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## DĀRU 'L-MASNAVĪ OF THE MEVLEVİ ORDER

### Evidence That Rumi was Born in Tajikistan

According to several scholars,<sup>1</sup> Mawlānā was probably not born in Balkh (a metropolis prior to the Mongol invasion), but in a small town about 90 miles east in the valley of Wakhsh River, which flows into the Amū Daryā (Oxus) River. Since this region is on the other side of the Amu Darya, it is in present-day Tajikistan. This area, culturally a part of Balkh, is where Mawlānā's father, Bahā' uddīn Walad, was a preacher and jurist. He lived and worked there between 1203 and 1211 and then in Samarkand in the year 1212.<sup>2</sup> He presumably returned to Balkh, since he and his family emigrated from there to Anatolia about 1216 or 1217.<sup>3</sup> It must also be kept in mind that Bahā' uddīn was called the "Great Master of Balkh," (Khodāwandgār-é Balkh) and that Mawlānā's earliest biographers mentioned only Balkh as the family's origin. Therefore, Mawlānā's father must also have been very active in Balkh as a preacher, scholar, and spiritual leader with numerous disciples-- and not merely a rural preacher. He was a "Balkhī," a man of Balkh.

Wakhsh, located about 90 miles east of Balkh, on the other side of the great Amū Daryā River, is mentioned once in the Mathnawi, IV: 3319. It is mentioned in Mawlana's father's book of sermons (Ma'arif), Vol. I, p. 345, 355, 369; Vol. II, p. 61, 138, 143. It is also mentioned in Aflaki book (completed about 70 years after Mawlānā died), Vol. I, section 25.

Below is a translation of most (but not all) of the citations about Wakhsh in the earliest Persian sources:

p. 345: "O religious jurisprudent (living) far away, as long as you have not assigned yourself work in Wakhsh, I rightly hold (the view)..." [ay qâzî-ye ba'îd tâ ba-khod Hawâla na-kon-î kâr-e wakhsh-râ man râst mî-dâr-am]

p. 355: "King Ghûr-e Badr came to the gate of Wakhsh in the month of Shawwâl (in) the year 600 [= 1203 C.E.]..." [malik-e ghawr ba-dar-e wakhsh âmad fî shawwâl-e sana-ye sitta-mi'ah]

p. 369: "There was a sufi from Khvârzm (who) said, 'I had a mother (living) in Wakhsh..." [Sûfiyê-ye kwârzmî bûd goft ba- wakhsh man mâdarâ dâsh-t-am...]

p. 61 (Vol. II): "Tâj Zayd was saying, 'In Wakhsh, something..." [tâj zayd mî-goft dar wakhsh yak chêz...]

p. 138 (Vol. II): "(The thought) came to my heart in Wakhsh: Why are there others in Samarkand, Baghdað, Balkh, and other great cities, while I am stuck in this corner lacking appearance and adornment [of being recognized as a scholar], and obscure and unknown of being remembered?" [ba-del-am âmad ke ba-wakhsh chegûna dîgar-ân ba-samarcand o baghdað o balkh o b-shahr-hâye jalîl mî-bâsh-and, man darîn konjê mânâda bê-Sûrat o bê-zaynat o khâmil al-dhikr.]

p. 143 (Vol. II): "...(he) arranged (for) sleeping (articles) and household belongings and devoting (his) heart to (the care of his) wife and children, and that which the musician needed who did not play the harp, what affairs and that which is (involved with) my home in Wakhsh..." [...]khoftan wa sar-o sâmân che kon-ad wa del-nehâdan bar zan wa farzand wa bar ân-ke zan-e muTrib bây-ad ke chang na-zan-ad che kâr wa bar ânke sarây-e man ba-wakhsh bâsh-ad...]

Aflâkî (Chapter 1, section 25): "...Shaykh Hajjâj-e Nassâj--(may) the mercy of God (be) upon him--who was among all the fortunate ones accepted (as disciples) of Bahâ Walad [= Mawlânâ's father] transmitted such (an account) as this: The Qâzî of Wakhsh, (who) was a man respected among the religious scholars of this world, wanted to remove the honorary title [= said to have been given to him by God through a miracle] of 'Sultan of the Religious Scholars' from the preface of (Bahâ' Walad's book) 'Ma'ârif' and (his) written legal opinions." [...]shaykh Hajjâj-e nassâj raHmatu 'llâhu 'alay-hi ke az jumla-ye maqbûl-ân-e muqabil-e HaZrat-i bahâ'-e walad bûd, chonân rawâyat kard ke qâZiy-e wakhsh mardê bûd mu'tabar wa az 'ulamây-e ïn 'âlam bûd, mî-khwâst ke az dîbaja-ye kitab-e ma'ârif wa istftnâ-ha liqab-e sulTânu 'l-'ulamâ'iyy-e bahâ' walad-râ maHw konad..."]

(--Also translated by John O'Kane, "Shams al-Din Ahmad-e Aflaki, The Feats of the Knowers of God (Manâqeb al-'ârefîn)," 2002, p. 26)

Mathnawi IV: 3319: "The partial intellect resembles lightning and the flash; it's never possible to go to Wakhsh in a flash." [aqîl-e juzwî ham-chô barq-ast-o darakhsh/ dar darakhshê kay tawân shod sôy-e wakhsh?]

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Annemarie Schimmel, "I Am Wind, You Are Fire," p. 11. She refers to an (1989) article by the German scholar, Fritz Meier: "Afghan and Persian admirers still prefer to call Jalaluddin 'Balkhi' because his family lived in Balkh before migrating westward. However, their home was not in the actual city of Balkh, since the mid-eighth century a center of Muslim culture in Khorasan (now Afghanistan). Rather, as the Swiss scholar Fritz Meier has shown, it was in the small town of Wakhsh north of the Oxus that Bahâ'uddin Walad, Jalaluddin's father, lived and worked as a jurist and preacher with mystical inclinations."

Franklin Lewis, "Rumi--Past and Present, East and West: The Life, Teachings, and Poetry of Jalâl al-Dîn Rumi," 2000, paperback 2003, pp. 47-49. Professor Lewis has devoted two full pages of his book to the topic of Wakhsh, which he states has been identified with the medieval town of Lîwâkand (or Lâvâkand) or Sangtûde, which is about 65 kilometers southeast of Dushanbe, the capital of present-day Tajikistan. He says it is on the east bank of the Vakhshâb river, a major tributary that joins the Amu Daryâ river (also called Jayhun, and named the Oxus by the Greeks). He further states:

"Bahâ al-Dîn may have been born in Balkh, but at least between June 1204 and 1210 (Shavvâl 600 and 607), during which time Rumi was born, Bahâ al-Dîn resided in a house in Vakhsh (Bah 2:143 [= Bahâ' uddîn Walad's book, "Ma'ârif." See translation below--note inserted here by Ibrahim Gamard]). Vakhsh, rather than Balkh, was the permanent base of Bahâ al-Dîn and his family until Rumi was around five years old (mei 16-35) [= from a book in German by the scholar Fritz Meier--note inserted here]. At that time, in about the year 1212 (A.H. 608-9), the Walads moved to Samarkand (Fih 333; Mei 29-30, 36) [= reference to Rumi's "Discourses" and to Fritz Meier's book--note inserted here], leaving behind Baâ al-Dîn's mother, who must have been at least seventy-five years old."

<sup>2</sup> Bausani, "Djalâl al-Dîn Rûmî," Encyclopedia of Islam, 2nd. ed., Vol. II, p. 393. He cites Faruzanfar's Introduction (pp. 37-38) to the Ma'arif of Mawlana's father, Bahâ Walad. Bahâ Walad refers therein to the kingdom and the Sultan of Wakhsh.

<sup>3</sup> Bausani, p. 393.