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The History of the First Khanaqohs in Bukhara

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Abstract: During the Timurid era, the khanaqohs built in Bukhara were further improved. They were used not only for religious ceremonies, but also for scientific conferences and literary discussions. Since great attention was paid to mysticism and religious sciences during the Timurid era, khanaqohs also developed as centers of science and spirituality. The khanaqohs built in Bukhara during this period were also of a high architectural level, and they enriched the cultural landscape of the city

Keys words: Bukhara, Transoxiana, Islam, Kubraviya, Naqshbandi, Yassawi

Bukhara has long been known as one of the major religious, cultural and scientific centers of Central Asia. This city became one of the important political and religious capitals of the Muslim East from the 9th-10th centuries. It was during this period that mosques, madrasas and khanaqohs began to be built in Bukhara. Especially as a result of the widespread spread of Sufi orders, khanaqohs took a strong place in social life. Historical sources indicate that the first khanaqohs appeared in Bukhara in the 9th century. During this period, Islam became increasingly strong in Transoxiana, paving the way for the formation of new social institutions. Although khanaqohs were initially built as places of prayer and conversation for Sufis and dervishes, they soon became centers of knowledge, enlightenment and charity.

The first khanaqohs operating in Bukhara are often associated with the names of famous sheikhs. They not only carried out religious activities, but also engaged in the education of murids, scientific and spiritual conversations, and attracting young people to knowledge. For example, in the 9th-10th centuries, Sufi schools operating around Bukhara gradually led to the formation of separate khanaqohs.

In the 11th-12th centuries, the influence of the Naqshbandi, Kubraviya, and Yassawi orders expanded in Bukhara and its surroundings. Each order built khanaqohs in its center, directing them to function as religious, spiritual, and social centers. During this period, khanaqohs in Bukhara played an important role in the daily life of the people. They carried out activities such as education, charity, and assistance to travelers.

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By the time of the Shaybanids, Bukhara had once again become the political and religious center of Central Asia. The khanaqohs built during this period were more associated with the Naqshbandi order, and they gained great influence in society. The khanaqohs built by the Juybarid dynasty also played an important role in the political life of Bukhara.

The main feature of the early khanaqohs in Bukhara was that they were not only religious places, but

also fulfilled broad social functions. They promoted good deeds among the people, helped the poor, taught science to the young, and provided shelter for travelers and strangers. In this regard, the khanaqohs in Bukhara played a central role in the social life of their time.

Historical sources contain separate information about some famous khanaqohs in Bukhara. For example, the Zayniddin Vasifiy khanaqoh, the Zhuyboriylar khanaqoh, the Khoja Zayniddin khanaqoh and other religious and spiritual centers played a major role in the life of Bukhara of that time. Through them, religious and spiritual education, scientific conferences, and dialogue with the people were established. Therefore, these structures were valued not only as religious, but also as political and cultural centers.

In conclusion, the first khanaqohs in Bukhara were widespread in the city and its surroundings during the 9th–16th centuries. Their emergence and development further strengthened Bukhara's reputation as the 'Cemetery of Islam'. Khanaqohs played an important role in the religious and spiritual life of Bukhara, as a scientific, educational and social institution. They are still valued today as historical and architectural monuments and have retained their place in the spiritual heritage of the people.

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