



[Home](#) > [Middle East and Islamic Studies](#) > [Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition](#) > Sa'īd al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Farghānī

Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition

Edited by:

Subjects: [Middle East and Islamic Studies](#)

Search Results: [Prev](#) | 4 of 4 | [Next](#)

Sa'īd al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Farghānī^(878 words)

[Chittick, W.C.](#)

, often called Sa'īd-i Farghānī, author of important Ṣūfī works pertaining to the school of Ibn al-'Arabī. Sometimes the form Sa'īd al-Dīn is found, but this seems to be a copyist's correction of the unusual form. On a manuscript of his *Mashāriḥ al-darārī* dated 678/1279-80 (Esad Ef. 1511), the name is given as in the title of this entry, with "Kādānī" added after the *nisba* Farghānī. Ḥaǧǧī Kḥalīfa gives death dates of 691/1292 and *ca.* 700/1300-1 (ed. Flügel, no. 365); Osman Yahia prefers 695/1296 (introd. to Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī, *Kitāb Naṣṣ al-nuṣūṣ*, Tehran 1975, 18); Brockelmann has 699/1299 (S I, 812).

Little is known of Sa'īd al-Dīn's life. In his *Manāhidj al-ibād* (Istanbul 1988, 184) he tells us that he entered Ṣūfism at the hand of Shaykh Naǧīb al-Dīn 'Alī b. Buzghuṣh of Shīrāz (d. 678/1279), a disciple of Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn 'Umar Suhrawardī. Later, he benefited from Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Kūnawī (d. 673/1274), and then from Shaykh Muḥammad b. al-Sukrān al-Baghḍādī and "others." Kūnawī tells us that Farghānī and several other scholars were his 1 companions when he travelled in the year 643/1245-6 to Egypt and began teaching Ibn al-Fāriǧ's famous *kaṣīda*, *Naẓm al-sulūk* (also known as *al-Tā'yya*). Several people took notes with the aim of composing books, but only Farghānī was successful (letter of approval to Farghānī. *Mashāriḥ al-darārī*, ed. S.Dj. Āshṭiyānī, Mashhad 1398/1978, 5-6, 77-8). Sibṭ Ibn al-Fāriǧ quotes Shams al-Dīn Ikī (d. 697/1298), a disciple of Kūnawī's and *shaykh al-shuyūkh* in Cairo, to the effect that after lecturing on *ḥadīth* in Arabic, Kūnawī would recite one verse of *Naẓm al-sulūk* and explain its meaning in Persian, and it was these explanations that Sa'īd al-Dīn recorded (Th.E. Homerin, *From Arab poet to Muslim saint*, Columbia, S.C. 1994, 29; cf. Djāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-uns*, ed. M. Tawḥīdīpūr, Tehran 1336/1957, 542).

Farghānī is best known for his Persian and Arabic commentaries on *Naẓm al-sulūk*. The full name of the first is *Mashāriḥ al-darārī al-zuhar fī kashf ḥaḳā'ik naẓm al-durar*, while the second is called *Muntahā 'l-madārik wamuṣhtahā lubb kull kāmīl aw ārif wa-sālik* (2 vols., Cairo 1293/1876). Kūnawī's just-cited letter of approval is appended to the end of the introduction to the Persian text. The Arabic commentary is half again as long as the Persian and includes a much expanded introduction, without Kūnawī's letter; it was being read in Cairo as early as 670/1271 (Massignon, *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, Eng. tr. Princeton 1982, i, 44). Both works were widely cited as authoritative expositions of the teachings of Kūnawī. Djāmī was particularly fond of *Muntahā 'l-madārik* and called its introduction an unparalleled exposition of "the science of reality" (*Nafaḥāt*, 559).

Farghānī's third work, the Persian *Manāhidj al-ibād ilā 'l-ma'ād*, outlines the five pillars of Islam along with basic Ṣūfī *ādāb*. It was not as widely read as the other two, but it gained more readership than it might have because Ḳuṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311 [q.v.]), who studied *ḥadīth* with Kūnawī, incorporated it into his philosophical encyclopedia, the *Durrat al-tāǧ*, as the last and "most important" part of the book (see J. Walbridge, *A Sufi scientist of the thirteenth century: the mystical ideas and practices of Qutb al-Dīn Shīrāzī*, in L. Lewisohn (ed.), *The legacy of mediaeval Persian Sufism*, London 1992, 323-40; idem, *The science of mystic lights. Qutb al-Dīn Shīrāzī and the Illuminationist tradition in Islamic philosophy*, Cambridge, Mass. 13, 176-8). According to Ḥaǧǧī Kḥalīfa, the *Manāhidj* was translated into Arabic with the title *Madārid 'al-i 'tikād* by

Abu 'l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Bidlīsī. Ḥādīdjī Khalīfa (no. 1263) also attributes a commentary on Ibn al-'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* to Sa'īd al-Dīn, but the ascription is unlikely. Another book that is often attributed to Farghānī is the important unedited compendium of *Ṣūfī* technical terms, *Laḥā'if al-i lām fī ishārāt ahl al-ilhām* some of the definitions are indeed taken from *Muntahā 'l-madārik*. However, neither the style of the work nor what the author says about himself allows for this attribution; he speaks of his own works on *kalām* (under the definition of *al-rūḥ*) and mentions (under *al-ilm al-ladunī*) that he was a disciple of 'Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī (659-736/1261-1336 [q.v.]).

The *Mashāriḥ al-darārī* and *Muntahā 'l-madārik* are important as two of the earliest commentaries on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem, but their main significance lies in their formative influence on the way in which the teachings of Ibn al-'Arabī were developed. Like Kūnawī, Farghānī singled out certain of Ibn al-'Arabī's discussions and technical terms for emphasis. The net result was that Ibn al-'Arabī's well-known followers were drawn much closer to the philosophical mode of expressing Islamic teachings than was the *Shaykh* al-Akbar himself. Farghānī's introduction to *Muntahā 'l-madārik* is an especially good example of a dense philosophical and relatively systematic exposition of Ibn al-'Arabī's teachings. It provides a better survey of the technical terms and discussions that were to play major roles in theoretical *Ṣūfism* in the coming centuries than does Ibn al-'Arabī's own *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, which was to be the object of over one hundred commentaries.

(W.C. Chittick)

Bibliography

See also W.C. Chittick, *Spectrums of Islamic thought: Sa'īd al-Dīn Farghānī on the implications of oneness and manyness*, in Lewisohn, *op. cit.*, 203-17.

Cite this page

Chittick, W.C.. "Sa'īd al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Farghānī." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Brill Online, 2014. Reference. University of Toronto. 19 June 2014 <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/said-al-din-muhammad-b-ahmad-farghani-SIM_6491>
 First appeared online: 2012
 First Print Edition: isbn: 9789004161214, 1960-2007

Related

Reference Works

Akarnania. Treaty of the Akarnanian Koinon and Anaktorion concerning the...

Source: Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum

Article 54 - Duties of Ships and Aircraft during Their Passage, Research and...

Source: United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Elis. Digamma in the city-ethnic. (49-461)

Source: Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum

Bibliographies

The clear victory: Qur'an 48:1: Hudaibiyyah, the Pledge of Allegiance of Ridwan...

Source: Index Islamicus