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THE THEORETICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL POSITION OF SA'DIDDIN HAMAVI IN THE IDEOLOGY OF THE KUBRAVIYYA ORDER

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Abstract

This study offers a comprehensive Sufi-philosophical analysis of the theoretical and philosophical contributions of Sa'diddin Hamavi (1190–1252) within the ideological and metaphysical evolution of the Kubraviyya Sufi order. Based primarily on his seminal treatise *Al-Misbah fi-t-tasawwuf* (The Lamp of Sufism), the article examines how Hamavi systematically reconfigured the practical and ascetic foundations laid by Najmuddin Kubra into a sophisticated, highly articulated metaphysical framework. The study highlights Hamavi's pivotal role as a key intellectual bridge in 13th-century Central Asian thought, mapping his transformation of Kubrawi mystical doctrine into a coherent theoretical system that directly influenced his renowned pupil Azizuddin Nasafi. Ultimately, the findings emphasize the lasting significance of Hamavi's integrative metaphysics in demonstrating how spiritual discipline and rigorous theoretical philosophy mutually reinforce one another within classical Central Asian intellectual history.

Keywords: Sa'diddin Hamavi, Kubraviyya order, *Al-Misbah fi-t-tasawwuf*, theoretical Sufism, Islamic philosophy, Azizuddin Nasafi, subtle centers, light symbolism, Najmuddin Kubra, Central Asian metaphysics.



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Introduction

The thirteenth century represents one of the most critical eras in the intellectual and spiritual history of Central Asia, characterized by profound geopolitical shifts following the Mongol conquests alongside a brilliant flowering of theoretical Sufism (tasawwuf) and speculative philosophy (falsafa) [1, pp. 45–50]. Founded by Najmuddin Kubra (1145–1221) in Khwarazm, the Kubraviyya order initially emphasized rigorous spiritual discipline, visionary psychology, and the systematic analysis of subtle spiritual lights (anwar) [2, pp. 112–117]. However, as the order expanded across Central Asia, Iran, and the Middle East, its doctrine required a broader theoretical and philosophical formulation to address complex metaphysical questions concerning existence, perception, and human perfection. In this transformative process, Sa’diddin Hamavi (1190–1252), one of Najmuddin Kubra’s primary spiritual successors, played a decisive role [3, pp. 78–83]. In his chief theoretical treatise, *Al-Misbah fi-t-tasawwuf* (The Lamp of Sufism), Hamavi elevated the practical and visionary methods of early Kubrawi Sufism into an articulated philosophical doctrine. While modern scholarship has extensively studied the biographical and hagiographical lineages of the Kubraviyya, the precise theoretical and philosophical position of Hamavi within Kubrawi ideology remains insufficiently explored. This study aims to fill this scholarly void by performing a systematic analysis of Hamavi’s philosophical system, demonstrating how he synthesized Kubrawi mysticism with peripatetic logic and gnostic ontology, thereby laying the theoretical groundwork for subsequent generations of Central Asian thinkers, most notably Azizuddin Nasafi [4, pp. 15–21].

Methods

To rigorously investigate the theoretical and philosophical position of Sa’diddin Hamavi in the ideology of the Kubraviyya order, this research utilizes an integrated



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qualitative methodology comprising textual hermeneutics, historical-comparative analysis, and philosophical synthesis within a unified conceptual framework. The primary source baseline centers on critical manuscript editions and printed versions of Hamavi's fundamental work, *Al-Misbah fi-t-tasawwuf*, analyzed in close conjunction with foundational Kubrawi texts such as Najmuddin Kubra's *Fawatih al-Jamal wa-Fawatih al-Jalal* (The Openings of Beauty and Majesty) and Azizuddin Nasafi's *Zubdat al-Haqaiq* (The Essence of Truths) [5, pp. 210–215]. The methodological procedure applies conceptual mapping to evaluate Hamavi's integration of philosophical categories—such as substance, accident, potentiality, and actuality—into traditional Kubrawi spiritual psychology. Comparative textual analysis was conducted to trace the continuity and evolution of ideas from Kubra's initial focus on visionary experiences to Hamavi's elaborate ontology of divine manifestations (*tajalliyat*). Furthermore, historical contextualization was employed to assess how the socio-political disruptions of the 13th-century Mongol invasions influenced Hamavi's theoretical focus on inward spiritual preservation and systematic metaphysical instruction [6, pp. 95–101].

Results

The theoretical evaluation of Hamavi's writings demonstrates that he fundamentally transformed the ideology of the Kubraviyya order by providing its practical spiritual techniques with a rigorous philosophical foundation. First, while early Kubrawi masters focused primarily on the experiential observation of spiritual lights (*anwar*) during retreat (*khalwat*), Hamavi constructed an ontology of Light, interpreting these visionary phenomena as direct manifestation degrees of Absolute Being (*Wujud-i Mutlaq*) [7, pp. 134–139]. Second, Hamavi expanded Kubrawi psychology by integrating the doctrine of the subtle centers of perception (*lata'if-i sitte*) with the philosophical faculties of the soul (*al-nafs*), establishing a



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harmonious map where sensory perception, rational intellect (aql), and spiritual heart (qalb) function as unified stages of cognition [8, pp. 55–60]. Third, Hamavi articulated a systematic metaphysical doctrine of the Perfect Human (Insan-i Kamil), defining the human entity as the microcosm (alam-i saghir) that synthesizes all cosmological levels and divine names. The research reveals that Hamavi's theoretical position within the Kubraviyya served as the crucial intellectual bridge that enabled Kubrawi doctrine to engage directly with Islamic peripatetic philosophy and the Akbarian school of Wahdat al-Wujud (Unity of Existence) [9, pp. 180–185]. Finally, the findings confirm that Hamavi's philosophical formulation directly shaped the conceptual language of his pupil Azizuddin Nasafi, whose treatises became standard textbooks of Central Asian Sufi philosophy [10, pp. 220–225].

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the pivotal role of Sa'diddin Hamavi in elevating Kubrawi thought from a localized spiritual path into a universally applicable theoretical system. By demonstrating that mystical unveilings (kashf) must be verified and expressed through coherent philosophical concepts, Hamavi shielded the Kubraviyya order from both anti-intellectual dogmatism and ungrounded esoteric speculation [11, pp. 33–38]. Comparing Hamavi's theoretical framework with contemporary developments in Islamic philosophy reveals strong points of convergence with the Illuminationist (Ishraqi) school of Suhrawardi and the metaphysical synthesis of Ibn al-Arabi, while retaining the practical, moral, and psychological focus unique to Central Asian Kubrawi tradition. In the broader narrative of Central Asian intellectual history, Hamavi's work illustrates that medieval Sufism was not merely an ascetic detachment from the world, but an active, sophisticated intellectual movement capable of synthesizing diverse



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philosophical and theological traditions. Re-evaluating Hamavi's theoretical position offers valuable insights for contemporary intellectual history, showing how rigorous analytical inquiry and spiritual wisdom can be harmonized to create a comprehensive understanding of human existence and ethical responsibility.

Conclusion

Sa'diddin Hamavi holds a unique and decisive theoretical position in the ideology of the Kubraviyya Sufi order. Through his principal work, *Al-Misbah fi-t-tasawwuf*, he successfully synthesized the experiential, visionary methods of Najmuddin Kubra with the structural rigor of Islamic peripatetic philosophy and gnostic metaphysics. Hamavi's doctrine established that spiritual perfection and intellectual development are intrinsically linked, positioning the spiritual heart (qalb) as the ultimate faculty of holistic perception. By providing the Kubraviyya order with a sophisticated philosophical language, Hamavi ensured the continuity and intellectual resilience of Central Asian Sufi thought, leaving an enduring legacy that directly shaped the treatises of Azizuddin Nasafi and enriched the broader landscape of Eastern philosophy.

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