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**INFORMATION ABOUT SHEIKH ABDURAHMAN-HAJI AL-  
SUGURI IN THE AL-KIKUNI HAGIOGRAPHIC WORK**

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*Abstract*

The article presents information from the biography of a famous Dagestan religious and political figure of the 19th century, a Sufi Sheikh Abdurahman-Haji al-Suguri. The study was based on a written monument of the Dagestan Arabic-language literature of the early 20th century - collection of Sufi biographies “Hikaya va manakib al-Mashaih an-nakshbandiyin”. This hagiographic work relates to the manakib genre, one of the varieties of Arab-Muslim living literature. On the example of information about Sheikh Abdurakhman-Haji, given in this work, we attempt to study the specific features of the presentation of the biography of a well-known historical person in the context of the narrative of the unreal events in his life. Sheikh Abdurahman-Haji is represented here in the image of a saint who has the mystical powers of miracles (Karamat). Moreover, the essay contains fantastic episodes from his life associated with other well-known Muslim thinkers and theologians. At the same time, during the work on the Arabic-language text of the essay, was revealed information clarifying previously known facts from the biography of a famous religious figure who played an important role in spreading the ideology of Sufism in Dagestan, as well as a significant figure in the social and political life of the Northeast Caucasus 19th century.

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## 1. Introduction

The cult of Muslim saints (Avliya) was formed in Dagestan under the strong influence of Sufi traditions. Sufism has spread the main tenets of Islamic dogma among the local population of the region. The initial stage of the Islam spreading in Dagestan is associated primarily with the Arab conquests, but later on, the activity of Sufi missionaries contributed to the maximum adaptation of religious ideology to already existing local pre-Islamic beliefs. (Alikberov, 2003; Shikhaliyev, 2008). This phenomenon is common in the history of Islam. The Islamization process for many centuries connected people of the Northern and Eastern Caucasus to the Muslim circle of the world cultural community. The mutual exchange of material and spiritual values in the conditions of the developed traditions of the Arab-Muslim civilization caused new intellectual needs and creative abilities of local peoples.

Regarding the spread of Islam in Dagestan, A.R. Shikhsaidov notes that as a result of the merging of normative Islam with the “local spiritual substratum of different cultures,” its regional characteristics have developed. In Dagestan, Sufism appears as a form of the existence of Islam (Shikhsaidov, 2010).

First of all, local epigraphic monuments testify to the wide distribution of Sufi ideas in Dagestan (Shikhsaidov, 1984; Khapizov, Shehmagomedov, & Abdulmazhidov, 2017). The burials of the Sufis (ziyaraty, feasts) became objects of mass pilgrimage for believers, pinpointing the main feature of the local cult associated with the graves of the saints (Shikhaliyev, 2008). Along with the monuments of local epigraphy, there are oral and written word, as examples of the cult of the saints. In the minds of the majority of Dagestan Muslim believers, supernatural abilities are attributes peculiar to many Muslim theologians, not only Sufis. The description of these abilities among people with deep knowledge of theological sciences is reflected in the works of local authors (Abdulmazhidov & Nutsalov, 2017; Shekhtagomedov & Hapizov, 2017). However, the topic of miracles in Sufi literature is most widely represented.

Hagiographies (manakib al-'arifin) along with records of saints conversations (Malfusat, Madzhalis) and their correspondence (Maktubat) occupy an important place in Arabic-language literature. The manakib genre's works were generally devoted to supernatural godly deeds of the sheikhs, moreover, the typological classification of the miraculous works (Karamats) is traced in the local written hagiographic tradition (Musaev & Shikhaliyev, 2012).

It is important that in similar works, in addition to the fantastic, real events from the lives of famous personalities are cited. This is one of the peculiarities of the manakib genre, in which the biographies of Sufi sheikhs are full of numerous wonderful moments aimed at creating the image of the saint. Scientific studies on the works of the manakib genre as a historical source confirm the expediency of referring to these monuments of Muslim hagiography; and not only of religious scholars and philologists, but also of historians (Ismoilov, 1991). It is also necessary to keep in mind that the hagiographer did not deliberately mislead his readers for any self-serving purpose. An Eastern author with a specific worldview opposite to modern European worldview described fantastic events in his writings that occurred with real people, and not with mystical characters (Averyanov, 2012).

If in the general Arab-Muslim literature the biographies of saints were distributed, then in Dagestan this genre was initially not popular. Local Arabic Sufi works of the biographical genre began to be created in the early twentieth century. (Musaev & Shikhaliyev, 2012). During this period, works were written on the biographies of Sufi sheikhs, such as: “Hikaya va manakib al-Mashaih an-nakshandiyn” by Sharafaddin

al-Kikuni , “Tabakat al-Khvadhakan an-nakshandiya-va sadat Mashaih al-Khalidiyah al-mahmudiya” al-Bagini and “Siraj as-saadat fi siyar as-sadat” by Hasan al-Kakhi (Musaev & Shikhaliyev, 2011, 2012; Shekhmagomedov & Shikhaliyev, 2012).

Among the above works, the fullest descriptions of the sheikhs' miracles are the Arabic-language work “Hikaya va manakib al-mashaih an-nakshbandiyin” by Sheikh Sharafaddin al-Kikuni – a famous representative of the Dagestan diaspora in Turkey of the late XIX – early XX centuries. One of the sections of this collection is devoted to the Sufi Sheikh Abdurakhman-Haji al-Suguri.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The object of the research is information studies about the famous religious and political figure of Dagestan of the 19th century - Sheikh Abdurakhman-Khadzhi as-Suguri, identified in the manakib genre as “Hikaya va manakib al-Mashaih an-nakshbandiyin”.

## **3. Research Questions**

The research subject is information about Sheikh al-Suguri, presented in the Arabic-language hagiographic composition of the early twentieth century.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The study objective is to study the information about Abdurakhman-Haji Al-Suguri, given in Manakib al-Kikuni, as well as the interpretation of hagiographic components.

## **5. Research Methods**

The article is based on the textual, historical and philological analysis of the biographical composition of Sheikh al-Kikuni "Hikaya va manakib al-Mashaih an-Nakshbandiyin", as well as a comparative information analysis.

## **6. Findings**

The title of the work, “Hikaya va manakib al-Mashaih an-nakshbandiyin”, directly indicates that it belongs to the manakib genre. The stories about the sheikhs in this work use a lot of hyperboles, which characterize the Sufis work. At the same time, in “Hikaya va manakib al-Mashaih an-Nakshbandiyin”, each biography is accompanied by a set of dates and geographical names associated with the life of the Sufis, which are generally confirmed in various sources, as well as previously unknown data.

“Hikaya va manakib al-Mashaih an-nakshbandiyin” is a source on the history of the dissemination of Sufi ideology in Dagestan. Studying the creation of this work is, in our opinion, one of the significant aspects of its historical and philological analysis, as a monument to the Dagestan Arabic-speaking hagiography of the beginning of the 20th century.

At the beginning of the essay, the compiler Salman-Efendi al-Rashadi is indicated, and in the same place we learn that he is a follower of the (murid) Sheikh Sharafaddin, who, judging by his nisbe, lived in Rashadiya (Musaeva, Magomeddayev & Kurbanov, 1999). Each section of the work has a name

corresponding to the name of the Sufi, which is narrated and contains, in addition to descriptions of his wonderful acts, information from his life (place, date of birth and death, up to indicating the exact time of day). Thus, *Hikaya va manakib al-Mashaih an-nakshbandiyin* is a logically completed collection of the sheikhs' hagiographies of one of the branches of the nakshbandi Sufi brotherhood.

As Salman-Efendi ar-Rashadi points out, the collection was compiled by Sheikh Sharafaddin al-Kikuni's "min famm". After each semantic segment (story), there are records explaining its authorship or the source: "Sharafaddin al-Kikuni" or "min famm Sharafaddin al-Kikuni" (i.e., from the mouth of Sharafaddin al-Kikuni).

It is known that the Rashadiya village was destroyed during the Greek-Turkish war in 1921. The mosque was damaged by fire, and manuscripts belonging to the sheikhs al-Kikuni were killed in the fire. But in 1922-1924 began the revival of the settlement of Dagestan migrants (muhajirs). Most likely, it became necessary to restore the text of individual essays. In one of the letters from Turkey, addressed to his spiritual successor Makkasharip al-Irgali, Sheikh Sharafuddin mentions the work of his spiritual mentor Sheikh Muhammad-Haji al-Kikuni – "Manakib al-Marchum" ("Dignity of the Dead"). Sheikh instructed to use it in teaching followers who remained in their homeland, to "involve them in the best." It is possible *Manakib al-marhum*, written by Muhammad-Haji al-Kikuni, was lost during the capture and burning of the village of Rashadiya by the Greeks. After that, it was restored by Sharafuddin and Salman-Efendi from his teacher's words. Then Salman Al-Rashadi added the text of *Hikaya Va Manakib* with the biography of his mentor Sharafuddin. Thus, the work, known as "Manakib al-markhum", and, according to Sheikh Sharafaddin, useful for teaching followers, was restored by Salman-Efendi al-Rashadi. That is, Sharafaddin al-Kikuni retold "Manakib al-marhum" by Sheikh Muhammad-Hajji, which ended with the biography of Abdurahman-Haji al-Suguri (1792-1892). At the same time, we do not find "explicit additions" from Sharafaddin al-Kikuni, which is caused by the sheikh's aspiration to recreate the composition of his mentor Muhammad-Haji al-Kikuni as precisely as possible, and not create another work based on it. Thus, this collection of Sufi hagiographies is a product of "collective creativity".

However, it is necessary to take into account that such a "reconstruction" of the text is not possible without creative "attachments" of both the narrator and the compiler of the collection. At the same time, one should pay attention to the stories and statements that follow the hagiographies of the Sufi sheikhs, whose authorship, judging by the content, belongs to Sheikh Sharafaddin. (Ibrahimova, 2014)

Undoubtedly, in the manuscript of "*Hikaya va manakib al-Mashaih an-nakshbandiyin*" there are editorial corrections, as, for example, in the last section on Sheikh Sharafaddin, which is given after the story about Sheikh Abdurahman-Haji Al-Suguri.

When writing our article, we studied the part "*Hikayah va manakib al-Mashaih an-nakshbandiyin*" about the biography of the spiritual mentor of the sheikhs al-Kikuni, an influential political figure, adviser to Imam Shamil, the spiritual leader of the 1877 uprising – Sheikh Abdurahman-Haji al-Suguri. It presents information from his biography of previously not reflected in local written sources and found only in the oral tradition. Al-Kikuni's work provides accurate information regarding the date of birth and death of Abdurakhman-Haji al-Suguri, which was partly confirmed in local epigraphy.

The bright and many-sided personality of Sheikh Abdurahman-Haji played an important role in the history of Dagestan. He left behind him the most valuable material on the history of the spread of the

ideology of Sufism in Dagestan. He was not only a religious figure, scientist and poet, but played a significant role in the social and political life of the 19th century Dagestan.

During the Caucasian war of the XIX century sheikh Abdurakhman-Khadzhi was the associate of Imam Shamil – the leader of resistance against tsarism and was an adviser in the most serious and problematic affairs of the Imamate, served as an inspector (muhtasib). Imam Shamil entrusted him with the most important and complex affairs of a public and private nature. Especially he had to deal with the settlement of conflicts between representatives of the imam, clans and local influential persons.

After the defeat of the Highlanders movement and the capture of Shamil, Sheikh Abdurakhman-Haji was one of the most authoritative religious figures in Dagestan. Despite the fact that the sheikh was aware of the impending doom of the uprising of the highlanders in 1877, he again found himself in the center of events, moreover, his son was elected leader (imam) of resistance. After the brutal suppression of this armed demonstration, the sheikh lived in the village of Nizhnee Kazanische under house arrest. The official authorities then forbade him to engage in preaching.

Muhammad-Haji al-Kikuni was one of the disciples of Sheikh Abdurahman-Haji and received permission from him (ijazu) for spiritual guidance (irshad).

The author of “Hikaya va manakib al-Mashaih an-nakshbandiyin” reports about Abdurakhman-Haji: “He was born on the 3rd Rajab of 1207 between the afternoon and evening prayers in Sogratle and passes away in 1299 in the month of Rabbi al-Ahir on Thursday before the afternoon prayer in Kazanische. Because the author has accurately indicated these most significant dates of the life of Sheikh Al-Suguri, we are able to determine his birthdays and deaths more reliably.

In “Hikayah va manakib al-Mashaih an-nakshbandiyin” is given a detailed description of the appearance of Sheikh al-Suguri: “... He was of medium build with a dark brown face, gray head, brown eyes, a loud voice, only Al-Yaragi had such a voice ...” Regarding his origin, the author reports that “among his ancestors there were seven sheikhs-mentors (murshids) of the Sufi brotherhood of Qadiriyy and twenty-five perfect scholars of theology (alim)”.

The author arguments about the spiritual education of Sheikh al-Sughuri with spiritual substances (ravkhaniya) Abu Yazid al-Bastami and caliph Ali are of our specific interest. They cannot be perceived as historical information, but in the work they are cited as indirect confirmation of the sanctity of al-Suguri, i.e. Sheikh Abdurahman-Haji is a noble spiritual successor to generally accepted religious authorities. “... When [al-Suguri] was five years old, he was constantly under the gaze and [spiritual] upbringing of Abu Yazid al-Bastami . [Being under the influence of] gaze (Abu Yazid) [Abdurahman-Haji] sometimes shouted. Abu Yazid was never a Sufi mentor, [however] at that time, he received permission from the messenger, may the Most High bless him and welcome him to mentoring. Then there was a meeting [al-Suguri] with al-Yaragi even before he (al-Yaragi) accepted the tariqa. [al-Sughuri] heard a secret voice (hatif) Abu Yazid: “Be respectful to this blessed righteous man (Mubarak)!” Later, after the night prayer, Al-Sughuri [with a prayer] addressed Almighty Allah, al-Yaragi gave him permission [on mentoring].

Upon reaching the age of twenty-five, when al-Suguri loved the four companions of the Prophet Muhammad (askhabs) , the spiritual substance Ali appeared to him (may Allah exalt him). He asked him (Ali) what he (al-Suguri) would like to [get] from this meeting. He said, “Verily, I would like to [receive] fear of God (takwa)”. He achieved it as much as none of the great ones who had achieved perfection in

divine knowledge (Kamil) received either before or after him. Then the spiritual substance of the messenger [Muhammad] came to him, may the Most High bless him and greet all the prophets. [These meetings continued] until he was twenty-six years old.

Then, the envoy, may Allah bless him and greet, identified to him (al-Suguri) seven accomplished saints (avliyah) from Tabaristan as companions ... meeting with them took place at the predawn hour. For 35 years, this spiritual communion continued for half an hour every day and night. He pronounced the blessings (salavaty) to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and greet him. After fifty-five years, when Sheikh Al-Suguri was about to die, he heard from the Messenger, may Allah bless him and welcome that he needs to go to Mount Araf every year. ”

Next, Sharafaddin al-Kikuni tells how he himself was under the influence of the spiritual substance Abdurahman-Haji al-Suguri for six years and, thanks to his diligence, diligence in worship, work on himself (Riyad); he comprehended the truth and began to correspond to the level of Nakshbandi imams.

In this essay by al-Kikuni, several episodes are directly related to the mystical teaching of Sufism on the intercession of sheikhs for ordinary Muslims. From “Hikayah va manakib al-Mashaih an-nakshbandiyyin”, the reader learns that Sheikh Abdurahman-Haji prayed not only for his followers, but also for other saints (Avliya): “... Every Monday at the predawn hour all saints (Wali) come, the living and the dead make a detour (tawaf) around the house of Allah , and those who live are separate from the deceased. Upon returning from this detour, al-Suguri sits before noon, oversees major, and minor sins (perpetrated by people) between East and West, leaving little or no insignificant violations of divine law (sharia). He keeps them in memory all week until dawn next Monday. At the dawn hour of the second Monday, the envoy appears, may Allah bless him and greet, and say: “Oh, Messenger of Allah, I ask you to forgive these sinners, mentioning everything, not missing anything, even the slightest violation of the divine law between East and West from dawn past Monday to the present”. Then the messenger answers him. He does not leave (al-Suguri) from the envoy until he receives a satisfactory answer. The great saints are amazed at how he comes to the messenger with such a heavy burden of sins, his diligence in doing this and the very ability to do so. And they say: “No one else can do it!”.

Also in “Hikayah va manakib al-Mashaih an-nakshbandiyyin” there is an interesting Sufi tradition associated with the mausoleum (Ziyar) Abdurahman-Haji al-Suguri in Nizhny Kazanische: “...After the infidels (kafirs) built a building above its burial place in Kazanische ... ” Among the followers of Sheikh Sharafaddin al-Kikuni there is a tradition that sheds light on the background of this mystical resettlement. It states that during the pilgrimage to the Muslim holy places (hajj) al-Suguri visited Homs , where 10,000 followers of the Prophet Muhammad (Askhabs) were buried. Sheikh asked them for permission to go back to them after his death in case of disrespect to the place of his burial. After his death, he was buried in Kazanische, when the infidels built a mausoleum over his grave, the spiritual substance al-Suguri was transferred to Homs. Each time the Orthodox visit his mausoleum in Kazan, the spiritual substance of the saint returns to his burial place, and then is transferred back.

This episode is not accidental in the work of al-Kikuni, so the author implicitly leads readers to the idea that his spiritual master did not want to remain on the land conquered by the unfaithful, and even after death, he moved to the territory subject to the Muslim ruler.

Abdurahman-Haji Al-Suguri belongs to the Arabic-language composition “Hazihi Risal Sharif Le-Sh-Shaikh Al-Fadil Al-Hajj Abd Ar-Rahman Al-Suguri”, dedicated to the need for the resettlement of Muslims. The fact is that, as mentioned above, after the uprising of 1877, Sheikh al-Suguri was sent to the village of Lower Kazanische, and until the end of his days was under police surveillance. Being a deep old man, he certainly could not illegally leave Dagestan like his followers. Sheikhs al-Kikuni, having moved to Turkey at the end of the 19th century, actively campaigned Dagestanians to leave their homeland. Convinced of the unsuccessfulness of the armed resistance, they called on compatriots to leave the “homeland of the infidels” and head to more favorable places for Muslims. Al-Kikuni believed that it was impossible for the faithful to fully satisfy their spiritual needs, being dominated by the infidels, and attributed themselves to the heroes of early Islam who migrated from Mecca to Medina, because of oppression by enemies of their religion (Bobrovnikov, 2010).

In addition to letters of appeal to Muhammad-Hadji al-Kikuni, he wrote a poem in the Avar language calling for resettlement, which was published in 1905 in Port-Petrovsk in the A.M. Mikhailova’ printing house (Osmanova, 2009). On the title page of this edition, there is a record: “It is allowed by the censorship St. Petersburg, August 27, 1905”, but this could only be possible due to oversight of officials. Agitation to the resettlement (hijre) among the North Caucasian highlanders in the early 20th century was prosecuted by official authorities and was regarded as the pernicious spread of harmful ideas of pan-Islamism in the territory of the Russian Empire. In the part of “Hikaya va manakib al-Mashaih an-Nakshbandiyin”, dedicated to Sheikh Abdurakhman-Haji Al-Suguri, we find a veiled rationale for the need to resettle Dagestanis to the territory of the Ottoman Empire after the conquest of their lands by the tsarist troops.

The hagiographic collection “Hikaya va manakib al-Mashaih an-nakshbandiyin” presents the most significant moments of the life of a Muslim saint, in particular a Sufi sheikh. The value of this work increases because all the personalities mentioned in it, seemingly “mythological characters”, are in fact known historical figures. It is important that in this work mystical events, which, in the understanding of a secular person, can only be the product of the religious consciousness of Muslim believers, alternate with episodes from real life of a famous religious figure. The reliability of the basic biographical information presented here is beyond doubt; moreover, they are presented with important clarifying details.

## **7. Conclusion**

Information about Sheikh al-Suguri given in “Hikaya va manakib al-Mashaih an-nakshbandiyin” deserves the attention of humanities scholars: philologists, historians, religious scholars, ethnographers, and others, since their interpretation is of sufficient interest and is important in studying the social, religious and cultural life of the Dagestan society of the late 19th – early 20th century.

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