuscript reveals that chapters 19 through 24 are not arranged in a consistent order. Moreover, at least **three chapters are missing** within this range. This irregularity may be attributed to the loss of certain pages over time or to errors during the process of copying the manuscript. As a result, it is currently impossible to determine the complete and original sequence of the chapters with certainty.

The chapter on knowledge encourages the pursuit of learning, describing knowledge as the fruit of faith and comparing it to wealth. Subsequent chapters cover angels, the prophets Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Job, as well as topics like ablution, prayer, fasting, zakat, and pilgrimage.

Chapter 29 praises poverty and modesty, arguing against arrogance and asserting the equality of the rich and poor in Islam. In the following chapters, the author outlines both virtuous and sinful traits through religious-philosophical perspectives.

Among the positive qualities he discusses are reliance on God, sincerity, humility, endurance of hunger, brotherhood, and charity. Opposing traits include usury and alcohol consumption. Chapter 41 details the Prophet's (peace be upon him) migration, while later chapters discuss death, the afterlife, the Day of Judgment, heaven, and hell.

The final 49th chapter has an autobiographical tone, featuring inspiring personal stories. For instance, Salimbek impresses Russian officials with his sharp-witted answers about Bukhara. In another tale, while traveling to serve in the Ziyovuddin governorship, he loses his way but is guided by a luminous old man who predicts a bright future for him.

Salimbek also reflects on his loyal service to the emirs and the honors he received in return. Overall, "Kashkuli Salimiy" offers deep insight into Mirza Salimbek's rich spiritual world.

In his writings, Salimbek strongly criticizes the activities of the Jadids, viewing their methods as contrary to traditional Islamic values. This reflects his cautious and conservative stance toward reformist movements.

Salimbek's works contain rich information on the social and political situation of Bukhara's provinces, their rulers, military campaigns, and historical geography. These details make his writings essential resources for modern historians.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Mirza Salimbek's historical works serve as important materials for studying the history of Bukhara. His intellectual legacy — especially books like "Kashkuli Salimiy" — holds value not only for historians but also for educators and cultural scholars interested in national heritage and identity.

The historian and poet Mirza Salimbek's work "Kashkuli Salimiy" is considered one of the pearls of our spiritual heritage. In this work, the author includes Islamic rulings, as well as historical narratives about prophets and kings. It would not be wrong to describe "Kashkuli Salimiy" as an encyclopedic work.

His major work *Kashkuli Salimiy* stands out as an encyclopedic and didactic composition written in the traditional Islamic scholarly style. It explores Islamic legal teachings, the lives of prophets, and tales about Sufi saints, contributing to the moral education of youth and the formation of national identity. Salimbek's use of personal observation and numerous historical sources highlights his deep commitment to historiography. The translation of this work from Persian-Tajik into Uzbek by historian Narzullo Yo'ldoshev has made it accessible to a wider audience.

Academic research into his work can be divided into three main phases: studies from the Soviet era, post-independence Uzbek scholarship, and references found in foreign academic works. While Soviet interpretations often marginalized or misrepresented his legacy, recent Uzbek research has re-evaluated him as a significant historical figure. His opposition to the Jadid reform movement further reflects his traditionalist views rooted in Islamic conservatism.

Overall, Mirza Salimbek's writings serve not only as historical chronicles but also as tools for ethical guidance and cultural preservation. His legacy remains an essential component of Uzbekistan's intellectual heritage.

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