

CHAPTER EIGHT

UNITY AND DIVERSITY IN SUFISM. THE RISE OF THE *ṬARĪQAS*

Already at the early stages of Sufism's history, some Sufi masters occasionally interpreted their mystical experiences in philosophical and metaphysical terms. In attempting to place their mystical insights into a wider existential context they invested them with a cosmic meaning that transcended the experience of an individual mystic. We have already discussed the views of the Persian mystic al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī who developed an early theosophical system that integrated elements of pre-Islamic ways of thinking: above all, the legacy of Classical Antiquity, mainly neo-Platonic as well as Aristotelian concepts of nature. Muslims in general and Sufis in particular were exposed to such pre-Islamic systems of thought through translations or free renditions into Arabic since the beginning of the third/ninth century. They also experienced the influences of Zoroastrian and Manichaean religions and mythologies, which probably circulated in an oral form.¹

Al-Ghazālī's synthesis of Sufi moral and ethical teaching, theosophy, neo-Platonic metaphysics and the mainstream Sunnī piety of the *ḥadīth* folk was just one vivid example of this trend toward spiritual and intellectual syncretism. The theosophical and metaphysical elements of this synthesis were taken up and creatively re-interpreted by such mystical thinkers as Yaḥyā al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191) of Persia and Ibn 'Arabī of al-Andalus, who spent the second half of his life in Syria and Asia Minor, and died in Damascus in 638/1240. While al-Suhrawardī couched his Aristotelian and neo-Platonic ideas into the evolved mythical imagery and terminology of pre-Islamic Iranian traditions, especially Zoroastrianism, Ibn 'Arabī constructed a complex neo-Platonic-Gnostic system that stressed the underlying unity of all beings (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) and their common origin in the unique and indivisible Godhead. This is not to say that the philosophical and metaphysical systems of al-Suhrawardī and Ibn 'Arabī

¹ Radtke, "Theologien," pp. 559–563.

were but foreign implants grafted onto the pristine body of the classical Sufi tradition. It seems more productive to treat them as a natural development of certain tendencies inherent in the Islamic religion from the outset, which in turn reflected the growing sophistication of later Sufism. Already in the classical Sufi tradition God was seen as the only real agent in this world, to whose commands and actions man must submit willingly and unconditionally. In the post-classical period of Sufism's history, which began in the fifth-sixth/eleventh-twelfth centuries, this perception of God evolved into a vision of God as not just the only agent but also the only reality that exists. This conception, which may somewhat loosely be termed "monistic," was rebuffed by the great Ḥanbalī scholar Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), who condemned its Sufi adherents as out-and-out heretics. Ibn Taymiyya and those ulema who came in his wake laid the foundations of the anti-monistic polemical literature which was to play an important role in the Islamic intellectual discourse from the eighth/fourteenth century until today.²

In addition to non-Islamic philosophical systems, later Sufism integrated and institutionalized a number of special spiritual exercises and meditation techniques that have become its distinctive hallmarks. They included such practices as spiritual retreat (*khalwa*), the remembrance of God (*dhikr*) and the mystical concerts (*samāʿ*) during which formulas of *dhikr* were performed to the accompaniment of various musical instruments. Sufi theorists saw these rituals as a means to intensify relations between the mystic and his divine Master and to release the spiritual energies that the mystic accumulated in the process of direct contemplation of mysteries or even of God himself. It is with this end in mind that Sufi masters allowed music to be played and love poetry to be recited during the *samāʿ* gatherings. In the process, the mystic's encounter with his divine Beloved acquired a recognizable ritual and artistic expression that set Sufis aside from the commonality of the believers. During such gatherings, mystics often fell into a state of ecstasy (*wajd*) that could force them to perform a spontaneous dance or to make frantic rhythmic gestures to the accompaniment of music. As time went on, these practices became more and more rigidly ritualized. On the psychological level, they allowed the mystic to enter changed states of consciousness during

² See A. Knysh, *Ibn ʿArabī in the Later Islamic Tradition: The making of a polemical image in medieval Islam*, Albany, New York, 1998.

which he could experience visionary “unveilings” (*mukāshafāt*) or come into direct contact with the Divine Reality. A system of classification and interpretation of such visions was developed by Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā of Khīva in Khwārazm (d. ca. 620/1220), who paid special attention to the visionary element of mystical experience.

A more conventional strain of Sufi thought drew its inspiration from the moralizing discourses of the Sufi classics whose works were discussed in the previous chapters. In an attempt to cleanse the Sufi tradition from ecstatic, uncontrollable elements, which many Sunnī religious officials and secular authorities found alarming, advocates of Sufism laid the emphasis on the moral and ethical aspects of Sufi piety. This strain of the Sufi tradition found an eloquent exponent in the great saint of Baghdad ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166). A typical representative of the community-oriented mysticism of the Ḥanbalī school of law, al-Jīlānī tried to reach out to the ordinary townsfolk in his popular sermons which drew large crowds. As with al-Ghazālī, he emphasized the practical and moral aspects of Sufism and carefully eschewed its more intellectualizing expressions. The sober and practical tendency in mystical piety came to fruition in the last classical handbook of Sufism, “The Gifts of Divine Gnosis” (*‘Awārif al-mā‘ūrif*) of Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī of Baghdad (d. 635/1234). A Persian translation and adaptation of this book, which was made in the ninth/fifteenth century, has served as a standard textbook of Persian and Indian mystics ever since.

The devotional poetry of the early Sufi masters gave rise to a splendid literary tradition exemplified by such great Arab poets as Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235), al-Shushtarī (d. 668/1268) and, later, by ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1143/1731). However, Sufism played a far greater role in the shaping of Persian literature which is virtually permeated by its themes and motifs. Here various aspects of the Sufi tradition received an aesthetic elaboration of unprecedented profundity and vigor. Its impact on the formation of Persian *belles-lettres* is hard to overestimate. In the words of a Western investigator, “classical Persian poetry is to a very notable extent Sufi in content and inspiration.”³ The contributions to Islamic literary culture by such Sufi poets as ‘Aṭṭār (d. ca. 615/1220), Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273) and Jāmī (d. 898/1492) were examined in a special chapter

³ Arberry, *Sufism*, p. 106.

of this study. Sufi motifs were also prominent in the other literary traditions of the Islamic world: Turkish, Urdu, Malay, and so on.

The Rise of the Ṭarīqas

From the sixth/twelfth century onward, mystical life was increasingly cultivated in the Sufi associations or orders (*ṭuruq*), many of which are still active today. In fact, if today Islamic mysticism is mentioned, the Sufi orders are the first thing that comes to mind. Taking their origins in the Sufi lodges and hermitages, such as those founded by al-Sulamī, al-Kharāqānī, Abū Saʿīd b. Abī ʿl-Khayr, and ʿAbdallāh al-Anṣarī, the orders were usually located in special buildings, where Sufis practiced their rites and engaged in collective and individual worship without being disturbed by the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Gradually these institutions acquired rigidly fixed rules of fellowship and a complex hierarchical leadership. In the early centuries of Sufism's history, until the end of the forth/tenth century, the teacher-disciple relation was a relatively loose one. The disciple (*murīd*) often attached himself to several teachers (*shuyūkh*) in the hope of benefiting from their spiritual advice and from their varying interpretations of the knowledge pertaining to the Sufi path. From the end of the forth/tenth century onward, in some areas, especially in eastern Persia, this relationship underwent an important change. The face-to-face instruction in a casual setting that was typical of early Sufism was replaced by a more-or-less formal course that the spiritual master offered simultaneously to a relatively large group of disciples. In some cases, the teacher supported his disciples from his own funds or by means of pious donations. In return, he came to require of his disciples undivided loyalty and could even prohibit them from attending the teaching sessions of other Sufi masters. The training technique of an individual teacher came to be known as his spiritual "way," or "method" (*ṭarīq*, or *ṭarīqa*). It was, in essence, a set of rules, rituals and pious formulas, which the shaykh imposed upon his disciples in order to purify them of sins and of mundane concerns and to instill in them absolute serenity. The goal of this training was to liberate them from the ties to this world, to make them receptive to the outpourings of divine grace and to lead them into the direct presence of God. As time went on, the term *ṭarīq*, or *ṭarīqa*, came to be applied metonymically to the Sufi disci-

pline and doctrine pursued by the followers of a Sufi master within the framework of a Sufi institution. In Western literature such institutions came to be known as "Sufi orders," a term that implied their underlying affinity with the monastic orders of Christian Europe. They were usually named after their founders, although the credit for the shaping of the disciples of a given shaykh into a structured social and religious organism usually went to his immediate successors. These successors put the teacher-disciple relationship on a formal foundation which came to serve as the rule of communal life within the order. Upon completing his training under a renowned master, the novice obtained from his teacher a license to instruct his own disciples (*ijāza*) and, as an external sign, a rough cloak (*khirqa*). A typical Sufi outfit also included a prayer rug (*sajjāda*), a rosary (*misbaha*) and a beggar's bowl (*kashkūl*).

Throughout the late sixth/thirteenth-early tenth/sixteenth centuries the ruling dynasties of the Middle East were generously supporting both Sufi brotherhoods and individual mystics, including such unconventional figures as Yaḥyā al-Suhrawardī, Ibn Sabʿīn (d. 669/1269), Ibn Hūd (d. 699/1299), Ibn ʿArabī, and ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. 832/1428), who flourished under the Ayyūbids of Egypt and Syria and under the Rasūlids of Yemen. The institutionalization of Sufism that had begun under the Saljuqs gained further impetus under their successors in the eastern lands of Islam. In spite of the disruptions caused by the Mongol invasions of the middle of the seventh/thirteenth centuries, the Mongol rulers, who gradually embraced Islam, tended to extend patronage to renowned Sufis masters in hopes of benefiting from their popularity among their Muslim subjects and in order to secure their blessings (*baraka*) in political and military ventures. It is often argued that the network of Sufi organizations, which developed around that time, cemented the unity of eastern Islamdom following the fragmentation of the Caliphate and the emergence of numerous mutually hostile Muslim principalities.

In Egypt and Syria, the Mamlūk rulers continued the pro-Sufi policies of their predecessors. Many Mamlūks were fascinated with charismatic Sufi visionaries, whose blessing and charisma they highly valued and were anxious to secure. At the same time, religious officials in the Mamlūk administration found this fascination disturbing. They felt that freewheeling mystics with no formal education were ill qualified to provide counsel to their royal patrons, who often had a very vague notion of the Sharīʿa norms and their application.

Nevertheless, in the competition for the rulers' hearts and ears Sufi shaykhs often gained the upper hand over the formally trained religious specialists whose dry casuistry and scholastic corporatism had little appeal to both the rulers and their subjects. The sympathetic attitude toward Sufis that was displayed by the Mamlūk sultans was eagerly imitated by the lesser governors and state officials many of whom generously supported the "poor" (*fuqarā*), that is the Sufis, by means of charitable bequests (*waqf*) and willingly availed themselves of their advice and therapeutic skills. A tangible material manifestation of Sufism's growing prestige with the Mamlūk sovereigns was the unprecedented proliferation, in that age, of Sufi institutions. These ranged from humble lodges (*zāwiyya*), which housed a master and his few disciples, to large hostels for itinerant Sufis (*ribāṭ*) to the giant Sufi monasteries (*khānaqā*) which accommodated hundreds of Sufis. Such large Sufi institutions were particularly numerous in Egypt, where authorities spent enormous sums on their construction and upkeep. The ideological and physical expansion of Sufism was determined by a number of reasons. It was due perhaps in part to the popular dissatisfaction with the institutionalized religion of religious specialists whose recondite hair-splitting theological debates and constant jockeying for sinecures alienated them from the masses and rendered them irrelevant to their spiritual needs. On the other hand, many Muslims seem to have been attracted to Sufism by the generous donations lavished upon its institutions by the secular rulers who were anxious to flaunt their credentials as supporters of men and women of religion. Be this as it may, there is no denying that a great number of Muslim men, and to a lesser extent women, of that age became "full-time" mystics. They joined a spiritual family established by a renowned Sufi master of old and abandoned gainful employment in order to devote themselves fully to the service of God. Especially prominent in the central and western lands of Islam were such Sufi "families" as Shādhiliyya, Rifā'iyya, Burhāniyya, Khalwatiyya and Qādiriyya and their numerous offshoots. Some of these institutions, especially the Qādiriyya, had their branches throughout the Muslim world, from West Africa to China. On the whole, however, eastern Sufis affiliated themselves with local Sufi orders, namely the Kubrawiyya, the Ni'matullāhiyya, the Yasawiyya, the Chishtiyya, and so on. In time, Sufi orders in the West and in the East developed a vast body of normative literature that dealt with the following major themes:

1. The order's spiritual genealogy (*silsila*), which was traced back from its incumbent head to the Prophet Muḥammad and which consisted of thirty to forty links. Since the chief aim of the genealogy was to assert the legitimacy of a given brotherhood or of its branch, it was subject to forgery, although in most cases its authenticity does not raise serious doubts.

2. Conditions and rituals relating to admission into the order. Some orders were open to both men and women, while others were restricted to men only. Once admitted, the novice owed the shaykh unconditional obedience and was expected to satisfy his every wish. The relationships between, and mutual obligations of, the shaykh and his *murīds* were carefully detailed in the handbooks of each order.

3. Instructions about the use of the formulas of *dhikr*. They specify the control of breathing, the rhythms in which these formulas must be recited, and the occasions on which certain *dhikr* formulae are to be pronounced.

4. Instructions regarding seclusion (*khalwa*). Members of Sufi orders were often required to withdraw from society for pious meditation and *dhikr* exercises. Such retreats could last from several to forty days and had to be practiced in special small rooms or in isolated places, such as caves, forests, or mountains. As a rule, the mystic's behavior during retreats was regulated by precise instructions that varied from one order to another. These instructions stipulated the site and the arrangement of space, the length of the seclusion, the sequence of the formulae and litanies, the postures to be maintained by the anchorite, and the ways to maintain ritual purity. Spiritual retreats were especially prominent in the ritual of the Khalwatiyya brotherhood, which derives its name from it.

5. Rules and regulations concerning communal life in the Sufi lodges and conduct toward one's fellow Sufis under different circumstances. The manuals of various Sufi organizations were thus all-encompassing collections of rules that covered all aspects of Sufi behavior while in and outside the lodge, such as traveling, interacting with fellow Sufis and laymen, meditating, listening to poetry and music, performing ablutions, fasting. They also spelled out the hierarchy of the states and stations of the mystical path to God, as conceived by the founder of a given order.⁴ In other words, the normative

⁴ Baldick, *Mystical Islam*, p. 74.

manuals of Sufi orders provided their members with a strong sense of identity, with a code of behavior, and with the awareness of belonging to a respected and ancient spiritual tradition, complete with its own rituals, ethos, and doctrinal system. This communal identity was further reinforced by the hagiographic literature of the order, which praised its eponymous founders and cast them as paragons of piety and righteousness to be followed by the rank-and-file members of the order. In the hagiographic writings, which were diligently studied within the orders, special emphasis was placed on the miraculous and intercessory powers of the deceased masters. This emphasis encouraged the rise of the posthumous cult of Sufi saints (*awliyāʾ*) among their followers and, gradually, among the local population as well. Generally, members of the Sufi order were physically separated from the lay masses. They resided in a special building, usually constructed for them by a wealthy benefactor, and led a communal life that was punctuated by strictly defined ritual practices, such as the recitation of certain litanies (*awrād*; sing. *wird*) at the assigned times of the day or ritualized acts of piety. Many Sufis believed that these litanies were communicated to the founding father of their *ṭarīqa* by the Prophet who appeared to him in a dream. Also widely practiced were collective spiritual concerts (*dhikr*; *samāʿ*; *ḥadra*), which were performed several times a week and required the participation of all members of a given order. These ritual events were meant to renew the allegiance of the Sufis to the order and its founder through an act of collective practice. The use of music, clapping and dancing during such concerts were condemned by some puritan Sunnī scholars (e.g., by Ibn Taymiyya), whilst others declared them to be legitimate, provided their participants exercise self-restraint and avoid excesses (e.g., al-Ghazālī). The importance of the *dhikr* formulae for the self-identification of the order's members is attested by the fact that on admission into the order the teacher solemnly disclosed it to the novice in the special ceremony called the "recitation of the *dhikr*" (*talqīn al-dhikr*).⁵

From the outset, Muslim ascetics and mystics were fascinated by the Prophet's private piety and pious exhortations, which they treated as the surest way to moral rectitude and, eventually, to personal salvation. The Sufi strove not just to imitate every single detail

⁵ Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, 2d edition, Oxford, 1998, pp. 182–193 and "Index" under "dhikr."

of Muḥammad's behavior (*imitatio Muhammadi*) but also to keep Muḥammad's image always present in his thoughts and feelings. This practice was intensified to such an extent that many Sufis claimed to have witnessed Muḥammad in person by their own eyes. In the course of such encounters the Prophet communicated to them some valuable advice or a solution to a difficult moral dilemma or theological problem. Many Sufi orders claimed to have derived their training techniques and moral and ethical precepts from what they called the "path of Muḥammad" (*ṭarīqa muḥammadiyya*).

In later Sufism, we find two principal types of affiliation between the master and his adherents. According to the first type, the seeker, or aspirant (*murīd*), attached himself permanently to the shaykh of a *ṭarīqa*, who thereby assumed full responsibility for his education and, at the end of his study, invested him with the so-called "robe of discipleship" (*khirqat al-irāda*), which can be seen as the equivalent of a Sufi diploma. The second type was far less formal. It presupposed a temporary affiliation of the disciple to a Sufi master with a view to benefiting from the latter's blessing and charisma which he in turn derived from his initiatory lineage stretching back to the Prophet. After a short period of instruction and counseling, the disciple could obtain the "robe of blessing" (*khirqat al-tabarruk*) from the master and leave him to join another one.⁶ This type of affiliation was open not only to "full-time" Sufis, but, in principle, to any Muslim, thereby dramatically expanding Sufism's popular base and facilitating the recruitment of new members. Frequently, such affiliated members of the order came from a royal or princely background or occupied high offices in the state hierarchy. They were therefore in a position to lavishly reward their Sufi mentors for their spiritual counsel and charisma by assigning them revenues from their properties. Multiple affiliations became a common feature of later Sufism, although some Sufi leaders (e.g., those of the Tijāniyya) prohibited their followers from seeking blessing outside their order.

Throughout the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries the Sufi *ṭarīqas* grew more complex. They developed into hierarchical social and economic structures, making it impossible for their heads to dispense spiritual advice and training directly to all of their followers. Consequently, the shaykh of a large *ṭarīqa* came to rely

⁶ Ibid., pp. 181–185.

on a group of deputies (called *muqaddams* or *khalīfas*), who were authorized to preach and teach on his behalf at the regional branches of the brotherhood, which were sometimes located at a considerable distance from the central lodge. Such deputies, who often enjoyed considerable independence and had the right to initiate new members into the order, were often tempted to establish an independent order, especially when they disagreed with the shaykh's appointment of his organizational successor. This situation led to a rapid proliferation of subsidiary localized brotherhoods that were run by their leaders as independent organizations. Compared to the Christian monastic orders, which were organized around the papacy and had to comply with fixed constitutions, the Sufi brotherhoods were more loosely structured and decentralized. The lack of a rigid subordination accounts for the fissiparous nature of *ṭarīqa* Sufism and for the resultant tendency on the part of local branches to acquire independence vis-à-vis the "mother" order. To regulate their activities, secular rulers tried to bring the orders under state control with various degrees of success. In the Ottoman Empire, each major city had the "master of the orders" (*shaykh al-shuyūkh*). Appointed by the local governor, he presided over the activities of Sufi institutions in the area under his jurisdiction. In 1227/1812, the Viceroy of Egypt Muḥammad 'Alī established a similar office in Cairo. Its holder was granted authority over all the mystical communities of Egypt as well as over the country's numerous Sufi shrines and hostels. The competition among later Sufi orders for spheres influence and new members encouraged exclusivity and resulted in the emergence of clearly defined borderlines between a given order and its competitors or between different organizational branches of the same order. In modern times, each order was characterized by distinct colors and a specific dress code, which set its adherents apart from other Sufi institutions.

As mentioned, the physical and institutional spread of Sufism was accompanied by the diversification of its doctrines and sources. The spiritual and intellectual needs of Sufism's increasingly diverse constituencies were no longer met by the simple pietist principles outlined by the semi-legendary figures of the first centuries of Islam. Responding to the varied needs and intellectual levels of its audiences Sufism evolved into a complex and heterogeneous system. Thus, the famous Maghribī Sufi Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 899/1493) could identify ten distinctive stands within the Sufi tradition of his epoch. Each of these strands, according to Zarrūq, had its own set of ascetic and

spiritual exercises, theoretical assumptions, textbooks and authoritative exponents.⁷ In the section that follows I will examine the life and work of the greatest Sufi masters of the later period who established lines of teaching and influence that persisted for centuries to come. In undertaking this task one inevitably encounters the problem of Sufism's definition, which arises precisely out of the diversity of its elements. Authors and scholars who are now known as Sufis may or may not have applied the term to themselves. Throughout the later Middle Ages and in modern times, one finds a broad spectrum of doctrinal opinions, beliefs and practices that have been labeled as Sufism by both Muslims and outside observers. Nevertheless, their relevance to the Sufi tradition in the original sense of the word is far from straightforward in so far as later Sufism "served more than any other movement to draw together all strands of intellectual life."⁸

The Grand Masters of Ṭarīqa Sufism

ʿAbd al-Qādir (d. 561/1166) and the Qādiriyya

The sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth centuries saw many momentous developments and personalities that proved to be pivotal for the subsequent history of mystical Islam. The formation of the first Sufi orders was one such critical turning point. This event is usually associated with three Sufi masters whose lives and thought will be discussed in this chapter. The first of them, ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, is considered to be the founding father of the influential Qādiriyya brotherhood. Born at Gīlān in Persia, al-Jīlānī came to Baghdad at the age of seventeen to study *ḥadīth* and Ḥanbalī jurisprudence. He subsequently made a pilgrimage to Mecca.⁹ Although he had received a Sufi cloak from the Ḥanbalī scholar al-Mubārak al-Mukharrimī, the builder of the first Ḥanbalī college in Baghdad,¹⁰ his conversion to Sufism occurred at the hands of the stern Sufi master Abū 'l-Khayr al-Dabbās (d. 523/1131), who earned his livelihood by selling syrup.

⁷ Aḥmad Zarrūq, *Qawā'id al-taṣawwuf*. Ed. by Muḥammad Zuhrī Najjār, 2d edition, Cairo, 1976, p. 35.

⁸ Hodgson, *Venture*, vol. 2, p. 230.

⁹ Ibid., p. 208.

¹⁰ Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 247.

This shaykh put ‘Abd al-Qādir through a severe ascetic discipline in order to suppress his pride. After studying with al-Dabbās, ‘Abd al-Qādir continued to practice the austere lifestyle inculcated in him by his master: he kept night vigils, fasted during most of the year, recited the Qur’ān from beginning to end many times over, wandered off in the desert without any provisions, and so on. In 521/1127, when he was fifty years of age, he felt that he had achieved the spiritual maturity he was seeking and decided to return to active social life. Following a dream that urged him to impart his knowledge to the people, he embarked on the career of a popular preacher. A fiery orator, he attracted large audiences of the common folk as well as royalty and wealthy merchants. Shortly before his death the Ḥanbalī ascetic al-Mukharrimī put ‘Abd al-Qādir in charge of his religious school (*madrasa*) in one of the quarters of Baghdad. To this was soon added a hospice (*ribāt*) for his large family (he had four wives and forty-nine sons) and disciples, where he lectured on the standard religious subjects: the Qur’ān and its exegesis, *ḥadīth*, and jurisprudence. At least three of his sons and many of his disciples later distinguished themselves as popular preachers and scholars in their own right.

A convinced Ḥanbalī who adhered to the populist and socially active stance of the founder of the movement, ‘Abd al-Qādir’s sermons drew large crowds. Even in its extended form his private school could no longer accommodate his numerous admirers who flocked to him from all over Iraq and beyond. To cater to their needs, on Fridays and Wednesdays, he had to preach on the special prayer grounds outside the city, for there was no building in the ‘Abbāsīd capital that was large enough to hold his listeners.¹¹ Finally, the authorities of Baghdad had to erect a special building for him on that site. There he received visitors and issued rulings on various difficult points of Islamic piety and ethic. His extraordinary popularity attracted wealthy donors, who assigned generous endowment funds to his school.

‘Abd al-Qādir’s fiery orations and irresistible charisma encouraged members of the non-Muslim religious communities of Baghdad to convert to Islam *en masse*. He also exerted beneficial influence on his Muslim followers, many of whom repented publicly of their sins in

¹¹ Hodgson, *Venture*, vol. 2, p. 208.

the aftermath of his moving sermons. He spoke in simple terms that were accessible to the rank-and-file believers. His moral discourses illuminated their everyday moral problems and provided them with dignifying solutions, which he traced back to the precedents established by the heroes of early Islam. As with al-Ghāzalī's *Ihya'*, 'Abd al-Qādir's Sufism was driven by a clear communal agenda: to morally uplift his fellow Muslims and to guide them to salvation. In pursuit of this goal he carefully avoided the metaphysical speculations that were advanced by some contemporary Sufi theorists and played down the sensational and individualistic aspects of mystical experience exemplified by al-Bisṭāmī and al-Ḥallāj. And yet, 'Abd al-Qādir's simple piety was thoroughly inward-looking; it gave his listeners room for infinite self-improvement that was aimed at reaching the stage when one's "secret thoughts and evident words and actions will be at one."¹² He called upon the Muslims to embark on the greater *jihād*, one that, in accordance with a famous *ḥadīth*, should be waged against the enemy within every believer, that is, against his lower psyche with its destructive passions and uncontrollable drives which bar man from God's grace. In a similar vein, 'Abd al-Qādir presents the believer's obedience to God's will, as expressed in the Qur'ān and the Sunna, as the only authentic expression of his love for God.

'Abd al-Qādir's principal work, "That Which is Sufficient for the Seekers of the Path to the Truth" (*Ghunya li-ṭālibī ṭarīq al-ḥaqq*), became a favorite manual of instruction for the subsequent generations of Ḥanbalīs, Sufis and non-Sufis alike. A standard exposition of the ethical and moral precepts incumbent on the Sunnī Muslim, the *Ghunya* "contains very little that could possibly be condemned by any but the most extreme 'puritans'."¹³ Some Ḥanbalī doctors, notably Ibn Taymiyya, indeed criticized the supererogatory acts of piety and mystical litanies that were promoted by the *Ghunya*. They also pointed out, quite rightly it seems, that 'Abd al-Qādir drew heavily on Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī's "Nourishment for the Hearts," which served him as a model and source of inspiration. Yet, unlike Abū Ṭālib's work, the *Ghunya* contains a heresiographical section that represents a typical Ḥanbalī position vis-à-vis "deviant" Muslim sects. Incidentally,

¹² Ibid., p. 209.

¹³ Arberry, *Sufism*, p. 85.

it criticizes the teachings of the Baṣran Sālīmiyya, with which Abū Ṭalīb was closely affiliated.¹⁴

‘Abd al-Qādir explicitly identified the ideal shaykh of Sufism with a perfect Ḥanbalī scholar. A sober and responsible individual, he avoids excesses in theory and practice and guards jealously God’s transcendence that the ecstatic utterances of some Sufi “extremists” have so blatantly compromised. Furthermore, ‘Abd al-Qādir consistently upheld the supremacy of the prophets over the most perfect Sufi saints. Somewhat paradoxically, despite his sober and pragmatic character, ‘Abd al-Qādir became “probably the most popular saint in the Islamic world, whose name is surrounded by innumerable legends that scarcely fit the image of the stern, sober representative of contrition and mystical fear.”¹⁵ ‘Abd al-Qādir owes his posthumous fame to his sons and numerous disciples. One of his enthusiastic followers, al-Shaṭṭanawfī, writing a century after his death, crafted a miraculous portrait of ‘Abd al-Qādir that has completely overshadowed his historical persona. Al-Shaṭṭanawfī’s work gave rise to numerous apologetic imitations that present ‘Abd al-Qādir as the supreme saint of his epoch, “whose foot was on the neck of all other friends of God.” In such accounts, ‘Abd al-Qādir is invariably portrayed as a great miracle-worker: he extinguishes fire, walks on water, flies through the air, raises the dead, reads people’s thoughts, demolishes mountains, dries up seas, and is miraculously present in several places at the same time. He presides over a vast realm stretching from Istanbul to Delhi and is ever ready to come to the rescue of the downtrodden and the oppressed. His whole life is seen by his admirers as a chain of marvels and miracles. In the hagiographical literature of his order and in the collective imagination of his followers, he presents himself as an embodiment of the infinite divine majesty and a channel through which beneficent divine grace is distributed among mankind. Little wonder that soon after his death his tomb in Baghdad came to be seen by the populace as a source of blessing. Up to the present day it remains a popular pilgrimage site that attracts numerous visitors. Rebuilt on the orders of the Ottoman sultan Sülaymān in 941/1535, it is still visited by pilgrims, mainly from the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent, where his *ṭarīqa* continues to enjoy a wide following. Among Indian Muslims his name

¹⁴ Böwering, *Mystical Vision*, pp. 92–97.

¹⁵ Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 247.

is invoked whenever cholera or any other epidemic strikes a certain area or city. At such times, the people of the afflicted area take out what is believed to be 'Abd al-Qādir's flag (which is dark green in color) and process with it, calling upon the saint to intercede before God on their behalf. 'Abd al-Qādir's festival (*urs*) on the 11th day of Rabi' II is marked by special celebrations in Baghdad up to the present day. 'Abd al-Qādir's great popularity among Muslims of very diverse backgrounds, who lived in different historical epochs, as well as the nature of his affiliation to Sufism have been a puzzle for Western scholars. Summarizing their predicament, J. S. Trimingham wrote:

It is difficult to penetrate through the mists of legend which formed during the lifetime of 'Abd al-Qādir . . . and thickened rapidly after his death, and so to discern why he, out of the hundreds of saintly figures of the period, survived in a unique way to become the inspirer of millions, a heavenly receiver of petitions and bestower of benefits, right up to the present day . . . And as for his Sufi reputation there is not the slightest indication that he was a Sufi at all.¹⁶

Similar misgivings are expressed by J. Chabbi. She viewed 'Abd al-Qādir as a preacher and director of a religious college *par excellence*, who was later appropriated by the mystics of Shāfi'ī background and portrayed as a model Sufi master and the founder of the Qādirī brotherhood.¹⁷ A more recent study of his written legacy has revealed that 'Abd al-Qādir had an intimate knowledge of the early Sufi tradition and the teachings of its major exponents. Throughout his writings, he made frequent references to the ideas of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Ibrāhīm b. Adham, Sufyān al-Thawrī, al-Muḥāsibī, Rābi'a al-'Adawiyya, Ma'rūf al-Karkhī, Fuḍayl b. 'Iyāḍ, al-Bisṭāmī, al-Tustarī, and the Sufis of al-Junayd's circle.¹⁸ Furthermore, he showed a good command of the Sufi terminology current in his age.¹⁹ Finally, his position as the head of a Sufi lodge was shown to have been quite feasible, if we consider the rapid proliferation of such institutions in his epoch and the frequent references to his Sufi disciples (*murīdūn*; *fuqarā'*) in contemporary sources, including his own sermons.²⁰

¹⁶ Trimingham, *Sufi Orders*, pp. 40–41.

¹⁷ "'Abd al-Kadir al-Djilani, personnage historique," in: *StI*, vol. 38 (1973), pp. 65–106.

¹⁸ A. Demeerseman, *Nouveau regard sur la voie spirituelle d'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī et sa tradition*, Paris, 1988, pp. 13–17.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 18–19.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 19–34.

The Geographical and Organizational Dimensions of Qādirī Sufism

As mentioned, there is little reason to doubt that ‘Abd al-Qādir was simultaneously the principal of a school (*madrasa*) of Ḥanbalī law and the head of a Sufi lodge (*ribāṭ*) in Baghdad. His sermons, collected in a book titled “Revelation from the Lord” (*al-Faṭḥ al-rabbānī*) were delivered sometimes in the one, sometimes in the other. Both were notable institutions that were generously supported by state officials and private individuals. Both appear to have come to an end after the sack of Baghdad by the Mongols in 656/1258. Till that time it is probable that their headship remained in the family of ‘Abd al-Qādir which was numerous and distinguished. According to his biographer al-Shaṭṭanawfī, ‘Abd al-Qādir was succeeded in the *madrasa* by his son ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (552/1151–593/1196), who was followed by his son ‘Abd al-Salām (d. 611/1214). Another son, ‘Abd al-Razzāq (528/603–1134/1206–7), was a scholar and ascetic of some renown. Several members of the family perished during the sack of Baghdad, when both these institutions were destroyed.

Individuals residing at ‘Abd al-Qādir’s *ribāṭ* were subject to a body of rules and doctrines that were drawn up by its founder. It was sufficient to constitute a system of ascetic discipline (*madhhab*).²¹ By receiving the Sufi cloak (*khirqā*) from ‘Abd al-Qādir his *murīds* acknowledged their acceptance of his authority and of his demands and subordinated their will to that of the master.²² Al-Shaṭṭanawfī gives a long list of men who attained various degrees of distinction and who received the *khirqā* from ‘Abd al-Qādir in recognition of their achievements. These persons were said to “attach themselves” (*intasaba* or *intamā*) to the master and, upon the completion of their studies, were given permission to bestow the *khirqā* on others as from him. In doing so they would stipulate that the novice (*murīd*) was to regard ‘Abd al-Qādir as his shaykh and director after the Prophet. In a tradition which is likely to be apocryphal (dated 592/1196), ‘Abd al-Qādir declared that the acceptance of his *khirqā* was not absolutely necessary for entry into his order; personal attachment to himself was sufficient. It would appear that already during his lifetime several persons carried on propaganda in favor of his spiritual method: one ‘Alī b. al-Ḥaddād obtained proselytes in Yemen, and one Muḥam-

²¹ Ibid., pp. 40–52.

²² Ibid., pp. 45–46.

mad al-Baṭā'ihī, resident in Baalbek, did likewise in Syria. A Sufi named Taqī al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Yunīnī, also of Baalbek, was another famous propagandist, and one Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Ṣamad in Egypt "followed 'Abd al-Qādir and in treading the Path relied on him after God and His Apostle." Since all of his followers were promised paradise, the order is likely to have been popular. Its popularity has persisted, in some areas, well into the modern period: in the 1920s and 1930s Qādirī missionaries in Africa appear to have had little difficulty in obtaining fresh adherents to it.

That 'Abd al-Qādir's sons had some share in spreading his teachings is likely, though Ibn Taymiyya mentions that he had associated with one of his descendants who was an ordinary Muslim and not a member of the *ṭarīqa*, and so did not agree with those who held fanatical views about his ancestor. Al-Shaṭṭanawfī, however, does not bear out the assertion that in 'Abd al-Qādir's lifetime some of his sons were preaching his doctrine in Morocco, Egypt, Arabia, Turkestan and India.²³ He says much of his son 'Abd al-Razzāq (d. 603/1206), but nothing of the "mosque now in ruins, whose seven gilded domes have often served as the subject of description by Arabic historians," which this son is supposed to have built. Nor does his account confirm the statement that this 'Abd al-Razzāq introduced the use of music in the Sufi ritual, and indeed the employment of this was earlier than 'Abd al-Qādir's time. Since 'Abd al-Qādir was of the opinion that the exercises of each *murīd* should be determined by his shaykh in accordance with his individual needs, it is unlikely that he instituted any rigid system of collective worship (*dhikr*) or prescribed specific litanies (*wird*) to his followers. Indeed those in use among different Qādirī communities across the world differ considerably.²⁴ The initiation ceremonies of various Qādirī communities also vary from one region to another. In some communities, there is a tendency to set 'Alī, the Prophet's cousin, above the Prophet and to insist on the importance of his (i.e., 'Alī's) sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn. This simply cannot well represent the views of such a stern Ḥanbalī scholar as 'Abd al-Qādir.

The Qādirī movement seems from an early period to have developed on different lines according to whether 'Abd al-Qādir was

²³ A. Le Chatelier, *Confréries Musulmanes du Hédjaz*, Paris, 1887, p. 35.

²⁴ L. Rinn, *Marabouts et Khouan*, Algiers, 1884, pp. 183–185.

regarded as the founder of a system involving rites and practices, or as a worker of miracles and advocate of the poor and downtrodden. In the latter direction it meant the near deification of 'Abd al-Qādir, the extremists holding that he was the greatest saint of all times. His more moderate followers argued however that he was so only in his own age. The latter was the view of Ibn 'Arabī, who treats him the representative of God on earth (*khalīfa*) in his epoch, who made manifest the powers that God had given to him through his miracles, or "charismatic gifts."²⁵ But there was also a theory that 'Abd al-Qādir continued to exercise his supernatural powers in his grave, which he could leave at will to come to the rescue of those in need. This belief is attested by the initiation ceremonies of some branches of the Qādiriyya: the candidate for admission to a Qādirī community has to see the founder in dreams, in one case so often and so clearly that without having seen 'Abd al-Qādir's portrait he could recognize him among a thousand. The form of Qādirism that encouraged the worship of the founder seems to prevail in North Africa, where it is called Jīlāliyya, and whole communities are called collectively Jīlāla. Their system has been described by some French scholars as the application of Sufi mysticism to beliefs that are seem to be pre-Islamic, and the materialization of that mysticism under the form of a cult of hidden subterranean powers. Here the word "retreat" (*khalwa*) is used for a heap of stones where women attach rags to reeds planted between the stones and where they burn benzoin and styrax in potsherds. Such "retreats" seem to symbolize the saint's invisible presence among his followers in a given area. Similarly, "in the province of Oran on all the roads and on the summits of the chief mountains domed shrines (*qubba*) are to be found in the name of 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlālī."²⁶ The society of the Genawah in Guinea has placed itself entirely under the protection of Mawlāy (or Master) 'Abd al-Qādir with all his array of male and female demons. In such beliefs French scholars found traces of the powers which, according to the Qur'ān, belonged to Solomon. The cult of 'Abd al-Qādir is most ardently practiced by Arab and Berber women in some areas of Morocco. They come to the *khalwa* for every sort of object, and to satisfy their loves and hates in all the acts of

²⁵ W. Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God*, Albany, NY, 1998, p. 376.

²⁶ E. de Neveu, *Les Khouan: Ordres religieux chez les Musulmans d'Algérie*, Paris, 1845, p. 30.

their existence. The men on the other hand chiefly go to the *khakwa* when they are ill. Some Sunnī scholars, especially Ibn Taymiyya and his followers in Syria and Egypt, attacked such practices. The Qādiriyya consists of loosely structured communities that differ from other orders mainly in ritual, but again this varies widely from one locality to another within the same Qādirī movement. It is, therefore, hardly appropriate to speak of a unified Qādirī order. Perhaps the only feature such disparate regional communities share in common is their allegiance to the saintly founder. Furthermore, though the founder was a Ḥanbalī scholar, membership is by no means confined to that school, and the order is theoretically both tolerant and charitable.

Since historical and geographical works rarely distinguish between the different Sufi *ṭuruq* in their accounts of religious buildings, little can be said with certainty of the date at which the first Qādirī lodge (*zāwiyya* or *khānaqā*) was established in any country save Iraq. The teachings of the order is said to have been introduced into Fez by the posterity of two of ‘Abd al-Qādir’s sons, Ibrāhīm (d. 592/1196 in Wāsiṭ, Lower Iraq) and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (who died in Jiyāl, a village of Sinjār, Upper Iraq). Their descendants reportedly had migrated to Spain and shortly before the fall of Granada (897/1492) fled to Morocco, where they still reside. The *khakwa* of ‘Abd al-Qādir in Fez is mentioned as early as 1104/1692–3.

The order was introduced into Asia Minor and Istanbul by Ismā‘īl Rūmī, founder of the *khānaqā* known as the Qādirikhānah at the Ṭopkhāne. This personage (d. 1041/1631), who is called *Pīr thānī*, “Second Master,” is said to have founded some forty lodges (*tekiya* or *tekke*) in these regions. The Yemeni scholar Ṣāliḥ b. Mahdī al-Maqbalī mentioned a Qādirī lodge (*ribāṭ*) in Mecca²⁷ about 1180/1767. The assertion that a branch was established there during the lifetime of ‘Abd al-Qādir²⁸ is not improbable, since Mecca has a natural attraction for the Sufis.

The Qādiriyya order is mentioned as one that is highly respected but is not included among those recognized in India. It spread into the Subcontinent from Uch, northeast of Multān, in the late ninth/fifteenth centuries; from there it was carried by the Qādirī missionaries

²⁷ *Al-‘Ālam al-shāmikh*, Cairo, 1328 A.H., p. 381.

²⁸ Le Chatelier, *Confréries*, p. 44.

to Indonesia and Malaysia.²⁹ Later on, however, the Qādiriyya of India appears to have lost ground to other brotherhoods, especially the Chishtiyya, the Suhrawardiyya and the Naqshbandiyya, and we find no reference to it in a list of Indian brotherhoods from 1166/1752, although ‘Abd al-Qādir himself is mentioned.

Some statistics (to be received with caution) of the Qādiriyya and their *zāwiyas* are given by the French colonial officials in the Maghrib, O. Depont and X. Coppolani.³⁰ Much of its development is admittedly recent, and may be due to the fame won by the namesake of ‘Abd al-Qādir, the emir ‘Abd el-Kader (d. 1301/1883), a shaykh of the Qādirī order, who for many years resisted the French occupation of North Africa. It is still represented in many Islamic countries, though it would appear that certain derived brotherhoods enjoy greater popularity in many places. Thus the Qādiriyya of Touba in Guinea, which has become a distinct sign whereby the Diakanke tribe can be recognized, is derived through the Sīdiyya from the Qādiriyya of the Kunta (Kounta) of Timbuktū. Although these Kunta groups form an offshoot of the Qādiriyya, some of them prefer to identify themselves with the Shādhiliyya brotherhood, which is especially popular among African Muslims.

The Qādirī communities throughout the Muslim world acknowledge nominal allegiance to the keeper of ‘Abd al-Qādir’s tomb in Baghdad and share some common rituals of investiture.³¹ It would seem however that the actual authority of this personage is chiefly recognized in Iraq and Pakistan, which provided the majority of its visitors in recent times.³² ‘Abd al-Qādir’s Pakistani followers periodically send gifts that form the main source of the revenues of this establishment. No wonder therefore that the members of this family in Baghdad find it worth their while to learn Urdu. Under the Ottomans the Qādirī *zāwiyas* in Mecca were subject to the grand master of the Sufi orders (*shaykh al-ṭuruq*), who had the right to nominate their leader (*muqaddam*). Likewise, the Egyptian branch was under the control of a representative of the al-Bakrī family, who was charged by the Egyptian viceroy Muḥammad ‘Alī with the supervision of the Sufi *ṭuruq* in his realm.³³

²⁹ Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 354.

³⁰ Depont and Coppolani, *Confréries*, pp. 301–18.

³¹ Rinn, *Marabouts*, p. 179.

³² Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 247.

³³ F. de Jong, *Ṭuruq and Ṭuruq-linked Institutions in XIXth Century Egypt*, Leiden, 1978.

In Africa, according to L. Rinn, each *muqaddam* names his successor; in the event of one dying without having nominated anyone, an election is made by the members of a given branch during a collective Sufi worship (*ḥaḍra*). The approval of the head of the order in Baghdad is then solicited, and has never been refused. The organization of the order in North Africa is described somewhat fully by L. Rinn, O. Depont and X. Coppolani in the works cited in the footnotes. The system appears to be in general congregational, that is, the *zāwīyas* are by and large independent, and the relation between them and the central institution in Baghdad is very loose and sometimes nonexistent. The principle whereby the headship of a *zāwīyya* is hereditary is generally recognized, but not always followed.

In Anatolia, the sign of the Qādirī brotherhood was said to be a green rose adopted by its local propagator Ismāʿīl Rūmī. The candidate for admission to the order after a year brought an *ʿaraqīyya*, or a small felt cap, to which if the candidate be accepted the shaykh attached a rose of eighteen yellow, red, white and black petals, arranged in three rings of five, six and seven respectively, with Solomon's Seal in the center. This cap is called by them "crown" (*tāj*). The symbolism of this is explained by L. Garnett³⁴ and refers, respectively, to the virtues one acquires by joining the order, the indispensable elements of faith, and the number verses in the first Qurʾān chapter, the *Fātiḥa*. The Turkish Qādiriyya preferred the color green, though they allowed others. In nineteenth-century Egypt on the other hand the turbans and banners of the Qādiriyya were white; most members of the order were fishermen, and in religious processions they carried upon poles nets of various colors.³⁵ There are festivities in honor of ʿAbd al-Qādir on 11 Rabīʿ II, and pilgrimages are made in many places in Algeria and Morocco to the *zāwīyas* and shrines of the saint.³⁶ The "birthday" of the founder (*mawṣim*), celebrated by the Jilāla at Salé commences on the seventh day of the *mulūd* (*mawlid*), that is, the Feast of the Prophet's birthday, and lasts four days 17–20 Rabīʿ I. Sheep and oxen are presented to the descendants of ʿAbd al-Qādir. French observers in Morocco distinguished between the ceremonies of the Qādiriyya, who recite the

³⁴ *The Dervishes of Turkey*, London, 1990, pp. 119–121.

³⁵ E. Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of Modern Egyptians*, London, 1978, p. 245.

³⁶ Rinn, *Marabouts*, p. 177.

order's litany (*ḥizb*), and the Jīlāla, who recite the *dhikr* to the accompaniment of drums and tambourines; and again between the Jīlāla of the country, who use slightly different musical instruments. A performance executed with these instruments sometimes leads to ecstasy. The collective worship of the Jīlāla of the country contains neither the *ḥizb* nor the *dhikr* instituted by the founder of the brotherhood, but a plain *dhikr* of improvised words chanted to the ceremonial rhythm of the tambourines without bells (*banādir*). These improvisations always terminate with the words "Thus spoke Mawlāy 'Abd al-Qādir" or "O Mawlāy 'Abd al-Qādir."

Various collections of rituals, which are ascribed to 'Abd al-Qādir, have been published in Egypt, Turkey and India. In the Qādirī manual "The Divine Outpourings" (*al-Fuyūḍāt al-rabbāniyya*), the *murīd* who is about to enter upon *khalwa* (retreat) is advised to fast in the day and keep vigil at night. The *khalwa* lasts forty days. If, during the vigil, a figure reveals itself to him saying "I am God," he should say "Nay rather thou art in God," and if it be for probation, it will vanish; but if it remain, then it will be a genuine revelation (*tajallī*). Reduction of food during the forty days should be gradual till for the last three days fasting is complete. At the end, the *murīd* returns by degrees to his former diet.

The Jīlāla of Tangier in Algeria, who make vows to 'Abd al-Qādir in the hopes of securing his assistance in a difficult undertaking or in distress, are in the habit of depositing in the *zāwiyya* white cocks, which are called *muḥarrar*.³⁷ They do not kill them, but leave them free to rove about the *zāwiyya*, where however they do not long survive, since the descendants of the Prophet who live hard by take them for their food. The head (*muqaddam*) of this *zāwiyya* conducts the ceremonies at which the Qur'ān is repeated without 'Abd al-Qādir's litany (*ḥizb*) being pronounced, and where some ritual dances are performed. Circumcisions are made at the *zāwiyya* on the first day of the Prophet's birthday (*mawlid*). A nightly meeting called *layla* is held on the eve of this day, at which the *ḥizb* of 'Abd al-Qādir is recited. In some localities of the Maghrib, all the potters belong to the Jīlāla, among whom the richer members of the community are to be found.

The first time that the Qādirīs appear to have played an active political part was during the French conquest of Algeria in the 1830s,

³⁷ A reference to Qur'ān 3:35.

when the chief of the local Qādiriyya, Muḥyī 'l-Dīn, having been offered the leadership in the war against the infidel, permitted his son 'Abd al-Qādir to accept it. A born leader of men, 'Abd al-Qādir was able to utilize the mobilizational resources and the *shaykh-murīd* discipline of his brotherhood to establish his authority over many regions of Algeria. When his power was threatened by the French, he made astute use of his rank as the *muqaddam* of his order to win fresh recruits and consolidate his authority over the Algerian countryside. After his fall and subsequent exile to France in 1847, the followers of the African Qādiriyya seem to have lost their militancy. From that time onward they often lent their support to the French colonial government of Algeria. During a local insurrection in Aurès in 1879, the shaykh of the Qādiriyya of Menā'a, Sī Muḥammad b. 'Abbās, displayed unimpeachable loyalty. The same branch of the order helped the French to extend their influence to the Sahara at Wārgla and to El-Wad. Their leader Sī Muḥammad b. Ṭayyib, fell on the French side at the battle of Charouin on March 2, 1901.³⁸

General Observations

The various branches of the Qādiriyya present a typical example of the evolution of Sufism in the later periods. It was no longer simply the individual piety of a few religious virtuosi, but "an elaborate lore and custom based on the relation of disciple and master" that eventually acquired its own organization, the *ṭarīqa* Sufi order. From that time on the *ṭarīqa* has existed "side by side with the mosques and *madrasas* of the regular ulema scholars."³⁹ The social potentialities of organized Sufism were fully realized with the emergence of the Sufi cloisters and lodges, which gradually became the important foci of social cohesion and popular religiosity. As 'Abd al-Qādir's example clearly demonstrates, the great Sufi preachers and visionaries enjoyed enormous popular respect. "Living in poverty . . . and scorning the niceties of courtly fashion and the competition for financial and social advantage of the urban tradesmen . . ., they fulfilled the long-standing Irano-Semitic dream of a pure life over against the injustice that seemed built into city life . . ."⁴⁰ The moral

³⁸ I. Hamid, *Les Musulmans Français du Nord de l'Afrique*, Paris 1906, p. 276.

³⁹ Hodgson, *Venture*, vol. 2, p. 204.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

respect which Sufis and their leaders enjoyed among the masses gradually transformed into a wide popular belief in their miraculous powers and in their ability to intercede before God on behalf of the ordinary believers. Mixed with the pre-Islamic religious and cultural substrata of the areas where Sufism was by now firmly implanted, such popular beliefs produced the peculiar combinations that have just been described. From then on, Sufi institutions were increasingly catering to the needs of popular religiosity with its insatiable craving for the miraculous and the extraordinary. Endowed by the popular imagination with supernatural therapeutic and intercessory powers Sufi shaykhs came to provide the much needed spiritual comfort and ministry to the populations in the rural hinterland as well as in cities. Their role was especially vital at the time of the decline or outright collapse of the central authorities in the aftermath of various social cataclysms or natural disasters. In accounting for the new social role of Sufism one Western scholar wrote:

The Sufi ties at once deepened the local moral resources, and tied them in a system of brotherhoods in some ways as universal as the old caliphal bureaucracy had been, which had disappeared. . . . Thus Sufism supplemented the Sharī'ah as a principle of unity and social order, offering the Muslims the sense of spiritual unity which came to be stronger than that provided by the remnant of the caliphate. They developed . . . a picture of the world which united the whole Dār al-Islām [i.e., the Abode of Islam—A.K.] . . . under a comprehensive hierarchy of pirs . . . The individual khānīqāhs and saints' tombs to which the faithful could come for spiritual guidance and consolation from God-dedicated men were part of an inclusive holy order—not merely the order of a given ṭarīqah, but that of God's chosen men throughout the world.⁴¹

It is against the background of this new social and ministerial role of later Sufism that we should view the activities of the saintly individuals and the institutions that they founded.

Al-Suhrawardī and the Suhrawardiyya

The emergence of another great Sufi order, the Suhrawardiyya, is closely associated with Abū 'l-Najāb 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Suhrawardī (d. 563/1168), a man whose career "embraced both the academic and

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 221.

the mystical.”⁴² Born about 490/1097 in Suhraward, in the Persian province of Jibāl, Abū ’l-Najīb traced his genealogy to the first caliph Abū Bakr. Probably in 507/1113, while still a young man, Abū ’l-Najīb moved to Baghdad, where he pursued the study of *ḥadīth*, Shāfi‘ī law, Arabic grammar and belles-lettres. A paternal uncle of Abū ’l-Najīb, ‘Umar b. Muḥammad (d. 532/1137–8), was head of a Sufi cloister in Baghdad. It was he who invested the young Abū ’l-Najīb with the Sufi robe (*khirqā*). At about 25, he abandoned his studies at the famous Nizāmiyya college of Baghdad and devoted himself to a solitary life of asceticism. Soon afterwards, he traveled to Iṣfahān in order to join Aḥmad al-Ghazālī (d. 520/1126), the younger brother of the great Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, who represented an ecstatic, or “drunken,” trend in Islamic mysticism.⁴³ In the words of a biographer, al-Ghazālī “wafted upon him the breath of felicity (*nasīm al-sa‘ādat*) and guided him along the Sufi Path.” Under al-Ghazālī’s influence, continues the biographer, “he cut himself off from ordinary society in order to lead a life of seclusion and retreat.”⁴⁴ On returning to Baghdad he became a disciple of Ḥammād al-Dabbās (d. 525/1131), the holy individual who was already mentioned as a spiritual master of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. During his Sufi training, Abū ’l-Najīb is said to have earned his living as a water-carrier. Later on, he himself acquired a number of disciples and founded a cloister (*ribāṭ*) on the western bank of the Tigris. However, “he did not totally turn his back on the life of academe.”⁴⁵ In 545/1151 Abū ’l-Najīb was appointed as a professor of *fiqh* at the Nizāmiyya college. However, two years later, he was dismissed from his office as a result of the power struggle between the caliph and the Saljuq sultan. Both before and after his appointment at the Nizāmiyya, Abū ’l-Najīb taught *fiqh* and *ḥadīth* at his own *madrassa*, which was situated next to his *ribāṭ*. Simultaneously, he continued to hold teachings session on Sufism. In 557/1161–92, he left Baghdad for Jerusalem, but he could not travel beyond Damascus because of the hostilities between Nūr al-Dīn Zangī and the Crusaders led by

⁴² I. Netton, “The Breath of Felicity: *Adab*, *Aḥwāl*, *Maqāmāt* and Abū Najīb al-Suhrawardī,” in: L. Lewisohn (ed.), *Classical Persian Sufism from Its Origins to Rumi*, London and New York, 1993, p. 457.

⁴³ Baldick, *Mystical Islam*, p. 66.

⁴⁴ Netton, “The Breath,” p. 457, apud al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi‘iyya*, Cairo, 1905–1906, vol. 4, p. 256.

⁴⁵ Netton, *ibid.*

Baldwin. After being granted an honorable reception in Damascus, Abū 'l-Najīb returned to Baghdad, where he died a few years later. Of his numerous students at the Nizāmiyya one can mention the great historian Ibn 'Asākir (d. 571/1176) and the famous traditionalist al-Sam'ānī. Among his Sufi disciples 'Ammār al-Bidlīsī (d. between 590/1194 and 604/1207) occupies an important place as a teacher of the renowned Central Asian Sufi Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā, who will be discussed further on. However, Abū 'l-Najīb's fame is largely due to his disciple and nephew, Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar al-Suhrawardī, the author of the last classical Sufi manual *Awārif al-ma'ārif* and the true founder of the Suhrawardiyya order.

Abū 'l-Najīb was not a prolific author. Apart from a commentary on a popular *ḥadīth* collection, his fame as a writer rests on a small Sufi manual titled "The Manners of the Sufi Novices" (*Adab al-murīdīn*).⁴⁶ However, this work became widely known only with the spread of the Suhrawardiyya order that was founded by his nephew 'Umar after Abū 'l-Najīb's death. The *Adab* is unique among Sufi compositions in that Sufism in its entirety is viewed here from the standpoint of *adab* (rules of conduct)⁴⁷ to be followed by its adherents. Abū 'l-Najīb's manual does not provide a detailed explanation of Sufi doctrine, focusing instead on Sufi ethics and manners. Abū 'l-Najīb's work is addressed first and foremost to the novice who is about to join a Sufi community. It teaches him how to choose only pure food, drink and clothes, to render service to his brethren, not to leave his shaykh before the eye of his heart opens, to associate with people of his kind and those from whom he can benefit.⁴⁸ The author makes a careful distinction between the full members of a Sufi congregation, who are expected to undertake the life of rigors and self-imposed deprivation implicit in its rule, and those who seek to partake of its spiritual life without forsaking their material possessions and social obligations. By applying the traditional concept of *rukḥṣa* (a dispensation from some of the severer Sufi requirements for those believers who are unable to observe them to the maximum)⁴⁹ in a novel way, Abū 'l-Najīb responds to the phenomenon of attachment to Sufism of lay members of public, called *muhibbūn*

⁴⁶ M. Milson, *A Sufi Rule for Novices*, Cambridge, Mass., 1975.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 16.

⁴⁸ Netton, "The Breath," p. 460; cf. Milson, *A Sufi Rule*.

⁴⁹ Netton, "The Breath," p. 461.

("lovers").⁵⁰ The concept of *rukḥṣa* allows the associated member of a Sufi congregation to have an income that exceeds his immediate needs, to cultivate friendship with rulers, to wear expensive cloths, to enjoy delicious food, to listen to, and to reward, profane poets, etc.⁵¹ At the same time, he is allowed to share in the spirituality of the Sufi community and in the charisma of its full-time members.⁵² In return, he is expected to provide hospitality for itinerant fellow Sufis and to support the local Sufi community through charitable donations. In his book, Abū 'l-Najīb made extensive use of classical Sufi manuals by al-Sulamī, al-Sarrāj and al-Qushayrī. Surprisingly, his primary source seems to have been Ibn Khafīf's "The Just Mean" (*Kitāb al-iqtīṣād*), which he quotes throughout his "Rule." However, he never mentions Ibn Khafīf by name. The reason for this may lie in the fact that Abū 'l-Najīb disagreed with Ibn Khafīf's fundamentally negative view of dispensations (*rukḥṣa*), which the latter interpreted as a failure of the *murīd* to meet the requirements of absolute sincerity (*ṣidq*) in his relationship with God. Ironically, regular Sufis gradually began to avail themselves of the dispensations that, in Abū 'l-Najīb's system, were intended for the associated members only.⁵³ It may therefore be argued that the notion of *rukḥṣa* introduced an element of instability into Sufism by lowering the standards of ascetic discipline upheld by early Sufi authorities. Such an attitude could not but encourage unqualified and undeserving individuals to join the Sufi movement—a development that was bemoaned by later Sufi writers.

Shihāb al-Dīn 'Umar al-Suhrawardī: Sufism as a Social and Political Factor

Abū 'l-Najīb's nephew, Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥaṣṣ 'Umar al-Suhrawardī (539–632/1145–1234), was one of the most important Sufis in Sunnī Islam. He was born and grew up in the town of Suhraward, in the Persian province of Jibāl. He should not be confused with his controversial contemporary Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā al-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl, a mystical thinker who was put to death in Aleppo in

⁵⁰ Baldick, *Mystical Islam*, p. 72.

⁵¹ Ibid., Netton, "The Breath," p. 466.

⁵² Milson, *A Sufi Rule*, pp. 19, 53 and 66.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 20.

587/1191 on charges of harbouring suspect religious and political ideas.

While still a young man Abū Ḥaṣṣ ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī came to Baghdad, where he placed himself under the tutelage of his uncle Abū ‘l-Najīb. Abū Ḥaṣṣ followed his uncle’s courses both in the Nizāmiyya and in the *ribāṭ* on the front of the Tigris River which by that time had become a major centre of the Sufi training. Abū Ḥaṣṣ’s other master in Baghdad was the renowned Ḥanbalī preacher and Sufi ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. He was to have a lasting influence on the religious views of the young al-Suhrawardī by dissuading him from the study of speculative theology (*kalām*) and from the use of analogical reasoning (*qiyās*) in juridical issues. However, despite his great respect for his teacher, al-Suhrawardī did not formally join the Ḥanbalī school of law. On legal issues, he was a typical traditionalist Shāfi‘ī scholar whose religious attitude was characterised by a deep-seated mistrust of rationalist theology. ‘Abd al-Qādir’s influence comes to the fore in al-Suhrawardī’s violent attacks against the proponents of Ash‘arī *kalām* later in his career.

After his uncle’s death in 563/1168, al-Suhrawardī began to preach to the residents of Abū ‘l-Najīb’s *ribāṭ* and in several other places in Baghdad. An eloquent orator, his public speeches often threw his audience into ecstasy or into the state of acute remorse. Under the influence of his oratory skills and powerful personality a number of his listeners reportedly cut their hair as a sign of penitence and turned to ascetic life. Others wept profusely and swooned. His pulpit was made of clay in order to demonstrate his commitment to the ascetic way of life.

Al-Suhrawardī was on friendly terms with Mu‘īn al-Dīn al-Chishtī (d. 633/1236), the founder of the Indian Chishtiyya order that especially in its early period based its teachings on al-Suhrawardī’s “Gifts of Divine Knowledge” (*‘Awārif al-ma‘ārif*). He maintained particularly close ties with Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī, known as al-Dāya, a *murīd* of Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā whom he had met in 618/1221 at Malatya. Dāya presented al-Suhrawardī with a copy of his famous manual “The Path of God’s Bondsmen” (*Miṣṣād al-‘ibād*).⁵⁴ Not only did al-Suhrawardī give his unconditional approval to this book, he

⁵⁴ H. Algar (trans.), *The Path of God’s Bondsmen from Origin to Return: A Sufi compendium by Najm al-Dīn Rāzī*, Delmar, New York, 1982.

also wrote a letter of recommendation on behalf of al-Dāya to the Saljuq sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Kayqubād (d. 634/1237) of Konya. Finally, while on a pilgrimage to Mecca in 628/1231, al-Suhrawardī is said to have met the great mystical poet of the age Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235). His meeting with the great Sufi gnostic Ibn [al-] 'Arabī (d. 638/1240) must be a legend that was designed to exculpate the latter of the accusations of unbelief levelled at him by some Sunnī scholars.⁵⁵

Though he constantly invoked the ways of the "pious forefathers" of the early Islamic community, al-Suhrawardī occasionally condoned bold expressions of Sufi experience. He even gave his conditional approval to the famous "I am the [Divine] Truth" (*anā 'l-ḥaqq*) statement ascribed to al-Ḥallāj. At the same time, early in his career al-Suhrawardī was deeply suspicious of the intentions of those contemporary mystical thinkers who sought to put individual mystical experience in a metaphysical context. In his classification, they fell in the same category as the Muslim philosophers whose Greek-inspired speculations he explicitly condemned.⁵⁶

Al-Suhrawardī's popular teaching sessions attracted the attention of the caliph al-Nāṣir, who sought to shore up the crumbling authority of the 'Abbāsīd state by rallying around his throne various religious and social organizations in the lands under his sway. By patronizing al-Suhrawardī the caliph sought to secure the support of al-Suhrawardī's numerous followers in the capital and nearby territories. To demonstrate his high esteem for the popular Sufi leader, in 599/1203 al-Nāṣir built for him a *ribāt* named al-Marzūbaniyya on the bank of the 'Īsā river in the western part of the capital. The construction of the Marzūbaniyya coincided with al-Nāṣir's attempt to endear himself to his subjects by sponsoring the *futuwwa* (chivalry) clubs of young men, which had become "a prominent channel for expressing lower-class interests in the towns."⁵⁷ Al-Nāṣir's politics were aimed at securing an independent power base among the urban masses of the capital whose support he needed in order to resist the domination of the Saljuq warlords. According to al-Nāṣir's plan, his

⁵⁵ C. Addas, *The Quest for Red Sulphur*, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 240–241; cf. A. Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabī in the Later Islamic Tradition: The making of a polemical image in medieval Islam*, Albany, New York, 1998, p. 134 and passim.

⁵⁶ Hodgson, *Venture*, vol. 2, p. 281.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

patronage of the *futuwwa* clubs was to play a critical role in as much as it gave him control over the urban militias that helped him to assert Baghdad's autonomy against outside forces. Al-Nāṣir's goal in cultivating the *futuwwa* clubs and in presenting himself as their patron was to put these organizations of free citizenry at the service of the caliphate. Taking advantage of his headship of all the *futuwwa* organizations in his domain al-Nāṣir began to initiate into it his courtiers and military commanders as well as independent Muslim rulers and princes who still recognized his authority as the spiritual leader of Sunnī Islam.⁵⁸ Since al-Suhrawardī's public lectures emphasised "that the *futuwwa* was a part of the Sufi way, set off . . . precisely for the ordinary folk for whom the full Sufi way was too hard,"⁵⁹ he became the ideological pivot of al-Nāṣir's strategy aimed at reducing the caliph's dependence on the military might of the Saljuqs and other warlords. In al-Suhrawardī and his followers the caliph found a unique political instrument of mass mobilisation that he used to reassert his independence vis-à-vis the self-appointed "protectors" of the caliphate. Due to al-Nāṣir's support, al-Suhrawardī, in his turn, was able to extend his personal prestige far beyond the confines of Baghdad, laying the foundations for the subsequent rise to the international Suhrawardī *ṭarīqa*.

Al-Suhrawardī's works evince a concerted effort to demonstrate the underlying affinity between the code of the *futuwwa* and the spiritual and ascetic practices of Sufism. In so doing he pursued a dual objective. By showing the *futuwwa* to be part and parcel of by now widely accepted Sufi spiritual discipline, he implicitly supported the caliph's religious legitimacy as the head of the *futuwwa* organizations. Simultaneously, he gave legitimacy to organized Sufism by linking it to such a sacrosanct Islamic institution as the 'Abbāsid caliphate. Al-Suhrawardī's dual strategy is to the fore in his book "Directing the Sights Toward the Decisive Proof" (*Idlālat al-ʿiyān ʿalā ʾl-burhān*). It presents the relation between the Sufi teacher (*shaykh*) and his disciple (*murīd*) as analogous to the status of the caliph with regard to his Muslim subjects. For al-Suhrawardī, the caliph, like the Sufi shaykh, is appointed by God to serve as the mediator (*wāsiṭa*) between him and his subjects (*nās*). In al-Suhrawardī's discourse, the concepts of *futuwwa*, *taṣawwuf* (Sufism) and *khilāfa* (caliphate) form a hierar-

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 283.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 282.

chical structure: "The supreme caliphate is a script (*daftar*) of which *taṣawwuf* is a part; *taṣawwuf* in its turn is also a script of which the *futuwwa* is a part. The *futuwwa* is characterised by pure morals (*al-akhlāq al-zakiyya*), while *taṣawwuf* includes pious works and devotional recitals and meditations (*awrād*). Finally, the supreme caliphate comprises the mystical states, the pious actions and the pure morals." Implicitly, this hierarchical structure is reminiscent of the famous Sufi triad: *sharīʿa*, *ṭarīqa* and *ḥaqīqa*. Here the first element is identified with the initial stage of self-perfection which is followed by a formal entrance upon the Sufi path (*ṭarīqa*). This in turn leads to the realization of the higher mysteries of being. In al-Suhrawardī's schema, however, the usual Sufi order is reversed, since he represents the *sharīʿa* as the culmination of spiritual attainment that he identifies with service to the caliphate.

Al-Suhrawardī's importance for the process of the caliphate's revival instituted by al-Nāṣir is evident from the fact that the caliph sent him as his personal envoy to the courts of the Ayyūbid rulers of Syria and Egypt in 604/1208. Throughout his diplomatic mission al-Suhrawardī was greeted by popular expressions of sympathy: his arrival was celebrated by processions in his honour—a pattern that culminated in his triumphal return to Baghdad after his task was successfully accomplished. However, al-Suhrawardī's newly acquired taste for ostentatious pomp and his departure from his usual frugal lifestyle irritated the caliph who removed him from the direction of the Sufi *ribāṭs* and forbade him to engage in public preaching for a while. These measures caused a public stir in Baghdad, where al-Suhrawardī had a large following. However, the caliph refused to lift these sanctions until the Sufi had repented of his vainglorious pretensions, renounced the property and money that had accrued to him during his service at the court, and returned to the usual Sufi way of life. Satisfied by these signs of remorse, the caliph pardoned his protegee and made first steps toward reconciliation. From then on they remained close friends.

Ten years later, when the 'Abbāsīd caliph found himself in a predicament, both militarily and constitutionally, due to the hostile politics of the Khwārazm Shāh, al-Suhrawardī was again entrusted with a diplomatic mission. In 614/1218, al-Nāṣir sent him to Hamadān, where the Khwārazm Shāh 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad II was preparing for an assault against Baghdad. The Khwārazm Shāh, who hoped to establish himself as the successor to the Salujq protectors of the

caliphate, had long resented al-Nāṣir's independence. He therefore gave the caliph's envoy a chilly reception in his tent. On the decisive question, whether it was permitted to the caliph, by reason of the public interest, to keep members of the 'Abbāsid dynasty, namely his own son and the latter's family, in prison, al-Suhrawardī and his royal host failed to reach agreement. Although al-Suhrawardī was unable to persuade the Khwārazm Shāh to reach accommodation with the caliph, the adverse weather conditions eventually forced the ruler of Khwārazm to call off his campaign.

On the other hand, al-Suhrawardī's mission in 618/1221 to the new Saljuq sultan of Rūm (Anatolia), 'Alā' al-Dīn Kayqubād, was a complete success. Acting on behalf of the caliph, the Sufi master presented the sultan with the tokens of rulership: the diploma of kingship, the robe of honour, the sword and the signet ring that symbolized the latter's full authority over the Islamic regions of Asia Minor. Additionally, al-Suhrawardī succeeded in recruiting members for the caliph's *futuwwa* club among Kayqubād's courtiers, military commanders and scholars. Eventually, the ruler himself agreed to accept the robe of *futuwwa* in an initiatory ceremony led by al-Suhrawardī. The atmosphere of friendliness and elation that surrounded this episode is finely captured by the historian Ibn Bībī in his chronicle of the Saljuqs. Whether al-Suhrawardī's *futuwwa* was identical with that promoted by the caliph or represented a concession to the *akhī* ("brotherhood") movement of the Anatolien urban classes remains unclear.

Al-Suhrawardī's Sufi doctrine represents what by then had become a conventional mixture of traditional Sufi concepts with gnostic and neo-Platonic elements. His numerous disciples and friends spread his ideas throughout Syria, Asia Minor, Persia and North India. It was they, rather than al-Suhrawardī himself, who established the foundations of the renowned Suhrawardiyya order. Next to the Chishtiyya, the Qalandariyya and the Naqshbandiyya, the Suhrawardiyya became one of the leading Islamic brotherhoods in India, where it still has a substantial following. Among the most successful propagators of al-Suhrawardī's doctrine were his disciples 'Alī b. Buzghūsh (d. 678/1279–80 in Shīrāz), Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā', who founded the Suhrawardiyya in Sind and in the Punjab, and Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrizī, who spread its teaching to Bengal. By the eighth/fourteenth centuries, the Suhrawardiyya had become more subdivided than any other order to the extent that one sometimes has difficulty trying to trace its numerous branches.

Al-Suhrawardī left behind many works on Islamic mysticism and religious sciences. Of these, his *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif*, dedicated to his royal patron and friend the caliph al-Nāṣir, is by far the most famous. This is a traditional Sufi manual that has had a profound and lasting influence on millions of Sufis and ordinary Muslims until today. Its content evinces influences of earlier Sufi literature, especially the Sufi commentaries on the Qurʾān by Sahl al-Tustarī and Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī. Also frequently mentioned are the Sufi manuals of Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, Abū Ṭalīb al-Makkī, Abū Bakr al-Kalābādhī, and Abū ʿl-Qāsim al-Qushayrī as well as the Sufi treatises by al-Sulamī. The sixty-three chapters of the *ʿAwārif* deal with such traditional Sufi themes as the relationship between the novice and the shaykh, the Sufi rules of companionship, the ways to achieve a better understanding of one's own self, the inspired unveilings of advanced Sufi masters, the mystical "states" and "stations," etc. The *terminus ad quem* of this seminal work is 612/1216. The first Persian translations of, and commentaries on, the *ʿAwārif* appeared already during the author's lifetime. In the Persian-speaking world, al-Suhrawardī owes his fame to "The Lamp of Right Guidance and the Key to Contentment" (*Miṣbāḥ al-hidāya wa-miftāḥ al-kifāya*) by ʿIzz al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. ʿAlī-i Kāshānī (d. 735/1334–5). It provides a lucid account of the *ʿAwārif* that is sprinkled by Kāshānī's own interventions dealing with Sufi ethics and discipline.

In his later works, al-Suhrawardī seems to have embraced the ideas of his former intellectual adversaries: the philosophers and the philosophically minded theologians, including those with distinctive gnostic propensities. Under the influence of their ideas he developed a peculiar concept of creation that hinges on the myth of the cosmic marriage between spirit and soul that gave rise to the Universe. In a similar vein, he examined the ways in which each individual human being participates in the workings of the universal spirit and of the universal soul. Like many medieval thinkers, al-Suhrawardī saw man as the world in miniature, "in which were combined to their fullest fruition all the elements of the 'macrocosm,' the universe."⁶⁰ As for the Universe, he viewed it as a giant human being whose elements correspond to the members and functions of the human body. Al-Suhrawardī adopts other ideas which were usually

⁶⁰ Hodgson, *The Venture*, vol. 2, p. 225.

treated with suspicion by mainstream Sunnī theologians. His cosmology describes a hierarchical series of beings that emanate from God's primordial creature through the Divine Command (*amr*). In an obvious parallel to the *prima causa* of the philosophers, he describes this creature as "the greatest spirit" (*al-rūḥ al-aʿẓam*) that sets in motion the multi-stage process of origination culminating in the emergence of the first man. Al-Suhrawardī places God far above creaturely existence (*wujūd*). In line with his cosmological scheme, God's first and most beloved creature, the "greatest spirit," assumes the task of the necessitator (*mūjib*) of the world. The first to originate from the necessitator is "the primordial intellect," which al-Suhrawardī identified as the director of the missions of the prophets. He identified the second intellect with the cosmic soul, which he put in charge of the deeds of the saints. Next comes "the creative intellect" (*aql khalqī*), which presides over the thought of the philosophers. The sphere of the third intellect is followed by the heavenly spheres, down to the sphere of the moon. This theology is in many respects similar to that of al-Ghazālī, which could have been its source of inspiration.⁶¹

Although his later works are focused on metaphysical issues, they nevertheless evince the same political and religious agenda as we observed in the *ʿAwārif*. Al-Suhrawardī attempts to weave together different and at times contradictory trends of theological thought and to create a reformed traditionalist doctrine. This doctrine was explicitly designed by him to strengthen the ideological foundations of the decaying ʿAbbāsīd caliphate. On most theoretical and practical issues al-Suhrawardī steers a middle course (*wasat, tawassuṭ*). The only concept on which al-Suhrawardī was not prepared to compromise is the unicity of God (*waḥdāniyya*), which constitutes the fulcrum of the traditionalist creed. In defending God's unity and transcendence al-Suhrawardī mounts an attack on the philosophers with their doctrine of causality which, in his opinion, has made them susceptible to polytheism (*shirk*), that is, to the sin of absolutizing secondary causes. Based on this assumption, al-Suhrawardī declared them the principal enemies of the Muslim Community (*umma*). At the same time, he was rather lenient toward other "heretics," including the Shīʿīs and the Ismāʿīlis. This reconciliatory trend comes to

⁶¹ Landolt, "Religionswissenschaft," *passim*.

the fore in his attempts to explain to the conservative Ḥanbalīs in Baghdad the theological arguments of the Ashʿarīs regarding the nature of God and theodicy. In other words, the author's chief aim was to promote the unity of the caliphal state in the face of the impending Mongol danger. The educational and pedagogical trend in al-Suhrawardī's work culminates in his epistles and testimonies (*waṣāyīya*, pl. *waṣāyā*), which he wrote toward the end of his life. Written in response to the requests of his numerous disciples, they admonish them to observe the duties of the Sufi path on the basis of the ethical and moral principles of the Qurʾān and the Sunna. Here again, al-Suhrawardī seeks to link the principles of *futuwwa* with the knowledge of the Sufi path.

Al-Suhrawardī died in Baghdad, at the age of 90, in Muḥarram 632/November-December 1234 and was buried in the cemetery of the Sufis. Since the eighth/fourteenth century his tomb became an object of worship and the site of an annual festival in his honor. After Baghdad had been re-conquered from the Ṣafawids by the Ottoman sultan Murād IV in 1048/1638, the tomb, by then dilapidated, was restored, together with the tombs of Abū Ḥanīfa and ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.

The Suhrawardiyya Order

As was mentioned, the Suhrawardiyya traces its origin back to Abū ʾl-Najīb al-Suhrawardī, who, in turn, was a disciple of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, brother of the great Muḥammad al-Ghazālī. Since two of Abū ʾl-Najīb's students became masters of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, the spiritual genealogy (*silsila*) of the Kubrawiyya order also goes back to Abū ʾl-Najīb. Some of Kubrā's major disciples, such as Najm al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 654/1256) and Yaḥyā Bākhazrī (d. 736/1336), were either linked with Abū ʾl-Najīb's nephew Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar Suhrawardī or were active in the propagation of the latter's spiritual tradition. Abū ʾl-Najīb is also at the origin of the spiritual line of the famous mystical poet of ecstatic propensities Awḥad al-Dīn Kirmānī (d. probably 635/1238).

However, it is Shihāb al-Dīn ʿUmar Suhrawardī, trained in his uncle's *ribāṭ* in Baghdad, who should be regarded as the actual founder of the Suhrawardiyya order. Thanks to his close ties with the ʿAbbāsīd caliph al-Nāṣir, who employed Shihāb al-Dīn as a court theologian and special envoy, he obtained the privileged position of the head (*shaykh al-shuyūkh*) of the Sufi congregations of Baghdad.

The caliph had a lodge built for him and designated him as a patron of the *futuwwa* clubs. Upon his death, al-Suhrawardī was succeeded by his son ‘Imād al-Dīn Muḥammad Suhrawardī (d. 655/1257), who presided over the Sufi lodge al-Ma’mūniyya. Upon completion of their Sufi education his numerous disciples returned to their homelands or settled in new areas, where they propagated the teachings of the Suhrawardīyya order as expounded in the *‘Awārif al-ma’ārif*. This book thus can be rightfully regarded as the teaching manual of the order.

In the Indian Subcontinent, the Suhrawardiyya was one of the four major orders, besides the Chishtiyya, the Qādiriyya and the Naqshbandiyya. It gained a foothold there at the beginning of the Dehli Sulṭānate (sixth/thirteenth century) thanks to the efforts of three disciples of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī. Each of them later founded a regional branch: Ḥāmid al-Dīn Nagawrī (d. 673/1274) in the area of Dehli, Abū ‘l-Qāsim Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrīzī (d. 641–2/1244) in Bangala, and Bahā’ al-Dīn Zakariyyā’ Multānī (d. 661/1262) in Multān. Bahā’ al-Dīn, who joined Shihāb al-Dīn in Baghdad after spending some time at Bukhārā, proved to be the most successful propagator of the order’s teachings. Under his successors his residence in Multān became the order’s principal center in India. Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī’s contemporary and disciple, Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī of Sīstān (Iran), also disseminated the order’s doctrine in India. Having settled at Ajmer, he laid the foundations of the popular Chishtiyya order whose members used the *‘Awārif* as their manual of instruction. The Shaṭṭāriyya order, which had strong links to the Suhrawardiyya, was introduced to India at the end of the ninth/fifteenth century.

Of Bahā’ al-Dīn’s disciples mention should be made of Sayyid Jalāl Bukhārī (d. 690/1291) who migrated from Bukhārā to Uch, where he founded the Jalālī branch of the order. The famous Shī‘ī dervish order of the Khāksār seems to be a Persian offshoot of this Jalālī suborder. Bahā’ al-Dīn’s most famous disciple was the Sufi and poet Fakhr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ‘Irāqī, a native of Hamadān in Persia, who studied in Multān with Bahā’ al-Dīn and later served as one of his lieutenants (*khalīfa*). Since the appointment of Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad ‘Ārif (d. 684/1286) as his father’s successor at the head of the order, its Indian leadership has adhered to hereditary principle. Thus, despite the fact that Ṣadr al-Dīn had many illustrious disciples, including the great Sufi scholar Amīr Ḥusayn Ḥusaynī (d. after 720/1320),

upon his death the headship of the order devolved upon his son Rukn al-Dīn Abū 'l-Faṭḥ (d. 735/1335). The latter, in turn, was succeeded by either his nephew or, according to the Maghribī traveller Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, his grandson Shaykh Hūd. Following Hūd's execution on the orders of the sultan of Delhi, who suspected the shaykh of embezzlement, the fortunes of Bahā' al-Dīn's imposing *khānaqā* in Multān suffered a decline which eventually led to its dissipation. The order's other regional branches, however, continued to flourish in Uch, Gujarat, the Punjab, Kashmīr and at Dehli.

In Uch, Jalāl al-Dīn Bukhārī, also known as "Makhdūm-i Jahā-niyyān," succeeded in infusing the *ṭarīqa* with new life. In addition to his affiliation with the Suhrawardiyya, Makhdūm was also initiated, by Chirāgh-i Dihlī, into the Chishtiyya order. Although Bahā' al-Dīn prohibited his disciples from joining any other order, from the eighth/fourteenth century on many Indian Sufis were members of both the Chishtiyya and the Suhrawardiyya orders. The religious policy of a given branch of the Suhrawardiyya order was usually determined by the personal religious views of its leader. Thus Makhdūm, who was famous for his puritanism, opposed the influence of Hindu customs on his fellow Muslims; he also disapproved of invoking God in Hindi. His brother and successor Ṣadr al-Dīn Raju (d. after 800/1400) earned the name of "slayer" [of Hindus] (*qattāl*) on account of his unrelenting hostility toward Hinduism.

Whereas various disciples and descendants of the Makhdūm family established themselves in the provincial kingdoms of Kalpi and also in Gujarat, the Suhrawardiyya branch in Dehli was established by Samā' al-Dīn (d. 901–2/1496), a follower of Raju Qattāl. Unlike most of the leaders of the Suhrawardiyya who sought to steer clear of mystical metaphysics, Samā' al-Dīn was noted as an exponent of the tradition of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, personified by the Sufi gnostic Ibn 'Arabī and his numerous followers in the eastern parts of the Muslim world. The leading figure among Samā' al-Dīn's disciples was Ḥāmid b. Jamālī Dihlawī (d. 942/1536), a widely known poet and traveller.

The Indian Suhrawardiyya had the greatest impact, however, in Kashmīr. This was partly due to the support they received from migrant Sufis of the Kubrawiyya order and from the local temporal rulers. Rinchana, the king of Kashmīr and former Buddhist chief from Ladakh, who embraced Islam in the eighth/fourteenth century, is said to have been converted by Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn who was a disciple of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī's emissary (*khalīfā*) in Turkestan.

In the ninth/fifteenth centuries, various Suhrawardī shaykhs, mainly those of the Makhdūm-i Jahāniyān branch, kept Kashmīrī Sufism alive. There were clashes between local Suhrawardī groups and Shīʿīs in the following century, when Kashmīr came under the tutelage of the Chak dynasty that patronised Shīʿism.

The order's relations with temporal rulers varied from area to area and were determined by local political and social circumstances. In the Sulṭānate of Dehli, the Suhrawardiyya established itself as an aristocratic order that encouraged its followers to accumulate wealth and to actively seek state patronage. Like his master Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī, Bahā' al-Dīn willingly cooperated with sultans in an effort to exercise influence on their politics. Iltutmish, a sultan who belonged to the line of "Slave Kings" of northern India, declared war against the governor of Uch on Bahā' al-Dīn's advice. Thereafter, the sultan conferred upon Bahā' al-Dīn the title of *Shaykh al-Islām* with authority over the lands of Sind and the Punjab. Bahā' al-Dīn's successors also maintained close relations with the rulers. The sultans of Gujarat held the Suhrawardiyya leaders in high regard and many government officials embraced Sufism under their influence. Samā' al-Dīn of Dehli blessed the sultan Sikandar Lōdī during his coronation. His disciple Jamālī accompanied the crown prince Humāyūn on his military campaigns. Jamālī's son 'Abd al-Raḥmān Gadā'ī held the powerful post of *Ṣadr al-ṣudūr* under emperor Akbar; the latter eagerly attended his *samāʿ* assemblies. Many Suhrawardī leaders supported the enforced conversion of Hindus. For example, Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrīzī not only actively encouraged Hindus and Buddhists to convert to Islam, but also incited the rulers to demolish Hindu temples and Buddhist monasteries and to replace them with Sufi lodges. On the whole, however, it seems that the Suhrawardiyya only succeeded in converting Hindus of the upper castes.⁶²

The order played an important part in the preservation and dissemination of prophetic traditions. Its teachings placed emphasis on the classical Sufi legacy, while discouraging metaphysical speculations which in the later period had become a hallmark of the Sufi thought. The order's rules of ascetic discipline also tended to avoid extremes and excessive austerities. The Suhrawardīs emphasized the importance of the canonical prayer, *dhikr* and fasting in Ramaḍān. Modifi-

⁶² A. Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, New Delhi, 1968, vol. 2, p. 398.

cations of the *dhikr* exercises along the lines of Yogic mysticism, which were practiced by the members of the Chishtiyya, were absent from the Suhrawardī rituals. The practice of prostration before the shaykh (*zamīn-būs*), which was common among the Chishtiyya, was rejected by the leaders of the Suhrawardiyya.

With regard to the *samāʿ* concerts, the Suhrawardiyya shows little appreciation of poetry or music. Already the founder, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī, had taken a reserved stance toward the use of music and dancing during Sufi gatherings. Shihāb al-Dīn also criticised Awḥad al-Dīn Kirmānī for his contemplation of beauty in sensible objects, especially in the unbearded youth, which was often practiced during *samāʿ* assemblies.⁶³ Nevertheless the poet ʿIrāqī, who studied with Bahāʾ al-Dīn, adopted the latter's favorable attitude toward this practice, known as *shāhid-bāzī*. Many later Suhrawardī leaders also viewed *samāʿ* to be licit, although they restricted it to the order's spiritual elite. These conflicting approaches to *samāʿ* among the order's leadership have persisted up to the present day.

While in recent times the Suhrawardiyya has largely disappeared from such Arab countries as Syria, it continues to enjoy a modest following in Iraq. The leaders of the contemporary Suhrawardiyya in that country traditionally belong to the Ṣāliḥ al-Khaṭīb family. Some of them served as professors at the religious college named after Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī or as public preachers at the mosque attached to it. At one point, one Suhrawardī shaykh is said to have served as the official prayer-leader (*imām*) of the Iraqi army.

Al-Shādhilī and the Beginnings of the Shādhiliyya

In the Muslim West, the fortunes of Islamic mysticism were inextricably tied with the personality and teachings of Abū 'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Shādhilī (593/1196–656/1258). This Maghribī Sufi launched a *ṭarīqa* which gave birth to numerous dynamic ramifications in Egypt and North Africa. Later on, the offshoots of the al-Shādhiliyya *ṭarīqa* spread throughout the Islamic world, as far as India and Indonesia.

Accounts of al-Shādhilī's life are known to us through the works of his disciples. These works usually follow a standard hagiographic canon that makes it hard to distinguish his historical personality from

⁶³ H. Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, Leiden, 1955, pp. 473–476.

the conventions of pious legend. Its creators consistently cast him as an exemplary saint of the age (*walī*). Yet, despite the unbridled partisanship of such hagiographic sources, especially those written by members of his *ṭarīqa*, one can still try to reconstruct the main stages of his career. The most important of these sources are “The Delicacies of the Divine Gifts” (*Laṭāʾif al-minan*) of Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh al-Iskandarī (d. 709/1309) and “The Pearl of the Secrets” (*Durrat al-asrār*) of Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh (d. 724/1323). These works, in turn, were summarized by one Ibn ‘Iyād or Ibn ‘Ayyād (or even Ibn ‘Abbād) in the standard biography of the founder of the Shādhilī order entitled “The Exalted Virtues in al-Shādhilī’s Legacy” (*Mafākhīr al-ʿaliyya fī ʾl-maʾāthir al-shādhiliyya*).

Al-Shādhilī was born in northern Morocco, in the Ghumara country, between Ceuta and Tangiers, around 583/1187. He claimed descent from the Prophet through the line of ‘Alī’s elder son al-Ḥasan. Upon completing his religious studies at Fez, he for some time considered the career of an alchemist, but eventually abandoned this idea in favor of the mystical path. Seeking instruction from the great Sufi masters of his time and anxious to meet the spiritual pole (*qutb*) of the age, al-Shādhilī set out on a journey to the Muslim East. Upon his arrival in Iraq, in 615/1218, he studied under the guidance of Abū ʾl-Faṭḥ al-Wāsiṭī (d. 632/1234), the principal disciple and deputy of the founder of the Rifāʿiyya brotherhood, Aḥmad al-Rifāʿī.⁶⁴ He was, however, unable to meet the spiritual pole of the epoch until someone advised him to return to the Maghrib and to seek him there. In Morocco, al-Shādhilī finally recognized the pole in the person of the famous hermit and visionary, ‘Abd al-Salām b. Mashīsh (d. 625/1228), who, according to Shādhilī sources, became his spiritual master *par excellence*. He stayed with Ibn Mashīsh for several years, whereupon he traveled to Ifrīqiya (present-day Tunisia). It seems likely that al-Shādhilī’s departure for the East was precipitated by political disturbances which soon afterwards resulted in Ibn Mashīsh’s murder on the orders of a local tribal ruler. In Ifrīqiya, al-Shādhilī settled in the village of Shādhila, halfway between Tunis and Qayrawān. This village gave him the name under which he became known among his followers. His preaching and ascetic lifestyle soon won him a great fame in the land. The

⁶⁴ Trimmingham, *Sufi Orders*, p. 45.

locals came to credit him with numerous miracles and his prayers were thought to be granted by God. His popularity irritated the Mālikī ulema of Qayrawān who hastened to accuse him of harboring messianic tendencies (on account of his descent from ‘Alī and Fāṭima) and of claiming to be the pole of his age. Despite the support of the Ḥafṣid sultan Abū Zakariyyā’, al-Shādhilī finally decided to leave Ifrīqiya with a departing pilgrimage caravan. Upon arriving in Egypt, he settled in Alexandria in 642/1244 or perhaps only as late as 650/1252. His preaching attracted to him not only the populace but some established scholars as well. Numerous pupils flocked to his lodge in Alexandria from far and wide to attend his lectures and partake of his blessing.⁶⁵ A meticulous and uncompromising observer of the duties of Islam, al-Shādhilī made the point of performing a pilgrimage to Mecca as often as he could. It was on one such journey that he died at al-Ḥumaythira, a village in the Upper Egyptian desert on the Red Sea coast.

Al-Shādhilī left behind no doctrinal writings, except for a few letters to his followers,⁶⁶ litanies and prayers. The core of his teachings was transmitted and systematized by his pupils in the form of collections of sayings, witticisms and edifying and miraculous anecdotes. They demonstrate his indebtedness to the precepts of classical Sufism as well as his solicitude for the spiritual and material needs of his disciples. The pivot of his teaching is the strictest possible observance of the of Sharī‘a law which he prescribes equally to the Sufis and to the ordinary believers. By fulfilling the requirements of the Divine Law the Muslim, in the words of al-Shādhilī, purifies the mirror of his soul and becomes fit to undertake a mystical journey to his Lord.⁶⁷ No person who is remiss in implementing the rulings of the Sharī‘a can be seen as a Sufi (*faqīr*). When faced with mystical experiences, the Sufi should exercise humility and caution. “If, says al-Shādhilī, your mystical unveiling (*kashf*) diverges from the Qur’ān and the Sunna, hold fast to them and take no notice of your unveiling; tell yourself that the truth of the Qur’ān and the Sunna is guaranteed by God Most High, which is not the case with unveiling, inspiration and mystical perceptions.”

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 48.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 48–49.

⁶⁷ This idea was not original to al-Shādhilī; we find it in the works of earlier Sufis, including al-Ghazālī.

Al-Shādhilī's maxims and moralistic dicta reflect recurrent themes of classical Sufism: one must abandon earthly concerns, struggle against the carnal soul and be content with whatever fate God has in store for him. These maxims and dicta are not confined to "full-time" ascetics and Sufis but are addressed to the believers at large, including those who are engaged in gainful employment and lead an active social life. According to al-Shādhilī, "the [Sufi] Way does not involve monasticism (*rahbāniyya*), nor living off barley and flour-siftings; the Way requires patience in the accomplishing of the divine commands and the unshakable faith in divine guidance." Many of al-Shādhilī's sayings emphasize the importance of man's internal development over against his external behaviour and ostentation, in a clear parallel to the Malāmatiyya tradition discussed earlier in this book. As with the Malāmatiyya, al-Shādhilī took a negative attitude toward begging and wearing a distinctive clothing. He himself is said to have dressed with elegance, especially toward the end of his life. Al-Shādhilī was critical of the use of music during *samāʿ* sessions and did not take part in the gatherings that induced trances or involved spectacular phenomena (e.g., walking on fire or piercing the flesh), as was common with the Rifāʿiyya dervishes. His Sufi discipline hinged on the constant remembrance of God by means of prayers and litanies, recited collectively or individually. He also tried to instill in his followers fortitude in the face of trials and hardships of daily life.

Al-Shādhilī's spiritual method emphasized the practical aspects of mysticism over against the more metaphysically oriented mysticism of Ibn ʿArabī and his followers. Although himself an accomplished theologian, he saw little value in the speculative exercise of reason. Al-Shādhilī's biographers often mention his polemic against Muʿtazilīs, some of whom are said to have abandoned their teaching under his influence. In al-Shādhilī's discourse, God is presented as the original source of the believer's conscience, not an object of human knowledge. Nor can he be comprehended through an analysis of concrete things, for it is only through his mercy that these things are known to men. Contrary to Sufi theorists who sought to explore the metaphysical dimensions of mystical experiences, al-Shādhilī emphasized their purely personal and subjective character. He recommended that his disciples be discrete while speaking about their spiritual advancement in order not to be puffed up with pride, thereby hurting the sensibilities of the ordinary believers: "If you wish to reach the irreproachable Way, speak like someone who is apart from God,

at the same time keeping union with Him present in the secret recesses of your heart.”

Al-Shādhilī set great store by the prayers (*ad‘iyā*) and litanies (*aḥzāb*) the texts of which he passed on to his disciples. Most of these prayers relate to specific situations, e.g., spiritual anguish, fear, uncertainty or distress. Of these by far the most popular among the members of the order are the *Ḥizb al-baḥr*, which is said to have been communicated to al-Shādhilī directly by the Prophet, the *Ḥizb al-kabīr* (or *Ḥijāb sharīf*), the *Ḥizb al-barr*, the *Ḥizb al-nūr*, the *Ḥizb al-faṭḥ* and the *Ḥizb al-Shaykh Abī ‘l-Ḥasan [al-Shādhilī]*. The liturgical functions of these prayers were often overshadowed by their magical usage. The ordinary members of the Shādhilī *ṭarīqa* believe in their miraculous power to heal from illnesses or to protect from misfortunes. This usage is contrary to al-Shādhilī who opposed popular superstitions, including worship at the tombs of saints, which he condemned as a form of idolatry. In his opinion, the fact that the saint’s prayers are sometimes granted by God simply shows that in that particular moment he happened to be the locus of divine mercy that operates continually among mankind. Intrinsically, however, no human being, except the Prophet, can claim to be able to intercede on behalf of ordinary believers. Nevertheless, already in his own lifetime, al-Shādhilī acquired the reputation of a miracle worker. Upon his death, the members of his order came to attribute thaumaturgic powers to his tomb where prayers are believed to be especially beneficial and efficacious.

One issue on which al-Shādhilī seems to have departed from main-line Sunnism is sainthood. He saw the Sufis as the true heirs to the Prophet’s legacy, which most of the Sunnī scholars held to be their exclusive preserve. In al-Shādhilī’s view, the accomplished saint can achieve the same degree of knowledge as the prophets (*anbiyā’*) and the messengers (*rusul*). However, he is inferior to them in two respects: on the one hand, his knowledge is, in most cases, less complete than theirs; and on the other, his mission is neither to bring a new version of the Divine Law, nor to abrogate the old one. Nevertheless, in time, al-Shādhilī’s teaching came to be perceived by his followers as a continuation of Muḥammad’s prophetic mission. Closely allied with this notion is the idea of the invisible hierarchy of saints presided over by the head of the Shādhiliyya brotherhood. As we have seen, from the outset, al-Shādhilī was preoccupied with the search for the spiritual pole of the universe. Later on, his disciples came to treat

him as the *quṭb* of the age—a belief that he not only did not try to dispel, but may have actively promoted. Shortly before his death, he designated his chief disciple Abū 'l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī as his successor. Since that time the Shādhilī tradition insists that the *quṭb* of the age should of necessity belong to their brotherhood, until the Judgement Day. In al-Shādhilī's teaching, the function of the *quṭb* acquired universal dimensions in that it was not confined to a specific religious community or a people, but to the human race as a whole. Al-Shādhilī provides a list of fifteen characteristic features of the office of the spiritual pole. They include infallibility, clairvoyance and knowledge of the unseen.

Even though al-Shādhilī may have not planned to form a Sufi brotherhood, objectively his teaching responded to the need for a Sufi teaching that would serve as a foundation of communal life. The subsequent success of the order was secured by al-Shādhilī's successors, the Andalusī Abū 'l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī (d. 686/1287) and the Egyptian Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh al-Iskandarī (d. 709/1309). They expanded the popular base of the order through active recruitment in the masses, refined and systematized al-Shādhilī's tenets, codified the ritual of the *dhikr*, and founded a number of Shādhilī *khānaqās* which came to serve as centers of recruitment and training of new followers. The Shādhilī order soon spread throughout Egypt, Ifrīqiya, Morocco, al-Andalus as well as Syria and the Ḥijāz. This process continued during the subsequent centuries which witnessed the emergence of numerous branches and subdivisions of the order. As for the founder, he is commemorated during the annual festivals at his tomb in the eastern desert of Upper Egypt, as well as in Ifrīqiya, at Sīdī Belḥassen (on the outskirts of Tunis), Menzel Bouzelfa (Cape Bon) and on the mount Zaghwān.

The Shādhiliyya

As an institution the Shādhiliyya owed its existence to the organizational skills of al-Shādhilī's disciples who considered him to be the pole (*quṭb*) of the Universe in his age. Upon the death of the founder, the leadership of the nascent order devolved upon his deputy, the Andalusī mystic Abū 'l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī (d. 686/1287). The latter was able not only to maintain the cohesion of the Shādhilī community but also to expand its base among the Egyptian population. Al-Mursī was succeeded by another able and dynamic leader, Ibn

‘Aṭā’ Allāh al-Iskandarī, who was also a prolific writer. Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh’s works gave a distinctive articulation to al-Shādhilī’s spirituality, forming the ideological basis of the expanding Shādhilī brotherhood. Especially popular among the followers of the order was his “Delicacies of the Divine Gifts” (*Laṭā’if al-minan*), the principal statement of the Shādhilī teaching. Equally important is his collection of pious dicta, the “[Words] of Wisdom” (*al-Ḥikam*). Its readership was not restricted to the members of the order; the *Ḥikam* was studied and memorized all over the Muslim world and became an object of several commentaries by such eminent Sufi scholars as Ibn ‘Abbād of Ronda (d. 792/1390), Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 899/1493) and Ibn ‘Ajība (d. 1224/1809).⁶⁸

The formative period of the brotherhood remains somewhat obscure. Throughout the eighth/fourteenth centuries it secured a foothold in Egypt and the Maghrib. Although in the ninth/fifteenth centuries it became the major North African Sufi order, it did not acquire a centralized and hierarchical structure. Rather it was dissolved into a multitude of local subdivisions that were rarely connected with one another. Each of these was led by a spiritual master who emphasized a specific strain within the rich and variegated Shādhilī tradition. Some of these branches were confined to a particular region, while others had their centers in different areas. But in all cases, the Shādhilī tradition presented itself more as a school of spirituality than as a rigidly structured and cohesive organization. This feature greatly facilitated its adaptation to diverse ethnic and regional contexts, while preserving the integrity of its formative ideas in the face of the inevitable vagaries of leadership succession. The original Shādhiliyya was born into an urban milieu (Alexandria, Cairo, Tunis) and counted among its members many renowned scholars such as the Andalusī *faqīh* Ibn ‘Abbād of Ronda (d. 792/1390) and the outstanding ninth/fifteenth-century Egyptian polymath Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī.⁶⁹ However, as time went on, it made inroads into rural areas, especially in the Maghrib. There it was often represented by popular charismatic leaders with little or no formal education, such as the tenth/sixteenth-century mystic ‘Alī al-Sanhajī and his pupil ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Majdhūb. In the Maghrib as well as in the Nile

⁶⁸ P. Nwyia, *Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh et la naissance de la confrérie šādhilīte*, Beirut, 1972; Eng. tr. V. Danner, *Ibn Ataillah’s Sufi Aphorisms*, Leiden, 1973.

⁶⁹ P. Nwyia, *Ibn ‘Abbād, un mystique prédicateur à la Qarawiyyin de Fes*, Beirut, 1961.

valley, the Shādhiliyya actively encouraged the cult of the departed saints by inviting their followers to seek blessing from their tombs.

The Shādhilī tradition had a profound impact on the subsequent development of institutionalized Sufism in Egypt. Its influence can be observed in the theory and practice of such great Egyptian brotherhoods as the Badawiyya, the Wafā'iyya and the Dasūqiyya.⁷⁰ In the twelfth/eighteenth and thirteenth/nineteenth centuries, some Shādhilī tenets were appropriated and redefined according to changing times by the Tijāniyya and by the various branches of the Idrīsiyya. In Syria, the Shādhiliyya was propagated by the Moroccan Sufi 'Alī b. Maymūn al-Fāsī (d. 917/1511) and his disciples.

In the Maghrib, the spread of the Shādhilī teaching was associated with the activities of Abū 'l-'Abbās Aḥmad al-Burnusī, known as al-Zarrūq (d. 899/1494). This Moroccan scholar was introduced to the doctrines of the Shādhiliyya during his studies in Egypt. Upon his return to the Maghrib, he engaged in active propaganda of the Shādhilī ideas and rituals, breathing fresh life into the order's spiritual heritage. His writings gained wide popularity among North African orders, including the Darqāwiyya, the Rashīdiyya and its branches, the Shaykhiyya, Karzaziyya and Nāṣiriyya.⁷¹ Another dynamic movement of Shādhilī inspiration was initiated by Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad al-Jazūlī who came from southern Morocco. Upon completing his studies at Fez, he traveled to the East where he is said to have stayed almost forty years before returning to Morocco. After spending some time in retreat, he began to disseminate his spiritual teachings among the local population. The success of his preaching irritated some rulers, who suspected him of fomenting a popular revolt against the state. They had him poisoned around 869/1465, shortly before the fall of the Marīnid dynasty of Morocco. Upon his death, his body was interred at Marrakesh, where he became one of the seven patron saints of the city. Al-Jazūlī's career marks the rise of a new form of popular Sufism that was centered upon a single-minded allegiance of the followers to a charismatic Sufi leader rather than to a given Sufi tradition or institution. Al-Jazūlī's example inspired a number of similar charisma-oriented movements, including the 'Arūsiyya and the 'Īsāwiyya. The latter, which owed its name to Muḥammad b. 'Īsā al-Mukhtār (d. 931/1524),

⁷⁰ Trimmingham, *Sufi Orders*, p. 49.

⁷¹ See Depon and Coppolani, *Les confréries*, "index".

added to the Shādhilī-Jazūlī tradition shamanistic practices reminiscent of the Rifā'iyya. Members of the 'Īsāwīyya had a totem animal, practiced faith healing and, in a trance, devoured snakes or pierced their own bodies with sword blades.⁷² The members of the related Moroccan order Ḥamdūshiyya practiced similar spectacular, if controversial acts.⁷³

The Shādhilī Path owed its historic success to several factors. In the fissured and often acephalos society of North Africa, which was going through a protracted economic and political crisis, it provided the local population with a much needed sense of solidarity and belonging. Cognizant of the popularity of the Shādhiliyya among the urban and rural masses, the Marīnids of Morocco and the Ḥafṣids of Ifrīqiya actively supported the order by patronizing its leaders and by building and endowing new Shādhilī lodges (*zāwayā*; sing. *zāwiyya*) in the territories under their control. Paradoxically, with time these lodges became seats of opposition to the central power, as was the case of the al-Dilā' *zāwiyya* in Morocco, which almost succeeded in wresting power from the local sultan in the middle of the eleventh/seventeenth century. However, on the whole, the Shādhilī lodges usually served as centers of social stability by securing the allegiance of local tribes or villages to one or the other Shādhilī leader. As a result, the Shādhilī leaders could keep a lid on internal factional strife. These regulatory and mediatory functions no doubt added to the prestige of the Shādhilī leadership in the eyes of the local communities. The historical success of the Shādhiliyya was also due to the specificity of its rituals and ideology. Its emphasis on the strict observance of the Sharī'a and its inconspicuous social profile (namely, absence of a distinctive garb or of spectacular public festivals as well as discouragement of mendicancy) secured the Shādhilī brotherhood a wide acceptance among different sections of the society, from the peasant communities to the sophisticated scholars in urban centers. This acceptance was further enhanced by the active role of the brotherhood in resisting European encroachments on Muslim lands. Thus the Shādhiliyya-Jazūliyya branch of the order distinguished itself by organizing resistance to the Portuguese invasion of Morocco in the ninth-tenth/fifteenth-sixteenth

⁷² R. Brunel, *Essai sur la confrérie des Aïssaouas au Maroc*, Paris, 1926.

⁷³ V. Crapanzano, *The Hamadsha: A study in Moroccan ethnopsychology*, Berkeley, 1973.

centuries, at a time when the temporal rulers were divided and unable to repulse the conquerors.

More recently, the Shādhilī tradition underwent several attempts at institutional and ideological revival.⁷⁴ Of these the case of the Darqāwiyya was especially spectacular. It was launched by Abū Hāmid al-‘Arabī al-Darqāwī (d. 1239/1823) of Fez, who relied on the works of Aḥmad Zarrūq in order to cleanse the Shādhiliyya of the material and spiritual corruption that had adhered to it in the course of its long history. The great moral and political influence that he enjoyed during his lifetime survived after his death and gave rise to a number of new branches of the order which were active throughout the thirteenth–fourteenth/nineteenth–twentieth centuries. Prominent among those was the Bū-Zīdiyya *ṭarīqa* to which belonged the great Sufi theorist Ibn ‘Ajība (d. 1224/1809).⁷⁵ One should also mention the Yashrūṭiyya branch, founded by the Tunisian shaykh ‘Alī al-Yashrūṭī (d. 1309/1891). It became particularly popular in Syria, Palestine and Jordan. His biography came down to us through the works of his daughter, Fāṭima al-Yashrūṭiyya. A significant recent episode in the order’s history is associated with the ‘Alawiyya, a branch of the Shādhilī brotherhood that was founded in 1914 by the charismatic Sufi master Aḥmad b. ‘Alīwa (d. 1353/1934). His reforming dynamism and original interpretation of the tradition’s foundational ideas won him many disciples, including a number of Western intellectuals.⁷⁶

It is not easy to discuss such movements under the common heading of the Shādhilī tradition. Very often their links to it are rather obscure and indirect. Furthermore, the founders of various branches and subbranches of the Shādhiliyya were often steeped in several Sufi traditions and received their Sufi robes from many different masters. These multiple affiliations, which became quite common in the Maghrib in the modern period, make it difficult to attribute a given shaykh to just one tradition. Thus, Nāṣir al-Dar‘ī, the founder of the famous Nāṣiriyya order, was initiated into both Zarrūqī and Jazūlī branches of the Shādhiliyya. On the other hand, the Sufi

⁷⁴ See, e.g., B. G. Martin, *Muslim Brotherhoods in Nineteenth-Century Africa*, Cambridge, 1976, pp. 152–158.

⁷⁵ J.-L. Michon, *Le Soufi marocain Aḥmad ibn ‘Ajība et son mīṣraj*, Paris, 1973.

⁷⁶ M. Lings, *A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century*, 2d edition, London, 1972.

Muḥammad b. ‘Arūs, who had studied under both Shādhilī and Qādirī masters, refused to be associated formally with any of them.⁷⁷

At present, most of the numerous divisions of the Shādhilī order are located in North Africa, where it forms, along with the Qādiriyya and the Khalwatiyya, the chief living Sufi tradition. Some Shādhilī branches remain active in Egypt and in the Sūdān. However, one should not regard the Shādhiliyya as an exclusively North African *ṭarīqa*. Its branches can be found throughout the whole Muslim world,⁷⁸ especially in Syria, Turkey, the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Subcontinent as well as in Indonesia and China.

In matters of ritual practice and doctrine most of the branches of the Shādhilī brotherhood are characterized by their strong attachment to Sunnī orthodoxy and strict observance of the letter of the Sharī‘a. Its exponents tended to play down the importance of saintly miracles, preaching instead self-restraint and sobriety in word and deed. Although leaders of the Shādhiliyya generally tolerate music and dancing during *samā‘* sessions, they advise their followers against an outward display of ecstasy that constitutes the trademark of the ‘Īsāwiyya and the Ḥamdūshiyya. Members of the Shādhiliyya advocate an active social stance and discourage excessive asceticism as being contrary to the idea that man should be grateful to his Lord for his beneficence and mercy. In line with this precept, al-Shādhilī and some of his successors deliberately dressed themselves in an elegant fashion.

The Shādhiliyya can hardly be regarded as an intellectual order. Its exponents consistently placed accent on practice rather than doctrinal sophistication. This does not mean that individual members of the Shādhiliyya did not engage in theological and metaphysical speculations. Many of them embraced Ibn ‘Arabī’s teachings and wrote commentary on his works. This was part of the Shādhilī strategy aimed at reaching out to different layers of Muslims, including “high-brows.” However, most of the Shādhilī literary output consists not so much of theoretical treatises as of collections of prayers and litanies. Constantly recited during acts of collective worship, these homiletic texts inculcated in the Shādhilīs the sense of belonging to a great

⁷⁷ For details see E. Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Egypte et en Syrie sous les derniers Mamelouks et les premiers Ottomans: orientations spirituelles et enjeux culturels*, Damascus, 1995.

⁷⁸ E.g., on the Comoro Islands and in Zanzibar, Martin, *Muslim Brotherhoods*, pp. 152–158.

and glorious spiritual tradition that stretched back to its semi-legendary founding father.

Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband and the Naqshbandiyya

Bahā' al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Naqshband (718–91/1318–89), the eponymous founder of the Naqshbandiyya order, derived his name from the craft of embroidering. He is said to have assisted his father in weaving the embroidered Bukhāran cloaks known as *kīmkha*. More commonly, however, his name is taken to refer to the practice of the fixing, in the purified tablet of the heart, of the imprint of the name *Allāh* by means of a silent and permanent recollection (*dhikr*). To the people of Bukhārā, whose patron saint he became, Bahā' al-Dīn was known posthumously as *hāja-yi balā'-gardan* (“the averter of disaster”). This name referred to the protective powers bestowed upon him during his years as a Sufi novice. Elsewhere, especially in Turkey, he is popularly called *Shāh-i Naqshband*.

Descent from the sixth Shī'ī Imām Ja'far al-Šādiq has been attributed to Bahā' al-Dīn, but although the Imām does always appear in his spiritual genealogy (*silsila*), contemporary and near-contemporary sources make no mention of his kinship with the Prophet's family. They stress rather the position of Bahā' al-Dīn as the seventh in a series of Central Asian masters (*khwājagān*) of Sufism that was inaugurated by Abū Yūsuf 'Alī Hamadānī (d. 534/1140 in Merv). Soon after his birth in Muḥarram 718/March 1318 in the Bukhāran hamlet of Qaṣr-i Hinduwān (later renamed Qaṣr-i 'Ārifān, i.e., “the Castle of the Gnostics,” out of deference to him), Bahā' al-Dīn was adopted as the spiritual son (*farzand*) of Khwāja Muḥammad Sammāsī, the fifth descendant of Hamadānī. Sammāsī immediately assigned the infant's spiritual training to his principal disciple (*murīd*), Khwāja Amīr Kulāl, a spiritual advisor to Tīmūr, who enjoyed the ruler's complete trust.⁷⁹ In the Naqshbandī tradition, Amīr Kulāl counts as Bahā' al-Dīn's immediate predecessor in the *silsila*, for it was he who transmitted to Naqshband the essentials of the mystical path: the link of companionship (*nisbat-i ṣuḥbat*), instruction in the customs of the path (*ta'lim-i ādāb-i ṭarīqat*), and the inculcation of *dhikr* (*talqīn-i dhikr*).

⁷⁹ T. Graham, “Shāh Ni'matullāh Walī, Founder of the Ni'matallāhī Sufi Order,” in L. Lewisohn (ed.), *The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism*, London and New York, 1993, p. 180.

Nonetheless, as befitted the founder of a new order, Bahā' al-Dīn kept the company of a wide variety of spiritual instructors. Early during his association with Amīr Kulāl, he had a vision in which he saw his six predecessors in the *silsila*, beginning with Khwāja 'Abd al-Khāliq Ghijuwānī, or Ghujduvānī (d. 617/1220), a successor of Hamadānī. This vision amounted to a second initiation, for Ghijuwānī enjoined on Bahā' al-Dīn—among other things—the exclusive practice of silent *dhikr*, as opposed to the vocal *dhikr* in which Amīr Kulāl and his circle customarily engaged. Once back in the world of external reality, Bahā' al-Dīn began to comply with this command, but Amīr Kulāl continued to hold him in high esteem. He ultimately pronounced his spiritual guidance to be at an end and freed Bahā' al-Dīn to seek out other masters, “both Turk and Tājik.”

The ethnic and linguistic differentiation between Turks and Tājiks was reflected, in eighth/fourteenth-century Transoxanian Sufism, in the dichotomy between the Yasawī order—founded by the Turkoman saint Aḥmad Yasawī (d. 562/1167), another disciple of Hamadānī—which flourished among Turkic speakers, and the Persian-speaking *khwājagān* and their adherents. Since the Naqshbandiyya was destined to spread to almost every region of the Turkish world in the space of a few generations, it was appropriate that Bahā' al-Dīn should spend part of his apprenticeship with the Yasawī masters who were known to their contemporaries as the “Turkish masters” (*mashāyikh-i turk*).

First, however, Bahā' al-Dīn spent seven months in the company of another Tājik shaykh, Mawlānā 'Ārif Dīkgarānī, perfecting under his guidance the practice of the silent *dhikr*. He next spent two or three months with Qutham Shaykh, a Yasawī master resident in the Persian city of Nakhshab, before joining the following of a second Yasawī shaykh, Khalīl Atā, for a full twelve years.

The chronological problems posed by the sources (works of hagiography, the Tīmūrid chronicles, and the “Travels” of the Maghribī traveler Ibn Baṭṭūṭa) are impossible to resolve, but it seems certain that Khalīl Atā is identical with Kaḍān/Ghazān Khān, a singularly ferocious individual who ruled over the Chaghatayid khānate for roughly a decade. It is tempting to see in Bahā' al-Dīn's association with Khalīl Atā the origin of the penchant of several later Naqshbandīs for establishing ascendancy over rulers, but such an interpretation is excluded by a careful reading of the sources.

After the overthrow of Khalīl Atā, Bahā' al-Dīn retired to his birthplace to begin training his own disciples, most of whom came

from Bukhārā and its environs. He left the region himself only three times, twice to perform the *ḥajj* and once to visit Herat. There he met with the ruler, Muʿizz al-Dīn Ḥusayn, and explained to him the principles of his path.

He died in 791/1389, and was buried at Qaṣr-i ʿĀrifān. Surrounded by a continually expanding complex of buildings, the tomb became a place of pilgrimage for Muslims from all over Asia as well as the site, for Bukhārāns, of spring festivities known as *ʿīd-i gul-i surkh* (“red rose festival”).

Bahāʾ al-Dīn’s principal successors were Khwāja ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār (d. 802/1393), whom he had honored with marriage to his daughter; Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā (d. 822/1419), a prolific author who counts as founder of the learned traditions of the Naqshbandī order; and Mawlānā Yaʿqūb Charkhī (d. 851/1447), who originated in the region of Ghaznī. ʿAṭṭār was the leading figure among these three, but it was Charkhī who proved the most important for the continuation of the Naqshbandī line; he was the preceptor of Khwāja ʿUbayd Allāh Aḥrār (d. 896/1490), under whose auspices the Naqshbandiyya established its supremacy in Central Asia and began its expansion in the wider Muslim world.

Bahāʾ al-Dīn left behind no writings (with the possible exception of the litany named after him, *Awṛād-i Bahāʾiyya*), and he even discouraged his disciples from recording his sayings. The precise outlines of his teachings are, then, hard to discern, not because of the profusion of hagiographic legend that enshrouds so many Sufis, but because of the exiguous and sometimes elliptic nature of the sources. It is particularly difficult to establish why he should have become an eponymous figure, the central link in the *silsila* of which he is a part, instead of, for example, Ghijuwānī. The eight principles of spiritual conduct (*kalimāt-i qudsiyya*) first enunciated by Ghijuwānī have, after all, been reiterated in Naqshbandī handbooks down to the present; precisely the fact that Bahāʾ al-Dīn added three further principles to the eight would seem to reinforce the primacy of Ghijuwānī. These three were: *wuqūf-i zamānī* (“temporal awareness”), the constant examination of one’s spiritual state during *dhikr*; *wuqūf-i ʿadadī* (“numerical awareness”), the enumeration of the times *dhikr* is performed in order to discourage the intrusion of distracting thoughts; and *wuqūf-i qalbī* (“awareness of the heart”), the direction of attention to the physical heart in order to make it participate in the work of *dhikr*. All three principles relate, then, to *dhikr*; combined

with the fact that Bahā' al-Dīn set himself apart from the other disciples of Amīr Kulāl through insistence on silent *dhikr*, this suggests that the question of *dhikr* was crucial for the early coalescence of the Naqshbandī order.

Other features of early Naqshbandī practice were also linked to the concern for sobriety and anonymity implied by the choice of silent *dhikr*. Among them are the repudiation of music and dance (*samā'*); the deprecation of charismatic feats and saintly miracles (*karā-māt*); the avoidance of retreats in favor of the keeping of pious company (*ṣuḥbat*); and the shunning of distinctive forms of dress. As with the Shādhiliyya, all these features are highly reminiscent of the Malāmati movement of Nīshāpūr, and it may be suggested that Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband was an heir to the traditions of the Malāmatiyya although not in a formal, initiatic sense.

Other recurrent features of the Naqshbandī path, such as fidelity to the Sharī'a in the political and social spheres as well as in devotional life, and a marked hostility to Shī'ī Islam, were established in later periods; they cannot be traced directly to Bahā' al-Dīn. Similarly, the mildly critical attitude to Ibn 'Arabī adopted by some Naqshbandīs of the Mūjaddidī line cannot be attributed retroactively to Bahā' al-Dīn and his circle. Although there is no trace of acquaintance with the concepts of Ibn 'Arabī in the dicta of Bahā' al-Dīn, both 'Aṭṭār and Pārsā were enthusiastic exponents of his work.

The Naqshbandiyya in Persia

It is a paradox of Naqshbandī history⁸⁰ that although this Sufi order first arose among Persian-speakers and virtually all its classical texts are written in the Persian language, its impact on Persia has been relatively slight. This statement requires qualification only for the period of the genesis of the Naqshbandiyya movement when, it might be argued, Transoxania and the eastern reaches of Khurāsān still counted as parts of the Persian world. The rise of the Naqshbandiyya to supremacy in Transoxania appears to have begun already in the time of the founder, Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband himself, although the nascent order did not yet exercise political influence. Furthermore,

⁸⁰ For a comprehensive account of the order's history and doctrines see M. Gaborieu, A. Popovic and T. Zarcone (eds.), *Naqshbandīs: Cheminements et situation actuelle d'un ordre mystique*, Istanbul-Paris, 1990.

in the Kubrawiyya order, which will be discussed further on, it faced a still formidable competitor. Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā (d. 822/1419), sole adherent of Bahā' al-Dīn among the ulema of Bukhārā, had to endure the hostility of his colleagues for a number of reasons, not least being his enthusiasm for the works and concepts of Ibn 'Arabī. However, it was also in connection with Pārsā that the Tīmūrid rulers of Central Asia established their links with the Naqshbandī order, when Mīrzā Shāhrūkh secured the return of Pārsā to Bukhārā after a period of banishment. Those links, important for the ascendancy of the order, were consolidated in the time of Khwāja 'Ubayd Allāh Aḥrār (d. 896/1490), who several times intervened decisively in the political sphere (according both to the chronicles and to the hagiographic sources) and through his numerous disciples made the Naqshbandiyya supreme in most regions of Transoxania. The influence of the Naqshbandiyya spread during the same period southward to Herat, partly through the influence of Aḥrār and partly through that of Sa'īd al-Dīn Kāshghārī (d. 860/1456), a third-generation descendant of Khwāja Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband. Together with the Zayniyya order, with which it came to enjoy fraternal relations in Istanbul as well as Herat, the Naqshbandiyya dominated the religious and cultural life of late Tīmūrid Herat. The principal initiate of Kāshghārī was the great poet and mystic 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 898/1492), whose life and work were discussed earlier in this book. His rich and varied oeuvre contains a treatise devoted to the principles of the Naqshbandī path, as well as many references to the order and its personalities scattered throughout his works. The closeness of Jāmī to his Naqshbandī preceptor may be measured by the fact that the two men lie buried in a single enclosure in the Khiyābān district of Herat. Averse by temperament to the formal training of *murīds*, Jāmī nonetheless initiated at least two persons into his line of the Naqshbandī order: 'Abd al-Ghafūr Lārī (d. 912/1507) and one of his own sons, Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Yūsuf (d. 919/1513). He also brought about the adherence to the order of the well-known littérateur and statesman Mīr 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī (d. 906/1501), and inclined the Tīmūrid sultan Ḥusayn Mīrzā Bāyqarā to look favorably upon it.

The presence of the Naqshbandiyya in Transoxania and Herat has proved permanent. By contrast, the implantation of the Naqshbandiyya in northwestern Persia, which took place in the late ninth/fifteenth century, was relatively short-lived. The Naqshbandiyya was brought to Qazwīn, in north western Persia, by a disciple of Aḥrār,

Shaykh ‘Alī Kurdī, who spent a number of years serving Aḥrār as tutor to his children before settling in that city. Kurdī was put to death by the Ṣafawids in 925/1519. At least one of his six deputies (*khalīfa*) suffered the same fate, while several others fled before the Ṣafawid onslaught. However, Naqshbandī influence remained strong in Qazwīn for several decades and may have been one of the reasons for the relatively long resistance put up by the people of the city against the imposition of Shī‘ism. Tabrīz, the first capital of the Ṣafawid Empire, was also a center of Naqshbandī activity, stemming from the presence there of Ṣun‘ Allāh Kūzakunānī (d. 929/1523), a disciple of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Maktabdār (d. 892/1486), one of the deputies of Sa‘īd al-Dīn Kāshghārī in Herat. He enjoyed some influence at court of the Aq Qoyunlu dynasty and evidently managed to survive the Ṣafawid conquest. His son, known as Abū Sa‘īd-i Thānī, was imprisoned and tortured by the Ṣafawids, but was able to escape and ultimately to migrate to Istanbul, where he found favor with sultan Sülaymān. Another successor of Kūzakunānī, ‘Alī-Jān Bādāmyārī, established himself in the village of Bādāmyār near Tabrīz, where his initiatic line continued for two more generations.

There are also traces of the Naqshbandiyya in Sāwa and Hamadān in the immediate pre-Ṣafawid and early Ṣafawid period. In general, however, the rise of the Ṣafawid state sounded the knell for the Naqshbandī order in northern and western Persia, for with their strong loyalty to Sunnism the Naqshbandiyya became a special target of persecution. Mīrzā Makhdūm Sharīfī, a Sunnī scholar who took refuge with the Ottomans, writes that whenever anyone was seen engaging in *dhikr*, it would be said, “This is a Naqshbandī; he must be killed.” The Naqshbandiyya probably survived for a time in Urūmiyya and possibly in other Kurdish-inhabited areas of Persia. Otherwise, the order was so thoroughly extirpated that Mullā Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī (d. 1110/1699) felt safe in declaring, towards the end of the Ṣafawid period, that the names of the Naqshbandī masters listed by Jāmī in *Nafahāt al-uns* were unknown to all but “the ignorant Uzbeks” (*uzbaqān-i nādān*).

When in the thirteenth/nineteenth century Naqshbandīs again became visible in Persia, it was exclusively in the Sunnī-inhabited regions on the fringes of the country. Resistance to Persian attempts at establishing control over Herat (in present-day Afghanistan) was led by a certain “Sufi Islam,” a Naqshbandī dervish from Bukhārā. Although he died in battle in 1222/1807, the branch of the order

he founded at Karrūkh, outside Herat, continued to exercise an influence across the frontier among the Ḥanafī Sunnīs of Persian Khurāsān. Six years after the death of Sufi Islam, Khwāja Yūsuf Kāshghārī, a Naqshbandī master from Eastern Turkestan, led an unsuccessful uprising of the Yomut and Gökkan Turkomans against Qājār rule. A similar Naqshbandī-led Turkoman revolt was quashed in Astarābād in 1257/1841. It was also in the first half of the century that Khwāja Muḥammad Yūsuf Jāmī established a still active center of the Mujaddidī branch of the order at Turbat-i Jām near the Afghan border.

Infinitely more important than all these developments in the east was the rise of the Khālidī branch of the Naqshbandī order, established by Mawlānā Khālid Baghdādī (d. 1243/1827), a Kurd from Shahrāzūr. The Khālidīyya supplanted almost entirely all other branches of the Naqshbandīyya in the Middle East, and in Kurdistān it wrested supremacy from the powerful Qādirīyya to become the chief order of the region. Although the principal Kurdish *khatīfas* of Mawlānā Khālid all resided in Ottoman territory, their influence was considerable among the Kurds of Persia, not least during the great Kurdish uprising of 1880. Led by Shaykh ‘Ubayd Allāh of Sham-dīnān, it engulfed much of Azerbaijān as well as most of Kurdistān. In addition, the Khālidīyya expanded from Kurdistān to Ṭālīsh, the Shāfi‘ī enclave on the shores of the Caspian: Shaykh ‘Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn of Tawēla—a *khatīfa* of Mawlānā Khālid—initiated into the order a certain Mullā ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq Qiziljī from the village of ‘Anbarān in central Ṭālīsh and instructed him to spread the order in his homeland, which he did with great success. Most Shāfi‘īs in Ṭālīsh retain to this day an allegiance to the Khālidī Naqshbandī order.

In 1958, after the overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy, a namesake of ‘Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn quit Biyāra to establish himself at the village of Durū on the Persian side of the frontier. With the active encouragement of the Pahlawī court, he sought to bring under his sway all three areas of Naqshbandī presence in Persia—Kurdistān, Ṭālīsh and Turkoman Ṣaḥrā. In this he had some success, but his activities were brought to an end by the Islamic Revolution of 1978–9. Shaykh ‘Uthmān organized an army to combat the revolutionary government, but it was soon defeated and he withdrew to Iraq. Despite this removal of Shaykh ‘Uthmān, the Naqshbandī order

remains strong among the Kurds of Persia, particularly in the region of Mahābād and in Ṭālīsh (especially Hashtpar and its surroundings). By contrast, it is now moribund among the Turkomans.

The Naqshbandiyya in Turkey

The first implantation of the Naqshbandiyya among the western Turks took place in the ninth/fifteenth century, less than a hundred years after the death of its eponym. This was an important part of the general expansion of the Naqshbandiyya outside its Transoxanian homeland, for the order was well placed to gain the loyalty of the Ottoman Turks with its emphatically Sunnī identity and insistence on sober respect for the Sharīʿa.

The first Ottoman Naqshbandī was Mullā ʿAbd Allāh Ilāhī of Simav, who traveled to Samarqand where he became a disciple of Khwāja ʿUbayd Allāh Aḥrār. After his training was complete, he returned to his birthplace for a number of years before reluctantly accepting an invitation to settle in Istanbul. There, at the Zeyrek mosque, he established the first Naqshbandī center in Turkey and found himself surrounded by a large number of devotees. Preferring, however, a life of seclusion and scholarship, he left Istanbul for Vardar Yeñičesi in Thrace, where he died in 895/1490. Ilāhī's principal successor was Amīr Aḥmad Bukhārī (d. 922/1516), who had accompanied him back from Samarqand. Under Bukhārī's auspices, three Naqshbandī lodges were established in Istanbul and the order attracted numerous scholars and littérateurs, the most famous of whom was the poet Maḥmūd Lāmiʿī Chelebī (d. 933/1532) of Bursa. Although the lodges founded by Bukhārī continued functioning into the early twentieth century, the initiatic line he inaugurated appears to have died out in the space of a few generations.

Considerably younger than Ilāhī, but like him a *murīd* of Aḥrār, was Bābā Ḥaydar Samarqandī (d. 957/1550), for whom sultan Sülaymān Qānūnī founded a *tekke* at Eyyüb. This served as a hostel for Naqshbandīs coming from Central Asia until it was destroyed by fire in 1912. Naqshbandīs continued to migrate from Central Asia to Istanbul and other points in Turkey for several centuries, as is indicated by the names of certain *tekkes* such as Bukhārā, Kāshghār and Özbekler. Among them were men of distinction, such as Khazīnī, a dervish of triple Naqshbandī, Yasawī and Kubrāwī affiliation. He

arrived from Bukhārā during the reign of sultan Murād III. Also famous was ‘Abd Allāh Nidā’ī, an eleventh/seventeenth-century migrant from Kāshghār who established a *tekke* near Eyyüb.

In general, however, the history of the order in Turkey came to reflect the developments it underwent in India, which was its principal intellectual center from the time of Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī, the “Renewer” (*mujaddid*) (d. 1034/1624), whose contribution to the Naqshbandī tradition will be discussed further on. The Mujaddidī branch of the order established by Sirhindī was first transmitted to Turkey by shaykh Muḥammad Murād Bukhārī (d. 1141/1729), a *murīd* of Khwāja Muḥammad Murād Ma’ṣūm, Sirhindī’s son and principal successor. Muḥammad Murād spent about five years in the Ottoman capital toward the end of the eleventh/seventeenth-century, during which time he gained numerous ulema, including the *Shaykh al-Islām* Fayḍ Allāh Efendī, as his followers. The next thirty years were spent primarily in Damascus, but he returned to Istanbul in 1141/1729, dying shortly thereafter. The *tekke* that was established next to the tomb of Muḥammad Murād Bukhārī in the Nishānjī Pasha district became a fountainhead for the Mujaddidiyya, not only in Istanbul but also in Anatolia and the Balkans.

A second transmission of the Mujaddidiyya to Turkey came by way of Mecca, which remained until the late nineteenth century an important center for the diffusion of the Naqshbandiyya among pilgrims coming from Turkey as well as many other regions. The representative of Khwāja Muḥammad Ma’ṣūm in the Holy City was shaykh Aḥmad Jūryānī Yakdast, who initiated into the Mujaddidiyya shaykh Muḥammad Amīn of Tokat (d. 1158/1745). When Muḥammad Amīn returned to Istanbul in 1129/1717, he took up residence at one of the lodges founded by Amīr Aḥmad Bukhārī and began initiating members of the Ottoman bureaucracy. Particularly noteworthy among the *murīds* of Shaykh Muḥammad Amīn was the polymath Sulaymān Sa’d al-Dīn Mustaqīm-zāde (d. 1202/1787), who translated the letters of both Sirhindī and Khwāja Muḥammad Ma’ṣūm into Ottoman Turkish. The letters of Sirhindī have remained popular among Turkish Naqshbandīs down to the present, although it is now more commonly an Arabic translation that is used. Several of the early Turkish Mujaddidīs also had affiliations with the famous Mawlawī order of “Whirling Dervishes,” among them being Pertew Pasha and Hālet Efendī, both of whom exerted considerable political influence during the reign of sultan Maḥmūd II. An entirely new era in the

history of the Naqshbandiyya in Turkey begins with the rise of the Khālidi branch in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Before the emergence of the Khālidiyya, the Naqshbandīs were certainly prominent and respected, both in Istanbul and elsewhere, but they never came close to enjoying the near-monopoly on Sufi activity that they exercised in Central Asia. The Khālidiīs, however, made the Naqshbandiyya the paramount order in Turkey, a position it has retained even after the official dissolution of the orders.

Mawlānā Khālīd Baghdādī (d. 1242/1827)⁸¹ was a Kurd from Shahrāzūr who obtained initiation into the Naqshbandiyya in Dehli at the hands of Ghulām ‘Alī Dihlawī (d. 1240/1824), a shaykh of the Mujaddidī line. Although Mawlānā Khālīd was hostile to the local secular rulers in Kurdistān and acted there as an advocate of Ottoman power, the first appearance of the Khālidiyya in the Ottoman capital was greeted with suspicion. Mawlānā Khālīd’s first representative there, Muḥammad Šāliḥ, made matters worse by attempting to exclude non-initiates from public mosques during the performance of Khālidi rituals. The next representative, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sūsī, was, however, able to make inroads among the Ottoman élite. Like other key figures in the history of the order in Turkey, he recruited numerous ulema, bureaucrats and men of letters. Of these mention may be made of Mekkī-zāde Muṣṭafā ‘Āṣim, several times *Shaykh al-Islām* of the Ottoman Empire; Gürjü Nejīb Pasha and Mūsā Šafwetī Pasha; and Kechejī-zāde ‘Izzet Mollā, the chief *qāḍī* of Istanbul. It was suggested to sultan Maḥmūd II by Ḥālet Efendī, a Mujaddidī-Mawlawī, that this swift expansion of the Khālidiyya posed a danger to the state, and in 1828 all prominent Khālidiīs were in fact banned from the city. This period of disfavor was temporary, for in 1833 Mekkī-zāde was re-appointed *Shaykh al-Islām*.

Much of the impetus behind the early propagation of the Khālidiyya in the Ottoman lands had been political; it was the wish of Mawlānā Khālīd to reinforce the allegiance of the Ottoman state to the Sharī‘a and thus to make of it a viable focus for Muslim strength and unity. This aim gradually slipped beyond reach, and even in the period of sultan ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd II, the shaykhs of other orders were more

⁸¹ For a history of the Khālidiyya see B. Abū-Manneh, “The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya in the Ottoman Lands in the Early 19th Century,” in: *Welt des Islam*, N.S., vol. 22 (1982), pp. 1–36.

intimately associated with the sovereign than were the Naqshbandīs. Nonetheless, the Khālidi branch of the Naqshbandiyya possessed a wide popular appeal; it struck root throughout Anatolia, and even in Konya, the hallowed ground of the Mawlawī order, the Khālidi were supreme. By the close of the nineteenth century, they had more *tekkes* in Istanbul than any other order.

Among the Naqshbandī leaders of the second half of the century, shaykh Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Gümüşkhānewī (d. 1312/1894) may be singled out for mention both because of the size and nature of his following and because of the prolongation of his initiatic line down to the present. His *tekke* in the Chaghaloghlu district of Istanbul was probably the most frequented of all Sufi meeting places in the city, being visited not only by members of the Ottoman élite but also by many Muslims from abroad. In addition, Gümüşkhānewī wrote extensively, in both Arabic and Turkish, and by compiling a collection of *ḥadīth*, *Ramūz al-aḥādīth*, he inaugurated a tradition of active *ḥadīth* study still continued by his initiatic descendants in present-day Turkey.

Gümüşkhānewī further distinguished himself by fighting, together with his followers, in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877. This example of military engagement was followed by several other Naqshbandī shaykhs who fought on various fronts during the First World War and the Turkish War of Independence. Nonetheless, the Naqshbandīs found themselves denied all legitimacy under the dispensation brought in by the Turkish Republic, when all the Sufi orders were proscribed in September 1925. The immediate pretext for the ban was furnished by the uprising led in the same year by shaykh Sa'īd of Palu, a Khālidi master of eastern Anatolia. However, the rebellion was more an expression of Kurdish grievances and aspirations than it was of fidelity to the traditional political ideals of the Khālidiyya. Frequently cited as another exemplar of militant Naqshbandī opposition to the Turkish Republic is shaykh Muḥammad As'ad (Mehmed Esad, d. 1931). Originally from Irbīl, a physical as well as spiritual descendant of Mawlānā Khālīd, he took up residence at the Kelāmī *tekke* in Istanbul in 1888 before being banished to his native city by sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd. He returned in 1908 to take his place among the leading shaykhs of the Ottoman capital. In 1931, he was arrested on charges of complicity with those responsible for the notorious Menemen incident. Although the evidence of his involvement was exceedingly slight, his son was executed and he himself died in prison hospital.

Initiatic descendants of Mehmed Esad as well as other Khālīdī shaykhs continue to be active in Turkey; among those who have died in recent times one can mention Sāmī Ramazānoglū (d. 1984) and Mehmed Zāhid Kotku (d. 1401/1980). Arrests of Naqshbandīs and other forms of harassment have remained common, but the subversive potential and aspirations often ascribed to the Naqshbandīs in contemporary Turkey are, at best, grossly exaggerated. It can even be said that certain Naqshbandīs have integrated themselves into the political structure of Turkey by their involvement in ventures such as the National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi) and its successor, the Prosperity Party (Refah Partisi). The present-day significance of the Naqshbandīs in Turkey is to be sought not so much in their political activity as in the support they provide for traditional religiosity, a support greatly weakened by the debilitating trends of more than half a century.

The Naqshbandī Order in India

Introduced into India by Khwāja Bāqī Bi-ʿllāh (972–1012/1564–1603) during the closing years of the tenth/sixteenth century, the Naqshbandiyya order became an influential factor in Indo-Muslim life and for about two centuries it was the principal spiritual order in India. Though some Naqshbandī leaders had visited India during the reign of Bābur (937/1530) and his son Humāyūn (963/1556), the credit of establishing the first Naqshbandī *khānaqā* in India goes to Khwāja Bāqī Bi-ʿllāh who came to Dehli from Kabul and, in his own words, “planted the *silsila* (i.e., the brotherhood) in India.” He died at the age of only forty, but he made deep impact on the lives of the people by his unassuming ways and deep humanitarian spirit. Bāqī Bi-ʿllāh attracted both religious and political figures to his fold. A believer in the underlying unity of being, he gave expression to his feeling of unity with God and the Universe in spirited verses that show his indebtedness to Ibn ʿArabī’s monistic doctrine. Among his disciples two persons acquired great renown. The first was shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1034/1624), generally known as *Mujaddid-i alf-i thānī* (“Renewer of the Second [Islamic] Millennium”), who expanded the order so successfully that, according to one observer, his disciples reached every town and city of India. The second was shaykh ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq of Dehli (d. 1052/1642), who came to be known as “the Teacher of *ḥadīth*” (*muḥaddith*) on account of his contribution

to *ḥadīth* studies in India. A native of Sirhind (East Punjab), Aḥmad Sirhindī spent a few years in the capital, Āgra, where he made friends with the chief minister to the Mogul Emperor named Abū 'l-Faḍl. After having been initiated into the Naqshbandiyya, he set out to redefine its doctrine along more radical and militant lines. He also gave the order an effective organization that made it a social force to be reckoned with. He broke away from the earlier mystic tradition in India by rejecting the doctrine of the unity of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*). His religious views were marked by a strong opposition to all doctrines he regarded as deviating from orthodox Sunnism. On this account he attacked Indian Shī'īs and tried to present them as a danger to the Muslim state in India. He adopted a similar intolerant position toward certain trends within contemporary Sufism, especially toward the unitive vision of God and the world associated with Ibn 'Arabī and his followers. As an alternative to this vision, which, in his opinion, overemphasized God's immanent presence in this world, he advanced the doctrine of the unity of witnessing (*waḥdat al-shuhūd*). He viewed this doctrine as being more in line with the mainstream Sunnī theory that posited God's absolute transcendence vis-à-vis the created Universe. He also condemned the innovations in practice and ritual (*bid'a*) introduced by some Sufi masters, the religious syncretism of the emperor Akbar (r. 972/1564–1014/1605) and the misdeeds of the worldly ulema, who, in his mind, had failed to stem the spread of these detrimental ideas and practices. Sirhindī vigorously opposed Akbar's attempts to work out a synthesis of Hindu and Muslim religious attitudes. He declared that "Muslims should follow their religion, and non-Muslims their ways," in accord with the Qur'ānic injunction prohibiting any compromise in matters of religious faith. On the theoretical plane, Sirhindī took a dim view of Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. He considered it to be a cause of the corruption of the precepts of primeval Islam. This corruption, in turn, had paved the way for the emperor Akbar's attempts to impose upon his subjects a new religion called *ḍīn-i ilāhī*, which one modern Muslim scholar described as "a hodge-podge of Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, and Jainism."⁸² Although recent studies have called in question the traditional Muslim view of Sirhindī as a

⁸² F. Rahman, "Akbar's Religion," in: *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan* (Karachi), vol. 10 (June 1965), p. 126.

reformer and activist *par excellence*,⁸³ he did seem to have struggled hard to bring about a change in the outlook of the ruling classes. To this end, he carried on a brisk correspondence with Mughal nobles like ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Khān-i Khānān, Mīrzā ‘Azīz Kōkā, Farīd Bukhārī and others, and succeeded in winning them over to his point of view. Thus, when the emperor Jahāngīr ascended the throne, Farīd Bukhārī, who had taken Sirhindī’s admonitions seriously, requested that the ruler take a solemn oath never to break the rulings of the Shari‘a. Sirhindī’s arguments however are purely moralistic, and are not necessarily indicative of his desire to get involved in the affairs of the state, not to mention reform its policies. Yet, his activities and preaching were seen by rulers as being dangerous enough to warrant his imprisonment. In 1029/1619, acting on the slanderous reports of Sirhindī’s opponents, Jahāngīr threw him in prison. Soon afterward the emperor changed his mind and ordered the Sufi to be released. After that episode, Sirhindī continued to preach on themes like maintaining proper religious morals, prophethood, the Day of Judgement, the inadequacy of reason as a means to obtain religious truth, and on various moral dilemmas faced by his correlative religionists. His numerous adherents treated him as the supreme saint of the age, its spiritual pole on whom the whole world depended for its proper functioning. In modern times, his image as a religious reformer and a courageous critic of the powers-that-be who was opposed to any compromise with Hinduism and with various “deviations” from Sunnī Islam, especially Shī‘ism, was propagated by a number of Pakistani scholars, including Abū ‘l-Kalām Azad, Burhān Aḥmad Farūqī, and Muḥammad Miyān.⁸⁴

Aḥmad Sirhindī’s teaching was zealously carried forward by his sons and descendants. The emperor Awrangzīb came under the influence of Naqshbandī masters and showed deep respect to Khwāja Ma‘ṣūm (whose collections of letters contain several epistles addressed to that ruler), Khwāja Sayf al-Dīn, Khwāja Muḥammad Naqshband and others. The Naqshbandīs played an important role in replacing the policy of conciliation between Islam and Hinduism, instituted by Akbar, by the anti-Hinduist attitude that characterized Awrangzīb’s reign.

⁸³ E.g., Y. Friedmann, *Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī*, Montreal, 1971.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 106 and 109–110.

The Naqshbandī teachings differed from those of other Indian mystic orders in several respects. In contrast to the quietist social stance advocated by the Chishtiyya, the order developed a dynamic and, at times, militant outlook. It took a negative approach to other religions and energetically rejected Ibn ‘Arabī’s theory of *waḥdat al-wujūd* as conducive to religious pluralism. On this issue they ran afoul of Ibn ‘Arabī’s Indian supporters and initiated a long theological controversy that has continued up to the present day. The parties to this controversy periodically exchanged legal opinions (*fatwās*), issued in defense or refutation of Ibn ‘Arabī’s ideas. The Naqshbandī belief in the need to provide guidance to the state and its officials caused the Naqshbandī leaders to maintain close ties with the Indian rulers and courtiers. While other Indian brotherhoods propagated their teachings in the form of authoritative oral statements (*malfūzāt*), which they traced back to their founders, the Naqshbandīs tended to disseminate their views through epistles (*maktūbāt*), which Naqshbandī shaykhs addressed to their lieutenants and followers at large. Such epistles were written, for example, by shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī, Khwāja Ma‘ṣūm, Khwāja Naqshband, Shāh Ghulām ‘Alī and others.

In the eleventh-twelfth/eighteenth-nineteenth centuries two Naqshbandī masters made significant contributions to the ideology of the order by restating some of its basic premises. The first, Shāh Walī Allāh (d. 1176/1762), sought to bring about a reconciliation between the religious views of Ibn ‘Arabī and shaykh Aḥmad. He eventually declared that difference between their approaches was one of perspective. Both express the same underlying truth, although they make use of different metaphors. The second master, Mīrzā Maḥzar Jān-i Jānān (d. 1197/1782) revived the legacy of the emperor Akbar by adopting a tolerant attitude towards Hinduism and accepting the Vedas as a revealed book. Shāh Walī Allāh played an important role in revitalizing the traditional Islamic sciences, particularly the study of *ḥadīth*. In an effort to reach out to the masses he translated the Qur’ān into Persian to make it accessible to Muslim soldiers, artisans, and other townsfolk. He developed a new scholasticism with a view to infusing a fresh spirit into the Islamic dogma and to bringing it in harmony with changing times. Shāh Walī Allāh played a significant role in the political developments of his time. His letters addressed to his peers Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī, Muḥammad Shāh, Niẓām al-Mulk and others reveal a clear understanding of the contemporary political situation.

Another prominent Naqshbandī teacher, the *qāḍī* Thanā' Allāh Pānīpatī (d. 1225/1810), who studied under Mīrzā Maẓhar, made significant contribution to religious literature. His book on the fundamentals of *fiqh* (*Mā lā budd minh*) and his commentary on the Qur'ān titled *Tafsīr-i Maẓharī* became standard works in their respective fields of scholarly inquiry. His treatise "Guidance for the Seekers" (*Irshād al-ṭālibīn*) contains a concise exposition of the Naqshbandī principles. Other spiritual descendants of Mīrzā Jān-i Jānān, such as Shāh Ghulām 'Alī, Shāh Abū Sa'īd, and Shāh Aḥmad Sa'īd distinguished themselves as active propagators of the Naqshbandī ideology. The descendants of Shāh Ghulām 'Alī resisted the British occupation of the country and supported anti-British attitudes and activities.

Of the many Sufi orders of India, the Naqshbandī-Mujaddidī branch was the only one to gain a large following among the Sunnī Muslims of Afghanistan, Turkey and Syria. The *khānaqā* of Shāh Ghulām 'Alī (d. 1240/1824) attracted thousands of visitors from different Asian and African countries. As was mentioned, his Kurdish disciple shaykh Khālīd Baghdādī-Shahrazūrī spread the teachings of the order in Damascus and made it a significant factor in the life of the Ottoman Muslims and those of the Caucasus. Shāmīl (d. 1287/1871), a Dāghestānī follower of shaykh Khālīd, led a long and bloody struggle of the Dāghestānī and Chechen mountaineers against the Russian conquest of the Caucasus from 1250/1834 until 1276/1859, when he was captured by the Russian forces.

Another member of the Mujaddidī-Naqshbandī sub-order Khwāja Mīr Nāṣir (d. 1172/1758) founded a new order called "the Path of [the prophet] Muḥammad" (*ṭarīqa-yi Muḥammadi*). His son Khwāja Mīr Dard (1199/1785) wrote the famous "Knowledge of the Book [i.e., the Qur'ān]" (*Ilm al-kitāb*)—a fresh insight into the mystical tradition that gave a new orientation to the Naqshbandī discipline. Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd of Rāē Barēlī (d. 1247/1831) was also originally a member of the Mujaddidī order. However, later in his life he established a new mystical path, called the *ṭarīqa-yi nubuwat*. Nevertheless, the ideology of this new movement remained within the general framework of the Naqshbandī teaching. An important aspect of the Naqshbandiyya order was its originality of thought and the ability of its exponents to give new creative interpretations to the tradition formulated by its founders. As we have seen, shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī differed from his mentor, shaykh Bāqī Bi-llāh, who was an admirer of Ibn 'Arabī and his doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*.

In a like vein, Mīrzā Maẓhar Jān-i Jānān, contrary to the opinions of Sirhindī and Shāh Ghulām ‘Alī both of whom insisted on the suppression of the Hindu religion, was an advocate of reconciliation with Hinduism. Likewise, Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd disagreed with Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (d. 1239/1823) on the important concept of visualizing the master in spiritual practices. Despite these occasional departures from the original tradition, the Naqshbandiyya of India has remained strongly opposed to innovations in religious theory and practice and sought to suppress them by winning temporal rulers over to their side.

Najm al-Dīn Kubrā and the Kubrawiyya

The eponymous founder of the famous Kubrawiyya Sufi order of Central Asia and Khurāsān, Shaykh Najm al-Dīn Abū ‘l-Jannāb Aḥmad b. ‘Umar derived his nickname “Kubrā” from the Qur’ānic expression “the major disaster” (*al-ṭāmmat al-kubrā*).⁸⁵ He earned it through his formidable talent in polemic and disputation, which enabled him to defeat the most skillful controversialists of his age.

Born at Khīva, in Khwārazm, in 540/1145, he began his career as a scholar of *ḥadīth* and speculative theology (*kalām*), travelling extensively in the cultivation of these disciplines. His interest in Sufism was awakened in Egypt, where he became a *murīd* of the Persian shaykh Rūzbihān al-Wazzān al-Miṣrī (d. 584/1188), an initiate of the Suhrawardiyya order. After a number of years in Egypt, he went to Tabrīz, in Persia, to pursue his studies of *kalām*, but came instead under the influence of a certain Bābā Faraj Tabrīzī who persuaded him to abandon his concern with the “external” religious sciences and to devote himself fully to the search of the inner wisdom by embarking on the Sufi path.⁸⁶ Kubrā then spent some time in the company of two other preceptors, ‘Ammār b. Yāsir al-Bidlīsī and Ismā‘īl al-Qaṣrī, from both of whom he received a Sufi robe (*khirqā*), before returning to shaykh Rūzbihān in Egypt. By then, Rūzbihān evidently regarded Kubrā as fully mature, for in about 540/1145 he sent him back to Khwārazm with full authority to train and initiate disciples. Kubrā swiftly gathered a large following, including a remarkable number of individuals who attained prominence in their

⁸⁵ See Qur’ān 79:34.

⁸⁶ Trimmingham, *Sufi Orders*, p. 55.

own right as spiritual masters of and writers on Sufism. On this account, Kubrā is frequently designated as *walī-turash*, the “manufacturer of saints.” Among his foremost disciples were Majd al-Dīn Baghdādī (d. 616/1219), the master of the great Persian poet Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭar; Najm al-Dīn Dayā Rāzī (d. 654/1256), the author of the celebrated Sufi compendium “The Path of God’s Bondsmen” (*Mirṣād al-‘ibād*);⁸⁷ Sa’d al-Dīn Ḥammūya (d. 650/1252), Bābā Kamāl Jandī, Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī (d. 658/1260), and Raḍī ‘l-Dīn ‘Alī Lālā (d. 642/1244). Kubrā is said to have fallen victim to the Mongol conquest of Khwārazm in 617/1220. According to the traditional accounts, he refused an invitation by the Mongols to leave the city before they proceeded with their massacre of its inhabitants and died at the head of a band of followers while engaged in hand-to-hand combat. He is reputed to have been buried at the site of his *khānaqā* outside the city, and his tomb, located in what subsequently became known as Kōhne-Urgenj, became a center of pious visitation, retaining this function even under Soviet rule.⁸⁸ His followers did not form a tightly knit organization but rather a congeries of small Sufi communities that rallied around one or the other of his chief deputies.⁸⁹ Kubrā left behind a number of brief but important works in Arabic that show his concern with the analysis of visionary experiences. He discussed, among other issues, the significance of various types of dreams and visions; the degrees of luminous epiphany that are manifested to the mystic; the different classes of conceptions and images (*khawāṭir*) that engage the mystic’s attention; and the nature and interrelations of the “subtle centers” of man’s body (*laṭā’if*). Among the most important of Kubrā’s treatises are “The Fragrance of [Divine] Beauty and the Unveiling of the [Divine] Majesty” (*Fawā’ih al-jamāl wa-fawātiḥ al-jalāl*),⁹⁰ “The Ten Principles” (*al-Uṣūl al-‘ashara*) and “The Epistle to the Fearful One, Who Seeks to Escape the Reprimand of the Scold” (*Risālat al-khā’if al-hā’im min la’wmat al-lā’im*).⁹¹ In addition to these short works dealing with the

⁸⁷ For an English translation of this book see H. Algar, *The Path of God’s Bondsmen from Origin to Return*, Delmar, NY, 1982.

⁸⁸ G.P. Snesev, *Relikty domusul’manskikh verovanii i obryadov u uzbekov Khorezma*, Moscow, 1969, pp. 269 and 433.

⁸⁹ Trimingham, *Sufi Orders*, p. 56.

⁹⁰ Edited with a comprehensive introduction to the life and work of Kubrā by F. Meier, Wiesbaden 1957.

⁹¹ Edited, together with other lesser treatises, by M. Molé under the title of *Traité mineurs*, in: *Annales Islamologiques* (Cairo), vol. 4 (1963), pp. 1–78.

Sufi path, Kubrā undertook to write a monumental Sufi commentary on the Qurʾān. When he died without completing it, the project was carried on first by his *murīd* Najm al-Dīn Rāzī and then by another Kubrawī shaykh, ‘Alā’ al-Dawla Simnānī.⁹² Of all these works Kubrā’s *Fawā’ih al-jamāl* is by far the most famous. It can be described as a spiritual dairy that its author designed as a guidebook to help the Sufi wayfarer to progress successfully along the mystical path. Here Kubrā provided a detailed description of the psychological phenomena and spiritual states that the seeker experiences on the way to God, with special reference to the ocular and auditory perceptions one encounters during retreat and meditation. In describing his own progress toward the mystical goal, Kubrā gave the Sufi novice a helpful clue to the meaning of such experiences and phenomena. He also highlighted the possible pitfalls of such sensations. In his shorter treatises, especially in “The Ten Principles,” Kubrā laid down the code of behavior to be followed by the novices. Expanding on the eight Sufi principles outlined by al-Junayd, Kubrā recommended that his disciples practice ritual purity, fasting, silence, seclusion, the constant remembrance of God, a bare minimum of sleep and observe moderation after the breaking of the fast. In addition, the novice was expected to concentrate fully on the personality of his spiritual master and to discard all vain thoughts and impulses the instant that they appear.⁹³ Such works formed the foundation of the Kubrawī spiritual discipline.⁹⁴

The teaching of Kubrā was perpetuated by his disciples. Sayf al-Dīn Bākhārī (d. 658/1260), a native of Bākhār in present-day Afghanistan, established a well-endowed Kubrawī *khānaqā* in Bukhārā, where he spent his whole life preaching to his numerous followers.⁹⁵ His popularity, however, spread far beyond his immediate circle of his disciples. He was held in great esteem by the population of Bukhārā, which referred to him as “The Master of the Universe”

⁹² H. Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, Paris 1972, vol. 3, pp. 175–176 and 276 n. 90.

⁹³ M. A. Waley, “A Kubrawī Manual of Sufism: The *Fuṣūṣ al-adab* of Yaḥyā al-Bākhārī,” in: L. Lewisohn (ed.), “*The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism*,” London and New York, 1992, pp. 289–290.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

⁹⁵ Documents relating to this *khānaqā* were published by C. D. Chekhovich, *Bukharskie dokumenty XIV v.*, Tashkent, 1965; cf. Waley, “A Kubrawī Manual of Sufism,” p. 291.

(*shaykh-i ʿālam*).⁹⁶ It was at Bākharzī's *khānaqā* that Berke Khān, the fifth ruler of the Golden Horde, proclaimed his allegiance to Islam.⁹⁷ Badr al-Dīn Samarqandī, a *murīd* of Bākharzī, traveled to India and established there a branch of the Kubrawiyya that came to be known as the Firdawsiyya. Its most important figure was Aḥmad Yaḥyā Manērī (d. 772/1371), the author of the widely read "Writings" (*Maktūbāt*). Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥammūya established a *khānaqā* at Baḥrabād in Khurāsān. It was headed by his son, Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm, who in 694/1295 presided over the conversion to Islam of Ghazān Khān, the Īlkhānid ruler of Iran. The Kubrawiyya's involvement in the conversion of the Mongol rulers bears an eloquent testimony to their high prestige and political clout. Another *murīd* of Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥammūya, ʿAzīz al-Dīn Nasafī (d. 661/1263), was the author of several important treatises on various aspects of Sufi thought, which served as a theoretical starting point for many later Sufi writers.⁹⁸

The principal branches of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā's *ṭarīqa* were Firdawsiyya, Nūriyya, Rukniyya, Hamdāniyya, Istighāsiyya (Dhahabiyya), and Nūrbakhshiyya.⁹⁹ Of these, the most long-lived and prolific initiatic line was probably that descending by way of Raḡī 'l-Dīn ʿAlī Lālā and two further links of the chain to ʿAlā' al-Dawla Simnānī (d. 736/1336). A prolific writer, Simnānī further elaborated the analysis of Kubrā's subtle spiritual centers (*laṭā'if*) and also formulated a critique of Ibn ʿArabī's doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* that was to have much influence on the Indian Naqshbandī circles.¹⁰⁰ He also attacked the excessive belief in saintly miracles which he observed among some contemporary Sufis. At the same time, he condoned various *dhikr* practices and meditation techniques as long as they allowed the Sufi to communicate with the spirits of his deceased predecessors and to seek advice from them.¹⁰¹

ʿAlī Hamadānī, a *murīd*, successively, of two of Simnānī's followers, Taqī 'l-Dīn Akhī and Maḥmūd Mazdaqānī, introduced the

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 292.

⁹⁷ J. Richard, "La conversion de Berke et les débuts de l'islamisation de la Horde d'Or," in: *Revue d'Etudes Islamiques*, vol. 35, (1967), pp. 173–9.

⁹⁸ Published by Molé under the title *Kitāb al-Insān al-kāmil*, Tehran and Paris 1962; cf. H. Landolt, "Le paradoxe de la 'face de Dieu'," in: *SI* (Paris), vol. 25/2 (1996), pp. 163–192.

⁹⁹ Trimmingham, *Sufi Orders*, pp. 56–57.

¹⁰⁰ H. Landolt, "Die Briefwechsel zwischen Kāšānī und Simnānī," in *Der Islam*, vol. 50/1 (1973), pp. 29–81.

¹⁰¹ Trimmingham, *Sufi Orders*, p. 58.

Kubrawī order to Badakhshān (present-day Tājīkistān) and Kashmīr. However, the center of his career as a Sufī master was in Khuttalān (present-day Kulāb, Tājīkistān),¹⁰² and his disciples were recruited primarily from the eastern reaches of Khurāsān and Transoxania. He died in 786/1385, and is variously reputed to have been buried in Khuttalān and Srīnagar.¹⁰³ A descendant of the Prophet through Fāṭima and ‘Alī, he designated himself as the “second ‘Alī.” Although the branch of the Kubrawī order that he introduced to Kashmīr remains purely Sunnī to the present day, it is not surprising that descendants of Hamadānī adhered to various trends within Shī‘ism. Ishāq al-Khuttalānī, who succeeded ‘Alī Hamadānī as the head of the order, was murdered by emissaries of the Tīmūrid ruler Shāhrūkh in about 826/1423. Before dying, he appointed as his successor Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh. The majority of Khuttalānī’s followers accepted Nūrbakhsh, but a minority gave their loyalty to ‘Abd Allāh Barzishabādī instead. This schism gave rise to two separate derivatives of the Kubrawiyya, each with its own name, but having in common an adoption of Shī‘ism. One was the Nūrbakhshiyya, which survived in Persia into the Ṣafawid period; the other came to acquire, at a date and in a fashion unknown, the designation of Dhahabiyya, and has survived down to the present in Iran, where its chief center is Shīrāz.¹⁰⁴

The latter history of the Kubrawiyya in its Central Asian homeland is not well known. It is probable that it was almost universally displaced, even in Khwārazm, by the Naqshbandiyya from the early ninth/fifteenth century onwards. The small town of Saktari near Bukhārā remained, however, an active center of the Kubrawiyya until at least the early eleventh/seventeenth century.¹⁰⁵ At some point, the Kubrawiyya seems to have spread eastwards from Central Asia into the Muslim regions of China. Finally, there are traces of the Kubrawiyya in Turkey—a Kubrawī shaykh by the name of Muṣṭafā

¹⁰² D. DeWeese, “Sayyid ‘Alī Hamadānī and Kubrawī Hagiographical Traditions,” in: L. Lewisohn (ed.), *The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism*, London and New York, 1992, p. 124.

¹⁰³ J. Teufel, *Eine Lebensbeschreibung des Scheich ‘Alī-i Hamadānī*, Leiden, 1962.

¹⁰⁴ R. Gramlich, *Die schiitischen Derwischorden Persiens*, Wiesbaden, 1965, vol. 1, pp. 14–26.

¹⁰⁵ For a list of works produced by the shaykhs of Saktari, see A. A. Semenov, *Sobranie vostochnykh rukopisei Akademii Nauk Uzbekskoi SSR*, Tashkent 1955, vol. 3, pp. 327–8.

Dede is recorded to have fought in the ranks of the army that conquered Constantinople, but no lasting implantation of the order appears to have taken place either in Turkey or in the Arab lands. Only a nominal existence of the Kubrawiyya persisted in the western Islamic world as one of the multiple secondary affiliations claimed by Naqshbandīs of the Mujaddidī-Khālīdī line.

Sufism in a Shīʿī Context: The Niʿmatullāhiyya

The Niʿmatullāhī Sufi order first took root in south-eastern Persia, where it continued to prosper until the time of the Ṣafawid ruler Shāh ʿAbbās (978/1571–1038/1629). For the next two centuries, it survived only in the Indian Subcontinent (Deccan), and was reintroduced into Persia with considerable vigor in the early thirteenth/late eighteenth century. From that time on, the Niʿmatullāhiyya became the most widespread Sufi order in the country.

The founder of the order Shāh Niʿmat Allāh Walī was born in Aleppo ca. 730/1330. His father was a descendant of the Prophet via the seventh Shīʿī/Ismāʿīlī imām Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar. His mother was of Persian descent. During his early youth Niʿmat Allāh studied in Shīrāz. Among his teachers was one of the greatest theologians of the age ʿAḏūd al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 756/1355). Niʿmat Allāh was initiated into Sufism by the famous Yemeni historian and Sufi ʿAbd Allāh al-Yāfiʿī (d. 768/1367), who, in turn, derived his spiritual genealogy from the great Maghribī saint and the spiritual forefather of the Shādhiliyya order Abū Madyan Shuʿayb (d. 590/1197). Niʿmat Allāh joined al-Yāfiʿī's circle in Mecca at the age of twenty-four and stayed with this master until his death, whereupon Niʿmat Allāh embarked on a long series of journeys. After spending some time in retreat in the cave on Mount Muqāṭṭam in Egypt,¹⁰⁶ he traveled through Syria and Iraq to Azerbaijan. En route, he met many distinguished Sufi masters, including the eponymous founder of the Ṣafawid order, shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn. It was in Transoxania that Niʿmat Allāh first presented himself as an independent Sufi teacher. His success, which found its most dramatic expression in the establishment of several Niʿmatullāhī lodges in various locations throughout Central Asia, attracted the hostile attention of the all-powerful Tīmūr, who

¹⁰⁶ T. Graham, "Shāh Niʿmatullāh," p. 174.

suspected the Sufi of conspiring against his rule under the guise of Shī'ism. Some sources argue that Tīmūr's hostility was due in part to the influence of his Sufi advisor Amīr Kulāl, the progenitor of the Naqshbandiyya, who was probably envious of Ni'mat Allāh's wide popularity.¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, Ni'mat Allāh must have himself contributed to such suspicions by his intemperate statements that could have been interpreted as his laying claim on political as well as religious authority.¹⁰⁸ In any event, this episode demonstrates the acute rivalry between the nascent Naqshbandiyya and Ni'matullāhiyya brotherhoods, which may have facilitated the adoption of Shī'ī ideology by the Ni'matullāhiyya leadership at a later stage. As a result, Ni'mat Allāh was expelled from Transoxania and had to seek refuge in Persia and Afghaniṣtān. After spending a number of years at Herat, he settled in the province of Kirmān, which had the advantage of being remote from the main centers of power of the day. He died there at the village of Māhān in 834/1430.

This last period of Ni'mat Allāh's life was by far the most fruitful. Apart from his disciples in Kirmān, he had several thousand of devotees in the prosperous Persian province of Shīrāz, including a few eminent scholars and poets. Ni'mat Allāh himself was a prolific writer who is credited by his followers with many hundreds of treatises. His writings include exegetical essays on the Qur'ān and the utterances of the early Sufi authorities and well as expositions of Sufi metaphysics along the lines of Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of the unity of being. Even more popular among Ni'mat Allāh's followers were his poetic works that revolve around the theme of the underlying unity of being and the resultant impossibility of ontological multiplicity. The most frequently cited poems of his poetic corpus are his vague predictions of prophetic and apocalyptic nature. They were later interpreted as pointing to such diverse events as the rise of the Ṣafawid dynasty, the separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan and the Islamic revolution in Iran.

There can be little doubt that Ni'mat Allāh Walī remained a Sunnī throughout his life. His master al-Yāfi'ī was a bona fide Shāfi'ī scholar and he himself often cited the reports of the Prophet's companions who are normally rejected by Shī'ī scholars. Yet his teaching does

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 176 and 180–182.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 182–183.

contain chiliastic and messianic elements that may have facilitated the subsequent transition of the Ni'matullāhiyya order to Shī'ism.

Shāh Ni'mat Allāh Walī was succeeded by his son Shāh Khalīl Allāh, then fifty-nine years of age. Not long after his father's death, he was summoned to the court of the Tīmūrid ruler Shāhrūkh in Herat. Although this invitation was later interpreted as a gesture of respect, it seems more likely that Shāhrūkh sensed a danger to his rule in the ideological and numerical strength of the Ni'matullāhiyya. The existence of certain tensions in the relations between the ruler and the charismatic Sufi leader is attested by the fact that between 836/1432 and 840/1436 Khalīl Allāh decided to leave Persia for the Deccan. The ruler of the Deccan, Aḥmad Shāh Bahmān, a great friend of Sufi saints who was aware of Khalīl Allāh's high prestige among the masses, invited the master to settle in his kingdom and to become his spiritual master and confidant. Although Ni'matullāhiyya's links with Persia were not entirely broken by this move, the leadership of the order was now located in India. Despite their influence among the Deccani aristocracy, the Ni'matullāhiyya never succeeded in putting down roots among the Deccani population at large.

The branch of the Ni'matullāhiyya that stayed in Persia initially enjoyed good relations with the new rulers, the Ṣafawids. One of the Ni'matullāhī shaykhs, Mīr Nizām al-Dīn 'Abd al-Bāqī was promoted to the post the chief religious authority of the Ṣafawid Empire by Shāh Ismā'īl in 917/1512. There were also several marriages between the Nimatullāhī family and the Ṣafawid house. The relationship began to sour in the time of Shāh 'Abbās I, when one of the family, Amīr Ghiyāth al-Dīn Mīrmīrān, became involved in a rebellion against the Ṣafawids in the province of Kirmān. For a time, the Ni'matullāhiyya lost its influence on the dynasty's rulers and sank into oblivion.

A revival of the Ni'matullāhiyya in Persia in the twelfth-thirteenth/eighteenth-nineteenth centuries is associated with a certain Ma'sūm 'Alī Shāh Dakkānī (d. 1214/1799), who was sent by the order's incumbent head in the Deccan with the mission to propagate its teachings among the Persians. His emotional, and at times ecstatic way of preaching swiftly gained him a large following throughout Persia, particularly in Shīrāz, Iṣfāhān, Hamadān and Kirmān. The resurgent Ni'matullāhiyya, however, soon encountered the hostility of many Shī'ī scholars, who viewed themselves as the only genuine exponents of the Shī'ī dogma and were not prepared to share their

authority with the newcomers. Ma'ṣūm 'Alī Shāh fell victim to their hostility in 1212/1797, when he was captured and executed en route from Najaf to Meshhed on the instance of the influential Shī'ī scholar Bihbahānī, who was popularly known as "Sufi killer" (*ṣūfikush*).

Ma'ṣūm 'Alī Shāh's principal companion was Nūr 'Alī Shāh of Iṣfāhān, a prolific author in both poetry and prose. His works are replete with ecstatic paradoxes similar to al-Bisṭāmī's and themes characteristic of "extremist" Shī'ism. In addition, Nūr 'Alī Shāh severely criticized the exoteric Shī'ī ulema who were responsible for the death of his master. The presence of these "radical" elements in the resurgent Ni'matullāhiyya indicates that it must have departed from the mystical precepts of its founder, Shāh Ni'mat Allāh Walī and his immediate descendants and embraced the ideology of "extreme" Shī'ism. Particularly disconcerting for the ulema was Nūr 'Alī Shāh's assertion that the perfect Sufi master is the true deputy (*nā'ib*) of the Hidden Shī'ī Imām. Eventually, the ulema succeeded in putting Nūr 'Alī Shāh out of the way. He was poisoned by the agents sent to him by Bihbahānī.

Following the death of Bihbahānī four years later, the antagonism between the Ni'matullāhiyya and the their learned opponents among Shī'ī ulema began to decline. The rapprochement between the two groups was facilitated after the Ni'matullāhiyya leadership prudently adopted more circumspect doctrines and practices. As it was no longer seen as subversive by the Shī'ī scholarly and political establishment of the age, the Ni'matullāhiyya flourished under the Qājār rulers of Persia. One of them, Muḥammad Shāh, himself became an initiate of the order. Its influence on the Persian masses and élite continued to grow throughout the thirteenth/nineteenth centuries. However, its physical and numerical expansion was accompanied by its division into mutually hostile branches only the more important of which will be mentioned here.

Muḥammad Ja'far Maḥjūb 'Alī Shāh (d. 1238/1823) was the last leader to exercise undisputed control over the whole order. Three separate claimants to the leadership arose after his death: Kawthar 'Alī Shāh (d. 1247/1831), Sayyidī Ḥusayn Astrābādī, and Zayn al-'Ābidīn Mast 'Alī Shāh (d. 1253/1838). The first founded a sub-order known as the Kawthariyya, which has survived down to the present, although with a very small membership. Its most famous leader in modern times was Nāṣir 'Alī Shāh (still living in the late 1970s). The line that descended from Astrābādī also reached into

the twentieth century, producing one of the most celebrated Persian Sufis of recent times, Sayyid Ḥusayn Ḥusayanī Shams al-‘Urafa’ (d. 1353/1935). His followers formed a distinctive group that came to be known as the Shamsiyya. The main line of succession in the Ni‘matullāhiyya passes through Mast ‘Alī Shāh, a prolific writer and author of several apologetic treatises in defense of the order against the attacks of mainstream Shī‘ī divines. After the death of his successor Raḥmat ‘Alī Shāh in 1278/1861, his followers formed three suborders. The leader of the first group, Sa‘ādat ‘Alī Shāh (d. 1293/1876), was a typical ecstatic Sufi, the clarity of whose heart was unclouded by any formal learning. His successor, Sulṭān ‘Alī Shāh of Khurāsān, was a man of a quite different type, who had studied Islamic philosophy before embarking on the mystical path. Even after he assumed the headship of the order, he continued to train his Khurāsānī *murīds* in the intricacies of the formal religious sciences. Upon his death in 1327/1909 at the hand of an unknown assailant, he was succeeded by his son, Mullā ‘Alī Gunābādī Nūr ‘Alī Shāh-i Thānī (d. 1337/1918). The introduction of hereditary succession gave rise to a new suborder, the Gunābādiyya, with reference to the area surrounding Sulṭān ‘Alī Shāh’s place of origin. Mullā ‘Alī Shāh was succeeded by Šālīḥ ‘Alī Shāh (d. 1386/1966) and then by Riḍā ‘Alī Shāh Tābanda (still living in 1992). Although the Gunābādiyya generally did not regard themselves as representing the main line of the Ni‘matullāhiyya order, they have, for several decades, constituted the largest Ni‘matullāhī community in Persia. It is due in part to the sober, Shari‘a-oriented nature of their mystical discipline that they have been able to retain their position after the Iranian revolution of 1978–1979.

Another offshoot of the Ni‘matullāhiyya, the Šafi‘-‘Alī-Shāhiyya, which emerged from the dispute over the succession to Raḥmat ‘Alī Shāh, developed in a quite different direction. Its eponymous founder, Ḥājī Mīrzā Ḥasan Šafi‘ ‘Alī Shāh, spent some time in India looking after his father’s mercantile interests before returning to Persia and becoming a disciple of Raḥmat ‘Alī Shāh. Soon after the death of his master, he declared himself the immediate successor of Raḥmat ‘Alī Shāh and proclaimed his independence from another candidate. A writer on a variety of religious subjects, he was severely criticized for his nonconventional approach to them. On Šafi‘ ‘Alī Shāh’s death, the leadership of the order was assumed by Zāhīr al-Dawla Šafā ‘Alī Shāh, minister of the court and brother-in-law of the ruling

monarch, Muẓaffar al-Dīn Shāh. Şafa ‘Alī Shāh sought to impose some structure on the order’s activities. To this end, he established a twelve-man committee to supervise its operations, which functioned very much like a Masonic lodge. In time, this society abandoned virtually all the traditional rites of Sufism, but continued to flourish in the certain quarters of the Persian society until the rise of the Islamic Republic, when its activities were brought to an end together with those of all other Masonic organizations. Its last leader was ‘Abd Allāh Intizām, who died in 1982.

It is the line of the third claimant to the succession of Raḥmat ‘Alī Shāh, Muḥammad Āqā Munawwar ‘Alī Shāh (d. 1310/1884) that has the best claim to be regarded as the bona fide descendants of the original Ni‘matullāhiyya. Munawwar ‘Alī Shāh was succeeded in turn by Wafā’ ‘Alī Shāh (d. 1336/1918), Şādiq ‘Alī Shāh (d. 1340/1922) and ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Mu’nis ‘Alī Shāh (d. 1372/1953). A man of great erudition, Mu’nis ‘Alī Shāh enjoyed great respect during the thirty years that he directed the order. However, on his death another split occurred in its ranks. The traditional pattern of discord reasserted itself as thirteen claimants to the succession came forward. The most successful of them was Dr. Jawād Nūrbakhsh, a psychiatrist by profession. He managed to recruit many members of high society in Tehran and to build a chain of new lodges throughout Persia. A prolific author, he endeavored to popularize and to reinvigorate the Ni‘matullāhī tradition. When the Iranian revolution of 1978–1979 began, Nūrbakhsh left the country for the West, where he continues to promote the Ni‘matullāhiyya among Iranian émigrés and Western converts.

CHAPTER NINE

SUFI INSTITUTIONS IN REGIONAL CONTEXTS OVER THE LAST SIX CENTURIES

After we have examined the rise and subsequent evolution of the major Sufi brotherhoods, it would be helpful to consider their respective roles in various geographical areas of the Muslim world over the last six centuries. Given the vastness of material at hand, I have to limit my discussion to the history of Sufi institutions in the Maghrib, Africa, India, Indonesia, the Turkic lands (from Anatolia to Central Asia), the Caucasus and the Balkans. Developments in Persia,¹ China and Arabia will be touched upon briefly.

Sufism and Sufi Brotherhoods in the Maghrib

In discussing the history of the Shādhiliyya order it was pointed out that, in the Maghrib, the rise of institutional Sufism dates back to the eighth/fourteenth century. From the outset, Sufi activities in that area of the Muslim world were centered in small lodges (*zāwiyya*) or in military outposts (*ribāt*). They were manned by volunteer fighters for religion (*murābiṭūn*) many of whom had ascetic and mystical propensities. In a sense, therefore, the situation in the medieval Maghrib seems to mirror that in the Muslim East, where, as we have seen, early ascetics also spearheaded hostilities against their Christian, Buddhist and pagan neighbors. As time went on, the Maghribī lodges and military outposts became part of the local religious and social landscape, both in towns and in the countryside. The progressive integration of Sufism and its institutions into the religious culture and social life of the area is attested by the fact that fundamentals of Sufi science were often taught in the local religious colleges (*madrassa*). In a similar way, Islamic theology and jurisprudence

¹ For a comprehensive study of Sufism in Persia see L. Lewisohn (ed.), *The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism*, London and New York, 1992; idem (ed.), *Classical Persian Sufism: From its origins to Rumi*, London and New York, 1993.

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A Short History

By

Alexander Knysh



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