MATTHIJS VAN DEN BOS

Mystic Regimes

Sufism and the State
in Iran, from the Late
Qajar Era
to the Islamic Republic

BRILL

MYSTIC REGIMES

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BY

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was conceived from an anthropological interest in contemporary Iranian society and culture and sympathy for Sufism, be it undefined and mediated through literature. I have remained a non-convert, however, which explains a distant perspective, seeking to chart long-term social and cultural change. Readers caring for the unbridled Sufi perspective are advised to consult Persian sources in the bibliography, or the ever-expanding Western forest of esoterica.

Sufis or sympathisers as well as enemies and opponents often conceive of Sufism as a unitary social phenomenon. Thus, the Ṣafī-ʿalīshāhī and Solṭānʿalīshāhī-Neʿmatollāhī orders reckon one four-teenth-century founder. But nineteenth-century Sufis caused their division and social autonomy. For this reason, there is no mention in my study of Sufi 'branches', but of different Neʿmatollāhī 'orders'.

The present book is a revision of my dissertation, defended at the University of Amsterdam in September 2000. Although my thesis was based on fieldwork in preceding years, I did not update the book to include the latest developments. Its main purpose remains exploring long-term social and cultural change, and a study of current Iranian Sufism would be better served with a separate publication. Revising the thesis has mainly consisted of correcting errors that became evident to me upon rereading the manuscript and that various readers kindly brought to my notice. But it is necessary to state that any shortcomings in this work remain my responsibility alone.

I have transcribed Persian seeking to respect both sound and script and largely relied on Moʿīn's Dictionary for pronunciation. The short vowels were rendered as ‹a›, ‹e›, and ‹o›, the long vowels as ‹ā›, ‹ī›, and ‹ū›. ‹Ey› and ‹ow› have been used for the diphthongs. The consonants have been transliterated as follows: ء-ʾ; ث-s̱; ج-j; چ-ch; ح-ḥ; خ-kh; ذ-ẕ; ژ-zh; ش-sh; ص-ṣ; ض-ż; ط-ṭ; ظ-ẓ; ع-ʿ; غ-gh; و-v.

Names of persons, places and concepts that have their own currency in Western literature and that do not distort their object beyond recognition are the major exception. Thus, I refer to ‹Khomeyni› instead of ‹Khomeynī›, ‹Tehran› instead of ‹Tehrān› and ‹Sufi› instead of ‹ṣūfī›. Publications by Iranians in European languages that

employ alternative transliterations (‹gh› is often used for ق) have been rendered in their versions, thus: ‹Hazeghi› instead of ‹Ḥāẕeqī›.

Gate of the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī convent in Tehran
(courtesy Moḥammad Yāvarī)

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INTRODUCTION

This is a study of two Iranian Sufi orders as they have developed
socially over this century. They both claim to represent, exclusively,
the Neˁmatollāhī order. The tensions contained within this competi-
tion for spiritual authority have been paralleled by challenges to in-
ternal cohesion in each order, and augmented by the need to relate to
worldly regimes. Worldly regimes have often been hostile and some-
times lenient, but in always-different ways. Sufi performance upon
these tensions has given shape to the orders' social development.

I will briefly discuss theoretical notions in my exploration of the
modern Ṣafīˁalīshāhī and Solṭānˁalīshāhī Neˁmatollāhī orders, which
for reasons explained below I conceptualise as 'mystic regimes'.

Until fairly recently, the anthropology of religion was bifurcated
into idealistic, culturalist approaches in religious anthropology on the
one hand and a materialistic, power-centred political anthropology on
the other. Either culture or politics remained residual categories in
these studies (cf. BAX, 1987). Many great monographs in the anthro-
pology of Islam exemplify the meaning-power bifurcation too.

In the study of Sufism, for example, GELLNER's *Saints of the Atlas*
(1969) did not deal with esoterism, but 'rural Moroccan political
structure' (GEERTZ, 1971: 763). His study was "a transposition of
Evans-Pritchard's analysis of the role of the Sanusi brotherhood in
Libya" (BALDICK, 1989: 156), which dealt with the order "only in so
far as deemed necessary to an understanding of the political devel-
opment" (EVANS-PRITCHARD, 1949: preface). GEERTZ's *Islam Ob-
served* (1968), in contrast, ignored power and politics and explored
the relations between worldview, ethos and religious perspectives (cf.
ASAD, 1983: 252). Concerns with meaning in individual fieldwork
encounters, largely in isolation from politics, economics or class and
"at the expense of [...] exhaustive recordings of detailed social activ-
ity" (BEAL, 1995: 289), have also marked several reflexive approaches
that developed from Geertz's symbolical anthropology (that is:
RABINOW, 1977, CRAPANZANO, 1980, and DWYER, 1982).

Without problematising the power-meaning divide, some studies
nevertheless went beyond it in description. GILSENAN's *Saint and Sufi*

in Modern Egypt (1973) represented "an effort to articulate [...] economic, political and historical contexts with patterns of religious faith and experience" (EICKELMAN, 1984: 5), while the interrelations between class and religious patterns have since remained important in his work (cf. GILSENAN, 1982 (introduction), 1985, 1996). In a study of relations between Sufism and politics in Pakistan, EWING (1983: 253) showed that politicians allied themselves with Sufism not only because Sufi masters were politically and economically powerful, but also because they provided legitimisation as embodiments of spiritual authority. That is, relations had their rationale in an 'ideational' element intrinsic to Sufism. HAMMOUDI (1997), treating politics and Sufism in similar ways, identified 'the cultural foundations of Moroccan authoritarianism' in the Sufi master-disciple relationship - both as a cultural template and as an organisational structure.

1.

The concept of 'religious regime' as conceived and developed by BAX (1987, 1988, 1990) and deployed by, for instance, SPIER (1991) and WOLF (1991) was devised to tackle the power-meaning divide in anthropology theoretically. One of the few theoretical antecedents in the field of religion was provided by Abner Cohen, who "viewed power and symbolism as distinct variables in dialectical relationship with each other" (PARKIN, 1996: xv). BAX, more specifically, held religious phenomena incomprehensible outside human networks of interdependencies (1987: 1), and simultaneously stated that religious processes are relatively autonomous (1987: 2). By implication, reductionist determinisms are ruled out: neither can symbolic structures be conceived of as self-generating entities, nor can they be reduced to ideology in struggles for power and wealth. In the study of Sufism,

> one of the advantages of studying Sufi cults as [...] viable and generative symbolic and ethical movements is that this enables us to explore the connections between Sufi cosmologies, ethical ideas, bodily ritual practices and organisational forms, which have been lost in earlier historical and anthropological studies (WERBNER and BASU, 1998: 4).

Religious regimes connote a "constellation of dependencies that is characterised by religious imagery and acts" (SPIER, 1991: 10; BAX, 1988: 10). The social dynamics of religious regimes are accounted for by relations with worldly (state) regimes, confrontations with other

religious regimes, and by internal tensions (BAX, 1987: 3). The second conceptual advantage in 'religious regimes', besides bridging the meaning-power divide, lies in this specification of levels. In his discussions of domination and resistance, SCOTT (1985, 1990) dichotomously opposed the dominant and the subordinate (cf. GAL, 1995: 417). However, there are two arguments why a specification of levels is preferable here to a dichotomous model in dealing with domination. Even when confronted with violent state oppression, Sufi orders also engaged in relations to lateral regimes and internal struggles for spiritual authority. That is to say, religious regimes always "have their *own* politics" (ORTNER, 1995: 177) as well. Moreover, the dynamics of 'subordinate politics' itself affects the nature of domination.

Depending on the political context, the Neʿmatollāhī orders have managed to contain domination in different coalitions, with either the state or jurist regimes. Sufi leaders were able to negotiate their orders effectively, moreover, to the extent that they were able to establish internal control. Finally, there has often been deliberate differentiation of internal and external realms in Sufi orders. This explains a recurrent 'ambiguity of resistance' (cf. ORTNER, 1995: 175) in the mystic regimes when faced with domination. While some disciples in the Islamic Republic conceived of their Sufi religiosity as a protest against state Islam, many of their leaders have simultaneously been eager (not to resist but) to accommodate Sufism to the jurist state. That is, the apparent 'resistance' of a few took place within a larger configuration, which had 'accommodation' as keyword.

2.

The concept of religious regimes was legitimately conceived of as a heuristic instrument (SPIER, 1991: 9, cf. BAX, 1987: 2). But its large scope is potentially problematic for ethnography, as the relation of an historical dependency constellation to the human acts that build and keep it in place - to 'acting' - may become obscure.

BAX (1990) and SPIER (1991), for instance, conceived of the Roman Catholic church (as a whole) as a religious regime. It is not very easy, however, to realise the 'constellation of dependencies' metaphor in the case of the Church. It includes both such phenomena as Opus Dei - with its own substructure, largely independent from and in competition to the Curia - and liberation theology - autonomously

entering into ecumenical coalitions with Protestants and Jews against establishment/orthodoxy in general. These structures rather leave the Roman Catholic church as a nominal collection of difference; unified mainly by the prevalence of Christian competition.

The relations to the Vatican of both Opus Dei and liberation theologians are like the external relations of hierarchically situated competitor regimes, whose courses only sporadically collide with the spiritual centre. Being significantly self-contained, the contexts for the growth of Opus Dei and liberation theology were exterior to the Vatican, i.e. post-war Spain and Marxist revolutionary ideology in the 1960s in Latin America, respectively. Monsignor Escrivá resisted and acted upon leftist secularisation in Spain and Archbishop Romero fought poverty and government violence in El Salvador. As real dependencies do exist within these competitor groups, they are the more legitimate objects for the concept of religious regimes. More important as an argument for studying real dependencies, however, they bring into focus the human acts that build, manipulate, overthrow or keep dependencies in place.

WEBER wrote that "the most irrational form of religious behaviour, the mystic experience, is in its innermost being not only alien but hostile to all form" (1977: 342). Judging and inferring from its outward representations, however, Sufi experience bears the marks of, and leaves its marks on, time. Private and public relations, and liturgical practice in speech and writing, have shaped Sufi experience in particular, historical balances of religious need and constraint (cf. SPIER, 1991: 10-12, 1994: 20). In the Islamic Republic and the Pahlavi period, Sufi experience differed because (different) religious urge was subject to different constraint. State-led modernisation under Reza Shah, for instance, was contemporaneous with Sufi instruction that related spiritual progress to education and national development. Masters, disciples, poets and war volunteers alike equated Sufi experience with mystical martyrdom, while the Islamic Republic appealed to the Islamic, Iranian nation to sacrifice itself.

Addressing internal and external audiences, these instances of Sufi speech and writing allow for a conceptualisation as 'performance': that which in a particular period gives 'form to experience' (cf. FABIAN, 1990: 13; BARBER, 1992: 284). I find myself in agreement with FABIAN that one ought to abandon the view that sees performance (primarily) as 'enactment' (of texts), and treat it instead as 'event' and

'action' (pp. 9, 12, 13). However, while FABIAN epistemologically favoured 'creating' in action (p. 13), this study strongly emphasises performance's multiple regime dependencies. In a related sense, PARKIN (1996: xix) saw in cultural performance a "methodological metaphor for exploring issues of conflict [...] in wider society."

A second, more conventional series of connotations surrounding performance, concerns the embodiment of emotion (WERBNER and BASU, 1998: 7-8) and "'symbolic' or 'aesthetic' activities [...] enacted as intentional expressive productions in established [...] genres" (SCHIEFFELIN, 1998: 194). Performance touches upon 'agency' here to the extent that "agency is not an entity that exists apart from cultural construction" (ORTNER, 1995: 186, cf. TORAB, 1996: 237).

Emotion is central to the ritual life of Iranian, Shiᶜite Sufism, both as a desired religious effect and because of the religious significance of Imamic martyrdom. In conceiving of genres such as Sufi 'instruction', one has to account not only for a flow of emotion or symbolic information between knowledgeable and ignorant persons, however, but also for the establishment, in performance, of their respective roles as masters and disciples.

As performance is about 'embodying', 'expressing', and 'establishing', there may also be "failures in engaging a group into an 'audience' role" (FINNIGAN, 1992: 110, cf. SCHIEFFELIN, 1998: 198), which in the present analysis means that acting could be out of tune with the hierarchical setting. One sheikh whom I met in the process of establishing himself as an independent religious specialist nearly depleted his spiritual authority through insecure generic searching in the face of his flock. Commencing and interrupting meditative sessions on an established religious occasion several times, he did not convincingly establish master-disciple roles. Exceptional narrative skills and command over poetry and the Qurᵓān among Solṭānᶜalīshāhī leaders, inversely, have been crucial in organisational hierarchy and Solṭānᶜalīshāhī 'order'. Internal Sufi order, then, bears a particular relation to the masters' virtuosity; their mastery of styles, genres and settings in performance.

Thirdly, in an overarching sense performance relates to reproduction and survival. Each performance effects cultural reproduction, but as performers, genres, settings and occasions are never similar through time, each reproduction always engenders cultural innovation as well (cf. SAHLINS, 1981). Particularly "transformations in the

larger political arena in which the performance takes place result in changes in what that performance means" (VAN DER VEER, 1994: 82). It has been during such transformations that Sufi identity was most vulnerable, because it was made liminal.

GOFFMAN (1956, 1974) thoroughly analysed the maintenance of the self through performance in his studies of the 'presentation of self in everyday life' and, more relevant to Sufism, of 'stigma management'. One important reason for the ongoing conversation upheld by Sufis towards their opponents, is that "as long as [...] individuals are in communication with each other - as long as they are joined in an encounter - whatever they are doing is not occult, however esoteric and opaque it may appear to be" (GOFFMAN, 1963: 178). 'Occult' here carries GOFFMAN's sociological meaning, i.e. a disturbing mental absence from rule-led interactions in which legitimacy lies (cf. 1963: 76), but it also bears a literal relation to Shiʿism's religious universe: legitimate performance contains accusations of magic and heresy.

Not only accusations, reputations or spoiled identities were at stake in the authoritarian political contexts of this study, however. Everyday life Sufi performance had to survive the threat of suppression and violence that came, for instance, with the nationalist regime of Reza Shah and with the Islamic revolution. 'State drama' is part of Victor Turner's dramaturgical performance theory (PALMER and JANKOWIAK, 1996: 237). He stressed performance's reproductive functions, in the realm of the state and social reality at large, by treating it as (a four phased) 'social drama with conflict and conflict resolution' (p. 231), thus assigning to it an intrinsic developmental logic. In spite of intrinsic relations between Sufi performance and religious regime dependencies, however, "performance may be relative process rather than absolute unit and may emerge not from some prior plan but also in and through the event itself" (FINNIGAN, 1992: 110).

These three levels and functions of performance - giving shape to experience; embodying emotion and symbolic or aesthetic action in established genres; and socio-political and cultural reproduction and survival - define the crucial features of acting in religious regimes.

3.

Performance upon internal tensions, relations with other regimes and relations with the state account for social dynamics in religious re-

gimes. Bax conceived of the relation between religious and state regimes as an essentially 'antagonistic interdependency' (1987: 3). The pattern surely holds in many cases, but not always. There has been antagonism but no material interdependence, for instance, between Sufism and the state in the Islamic Republic. More interestingly, there has in other eras been a pattern of confluence, as much as antagonism, between state and Sufi regimes.

In his study of the Egyptian Hamidiya Shadhiliya Sufi order's social development Gilsenan (1973) attributed its growth in particular to detailed, internal regulations which gave it the power of modern bureaucratic organisations. De Jong (1974) contested Gilsenan's view and claimed that growth had primarily been due to government assistance (cf. discussion in Baldick, 1989: 158). It strikes an outsider to the debate as obvious that both explanations are not only valid but also interconnected, as part of the same historical, socio-cultural and political reality. Insiders' and outsiders' concerns similarly coincided in early twentieth-century Iran, when the Shah requested of the Solṭānꜥalīshāhī masters a rulebook for legitimate behaviour, while they themselves attempted to keep beggars and addicts at a distance.

An important reason for counter-examples to the proposed pattern of antagonistic interdependency lies in the nature of the parties and the relations involved. For Shiꜥite or Sunni Sufis in the Islamic world, the two major parties to relate to have been religious jurists and rulers. To the extent that rulers and jurists engaged in mutual antagonism, coalitions between rulers and Sufis were facilitated. Either in coalition with or antagonism to rulers, jurists have often constituted competitor regimes for Sufism, where Sufism was seen as an obstacle to spiritual authority monopolisation.

Lateral and vertical relations have also left their marks on internal structures in Sufi orders. To the extent that rulers were sympathetic, the orders could safely ignore their laterals, while in a patronage limbo they were pressed to accommodate jurist orthodoxy. The Neꜥmatollāhī orders' internal tensions, then, have often reflected (variable) answers to the question of how to relate to power-holders. Many Sufi affiliates in the Islamic Republic have, for instance, been less than happy with the restraints that their masters imposed for reasons of self-preservation. Performance upon these tensions has, in turn, significantly determined social developments in the Sufi orders. While the Ṣafīꜥalīshāhī order disintegrated and remained an arena for

competition in the Islamic Republic, centralised control in the Solṭānꜥalīshāhī order allowed for prominent jurists to visit their religious sessions. Thus, the three (internal, lateral and vertical) regime dynamics are not isolated, but inextricably interrelated. Furthermore, changing triangular relations between Sufis, jurists and rulers - which in different personnel varieties are perhaps descriptive of all religious regimes - rule out dichotomous generalisations of relations between states, lateral and mystic regimes.

I address these changing interrelations diachronically, juxtaposing the Pahlavi era and the Islamic Republic, and favouring performance in the Sufi orders as a vista to account for their social development. There is thus a double comparison - of orders and eras - which makes for the description of four mystic regimes. I refer to my study as an 'exploration' because contemporary Iranian, Shiꜥite Sufism is largely an unknown research field. Furthermore, 'exploration' stresses openness of the history under consideration. This study considers patterns and constraints - the notion of 'development' refers to patterned change in a certain direction (ELIAS, in GOUDSBLOM and MENNELL, 1998: 102) - but it is not claimed that Sufi performance could not potentially have been otherwise, nor that actual performance has been reducible to internal or external constraints. In this limited sense, in the stress on empirical and interpretative openness, my study resembles what MARCUS and CUSHMAN (1982: 25, 45) described as experimental ethnographies, as opposed to ethnographic realism.

Fieldwork has given a definite direction to and thus also imposed limitations on the material that this study is constructed from. The most important changes since my initial research design concern its scope. I prepared to study all Shiꜥite orders in Iran since 1979, with special reference to the Neꜥmatollāhīs. I ended up with two Neꜥmatollāhī orders and their comparative development over this century.

There were practical but also substantial reasons for this. It soon turned out that the idea of studying a range of orders simultaneously was excessively ambitious, because of the time, patience and energy involved in establishing productive relations. Once I became involved with the Neꜥmatollāhī orders on a regular basis, I soon decided to ignore the Khāksār, the least accessible, least organised and least visible of the Shiꜥite orders (only some references to their sessions remain in this study). As concerns the Ẕahabīya and the Ẕoʾr-Reyāsateyn-Neꜥmatollāhī order, I found the only option for in-depth

relations was trying to become a convert and devoting all of my time to them. An additional reason for ignoring the Ẕoʾr-Reyāsateyn is the development of their spiritual path in a unique, non-Iranian direction after the Islamic revolution. The narrowing of my research scope had an overall positive effect, however. Studying two orders that trace their descent to a common fourteenth-century founder but derive much of their contemporary identities from nineteenth and twentieth-century conflicts over succession, enabled a unique perspective on the microcosm of mystic regimes that facilitated their comparison.

The widening of historical scope occurred during fieldwork, when I realised that the Islamic revolution had only been one of the great caesuras that gave identity to the mystic regimes. An understanding of post-revolution Sufism in Iran cannot do without reckoning the particular identities that Sufi orders assumed in the Pahlavi era. It was mainly in the Pahlavi dynasty that the Iranian nation became an important frame of reference, that one Neʿmatollāhī order integrated deeply into the elite circles of state power and another consolidated its bonds with the clerical elite. The key, synchronical concept that I set out with - survival - gave way to a diachronical search for historical regime relations - cultural performance and social development.

My conception of fieldwork aimed at a detailed study of religious practice. As thematic interest shifted towards comparative social development, however, this focus of fieldwork changed as well. The scrutiny of religious practices gave way to ethnographic explorations of interaction at the thresholds of internal and external relations.

Apart from personal limitations, it is due in large measure to the authoritarian (political) contexts of twentieth-century Iran, inducing meticulously regulated economies of information in speech and writing in persons as much as in institutions, that much of the material in this study is open to replenishment. I tried to diminish the effects of such economies, however, by comparing both oral and written sources, in addition to personal observations and just 'being there'. Oral sources have been indispensable for this study, mainly because of the historical memory that Sufis shared with me and that is not duplicated in written sources. Written sources have been particularly useful for detecting public discourse about Sufism, by partisans and enemies of Sufism alike, and for the major historical reconstructions.

In most cases, oral information was produced within informal settings. This is reflected in my text by their reference as 'conversation.'

'Interview' reflects formal settings (of the semi-structured kind). Generally speaking, conversations were conducted with grass-roots informants, while interviews concerned Sufi masters. Irrespective of the particular source, interviews would often render ideal types, official views or historical justifications, while conversations would bring up the material that anthropologists are traditionally more interested in: failures, contradictions, covert meanings or allegedly irrelevant details. These sets of representations are socially interrelated (see chapter 7.3). This fact, in addition to the historical memory they contain, has been an elementary reason for their usage in this study.

In addition to Richard GRAMLICH's three-volume *Die schiitischen Derwischorden Persiens* (1965, 1976, 1981), on which any research on Iranian, Shiꜥite Sufism must of necessity be based (being the best and most detailed account available), and Henry CORBIN's four-volume *En Islam iranien* (1971/2) (that contains unrivalled analyses of Iranian Shiꜥism's 'spiritual universe'), I have relied heavily upon the Solṭānꜥalīshāhī order's corpus of primary and secondary sources.

Owing to the Solṭānꜥalīshāhīs' unique interest in historical documentation (partly as a means of proselytising), the corpus provides one with an exceptional opportunity to scratch the surface of generally a-historical Sufi images of the self and to identify cultural, social and political developments. For the Pahlavi period, MAḤBŪBꜥALĪ-SHĀH's *Khvorshīd-e Tābande* (1373/1994-5) has been particularly helpful, especially given the fact that useful sources on Sufism in the Pahlavi era remain rather scarce. PARĪSHĀNZĀDE's *Goshāyesh-e rāz* (1377/1998) and NĀSERꜥALĪ's *Resāla-ye javābīya* (1362/1983) are clear and fierce defences of the Solṭānꜥalīshāhī order that reflect several ongoing conflicts as well as its survival in the Islamic Republic.

Ṣafīꜥalīshāhī written sources are more problematic: one finds relevant worldly information only in the margins of the master's literary heritage (for instance: 1361/1973). Two exceptionally fruitful primary sources consists of his pupil ḤĀJJĪ DĀDĀSH's *Majalle-ye okhovvat* (1307/1928) - reflecting ideological developments in the Reza Shah era - and a pamphlet written by sheikh TAVĀNGAR (1345/1966) - reflecting ideological and organisational strife during the late Pahlavi era. Secondary sources such as ZANGANE-PŪR (1343/1964) and BARQ (1352/1973) mainly focus upon the personality of Ṣafīꜥalīshāh or, as in AFSHĀR (1367/1988) and ḤOSEYNĪ (1377/1988), upon the Society of Brotherhood within the order. The latter category of writings, in ad-

dition to (often repetitive) overview descriptions such as VAḤĪDNIYĀ (1352/1973) and HOMĀYŪNĪ (1371/1992) - does provide outlines of socio-historical development. However, even these writings would have been insufficient in the absence of oral sources.

Lastly, there is an important category of negative secondary sources. Nūreddīn Modarresī CHAHĀRDAHĪ's writings on Sufism (particularly his *magnum opus*, *Seyrī dar taṣavvof*) provides a useful and indispensable counterbalance to Sufi hagiography. Chahārdahī departed from the world of traditional Iranian Sufism, but despite (or perhaps because) of this, has sought consistently to reconstruct historical facts. Outrageously hostile secondary sources from the Islamic Republic such as ṢĀLEḤ ʿALĪSHĀH (1375/1996) are unreliable historical accounts but do explore silence in hagiographies and therefore shed light on the terms of battle between Sufis and their enemies.

There is a definite urban bias in this study, to the neglect of rural and/or tribal Sufism. The importance of such distinctions is indicated by the fact that the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order became involved in semi-feudal class conflict in Eastern Iran in the early Pahlavi era, while in Tehran (its second centre), it has rather been networks, crosscutting class divisions, which were important in external relations. Nevertheless, the numerical and historical importance of the Neʿmatollāhī orders and the fact that jurist and state views and policies have often been constructed on the basis of generalised ideas on Sufism in Iran (whether or not rural and/or urban), justify extrapolations from my urban Neʿmatollāhī cases to Iranian, Shiʿite Sufism at large.

Three issues, finally, define in more detail the ways in which I conceive of the religious regimes of Iranian, Shiʿite Sufism as 'mystic regimes'. What particularises Sufi orders in this study has to do with meaning-power relations, the (religious) status of strategies, and, most generally, the conceptualisation of religion and mysticism.

Meaning and power

The concept of religious regime was put forward to tackle reductionism in the anthropology of religion and to explore 'the mutual conditioning of power and meaning' (BAX, 1987: 1). However, explicit and convincing treatments of (the uses of) symbols, ideas, or beliefs in shaping religious power (exceptions such as SCHNEIDERMAN, 1992 aside) remain rare. Nevertheless, meaning-power relations touch

upon a paradox that lies to the heart of mystic regimes: how are or-
der, development and survival possible among large groups of people
who explicitly and publicly loathe worldliness? In a reflection on
fieldwork with the Ahl-e Ḥaqq, MIR-HOSSEINI felt puzzled by

> the force with which informants appeared to reject the relevance of
> any *ẓāhir* (political) interpretation of [their] stories. On reflection,
> these [...] were not so much rejected as taken for granted. But they in-
> sisted on the overriding importance of the *bāṭin* [esoterical], and the
> stories seemed to show less the connections between the two worlds
> than their separation. I suggest that such a conceptual segregation [...]
> is necessary to sustain another central dogma of the sect, a dogma
> shared by all sectarians, that they alone are the 'followers of *Ḥaqīqat*'
> (Ultimate Truth) (1994, (1): 281).

Taking this observation as a lead generates the hypothesis that such
segregation - and the obfuscation of worldly existence - is a premise
for the worldly, social and political prevalence of religious regimes.
In his study of reification in the thought of Alfred Schutz, THOMA-
SON (1982: 7) observed of 'successful communities' that they "seemed
almost always to involve patterns of daily life which members per-
ceived as somehow independent of their own will and authority. The
more firmly such patterns were backed by 'god given' [...] beliefs, the
more stable and persistent they were."

   Mystic regimes transform tacit reification, "the way people deny,
forget or ignore the constructedness of their social worlds," (THOMA-
SON, 1982) into explicit religious ideology and practice. Spiritual
progress means getting away from the "I" and the "here and now",
and analogically, monotheistic mystics (according to ARMSTRONG,
1993: 243) have essentially "made their God transcend the personal
category." The 'overriding importance of the esoterical' that MIR-
HOSSEINI referred to invests Sufi leaders with authority and power.
The Sufi path which leads towards unity and Truth and away from
the shattered world of seductions, has been paved with spiritual au-
thority, embodied in the masters who are uniquely equipped to guide
the travellers. In the end, Sufis hold spiritual authority to derive itself
from the transhistorical realm that produces initiatory dreams, illu-
minating visions, miracles and missionary orders. The success or
failure of such ideas largely depends on exterior forces - the pragmat-
ics of interaction, the quality of performance - but acting is neverthe-
less oriented towards such 'meaning', which - through the mediation

of acting - conditions 'power'.

Internal relations are only one level, however, on which meaning conditions power in the constitution of order. At the crossroads of their external relations, mystic and competitor regimes forward legitimations and delegitimations that are oriented towards a transhistorical *Ursprung*. Without exception, Iranian orders trace their (ultimate) descent to Imam ʿAlī, whose existence many mystics hold to have preceded creation. A recurrent strategy of enemies, in turn (whether internal or external) has consisted of contesting these continuities. Legitimacy lies in the past, which figures transhistorically in mystic regimes, but it becomes abruptly grounded and materialised in the contestation-and-defense genre. A related genre of legitimisation and delegitimisation in which transhistorical claims become grounded, concerns 'heresiology'. In heresiology, "polemics sets itself the task of determining the intangible point of dogma, the fundamental and necessary principle that the adversary has neglected, ignored or transgressed" and it "denounces this negligence as a moral failing; at the root of the error, it finds passion, desire, interest, a whole series of weaknesses and inadmissible attachments that establish it as culpable" (a formulation I borrow from FOUCAULT, *in* RABINOW, 1991: 382, see chapter three).

It is only to the background of these meaning-power complexes that one could make sense of a 'historical commission' in one order - positivistically concerned with facts in a way that few contemporary Western historians would now favour - that denies history a material existence of its own. The uses of transhistorical idealism and its closure thus enter the equation in meaningfully shaping lateral regime relations. Similar processes operate in the external relations between Sufi orders and the state.

SPIER (1991: 27) mentioned general Pinochet's choosing the company of evangelists who claimed non-involvement in politics. In the previous monarchy, Iranian Sufis similarly denied worldliness. ʿAlī ʿAnqā nevertheless occupied a parliament seat, while his father stated that rebellion was the greatest danger to cosmic harmony. In the Qajar era, inversely, a Sufi who was [only] "talking to men of spiritual discernment" (POURJAVADI and WILSON, 1978: 117) (i.e. similarly distancing himself from worldly claims) warned the king that neglect of his spiritual authority would ruin his reign. This scenario of mystic power - it is claimed by Sufis - subsequently unfolded.

Irrespective of the order, many Sufis hold Sufism to be a *sophia perennis* without temporal and spatial co-ordinates. But transhistorical and non-political definitions of mysticism made Sufism temporarily and politically attractive to the Shah, when faced with militant Islamic opposition (see chapter one). Religious obfuscations and political uses such as these indicate that "the position of religious regimes in political arenas is [...] effected by the type of ideology and by the nature of the collective fantasy espoused" (THODEN VAN VELZEN, 1992: 203). It has been royal receptivity towards Sufism that in turn came to figure in Sufi representations of the self (see chapter four). Power, then, "need not [always] be seen as either a cause or a first principle [...]" [my insertion] (DIRKS, 1994: 502). These cases - in which prevailing political interest converges with otherworldly religious doctrine - provide instances where Sufi 'meaning' conditions 'power' in both state and mystic regimes.

Strategies

While all regimes are concerned with questions of external confrontation and internal cohesion (BAX, 1987: 3), they are also defined through strategy-led performance. But in SCOTT's analyses, such performance has been related to a unilateral power dualism of dominant and subordinate, and opposed to 'authenticity' (GAL, 1995: 411).

GAL (1995: 419) pointed out that strategies are ill-conceived as straightforward responses to unambiguous domination. Political function is mediated through language, which is embedded within what she calls 'linguistic ideology' or culture. From this conception, it becomes plausible to conceive of strategic acts as cultural performance: 'strategic' Sufi acting departs from and is embedded within 'authentic' genres, doctrine and discourse. Strategic and authentic acting applies, first of all, to the signs that distinguish Sufis from others: stigmata, and to their management (GOFFMAN, 1974). Sufi stigmata - in both the Greek sense of bodily markers of moral inferiority and the Christian sense of "bodily signs of holy grace" (1974: 11) - have divided into the loose signs of stigma that are easily managed, such as clothing and bodily movements, and institutionalised ones that stick, such as the Sufi lodge.

The two aspects which have proved manageable in Sufi lodges, concern naming and adornment. Many lodges have changed their

names from *khānaqāh* into *ḥoseynīya* in the Islamic Republic, and they often included portraits of Khomeyni and Khameneʾi. This 'strategically' facilitated accommodation in the Islamic Republic, but also 'authentically' defused conceptualisations of Sufi centres in opposition to the mosque. In the Qajar era, the king named the Solṭānʿalīshāhī leader Saʿādatʿalīshāh 'peacock of the gnostics', in reflection of his expensive taste in clothing. In the Pahlavi era, customary civilian clothes became mandatory in many orders. Surely, these had Pahlavi modernisation projects as their context, but they also fitted an established shred of Sufi doctrine, which held social adaptation to be a religious duty. One has to do in these cases with multiple levels in one act - like in any other social drama but falling within the range of explicit religious doctrine in mystic, religious regimes - in which performance inextricably interweaves authenticity and strategy.

Apart from scientific reporters, many believers oppose strategy to authenticity as well. DIGARD (1978: 512) justly remarked, however, that "Contrairement à ce que beaucoup de musulmans (et d'autres croyants) pensent, il n'y a rien d'insultant pour eux ou de blasphématoire à se demander si la conception qu'ils ont à la pratique qu'ils font de leur religion répond à une ‹stratégie›." While in response to an outsider's questioning the sheer suggestion may be indignantly brushed aside, religious (including mystic, Sufi) regimes have often been very explicit about the strategic nature of (religious) performance in unprovoked representations of the self.

In his historical sociology of Opus Dei ESTRUCH (1995) elaborated upon the sect's modern concept of a saint, which included a this-worldly asceticism that prescribed 'scheming', for which affiliates were prepared in open educational institutions. While many Sufis would deny anything like scheming, 'dissimulation' has doctrinal status in the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order (*Pand-e Ṣāleḥ*, 1372/1993: 35), as among Shiʿites generally. An impeccably dressed affiliate once undressed in the lodge in one Ṣafīʿalīshāhī branch. Underneath his civilian clothes appeared a long white robe (*kafan*). He saw me watch him and explained: "I couldn't do this in the street." Yet, there was no notion of insincerity in strategy here, let alone of fooling the jurists. It had to do with survival but also religiously prescribed prudence, and authentic distinctions between inner and outer realms. Strategic acts do not exhaust the range of religious performance, but one may turn the allegedly inimical relationship between strategy and

authenticity on its head as authenticity is often accomplished through strategy.

Moreover, strategies vis-à-vis internal tensions and lateral and state regimes have taken on distinctive features in the Sufi regimes. To argue this point it is necessary to make another conceptual distinction. TOUWEN-BOUWSMA (1992: 126) criticised the definition of religious regimes for its formality bias. She described a regime that was weakly institutionalised and made up of informal relations. A second, underdeveloped variable for Sufi regimes is proximity. To account for strategies in mystic regimes is to conceive of Sufi performance, ideal-typically and with these variations in mind, as a differentiation of acting into levels of formality and proximity. These variables distribute internal-formal, internal-informal, external-formal, and external-informal elements (cf. GILSENAN, 1973).

Sufi orders are voluntary associations into which one is not born or integrated from an early age. Internally, therefore, and informally (i.e. not on temporally marked occasions or in specific ritual expressions) masters have had to rely heavily on qualitative guidance to keep their 'clients' faithful. Their positions are at stake with performance, and they often strive to minimize the orientation alternatives to zero (cf. BAX 1988: 20). It is simultaneously because of their dependence on public recognition, however, that one could hardly conceive of the dependencies between religious specialists and 'laymen' as patron and client relations, whereby specialists *monopolise* an immaterial scarce good (as BAX, 1988: 10, summarises their interaction).

The particularity of the internal/informal realm comes to the fore most strongly in its special relation to the esoteric (and Qurʾānic) core (concept) of 'friendship with God' (*valāyat*) - also connoting 'guidance'. Stigmatic proofs of friendship with God/guidance are not carried outside the lodge for public display. Having "been conveyed from heart to heart [while it] has not been written in books and its principles cannot be expressed in words" (*Pand-e Ṣāleḥ*, 1372/1993: 35), *valāyat* belongs to the innermost, divine realm of experience that ultimately breaches any form(ality).

Formally, spiritual authority bears a relation to the quality of mental counselling, financial charity towards the flock and Sufi meditation (*ẕekr*). When performed impeccably, meditations have integrated affiliates, reproduced hierarchy and respectability, and contained dissent. When these performances fail in containing dissent, compet-

ing claims for spiritual authority are always incongruous - given the sacred nature of Sufi leadership - and exclusive. Internal authority challenges have often been settled through either the challenger's formal separation or his formal expulsion.

Differentiation between formal and informal, internal realms enables Sufi institutions such as initiation, presupposing grades of knowledge and their shielding. Where external constraints are heavy, the inner life becomes more important (religiously).

Only in extreme circumstances would the mystic regimes' external relations be void of strategies, and unilaterally dictated by domination. An inversely exceptional situation prevailed in the period 1836-1848, when one Neˁmatollāhī Sufi (Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī) wielded tremendous power in Iran through his influence on Moḥammad Shāh Qājār - participating himself in state domination. In all other cases, that this study is mainly concerned with, there have been rather more delicate and moderate balances of power and performance. Twentieth-century patterns in relations to state and societal competitor regimes have included strategies to accommodate to and integrate into the prevailing worldly regimes. These strategies were matched by policies of patronage, co-optation, rejection and (ideological) suppression, vis-à-vis Sufism.

Despite the fact that Sufis have generally defined their mystical Path on a par with the holy law - being a prerequisite for higher knowledge - external relations to Iranian jurist regimes have generally been tense. Besides doctrinal reasons, this tension resulted mainly from competition for spiritual authority. From the eighteenth century to the present, one can nevertheless discern a gradual lessening of Sufi hostility towards jurists, which coincided with the jurists' slow ascent to power. In the late Pahlavi period, most importantly, the Solṭānˁalīshāhī leaders strategically balanced jurist and royalist loyalties, which proved useful to them after the revolution.

As regards state relations, Sufi orders accommodated to and were to some extent co-opted by the nationalist, modernising state during the regime of Reza Shah (1921-1941). During the regime of Mohammed Reza Shah (1941-1979) the orders' integration into elite circles was aided by the state's ideological and material royal patronage. In the Islamic Republic state ties were largely cut, but Sufis nevertheless managed to attract important clerics with state ties to their sessions, and accommodate Sufi spirituality to regime religiosity. The

component of reproduction in mystic regimes which was external and informal (i.e. not circumscribed in Sufi rules) has consisted, therefore, of public or private relations to people in high places.

Formal and external strategy and 'authentic' religiosity in the Islamic Republic has involved charitable donations during the Iran-Iraq war, announcements of public gatherings, 'open houses' on Shiʿite occasions, and cheap medical services. The mystic regimes' persistent denial of any relevance in informal relations to people in high places has in turn credited the voluntary and disinterested nature of formal-external acts. In these strategies, Sufi performance managed to establish religious authenticity as much as the Ahl-e Ḥaqq did through conceptual segregation (MIR-HOSSEINI, 1994, (1): 281).

The most important conceptual segregation, and its practical implementation, has concerned the internal and external Sufi realms. It has particularly been on the 'outside' that conformity was required in Sufi relations towards the orders that be, while the 'inside' was reserved for Sufi spirituality (see chapter seven). In different political regimes and across the orders, there has been patterned variation in these 'authentic strategies', vis-à-vis internal tensions, and external relations to lateral and state regimes. In other words, these historical patterns were given shape to by the cultural performances that have distinguished one mystic regime from the other.

Religion and mysticism

Only separate elements in GEERTZ's universalist definition of religion (1973 [1966]) have retained their descriptive value since the original publication. Paraphrasing, these elements include 1) a system of symbols [which establish] 2) long-lasting moods and motivations [by formulating] 3) conceptions of a general order of existence [and clothing these] 4) conceptions with [such] an aura of factuality [that] 5) moods and motivations [result] which seem uniquely realistic.

Ignoring the text between brackets, it can be easily demonstrated that in a superficial sense these elements are descriptive of Shiʿism in Iran: 1) the colour black, the sword, the rosary and saintly shrines are among many symbols that refer to central themes and conceptions in Shiʿism; 2) collective emotion involved in mourning ceremonies testifies to long-lasting moods - the 'memory' of Karbala - and motivations - a sense of injustice and militancy; 3) the Imamate -

Shiꜥism's theological core - is a cosmology; 4) During ꜥĀshūrā, Imam Ḥoseyn's transhistorical battle between good/ truth and evil/falsehood is narrated and depicted in a manner as concrete and historically detailed as possible, and 5) the smooth effectiveness with which the above cosmological event was transferred to contemporary circumstances in the Islamic revolution illustrates the uniquely realistic semblance of these moods and motivations.

However, ASAD (1993) convincingly contested the central tenet of the universalist definition that connects these elements in Geertz's theory - that "religious symbols are sui generis, marking out an independent religious domain" (*op. cit*., p. 52, cf. BAX, 1987). ASAD's critiques centre around the argument that (religious) symbols do not by themselves produce and define moods, motivations or cosmology, but only through the power of the institutions, disciplines, discourses and practices with which they are intrinsically connected (cf. *op. cit*., pp. 33, 35, 37). Moreover, the power and the authority of particular symbols, and that which makes these symbols possible in the first place and simultaneously rules out others, are definitely "to be explained as products of *historically distinctive* [...] forces" (*op. cit*., p. 54, my emphasis).

Religious symbols, then, are not central to this study, while the Sufi *orders* that produce these, in historically distinctive relations to other regimes, are. The cognitive centrality of 'belief' in Geertz's definition - a distinctly modern and Christian one (ASAD, 1993: 47) - is a similar point of divergence. Sufi orders embody a heterogeneity of beliefs, but some are more powerful than others. Spiritual progress has been dependent upon guidance, and it is the authority structures that define assemblies of Sufis as *orders*, which provide powerful symbols, beliefs with a heavy fundament.

As concerns the study of Islam, TAPPER usefully proposed its anthropology to chart "how Muslims (individuals, groups [...]) present/construct themselves [and others] as Muslims [and non-Muslims]" [my insertions] (1995: 192). However, to avoid this nominalism from turning into an Empty Vessel Theory of Islam that ignores persistent social and ideational patterns, the anthropology of Islam ought to chart, in addition, how presentations and constructions are shaped by and result in figurations: structured and changing patterns of interdependent people (ELIAS, 1970). In other words: one would study regimes by relating constructions and dependencies in a

way similar to ASAD's usage of 'social disciplines' (1993: 53).
Secondly, "Among the conclusions [of] the anthropological study of
religion [is] that certain religious ideas are universal and seem as old
as human society" (STEVENS, 1996: 1088). Mysticism has been one
persistent social and ideational pattern that defies a plain nominalism.

Mysticism in monotheistic religions has often been in juxtaposi-
tion to orthodoxy - now as a complement, then as a hostile adversary
(cf. ARMSTRONG's comparisons, 1993), or to intellectualist varieties
of religious experience (AUDEN, 1965). Mystic and orthodox regimes
not only constitute different ways of life, however, but also compet-
ing parties for scarce spiritual authority. WEBER's sociology of relig-
ion (1977 [1922]) offers surprisingly little on these this-worldly con-
flicts beyond psychological, Jamesian (1963) 'varieties of religious
experience'. In Christianity, contestations of the nature of resurrec-
tion and monotheism have from an early day defined spiritual author-
ity - dyadic in hierarchy, church-like, or dual, master-disciple like -
among communities of believers. Religious debate bore social and
political implications from the outset: "When gnostic and orthodox
Christians were debating the nature of God, they were at the same
time debating [...] spiritual authority" (PAGELS, 1985: 59).

The challenge to spiritual authority was never far off in mystic
imagery. Despite the fact that early Jewish mystics "were anxious not
to antagonise" the rabbis, their 'throne mysticism' "imagined God as
a mighty king who could only be approached in a perilous journey
through the seven heavens" (ARMSTRONG, 1993: 245). The thirteenth-
century Persian, Islamic equivalent is ʿAṭṭar's 'Discourse of the Birds'
(*Manṭeq oṭ-ṭeyr*), in which thirty birds undertake a similarly perilous
journey, many dying along the way, to be (re)united with a mystical
king who turns out to be 'thirty birds' (*Sīmorgh*). Such images of
power might be symbolical, of inner states, but could also have their
bearing on outer states, and embody claims to worldly power.

Of Islamic spiritual authority it was observed that "Muslims high-
light continuous genealogies as guarantors of authority [in, for in-
stance,] chains of Sufi teaching [...] that link practitioners to the
founder of a Sufi order" (BOWEN, 1993: 186). The living Sufi centre
of authority is the sheikh, *pīr* or *qoṭb*. As disciples invest spiritual
authority in his person to the extent that cosmic balances are thought
dependent upon his being, "l'histoire des saints n'est que l'histoire de
leur autorité" (KERROU, 1998: 32).

Here mystic regimes stand out as particular religious regimes. Charismatic leadership is characteristic of all religious organisation, which often establishes spiritual authority as a mediation of sacred texts and personalities. Mystic regimes, however, more strikingly so than religious regimes in general, are characterised by personalised charismatic leadership, in the sense that Sufi masters *embody* authority. Sufi authority has thus resembled royal authority - kingship's 'divine splendour' in Iran, more than God-ordained, mainly derived from this-worldly values of force and might. Jurist authority, to the contrary, built largely on ethical or spiritual brokerage - representation - of the Prophetic and Imamic messages (see chapter seven). Although few Sufis would publicly juxtapose themselves to jurists, there are three potential challenges in mysticism to orthodoxy: competing mystic readings of scripture and holy men (Prophet and Imams), particular competence claims for such readings, and the autonomous source of spiritual authority in the figure of the sheikh. It is when these challenges materialise in conflict, that continuous genealogies are often contested.

In both Neˁmatollāhī regimes, stories abound of affluent leaders in other orders, and wealth was in some cases visible in the orders' real estate property. Despite this, my fieldwork has not produced incontestable facts concerning property relations, financial administration, stipends, etc. An important reason is that Sufi spiritual authority has often depended upon a master's ability to dissociate himself from concerns with worldly gain. Thus, the economic conditions which enable Sufi organisation belong to the realm of secret knowledge as much as spiritual instruction during initiation. In competition for spiritual authority, however, financial morality enters the equation. "To accept money is to destroy the morality of the act," a Sufi related of the behaviour of a competitor, who in his turn had accused the former of embezzlements. Economic resources thus figure in my research not primarily as economic infrastructure, but as narrative devices in competitions for spiritual authority.

Military power has been ruled out for Sufis since the Iranian state monopolised the legitimate use of force - which fits an evolutionary pattern in the relations between states and religious regimes (cf. BAX, 1987: 3). Beyond military and economic concerns, however, spiritual authority is a scarce good and an end in itself. Whether or not spoils are its produce, spiritual authority has remained a desirable asset

because of its intrinsic religious value.

Although Sufi spiritual authority has seen attempts at monopolisation of the means of orientation in internal and external strife, this has not effectively outdone alternatives. The orders have had no means at their disposal - this reflects Shiʿite organisation in general - to prevent affiliates from changing spiritual masters. In this respect, EICKELMAN's observation that "there is an 'essential looseness' [...] about Islamic religious organisation" (1981: 293) is particularly to the point for modern Iranian Sufism. But most important as an impediment to violent conflict, few Sufis have ever presented the Sufi Path (*ṭarīqat*) as an alternative to the holy Islamic Law (*sharīʿat*). This study thus discusses indigenously Islamic, mystic regimes.

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Part One addresses academic regimes - research paradigms - in the study of Sufism, and it explores the long-term developmental history of the Neʿmatollāhī Sufi order.

Chapter one depicts a wondrous episode in which a range of transnational interests colluded in transhistorical and mystical explorations of Iranian Shiʿism. After 1945, Henry Corbin and several Iranian colleagues set out to reconstruct Shiʿism, to arrive at 'the origin of any perspective'. They reached their destination through a quietist definition of Shiʿism in the midst of political turmoil, and by then paradoxically becoming, after Corbin's death and after the Islamic revolution, a token of respectability for political Islam. This episode is illustrative of a crucial mechanism in mystic regimes: non-political and transhistorical definitions of religiosity serve exterior and temporal political purposes. But it also bears testimony of excessive idealism in Corbin's 'hermeneutical phenomenology' of Shiʿism, which was epistemologically bound to miss the real social dynamics. Corbin was himself part of this dynamics, which resulted in the esoterically inconceivable Islamic revolution.

Chapter two seeks to ground the exploration of Neʿmatollāhī history in a different analysis. It begins by addressing Corbin's unitary conceptualisation of Shiʿism, underlying which were neglected histories of conflict about spiritual authority that have been constitutive of Sufism. In Weberian ideal-types, these conflicts were conceptualised in a dichotomy of law and 'experience' in Islam. The dichotomy's use

as a tool of analysis is limited, however, because of a pattern of over-lap between Sufis and jurists, antinomian traditions that dissolve Sufism as a unitary object, and the centrality of the state in shaping Sufi-jurist relations. The centrality of the state remains similarly unaccounted for in several exemplary studies in the historical anthropology of Islam, which complemented the law-and-experience dichotomy with an equally Weberian duality of modernity and tradition. Beyond the grid of these too rigid notions, it is argued, the social development of Shiʿite Sufism in Iran has taken shape through contingent factors such as state centralisation and royal patronage.

The eighteenth-century reestablishment of the Neʿmatollāhī regime in Iran developed through two figurations. Initially, the relations of Sufis derived mainly from local rulers' competition for power in the absence of a central state. The internal dynamics which enhanced Sufi power, consisted of a massive growth in the number of converts, which could not be checked by either rulers or jurists. Rulers often feared jurists in the second figuration, which had the reunified state at its centre. Rulers' Sufi patronage strengthened Sufi challenges of jurist authority. Nineteenth-century Iran did not witness the disappearance of 'traditional' Sufis through the ascent of jurist-led, 'modern' religiosity, but, instead, Sufism's socio-political renaissance.

Part Two deals with the Neʿmatollāhī regimes in the Pahlavi Dynasty (1921-1979). In 1976, a French Ahl-e Ḥaqq convert observed that "le champ du soufisme iranien est encore à explorer" (DURING, 1976: 124). GRAMLICH'S studies of Iranian Shiʿite Sufi orders (1965, 1976, 1981) provided unique material and hitherto unparalleled analyses of Sufi religiosity and ritual life in the Pahlavi period. However, these detailed analyses lacked a generalising treatment of Sufism's socio-political development, while it may be generalised for oriental studies that "academic treatments of Sufism [...] rarely enter the modern period" (MCGREGOR, 1997: 255).

Chapter three describes Sufism's transformation in the context of the nation-state. The Neʿmatollāhī orders lost much of their exterior power through the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911) and in the period 1921-1941, under Reza Khan/Reza Shah, because their intimate state ties were cut. Sufism transformed with the new regimes, as the nation(-state) became a prime marker of legitimate identity. Internally, nationalistic modernisation and the dismantling of traditional power bases that occurred in their name, were paralleled by

Sufi struggles for spiritual authority. Master-disciple relations changed shape as Neʿmatollāhī Sufis took issue with self-explanatory rule, and implicitly asked for relevance to the nation-state in Sufi spiritual authority. Nationalistic modernisation similarly provided external contexts for lateral and state relations. In their external representations, too, the Neʿmatollāhī Sufi regimes redirected their focus to the particular audience of the Iranian nation.

Chapter four examines contrary Sufi regimes in the face of political polarisation. The nation-state remained an important frame of reference for the late twentieth-century Neʿmatollāhī orders. Its representation by the late Pahlavi regime, however, became a ground for political contestation. Iranian Sufism in the period 1941-1979 had royal patronage as an important context, in the face of growing opposition. Different degrees of royal patronage - from personal sponsoring to ideological incorporation - relate to both the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order's social prominence and to the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order's sudden religious opposition. Internally, the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order remained a theatre of conflict, which now involved religious and political contestation of the aristocratic Freemasonry leadership. The Solṭānʿalīshāhīs, in contrast, established conspicuous unitary order. Externally, the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī elite integrated deeply into the stately regime, while the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs developed relations to the clerical regime that came to represent the Iranian nation more successfully. Their relative independence provided crucial room for manoeuvre when the balance of religious power shifted and the political tide swept away the Shah's regime.

Part Three explores the Neʿmatollāhī regimes' comparative social development and cultural performance in the Islamic Republic. Until 1996, the history of the Republic divided into three periods, in which the state ideology successively emphasised the supremacy of Islam alone ('Islam-Islam'), then blended it with patriotism ('Islam-Iran'), and finally, from 1989, with full blown nationalism ('Iran-Iran').

Chapter five treats the Sufi regimes in the 'decade of war and revolution' (MENASHRI, 1990). Initially, the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs were confronted with oppression, but switching sides before the revolution paid off for them. They sought legitimacy in mourning sessions for deceased notables and acted as a national patron of caritas. The Ṣafīʿalīshāhīs, to the contrary, were haunted by their Freemasonry reputation. Their lodge was occupied, and once it was recovered, they in-

volved themselves in slander concerning financial morality. While the Solṭānᶜalīshāhīs enhanced their reputation through religious nationalism (externally), the Ṣafīᶜalīshāhīs' public, Shiᶜite mourning ceremonies were deliberately kept apart from the lodge's Sufi activities. They did not, therefore, improve on Ṣafīᶜalīshāhī legitimacy. While the Solṭānᶜalīshāhīs retained unquestioned and hereditary leadership (internally), the Ṣafīᶜalīshāhīs dissolved into small rival groups, over which the central leadership retained only marginal leverage. In spite of multi-faceted adversity, however, Ṣafīᶜalīshāhī (hi)stories tell one not of jurist-led state persecution, but of accommodation.

Chapter six probes an ideological rapprochement between Sufism and the state from 1989, through Sufism's continuous ethical *réveil* and the emergence of 'state mysticism'. To some extent the state itself engaged in a revolutionary variety of mysticism, and it was observed that many lodges embarked on a 'second life' (ḤAṢŪRĪ, 1375/1997: 8). The Ṣafīᶜalīshāhī leadership saw itself devoid of spiritual authority and focused, neutrally, on the image of Ṣafīᶜalīshāh. External, public performances pointed to the politicised context of mystical martyrdom, under the surface of traditional Sufi/Shiᶜite laments. Among the Solṭānᶜalīshāhīs, internal order remained uncontested. The leadership of Maḥbūbᶜalīshāh had been authorised by divine sanction and by his father's meticulous preparation for it. His death presented itself in an historical continuity of saintly Islamic martyrdom, which in turn credited Maḥbūbᶜalīshāh's visionary letters of appointment (and *vice versa*). Majẕūbᶜalīshāh's subsequent new proclamation of allegedly old rules - for external as much as internal consumption - outlined a meticulously detailed socio-political modesty, but - as if in exchange for it - it also circumscribed an exclusive realm of Sufi spiritual authority. The formality of these assertive Solṭānᶜalīshāhī rules revealed strength and confidence. The order argued the legitimacy of its spiritual realm by referring to relations with Khomeyni. Its success, and the effects of state mysticism, became apparent in 1997 when several mollahs and prominent clerics paid their respect.

Part Four and chapter seven bring the explorations of comparative social development and cultural performance on a broader theoretical plane, by confronting them with discussions concerning civil society. Observers spotted an emergent civil society in Iran after Khomeyni's demise, in a revival of associational life and civil thought. However,

civil thought has remained confined, while many associations are to be conceived of as ideological state institutions at best. Regarding the classical definition of civil society - civility and associational life beyond primordial attachments, significantly independent from the state - the Sufi regimes have not been a clear referent either.

Modern Iranian Sufism as represented by the Neᶜmatollāhī orders has been characterised by internal and external relations that constitute a mirror image of the classical civil society. Internally, relations have been primordial - in the sense of exclusive and hidden face-to-face interaction, not meaningfully extending beyond the proximity of direct communication. Externally, relations have been characterised by either ideological or material state affiliations. Two arguments which apply in particular to the Islamic Republic, add to the qualification. Sufism's relations to socio-political aims have now been largely severed, while the orders' and the state's authority structures, both of which stress exclusive spiritual authority, are analogous.

Once one takes the historical emergence of Western civil societies as a comparison, however, various parallels become evident. There are two instances in which Sufism meaningfully relates to the civil society - though in paradoxical ways. Western civil societies originated from literary and artistic circles and debating clubs, not from politically assertive mutual interest groups (HABERMAS, 1990). An important new strain in Iranian intellectual discourse in which Sufism figures passively as a recurrent reference, provides a parallel. Secondly, Western public space, in advance of any full-fledged civil public sphere, was first established within societies which were not only mute and inward looking, but also closed and secretive, confined to selective memberships. The Neᶜmatollāhī regimes have been the bearers of a shielded religiosity of their own - which by implication means non-state religiosity, no matter to what extent they accommodated to the public transcript. Thus they confronted, if largely willy-nilly, the state's 'colonisation of the lifeworld'.

* * *

My fieldwork in Iran in 1996, 1997 and 1998 has nearly covered one year. It has been the sort of cursory project - no initiation - that Sufis would certainly consider a worldly vanity and dangerous enterprise. After all, "one ought not to jump into the ocean when one cannot

swim" (that is, without the guidance of a spiritual master). One Sufi, filled with laughter, mentioned 'one university professor' who was 'his own pupil' (*ye ostād-e dāneshgāhī morīd-e khvod būd*), while others added that if I wanted to learn anything, I had no choice but to 'go (all) the way' (*bāyad rāh raft*). There are no claims in this study of knowledge 'from the inside' in the Sufi sense of the term, but the esteemed company of the Sufis (and the literature I collected during my stay) nevertheless produced some essential ingredients for a broad outline of historical development. These ingredients included glimpses of an emerging pattern.

During my last visit in September 1998, I was led into an informal gathering by Sufis whom I had previously known, which - to my great surprise - turned out to be a 'class of mysticism' (*kelās-e ʿer-fān*). In the gatherings I had previously visited, which were ranging from very formal, lodge-based congregations to almost spontaneous meetings, hierarchical master-disciple relations had always been among the defining features. Here, the relations of master and disci-ples had been transformed into teacher (*ostād*) - pupil (*shāgerd*) rela-tions. While average Sufi gatherings had been decisively monologi-cal, the class of mysticism featured dialogue, which began by the teacher asking what passages in Rumi's *Maṣnavī* his audience would like to read. It ended with him - as far as I could judge, sincerely - inquiring whether or not his evocations and explanations of mystic matters had been to the satisfaction of his audience.

The authoritative words spoken in average Sufi gatherings were not usually subject to verbal exchanges, but here, the pupils subjected their teacher's discourse to questions, and, where his answers were not deemed sufficient, friendly but deliberate discussion. The new class of mysticism included a widely varied audience, which simi-larly contrasted with Sufi gatherings I had previously witnessed. There were some fifteen people, young children among them, women with and without the *ḥejāb*, a teacher of yoga who held a low opinion of Islam, and Sufis dedicated to traditional Islamic exegesis. In re-sponse to one particular 'pointe' (*nokte*) in the teacher's *Maṣnavī*-exegesis, and as if generally reflecting the structure of the gathering, one pupil raised an issue which reminded of the fundamental debates that currently rage within the world of Iranian Shiʿism:

> Religion is similar to taste. One experiences it not with the head but with the soul (*jān*). If one tries only to 'understand' religion, it be-

comes cliché. One must enjoy it! Once, I even heard someone say:
'Thank God that this prayer is over (*khodā-ye shokr īn namāz tamām
shod*)'. Such a person does not enjoy religion!

The implicit reference was to the Islamists who are held to be 'dry by
religion' (*khoshk-e maẕhab*). The teacher of the flock, finally, was
brought at one point to the statement that "Anyone who grows takes
his environment into consideration; only people with a closed mind
want to dominate anything and everything. If one takes everything,
one engages in the relations of hell. One must welcome life."

The mystic regimes of the past - my exposé ends with the presi-
dency of Mohammad Khatami - will now, with the current changes
in Iran, possibly give way to an emerging civil society. The new po-
litical regime may lead Iranian Sufis to celebrate again "Celui qui
manifesta son *humanité*, Comme mystère de gloire de sa *divinité*
radieuse, et qui ensuite se montre à découvert dans sa créature, Sous
la forme de quelqu'un qui mange et qui boit" (CORBIN, 1972 (1): 146,
referring to MASSIGNON, 1955: 39-40, who in his turn cited al-Ḥallāj).

PART ONE

Mystic Regimes

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CHAPTER ONE

FULL CIRCLE
ON THE INTERPRETATION OF IRANIAN SUFISM

A pervasive tradition attributes the origins of Iranian Sufism to national resistance. Driving back home after a Sufi congregation, Moḥammad spoke in a secretive voice: "Now I will tell you something. Pay attention." He sadly proclaimed: "The Arabs came by the sword, subjecting neighbouring peoples and violating their ways of life." Only the Iranians (it is often heard) had retained their language and culture. "But we saw the virtue of the Message, and saved it from them." An inverse account has Sufism as a stronghold of alien or repressive power in Iran, from the outset. Enemies associate Sufism with Zoroastrian despotism, Greek philosophical pollution of Islamic theology, or illegitimate Christian monasticism.

For many who are involved in either its propagation or denunciation, Sufism equals its origins. These origins may be alluded to in historical contexts such as the Arab invasion, but they are not often thought to occupy an historical locus, i.e. one restricted by temporal and spatial dimensions. They are rather seen as the manifestation of an essence. 'Iran', 'Shiᶜism' and 'Sufism' are conceived as preordained qualities rather than decipherable units in this perspective, manifest to the surface of their appearance. Explaining history, a Neᶜmatollāhī Sufi told me that his order had 'always just been there'.

Sufis resist historical objectivation more sharply when it comes to what Sufism actually does. They either describe spiritual experience as a transcendence of time, as reaching the place where time is no longer, or as the point in consciousness where one drowns in the state of the 'now' that shatters past and future by absorbing all. A quest for the referent in time (x) of a particular event (y) remains pointlessly grounded where a sheikh is honoured for his spiritual ascent or simultaneous presence in different places. Objective geography meets the denial of the Sufis who head for 'nowhere place' (*nā-kojā-ābād*).

As much as Iranian Sufis resist secular, historical chronologies,

they often abhor sociological categories.[1] Although consciousness of
violent persecution pervades their reflections on self, this awareness
does not often lead to objectivations that might structurally juxtapose
them to rulers or jurists. Sufism's enemies are rather understood as a
geographically and historically indistinct, universal type of 'spiritu-
ally lesser endowed creatures'. Transhistorical essentialism, then,
which enemies and participants alike employ in Sufism's discussion,
is a defining feature of the discursive universe of Iranian Sufism.

   If not abhorred, 'the social' is often deemed irrelevant: there was
no response from the Solṭānᶜalīshāhī order when the nationalist histo-
rian Ahmad Kasravi publicly castigated Sufism as a whole for all of
Iran's social ills in the 1940s. But its relevance shows in the wars of
words that have been waged between Neᶜmatollāhī Sufis and orders
with competitive, mutually exclusive claims for spiritual leadership.

   Since 1945, an authoritative account of Iranian, Shiᶜite spirituality
by Henry Corbin mirrored the essentialist Sufi vision of the self[2] and
its negation of social historicity. Corbin and a group of Iranian
friends and colleagues defined Shiᶜism as an essentially 'immanent'
and transhistorical esoteric tradition, far removed from any worldly,
material and political concerns. A major context for this late twen-
tieth century configuration was a state interest in Sufism, which was
in some ways beneficial to the definition of a national identity and as
a counterweight to political Islam. The Shah and the Empress Farah
had Sufis in their entourage, as religious teachers and advisors. 'Cor-
binism' also marked an esoterical shift in the definition of Sufism,[3]
which had previously become worldlier in the context of the nation-
state. Corbin's views were in turn overrun by the Iranian revolution,
an 'exterior' and historical sociological event that bore witness to a
different Islamism. His esoterism and the construction of a quietist
Shiᶜism thus came full circle with his death in 1978. The point of its

   [1] "La mission des ʾorafâ [mystics] [....] opère une désocialisation" (CORBIN,
1971, (1): 185).
   [2] The Sufi image of has been influenced by Neo-Platonism (as was Corbin)
(TRIMINGHAM, 1971: 134; AHMADI and AHMADI, 1998) Plotinus' Emanation
doctrine involves 'descent' and 'procession', analogous to Shiᶜite Sufi *nozūl* and
soᶜūd. Like Iranian Sufis, Plotinus 'located' Emanation outside time and space in a
mystical 'nowhere' (DE GANDILLAC, 1952: 19). In 1941/2 a Solṭānᶜalīshāhī leader
wrote a laudation on Plotinus (*Falsafa-ye Falūṭīn: Raʾīs-e aflāṭūniyān-e akhīr*).
   [3] "Il fut [...] à l'origine d'un mouvement spirituel qui aspirait à établir un pont en-
tre l'Iran traditionnel et la modernité" (SHAYEGAN, 1990: 25).

description here is to take issue with an excessively idealistic herme-
neutics in the interpretation of Shiᶜite religiosity.

<div align="center">'UN UNIVERS SPIRITUEL À COMPRENDRE'</div>

> Corbin, while demonstrating the originality of the intuitive method,
> says: "Western anthropology, sidetracked by the fables of the positiv-
> ist ideology of objectivity, has quite recently discovered the notion of
> understanding (Verstehen) whereas the Muslim gnostic from the very
> beginning, and especially since the XVIIth century with Molla Sadra,
> has placed this existential internalization in the forefront of the socio-
> logical or historical event."[4]

Henry Corbin was a French philosopher, orientalist and an ecumeni-
cal Protestant theologian who was to become 'the foremost Western
student of Shiᶜism'.[5] He went on a French state mission to Turkey in
1939, on behalf of the Bibliothèque Nationale, to search for manu-
scripts of the mystic Sohrawardī in the libraries of Istanbul. His
teacher Louis Massignon had presented Corbin with one of Sohra-
wardī's texts in 1928, which had marked the beginning of his interest
in Islamic mystisicm.[6] The plan was for Corbin to stay three months,
but his stay lasted until 1945 because of the war. In August 1944, the
Bibliothèque Nationale issued another 'ordre de mission', for Persia
this time, and on 14 September 1945, Corbin arrived in Tehran.[7]

   In Tehran, Corbin set out to study Iranian Shiᶜism, which he felt

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[4] NARAGHI, 1976: 96. Of Corbin's colleague Seyyed Hossein Nasr it has been
remarked that he, after an 'occidental exile' and upon reappropriating the Iranian
Islamic tradition, could now "relate to Molla Sadra's metaphysical *verstehen*" after
which he "came to view mysticism as the main axis of his thinking and worldview"
(BOROUJERDI, 1996: 122-3).

[5] Seyyed Hossein NASR, *in* ṬABĀṬABĀᵓĪ, 1982: 9. "Writers on Sufism have
fought shy of dealing with the question of the relationship of Sufism and Shīᶜism. L.
Massignon was concerned with the relations of Shīᶜīs with al-Ḥallāj; but otherwise
the only scholars who have attempted to deal with it have approached it from the
Shīᶜī viewpoint - we may mention Henri Corbin, W. Ivanow, and Sayyid Husain
Nasr" (TRIMINGHAM, 1971: 135).

[6] In 1954, Corbin would succeed Massignon at the religious sciences section of
the École Pratique des Hautes Études (SHAYEGAN, 1990: 14-22). Corbin acquired
his text editing skills in Istanbul through Helmut Ritter (*verbatim* Bernd Radtke).

[7] Cf. SHAYEGAN, 1990: 23; CORBIN, (*En Islam iranien*, 1971, (1): 128. "Ce qui
était le but de ma mission, comment je m'appliquai à mettre en oeuvre ‹les longs
projets et les vastes penseurs› [....] La tâche immédiate: recueillir le matériel, créer
un cabinet de travail, commencer à publier [....] Je commençai la publication de la
Bibliothèque Iranienne" (1981: 47).

was Islam's strongest living, esoterical tradition.[8] One result of his studies has been the monumental, four-volume *En Islam iranien* (1971/2), which had as its mission to document Shiᶜite spirituality from its literary canon. From the 1960s, a circle of Shiᶜite scholars and friends assembled around Corbin in Tehran, among whom were professor of Islam and court-intimate Seyyed Hossein Nasr, diplomat Hūshang Beshārat, and philosopher-theologian ᶜAllāme Ṭabāṭabāʾī.[9]

Many literate Sufis in Tehran are familiar with Corbin, whose work had significantly helped define their spirituality. In so far as a Sufi sentiment against historical sociology (or more specifically historicism and historical materialism) is formulated in an explicit theory of transcendental history, it often directly derives from him. One Tehrani sheikh I spoke with even referred to '*la gnose*' rather than to ᶜ*erfān* or *taṣavvof* in an explanation of Sufi mysticism. More than Michel Foucault's short excursion into Iranian spirituality in 1978, which remained firmly rooted in French post-structuralist concerns (and ended in a public apology),[10] Corbin's exploration of Shiᶜism became a laudatory definition of it, blurring boundaries between sympathetic scholarship and exegetic participation.

Corbin's exegetic participation involved hermeneutical phenomenology. Hermeneutics meant '*reconduire une chose à sa source*', where 'source' has the meaning of an essence, of 'the origin of any perspective'. To establish that which must be relocated required phenomenology, which meant '*sauver les phénomènes*', or reconstructing phenomena as they are conceived by the subject.[11] To write history

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[8] CORBIN repeatedly referred to Shiᶜism as "la tradition ininterrompue de la gnose (silsilat al-ʾirfân)" (*En Islam iranien*, 1971, (1): 110).

[9] SHAYEGAN, 1990: 25, 27; CORBIN, 1971, (1): 6; 1972, (1): 220-1, 3. NASR estimated the influence of Corbin in Iran to have been quite large (1977: 25).

[10] The relations between Corbin and Foucault, intellectual and other, have remained largely unexplored. It seems obvious though, inferring from the similarity of their theme (Iranian spirituality) and from Corbin's fame in France at the time, that Foucault was partly inspired by the former. Perhaps the fact that FOUCAULT had already spoken out strongly against transcendental history (1972) and afterwards never gave up this position, is the reason for his exploration not to have developed into the kind of willed blending of 'Western' and 'Eastern' perspectives that is so striking in Corbin's project (cf. STAUTH, 1991). Corbin's pupil Daryush Shayegan, "who like [...] Foucault, had come to express his admiration for the spiritual dimension of the Iranian revolution," again like Foucault engaged "in a theoretical autocritique" after the Islamic revolution (in 1982) (BOROUJERDI, 1996: 153-4).

[11] CORBIN, 1971, (1): XIX, XX; 143; xix. He defined hermeneutical phenomenology in accordance with *tāʾvīl*, meaning esoteric or allegorical, Qurʾānic exegesis.

from such concerns is to blend with one's subject, and Corbin (mentioning seventeenth century Persian Neo-Platonists who did not distinguish between knowledge and revelation) conceived of the project as an initiation.[12] His search for '*le fait religieux*' ignored discontinuous political incursions, which were lacking in eternal essence - one would search in vain for public statements by Corbin on the *coup d'état* in Iran in 1953 or the student revolt in Paris in 1969, both of which influenced Iranian Shiʿism. But *En Islam iranien*, intended to be a timeless understanding of Iranian Shiʿism, would develop a life of its own, and attain temporally distinct political meanings that were exterior to the intentions of its author.

Exteriority

'Exteriority' is a term coined by Michel Foucault, which marked a position contrary to hermeneutics and phenomenology.[13] It refers to the quality of autonomy in historical phenomena - beyond the scope of an actor's intentionality or subjectivity - and thus it stands opposed to Corbin's initiatory comprehension. The most effective way to argue the relevance of exteriority for Sufism's interpretation, is to explore the space from which Corbin's project of initiation was itself exterior to the Shiʿite 'spiritual universe' it sought to comprehend.

In 'Nietzsche, history, genealogy' Foucault explained the ironical meaning of *Ursprung* for Nietzsche.[14] It is the myth of those who cannot reconcile themselves with their historicity, or discontinuous presence (which cannot be subsumed in an all-embracing 'origin'). In his treatment of this vision's implications, Foucault again followed Nietzsche in his definition of alternative historiography. One of its concepts is 'emergence' (*Entstehung*), which connotes synchronous power relations that influence an historical manifestation. To expli-

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[12] CORBIN, 1971, (1): XIII, 7. SHAYEGAN (1990: 286) cited Ricoeur's distinction between 'herméneutique amplifiante' (the Corbinian mode) and 'réductrice' in this respect.

[13] With 'exteriority' came a collection of other de-subjectivised concepts such as 'archaeology', 'archive', 'range', and 'grid'. Cf. CORBIN (1971, (1): IX-XXIII), for explicit statements of hermeneutical phenomenology in contradistinction to positions of exteriority.

[14] *In* RABINOW, 1991: 80. Foucault levelled severe criticism on the Idealism of conventional historiography in many of his works. Cf. *The Order of Things* (1994, *Preface*) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972, part four, chapter one: *Archaeology and the History of Ideas*).

cate exteriority in Corbin's project is, first, to describe the emergence of *En Islam iranien* in France and Iran after the second world war. Secondly, I explore exteriority in the forward direction through the notion of its 'unintended consequences': after Corbin's demise, *En Islam iranien* was used for contemporary political purposes.

<p style="text-align:center">1.</p>

There was an historical dissatisfaction with the Western here and now in Corbin's work. Western universities and Western society, he felt, and wrote, were conquered by positivism and Marxism. Corbin conceived of transhistorical spirituality as universal religiosity, but the predominance in Western academia and society of historicism[15] had eroded the possibility of relating meaningfully to it. *En Islam iranien* was an attempt to restore lost spirituality, and explicitly a critique of modernity[16] that in some ways resembled the views and writings of his friend and source of inspiration Martin Heidegger.

  Corbin's contact with Heidegger dated back to 1931, when the two met in Freiburg. The context for the encounter was a series of German travels (1930-1936), in which Corbin discovered various Christian thinkers and mystics (such as Karl Barth). Heidegger entrusted the French translation of *Was ist Metaphysik?* (1929) to Corbin, which was published - with fragments of *Sein und Zeit* (1927) - in 1938.[17] One observes Heidegger's intellectual influence on Corbin in three interrelated themes: the fate of the West (that nowadays also mutilated the East), in the face of the alienating hegemony of a technological mode of life, which destroyed the authentic life. After the war, Corbin brought Heidegger's hermeneutics to Iran with him, and the Western criticism of self in turn made a lasting impact on Iranian Shiʿites. More directly, Corbin's and Heidegger's Western views affected spiritual perspectives in Corbin's Iranian circle.

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[15] Historicism for Corbin did not connote Popper's critique of History as Prediction, but referred to the explication of mental phenomena in terms of their temporal and social contexts. Cf. 1971, (1): 22-38, for Corbin's critique of Marxism and of positivism.

[16] "Corbin pose des questions sous lesquelles on sent percer une certaine inquiétude. L'Orient risque de perdre son âme par suite d'une technologie envahissante et d'une occidentalisation [....] Cependant [...] fleurissent en Occident de pseudo-ésotérismes [...] qui tournent le dos à la Tradition dont ils se croient les représentants" (BRUN, 1981: 77).

[17] JAMBET, 1981: 17 (*Les Cahiers de L'Herne*); SHAYEGAN, 1990: 21.

In the beginning of the 1960s, Corbin met with the Sanscritist Daryush Shayegan, whom he supervised for his dissertation on Hinduism and Sufism at the Sorbonne. From 1977, Shayegan led the Iranian Centre for the Study of Civilisations,[18] which was preoccupied with the identities of and relations between East and West, modernity and tradition.[19] But beyond the French and German intellectual influences, Shayegan's *Markaz-e Īrānī-ye Moṭāleᶜe-ye Farhang-hā* was materially enabled by and established under the Iranian supervision of the Farah Pahlavi Foundation. In 1974, "upon securing the Queen's patronage", Corbin's colleague Seyyed Hossein Nasr founded the Imperial Academy of Philosophy, which collaborated closely with Corbin's Institut Franco-Iranien.[20] Nasr defined as his aim to present "Shiᶜism to the Western world from the point of view of Shiᶜism itself."[21] Obviously with a similar Western audience in mind, ᶜAllāme Ṭabāṭabāʾī defined Shiᶜism as an 'Islamic science', and more specifically as a 'spiritual anthropology'.[22] Corbin's *En Islam iranien*, and both Nasr's and Ṭabāṭabāʾī's definitions of Shiᶜism, excluded any contemporary political definitions.

Following in the footsteps of Massignon, Corbin conceived of Shiᶜism as a '*christologie*', and it was perhaps due to this analogy that he ignored revolutionary potential in Shiᶜite concepts of martyrdom.[23] Instead Corbin, Nasr, Ṭabāṭabāʾī and their Tehran circle rewrote Shiᶜism into otherworldly gnosis, as is seen in an anecdote, reported by Nasr, of a conversation between Corbin and Ṭabāṭabāʾī :

> Corbin, who himself was as far removed from 'historicism' as possible, once said to ᶜAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī during the regular discussions they

[18] BOROUJERDI, 1996: 148.

[19] In the 1970s, Iranian sociologist and court-intimate Eḥsān Naraqī (who had 'matrilineal ties to the queen') brought 'Eastern and Western civilisation' into his analytical focus as well: "The 'reality' he spoke of was of Western science and technology, whereas the 'truth' alluded to oriental faith, mysticism, and esoteric philosophy" (BOROUJERDI, 1996: 136, 139).

[20] BOROUJERDI, 1996: 125.

[21] NASR, *in* ṬABĀṬABĀʾī, 1982: 10. CORBIN'S explicit statement reads: "L'enseignement des Imams [....] n'est jamais un ‹‹programme politique››" (1971, (1): 222). Corbin and Nasr further co-operated via the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy (headed by the latter).

[22] ṬABĀṬABĀʾī, 1982: 9. CORBIN in turn, bringing hermeneutics home to its religious origins, felt that "herméneutique et anthropologie mystique sont indissociables" (1972, (1): 312).

[23] CORBIN 1971, (2): 273-4, cf. HALM, 1994: 44-5.

had together in Tehran [...], "Western scholars claim that ʿAlī is not
the author of the *Nahj al-balāghah*. What is your view and whom do
you consider to be the author of this work?" ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī
raised his head and answered in his usual gentle and calm manner,
"For us whoever wrote the *Nahj al-balāghah is* ʿAlī, even if he lived
[only] a century ago" [insertion mine].[24]

The highest authority in Shiʿism (*marjaʿ-e taqlīd*), ayatollah
Borūjerdī, remained at a distance from Corbin's circle. There had
been a clash with Ṭabāṭabāʾī,[25] whom he felt was too philosophical
and distant from jurisprudence (*feqh*) to be respectable, and one
imagines that Corbin's ecumenicalism was, for Borūjerdī, another
universe altogether. But the gap between the jurists' exterior Shiʿism
and Corbinian esoterism would widen still further, as twenty years of
traditional quietism had come to an end too with Borūjerdī, in 1961.

Iranian Shiʿism rapidly politicised from the 1960s onwards, and in
the 1970s the religious world was flooded with Khomeyni's taped
comments on world political events. But more than these, ʿAlī
Sharīʿatī's 'Sociology of Islam' caught the national attention. Sharīʿatī
had studied in the Western here and now, in Paris, and had been
deeply moved by the personality of Louis Massignon, both as an
orientalist teacher of mysticism and as a political publicist. Contrary
to his quietist pupil (Corbin), Massignon was very explicit (left-wing
and anti-colonialist) politically.[26] As a consequence of Massignon's
and other French and German, Marxist influences, Sharīʿatī endeav-
oured both to objectify and to revolutionise Shiʿism.

Sufism was, for Sharīʿatī, "[...] a central element in that obscurant-
ism which represented a retreat from the [...] struggle to establish an
Islamic Order." His own views, however, were not void of mysti-
cism. Only, "Sharīʿatī's new strain of [...] Mysticism, if it can be so-
called, [was] communal as much as [...] individual."[27] DABASHI

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[24] NASR, *in* ṬABĀṬABĀʾĪ, 1982: 9. CORBIN (1971, (1): 90) wrote: "Or la
perpétuation et la transmission de ce message spirituel des Imâms sont
indépendantes de [...] savoir si telle ou telle société islamique rejettera ou acceptera,
pour 's'adapter au monde moderne', [le] code civil."

[25] Cf. DABASHI, 1993: 281-4.

[26] Disapprovingly, CORBIN wrote: "Sur le tard, il fut désolé quand ses amis ne
purent le suivre dans ses options politiques" (*in Les Cahiers de l'Herne*, 1981: 40).

[27] SIRRIYEH, 1998: 164, 167. "When Sharīʿatī spoke in negative terms about Suf-
ism, and he did so frequently, it was not that he denied the virtue of mysticism
completely, but rather that he associated the way it had developed with reactionary
clericalism" (*op. cit.*, pp. 166-7, cf. *op. cit.*, p. 165). The paradox is further seen in

(1993: 107) observed: "it is as if the mystical truth of the Sufi masters, the stuff of Massignon's scholarship [...] is [...] transfused into the ideological truth of Shariʿati's [...] political agenda." From an alienating West to an imaginary East, *En Islam iranien* had emerged from and developed in the opposite direction. As "[o]thers have spoken about the necessity of a 'permanent revolution'," stated Corbin in 1976, possibly in a late recognition of the Shiʿite likes of Sharīʿatī, "I will pronounce the necessity of a 'permanent hermeneutics.'"[28]

2.

On the eve of the Islamic revolution (7 October 1978) Corbin passed away. In an obituary essay one reads doubt as to whether the prophetic teacher had succeeded, after all, in grasping Shiʿism's timeless essence.[29] "Ultime symbole:" Charnay wrote, "Henry Corbin est mort alors que s'exaltait la Révolution islamique."[30] Ever since, he suggested, the politics of Shiʿism caught the eye. Surely, political Shiʿism was nothing of a novelty, but Corbin's demise did close off a chapter in Iranian history in which leading intellectuals such as he himself, Ṭabāṭabāʾī and Nasr had been in a position to both represent and construct Shiʿism as a spiritual project (with the help of the French and Iranian states), in the midst of ever present political in-

that "his voice [was] influential not only in progressive religious circles in Iran [...], but would also be heard by Sunni as well as Shīʿī revivalists [...], among the radical Sufis of Turkey and Central Asia as well as among Muslim activists disposed to share his critical perspective on Sufism" (*op. cit.*, p. 167). BOROUJERDI (1996: 114) judged that "his disdain of the West was not that of an Islamic mystic unaware of the West but that of a disillusioned Western-educated intellectual". There is one report of a clash between the Corbinians and the revolutionaries: "Nasr's status as a cultural figure of the Pahlavi regime was in total opposition to Shariʿati's antistatist views, leading to the exchange of such mutual accusations as a 'reactionary armchair intellectual' and a 'subversive Islamic-Marxist attempting to infiltrate the ranks of religious forces'. The culminating point in the parting of ways of Nasr and Shariʿati happened around 1970 when upon hearing a lecture in which Shariʿati compared Imam Hosein to Che Guevara, Nasr resigned from the Hoseyniyye-ye Ershad" (BOROUJERDI, 1996: 126-7).

[28] Interview with Philippe Némo (*Les Cahiers de L'Herne*, 1981: 36).

[29] SHAYEGAN, Corbin's erstwhile pupil and colleague, changed his mind as well after Corbin died. "On arrivait ainsi à un paradoxe étrange : pour sauver l'âme et l'individu, il fallait *séculariser* la société. Car sans la séparation de la foi et du savoir, pas de sujet de droit donc pas de démocratie. Sans le désenchantement du monde, pas d'objectivité, et sans la mathématisation galiléenne du monde, pas de sciences de la nature [...]" (1990: 290).

[30] CHARNAY, 1981: 279.

terpretations which had conquered the stage during their lifetimes.

Since the revolution, fieldwork-based Western studies of Iranian Shiʿism from a hermeneutic perspective have been rare. Exceptionally, LOEFFLER (1988) wrote an empirically valuable account of 'religious beliefs in a Persian village'. It shared in some of the views of symbolic anthropology - which, through Geertz, reached back to the German hermeneutic tradition.[31] Like Corbin, symbolic anthropology has generally approached religion as a self-contained system of meaning.[32] In *Islam Observed* (1968) GEERTZ accounted for a 'religious perspective' by triangular relations with 'worldview' and 'ethos'. Explaining challenges to 'religious hypotheses' (pp. 276-9), Loeffler employed a similarly idealist scheme. There were challenges from within the religious system - new experiences, mystical insights, meanings discovered in texts - and external ones - disconfirming evidence from thought systems outside religion - but none of these incorporated the socio-political factors that determine religious regimes.

Loeffler convincingly charted a series of religious types, but they seemed devoid of mutual relations and always to have been 'just there'. From his text it is not difficult to reconstruct his religious typology, however, in more exterior, temporal terms. The 'fundamentalist' lamented the 'decline of morality in modern education and lifestyles'. Loeffler summarised: "His version turns out to be in many respects just about the opposite of what the modernist Craftsman considers to be the pure Islam" (p. 286). Thus, the context of religiosity for both was state-induced modernisation in the Pahlavi era. This context also applied to the Mystic's praise of "Westerners, who take great pains in developing industry so that people can live in ease, [and who] will discover the [Way] sooner than most of us" (p. 131). Within the same temporal frame, the 'representative of the people' lamented American 'oppressors in Vietnam' and 'injustice' in the United States (p. 96). Loeffler may have been right to contend that the revolution had virtually no effect on these variant religiosities (p. 226), but he ignored the relevant dynamics in a prior course of collision: a

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[31] To be accurate: Loeffler felt his study contributed to Bourdieu's practice theory (*op. cit*., p. 3). But as it is more about internally consistent, symbolic belief systems than 'practice', I interpret it (despite Loeffler's criticisms of Geertz) as a work inspired by symbolic anthropology.

[32] ASAD (1983) has painstakingly criticised symbolic anthropology for its neglect of 'power'.

clash of incompatible notions of Islam in the Pahlavi era that culmi-
nated in the revolution. SPOONER justly concluded that *Islam in Prac-
tice* undervalued social dynamics and historical trends (1996: 403;
406) - a practice that Corbin had made into a research methodology.

After the revolution, Corbin's studies have not sunk into oblivion
in Iran, nor have they fallen into disrepute. Given Corbin's quietist
representations of Shiʿism, receptivity towards them in the Islamic
Republic strikes one as an ironical fate; an unintended consequence.
French copies and Persian translations of his work (and that of
Ṭabāṭabāʾī, as well as that of Nasr, who explicitly favoured the Shah)
are found in many bookstores in Tehran. And paradoxically, the mys-
tical prose, devoid of any politics, is considered politically correct.[33]

Islamists and Sufis alike - beyond historical conflicts on the social
plane - often argue their relevance in the modern world in reference
to 'the spiritual crisis of the West', of which Corbin had provided
them with an 'authentic' account.[34] Corbin has remained a figure of
authority not only for mystical representations of self, but also for the
political legitimacy of statist, republican Islam. This comes to the
fore unambiguously in a report by *Iran News* on April 27, 1997:

> [Ayatollah] Kashani said 'velayat al-mutlaqa', or the absolute leader-
> ship of mankind, was not the belief of Muslims alone, [as] even Chris-
> tians, philosophers and gnostics shared the belief that it was 'velayat'
> which guaranteed the objectives of religion and human life [...] Kasha-
> ni, quoting [...] Professor Henri Corbin, said that in the same way God
> sends prophets to guide humanity, there should be some divinely-

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[33] The occidentalisation of Iranian political Islam was convincingly analysed by
SHAYEGAN (1997). Corbin's post-revolutionary reception was parallelled in the
Pahlavi period: "even in the midst of a rampant antiorientalist campaign in Iran in
the 1960s and 1970s warm testimonies to certain types of orientalists never fell out
of fashion with the higher echelons of the Iranian academic establishment. For
example, in 1963 and 1977 Tehran University published two books in honor of
French orientalists Henri Massé [...] and Henry Corbin" (BOROUJERDI, 1996: 143).

[34] Corbin had developed close ties to - among many influential Iranians - various
Sufi masters (NASR, 1977: 25). The Solṭānʿalīshāhī order began invocations of 'the
spiritual crisis of the West' from the 1960s. (See analysis in chapter 4 of
‹Solṭānḥoseyn› Tabandeh's treatise *A Muslim Commentary on The Universal
Declaration Of Human Rights*). The Solṭānʿalīshāhī leader had spoken rather dis-
missively of Corbin as a seeker who had not quite seen the light, but Corbin's influ-
ence is nevertheless felt in the Sufi leader's rather ecumenical definitions of mysti-
cism. He for instance held Theosophy and Sufism to be one and the same school
(CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 358).

decreed personages after the prophets to save mankind from pitfalls, since reason demanded that guidance should not abruptly end.[35]

Heideggerian philosophy had come to figure in Iranian discussions of Shiᶜite spirituality, and it had been introduced to Iran by Corbin. But some in his audience employed it in unforeseen ways. Aḥmad Fardīd[36] coined 'westoxication' (*gharbzadegī*), which was to become a token of revolution from the 1960s, and a rumour in Tehran had him as the real inventor of Khomeyni's 'rule of the jurist' (*velāyat-e faqīh*). Furthermore, "his theories have been adopted by some intellectuals who claim that the policies of the current Islamic regime are manifestations of Eastern spirituality."[37] Fardīd, for some time a disciple of the reformist ayatollah Sangelajī - who had been on good terms with elite personalities in Reza Shah's monarchy (chapter 3) - led his own intellectual circle from the late 1960s. Paradoxically, he

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[35] *Iran News*, 27 April 1997.

[36] "The uneasy relationship between Persia and the West has encouraged intellectuals like Ahmad Fardid [...] to adopt theories of conspiracy." *Gharbzadegī* "was coined by Fardid, who claimed that Freemasons and Jews are engaged in a great conspiracy to 'hellenize' the entire world [....] 'Westoxication' appears to be derived from a recurring theme in Martin Heidegger's works, the 'darkening of the world.' The [...] decadence of the West had already begun, according to Fardid, with the development of Greek philosophy, in which human beings (*vojud*) were separated from the unity of consciousness (*delagahi*) [....]" (ASHRAF, 1996. *Conspiracy theories and the Persian Mind*. http://www.iranian.com/May96/ Opinion/Conspiracy .html, p. 3). Similarly, "il y a chez Corbin [...] une évaluation plutôt négative à l'égard de l'évolution [...] de la pensée occidentale" (SHAYEGAN, 1990: 21). Before the Islamic revolution, Shayegan's views - although infinitely more subtle and less confrontational - shared in much of the above views: "If occidental philosophy is a question of existence and being and if philosophy answers 'why' questions, in Islamic mysticism the questioner is God, and humankind only answers" (cf. BOROU-JERDI, 1996: 149).

[37] ASHRAF, 1996. *Conspiracy theories and the Persian Mind*. http://www.iranian. com/May96/Opinion/Conspiracy.html, p. 4. Likewise, during the twentieth celebration of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, February 1999 in Isfahan, Ḥojjat ol-Eslām Taqavī, a conservative member of parliament, told his audience that there was no need for cultural exchange - a key notion in Khatami's government - as Iran already had [the mystical traditions of] Mollā Ṣadrā and Mīr Dāmād. ABRAHAMIAN (1993: 23) held Āl-e Aḥmad - who attained fame by a essay named *Gharbzadegī* - to have inspired Khomeyni's *velāyat-e faqīh*-doctrine. In Āl-e Aḥmad's work, too, the influence of Heidegger has been detected (cf. BOROUJERDI, 1996: 71). AHMADI and AHMADI (1998: 105) spoke of an "escalation of the popularity of Sufi ideas in the aftermath of the Islamic revolution", which were officially transmitted through schoolbooks. They failed to recognise, however, that Sufism does not simply equate 'traditionality' (see chapter 2). What goes in its name in contemporary Iran is very often rather a (modern) construction of it in the face of Western modernity.

had also helped translate Corbin's *Les Motifs Zoroastriens dans la philosophie de Sohrawardi* (1946),[38] which could be easily read as a celebration of royalist, Iranian glory. Elite cultural nationalism had been transformed, in Fardīd's thought, into revolutionary ideology.

Another student of Corbin's, the philosopher Reżā Dāvarī, repeatedly referred to Heidegger's lament of the West in order to argue the legitimacy of the Islamic Republic in the face of its critics, such as ʿAbdolkarīm Sorūsh (who preferred Popper).[39] Particularly legendary, Dāvarī and other ideologues of the Islamic Republic have often quoted *Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten*, one of Heidegger's last, prophetic communications (published in *Der Spiegel*, May 1976). Bitterly perceptive, SHAYEGAN (1997: 115-7) analysed the newest phase in transnational Orientalism[40] thus:

> A twentieth-century German philosopher had to devote some attention to the 'historical' stages of Western philosophy, and had to interpret it in terms of Occultation of Being, and had to unveil in his own way the variation of its discourses over time, so that an Iranian, situated as far from that world as it is possible to be, could read it in French translation and believe himself involved in a problem which had nothing to do with him; and, as an ultimate illusion, imagine that the messianic assertions of a German somehow contain the spiritual truth of Islamic renewal [....] our perception is *mutilated*.

Possibly unrecognisable to an outsider, Corbin's representations have now become 'Shiʿism from the viewpoint of Shiʿism itself', that is, Shiʿism even from the politicised perception of the Islamic Republic.

The transnational project that set out to reconstruct Shiʿism to arrive at 'the origin of any perspective' reached its destination through a quietist, elite definition of Shiʿism in the midst of political turmoil, and by then becoming, after the author's death, a token of respectability for a populist, political Islam. Ironically, Sharīʿatī's contribu-

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[38] BOROUJERDI, 1996: 63.

[39] In the 1970s, Dāvarī participated in Shayegan's Civilisations Study Centre. Presently, he edits *Nāme-ye Farhang*, published by the Iranian Ministry of Culture.

[40] SAID held that "what he says and writes, by virtue of the fact that it is said or written, is meant to indicate that the Orientalist is outside the Orient, both as an existential and as a moral fact. The principal product of this exteriority is of course representation" (1991 [1978]: 20-1). JAMBET, however, (1981: 14) observed of Corbin: "Il n'étudie pas des *objects*, il n'aborde pas l'univers perçu par les philosophes iraniens comme une *représentation*." Corbin's Orientalism (as much as that of his teacher Massignon) was marked by a committed personal involvement. Moreover, transnational (French-Iranian) cooperation was crucial to Corbin's projects.

tions fell out of official favour soon after the revolution.

   But the hermeneutical phenomenology of Shiᶜism's 'spiritual uni-
verse' would, because of exteriority denied, 'restore' Iranian Sufism
to what it socially and historically never had been. After all, *En Islam
iranien* was more than anything else a beautiful work of art, and an
initiation - for believers - into *Islam Corbanien*.[41]

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   [41] This was a standing joke among some of the French academic community in
Tehran. Others have preceded my evaluation, in a similar mixture of respect and
epistemological unease. This is what HODGSON (1974, 3: 45), for instance, had to
say about some of Corbin's work: "Henry Corbin has beautifully set forth the *devo-
tional* meaning of the ᶜālam al-mithāl in several works, and especially in *Terre
céleste et corps de résurrection: de l'Iran mazdéen à l'Iran shîᶜite* (Paris, 1960), in
which he attempts incidentally to show such continuities as can be surmised be-
tween the old Mazdean angelology and that of Islam (flavouring his description with
a romantic Iranian nationalism not really borne out by his data). Corbin's 'The
Visionary Dream in Islamic Society', in *The Dream and Human Societies*, ed. G. E.
von Grunebaum and Roger Caillois (University of California Press, 1960), pp. 381-
408, deals with the ᶜālam al-mithāl [....] Corbin's magnificent perceptiveness has
made us aware of the importance of both Mullā Ṣadrā and Mīr Dāmād [....] Unfortu-
nately, in pursuit of his romanticism Corbin can be historically inexact. Thus he
sometimes translates as if the text contrasted an Oriental 'theosophy' to a Peripatetic
(and implicitly Western) 'philosophy', where the text refers simply to Ishrāqis and
Peripatetics, as names of schools, without either geographical or disciplinary speci-
fication. This is an instance of his frequent overdetermination in translating techni-
cal terms: for instance, he renders ᶜālam al-mithāl as world of *archetypes*, rather
than something simpler like *images*, making his texts' inclusion of mirror images
seem absurd." As concerns 'romantic Iranian nationalism', Corbin wrote within a
well-established French tradition: "Le Chiisme offrit une expression à cette nation-
alité qui s'obstinait à survivre [...] l'idée persane se réincarna sous une forme re-
ligieuse [....] Le Chiisme préserva les Persans" (AUBIN, 1908: 458). In pre-
revolution Iran itself there were critical voices too. In 1972, the political scientist
Ḥamīd ᶜEnāyat had "criticized the French Islamist Henry Corbin for [...] divorcing
Shiᶜism from its social and political context" (BOROUJERDI, 1996: 142).

CHAPTER TWO

TRILATERAL FIGURATIONS
ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF IRANIAN SUFISM

En Islam iranien divided 'the spiritual situation of Iranian Islam' into four intellectual traditions: scholastic theology (*kalām*), Sufism (*taṣavvof*), Oriental illumination (*eshrāq*), and metaphysical philosophy (*falsafa*). In Corbin's experience, the Shiʿite universe incorporated tension: "à l'Université théologique traditionelle de Qomm [...] l'emploi des mots *tasawwof* et *soufi* fait passer une ombre sur les visages."[1] As a solution, he adopted authoritative Iranian distinctions between 'true' and 'false' Sufis, which restored Shiʿism's transhistorical unity. Righteous ones were unambiguously involved with gnostic mysticism (*ʿerfān*), while tricksters, impostors and clowns were counteracting the *sharīʿa*.[2]

The underlying reality was an enduring collision of epistemic orders that constitutes a point of departure for the interpretation of conflict. Confrontations between Shiʿite Sufis and other Muslims have been, more than anything else, about spiritual authority (discourse about which Corbin, too, considered as among Shiʿism's unifying themes).[3] Contestations of spiritual authority, in the realm of the state, the seminary or within the confines of the lodge, point to political economy. With spiritual authority have come power and wealth, and the enemies of Sufism still reproach the fourteenth century Shāh Neʿmatollāh Valī for both. Moreover, spiritual authority has often been a scarcity in itself, as much as power and wealth, because of its largely exclusive definitions, and because the competing parties have striven after monopoly.

The shadow that Corbin witnessed over the clergy's faces in Qom undoubtedly derived from a challenge of their - and particularly the Jurists' - conception of spiritual authority in terms of 'guardianship'

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[1] CORBIN, 1971, (1): XI. The quaternity derived from (*sheykh ol-eshrāq*) Sohravardī.

[2] The circular movement of Corbin's analysis - defining, searching for and internalising a preconceived Shiʿite spirituality - involved an implicit interpretative choice that made for a category of people to fall 'out' that thought itself 'in', and, thus, what Foucault called a 'play of dominations' (*in* RABINOW, 1991: 85). Foucault used the term in the context of his analysis of 'emergence' (*Nietzsche, Genealogy, History*), to argue that classifications embody (previous) acts of power.

[3] CORBIN, 1971, (1): 14, 18, 170.

(*velāyat*). Shiʿite Imamate doctrine holds that the prophecy was fol-
lowed by an Imamic 'cycle of guidance' (*dāʾerat ol-valāyat*). After the
('larger') occultation of the twelfth Imam (in 941), Imamic authority
came to be represented by Jurists. From the sixteenth century onward,
their powers increased through high positions in the Safavid state and in
the eighteenth century, when their state ties were cut, they attained vir-
tual independence. Since then, Khomeyni's *velāyat-e faqīh* doctrine has
identified the Jurists with the Qurʾānic category of 'those who rule'
(*uluʾl-amr*), Juristic authority attaining an activist political meaning.

For Shiʿite Sufis, *velāyat* similarly refers to Imamic authority, but
also to their spiritual leaders, to mystical states, or 'sainthood'. Sufism's
enemies often stress the incompatibility of the two definitions, in refer-
ence to harsh criticism of Sufis by the sixth, eighth and other Imams.[4]
Nevertheless, Shiʿite Sufis have often considered their historical leaders
as representatives of the Imam on earth, or the Supreme (Sufi) Pole
(*qoṭb ol-aqtāb*) and the Hidden Imam to be one and the same person.

An esoteric reading of the Imamate in which Shiʿite Sufis share,
considers the 'cycle of guidance' in terms of a spiritual 'intitiation'
(*beyʿat*) and as 'friendship with God' (*valāyat*). This doctrine holds
Imam ʿAlī to be the 'Friend of God' (*valī-Allāh*), who has been chosen
by God as his friend and, through this divine friendship, to be the patron
of the community of believers. The eleven Imams who came after ʿAlī
were considered Friends of God as well, but Sunni as well as Shiʿite
Sufis have also used this designation to refer, instead or in addition, to
themselves. Some daring, Shiʿite Sufis have considered themselves to
be depositories of the Real/Truth (*ḥaqīqat*) - that is contained in *valāyat*
- and thus to represent, during the occultation, the Imamic authority.[5]

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[4] There is a collection of forty Imamic *akhbār* in rejection of Sufis and Sufism, *Al-arbaʿūn ḥadīṣān fī radd aṣ-ṣūfīya*, kept in the library of āyatollāh ol-ʿoẓmā Marʿashī Najafī (title reference no. 4578) (‹ṢĀLEḤ ʿALĪṢĀH›/*Az kū-ye ṣūfiyān tā ḥożūr-e ʿārefān*, 1375/1996: 82).

[5] For an authoritative discussion of *valāyat*, "the most important article of Shīʿī faith" (FARSAKH, 1969: 132) see CORBIN (1971/1972). Several Iranian authors hold that early historical relations between Sufis and Shiʿites had been intimate (see, for example, NASR (1972) and TABATABAʾI (1360/1981, 1982)). The ultimate synthesis between Sufism and Shiʿism was formulated in the fourteenth century by Sayyed Ḥeydar Āmolī. Then, Shiʿite Sufis also played a role in the establishment of the Sarbedār dynasty in Sabzavār (MEIER, 1976, (2): 301). In mediaeval Iran and Turkey the Youngmanliness (*fotovvat*) tradition provided a linkage between Sufism and organised professional groups (RAHMAN, 1966: 151). Sufis were the patron saints of guilds and crafts, and craftsmen engaged in the associational life of Sufi orders. Guilds acted as "a

There are, however, three compelling arguments against turning tension between Shiʿite Jurists and Sufis into a Weberian dichotomy of religious types that juxtaposes 'law' and 'experience'.[6] The dichotomy derives from Weber's *Religionssoziologie*, which contrasts exclusively the religiosity of the 'Ulema' and that of the 'dervishes'[7] and associates Experiential Islam, or 'dervish religion', with orgiastic practices and irrationality.[8] "The inner-worldly order of dervishes [...] cultivated a planned procedure for achieving salvation, but this [...] was oriented ultimately to the mystical quest for salvation of the Sufis."[9] The notion is reinforced in the Typology of Asceticism and Mysticism, which juxtaposes other-worldly dervish mysticism and Occidental asceticism.[10]

First, such a typology would neglect an historical pattern of overlap between Jurists and Sufis. Second, (if only) because of its antinomian traditions, Sufism is not a unitary social object. Authoritative classifications such as Hojvīrī's (and later Sohravardī's) distinguished between praiseworthy and condemnable ones. Antinomians, who often compri-

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kind of bulwark against the state authority", in particular since the eleventh century, when the Abbasid dynasty was on the decline. From the thirteenth century, they constituted centres of recruitment for rebellion against it. Usually, these groups were "heavily tinged with Shiʿi-sectarian ideas, as in the case of the Sufis who backed the rise of the Ottoman and Safavid dynasties" in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (KEDDIE, 1963: 50). Before attaining state power, the Safavids were called 'Sufi warriors' (*Ghozāt-e ṣūfīya*). For modern relations between Iranian Sufis and Shiʿites, see below.

[6] For historical critique of Weber's Sufi types, see AHMADI and AHMADI, 1998: 60. For general critique of Weber's views on Islam and their logical coherence, see TURNER, 1974; for critique of their empirical validity, see RODINSON, 1974. These strains of analysis indicate that 'Islam' is not in itself a suitable social unit of analysis. Even 'fundamentalism' is not by inherent mechanisms opposed to Sufism, as is testified by fundamentalist Sufi orders (PETERS, 1986: 44-5). For similar reasons, GILSENAN proposed an historisation of Weber's ideal types (1973: 10-2). It has possibly been WEBER's dislike of German mysticism - which he saw as a flight from reality into still enchanted private realms ('Science as a Vocation', 1977 [1919]: 155) - that influenced his views on Islamic mysticism. It seems furthermore probable that his studies of Islam - written at the beginning of the last century, when knowledge of Islam often consisted of essentialist generalisations (cf. PETERS, 1986: 43) - were inspired by William James' a-historical, and similarly social psychological approach to 'Varieties of Religious Experience' (1902). There is one reference of personal contact between Weber and James in 'The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism' (1977 [1922/3]: 308).

[7] *Religionssoziologie* (*in From Max Weber - Essays in Sociology*), 1977 [1922/3]: 288.

[8] Cf. *op. cit*., pp. 278, 284, 326. See also the typology of asceticism and mysticism.

[9] *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, 1978 [1921/2]: 555.

[10] *Religionssoziologie*, 1977 [1922/3]: 325.

sed a "class of illiterate, crude, and sometimes even very nasty saints",[11] were persecuted by Rulers, Jurists and Sufis alike. Variation in such patterns and distinctions, thirdly, had exterior and extra-typological reasons. The shape of relations between Jurists and Sufis, and between Sufis and their antinomians, has not primarily derived from a typologically structured spiritual universe, but from one in which all had to relate to Rulers and state regimes,[12] whether dynastic, regional, or local.[13]

Sufism emerged from the seventh and eighth century quest of individual ascetics, who later assembled in groups and attracted an audience

[11] SCHIMMEL, 1975: 20. 'Respectable' Neʿmatollāhīs in seventeenth century Iran clashed with 'libertine' (antinomian) Ḥeydarī Sufis. Neʿmatollāhīs and Ḥeydarīs were assigned to separate wards in Iranian cities. In Tabriz, the inner-Sufism strife led to annual fights and killings. In Shiraz, these conflicts continued until the middle of the nineteenth century (cf. LAMBTON, 1954: 16; MIRJAFARI, 1979; and PERRY, 1999).

[12] When Sufis ran into conflict, their antagonists were most often either Rulers (ḥokmrānān, salāṭīn), or Jurists (a rubric I freely employ to designate 'religious scholars' (ʿolamā) in general, and more specifically 'those whose field is jurisprudence' (foqahāʾ), and theologians (mutakallimūn). These socio-political categories are reproduced in other Islamic dichotomies such as 'the turban' and 'the crown' (ARJOMAND, 1988), or dīn va dowlat (religion and state). The importance of conflicts with Jurists party derived from the fact that "as a class" they were, from the beginning of and throughout Islamic history, "intimately bound up with the state" (RAHMAN, 1966: 151). MEIER played down the importance of Rulers ("Die anstösse zum vorgehen gegen einzelne kamen aber nur in seltenen fällen vom fürsten selbst. Den anlass bildeten meist auseinandersetzungen auf einer niedrigeren ebene, zwischen ṣūfiyya und ṣūfiyya, zwischen theologen oder juristen oder juristen und ṣūfiyya"), but then listed various cases in which state functionaries (admittedly not 'fürsten' in the strict sense) were responsible for Sufi repression (1976, (2): 319-20). Jurists often provided Rulers with arguments for fighting Sufis, and as a basis for more specific charges, three legal categories were generally available for framing these arguments: heresy/polytheism (sherk), infidelity/blasphemy (kofr), and illegitimate innovation (bedʿat). From the life-histories of Sufi martyrs, it appears that such doctrine was often subject to political usage. Commentaries indicate that beyond doctrinal concerns, accusations levelled against Ḥallāj (d.922) were related to groups that fought the Abbasid caliphate. The main charge, zandaqah, has been described as a "catch-all term for heresy deemed dangerous by the state" (ERNST, 1985: 99, cf. MASSIGNON, 1975: 425). Charges against ʿAyn al-Quẓāt (d.1131), claims to prophethood and kingship, point to similar motives for persecution.

[13] If one would incorporate the above three critiques of Weber into a refined typology of conflict, then actual options amount to 13. As typology generally seeks lowest common denominators, it would depict only *forms* of conflict, to the neglect of *causes*. It would generate a three-tiered universe of Sufis, Rulers, and Jurists that divides into Sufi and non-Sufi sub-types and dissolves Sufism into antinomians and non-antinomians. These parties obtain for conflict: 1) Sufi Ruler, 2) non-Sufi Ruler, 3) Sufi Jurist, 4) non-Sufi Jurist, 5) Sufi Ruler-Jurist, and 6) non-Sufi Ruler-Jurist. If the conflicts of antinomians (6) are distinguished from those of non-antinomians (6), and if conflict between Sufis and their antinomians (1) is included, then actual options amount to 13.

of pupils. As their mystic teachings spread over the Islamic world, schools, lodges and orders came into being. However, as early as the ninth century, Sufism was involved in political-military activity.[14]

Throughout Islamic history, alongside expanding military frontiers, Sufis have assisted in missionary conversion. From the tenth century, Sufi lodges had come into existence all over the Islamic world, and in the eleventh century, the Seljuqs used Sufi institutions to protect the state against their enemies.[15] Beyond the mere faithful assistence to rulers, Sufi attempts at state foundation have been recorded from the twelfth century.[16] In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Sufi orders emerged rapidly, which coincided with the usage of Sufis by the caliph during the restoration of the Abbasid caliphate. The socio-political importance of Sufism was reflected in the deification of Sufi sheikhs from the thirteenth century, as from then "they, in place of the scholar-jurists, became the most respected leaders of the population," while engaging in intimate relations with Islamic state regimes.[17] From the fourteenth century, (Sufi) mystics were labeled 'king' (*shāh*).[18] In the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, most importantly, Turkish and Iranian Sufis "backed the rise of the Ottoman and Safavid dynasties."[19] Since the end of the Middle Ages, Iranian Sufism has developed in a separate direction because of the specific character of the Shiᶜite state in Iran.[20]

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[14] MEIER, 1976, (1): 125; (2): 300, cf. TRIMINGHAM, 1971: 69. Seeking a Weberian explanation for Sufi power, LINDHOLM (1998) pointed to the paradox of an 'emissary' religion' (active, moral and sober, i.e. non-charismatic) with a less than perfectly manifest revelation. Here, charismatic Sufi movements found their niche. In the end, however, Sufi movements gave way to 'emissary' religiosity, because of "the rise of modern ideals, and the heightened repressive power of the central state" (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 209).

[15] BALDICK, 1989: 58.

[16] MEIER, 1976, (2): 301.

[17] BALDICK, 1989: 171; cf. MEIER, 1992, (2): 131.

[18] BUSSE, 1972: 40.

[19] KEDDIE, 1963: 50, cf. RAHMAN, 1966: 151.

[20] The fact that Iran was never completely colonised also defines Iranian specificity. In many areas of the Islamic world, Western (including Russian) colonialism profoundly influenced Sufism. Orders in North and West Africa, for instance, either resisted or collaborated with Western colonial powers, but they all expanded under colonialism. In nineteenth century Senegal and Niger and twentieth century Libya, the Tijānīya (see ABUN-NASR, 1965) and the Sanūsīya founded states. The Mahdīya state in late nineteenth century Sudan derived from a (former) Sufi master. In Central Asia and the Caucasus, there is a similar history of resistance to (Russian) colonial rule and subsequent expansion, from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. The Emirs of Bukhara were dervish kings. In eighteenth and nineteenth century India, Sufism at-

In the sixteenth century, the Iranian Safavid Empire evolved from a tribal Sufi order of Turkish descent. The subsequent repression and the virtual disappearance of Sufism in seventeenth century Iran was caused by an historical inversion: a political and religious coalition of Rulers and Jurists. After the Safavids' final defeat by the Afghan Afshar tribe in the eighteenth century (1722), many Jurists retreated to Iraqi centres where they would be virtually autonomous. In the nineteenth century, the new Qajar state extended royal patronage to Sufism, partially in an attempt to curb the Jurists' growing powers. The reunification of the Iranian state and the Qajars' issuing of royal patronage set the stage for the re-emergence of the Neʿmatollāhī order's mystic regime in Iran.

THE RENAISSANCE OF THE NEʿMATOLLĀHĪ ORDER

> Worldly rulers [...] are manifestations of only one of the divine attributes, but the True King is he who rules over all the manifestations of all the Names of the Absolute: the Perfect Man whose sayings are supreme. Worldly rulers must spread his word by the sword.
>
> Shāh Neʿmatollāh Valī[21]

When Shiʿism became the state religion in 1501, Sufism was ruthlessly suppressed "because it was seen as a potential threat to political and religious authority."[22] The state set out to deplete the alternative, autonomous sources of spiritual authority in the figure of the Sufi sheikh - which had been crucial in the establishment of the Safavids: the first ruler, Shāh Ismāʿīl, reigned as Sufi *qoṭb* as well as Imamic descendant.[23] The realistic threat posed to the state authority came from an organised Sufism of Safavid descent, and from differently affiliated groups, which had flourished in the wake of the Safavid ascent. Neʿmatollāhī leaders, who had become related to the Safavids by blood and

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tained renewed political importance through reform movements and resistance to the British (cf. SIRRIYEH, 1998, for an extensive overview of Sufism in the modern era).

[21] Cited in POURJAVADI and WILSON, 1978: 21, cf. ZARRĪNKŪB, 1369/1990, (2): 190. Throughout history, many Sufis had made claims to power, explicitly or implicitly, such as Najm al-Dīn Rāzī (d.1256), who "states in the *Mirṣād al-ʿIbād min al-Mabdaʾ ilāʾl Maʿād* that the highest good was obtained when the kingship of faith and [...] the world were united in one person" (LAMBTON, 1956: 138). During his fieldwork in Pahlavi Iran, GRAMLICH witnessed a Khāksār ceremony in which it was held that: "Der König der Könige ist der Qalandar der Epoche" (1981: 87).

[22] ARJOMAND, 1984: 109, 244; KIYĀNĪ, 1369/1990-1: 260-1.

[23] See ALGAR, 1969: 27.

who were provincial governors,[24] were aspiring for political power.[25]

Attacks against Sufis renewed under Shāh ʿAbbās the Great (1587-1629) because of Neʿmatollāhī political intrigues.[26] However, a different Sufism flourished in his polity. *ʿErfān*, mysticism or philosophically oriented and respected 'gnostic wisdom', was largely unrelated to 'Sufi order Sufism' (*taṣavvof*). Mollā Ṣadrā, the main representative of the theosophical School of Isfahan, strongly lamented libertine and wandering dervishes. The criticism of antinomians within the community of the faithful in the name of *ʿerfān* (underlying Corbin's construction) has since, however, also been adopted by many Iranian, Shiʿite orders.[27] In the latter part of the seventeenth century, when many Neʿmatollāhīs had fled Iran and Sufism had become politically impotent, Shāh ʿAbbās II (1642-1666), 'the dervish loving king', financially supported *ʿerfān* and brought (remaining Sufi order) Sufism under royal patronage.[28]

The ultimate conflict between Sufis and jurists erupted after Shāh ʿAbbās II died and jurists initiated a course of confrontation. Even antinomian Sufis had attained power through royal patronage, but now the state reached out to the puritan jurist Moḥammad Bāqer Majlesī of Isfahan (d.1700). Assisted by the last Safavid Shāh Solṭānhoseyn (d.1722), Majlesī wiped out much of organised Iranian Sufism, which included the Safavid Sufis who had by then "largely degenerated, it seems, to a corps of palace guards,"[29] and the remainder of the Neʿmatollāhīs.

The inquisition's effect was Sufism's virtual non-existence in Iran, for nearly a century. From the days of Majlesī, Shiʿite jurists redefined their positions to match a reinvigorated ambition for power, and jurist authority attained a new doctrinal status through the Oṣūlī school. Their

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[24] MEIER, 1976: 126, cf. ALGAR ("Niʿmat-Allāhiyya", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*).

[25] BAYAT, 1982: 33.

[26] BAYAT, 1982: 27, 60. One of the Shah's jurists, Bahāʾ od-Dīn ʿĀmelī (1547-1621), was, however, influenced by Neʿmatollāhī Sufism (KOHLBERG, 1989: 430). Another target of Shāh ʿAbbās, besides Neʿmatollāhī Sufism, was the extermination of the Ḥorūfīya movement of letter mysticism (KIYĀNĪ, 1369/1990-1: 263). "Der Bedeutungswandel, den das Wort ›Ṣūfī‹ durchmachte: ursprünglich eine Ehrenbezeichnung für einen [...] Krieger der Ṣafaviden, wurde es in spätṣafavidischer Zeit zur Bezeichnung eines verfolgten ›Häretikers‹ verwendet" (VON GRUNEBAUM, 1995: 164).

[27] Cf. ENDE, 1984: 79-80.

[28] BALDICK, 1981: 126; ARJOMAND, 1984: 148. An aspect of Neʿmatollāhī history from the Safavid period is the blending, up to the middle of this century, of the Neʿmatollāhīs with the Nizari Ismāʿīlīs. See POURJAVADI and WILSON (1975) for the authoritative account.

[29] HODGSON, 1974: 53, cf. KIYANĪ, 1369/1990-1: 264; ALGAR, 1969: 29.

state support ended, however, with the collapse of the Safavid polity in 1722. The Safavids' disintegration also ended the effective imposition of a unitary religious identity on the population, which was beneficial to Sufism. In the second part of the eighteenth century, Neᶜmatollāhī Sufis came back from their exile in India to carry their mission to Iran.[30]

Modernity in the anthropology of Islam

There is an implicit consensus in the (historical) anthropology of Islam about the incongruity of Sufism and modernity.[31] Whether authors have argued Sufism's anti-modern essence[32] or related its diminished appeal in the modern era[33] to the rise of nationalist movements, educational progress, industrialisation, or judicial reform - Sufism has been largely conceived of as a survival: an Islamic left-over[34] that lost its function.[35]

[30] See BAYAT, 1982: 27.

[31] The notion of Sufism's anti-modernity reflects many indigenous perspectives: "in short, the Sufi disagrees with the modernist" (POURJAVADY and WILSON, 1978: 4).

[32] GELLNER's *Saints of the Atlas* (1969) built on the work of EVANS-PRITCHARD and the segmentary lineage theory the latter propagated in his Sanūsīya-study (1949). The High Atlas region had 'traditional institutions' that until the 1950s had "survived untouched [...] in a kind of sociological ice-box" (cited in EICKELMAN, 1981: 137). Gellner made explicit his many suggestions of inherent relations between Sufism and tradition in *Muslim Society* (1981): "Sufism is a kind of Reformation-in-reverse. It creates a quasi-church [....] So much for traditional society" (*op. cit.*, p. 104, cf. 132-3).

[33] GEERTZ, in an otherwise very subtle comparison of Morocco and Indonesia (1968), constructed a dichotomy of religious development in both countries, the component parts of which were 'classical' and 'scripturalist' religious styles (*op. cit.*, pp. 19-22). The historical process that linked the two was modernisation (variably described as 'modernism', *op. cit.*, p. 20; 'the industrial revolution' or 'Western intrusion and domination', *op. cit.*, pp. 56-7, etc.). It would be fair then, despite Geertz's dislike of these concepts, to conclude that the dichotomy mirrored traditional and modern society. The classical style in both (traditional) countries was 'mystical' (*op. cit.*, p. 24). Geertz's typological depiction cannot be reduced to the particularities of two peripheral regions of the Islamic world, as the types were made to stand for the whole: "Sufism, as an historical reality, consists of a series of different and even contradictory experiments, most of them occurring between the ninth and nineteenth centuries" (*op. cit.*, p. 48). He strongly suggested, then, that Sufism is a thing of the past, which had been bound to vanish with modernity. To name only one of many counterexamples, the twentieth century, Libyan Sanūsīya order expanded during the 'Western intrusion and domination'.

[34] Not historical anthropology but reinforcing the Sufi traditionality view, CRAPANZANO's moving ethnography of the Moroccan Ḥamadsha (1973) related ritual practice in the shantytowns of Meknes to its therapeutic functions. In describing symptoms treated in therapy, he quoted a psychiatry scholar who took them as "expressions of [...] anxiety reaction found in many *primitive societies*" [italics mine] (*op. cit.*, p. 5). What therapies did, was to explain, in terms of socially bounded symbols, the nature of specific illness. "Such explanations," Crapanzano related, "are characteristic of many so-

Sufism's decline is often construed on a par with jurist-led or 'juristic' reformism:[36] eighteenth and nineteenth century Islamic movements that sought to redefine Islam, so that the Islamic world could withstand Western penetration and come up with an indigenous response to the

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                modernity
                    |
      JURIST        |     —
                    |
law ————————————————+———————————————— experience
                    |
     (JURIST)       |   SUFI
                    |
                tradition
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Figure 1. Analytical grid for Sufism

West's technological superiority.[37] Many ethnographic treatments of Sufism, in the (historical) anthropology of Islam, have thus intersected the *longue durée* duality of law and experience with a similarly Weberian dichotomy of traditional and modern types of religiosity (figure 1).[38] The renaissance of the Neʿmatollāhī order, however, occurred within

called *primitive therapies*" [italics mine] (*op. cit.*, p. 6). It was AL-ZEIN's conclusion from considerations such as these, that "Moroccan society is portrayed [...] as static and [...] within a predetermined universe of meaning" (1977: 243). But Crapanzano "emphasized that the practices [...] of the Ḥamadscha [...] are not characteristic of 'Moroccans' in general," being 'a fringe phenomenon' (*op. cit.*, p. 7). Not Moroccan society as a whole, but the Ḥamadsha were portrayed as primitive survivals of Islamic things past.

[35] One notable exception in the anthropology of Islam, except for GILSENAN (1973), has been the first monograph on a Sufi order in anthropology. EVANS-PRITCHARD's historical study of the Libyan Sanūsīya (1949) described the expansion of the order throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and its successful rally for support of tribal populations of Cyrenaica in the liberation struggle against Italian occupation.

[36] GELLNER (1981: 159-60), for instance, conceived of relations between the 'associationist ideal' (including mediation, propitiation, ritual and devotional excess) and 'scripturalist' (puritanical, unitarian, individualist) Islam as a pendulum that got 'unhinged' through reformism (with mystic religiosity as the victim). I distinguish between 'jurist-led' and 'juristic' because it was often lay Muslims who carried the reform.

[37] In contrasting the previous period with eighteenth century reformism, HODGSON claimed that "since Ibn Taymiyyah (d.1328), there had been few figures, even among the Hanbalīs, to stand out with great intensity against the casting of all religious life into the mould of Sūfī tarīqahs. Most reformers had accepted this pattern" (1974, 3: 160). But in the mid-eighteenth century Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb from Arabia (d.1792) endeavoured to regain Ibn Taymīya's spirit. He promoted the cleansing of Islam of what he saw to be its alien, impure and otherwise undesirable elements, including Shiʿism and Sufism. Sufism, which for him represented a prime example of polytheism, especially stood out as an object of his hatred.

[38] The above descriptions do not apply to a new generation of anthropological Sufi studies (such as EWING, 1990; GROSS, 1990; and MIR-HOSSEINI, 1994), in which questions of modernity and traditionality have made way for contemporary theoretical concerns such as the relations between (collective) representation, power, and history, and in which Sufism is not usually dealt with in long-term, diachronical perspectives.

the modern era,[39] while nineteenth century Neᶜmatollāhī Sufis were among the carriers of modernity in Iran.[40] Systematic Sufi persecutions, in the seventeenth century, had preceded their ascent. These Sufi persecutions were enabled through co-operation between jurists and rulers, and they were unrelated to reformism in the eighteenth or nineteenth century sense. Eighteenth century ruler-jurist co-operation was less effective in the absence of a central state,[41] while the mutual relations between these parties gradually turned sour. The Neᶜmatollāhī order's modern social development, in other words, eludes the prevalent analytical grid for Sufism as an historical object (as drawn in figure 1).

The reestablishment of the Neᶜmatolllāhī regime in Iran developed through two figurations. In the first, the relations of Sufis derived, principally, from weak local rulers' competition for power in the absence of a central state. Both Sufis and jurists at times achieved autonomous local influence, which coincided with intense mutual hatred.[42] The internal dynamism among Sufis, which enabled their ascent, consisted of an enormous growth in their ranks. Their power of popular mobilisation brought local rulers to seek proximity to Sufis, and to persecute them - with the aid of jurists - where they were seen to threaten the state. The relations between Sufis, rulers and jurists thus derived not from jurist modernity or Sufi traditionality but from the absence of centralised rule. Secondly, they derived from an ideologically aggressive and rapidly

[39] ARJOMAND stated that as a consequence of Sufism's repression after the Safavid ascendancy, "it has continued [...] primarily in its highly cultivated form among the elite" (1984: 109, 244). The popular Neᶜmatollāhī revival, however, offers counter-evidence to this widely-held conception.

[40] It will not be useful for the present discussion to problematise 'modernity'. I use it in a loose sense, so that a variety of definitions can apply. It designates 'rationalisation' - the maximisation of efficiency between means and ends - in the economic, social and political spheres, and especially the willingness to explore new media to achieve these ends. For an exemplary analysis of contemporary, resilient Sufism (in Lebanon), see NIZAR HAMZEH and HRAIR DEKMEJIAN, 1996: 227. Nothing like a ban of Sufi orders, as in Turkey in 1925, ever occurred in modern Iran.

[41] "In the short interregnum of the Afghan, Afshār and Zand dynasties [...] religious supervision of the jurists [...] did not, because of [...] the weakness of and the vacuum left by the state apparatus, have the same power and hegemony as during the late Safavid era [....] Among the Ẕahabīya and Neᶜmatollāhīs a new movement came into existence" (ZARRĪNKŪB, 1369/1990, (2): 309).

[42] State formation starts with "a figuration made up of numerous relatively small social units [...] in free competition with one another" (ELIAS, _in_ GOUDSBLOM and MENNELL, 1988: 131).

expanding Sufism, and diminishing jurist chances for spiritual authority while their claims to it had greatly increased in the eighteenth century.[43]

The reunified Iranian state was in the centre of the second, nineteenth century figuration, in which rulers often perceived jurists as threatening. Several rulers granted Sufism state patronage - which defined the feudalist nature of the Qajar political system[44] and facilitated the social renaissance of Iranian Sufism. From their newly found court positions, Sufis often continued to challenge jurist spiritual authority.

1.

The Ne‘matollāhī order had royal relations through Shāh Ne‘matollāh, and through intermarriage with the Safavids. In spite of an uncharacteristic conflict in Transoxiana, the *shāh-e velāyat* had "enjoyed the favour of kings, and this partiality was continued by his descendants."[45] Shāh Ne‘matollāh had been invited to send his son to India by the local king Aḥmad Shāh Bahman,[46] in whom the order found patronage after Kha-

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[43] The Akhbārī revolt had been overcome by the Oṣūlīs, who defined an actively representative role for the jurists in the absence of the twelfth Imam. It may be generalised that relations between (Shi‘ite) Sufis and Jurists had generally been good where there was a common dynastic, Sunni enemy (this situation often obtained prior to the sixteenth century establishment of the Safavid state), and that they had generally been bad where (Shi‘ite) rulers extended patronage to either jurists (as in the late Safavid era) or Sufis (as in the larger part of the Qajar era).

[44] FLOOR, 1971: 7.

[45] TRIMINGHAM, 1971: 101. Nūreddīn b. ‘Abdollāh Valī (Shāh Ne‘matollāh Valī Kermānī) was born in Aleppo in about 1331, of a mother who was born from a royal lineage in Fars province (NURBAKHSH, 1991: 145). At the age of about twenty-four he became a pupil of the Sufi master ‘Abdullah Yāfi‘ī. After Yāfi‘ī's death Shāh Ne‘matollāh set out to travel. In Transoxiana he founded lodges, but was forced to leave because of the wrath of Timur Leng (a Naqshbandī affiliate) whom he met once (NURBAKHSH, 1980: 45). He ended up in Kerman at the request of local pupils, and founded a Sufi community (with a lodge, mosque, garden and lessons in various Islamic disciplines) in which *‘olamā* and *foqahā'* participated. He spent his last years in Mahan (where a lodge and a mosque were also built), and had by then gathered many thousands of disciples. He died in 1431 (ZARRĪNKŪB, 1369/1990, (2): 189-95), after which "his body was carried by government officials" (NURBAKHSH, 1991: 146). According to present-day affiliates, he had originally been a Sunni and later converted to Shi‘ism (‹MAḤBŪB‘ALĪSHĀH›, 1373/1994-5: 43), but ALGAR stated ("Ni‘mat-Allāhiyya", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*) that "there can be little doubt [he] remained a Sunnī throughout his life." For other authoritative studies of the history of the origins of the Ne‘matollāhī order, see AUBIN (1956; 1970; 1984; 1988).

[46] NURBAKHSH, 1990: 146.

līlollāh I migrated to the Deccan in the fourteenth century.[47] Subse-
quently, there were Sufi migrations between the Indian and Iranian
Neᶜmatollāhī centres. This situation lasted until the seventeenth century,
when Sufism largely disappeared from Iran under Shāh Soleymān.[48]

In the mid-eighteenth century, the order's Axis was Sayyed ‹Re-
żāᶜalīshāh› Dakkanī (d.1799/1800). It was his initiative to 'revive' the
order in Iran - after Iranian Neᶜmatollāhīs had asked him for a spiritual
guide and he himself had experienced a vision in which the eighth
imam ᶜAlī al-Riżā had told him to send one.[49] He delegated his most
entrusted Sufis, first Shāh Ṭāher and later ‹Maᶜṣūmᶜalīshāh›, "the king
of all Sufi soldiers."[50] Travelling for some five years, through the Gulf
of Oman, and from the Persian Gulf coast to Shiraz, Maᶜṣūmᶜalīshāh
encountered widespread hatred of Sufism. In a hostile origin myth that
represents Sufism as a subversive stronghold of alien power from the
outset, the event has been described - with obvious insinuations for a
nationalistic audience - as "the coming to Iran [...] of a number of fa-
mous Sufis by means of a ship of the British East India Company."[51]

According to various Sufi accounts, notables and jurists in the Shi-
razi court of the local Zand dynasty (1750-1779) shared in the anti-Sufi
sentiment. They convinced the ruler, Karīm Khān Zand (d.1779), that
Maᶜṣūmᶜalīshāh was 'a fire-worshipper', that is, a Zoroastrian heretic,
who made claims to divinity and kingship[52] and would be a threat to the
state. Furthermore, in an account by Sir John Malcolm it is mentioned
that the Sufis had managed (despite hostility) to attract about thirty
thousand followers in Shiraz, which approximated the size of a local

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[47] Khalīlollāh I had migrated to Bidar because the large number of Iranian Neᶜma-
tollāhīs and a patronage-like relation to Aḥmad Shāh Bahman (who had also been on
good terms with his father) had convinced the son and successor of Timur Leng, Shāh
Rokh, that he was seeking (worldly) power (ZARRĪNKŪB, 1369/1990, (2): 199).

[48] POURJAVADY and WILSON, 1978: 27. Only some Ẕahabī and Nūrbakhshī groups
had remained.

[49] POURJAVADI and WILSON, 1975: 118.

[50] My paraphrase of "*Maᶜṣūmᶜalīshāh ast, shāh-e darvīsh, solṭān-e hame sepāh-e
darvīsh*" (*in* ‹MAᶜṢŪMᶜALĪSHĀH›, 1318Q/1900, (3): 170), cf. ROYCE, 1979: 86.

[51] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-2: 3, 4. The story is not corroborated in ZARRĪNKŪB
(1369/1990), POURJAVADY and WILSON (1978: 94), ROYCE (1979: 84-7) or GRAM-
LICH (1965: 30-1). Chahārdahī did not mention ‹Maᶜṣūmᶜalīshāh›, but as no other
famous Sufis are known to have come from India in this period, ‹Maᶜṣūmᶜalīshāh› was
most likely referred to. He misdated the event during Fatḥᶜalīshāh's rule (1797-1834)
while ‹Maᶜṣūmᶜalīshāh› arrived in Iran in about 1776/7 (ROYCE, 1979: 90).

[52] Cf. ‹MAᶜṢŪMᶜALĪSHĀH›, 1318Q/1900, (3): 171.

Zand army.[53] Beyond religious objections, the threat to the state posed by Maʿṣūmʿalīshāh seems therefore to have derived from the material reality of a numerically massive presence. A few years after his arrival, Maʿṣūmʿalīshāh was chased from Shiraz, and he and his followers fled to Isfahan, molested all along the way by supporters of the ruler.[54]

The ruler of Isfahan, ʿAlī Morād Khān Zand, was a relative of Karīm Khān Zand, but not on favourable terms with the latter. It was apparently for this reason that he initially patronised the Sufis, one of whom "in return, gave his Sufi blessing to the governor's military campaigns, making special banners for his army."[55] When convinced of their private political aspirations, however, he turned against them.[56] Maʿṣūmʿalīshāh's lodge was wrecked and he and his followers were expelled from Isfahan. They were followed by the ruler's servants, who cut off the ears of Maʿṣūmʿalīshāh and ‹Nūrʿalīshāh›, his favourite disciple and successor,[57] and delivered them at the kingdom's border, near Tehran. Tehran's sovereign, Āqā Moḥammad Khān Qājār, had become the Zands' main rival after having spent his childhood in their captivity. Like the ruler of Isfahan previously, he took the Sufis in his care. After recuperation in Tehran, they made a pilgrimage to Mashhad at his expense.[58]

They eventually parted ways and Maʿṣūmʿalīshāh roamed for years. After setting out from Karbala for Mashhad on a second pilgrimage, he was arrested in Kermanshah at the orders of Āqā Moḥammad ʿAlī Behbehānī, a jurist consumed by hatred for Sufism, who went by the name

[53] POURJAVADY and WILSON (1978: 109) and GRAMLICH (1965: 31) doubted Malcolm's figure, but even if it were reduced to one third, then the Sufis would still have constituted a force to be reckoned with by the local dynasty. My claim of comparable numbers derives from a description by ‹MAʿṢŪMʿALĪSHĀH› (1318Q/1900, (3): 174) of ʿAlī Morād Khān's army of 40.000 men.

[54] NURBAKHSH, 1980: 77-8, 85; ‹MAʿṢŪMʿALĪSHĀH›, 1318Q/1900, (3): 172. ALGAR (1969: 38) did not mention conflict between the Sufis and the ruler, and stressed instead that "at the *urging of the ulama* [‹Maʿṣūmʿalīshāh›] was banished to a village near Isfahan" [my italics] (*op. cit.*, p. 38). Ẕahabīya Sufis retained Zand patronage (LEWISOHN, 1999: 37), probably because of political innocence.

[55] LEWISOHN, 1998: 443; POURJAVADY and WILSON, 1971: 114. LEWISOHN (1998: 243) related that a pupil of ‹Maʿṣūmʿalīshāh›, ‹Darvīsh Ḥoseyn ʿAlī›, always accompanied military campaigns of the Afghan ruler Tīmūr Shāh (to bless the troops), with whom he and other Sufis had found patronage.

[56] Personal spite may also have motivated his hatred. When he was once chased away from Isfahan, Jalālī Sufis loudly celebrated the event (‹MAʿṢŪMʿALĪSHĀH›, 1318Q/1900, (3): 176).

[57] ‹MAʿṢŪMʿALĪSHĀH›, 1318Q/1900, (3): 176; ZARRĪNKŪB, 1369/1990, (2): 320.

[58] NURBAKHSH, 1991: 154; cf. ‹MAʿṢŪMʿALĪSHĀH› (1318Q/1900, (1): 185).

of 'Sufi killer' (ṣūfī-kosh).[59] The exceptional influence of Behbehānī was such that he "accomplished the complete power and victory of the jurists in matters related to the holy law, vis-à-vis actual and virtual rulers, in the struggle with the Sufis."[60] In the power vacuum that prevailed through the absence of a centralised state, Behbehānī had emerged virtually autonomous: as a ruler-jurist.[61] Moreover, the jurists had been "newly invigorated by the triumph of the Uṣūlī doctrine, which assigned them supreme authority in all religious affairs".[62] In doctrinal terms, this immediately preceded the present-day concentration of authority in the figure of a single jurist. But the Neʿmatollāhī order, in the eighteenth century, "refused to validate the [jurists'] function, and often claimed that the Sufis were the true Shia."[63] In 1797/8, Maʿṣūmʿalīshāh was charged with heresy and at the orders of Behbehānī he was put in a sack half filled with stones and drowned in the Qarasū river.[64] Maʿṣūmʿalīshāh had by then transferred the leadership of the order to Nūrʿalīshāh, which was probably only later interpreted as a formal appointment.[65]

After parting from Maʿṣūmʿalīshāh, Nūrʿalīshāh had travelled the land with ‹Moshtāqʿalīshāh›, a Sufi musician. In 1785 they arrived in Mahan, where Shāh Neʿmatollāh was buried. The following they attracted was so large that not enough food could be found to feed it.[66] For this reason they went to Kerman, from where they organised Thursday night pilgrimages to Shāh Neʿmatollāh's shrine. Thousands participated, and Neʿmatollāhī Sufi power led to a situation where "the application of the sharīʿat seemed in danger."[67] After having converted members of the Kermani ruling elite, "the more or less dominant role [in Kermani political life came to be] played by Sufi masters [...] whose worldly aspi-

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[59] BAYAT, 1981: 40. ‹Maʿṣūmʿalīshāh› had been expelled from Karbala to Baghdad because of the enmity of jurists in the Shiʿite holy sites. From Baghdad, where he found the protection of the ruler Aḥmad Pāshā, he travelled to Kermanshah (ZARRĪNKŪB, 1369/1990, (2): 321).

[60] ZARRĪNKŪB, 1369/1990, (2): 316. A similar situation occurred in Isfahan, but ZARRĪNKŪB (1369/1990, (2): 317) judged Kermanshah to have been exceptional with respect to the jurists' power.

[61] ZARRĪNKŪB, 1369/1990, (2): 317

[62] ALGAR ("Niʿmat-Allāhiyya", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*).

[63] BAYAT, 1982: 27, cf. ALGAR, 1969: 37.

[64] GRAMLICH, 1981: 31. ROYCE (1979: 171) mentioned contradictory versions of the killing.

[65] GRAMLICH, 1965: 31.

[66] POURJAVADI and WILSON, 1975: 119.

[67] ALGAR, 1969: 38.

rations for influence and status went beyond doctrinal considerations."[68] At the same time, remnants of the Zand dynasty tried to conquer Kerman from the hands of the emerging Qajar dynasty (1779-1925), whose first ruler had acted as a caring royal patron of the Neʿmatollāhīs.

The Sufis' power, it may be hypothesised, was an important motive for the Qajars to seek proximity to them,[69] and for the hatred of the Zands. When in Kerman in 1792, the Qajar ally Moshtāqʿalīshāh entered a mosque to pray. The prayer leader, who was on the side of the Zands, called upon the crowd to stone him.[70] He was declared an heretic and subsequently stoned outside the mosque. Moshtāqʿalīshāh's persecution and death forced Nūrʿalīshāh to flee. He went to Shiraz first and later, in Karbala, ran into conflict with jurists who declared him an infidel and sought for his execution. When Āqā Moḥammad conquered Kerman in 1794, he inflicted a cruel massacre upon the population and only spared the remaining Sufis (and Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs, who were related to them).[71]

After the (fragile) reunification of Iran in the late 1790s,[72] the second Qajar king Fatḥʿalīshāh (1797-1834) dealt with the Sufis differently than Āqā Moḥammad. He asked for Nūrʿalīshāh to be expelled, and "because of [the Sufis'] aim of founding a [worldly] reign [...] Fatḥʿalīshāh [...] aided the jurists [...] in their persecution."[73] Two of Nūrʿalīshāh's devotees were delivered to Behbehānī, and Fatḥʿalīshāh acted against a concentration of Neʿmatollāhīs, similar to the one in Kerman, in Gilan.[74]

Although there is a panegyric, in a work in the name of Nūrʿalīshāh, that had probably been composed as a "political ploy to gain favour and support from the Qajar state",[75] Nūrʿalīshāh had also felt that "the Sufi

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[68] BAYAT, 1982: 60. ROYCE (1979: 152-62) gives more extensive descriptions.

[69] ZARRĪNKŪB thus mentions "this *reaching back to a former Sufism, like the return to centralised government*, was not accomplished without many difficulties, especially sharp conflicts with jurists" [my italics] (1369/1990, (2): 310-11).

[70] BAYAT (1982: 61) mentioned 1791, but I accept ROYCE's dating (1979: 161) because it is more precise ('ramaẓān 1792').

[71] Revenge for Kerman's disobedience consisted of the blinding 20.000 inhabitants and the building of a pyramid of eyeballs in the public square (POURJAVADI and WILSON, 1975: 124).

[72] Since the eclipse of the Safavids, only the ruler of the Afghan Afshar tribe, Nāder Shāh, had been able to temporarily reunify Iran politically in 1736 (ALGAR, 1969: 30).

[73] ZARRĪNKŪB, 1369/1990, (2): 324. "Most of the jurists [...] looked upon Sufism with a critical mind [....] and they reckoned its condemnation to be a religious necessity" (*op. cit.*, p. 315).

[74] ALGAR, 1969: 63, 64.

[75] LEWISOHN, 1998: 443, in reference to ‹Nūrʿalīshāh›'s Paradise of the Lovers' Union (*Jannāt ol-veṣāl*). The part referred to (the seventh) was written by to

master was the true deputy (*nāʾib*) of the Hidden Imām."[76] A citation from Nūrʿalīshāh after the Isfahan debacle amply illustrates the worldly ambitions that the king was up against:

> The power of the Quṭb [Axis] is obviously greater than that of any ruler [....] Salvation in this world and the next depends on obedience to the Quṭb of the time, 'who, in our era, is Sayyid Maʿṣūm ʿAlī Shāh'. If a ruler attacks the Quṭb, he must come to ruin, not only because the cosmic balance has been threatened, but because the dervishes [...] *will* his ruin.[77]

Nūrʿalīshāh, who had granted permission to spread the Neʿmatollāhī teachings to an exceptionally large number of disciples - which is likely to have doubled to about 60.000 - [78] was probably poisoned in 1798 by Behbehānī (the killer of Maʿṣūmʿalīshāh).[79] In Neʿmatollāhī hagiography, Nūrʿalīshāh has the reputation of being the order's 'reviver' (*mohyī*) in Iran. Despite their persecution and eventually martyrdom, Maʿṣūmʿalīshāh and Nūrʿalīshāh had managed to convert large numbers of people to their variety of Sufism. In spite of the king's resistance, and the jurists who "opposed the Sufis from the beginnning of the Qajar dynasty",[80] therefore, (Neʿmatollāhī) Sufism revived under Fatḥʿalīshāh.

   MIR-HOSSEINI (1994, (1)) has analysed Ahl-e Ḥaqq legends in reflection of neglected or taken-for-granted 'outer history'. "There is much to be inferred from these narratives about the dynamics [of their] communities", she held, the narratives appearing in "forms common to those of Sufi orders."[81] Exteriority is similarly contained in the contrast between Reżāʿalīshāh's innocuous vision[82] and the power ideology of Nūr-ʿalīshāh. It also brings to the fore that the idea of a single powerful leader (*qoṭb*) had developed, while this idea had probably been absent

<Neẓāmʿalīshāh>, whose teacher was <Rownaqʿalīshāh>, a pupil of <Nūrʿalīshāh> (GRAMLICH, 1965: 35, cf. DE MIRAS, 1973: 23).

   [76] ALGAR ("Niʿmat-Allāhiyya", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*).

   [77] POURJAVADY and WILSON, 1978: 117, citing <Nūrʿalīshāh>'s Book of Guidance (*Hedāyat-nāme*).The immediate reference was to the fate of the Zand kings of Shiraz and Isfahan.

   [78] LEWISOHN (1998: 441), citing MALCOLM (1829: 298).

   [79] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1362/1983: 8, cf. GRAMLICH, (1965: 34), who doubted the claim.

   [80] NASR, 1972: 119; ZARRĪNKŪB, 1369/1990, (2): 317. ZARRĪNKŪB stated that the ruler and jurists co-operated under Fatḥʿalīshāh in allegations of heresy (*takfīr*) towards the Sufis (*op. cit.*, 324).

   [81] MIR-HOSSEINI, 1994, (1): 273.

   [82] From the little that is known (POURJAVADY and WILSON, 1978: 93-5), it appears <Reżāʿalīshāh> had foreseen the suffering and death of <Maʿṣūmʿalīshāh>, but not his socio-political power.

when the Sufis travelled to Persia.[83] Various descriptions of Qajar Persia, moreover, bear witness of Sufism's tremendous social power. Before *nowrūz*, dervishes from all over the country flocked into the cities, presented themselves at the houses of the wealthy, and expected to be taken in and to be taken care of financially. Few dared ignore them.[84]

More precisely, these contrasts reflect figurational changes in the trilateral relations of Sufis, jurists and rulers that occurred along the paths that the Sufis travelled. Their persecution and patronage in Shiraz, Isfahan and Tehran (as well as in many other places) marked Sufism's reemergence as a socio-political force in Iran. It proved to be both an attraction, to local rulers who competed for state power, and a danger. Where rulers deemed Sufis dangerous, jurists, whose ambitions for power had greatly increased, enabled their persecution. The height of the jurists' persecutions in Kermanshah, and of Sufi power in Kerman, reflected the absence of a central state, and even of strong, independent rulers in these localities. The context for renewed ruler-jurist cooperation in anti-Sufi purges, finally, was Fathʿalīshāh's territorial reunification, which had no use for a politically assertive Sufism.

<div align="center">2.</div>

After the Qajars had established national state power and Fathʿalīshāh had done away with the Neʿmatollāhī Sufis that Āqā Moḥammad had protected during the Qajars' ascent, "Sufism as a popular force [...] ceased to be a serious threat to [the rulers'] authority."[85] But even Fathʿalīshāh had not been able to prevent Neʿmatollāhī Sufis from 'infiltrating' into the royal court. The first Crown Prince and governor of Gilan had become a disciple of ‹Majẕūbʿalīshāh› (d.1823), and his son was initiated in the Neʿmatollāhī order as well.[86] The second Crown

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[83] GRAMLICH, 1965: 31.

[84] See MEIER, 1992, (1): 530-31.

[85] MARTIN, 1989: 21.

[86] POURJAVADY and WILSON, 1975: 125. Modernisation in Iran was carried out by enlightened individuals who were court officials, and it was intimately connected with ʿAbbās Mīrzā. Measures to improve the efficiency of administration, the army, taxation, education and transport, modelled on the systems of Western European nations, were largely his initiative (see HAIRI, 1977: 11). Crown Prince Moḥammad Reżā Mīrzā was also in touch with the next Axis ‹Mastʿalīshāh› (POURJAVADI and WILSON, 1975: 126). After patronage had degenerated, people spending "the money gained from the donations of the prince on pleasure", the vizier to the prince was removed and a com-

Prince and Governor of Tabriz, ʿAbbās Mīrzā, had similar sympathies for Sufism, and he allowed his retainers to join the Neʿmatollāhī order.[87]

These developments indicated the emergence of a second trilateral figuration. The potency of Sufi imagery - extroverted and aggressive - had been a reflection of the open field, the absence of terms of engagement, in the relations of Sufis, rulers and jurists.[88] Through territorial reintegration and rulers who conceived of jurists as obstacles to their reign, Sufis now attained positions in court society. Mass adherence had turned Sufism into a popular religiosity, but court society made it *salon-fähig*. New Sufi religiosity was reflected in a moderated imagery, and in the fact that each of the order's *qoṭb*s would now also be a mollah.[89]

Under Fatḥʿalīshāh's grandson Moḥammad Shāh (1834-1848), Neʿmatollāhī Sufis were still found in the court, "recruiting members from among prominent government officials and royalty."[90] Moḥammad Shāh had been initiated into the Neʿmatollāhī order in his youth,[91] and remained anti-clerical ever since.[92] "Sufis were given posts at court and entrusted with government missions: Mīrzā Mihdī Khūʾī, a *murshid* (spiritual guide) of the Niʿmatollāhī order, was chief scribe to the Shah", and the last leader of the semi-unified Neʿmatollāhī order, before present-day divisions - ‹Raḥmatʿalīshāh› (d.1861) - was appointed vice-

pany of Sufis and vagabonds, as well as the *qoṭb* Majẕūbʿalīshāh, were punished by the Shah, in 1821 (BUSSE/*Fārs-nāme-ye Nāṣerī*, 1972: 161-63).

[87] Moreover, the Neʿmatollāhī pole ‹Kowsarʿalīshāh› had taken refuge with ʿAbbās Mīrzā "from the persecutions of the ulama" (ALGAR, 1969: 105).

[88] In his sociology of game-types, ELIAS (1970: 75-109) outlined a simple model in which two parties compete for a scarce good in the absence of norms for engagement. More complex models concerned relations between unequal players, more than two (groups of) players, and players at different levels. None of the present cases sufficiently resembles the models for technical analysis, but enough to illustrate main mechanisms. In the first, simple figuration, there was unregulated competition for spiritual authority, with explicit Sufi power claims. State centralisation in the second, complex figuration (Elias' model 3a), made for a moderated Sufism in the royal court.

[89] POURJAVADY and WILSON (1978: 139, 142). Early leaders in the Iranian Neʿmatollāhī renaissance such as ‹Nūrʿalīshāh› had also received official Islamic religious training (ROYCE, 1979: 111). POURJAVADY and WILSON (1978: 137) resisted the label 'aristocratic' for the Neʿmatollāhī order - which they felt was an untenable political designation - unless it referred to individual Sufis being 'noble' (*sharīf*). In my analysis, this mental characteristic derived from aristocracy in the political sense.
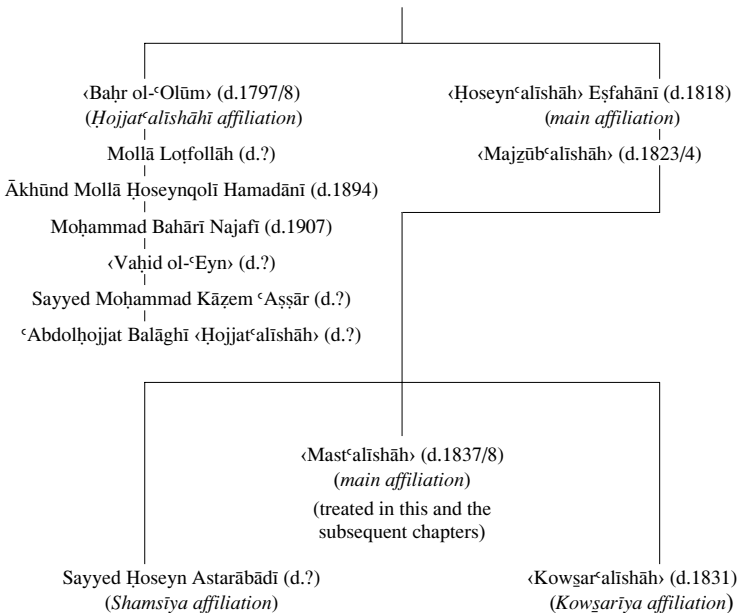
[90] BAYAT, 1982: 61.

[91] POURJAVADI and WILSON, 1975: 125. ‹MAʿṢŪMʿALĪSHĀH› (1318Q/1900, (3): 469) referred to him - apparently with a Neʿmatollāhī religious hierarchy in mind with Sufis on top - as the 'Axis of the rulers' (*qoṭb os-salāṭīn*) (and as 'dervish king').

[92] See ARJOMAND, 1988: 91, cf. ZARRĪNKŪB, 1369/1990, (2): 341.

premier (*nāʾeb oṣ-ṣadr*) of Fars.[93] Upon Moḥammad Shāh's coronation, Raḥmatʿalīshāh's master Zeyn ol-ʿĀbedīn Shervānī ‹Mastʿalīshāh› (d.1837/8) had "arranged a *majlis* [religious gathering] in the throne room, *as if to put a Sufi seal on the new reign*" [my emphasis],[94] and as

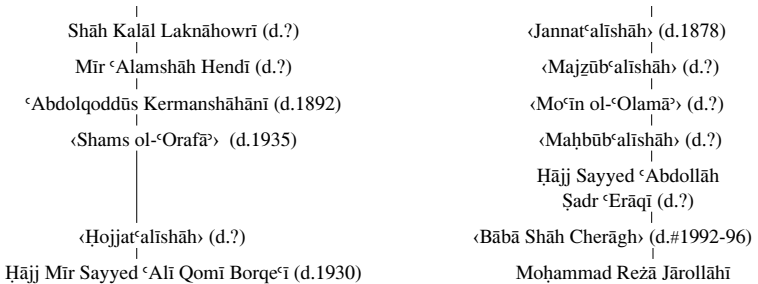[93] ALGAR, 1969: 107, cf. CHAHĀRDAHĪ's alternative version (1352/1973, (3): 527).

[94] POURJAVADI and WILSON, 1975: 126, 158. Neʿmatollāhī spiritual genealogy (GRAMLICH, 1965: 27-69; NURBAKHSH (1980); POURJAVADY and WILSON (1978); HOMĀYŪNĪ (1992) reckons eight Imams to have been succeeded by a series of Sufi masters who culminated in Shāh Neʿmatollāh. The eighth Imam appointed: Maʿrūf al-Karkhī (d.815/6), who was succeeded by Sarī al-Saqaṭī (d.867); Abuʾl-Qāsim al-Junayd (d.910); Abū ʿAlī al-Rūzabārī (d.934); Abū ʿAlī b. al-Kātib (d.#951/2); Abū ʿUṯmān al-Maghribī (d.984); Abuʾl-Qāsim al-Jurjānī (d.#1076/7); Abū Bakr al-Nassāj (d.1094); Aḥmad al-Ghazzālī (d.1126); Abuʾl-Fażl al-Baghdādī (d.1155); Abuʾl-Barakāt (d.1174); Abuʾl-Saʿūd al-Andalusī (d.1183); Abū Madyan Shuʿeyb al-Maghribī (d.1197); Abuʾl-Futūḥ al-Shahīd al-Ṣaʿīdī (d.?); Najm al-Dīn Kamāl al-Kūfī (d.?); Rażī al-Dīn Ṣāliḥ al-Barbarī (d.?); Abuʾl-Saʿādāt ʿAbdullāh al-Yāfiʿī (d.1367). The successors of Shāh Neʿmatollāh: Borhāneddīn Khalīlollāh I (d.?); Ḥabībeddīn Moḥibbollāh I (d.?); Kamāleddīn ʿAṭīyatollāh I (d.?); Borhāneddīn Khalīlollāh II (d.?); Shamseddīn Moḥammad I (d.?); Ḥabībeddīn Moḥibbollāh II (d.?); Shamseddīn Moḥammad II (d.?); Kāmāleddīn ʿAṭīyatollāh II (d.?); Shamseddīn Moḥammad III (d.?); Maḥmūd Dakanī (d.?); Shamseddīn Dakanī (d.?); ‹Reżāʿalīshāh› (d.1799); ‹Maʿṣūmʿalīshāh› (d.1797/8); ‹Nūrʿalīshāh› (d.1798). After ‹Nūrʿalīshāh› the order split in two branches, while the main branch further split in three branches after ‹Majḏūbʿalīshāh›:

‹Baḥr ol-ʿOlūm› (d.1797/8)
(*Ḥojjatʿalīshāhī affiliation*)

‹Ḥoseynʿalīshāh› Eṣfahānī (d.1818)
(*main affiliation*)

Mollā Loṭfollāh (d.?)

‹Majḏūbʿalīshāh› (d.1823/4)

Ākhūnd Mollā Ḥoseynqolī Hamadānī (d.1894)

Moḥammad Bahārī Najafī (d.1907)

‹Vaḥid ol-ʿEyn› (d.?)

Sayyed Moḥammad Kāẓem ʿAṣṣār (d.?)

ʿAbdolḥojjat Balāghī ‹Ḥojjatʿalīshāh› (d.?)

‹Mastʿalīshāh› (d.1837/8)
(*main affiliation*)
(treated in this and the subsequent chapters)

Sayyed Ḥoseyn Astarābādī (d.?)
(*Shamsīya affiliation*)

‹Kowṯarʿalīshāh› (d.1831)
(*Kowṯarīya affiliation*)

if inspired, after many centuries, by Shāh Neʿmatollāh's claim - that true royalty belonged to Sufism. But while Shāh Neʿmatollāh had sought the jurists' respect and co-operation, Mastʿalīshāh was in a (court) position that allowed for him to confront them harshly: "The *foqahā* are the trusted ones of the Prophet, if they do not intervene in worldly affairs. The Prophet was asked, 'And if they do?' He replied, 'They follow the king, and if they do that, then protect your faith from them'."[95]

Hostile, anti-Sufi tracts were written by many of the *ʿolamā* in response to the Neʿmatollāhī challenges of their spiritual authority, and the Iranian state that tolerated these with apparent consent. In this way, "the precarious balance between the monarchy and the ulama preserved by Fatḥ ʿAlī Shāh was virtually destroyed."[96] Sufism's royal patronage had figured, as in the previous century but now with a new, vigorous effectiveness, in a process "of strengthening the state [which] was [generally] one tending to restrict the prerogatives of the ulama."[97]

It had taken the Neʿmatollāhī order nearly one century to 'conquer' Iran - from the Bahmanī rulers' patronage, through the legendary vision of Reżāʿalīshāh, and stormy relations to local rulers and jurists. Neʿma-

Shāh Kalāl Laknāhowrī (d.?)	‹Jannatʿalīshāh› (d.1878)
Mīr ʿAlamshāh Hendī (d.?)	‹Majzūbʿalīshāh› (d.?)
ʿAbdolqoddūs Kermanshāhānī (d.1892)	‹Moʿīn ol-ʿOlamāʾ› (d.?)
‹Shams ol-ʿOrafāʾ› (d.1935)	‹Maḥbūbʿalīshāh› (d.?)
	Ḥājj Sayyed ʿAbdollāh Ṣadr ʿErāqī (d.?)
‹Hojjatʿalīshāh› (d.?)	‹Bābā Shāh Cherāgh› (d.#1992-96)
Ḥājj Mīr Sayyed ʿAlī Qomī Borqeʿī (d.1930)	Moḥammad Reżā Jārollāhī

[95] ALGAR's (1969: 37) citation from ‹Mastʿalīshāh›'s *Būstān al-siyāḥa*.

[96] ALGAR, 1969: 38, 105. ‹Mastʿalīshāh› obtained a royal salary and the possession of a village (GRAMLICH, 1965: 52). "Devotion to Sufi adepts, especially Niʾmatullahis, was not rare among the Qajar ruling elite of the early nineteenth century. Contrary to official state support for the ʾulama, and in spite of recurring Sufi persecutions, dervishes were occasionally admitted to service in provincial courts. Sufi scholars such as Mulla Riza Hamadani, Kawthar ʾAli Shah, were prominent in Tabriz" (AMANAT, 1997: 456). Moḥammad Shāh's sympathies for Sufism were related to two of his Sufi(-minded) advisors in the royal court, Mollā Naṣrollāh Ṣadr ol-Mamālek and Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī, who himself aspired for the Neʿmatollāhī leadership (cf. AMANAT, 1988: 109; 1997: 29-30, 60-1; POURJAVADI and WILSON, 1975: 128). Between 1836 and 1848, Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī virtually controlled state affairs in Iran, and he used his control to intimidate and suppress the *ʿolamā* (cf. ALGAR, 1969: 106, 119).

[97] ALGAR, 1969: 120.

tollāhīs had found new royal patronage in a unified state under Moḥammad Shāh Qājār, whose initiation made him a Sufi-king as much as the Safavid Shāh Ismāʿīl. No Neʿmatollāhī Sufi is known to have ever run into conflict with Islamic reform movements during the Iranian ascent, except for one pupil of ‹Ḥoseynʿalīshāh› (d.1818). He was slaughtered in 1802, by Wahhabis, one year after their destruction of the tomb of Imam Ḥoseyn in Karbala.[98] But the order's expansion would continue, and its spread over Iran coincided with numerous splits.[99]

Moḥammad Shāh had bestowed the honorific title Peacock of Gnostics (*ṭāvūs ol-ʿorafāʾ*) upon the first Solṭānʿalīshāhī-Neʿmatollāhī axis, ‹Saʿādatʿalīshāh› (d.1876).[100] As Raḥmatʿalīshāh's succession led to an unparalleled disunity, he was fiercely attacked by Neʿmatollāhīs who contested his claims to leadership. Among these were the followers of ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh› (d.1899), who had managed to surround himself with members from the Tehran elite. ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle› (1864-1924) was Nāṣer od-Dīn Shāh's Minister of Public Ceremonies (*vazīr-e tashrīfāt*) and his son-in-law. In 1885, possibly sent by the king, he joined the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī lodge. He soon achieved prominence in the order and became Ṣafīʿalīshāh's successor.[101] Throughout his life as a noble Sufi he combined various gubernatorial appointments with activities in the order.

While there was a further "reduction in the power of the [official] religious classes",[102] Ṣafīʿalīshāhī prominence and wealth were testified by the order's founding of trading houses in India and China during the reign of Moḥammad Shāh and Nāṣer od-Dīn Shāh (1848-1896). According to a recent estimate, about "one-fifth of the [...] population of Qajar

[98] The victim was a famous scholar, ʿAbdolṣamad Hamadānī (GRAMLICH, 1965: 40), and the master of Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī, who was particularly powerful in Iran in 1836-1848 (see above).

[99] In 1851, Lady SHEIL considered the Neʿmatollāhīs "the fraternity most prevalent in Persia" (1856: 194). The connection between splits and expansion is confirmed by GRAMLICH, who stated that "Wachstum, Zersplitterung und straffere Zusammenfassung der Splittergruppen gingen im [...] 19. und 20. Jahrhundert mit der Ausbreitung des Ordens in Persien Hand in Hand" (1965: 27).

[100] The Ẕoʾr-Reyāsateyn Neʿmatollāhī order had similarly derived its name from a royal, Qajar designation (of Ḥajj ʿAlī Āqā ‹Vafāʿalīshāh› at first, and later his son Ḥajj Mīrzā ʿAbdolḥoseyn ‹Mūnesʿalīshāh›, the master of Dr Nurbakhsh, cf. CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1352/1973, 3: 528, 531).

[101] ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh› was a 'confidant of Nasr al-Dîn Shâh' himself (FRYE, 1956: 10).

[102] LAMBTON, 1964: 116-7.

Persia were 'either dervishes or followers of some dervish group'."[103]
But as separate Neᶜmatollāhī branches emerged - that would develop
into separate orders, mutually independent in the social realm - the un-
ion of royalty and Sufism began to dissolve. Solṭānᶜalīshāhī sources
have Saᶜādatᶜalīshāh wishing for and predicting the death of the Shah,
whom he reportedly considered 'despotic'. One of these sources regards
the king's killer to have executed Saᶜādatᶜalīshāh's command.[104] Possi-
bly, this new attitude reflected the immanence of the Constitutional
Revolution, which would shatter the increasingly resented Qajar polity.

Many of Ẓahīr od-Dowle's adherents consider him to have been, de-
spite his royal relations, the ruler's enemy, and a seeker of freedom on
the side of revolutionaries who sought despotism's political reform. In
his capacity as governor of Hamadan he played a crucial role in 1906 in
the establishment of Iran's first regional parliament, in Hamadan.[105] The
transformation he brought about in the Ṣafīᶜalīshāhī order is moreover
considered to have made it 'a secret organisation that was a meeting
place for democracy-minded Sufis'.[106] But Ẓahīr od-Dowle had obtained
the permission for this organisation within the order by the king, his
brother-in-law Moẓaffar ed-Dīn Shāh (1896-1907),[107] and contrary to the
jurists, neither Ẓahīr od-Dowle[108] nor the Sufis collectively[109] acted in a
significant way during the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911).

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[103] LEWISOHN (1999: 48), citing Jaᶜfar Shahrī's *Tehrān-e qadīm* (Tehran, 1371/1992
(ii): 287). Unfortunately, more reliable sources seem to be unavailable for this estimate.
   [104] ‹SOLṬĀNḤOSEYN›, 1350/1961: 115-6. CHAHĀRDAHĪ (1361/1982-3: 163) more-
over claims that Jamāleddīn al-Afghānī, who had inspired Nāṣer od-Dīn Shāh's killer,
was a pupil of ‹Ṣafīᶜalīshāh› (without, however, presenting evidence, and despite the
fact that Jamāleddīn al-Afghānī is well-known for his reproaches against Sufism).
   [105] Cf. FRAGNER, 1979: 121-80, and HAIRI, 1977: 130. ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle›'s impor-
tance in Hamadan and other places for Iranian democracy was also proudly hailed by
the present sheikh in ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle›'s lodge in Tehran (*conversation*, 07/17/97).
   [106] It has even been claimed that Iranian Sufi orders in general were among the plat-
forms on which ideas of political reform were discussed (see YAPP, 1978: 7).
   [107] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-2: 44; ALGAR ("Niᶜmat-Allāhī", *Encyclopaedia of Is-
lam*); and about any other serious source that deals with the Society of Brotherhood.
   [108] KASRAVĪ mentioned ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle› in the *Tārīkh-e mashrūṭe* as a person
"who was counted among the supporters of the constitution" (*op. cit.*, p. 627).
KATĪRĀˀĪ, however, claims that there are no acts to match these sympathies and that
‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle› continued to render his services to the Qajars (1355/1976: 108).
   [109] Sufi protagonists of the revolution were found in the Ẓoˀr-Reyāsateyn order, as
Ḥājj ᶜAlī Zoˀr-Reyāsateyn ‹Vafāᶜalīshāh›, who was reportedly, despite his royal *laqab*,
"the first man among the clergy of the province of Fars to self-sacrificingly devote
himself to [...] the Constitution." He and his followers wore military clothes (CHA-
HĀRDAHĪ, 1352/1973, (3): 530). The *khānaqāh* of his successor ‹Ṣādeqᶜalīshāh›, "was

When Moḥammadᶜalīshāh (1907-1909) bombarded the parliament and had the revolutionary ringleaders arrested in June 1908, one of them turned out to be a son of Ẓahīr od-Dowle.[110] In an incident that found its way into Persian poetry, the Shah subsequently ordered the destruction of Ẓahīr od-Dowle's house,[111] but then, full of remorse, wrote him a reconciliatory letter. In response, Ẓahīr od-Dowle proclaimed - in a variation on Nūrᶜalīshāh's dark prediction of Sufi wrath and the ruin of royalty: "You have destroyed my house, [therefore] God will destroy yours."[112] Throughout the constitutional era and until the ascent of the Pahlavi dynasty, royal patronage nevertheless remained unimpaired. That is, royals retained their allegiance to Ẓahīr od-Dowle's Sufi Society of Brotherhood, and his family retained a royal, Qajar, salary.[113]

[...] a sanctuary for the politically oppressed [....] During the [...] constitutional period, his house served as a hide-out for many distinguished men among the opposition" (NURBAKHSH, 1980: 114, 115). ABRAHAMIAN mentioned 'the leader of a Niᶜmatī order' as a member of a Revolutionary Committee (1979: 403), and claimed that the legend of Freemasonry's involvement even inspired Khomeyni's evaluation of the Constitutional Revolution (1993: 94). The pro-Constitution jurist Ṭabāṭabāʾī was a Freemason (ABRAHAMIAN, 1993: 96) but it is unknown whether this inspired his political views. Sufism was not a social force either in the jurist-led Tobacco Protest of 1891/2. ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle›'s public responsibilities did not do anything to stop the jurists' revulsion against Sufis, as is testified by a jurist's tract that was written during the Constitutional Revolution: "If Iranians knew the exact meaning of wealth, they would try to obtain it. But since they are in want of law [and] expertise [...] they have no wealth. They are engaged in nothing but superstition, pomposity, and futile activity. They do nothing but smoke opium in tea-houses [...]. They have no profession but begging, or being derwishes and wasting their time with Sufism" (Hamid Dabashi's translation of Sayyed ᶜAbd ol-ᶜAẓīm ᶜEmād ol-ᶜOlamāʾ Khalkhālī's text "On the Meaning of Constitutional Monarchy and its Benefits" (1907), *in* ARJOMAND, 1988: 343).

[110] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-2: 53.

[111] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 156. Three other Ṣafīᶜalīshāhīs were killed as well, but the event does not, apparently, figure in contemporary repertoires of Sufi stories.

[112] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-2: 54. Original text in AFSHĀR (1367/1988: 22-3).

[113] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-2: 54. Similarly, until 'the very end of the Qājār era', the leader of the Ahl-e Ḥaqq, Shāh Ḥayāsī, received royal (state) patronage (MIR-HOSSEINI, 1994, (2): 222).

Figure 2. The mausoleum of Shāh Neᶜmatollāh Valī in Mahan (courtesy Mehrdād Torkzāde)

Résumé

It has been argued in this chapter that the Neʿmatollāhī mystic regime's reestablishment in Iran developed through two figurations. The internal dynamism among Sufis that enabled their ascent consisted of a massive growth in the number of their converts, which could not be checked by either rulers or jurists. The Sufis' relations vis-à-vis state and societal (jurists') regimes - the two other relational dimensions of mystic regimes - have been grasped in the notion of 'trilateral figurations'.

I began arguing the relevance of trilateral figurations by addressing Corbin's quaternary view of Shiʿism - underlying which were neglected histories of conflict about spiritual authority that are constitutive of Sufism. In Weberian ideal-types, Islamic histories were conceptualised in a dichotomy of law and experience. Their use as a tool of social analysis is limited, however, because of a pattern of overlap between Sufis and jurists, antinomian traditions that dissolve Sufism as a unitary object, and the centrality of the state in shaping Sufi-jurist relations. The centrality of the state remains similarly unaccounted for in the historical anthropology of Islam, which complemented the law-and-experience dichotomy with an equally Weberian duality of modernity and tradition. Beyond the grid of these notions, Iranian Sufism's social development has taken shape through the contingent factors of state centralisation and royal patronage.

In the first, eighteenth century figuration, the relations of Sufis derived mainly from local rulers' competition for power in the absence of a central state. Both Sufis and jurists at times achieved autonomous local influence. Their power of popular mobilisation brought rulers to seek proximity to Sufis, and to persecute them where they were seen to threaten the state. Rulers often feared jurists in the second figuration, which had the reunified state at its centre. Their Sufi patronage, in turn, enhanced continuous Sufi challenges of jurist authority. Nineteenth century Iran did not, therefore, see the disappearance of 'traditional' Sufis through the ascent of jurist-led, 'modern' religiosity, but, instead, Sufism's socio-political renaissance.

It was through another period of socio-political disorder and restoration in the early twentieth century, that new mystic regimes would again emerge. Royalty lost its autonomy as a worldly and spiritual centre in Iran. From then, Neʿmatollāhī Sufis came to identify more strongly with the imagined community of the Iranian nation.

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PART TWO

In the Pahlavi Dynasty

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CHAPTER THREE

NEW MYSTIC REGIMES, 1900-1941

The early twentieth century marks the redefinition of Sufism as a
social institution in Iran. The context for this transformation was the
genesis of the Iranian nation-state. Two political processes were
involved: the Iranian *nation* first emerged as a powerful concept in
the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911), and Reza Khan/Shah Pah-
lavi subsequently moulded it to fit his statist ambitions (1921-1941).[1]

The early Pahlavi state regained control over the national territory
and in the process expanded further into society than the Qajar rulers
had been able to. Legitimate social power in the early Pahlavi era
came to be defined once more, but this time more effectively, in
terms of one's state-affiliation. Militant policies of nationalistic mod-
ernisation,[2] which were initiated by the Shah, produced the nation-
state as a new, virtually uncontested, cultural frame of reference.

Nationalistic modernisation has come to be associated with the
repression of Sufism, as a component of anti-religious policy: "Un-
der Reza Shah there was a concerted drive against religion by the
government [and] dervishes were driven from the city streets."[3] He
had sought to repress begging - the pacific antithesis of militant
modernity - and this explained, according to a contemporary Sufi,
the persecution of the Khāksār order.[4] An intimate from the royal

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[1] Useful Persian sources regarding Sufism in the Pahlavi era, at least those readily
available in public archives, are unfortunately rather scarce (cf. FARMAYAN (1974)
for general observations on modern Iranian sources). The tendency nowadays of
archives to open up collections to researchers, more so than under the Shah (cf., for
example, EILERS' account (1977: 322) of the Pahlavi Library), suggests that more
relevant material will become available in the near future.

[2] "The shah's power was [among other bases] founded on the increasing wealth of
the royal house, much of it accumulated [...] through force [....] As a result [...] the
strengthening of the state could be tied to nationalism, as had been impossible under
the Qajars" (MCDANIEL, 1991: 27).

[3] FRYE, 1957: 188, cf. AKHAVI (1980: 23-59) for relations between Reza Shah
and the clergy.

[4] *Interview* Solṭānʿalīshāhī Sufi. He further held that "the Shah was against the
Sufis because he was ignorant of Sufism." The Khāksār had been related to the state
through 'lords' (*noqabāʾ*); intermediaries who checked upon dervishes on behalf of
the state, but who were appointed by the highest Khāksār authority. This institution

court related that Reza Shah had "criticised the dervishes fiercely and considered the *kashkūl* [Sufi begging bowl] and *tabarzīn* [small Sufi axe] as means for collecting money and fooling the people."[5]

However, there are also different, ambivalent accounts that defy the alleged incongruity of religion and nationalistic modernisation, or the idea that nationalistic modernisation in its very essence belongs to a secular order of things. A political scientist in the Islamic Republic observed that the "new regime [of Reza Shah] tried to implement an ideology of royal chauvinism [...] with the help of people like Ardashīr Rīpūrtar and [...] his son Shāpūr, the Freemasons."[6] A similarly 'deviating' school of thought was "Sufi mysticism, which was revived and propagated through several westernised and Freemason intellectuals, and it even made its way into schoolbooks."[7]

Reza Shah is reported to have been closely associated with the Sufi member of parliament Sheikh ol-Molk Owrang.[8] Owrang is the courtier source for the Shah's above-mentioned criticism of Sufism as well, but it must be noted that this critique explicitly concerned certain dervishes, certain dervish practices and the anti-modernism that they represented - not Sufi mysticism as a whole. The Shah's measures and goals of cultural reform were specifically aimed at:

> [...] forbidding jugglery and deceitfulness [:] Qalandars with dervish names but far removed from the meaning of Dervishhood exhibited their jugglery on squares and crossroads, and with singing poetry they would gather people around them. Then they would release some

was abolished by Reza Shah (MEIER and GRAMLICH, 1992 (1): 314; GRAMLICH, 1976: 164). The order responded by organisational reforms, carried by Ḥājjī Motahhar, so that it would be better able to withstand repression, and survive (cf. GRAMLICH, 1965: 73).

[5] OWRANG, *in Sāl-nāme-ye donyā*, 22: 216-20

[6] FOYŪŻĀT, 1375/1997: 55. But the insinuation of Freemasonry conspiracy is refuted by another report that cannot be reproached for sympathising with the king, which states that "during the reign of His Majesty Reza Shah the Great, on the basis of a decree of the before-mentioned, activities of parties of Freemasons came to a standstill" (*Pānzdah-e khordād*, 1376/1997: 144-5). "Reza Shah was [...] highly suspicious of foreign missionary organizations, regarding mission schools and hospitals as focal points of sinister foreign influence and possible espionage. Both were brought increasingly under the scrutiny and control of the central government" (HAMBLY, 1991: 235). The ambiguous missionary activity of American Presbyterians indicates that the suspicions were not entirely unfounded.

[7] BAṢĪRAT-MANESH, 1375/1997: 77, cf. POURJAVADI and WILSON, 1978: 162.

[8] HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1991: 225, cf. ṢAFĀ, 1356/1977-8: 11: "In a pleasant voice, [...] Owrang would sometimes read from the Shah-name for him [Reza Shah]."

snakes with clipped teeth from a box and would expose them to exhibition with indecent movements [...]. Or they would, by exhibiting various kinds of jugglery, gather unemployed people and idlers around them, and they would make people forget.[9]

Reza Shah's coming to power was mystically foretold and allegedly caused by an Indian Sufi,[10] while another, Iranian Sufi recollected that "many of the orderly [i.e. non-*qalandar*, non-Khāksār] Sufis hailed their sovereign." While the nationalist historian Ahmad Kasravi proclaimed that all books of the Sufis had to be thrown into the fire,[11] Sufism under Reza Shah, "though seldom publicly avowed, [continued to] have a strong hold upon the educated classes and [...] a great influence over them."[12] But Sufism not only survived introverted in elite circuits under Reza Shah: it also radically changed.

HAMMOUDI has written of Morocco that "if the royal institution and its legitimacy function in and through sainthood [...] it seems logical to consider the master-disciple relationship [...] as the decisive schema for the construction of power-relations" (p. 85). This argument would make perfect sense for most of Qajar Iran as well, as widespread notions of kingship in this era were very much akin to conceptions of Sufi authority and its embodiment in Sufi masters.[13]

However, the sainthood model of master and disciple did not provide for equivalents when autocratic power relations were challenged in the name of the nation, during the Constitutional Revolution. Under Reza Shah, the legitimacy of monarchy was not constructed

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[9] ṢAFĀ, 1356/1977-8: 112.

[10] "One of the Sufis from India named ‹Shast Mehr Bābā› related the coming to power of Reza Shah in Iran to himself and said it was because of his drive and willpower that he had become Shah" (ĪRĀNĪ,1371/1992-3: 18), cf. KASRAVĪ, 1342/1963-4: 71.

[11] "*Bāyad ketābhāʾī ke az ṣūfiyān dar miyān ast […] be ātesh keshīde shavad*" (1342/1963-4: 12).

[12] WILSON, 1929: 299, cf. WILBER, 1975: 22. The complexity of the Shah's modernisation policy is further seen in that he, one would say in spite of it, sometimes considered Mīrzā Moḥammad Ḥoseyn Nāʾīnī his *marjaʿ-e taqlīd* (RICHARD, 1988: 162, cf. HAIRI, 1977: 147).

[13] "During the Qajar period the shah was still the Shadow of God - *zell allah* - and *the centre point of the cosmos* [my italics] - *qebleye ʾalam*" (AHMADI and AHMADI, 1998: 154). AUBIN (1908: 488) mentioned a *rowże-khvān*'s eulogy for the Shah (during a religious ceremony): "Pour régner en roi, comme un soleil brillant, est apparu Mohammed ʿAlî Shâh, conservateur de l'Univers."

through royal sainthood,[14] but mediated by nationalistic modernisation. This policy, in turn, established the context for new (Sufi) master-disciple relations in which legitimacy attained an abstract and external measure in the Iranian nation. Sufi ideology would increasingly argue its relevance vis-à-vis the Iranian nation, and it did not vest all authority in the person of the Sufi master anymore. Mystic religiosity, that is, transformed in the context of the nation-state.[15]

EXPERIMENTS AND REFUTATIONS

The Neᶜmatollāhī path had disintegrated in the late Qajar era, and the experience of constitutionalism was therefore varied in the different branches. Various Neᶜmatollāhī masters had been politically active and influential in the Qajar period - often through royal patronage - but this exterior power was largely lost under Reza Shah's regime, as intimate Sufi ties to the state were cut. Although explicit Sufi contributions to the nation-state were few, many were the changes in the Neᶜmatollāhī paths that had the new political regimes as a context.

The Ṣafīᶜalīshāhī order experimented with and further developed its Freemasonry profile. Its main branch bureaucratised to the extent that the formerly unitary, exclusive and charismatic spiritual authority evolved into the leadership of a 'first among equals' who was selected through a restricted election. Analogies for these developments lay in the creation of an effective state bureaucracy,[16] and the Shiᶜite clerical reforms of ayatollah Sangelajī (see below). The

[14] AHMADI and AHMADI (1998: 159-60) downplayed this development, but their formulations suggest it was crucial: "The idea of the divinity of the king [...] had lost much of its influence [...] The political and military shortcomings of the kings, who had brought bankruptcy and poverty upon the country and hindered its socio-economic development, can be considered as contributory factors in the weakening of the idea of the divinity of the king."

[15] I have left out discussions of Enlightenment and neo-Sufism here. Neo-Sufism was probably coined by Fazlur Rahman in 1966 (SIRRIYEH, 1998: 11), technically referring to eighteenth- (and nineteenth-) century reform movements (mainly in North Africa) that propagated a lessening of ecstatic practices and more conformity to holy law. The two concepts have been hotly debated by RADTKE (1992, 1994, 1996) and SCHULTZE (1990, 1996), cf. PETERS (1990). The debate mainly involves doctrinal changes until the twentieth century, while I focus on modern, mainly twentieth-century social (master-disciple and Sufi-nation) relations.

[16] "Reza Shah was able to accomplish what had proved impossible for the Qajars, the creation of a relatively powerful state [with] an effective bureaucracy" (MCDANIEL, 1991: 27).

breach of tradition was refuted by a seceding sheikh who himself, nevertheless, headed a modernist magazine that specifically targeted the Iranian nation, rather than fellow Sufis or the community of believers, as an audience. The opposite pattern emerged in the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order, where traditional spiritual authority was challenged by a single modernist affiliate. Causing a war of words, he went his own way to develop a 'scientific' Sufi religiosity that related spiritual maturity to educational progress.

The Solṭānʿalīshāhī order

Zeyn ol-ʿĀbedīn Raḥmatʿalīshāh was Moḥammad Shāh's governor of Fars, under whom "the Nimatullahi Order reached the apogee of its external power."[17] Upon his death in about 1861 there was no generally recognised successor. Eventually, two of the claimants were Monavvarʿalīshāh (d.1884), from whom the Mūnesʿalīshāh or Ẕoʾr-Reyāsateyn 'branch' evolved, and Ṣafīʿalīshāh (d.1899), who created the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order. The third claimant was Ḥājj Moḥammad Kāẓem Eṣfahānī Saʿādatʿalīshāh (d.1876), who founded the Gonābādī, or Ṭāvūsīya, or Solṭānʿalīshāhī (Neʿmatollāhī) order.

A testimony to Sufism's unabated socio-political significance in the late Qajar era - even after the Neʿmatollāhī order's disintegration - Saʿādatʿalīshāh was named Peacock of the Gnostics (ṭāvūs ol-ʿorafā) by Moḥammad Shāh, reportedly because he thought Saʿādat-ʿalīshāh 'well-dressed'.[18] Because of this legend, the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs are sometimes referred to as the 'Ṭāvūsīya'.

As the order was most distinctly moulded by Saʿādatʿalīshāh's successor Ḥājj Mollā Solṭānmoḥammad Solṭānʿalīshāh, it has been more commonly designated as 'Solṭānʿalīshāhī'. 'Gonābādī' refers to the order's main residence since Solṭānʿalīshāh.[19] Solṭānʿalīshāh figures in another tradition of Sufi power: Nāṣer od-Dīn Shāh had wished to meet with the Sufi master, but the latter dared to decline

[17] NURBAKHSH, 1980: 111.

[18] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 161.

[19] "By means of Mollā Solṭān and his successors Beydokht and Jūymand (Gonabad) became proverbial, to such an extent that this *selsele* became known as the Gonābādī" (CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/ 1982-3: 230-1). ALGAR's claim ("Niʿmat-Allāhiyya", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*) that "Gunābādīs generally eschew the designation Niʿmat-Allāhī and cannot therefore be regarded as representing the main line of the [...] order" is false, if only because of continuous conflicts over this matter.

the invitation and (for unclear reasons) to 'ignore' the king.[20] The order grew in social and numerical importance under Solṭānᶜalīshāh's leadership, and he himself grew increasingly wealthy.[21] Solṭānᶜalīshāh was, possibly because of his conspicuous outward success, accused of various heresies. In 1909 he was murdered, under unclear circumstances, and thus made a martyr for Gonabadi Sufis.[22]

Complex and contradictory histories of religious and personal strife surround the death of Solṭānᶜalīshāh. There are several indications, however, that beyond these, socio-political reasons motivated his death. "It is said that at a time of famine [Solṭānᶜalīshāh] refused to give people grain from his storehouses, and [then] became so unpopular that he was killed."[23] Among the strenuous events which preceded his death was another conflict, during the Constitutional Revolution, with villagers in Beydokht who confronted him and demanded an explication of his political position.

Solṭānᶜalīshāh, whose predecessor had allegedly wished Nāṣer od-Dīn Shāh dead and his 'despotism' to end, defended himself by proclaiming: "I am only a village farmer and a dervish, and I do not know what 'constitutionalism' or 'despotism' mean. We have nothing to do with these matters and we obey the government, whether it be constitutional or not."[24] But one of the conspirators had acted in the name of the constitution,[25] and Solṭānᶜalīshāh, a wealthy and resented landlord rather than a simple village farmer, had been on good terms with various local authorities - state representatives - among whom was the governor of Khorasan, Nayyer od-Dowle.[26]

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[20] "Mr Tābande has written in the introduction to the second print of the *Tafsīr-e bayān os-saᶜādat* that Nāṣer od-Dīn Shāh intended to meet Mollā Solṭān during the days of his stay in Tehran, but Mollā Solṭān ignored him and left for Mashhad. After a while he travelled to Beydokht and found a place to stay there" (CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 230-1).

[21] GRAMLICH, 1965: 66, cf. ‹MAḤBŪBᶜALĪSHĀH›, 1373/1994-5: 48.

[22] Official literature relates: "The shrine [for Solṭānᶜalīshāh] is built on the spot where the Qutb was murdered by a mob of fanatic bigots whose consciences were unable to bear the sense of guilt produced by the spirituality and moral edge of his preaching. They sacrilegiously slew him while he was at his ablutions in preparation for his morning prayer" (HAZEGHI, 1970: vii). Cf. GRAMLICH, 1965: 65; ‹SOLṬĀNḤOSEYN›, 1350/1971: 149.

[23] MILLER, 1923: 345.

[24] *In* ‹SOLṬĀNḤOSEYN›, 1350/1971: 122.

[25] JAZBĪ-EṢFAHĀNĪ, 1372/1993: 175.

[26] ‹SOLṬĀNḤOSEYN›, 1350/1971: 133, 134, 135, cf. MADANĪ, 1376/1997: 73-4.

Ḥājj Mollā ʿAlī Nūrʿalīshāh II

Nūrʿalīshāh, Solṭānʿalīshāh's son, initially disliked the Sufism of his family in his youth. He disappeared after conflicts with his father, travelled the Islamic world for years and became a jurist. Later in life, however, he changed his views and in the end (after the murder of his father in 1909) became the order's Pole. He "was to be martyred in his turn by the opponents of such piety."[27] In 1918, on the run for clergymen now turned enemies, he was poisoned in Kashan, and then buried in Rey. 'Gonābād' became 'Gūnābād', 'place of blood'.[28]

After having taken over the order's leadership from his father, Nūrʿalīshāh fell victim to the local strongman Sālār Khān Balūch. Before his clash with the Sufi leader, the latter had killed a local ruler in the village of Torbat in the name of the Constitutional Revolution and behaved as a warlord in Khorasan province.[29] "At the instigation of enemies" Sālār Khān Balūch had grabbed and abducted Nūrʿalīshāh and "held him prisoner for some time, after which he [...] destroyed the houses of Nūrʿalīshāh and his relatives." Nūrʿalīshāh was eventually freed through the intercession of various persons, among whom the ayatollah Mollā Moḥammad Kāẓem Kho-

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[27] HAZEGHI, 1970: vii, cf. GRAMLICH 1965: 68; HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1371/1992: 217-9.

[28] HEYʾAT-E TAḤRĪRĪYE-YE KETĀBKHĀNE-YE AMĪR SOLEYMĀNĪ, 1367/1988-9: 35. ‹Nūrʿalīshāh› had ordered for the construction of a library in Beydokht that the *foqarā* could consult under the sheikh's guidance, while the lodge was open to pilgrims who were allowed to stay as long as they wanted, free of charge (HAZEGHI, 1970: vii). He had issued a *fatvā* that somewhat contested the Islamic legitimacy of slavery. His grandson related: "My grandfather [...], an inspired Mujtahed, issued his Fatva [...] in [...] 1912 - and that was 36 years before the United Nations issued their Universal Declaration of Human Rights - in which he pronounced that 'the purchase and sale of human beings is contrary to the dictates of religion and the practice of civilisation; [...] in our eyes any persons [...] who are claimed as slaves, are in legal fact completely free, and the equals of all other Muslims of their community'." But "should the legal condition for the enslavement of anyone be proven (because he had been taken prisoner fighting against Islam with a view to its extirpation and persisted in invincible ignorance in his [...] infidel convictions, or because there did exist legal proof that all his ancestors without exception had been slaves descended from a person taken prisoner conducting a warfare of such invincible ignorance) Islam would be bound to recognise such slavery as legal [....] The article is thus acceptable to us with this one proviso" (TABANDEH, 1970: 26, 27).

[29] Cf. JAZBĪ-EṢFAHĀNĪ, 1372/1993: 190.

rāsānī.[30] When harassments continued, "the state of the era prevented [the enemies' further] aggression and imprisoned a few of them."[31]

But in the second part of the First World War, when Russian troops controlled most of the northern provinces in Iran,[32] Nūrʿalī-shāh was again abducted. This time, it was carried out by Tzarist forces. The abduction had once more, according to Solṭānʿalīshāhī sources, been accomplished by plotting opponents "who had stated political accusations against Nūrʿalīshāh."[33] Although much remains unclear, it is possibly the friendly relations between Solṭānʿalīshāh and Khorasan's governor,[34] whose position the Russians had undermined, which provide context for the second abduction. Nūrʿalīshāh was honourably escorted back after a few days, however, when interrogations ran dry on his repeated denial of involvement in politics.[35]

What appears from circumstances leading up to the Russian abduction as much as from the continuous harassment of the Gonabadi Sufis, is the conflictuous nature of local and, beyond that, provincial relations, which surpassed outright religious strife. That is, class conflict presented itself in the vocabulary of political reform. On the eve of the Pahlavi dynasty, the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order constituted a considerable socio-political power in Khorasan, if only because it was perceived as one and many enemies acted upon this perception.

Possibly more strenuous than outsiders' harassment, Nūrʿalīshāh had become involved in conflicts over succession after his father died and disobedience by one of the latter's pupils, the self-willed Keyvān Qazvīnī.[36] To support his leadership claim, Nūrʿalīshāh had "issued a proclamation which he is said to have published all over Persia, in which he called upon the *nation* to accept him *as its head*" [italics mine].[37] But even after his ascent, Qazvīnī initiated affiliates

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[30] ‹SOLṬĀNḤOSEYN›, 1348/1969-70: 264.

[31] ‹SOLṬĀNḤOSEYN›, 1348/1969-70: 265.

[32] YAPP, 1978: 15-16. The Russians had a Northern sphere of influence from 1907 (and the British a Southern one) and invaded Iran in 1911. By 1920, remaining (Bolshevik) troops were chased away by Reza Khan (Reza Shah, from 1925). In 1940 they, as well as the British, invaded again.

[33] ‹SOLṬĀNḤOSEYN›, 1337/1958: 203.

[34] ‹SOLṬĀNḤOSEYN›, 1350/1971: 135.

[35] ‹SOLṬĀNḤOSEYN›, 1348/1969-70: 265.

[36] Discontent over ‹Nūrʿalīshāh›'s succession of his father was not limited to Qazvīnī, but shared by many of the Sufis (GRAMLICH, 1976: 178, cf. 1965: 68).

[37] MILLER, 1923: 353. Defending Sufism, in response to accusations by Sālār Khān, ‹Nūrʿalīshāh› had proclaimed: "We do not need the crown of kings / but kings

without Nūrʿalīshāh's approval.[38] Although according to his opponents, Qazvīnī's permission to teach was only granted in 1910 by Nūrʿalīshāh,[39] Qazvīnī maintained it derived from Solṭānʿalīshāh.

The real / true Sufism

'From all the sayings of the Sufis it appears that the institution of the Pole (*qoṭbīyat*) occupies the highest position and that a higher rank is inconceivable'. Riyāżʿalī [replied]: 'Yes!' [....] 'There exists no position of greater importance'.[40]

Keyvān Qazvīnī (1861-1938) was born in Qazvin.[41] After having served several other Sufi masters, he "entered in the circle of the novices of Ṣafīʿalīshāh", succeeded in becoming his 'itinerant sheikh' (*sheykh-e sayyār*), and received his *ejāze-ye ershād*.[42] In the Iraqi holy places he then entered into the service of various Sources of Emulation, one of whom, Rashtī (according to one of Qazvīnī's pupils), conveyed the title of 'ayatollah' upon him.[43] After six years in the service of Ṣafīʿalīshāh and many travels he reached Beydokht, and on 28 December 1894 he re-entered the Sufi path under Solṭānʿalshāh. He was then, reportedly, once more appointed itinerant sheikh, received the cognomen ‹Manṣūrʿalī›, became one of the favourite and most fanatic Gonābādī affiliates, "worked for the propagation of Sufism on behalf of Mollāsolṭān, and went to India, Iraq, Turkestan, the Caucasus and Arabia."[44] But in 1926, he departed from the path of Sufism as it was predominantly known in Iran.[45]

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need our crowns instead" (*Mā na moḥtāj-e tāj-e shāhān-īm / balke shāhān be tāj-e mā moḥtāj*) (JAZBĪ-EṢFAHĀNĪ, 1372/1993: 193).

[38] PARĪSHĀNZĀDE, 1377/1998: 20.

[39] ‹NĀṢERʿALĪ›,1362/1983-4: 44.

[40] RAHBAR-EṢFAHĀNĪ, 1340/1961-2: 254-5.

[41] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 231; 1360/1981-2: 15, cf. GRAMLICH (1965: 68, 69), who held Qazvīnī to have died in 1939. I accept CHAHĀRDAHĪ's dating (1360/1981-2: 15) because it is more precise: 13 October 1938. Qazvīnī died in an American hospital (it is mentioned with a touch of irony by the above researcher).

[42] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1370/1991: 108.

[43] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1370/1991: 108. Qazvīnī wrote about twenty books (GRAMLICH (1965: 68)). Besides two *tafsīr*s and a 'Book of Mysticism' (see below), these included *Rāz-goshā* (Revealing of Secrets), *Behīn sokhan* (The Best Words), the two-volume *Keyvān-nāme* (Book of Kevvān) and *Ostovār* (Keeper of Secrets).

[44] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 231-2.

[45] GRAMLICH, 1965: 68.

While Qazvīnī lived through Reza Shah's demolition of the tradi-
tional Shiʿite clergy's religious institutions, it is unlikely to have
eluded him that "some audacious thinkers attempted to reconcile [...]
intellectual modernism with a renewal of religion."[46]

Ayatollah Sangelajī, who was trained in mysticism (ʿerfān), but
developed a distinct dislike of esoterism, retained, throughout his
life, "confident relations with the new regime."[47] The Shah's Justice
Minister, for example, was his disciple. Central among the modernist
ayatollah's ideas was the need for a more rigorous monotheism that
would do away with the belief in sacred intermediaries, i.e. the
Imams, and their 'intercession' (shefāʿat). In his view, the 'emulation'
(taqlīd) of mojtaheds ought to be replaced by everyman's direct 'in-
terpretation' (ejtehād) of the sacred sources.

Similar arguments against jurist emulation had been stated earlier
by the Akhbaris and the Sheikhis. However, Sangelajī was not the
founder of a religious school or sect and neither did his message
remain largely confined to the clerical community. He lectured in
public while the emerging nation-state was heading towards mass-
education,[48] and he attracted a broad audience as "workers, traders,
merchants, teachers, students, members of parliament, journalists
and preachers were all seated at the foot of his pulpit."[49] (Reportedly,
Qazvīnī had an equally impressive audience, consisting of some 3000
pupils, among whom were well-known literati).[50] An inverse exam-
ple to his modernising religiosity, Sangelajī felt that "the Sufis
[have] so developed the principle of authority that for them the faith-
ful [...] are to the shaykh 'as cadavers are to the washers of the dead':

[46] RICHARD, 1988: 159.

[47] RICHARD, 1988: 162, 168, 162. Even of Reza Shah's main clerical opponent,
Modarres - hailed in the Islamic Republic as an uncompromising star of the Islamic
movement - it has been observed that he "spoke a secular, rather than a religious,
language" (ABRAHAMIAN, 1993: 103).

[48] The number of schools increased from 612 in 1922 to 8237 in 1940 (BANANI,
1961: 108).

[49] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1352/1973-4: 518.

[50] These included, for instance, Saʿīd Nafīsī, Gholāmreżā Samīʿmī Kermānshāhī,
ʿAlī Dashtī, and ʿAbdollāh Khān Maʿzūmī (CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1370/1991: 109). In the
1950s Nafīsī gave a course in Sufi history at Tehran University (cf. BARQ, one of his
pupils, in a treatise under his supervision on the life and works of ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh›,
1352/1973-4: 2). DASHTĪ (d.1982), was a senator and publicist, and the author of
Dar diyār-e ṣūfiyān, a generally sympathetic account of Sufism (1354/1975-6).

utterly without will."[51] The clerical Shiʿite struggle was not, however, lost on Sufism. Sangelajī's affront was paralleled by Qazvīnī's Sufi (self-) critique and his many outlines of a program for reform.

Nūreddīn Modarresī Chahārdahī, Qazvīnī's faithful disciple, wrote in relation to his master's conflicts that "the [Solṭānʿalīshāhī] Poles have never indulged in speaking badly about him, but a number of their Sufis have out of foolishness and without comprehending the issues of the books, engaged in nonsensical, idle talk."[52] Although it is doubtful whether privately opinions were so civil, it was only in 1982 that 'The Cutting Edge' (*Tīq-e boranda*) was published,[53] followed in 1983 by the equally vigilant 'Treatise of the Response' (*Resāla-ye javābīya*).[54] Both of these pamphlets, in defence of the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order, were assaults on Qazvīnī.[55]

As Sangelajī attacked Shiʿite *taqlīd*, Qazvīnī had "objected to Sufism in its outer structure, with poles, sheikhs and disciples. He developed his own teaching of 'real/true' (*ḥaqīqī*) Sufism, against the 'formalist' (*rasmī*) Sufism of Sufi orders",[56] which had as its core the

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[51] RICHARD, 1988: 163, 166-9, 169. Sangelajī's ideas were anathema to most of the *ʿolamā*. Khomeyni was fiercely opposed to Sangelajī (of which evidence is found in his *Kashf ol-asrār*).

[52] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 231-2.

[53] The writer of *Tīq-e boranda* was ʿAbdoṣṣāleḥ Neʿmatollāhī.

[54] The writer of the *Javābīya* was Asadollāh Golpāyegānī Īzād-Goshasb ‹Nāṣerʿalī› (d.1947; see ‹SOLṬĀNḤOSEYN›, 1350/1971: 363 (*Nābegha-ye ʿelm va ʿerfān*)).

[55] 'The Cutting Edge' in addition attempted to tackle Kasravi's attack against Sufism. ‹Reżāʿalīshāh› Tābande (then named ‹Solṭānḥoseyn›) had only once publicly, mildly criticised Qazvīnī in *Sāl-nāme-ye keshvar-e Īrān* (1338/1959-60: 4), and protested to Kasravi in a personal letter dated Mehr 17, 1321/October 9, 1942 (‹MAḤBŪBʿALĪSHĀH›, 1373/1994-5: 221). The present master, his brother ‹Majẕūbʿalīshāh›, told me there could possibly have been a meeting between ‹Solṭānḥoseyn› and Kasravi, as Kasravi was a professor at Tehran University and ‹Solṭānḥoseyn› one of his students. A reason for the order's previous silence was that "the *ʿolamā* were opposed to Sufism to a far greater extent than Kasravi was." ‹Reżāʿalīshāh›, who despised Qazvīnī's pupil Chahārdahī, had nevertheless quoted the latter in stating that Qazvīnī had 'found nothing' with ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh›, to whom the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs related 'as water to fire' (*interview*, 04/19/97). Recently, a new series of affronts and defences has been inaugurated. Maḥmūd ʿAbbāsī provided a new edition of QAZVĪNĪ's *Rāz-goshā* (1376/1997) - a very ill-concealed attempt to render Sufism illegitimate as a whole - to which the order responded with PARĪSHĀNZĀDE's *Goshāyesh-e rāz* (1377/1998), which sought to discredit both Qazvīnī and his editor.

[56] GRAMLICH, 1965: 68-9. ‹NĀṢERʿALĪ› held Qazvīnī opposed to any *reyāsat* (1362/1983-4: 28). Among the Ẕahabīya, there was a somewhat similar discussion

idea that mysticism could be a modern scientific enterprise. The 1930 version of his 'Book of Mysticism' (*ʿErfān-nāme*) used the measure of the modern age; the Gregorian calendar. In line with his modern pose as a 'thinker', Chahārdahī referred to his master not as 'sheikh' but as 'the great philosopher'. Admirers had addressed Kasravi, the nationalist enemy of Sufism, in the same way.

Qazvīnī's real/true Sufism was strongly condemned in the *Resāla*. As Sangelajī allegedly took his inspiration from Saudi revivalists, it was protested against Qazvīnī that "sometimes he exhibits a special interest for the Wahhabi religion," and that "like the Sunnis, he did not recognise 'being divinely appointed' (*naṣṣ*) and 'authorisation' (*ejāze*) as necessary conditions."[57] Furthermore, the Response indignantly rejected Qazvīnī's reproach that Solṭānʿalīshāh had secretly made a claim to the Imamate. Qazvīnī's most sacrilegious allegation even had Solṭānʿalīshāh secretly pretend to prophetic revelation (*vaḥy*), that is: being the ultimate prophet, beyond Moḥammad.

The *Resāla-ye javābīya* explained: "Because [Qazvīnī] was himself opposed to, and an enemy of all the [...] leaders of the religious strata, so he thought that Sufism would be against them as well."[58] Having cited many of Qazvīnī's alleged misconceptions of Shiʿite and Sufi history and deviations from established points of doctrine, it concluded that "the honourable sheikh reckons Shiʿism and Sufism [as a whole] outside Islam."[59] In other words: in attacking all traditional bases of spiritual authority, Qazvīnī had not only lost his wits but was also, through these illicit innovations, an heretic unbeliever.

on the Pole-ship from 1913 (which primarily had to do with its hereditary nature among the Ẕahabīya (LEWISOHN, 1999: 42).

[57] ‹NĀṢERʿALĪ›, 1362/1983: 26, 38. This point was elaborated by Ḥojjat Balāghī, another adversary of Qazvīnī's who led a smaller Neʿmatollāhī branch and stated in a polemic that one was simply born a *qoṭb* - like one was born a *mojtahed* - there being no human elements of election or selection involved (see GRAMLICH, 1976: 179). Qazvīnī, in reference to ('heretic') Bahaism, held of Solṭānʿalīshāhī mysticism that "one cannot count this as Islamic Sufism anymore: it was a new religion, like the claims of Mīrzā Ḥoseynʿalī Bahā" (‹NĀṢERʿALĪ›, 1362/1983: 67).

[58] ‹NĀṢERʿALĪ›, 1362/1983: 63.

[59] ‹NĀṢERʿALĪ›, 1362/1983: 37; CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1370/1991: 108.

These Solṭānᶜalīshāhī exchanges present one with a distinctly modernist struggle. Not only personal claims to spiritual authority were questioned, but also the nature of Sufi authority itself. The struggle has nevertheless been framed, *on both sides*, in the traditional Sufi genre of 'heresiology', which sought 'the intangible point of dogma' to establish the adversary's failings, and to associate them with inadmissible passions and moral culpability.[60] These passions were often related to financial malpractice, which flew in the face of the Sufi ideal of disinterestedness. Doctrinal deviations and heretic passions together established

the opponent's moral failings and bankruptcy.[61]

Figure 3. (Genealogical) succession in the Solṭānᶜalīshāhī order
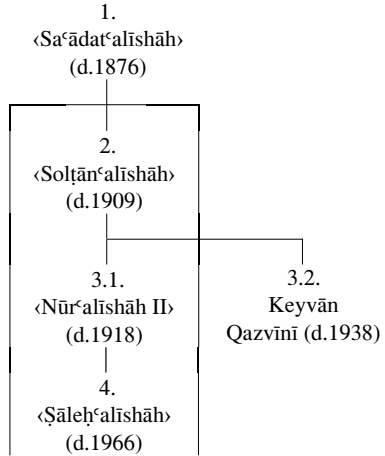
LEGEND. Genealogical succession applies to the names within the demarcated area

In addition, Qazvīnī's questioning of traditional Sufi authority had the nation-state as an implicit, organising motif. In the 'Revealing of Secrets' (*Rāz-goshā*)[62] he identified elements in Iranian culture that were foreign to either Islam or Iran.[63] In this respect, his 'heresiology' was analogous to Kasravi's modernist and nationalist critique. In the Book of Mysticism, Qazvīnī outlined a corporate vision of "classes

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[60] My paraphrase of Foucault's definition (*in* RABINOW, 1984: 382).

[61] One comes across this genre of contestation among many Iranian Sufis. For the Solṭānᶜalīshāhī conflict, see: ‹NĀṢERᶜALĪ›, 1362/1983: 79; QAZVĪNĪ, *in* ᶜAbbāsī, 1376/1997: 190).

[62] Qazvīnī completed *Rāz-goshā* on 16 November 1931, and he published it in August or September 1932 (‹NĀṢERᶜALĪ›, 1362/1983: 22; QAZVĪNĪ, *in* ᶜAbbāsī, 1376/1997: 254).

[63] QAZVĪNĪ had words of praise for the 'great works' of the recent past in Iran: the defeat of the British tobacco monopoly, the Constitutional revolution, and the parliament of 1906 (*ᶜErfān-nāme*, 1309/1930: 269). The Solṭānᶜalīshāhīs (except for Qazvīnī) refrained from such appreciations, which underscores that the nation-state was less obvious as a frame of reference for them.

in society [that] are like organs in the body, [and] that must be present in the society to the extent that they are necessary, not too much and not too little, otherwise society would become defective like the man with four eyes and one hand, or four feet and one tooth."[64]

Of the clergy, very few were functional. The underlying axiom held that if there were many clergymen, there would be more corruption, and few religious benefits. In a city of half a million, Qazvīnī estimated, one person would be enough, to be present once a week for prayer and for teaching 'necessary subjects'.[65] No such leniency was left over in his consideration of formalist, or 'customary' (*marsūm*) Sufism. In Qazvīnī's distinctly modern mode of functionalist reasoning, the organ of traditional Sufism was not only un-Islamic, but also nationally dysfunctional:[66]

> The See of Dervishhood, which had blossomed in the era of impotence of government in Iran, - during the war between the Zands and the Qajars - split into an abundance of branches. Now that it is 1928 in the Christian era, there are twenty dervish Sees in Iran. They flaunt one another with sarcasm and except for negating one another, they have no ground to substantiate themselves.[67]

Mutual admonitory advice

(4) Ḥājj Sheykh Moḥammad Ḥasan Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh (1891-1966) assumed the leadership of the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order after his father was poisoned in 1918, and the torments that befell his father and grandfather awaited him too.[68] But Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh survived, despite assertive views on Sufi authority. In a 1950 interview, he was asked who at present represented the Hidden Imam. Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh's stated: "All orders claim that the directives [...] from their predecessors lead up

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[64] *ʿErfān-nāme*, 1309/1930: 311-12.

[65] *ʿErfān-nāme*, 1309/1930: 313.

[66] Cf. the analysis in *ʿErfān-nāme*, 1309/1930: 311-13.

[67] *ʿErfān-nāme*, 1309/1930: 307.

[68] Cf. ‹ṢĀLEḤʿALĪSHĀH›, 1372/1993-4: 6; JAZBĪ-EṢFAHĀNĪ, 1372/1993-4: 229. There were regular harassments of and violence against Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh and his affiliates and destructions of Solṭānʿalīshāhī property in Gonabad, which caused Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh to flee from Gonabad several times. He had moreover been abducted by Tzarist forces in his youth, together with his father Nūrʿalīshāh.

to them. But they have no written authorization. It is us who are in the possession of a written authorization from the past."[69]

Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh cultivated his religious studies, travelled widely to Islamic holy sites (and once to Geneva), and initiated works for the public good in Gonabad.[70] He managed to reformulate the order from a persecuted outcast in the provincial periphery into a national source of morality. His position was enhanced through conspicuous organisational order and considerable wealth,[71] which rumours say derived from the politically influential provincial aristocracy. The one certainty is that ever more well-to-do and influential affiliates entered the order - including many members of parliament and the premier Qavām as-Salṭana - and that his message became widespread.[72]

When Reza Shah enforced the use of surnames in 1928, the wealthy and powerful Pole chose *Bīchāre*, 'helpless' (which one critic used as an ironical joke and affiliates pointed out as a sign of piety).[73] There are narratives of more direct early contacts between the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs and Reza Shah as well, which concerned one of Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh's sheikhs, Ayatollah Ḥājj Sheykh ʿAbdollāh Ḥāʾerī

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[69] HEYʾAT-E TAḤRĪRĪYE-YE KETĀBKHĀNE-YE AMĪR SOLEYMĀNĪ, 1367/1988-9: 412.

[70] Cf. ‹ṢĀLEḤʿALĪSHĀH›, 1372/1993-4: 7. Among these works were the foundation of the Ketābkhāne-ye Solṭānī, that attained national recognition, the Ṣāleḥīya hospital, the propagation of literacy and adult education, and the digging of several *qanāt*s.

[71] The Solṭānʿalīshāhī order is "innerlich straffer zusammengefaßt, mehr geeint und zentralisiert, mehr von seiner Sendung überzeugt, als jede andere Niʿmatullāhī-gruppe, abgesehen davon, daß der Pol der Gunābādī über ungeheure Geldmittel verfügt, die ihm helfen, seine Machtstellung nach außen hin sichtbar zu machen" (GRAMLICH, 1965: 64).

[72] "Obwohl man in jedem Derwischorden in Persien Vertreter aller Bevölkerungsschichten finden kann, kann man doch in letzter Zeit beobachten, daß Angehörige höherer sozialer Schichten, besonders Beambte, Offiziere, Kaufleute und ähnliche [...], sich mit Vorliebe für die Gunābādī entscheiden" (GRAMLICH, 1965: 64). TRIMINGHAM cites an observation by IVANOW in the 1960s: "A few decades ago almost the whole of the class of the junior government clerks [...] belonged to the [...] Gunābādī order" (1971: 102). MILLER (1923: 347) mentioned "well-to-do classes such as merchants [and] landowners", parliamentarians and the premier as Gunābādī affiliates.

[73] POURJAVADY and WILSON, 1978: 252. It must be noted in addition to Pourjavady and Wilson's reading, however, that *Bīchāre* was also the name of a clan in Beydokht under which ‹Solṭānʿalīshāh› had already been registered (cf. ‹MAḤBŪBʿALĪSHĀH›, 1373/1994-5: 47).

Māzanderānī.[74] During the holy months the king used to send money
to some of the clergymen for the breaking of the fast. He included
Ḥāʾerī, who, however, refused to accept the compromising gift.[75]

   The present Pole, Majẕūbʿalīshāh, stressed a less ideologically
cleansed royal relation with the sheikh, to whom the king had alleg-
edly 'become captivated'. His version matched, in detail, a pre-
revolutionary account by Sheikh ol-Molk Owrang, Sufi member of
parliament and court intimate of Reza Shah. Majẕūbʿalīshāh related:

> When he was still a hungry, poor and simple soldier, Reza Shah once
> had an encounter with Ḥāʾerī, one of the sheikhs of Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh.
> Ḥāʾerī predicted: 'You will be king'. Reza Shah was utterly amazed
> and said he didn't believe the prediction. Ḥāʾerī responded: 'Yes, you
> will be king, and you must treat the people right'. After Reza Khan be-
> came Reza Shah, he recalled the encounter with Ḥāʾerī and sent some-
> one to search for him. Ḥāʾerī was found and the two met for a second
> time, during which Reza Shah asked: 'Is there anything I can do for
> you?' Ḥāʾerī responded: 'No, nothing, just don't loose out of sight that
> which I told you when we first met: Treat the people right'.[76]

Reza Shah had become opposed to Sufism, according to Majẕūb-
ʿalīshāh, not because of any preconceived grudge against it, but be-
cause its numbers had grown very large. A British traveller, in any
case, was told in the 1920s that all of the people in the district of
Gonabad were Sufis.[77] During Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh's leadership, the Solṭān-
ʿalīshāhī numbers were estimated at about 40.000 (which approxi-
mated the size of the unified Neʿmatollāhī order in the eighteenth
century), while their affiliates were widely distributed over Iran.[78]

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[74] GRAMLICH (1965: 69) mentions that during his research ‹Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh› had
four sheikhs, one of them his son ‹Solṭānḥoseyn›, the other three unknown. From
Yād-nāme-ye Ṣāleḥ (HEYʾAT-E TAḤRĪRĪYE-YE KETĀBKHĀNE-YE AMĪR SOLEYMĀ-
NĪ, 1367/1988-9: 84-90) it emerges there were, in total, fourteen sheikhs, whose
names in addition to ‹Solṭānḥoseyn›, Keyvān Qazvīnī and Ḥāʾerī, included: 1)
ʿEmādeddīn Sabzavārī; 2) Mīrzā Abū Ṭāleb Semnānī; 3) Mīrzā Yūsof Ḥāʾerī; 4)
Emām Jomʿe-ye Eṣṭahbānātī; 5) Asadollāh Golpāyegānī Īzad-Goshasb; 6) Moḥam-
mad Fānī Semnānī; 7) Mīrzā Mehdī Mojtahed Soleymānī; 8) Moḥammad Khān
Rāstīn Arākī; 9) ʿAbdollāh Ṣūfī Amlashī; 10) Moḥammad Sharīʿat Qomī; and 11)
Hebatollāh Jaẕbī.
   [75] NEʿMATOLLĀHĪ, 1361/1982: 80.
   [76] *Interview* ‹Majẕūbʿalīshāh›, 04/19/97; cf. OWRANG, *in Sāl-nāme-ye donyā*, 22:
216-20.
   [77] MILLER, 1923: 343.
   [78] ‹SOLṬĀNʿALĪSHĀH›, *in Sāl-nāme-ye keshvar-e Īrān*, 1338/1959-60, (4): 124.

Majẕūbᶜalīshāh recollected three additional, baseless reproaches: the Sufis in Beydokht were accused of smoking opium and bribing judges. Qazvīnī had written that the Sufis - Ṣāleḥᶜalīshāh among them - were aspiring to revolution and coveting the kingship.[79] Reza Shah then, according to Majẕūbᶜalīshāh, himself visited representatives of the order in Tehran, who explained to the king that none of the accusations contained any truth. Reza Shah's Minister of Culture ᶜAlī Aṣghar Ḥekmat visited Gonabad and witnessed the Solṭānᶜalīshāhī school for illiterate adults. After Ḥekmat returned to Tehran and reported his findings, the Shah allegedly made literacy compulsory for servants in the state machinery. Classes similar to the Solṭān-ᶜalīshāhī one in Gonabad were then organised for adult illiterates.[80]

Finally, Majẕūbᶜalīshāh recollected a visit by Reza Shah to the Solṭānᶜalīshāhīs in Gonabad, during which the king requested the writing of an instruction from which it would become manifest what constituted legitimate Sufi behaviour. The manuscript that resulted in 1939 was 'Ṣāleḥ's Advice' (*Pand-e Ṣāleḥ*), a booklet which more than any other established the order as a legitimate religious force in modern Iran.[81] It has perhaps been events like these, and booklets like *Pand-e Ṣāleḥ*, which underlay the claim that actually, "Reza Shah [may even] have harboured some sympathy for the dervishes."[82]

Pand-e Ṣāleḥ, according to another Solṭānᶜalīshāhī manifesto, became "a household word amongst the religious of Iran."[83] The Sol-

[79] Cf. HEYʾAT-E TAHRĪRĪYE-YE KETĀBKHĀNE-YE AMĪR SOLEYMĀNĪ, 1367/1988-9: 142-3. Solṭānᶜalīshāhīs in turn accused Qazvīnī of appropriating the title 'shah' (which they say only becomes the *qoṭb*) through adding it to his order name ‹Manṣūrᶜalī› (see HEYʾAT-E TAḤRĪRĪYE-YE KETĀBKHĀNE-YE AMĪR SOLEYMĀNĪ, 1367/1988-9: 86). Ṣāleḥᶜalīshāh reportedly stated: "He [Qazvīnī] is not a sheikh anymore, but as he is still a dervish [*faqīr*], let us ask God to carry him from this world, before he brings the dervish faith into danger" (cited *in* QAZVĪNĪ/ᶜAbbāsī, 1376/1997: 93).

[80] "Reza Shah realised that adult education would potentially provide his program of nationalism [...] and modernization with a broader mass-support, and in 1936 the Ministry of Education began to put its plans into operation" (BANANI, 1961: 103).

[81] *Interview* ‹Majẕūbᶜalīshāh›, 04/19/97. In the official Solṭānᶜalīshāhī literature the story is retold with a slightly different twist: In it Reza Shah becomes aware of his prejudices against Sufism and the Solṭānᶜalīshāhī order after getting to know the content of *Pand-e Ṣāleḥ* (HEYʾAT-E TAḤRĪRĪYE-YE KETĀBKHĀNE-YE AMĪR SOLEYMĀNĪ, 1367/1988-9: 142-3). In *Pand-e Ṣāleḥ* itself, it is mentioned that the booklet was written in response to requests by the *foqarā* (*op. cit.*, p. 16).

[82] POURJAVADI and WILSON, 1978: 162.

[83] HAZEGHI, 1970: viii.

ṭānʿalīshāhī order's respectable mission, contrary to that of others, aimed at the broadest possible audience. Ṣāleḥ's Advice, the laudatory introduction mentions, "makes clear for the ordinary man and woman how to practice this moral and spiritual discipline [of Sufism], and so to enjoy the fruits of the spirit in daily life in this world."[84]

Pand-e Ṣāleḥ was recently observed to be "a work filled with platitudes and hackneyed moral exhortations, the mystical content of which is insignificant."[85] Whether or not one accepts this as a literary qualification or as a judgement of modern Solṭānʿalīshāhī doctrine, there is indeed little in it, apart from some measure of terminology, that could distinguish the Solṭānʿalīshāhī Sufis from other Iranian Shiʿites. And there is nothing in *Pand-e Ṣāleḥ* that would otherwise put the Sufis up against the social, the religious or the stately order.

Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh was vehemently opposed to the Sufis' involvement in politics, except where politics concerned religious matters. However, even in these he would not define religious duties in any binding detail beyond 'enjoining the good and forbidding the evil' (*amr be maʿrūf va nahy az monkar*).[86] When Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh did incidentally call upon the *state*, it was in a bid for support of traditional crafts and industries, which were a token of the (great) *nation of Iran*.[87]

National integration had been a cause of great concern for Kasravi, who had "focused on the question of communalism in [his pamphlet] *Sufigari*", and held Sufism, as a religious sect, among the primary causes of national disintegration.[88] But Nūrʿalīshāh had promised "to remove all discord from the nation in the space of two years" (if only the nation would recognise him as its spiritual leader).[89] Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh had been unable to verbally counter Kasravi's modernist assault, but he had nevertheless further developed the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order in ways to make it seem idle.

One finds modern transformations in the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order, then, not only in the conspicuously revolutionary innovations of Qazvīnī. They are also to be found in Nūrʿalīshāh's nation-wide appeal for spiritual recognition and national unity, and in the stream-

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[84] HAZEGHI, 1970: ix.
[85] LEWISOHN, 1998: 452.
[86] ‹SOLṬĀNḤOSEYN›, 1348/1969-70: 270.
[87] HEYʾAT-E TAḤRĪRĪYE-YE KETĀBKHĀNE-YE AMĪR SOLEYMĀNĪ, 1367/1988-9: 141.
[88] ABRAHAMIAN, 1973: 297, 282.
[89] MILLER, 1923: 354.

lined religiosity which stories surrounding Ṣāleḥ's Advice claim was commissioned by Reza Shah, the leader of the nation. Thus, the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order evolved from being a powerful but localised *ferqe* (sect) into, to some outward extent at least, becoming a subdued but nationally integrated socio-religious organisation.

The Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order

The Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order takes its name from Mīrzā Ḥasan Bāqer Eṣfahānī (or Yazdī), a disciple of Raḥmatʿalīshāh, the last leader of the unified Neʿmatollāhī order before contemporary divisions. He was born in Isfahan in 1835, travelled widely, repeatedly met with persecution, but founded a flourishing order, and died in Tehran in 1899.[90]

Ṣafīʿalīshāh was, like his pupil Qazvīnī, accused of entertaining relations with the Bahai community, he was reproached for Freemasons being among his disciples,[91] and his "connections with the Ismāʿīlīs were obviously strong."[92] When in India, "Safi 'Ali Shah [had] also kept company with the local Sufis, Yogis and Brah-

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[90] 11/24 or 25/1316Q, cf. GRAMLICH, 1965: 61; ḤOSEYNĪ, 1377/1998: 11; BARQ, 1352/1973-4: 3; *et al.* ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh›'s lodge and burial site was allegedly built in 1316Q/1896 (see KIYĀNĪ, 1369/ 1990-1: 244; ‹MAʿṢŪMʿALĪSHĀH› (1318Q /1900, (3): 446 (*Ṭarāʾeq ol-ḥaqāʾeq*), but this was contested by HOMĀYŪNĪ (1371/1992: 276). "After the passing away of ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh› nine hundred *tūmān* was assembled and spent on the restoration of the lodge and the payment of the heirs of ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh›" (CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-2: 15). Besides this lodge, the Ṣafīʿalīshāhīs have a general burial place between Tajrish and the Emāmzāde-ye Qāsem in Tehran. It was built and named after ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle› by his Society of Brotherhood, from money acquired from the sale of adjacent lands (*op. cit.*, p. 28). The Solṭānʿalīshāhīs stress that ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh› had accepted the *ejāze-nāme* of his (Solṭānʿalīshāhī) competitor ‹Saʿādatʿalīshāh› (EṢFAHĀNĪ, 1372/1993-4: 35-8). As there is no denying this, many Ṣafīʿalīshāhīs grant the Solṭānʿalīshāhī version but add that ‹Saʿādatʿalīshāh› had, with authorisation, accepted ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh›'s superiority in the affairs of Sufism. The details of the agonising conflicts over ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh›'s succession fall outside the scope of this research (they are dealt with *in* GRAMLICH, 1965).

[91] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-2: 18, 167; KATĪRĀʾĪ, 1355/1976-7: 96.

[92] POURJAVADY and WILSON, 1975: 132. ḤAZINI relates: "Rahmat 'Ali Shah soon made Safi 'Ali Shah his personal envoy to the Ni'matullahi and Isma'ili communities in India" (1998. *A Short Introduction to the Life and Works of Safi ʿAli Shah: A Persian Saint of the 19th Century*. Http://welcome.to/safi). He had been sent to India to renew allegiances to the Agha Khan of the Ismāʿīlīya (VAḤĪDNIYĀ, 1352/1973: 254). A first hand account by Ṣafīʿalīshāh of (among other subjects) relations with the Ismāʿīlīya during his foreign and Iranian travels, has been included in HOMĀYŪNĪ (1371/1992: 246-74).

mins.''[93] Kasravi wrote (without, however, providing any evidence) that Ṣafīʿalīshāh had "annexed Sufism to the deifyers of ʿAlī (ʿAlī-Illāhī)", the 'extremist' Ahl-e Ḥaqq.[94] In another sense, Ṣafīʿalīshāh was an undisputed innovator: he wrote a *tafsīr* in rhyme and in Persian, which many of the clergy found blasphemous, and for which they declared him an unbeliever. The *tafsīr* was nevertheless, through Nāṣer od-Dīn Shāh's intercession, sanctioned by a *fatvā* of the Iraqi Source of Emulation Mīrzā-ye Shīrāzī.

Even more interesting than the allegations and facts of an ecumenical and innovative mind, one of his successors read Ṣafīʿalīshāh's appearance and success in Tehran politically, in the context of the reform of Qajar despotism.[95] The theme of reform would, in conflicting definitions, dominate developments in the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order after the founder's demise. All of the new sub-branches became preoccupied, through their leaders, with far-reaching organisational and ideational changes.

In his last breath - dying, according to a legend which survives to the present, in a corner of the lodge in Tehran - Ṣafīʿalīshāh reportedly murmured to the disciples who were surrounding him: "have no disunity" (*ekhtelāf ma-dār*). But contrary to the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order - in which a largely undisputed, genealogical leadership came into existence - the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order has seen incongruously antagonistic claims for leadership, immediately after the founder's death and until presently. After Ṣafīʿalīshāh, there has not been any Sufi leader who compared to the founder in charisma, reputation or following. Ṣafīʿalīshāh had sixteen sheikhs, none of whom were unambiguously declared his one and only successor.[96] For this reason, Ṣafīʿalīshāhī spirituality has to this day radiated around Ṣafīʿalīshāh's personality.

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[93] HAZINI, 1998. *A Short Introduction to the Life and Works of Safi ʿAli Shah: A Persian Saint of the 19th Century*. Http://welcome.to/safi. He had been sent to India by the late Neʿmatollahi leader ‹Raḥmatʿalīshāh› to renew the allegiances to the Ismāʿīlīya Agha Khan.

[94] KASRAVĪ, 1342/1963-4: 50.

[95] See Marzbān, *in* AFSHĀR, 1367/1988: 24-5, cf. ḤOSEYNĪ, 1377/1998: 15.

[96] ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh› held that the Pole-ship ought to be claimed by a person whose being sufficiently shared in that of the Hidden Imam during his occultation, and to whom nothing would remain unknown (ZANGANE-PŪR, 1343/1964-5: 471). The sheikhs were: 1. Ḥājj Sayyed Mīrzā Maḥmūd Khān Naʾīnī ‹Ḥeyratʿalīshāh› (d.1919/20) (CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-2: 36); 2. Ḥājj Moḥammad Ebrāhīm Namāzī Shīrāzī ‹Niyāzʿalīshāh› (d.1904/05); 3. Ḥājjī ʿAbdollāh Neʿmatī Mostashārʿalīshāh Ker-mānshāhī ‹Ḥājjī Dādāsh› (d.1948) (CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-

Maʿrūfʿalīshāh, Mīr Maʿṣūm Khān Kermanī, Ḥeyratʿalīshāh and Ẓahīr od-Dowle all claimed to be Ṣafīʿalīshāh's exclusively legitimate, appointed successor. The claimants produced and contested various documents and oral authorisations. But the evidence made public and subsequent conflicts over succession did not result in clearly demarcated branches. Several sheikhs attempted, to the end of the reign of Reza Shah, to regain the spiritual leadership over the central branch, and others gave up their claims in silence.[97] The central branch in Ṣafīʿalīshāh's lodge has remained a contested asset.

The Shirazi horse trader Maʿrūfʿalīshāh made a claim for the leadership, but soon thereafter pledged his allegiance to Mīr Maʿṣūm Khān Kermanī,[98] whose alternative lineage was influential up to the 'glory of the gnostics' (*fakhr ol-ʿorafāʾ*) Moḥammad Ḥakīmiyān ‹Rahmatʿalīshāh›. Reza Shah's first Prime Minister Mīrzā Moḥammad ʿAlī Khān Forūghī Ẕakāʾ ol-Molk and the Speaker of Parliament Ṣādeq Ṭabāṭabāʾī were among Ḥakīmiyān's influential pupils.[99] Although Maʿrūfʿalīshāh's successor initially followed Ẓahīr od-Dowle, Qāsem Tavāngar later parted from his Society of Brotherhood (see below), that he reproached for illegitimate innovations of Sufism.[100]

Ḥajj Sayyed Maḥmūd Khān Nāʾīnī ‹Ḥeyratʿalīshāh› reportedly 'brought forth a lot of noise' after Ṣafīʿalīshāh died, quarrelled fiercely with Ẓahīr od-Dowle, and fled to Mahan. Mahan was, a contemporary Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufi reminded, an uninhabitable place where the late Shah had done away with exiles. But it also contained the shrine of Shāh Neʿmatollāh Valī, at the foot of which Ḥeyratʿalīshāh

2: 40-1); 4. ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle›, ‹Ṣafāʿalī› (d.1924); 5. Mīrzā ʿAbdolkarīm Shīrāzī ‹Maʿrūfʿalīshāh› (d.?); 6. Hādī Mowlavī Gīlānī ‹Vafāʿalīshāh› (d.1949) (CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 164); 7. Maʿṣūm Khān Kermanī (d.?); 8. Vahdat (in Yazd) (d.?); 9. Navvāb-e Shams (in Yazd) (d.?); 10. Sayyed Ḥoseyn (in India) (d.?); 11. Nāʾeb oṣ-Ṣadr Semnānī ‹Man-ṣūrʿalīshāh› (d.1934) (CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 174); 12. Ḥājjī ‹Seyf od-Dowle› (d.?) (CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1982: 49); 13. 'Sheykh ol-Mashāyekh' Qomsheʾī (d.?); 14. Āqā Reżā Shams ol-ʿOrafā ‹Ḥoseynʿalīshāh› (d.?); 15. Mīrzā Maḥmūd Raʾīs ‹Shafīqʿalī› (d.?) (CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 149); 16. (Mollā ʿAbbāsʿalī) Keyvān Qazvīnī (d.1938).

[97] Historical reality has certainly been more complex than the chart in Figure 4. outlines (see below), but given that several Sufis from different sub-branches agreed on it when I presented it to them, I am convinced that at least the main structure must be accurate. I am particularly grateful to ‹Monavvarʿalīshāh› who took the trouble to delve his memory and go over it with me.

[98] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-2: 34.

[99] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 149; ZANGANE-PŪR, 1343/1964-5: 473.

[100] Tavāngar died in the 1960s or early 1970s (*verbatim* Nima Hazini, 10/29/99).

built his own Ṣafīʿalīshāhī lodge. Thus, an early competitor branch was established, located in an untouchable spiritual realm that bore witness to Ḥeyrat's authentic mystical religiosity. It was to Ḥeyrat‹alīshāh› and the Mahani rebel lodge that the son of Ṣafīʿalīshāh retreated as well, when a conflict evolved between the heirs of Ṣafīʿalīshāh and the new masters of the lodge in Tehran.[101]

Two other influential sheikhs who were opposed to both the heirs of Ṣafīʿalīshāh and the new masters surrounding Ẓahīr od-Dowle were ʿAbdollāh Neʿmatī ‹Ḥājjī Dādāsh› and Hādī Mowlavī Gīlānī ‹Vafāʿalīshāh›.[102] Vafāʿalīshāh had been authorised on the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī path by Niyāzʿalīshāh, the successor of Ḥeyratʿalīshāh. However, for some time Vafāʿalīshāh had also lived in Ẓahīr od-Dowle's house and been the latter's Master of Ceremonies (*pīr-e dalīl*). Some fifty years after the successional conflicts, he was honoured by burial in the graveyard adjacent to the lodge of Ẓahīr od-Dowle's Society of Brotherhood. Vafāʿalīshāh took care of the edition of Ṣafīʿalīshāh's *tafsīr* and 'The Last Writing of Ṣafīʿalīshāh'.[103]

The kind reference to Ẓahīr od-Dowle in the latter publication further moderates the image of militant opposition which later Ṣafīʿalīshāhī sheikhs project upon Vafāʿalīshāh.[104] The renown of Vafāʿalīshāh as a prominent Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufi with leadership pretensions had been wide enough for Kasravi to attack him harshly:

> Let me cite [an] example of the unclean spirit of the Sufis. A man named Mowlavī was a pupil of ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh› [...] (and they say he is now his successor). This man has produced a *maṣnavī* about history named ʿĀlam va ādam [....] Two poems from it [...] are to the praise of Timur Leng [....] It is a sign of the darkness of the soul of this person who has completed *retraites* (*chillahā*) and traversed 'stations' (*maqā-*

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[101] The brother of ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh› (who also was one of his sheikhs) was named Āqā Reżā Shams ol-ʿOrafā ‹Ḥoseynʿalīshāh› (CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 149).

[102] *Interview* Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufi, 03/25/97; CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-2: 171. GRAMLICH mentions ‹Ḥājjī Dādāsh› and ‹Vafāʿalīshāh› as claimants for the *qoṭbīyat* after Ẓahīr od-Dowle (1965: 63). This is not confirmed by CHAHĀRDAHĪ (in either 1360/1981-2 or 1361/1982-3). In any case, both initially opposed but later accepted Ẓahīr od-Dowle's Society of Brotherhood, if not his leadership (see below).

[103] *Asrār ol-maʿāref, ākherīn taʾlīf-e Ṣafīʿalīshāh.*

[104] One Ṣafīʿalīshāhī sheikh had ‹Vafāʿalīshāh› as an irreconcilable enemy of the Shah and an aid to the rebel Mirza Kuchek Khan (cf. CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-2: 43). Another Ṣafīʿalīshāhī sheikh, however, mentioned that the preface to ‹Vafāʿalī-shāh›'s *ʿĀlam va ādam* contained praise not only of Timur Leng but also Reza Shah.

māt), that after six hundred years he flatters the cruel Timur Leng [....]
A person whose soul is clean, should be disgusted by oppression.[105]

Three loyalty groups were thus represented in and around the Tehrani lodge. First was Ẓahīr od-Dowle's Society of Brotherhood, second were their divided enemies (among whom Ḥeyratʿalīshāh), and third were remaining members of Ṣafīʿalīshāh's family.

Apart from these informal loyalty groups were several Sufis who were reputed to be 'impartial' sheikhs (*sheykh-e bī-ṭaraf*, such as Ḥājj Sayyed Mīrzā Naṣrollāh Taqavī).[106] Some of these sheikhs started their own lines of succession. A prominent 'independent sheikh' in the lodge (although successively a pupil of Ṣafīʿalīshāh and Ẓahīr od-Dowle, and later on an aide to the Society of Brotherhood) was Maḥmūd Ṣafāʾī ‹Ṣafāʾ ol-Molk›, with his first and second adjutants and Masters of Ceremonies Dastūrī and Moṣaffāʾī.[107]

Although none of these groups (that is, including the impartial sheikhs) had sufficient power or skills to oust either of the others, soon after Ṣafīʿalīshāh's death the actual leadership in the order became firmly established in the hands of the Society of Brotherhood.

[105] KASRAVĪ, 1342/1963-4: 64-5.

[106] Despite independence, Taqavī reportedly entertained relations with both the heirs of ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh› and the Society of Brotherhood (*interviews* ‹Monavvarʿalīshāh›, 03/25/97, 09/09/98; CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-2: 57). Taqavī obtained his 'authorisation' (*ejāze*) from Ṣafā.

[107] GRAMLICH, 1965: 64. There is a confusion of names as yet unresolved. Gramlich mentions 'Dastūrī', CHAHĀRDAHĪ refers to 'Nūrollāh Daftarī', "who smoked opium and hashish in the lodge" (1361/1982-3: 164). He was a nephew of the late premier Moṣaddeq. Ḥājj Aḥmad Moṣaffāʾī (1285/1906-7 - 1310/1931-2) was an employee in the Ministry of Finance who obtained his *ejāze-ye ershād* from ‹Vafāʿalīshāh› (*op. cit.*, p. 19). The latter also granted an *ejāze-ye ershād* to ʿAbbās ʿĀfī, an employee in the Sepāh Bank (*op. cit.*, p. 42).

Figure 4. Initial branching of the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order
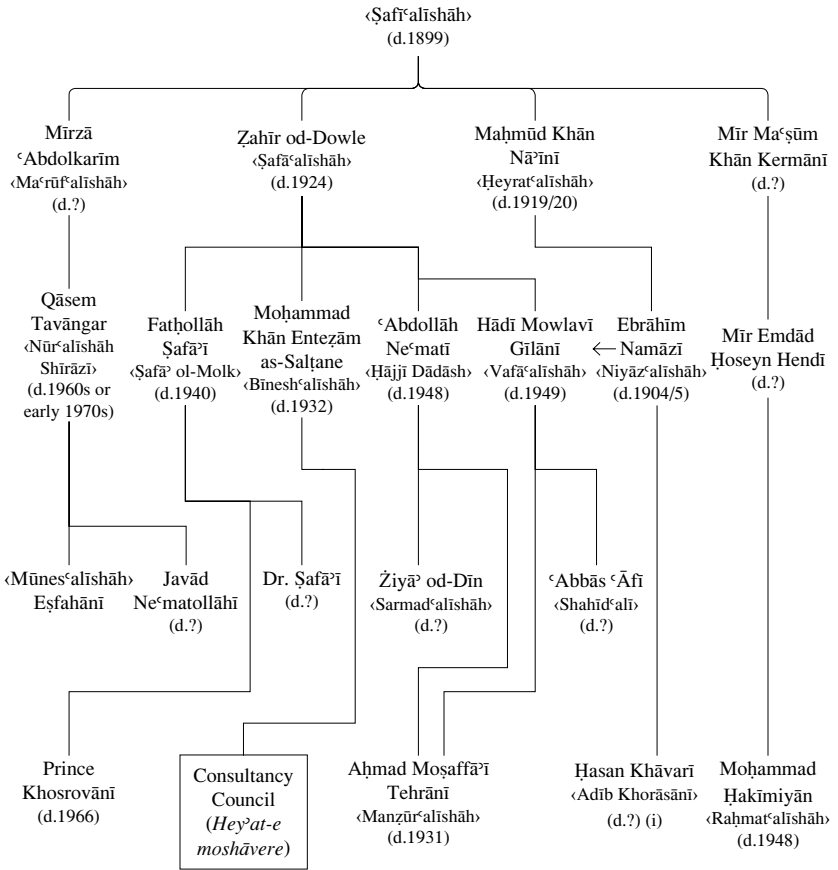
LEGEND. ‹›: cognomen; ▯: genealogically independent; ←: the person to the left was (also) a pupil of the person to the right; (i): Adīb Khorāsānī was also known as ‹Manẓūrʿalīshāh› and ‹Adīb ol-ʿOrafā›. Cf. Figure 8., on recent branching.

Relations between the Society and Ṣafīʿalīshāh's heirs grew worse when the two parties began disputing the ownership of the lodge, which had been built by Ṣafīʿalīshāh's sheikh Seyf od-Dowle. The unequalled significance to this day, for Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufis, of the Tehrani site - beyond any other location, including Mahan - consists of its containing the grave of Ṣafīʿalīshāh. When the heirs wanted to sell the Tehrani lodge, they were therefore bound to meet with the enmity of Vafāʿalīshāh, Ẓahīr od-Dowle and Ḥeyratʿalīshāh.

Although Ṣafīʿalīshāh's granddaughter Nasrīn Neshāṭ maintains that "Vafāʿalīshāh, who did not even live in the lodge, one day out of the blue claimed his ownership of the place",[108] many agree that initial hostilities erupted after Ṣafīʿalīshāh's daughter Bānū Shams oż-Żoḥā requested the whole *khānaqāh* to be registered as her private property. Vafāʿalīshāh then went to court to dispute the claim, and the issue remained unsettled for many years. In the end, a judicial ruling ordered for the lodge to be split in two.[109]

Sufism and Freemasonry

> Yes! It was the Society of Brotherhood that shattered the court of the arrogant ones and that brought the leaders of the time, and the sons of the government of the age [...], in conversation with the *foqarāʾ* [...].[110]

Mīrzā ʿAlī Khān Qājār Ẓahīr od-Dowle, also known by his Sufi cognomen ‹Ṣafāʿalīshāh›, was the son-in-law of Nāṣer od-Dīn Shāh and his Minister of Ceremonies.[111] According to a canonised tradition still current among several Tehrani Sufis, Ẓahīr od-Dowle was sent to Ṣafīʿalīshāh by the king, who mistrusted the concentration of social power in his Sufi circles. But the Qajar courtier became irresistibly captivated, instead, by the forceful personality of Ṣafīʿalīshāh.

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[108] *Interview* Nasrīn Neshāṭ, 07/20/97.

[109] After the court ruling, Shams oż-Żoḥā reportedly remained in her part of the lodge. VAḤĪDNIYĀ (1352/1973: 256) claimed she remained in its 'surroundings'.

[110] Speech by ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle› in 1911 (AFSHĀR, 1367/1988: 62; HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1371/1992: 318).

[111] GRAMLICH (1965: 63) held that ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle› was ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh›'s second man and Ḥeyratʿalīshāh just a pretender. ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle› was supposedly recognised by the majority as ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh›'s successor. The above conflicts, however, suggest otherwise. The techniques; shaming, discrediting and stressing the urgency of reform, were also documented of the Ahl-e Ḥaqq (MIR-HOSSEINI, 1994, (2)).
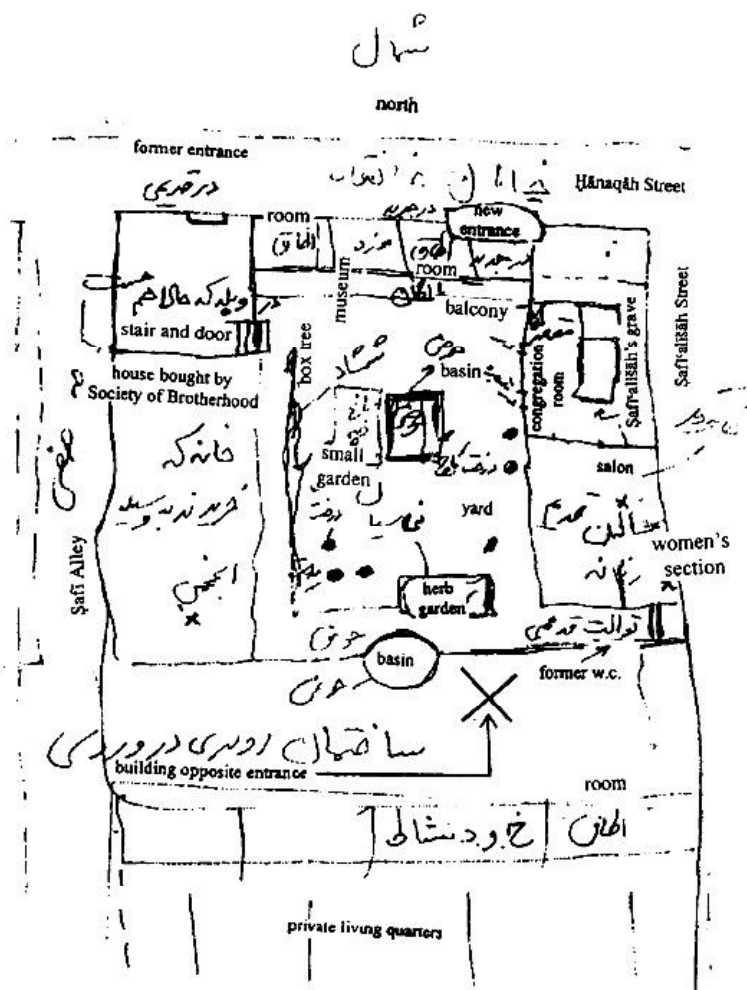
Figure 5. Sketch-map of the main Ṣafīʿalīshāhī lodge before the partition
(see below), drawn by Monavvarʿalīshāh, 04/04/97

In a test of his new pupil's sincerity, Ṣafīʿalīshāh then sent Ẓahīr od-Dowle begging in the bazaar of Tehran. The Qajar noble humbly accepted and carried out the initiatory mission.

On December 18, 1899, seven months after the death of Ṣafīʿalīshāh, Ẓahīr od-Dowle officially founded the Society of Brotherhood (*Anjoman-e okhovvat*) within the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order.[112] It gained the protection of a royal decree by Moẓaffar ed-Dīn Shāh (ruled 1896-1907).[113] As constitutionalist ideas were current in the Society of Brotherhood, Ẓahīr od-Dowle fell out of grace with Moḥammad ʿAlī Shāh, who sacked the Society (in Ẓahīr od-Dowle's house) in revenge. Ẓahīr's son was arrested. Some Sufis reportedly fought along with government forces during the Constitutional Revolution, but at least three pro-constitutionalist Ṣafīʿalīshāhīs were killed.[114]

Beyond verbal agitation after the revolution, Ẓahīr od-Dowle's own role remains unclear.[115] When the revolution was over, relations between the Society of Brotherhood and the royal court were not breached, as the new king Aḥmad Shāh and his crown prince developed an interest in it. Until the ascent of the Pahlavi dynasty, the family of Ẓahīr od-Dowle retained a royal salary.[116] With the coming to power of Reza Shah's regime, royal patronage came to a temporary halt, but not the Society of Brotherhood's political life. It had been a long time before dying physically, according to legend, that Ẓahīr od-Dowle had (spiritually) 'died to the world'.[117] He acted his last public part as governor of Tehran up to 1922, however, (only)

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[112] Marzbān, *in* HOMĀYŪNĪ (1371/1992: 302).

[113] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 44; ANWĀR, 1987: 88. The Society of Brotherhood was also called *Okhovvat-e Ṣafīʿalīshāh* [Brotherhood of Ṣafīʿalīshāh] (GRAMLICH, 1965: 63). It was probably the first major Society during the reign of Moẓaffar ed-Dīn Shāh (cf. ḤOSEYNĪ, 1377/1998: 10).

[114] Cf. ṢADŪQĪ-SOHĀ, 1370/1991-2: 105.

[115] ṢAFĀʾĪ (1344/1965-6) has written a biography of ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle› in his 'Leaders of the Constitutional Revolution'. He did not, however, contribute evidence to support his inclusion. The ideological fusion of Freemasonry and Sufism, in the sense that terms from either tradition were used to describe the other, was further openly stressed in Adīb ol-Mamālek's famous, masonic poem from 1907, *Āʾīn-e farāmāsūn va farāmūshkhāne* (cf. ALGAR, 1970: 288-9).

[116] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-2: 44, 54, cf. HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1371/1992: 313.

[117] *Pāsokhī be entebāh-nāme-ye heyʾat-e moshāvere-ye anjoman-e okhovvat,* 1333/1954: 4.

two years before his death.[118] His successors in the Society of Broth-
erhood included similarly influential men of the world.

Ẓahīr od-Dowle had self-consciously combined politics and mys-
ticism, as he "brought Sufism into the shape of [...] a political
party."[119] It was objected that "Sufism was an excuse for his political
work", while others would stress it had been 'mysticism in the ser-
vice of society'.[120] In either case, the focus of mysticism had widened
beyond the traditional, atomistic individualism: after the Constitu-
tional Revolution, the Society organised festivities for the 'national
victory'.[121] Because of the Society of Brotherhood, the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī
order obtained its largest numerical growth.

From the beginning, Freemasonry embodied the political and
mystical ideals in the Society of Brotherhood.[122] There were histori-
cal and structural reasons for this. Reform-minded individuals in the
Qajar court who found intellectual inspiration in its Western and elite
ideals and sufficient protection in its secrecy carried Freemasonry in
Iran.[123] As the Iranian nation in the Constitutional Revolution and the
nation-state under Reza Shah became markers of legitimate identity,
the Society of Brotherhood could open up, in the sense of becoming
more public. It did not ever, however, come close to being a democ-
ratic organisation. In sudden awareness, one Ṣafīʿalīshāhī sheikh
expressed amazement to me of his having been in the order for
nearly forty years without knowing very precisely who had been the
board members in the Society of Brotherhood. The Society of Broth-
erhood remained public and nation-oriented externally, but secretive
and hierarchical like Freemasonry, internally.

Iranian Freemasonry had come about from exile contacts with
European representatives of the mother branches in Europe: the

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[118] AFSHĀR, 1367/1988: 36.

[119] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 164; 1360/1981-2: 61.

[120] ṢAFĀʾĪ, 1344/1965-6: 10.

[121] ṢAFĀʾĪ, 1344/1965-6: 39.

[122] See CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-2: 58, cf. RĀʾĪN, 1357/1978: 479.

[123] The main reason for Sufism and Freemasonry, rather than other traditions, to
have fused, lay in structural resemblances that gave them natural proximity: "Resem-
blances may [...] be noted between the Masonic lodge and many Sufi brotherhoods: a
clandestine or semi-clandestine organization; a ceremony of initiation; the claim to
esoteric knowledge; and disdain for the outward forms of established religion are all
shared [....] Such similarities may have played some role in the preparation of promi-
nent Iranians for entry to masonic [...] groupings" (ALGAR, 1970: 291).

Scottish and the German Grand Lodges and the French *Grand Orient*.[124] Four small groups were connected to the German branch in Iran, that were to develop into independent lodges by the names of *Mehr* (Affection), *Āftāb* (Sunshine), *Vafā* (Fidelity), and *Ṣafā* (Purity).[125] Ẓahīr od-Dowle's Sufi/Freemasonry organisation was directly related to *Ṣafā* (see next chapter), but all four Iranian lodges were to hold their meetings in Ferdowsi Avenue, in Tehran, "in the [administrative] centre of the Society of Brotherhood."[126]

Thus, the Society of Brotherhood would assume a central position in Freemasonry networks, and possibly already did in the Reza Shah era. One contemporary observer held it to have been *the* "congregational centre of the Freemasons and their secret sessions" [my emphasis].[127] Contesting the alleged status-equality in the Society of Brotherhood's outward representations of self, it has been remarked of the leaders that "many [...] were eminent figures of their day" and that "their presence in the Society of Brotherhood [...] did much to extend the influence of Sufism in the [...] upper classes."[128]

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[124] The international freemasons had reached an agreement on the admission of new lodges in 1929 (*Pānzdah-e khordād*, 1375/1996, 5, (22): 78). It is conveniently stressed, in and outside Iran, that Freemasonry spread with the British Empire. However, the first Iranian Freemasons were expatriates, in Europe (cf. KATĪRĀʾĪ, 1355/1976-7), who brought back Freemasonry with them as an *état importé* (cf. BADIE, 1992). One author considers Mīrzā Ṣāleḥ Shīrāzī, who was sent to England by Amīr Kabīr, and who wrote a diary about his experiences in 1817 and 1818, 'the first Iranian who became a Freemason' (Qadīmtarīn Īrānī ke vāred-e Farāmāsūn shode ast, *in Yaghmā*, 1329/1950-1: 4-5). ALGAR (1970: 276) mentioned the first initiation, of the diplomat ʿAskar Khān Afshār, to have taken place in 1808 in Paris. The first real Iranian lodge, related to the French Grand Orient, was 'Reveil de l'Iran' (*Bīdārī-ye Īrān*), founded in 1908 with the Shah's permission (cf. *op. cit*., p. 287).

[125] Farāmāsūnrī va tashkīlāt-e ān dar Īrān, *in Pānzdah-e khordād*, 1375/1996, 5, (22): 76. A fifth related lodge was *Setāre-ye saḥar* (Morningstar). "The Charter for these [five] lodges was obtained by a group of Iranians, most of whom were Sufis" (*communication* 12/07/98, via the Supreme Council of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the United States of America).

[126] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 163; *Pānzdah-e khordād*, 1375/1996, 5, (22): 76.

[127] CHAHĀRDAHĪ (1361/1982-3: 167) and RĀʾĪN (1357/1978: 499), reported early connections between the Society and the French Grand Orient and (related) Iranian *Bīdārī* lodges, but the content of these alleged ties, except for the fact that many members of the Anjoman were also initiates of the Bīdārī lodge (ALGAR, "Niʿmat-Allāhī", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*), remains rather obscure.

[128] NURBAKHSH, 1991: 156; cf. Maḥmūd ʿErfān, *in* AFSHĀR, 13671988: 52.

1. Z̧ahīr od-Dowle
(d.1924)

2.1. Ḥājjī Dādāsh	2.2. ‹Bīnesh‹alīshāh›
(d.1948)	(d.1932)
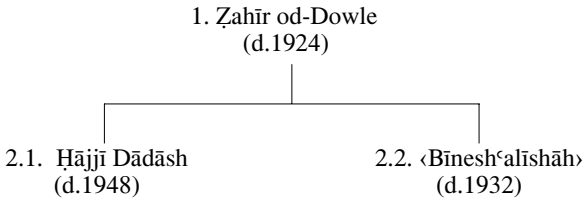
Figure 6. Succession in the Society of Brotherhood

On 18 December 1923 Z̧ahīr od-Dowle had appointed Sayyed
Moḥammad Khān Entez̧ām as-Salṭane (Bīnesh‹alīshāh) as his suc-
cessor.[129] Ḥājjī ‹Abdollāh Ne‹matī (Ḥājjī Dādāsh), who had joined
Z̧ahīr od-Dowle as a seventeen-year-old and led his lodge in Ker-
manshah from 1911,[130] disagreed and continued his own Society in
Kermanshah, in the traditions of Ṣafī‹alīshāh.[131] Some claim that
Bīnesh‹alīshāh soon gave up his position, but he and Ḥājjī Dādāsh
remained at the head of separate branches. The successional conflict
not only reflected personal strife. It also involved mutually exclusive
contestations of the nature of spiritual authority. Gramlich writes:
"Mit dem Tode des [Z̧ahīr od-Dowle] ist für die Mehrheit [...] die
Affiliation der Pole [...] beendet. Zwar haben noch einige andere,
wie Ḥājj Dādāsh [...] das Amt [...] beansprucht [...]."[132]

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[129] HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1371/1992: 325. ‹Bīnesh‹alīshāh›'s *ejāze-nāme* by ‹Z̧ahīr od-
Dowle› has been reproduced in KIYĀNĪ, 1369/1990-1: 368, and in HOMĀYŪNĪ,
1371/1992: 325.

[130] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1352/1973-4, (1): 455. Kermanshah was the Society of Broth-
erhood's most important branch outside Tehran, founded personally by ‹Z̧ahīr od-
Dowle› in 1329Q/1911. There was one foreign branch, in Baghdad (ḤOSEYNĪ,
1377/1998: 30, cf. CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-2: 54). Ḥājjī Dādāsh's real *laqab* was
‹Mostashār‹alī›.

[131] HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1371/1992: 326; cf. ṢAFĀʾĪ, 1344/1965-6: 39. Far from claiming
to be himself a centre of authority on an equal footing with ‹Ṣafī‹alīshāh›, Ḥājjī
Dādāsh modestly referred to himself as the Sufis' 'servant', *khādem-e foqarā* (*in
Majalle-ye okhovvat*, 1307/1928, 10-11: 38).

[132] GRAMLICH, 1965: 63. Other claimants were ‹Vafā‹alīshāh› and his son Āqā
Żiyā Mowlavī.

Ḥājjī Dādāsh's Magazine of Brotherhood

Among the few material traces that are known to be left of Ḥājjī Dādāsh, is the Magazine of Brotherhood (*Majalle-ye okhovvat*), which he founded and directed in Kermanshah.[133] The Sufism which Ḥājjī Dādāsh professed may be reconstructed in its broad outlines with the help of the Magazine of Brotherhood's first twelve issues. In adherence to both Ẓahīr od-Dowle and Ṣafīʿalīshāh, the contributions to them explored current, worldly affairs and in many cases related them to patriotic or nationalist themes. Retaining his claim to traditional spiritual authority in terms of Sufi organisation, Ḥājjī Dādāsh represented a modernist Sufism ideologically.

The Magazine of Brotherhood was modern because it was decisively this-worldly. It discussed 'progressive' themes, such as the meaning of the Wahhabi reform in Islam (1307/1928, 10-1: 29-32), in its section on The Islamic World of Today. There was no mention of the Wahhabites' hatred of both Sufism and Shiʿism, and the author (Ṣ. Vaḥdat, the name written according to the Western convention) instead estimated that they marked the beginning of 'the grand awakening of Muslims' (p. 32). The Magazine contained sections not only on the world of Islam and Iranian society, but also - uniquely, interspersing traditional poetry, treatises on Love and Truth and moral exhortations - a contribution on economy (1307/1928, 8: 6).

One example of straight-out patriotism had 'What is more effective for the arousal of feelings: poetry or music?' (1307/1928-9, 10-1: 9-13) as a title. The author pondered the mobilising effect of the French *Marseillaise* but concluded that poetry would be more effective in Iran, on condition that it would be unified with music (p. 13).

Patriotism blended with progressive themes, especially in discussions on and by women. 'Patriotism is the first duty for women', one article held (1307/1928, 3: 20), rather than, for instance, the more

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[133] In Tehran, the Society of Brotherhood had a magazine named *Majmūʿe-ye akhlaq*, in Kermanshah it had (besides *Majalle-ye okhovvat*) a newspaper named *Kūbak-e gharb* (which, according to CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-2: 54, was published by Ḥājjī Dādāsh as well) and in Shiraz it had a newspaper named *Okhovvat* (ḤOSEYNĪ, 1377/1998: 31-3). *Majalle-ye okhovvat* published some of Ẓahīr od-Dowle's poetry, obtained by means of Ḥājjī Dādāsh (AFSHĀR, 1367/1988: 453). According to HOMĀYŪNĪ (1371/1992: 326), Ḥājjī Dādāsh published the Magazine 'for a few years'. I am not aware of scientific analyses of these sources in explorations of the history of the Anjoman.

traditional concern for personal chastity. The author first referred to
'civilised nations' in which women played considerable roles, then to
Turkey, as an 'Eastern country' which had successfully copied the
Western achievement, and ended with a call to Iranian women to do
likewise and not be discouraged by resistance. Ṣ. Vaḥdat considered
(contemporary) contact between Asian Muslims and Christian Euro-
peans to have resulted in certain (positive) developments, among
which were the emergence of constitutional governments in Islamic
countries, and the codification of women's rights (1307/1928, 8: 27).

Eight years before Reza Shah ordered the unveiling of women,
Badr ol-Molūk Mostowfīzāde expressed her opinion on 'the veil and
chastity' (1307/1928, 4: 15-8). Through formal reasoning, she estab-
lished there were no moral barriers for women to lay off the veil.
Then she asked: When and Where?, to which she responded: not,
certainly, now in Iran. For moral corruption prevailed, and in order
for the veil to be removed, first men and women needed to be edu-
cated. Women needed to understand betrayal of their husbands as of
the gravest sins to holy law. Men should become aware that mal-
treatment of their compatriot sisters was a sin legally and socially.
For women, freedom from the veil would now be traded against the
freedom which was provided for them in honour and chastity. "It is
strange", Mostowfīzāde concluded, "that most of our intellectuals
ask why women in civilised countries do not have veils. Dear Sir!
Over there they do not have so much moral corruption [...]."[134]

Bīneshʿalīshāh's elective assembly

Bīneshʿalīshāh, vice-president of the Society's Consultancy Council
before becoming its leader and Ẓahīr od-Dowle's 'sheikh of sheikhs',
was for some time the director-general in the Interior Ministry under

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[134] Somewhat earlier, a development similar to the emergence of the *Majalle-ye
okhovvat* had occurred in the Ẓoʾr-Reyāsateyn branch. In 1912 ‹Munesʿalīshāh›,
the master of Javad Nurbakhsh, had founded "the Fars printing press, from which he
personally edited and distributed the important newspaper *Ihyā* (*Renaissance*). The
publication of this newspaper under his direction caused the people of Fars, *or
rather all Iranians*, to become more conscious of the true rights of their *national
heritage*" [italics mine] (NURBAKHSH, 1980: 118).

Reza Shah.[135] Under his leadership, a 'new order' came into existence, in which "they ended the institution of the Pole."[136]

Although developments under Bīneshˁalīshāh compared to his own innovations, Keyvān Qazvīnī held the thriving of the Society of Brotherhood to have been "related to the personality of Ẓahīr od-Dowle, not to [its alleged] real/true Sufism. Consequently, it would have dissolved after Ẓahīr od-Dowle.[137] But it did not, despite the lack of a charismatic leader and in spite of Sufism's spoiled identity under Reza Shah. Influential courtiers remained in the Society of Brotherhood and its fourth leader, Farajollāh Āqevlī, pursued his impressive military and bureaucratic career under the king.[138] Bīnesh-ˁalīshāh's son ˁAbdollāh Enteẓām, the fifth leader, entered the Foreign Service in 1919 and worked as a valued diplomat in Washington, Prague, Bern, and in Germany. From 1936 he entered into a long-lasting friendship with the king's son.[139]

Contrary to the other Ṣafīˁalīshāhī lineages, the Society of Brotherhood was tightly organised. People could be officially removed, while in Ṣafīˁalīshāh's main lodge a *persona non grata* would be pushed, pestered or harassed until he left on his own accord.[140] Entry into the organisation was similarly formalised, and made conditional upon the intercession of two persons deemed reliable. Central offices existed for the administration of the membership flow, general finance, and alms collection.[141] The Society's conception of modern self was further seen in that, while most orders to this day congregate on rugs, uneven in shape, colour and size, the Society possessed "102 chairs that were all alike". The usage of chairs had its origin among

[135] AZIMI, 1998: 461; HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1371/1992: 313; ṢAFĀʾĪ, 1344/1965-6: 13.

[136] HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1371/1992: 326-7.

[137] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 161.

[138] Cf. *Iran Almanac 1969*, p. 740, and his biography in *Yād-nāme-ye Shādravān Sepahbod Farajollāh Āqevlī* (2536/1977). When I inquired about regime relations, a Sufi in the lodge of Ẓahīr od-Dowle recollected the story of a visit by the king. Reza Shah, he said, had once passed by the lodge and he had seen a Sufi engaged in work. The Shah had then said: "Dervish, do not hit the nail in the tree." The fatherly reproach as conceived by this Sufi, I take it, meant an implicit recognition of his Sufi order's rightful existence.

[139] See HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1371/1992: 328; NARAGHI, 1994: viii, 182.

[140] This treatment awaited the son of ‹Ṣafīˁalīshāh› after his father's death. Critics of the order's Freemason domination often refer to this episode to state their case.

[141] AFSHĀR, 1367/1988: 61; CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 49.

westernising Qajar princes in the royal court,[142] i.e. an origin among the likes of Ẓahīr od-Dowle. It was these and similar "changes in the ceremonies" that even Chahārdahī, faithful disciple of the modernist Qazvīnī, found excessive. Ẓahīr od-Dowle had not founded a new order in the Sufi sense of the word, and the innovations which he initiated had been unauthorised "according to the laws of Sufism."[143]

The Society of Brotherhood was as centralised an organisation as many Sufi orders, but contrary to Sufism elsewhere it had 'interpretation/exegesis by opinion' (*tafsīr be raʾy*), instead of the sheikh's dictates.[144] These and other 'exoteric features' (*ṣefāt-e ẓāherī*) were and are in retrospect held against the Society of Brotherhood and its 'worldly' (*donyavī*) behaviour. The complaints point to a leadership collectivity that led the Society since its foundation - the Consultancy Council (*heyʾat-e moshāvere*).[145] The Consultancy Council had ellipsed around the founder and below him Bīneshʿalīshāh - as 'sheikh of sheikhs' and as its vice-president. Personalised authority was retained after Ẓahīr od-Dowle died and Bīneshʿalīshāh took the leadership upon himself. But Bīneshʿalīshāh himself did not appoint a successor - neither in the Consultancy Council or the Society of Brotherhood, nor in the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order at large.

In a far-reaching administrative reform that must have occurred during Bīneshʿalīshāh's leadership or soon thereafter, "the sheikhs and the Poles were abolished." The balance decisively shifted towards the Consultancy Council, the 'leader' (*raʾīs*) of which was no more than first among equals.[146] The leaders who came after

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[142] Cf. PETERSON, 1981: 385-90.

[143] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-2: 56. The French traveller to Iran Eugène AUBIN made an interesting observation of Iranian Sufism (probably on the basis of encounters in Tehran), which has not been mentioned in later, authoritative accounts: "J'ai vu chez les derviches de véritables chapelles, où les cierges brûlaient devant l'image d'ʿAlî" (1908: 471). Although detailed accounts of Sufi religiosity in nineteenth century Qajar Iran are lacking (and one thus lacks a comparative measure for the preceding era), the observed 'christologie' might possibly reflect the context of Sufi religious renewal that Chahārdahī referred to and that this chapter is concerned with.

[144] *Interview* ‹Monavvarʿalīshāh›, 03/25/97.

[145] Cf. FRAGNER, 1979: 125.

[146] Cf. GRAMLICH, 1965: 64; FRAGNER, 1979: 124. The Society did not completely sever its ties with what had formerly defined the shape of Sufism, as the Consultancy Council was entitled to appoint sheikhs in the Society's name for the 'guidance' (*dastgīrī*) of the Sufis. Until 1959, the Council had not, according to GRAMLICH (1965: 64) made use of this right. Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufis that I spoke to contested this account, and mentioned sheikhs appointed by the Council, whose

Bīneshᶜalīshāh did not bother with the traditional tokens of legitimate spiritual authority: dream instructions by Shiᶜite Imams, notables or the Prophet, genealogical proximity, or letters and personal communications of appointment. Their being chosen through restricted election by the Consultancy Council (that was not accountable or responsive to the Sufis it led) was sufficient. The Society of Brotherhood that throughout its existence maintained it headed a Sufi organisation, had as its leaders people who did not "pretend to 'disclosure and vision' (*kashf-o-shohūd*), and neither, like the other sheikhs of the path, to supernatural things [...]."[147]

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The Ṣafīᶜalīshāhī order travelled two distinct, modern paths. On the one hand, the Society of Brotherhood modernised organisationally, through Freemasonry. Its nationally powerful elite did not confront the Shah's autocracy, and its modernism evolved from self-proclaimed democratic reform-mindedness to political silence.

As Freemasonry internationally, its elite leadership structure did not prevent appeals going out to 'the high and the low' - the Iranian nation at large. The Society heralded progress through the elective principle, while causing an unbridgeable gap: for Sufis, the Consultancy Council leaders had become unapproachable men in high places. Their doing away with the traditional authority structure matched the reformist ideologies of Sangelajī in Shiᶜism and Qazvīnī in Sufism, both of which - similarly - had the particular modernity of Reza Shah's Iran as a context. By effectively abolishing gene-

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names they could not, however, come up with. These sheikhs would have exchanged blows with the 'authentic' Sufis (there was even mention of 'war'). What these Ṣafīᶜalīshāhīs most probably referred to, is an episode in which ᶜAbbās Āfī, at first a pupil of ‹Vafāᶜalīshāh›, went over to the Society in conflict ("they bribed him"), and was there appointed Master of Ceremonies. CHAHĀRDAHĪ (1361/1982-3: 154, 162) mentioned Prince Khosrovānī as an 'elected sheikh' of the Society, but he did not provide historical details. GRAMLICH (1965: 64) mentioned Maḥmūd Ṣafāʾī ‹Ṣafāʾ ol-Molk› to have been the one remaining sheikh of ‹Ṣafīᶜalīshāh›. The Ṣafīᶜalīshāhīs that I spoke to could not confirm this, but he is mentioned by CHAHĀRDAHĪ (1361/1982-3: 154) as a sheikh of ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle› (‹Ṣafāᶜalīshāh›). Ṣafāʾī's *pīr-e dalīl* was Ḥājj Aḥmad Moṣaffāʾī, whose son now leads an independent Ṣafīᶜalīshāhī lineage that is committed to restoring ‹Ṣafīᶜalīshāh›'s Sufi traditions.

[147] AFSHĀR (1367/1988: 80 [*hashtād*]), in citation of *Afżal al-tavārikh*.

alogically motivated, charismatic and unitary leadership, the Society effected Iranian Sufism's most far-reaching reform ever.[148]

On the other hand, Ḥājjī Dādāsh more radically reoriented mysticism toward the here-and-now of the Iranian nation, while retaining his claims to traditionally legitimate spiritual authority. His Magazine of Brotherhood is not easily interpreted as an 'ideological state institution' - a label which in certain respects fit the Society of Brotherhood. While the king's blend of nationalistic modernisation involved the violent imposition of a unitary identity, the Magazine rather offered discussions of it. Contrary to the vertical chain of command in the Society, finally, *Majalle-ye okhovvat* hosted a wide range of authors, male and female, with widely differing views.

Beyond individual differences, however, Neʿmatollāhī Sufism in Tehran and Kermanshah bore witness to a common social transformation. The new mystic regimes of Ḥājjī Dādāsh and Bīneshʿalīshāh did not classify as Messianic 'Religions of the Oppressed' (LANTER-NARI, 1965), which do not emerge automatically where West-inspired modernisation confronts indigenous religiosity. To the contrary, the Ṣafīʿalīshāhīs featured 'authentic' modernist voices. Previously a 'vertical' sect - laterally isolated, oriented up towards sheikh and king[149] - the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order split and developed into several national, 'horizontal'[150] organisations, in the context of the nation-state.

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[148] The third leader Marzbān later recollected: "The Society [...] rendered valuable services for the [...] education of the people [....] It was [...] a pioneer" (*in* AFSHĀR, 1367/1988: 64-9).

[149] This double authority structure is evident in the biography of ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh›. His *tafsīr* included a laudation of Nāṣer od-Dīn Shāh. Demanding absolute obedience to himself, he forbade his flock to speak against the Shah's views, either in private or in public (ḤOSEYNĪ (1377/1998: 17-8).

[150] For a discussion of these concepts in the Iranian context, see ABRAHAMIAN (1973). Kasravi's resistance against religious sects was led by the belief that they constituted states within the state (*op. cit.*, p. 283). KASRAVĪ felt that "nowadays in Iran [...] there are several institutions which, without crown and throne, rule like kings" (1342/1963-4: 107).

Résumé

The Neʿmatollāhī orders lost much of their exterior power through the Constitutional Revolution and under Reza Shah because their intimate state ties were cut. Sufism transformed with the new regimes, as the nation(-state) became a prime marker of legitimate identity. But rather than silent victims of state oppression, the Neʿmatollāhīs seized opportunities and developed 'authentic' modern voices. While nationalistic modernisation involved the imposition of a unitary identity for the nation, Ḥājjī Dādāsh's magazine rather offered pluralistic discussion of it. A second aspect of the transformation, was the emergence of new master-disciple relations. The Neʿmatollāhīs faced new cohesion problems in contestations of traditional spiritual authority, which mirrored Sangelajī's modernist struggle in Shiʿism. The transformation of Iranian Sufism occurred on all three relational levels of mystic regimes.

Internally, nationalism, nationalistic modernisation and the dismantling of traditional power bases that occurred in their name, were paralleled by Sufi struggles for spiritual authority. Sufi masters and disciples took issue with self-explanatory, charismatic rule. What motivated them was never democracy, but rational - that is: reasoned - rule. What they asked for, if often implicitly, was relevance to the nation-state. Qazvīnī dismissed traditional Sufi authority as nationally dysfunctional. It was Bīneshʿalīshāh's elective assembly, however, - one bridge too far to match the taste of Qazvīnī - that acted and uncompromisingly abolished traditional spiritual authority.

Externally, nationalism and nationalistic modernisation provided contexts for both lateral relations to other religious regimes and vertical relations to the state. The Society of Brotherhood publicly propagated a national religiosity and its elite members, such as Bīneshʿalīshāh and Enteẓām, were personally involved in the nation's construction by the state. They did so, respectively, through working for the nation-state's establishment at home and by representing it abroad. In the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order, Nūrʿalīshāh appealed to the nation in a bit for support of his leadership claim. The genesis of Ṣāleḥ's Advice lay in the perception of state concerns for Sufi orderliness. The Solṭānʿalīshāhīs addressed these concerns through the prescription of a generalised Shiʿite religiosity, for the lateral regime of the (national) Shiʿite community.

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CHAPTER FOUR

CONTRARY MYSTIC REGIMES, 1941-1979

Emblematic texts such as 'Under the royal patronage of her Imperial Majesty Farah Pahlavi the Shahbanou of Iran' accompanied many publications in Iran in the post-war period.[1] Patronage, in the sense of an exchange of favours for loyalty, was a dominant mode of relating in Iranian society.[2] Royal patronage obtained in the strong sense of an exchange of social benefits for public allegiance to the monarchy, and in the weaker sense of ideological incorporation. Even physical proximity to royalty counted, in the autocratic late Pahlavi environment, as one of its signs. Both types of patronage were enabled primarily through the royalty's recruitment of a network from among elite networks.[3] Its second defining characteristic was the extension of relations to the lowest nodes in the status hierarchy - from the 'shadow of God on earth' to proverbial vagabonds,[4] and lastly, royal patronage extended to Sufism.

A closer look at Sufism's ideological incorporation could modify a dominant and rather flat image of the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah - as one of inherently militant religiosity, trampled by a despotically secular monarch.[5] The process through which Shiʿism in the end became predominantly militant, involved nearly four decades of cultural battle for political and religious authority, between societal and state actors, with certain versions of Sufism as royal weapons. Sufism in the period 1941-1979 would thus remain as enigmatic, without the political context of royal patronage, as Opus Dei without its flawless embedding in Franco's 'nationally catholic Spain'.[6]

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[1] *Taḥt-e tavajjohāt-e ʿāliya-ye ʿolyā ḥażrat-e shāhbānū Faraḥ Pahlavī.*

[2] Cf. studies on the 'circle' (*dowre* or *ḥalqe*) such as BILL (1973) and ZONIS (1971).

[3] Cf. ZONIS (1971); BEHNAM (1986); SANGHVI (1968).

[4] This characteristic is expressive of Iranian social mobility, exemplified in MORIER's *Hajji Baba of Isfahan*, and since Morier observed by many travellers to and analysts of Iran. BRADBURD stressed that the extensive networks of royal patronage assumed a pyramidal shape (1983: 30).

[5] The vision is partly seen in ALGAR (1972), who claimed Shiʿism was essentially rebellious. It was contested by FLOOR (1983) with respect to Iranian jurists' alleged revolutionary character.

[6] Cf. ESTRUCH's (1995) monograph on Opus Dei.

What follows is a discussion of Sufism's royal patronage in the period 1941-1979, and its partial transformation, as a religious tradition, into a regime-bound discourse. Secondly, the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order's social prominence is related to royal patronage. Lastly, the emergence of religious opposition in the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order is discussed in relation to its effective balancing act between royal and clerical loyalties.

<div align="center">* * *</div>

The mutual attractions and interrelations of royalty and mysticism constitute a recurrent motif in Iranian monarchical and Neʿmatollāhī history.[7] Shāh Neʿmatollāh proposed worldly rulers to function as military transmitters of Sufi Truth; Nūrʿalīshāh warned rulers that the neglect of Sufism's superiority would be to their own peril; Karīm Khān Zand died six month after he expelled the Neʿmatollāhī Sufis from Shiraz, Moḥammad Shāh was initiated by and surrounded himself with Neʿmatollāhīs; and Reza Shah's ascent to power had several Sufi claimants.

The theory of religious regimes postulates an immanent developmental logic, in which the growth of religious regimes increases organisational complexity, making them more like, and possibly transforming them into, states. States rather than religious regimes, however, have in the long run monopolised the means of taxation and violence. It has been argued in chapter two that Neʿmatollāhī development proceeded through trilateral figurations, in which the exterior measure of state centralisation was crucial. Where state power was weak, as in the transition to Qajar rule, the Neʿmatollāhī regime assumed state-like properties in its conceptions of self as a parallel power. The Pahlavi restoration could not tolerate such parallel power, whether it existed in tribes, autonomy-aspiring regions, or in Sufism. Reza Shah relied on repression and co-optation, respectively, towards Khāksār and Solṭānʿalīshāhī Sufis.

When Mohammad Reza Shah inherited his father's state in 1941, most centrifugal threats had been subdued. The positive relations that would from 1941 onwards develop between monarchy and mysticism, therefore, compare in some ways to Sufism's nineteenth century absorption into Qajar court society. Dynastic rule firmly established, Sufism had lost its potential state-like properties, providing useful counterweight to religiously and politically assertive jurists. Because of the

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[7] Even more generally, "Die islamische, insbesondere persische Hagiographie ist voll von frommen Pakten zwischen Sufi's und Fürsten" (MEIER, 1992, (4): 121).

following they commanded, Sufi masters were useful political brokers of monarchical ideology, to the subjects or the nation at large. However, there were also concerns more intrinsically religious than the desire to divide-and-rule, for the royal usage of Sufism.

Beyond the promise of personal salvation, Sufism offered a doctrine of empowerment. Herein probably lies an important reason why it was Sufis rather than, for instance, monarchy-minded jurists, to whom royals were particularly drawn. There was no provision in Shiʿism for a caliph, let alone a king, but the idea of divine power vested in the physical person of a leader was what defined Shiʿite Sufism - as it did the former state religion of Zoroastrism, the main pillar of royal legitimisation.

It was a universal longing that must have played in the royal attraction to Sufism: the need for blessing by those who possess 'higher knowledge', for a mystical sanction of ambiguous, worldly power. Power had to be relocated from the profanity of human interventions - the throne had come through the British - to be reunified with the (super)natural order of things. The kind of longing, that is, which brought together Katharina and Rasputin, and made credible the Solṭānʿalīshāhī sheikh who predicted the unlikely reign of Reza Shah in the eyes of the king. In Frazerian analysis, these mystical sanctions make the king into "a being apart [...] who articulates the natural and cultural orders [and] this ritual function is the foundation of the political function of royalty."[8] Sufism, then, represented potential for royalty's empowerment.

The recognition of power was mutual, in Sufism's late twentieth century royal relations. Asked about the nature of Sufi ties to the Pahlavi dynasty, a Sufi riddled that "the king remains [always] as the sea."[9] In addition to being a source of material rewards, that is, the sovereign represented sacrosanct - holy and dangerous - power in person. An essay addressing Sufi influences in Iranian culture stated that:

> [One] manifestation of the other self (*man-e dīgar*) (in the station of controlling the lower self) consists of the relation between the ruler and the ruled. Politics and the legal machinery are areas in which the particulars of this kind of relations become clearer. In Iran, kings have always been seen as the representatives of God [...] In this regard [...] one could consider the king as that ‹‹higher power››, whose existence is a symbol of the

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[8] DE HEUSCH (1996: 213). I use Frazer's 'sacred kingship' only as an analogy, and it is not implied that a central mechanism in it - the king's ritual slaughter - is what also happened to the Pahlavi king.

[9] My paraphrase of *Pādeshāh mesl-e daryā mī-mānad* (*interview*, 06/19/97).

other self. That is to say: a symbol of the self controlling the lower [bestial] soul (*nafs-e soflī*) [my insertions].[10]

* * *

Farah Diba made friends with the painter Īrān Darrūdī when they studied together in Paris in 1959. Darrūdī was interested in Sufi mysticism, and it was she who reportedly took Farah to a Sufi lodge several times.[11] The Shah's twin-sister Ashraf was held to have visited several *khānaqāh*s as well, one of them being located in the private living quarters of Ṣādeq, son of Moḥammad ʿAnqā, the leader of the Oveysī order.[12]

In 1976, Moḥammad ʿAnqā was mentioned as an exponent of organised Sufism whose ideas remained unknown.[13] It is not just post-revolution discrediting that engages him, in retrospect, in an ideology beyond the self-contained, spiritual Sufi life. "[The Sufis] Ṣādeq Ṭabāṭabāʾī and [...] ʿAnqā and [...] people from the elite gathered [...] and occupied themselves with [...] political matters."[14] ʿAnqā himself acknowledged he engaged in politics, and his (Sufi) son ʿAlī was a Senate delegate.[15]

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[10] AḤMADĪ, 1375/1997: 55 (in *Kiyān*, 6, (34)).

[11] Cf. BALDICK, 1993: 28. The contact between Farah Diba and Darrūdī had come about through Farah's mother (DARRŪDĪ, 1377/1998: 96), who lived next door to Darrūdī's mother. In an interview (09/22/98), Darrūdī did not, unfortunately but understandably, wish to discuss her relations to Farah Diba with me, let alone the Sufi component, in any detail. Mrs Diba (Farah's mother) was (in)famous for being a dervish. The Shah's Minister of Court ALAM (1991: 387-8) wrote in his diary on 13 September 1974: "Told [the Shah] that Mrs Diba still longs to be awarded the Order of Khorshid ('The Sun') reserved for members of the royal family. She never refers to it by name, but goes on and on about 'the other decoration' [...] 'How peculiar', HIM remarked. 'Tell her that it doesn't befit her status as a self-confessed dervish to covet such baubles'." Elsewhere the Shah was quoted as referring to Farah and 'the vanity of this dervish mother of hers' (*op. cit.*, p. 472). On 19 September 1976: "Sought HIM's permission to pay Mrs Diba's expenses for a trip to Romania. 'By all means', he said, laughing; 'Our dear Mrs Dervish hopes Mrs Aslan's treatment will restore her to the bloom of youth'." Mrs Aslan claimed to have discovered the secret of eternal youth and had prominent Western politicians amongst her patients (*op. cit.*, p. 511, footnote).

[12] *Interview* ʿAlī ḤAṢŪRĪ, 04/16/97, who claimed he gave me a first-hand account.

[13] BAGLEY, 1976: 61. Farah was the Shah's third wife. They married in 1959. ʿAnqā, before establishing his own order, had been a disciple of Keyvān Qazvīnī (CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1356/1977: 82).

[14] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: Text photo appendix. ʿAnqā and Ṭabāṭabāʾī, formerly a Speaker of Parliament, had been pupils of the influential Ṣafīʿalīshāhī sheikh Moḥammad Ḥakīmiyān. Ḥakīmiyān was buried in Ṭabāṭabāʾī's graveyard in Shahr-e Rey (HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1371/1992: 304).

[15] ʿAlī ʿAnqā was a pupil of Sabzavārī, a pre-revolution *khatīb* in the main Ṣafīʿalīshāhī lodge.

Moḥammad ʿAnqā held important state functions, among which was the leadership of the Shah's Special Office.[16] He was explicit about the purpose of his teaching, which he said was 'not all gnostic mysticism': "There is a very [...] political side to it [....] The message is that in politics as in life itself, what makes for the realization of being in its positive manifestation is beautiful, what does not is ugly [....] All who are interested only in gain in the world become rebellious to the masters who [...] point them the right way."[17] In these passages, ʿAnqā's discourse testifies to the development of a theosophical mysticism - initiated in 1942 by Īrānshahr's doctrine of 'neo-Sufism' - which was as elitist and transnational (German, Swiss, Iranian) as Corbin's orientalism, and which proclaimed universal harmony as much as ʿAnqā did.[18] As theosophical mysticism linked up with 'scientific' practices (magneticism, spiritism), ʿAnqā brought Sufism in line with astrology and physics.

ʿAnqā's esoteric words were moreover decisively anti-liberal, and in this sense they matched a nineteenth century brand of religiosity which features with great clarity in two of Dostoyevsky's characters. Humble Alyosha in 'The Brothers Karamazov' resists the rational rebellion of his brother Ivan in trust of divine order, and the optimistic prince Myshkin in 'The Idiot' exclaims that "beauty will save the world." Contrary to these characters, however, not so humble ʿAnqā aspired to shape the national destiny on the political plane. His' was a vision - adopted by many Sufis who shared in royal patronage - that may be grasped as Platonic, in a political sense.[19]

ʿAnqā's Platonism projected a pure, natural, hierarchical order, which was threatened by the pollution of political dissent: "In our age of turmoil, the virtues that bring men towards [...] oneness have been thrown over for the vices that tear men apart. Tenderness in the body politic is killed and men become ready for any sort of rebellion [...] however others may suffer."[20] The way to a 'true political reform' that would end

[16] VAḤĪDZĀDE, 1347/1968: 362.
[17] BROWN, 1358/1979: xix.
[18] GHAFFARI, 1964: 247, CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 377.
[19] The influence of (Neo-)Platonism on Shiʿite esoterism (in Iranian Sufism in particular) has been enormous. See Henry CORBIN's *En Islam iranien, vol. ii* (1971). Plato's reception in Islam by philosophers such as al-Fārābī has focused on the question of a ruler's ideal characteristics as the basis for the ideal state. In Sufi conceptions of such a state one finds many statements that stipulate a 'gnostic-king', a variation that does not deviate in essence from Plato's 'philosopher-king'-concept.
[20] BROWN, 1358/1979: xix.

all political friction, i.e. not the path of antagonism engaged in by oppositional politics, was achieved "only as man begins to penetrate the illusion of the sensuous in politics as in his own life." Then, "true harmony between ruler and ruled will be achieved."[21] In ʿAnqā's brand of mysticism, the monarchy was in safe hands.

The empress' royal patronage was primarily conducted from an Office for Social and Cultural Affairs suggested to her by Seyyed Hossein Nasr,[22] a Sufi, Islamic scholar, head of Farah Diba's Office in the last months of the Shah's regime, patron of the multilingual, theosophical magazine *Sophia Perennis*/*Jāvīdān kherad* and director of the Imperial Academy of Philosophy. It was "one of the intellectual tasks" of the Imperial Academy of Philosophy, over which Farah in turn presided as a patroness[23] "to explicate Sufism in the context of Iran's modernity."[24]

Nasr's views - on Sufism, Islam, Iran's modernity - promoted, like ʿAnqā's, a conservation of the powers that be: "What is going to induce man, whom all the external forces of human society during recent times have been pushing to [...] outwardness [,] to [...] turn towards the inner pole [?] If some think that [...] political resolutions will achieve such ends they are mistaken."[25] Contrary to Moḥammad and ʿAlī ʿAnqā, Nasr was not explicit in his aspirations after a public role in political office. But he shared with the ʿAnqā Sufi family a perspective that opposed the authentic to oppositional Islam. On the eve of the revolution he stated:

> [V]olcanic eruptions and powerful waves of a political nature associated with [...] Islam [...] and Shiʿism in particular have made an authentic knowledge of things Islamic imperative, lest ignorance destroy the very foundations of human society and the relations which [enable] discourse

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[21] BROWN, 1358/1979: xix, cf. HOMĀYŪNĪ (1991: 218), for another Master's Platonic Corporatism: "I gave a lecture on strikes [and] stressed the fact that, in my opinion, they are always detrimental, not only to workers and employers, but to society and the country itself." Homāyūnī was among the leaders of the Īrān Novīn and Rastakhīz political parties, both of which were the Shah's creations, in effect his 'loyal opposition'. Unlike Indian and British Theosophy as described by VAN DER VEER (1996), Homāyūnī's international Theosophy was (just like Iranian Sufism), regime religiosity.

[22] EILERS, 1977: 323. Rumour has it Nasr forced the office on Farah Diba.

[23] Farah PAHLAVI, 1978: 70.

[24] FORBIS, 1980: 154.

[25] NASR, 1967: 61-2. Nasr is resented for his role as a government aid and refusal to repent. The damage to Sufism is suggested by curses encountered by FISCHER during fieldwork, prior to the revolution, in Qom: "Nasr - you know why we don't like him, because *he is trying to turn Islam into Sufism*" (1980: 143) [italics mine].

between [...] communities.[26]

Befriended, quietist religious notables defined the Islam that Nasr thought real and worthy. It was remarked of ʿAllāme Ṭabāṭabāʾī's *Shiʿite Islam*, just before the revolution, that "the original [...] version of this work [...] with a[n] introduction by [...] Nasr, has become one of the most widely read works on Shiʿism in Iran itself and [it] has been reprinted many times."[27] One part of the compendium is dedicated to the affairs of this world. It is a commentary on Imam ʿAlī's 'Instructions to Mālik al-Ashtar', that "clarify the general situation of Islamic society in relation to the practical application of Islamic government."[28] In nothing it resembles Khomeyni's assembled lectures, clandestinely and widely distributed since 1970, that unfolded a theory of Islamic government in terms of the 'Rule of the Religious Jurist' (*velāyat-e faqīh*). The Shah's government, for Ṭabāṭabāʾī, apparently *was* an Islamic government.[29]

Farah's patronage became a public event when, in 1977, she inaugurated a House of Culture in Tehran. Sufis performed an open-air dance in her presence. It is reported that she "had decided not to sit and watch the performance on the chair reserved for her, but came and sat, [...] naturally, on the ground with the rest [...] She was obviously moved and overcome by the ecstatic incantations of the dervishes."[30]

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[26] NASR, 1979: 11. ALAM (1991: 262) had noted in his diary on 29 November 1972: "Much to my alarm Dr Hossein Nasr, the new President of the Aryamehr Institute of Technology, has reported that many of his students are poor, and a great number of them fanatical Moslems." The Shah then ordered: "Warn Nasr to tread carefully but to make a thorough investigation."

[27] NASR, 1979: 13.

[28] ṬABĀṬABĀʾĪ, 1982: 22. Mālik b. al-Ḥariṣ al-Nakhaʾī was appointed by Imam ʿAlī as governor of Egypt, but he was poisoned on the way of assuming his post in 658-9. Legitimising reference to ʿAlī's instructions was also made in the Shah's biography (SANGHVI, 1968: xxi), and "in his pre-1970 writings, [Khomeyni, too, had] tended to accept the traditional notions of society as sketched out in Imam ʿAlī's *Nahj al-Balaghah*" (ABRAHAMIAN, 1993: 26).

[29] DABASHI (1993) saw Ṭabāṭabāʾī as an ideological founder of the revolution. But there is no information in his biography or oeuvre to suggest he had anything positive to say about it, which Dabashi himself actually admits (*op. cit.*, p. 277). Because of an initiation, Ṭabāṭabāʾī must be considered a Sufi: he "conducted his own spiritual [...] exercises under the mastership and guidance of Sayyid al-Arefiyn Hajj Mirza Ali Qazi, the man for whom he reserved the exclusive title of 'the master' and whom he held in utmost respect, reverence, and honor" (*op. cit.*, p. 303). NASR (in ṬABĀṬABĀʾĪ, 1981) mentioned that Ṭabāṭabāʾī taught Sufism 'in more intimate circles' (*op. cit.*, p. 24).

[30] REEVES, 1986: 161.

Far outstripping Farah's Office in size and reach, royal patronage was primarily embodied in the Pahlavi Foundation. It was founded in 1958[31] and soon began to play a major role in Iran's economic, social and cultural life. The Prime Minister, Minister of the Court, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of Parliament were on its board.[32] Moreover, most of the major institutions in Iran were in some way linked to it. A cultural office not directly linked to the Foundation, but nevertheless operating under a state sanction, was the Bonyād-e Mowlavī, founded with royal permission in 1974.[33] "It was headed by Professor Zabihollah Safa, historian of Persian literature [and] devoted to research and propagation of the works of [...] Rumi [and] the books influenced by his School of Dervishes."[34] The Bonyād-e Mowlavī may in addition be described as an 'ideological state institution'[35] because "[Rumi's] Sufism became the guiding philosophy of Iran, permeating many aspects of its culture [and to] judge by his own writings, especially *Mission for My Country*, [the] Shah could be considered one of its followers."[36]

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[31] Cf. PAHLAVI, 1979: 152. EILERS (1977: 323) mentioned 1961 as the founding year, but this was the year in which the Foundation, "perhaps the most distinctive court institution" (MCDANIEL, 1991: 67), was given an administrative structure. The Foundation was founded in 1958.

[32] EILERS, 1977: 322. The Foundation's pervasiveness is suggested in the following citation: "That patrimonialism in government breeds corruption was particularly evident in Iran [....] Pensions were synonymous with handouts or rewards for favours or fringe benefits to those faithful to the regime. The Pahlavi Foundation's interests in [...] banks [...] and other industrial and commercial enterprises evidenced the extent to which the Shah and his immediate family were involved in the economic affairs of the country" (BEHNAM, 1986: 169).

[33] Royal permission was the prerequisite for any major social organisation in Iran.

[34] EILERS, 1977: 323, cf. the Shah's *Mission for my Country*, 1960: 20 and *Réponse à l'Histoire*, 1979: 20, 127. On top of *Tārīkh-e adabiyāt-e Īrān*, Ṣafā wrote a widely-read 'Introduction to Sufism'.

[35] 'Ideological state institution' is a free adaptation of ALTHUSSER's 'appareil idéologique d'Etat' that he put forward to broaden the traditional Marxist outlook on the state as an instrument of repression (1976: 82). This study does not support his Marxist underpinning of the concept. Another such ideological state institution since 1963 was Iran's Theosophical Society (see HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1991: 231).

[36] EILERS, 1977: 323. "The Shah's second wife Queen Sorayya recounts in her memoirs that the Shah used to talk of his visions of the Prophet Mohammad [...] Such claims appear repeatedly in his political speeches: 'a force others can't perceive accompanies me. My mystical force'" (AHMADI and AHMADI, 1998: 161).

Involvement by the state in the promotion of a certain mysticism may help explain why Sufism became 'fashionable'[37] and "many members of higher society quite openly confessed to belonging to one of the [...] dervish orders."[38] Commenting on the relations between Iran, civilisation and mysticism in a way that must have appealed particularly to the 'members of higher society', the Iranian exile writer Jamālzāde (although he himself was not exactly co-opted by the Pahlavi state) claimed that "if we conceive of real civilisation as [...] a mixture between [...] the mind and the heart, then we may count some of our own mystics among the brilliant examples of the 'civilised man'."[39]

Just like Moḥammad and ʿAlī ʿAnqā and Nasr and their institutions, the Bonyād-e Mowlavī was centrally located in the post-war elite figuration. Their ideologically incorporated Sufi discourse was an "ecumenical mysticism [...] that obfuscate[d] the historical and sociological dimensions of religion." In its projection of a divine and natural hierarchy, their quietist mysticism resented what became "a major element of Islam for ordinary believers; socio-political criticism of the state."[40]

After the urban uprising of June 5, 1963 ('*pānzdah-e khordād*'), the Shah was increasingly faced with a resilient religious opposition that would not be co-opted.[41] 'The infiltration of Sufi orders' has been mentioned as a means available to the state to cope with it.[42] That Sufism could be made into a counter-ideology to Islamism by the government and related institutions, is seen in a curious, 1969 definition in the semi-official *Iran Almanac*: "A religious movement, second in importance in

[37] SLUGLETT, 1989: 116.

[38] EILERS, 1977: 323. Among the Ahl-e Ḥaqq, a subsect of urban and educated affiliates came into being from the 1960s (MIR-HOSSEINI, 1994, (2): 212). From 1974, when he succeeded his father, Bahram Elāhī attempted to give the order 'a more universal appeal' and attracted new converts who included foreigners (*op. cit.*, p. 215). However, it is not suggested here that Sufism in the late Pahlavi era was but an elite phenomenon. Underlying elite affiliation was 'general mystical religiosity', which is seen through a remark by DURING: "C'est que de l'avis de tous les soufis [...] Nûr ʿAlî Shâh était un très grand Maître [....] De nos jours il représente encore, *dans la mythologie populaire*, le prototype du saint extatique mort en martyr" [my italics] (1976: 123).

[39] JAMĀLZĀDE, 1352/1973: 13.

[40] SLUGLETT, 1989: 116, in a review of FISCHER (1980).

[41] "In the 60s [...] ties between clergy and monarchy were broken" (VIEILLE, 1981: 3). The process was fastened by the death of the quietist Source Borūjerdī in 1961.

[42] ZONIS, 1971: 194, cf. ALAM (1991: 151), who wrote in his diary, on 11 May 1970, that "I mentioned [to the Shah] that a group of Naqshbandi Kurds have agreed to 'flee' to Iraq, posing as refugees. Once there they are sure to be received by General Bakhtiar who will be at their mercy."

Iran only to Shiʿism is [...] Sufism [....] Sufis themselves claim Islamic sanction for their system."[43] The positioning of Sufism as 'a religious movement' outside the Shiʿism-Sunnism divide, is a construction that has been alien to most Iranian, Shiʿite Sufi understandings of self - both before, during and after the Pahlavi dynasty. As they have conceived of Sufism as an integrally Islamic movement, 'Islamic sanction' constructs an opposition that is not justified by indigenous views.[44]

Besides institutional absorption, the state incorporation of mysticism materialised in a more personal aspect as well. A claimant to the position of Shams ol-ʿOrafāʾ 'axis', Ḥājj Mīr Sayyed ʿAlī Qomī Borqeʿī, was a reputed jurist. From this status emanated his appointment as a teacher of the Shah in religious matters.[45] Dr. Reżāzāde Shafaq, a disciple of the Kowṯarī Neʿmatollāhī sheikh ʿAlī Samandar, had been appointed - it is not clear in exactly which period - to the same end.[46]

Kingship having once more become an axis of legitimacy in Iranian society, royal patronage was not just bestowed upon but also actively sought by Sufis. Sufi literature had reportedly been published with congratulatory dedications to the king under Reza Shah. Under Mohammad Reza Shah, there were Sufis who requested congratulatory dedications of the royal state. ‹Maʿṣūmʿalīshāh› Modarresī ʿĀlem sent a manuscript to a great many political personalities, and included their laudatory let-

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[43] *Iran Almanac 1969*: 516, cf. SANAI (1951: 3); *Iran Almanac 1968* and *1963*, the latter of which states: "We have dealt [with] the Sufis [and] no [...] noteworthy event about them has [...] taken place" (*op. cit.*, p. 436). SAVAK's demolition of Khomeyni's reputation in 1963, however, portrayed him as a person who, except for being a homosexual, a spy and a foreigner, "had written erotic Sufi poetry" (CHEHABI, 1990: 235). Besides the obvious damage that 'erotic poetry' would do to one's ascetic reputation in Iran, the charge hardly makes any sense, except when one interprets it as a state attempt to divide the jurists through associating one of them with Sufism, i.e. by playing on the opposition between Sufis and jurists. *Iran Almanac 1975* contains a reprint of a newspaper report on the (mainly Qāderī and Naqshbandī) dervishes of Sanandaj, Kurdistan.

[44] *Iran Almanac 1969*: 516. In its summary of Iranian history, the same report omits mentioning the crucial fact, which is not normally lost on anyone, that Shāh Ismaʿīl, who declared Shiʿism the state religion in 1501, had been the leader of a Sufi order (*op. cit.*, p. 48). There is a striking similarity between this definition of Sufism from the Pahlavi era and (post-)revolutionary redefinitions. A contemporary anti-Sufi manifesto (‹Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh›, 1375/1996) reads: "They gave Sufism an Islamic freshness" (*be taṣavvof āb va rang-e eslāmī dādand*) (*op. cit.*, p. 46).

[45] "ʿAlī Borqeʿī was an *emām-e jamāʿat* and he published several books, one of which was forbidden by the Sources of Emulation (*marājeʿ-e taqlīd*). When Moḥammad Reza (the dethroned king) was [still] the heir apparent, he instructed him in the Holy Law" (CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 60).

[46] HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1991: 200.

ters of response, including the royal emblem of the lion with a sword, in the final edition.[47] Another, more traditional technique that was also known from the Reza Shah era, was the (mostly *post-factum*) claim to Sufi foresight and magical intervention:

> First miracle - One day the Honourable Vaḥīd ol-Owliyāʾ sat serenely among an assembly of his lovers and he was worried. Suddenly [...] he proclaimed: 'A danger awaits His Majesty Mohammad Reza Shah, please bless him and recite this holy *āya* after the morning prayer, 110 times, for his health and in order for the danger to be removed from him' [....] A few days later he reported that His Majesty had been shot at by one of the enemies [...] and that each bullet had miraculously missed, as if an invisible hand had kept them away from His Majesty's face, [...] and this event occurred on the day of Bahman 15.[48]

ROYAL PATRONAGE AND RELIGIOUS OPPOSITION

The Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order

The Shah's younger brother Ali-Reza reportedly had a liking for Sufism. He often visited the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī sheikh Manẓūrʿalīshāh and extended royal grants to surrounding Sufis.[49] Notwithstanding the royal patronage, there had always been and still was a negative stereotype. The informal master - whom one Sufi held to be Ṣafīʿalīshāh's brother's

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[47] Cf. ʿĀLEM, 1338/1959. ʿĀlem is a sheikh of the Khāksār order and a Shiʿite religious notable (GRAMLICH, 1965: 86) who resided - at least to the 1980s - in Tehran, and founded his own branch which he named after himself: Modarresī ʿĀlemīya Khāksārīya (cf. KHVAJA OD-DĪN, 1360/1981: 19). A comparable and common technique of legitimisation is seen in the four pictures of the Shah, with full honorary reference, on a visit to Naʾin that are included in BALĀGHĪ, 1369Q/1949 (*op. cit.*, pp. 15, 17), who was a Shams ol-ʿOrafāʾ-Neʿmatollāhī leader.

[48] HĀFEZ OL-KOTOB, 1338/1959: 82. 15 Bahman corresponds to the 4th of February 1949, when the first attempt at the life of the Shah was made by a member of the Islamist movement *Fedāʾiyān-e Eslām* (active between at least 1945 and 1953) The *Fedāʾiyān-e Eslām* were even more opposed to secular politicians such as Moṣaddeq. When the CIA-sponsored coup restored the Shah in power in 1953, they referred to it as a 'holy uprising' (ABRAHAMIAN, 1993: 109). ‹Vaḥīd ol-Owliyāʾ› (d.1956) was a leader of the Ẓahabīya order. An example of earlier techniques: "One of the Sufis from India by the name of ‹Shast Mehr Bābā› related the coming to power of Reza Shah in Iran to himself and said that his becoming a king had been because of his willpower" (ĪRĀNĪ, 1371/1992: 18, cf. previous chapter).

[49] Cf. CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-2: 42, 1361/1982-3: 19. ‹Monavvarʿalīshāh› confirmed this reading and added Ali-Reza Pahlavi was initiated in Mashhad by ‹Manẓūrʿalīshāh› (*interview*, 09/09/98).

grandson, while another denied any such blood relation - spoke of his mother's fears. She had been afraid of the Sufis as she knew them to be engaged only in smoking hashish and dark activities in the cellar of the lodge. The master himself had a similar opinion, until he once visited the lodge out of curiosity and never left again.

None of the lodge's leading notables were blood relations of its founder. The conflict over the lodge's ownership was concluded after 17 years, in the 1950s, with the help of the Freemason and 'impartial sheikh' Naṣrollāh Taqavī. The settlement provided for the separation of the congregational part from the living quarters (the latter of which were allocated to the heirs of Ṣafīᶜalīshāh). Afterwards, Ṣafī's heirs withdrew from the lodge: they retreated into their living quarters or went abroad. The lodge was now *de jure* in the hands of the Society of Brotherhood and remained so until 1979.

With the coming to power of the Pahlavi polity in 1921, royal patronage came to a temporary halt. Now, in the Islamic Republic, a Sufi in Ẓahīr od-Dowle's Tehrani lodge quite openly took pride in the royal relations that developed after the interlude, in the period 1941-1979. He boasted of royal patronage in the weak sense, consisting of a visit by the Shah's twin sister Ashraf.[50] "Here is Ashraf", she had called out after ringing the bell. "Well, I am the Honourable One and I am sleeping", the resident sheikh responded. Ashraf said: "If Your Honour is tired, we will not enter." The sheikh then changed his mind, when he saw who was at the gate, and invited in the princess and her entourage. After having spent an agreeable time with the sheikh and upon leaving, Ashraf commanded: "Dervish, ask something of me!" The sheikh responded (in modest dignity) that there was nothing he could possibly wish for, and the ritual was once repeated before the company left.[51] Royal patronage in the strong sense however - as in the reported case of Manẓūrᶜalīshāh - was less publicly jubilated.

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[50] A similar visit is reported of Farah and her mother (*conversation*, 06/19/97).

[51] The story was obviously framed in a classical Sufi mold, an anecdote of RŪMĪ's: "Once, a lover came to his Beloved's house. He knocked on the door. 'Who is there?' the Beloved asked. The man answered, 'It is I, your lover'. 'Go away', said the Beloved, 'for you are not really in Love'. Years passed, and again the lover came to the door of the Beloved's house and knocked. 'Who is there?' asked the Beloved. This time the man answered, 'It is you'. 'Now that you are I', replied the Beloved, 'you may come in" (*Mathnawī*, I: 3056sq, cf. NURBAKHSH, 1978: 89). I interpret this to indicate that my interviewee wished to express Ashraf's serious intention, her being essentially a Sufi.

The Shah's elite co-optation involved a cross-class network of "courtiers, personal adjutants, military generals, and economic and political confidants."[52] These persons were recruited from the 'general elite' that Zonis reckoned to have consisted of "officers, directors, members of the board, of leading fraternal and social organizations (e.g., the Rotary Club, Lions Club, [...] the Freemasons, etc.)."[53]

From the 1960s onward royal recruitment increasingly involved politicians, who came to the fore as a professional class for the first time, and among whom were many Freemasons.[54] In 1969, the secret service SAVAK wrote a report on Freemasonry in Iran,[55] in which their total number (in 1969) was estimated at 12.000. It listed from their midst 22 members of parliament, 17 senators and eight members of the ministerial council, most importantly the late premier Amīr-ʿAbbās Hoveyda.[56] The Society of Brotherhood occupied a central position in these Freemason networks. Its administrative centre provided a meeting point, and developments under Mohammad Reza Shah further intensified the relation. Simultaneously, leading Ṣafīʿalīshāhīs increasingly contested the confluence of elite Sufism and worldly, royal state power.

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[52] BILL, 1973: 142.

[53] ZONIS, 1971: 346-7, cf. FORBIS, 1980: 153; FOYŪŻĀT, 1375/1997: 137. In 1961, the Shah accepted the presidency of the Rotary Club (*Iran Almanac 1969*, p. 554), and in 1963 the patronage of the Lions Club (MĪR, 1371/1992: 104), which was publicly announced on May 17, 1963, by the president of the Iranian chapter Ḥoseyn Aʿlāʾ (premier in 1951 and 1955, reportedly with masonic affiliations (ALGAR, 1970: 296)). The Iranian chapter was subdivided into 100 local branches. In 1969, Farah Diba donated three million rials to the Lions Club (*Iran Almanac 1969*, p. 735).

[54] *Interview* ‹Monavvarʿalīshāh›, 03/25/97. Besides as a high status mutual-interest club, Freemasonry's popularity is partly explained by its legendary roots, i.e. the building of King Solomon's temple (cf. *Tehran Times*, 05/08/97). Although many unrelated others were involved as well, it is probably correct that "‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle› was one of the founders of Freemasonry in Iran" (CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: text accompanying photo appendix); cf. AFSHĀR, 1367/1988: 52.

[55] The SAVAK report (*Farāmāsūnrī va tashkīlāt-e ān dar Īrān dar sāl-e 1348 (3)*) was published in *Pānzdah-e khordād*, 1375/1996, 5, (22). Many of its articles present documents pertaining to the Iranian revolution and the preceding dynastic period.

[56] *Pānzdah-e khordād*. 1375/1996, 5, (22): 81.

Dr. Ismaʿīl Marzbān Amīn ol-Molk

After Bīneshʿalīshāh died in 1932, the oculist Marzbān assumed the
Consultancy Council's leadership. On the occasion of the fiftieth anni-
versary of the foundation of the Society of Brotherhood in 1949, he held
a speech in commemoration of its genesis. It stands out in this text that
Marzbān spoke of royalty as an equal. He strongly suggested that the
well-being of the Monarchy was related to the state of Sufism (or at
least the Anjoman). His speech did not assert parallel Sufi power, but it
nevertheless radiated a self-conscious proximity to the Monarchy.

> After the bombardment of the Society by the agents of Moḥammad ʿAlī
> Shāh, *who because of this very act destroyed his Kingdom*, his successor
> Aḥmad Shāh developed an interest in [it]. Moḥammad Ḥasan Mīrzā, [his]
> crown prince, turned to Sufism/spiritual poverty [*faqr*] in this very Soci-
> ety [...]. Through this act the great divide between the various classes of
> the people (which Ṣafīʿalīshāh had ordered to be lessened), came to an
> end, from this moment [....] In the Society, they made the king and the
> beggar equal [...] [my italics].[57]

King and beggar were held to be equal, but the leaders belonged to Te-
hran's elite.[58] For this reason, Marzbān was confronted with an anony-
mous pamphlet that challenged the Society's confluence with worldly
power. It responded to the Council's 'Letter of Vigilance' (*Entebāh-
nāme*), which legitimised the abolition of the Pole.[59]

Present leaders propounded 'the thoughts of Faraonism' (i.e. of the
despotic era of ignorance before Islam).[60] "Gentlemen", the Response
admonished, "spiritual poverty and Sufism do not accommodate aristo-
cracy."[61] The 'eleven noble gentlemen' displayed a 'love of leadership'
(*reyāsat-dūstī*), while Sufism without (one) 'living, perfect essence' was
impossible. The Vigilance Letter referred to holy sources to legitimise
electory principles. This illegitimate innovation proved that the Council
was not only disrespectful of Sufism, but also ignorant of the holy law.[62]

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[57] *In* AFSHĀR, 1367/1988: 64-9.

[58] Maḥmūd ʿErfān, *in* AFSHĀR, 13671988: 52.

[59] *Pāsokhī be entebāh-nāme-ye heyʾat-e moshāvere-ye anjoman-e okhovvat* (An An-
swer to the Letter of Vigilance of the Society of Brotherhood's Consultancy Council),
1333/1954. ‹Monavvarʿalīshāh› produced the name of Żiyāʾ od-Dīn Mowlavī ‹Sar-
madʿalīshāh› as the pamphlet's author (*communication*, 02/21/99). The Letter of Vigi-
lance has been printed *in* AFSHĀR, 1367/1988: 558-62.

[60] *Pāsokhī be entebāh-nāme-ye heyʾat-e moshāvere-ye anjoman-e okhovvat*: 2.

[61] *Pāsokhī be entebāh-nāme-ye heyʾat-e moshāvere-ye anjoman-e okhovvat*: 4.

[62] *Pāsokhī be entebāh-nāme-ye heyʾat-e moshāvere-ye anjoman-e okhovvat*: 3, 2, 9, 5, 9.

Āqevlī and the 'war of words'

The Society's fourth leader was lieutenant general Farajollāh Āqevlī. He had held important state positions among which the ministry of the Interior during the Ḥakīmī and Qavām cabinets in the 1940s[63] and he was rewarded with the royal Homāyūn medal for his services.[64] In 1961, retired and out of official political office, he came to head the Society. He was re-elected in 1966 and remained its leader until he died in 1974.

In 1956, 30.000 members were registered. In 1963, the numbers had risen to about 34.000.[65] This means there had been a yearly increase from 1956 of some 570 members, and that the Society of Brotherhood was a vastly expanding social organisation. The Society did not completely sever its ties with what had formerly defined Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufism. The Consultancy Council was entitled to appoint sheikhs in the Society's name, for the 'guidance' (*dastgīrī*) of the Sufis, apparently not to lose touch with the basis that defined its public legitimacy.

The structure of the Society may have inspired Binder's reflection before the revolution that "most [Sufi orders] do not appear to be serious religious movements anymore."[66] But degrees of conviction are hard to measure, and opponents' labels often enforce false dichotomies. The category of Shiʿite Freemasonry, mocked by many as 'inauthentic', was a social reality. Dr Sayyed Ḥasan Emāmī, a Tehrani Friday Imam, saw no contradiction in being both a Shiʿite leader and a Freemason.[67]

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[63] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 21, MĪR, 1371/1992: 225.

[64] The Shah's regime survived initial instability, according to ABRAHAMIAN (1978: 29), "not because of the Iranian mystique for kingship but because the Shah was much more aware of the [...] need to retain control of the unmystical military". Farajollāh Āqevlī, however, was a mystic/soldier. Another famous decoration besides the Homāyūn medal, The Lion and the Sun, had been installed in Persia in the honour of the British diplomat and traveller Sir John Malcolm (SYKES, 1951: 308).

[65] Cf. AFSHĀR, 1367/1988: 60. In 1924, 31.321 members were registered (ḤOSEYNĪ, 1377/1998: 28).

[66] BINDER, 1965: 128, cf. GRAMLICH: "Persönliche Isnāde interessieren den Derwisch kaum mehr. Ihm genügt die Zugehörigkeit zu einer Institution [....] In erster Linie ist der Derwisch nicht Schüler eines Meisters, sondern Mitglied einer Institution, eines Ordens" (1970: 176, 177).

[67] MĪR, 1371/1992: 228. Emāmī followed in the footsteps of the *emām jomʿa* Ḥājjī Mīrzā Zeyn ol-ʿĀbedīn (d.1904), who had been a member of the Freemason *farāmūshkhāne* (ALGAR, 1970: 284).

The Consultancy Council did not make use of its elective power until 1959.[68] Thereafter several Sufi masters were appointed as 'elected sheikh' (*sheykh-e montakhab*). They were violently resented by Ṣafī-ʿalīshāhīs opposed to the Anjoman, and subordinated to the Society in a structure that no other Iranian sheikh would have accepted.[69] Sufis in Ẓahīr od-Dowle's lodge cherished the memory of Āqevlī for his main-tenance of the graves and a large-scale repair of the main *khānaqāh* in 1961/2.[70] But not in the main lodge itself, regained after the revolution by non-Freemason Sufis who remained stubbornly indifferent to the source of beauty that came to them as an invasion.[71]

Under Āqevlī, discontent over the ways of the Society led to a new 'war of words' (*jang-e lafẓī*). In addition to face-to-face confrontations, it was often staged in pamphlets and magazines with a wide circulation such as *Vaḥīd* and *Mehr*. One sheikh in Isfahan, Qāsem Tavāngar (see chapter 2, table 2), wrote in defence of 'the real path of Ṣafā/the rightful path of purity' (*dūde-ye ḥaqqe-ye Ṣafāʾī*) and revived the issue of the in-

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[68] "Als ich mich [...] im Jahre 1959 über die Amtsführung des Rates erkundigte, hatte er seit seinem Bestehen von diesem Recht noch nicht Gebrauch gemacht" (GRAMLICH, 1965: 64).

[69] Under Marzbān two persons were appointed, and one under Āqevlī:
(1). Moṣṭafā Sālār Amjad ‹Moṣṭafāʿalīshāh› (d.?). Sufis in the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī lodge claimed that Amjad was the *pīr* of Ayatollah Ṭāleqānī; (2). Fatḥollāh Ṣafāʾī ‹Ṣafāʾ ol-Molk› (d.1940). For biographical details, see CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 154, 174, 1362/1983: 42-3. (3). Prince ʿAlīreżā Mīrzā Khosrovānī ‹Ḥakīm Khosravī› Qājār (d.1966). The last elected sheikh under Marzbān, see CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 162. At the orders of Āqevlī, ʿAbbās ʿĀfī ‹Shahīdʿalī› (d.?) was designated Khosrovānī's *pīr-e dalīl*. Through the intercession of Āqevlī, ʿĀfī had allegedly obtained a job in the Sepah Bank (CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1362/1983: 42-3) (which critics of Sufi Freemasonry claimed was subordinate to Āqevlī's wishes). The history is one of sublime irony, if one is to believe present-day sheikhs in ʿĀfī's line. ʿĀfī obtained his *ejāze* from ‹Vafāʿalīshāh›, who was reputed for joining the separatist forces of Kūchek Khān in Gīlān in the First World War and later in the struggle against Reza Shah (for whom Āqevlī worked, see previous chapter). When Āqevlī assumed the leadership, ʿĀfī was reportedly fearful of his forceful personality and dared not by himself approach Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufis (CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1362/1983: 42-3).

[70] *Yaghmā* (1353/1974, 27, (10): 414-5) published an elegy that commemorated Āqevlī as a Sufi leader of great social importance. The biography in *Iran Almanac 1969* mentions he was important in the Constitutional Revolution and later imprisoned by the British for alleged Nazi sympathies.

[71] Rather, the Society of Brotherhood was reproached for its negligence in the con-flict with Ṣafīʿalīshāh's heirs: "Yes, it was this Consultancy Council that sat and watched while Maḥmūd Neshāṭ, that unbelieving tyrant, confiscated nearly three quar-ters of the lodge's *ṣaḥn* and sold another part" (*Pāsokhī be entebāh-nāme-ye heyʾat-e moshāvere-ye anjoman-e okhovvat*: 7-8).

dispensable Pole.[72] It is an enigmatic piece that layers contradictory, overt and rather more hidden messages. Upon superficial reading, one might take it as a laudation of the Society of Brotherhood. Although many of the Society's leaders came from a political background, Tavāngar held, they had not used the Society for political purposes. In state service they had, motivated by Sufism, rendered valuable services to the country.[73] Entezām as-Saltane had been morally outstanding like Safā himself. Selfless Marzbān had dedicated his whole life to others. Āqevlī had "several sensitive jobs, among which [...] the directorate of the Se-pah Bank, being a high-standing member of the Board of Directors of the Lion and the Red Sun, [being involved in] harbour development and other activities." In all of these he had "no objective but service to the Shah and the fatherland," and had "the honour of reporting to the first person of the country." In these days, one did not often come across a man who was so full of (both) "Shah worship and Sufi features."[74]

Abruptly changing subjects, Tavāngar then wrote: "Our topic is presently the real path of Safā/the rightful path of purity." His purpose was not criticism, as it was an error *(khatā)* to have discussions on dervish-hood. Rather, he wished to bring into mind the history of the Safīʿalīshāhī order. If, after Safīʿalīshāh and Zahīr od-Dowle, a claimant was not found, or if such a person did not want to make himself known as the Pole of the Time of the Path, then it did not follow that there *was* no Pole. Thus, Tavāngar did not consider Bīneshʿalīshāh and his successors legitimate, but his construction of events carefully related the absence of a Pole to faulty reasoning rather than deliberate acting. Fur-

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[72] TAVĀNGAR, 1345/1966. Tavāngar's piece was a response to earlier critique of him by Āqevlī.

[73] TAVĀNGAR, 1345/1966: 197.

[74] TAVĀNGAR, 1345/1966: 198. Āqevlī's nationalism is for instance seen in a memorial speech from 1971, as head of the National Heritage Organisation, of his anti-clerical friend Hasan Taqī-zāde. Taqī-zāde (who reportedly had masonic affiliations (ALGAR, 1970: 296), like Āqevlī), had "reckoned any fanaticism as blameworthy". His most important scientific work had been a research on the national Iranian epic. He had been characterised by a 'learned [...] love of his fatherland' and he had known the Persian language as the strong foundation of nationalism. Taqī-zāde had furthermore been important in his consideration of the 'rebirth of the national spirit of Iran' after the Arab invasion. In him, Iran had lost one of its wisest and worthiest children (*in Yaghmā*, 1349/1971, 23, (12): 728-29). Mehdī Sheykhbahāʾī, a Safīʿalīshāhī leader for Europe (in the Netherlands) in the line of Tavāngar, confirmed that Āqevlī had been a regular visitor to the royal court (*interview*, 06/24/98).

thermore, if the Society had not *wanted* to acknowledge a Pole, then this would not justify considering the following of him unauthorised.[75]

Here then, Tavāngar said by implication that what had been so valuable for the nation, society and the state in Āqevlī, had not been translated in a way that would benefit Sufism. In a stronger, although still evasive counterimage to the initial laudations, he held that "of course [...] the brothers of the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī path are not seeking fame (*shohrat*), and their acts are 'with ʿAlī' (*bā mowlā*), and their way is with the truth, except for a limited few who have been 'showing off' (*taẓāhor*)."[76] But in any case, Tavāngar ended, "We are convinced that the [...] Path had a Pole, and presently has one, and that one cannot exist without a Pole (who is in contact with the Imam of Time (*emām-e zamān*)) [....] *The Society belongs to us and we belong to the Society*" [my italics].[77]

ʿAbdollāh Enteẓām's 'new perspective'

Bīneshʿalīshāh's son ʿAbdollāh Enteẓām was Iran's Foreign Minister between 1953 and 1956,[78] a member of the Consultancy Council since at least the 1960s and its leader from 1974.[79] He took part in an informal gathering (*dowre*), the participants in which were ranked among the 307 most influential Iranians of their time.[80] A comment on similar groupings held that they "may even bind their members to secrecy and mutual aid by oaths or various rituals",[81] which is a likely reference to the Freemason/Sufi Society of Brotherhood. During Enteẓām's leadership, the influential Moḥammad Okhovvat (d.1979) was appointed as (the last) 'elected sheikh'. Okhovvat had been a counsellor of the national supreme court, and he had received the Agha Khan III on one of his

[75] TAVĀNGAR, 1345/1966: 198-99.

[76] TAVĀNGAR, 1345/1966: 199.

[77] TAVĀNGAR, 1345/1966: 199-200, cf. *Pāsokhī be entebāh-nāme-ye heyʾat-e moshāvere-ye anjoman-e okhovvat:* 2. Other critics also stressed that the order was 'the path of *Ṣafī and* Ṣafā' (*ṭarīqe-ye Ṣafī o Ṣafā*), i.e. not only that of ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle› (*interview* ‹Monavvarʿalīshāh›, 09/09/98).

[78] Between 1957 and 1963 he was the director of the state-owned National Iranian Oil Company. A Sufi dissident claimed, possibly in an attempt to clear Sufism's name, that Enteẓām had no Sufi credentials but owed his position to socio-political prominence. In reality Enteẓām's Sufi identity as ‹Bīneshʿalīshāh›'s son preceded his socio-political prominence (which was largely of his own making).

[79] HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1371/1992: 327.

[80] ZONIS, 1971: 238-9.

[81] ZONIS, 1971: 240.

visits to Iran and the main Ṣafīʿalīshāhī lodge, to which old spiritual connections existed.[82] The Shah had awarded the Agha Khan several honorary titles, such as 'Vālāḥaẓrat', during these visits.

In 1977/8 Enteẓām wrote a series of articles entitled 'A New Perspective on ʿErfān and Sufism' (*Naẓarī tāze be ʿerfān va taṣavvof*). He used the pseudonym 'I do not know' (*lā adrī*), and the articles allegedly reported the question-and-answer sessions of a Sufi master. Thus he set out on a Socratic investigation of Iranian mysticism. There was a traditional, initial modesty to anything Enteẓām was going to say on mysticism through his sheikh, and he stressed that complacency was to be avoided: "Our understanding of the divine sphere/self (*lāhūt*) is limited to the perception of its traces, not its essence [....] We must know that even the thought of [it] is beyond us. No matter how much we ascend to high stations, we will not uncover this enigma."[83]

But the importance of Sufism, Enteẓām also held, could hardly be overestimated. Like Moḥammad ʿAnqā, Enteẓām stressed personal reformation as the key to humanity's salvation. Although lives in the service of others were incumbent on commoners and the elite alike, he especially recommended the participation of the 'high authorities of the country', who could be brilliant 'moral examples' for the 'others': "If a Minister makes simplicity his motto in his own life [...] then all civil servants in that Ministry will change [as well] and be turned into abstemious and dutiful people."[84] Enteẓām pointed at the impotence of philosophy, which had from Plato to Existentialism come up with the illusion of political solutions,[85] but his sketch of a Sufi guardian class reminds one of the Republic as much as ʿAnqā's discourse does.

Furthermore, Enteẓām's sheikh held a critical view of Sufism's contemporary manifestations. Nowadays youngsters took alcohol and various drugs, that addicts referred to as a 'trip' (*safar*). The 'mystical audition' (*samāʿ*) of the ancients had been converted into pop music. "Do

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[82] Cf. CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 45; 1362/1983: 180. Okhovvat was a disciple of ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh› (BARQ, 1352/1973: 15). The Agha Khan (d. 1957) - a central figure in the international jet set and political scene, and Spiritual Leader of Ismāʿīlī Muslims - visited Iran in 1948/9 and 1951. Historical relations between the Neʿmatollāhīs and the Ismāʿīlīya have been explored by WILSON and POURJAVADI (1975). Intimate (financial) relations between the Ismāʿīlīs and the Ẓoʾr-Reyāsateyn ended in 1948, when the Agha Khan took insult at ‹Mūnesʿalīshāh›'s refusal to visit him (*op. cit.*, p. 133).

[83] *Vaḥīd*, 1356/1977-8, 209: 37.

[84] *Vaḥīd*, 1356/1977-8, 211/2: 93-4.

[85] *Vaḥīd*, 1356/1977-8, 207: 35.

not presume that these are the words of a dry and inexperienced per-
son", he warned, for "the world of drunkenness is happy, but unfortu-
nately, it does not last long and its sequel is a hangover."[86] Neither did
the traditional Sufi leaders, who were full of claims to knowledge and
authority, seem to share his rational views:

> This is to the leaders of various Sufi orders: Are my words baseless? Can
> people not be shown [...] a new way? If you say 'no', then I say: 'what
> have you achieved?' Is your conscience cleared [...] by building a few
> lodges? Dear honourable Elders, I spent fifty years on these teachings,
> and I do not make any claim. I am a lover of Sufism [....] Do *you* really
> have faith in [...] Sufism? [italics mine][87]

By the time he published his 'new perspective' on Sufism, Enteẓām had
discretely accomplished a further integration of Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufism
and Freemasonry. The four Iranian lodges had grown in number and
confidence, and developed their own rules with regard to admission and
litany. The conspicuous independence was not appreciated at headquar-
ters, and it resulted in a separation from the German mother branch.[88]
Operating from the Tehrani Ṣafīʿalīshāhī building, the Iranian Freema-
sons joined forces and chose the Society of Brotherhood's Enteẓām,
who also headed the Ṣafā lodge,[89] as their representative.

In 1969, Enteẓām went to see the Shah and make a petition. He re-
quested an Iranian lodge, "without any form of foreign bondage," es-
tablished as the one Grand National Lodge of Iran. The Shah consented.
The Iranian lodge was inaugurated in 1969, and Jafar Sharif-Imami was
chosen as its head.[90] The Freemasons then chose the administrative cen-

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[86] *Vaḥīd*, 1356/1977-8, 208: 30.

[87] *Naẓarī tāze be ʿerfān va taṣavvof*, 1363/1984: 114, 115.

[88] Only *Setāre-ye saḥar* (the fifth Iranian lodge related to German Freemasonry, see
previous chapter) retained German sponsorship (*communication* 12/07/98, via the Su-
preme Council of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the United States of America).
The separation probably occurred, according to this source, "some time in 1958" (*com-
munication* 02/16/99, idem). In a 1348/1969-70 SAVAK document published in
Pānzdah-e khordād (1996, 22, (5): 72-96), however, it is mentioned that the four lodges
established independence from the German branch "three years ago" (p. 76).

[89] *Pānzdah-e khordād*, 5, (22): 77-8.

[90] *Pānzdah-e khordād*, 5, (22): 78; JAFARI, 1369/1990: 250, cf. BILL, 1973: 135.
Sharif-Imami was premier in 1960-1961, and August-November 1978. In 1969 he was
Deputy Custodian to the Pahlavi Foundation and a member of the Lions Club (*Iran
Almanac*, 1969: 781). Foreign Freemasonry never consented to independent chapters in
Iran (*Pānzdah-e khordād*, 5, (22): 78), but "the foundation of the Grand Lodge of Iran
was consecrated by the French, Scottish and German Grand Lodges." As concerns
Scottish Rite activities, "The Supreme Council for Iran was consecrated in Tehran by

tre of the Society, once again, as theirs.[91] This event marked the completion of Freemasonry-Sufism integration in the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order.

Rumours held it among the self-proclaimed tasks of the Society of Brotherhood to prepare from its midst a person for the premiership. In this context, one cannot help noticing - the extent to which this is telling will remain for historians to judge - the formal resemblance between the Consultancy Council and a national cabinet. When massive protest shook the foundations of power and the Shah complained of former friends who were hastily leaving the sinking ship in December 1978, the Shah turned to Enteẓām for a solution. Despite a cloudy episode, the Shah had known Enteẓām as a friend since 1936.[92]

A correspondence on the eve of the revolution has been retrieved that documents a plea on the part of the Grand Lodge of Iran. It pledges compliance with Khomeyni and the revolution, in reward for protection afterwards. It was the (Sufi) Freemasons' royal patronage and deep absorption into the institutions of Pahlavi power, however, as 'courtiers, personal adjutants, military generals, and economic and political confidants', which made for the offer to be immediately rejected.[93]

The Solṭānʿalīshāhī order

Contrary to the Ṣafīʿalīshāhīs, who evolved from the cradle of the Qajar monarchy and retained its protection, the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs had to do without significant patronage on the eve of their ascent. They barely survived persecutions and a widespread hatred of Sufism. Given the early history, the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs' later, generally acknowledged development into the most 'respectable' Sufi order of Iran makes for a riddle.

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the [...] Supreme Councils of France, Belgium and the Netherlands in 1970" (*communication* 12/07/98, via the Supreme Council of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the United States of America). Despite the independence, "the Grand Lodge of England assisted in the establishment of the Grand Lodge of Iran." The Iranian lodges worked together from 1967 (*communication*, 02/16/99, idem).

[91] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 163.

[92] NARAGHI, 1994: viii, 182. Various persons (HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1371/1992: 328-29, NARAGHI, 1994: 79) have indicated that Enteẓām had been out of favour with the Shah since 1963. Still, I would hold that the acceptance by the Shah of Enteẓām's request in 1969 (and his reception) moderates this view.

[93] FAQĪH-ḤAQĀNĪ, 1373/1994: 92. It was possibly such acts of despair, which explain the Sufi claim that Enteẓām aided revolutionaries (*interview*, 05/11/97; cf. CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 172).

It seems plausible that the early history engrained into the order an ethos of survival; the urge to pacify hostile powers. The acquisition of official Shiʿite religious status - unalienable and protective - was the primary means in its repertoire. Secondly, at a more mundane level survival depended upon societal integration. Thirdly, no royal patronage is officially known to have been extended to the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order during the era of Mohammad Reza Shah, but as the order expanded enormously, many of its members held influential positions in Iranian society, members of the government visited its lodges, and there were several contacts between the royals and the Sufis. Thus, ideological incorporation was from several angles beneficial to the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs. Lastly, what proved as important as these elements, was the Solṭānʿalīshāhī balancing act between royal and clerical loyalties.

Ḥājj Sheykh Moḥammad Ḥasan ‹Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh›

Ever more well-to-do and influential affiliates had entered the order under Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh (1891-1966), and his message had become widespread. He had acquired weighty religious status even before publishing *Pand-e Ṣāleḥ*, through a visit to Iraqi Sources of Emulation in 1912, "all of whom bestowed the utmost kindness on him."[94]

In Beydokht, Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh built a library and a mausoleum for his grandfather and a 'tremendous number' of followers gathered around him.[95] Their appearance did not distinguish them from other Shiʿites. It was remarked in 1959 that "the Ni'matullahi cap [...] is seen more rarely among the dervishes [...], because they are all in the service of society and [...] dressed in the customary clothing of their own time."[96] For Solṭānʿalīshāhīs, work and contemporary clothing were not only customary but obligatory.[97] As regards politics, Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh felt that "no one can

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[94] HEYʾAT-E TAḤRĪRĪYE-YE KETĀBKHĀNE-YE AMĪR SOLEYMĀNĪ, 1367/1988: 45.

[95] GRAMLICH, 1965: 69; HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1371/1992: 220.

[96] NŪRBAKHSH, 1338/1959: 52. The observation is made in contradistinction to the Khāksār order, which is not known for attempts to be respectable and that cherishes its traditions: "In the [...] Khāksār [order], the cap is worn more often. There exists a difference [...] between Neʿmatollāhī and Khāksār caps: the Neʿmatollāhī cap is like a half-globe while the Khāksār cap is more like a cone. The mark on top [...] is not customary in the Neʿmatollāhī [...] order".

[97] ‹ṢĀLEḤʿALĪSHĀH›, 1372/1993: 72, 88, 92. This issue is closely related to the primary importance of Shiʿite 'dissimulation' (*taqīya*) in the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order (cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 36, 107).

interfere in state affairs without the ruling and proclamation of the Shah [...]."[98] Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh had established integration, religious, civil and political. In 1954, he became seriously ill. He spent his last twelve years reading, writing and bestowing advise. When he died in 1966, "in most Iranian cities, glorious ceremonies of commemoration were held."[99]

Ḥājj Solṭānḥoseyn Tābande ‹Reżāʿalīshāh›

Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh's son Solṭānḥoseyn (1914-1992) was born in Beydokht. At the instigation of his father he studied a range of civil and particularly religious subjects, which resulted in an authorisation (*ejāze*) to narrate the traditions of the imams and, in 1950, to lead congregational prayers (after which he would be called ‹Reżāʿalī›).[100] In imitation of his father, Reżāʿalī travelled widely and visited many religious authorities. During a visit to Najaf he managed to impress Ayatollah Moḥammad Ḥoseyn Āl-e Kāshef ol-Gheṭāʾ, who on March 22, 1951, after an examination, allowed him 'independent judgement' (*ejtehād*) in religious matters,

which effectively made him a jurist (*mojtahed*).[101] Upon his appointment as successor in 1960, he received the cognomen ‹Reżāʿalīshāh›.

In a spatial representation of Gonabad, Reżāʿalīshāh located it in between Shiʿite holy places - Mecca, Karbala, and Mashhad. His religious geography thus indicated the Solṭānʿalīshāhī home was (in) the centre of the (religious) universe. The religious geography is furthermore significant in that it absorbed a Sufi repertoire which held the world's turning to be de-
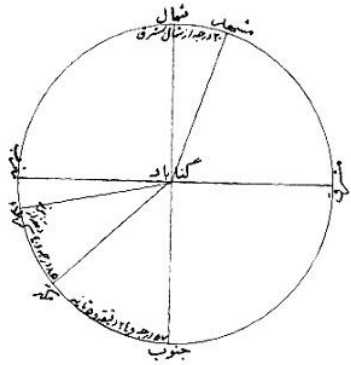
Figure 7. A religious geography

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[98] *Sāl-nāme-ye keshvar-e Īrān*, 1338/1959, 14: 128.

[99] JAZBĪ, 1358/1979: 5

[100] Biography *in* ‹MAḤBŪBʿALĪSHĀH›, 1373/1994-5: 70; ĀZMĀYESH, 1372/1993: 2-4.

[101] There had been jurists in the order, such as ‹Solṭānʿalīshāh›'s pupil Ḥājj Sheykh ʿAbdollāh Ḥāʾerī (d. 1938, cf. GRAMLICH, 1965: 67; previous chapter), but not, as ‹Reżāʿalīshāh›, in the position of Leader. The *ejāze* text has been published in ĀZMĀYESH, 1372/1993: 5, cf. ‹ṢĀLEḤʿALĪSHĀH›, 1372/1993: 11.

pendent upon Sufi masters: Gonabad is displayed as an axis around which the word turns (see figure 7).[102]

Back in Beydokht, Reżāʿalīshāh managed the Solṭānʿalīshāhī agricultural estate, and took care that none of the Sufis would lead astray and damage the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order through 'unlawful habits' (i.e. drugs and alcohol consumption, etc.), or by idling or begging.[103]

He assumed the leadership of the order at his father's death (1966), and would not be confronted with any of the modernist challenges of his forebears. In the winter of 1951, he had met with the brother of Ayatollah Sangelajī (whose innovative Shiʿite thought resembled the blasphemies of Qazvīnī), and praised his religious expertise (ignoring the reform program that his brother had proposed).[104] Kasravi was assassinated in 1946 and Qazvīnī's disciples did not pursue their teacher's fight.

Although it was forbidden from early on for any Solṭānʿalīshāhī Sufi to engage in politics, politicians did visit the order's religious centre (ḥoseynīya) in Gonabad.[105] In 1951, Reżāʿalīshāh visited several 'friends and notables', among whom was Ḥasan Emāmī, the Freemason Friday prayer leader of Tehran, who had been personally appointed by the Shah in 1945, and had just recovered from an attempt on his life in 1950.[106] Before embarking on the ḥajj in September 1950, Reżāʿalīshāh also met with general Razmara, who had just been appointed as Iran's premier, and whom he told that "most people in Iran look favourably upon your government."[107] In March 1951, Razmara was killed by a member of the militant Fedāʾiyān-e Eslām. Another meeting in Tehran had come about through the invitation by the Shah's stepmother Tūrān to visit her son prince Gholāmreżā Pahlavī. The rendezvous in Gholāmreżā's house reportedly provided an opportunity for Reżāʿalīshāh and the prince to exchange their Meccan pilgrimage experiences.[108]

Some Gonabadi affiliates were politicians themselves. One had been a college lecturer in Tehran and a diplomat who "in national and inter-

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[102] Figure 7. stems from ‹SOLṬĀNḤOSEYN›, 1348/1969: 24 (*Tārīkh va joghrāfī-ye Gonābād*).

[103] Cf. biography *in* ‹ṢĀLEḤʿALĪSHĀH›, 1372/1993: 11. ‹Reżāʿalīshāh› was also responsible for the restoration of the burial site of ‹Raḥmatʿalīshāh› (d.1861) in Shiraz (CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1352/1973, 3: 527).

[104] Cf. ‹SOLṬĀNḤOSEYN›, 1337/1958: 268-69.

[105] A long-time influential affiliate passed on this information to me.

[106] ‹SOLṬĀNḤOSEYN›, 1337/1958: 267-68.

[107] ‹SOLṬĀNḤOSEYN›, 1337/1958: 5.

[108] ‹SOLṬĀNḤOSEYN›, 1337/1958: 285.

national affairs [alike] evidenced a reconciling faculty which has helped antagonistic groups to work together for the benefit of all."[109] Moreover, "Mr. Hazeghi [had] been four times [a] Member of Parliament [...]: twice its delegate to the Constitutional Assembly: and three times Amir-ul-Hajj, leader of Iran's pilgrims to Mecca."[110] When Reżāʿalīshāh returned to Tehran from a visit to Afghanistan and Pakistan in 1957, which Hazeghi had helped facilitate, "many of the statesmen and parliamentarians came over for a visit."[111]

But the larger paradox is the political involvement of Reżāʿalīshāh himself, and the oppositional direction in which it guided the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order. In contrast to other Iranian Sufis, to his grandfather, his father and even himself up to then, Reżāʿalīshāh all of a sudden, in the 1960s, publicly criticised (representatives of) the Shah.[112] To be sure, he did not conceive of his criticism as political: "I have never taken part in politics, and know nothing of any political aspects or implications [....] It is only from the religious angle [...] that I shall discuss the matter."[113] But then, as an *official* Sufi/jurist Reżāʿalīshāh knew that "in Islam, religion and politics are not separated [and that] the government [can not] be divorced from the *official* religion" [my italics].[114]

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[109] GOULDING, 1970: xi; HAZEGHI [ḤĀZEQĪ]: "On journeys to diplomatic posts I have held in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, I always stopped for at least a couple of days at Bidukht en route" (1970: viii). When Ḥāzeqī was the cultural attaché of the Iranian embassy in Kabul in 1957, he invited ‹Reżāʿalīshāh›, who accepted his invitation (JAZBĪ-EṢFAHĀNĪ, 1372/1993: 245).

[110] GOULDING, 1970: xi.

[111] ‹REŻĀ-ʿALĪSHĀH›, 1354/1975, (2): 331-2. In addition, a hostile account mentioned the forceful 'protection' of the order by Manuchehr Eqbal, Iran's premier in the late 1950 (MADANĪ, 1376/1997: 45-6). The author did not, however, produce any evidence to back up his allegation.

[112] It was claimed after the revolution that ‹Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh› had resisted the landreforms of the 1960s, and the following citation was brought forward in support: "I wrote several letters to the [officials] of the time and I made proposals, but as it appeared this program had been designed in advance and that it [conformed] to an international standard, [I realised] it could not be changed and discussing it would be pointless" (HEYʾAT-E TAḤRĪRĪYE-YE KETĀBKHĀNE-YE AMĪR SOLEYMĀNĪ, 1367/1988: 146). There is no accompanying evidence of these letters (while others are included), and despite the fact that a *fatvā* had been issued against the landreforms, ‹Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh›'s moderate wording suggests it was not too much of a crucial, religious issue to him. In conclusion, there is no evidence here to suggest that ‹Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh› publicly opposed the Shah, as did his son (see below).

[113] ‹REŻĀ-ʿALĪSHĀH›, 1970: 1.

[114] ‹REŻĀ-ʿALĪSHĀH›, 1970: 71.

A 'religious perspective'

The occasion was provided for by the 1968 International Conference on Human Rights in Tehran, which was opened on April 21 and presided over by princess Ashraf. Reżāʿalīshāh had written a manifesto entitled 'Religious Perspective on the Human Rights Declaration', which, a later preface explains, presented "an Islamic attitude to the [Universal Human Rights] Declaration [and] was put into the hands of the representatives of [all] Islamic [countries that] attended the [...] Conference."[115]

  The Religious Perspective not only criticised the Universal Declaration but also took issue with a (royally sanctioned) parliamentary decree on the regulation of prostitution, which had been enforced since 1953.[116] Fiercely condemning and rejecting it, Reżāʿalīshāh took the opportunity to lament fading Islamic values,[117] the spread of non-Islamic male-female relations,[118] the neglect of female religious obligations,[119] and ignorance of Islamic women's rights[120] and restrictions in Iran.[121]

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[115] HAZEGHI, 1970: x. ‹Reżāʿalīshāh›'s text has been published in Persian and in English. The Persian *Naẓar-e maẕhabī be eʿlāmīye-ye ḥoqūq-e bashar*, literally A 'Religious Perspective on the Human Rights Declaration', has been translated as 'A Muslim Commentary on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights', possibly on purpose, with a Western audience in mind.

[116] "When we want to declare ourselves on the side of chastity [...], we actually pass a new law. [January 10, 1953] our Foreign Office presented a 'Supplementary Measure' to the Majlis on behalf of His Imperial Majesty's government entitled 'Improvement of arrangements for the control of Prostitution'. When I heard this I was astounded and grieved. How could the leaders of our country be so ignorant [...] of the Islamic Canon as to take up the [purification] of our land and the prevention of moral degradation without reference to the Canon, in obedience to the promptings of outsiders? The State religion of Iran is officially [...] Islam: and within that the Canon of the Shari'a and the teachings of the Imams [....] Why then should our government [...] bypass this religion and its Canon, which has omitted no point that concerns human life, morals and society, nor failed to legislate for every need of the human community? [....] What could give clearer evidence of the ignorance and negligence of the Commandments of Islam which prevails, than the 'Supplementary Measure' of our 1953 Parliament [...]? Some of our leaders may even believe that Islam is like Christianity in having no rule that governs these matters, but merely a general moral principle" (‹REŻĀʿALĪSHĀH›, 1970: 55, 57).

[117] "Today, alas, most Islamic values are influenced by the [...] politics of strangers. Muslims fail to see the [...] evil of these foreign ways. [R]eligious rites for the Prophet's birthday [...], for the birth of Ali [...] are neglected, and the holidays, instead of being holy days, are dissipated in banquetings and revelry" (‹REŻĀʿALĪSHĀH›, 1970: 48, 49).

[118] "The 9th and 10th days of [...] Muharram [...] are amongst our most sacred holy days. But far too many people not only fail to partake into the due ceremonies [...], but [also] deliberately throw them over in favour of pleasure jaunts to the seaside, where they gloat over the sight of near-naked bodies or indulge in debauches: and yet they have the effrontery to continue to call themselves Shiʿa" (‹REŻĀʿALĪSHĀH›, 1970: 49).

Reżāᶜalīshāh apologised for addressing these issues. They had been "somewhat of a digression [....] The subject is so sensitive that the horse of my pen took the bit between its teeth and ran away with me."[122] But the 'peripheral' issues and the main treatment of the Declaration shared common ground: the lament over Westernisation, which had become a crucial issue in opposition to the Monarchy since the early 1960s.[123] That is to say, the manifesto reads as a political judgement rather than as a general, religious commentary with one 'slip of the pen'. It confronted a seamless whole of Westernisation, as the antithesis of religious power.

While Solṭānᶜalīshāhī forebears had nearly always shunned political judgement, Reżāᶜalīshāh now felt that "certain ideas and systems, e.g. parliamentary democracy, have grown up over millennia in their own environment, and so proved effectively successful. But woe betide the attempt to plant them in another soil and climate where a different growth of thought and of social intercourse has subsisted from time immemorial."[124] In 1968, the presence of irreligious M.P.s wielding

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The following is an indication of the position of women in the Neᶜmatollāhī orders in the Pahlavi dynasty (that is, under ‹Reżāᶜalīshāh›): "Bei den heutigen niᶜmatullāhiyya hält der scheich einer frau, die in den orden aufgenommen wird, zum handschlag nicht die hand, sondern einen stock hin, den die bewerberin zu fassen hat" (MEIER, 1976, (2): 351, referring to a remark by Gramlich).

[119] "Alas! most modern Islamic lands follow habits which do exactly the opposite. Indeed in some, lewdness and lechery prevail more than in non-Muslim lands, since their women have assumed total liberty: and with the throwing off of controls, they have also cast off religion and morality, chastity and temperance. No Faith - indeed no reasonable intelligence - could accept such conduct [...] why should we any longer go on permitting the increasing laxity [...] *which has been spreading from the west to the east*, seeing that this runs counter to the [...] standards of our religion and to the social dignity of our community? Not only has this false freedom brought shame and disgrace but it has also caused [...] the collapse of families and even murder, as the far too frequent reports in our newspapers testify" [my italics] (‹REŻĀᶜALĪSHĀH›, 1970: 53-4).

[120] "Women are touchy and [...] imprudent [,] the generality [is] more gullible [...]" and thus, should not have equal rights in divorce cases (‹REŻĀᶜALĪSHĀH›, 1970: 39).

[121] "In spiritual matters, Islam does not allow women to take leadership or religious office [, so women] cannot exercise spiritual authority" (‹REŻĀᶜALĪSHĀH›, 1970: 52).

[122] ‹REŻĀᶜALĪSHĀH›, 1970: 58.

[123] The major ideologue of Iranian nativism was Jalāl Āl-e Aḥmad. His famous pamphlet *Gharbzadegī*, 'westoxication' - that was greatly appreciated by Khomeyni - was "the most significant publication of 1962 for Al-e Ahmad and for the entire formative political culture of the 1960s [...]" (DABASHI, 1993: 73).

[124] GOULDING, 1970: xii (in a foreword to the Religious Perspective).

authority was unbearable to Reżāʿalīshāh. In 1964, similarly, Khomeyni had declared decisions taken by members of parliament null and void.[125]

The predominance of a worldly authority that made no provision for the superiority of Muslims,[126] whether in parliament or behind the Universal Human Rights Declaration, was the context for Reżāʿalīshāh's rejection of its spine, the 'freedom and equality-article', Article 1:[127]

> People [who rely on] man [...] abuse Reason, [...] which distinguishes man from the brutes, and fail in that belief in the Creator which Reason demands. As humanists they degrade [man] to [the] animal level and put themselves out of the ranks of [mankind.] They are [...] gangrenous members of the body politic.[128]

Reżāʿalīshāh apparently took Shiʿite religion far more strictly and political than many of his co-religionists did. Paradoxically, it even led

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[125] He did so in a speech on October 26, 1964 (which caused his exile), after parliament had passed a 'Capitulation bill' that granted US military adivors diplomatic immunity (see RAHNEMA and NOMANI, 1990: 303, and ABRAHAMIAN, 1993: 10-11).

[126] Article 2: "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty."

‹REŻĀʿALĪSHĀH›'s commented: "Since Islam regards non-Muslims as on a lower level of belief [...], if a Muslim kills such a non-Muslim [...] (i.e. not one who is a professional killer of non-Muslims), then his punishment must not be the retaliatory death, since the faith [...] he possesses is loftier [....] A fine only may be exacted [...]" (op. cit., p. 19). In this spiritual aristocracy, "the top rank is given to fighters for the faith, and the highest of all to martyrs who have laid down their lives in that warfare" (op. cit., p. 18). The vision of Muslims as a superior humanity legitimatised slavery: "A prisoner of war, taken fighting against the true believers, because of his enmity to Islam is automatically of lower rank and therefore reduced to slavery: and the son of such a one is a slave by inheritance [...]"(op. cit., p. 19). This traditional view resembled Khomeyni's implicit acceptance of slavery in the period 1943-70 (cf. ABRAHAMIAN, 1993: 46).

[127] The first Article of the Universal Declaration declares unambiguously that: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

[128] ‹REŻĀʿALĪSHĀH›, 1970: 15. Article 18 reads: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

‹REŻĀʿALĪSHĀH›'s comment: "This article is largely acceptable but not without difficulties. Freedom of thought, of conscience and of belief is allowable to the extent that it does not clash with the Qorʾān or with Islamic Canon Law" (op. cit., p. 32). In line with this view, freedom of expression was only allowed to the extent that it would not disturb the (general order and the) Great Men of Religion (1354/1975, (1): 106).

him to the praise of (the Islamic Monarchy of) Saudi Arabia, the official Wahhabite creed of which had identified Shiᶜism and Sufism as its main enemies: "Saudi Arabia owes its superiority over other lands in the security of property and of social order to the fact of the stricter enforcement of Islamic laws, the higher level of their practice and the greater severity of the penalties for contravening them that prevails there."[129]

With the contrary example of Saudi Arabia's Islamic Monarchy - into which one might read an insinuation concerning the Islamic status of the Iranian Monarchy - Reżāᶜalīshāh concluded that the Declaration promulgated nothing new and that if there was any good in it, it was because of the faint shadow in its articles of more perfect, eternal Islamic prescriptions. 'Islam is the summit and nothing excels it'."[130]

> As a people, we do not [...] aim to improve ourselves, nor do our leaders seek to enlighten us by making us aware of the [Islamic] Commandments. Not only have we ceased to practice these: we have ceased even to recall their existence [...] We run after the dicta of strangers who, if they do possess any good [...], gained it by gleaning over the fields which our great ones sowed and harvested for us, and stored up in the granary of our religion [insertion mine].[131]

When asked whether Reżāᶜalīshāh had been opposed to the Shah, the present Leader responded in a fashion similar to the former's conception of politics: "No, the Solṭānᶜalīshāhī order is not political. He was not opposed to the Shah but to his deeds."[132] But the Religious Perspective, a far cry from the 'softer Islam' that is often projected into Sufism in the West, establishes Reżāᶜalīshāh as a precursor of the Islamic Republic.

There were surely some positions in the Perspective that assumed a traditional clerical stance towards the Monarchy (which still was, however, a long way from Ṣafīᶜalīshāhī attitudes): "The only right course for a government in matters [of] religion is to consult the Ulema [and] if the government fails to call them in, the Ulema themselves must approach the government and belabour them with indignant protests."[133]

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[129] ‹Reżāᶜalīshāh›, 1970: 56.

[130] ‹Reżāᶜalīshāh›, 1970: 85.

[131] ‹Reżāᶜalīshāh›, 1970: 57.

[132] *Interview* ‹Majẕūbᶜalīshāh›, 04/19/97, cf. ‹Ṣāleḥᶜalīshāh›'s exemplary quietist declaration of his order's Sufi principles *in* HEYʾAT-E TAḤRĪRĪYE-YE KETĀBKHĀNE-YE AMĪR SOLEYMĀNĪ, 1367/1988: "We are not a political party" (*op. cit.*, p. 411).

[133] ‹Reżāᶜalīshāh›, 1970: 70. This view matched Khomeyni's earlier thought (1943-1970), which stressed the clergy "had the responsibility of speaking out if the government did not carry out its main tasks", including the protection of Islam, and "in

One finds no indication whatsoever in the order's official literature from 1941 onwards, however, of unease, let alone indignation vis-à-vis the prevalent Islamic Monarchy. Rather, the Iranian Monarchy was celebrated in annual sessions that the Solṭānᶜalīshāhī Sufis organised in the Gonabadi *khānaqāh* on the occasion of the birthday of the Shah.[134] That is to say, even the 'traditionalist' stance was an innovation.

There had been much indignant, religious protest in Iran from the beginning of the 1960s, and simultaneously a weakening of the position of quietist jurists - who were in fact consulted by the royal government on many occasions. It was to the jurists, a dominant section of whom were now developing activist leanings, that the Religious Perspective specifically addressed itself - contrary to the earlier 'broadest possible audience' in, for instance, *Pand-e Ṣāleḥ*. The Perspective was published "in the hope that [...] especially the learned Ulema [...] in whose field this work falls, will pardon and correct any errors they may discover, so that my readers may not be misled."[135] The protests and the larger shift in the balance of religious power, then, in which Reżāᶜalīshāh could and did now officially share, are what most probably accounted for his change in tone, from neutral to traditional, and beyond that, militant.

Reżāᶜalīshāh is not known to have issued public statements in speech or writing that explicitly call for the establishment of an Islamic Republic ruled by religious jurists. But the fact that a governmental commission for 'Islamic human rights' recently consulted his Religious Perspective, indicates at least that some of his ideas have been recognised as legitimate in the Islamic Republic.[136] The following militant statement is a clear sign as well of the Islamic state that Reżāᶜalīshāh envisioned:

> The government of an Islamic country is officially Islamic. A government not set up on an Islamic basis, that does not profess Islam, cannot rule. [If a member] of such a government is not a Muslim, his [...] position is strictly illegal. Every member of the Judicature and [...] Legislature must be a Muslim.[137]

Kashf al-asrar, Khomeyni had accepted monarchies on condition they sought the advice and consent of the senior clerics" (ABRAHAMIAN, 1993: 46, 54).

[134] MADANĪ, 1376/1997: 150-1.

[135] ‹REŻĀᶜALĪSHĀH›, 1970: 1.

[136] *Interview* ‹Majẕūbᶜalīshāh›, 04/19/97. The Commission had abandoned its aim of using the Religious Perspective, however, once it found out about its Sufi origin.

[137] ‹REŻĀᶜALĪSHĀH›, 1970: 70. Attacks against the Monarchy frequently centred upon its members. Princess Ashraf consumed and was accused of selling heroin (cf. NIRUMAND, 1967: 186).

The Shah's adornment of his Monarchy with Islamic signs and his personal efforts at having him portrayed as professing Islam[138] were not sufficient anymore to Reżāʿalīshāh: they lacked the prerequisite of an 'Islamic basis'. The master's conviction echoed the militancy of Imam Khomeyni and it sealed the death knell for the reign of the Shah.

Considering this (late) judgement, the report of a meeting in 1978 between Reżāʿalīshāh and Khomeyni is a plausible one. In it, the Imam - notorious for his reluctance to comment on his politics - explained in detail to Reżāʿalīshāh the nature and aims of the unfolding revolution.[139]

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[138] The Shah made the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1956. "L'événement fit d'autant plus sensation que l'on n'avait pas vu de souverain iranien en ces lieux depuis fort long-temps" (CORBIN, 1971, (1): 66). He initiated the publication of a 'royal Qorʾān' named 'Pahlavī' in 1965/6, which many jurists fiercely resisted. In 1976 the Court organised an ʿīd al-fiṭr celebration in a Tehran mosque, during which the Shah quasi-spontaneously accepted criticism of his rule by a Molla (REEVES, 1986: 160). Despite the political danger, the ban on ʿĀshūrā-processions was lifted in September 1978. ABRAHAMIAN (1993: 23) cited an opposition newspaper that tellingly stressed the state had been "out to nationalise religion", as opposed to, this suggests, trying to eliminate it.

[139] The meeting is referred to in ‹MAḤBŪBʿALĪSHĀH›, 1373/1994-5: 81. On April 19, 1964, ‹Reżāʿalīshāh› wrote a letter to Khomeyni to congratulate him on his 'release from state detention' (*in* ‹MAḤBŪBʿALĪSHĀH›, 1373/1994-5: 498). Sufi informants indicated an earlier contact in mentioning that Khomeyni often referred positively to the *tafsīr* of ‹Solṭānʿalīshāh›, *Bayān os-saʿādat*, when teaching jurisprudence in Qom (ALGAR ("Niʿmat-Allāhiyya", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*) juxtaposed its respectability to the *tafsīr* of ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh›, which was "widely criticised, both because of its contents and because it was composed in verse"). They similarly pointed out that ‹Reżāʿalīshāh› and the Imam had had 'good relations'. Thus, nothing could be further from the truth - at least for the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs - than the statement, made in the Pahlavi era, that the (Iranian) Sufis "deny the need for an intermediate *Imām*" (FRY, 1956: 10). Even among the enemies of Sufism, there is acknowledgement of the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs' support for the revolution - although in a very malign interpretation: "Yes, it is the politics of the leaders of the Solṭānʿalīshāhī *khānaqāh* to have divided their policy on every issue and to support all of the various, conflicting wings" (MADANĪ, 1376/1997: 159).

Résumé

The nation-state remained an important frame of reference for the late twentieth-century Neʿmatollāh regimes. Its representation by the late Pahlavi regime, however, became a ground for political contestation. Iranian Sufism in the period 1941-1979 had royal patronage as an important political context. It was impossible for large organisations (except the religious hierocracy) to operate independently. For them to survive, royal, state patronage was a necessity. Different degrees of royal, state patronage - from personal sponsoring to general ideological incorporation - relate to both the Ṣafīʿalīshāhīs' social prominence and the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs' sudden religious critique.

Internally, the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order remained a theatre of conflict, which involved contestations of Freemasonry conceptions of spiritual authority. What made these conflicts characteristic of the period 1941-1979, was the political twist given to them. The Society of Brotherhood was no exception to the Sufi Mystery of Power that established authority through the denial of worldly attachments. Nevertheless, internal enemies were well aware of these attachments, and political implications, and rejected them. Among the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs, to the contrary, unitary order was visibly established. There had been resistance to Nūrʿalīshāh's appointment, but Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh and Reżāʿalīshāh came uncontested. Both leaders cherished contacts with state and societal - particularly religious - authorities, and the earlier phase of bloody persecutions had been left behind. The pupils of former modernist critics did not pick up their masters' fights, and unitary spiritual authority even survived Reżāʿalīshāh's late politico-religious shift of sides.

Externally, while the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī elite integrated into the stately regime, the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs developed close ties to the lateral, clerical regime that came to represent the Iranian nation more successfully. Reżāʿalīshāh's condemnation of the Shah and his meeting with Khomeyni were conditioned upon the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs' relative independence, created through civil, religious and political integration, which provided crucial room for manoeuvre when the balance of religious power shifted. Despite relations with prominent representatives of the Pahlavi regime, the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs' royal patronage did not extend beyond some measure of ideological incorporation. Institutional overlap between the Society of Brotherhood and the National Lodge, to the contrary, defined an exclusive position, which ruled out any manoeuvre for the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order when the political tide swept away the Shah's regime.

PART THREE

In the Islamic Republic

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PURGATORY REVOLUTION, 1979-1989

Shortly after the victory of the Islamic revolution, one of its foreign academic supporters stated that "the word 'mysticism' is a little problematical" and that "Sufism as an organized body has only a peripheral existence in [the] Shi⁾i school. We do find sufi orders, but they are generally rejected by the Shi⁾i *ulama*."[1] In the Islamic Republic, some two decades later, one disappointed Ṣafīʿalīshāhī sheikh held a similar opinion. In reply to my questions as to the social state of contemporary Sufism in Iran, he compared the fate of the various Neʿmatollāh paths to that of "a vine, the shapeless branches of which have decomposed."[2]

One could be easily led by statements such as these to the assumption that Sufism - whether Sunni or Shiʿite, urban or rural - must have suffered greatly from the Islamic revolution, and that as a consequence, it should have virtually disappeared by now. However, a Sufi in exile in the safe haven of London stated of the Solṭānʿalīshāhī *qoṭb* that he had (wished to stay and had) "remained in Iran after the revolution, displaying his surrender and obedience to Ayatollah Khomeyni."[3] Revolutionary purges long gone, it was felt by another authority that nowadays "the Nimatullāhī Order has many followers in [...] especially Persia."[4]

The Neʿmatollāhī orders overcame initial suffering through social, doctrinal and ideological reform(ul)ations. There were, for instance, personnel changes among the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufis that to some extent

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[1] ALGAR, 1983: 55, cf. BAYAT, 1982: 195; FISCHER, 1980: 143, 277; and RICHARD, 1995: 51-2, for reflections on the impact of the revolution on groups not favoured by the revolutionary elite (i.e. among whom Sufi orders). LEWISOHN (1998: 440) held that "Despite the fact that certain Sufis with a clerical background, such as Majdhūb ʿAlī Shāh, and Ḥusayn ʿAlī Shāh, and some clerics with gnostic tendencies, such as Mullā Hadī Sabzavārī and Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, were able to transcend the artificial exoteric-esoteric divide in their lives and works, effecting a reconciliation between the largely separate fields of the juridical *sharīʿat* and the mystical *ṭarīqat*, the intellectual endeavours of individuals belonging to these élite subcultures have done little to dispel the bitter rivalry and enmity which still permeates public social relations between the two groups (especially in Iran under the ayatollahs)".

[2] Cf. CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 182.

[3] HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1371/1992: 221. The *qoṭb* referred to is the late ‹Reżāʿalīshāh›.

[4] NURBAKHSH, 1991: 144. The author referred to the Ẕoʾr-Reyāsateyn order.

helped shape a revolutionary profile for the order, while the informal leader in the main lodge abstained from any claims to sheikhal authority. The Solṭānᶜalīshāhī Sufis identified themselves strongly with revolutionary clerics and with victims of the war with Iraq. Generally speaking, both Neᶜmatollāhī orders redirected their public discourse and practice towards political, Shiᶜite audiences in the new Islamic state. These developments facilitated their accommodation in the Islamic Republic.

The depth of Sufi suffering that can be attributed to the revolution is still lacking in any precise measurement to this day. But the consideration of reform(ul)ations in the Neᶜmatollāhī orders allows one to scratch the surface of Sufism's survival through adversity. The extent to which the Ṣafīᶜalīshāhīs and Solṭānᶜalīshāhīs succeeded in maintaining themselves in the Islamic Republic, was conditioned not only on contingent forces but also variant reputations on the eve of the revolution, and different sets of performance in the face of the new circumstances. The disadvantage of ties to the *ancien régime* made itself felt in the Ṣafī-ᶜalīshāhī order. The stains of an otherwise spoiled Solṭānᶜalīshāhī reputation were blurred, inversely, by a pre-revolution meeting with Khomeyni made public in the Islamic Republic. Through the shadows of the past and the revolutionary fervour, new mystic regimes appeared.

Until 1996, the history of the Islamic Republic roughly divided into three periods in which the state ideology successively emphasised the supremacy of Islam alone ('Islam-Islam'), then blended it with patriotism ('Islam-Iran'), and finally, with full-blown nationalism ('Iran-Iran').[5] The third period - after the 'decade of war and revolution'[6] and Khomeyni's death in 1989 - brought a series of reforms. These included ideological moderation and the emergence of 'state mysticism', enabling Shiᶜite Sufism to accommodate to regime religiosity (see chapter 6). In the first period, however, the Shiᶜite hierocracy reoriented itself towards state affiliation, and Khomeyni's doctrine of the absolute Rule of the Jurist. Guiding the process of state building, this hermetic ideology largely ruled out opportunities for Sufism to assert itself either religiously or politically. It was only once Shiᶜite religiosity attained a patri-

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[5] AMIRAHMADI, 1996. *From political Islam to secular nationalism*. Http://www. iranian.com/Jan96/Opinion/SecularNationalism.html.

[6] Cf. MENASHRI, 1990.

otic colouring, during the war with Iraq (1980-1988),[7] that Sufis saw chances to acquire national religious legitimacy.

IN BETWEEN REJECTION AND PERSECUTION

> The account of 'what happened', whether or not an 'event' had occurred and, if so, what was its nature, always had a rhetorical purpose [....]
>
> Violence [...] plays the motivating role [...] whether as physical confrontation, [...], vengeance, [...] or state oppression that one must escape.[8]

The refutation (*radd*) of their doctrines and their denunciation as heretics (*takfīr*), by either rulers or jurists, had been the fate of many Sufis throughout Islamic history. Social configurations in which rulers cooperated closely with jurists (as in the late Safavid era) had been particularly detrimental. Now, with the Shiʿite vanguard's assumption of state power - i.e. rulers and jurists uniting in terms of personnel - revolutionary purges had to be lying in wait.[9] Certain clerical attitudes moreover seemed to make these plausible. The universe of clerical anti-Sufism was clearly revealed to me during a coincidental meeting in Qom with Ayatollah Āzād, who took the traditionalist stance with enthusiasm: "We do not agree with Sufism at all. Sufis do not marry or work, are lazy, they beg and they do not recognise the holy law. They are outside Islam and we do not exchange our women with them."[10]

However, among all official and documented repression of Bahais, Freemasons, or Monarchists, sources are silent on Sufism.[11] It seems

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[7] *Tehran Times* (11/03/96) published a telling 'Interview With the Mother of 3 Martyrs': "Q: What was their motivation for going to the battlefield? A: It is incumbent on not only every Muslim but on every person to defend his homeland, let alone the fact that my sons were defending Islam."

[8] GILSENAN, 1996: 48, 59. MIR-HOSSEINI's account of the Ahl-e Ḥaqq in the Islamic Republic (1994, (2)) stated they *see* the Islamic Republic as hostile (*op. cit.*, p. 217, my emphasis), while evidence indicated they played a far from insignificant sociopolitical role in it: "In both the previous and the 1992 parliamentary elections [Ahl-e Ḥaqq leader Sayyed Naṣreddīn] proved that his support for one candidate could transform the electoral results at the level of the province" (*op. cit.*, p. 224).

[9] For the Ahl-e Ḥaqq, the Islamic Republic "revived a painful collective memory, dormant in the last decades before the revolution" (MIR-HOSSEINI, 1994, (2): 217). Providing context for Ẕoʾr-Reyāsateyn attitudes, LEWISOHN (1998: 460) stated that "with the advent of the religious revolution [...] the historical animosity between mulla and Sufi had hardly subsided; the ʿUṣūlī Shiʿite clergy's hatred of Sufism lay dormant but not dead. Only a century and a half away lay the anti-Sufi pogroms."

[10] *Interview*, 06/07/97.

[11] "Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, the head of the judiciary, stated in 1996 that Baha'ism was an espionage organization [....] Attorney Mohammed Assadi was executed

that public documents from revolutionary Iran that testify to Sufism as a target are either unavailable, as yet, or non-existent. Nevertheless, many Iranians narrate the fate of Sufism in terms of official persecution.

An official at the Police Department for Foreigners' Affairs lectured me on Sufism's illegality when I was at his office to renew my visa. When I asked for evidence, he decided not to stress the point. A student who was sympathetic to the revolution explained to me that Sufism was referred to in schools as an example of what Islam would be if devoid of its social mission. He cited political statements of Shiʿite revolutionaries but he could not produce one that framed Sufism as infidelity (*kofr*), polytheism (*sherk*) or illegitimate innovation (*bedʿat*). Officials in Tehran's Parliament Library looked at me sternly when I introduced myself, but they nevertheless allowed me to consult their collection, which included generally accessible Sufi handwritings. A Tehran-based Ḥojjat ol-Eslām held Sufism to be a worthy object of persecution, but he enthusiastically agreed when I cited Henry Corbin to him, who had cited Ḥeydar Āmolī's dictum that "true Sufis are Shiʿites and true Shiʿites are Sufis." A teacher of ʿerfān in Qom held Sufism to be rejectionable, but the person who introduced me to him told me that he himself was known as that city's Sheikh of Sufism (*sheykh ol-taṣavvof*).

The alleged systematic persecution of Sufism in Iran prevailed not only in outsiders' representations, but is also suggested in a contemporary Sufi narration of the self. The (hi)story of the Ẕoʾr-Reyāsateyn Neʿmatollāhī order provides the particular context for its articulation.

The Ẕoʾr-Reyāsateyn order as it is presently known, was shaped and moulded by Javad Nurbakhsh, who became its *qoṭb* in 1953. In 1955, Nurbakhsh bought the lodge of his deceased spiritual master in the South of Tehran and reportedly had it registered as a religious endowment (*vaqf*). It was, according to a Tehrani affiliate, enlarged through

on August 9 on charges that included [...] being a Freemason and a member of the International Lions organization" (U.S. Department of State, Iran Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997, pp. 6; 2). On 10/24/93, "Majlis deputies approved a bill [...] which entails that administrative offences would now include [...] membership of deviant groups [...] and membership of Freemasonry organizations" (unspecified internet message). It has furthermore been reported that "all documents and records of Iranian Freemasonry were captured by the Revolutionary Guards in 1980" (*communication* 02/16/99, via the Supreme Council of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the United States of America). Although Human Rights Watch and Amnesty reports have repeatedly included sections on the persecution of religious minorities in Iran, I have not been able to trace any clear case in these reports that concerned Sufism.

the purchase of surrounding properties, and subsequently adorned with a garden, library and a museum. The Ẕoʾr-Reyāsateyn *morīd*s had their private places in the lodge, but they did not live inside. The master's modern views held that social life was to be accomplished outside the lodge, while the inside was reserved for spirituality. From 1962 to 1977, Nurbakhsh combined the leadership of the order, among many other activities, with a position as psychiatry professor in Tehran.[12]

In 1974, Nurbakhsh visited the United States and in 1975, the first American convent was founded in New York City. More American lodges followed, and a building was purchased in London as well. The 'temples' attracted Iranian students who had gone abroad for education. "They lacked spirituality in the West," a Tehrani affiliate told me, "so they came to look for it with Dr. Nurbakhsh." He was the appropriate man for them, because as a secular professor - who was lecturing academic audiences on Freudian psychoanalysis - he represented the Westernised and educated elite, while his Sufi spirituality represented in some ways a compromise between religion and modern life.[13] In the Western wave of 'spiritual reorientation' in the 1960s and 1970s, it was possibly this very attraction that brought foreigners to Nurbakhsh's order as well.[14] About a dozen of them travelled to Iran to see the spiritual homeland of their newly found, mystic faith, to go around the country to visit lodges, and see the main lodge in Tehran.

The order developed as the membership structure changed. Its ranks had been filled by elderly people, "many of whom were illiterate and

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[12] *Interview* Tehran affiliate, 11/27/96. Scattered over the country, there were according to my interviewee about forty lodges, especially in smaller cities, bought or constructed between 1960 and 1970, and an equivalent number of sheikhs to lead them. He hesitatingly admitted the Ẕoʾr-Reyāsateyn order represented, in Iran in the late 1960s, 'tremendous social power'. ALGAR ("Niʿmat-Allāhī", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*) wrote that Nurbakhsh "managed to recruit many members of Tehran high society at a time when the profession of a certain type of Ṣūfīsm was becoming fashionable; to build a whole series of [lodges] around the country; and to publish a large quantity of Niʿmat-Allāhī literature, including many of his own writings." Cf. MIR-HOSSEINI's (1994, (2): 214) account of the Ahl-e Ḥaqq, who went through similar modernising developments. Besides doctrine, the Ahl-e Ḥaqq seem to have differed from the Ẕoʾr-Reyāsateyn mainly in their middle-class, as opposed to upper-class, affiliation.

[13] NURBAKHSH considered himself "one of the first Sufi authorities to be well versed at once in the traditional science of the soul and modern psychiatry" (1991: 157).

[14] "Under Dr Nūrbakhsh, this branch of the order has undergone a vigorous expansion with several new *khānagāhs* built in Iran and, taking advantage of the interest in Sufism in the West, an expansion of the order to England and the USA" (MOMEN, 1985: 214).

did not see the use in reading," the Tehrani Sufi said. From the late
1950s, book collecting and publishing started, which, according to the
Master, resulted in "one of the largest collections of ancient manuscripts
[...] on Islamic mysticism in Iran."[15] As Nurbakhsh now headed many
branches in Iran and abroad, his prolific writings gained in importance,
in addition to his presence in person or mediated by his *kholafā'*. In his
writings, the stress on Islam became less pronounced. While the earliest
publication strikes one as fairly traditional, later references to Islam
have an ambivalent, which is to say ecumenical sound to them.[16] When
the revolution came, the Ẕo'r-Reyāsateyn had not only physically (geo-
graphically) but also spiritually become an international order.[17]

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[15] NURBAKHSH, 1991: 157; LEWISOHN, 1998: 459. Contacts were reported between
Nurbakhsh and Seyyed Hossein Nasr (who was held to still regularly visit the London
lodge whenever he came around), and Henry Corbin is also reported to have regularly
visited the order in the 1970s.

[16] *Golzār-e Mūnes* from the late 1940s is a traditional composition (highly valued by
non-Ẕo'r-Reyāsateyn Ne'matollāhīs as well), in honour of Nurbakhsh's master. Three
decades later, a statement by Nurbakhsh still looked traditional: "since a sufi must be a
Moslem, whoever claims to be a sufi without being a Moslem, makes a false claim"
(1978: 107). However, GRAMLICH cited a sheikh (before the revolution) who stated
there were no preconditions whatsoever for an adult's entrance, which contrasted
sharply with even the Ṣafī'alīshāhī Consultancy Council's demand for monotheism
(1981: 74). In a 1991 summary of the Ne'matollāhī order - that says curiously little
about Nurbakhsh's immediate forebears, while earlier *qoṭb*s are expounded upon
(‹ṢĀLEḤ'ALĪSHĀH›, 1375/1996: 433, mentioned a rupture) - Nurbakhsh only once
referred to the meaning of Islam *for him*, which puts in doubt the extent to which he
still conceived of Sufism as intrinsically Islamic. Ecumenicalism stood out: "Any
propagation of Sufism should aim at *the reality of Islam so that an attitude of love may
be generated capable of unifying followers of divergent faiths*" [my emphasis] (1991:
158). My first impression of Ẕo'r-Reyāsateyn ecumenicalism derived from visiting the
London *khānaqāh* in 1996 and reading the magazine *Sufi*, both of which addressed
international audiences interested in spiritual progress in a broad sense. This corre-
sponded to a reproach against Nurbakhsh by an enemy of Sufism: "*Yā 'Alī madad* [Oh
'Alī Saviour, a general Shi'ite formula] was changed into *Yā ḥaqq* [Oh Ultimate Real-
ity/God, a specific Sufi formula the ambiguity of which leaves for many interpretations]
[...] in order for him to be accepted by non-Islamic masses as well" [my insertions]
(‹ṢĀLEḤ'ALĪSHĀH›, 1375 /1996: 398-9). The Ẕo'r-Reyāsateyn, it is not exaggerated to
state, were a 'weststruck' part of Iranian society. Idries SHAH's international Sufi
Movement featured a similar ecumenicalism - in his case particularly concerning Suf-
ism and Freemasonry, which, he said, were basically the same (1964: 206-7).

[17] LEWISOHN's (1998: 439) interpretation of Ẕo'r-Reyāsateyn history stated that
"Persian Sufis - the [Ẕo'r-Reyāsateyn] branch of the Ni'matullāhiyya in particular -
have often [...] aligned themselves with advocates of secular liberalism and modern-
ization." As regards the late twentieth century, however, evidence for such a statement
is lacking. The Ẕo'r-Reyāsateyn were ecumenical and modern, but neither in touch with
religious, nor secular (including liberal) opposition to the late Pahlavi state.

After the revolution, "the Islamic authorities invited [Nurbakhsh] to pledge allegiance to Imam Khomeyni [...] to demonstrate that there was no political ambiguity between the Neᶜmatollāhī order and the new government."[18] Nurbakhsh, however, had decided to flee and emigrated to the United States, where he founded new lodges.[19] In 1983, he settled in London, which became the new headquarters. Four British members were then appointed deputies.[20] A basis abroad had also become a necessity now, because of Nurbakhsh's public hostility to the Islamic Republic: "Several invitations [...] asking him to come back to Iran, have met with [his] irrevocable ironic reply: 'I will return on the day when you can guarantee that I can insult Khomeyni with impunity [...].'"[21]

According to a Tehrani affiliate, twenty-five lodges were closed down after the revolution, and the orders' publications were prohibited.[22] In 1996, the centre in London stated that the main Tehrani *khānaqāh* had been among the closed lodges and that visiting the Sufis in Iran would be a very dangerous enterprise.[23] However, "during the 1990s, Nūrbakhsh has [...] written monographs in Persian on individual classical Sufi masters [...], which were published in Tehran and almost immediately sold out."[24] Whatever happened in the revolutionary fervour

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[18] RICHARD: "The insistence of the authorities led Nurbakhsh, who was anxious above all things to preserve his freedom, to go into exile" (1995: 51-2). Cf. MIRHOSSEINI's account (1994, (2): 212) of the international attractions on exile Iranians of a modernist group in the Ahl-e Ḥaqq.

[19] LEWISOHN, 1998: 460.

[20] Cf. HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1371/1992: 236.

[21] RICHARD, 1995: 51-2.

[22] ḤAṢŪRĪ stated that "disputed lodges [were] confiscated" (1375/1997: 8). In an interview (04/16/97), he could not confirm whether these confiscations concerned Ẓoʾr-Reyāsateyn lodges. According to the leader of the Ẕahabīya order, Dr. Ganjaviyān, no Ẕahabī lodges have been confiscated by the Islamic Republic, and the publications of the Ẕahabīya have continued (LEWISOHN, 1999: 48).

[23] *Visit/interview* ᶜAlīreẓā Nūrbakhsh, 04/16/96.

[24] LEWISOHN (1998: 460). A Tehrani affiliate was uninhibited in writing for the international *Sufi*. Although the "publication of new works and reprinting of old works on Sufism under the Niᶜmatullāhī imprint has been banned since 1995 by the Ministry of Islamic Guidance" (*op. cit.*, p. 461), it is equally true that "the Niᶜmatullāhī master's writings, which had been reprinted in 1994, were still available [in 1996] in bookstores" (*op. cit.*, p. 461). Solṭānᶜalīshāhī books *have*, reportedly, been taken out of stock a few years ago, and are only now, with the current regime changes, reprinted (*conversation*, 07/03/97). Critical editions and literary reviews of classical Sufi literature did continue, as is seen, for instance, in *Nāme-ye farhangestān*, 2, (1), 1375/1996. In 1985, a new edition of the Ahl-e Ḥaqq treatise *Ḥaqq ol-ḥaqāyekh* came out in Tehran (MIR-

and the nearly two decades that followed it, Sufi gatherings continued in 1997, and Nurbakhsh's publications were quite readily available.

Except for literary mysticism, certain kinds of (popular) Sufi piety survived without an effort because they could not be distinguished - except in terms of their practitioners - from Shiʿite (popular) religiosity - self-flagellation, Fatima-worship, dream-visitations by the Imams, belief in the evil eye, etc.[25] The Khāksār were not blemished by a reputation for royal relations. In the outskirts of Tehran I met with ʿAlī, a Khāksārī who had ostentatiously filled his little antique shop with Sufi paraphernalia - no attempt had been made to conceal them. A private Khāksār lodge, in a garage, was filled with what critics would surely denounce as 'Sufi idols', but here, they included pictures of the Leader and Imam Khomeyni. "The Khāksār are the only legitimate Sufis," its chairman said, proudly, and related of the lawful wonders of Ayatollah Borūjerdī. On Imam ʿAlī's birthday, a Sufi ceremony was organised in his neighbourhood, which, except for *zekr* and some real 'Sufi idols,' was indistinguishable from other signs of Shiʿite religiosity in the city.[26]

However, the Ẕoʾr-Reyāsateyn - who have successfully managed to portray their branch in the West as the one and only Neʿmatollāhī order[27] - were internationalised when the revolution came, and consequently, the margins of republican Islam proved too tight for them.

HOSSEINI, 1994, (2): 214). LEWISOHN (1998: 461) mentioned there are to this day some 60 Ẕoʾr-Reyāsateyn lodges, 'the lights of which remain still lit'.

[25] There has been official legitimisation for certain kinds of popular religiosity from the Ḥowze-ye ʿElmīye-ye Qom: "Question: Does the matter of the 'evil eye', current among women, contain truth, like if they say this or that person was struck by the evil eye? Answer: The evil eye is a reality" (*Pāsdār-e eslāmī*, 1375/1997, 178: 44).

[26] *Congregation*, 11/23/96. To underscore respectability, one Sufi referred to his group as Khāksārī-Neʿmatollāhī. Initiation into the four main Khāksār groups has meant co-membership in the Ahl-e Ḥaqq, whose fate was reportedly less fortunate. In Tehran (and probably urban areas in general), it meant spiritual affiliation and the extension of a highly valued title (cf. CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 491). The Ahl-e Ḥaqq were historically reproached for being 'deifiers of ʿAlī' (ʿAlīʾilāhī), and they were held to feel God manifested himself in the Ahl-e Ḥaqq leader Solṭān Esḥāq (CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1370/1991: 36). They have been organised in 'houses', that according to CHAHĀRDAHĪ (1370/1991: 35) numbered 12 in 1991. The Ahl-e Ḥaqq singer Parīsā (reportedly a pupil of ‹Safvat›), who performed for women's audiences, has been forbidden to record her music in the Islamic Republic. This fate has been shared by many other female singers, such as ‹Marżiye› (cf. *The Economist*, 04/01/95).

[27] This has been contested by many. A Solṭānʿalīshāhī protested Nurbakhsh's biased presentation during a SOAS congress on historical Persianate Sufism in May 1997 (*conversation*, 07/03/97).

While the Islamic Republic's invitations of Nurbakhsh indicated a certain readiness for coexistence, his narration suggested state oppression - Khomeyni's wrath - to be Sufism's fate. But other Neʿmatollāhī orders were primarily Iranian, geographically and spiritually, and their fate has been more complicated. Many Sufis did pledge allegiance to the new order and one ought therefore, beyond the plain and prevalent view of repression and resistance, to explore Sufism's accommodation.[28]

The Solṭānʿalīshāhī order

Ḥājj Solṭānḥoseyn Tābande ‹Reżāʿalīshāh›

While Reżāʿalīshāh's brother ‹Nūrʿalī› Tābande reportedly "aided the revolutionaries in Tehran",[29] the situation in the order's centre in Beydokht, Khorasan, had become very tense because of revolutionary agitation against the Sufis. Alleged royal and regime connections were and are contested. A contemporary, defamatory pamphlet claimed: "An evil [...] man such as Lieutenant General Neʿmatollāh Naṣīrī, head of the Security Organisation during the era of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi [...] belonged to a Sufi [...] family, and he himself too claimed to be a Sufi [...] and he was allied to the Gonābādī line."[30] A local mollah wrote: "The revolutionary Muslim people of Gonabad became very anxious from the demonstrations of allegiance to the Shah by the club-bearing dervishes, and in the end, on the day of Moḥarram 12 [two days after ʿĀshūrā, December 2, 1979] they got into their cars with the aim of smashing up the Sufis." This was allegedly averted on the mollah's intercession - despite his being a self-proclaimed enemy of Sufism - and as a result, he observed with satisfaction, "some of the Sufis became remorseful and turned over to the clergy."[31]

Later on, Reżāʿalīshāh was brought before a revolutionary tribunal in Beydokht, on the basis of unclear charges. Preventing victimisation by revolutionary justice, however, a decree issued by the Judicial High Court in Tehran, "which was based upon Reżāʿalīshāh's absolution by

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[28] ORTNER (1995) criticised dichotomous models of repression and resistance such as SCOTT'S (1990), both as an unsatisfactory theoretical predisposition and as 'ethnographic refusal'.

[29] MADANĪ, 1376/1998: 159.

[30] ‹ṢĀLEḤʿALĪSHĀH›, 1375/1996: 215-16. In 1977, the Shah had sacked him in a human rights gesture.

[31] MADANĪ, 1376/1998: 155-56.

Imam Khomeyni", set him free.[32] Apparently, even enemies admit, Khomeyni (or those who spoke in his authority) stood up for Reżāʿalīshāh, whom the Imam had probably met with somewhat earlier.

On March 31, 1979, immediately after the victory of the Iranian Revolution, Reżāʿalīshāh had returned from a trip to Mashhad to settle in Tehran for a few months. In between medical treatments for his deteriorated condition, he had also managed to meet with various Sources of Emulation.[33] After recuperation, Reżāʿalīshāh again made a number of travels,[34] some for medical treatment, which took over five months, and returned to Tehran on March 20, 1980. He made cautiously clear that these and other travels were not a pretext for flight from Iran, as is seen in a reverential advertisement published in the most respectable national newspaper, *Eṭṭelāʿāt*.[35] Hereafter, he would reside permanently in Tehran, both because of repeated requests by the *foqarā* in the capital and because of protracted hostilities by the local population in Beydokht.[36]

However, before his return, in his absence, an event had occurred in Tehran that profoundly impressed the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order. This is how Reżāʿalīshāh's son, his successor ‹Maḥbūbʿalīshāh›, narrated it:

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[32] MADANĪ, 1376/1998: 162-63.

[33] See ‹MAḤBŪBʿALĪSHĀH›, 1373/1994-5: 81.

[34] ĀZMĀYESH, 1372/1993: 14. Destinations included Paris, Cologne and Hyderabad.

[35] "Oh God! 121. Taking leave. In the name of God [....] We hereby ask the honorable presence of the great and revered *āyatollāh ol-ʿoẓma* Khomeyni [...] for permission to embark on a short foreign journey, because of the agony of finding my heart in a non-tranquil state, because of rheumatism and other ailings, and we would by these means like to say goodbye to the high-placed gentlemen of the *ʿolamā* and the great clergy who display gratitude with respect to poverty, and to the honoured friends and noble brothers, and we ask of God for all of them good health and prosperity and we hope that the brothers in faith will accomplish the realisation of the duties of the *sharīʿa* and the work in stipulations of religion [...] and constant development of the truly Islamic revolution. And greetings to the highest ones and to God's pious servants of ʿAlī, Faqīr Solṭānḥoseyn Tābande Gonābādī, *Rabīʿ al-avval* 29, 1401, *Bahman* 16, 1359" [February 5, 1981] (*in* HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1371/1992: 222).

[36] This reason is unofficial. An enemy of Sufism malignantly related an opposite version: "[The Sufis] were on the lookout [...] in Beydokht to check on any car coming in, for portraits of Imam Khomeyni. When they found portraits, they smashed the windows of the car" (MADANĪ, 1376/1998: 155).

[...] in the night of ʿĀshūrā[37] in the year 1400Q (Āzar 9, 1358) [November 30, 1979], after the closing of the ʿazādārī gathering,[38] in about the middle of the night, just as [happened to] the tents of Ḥoseyn,[39] the Ḥoseynīya Amīr Soleymānī in Tehran became involved in a heavy fire, which caused the complete destruction of the building, as well as its equipment and furniture. During that time, in which my noble father was abroad for medical treatment, he, after hearing of this calamity, and expressing much grief, ordered for the ʿazādārī ceremonies not to be stopped under any condition and to continue them in the adjacent house. In the same way, he ordered: 'prepare the ground of the Ḥoseynīya for reconstruction from tomorrow proper, and in case financial possibilities will not be found, I will, if possible, sell my own house [....] so that assistance will come in the expenditure' [insertions mine].[40]

From the time that Reżāʿalīshāh took up his permanent residence in Tehran, he would be fully occupied by his daily activities, which included first of all overseeing the reconstruction of the Ḥoseynīya Soleymānī. Furthermore, he presided over Sunday and Thursday evening and Friday morning sessions, and ʿazādārī gatherings in the second lodge in the capital, the Ḥoseynīya Ḥāʾerī. The gatherings were shifted back to the Ḥoseynīya Amīr Soleymānī after its reconstruction. The new building, which included a semi-public library that contains 12.000 books in many languages, was completed on July 12, 1982, and it was opened on November 7 the same year.[41]

The calamity of fire set to the convent has been dealt with by Solṭānʿalīshāhī notables with an overall silence. If they are pressed to the point, one will hear them evasively declare that it was "the work of

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[37] ʿĀshūrā is the tenth day in the month of Moḥarram on which Ḥoseyn's martyrdom is mourned.

[38] ʿAzādārī gatherings in general are mourning sessions for deceased persons, and more in particular mourning sessions commemorating the martyrdom of Shiʿite notables and the imams.

[39] 'The tents of Ḥoseyn' refers to fire set to Imam Ḥoseyn's military camp outside Karbala in 680, by the troops of Yazīd, after which the political cause of Shiʿism was lost for centuries. See the sections on the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order in this and the next chapters for their religious, Sufi significance.

[40] ‹MAḤBŪBʿALĪSHĀH›, 1373/1994-5: 120 (note), cf. op. cit., p. 81: "in the night of ʿĀshūrā in the year 1400Q [1979] the Ḥoseynīya Amīr Soleymānī in Tehran became involved in an arson attack, and as [‹Reżāʿalīshāh›'s] biography will later show, he allowed for no delay whatsoever in the procession of the ʿazādārī ceremonies [...], and he ordered the sessions to be continued [...]."

[41] ĀZMĀYESH, 1372/1993: 37. There is an extensive description of the building's religious architecture and decoration _in_ HEYʾAT-E TAḤRĪRĪYE-YE KETĀBKHĀNE-YE AMĪR SOLEYMĀNĪ, 1367/1988.

ignorant enemies of Sufism,"[42] and refuse to be any more specific. An-
gry silence, as a token of avoidance or communication breakdown
(*qahr*), is a recorded repertoire in Iranian ways of conflict resolution,
which is held to clear the field for third-party mediation.[43] Such media-
tion to have taken place, is suggested in a complementary scenario of
co-optation: a widespread rumour claims the order has received 40 mil-
lion *tūmān* from the government after the fire, in return for silence
about the event.[44] Although I have been unable to ascertain the real
course of events, the fact that Solṭānᶜalīshāhī silence was melancholic in
resignation, deliberately not angry, excludes the reading that has the
rhetoric of silence, in any power context, as a token of resistance.[45]
Whether or not mediation has taken place, silence here served accom-
modation. This reading is supported by the order's external activities in
the Islamic Republic, which it tried to convert into a home.[46]

   The double mission of social and religious integration, which was
successfully accomplished in the Pahlavi period but now under renewed
strain, was to be re-established. A new state context for religion had
come to the fore in revolutionary definitions of Shiᶜism, in which "ritu-
als such as *namaz-e jama'at* (the congressional prayer) [were] reinter-
preted as forums for expressing political solidarity of the Mus-
lims."[47]After the revolution, it was observed that "lifecycle rituals pro-
vided mediums for the new messages. Funerals of village martyrs were
turned into propaganda rallies, and at weddings girls chanted slogans
like, 'Death to the opponents of *velāyat-e faqīh*'."[48]

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   [42] ĀZMĀYESH soberly remarked: "it is often said that it was a premeditated attack
from the side of the prejudiced and the enemies" (1371/1992: 14). A Tehrani resident
unrelated to the order but aware of the above events interpreted this verbal caution as a
case of 'dissimulation' (*taqīya*) (*conversation*, 10/20/96). His story is plausible as one of
the order's librarians lied to me about the real course of the event in asserting that it
occurred somewhere during the Pahlavi era (*conversation*, 11/19/96).

   [43] ASSADI, 1982: 203.

   [44] *Interview* Ṣafīᶜalīshāhī Sufi, 05/01/97.

   [45] GAL (1995: 419) rightly stressed, in a critique of SCOTT's exploration of covert
forms of resistance (1990), that "silence can be as much a strategy of power as of weak-
ness, depending on the ideological understandings and contexts [...]."

   [46] ALGAR ("Niᶜmat-Allāhiyya", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*) rightly observed of the
Gonābādī Sufis that "they have been for several decades the largest single group of
Niᶜmat-Allāhī descent in Iran", and that "it is no doubt because of the sober, *sharīᶜa*-
oriented nature of their Ṣūfīsm that they have been able to retain this position even after
the establishment of the Islamic Republic."

   [47] ALINEJAD, 1998: 11.

   [48] LOEFFLER, 1988: 226.

Analogous to these generic changes and in line with the Solṭān-ʿalīshāhīs' previous cultivation of clerical proximity, Reżāʿalīshāh now, in 1979, publicly announced mourning ceremonies in the lodge on behalf of Ayatollah Ṭāleqānī "who spent his life struggling in the way of Islam" and on behalf of Ayatollah Moṭahharī, who had obtained 'martyrdom' in the struggle with the (Pahlavi) 'regime of oppressors'. [49] Far from making Sufism into a 'resistive space', these performances, in which one could observe that "through mimesis [...] the disadvantaged appropriate the power of the [...] dominant classes and make it their own", enhanced a public respectability.[50]

From the second half of the 1980s, Reżāʿalīshāh's health deteriorated to such an extent that he was forced to spend most of his time at home. The *foqarā* came to visit in between his morning activities, which included responding to the abundance of mail from Iran and abroad that he daily received, and his afternoon activities that included labouring on his last treatise. Rumours circulated in foreign countries of the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs' persecution in the Islamic Republic, but Reżāʿalīshāh never gave up the stoical appearance that was so helpful in the socio-religious reintegration of Solṭānʿalīshāhī Sufism.[51]

The Iran-Iraq war represented agony and horror for Sufis as much as for other Iranians, but it also provided an occasion for the acquisition of legitimacy. In March 1988, near the end, Tehran was exposed to the Iraqis' shelling of the civilian population. Iranianness was now at stake,

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[49] Texts *in* HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1371/1992: 221-2 (from *Eṭṭelāʿāt*). The openness during the commemorations contrasted to the silence on anything that had to do with initiation, and the workings of the inner organisation. When I inquired about organisational aspects of the order, such as its conspicuous real estate (among which a public hospital), my question was cut short by the leader's remark that "all of this is non-essential" (*interview* ‹Majẕūbʿalīshāh›, 05/07/97). He did admit the secrecy (with regard to initiation) and stated that it had to do with protection against the enemies. "If you'd ask the inventor of nougat what his invention consists of, he will not tell you. But you could experience the invention by tasting it." I came across this gnostic truth many times, as when the 'teacher of *ʿerfān*' ‹Ostād Bīnā› - who had tirelessly attempted to instil the basic principles of mysticism in me - was scorned for this by a critic: "He who finds a treasure, does not spread the word around" (*interview*, 06/19/97).

[50] WERBNER and BASU (1998: 8), relating Taussig's and Stoller's work to Sufism.

[51] Perhaps - but I have no evidence for this claim - the fact that Solṭānʿalīshāhīs have been referred to as *foqarā*, 'poor ones' (contrary to the Ṣafīʿalīshāhīs), has also aided the order in maintaining itself in the Islamic Republic. In the first years after the revolution, a left-wing rhetoric that juxtaposed 'the poor' and 'the rich' (*ṣarvat-mandān*) was dominant in the state ideology (see ABRAHAMIAN, 1993: 26). Some Gonābādīs were reportedly put in jail (various *conversations*; LEWISOHN, 1998: 452).

more so than in the revolutionary heyday with the exclusive stress on political Islam, and the *qoṭb* contributed to the aid of the victims. Looking back at eight years of cruel war, a Solṭānᶜalīshāhī Sufi related with unconcealed pride that "Reżāᶜalīshāh was among the very generous few in the religious community."[52] Sufis had not been exempted from the general mobilisation, and consequently, Reżāᶜalīshāh could solemnly - and publicly - reflect that "the *foqarā* of the [Solṭānᶜalīshāhī] order are aware that a number from their ranks have become martyrs in the way of God and on the war front and soul to soul they have suffered."[53]

   Van der Veer writes of religious nationalism that "control over religious centres as material embodiments of beliefs and practices" is crucial.[54] The control over their houses of worship - Reżāᶜalīshāh's primary pulpit - has been crucial, too, in Solṭānᶜalīshāhī performances of religious nationalism. However, Solṭānᶜalīshāhī houses of worship largely defy the premise of carrying any particular significance as 'embodiments of beliefs and practices', other than those of mainstream, Shiᶜite Islam. Reżāᶜalīshāh did not resort to aliases in order to conceil mystic affiliations, but when he spoke in public, he spoke as a Shiᶜite Muslim, addressing Shiᶜite audiences. These facts are indicative of a rather complex economy of meaning, in which religious nationalism is only one element and in which Sufi identity is maintained through its dissimulation. The Tehrani lodge being termed *ḥoseynīya*, 'House of Ḥoseyn' instead of *khānaqāh*,[55] defuses conceptualisations of the centre in oppo-

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[52] *Interview*, 12/10/96. Differently affiliated Sufis (especially Ṣafīᶜalīshāhīs), commenting on the legend, fervently denied any such caritas. As is common in mutual denunciations, they accused ‹Reżāᶜalīshāh›, instead, of accepting money from the Sufis and thus being an immoral person.

[53] *In* HOMĀYŪNĪ, 1371/1992: 222. Similarly, the Ahl-e Ḥaqq leader Sayyed Naṣreddīn "personally headed an Ahl-e Ḥaqq militia, fighting side by side with the state-organized *basīj* [...] to guard the only sector of the frontier that the Iraqi army failed to penetrate" (MIR-HOSSEINI, 1994, (2): 224).

[54] VAN DER VEER, 1994: 11.

[55] Although *khānaqāh* is inscribed on the Ṣafīᶜalīshāhī lodge, its Sufis hardly ever use the word. NURBAKHSH is the only Neᶜmatollāhī leader who uses it without an apology, and his order's publishing house is still named *Enteshārāt-e Khānqāh-e Neᶜmatollāhī*. The Zahabīya were particularly sensitive to public naming. After the revolution, their lodge in the South of Tehran was renamed *Ḥoseynīya Aḥmadīya*. When I first looked for it, I was told there were no *khānaqāh*s in this neighbourhood. When I mentioned the Zahabīya, someone immediately took me to the *ḥoseynīya*. The significance of *ḥoseynīya* is its reference to Imam Ḥoseyn, the most loaded symbol of politicised, militant Shiᶜite religiosity, and its neutralising value, as many Shiᶜite buildings are called *ḥoseynīya* too. When a mosque is called *ḥoseynīya*, this theoretically

sition to the mosque. In mass meetings, its spatial significance is down-played for the *foqarā*, who are admonished that "the house of God is in man's heart."[56] It has been as crucial for religious nationalism as for any other Solṭānᶜalīshāhī performance to be staged from a purged religious centre. This, in turn, defined a major premise of lasting control over it.[57]

In March 1989, three years before his passing away, Reżāᶜalīshāh made the contrary circumstances of wartime agony the topic of his speech in a gathering in the neutral Ḥoseynīya, on the occasion of the national, Iranian, Persian New Year (*nowrūz*):

> Last year was among the worst this country has seen. The people were exposed to missiles and the friends and the *foqarā*, from close by and far off, invited me: from Khorasan, from the North, Dubai, and Zahedan. But I said I will not move from among the friends and the *foqarā*. In joy I was with them, in difficulty I will also remain, until God removes this blight. We have no remedy but to turn to God. Even if we do not get an answer, we have no other place to go. We must knock on that very door, knock that door to such an extent that in the end a head will appear from that door [....] Last year was the most calamitous year for this country [....] *Enshāʾllāh* may God, from his mercy, absolve our land.[58]

invites believers to conceive of it as a signpost in holy war (although on September 17, 1996 (*Eṭṭelāᶜāt*, Āẕar 27), Rafsanjani surprisingly referred to mosques as an 'esoterical decoration for the seekers of truth'). Shiᶜite Sufism reserves a special reverence for the first Imam, and it is often heard from them that the *khānaqāh* is the Place of Worship for Imam ᶜAlī. It is not predominantly the political history of the Imam's defeat by Moᶜāviya, but his gnostic wisdom that constitutes the Imam as an object of Sufi wor-ship. But whether or not Shiᶜite Sufis manage to convince others of their reading of *khānaqāh*, it does not have a clearly circumscribed Islamic meaning. There were con-stant worries in Iran with respect to declining attendance to Iran's estimated 70.000 mosques (According to *Iran News*, 06/04/97, there were about 2.000 mosques in Tehran in 1997). One of the reasons was the existence of 'unlawful mosques', "attendance to which equals heresy", and the hypocritical leaders of which "scared off the *ᶜorafā* and the faithful (*moʾmen*) youth" (ᶜARABĪ-NEZHĀD, 1375/1996). These allusions most probably refer to *khānaqāh*s.

[56] Usually, mosques are considered God's House (*Eṭṭelāᶜāt*, Ābān 15, 1375/Novem-ber 5, 1996).

[57] Cf. MIR-HOSSEINI's parallel case (1994, (1); 283): "During the last stages of the Iran-Iraq war, the *takiya* [lodge, in Tutshami] housed and fed the fleeing Iranian sol-diers, although the Ahl-i Haqq at the time were under pressure from the authorities."

[58] *In* ‹MAḤBŪBᶜALĪSHĀH›, 1373/1994-5: 83 (note). A major difference between Van der Veer's Indian case and Iranian Sufi religious nationalism is the nature of the politi-cal arena wherein religious nationalism is staged. While in India two large communities are involved, here the 'contest' is between a rather marginal group and the state.

Nowrūz had been used as a symbol of opposition against the Shah. In March 1963, Khomeyni called for a boycott of *nowrūz* in protest of the Shah's land reforms. *Nowrūz*

The Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order

In 1982/3, it was written of the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order that "actually, this *selsele* has now been destroyed, and its shrine is now a place where the Qurʾān is read for the dead."[59] Neither part of the observation being entirely accurate, one suspects the observed decline to derive mainly from the revolutionary narrative that builds on the state persecution of Freemasonry - which had fused with Sufism in the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order.

A Sufi in Ṣafīʿalīshāh's lodge related that "during the revolution, a heavy conflict evolved between the new revolutionary leaders and the Consultancy Council, because Freemasonry became a target", and that "consequently, the Council's leadership fled the country."[60] So, allegedly, did the surviving family of Ṣafīʿalīshāh. The former *khaṭīb* of Ṣafīʿalīshāh's lodge, Sabzavārī, was well related to the Society of Brotherhood, and some relation to the Shah was attributed to him. After the revolution, he for obvious reasons did not return to the lodge, reportedly became blind and died.[61] Officer Neshāṭ, a nephew of Ṣafīʿalīshāh's granddaughter and a member of the Shah's royal guard, was executed.[62]

was out of favour shortly after the revolution, but by the time of ‹Reżāʿalīshāh›'s speech it had regained its status as a national and revolutionary symbol.

[59] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 183.

[60] During the revolution, many 'findings' concerning Freemasonry were published in national newspapers. A typical title for such an article would be 'Dismantling of four Freemasonry lodges in Shiraz' (*Eṭṭelāʿāt*, Farvardīn 20, 1358/April 9, 1979). Although if anything these articles prove that very little was found, they reverberate in Persian secondary literature as 'evidence' (cf. CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3). "Between the time of the establishment of the Grand Lodge of Iran (1969) and the Islamic Revolution there were 44 subordinate lodges in Iran" (*communication* 02/16/99, via the Supreme Council of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the United States of America).

[61] *Interview* current *khaṭīb*, 02/09/97. Reportedly, Sabzavārī had left not only because of former ties but also because of the occupation. The current *khaṭīb* referred to him respectfully: "Sabzavārī was very large, I am very small." The poisonous claim of proximity to the old regime (cf. ḤAṢŪRĪ, 1375/1997: 8) also extended to the Oveysī order, that is generally held to have suffered from persecution and is now led from the United States. A similar (hi)story, but less dramatic, applies to Homāyūnī's Maleknīya and Ganjaviyān's Ẕahabīya orders. Both leaders fled to England (cf. CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 291). In 1996-1997, the Ẕahabīya still had large buildings in working order as lodges, administrative centres and libraries, in Tehran and in Shiraz.

[62] *Interview* Ṣafīʿalīshāhī sheikh, 05/19/97.

A Sufi recollected of the revolutionary times that "beards were set on fire", and that until recently, people repeatedly threw firecrackers and other burning objects into the yard. Every now and then, self-proclaimed guardians of Islamic purity would make a provocative appearance.[63] But none of Ṣafīʿalīshāh's family, nor other Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufis are known to have been killed because of their being Sufis.

The Ṣafīʿalīshāhīs could not hope to retain the control over their lodge, like the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs had after the fire, as it was immediately, "one night after the victory of the revolution" (Bahman 24, 1357/ February 13, 1979), raided by the 'Committee of Black-dressed People' (*Komīte-ye siyāh-pūshān*). The Committee was one of the revolutionary *ad-hoc* organisations that had taken control in the streets. Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufis said that Daryūsh Forūhar led it: an old-time political broker, and a member of the National Front (*Jebhe-ye mellī*) who was to become the Minister of Labour in Bazargan's provisional government.[64]

"How did all this happen?" I asked. "They came in armed with rifles, and just took over the *khānaqāh*", my interviewee responded in resignation. "How was all this dealt with by the Sufis?" Smiling, the eye-witness explained that "the Sufis responded by preparing them a meal. [The intruders] stayed for only a few days, but then their departure was followed by the entrance of another group, the Committee of Valī-ābād." Sergeants of the Air Force took part in the Valī-ābād Committee, which had taken its name from one of the appropriated houses of SAVAK in Valī-ābād Street in which they had settled.[65] They had allegedly refused orders to use their helicopters and shoot demonstrators,

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[63] *Interview* Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufi, 12/05/96.

[64] *Interviews* Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufis, 03/09/97; 05/19/97, cf. *Iran Almanac 1969*. Forūhar was a leader of one Pan-Iranist Party that supported Moṣaddeq and after 1953 secretly continued the activities of the National Front. He became Minister of Labour under Bazargan, but distanced himself from the National Front when it increasingly criticised clerical rule (RAHNEMA and NOMANI, 1990: 200). After leaving Iran, he nevertheless spoke for the opposition Party of the People of Iran in Paris (*Echo of Iran*, 50, March 1992). On November 22, 1998 Forūhar and his wife were stabbed to death in their home in Tehran, which provoked an international outcry.

[65] A clash between differently affiliated airforce officers took place on February 10, 1979 at an airforce-training base in Tehran, which was the beginning of the army's final disintegration (RAHNEMA and NOMANI, 1990: 16). I am not sure if, but think it likely that my Ṣafīʿalīshāhī informant referred to this particular event. Nowadays the house in question is reportedly a centre of the Association of Militant Clergy (MJM), a very important faction in the Islamic Republic. Another obscure shred in the story held the *Siyāh-pūshān* to have been a 'homebase' of sorts for the Valī-ābād committee.

they had resisted the *ancien régime* in that way and they took their 'directions' from the ayatollah Sayyed Maḥmūd Ṭāleqānī.

   The Valī-ābād Committee made use of the kitchen to prepare food for its guards. But as "the committee came to rob, being after its carpets and gold," Sufis also realised that "there were no political reasons." 'Big money' was made in the lodge, which was the produce of the mourning sessions in the Salon. Some resisted the proceedings. Asked as to what their action had consisted of, the eyewitness pondered and came up with 'tactical resistance', which resulted in the removal of rebellious Sufis from the lodge.[66] But in the course of time, the Committee of Valī-ābād disappeared too; it "dissolved like sugar in the tea."[67] The lodge had by then been under occupation for nearly a year, and the *zekr*-sessions had been in suspension. Finally, after the invasion of revolutionary committees and before 1983, when the Tūdeh party was largely eliminated, "there was an infiltration attempt by Tūdeh-communists, to establish a basis." But this event too was short-lived in its effects, as a new order would be established on different grounds in the lodge of Ṣafī'alīshāh.

The Board of Trustees

An informal group within the Ṣafī'alīshāhī order, which allegedly had for long been opposed to the Freemasonry Council, took the upper hand in the shadowy contests for power. They appointed representatives from their ranks, who reorganised the religious sessions after the disappearance of the Valī-ābād Committee. The new leadership consisted of a council that contained (at least) two members of the order and one member of the Organisation for Religious Endowments (*Sāzemān-e owqāf*). The new leadership was said to offer an 'annual report' and pay a ten percent fee of its income (*kharāj*) to the Organisation, annually.

   Their leader had gone to see the *Sāzemān-e owqāf* to make a request for registration. The new leadership principally wanted the lodge to be recognised as an organisation for certain ceremonies of mourning for deceased persons (*marāsem-e khatm*), sessions held the third, seventh

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[66] There is an alternative (and similarly unverifiable) version as well. According to one Ṣafī'alīshāhī Sufi, the *Siyāh-pūshān* were related to Forūhar only in name, while their effective leader was 'Fotohī', who, being 'a charlatan after the lodge's money' was thrown out by several Sufis (*interview*, 05/19/97).

[67] *Interview* Ṣafī'alīshāhī Sufi, 03/09/97.

and fortieth day after the passing away.[68] These ceremonies had been - several Sufis indicated - the lodge's major source of income. It had been depleted by the Committees, and it was now - as were the convent's other material assets - in a judicial limbo. Through registration, the material basis was legally restored. Not, however, public appeal. Contrary to the Solṭānᶜalīshāhī order, which enhanced its Sufi reputation from a purged religious centre, the Ṣafīᶜalīshāhī order's traditional, Shiᶜite mourning ceremonies were deliberately kept apart - literally, in their spatial allocation (in the Salon) - from the lodge's Sufi activities.

Sufi activities included Monday and Thursday night *ẕekr* sessions, in the room containing the grave of Ṣafīᶜalīshāh, adjacent to the Salon. The gatherings would take about two hours and were preceded by some sixty minutes of generally Shiᶜite sermons in the Salon. These were encapsulated in the larger Sufi event as the entrance of affiliates into the lodge, beforehand, went along with ritual, Sufi greeting (*moṣāfaḥā*), and before the revolution, too, they had accompanied Sufi gatherings. The leaders of the Board of Trustees would mostly be there, informally marking their authority through being seated together, occupying a central place (see figure 14) and by taking the lead and initiative in oratory and chanting. In addition, there would be regular Sufis affiliated to the order before the revolution as well, novices who never failed to be present, new visitors with an undefined Sufi affiliation and curious passers-by. Average Thursday night sessions would include in between fifty and

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[68] *Interview*, 05/19/97. Depending on mourners' commitment, there are annual repetitions of the *marāsem-e khatm*, the fortieth one of which (that makes for the *chelle*) carries special significance. My personal observations and the above story, which several Sufis in the lodge confirmed, contrast with some of the claims stated by LEWISOHN (1998: 456): "With the triumph of the fundamentalist regime in 1979, the *Anjuman-i ukhuwwat* was forced to change its name to 'Maktab-i ᶜAlī b. Abī Ṭālib'. Although the actual Khānaqāh building in Tehran remains in much the same state, the building is used primarily as a mosque, and the dervishes who still adhere to this branch of the Niᶜmatullāhiyya seem to have given in to government pressure to participate in formalities unrelated to Sufism." First, 'Maktab-i ᶜAlī b. Abī Ṭālib,' referring to Shiᶜism in general, is an unlikely description for any particular Shiᶜite (including Sufi Shiᶜite) grouping. Sufis who claimed they represented the Society of Brotherhood did not refer to their assembly as 'Maktab-i ᶜAlī b. Abī Ṭālib' to me. Nor were there written signs on posters, pamphlets or inscriptions on the lodge - that one would not have missed - which pointed to this. Second, ‹Ṣafīᶜalīshāh›'s *khānaqāh* is not used primarily as a mosque (and neither is the lodge of ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle›) - though sermons are given, as before the revolution, in advance of the *ẕekr*-sessions. Thirdly, ‹Ṣafīᶜalīshāh›'s *khānaqāh* was never the Anjoman's main centre (while the actual centres of the Society of Brotherhood have all the signs of Freemasonry intact (see chapter 6)).

one hundred persons, and no participant could be mistaken as to the centrality of these sessions among the activities of the lodge. It was the other, public activities, then, which made for the widespread and false opinion that there was no Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order anymore. These did nothing, therefore, to improve on Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufi legitimacy.

More strikingly so than the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs, the post-revolution Ṣafīʿalīshāhīs in Tehran were a new order. Many affiliates claimed - and this corresponded to the predominance of juveniles in the *khānaqāh* - that they had come to the lodge of Ṣafīʿalīshāh since about fifteen years, which is to say: they did not know the order, other than under the new command of the Board of Trustees.[69] A general observation of Sufism in the Islamic Republic, applied in particular to the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order:

> [...] Words are now carried in Iran by people who have recently embarked on the path, because the old *pīr*s and *morshed*s and their representatives have for various reasons - such as their maintaining of relations with members of the previous royal family, or relations with international societies - either been eradicated, or they have moved to settle in other places in the world.[70]

The Board of Trustees had nothing to fear from what remained of the Society of Brotherhood, and the centre of gravity in the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order definitely shifted back to the lodge of Ṣafīʿalīshāh. But within the lodge, the Board was repeatedly confronted with dissent, that I hesitate to label 'internal' as it is doubtful if the Board ever effectively commanded the Ṣafīʿalīshāhīs in the first place. In a Sufi's somewhat flamboyant recollection of these years, it was held that "there were 133 groups."[71]

Sheikh Borhān, who claimed the possession of a written authorisation (*ejāze*) by the late sheikh Maḥmūd Sangesarī to continue his teachings (see figure 8), disagreed with the new order. The newly appointed ones themselves claimed that Borhān did not have anything like a written permission, but a 'handwriting' (*dastkhaṭṭ*) at most, of a far more

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[69] For some elder affiliates claiming recent affiliation, a rhetorical purpose may be suspected, as the post-revolution order is the one dedicated to official, Islamic respectability. I spoke to an old affiliate in the Tehrani lodge who had left Iran and now returned for a persoanl visit from the United States. "This is not Sufism", he said disapprovingly, "with all these celebrations for Ḥoseyn" (cf. chapter 6).

[70] ḤAṢŪRĪ, 1375/1997: 8.

[71] *Interview* Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufi, 12/05/97. One of the charismatic pre-revolutionary sheikhs who continued to attract a spiritual affiliation was ‹Manẓūrʿalīshāh›. Stressing the artificial character of the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Board of Trustees, one of ‹Manẓūrʿalīshāh›'s fans mentioned that "*he* was a *real* Sufi."

insignificant master (whom I was unable to trace). The struggle against Borhān on the part of the Board of Trustees involved a tested repertoire of character assassination for heretics. From the point of personal competence, it stressed, Borhān was unsuitable to lead any group, and from the point of morality, more effectively, he was a failure. The informal leader of the Board of Trustees once related to novices of the visit by a woman, full of complaints, who had asked Borhān for help. The pretender-sheikh had then accepted a conspicuously decorated ring from her, an act anathema to any Sufi ethos. "To ask for money is to destroy [the morality of] one's deeds", the leader interpreted, and implied that Borhān was but a miserable thief.[72] "He accepted money, and they have thrown him out," another Sufi summarised.[73]

Borhān resided in a Ṣafīʿalīshāhī lodge in Gilan and naturally cherished the inverse conception. His *ejāze* - the most important classical argument in claims to spiritual authority, whatever its particular worth - favoured the rebel sheikh over the Board of Trustees, not any of whose leaders possessed such a document of authorisation. Seen through this historical mandate, they were to be considered illegitimate usurpers.

In amazement of the contrast with the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs, I asked an old Ṣafīʿalīshāhī master: "What do all these conflicts stem from, why are they here?" He responded, in what seemed doctrinal imposition - a legitimisation of contingent disintegration: "They are necessary, because through them it appears who is the jewel (*gowhar*)."[74] For the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs, however, this contest was eliminated in advance. Two mechanisms in particular, accounted for this: i) initiation (*tasharrof*) was (among other things) conditioned upon recognition of the leader as

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[72] "We have [...] pointed to the marriage of Shāh Neʿmatollāh's offspring with princes [....] from the rule of the Sufis who have [...], in raising the standard of their material wealth, filled their stomachs [...], we have a complete sufficiency of information. It is not without reason that the axe (*tabarzīn*) has become the sign of the Sufis. By what means have the likes of Shāh Neʿmatollāh Valī lived up to today? [....] The Sufis of these days [...] try to tell one: If you clear your conscience and free yourself from worldly relations, then ultimate truths will become manifest to you. But they themselves are engaged with means such as investments in trading firms [...], *and they even give themselves the right to receive gifts and unpaid services of the novices* (*morīdān*) [...]" [my emphasis] (ḤAṢŪRĪ, 1375/1997: 6). 'Investments' in combination to an earlier mention of 'the likes of Shāh Neʿmatollāh Valī' refers to the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order that uniquely engages in real estate investments on some scale (*interview*, 04/16/97). Asked as to his motives, the author stated: "Well, it's obvious I hate the Sufis."

[73] *Interview*, 05/01/97.

[74] *Conversation*, 05/01/97.

head of the *'orafā,* who in spiritual terms represented the twelfth Imam during his absence, and ii) the 'renewal of the covenant' (*tajdīd-e ahd*), with God, the Imams and with the flock, has been one of the most important acts required of a new leader once the old one died.[75]

The current Ṣafī'alīshāhī strife and disintegration, to the contrary, were reflected in a paradox. Although the *ejāze* had been a fiercely contested asset in the order, it currently lacked a clear definition: "With us, it does not have the strict meaning that it has among the Solṭān'alī-shāhīs. It only generally denotes the authorisation to grant advice and instruction," an affiliate reflected.[76] The lack of an exclusive and unified structure in Ṣafī'alīshāhī spiritual authority, in doctrine as much as in practice, made for its permanent contestation.

Several Sufis in the main Ṣafī'alīshāhī lodge in Tehran shared Borhān's claim and felt that the sheikh was the lodge's legitimate heir. Others felt that whether or not he should be the lodge's one and only spiritual leader, he did have the right, as any qualified and charismatic Sufi had, to lead the religious sessions. Borhān reportedly derived pleasure from unannounced visits every once in a while, and from a provocative presence during the *zekr*. The sheikh from Gilan was an untamed challenge for the Board of Trustees.[77]

An ousted sheikh named Valī Dorostī resided at the foot of the Damavand mountain in northern Tehran, at a comfortable distance from the main lodge. Nowadays, Dorostī was conducting Sufism 'from his own', which is to say: he did not follow another sheikh, and he represented the starting point of a new spiritual genealogy, much like the Oveysī sheikhs who stressed the individual master-pupil relationship. The Board of Trustees dealt with Dorostī as it had dealt with Borhān. In response, Dorostī - who at my instigation confirmed he possessed an *ejāze* by sheikh Maḥmūd Sangesarī, but contrary to Borhān made no legitimising point of it - mentioned another classical argument that

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[75] *Interview* ‹Majẕūb'alīshāh›, 05/07/ 97. From MIR-HOSSEINI's account (1994, (2): 222, 224) it appears that the Ahl-e Ḥaqq were faced with dilemmas to conform and survive after 1979, similar to those of the Solṭān'alīshāhīs, which similarly accounted for explicit leadership among the Ahl-e Ḥaqq.

[76] *Conversation*, 05/01/97.

[77] *Interview* old-time, regular Sufi visitor to the lodge, 03/09/97. The Board stressed personal qualifications as against formal legitimacy. It admitted to me that ‹Ṣafī'alīshāh› had himself been less qualified in formal terms than his Solṭān'alīshāhī competitor. "‹Ṣafī'alīshāh› was less qualified, but ‹Sa'ādat('alīshāh)› was 'illiterate/stupid' (*bī-savād*)!", it was held, in rhyme (*conversation*, 05/01/97).

would undermine the legitimacy of the Board. As the Sufi disciple's need for an insightful Spiritual Leader had been central to most Iranian Sufi orders for centuries, "the [whole idea of a collective] Board of Trustees is completely alien to Sufism."[78]

Why, then, was there a Board of Trustees? After being deliberately kept in the dark for months, I managed a Sufi to point out to me the existence of a financial committee. More visibly, it was obvious that the gas and electricity bills, dates, *āb-gūsht* meals, tea, rosewater, printing of announcements, maintenance of the garden and other properties, required funding. In an interview with the informal leader, I innocently attempted to bring up the subject again: "How is finance provided for?"

The Ṣafīʿalīshāhī leader silently stared at my shoes for about a minute, then turned his head to one of the novices, silently but visibly sighed, then coldly stared me in the face. "Money? There is no money whatsoever!" More calculated silence and a high, short giggle followed, but I was still eager for an impression of Ṣafīʿalīshāhī finance. "How, then," I asked, "are expenses covered?" He raised his hands and brought them down, avoided my gaze and said in his version of 'reliance upon God' (*tavakkol*): "We are being provided for in our daily needs."

We were seated in the erstwhile library, which stored several of the treasures that had been on public display in the lodge before the revolution. There was a small table next to the leader's chair, and on it a little box. The leader looked me in the face again as if to measure the impact of his words. Novices, apparently shocked by the impiety of my questioning, were nervously observing the scene. Then, in a sudden move, the leader reproachfully turned the box upside down and produced a few coins. "This is all there is, nothing! Nothing!"[79] This argument, I later learned in a conversation with a novice, was sufficient and conclu-

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[78] *Interview*, 04/03/97. One of the wildest conspiracy theories that I came across in Iran, held that Valī Dorostī only had female affiliates, which proved the role of *ākhūnd*s in the foundation of his spiritual centre (that is: his house), who were out to undermine the legitimacy of Sufism. Another pretender-Ṣafīʿalīshāhī sheikh, ‹Sol-ṭānʿalīshāh› (see figure 8), felt himself uniquely entitled to rule the lodge, but thought the time, political circumstances in particular, not ripe yet (*interview*, 05/01/97).

[79] One Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufi, to the contrary, was convinced that the leader of the Board of Trustees had "obtained his position via the Ministry of Islamic Guidance, and became very wealthy through it" (*conversation*, 07/24/97). This accusation was repeat-ed by a self-proclaimed enemy of Sufism (*interview* Ḥaṣūrī, 04/16/97), who compared the state's stipends to the lodge to those of mosques and mollahs. Several Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufis contrasted their financial ethics to those of Solṭānʿalīshāhī leaders, who were held to receive - they themselves fervently denied this - a 'monthly income' (*māhiyāne*).

sive. He had come up with definite evidence for trustworthiness of the
Board of Trustees, mentioning that the *kashkūl* in the middle of the Sa-
lon, in which donations were made, was emptied in public once in every
year, so that anybody could witness the leadership's yearly income.[80]

The suspicion of the new leadership to have created their structure as
a personal Board of Profit, was brought up by several Sufis who were in
turn accused of financial immorality by the Board of Trustees. ‹Monav-
varʿalīshāh›, late Manẓūrʿalīshāh's son, his *khānaqāh* only one street
away from the lodge of Ṣafīʿalīshāh, was one of the dissenting sheikhs.
Just as Borhān reportedly did, Monavvarʿalīshāh made his entrance in
the lodge every now and then, causing a quiet consternation. His group
organised rival sessions in the sheikh's private lodging, that centred
around the recitation and exegesis of the oeuvre of Ṣafīʿalīshāh, which
Monavvarʿalīshāh claimed the ignorant Board of Trustees had no know-
ledge of and that had been completely lost under its command. More
effectively than Borhān, he moreover managed to recruit new members
for his group from Ṣafīʿalīshāh's lodge. Under the Board of Trustees,
they echoed sheikh Dorostī's complaint, "there is no more Sufi order."[81]

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[80] *Conversation*, 07/24/97. See Figure 15. For a photograph of the *kashkūl*.
[81] *Dīge, ṭarīqat dāde ne-mī-shavad* (*interview*, 03/19/97).

Résumé

The Solṭānᶜalīshāhī order was confronted with oppression, but having switched sides before the revolution paid off. The Solṭānᶜalīshāhīs sought legitimacy through mourning sessions for deceased notables and acted as a national patron of caritas. The Ṣafīᶜalīshāhī order, to the contrary, was haunted by its Freemasonry reputation. The order lost the control over its lodge as it was occupied, and once it was recovered, its Sufis involved themselves in slander concerning financial morality.

While the Solṭānᶜalīshāhīs enhanced their reputation through religious nationalism (externally), the Ṣafīᶜalīshāhīs' public and traditional, Shiᶜite mourning ceremonies were deliberately kept apart from the lodge's Sufi activities. They did not, therefore, improve on public Ṣafī-ᶜalīshāhī legitimacy. While the Solṭānᶜalīshāhīs retained unquestioned, hereditary leadership (internally), the Ṣafīᶜalīshāhīs dissolved into small, rival groups over which the Board of Trustees retained only marginal leverage. In spite of multi-faceted adversity, however, Ṣafīᶜalīshāhī (hi)stories tell one not of jurist-led state persecution but of accommodation. Through the lodge's registration as an official religious property and the continuation of Shiᶜite Sufi tradition in the peripheral branches, the Ṣafīᶜalīshāhī order, too, survived the revolution's purgatory.

Figure 8. Recent branching of the Ṣafī‘alīshāhī order

‹Mūnes‘alīshāh› Eṣfahānī[1)] Abdollāh Enteẓām (d.1983) Consultancy Council ← Żiyāʾ od-Dīn ‹Sarmad‘alīshāh› (d.?) ← ‹Ḥājjī Dādāsh› (d.1948) → Aḥmad Moṣaffāʾī ‹Manẓūr‘alīshāh› (d.?) Ḥasan Khāvārī ‹Adīb Khorāsānī› (d.?)

Mehdī Sheykhbahāʾī ‹Ṣafī‘alīshāh II› ‹Reżā‘alīshāh› (d.#1988) Nāṣer‘alī Moṣaffāʾī Tehrānī ‹Monavvar‘alīshāh› Bāqer Sā‘dī ‹Sa‘ādat‘alīshāh›

Sharafīya[2)] Gholām‘abbās Ṣafāʾī ‹Sharaf ed-Dīn ‘Alī› Aḥmad Ṣafāʾī Mr Ansarī ‹Solṭān‘alīshāh›

SHEIKHS IN:

Kermānshāh ——————→ Gheyrat (d.?)
Khorammābād ——————→ Moḥsen Baṣīrī (d.?)
Sangesar/Semnān ——————→ Maḥmūd‘alī Ṣafāʾī Sangesarī ‹Ṣafā‘alī› (d.1976)[3)]

Shāhsavār ——————→ ‹Ḥajjī Majẕūb› Borhān Valī Dorostī Nāṣer‘alī ‹Āref‘alī›
Sarrī ——————→ Borhāniyān (Maḥmūd Sangesar's son)
Shāhmīrzād ——————→ Maḥmūd Ṣafāʾī Behnām

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LEGEND. ‹ ›: cognomen; □: genealogically independent; ← / →: authorisations and appointments; 1): Although ‹Ma‘rūf‘alīshāh› had soon given up his claims for the Ṣafī‘alīshāhī leadership, his sheikh Qāsem Tavāngar, and after him ‹Mūnes‘alīshāh›, did not follow their master in this respect; 2): I have not been in touch with the Sharafīya, but their existence was pointed out to me in a conversation about branching since Enteẓām; 3): ‹Ṣafā‘alī› was also appointed sheikh in Semnān by ‹Ḥājjī Dādāsh›. Other centres of the Society of Brotherhood (whose sheikhs are unknown to me) included Isfahan, Mashhad, Hamadan, Shiraz, Enzeli, and Shāhī (renamed Qiyāmshahr after the revolution).

CHAPTER SIX

REFORM(UL)ATIONS, 1989-1998

After Khomeyni died in 1989, the Iranian state and society changed dramatically. State power weakened and gave way to a plethora of power centres, which benefited the resurgence of Iranian society. Another, related effect of these regime changes, consisted of an indirect and double rapprochement between Sufism and the state.

On the one hand, the state broadened its definition of legitimate religiosity, which brought Sufism closer to officially sanctioned, Islamic respectability. Even where Sufis remained passive, the regime changes were significant for Sufi practice: "transformations in the larger political arena in which [...] performance takes place result in changes in what [...] performance means" (VAN DER VEER, 1994: 82). The changes involved the state's appropriation of mystical notions, in definitions which had been laid down in Khomeyni's *ʿerfān*. Through 'state mysticism', Sufi performance approximated what SCOTT (1990) called the 'public transcript', of state Islam.[1] As discrepancy between hidden and public transcripts accounts for the level of domination (1990: 4), one may conclude that state mysticism lessened the domination of Sufism.

On the other hand, "the position of religious regimes in political arenas is [...] effected by the type of ideology [...] espoused" (THODEN VAN VELZEN, 1992: 203). The themes of social service, sacrifice and mystical martyrdom - state concerns as well - marked Sufi discourse in both Neʿmatollāhī orders. But beyond this, the Ṣafīʿalīshāhīs and Solṭānʿalīshāhīs tapped different repertoires in relating to state mysticism, and they accommodated differently. For the Ṣafīʿalīshāhīs, bonds of allegiance to the clerical state elite - whether they existed before or not, being either imagined or real - did not restore the unified leadership. Sufis in the various branches reproached each other for either being related to the state, or for deviating from state Islam. There was a 'double emulation' in one of the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī branches: in its allegiance to (mystical) state Islam, it did not claim to embody, itself, any authority.

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[1] 'Hidden transcript' means "discourse [...] 'offstage', beyond direct observation by powerholders," the 'public' one "open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate" (1990: 4, 2).

But in an affiliates' 'hidden transcript', it was the master's sovereign spiritual authority that mediated the state allegiance. The unified Solṭānʿalīshāhīs, to the contrary, felt strong enough to publicly proclaim a division of authority between the mystics and the jurists. In contrast to the covert nature of spiritual authority in the above Ṣafīʿalīshāhī branch, the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs' explicit authority division proved acceptable to some of the clerical elite, as they visited the lodge. For the Solṭān-ʿalīshāhīs, who could trace their allegiance to Khomeyni and his ʿerfān legacy back to the Pahlavi period, state ties strengthened spiritual authority, and benefited the order's religious reintegration.

In neither of these cases, however, would the meaning of Sufi performance be fully grasped as a "smuggling of portions of the hidden transcript, suitably veiled, onto the public stage" (SCOTT, 1990: 157). The public stage, in spite of its dangers, was much more than an arena for dissimulation. It was also the place where Sufis could, through various strategies, attain 'authentically' wished for, Islamic respectability.

STATE MYSTICISM

State interference into affairs deemed private was regarded a 'nuisance' (*mozāḥem*) by many Sufis.[2] Individuals were targeted in their private realms, but state interference was most visible in publications and audio-visual releases that entered into the public realm. In June 1996, a musical cassette came out containing ʿerfānī music by Āzād ('free'). A

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[2] Although it has been argued in the previous chapter that one would do better to focus on Sufism's accommodation rather than confine oneself to narratives of suppression, there certainly were great nuisances. LEWISOHN (1998: 461) mentioned that: "Harassment of dervishes by various armed representatives of the regime in various cities throughout Iran ranges from weekly interrogations by the police to varieties of psychological torture (such as surveillance by agents of the regime and verbal threats [...]." However, his mentioning the "threat of expulsion from civil-service jobs should members not be willing to renounce their affiliation to the order" is questionable. There may have been such cases, but it is unlikely that they were part of a co-ordinated policy. The public functions of several Solṭānʿalīshāhī notables provide counterevidence for that. My observation of several Basīj in lodges (simply there to enjoy the congregation) and the reported popularity among the Basīj of the Khāksār, moderate his statement that "the Islamic Republic's distrust of, and hostility to the dervish orders is reflected in the fact that members of the armed services in Iran are not allowed to belong to any Sufi *ṭarīqa* nor, indeed, to frequent *khānaqāhs*, since the intelligence service of the government considers the hand of America [...] to be directly behind the present popularity of Sufism in Iran and the West".

store-owner in a Tehrani suburb mentioned that in his area alone at least eighty copies of the popular tape had been sold, which to him implied a multitude of that number had been bought in the centre of town. After twelve days, it was forbidden.[3] This was the year in which the 'war against the Western 'cultural invasion', which had become 'a pillar of official discourse in 1992', "peaked [...] with a series of television programs and articles in the conservative press, titled 'identity' (*hoviyyat*)."[4]

The climate had its effect on Mr Zanjārī, rumours told. He was vaguely involved with Sufism, could foretell people's future from the moment they walked through his door, effectively advice on how to circumvent it, and was a sought-after counsellor for these qualities. About March 1997, unexpected visitors made their entrance. It was the Revolutionary Guards, who held foretelling the future anathema to religion and thus explained the cause for Zanjārī's arrest. He was forbidden to take up counselling again and spent ten days in the infamous Evin prison.

More striking as an instance of state interference, however, was the slow and unannounced appropriation of mysticism by the state itself. The effects of 'state mysticism' were seen in 1997, for instance, when the state felt uninhibited to proudly invite 22 foreign ambassadors, on a trip to Kerman, to visit the mausoleum of the 'famous mystic poet Shah Ne'matollah Vali' (in Māhān).[5] In commemoration of his martyrdom, one national newspaper referred to Imam ʿAlī as the *emām-e ʿārefān*.

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[3] *Conversation* Ẕoʾr-Reyāsateyn Sufi, 12/04/96. LEWISOHN's interview with the artist (referred to *in* 1998: 461) gave the context: "In June 1996, a cassette tape [...] by Dāvod Āzād, a member of the order, featuring Persian verses of Dr Nūrbakhsh [...] was published in Tehran [....] It unexpectedly caught the attention of a wide public and 10,000 copies were sold within a week. In late June 1996, shocked by such [...] high sales and the public's welcome of this mystical music, the Ministry of Islamic Guidance recalled and banned the tape. The record company that produced it was then broken into by the Revolutionary Guards and all copies were erased. Permission for further sales was revoked and all the covers of printed cassettes were confiscated or defaced."

[4] MATIN-ASGARI, 1998: 59. MIR-HOSSEINI (1994, (1): 282) reported that in spring 1992, "in a national television program, a popular religious character condemned the Ahl-i Haqq dogmas and invited their youth to rise against their fathers' archaic beliefs and become true Muslims."

[5] *Tehran Times,* 04/09/97; see Figure 2. There had been earlier rapprochements as well: "In 1987 a senior Tijānī, Shaykh Dahira Usman Bauchi, was invited to Iran to attend the eighth anniversary celebrations of the revolution" and "some of the Tijāniyya in Tamale and Accra have become Shīʿīs with an 'Iranian-sponsored school of Shiʿite piety' being founded in Accra" (SIRRIYEH, 1998: 147).

And another deplored his demise, exclaiming: "Oh, Leader of the World of Mysticism! (*Ey, moqtadā-ye ʿālam-e ʿerfān!*)".[6]

Just after Khomeyni died in June 1989, his son Aḥmad had offered a mystical poem to the Iranian people as a token of gratitude for their massive presence during the funeral.[7] The Imam's relations to mysticism then came under national and international scrutiny. In winter 1989, Khomeyni's mystical letter to his daughter-in-law was published, written three years earlier, which again contained Sufi references: "Oh Sufi, you have to polish the Armour of Love / and be faithful to the Promise you made / as long as you remain yourself, you will not reach Union with the Beloved / you have to annihilate your self, in the Way of the Friend."[8] Beyond intellectual debt, Khomeyni's relation to mysticism was ingrained in the collective Sufi memory of the Imam lashing out against the Ḥojjatīye Society - the staunchest ideological enemy of

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[6] *Keyhān*, *Resālat*, Bahman 11, 1375/January 3, 1997. The relaxation of legitimate religiosity was similarly evident in a recent congress on Shams-e Tabrīzī in Khvoy (*Tehran Times*, 09/09/98).

[7] TER HAAR, 1995: 91.The poem included the lines "Open the door of the tavern and let us go there day and night / For I am sick and tired of the mosque and seminary." A commentator aptly commented (*New York Times*, 08/20/89) that on the one hand "These are classical images in support of religious fervour" but on the other, that "Such poetry had apparently not been prominent in the years since Khomeyni's revolution, and [that] the poem's appearance may even signal some kind of elaborate political manoeuvring among Khomeyni's successors." See below for confirmation of this view.

[8] *Rah-e ʿeshq*, 1368/1989: 25. Mostly, as in KNYSH's eye-opener review (1992), an intellectual debt was stressed. The documented relations between mysticism and the Imam may be historically summarised as follows: From 1922, Khomeyni studied ʿerfān in Qom. From 1929, he wrote mystical treatises (*Pāsdār-e eslāmī*, 1375/1997, 182: 29, mentioned *Sharḥ-e doʿā-ye saḥar*, *Miṣbāh al-hidāya ilā al-khilāfa waʾl-wilāya*, and commentaries on the *Fuṣūs al-ḥikam* and *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*), in some of which historical Sufis were positively referred to. Thereafter he taught ʿerfān, but in the early 1960s, he cancelled his lessons, probably because political activities occupied all of his attention. But in his political lectures abroad, as in 1972, the Imam kept on referring to ʿerfān. After the revolution, there were televised 'lessons' from Khomeyni's *Tafsīr-e sūra-ye ḥamd* (*Pāsdār-e eslāmī*, 1375/1997, 182: 30, erroneously claimed this was mentioned by Knysh). In 1983, a student in Hamadan found several of his mystical manuscripts (belonging to his collection raided by SAVAK in 1968), that the Imam allowed for publication the same year. In 1986, he wrote a mystical letter to his daughter-in-law. In 1989, he wrote a letter to Gorbatsjov that contained new references to mysticism, and until his death, he wrote mystical poetry. Cf. VAJDANI, 1982; FAHIMI, 1989; PĀK-DĀMAN, 1989; RAFSANJANI, 1989, TER HAAR, 1995. Of KHOMEYNI's political writings, *Jehād-e akbar yā mobāraze bā nafs* (The Greater Jihad or the Struggle with the Soul) particularly stands out as mystical. PĀKDĀMAN stated, with a bit of exaggeration: "He belonged to the *ṭarīqat* [....] and on this path he, under the designation of 'moralities', spoke words left unsaid that transgressed the limit of apostasy [...]" (1368/1989: 3).

Sufism[9] - when in Paris. There were more physical connections as well. One observer felt it was not "out of context to mention [that] Khomeyni's former residence and the place where he gave audience to his people in the north of Tehran [was] itself a Sufi mosque and sanctuary."[10] Sufis moreover claimed Khomeyni's personal initiation, which he reportedly spoke about on television shortly after the revolution.[11]

Khomeyni's carefully construed hagiography as Master of the *foqahā* - already in wide circulation during his lifetime - was thus revised in an unexpected, mystical rapprochement to the *ʿorafā*. It is probably accurate to interpret these changes as events allowed to come into the open by some, which were nevertheless not foreseen by the regime. Rafsanjani, in any case, was quick to capitalise on them politically:

> In November 1989, Rafsanjani presented a long eulogy in which he played down Khomeyni's role as the charismatic leader of the downtrodden masses. Rafsanjani depicted him instead as a first-rank theologian and philosopher, *especially on mysticism*, as a major scholar who had given 'a new lease on life' to the Qom seminaries, and as a world-famous figure *who had restored Iran's national sovereignty* [italics mine].[12]

However, the emergence of state mysticism knew more preconceived regime expressions as well. In the last months of the Iran-Iraq War, a Tehran University student and Basīj war volunteer sent his family a letter from the front, published in the summer of 1989 under the title 'Red Mysticism. A Basīj student's literary-*ʿerfān* letter from the front'.[13] The Islamic Propagation Council (*Shūrā-ye tablīghāt-e eslāmī*), an

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[9] *Interview* revolutionary student, 02/27/97, cf. VALI and ZUBAIDA's general account (1985: 161).

[10] HAERI, 1995: 93. This observation has not to my knowledge been picked up in other literature.

[11] The alleged 'initiation' refers to Imam Khomeyni's *ʿerfān* education, for six years, by Ayatollah Mīrzā Moḥammad ʿAlī Shāhābādī (cf. *Pāsdār-e eslāmī*, 1375/1997, 182: 29), whom Neʿmatollāhī Sufis referred to as a *morshed*, and Ayatollah Mīrzā ʿAlī Akbar Ḥākem (cf. KNYSH, 1992: 633-4).

[12] ABRAHAMIAN, 1993: 134. On November 25, 1996, Tehran hosted a congress on 'mysticism and Justice'. When the Source of Emulation Reżā Bahā al-Dīnī died on July 19, 1997, *Tehran Times* (07/21) praised his "devotion to spirituality and lofty mystical stations [that] he had mastered."

[13] SĀLĀRĪ, 1368/1989. *ʿErfān-e sorkh. Nāme-ye adabī-ʿerfānī-ye dāneshjū-ye basījī az jebhe-ye jang*. In February 1997, I was told at the Islamic Propagation Council that Sālārī's Letter was out of print and that there were no back-issues. A copy was fortunately kept at Tehran University Library.

ideological watchdog, published it "on the occasion of the honouring of the week of victorious resistance and eight years of sacred defence." The pamphlet's definitions of *ʿerfān* melted mysticism with revolution and republican Islam. The title referred to the blood of Shiʿite martyrs who had died in the cause of a 'higher knowledge'. Ultimately, the student held, higher knowledge was obtained by 'dying in God' (p. 7), and its examples were, literally, provided by the 'martyrs of Karbala' (p. 8).

Poets explored the relation between martyrdom and mysticism on a regular basis in various national newspapers.[14] Basīj volunteers were reported among the Khāksār.[15] But Red Mysticism was also careful to distinguish between Wise Men and Sufis on the one hand, and militant mystics on the other. While "[Khomeyni's] *ʿerfān* did not seek isolation and seclusion",[16] the sages and Sufis were reproached for "taking into hiding and intellection" instead of "choosing the open field of martyrdom" (the highest 'station', *maqām*, and 'rank', *manzelat*). This cowardly attitude designated their 'yellowness' (preface).[17]

A newspaper instead commemorated a war volunteer in its rubric *The Green Voice of the Basīj*.[18] The label was descriptive of the martyr's *ʿerfān*, in evoking the image of Islam having grown inseparable from his body. He had courageously defended Islam as if it were his own body, and finally sacrificed his body, with equal vigilance, for Islam. The prototype martyr for obituaries such as these, was Ḥoseyn

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[14] *Resālat* published *shaṭḥīyāt*, ecstatic or even blasphemous utterances of divine inspiration for which Sufis had historically been executed (for instance: Mehr 15, 1375/October 16, 1996); *Keyhān* published poetry under the title *kofrān-e ʿeshq*, 'heresies of love' (Khordād 8, 1376/May 29, 1997).

[15] Cf. GIELING's 'The Sacralization of War in the Islamic Republic of Iran' (1998). I arrive at my conclusion of the *ʿerfān*-war linkage's unicity (among all other ideological linkages between the war and religious themes) because of the fact that Gieling hardly mentioned anything that could be interpreted in this direction. There is one mention of a wartime poster carrying the text *sangar-e ʿeshq* ('trench of love') (*op. cit.*, p. 82), the evocative significance of which doubtlessly derived, in part, from *sang* (blood, as part of *sangar-e ʿeshq*). Somewhat related, the afterlife was referred to as *diyār-e ḥaqq*, 'the realm of truth' in *Salām* newspaper (Āzar 29, 1375/December 19,1996).

[16] PĀKDĀMAN, 1368/1989: 4.

[17] SĀLĀRĪ's treatise was not straightforwardly in the *radd*-genre, however, and Sufism's subjection to the higher scale of Red Mysticism by Sālārī was only a matter of degree, not principle. More importantly, he explicitly took historical Sufis such as Bāyezīd Basṭāmī as role models for contemporary Islamists. Another of these models was the Sufi martyr Sohravardī, who, ironically, died at the hands of the Jurists, the Jurists in whose name the Basīj fought their war of 'sacred defense'.

[18] *Eṭṭelāʿāt-e haftegī*, Esfand 15-22, 1375/March 5-12, 1997.

Fahmīde, the sixteen-year-old whom Khomeyni had declared Iran's real leader, and who had sacrificed himself before an Iraqi tank. Fahmīde, Sufis recollected respectfully, had carried an *ʿerfān* text on his trousers that spoke of his longed for reunion with God.[19]

As martyrdom was all encompassing, it extended beyond the warfront when the war ended. "The war with Ṣaddām", Khomeyni had proclaimed, "was only a part of this struggle. Our struggle was the fight between Truth and Falsehood, which has no ending [...]."[20] Sālārī's pamplet on Red Mysticism had similarly stressed - in a post-war preface - that "although today, our eight-year war with all its ups and downs [has come to an end], one should not render the values of this Way (*rāh*) [...] into oblivion".[21] Mystical martyrdom, that is, was to be transformed, sublimated into moral acts, a militantly cooperative spirit towards the leadership of the Islamic revolution and social sacrifice in Iranian society - the greater *jehād*.[22] When Iran's spiritual leader, Khameneʾi, praised the mystical quality of 'asceticism' in Imam ʿAlī, he explained that 'lack of worldly attachment' had been accompanied by

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[19] In *Eṭṭelāʿāt* (Khordād 8, 1376/May 29, 1997) it was held of a 'lover of martyrdom' (*ʿāsheq-e shahādat*) that "they had blended his being with love for the People of the House (*ahl-e beyt*)." On Behesht-e Zahrā I spoke to a Pāsdār-officer who had lost his brother in combat. Upon learning I engaged in Persian Studies, he stressed I should pay special attention to *ʿerfān*. "I've had quite some experience with *ʿerfān-e naẓarī va ʿamalī* (*ʿerfān* in theory and praxis). My brother appeared before me in a dream. He said: 'I am able to have contact with you, on condition you don't drink and do not have unlawful relations with women'. I did neither. When I stood at his grave, contact was established" (06/07/97).

[20] PĀKDĀMAN (1368/1989: 6), citing a message of Khomeyni's, which was delivered to the clergy (on Esfand 3, 1367/February 22, 1989), and printed in *Keyhān*, Esfand 6, 1367/February 25, 1989.

[21] SĀLĀRĪ, 1368/1989: 10.

[22] Iran's martial arts magazine *Razm-āvar*, for instance, which was dedicated to "knowledge of the true values of sport in Islamic Iran" (1375/1996, 18: 5), contained articles that addressed 'militancy' and 'the fighting mentality' in a largely metaphorical sense. It was critical of sports in their conventional meaning, as "it is one of the functions of showing sport contests, particularly in third world countries, to keep the people ignorant of their political fate and political currents in their countries" (1375/1996: 37), while 'imperialist politics' exploited sports economically (1353/1996: 18: 8). *Razm-āvar*, therefore, paid attention as to how sports could communicate the message of the revolution (1375/1996, 18, pp. 8-9). One of Iran's leading karate experts, a Basīj commander, "demonstrated his skills [...] commemorating Tehran's 36,000 martyrs of the imposed war" (*Iran*, 06/29/97).

his active seeking of 'social justice' and as such was to be seen as an attribute of ʿAlī's involvement in (worldly) rule.[23]

When rumours spoke of draconian and unremitting repression,[24] concerning, for instance, the closing down of a Qāderī lodge in Tehran in August 1996, many Sufis managed to accommodate to the new regime religiosity. A new, post-revolutionary climate was witnessed among Sufis, inversely, in that several affiliates and observers held Sufism to be immersed in a process of *réveil*: mystic, Shiʿite religiosity not only offered but was itself on the 'Way of (ethical) Reform' (*rāh-e eṣlāḥ*).[25] When confronted with the enemies' traditional reproach of (idle) 'asceticism' (*zohd*), one Sufi responded in irritation that "worship does not go without service to the people" (*ʿebādat be-joz-e khedmat-e khalq nīst*).[26] Traditionally, 'social service' was a Sufi act that would especially

[23] *Tehran Times*, 11/26/96.

[24] An undated overview by Malik Carn contains important but sometimes unsubstantiated or erroneous information (dowloaded on 12/31/99 from www.wco.com/~altaf/sufipers.html). It claimed that in 1997, the Intelligence Ministry presented a video with coerced confessions and alleged evidence of *sharīʿa*-violations to the Leader, asking for his anti-Sufi *fatvā*. Thereafter, Ayatollah Rajāʾī declared that "anyone who kills a sufi student will go to heaven." Tehrani informants spoke of the Qāderīya as a politically charged and persecuted, ethnic Sufism - because of its ties to the Kurdish guerrilla. *Mideast Mirror* reported that "The sheikh of the Naqshabandi Sufi tariqa, Othman Serajeddin, was forced into exile" (09/09/94 (Section: The Arab/Islamic World), vol. 8, no. 174), but did not specify when. The Dutch Ṣafīʿalīshāhī leader claimed his lodge in Isfahan had been destroyed by the state.

[25] ʿAbdollāh Enteẓām/ Āzāde's *Naẓarī tāze be ʿerfān va taṣavvof* (1363/1984) was a precursor of the ethical reform(ul)ations: "The breaking of promises [...], being recalcitrant [...], dominating, shortcomings in the accomplishment of obligations and hundreds of other unpraiseworthy characteristics are the agents of decay [....] Dervishhood and Sufism do not mean laziness. In all eras, Sufis have been men of work and in the Holy War they have not refrained from sacrificing their lives [....] *The Ministry of Culture [...] could [...] in co-operation with radio and television, offer educational programs in support of the thought of Sufism*" [my emphasis] (*op. cit.*, pp. 113, 112, 113). Furthermore, the text stated that "I am certain that if this school [of Sufism] finds expansion, in such a way that from various classes of people a number worthy of consideration will turn to following it, then it will change the sort of morality and thought [now current] in our society" (op. cit, p. 8). Not everybody was convinced of *ʿerfān*'s legitimacy. Ayatollah Āzād held that "in the meaning of Knowledge of God, it is fine. But in these last years a different kind of *ʿerfān* has come to the fore that has non-Islamic, Christian and Greek roots, and we cannot, therefore, accept it in this form" (*interview*, 06/07/97).

[26] *Interview*, 12/17/96, cf. SAḤĀBĪ, 1375/1996: 9. ‹NEʿMATʿALĪ› attributed the saying to Bayezīd (1999: 218). Generally speaking, it derives from an old Sufi repertoire: Some Sufis "waren berühmt für die Hilfsbereitschaft, mit der sie sich ihrer armen und leitenden Mitmenschen annahmen" (MEIER, 1976, (1): 125). Given that Iranians have been reminded by posters in the streets that they 'ought to use time wisely', and that

serve one's individual, spiritual progress. Here, however, it assumed an ethical quality in itself, separate from the goal of spiritual progress, and concerned with Iranian society at large. It derived from the politicised injunctions of the *sharī'at* - not the spiritual requirements of the *ṭarīqat* - and it went a long way, in particular, from Ṣafī'alīshāh's aristocratic maxim that said "in Sufism, the foundation of deeds is service to the spiritual leader" (*dar taṣavvof aṣl-e a'māl khedmat-e pīr ast*).[27]

Sufis sought to join the heart of the 'public transcript' - that built on Khomeyni's mystical charisma - in presenting Sufism as a law-oriented Path, both mystical and militant. A Khāksār Sufi showed me a series of liturgical objects. He presented his axe (*tabarzīn*) - otherwise a metaphor of spiritual combat - as if it were a material weapon in the holy war, the double-edged sword of 'Alī (*ẕo'l-faqār*) not as a symbol of spiritual chivalry but of communal defence. The horn (*būq*) that used to warn fellow Sufis of enemies,[28] blew in defence of Shi'ism for him.[29] Transcend-

Sufism represents in many ways the opposite ethos, it was surprising to encounter a Sufi's sardonic wisdom that suggested ethical *réveil*: "the people of Iran, we are Professors in the Killing of Time" (*mardom-e Īrān, ostād-e vaqtkoshī hastīm*) (07/10/97). The place of 'service' in the Islamic Republic is for instance seen in the views of "Beheshti, the chief architect of the Constitution [who] argued that the Koran and the Shi'i traditions protect legitimate wealth [...] for the simple reason that human labor was the source of all such property. This labour, he explained, was physical work, mental work, such as accountancy, or public service (*khedmat*)" (ABRAHAMIAN, 1993: 43).

[27] ḤOSEYNĪ, 1377/1998: 16. The context for this citation proves that the translation must be 'service to', not 'service of'. Things had been similar in the Ne'matollāhī order before ‹Ṣafī'alīshāh›'s rise to fame. In 1851, Lady SHEIL wrote, on the basis of her experiences with Sufism in Tehran, that "Among the Niāmet-oollāhees the novice must present the moorshid, in addition to the sheereenee [sweets], with a coin called an abassee, on which are engraved the words "Lā illāh illallāh" (There is no God but God). The moorshid repeats to him an ayah, or verse, of the Koran, to be recited daily. In performing every act, the mooreed, or disciple, must meditate on the moorshid" (1856: 195).

[28] Jalālī Sufis in eighteenth century Isfahan blew trumpets to celebrate the ruler's defeat (ROYCE, 1979: 137), but in the Islamic Republic, any practical uses of liturgical objects were wisely avoided.

[29] One witnesses a parallel accommodation technique in ĀZĀDE's 'New Perspective on 'Erfān and Sufism.' The book is a pseudonymous, unmodified but post-mortem (and post-1979) edition of 'Abdollāh Enteẓām's newspaper essays, which legitimises a comparison with other Sufi literature in the Islamic Republic. (The publisher of) ĀZĀDE criticised the unlawful use of Sufi symbols, and subsequent misconceptions regarding the true nature of Sufism: "That faulty rumour which has made the Sufis known for their laziness is the work of [...] parasitic beggars posing as dervishes, who presented themselves for pretense, in appearance, in the clothes of the dervishes. With wine and [...] the begging bowl (*kashkūl*) they were pretending to spiritual poverty (*faqr*) and Sufism. What do these impostors have to do with the world of Sufism?" (1363/1984: 112).

ing 'yellowness', a Sufi who claimed heroism as a revolutionary explained that 'becoming not, in God' (*fanāʾollāh*) - mostly conceived of symbolically - was to be taken literally; as Sufism in essence.[30]

Khomeyni had been influenced from an early stage by Ibn Arabī's mystical concept of the Perfect Man (*ensān ol-kāmel*). Several Sufis whom I met, in their turn, projected into Khomeyni an immaculate *qoṭb*, who had been surrounded, however, by evil courtmongers. These men of politics had kept him from revealing his true identity. Wretched and ignorant courtmongers, they said, accounted for Khomeyni's silence during the era of revolutionary violence and repression.[31] Echoing Āmolī's 'true Sufi Shiʿite', they stressed the difference between the *mosalmān*, i.e. the outwardly conformist Muslim, and the *moʾmen*, the believer who touches upon the essence of religion.[32] They represented themselves to be, as Khomeyni was, a part of Shiʿism's *moʾmenīn*.

In written response to a set of questions on Sufism that I put to him, the (office of) *āyatollāh ol-ʿoẓmā* Nāṣer Makārem-Shīrāzī held Sufism generally to consist of illegitimate aberrations.[33] The (office of) Source of Emulation *āyatollāh ol-ʿoẓmā* ʿAbdolkarīm Mūsavī-Ardabīlī, however, responding to the same set of questions, wrote that:

> jurists who are not without interest in these sciences, who have sufficient knowledge of them, and have worked in them, they criticise the *ʿorafā* and the Sufis less: except for some of their issues which cannot in any way be brought in accordance with the *maḥkamāt-e sharʿ* [parts of the *sharīʿa* not admitting of allegorical interpretation] they do not oppose the rest of their words [my insertion].[34]

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[30] *Interview* Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufi, 03/09/97. AḤMADĪ held the Sufi concept of *fanāʾ* (among others) responsible for the lack of individualism in Iranian society (1375/1997: 52), which explains precisely why 'dying in God', in its literal reformulation, was such an apt doctrinal support for martyrdom.

[31] *Interview* Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufi, 12/19/96. I asked this Sufi whether much had changed since the revolution. He said: "Yes, nowadays it is about cleaning one's soul (*pāk kardan-e jān*), about ultimately becoming an *ensān-e kāmel*, and I feel much cleaner now." In a newspaper defence against an attempt to delegitimise mysticism, it was written that "[Khomeyni says, in his Ḥamd Sura exegesis, that 'prayers and the Qurʾān are one; *ʿorafā* and *ʿāref* poets and philosophy, etc., all speak of one subject, [...] only the [...] languages are different" (*Jomhūrī-ye eslāmī*, Mehr 8, 1375/ September 29, 1996).

[32] *Interviews* independent (unaffiliated) Sufi, 10/29/96; Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufi, 03/06/97.

[33] *Correspondence*, 09/22/97.

[34] *Correspondence*, 08/23/97.

The Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order

The Board of Trustees retained its nominal rule over the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order. It sought legitimacy in Ṣafīʿalīshāh's charisma, while the rebellious satellites remained dedicated to traditional, sheikh-centred spiritual authority. Both the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī centre and its peripheries, however, absorbed mystical regime religiosity (though in contrary ways).

The informal leader of the Board of Trustees had no pretensions whatsoever of being a sheikh. He dressed soberly, as is ideally required of Muslims, and he abhorred the Sufi regalia that some of his more traditional subjects carried. Rebel sheikhs pointed at this not only to condemn the Board of Trustees' illegitimate innovation of Sufism, but they also interpreted it as a sign of secret state affiliations. One of the board members, they pointed out, had been a Revolutionary Guard during the revolution, and later on become an employee in the Ministry of Education. A member of the Endowments Organisation was on the Board, and there were financial transactions between the two. When I pointed at a damaged painting in the erstwhile library, the informal leader told me a state institution (the *Sāzemān-e ershād*) was called upon to repair it, and many suggested the lodge's property was now owned by the state.

Given these relations, there would be no room for alternative spiritual authority, independent of the state. The absence of any sheikh on the Board corresponded to its claim of being void of spiritual authority itself. However, the presence of a sovereign spiritual guide had traditionally been seen as a necessity, both cosmologically and for individuals. Blessing could come from the master only, as without him, the world would lose its balance and novices ran the risk of great spiritual harm.

Among the larger and older Sufi orders, spiritual authority, although mediated by sheikhs and *kholafāʾ*, had often come to focus on a legendary founder. Among the Neʿmatollāhī orders, the Z̤oʾr-Reyāsateyn have most explicitly revered Shāh Neʿmatollāh Valī. The Solṭān-ʿalīshāhī order upkeeps an extensive spiritual genealogy, but concentrates affiliates' devotion in the figure of the present, living pole. The redefinition of spiritual authority under the Board of Trustees, however, represented a unique development in between these types. Religiosity changed its focus, from the narration of Neʿmatollāhī and Ṣafīʿalīshāhī traditions through a medium-sheikh, towards an unmediated focus on the life and works of Ṣafīʿalīshāh himself. "We are just", a regular visitor explained to me, "a religious circle for the devotion of Ṣafīʿalīshāh."

In 1995, the Board of Trustees unexpectedly found a source of legitimisation when one of the granddaughters of Ṣafīʿalīshāh, Ṣafīya-ye Neshāṭ, returned to Tehran from Switzerland. While she disliked "narrow-minded mullahs who deny people their right to cry", she admired the *tellement sympathique Sufi, monsieur Khomeyni*, who had read all of Ṣafīʿalīshāh's oeuvre and whom, she claimed, she had visited several times in Paris before the revolution when she lived in Geneva.[35]

In an historical reparation of relations between the lodge's leadership and the heirs of Ṣafīʿalīshāh, she reportedly contributed to the Board of Trustees, financially, to some considerable extent.[36] But she was important for other reasons as well, as Ṣafīʿalīshāh's spiritual authority radiated through to the present day. Despite the unitary enforcement of state-Islam, one street away from the lodge one walked in 'lodge-alley' (*kūche-ye khānaqāh*). The lodge itself, situated along boulevards and squares the names of which were 'cleaned up' during and after the revolution, the lodge remained in 'Ṣafīʿalīshāh-street' (*khiyābān-e Ṣafī-ʿalīshāh*).[37] Young Sufis carried plastified pictures with them, not of some *qoṭb*, but Ṣafīʿalīshāh. Despite the fact that he detested Sufis, a Tehrani Ḥojjat ol-Eslām felt that Ṣafīʿalīshāh, who had uniquely composed a Qurʾān Commentary in rhyme that several in his day and some to this day found blasphemous, had been "a great man."[38] It was the *tafsīr* that the Board of Trustees had been after, first demandingly and then, when Ṣafīya-ye Neshāṭ did not give in, politely. After initial reluctance, Neshāṭ gave her permission for a new print.

In the last instance, the religious significance of Ṣafīʿalīshāh derived from his rapport to the Imams. An eye-catching poster adorned the outside wall of the prayer space in the courtyard. Its significance was unmistakable for outsiders as for insiders, as it embodied 'raw, melancholy

[35] *Interviews* 03/09/97; 07/20/97.

[36] *Interview* Sufi affiliate and friend of Mrs Neshāṭ, 03/09/97.

[37] Only a bookstore named ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh› (mentioned by GRAMLICH, 1976: 148) has disappeared.

[38] *Interview*, 02/10/97. ‹Monavvarʿalīshāh› felt it was a 'pearl for the speaker of Persian' (*gowhar-e fārsī-zabān*) (*interview*, 04/04/97). *Tafsīr* was respectable, and thus good for the image of Sufism. But one Sufi warned me not to attach too much importance to 'form', as "the first *tafsīr* came from the devil", and "Shemr too [Imam Ḥoseyn's murderer] was an interpreter" (*interview*, 02/09/97). In the *Anjoman-e okhovvat*, Khosravī had produced a *tafsīr* as well, which, a Sufi in ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle›'s lodge said, "of course does not match the greatness of ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh›'s *tafsīr*" (*interview*, 05/11/97).

passion' (*sūdā'-ye khām*). It depicted Imam Ḥoseyn's military camp, surrounded by Yazīd's hostile troops. Ḥoseyn was about to be martyred. The idea of martyrdom's religious significance was nothing of a novelty,[39] but it had not before replaced the centrality of ʿAlī in Ṣafīʿalīshāhī religiosity. One affiliate who had left Iran after the revolution and had now returned from the United States said, disapprovingly: "This is not Sufism, with all these celebrations for Ḥoseyn."

However, on January 30 and 31, 1997, ʿAlī's centrality was temporarily restored. January 30 was the Thursday night session immediately preceding the commemoration of ʿAlī's martyrdom, on the 31st. The usual sermon in the salon which preceded the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī *ẕekr*, was exceptionally tense. The *khaṭīb* cried incessantly, alternating pretense sobs with genuine tears, interspersing laments, hitting his chest and successfully moving his crowd. In front of his pulpit, the audience was moved to convulsions. The massive drone of chest beating (*sīne-zanī*) made the stained glass windows tremble.

The 31st brought some estimated 1000 people to the *khānaqāh*. Not everybody had come solely for ʿAlī. This was also the day on which Khomeyni had returned to Iran, and, more importantly, it was the first day in a series of ten, which commemorated the Fajr-offensive against Iraq. The day after, martyrs' coffins were being paraded in the streets of Tehran. On the 31st, several soldiers had made their presence, too. The subtext which was being performed on these days, as forceful as any 'celebration for Ḥoseyn', pointed to mystical martyrdom, under the surface of traditional Sufi/Shiʿite laments:

> *Gedā-ye to / fadā-ye to / bī navā-ye to / yā ʿAlī*
>
> (I am) your beggar / (I am) your devotee /
> (I am) helpless without you / Oh ʿAlī
>
> <div align="center">* * *</div>
>
> *Man-am, man-am, gedā-ye to / man-am, man-am, gedā-ye to / gedā-ye bī navā-ye to / ʿAlī ʿAlī ʿAlī ʿAlī / ʿAlī ʿAlī ʿAlī ʿAlī !*
>
> I am, I am, your beggar / I am, I am, your beggar /
> (I am) your helpless beggar / (Oh) ʿAlī !

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[39] ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh› had already spoken of the 'secrets of martyrdom' (*asrār osh-shahādat*) in his *Zobdat ol-asrār* (cf. VAḤĪDNIYĀ, 1352/1973: 254; CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1361/1982-3: 5). "Die sogenannte Genügepflicht des heiligen Krieges haben manche Sūfiyya freiwillig erfüllt" (MEIER, 1976, (1): 125).

ʿAlī jān-am / ʿAlī jān-am / ʿAlī jān
My dear ʿAlī / my dear ʿAlī / dear ʿAlī[40]

Regeneration in the Society of Brotherhood

Although the Anjoman-e Okhovvat could historically document its legitimate representation of Ṣafīʿalīshāh's line, the Board of Trustees had nothing to fear from the disreputed Society of Brotherhood. When asked, Tehranis would tell of some formerly influential, pre-revolutionary organisation afterwards closed down. Freemasonry charges having stuck to it, they considered it a relic of the past. Enemies, including differently affiliated Sufis, moreover conveniently projected the Freemasonry history upon the order at large.[41] But the Society had survived the purgatory of revolution.

On my way to the old quarters of the administrative centre, I was unexpectedly led from a busy street into a quiet hallway. What first met the eye was neon-advertisements. Behind them, clearly visible, was a cast-iron gate displaying unremoved Sufi stigmata: Crossed axes, a begging-bowl and the founding date of the Society of Brotherhood. Behind the iron construction, a stained glass plate was in place, broken in some places and patched up with pieces of wood. Behind the gate was a yard that contained the living-quarters of, reportedly, the sole survivor and keeper of the Society of Brotherhood.[42] The centre in arrears was only one of its heirs, however.

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[40] '*Jān*' carries the double meaning of 'dear/beloved' and 'soul'. GRAMLICH (1981: 33-8; 1976: 405-8) gave extensive descriptions of Ṣafīʿalīshāhī *ẕekr*, but did not mention these texts, which suggests they were specific to this commemorative occasion.

[41] The Solṭānʿalīshāhīs considered ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh› an illegitimate usurper, and ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle› responsible for the order's final degeneration. Of ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle› it was claimed that he i) married Sufism and Freemasonry and ii) never appointed a successor as he understood ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh› himself had made a false claim (ESFAHĀNĪ, 1372/1993: 26; 47). Although Solṭānʿalīshāhīs were exceptionally active in historical publications, they denounced the *jang-e khaṭṭī* (*op. cit.*, p. 29). A rebel sheikh in ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh›'s main lodge said venomously: "We have nothing against ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle›'s lodge, only it goes without saying that it is not a *khānaqāh* in the first place, but just a burial site, and its *qoṭb* is obviously an impostor who accepted money" (*interview*, 05/19/97).

[42] *Interview* Sufi in ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle›'s lodge, 05/24/97. From the fact that Sufis in the lodge knew of the administrative centre's continued existence but were not in any regular contact to its keeper (an old affiliate), I infer that the Society of Brotherhood has split into many centres as well.

After the revolution, various Freemasonry centres had been closed down, but not any of the branches of the Anjoman-e Okhovvat were reported among them. Several went on independently.[43] Ẓahīr od-Dowle's Ṣafī'alīshāhī lodge in northern Tehran - the third most important place for the Society of Brotherhood, after the administrative centre and the lodge of Ṣafī'alīshāh - assumed a second life. The present leader stressed spiritual, genealogical continuity from the Society of Brotherhood without apologising, and upon a first visit in May 1997, the sheikh's brother assured me that I had been right to come, as this place - small to all standards - was 'the national centre of the Real Sufism' (in Iran). The last pre-revolutionary leader, ʿAbdollāh Enteẓm, had been succeeded by 'father' (*bābā*) Reżāʿalīshāh Ṣafāʾī, ‹Darvīsh Reżā›.

> Reżāʿalī came from a famous family in Yazd. He had two paternal uncles who were wandering dervishes (*qalandar*s), Darvīsh Ḥoseyn and Darvīsh Khorram, one of whom planted a tree in Ṣafī'alīshāh's *khānaqāh*. Being attracted to Sufism from an early age, and seeing the example of his uncles, he came to Tehran, on foot, to meet the *foqarā*. He made the journey seventeen times. Reżāʿalī was spotted by Ẓahīr od-Dowle and allowed to live in his house. He developed into a prominent Sufi in the Society of Brotherhood, and became its sheikh in Yazd. During the seventeenth journey, Reżāʿalī had become a man of age, and he decided he would permanently reside in Tehran. After the revolution, he assumed the leadership, and his two uncles remained ever faithful to their inspired nephew, and they kept on treating him respectfully.[44]

After Reżāʿalī died in about 1988, he was succeeded by his son Aḥmad Ṣafāʾī, the present *pīr*, who was in possession of his father's *ejāze*. His rule of Ẓahīr od-Dowle's lodge visibly contrasted with the supervision over the lodge of Ṣafī'alīshāh by the Board of Trustees.

It was common knowledge among the followers of the contemporary successors of Ẓahīr od-Dowle that "*they* say the mosque is the House of God, while for *us* the House of God is in the heart." However, one would misread this adage if conceived as an attempt to take away the legitimacy of the mosque, and in this sense these followers compared to the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs. The formulation highlighted Sufism's proper re-

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[43] *Interviews* Ṣafī'alīshāhī Sufis, 06/19/97; 04/18/97. My interviewees were long-time affiliates of the Society of Brotherhood, who accepted the lodge's post-revolution leadership as legitimate.

[44] *Interview* Sufi in ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle›'s lodge, 05/11/97.

ligiosity, simultaneously downplayed its material referents, and so less-
ened vulnerability. There were other safety-valves as well.

There was a little wooden frame, stuck to the lodge's entrance, which
contained a sheet of rules specifying - in addition to the sheikh's spiri-
tual authority - that no-one was allowed in who did not observe the
social order. At first, nobody wished to discuss the rules, trying - de-
spite their eye-catching display - to convince me they meant nothing.
Later on, the official reply held that: "if people come from the outside,
ignorant as to what goes on inside, they have to be informed as to what
constitutes proper behaviour." In the end, however, and in private, a
Sufi told that basically the rules were for protection. 'Protection' was for
outsiders - for them not to project into Sufism anything like anti-regime
religiosity - as for insiders, "the real *ādāb* are a matter of the heart."[45]

Contrary to the lodge of Ṣafīʿalīshāh, which was proverbially open
all day and night, the gate of Ẓahīr od-Dowle's *khānaqāh* usually re-
mained closed until the commoners' preparations for the *majles* started:
cleaning the yard, sweeping the congregation room, checking the stereo
equipment, and preparing tea and sweets.[46] In the lodge of Ẓahīr od-
Dowle, in other words, there were presumably many things to guard.

People in Ṣafīʿalīshāh's lodge usually kept a low profile. While
freely accessible, and visible from all sides, a Sufi proudly remarked
that "only a few of the neighbouring people are probably aware of the
existence over here of a lodge."[47] In a bird-eye's view of the yard from
one of the surrounding flats, one would indeed meet with little Sufi
stigmata, except for ritual greetings (*moṣāfaḥa*) and only incidentally
full Sufi dress.[48] In Ẓahīr od-Dowle's lodge, however, the Sufi stigmata
and regalia were more fully, though still cautiously, observed (as they
were among Valī Dorostī and the followers Monavvarʿalīshāh). During
ʿĀshūrā, a guest singer had introduced his performance in the lodge
with a moving 'pointe' (*nokte*) on transhistorical charisma: "some time
ago I crossed the street and I saw three little boys playing, staging Kar-

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[45] *Interview*, 06/19/97.

[46] A Sufi told me that the gate used to be open all day. He unconvincingly claimed
there were no political reasons for the closure: it had to do with protection of the graves
(*conversation*, 05/06/97).

[47] *Interview* Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufi, 03/06/97.

[48] There was a *morīd* of Ḥājjī Dādāsh in the lodge ('sheikh Rokhsar') - with axe, cap,
manteau, begging bowl, and small *ẕoʾl-faqār* - whose provocative outfit was on everyo-
ne's mind (05/01/97).

balā. And I asked myself: Who is this Ḥoseyn, who, 1000 and some-thing years later, still manages to enrapture young boys." In an outfit that bore public witness to a double, Sufi Shiᶜite affiliation, a black-dressed affiliate who was continuously moved to tears because of the guest singer's Karbalā-narration, incessantly rolled the beads of his 'Sufi rosary' (*tasbīḥ-e ṣūfiyāne*), which held two *tabarzīn*s and one *kashkūl*.

The lodge was only once open all day, during a religious commemo-ration that provoked my amazement and curiosity. "Why does Kho-meyni's portrait hang over here?" I asked. Due retribution for a stupid question, it was responded: "Because we commemorate his demise." That was perfectly reasonable, but what did his demise have to do with Sufism? "Nothing," my interviewee said, "we just have a special ses-sion. Through these external things, the spirituality transpires that we are really all about."[49] Two years ago, another visitor told me, the leader had performed a similar act of accommodation. He had changed cus-tomary dress by ordering the stigmatising Sufi *kafan*s for the wardrobe. Now I understood the impeccably dressed man, who, on another occa-sion, had started to undress in the lodge. He had first taken of his shirt, then his trousers, and underneath, to my surprise, had appeared a folded, long, white robe. He saw me watching him and explained: "I couldn't do this in the street." Just to make sure, I asked: "You're wearing a *kafan*?" "No," he said, "just the dervish clothing (*pūshesh-e darvīsh*)."[50]

A glimpse of the things that were being avoided once became visible in advance of the religious sessions - which were invariably preceded by generally Shiᶜite prayer (*namāz*) - when a politically charged debate ensued in the yard. A novice apparently unaware of any danger, said: "We don't agree with the way things are now, this [the Islamic Repub-lic] is not real Islam."[51] Then someone from the lodge - only recently purged with respect to clothing - probably worried about my observa-tions and quickly corrected, by arguing with sweet reason: "No, no, please: things are not that simple. If the state closes down lodges be-cause women don't wear the *ḥejāb*, then this is legitimate."[52]

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[49] *Interview*, 06/19/97.

[50] It was reported of the pre-revolution Ẕahabīya, inversely, that they "tragen in [...] Versammlungen nur Derwischhut und Mantel [...] über der Zivielkleidung (GRAM-LICH, 1981: 3).

[51] *Conversations*, 07/10/97; 06/19/97.

[52] As all public or semi-public lodges, ‹Ẕahīr od-Dowle›'s *khānaqāh* had a separate women's section, which was reached from the men's section (by the sheikh) through a

The master reinterpreted history to the demands of ethical *réveil* by mentioning Ẓahīr od-Dowle not as a Freemason - as some affiliates, many differently affiliated Sufis and any non-Sufi continued to do - but as a "renewer of Sufism who placed morality at the centre of it." Furthermore, one had to reckon that his assembly simply had a 'Congregation for ʿAlī (*Heyʾat-e ʿAlī ibn-e Abī Ṭāleb*).'[53] But the most striking element in the yard in which we had our conversation, was the unremoved Freemasonry stigmata on the grave of Ẓahīr od-Dowle. The master's innocuous discourse - prescribing general, mystical Shiʿite religiosity, in neglect of the Freemasonry signs, the contestations of illegitimate innovations in the Pahlavi era, or the Society of Brotherhood's proximity to the Monarchy - had left its mark on the world outside the lodge. In response to the question what brought him on the track of Sufism, one faithful affiliate - always present in the lodge - decided to entrust his life-history to me, which did not contain any reference to these stigmatising backgrounds:

> My ending up here has a story to it. I was in a theatre-school, where I met with a woman I grew very fond of. It was not being in love, just being very fond of her. Then I began reading Ḥāfez and Mowlānā, who touched me very deeply as well. But then I got into trouble and I ended up in prison. I was desperate, until *ḥażrat-e* Ḥāfez appeared before me. This gave me an enormous strength. When I was released from prison, I made the pilgrimage to Mashhad. Once again, Ḥāfez appeared before me and he told me there was an organisation in Tehran named *Anjoman-e okhovvat*, opposite Mellī Bank. Having reached it, they told me I should get it all out of my head, but I held tight and finally they said: 'All right, go to the North of Tehran'. I went to take a look, I went from house to house and every time I asked, people told me it was not there. But I did not give in and after a long time I again asked someone: '*Āqā*, where do the dervishes meet over here?' He pointed at a spot right in front of him, and that was the *khānaqāh* of Ẓahīr od-Dowle. That was eleven years ago.

The most important contrast between the two Ṣafīʿalīshāhī branches, however, involved spiritual authority. Contrary to the Board of Trustees, the striving after respectability in Ẓahīr od-Dowle's lodge did not include an abstention from alternative spiritual authority. Only, it was

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microphone and speakers. In advance of the sessions, however, men and women rather freely mingled (as in other lodges).

[53] *Conversations*, 07/10/97; 07/17/97. Similar stories probably underlie Lewisohn's claim (1998: 456) that: "the *Anjuman-i ukhuwwat* was forced to change its name to 'Maktab-i ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib'.

mostly outside the formal, ceremonial life, in informal gatherings in the yard, that inhibitions concerning its expression would lessen.

The master and his affiliates made a point of his spiritual authority. As soon as he made his entrance, people humbly rushed forward and bowed to kiss his hand - which, an affiliate said without hesitation, "compares to the oath of allegiance to Imam ʿAlī" - and take any order from him.[54] "I am a sick old man now", a Sufi stated in advance of religious sessions, "but if the revered *qoṭb* requests my presence, then of course I will appear."[55] I asked a Sufi why he had not married - a religious expectation for young men his age - and he explained that "one of the reasons is: the sheikh has not yet given me a sign to do so." Then he cited the Sufi dictum that the affiliate should be towards the sheikh as "a corps to the hands of the washer of the dead."

Complementing the master's public, Shiʿite respectability, a visitor privately lectured me on the fine points of reincarnation, one person admiringly mentioned his wife's Roman Catholicism, another felt a direct spiritual tie to 'the first real Iranians, the Zoroastrians', and one Sufi confided to me that he tried his luck in magnetism and hypnosis sessions.[56] It was in Ẓahīr od-Dowle's graveyard that affiliated Sufis expressed the significance to the collective memory, taking me along the graves and recounting their good deeds, of Ẓahīr od-Dowle, Farajollāh Āqevlī, the Enteẓāms, and their discredited Society of Brotherhood.

A martial arts specialist and Basīj survivor joined in the discourse of state mysticism with ambivalence. "The essence of higher knowledge is realised once bodily integrity is beyond one's care." This had applied to Owrangiyān, the militant war singer, hated by many for inducing their sons to martyrdom on the battlefield, but here held in high esteem.

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[54] *Interview* Sufi in ‹Ẓahīr od-Dowle›'s lodge, 05/16/97. MEIER (1976, (1): 24) claimed of the Gonābādī (Solṭānʿalīshāhī) order that "Der Leiter [...] fühlt sich als Vertreter dieses zwölften Imams und nimmt sogar Huldigungsgeide für ihn ab." Given the date of publication, this must have referred to ‹Reżāʿalīshāh›. It should be noted, however, that ‹Reżāʿalīshāh› promoted a strict division of realms of spiritual authority between the jurists and the gnostics, in the Pahlavi dynasty as well as in the Islamic Republic. He was very explicit in favouring jurist rule (indirectly if not directly) in worldly affairs, and did not conceive in any way of his mystic authority as an infringement on jurist authority (or *vice versa*). More inclusive conceptions were rather found in the above cited Sufi in ‹Zahīr od-Dowle›'s lodge.

[55] *Interview*, 10/22/96.

[56] In Ṣafīʿalīshāh's lodge, to the contrary, a novice had exclaimed (this corresponded to some extent to general sentiments throughout Iranian society) that "Magnetism and Spiritism are British plots!"

"This power transcends all technology, it is the power of the heart."[57]
The comparison was also embodied in Ḥallāj, the Sufi martyr who had
proudly reddened his face with blood from what had remained of his
arms after his hands had been amputated. Allegiance, Ḥallāj had shown
towards God alone. Allegiance, the martial arts specialist stated, he too
owed to God alone, but only through his master's mediation. Here, a
double emulation defined Sufism in essence. "Nothing transcends the
Sharīʿa," he said in a voice that left no room for doubt, "but if the *qoṭb*
orders me to drink wine, I will do so without hesitation."

   "I don't say that all other orders are completely wrong," another af-
filiate said. "But some of the Ways circle and circle and hardly reach
their destination. This way of ours is the Straight Way to God". He then
showed me a book held precious by all who shared in the Neʿmatollāhī
legacy (Shervānī's *Riyāż al-siyāḥa*). He felt this particular configura-
tion of Sufis in northern Tehran to be its exclusive spiritual heir, be-
cause it contained "the answer to the world." To Sufis in Ẓahīr od-Dow-
le's lodge, this Tehrani congregation was, rather literally so, the Axis of
the Universe.[58] Nevertheless , it was reported in Tūs newspaper on Au-
gust 16, 1998, that "the garden and the graveyard" of Ẓahīr od-Dowle
had been "registered under nr. 2001 on the National heritage [...] catalo-
gue," implying that the lodge had been brought under the state control
of the Cultural Heritage Organisation (*Sāzemān-e mīrās̱-e farhangī*).

The Solṭānʿalīshāhī order

It was written in 1997 that "disputed lodges confiscated during the revo-
lution [...] are now continued under state supervision, and other lodges
have, bit by bit, obtained their second life."[59] While the reproach of state
supervision worked to the detriment of the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī orders' legiti-
macy and unity, Solṭānʿalīshāhī masters remained in undisputed com-
mand through consolidating their order's accommodation to state Islam,
the foundation for which had been laid, since 1968, by Reżāʿalīshāh.

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[57] *Interview*, 07/17/97.
[58] HODGSON (1974, 3: 40) described early Safavid concepts of Sufi power as a 'se-
cret ruling of the whole world', which perhaps applies to Islamic Sufism at large - but
certainly Shiʿite Sufism.
[59] ḤAṢŪRĪ, 1375/1997: 8.

(6) Ḥājj ʿAlī Tābande ‹Maḥbūbʿalīshāh›

Maḥbūbʿalīshāh (1945-1997) was widely ap-
preciated as a friendly person. Sufis in the
ḥoseynīya often stated their allegiance to him
more emphatically than they did towards his
somewhat more distant and severe father.

Despite the fact that he did not possess
much religious status (he "only had a loose
sleeveless cloak, *ʿabā*, and no turban, *ʿam-
māma*"),[60] he was as respectable a Sufi as the
order could wish for: "Unity [...] around the
flag of Islam", he had admonished the *fo-
qarā*, "is the sole bulwark of salvation in

Figure 9. Maḥbūbʿalīshāh

today's world."[61] He had published several 'memoranda', which had
advocated "the unification of the ordinations of the *sharīʿa* and the
ṭarīqat."[62] Joining his sessions for the first time, it took me a while to
realise I was not in a mosque. The opposite of the Sufis' popular image
of ecstatic dervishes, the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs had their 'silent *ẕekr*', the '*ẕekr*
of the heart' (*ẕekr-e qalbī*). In the lodge of Ṣafīʿalīshāh, notables had
claimed a similarly respectable 'mental *ẕekr*' (*ẕekr-e pendārī*), but their
sessions were a struggle to contain rowdiness. Some had cited the
maxim of Ṣafīʿalīshāh that "during the *ẕekr* one ought to focus on the
figure of the *qoṭb*." Given the general Shiʿite conception that all legiti-
mate prayer must have God as its object, the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī *ẕekr-e
pendārī* was infinitely more dubious than the regular and quiet
Solṭānʿalīshāhī *ẕekr-e qalbī* under Maḥbūbʿalīshāh.[63] The Solṭānʿalī-

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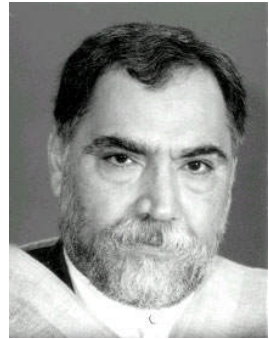
[60] *Interview* Solṭānʿalīshāhī Sufi, 10/09/96. He did study religious subjects privately,
under the guidance of the order's sheikh Jaẕbī, ‹Ṣābetʿalī›, but apparently did not
achieve any official degree (see biography, *in* ‹MAḤBŪBʿALĪSHĀH›, 1376/1997: 71).

[61] *In* PĀZŪKĪ, 1997: 6. It may have been this undeniable legitimacy which explains
why the Sufi researcher Chahārdahī, who had been especially critical of the Solṭānʿalī-
shāhīs as a pupil of the 'excommunicated' sheikh Keyvān Qazvīnī, had written a 'letter
of remorse' (*ṭowbe-nāme*) to ‹Reżāʿalīshāh› and apologised to the order as a whole for
his unsympathetic writings (a copy has been published in *Tīq-e Boranda*, p. 94). Qazvī-
nī is fiercely resented to this day by both Ṣafīʿalīshāhīs and Solṭānʿalīshāhīs. The sheikh
in ‹Ẕahīr od-Dowle›'s lodge told: "They don't ever mention his name and neither do
we, our predecessors considered him dead and so do we" (*interview*, 07/17/97).

[62] Biography *in* ‹MAḤBŪBʿALĪSHĀH›, 1376/1997: 74.

[63] *Ẕekr-e pendārī*, in turn, strikes one as fairly orthodox in comparison with tradi-
tional Ahl-e Ḥaqq doctrine as documented by MIR-HOSSEINI (1994, (2)). She held the

shāhī order's undisputed, hereditary leadership structure remained intact
and there were tens of thousands of affiliates in Iran and world-wide.[64]
Under Maḥbūbꜥalīshāh, the Solṭānꜥalīshāhī order managed to consoli-
date its 'second life' - after the troubles of Reżāꜥalīshāh in Beydokht, the
arson attack on the Tehrani lodge during his reign, and a third incident
of grave implications that reportedly took place in the early 1990s.[65]

A recent hagiography provided the outside world with his life his-
tory. Maḥbūbꜥalīshāh had pursued 'religious and literary sciences' at
secondary school, which resulted in graduation in 1963. The following
year was marked as his entrance on the Sufi path, and in 1966, he had
undertaken the ḥajj. He then took up studying in Mashhad and Tehran,
and graduated in Persian literature (*adabiyāt-e fārsī*) in 1969. In order to
pay for his livelihood and education, sources obliquely mentioned, he
taught in primary schools. After university studies, in 1976, he visited
the Iraqi Shiꜥite holy places in the service of his father and in order to
meet with the Sources of Emulation. Being judged a worthy Sufi in
stable progress, his father allowed him to lead the Solṭānꜥalīshāhī Sufis
in congregational prayer in 1981.[66] In 1985, he obtained a general autho-
risation to lead the Sufis, and his Sufi cognomen ‹Maḥbūbꜥalī(shāh)›.

After university graduation, in 1972, Maḥbūbꜥalīshāh had joined the
National Iranian Oil Company, "to earn his livelihood from his own
labour." He remained in its service up to 1989, when "he wanted to di-
rect all his attention to [...] the order." Reżāꜥalīshāh had by then become
a man of afflictions, and the motive for resignation attributed to Maḥ-
būbꜥalīshāh is therefore perfectly plausible. But it remains unclear why
he came to work for the Oil Company in the first place, as there is noth-

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sect had to be viewed 'in the context of defiance of orthodoxies' and outlined that the
Ahl-e Ḥaqq stress *niyāz*-supplication not as a complement - as most Sufis hold *zekr* to
be - but *in stead of namāz* (prayer). They "call themselves People of *Niyāz*, and other
Muslims, whether Shīꜥa or Sunni, People of *Namāz*" (*op. cit.*, p. 218).

[64] Although I gave up determining exact figures fairly soon, 'tens of thousands'
seems realistic to me because of the order's many lodges in Iran and abroad. Prosperity
is enhanced through gifts. During a session, someone donated 500.000 *tūmān* for the
Charitable Ṣāleḥīya Polyclinic (*Darmāngāh-e kheyrīya-ye Ṣāleḥīya*), which was over
USD 1000 (*congregation*, 07/03/97). The polyclinic was opened on Dey 16,
1371/January 6, 1993 (*in* ‹MAḤBŪBꜥALĪSHĀH›, 1373/1994-5: 254).

[65] "In the early 1990s the main Gunābādī cemetery in Tehran which housed the
grand mausoleum of Ṣāliḥ ꜥAlī Shāh, as well as many other historical buildings [...]
were entirely destroyed [...] according to the ayatollahs to make more space for public
worship" (LEWISOHN, 1998: 452-53).

[66] The documents were published in a public letter of the order (only) in 1365/1986.

ing in his education to suggest he had an interest in oil, economics, business administration or geology, or obtained knowledge relevant to his job. The eighteen-year interlude dealt with in two lines, then, is enigmatic. One may, however, try to interpret it in the context of Reżāʿalīshāh's management of the order. Religious integration had been served by introducing Maḥbūbʿalīshāh to the Iraqi *marājeʿ-e taqlīd* and to various Iranian, Shiʿite jurists, among whom was Imam Khomeyni.[67] It was the Oil Company that is likely to have served the other professed aim of Reżāʿalīshāh - societal integration - and he had chosen a particularly strategic locus. The Oil Company embodied the Iranian nation across its divisions: for both anti-royal nationalists and the Shah at first, and then for any Iranian, during the Islamic revolution and the Gulf war - when its infrastructure was being shelled. Secondly, various Solṭānʿalīshāhī affiliates had high- ranking jobs in the Oil Company, and it was at the invitation of one of them that Maḥbūbʿalīshāh had joined in.[68]

In 1986, Maḥbūbʿalīshāh was appointed to the order's viceregency (*khelāfat*). His father's decision had been informed by divine sanction and by the forebears' consent, but its narration also evidenced worries about whether his precautions had been enough to protect his son:

> One night in Kashmir, I had a dream. I was with Ṣāleḥʿalīshāh and with hot temper he said: 'Why do you not authorise ʿAlī [Maḥbūbʿalīshāh]?' I responded: 'I authorised him by naming him ‹Maḥbūbʿalī›.' He said: 'Yes, I know that. But why don't you write the authorisation for the viceregency?' I answered that perhaps they will act with hostility towards him and there might be dangers of the soul lying in wait for him. He stated: 'God and the twelve Imams and the Friends of God and We ourselves are his protectors' [insertion mine].[69]

On several occasions thereafter, Reżāʿalīshāh proclaimed Maḥbūbʿalīshāh his successor, in speech and writing.[70] None of the order's affiliates, consequently, could reasonably object when Maḥbūbʿalīshāh succeeded his father as *qoṭb* on September 9, 1992, when Reżāʿalīshāh died.

After the funeral, Maḥbūbʿalīshāh travelled to Beydokht to introduce himself anew as the Solṭānʿalīshāhī master, lead various religious sessions that marked his assumption of the leadership, and accept oaths of allegiance by sheikhs and commoner affiliates. These initiatory gather-

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[67] *Correspondence* Solṭānʿalīshāhī order, 07/19/1999.

[68] *Correspondence* Solṭānʿalīshāhī order, 07/19/1999.

[69] Biography *in* ‹MAḤBŪBʿALĪSHĀH›, 1373/1994-5: 854-6.

[70] Biography *in* ‹MAḤBŪBʿALĪSHĀH›, 1373/1994-5: 859.

ings were repeated once more in Tehran, and finally, Maḥbūbᶜalīshāh proclaimed a series of fourteen (new) rules for Sufi conduct. Except for the above mentioned call for 'unity around the flag of Islam,' these included general prescriptions that were - like the edicts of his father and grandfather - hardly distinguishable from other, non-Sufi calls to Shiᶜite piety. Their main points included: permanent remembrance of God (*yād-e khodā*), kindness to God's creatures (*shafaqat-e khalqollāh*), care for the body from one's own labour, meditation and reflection *(ẕekr o fekr)*, according the light of reason (*nūr-e ᶜaql*) a central place, taking the ordinations of the holy law (*aḥkām-e sharīᶜat*) before one's eyes as a model, reading *Pand-e Ṣāleḥ*, avoidance of conflict (*ekhtelāf*), care of one's family, and the faithful execution of all of these points.[71]

Little was known among the affiliates - and neither did hagiography help in this respect - about the period between his assumption of power and untimely death on January 16, 1997. However, it was generally felt by the *foqarā* - hagiography confirmed - that Maḥbūbᶜalīshāh had been "kind and polite with his own, and moderate with the enemies."[72]

Attraction to Maḥbūbᶜalīshāh's personality played into the consternation that evolved after he died. "All great Islamic personalities die a martyr's death, and Maḥbūbᶜalīshāh surely was a martyr", an affiliate wept. A Sufi took me aside and whisperingly proclaimed: "Maḥbūbᶜalīshāh was killed!" A week before, *foqarā* hummed, he had been visited by *Nīrū-ye enteẕāmī*, order troops. They had beaten him and assured they would deal likewise with all Sufis. The story had been broadcast on a Swedish radio station the day after, and would be repeated in various versions in foreign media. Gruesome details began circulating among the believers. "When Maḥbūbᶜalīshāh was buried, people saw blood dripping from his mouth. This could not have been, had he died from a heart-attack, as the official versions have it."[73]

One of Maḥbūbᶜalīshāh's confidants then confirmed that indeed, the Leader had been visited by the *Nīrū-ye enteẕāmī*, but not for the reasons assumed by the *foqarā*. His living quarters lay opposite a large military training camp and as religious sessions were held in it, early in the morning, twice a week, and many Sufis would flock the alley, the commander felt they constituted a safety-danger. He requested the master to

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[71] Biography *in* ‹MAḤBŪBᶜALĪSHĀH›, 1373/1994-5: 867-68.

[72] Biography *in* ‹MAḤBŪBᶜALĪSHĀH›, 1376/1997-8: 69-77, citation on p. 73.

[73] *Interview*, 03/02/97.

relocate them. Maḥbūbᶜalīshāh answered he understood the complaint but could not meet it, as this was the House of the Pole (*khāne-ye qoṭb*). This, request and denial, had occurred twice, but the boundaries of politeness had not been breached. Another, coincidental event had been the accusation of 'immoral activities' leveled against the order by the police.[74] Maḥbūbᶜalīshāh's confidant nevertheless smiled through his grief for the deceased master when I put the murder story to him. "No", he said, sighing calmly in denial, "the *foqarā* will make up anything."

The day after Maḥbūbᶜalīshāh's demise, his body was carried amongst a crowd of inconsolable mourners, and then he was buried in Beydokht, in a grave next to his father's.[75] Subsequent events bring to mind the legends of Solṭānᶜalīshāh and Nūrᶜalīshāh, who had predicted their own martyrdom in, respectively, 1909 and 1918.[76]

Several weeks before he died, Maḥbūbᶜalīshāh had reportedly announced - foretold - his own death, and written the text for six telegraphs to various sheikhs in and outside Iran, which explained his condition and contained instructions for the sheikhs' acceptance of a successor (*jāneshīn*).[77] These documents, which had been "delivered to one of the *foqarā* in two closed and sealed packages to be dispatched after his death," now became public. They authorised a smooth leadership transition, and a reproduction of the Solṭānᶜalīshāhī organisation - Solṭānᶜalīshāhī order. The telegraphs' instrumental function had moreover mixed flawlessly with doctrinal concerns. The disaster of Maḥbūb-alīshāh's untimely demise had found its place in a Sufi plot-structure prevalent among the affiliates, which postulated an historical continuity of saintly, Islamic martyrdom, foreseen and predicted by their victims, in the Solṭānᶜalīshāhī order. Conveniently adding to the depth of sentiments, it also included a political subtext, for some, who took the prototypical figure of Islamic martyrdom literally.

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[74] LEWISOHN (1998: 453) cited London-based *Nīmrūz* (Bahman 5, 1375/January 24, 1997): "Approximately two weeks prior to his heart-attack, in order to curb the growing popularity of the order, police [...] concocted the excuse that, *inter alia*, the dervishes were engaging in immoral activities (*lahw wa laᶜb*). This is an entirely new tactic used by the Islamic Republic to subject the Gunābādī dervishes to psychological pressure and thus expel them from the public arena." A prominent Solṭānᶜalīshāhī confirmed (*correspondence*, 07/19/99) that such had indeed been the case.

[75] Biography *in* ‹MAḤBŪBᶜALĪSHĀH›, 1376/1997-8: 77.

[76] Cf. ‹SOLṬĀNḤOSEYN›, 1350/1961: 139-40; MILLER, 1923: 354.

[77] The event is referred to *in* ‹MAḤBŪBᶜALĪSHĀH›, 1376/1997-8: 76. The telegraphs' texts, kindly put at my disposal, have so far remained unpublished by the order.

Figure 10. Maḥbūbʿalīshāh's letters of succession

(7) Nūrʿalīshāh Tābande ‹Majẕūbʿalīshāh› (1997 -)

The Solṭānʿalīshāhīs forcefully denied that the matter of succession had become a family business, a reproach against them heard from non-Sufi and Sufi outsiders alike. "We are not a Monarchy", the new leader's brother explained, on the defensive.[78] But whether it was for a lack of suitable candidates or other reasons (Maḥbūbʿalīshāh's two sons were not at a suitable age to succeed their father), it was Maḥbūbʿalīshāh's uncle, Reżāʿalīshāh's brother, the closest Sufi family member, who assumed the leadership. Unlike his predecessor - who had according

Figure 11. Majẕūbʿalīshāh

to the telegraphs assigned Majẕūbʿalīshāh as his successor - the new leader's personal piety radiated from a physical stigma: A small, purplish spot on his front, that evidenced many years of unabated prayer.[79]

Majẕūbʿalīshāh was generally known for his proximity to the Nehżat-e Āzādī, Bazargān's Freedom Movement,[80] and his activism during the Islamic revolution.[81] However, he went at length to moderate the connection to the Freedom Movement. "I've never been a member - being a judge in public service - but just on good terms with some of its personalities." His public function in the Pahlavi era and his societal career, he explained, had been severely limited because of his connections. Nevertheless, these had been primarily ideational. They also extended to Sufism: "Ebrāhīm Yazdī once held a speech in which he reproached 'idle dervishhood' (*darvīshī va qalandarī*). I fully agreed with him, because we ourselves are on the track of *ʿerfān*."[82]

Whatever its precise nature, the connection dated from the pre-revolution era when Majẕūbʿalīshāh's brother Reżāʿalīshāh had sought allegiance to Khomeyni, and it reminded of an outlived Solṭānʿalīshāhī dual

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[78] *Interview*, 01/31/97; *Interview* differently affiliated Sufi, 04/04/97.

[79] This physical stigma, caused by the small, inscribed prayer stone to which believers bend in prayer, is a general Islamic sign of piety. But it is especially associated with those who are 'dry by religion' (*khoshk-e maẕhab*). In explaining to me why she feared the presidential candidate Nāṭeq-Nūrī, an Iranian woman pointed to his spot.

[80] MADANĪ, 1376/1997: 162, mentioning what was common knowledge to many.

[81] MADANĪ, 1376/1998: 159.

[82] *Interview* ‹Majẕūbʿalīshāh›, 05/07/97.

containment. There was no reason left for Majẕūbʿalīshāh in 1997 - in undisputed command of the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order, in a stable Islamic Republic - to boast of the rather marginal, 'liberally-Shiʿite' Nehżat-e Āzādī, which, since Bazargan, had been opposed to *velāyat-e faqīh*.[83]

The new leader's first public act, the day after his nephew's death, was proclaiming a decree with five rules of conduct. It was based on his grandfather's *Pand-e Ṣāleḥ*, allegedly in a perfect, essential unity with it. Two elements strike one in contrast to the rules of Maḥbūbʿalīshāh. First, they contained more specific prescriptions. Majẕūbʿalīshāh thus took care of accommodation by closing interpretive space between general Solṭānʿalīshāhī rules and specific socio-political reality. Secondly, the rules also contained a worked-out division of spiritual authority:[84]

1) [...] the observation of the Islamic *ḥejāb* [...] is a necessary condition for individual and societal chastity, and, likewise, pay abundant attention to the honouring of piety for men.
2) [...] for the first time for over one hundred years ago, Solṭānʿalīshāh forbade the use of illicit drugs, and even opium addicts [...], and he did not favour cigarettes [...].[85]
3) The fixed obligations (*vaẕāʾīf-e moqarrare*) in the holy Islamic religion have, by the high-placed *ʿorafā*, been implicitly divided according to kind. Rulings (*aḥkām*) of the holy law [...] one must emulate from the [...] *mojtahed* [....] Rulings of the *ṭarīqat* [...] are received from the Great One of the Age, and *ʿerfān* instruction has also been deposited in the books of the Great *ʿorafā*.
4) [...] involvement [...] in social issues is not within the jurisdiction of the *ṭarīqat* and the *foqarā* must not expect the Great Ones to direct them in this sense [....], non-involvement in social issues will be observed as it was before.
5) The observation of social order and respect and watchfulness with respect to the law, we must historically learn from Socrates [....] The observation of the communal law is respect for oneself and others. Pay grave attention to this.

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[83] In a 1988 pamphlet, *The Explanation and Analysis of the Absolute Governance of the Jurist*, the Freedom Movement had equated Khomeyni's innovation in the doctrine of *velāyat-e faqīh* - to include the jurist's 'absolute' mandate - with *kofr*, heresy, and *sherq*; blasphemy (cf. ALINEJAD, 1988: 41-6).

[84] A translation of the rules in English (PĀZŪKĪ, 1997) is about to be published. Apparently to ensure Solṭānʿalīshāhī respectability abroad as well, the rules were also published in *Nīmrūz* (Bahman 12, 1375/January 31, 1997) (LEWISOHN, 1998: 453).

[85] According to LEWISOHN (1998: 451), ‹Nūrʿalīshāh II› had lauded "the virtues of smoking opium". But his treatise *Ẕoʾl-faqar dar ḥormat-e keshīdan-e taryāk* actually forbade it for the Gonābādī affiliates (*correspondence* Solṭānʿalīshāhī order, 07/19/99).

۱۲۱

حکیم سخن در زبان آفرین   بنام خدا و مذ جان آفرین

برادر الاعزیز   درسلت مولای بزرگوار حضرت محبوبعلیشاه همه کواریم خدا وند توفیق صبر وتحمل در فراق راعنایت فرماید وروح آن بزرگوار را ...

از ما شاد وراضی بفرماید از خدا وند متعال مسئلت اُرم که این ذره ناچیز را در انجام وظیفه ای که از طرف مولای معظم حضر ارجاع شده ...

موفق مدارد وبرای اجابت این درخواست عای همه شما برا دران انگمه شفاعت می طلبم .

دستورالعملهایی که در رسالۀ پند صالح مرقوم فرمو ده اند وهمچنین لوایحی که از طرف بزرگوارِ آن سلف حضرتیه شده ...

آوریم کوشش کرده بدان عمل کنید . این روش شاخص وذوخه اوند را باعث شده وتوفیق حضر انتضمین می کند فعلاً چند نکته را تذکر داده وتکرار می کنم :

۱ - در مورد رعایت حجاب اسلامی زنان که شرط لازم عفت فرد وی اجتماعی است ومهم چنین رعایت تقوی مردان وقت فرا وان بنماید .

۲ - چنانظور که می دانید تا وزار صد وسال است کبرای اول با رحضرت سلطانعلیشاه بشمید استعمال موا دمخدر را تحریم فرمود وحتی معتادین را ...

... فرمود وند وجانشینان ایشان نیز با تأکید مجدد وکرر بر این تحریم بهمین روش راداشتند خدای مخدرا کربرا در باخوابری ولوانداف استیاد ...

داشته باشد مدرکه خدا وند تو یه کند ومسئلت نماید که بهمت اراده و ترک عادت وامرحت کند . وچونین که نه استیادات تعقل رامخدوش احیاناً ...

زائل می سازد تا قبل از قبول تو به وترک عیا در مجالس فقری حاضر نشود و به قرینۀ آیۀ کریمه ولاتقربوا الصلوه واتقیموا تم سکاری بند رست و در مواقع ...

هوشیار حاضر شود .

۳ - وظایف مقرره ارشر بمقدس از حرف عرفای واالامقام بطورضمن به سه نوع تقسیم شده است .

احکام شریعت که باید از محمد جامع الشرائط تقلید کرد وتشخیص چنین مرجعی بعهده خودمکلف است .

احکام طریقت که از بزرگ وقت اخذ می شود و تربیت عرفانی هم در کتب عرفای عظا م آمده است .

احکام مخفی که بتشخص خودشخص است بدین معنی که خدا وند متعال خواسته است خوا ستوی بندگان انکار وا داشته وتعالی بعد لذا آنان را ...

موظف ساخته است که در خارج از دوقلمرو سابق الذکر تشخصاً بکرو ومنطق شرعی تکلیف خود را بیابد .

۴ - بنابر این خالت اظهار نظر در مسائل اجتماعی در قلمرو طریقت نسبت فقر انبا متوقع باشد که از این جهت از طرف بزرگان دستوری ...

آنها داده شود علم نیست خود رانعالماً (لوبه الله) کرده وبکیف وخویش ابیابند وبزرگ تان هم و . این مسائل اظهار نظرفوی کرد نبرای انکه تصور ...

نشود که از وظایف طریقتی است . وهمین روش عدم وخالت در مسائل اجتماعی کاکان برقرار خواهد بود .

۵ - رعایت نظر اجتماعی واحترام واطاعت و دربرابر قانون ودر تاریخ از شرائط یا موزیم . رعایت قانون جامعۀ احترام بخود و دیگران ...

است . باین مهم توجه فرمائید .

ممتس چعـ   نورعلی نماینده   مجذوب علیشاه

Figure 12. The rules of Majzūbʿalīshāh

Whether Solṭānʿalīshāhī affiliates privately agreed of not, it would not under any circumstance be publicly heard from their ranks, as a differently affiliated sheikh once nonchalantly stated, that "the Qurʾān is (but) a language of images that lacks a referent in the material world."[86] In an interview, the Solṭānʿalīshāhī leader defined as his two respectfully Islamic, and worldly future tasks: ʿerfān instruction (tarbiyat-e ʿerfānī) and 'service to the people' (khedmat be mardom) (cf. rules 3 and 5).[87]

The Solṭānʿalīshāhī stress on the order's fundamental continuity regarding respect for the social order, from Pand-e Ṣāleḥ to the present, was to some extent justified. But as the social order changed its shapes, the rules' content changed as well, as much as the meaning of performance changes through transformations in the political sphere. 'The observation of the Islamic ḥejāb,' for instance, was a new prescription (though old practice) that one encountered in about any restaurant or post-office as well. In comparison, Pand-e Ṣāleḥ contained a short section on 'clothes'; a minimal prescription only, and nothing on the ḥejāb: "And [the believer] should not be extravagant with his clothes, nor should he be too spartan with himself" (p. 88).

Even more striking, however, was Majẕūbʿalīshāh's division of spiritual authority. Another sheikh unrelated to the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs once privately told me: "What bothers us is velāyat-e faqīh, in which there is no place for the ʿorafā. Many ayatollahs themselves disagree." The ʿorafā, he meant, constitute legitimate power appropriated by the foqahā. Whether or not Solṭānʿalīshāhī conceptions were privately similar in

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[86] "If you tell a six-year-old child something is 'impure', it will ask: How, what? If you are then unable to explain that 'impure' is a symbolical construction, it will ask: Where are the microbes? If it then sees you cannot produce them, then this is the way religion is lost" (interview, 03/13/97).

[87] Interview ‹Majẕūbʿalīshāh›, 05/07/97. 'Order' was another central, but unofficial concern in the organisation. When I asked him about the ẕekr and its regulations, ‹Majẕūbʿalīshāh› said: "If the faqīr is unable to contain himself, then the ẕekr is not a good one." In its definition and practice, Solṭānʿalīshāhī ẕekr seemed to correspond flawlessly to a recent publication on ẕekr Allāh from the Theological Seminary in Qom (TAQAVĪ, 1375/1996). How, I asked the Leader, is it possible that the leaflet omits any reference to Sufism? "A treatment of ẕekr Allāh without Sufism", he responded forcefully, "is a sign of the fundamental fear which reigns in Qom."

Sufi ẕekr and Shiʿite prayer were differentiated through at least one structural feature (see also chapter 7) that was not to my knowledge, however, held against Sufism. ‹Majẕūbʿalīshāh› explained that ẕekr is internalised by repetition, so that remembrance of God is realised through God (he spoke of a 'Pavlov-reaction'). Eṭṭelāʿāt, however, warned its readers that "prayer is not repetition" (Khordād 1, 1376/May 22, 1997).

essence,[88] there were no public statements that could pin down the order for it. While the *ʿorafā* constituted the legitimate succession to the twelfth Imam in spiritual terms, the *foqahā* were to be followed in worldly affairs (rules 3 and 4). Respect for the social order - which happened to be determined by *foqahā* - was a religious obligation (rules 1 and 5). Despite the fact that all of this sounded perfectly obedient and respectful, the rules simultaneously marked a daring innovation. They publicly carved out, for the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order, for the first time in the Islamic Republic, a spiritual realm in which it alone could legitimately claim sovereignty (rule 3). In comparison, such open assertion sharply contrasted to 'double emulation' in the lodge of Ẓahīr od-Dowle, and with the Board of Trustees' 'circle for the devotion of Ṣafīʿalīshāh'.

There were setbacks: Majẕūbʿalīshāh was once requested by the Islamic Republic's Islamic Human Rights Commission to send a copy of Reżāʿalīshāh's treatise, from the late 1960s, on Islamic human rights (*Naẕar-e maẕhabī be eʿlāmīye-ye ḥoqūq-e bashar. Negāresh-e Solṭān-ḥoseyn Tābande Gonābādī*). When the state commission found out about the source, i.e. that it came from 'those people', it was sent back.[89] Nevertheless, Solṭānʿalīshāhī respectability under Majẕūbʿalīshāh, who kept the order from *darvīshī va qalandarī* and reimposed his grandfather's edict against drugs (rule 2), allowed for mullahs to come and visit the morning sessions in his private house.[90]

Some of the *foqarā* had an additional reason, a secret history to account for clerical rapprochement: "Majẕūbʿalīshāh's brother - Reżāʿalī-shāh - had requested the authorities' permission for a visit to the *foqarā* in Isfahan. This was refused. Then Aḥmad Khomeyni had stepped in and written a letter which said: 'Do not hinder these people in any way, because me and my father, we have been 'dervish people' (*ahl-e dar-*

vīsh)."[91] Like Maḥbūbʿalīshāh, Aḥmad Khomeyni had been the object of many reverential rumours in Iran. A few days before he died, these rumours said, he had threatened to speak out publicly, naming names, on corruption and other excesses of government. Therefore, a Sufi confirmed, he had been poisoned, in March 1995, dying a martyr's death. In a recent defence of the order, ayatollah Khomeyni's legitimisation of (Solṭānʿalīshāhī) mysticism was once again emphatically referred to:

> [...] They base themselves on the treatise of [...] *āyatollāh ol-ʿoẓmā* Mr Khomeyni, claiming he criticised the cognomina Majẕūbʿalīshāh or Maḥbūbʿalīshāh. One must pay attention to who had the cognomina Majẕūbʿalīshāh or Maḥbūbʿalīshāh when he wrote on this matter. He aimed at that [particular] group and those [particular] persons. His eminence Mr Khomeyni bestowed honour upon the late Ḥājj Mollāsolṭān and he cited him often in his books, and in the *Tafsīr-e sūra-ye ḥamd* he often spoke appreciative words about his Qurʾān *tafsīr*.[92]

During the new leader's second public act - presiding over his nephew's burial - one event clearly illuminated Maḥbūbʿalīshāh's consolidation of Solṭānʿalīshāhī legitimacy. The mourning affiliates were accompanied by the presence - publicly announced in the lodge - of Ayatollah Sharīʿatmadarī and the son of Ayatollah Pasandīde - a nephew of Khomeyni, the *ʿāref* and personification of *velāyat-e faqīh* in one.[93]

[91] *Interview*, 02/21/97.

[92] PARĪSHĀNZĀDE, A. 1377/1998. *Goshāyesh-e Rāz (Pāsokh be ketāb-e ‹Rāz-goshā›-ye Keyvān Qazvīnī)*. This book contained a refutation of Keyvān Qazvīnī's recently republished *Rāz-goshā*, which attempted to delegitimise not only ‹Solṭānʿalīshāh› and ‹Nūrʿalīshāh›, but also the present Solṭānʿalīshāhī leaders. This sheds light on the contemporary relevance in the historical discussion (in both treatises) of ‹Maḥbūbʿalīshāh› and ‹Majẕūbʿalīshāh›.

[93] *Personal observation*, 02/21/97. Khomeyni's elder brother Ayatollah Ḥoseyn Moṣṭafāvī, or Sayyed Morteżà, Pasandīde died in November 1996 (*Jomhūrī-ye eslāmī*, *Ābān* 28, 1375/November 18, 1996, *Salām*, *Ābān* 24, 1375/November 14, 1996). Sharīʿatmadarī is not to be confused with the famous Azarbaijani *marjaʿ-e-taqlīd* Āyatollāh Sharīʿatmadarī (d. 1986). PĀKDĀMAN mentioned Khomeyni as an *ʿāref-faqīh* (1368/1989: 4) and fascinatingly suggested a mystical element in *velāyat-e faqīh*, the ideological core of state Islam: "it is not clear whether [...] any *marjaʿ-e taqlīd* is fit to occupy the position [...] or if the privilege is confined only to that group of the *ahl-e ʿamāma* who are inclined to emulate [both] *sharīʿat* and the *ṭarīqat*" (1368/1989: 7, cf. TER HAAR, 1999). ʿAbdolkarīm SORŪSH, too, stated that *ʿerfān* is part and parcel of *velāyat* (*in Kiyān*, 1375/1997, 6, (34): 58, cf. MATIN-ASGARI, 1997: 109). In contradiction to his order's official doctrine, an affiliate held there was no meaningful difference between *ʿerfān* and Sufism (*interview*, 02/21/97). There is an interesting parallel here with an observation of the order in the early twentieth century. One affiliate then felt that the leader had "a divine side and a human side just like all prophets; at times he

Khomeyni's brother Ayatollah Pasandīde, a Solṭānʿalīshāhī affiliate held, had been a Sufi in reality, "but he could not speak about this in public, for they would have killed him for that." His son's attendance to Maḥbūbʿalīshāh's funeral, however, like Sharīʿatmadarī's presence, could hardly be interpreted other than as an unconcealed legitimisation of the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order. While hostile rejections were certainly not a thing of the past, the two notable clerics' presence bore witness to the effects of a broader, regime context of state mysticism, which had allowed for its occurrence.

feels he is God, at times he cries to God for pardon [...] Of course this was a personal opinion expressed in private; I suppose it would have seemed rank heresy to the majority of the Sufis" (MILLER, 1923: 354-5).

Résumé

After 1989, an ideological rapprochement occurred between Sufism and the state. On the one hand, this was caused by the emergence of state mysticism, and by Sufism's continuous ethical *réveil* on the other.

The Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Board of Trustees considered itself devoid of any spiritual authority and focused, neutrally, on the image of Ṣafīʿalīshāh. The central order's public, external performances pointed to the politicised context of mystical martyrdom in Iran, under the surface of traditional Sufi/Shiʿite laments. In Ẓahīr od-Dowle's lodge, outward behaviour was prescribed by rules that demanded respect for the sociopolitical order. But in informal gatherings, Sufis upheld continuity in remembrance of the discredited Society of Brotherhood, and a sovereign sheikhal authority. Spiritual authority in the lodge of Ẓahīr od-Dowle, therefore, was marked by an ambiguous, 'double emulation'.

Among the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs, internal order remained uncontested. The leadership of Maḥbūbʿalīshāh had been authorised by divine sanction and his father's meticulous preparation for it. His death presented itself in a similar historical continuity, of saintly, Islamic martyrdom. This religious frame of reference enhanced the spiritual significance of Maḥbūbʿalīshāh's visionary letters of appointment, and *vice versa*. Majẕūbʿalīshāh's new proclamation of allegedly old rules - for external as much as internal consumption - outlined meticulously detailed sociopolitical modesty, but - as if in exchange for it - also circumscribed an exclusive realm of Sufi spiritual authority. A barometer of strength and confidence, the formality of these assertive Solṭānʿalīshāhī rules tellingly contrasted with the silent ambiguity of 'double emulation' in Ẓahīr od-Dowle's lodge. The Solṭānʿalīshāhīs effectively argued the legitimacy of their spiritual realm in references to Khomeyni. Their success, and the effects of state mysticism, were witnessed in 1997, when Khomeyni's nephew, Sharīʿatmadarī and several other clerics paid their respect.

PART FOUR

Afterthoughts

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CHAPTER SEVEN

SUFISM, CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE STATE

The following seeks to treat the foregoing explorations of comparative social development and cultural performance on a broader theoretical plane by confronting these with discussions concerning 'civil society'.

Regarding the classical definition of civil society - civility and associational life beyond primordial attachments, significantly independent from the state - the mystic regimes have not been a clear referent.[1] They do function in ways, however, that resemble the history of emergence of Western civil societies. On this comparative basis, one may identify mystic regime contributions to the emerging civil society in Iran, which mainly consist of Sufi competition for spiritual authority with the state.

CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE SECOND AND THIRD REPUBLICS

The Islamic Republic has often represented itself as a total power, but it has hosted many conflicting bases of domination that have diminished effective centralisation. Factionalism, a keyword in many analyses of the Islamic Republic under Khomeyni,[2] was a strategic asset enhancing divide and rule, but more important, pervasive in the state machinery, it testified to the limits of centralisation. Factionalism remained endemic after the Islamic Republic Party's dissolution in 1987 and Khomeyni's demise in 1989. Thereafter charismatic state authority waned and Iranian society saw signs of civil assertion that prompted analysts to speak of a 'second republic' in which "dialogue is the key word."[3] State mysticism was another aspect of regime change. Rafsanjani furthermore introduced a 'business cabinet' and there was a broadening of freedom, which has exponentially expanded in the 'third republic' under Khatami.

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[1] I am referring to the long tradition of thought whose origins lay in antiquity and whose modern representatives included thinkers such as Montesquieu, Smith, Hegel and Weber (cf. SHILS, 1991).

[2] Cf. AKHAVI, 1987; SIAVOSHI, 1992; BEHROOZ, 1992.

[3] ROULEAU, 1995: 6.

"Though not always easy to perceive in Western news reports", it was claimed, "the absolute monarchy and the terror that followed it have gradually given way to a system that tolerates peaceful political and economic struggle."[4] It was felt that "associational life is reviving and elections are technically fair, if still ideologically constricted."[5] In 1992, the thriving of associational life was seen to cause a situation where "power is not concentrated enough in the hands of the government to liberate it from the influential sectors of civil society."[6] Civil society was conceived of as a plethora of non-governmental organisations, and observers of the Second Republic identified many secular as well as Islamic ones.[7] A testimony to their significance, they were not referred to as leisure groups or friendly societies, but 'interest groups'.[8]

In 1994, it was held of the Second Republic that "while the law permits no criticism of Islam, [...] Khomeyni, or his successor as Iran's religious leader, on all political [...] points there is freedom of religious worship, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press."[9] The reported freedom was seized primarily by intellectuals who were loosely united in a network of magazines and newspapers,[10] the forum for their 'different thought' (*andīshe-ye dīgar*).[11] A major, new publication was *Goft-o-gū*, 'Dialogue', founded in 1993, whose ambition was "triple dialogue: between Islamists and secularists, among secularists of diverse ideological currents, and between representatives of civil society and the state." Among the issues debated were "various freedoms [...], pluralism, and multi-party politics [....]" It attracted the sectors of (civil) society that "rail against censorship (journalists and publishers), [and] pressures, intimidation and harassment (intellectuals and academics) [...]."[12]

Public criticism of the regime did not always shy away from addressing the sensitive issue of The Rule of the Jurist. The Freedom Movement, Iran's only political party up to 1997, Majzūbʿalīshāh's former political affiliation and an intellectuals' refuge, openly opposed exclusive jurist power. In the religious hierocracy, *velāyat-e faqīh* was op-

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[4] ASKARI , 1994: 51; cf. ROULEAU, 06/19/95.
[5] NORTON, 1995: 2.
[6] SIAVOSHI, 1992: 49.
[7] ROULEAU, 1995: 6., cf. SIAVOSHI, 1992: 28, 30; KAZEMI (1996).
[8] SIAVOSHI, 1992: 28
[9] ASKARI, 1994: 52.
[10] Cf. ADELKHAH, 1995.
[11] Cf. HOOGLUND, 1995: 1.
[12] ROULEAU, 1995.

posed from the early day Republic by leading jurists such as ayatollah Sharī‘atmadarī, while renowned ayatollahs such as Montazeri and others under house arrest, have for long called for reform. Public criticism of state Islam was often levelled from jurist networks that conveyed the voice of an old, silent clerical majority.[13]

When ‘Abbās Kiyārostamī won the Film Festival of Cannes in 1997, attention to the role of artists in the Iranian civil society refocused in the international media. In 1996, 200 movie directors had signed a petition against government interference, and there were various attempts to re-establish the old artists' unions. In 1995, 85 intellectuals had petitioned for an extension of the freedom of expression, and had so striven to extricate art from the double Pahlavi heritage of censorship and symbolism.[14] In 1994, 134 writers had protested censorship. These events were seen as an awakening of dormant civility, and observers referred to it as an Iranian *glasnost*. Tehran's mayor Karbaschī, who founded Tehran's daily newspaper Hamshahrī ('citizen') and worked to rationalise and to some extent secularise city government, enthusiastically declared: "We want to teach people what it means to be in possession of citizenship."[15]

Mohammad Khatami, Karbaschī's old friend and an exceptionally liberal Minister of Culture up to his removal in 1992, made civil society a central issue in his presidential campaign, up to May 1997. His 20 million votes derived in large part from youth and women, two of the major groups to benefit from the civil society. In his first speech in office the new president pledged, later on often echoed by the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohājerānī, that he would keep his promise and see to the development of a civil society. In September 1997, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kharrāzī, "emphasised the theme of civil society" during his first address to the United Nations.[16]

The euphoria in Iran was witnessed in the emergence of a series of new magazines and newspapers that further stretched the margins of legitimate publicity, and organised a vigorous political debate. Some in

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[13] If one accepts oppositional acts and attitudes by jurists - such as the above - to be part and parcel of civil society, then, contrary to GELLNER's notion (1991), they support the view that an "example of the historical legitimacy of civil society is the role played by the *‘ulama*" (MOUSSALLI, 1995: 84).

[14] Cf. BOROUJERDI, 1996: 49.

[15] Interview *in* NRC Handelsblad, 09/20/95.

[16] MATIN-ASGARI, 1998: 57.

the clerical establishment subsequently brought their views in line with the new religious climate.[17]

<div align="center">IN A STATE OF BLISS</div>

In spite of a certain Western intellectual consensus on the Iranian civil society's significance, several leading Iranian intellectuals (in Iran) have not shared in the enthusiasm. Whether or not cultural magazines hosted certain confined discussions, an intellectual complained that "the political order in Iran [still] thinks itself to be the society."[18] Intellectuals have been up against unabated attempts at state centralisation in cultural affairs - the content of which is a fervently debated issue in the Iranian polity, which testified to the overall illegitimacy of a 'civic culture' vis-à-vis state-induced 'mass-culture'.[19] The societal opposition that proponents of a civil society were up against, was proportionally strong. It invariably incurred anathema on the 'different thought'. In shrewd reference to Weber, who "regards civil society and the citizens' community [...] as exclusively Western phenomena", an outraged editorial held:

> What sort of a gift is the civil society, that we would need it now? The real nature of the Western civil society is revealed in the Vietnam war [....] American blacks [...] and the victims of atomic bombardments in Hiroshima have experienced with their own bodies the real logic and the true nature of 'civil society' [....] From the Constitutional Revolution onwards, we have ourselves been the victim of the achievement of 'civil society'; the Islamic Revolution [...] was a fundamental protest against [...] westoxication and its manifestation, which is to say bourgeois society [...] Our surprise concerns a part of those who claim to be revolutionaries,

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[17] In November 1997, Ayatollah Āẕarī-Qomī (d.02/11/99), who had staunchly supported regime positions, publicly questioned the 'absolute rule of the jurist' (which led to his house arrest).

[18] MOḤAMMADĪ, 1375/1997: 35, cf. ASHRAF, 1375/1996-7; KAZEMI, 1996: 122, 125.

[19] For the distinction between 'civic culture' and 'mass culture' in Iran, see MOḤAMMADĪ, 1375/1997: 35. For the political significance of 'culture' in the Islamic Republic, see BUCHTA, 1995, cf. Eṭṭelāʿāt, 12/11/96, on the "Command of the High Leader of the Revolution for the Foundation of a Centralised Leadership in the Nation's Cultural Affairs." Enthusiasts were wrong to see the vigilance of civil society in the number of publications (cf. KAZEMI, 1996: 141). The invalidity of this criterion is amply illustrated by the fact that the former vice-president Rūḥānī referred to their number to support his claim that human rights are safe in Iran (*Tehran Times*, 11/17/96). Several Iranian newspapers often shared this quantitative approach to argue the strength of the Iranian civil society.

and make claims to religious thought, and claim to be 'followers of the imam's line', and who have made civil society their motto."[20]

Besides taking into account ideological opposition, one would do well to scrutinise the reported civil associations.[21] First, the boundaries of legitimate social organisation are reflected in that the larger part mentioned is still named 'Islamic association' (*anjoman-e eslāmī*), as the state decided for them in 1979.[22] This is not to argue an intrinsic contradiction between Islam and civil society, but to indicate the reported larger part of civil life in Iran does not allow one to identify unambiguously independent ideological space.[23] Local, economic civil life that is not directly organised under the banner of Islamic associations often derives legitimacy from the values of state Islam (see figure 13) rather than from intrinsic social or economic identities.

Secondly, for paradigmatic mutual-interest organisations such as trade unions - which according to *Tehran Times* were among 'the most advanced in the world' in Iran - it has been largely unlawful to organise strikes, while their corporate leadership has been state-appointed.[24]

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[20] Ṣobḥ, 1376/1997, 3, (69). It was written before the presidential elections, and targeted Khatami.

[21] "In practice, most independent organizations are banned, co-opted by the Government, or moribund" (U.S. Department of State, Iran Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997, p. 9).

[22] Cf. KAZEMI, 1996: 150, and MOḤAMMADĪ's insightful analysis (1996). State intervention in civil associations, is characteristic of a larger historical pattern in Iran. FLOOR (1971: 69) wrote of the Qajar era that "Persian guilds were not voluntary associations based on the assent and willingness of their members. Contrary to the situation in Europe where guilds grew into a force which has helped to build up a social structure by which they have been superseded [...] the Persian guilds were passive, loosely organized associations fostered and controlled by the government. Persian guilds therefore resembled the Roman classes rather than the European craft guilds in their hey-day, being only an extension of the urban bureaucracy. This being so, they had little access to political power."

[23] There have been, of course, Islamic associations that acted independently. The *Anjoman-e eslāmī-ye dāneshgāh-e Tehrān*, members of which supported intellectuals opposed to *velāyat-e faqīh*, provides an early example (HOOGLUND, 1995: 3) that remains a powerful case to the present.

[24] *Tehran Times*, 11/25/96. The High Council for Guilds was a partial exception in the Islamic Republic, although it did not, because of state co-optation, play an active role that would make it comparable to the guilds in the Western civil societies (ASHRAF, 1375/1996-7: 41-3). "Although the Labor Code grants workers the right to establish unions, there are no independent unions. A national organization known as the Workers' House, founded in 1982, is the sole authorized national labor organization. It serves primarily as a conduit for the Government to exert control over workers. The leadership [...] coordinates activities with Islamic labor councils, which are organized in

Ayatollah Khamenei, the Great Leader:
Basij is the manifestation of people's active presence in the scene

Congratulations on

BASIJ WEEK to Basiji Warriors

Yazd Bastan Carpet Company
Tel: (0351) 53456

Figure 13. *Tehran Times*, 11/26/96

While the Egyptian civil society found a forceful representative in its paradigmatic lawyers' union, the role of lawyers in the Iranian judicial process, and in Iranian society at large, has been as insignificant as the role of trade unions in the economy.

Thirdly, several organisations are what Althusser called 'ideological state apparatuses' at best. The 'independent' Pānzdah-e khordād Foundation was (made) responsible for the maintenance of Khomeyni's shrine; the 'private' Islamic Propagation Organisation was "created with large assets based on confiscated property."[25]

Many of these respectable organisations - from the point of view of state Islam, that is - were moreover supervised by the state's 'representative of the jurist' (*nemāyande-ye valī-ye faqīh*). When measuring with a classical definition, these features would plainly discard organisations such as the above as members of the Iranian civil society.[26]

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many enterprises. These councils also function as instruments of government control, although they have frequently been able to block layoffs and dismissals. Moreover, a network of government-backed guilds issues vocational licenses, funds financial cooperatives, and helps workers find jobs [...] The Government does not tolerate any strike deemed to be at odds with its economic and labor policies. In 1993 the Parliament passed a law that prohibits strikes by government workers [....] Workers do not have the rights to organize independently and negotiate collective bargaining agreements" (U.S. Department of State, Iran Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997, p. 15).

[25] KAZEMI, 1996: 144.

[26] It was claimed that "anyone wanting to know what has been happening over the past few years in [...] the civil society, should start by visiting Qum" (ROULEAU, 06/17/95). A computerised research centre documented Shiʿite texts and its director ayatollah ol-Kowrānī declared it 'totally autonomous' (cf. *Time*, 03/22/93). Since the revolution, clerical centres in Qom have, however, stood out as champions of Islamic state education, ideologically (if not materially) tied to the state. Contesting Iranian civil society, it was also observed in 1995 that "[s]ince the collapse of the Soviet Union, Iran is one of the few countries to maintain a special department for the indoctrination

Beyond the formal, institutional life that many observers of the civil society focused upon, an Iranian newspaper cited a moderately phrased reflection on the last, thirteenth day of *nowrūz* (*sīzdah-bedar*), when families collectively leave their houses to picnic and socialise in parks:

"I always consider that the people, in festivities such as *sīzdah-bedar*, unconscious of themselves and their motivations, establish a temporary civil society (*jameʿe-ye madanī-ye movaqqat*)."[27]

Informally and beyond the reach of co-opted institutions, Iranian society facilitated sporadic civil eruptions - no enduring, public civic culture. The formal legitimacy of the reported civil society was, even in the Third Republic, fiercely contested, and its associational life to a significant extent, either materially or ideologically, dependent upon the state. Sufism's relations to the Iranian state and civil society are explored to the background of these regime dependencies.

* * *

Sufism's position vis-à-vis the state in the Islamic Republic has radically altered in comparison to the Pahlavi era. No Sufi leaders are known to be intimate with state leaders. Rather, the two parties are on a hostile footing or relate in attempted co-optation or accommodation (but not patronage). The mystic regimes are ideologically marginal: whether or not they forward themselves as an *Anjoman-e eslāmī* (as most do), most Iranians do not primarily recognise them as such.

Simultaneously, Sufism's unabated popular legitimacy is witnessed by the position of the dervish as a cultural icon (and in this sense Sufism relates to Iranian culture as *pars pro toto*).[28] Many feel that atten-

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of the young - the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults" (*The Economist*, 07/01/95).

[27] *Īrān*, Farvardīn 16, 1376/April 5, 1997 (free translation). MOḤAMMADĪ similarly referred to the 'learning of everyday-life' as the 'cradle for the formation' of civil society (1375/1996: 37).

[28] BATESON ET. AL. designated 'inner purity' (*ṣafā-ye bāṭin*) as a shared ideal, made up of heroism (*luṭīgarī*) and spirituality (*darvīshī*), embodied in a "semi-mythic figure who is purely Persian, *Pūryā-yi Valī*, a medieval champion and hero who later became a *ṣūfī*" (1977: 263). FRYE spoke of the "inherent predilection for the mystic in Persian culture" (1957: 187); cf. NAFĪSĪ, 1332/1953: 7-8: "Sufism has [...] been completely adopted from the day it appeared. All thinkers, poets [...] from Iran and India have, whether they want to or not, been Sufi-natured [...] up to today. This wisdom has settled so deeply in the [...] peoples of these two countries, that they themselves do not know to what extent they are Sufi." The dervish often functioned as a cultural icon in the satirical *Gol āqā*. MEIER (1992, (4): 113) spoke of "eine reine Vermutung, eine Möglichkeit,

dance to Sufi lodges has increased since 1979 (at the expense of mos-
ques), while ever new ones have been constructed. Sufi orders therefore
appear to be - as carriers of generally perceived, alternative religiosity,
significantly independent from the state - a part of the civil society.

Upon closer inspection, however, appearances turn out to be prob-
lematic. Kiyān magazine addressed cultural obstacles for the develop-
ment of a civil society. It spoke of 'historical imprisonment', the substi-
tution of the past for the present and the future:

> It works merely in members of traditional organisations with historical
> roots (religious sects and circles, *Sufi groups* and their likes) [...] These
> organisations are independent and membership in them is voluntary. But
> *internal* relations are based on affection and they do not have a straight
> and transparent social outcome as concerns the interests of the individual.
> In part, these organisations are not against the society (and they have lots
> of positive works) but the *exclusivity of relations* between the individuals
> in them, and *their being hidden* or changed into exclusive societies, make
> them *anti-civil*" [italics mine].[29]

An historical generalisation of the mystic regimes' external relations to
the state adds to the qualification. The renaissance of (Neʿmatollāhī)
Sufism in Iran during the Qajar era occurred through the Qajar dynasty,
in the wake of local Iranian rulers' competition for the crown, and state
centralisation, which enhanced Sufism's royal patronage. Although the
public preponderance of Sufism diminished in the late Qajar days and
during the early Pahlavi period - when the Neʿmatollāhī path once more
split in three and the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī and Solṭānʿalīshāhī orders came into
existence - regime connections remained, both materially and ideologi-
cally. Most notably, the Solṭānʿalīshāhī 'book of rules' *Pand-e Ṣāleḥ* -
more than an internal, disciplinary device for affiliates - had reportedly
come about through the royal request of Reza Shah.

The late Pahlavi period ushered a new era of royal patronage for Ira-
nian Sufis, in both material and ideological senses. While the
Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order blended with Freemasonry and became absorbed in
elite networks of royal patronage, Solṭānʿalīshāhī 'dual containment'

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die ich zu erwägen gebe, wenn ich meine, daß der eigenartige, zum mindesten
schwankende Gebrauch des arabischen Wortes für "Wirklichkeit, Wahrheit", *ḥaqīqa*, in
der profanen Sprache der heutigen Zeit, sowohl im Arabischen als auch im Persischen,
stark von der Wirklichkeitsauffassung der Sufik bestimmt ist."

[29] Moḥammadī, 1375/1996: 36. Ibrahim, 1995: 30, and Moussalli, 1995: 86-7,
mentioned Sufi orders as representatives of *pre-modern* Middle Eastern or Islamic civil
societies.

enabled a switching of sides, so that the order could join the ranks of the clerical state to be. In the Islamic Republic, the mystic regimes again sought legitimacy, this time not only to integrate and prosper, but survive, through expounding regime religiosity. The mystic regimes' comparative social development as seen from the external aspect of regime connections is depicted in the following graph:

Table 1. External regime relations of the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī and Solṭānʿalīshāhī orders

	political regime					
	[Qajar Dynasty]		Pahlavi Dynasty		Islamic Republic	
Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order	+/+	+/+	+	+	-/-	-/+
Solṭānʿalīshāhī order	+/+	+/+	+/-	+/-	-/+	+
	power	value	power	value	power	value

socio-political relation

(*) The findings for the Qajar period are between brackets because the Ṣafīʿalīshāhīs and Solṭānʿalīshāhīs were not yet, for most of the period, established as independent orders. 'Power' denotes objective (outward) socio-political regime relations, 'value' denotes Sufi ideology on regime relations (in general, not on the strength of the actual relations). Relative values for power and value range from +/+ to -/-.

In the Qajar era, powerful regime relations were matched by manifestly positive evaluations. In the Pahlavi era the power of regime relations lessened, as did their evaluations. In the Islamic Republic the Neʿmatollāhī orders nearly inverted their former evaluations of regime ties, which was caused by changed power relations in Islamic Iran. Nevertheless, the mystic regimes' contemporary transformation into socially neutral and/or politically insignificant organisations (to the civil society and the state at large) has paradoxically been matched by the unabated deriving of identity from state linkages - not independent, social assertion - whether these linkages have been ideological or material, wishful thinking or real. The state has remained, in the three political regimes, a crucial parameter of legitimate identity.

This is to say: modern Iranian Sufism as represented by the Neʿmatollāhī orders has been characterised by internal and external relations

that constitute a mirror image of the classical civil society. Internally, relations have been primordial - in the sense of exclusive and hidden face-to-face interaction that does not meaningfully extend beyond the proximity of direct communication. Externally, Sufi relations have been characterised by either ideological or material state affiliations.

The following further explores these internal and external relations, and their bearings on the question of civil society. First, Sufism's relations to socio-political aims have now been severed, despite ideological state affiliations. Secondly, there have been similarities in the spiritual authority structures of Sufi orders and the state. In this respect, the mystic regimes compare to the Iranian state rather than to civil associations.

<div style="text-align:center">1.</div>

Although an ethical reinterpretation of Islamic mysticism characterised both regime religiosity and Sufism in the late Islamic Republic, the orders' long-kept mystical depositories also represented a different tradition that juxtaposed ʿerfān and ʿorfan, 'according to civil law'. A similarly traditional concept distinguished social from mystical, inner freedom. A non-Neʿmatollāhī master proclaimed: "Sufism does not go with the universality, it is the inner way" (*taṣavvof bā jāmeʿiyat nīst, rāh-e bāṭenī ast*).[30] While Sufis' claims to mystical otherworldliness were contradicted by their (proximity to) social and political power in the Qajar and Pahlavi periods, the rules of Majẕūbʿalīshāh - especially rule 3, that left social affairs to the jurists - testified to its reality in the Islamic Republic. All rules, in all Sufi assemblies, in various definitions pointed to a social space outside their jurisdiction.

Many of the dichotomous terms that positioned mysticism vis-à-vis other disciplines, notions and groups, described complementary relations. However, these were often cast in a hierarchical, triangular scheme, in which the third term synthesised and overarched the others. The Neʿmatollāhī orders respected ʿorfan and accommodated ʿerfān to regime religiosity. But the overarching spiritual way (*rāh-e maʿnavī*) belonged to the inside - in persons as in Sufi orders - in which things were hierarchically valued to the extent that they were secret. There was

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[30] *Īrān*, Farvardīn 16, 1376/April 5, 1997; *interview*, 03/31/97; cf. MEIER, 1992, (4): 110: "Das höhere Wissen [...] ist in gewisser Weise unsozial: es gilt nur für den Empfänger, für diesen aber unbedingt, und unterliegt keiner Erörterung auf der Basis des Denkens und keiner Beweisführung."

no doubt in any of the Sufis that I met, that ultimate reality/truth (*ḥaqīqat*) - the overarching term in a widely respected trinity with had the holy law (*sharīʿa*) and the Sufi path (*ṭarīqat*) as its bases - belonged to their realm in particular, whether or not others could share in it.

"Mystics and jurists do not understand one another's languages", an *ʿerfān* teacher said, in reconciliation.[31] But Sufis stressed a contradiction in terms in this man's being a 'teacher', because "that which is worthy of attention is secret and not for general transmission" (which implied he had no secrets to share). After all, "he who finds a treasure, doesn't speak of it."[32] A Sufi less interested in crediting jurist claims, gave me a rather subversive hermeneutical reading of Shiʿite history to argue that the *ʿolamā* had illegitimately appropriated the Hidden Imam's authority, it having been up to the *ʿorafā* to distribute Imam ʿAlī's 'friendship/guidance': "The source of Shiʿism was not theology (*kalām*), it was not jurisprudence (*feqh*), but friendship/guidance (*valāyat*). It is not about being a religion (*maẕhab*), but being an emulator of ʿAlī." I then asked: "But surely this would have radical social and political consequences?" He responded: "Yes, and I can not write it down like this."[33]

What distinguished Sufi from jurist Truth, was methodical and experiential 'witnessing and bearing testimony': "*ʿErfān* is the truth. That which Mowlānā writes is no nonsense, I have witnessed many 'impossible' (*gheyr momken*) things. It is all about testifying and being a witness to *ḥaqq*, while the *ʿolamā* only 'know'."[34] In their testimony of witnessing, Sufis derived spiritual authority from dreams that eluded the jurists' textual authority.[35] Inversely, a cleric felt that "these Sufis are just singing a bit, *lā ilāha illallāh*, but they have no idea what it means."[36]

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[31] *Interview*, 02/10/97.

[32] *Interview,* 06/19/97. "Whom they taught the secrets of Truth, they instructed by [...] sewing his mouth" (TEHRĀNĪ, 1351/1953: 24). The latter saying seems to derive from a repertoire shared by the Ahl-e Ḥaqq as documented by MIR-HOSSEINI (1994, (2): 213): "It was believed that whoever learned the 'mystery' as embodied in *kalām* [here in the sense of 'sacred litany'] had their lips 'sealed' (*muhr*)." MILLER (1923: 349) stated of Gonābādī initiations that "The Qutb [...] discloses to [the initiate] a mystery which he may never reveal to anyone. And he is told that if he does so his head will fall off. So greatly do [initiates] fear this awful fate that even the Sufi apostates never dear to reveal the mystery to their most intimate friends."

[33] *Interview*, 03/07/97.

[34] *Interview* Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufi, 01/02/97.

[35] Generally, "Visions of the Hidden Imam in a dream are acceptable in Twelver Shiʿism as a source of guidance on religious matters" (ALGAR, 1973: 220). EWING considered Pakistani Sufi dreams of initiation from many angles, among which "how

The dichotomy of mystics and jurists was also structured in a hierarchy of knowledge that distinguished the 'name' (*esm*, or material appearance), 'feature' (*ṣefat*, having to do with its formal properties), and 'essence' (*ẕāt*, or first principle).[37] Progressing from the first to the last element, one moved from the exoteric disciplines of the ʿ*olamā* to the esoteric realms of the ʿ*orafā*. It was moreover felt by a scornful affiliate that "although a *mojtahed* can become an ʿ*āref*, this occurs in the highest regions only. When he becomes an ʿ*āref* he is not a *mojtahed* anymore, because that stage is lower [...]" Ṣafīʿalīshāh, firmly dedicated to the trinity of truth, Sufi path and holy law, had worried about the legitimacy of his *tafsīr* for which, through royal intervention, he had nevertheless acquired a *marjaʿ*'s seal. But he had also spoken, a Ṣafīʿalī-shāhī affiliate reminded me, of the ʿ*olamā*'s 'playing with the (literalism of the) holy law' (*sharʿbāzī*) that kept the seeker from gnostic Truth.[38]

However these notions and their frames were articulated historically - in politically assertive or subordinate modes - they all pointed to a mystical inner world that embodied the ultimate source of legitimacy, wholeness and Truth. The (outside) world, inversely, was a sphere of injustice, hardship and compromise, in which souls were cast, alienated and lost. A critical review of Iranian civil society testified to the wide distribution of these dichotomies in Iranian culture (and the trilateral concepts by implication), to their embedding in traditional Islamic mysticism, and to their negation of civil society:

> In our culture, the oppositions of inside and outside [...], the self and the stranger, have always had a heavy presence. From [...] ʿ*erfān* our culture has taken the wish, very evident in daily life, of returning to one's house and refuge [...], as a safe hiding-place of sorts, and also its counterparts, which is to say fear of the strange, emigration and homelessness [....] The outside world becomes the arena for the operation of power and bitter harshness, for insecurity and fear of the other and others, the arena of scepticism and mistrust for the wise ones who retain their silence, and of deception and dissimulation for the opportunists.[39]

the interpretation of the dream facilitates the establishment of a new self representation and associated social relationships" (1990: 56). Because of this social power mediation, dreams are particularly crucial to Sufism, in Iran as elsewhere.

[36] *Conversation*, 02/10/97.

[37] *Interview* Ṣafīʿalīshāhī Sufi, 01/02/97.

[38] *Interview*, 02/09/97. The Qajar king was Nāṣer od-Dīn Shāh (*Zobdat ol-asrār*, 1361/1982: 6).

[39] FARHĀDPŪR, *in Kiyān*, 1375/1996, 6, (33): 6. SAḤĀBĪ added, in reference to ʿ*erfān*'s sources: "In Neo-Platonism [the] idea [of civil society] has not been developed."

Socially, the mystic regimes have taken refuge into their inner world in the Islamic Republic. In their Sufi political economies of meaning, formal and external aspects of communicative interaction - such as rules - became a play of either silence, dissimulation, or 'authentic' displays of Islamic repectability. But what was being shielded in any of these cases, was the higher, informal and internal, spiritual life.[40]

While in the Qajar era they did not shy away from explicit claims to worldly power, and in the Pahlavi dynasty they shared in it through royal patronage, Sufis now had a *sui generis* existence that was hardly stretched to the accomplishment of socio-political aims. Although Solṭānᶜalīshāhīs engaged in charity during the war with Iraq and so enhanced social integration, and Ṣafīᶜalīshāhīs aspired for political accommodation through regime religiosity, these activities did not extend social or political aims beyond self-preservation. They brokered Sufism in the Islamic Republic, but they did not mediate it towards the state as a component of the Iranian civil society.

In the Pahlavi era, antagonism in relations between Sufi affiliates, masters or orders was largely the result of 'horizontal' competition for spiritual authority. In the Neᶜmatollāhī orders, there has been no self-representation as a part, section, stratum, group or sect within the larger community of Sufism. Rather, Sufism has been held to manifest itself in essence in the particular part, section, stratum, group or sect that the speaker belonged to. "Yes, there are different *khānaqāh*s but there is only one *selsele*", a contemporary, Tehrani Ẕahabī leader said, in a definition that should not be mistaken for pluralism: "We do not agree with the other groups, who say that they are Sufis while they are not even Shiᶜites."[41] Majẕūbᶜalīshāh said: "We are the representatives. Of most

AḤMADĪ reckoned the Sufi concept of mortifying the soul a hindrance for individualism (*in Kiyān*, 6, (34): 52).

[40] These differences figured in an interesting conflict of interpretation. A Tehrani acquaintance said: "I feel at a distance from myself these days." I nodded and responded: "Like in this poem." He took a copy of Hafez's *Dīvān*, found the poem he thought I referred to and said: "It is about this very rotten state which causes its subjects psychological problems." Then his Ẕoʾr-Reyāsateyn friend corrected his reading with tortured features: "No! The Master interprets 'loss of self' in connection to the *ẕekr*" (indicating its opposite, non-political and positive meaning) (*conversation*, 01/17/96).

[41] *Interview*, 12/29/96. Inversely, "most of the later Niᶜmatullāhī sources deride the Dhahabīs [which] reflects the sectarian intra-*ṭarīqa* rivalry which, unfortunately, still mars the relations between these two great orders" (LEWISOHN, 1999: 47). NUR-BAKHSH, who made no effort to treat Solṭānᶜalīshāhīs and Ṣafīᶜalīshāhīs as Neᶜmatollāhī equals, wrote: "sufi orders are but branches of a single tree of loving-

most *selsele*s, we do not know if they are legitimate, but obviously several have gone astray. One has to treat other *selsele*s respectfully, for people go around in them who claim activity on the holy path. As the Prophet said: 'of the *gheyba* I have no knowledge', so perhaps there are legitimate others. But for as long as this is not clear, one ought not to join hands/intimacy (*moṣāfaḥa*) with them".[42]

In the Islamic Republic, however, intra-Sufism antagonism has been staged in a triangular set of relations, whereby spiritual authority was to a significant extent 'vertically' derived from regime definitions of legitimate religiosity.[43] Thus, compliance to state religiosity entered the formerly horizontal competition as a criterion for spiritual authority. In this way, the requirements of survival deepened the antagonism, enhanced Sufism's social fragmentation, and held it aloof from civil society.

MOḤAMMADĪ rightly suggested Sufi orders to be mutual interest clubs whose interests did not, contrary to civil associations, transcend the confines of the lodge.[44] When they did come in the open, they did so to retain the intimacy of the private 'retraite' (*khalvat*). Ḥājjī's confession of opportunism and disappointment indicated he had been after salvation in the *khalvat,* not socioreligious representation outside:

> I went to the *khānaqāh* to find methods for success in business, and to acquire a high social position. But after years in the lodge, I still haven't felt a thing. And most people don't. Perhaps it works for the sheikh and his friends. I hoped for miraculous blessing (*karāmat*) but I haven't seen any of it. I asked the sheikh to teach me something, to give me a good thought, for success, but all the sheikh keeps on saying is: 'Patience!' (*ḥowṣele*), and 'concentration!' (*tamarkoz*).[45]

kindness. If one order denies or repudiates another, it only repudiates itself" (1980, preface).

[42] *Interview*, 04/19/97.

[43] MIR-HOSSEINI (1994, (2): 221) described a mind-blowing case where in 1989 conflicts related to spiritual authority among the Ahl-e Ḥaqq resulted in one group sending a letter "to the office of the President of the Islamic Republic and to the leaders of Friday Prayers in all major towns of the country." In earlier clashes in 1980, the government reportedly intervened not by a backlash against Sufism, but by taking sides in the conflicts (*op. cit*., pp. 215-6). After new clashes in 1989 in Sahneh, arrests were made on both sides. A local M.P. finally helped resolve the dispute (*op. cit*., p. 223).

[44] MOḤAMMADĪ, 1375/1996: 36.

[45] *Conversation*, 03/13/97. This is not to suggest opportunism is the only motive to join a Sufi order. However, the quest for personal salvation in an intimate, face-to-face relation, is a constant.

2.

Ḥājjī's complaint bore witness to Sufism's insularity, but it also pointed to a field of resemblances connecting Sufism to the world outside the lodge. Claims to powerful and exclusive spiritual authority have characterised both Sufi orders and the state, and this analogous ideational structure has been mirrored in social organisation.[46]

Conceptions of spiritual authority in Iran have historically divided it into religious and royal components.[47] The religious component built largely on the ethical or spiritual brokerage of the Prophetic and Imamic messages, while kingship's 'divine splendour', more than God-ordained, mainly derived from thisworldly values of force and might. As ideal types, religious authority derived from representation, while royal authority equalled the self-contained value of power. Idealtypically, the revolution has brought religious charisma to the place formerly occupied by royal authority, to the fusion of both.[48] While for the clergy this

[46] Literary representations of the state and of Sufi orders in, respectively, the Islamic Republic's Constitution and in Sufi rulebooks, are misleading with respect to spiritual authority structures. Constitution Article 1.6.c. that stipulates "negation of all forms of oppression" (ARJOMAND, 1988: 375) is superseded by the institutional primacy (and charisma) of *faqīh* power; the (horizontal) divisions between the world of the lodge and the outside world, the realm of the jurists and the realm of the mystics, *ṭarīqat* and *sharī'at*, etc., are mostly subordinated to (vertical) hierarchies which assign primacy to *valāyat* or sheikhal authority. Thus, except for similar authority structures, there is a comparison between Sufi orders and the state in their representation, too.

[47] Cf., for instance, ARJOMAND, 1988: 6-7 (on Safavid caesaropapism and Qajar dualism); BEHNAM, 1986: 17-36, 117-54 (on monarchical and clerical authority); MCDANIEL, 1991: 14-47 (on the historical legacy of authoritarian rule in Iran); FRYE, 1957: 186-7, 1964: 36-54 (on the mystique of Iranian Kingship). The significance of royal authority was contested by ABRAHAMIAN, 1978: 29, who saw in it a Western projection in the Oriental Despotism tradition. For a useful summary of discussions on Shi'ite clerical authority, see BAKHASH (1991). "[I]n Shiite orders such as the Ni'matullāhiyya and Dhahabiyya, the head of the *ṭarīqa* is always considered the supreme *quṭb*, the sole and unique Pole of the Muslim saintly hierarchy, so that his cosmological role is physically and politically temporalized. One socio-political consequence of this doctrine has been that the Persian Sufi *murshid* is considered not only an absolute monarch over his disciples - quite in accordance with ordinary *pīr-murīdī* tenets and teachings found in other areas of the Islamic Sufi world - but also the only genuine *ruler* in the invisible and visible worlds of being" (LEWISOHN, 1999: 51).

[48] This is not to say the Islamic Republic's leadership embellishes some form of Monarchy. But one does notice an inspiration - in formulations of leadership, and in the way people address it - which stems from *farr-e īzadī*, the ancient royal attribute. In this sense, the Islamic Republic institutionally reproduced royal charisma, although in a different jargon. When a diplomatic row broke out between Germany and Iran in November 1996, newspapers wrote of the "offence to the sanctities of the Islamic Repub-

has been a recent development, in Sufi orders there has for long been a natural fusion of royal and clerical spiritual authority.

Sufis' claims - or enemies' attributions of such claims - to clerical spiritual authority have been evident in the functional doubling of the *mojtahed* and the *qoṭb* (as representatives of the hidden Imam),[49] the *foqahāʾ* and the *ʿorafā*, the mollah and the sheikh (as spiritual guides), and in many related structural oppositions (whether or not these find subordination to a *modus vivendi* socially, or a higher synthesis conceptually), such as the mosque and the *khānaqāh*, *sharīʿat* and *ṭarīqat*, *ahl-e ẓāher* and *ahl-e bāṭen*, or, when relations turned irreparably sour, the faithful and the heretics (see above).[50]

Possibly the strongest indication of functional doubling, however, concerned guide-flock relations. There has been no provision in the 'emulation' (*taqlīd*) by the 'imitating believer' (*moqalled*) of his *mojtahed* for a complementary or alternative, independent spiritual realm. Such a sovereign realm has been institutionally sealed in the 'oath of allegiance/initiation' (*beyʿat*) of Sufi to sheikh.

Sufism's royal spiritual authority has been evident in the absolute obedience requested of affiliates, as an ideal and to some extent as a practice, which transcended representational values. One Solṭānʿalīshāhī affiliate's humble task consisted of watching the gate and welcoming visitors. I asked him, after Maḥbūbʿalīshāh died, if he had personally known the master. He turned to me in amazement of such ignorance and said: "Me? No! I am the dog of dogs."[51] Allegiance, the martial arts specialist in Ẓahīr od-Dowle's lodge explained, he owed to God alone, but only through his master. "Nothing transcends the Sharīʿa, but if the *qoṭb* orders me to drink wine, I will do so without hesitation." Most masters in the Neʿmatollāhī orders have carried 'shah' in their cognomen, which has historically meant disembodied 'spiritual kingship', but could also reflect literal claims to worldly power. In the Qajar era, Sufism's acceptance through royal patronage was preceded by competition

lic." This concerned blasphemy of an order completely different from 'insulting a foreign head of state', carrying connotations not of royal splendour but *raison d'état*.

[49] "Hence the hatred of the *mujtahids* for Sufis" (TRIMINGHAM, 1971: 164).

[50] "The functions of the [...] Imam, in Shiʿi beliefs, include the authoritative explanation of [...] the Qurʾān, the authoritative interpretation and even extension of Islamic law, the guidance of the individual in his spiritual life in a fashion akin to the *murshid* [...] in Sufism" (ALGAR, 1983: 10).

[51] *Interview*, 01/31/97. Another Sufi reported his quest to be 'to become not' (*interview*, 11/27/96).

for worldly power between Sufis and the monarch.[52] In the late Pahlavi era, the Sufis' sharing in royal charisma through ideological and institutional royal patronage was matched by their mystical variations on Plato's concept of a philosopher-king,[53] in whose power Moḥammad ʿAnqā left little doubt he wished to share. In a general observation of Islamic, 'saintly' authority, it was remarked that "in folklore the *pir* maintains respect much as a sultan might: through the use of brute force."[54] In the examples from this study, the last part of the observation may be taken metaphorically: as unmediated power.

In the Islamic Republic, the clerical component has remained unimpaired in definitions of spiritual authority: both clerics and Sufis claimed representation of Imamic authority, or the leading of their flocks in its name. The refined Solṭānʿalīshāhī doctrine that designated a worldly realm in which obedience to the *foqahāʾ* was a religious duty, and signs of its clerical acceptance, were important for the containment of incongruous competition. In Ṣafīʿalīshāhī congregations, the containment of tension was managed by masters who downplayed the significance of authority claims to the outside, but on the inside upkept allegiance to the spiritual genealogy - which generally found its legitimisation in the twelve Imams, most notably ʿAlī.

The royal component in spiritual authority claims has lessened for Sufi orders - from outward and manifest it has become inward and latent - and increased (inversely) for the clerics. This has respectively meant increased and decreased political assertion on the part of the clerics and the Sufis. However, the Sufi orders and the state now both embodied royal and clerical elements, which brought them face to face, in direct competition for by and large exclusive, spiritual authority. Competition resulted not from differences - civil associations demanding a social space of their own from an overbearing, monolithical state - but

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[52] A citation from chapter 2.: "The power of the Quṭb is obviously greater than that of any ruler [....] Salvation in this world and the next depends on obedience to the Quṭb of the time, 'who, in our era, is Sayyid Maʿṣūm ʿAlī Shāh'. If a ruler attacks the Quṭb, he must come to ruin, not only because the cosmic balance has been threatened, but because the dervishes themselves *will* his ruin" (POURJAVADI and WILSON, 1978: 117, citing ‹Nūrʿalīshāh›'s Letter of Guidance (*Hedāyat-nāme*).

[53] "In Persian Sufism, the 'pole' [...] was meant as an interior quality, the realization of the so-called [...] I of the I-ness'. This is the 'pillar of light,' [...] that connects Heaven and Earth through the Perfect Man personified by the ruling king" (FILIPPANI-RONCONI, 1977: 62).

[54] LINDHOLM, 1998: 223.

similarities - the Sufi orders and the state both embodying claims to
royal and to clerical authority. In one of the defamatory pamphlets that
was allowed to come into the open in the Islamic Republic - for Sufism
to be tarnished - a contemporary enemy restated traditional, historical
reproaches, the venom of which now had a new political significance:

> If the existence of the Sufi lodge in front of the mosque [now largely em-
> bodying state religiosity], the taking of the face of the sheikh into one's
> mind [constituting, besides blasphemy, competition for state appointed
> prayer leaders] and the assumption of the honorary title of 'king' [ulti-
> mately denying any pretender ruler's and particularly jurists' worldly
> claims to spiritual authority], if all of this is not against the Islamic foun-
> dations, then what is? [my insertions].[55]

The analogous structures of clerical and Sufi spiritual authority have
been expressed not only in ideational similarities. One also observes
various fundamental resemblances in terms of their organisation.

   From its invocations of Iranian society, one can deduce that the cleri-
cal state has largely conceived of it as an amorphous mass of adepts in
need of charismatic, religious leadership. Khomeyni said: "The guardi-
anship of the Islamic jurist [...] is the same as the appointment of a tutor
for minors. The tutelage of the nation regarding responsibility and au-
thority does not differ at all from the tutelage of the under-aged."[56]
Some sectors of it were subject to special care: there was subsidised
schooling and pilgrimages for martyrs' families, and there were
educational and literacy campaigns for tribal areas. However, the revo-
lutionary care for the 'disinherited' was gradually transformed into per-
manent and general appeals to the Iranian nation's Islamic solidarity.
Beyond the privilege of any group, the clerical state's charismatic elite
set out to achieve a permanent mass-mobilisation, for which it made use
of popular symbols - the infallible Imams, their gnostic wisdom, mar-
tyrdom's exemplary values, the expectation of the Mahdi - ingrained in
Shi'ite-Iranian culture. Whenever there were state-organised political
rallies in Tehran, one would read in the newspapers the next day that
'people from all walks of life' had participated. Thus, the Islamic Re-
public has been aptly analysed in terms of its 'populism' (whether or not

[55] CHAHĀRDAHĪ, 1360/1981-2: 5. The "taking of the image/face (ṣūrat) of the sheikh
into one's mind" had been an explicit demand of ‹Ṣafīʿalīshāh› (cf. CHAHĀRDAHĪ,
1360/1981-2: 62).
   [56] KHOMEYNI, 1357/1978: 65.

this offers a viable alternative to 'fundamentalism').[57] Populism was institutionalised: the televised Friday sermon (*khoṭbe*) has stood out as a major genre and institution at the state's disposal, in constructing, through the Iranians' mass-mobilisation, an amorphous clientele.[58]

A similar hierarchy has operated in the Neʿmatollāhī mystic regimes, in which various genres and institutions constructed an amorphous following of affiliates. The salvation of these affiliates invariably depended on their following of the masters.[59] The Ṣafīʿalīshāhī order had many sheikhs, but not any of them under the command of the Board of Trustees. Rather, each sheikh recreated his microcosm of what had once been the orders' central authority. There were levels of closeness to Monavvarʿalī-shāh, but none of the participants in his gatherings could claim superior religious status. Monavvarʿalīshāh too, although critical of innovations under the Board of Trustees, was moderate in his claims to spiritual authority. In the end, all divine spiritual legitimacy was mediated, passed through by Ṣafīʿalīshāh - and through him, referred back to the Imams and the Prophet - to whom Monavvarʿalīshāh and the participants in his gathering, in turn, theoretically constituted an amorphous following as well.

In order to retain an amorphous following and contain dissent, Neʿmatollāhī leaders had to testify to their ('royal') might from time to

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[57] HALLIDAY pointed out the weakness in juxtaposing populism and fundamentalism in Iran (1995: 256-7). ABRAHAMIAN (1993: 17) cites as populism's features: "A movement of the propertied middle-class that mobilizes the lower classes, especially the urban poor, with radical rhetoric directed against imperialism, foreign capitalism and the political establishment. In mobilizing the 'common people', populist movements use charismatic figures and symbols, imagery, and language that have potent value in the mass culture. Populist movements promise to drastically raise the standard of living and make the country fully independent of outside powers. Even more important, in attacking the status quo with radical rhetoric, they intentionally stop short of threatening the petty bourgeoisie and the whole principle of private property. Populist movements, thus, inevitably emphasize the importance, not of economic-social revolution, but of cultural, national, and political reconstruction." I have been deliberately selective in my citation as the middle-class element is not relevant to the present discussion, and class in Iran in general and particularly in the 1970s has, in my opinion, been less relevant than "the specific religious project [...] in the Iranian revolution" (that Abrahamian rather neglects, cf. HALLIDAY, 1995: 257), to which charismatic authority and leadership have been central.

[58] The Islamic Republic "elevated the Friday prayers [...] into a key state institution for [...] indoctrination, and mass mobilisation" (KAZEMI, 1996: 140, cf. EICKELMAN, 1992: 646).

[59] TRIMINGHAM stated that "The foundation of the orders is the [hierarchical] system and [initiatory] relationship of master and disciple" (1971: 3), cf. DENNY, 1985: 77; DE JONG, 1984: 487.

time - their possession of blessing, which was witnessed through the performance or the narration of miraculous deeds. But they also had to appeal to the affiliates by invoking a popular, Sufi construction of Shiʿite history through which they testified to representational ('clerical') legitimacy. Superseding the power of any contemporary master, the charisma of Shāh Neʿmatollāh Valī, the founder of the order, radiated through to the present in all Neʿmatollāhī gatherings (*majāles*), and the spiritual chain that traced back his legitimacy to the first Imam, also pointed forwards to the contemporary masters.

The size of the Solṭānʿalīshāhī order, the variety in its real estate property, the number of its affiliates, and their wide geographical spread, corresponded to hierarchies more complex than the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī ones. The *qoṭb* disposed of three varieties of sheikhs: one 'sheikh of sheikhs' (*sheykh ol-mashāyekh*) who shared in many of the master's attributes and had the right to install lesser sheikhs; the 'restricted' (*maḥdūd*) variety, who were installed at specific places at specific times; and the 'independent' (*moṭlaq*) ones, who could be detached to any place, at any time.[60] These layers of sheikhs in between the master and his affiliates did not, however, attain authority in themselves. The sheikhs had a representative identity, bestowing the master's grace on the affiliates, and reproducing their dualism. Sufis in both Neʿmatollāhī orders repeatedly stressed - in a formulation which was politically convenient but simultaneously 'authentic' to the Sufi orders' collective conceptions of the self - that the affiliates had no particular identity and included 'people from all walks of life.'

In a pre-revolutionary definition of Islamic prayer, ʿAllāme Ṭabāṭabāʾī divided it into the 'canonical' type *(ṣalāt)*, 'supplication' *(doʿāʾ)*, 'litany' *(verd)* and 'invocation' *(ẕekr)*.[61] He did not, then, define these in any hierarchy, and he could not have foreseen canonical prayer as a state institution in the Islamic Republic. On banners and wall-paintings in the streets one read: "prayer is the sun of hearts" *(namāz khvorshīd-e delhā ast)*, and "enjoining the good is obligatory like prayer is" *(amr be maʿrūf mesl-e namāz vājeb ast)*. In the lodge of Ṣafīʿalīshāh, one obstinate Sufi who thought prayer was unnecessary and felt that all one needed to do was 'thinking of ʿAlī', was sharply corrected: "When was ʿAlī succesful?", he was asked, and then given the answer: "It was

when he prayed."[62] Post-revolutionary Neʿmatollāhīs would certainly not equate *ẕekr* with *namāz*. *Namāz* preceded the Sufi meditations in both of the Neʿmatollāhī orders, circumscribing their encompassing realm of legitimate religiosity. If there was any fundamental unity in these varieties of Islamic prayer, beyond being complementary, it was to be found in their communicative structures.

Sufi ceremonies compared to the Friday sessions in that they, too, were hermeneutic exercises in which the right of interpretation was monologically sealed. They featured similar, esoteric interpretations of reality, in a collective endeavour to uncover meaning hidden deeply under the surface of manifest phenomena.[63] They read the world for signatures that related it to the holy book, and attributed common purpose to instances - such as imperialism and spiritual crisis - at first sight isolated. Collective interpretive efforts had spiritual progress and becoming better Muslims among their primary aims;[64] religious purposes that many Shiʿite Iranians would consider largely interchangeable.

More important for the present discussion, amorphous audiences were constructed and rallied through the congregations' hierarchical features. Both the Friday sermon and the Sufi ceremonies were hierarchically authoritarian in that they created two largely undifferentiated strata - the faithful and the affiliates versus the prayer leader and the master - the one defined in its attribute of 'following' to the other. In Tehrani Friday sermons, hierarchy is physically stressed in the speaker's speaking from a pulpit and his audience being seated on the ground. The Neʿmatollāhī orders' physical arrangement has both parties seated on the floor, but all affiliates facing their master in the centre. The Solṭānʿalīshāhīs visibly marked the master's place, while the Board of Trustees was only informally in the centre of attention (see figure 14).

One might question the social significance of these spatial orders - they do not necessarily rule out more egalitarian settings - but here, they manifested one aspect of a larger communicative structure. Spatial hierarchies were paralleled in the generic dominance of monologue, which defined the first party through passivity and repetition / listening and silence, and the other by its activity and initiation / speaking and voice.

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[62] *Conversation*, 12/01/96.

[63] I am here using a definition by FOUCAULT (1994: 29): "Let us call the totality of the learning and skills that enable one to make the signs speak and to discover their meaning, hermeneutics."

[64] Cf. BAYAT, 1982: 11, 13, 15.

Neither Sufi spiritual gatherings nor state Friday sermons enhanced a
'civic culture' - defined by self-conscious, plural and assertive social
identities. Through their hierarchical communicative features, they in-
stead (re)produced the 'mass culture' of an amorphous following.

   In terms of these crucial similarities to the Islamic Republic's spiri-
tual authority structure, the Sufi orders have compared to the state re-
gime rather than to civil associations. Functionally, the orders differed
from the state mainly in the absence of taxation and a monopoly of vio-
lence; the two differences that in general prevail between religious re-
gimes and modern states.[65] In many other respects, however, the orders
and the state engaged in competition for exclusive spiritual authority,
not because of fundamental differences but, instead, numerous resem-
blances, in their evocations of collective states of bliss.

[65] BAX, 1987: 3. Although even here, there is a comparison. The orders collect reli-
gious revenues on some scale; the state has a central office for *khomms* collection
(*ṣandūq-e akhmas*). The difference is the voluntary and informal nature of the first, and
the compulsory and fixed nature of the second.

Figure 14. Spatial hierarchy in four Sufi lodges
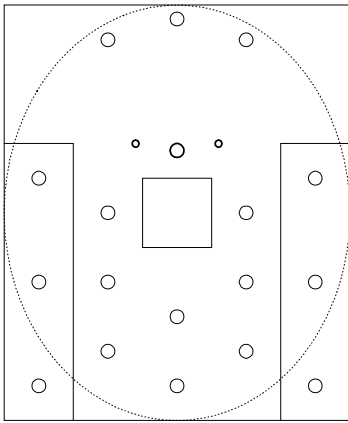
Solṭānʿalīshāhī gatherings
(main Solṭānʿalīshāhī lodge)
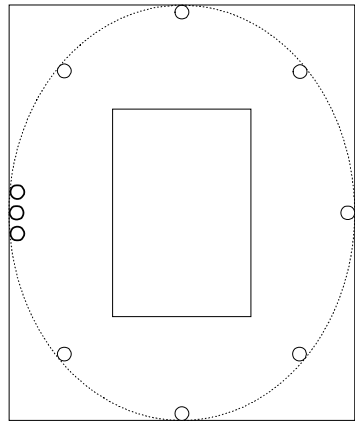
Ṣafīʿalīshāhī gatherings
(lodge of the Board of Trustees)
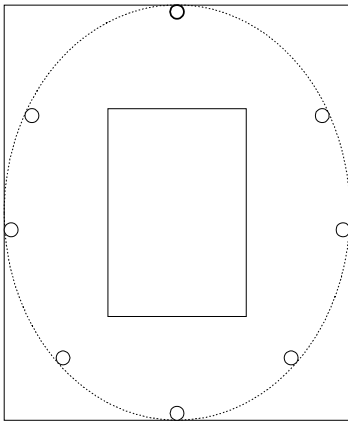
Ṣafīʿalīshāhī gatherings
(Ẓahīr od-Dowle's lodge)
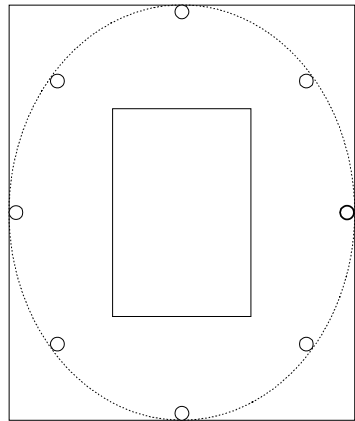
Ṣafīʿalīshāhī gatherings
(Monavvarʿalīshāh's lodge)

LEGEND. Large circle: affiliates; bold large circle: masters; bold small circle: notables. Centred rectangles represent empty space. Side-flanks in the Solṭānʿalīshāhī lodge represent balconies, and the three affiliates on top of the drawing are seated in an ante-chamber. Drawings do not represent absolute or relative numbers but relative distances.

PARADOXES OF CIVILITY AND SUFISM

> Or la perpétuation et la transmission de ce message spirituel des
> Imâms sont indépendantes de la question de savoir si telle ou telle
> société islamique rejettera ou acceptera, pour 's'adapter au monde
> moderne', l'introduction du code civil.[67]

The mystic regimes do not easily fit the model of associational life
and civility, circumscribed in the classical definition of civil society.
Recently, however, several anthropologists cast doubt on the defini-
tion's descriptive and conceptual value, holding it inapt to grasp cul-
tural variability. They objected to the classical idea that it is "too
narrowly circumscribed by modern western models of liberal-in-
dividualism", and that "the recent use of the concept to differentiate
states according to their potential for democracy and civilisation [...]
carries on [...] using rationality and individualism [...] to measure the
distance between the civilised individual and the collectivist barbar-
ian."[68] They considered it, in short, a Western artefact to be ideologi-
cally deconstructed. If it was to offer any meaningful perspective,
"the exploration of civil society requires [...] careful attention be paid
to [...] informal [...] practices overlooked by other disciplines."[69]

    The first series of critiques takes the descriptive, classical model
of civil society for a prescriptive one. The critiques moreover strike
one as political, more so than conceptual, and they do not, therefore,
significantly problematise Western origins in the classical concept of
civil society. The second appeal, however, points to a real conceptual
problem. The image traditionally evoked of associational life, applies
to well-established groups, mutually well-connected and socially
powerful, in which interactions and transactions take a formal, regis-
tered and regulated, orderly course. The informal processes through

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[67] CORBIN, 1971, (1): 90. The 1804 *code civil* has been one of the historical
markers of the Western civil society: "Mit den großen Kodifikationen des
bürgerlichen Rechts wird ein Normensystem entwickelt, das eine im strengen Sinne
private Sphäre, nämlich den von ständischen wie von staatlichen Auflagen tenden-
ziell befreiten Verkehr der Privatleute miteinander sichert" (HABERMAS, 1993:
144). Before the Islamic revolution, Daryush Shayegan conceived of the relations
between civil society and religion, beyond Corbin's view that they were simply
unrelated, as mutually exclusive: "the West has been losing its spiritual trustworthi-
ness since the sixteenth century when it substituted civil society for religious order"
(*in* BOROUJERDI, 1996: 150).
    [68] HANN, 1996: 3; RABO, 1996: 155.
    [69] HANN, 1996: 3; 6.

which such groups evolved, fall outside the scope of civil society's classical definition, which is, essentially, synchronic. In a process-oriented, diachronical search, however, one would be able to explore civil society's history of emergence and subsequent development. Conceiving of the Iranian civil society as a process, one could make comparative sense of its (re-) 'emergent' character, which has been often observed but also left theoretically unexplored.

The following explores two instances in which Shiᶜite Sufism meaningfully, though in paradoxical, implicit, passive and informal ways, relates to the Iranian civil society. First, Western public spheres originated from literary and artistic circles and debating clubs, not - immediately - from politically assertive mutual interest groups. An important new strain in Iranian, religious intellectual discourse provides a parallel. Sufism figures passively in it, as a recurrent reference, representing a beacon of legitimate religiosity.

Secondly, Western public space, in advance of any full-fledged civil public sphere, was first established in societies which were not only mute and inward looking, but also secretive and closed, and confined to selective memberships. The Neᶜmatollāhī Sufi orders have similarly maintained a secluded and shielded religiosity of their own. By implication, this means non-state religiosity, no matter to what extent the orders outwardly accommodated to the public transcript of state Islam. Through non-state religiosity they confronted, if largely willy-nilly, the state's 'colonisation of the lifeworld'. [70]

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[70] Paraphrasing, 'colonisation of the lifeworld' refers to the extension of 'systemic' economic and bureaucratic criteria to private realms (*Lebenswelt* refers to "der transzendentale Ort, an dem sich Sprecher und Hörer begegnen; wo sie reziprok den Anspruch erheben können, daß ihre Äußerungen mit der Welt (der objektiven, der sozialen oder der subjektiven Welt) zusammenpassen; und wo sie diese Geltungsansprüche kritisieren und bestätigen, ihren Dissens austragen und Einverständnis erzielen können" (HABERMAS, 1988, (2)), undermining freedom and consensus-based, communicative rationality (*op. cit*., p. 293, in an argument that begins at p. 273), enforcing systemic assimilation (*op. cit*., p. 522). The analogy consists in the Islamic Republic having extended its reach over Iranian society and individuals, physically as well as ideologically, further than previous twentieth-century regimes, and in it having conceived of and imposed its regulations exclusively. It is not implied, by this historical comparison, that the Iranian, Islamic world as a whole would now be in the developmental stage that Europe was in the eighteenth century.

1.

In his historical study of Western public space, HABERMAS (1990 [1962]) identified its embryonic forms in advance of any institution-alised, state guaranteed public freedom. Confined, public space was first established in salons, clubs and coffee-houses, partly co-opted by the court, from which developed the associations of citizens that gave shape to the classical, Western civil society. It was public de-bate, beyond the reach of court society, which marked the transition from a 'representative' public space - the public representation of rule and rulers - into a 'civil' public space - the civilians' proper realm that won over the public stage. The process is described in the trans-formation of predominantly inward, literary (eighteenth century), into outward, political (nineteenth century) public space. Intellectu-als' discourse in which Sufism figures as a recurrent reference, repre-sents a similarly inward public space in the process of expansion.

The philosopher ʿAbdolkarīm Sorūsh is one of Iran's most promi-nent contemporary intellectuals.[71] He was educated in Iran and abroad and initially he was a fervent supporter of the revolution and the Islamic Republic. Gradually, however, he came to realise a con-tradiction between his Islamic values and the state that purported to execute these. The Iranian philosophical discourse that Sorūsh em-bodied, has been pervaded by European categories of thought - through the translation into Persian of Kant and Hegel as much as Heidegger and Foucault - the most important of which for Sorūsh has been the concept of relativism. He argued that the revelation was sacred, as its meaning remained unchanged in time. But readers were not, hence the need for interpretation.[72] Interpretation was a secular matter, for the legitimisation of which no meta-secular arguments were valid (an idea which Sufis too, in various formulations, stressed

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[71] Another intellectual writing within the jurist community and similarly influ-enced by mysticism, was Mojtahed-Shabestarī. "Shabestari differentiates between faith and the religious law, associating faith and the essence of religiosity with religious experience rather than with the religious law (*fiqh*). In this, he relies on the mystics who have said; 'the human problem is the problem of correct interpretation of religious experience and not the experience itself'" (ALINEJAD, 1998: 37).

[72] Cf. ROULEAU, June 1995. It could be argued that interpretation of the sacred sources is what most of the Shiʿite clerics do anyway. The radically new aspect of the philosopher's approach - although seemingly much in line with the eighteenth century theological position of the Akhbārīs - is, however, his extension of the right of interpretation to the religious lay population at large.

over and again). Sorūsh concluded there was no justification for any group to monopolise interpretation, and, consequently, state power.

Thus, the philosopher attacked exclusivity in the idea of *velāyat-e faqīh*: "Soroush regards religion and mysticism along with science and philosophy as four legitimate modes of attaining knowledge [....] He charged that just as the fatvā [...] of a rural jurist differs from that of an urbanite, [...] so the Islam of a philosopher contrasts that of a mystic".[73] Because of his unabatedly religious perspective, Sorūsh became a feared critic of the Islamic Republic,[74] and in this respect compared to Kant. Just as the latter's Enlightenment-declaration ('dare to think!') found its expression in an ambivalent allegiance to Frederick the Second, so the former subverted through criticism, but is not known to have ever explicitly declared unambiguously illegitimate, until Khatami's ascent, Khomeyni's doctrine of jurist rule.[75]

Sorūsh developed these ideas in his position as a university lecturer, and spread his 'thinly disguised call for pluralism' through articles in Kiyān magazine.[76] These activities attracted the international media's attention, and he embarked on a series of international lectures. Directly and indirectly, the government took various measures to put a stop to his message. Lectures were cancelled and he was beaten up by Ḥezbollāhīs. Despite being nearly untouchable through his increasingly global renown, he was largely silenced.[77]

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[73] BOROUJERDI, 1996: 259, 251, cf. ROULEAU, 06/17/95.

[74] Cf. KAZEMI, 1996: 151-2.

[75] FOUCAULT (1984: 37) concluded of *Was ist Aufklärung*: "And Kant, in conclusion, proposes to Frederick II, in scarcely veiled terms, a sort of contract - what might be called the contract of rational despotism with free reason: the public and free use of autonomous reason will be the best guarantee of obedience, on condition, however, that the political principle that must be obeyed itself be in conformity with universal reason." Cf. HABERMAS' more positive evaluation of Kant's significance for discussions of civil society and public space (1990: 178-195, 200, 273).

[76] KAZEMI, 1996: 151.

[77] After the 1997 presidential elections, Sorūsh commented on the results on CNN, which he was fiercely reproached for by the hard-line newspaper *Keyhān*. "'Abdolkarīm Sorūsh who is according to the commentator (!) of the television station CNN an Islamic philosopher against the regime (!) said in an interview with journalists of this news channel, among statements concerning the above issues, that the election result is a way to find peace and quiet towards a better future. While the journalists of the Western and Zionist media assessed the crisp and clear statements of [...] Khatami as a sign of a confession of disappointment and despondency vis-à-vis the Western encampment, and knew the issues forwarded by Mr. Khatami to be based on his fundamentalism, Sorūsh's happy divulging [...] appears ridiculous. These statements of Mr. Sorūsh, in the margin of issues that he addressed at confer-

While Sorūsh's thought has become the object of international exegesis, the extent to which his oppositional discourse derived from the Islamic, mystical tradition - this has been a recurrent motive in Iranian intellectual discourse[78] - has not often been analysed in any detail. Mystical philosophy was rather associated with Sorūsh's intellectual and political enemies, particularly Reżā Dāvarī, who had carried Corbin's Heideggerian mysticism to its absolutist extremes.[79] As Sufism accommodated itself to regime religiosity through blending its mysticism with a Khomeynist variety of ʿerfān, however, Sorūsh delved into Islamic mysticism - in as far as its legitimacy was beyond doubt - to argue authentic, decisively non-statist religiosity.[80]

In a recent interview that has been published on the internet, Sorūsh explained that "My first attempts at interpretation concerned the Koran and an important Sufi text, Mathnavi [....] My continuing contemplation of Rumi made me gradually better acquainted with

ences and speeches abroad and that have become termed 'Islamic Lutheranism', assume a very particular meaning" (Khordād 8, 1376/May 29, 1997). It was reported that "In a July letter published in a newspaper, publisher and writer Abdolkarim Soroush confirmed that he had been banned from leaving the country and that his passport had been confiscated. In November Ansar-e Hezbollah thugs attempted to break up at least one of Soroush's lectures" (U.S. Department of State, Iran Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997, p. 8).

[78] See, for instance, COLE's (1996) discussion of intellectuals' nationalist discourse in the Qajar period. He addressed Eʿtemād os-Salṭāna's 'Dreambook' that used dervish imagery to argue against the reformists of his time and in favour of absolute monarchy (*op. cit.*, pp. 51, 53). (Inversely - Sufis arguing reform - "Voltaire, [...] whose works had not been translated into Persian [in the nineteenth century], was held in high esteem by some Sufis, who had heard of his anti-clericalism" (BAYAT, 1982: 62)). ALINEJAD (1998: 3) emphasised the "meaningful function of the new interpretations of Iranian-Islamic philosophical and mystical traditions in building new political *imaginaries*." In these traditions, he felt (as did Sorūsh), lay the roots of current trends towards democracy and pluralism (*op. cit.*, p. 5). Similarly, "from a political perspective, these new interpretations may be considered in opposition to the official interpretations of the sacred texts held by the conservative Shiʿi jurists in power" (*op. cit.*, p. 15).

[79] Cf. BOROUJERDI's eye-opener review of post-revolution intellectual debate (1994: 247).

[80] Mysticism had been an important theme from his earliest book, 'The Restless Structure of the Universe' (*Nahād-e nā-ārām-e jahān*), in which "the author aligns himself with the mystical Shiʿi school of illumination (*eshrāq*), and particularly with its great seventeenth-century exponent [...] Molla Sadra [....] Sorush's strong mystical tendency can be shown in the conceptual structure of his various arguments, as well as by the simple fact that the most frequently and approvingly cited reference in his writings and lectures is the great mystic poet Jalal al-Din Rumi" (MATIN-ASGARI, 1997: 100-1, 102, cf. various references in this chapter).

Sufism." In another passage, he mentioned "a memorable trip [to] the desert town of Gonabad. There I met the Ghotb or the master of the mystic Sufi order of Khaksari that is also known as Gonabadi. Upon my return, I wrote a fictionalized travelogue [about this memorable trip to the Sufis' Gonabad] entitled "Journey to the Center.""[81]

"Religiosity", Sorūsh held, "is the station of being in love" (*dīndārī maqam-e ᶜāsheqī ast*),[82] and he chose to explore it in the language of the mystics, as in 'the words of Mowlānā'.[83] Rūmī, the Sufi, has not been absent from official religious discourse, if only because his poetry has such authority in Iranian culture that banning it would be inconceivable. But he predominantly has been represented as an *ᶜāref*, not as a Sufi. *Eṭṭelāᶜāt*, for instance, prescribed that he had not been 'a Sufi or a recluse ascetic' (*ṣūfī va zāhed-e khalvat-neshīn*) and not even 'a Sufi-like mystic' (*ᶜāref-e ṣūfī-vash*).[84]

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[81] The equation of ‹Khāksār› and ‹Gonābādī› is obviously a mistake. The interview was held on May 3, 1999. I found "Intellectual Autobiography: An Interview" on http://www.seraj.org/ (10/31/99), a website dedicated to Sorūsh. The interviewer was "Sadri", but other details are unknown.

[82] *Taḥlīl-e mafhūm-e ḥokūmat-e dīnī*, 1375/1996: 7. Although Sorūsh was ambivalent or sometimes negative towards Sufism, overall his tone was positive (especially in *Ṣerāthā-ye mostaqīm: sokhanī dar plūrālīsm; moṣbat va manfī*, 1376/1997). In his treatment of Moḥammad al-Ghazzalī, Rūmī and Ḥāfeẓ he stressed their enmity towards Sufism (*Qeṣṣe-ye arbāb-e maᶜrefat*, 1375/1996: 6, 7, 26, 59-61, 257). However, in the same publication he told, in an inverse appreciation, that "the important lesson of Sufism is abstention from power and wealth, to refrain from sin" (1375/1996: 268). In 'Confused Consciousness, Confused Identity' (*Ẕehnīyat-e moshavvash, hovīyat-e moshavvash*, *in Kiyān*, 1996, 6, (30): 4-9), he "conceded that by its very nature [...] taṣavvof leads to fatalistic thinking [...] and perplexity [...], traits that breed irrationality and confusion in Iranian culture" (MATIN-ASGARI, 1997: 103). In *Akhlāq, zībā-shenāsī va ᶜerfān* (1375/1997: 17), however, Sorūsh associated beauty with proximity to God, and proximity to God with Sufis.

[83] *Taḥlīl-e mafhūm-e ḥokūmat-e dīnī*, 1375/1996: 2. SHAYEGAN writes (1997), in what must be a reference to Sorūsh, of distortions in the Westernised Islamic episteme, that it "is quite capable of mixing eschatology with, for example, positivism. The product of such combinations is always a hybrid which can only be made to fit together by *grafting*" (*op. cit.*, p. 73). Ironically, similar grafting was employed by "all kinds of converts: German fundamentalists, British Sufis, meticulously conscientious Swiss Muslims, French dabblers in 'a nice class of Islam, rich in cultural appeal'" (*op. cit.*, p. 74). Although one may agree with Shayegan that "to match two notions which belong to different constellations of ideas, kept apart by the great historical caesuras on which modernity is founded, is to attempt a chain of identification and misread the genealogy of the concepts" (*op. cit.*, p. 27), the attempts live a life of their own, and thus constitute an object for social science.

[84] There were fewer inhibitions in lesser figures. A new edition of ᶜAlī Torke's *Sharḥ-e golshan-e rāz* was judged 'among the best books to have appeared until now

Sorūsh repeatedly evoked challenging images of a more legiti-
mate, Islamic spiritual authority. As the Islamic Republic politicised
mysticism, Sorūsh gave Mowlānā an inverse political reading: "Our
[...] mystics [...] have [...] taught us that one can attain freedom in the
shadow of religion", he stated, and "Mowlavī comprehends the aim
of 'prophecy' precisely in this founding of freedom for believers and
supporters of religion."[85] The teachings of Sufi mystics, Sorūsh felt,
had been a reaction not only to monarchist ethics but also, more gen-
erally, to despotic ethics, predominant in Iranian, Islamic history.[86]

Under Sorūsh's hermeneutic reasoning that strove to define the
basis for textual authority and religiosity, lay a fundamental, onto-
logical discussion that dealt with the essence of man: "Our mystics
have spoken about nothing but man. Sufism and ʿerfān are, funda-
mentally, anthropology. The mystics have said that man is the em-
bodiment of the overarching name of God."[87] From this inclusive
conception of mankind, it followed that "mystics such as Mowlavī
[...] knew the 'fight between the believer, the unbeliever and the Jew'
to occur [only] as a consequence of conflicting perspectives", and
that they had "in an insightful and wise manner laid the firm founda-
tion for an honest and just pluralism."[88] One of the ways in which

in Persian about ʿErfān *and Sufism*' [my emphasis]. The *Golshan-e rāz* contained
Maḥmūd Shabestarī's (d. 1317) answers to questions of a 'famous Sufi' (*Eṭṭelāʿāt*,
Bahman 11, 1375/January 30, 1996, cf. CORBIN, 1972, (1): 233).

[85] *Dīn va āzādī*, 1375/1996: 42, 44: "rivers of freedom and religion spring from
one source."

[86] In the same passage, Sorūsh criticised 'Sufi ethics' (MATIN-ASGARI, 1997: 107).

[87] *Dīn va āzādī*, 1375/1996: 48-9. ROULEAU's citation of Sorūsh (06/17/95): "the
Islamic state can only be justified if it is democratic and humanistic" must not be
mistaken for secularism, but be seen as a strictly religious view. The year in which
Sorūsh published *Dīn va āzādī* (1996), there was also a round table on 'religion and
freedom' at Tehran University (ADELKHAH, 1997: 17).

[88] *Dīn va āzādī*, 1375/1996: 47. In winter 1997, *Nāme-ye farhang* (24) published
a 'forum on pluralism and culture' that was presided over by Reżā Dāvarī. Ḥojjat ol-
Eslām Rashād recognised mysticism, just as Sorūsh did, as an Islamic basis for
pluralism (*op. cit.*, p. 5, English introduction). Dāvarī's evaluation, contrary to that
of Sorūsh, was decisively negative: "because of the confusion of the language and
ambiguity of the concepts and interpretations, some of the pious believers have
defended pluralism [....] Pluralism is not a religious or theological issue, and in
theological and ʿerfānī introductions to its explication, it is in reality a kind of politi-
cal exploitation" (*op. cit.*, p. 3, English; p. 13, Persian text). The views of Dāvarī are
in line with those of the Western relativists in the civil society debate, who posi-
tively reckon that "Some societies may reject modern western notions of what is
intrinsically good, as when a Brahmin rejects equality and upholds the hierarchy of

pluralism became manifest, was in the diversity of religious explication and experience, which Sorūsh considered 'our Sufis' to represent in words and action.[89] Mysticism, then, embodied Islamic pluralism.

As many Iranian critics of the Islamic Republic did, Sorūsh maintained that he took no political positions at all, and stated emphatically that "mystical theories must not be established as the basis for political thought, because this unusual practice is dangerous."[90] Habermas observed of Western equivalents: "Der kritische Prozeß, den die öffentlich räsonierenden Privatleute gegen die absolutistische Herrschaft anstrengen, versteht sich selbst als unpolitisch."[91] Sorūsh's mystical demand for a 'society of law' (*jāme͑e-ye ḥoqūqī*), an allegedly unpolitical plea, was an important political event as it transcended Henry Corbin's traditionally narrow conception of *͑erfān* beyond and isolated from any 'Code Civil'.[92] In this way, through its denial and claims to the opposite, Sufism discursively transformed into Sorūsh's oppositional defence of (religious) civility.

2.

Until the end of the eighteenth century, Western proto-civilians faced a 'representative public space', which was filled with the emblems, gestures and rhetoric of rule and rulers. As long as this rhetoric and these emblems and gestures remained the sole occupant of the public space, there could be no full-fledged civil society.

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caste, or a Mollah defends the sacred truths of Islam against secular pluralism" (HANN, 1996: 18). However, interestingly, it is the enemies who cite from the Western tradition as well. Transcending the East-West divide, Ṣobḥ cited Weber and Dāvarī found solace in Heidegger.

[89] *Ṣeraṭhā-ye mostaqīm: sokhanī dar plūrālīsm; moṣbat va manfī*, 1376/1997: 4. In a London lecture, Sorūsh stated that: "Sufis empty themselves so that Truths may radiate in them" (*Kiyān*, 1997, 34, (6): 58). In a 1992 critique of post-modernism, Sorūsh paradoxically defended mysticism as a solution for 'man's uncertainty and self-consciousness' (MATIN-ASGARI, 1997: 103).

[90] *Dīn va āzādī*, 1375/1996: 51. One finds ambivalence not only in the incongruity of Sorūsh's discourse and practice, but also in the fact that he reproaches Sufism for *zohd* while it is with the voice of this very, traditionalist and quietist *͑erfān* that Sorūsh speaks in the above citation. In the above lecture Sorūsh played a dangerous game by associating *velāyat* as a mystical concept with Sufism, suggesting an alternative conception for the *feqhī* and *donyāvī* varieties *of velāyat-e faqīh*.

[91] HABERMAS, 1990: 178.

[92] ALINEJAD (1998: 13) rightly remarked that thinkers such as Sorūsh engaged in "constant flirtations with politics."

Nevertheless, civil public space was established within the confines of closed societies. Habermas mentioned Freemasonry and illuminationist societies - secretive as much as Iranian, Islamic Sufism - as examples.[93] He illustrated their dialectical relation to the representative public space as follows: "Die Beschränkung der Öffentlichkeit, meint Kant mit dem Blick auf die damals heißumstrittenen Freimaurerlogen, sei ››die veranlassende Ursache aller geheimen Gesellschaften‹‹".[94] Thus, the common European phenomenon of Freemasonry was "as old as civil society itself, if civil society as a whole was not just an outgrowth of Freemasonry."[95]

This points to a paradox in civility, which describes open, nonprimordial interaction, resembling what Habermas in a different context outlined as the 'ideal speech situation' - free of distorting system constraints - but which has nevertheless, in Western European countries, been constituted through one of its opposites: secrecy.

In Habermas's argument, the question of public space was closely related to a widening scope for rationality. It was rational communication that needed the protection of secrecy, as rational communication threatened self-explanatory sovereignty. Thus, "Solange die Publizität ihren Sitz in der fürstlichen Geheimkanzlei hat, kann sich Vernunft nicht unvermittelt offenbaren. Ihre Öffentlichkeit ist noch auf Geheimhaltung angewiesen, ihr Publikum bleibt [...] intern."[96]

However, one suspects the more crucial element in civil society to have been not rational communication, but the threat that its independence posed.[97] The crucial element in eighteenth-century contes-

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[93] HABERMAS, 1990: 96, 58-67, 14: "freimaurerischen Geheimbünde und Illuminatenorden waren Assozationen, die sich durch die freien, d.h. privaten Entscheidungen ihrer Gründungsmitglieder konstituierten, aus freiwilligen Mitgliedern rekrutierten und im Innern egalitäre Verkehrsformen, Diskussionsfreiheit, Majoritätsentscheidungen usw. praktizierten. In diesen gewiß noch bürgerlich exklusiv zusammengesetzten Sozietäten konnten die politischen Gleichheitsnormen einer künftigen Gesellschaft eingeübt werden." The one conceptual doubt in these examples concerns the equality of communication. Freemasonry and illuminationist societies were, in Europe as in Iran, characterised by organisational hierarchy and (at least in Iran) charismatic leadership. Equality was an attribute of inter-stratum communication, as among the undifferentiated *morīd*s.

[94] HABERMAS, 1990: 184.

[95] HABERMAS, 1990: 96.

[96] HABERMAS, 1990: 96.

[97] If rationality is conceived of as more than economic or organisational efficiency, i.e. as behaviour and thought which is guided by reason, to the exclusion of

tations of public space, was the 'bürgerliche Dialektik von Innerlich-keit und Öffentlichkeit.' Facing a representative public space, it had to emerge and be constituted as a secret public space.[98] This paradox of civility has also operated in the mystic regimes, in their relations to the Islamic Republic's waning, representative public space.

The Neʿmatollāhī orders were not all fora for rational, civilian dialogue. One Sufi said: "When a thief enters a house, the first thing he does is turn out the light. Love (ʿeshq) is such as thief, with re-spect to reason (ʿaql). What we do here is wage a 'war of love' (jang-e ʿeshq) to annihilate that which cools down ʿeshq, which is to say ʿaql".[99] While many other Sufis would disagree and assign a central place to ʿaql, as demands Shiʿite doctrine, no Sufi felt that it was 'mystic reason' that faced an over-bearing state. It has been as inde-pendent bearers of a religiosity of their own, that Iranian Sufis have countered, if largely willy-nilly, their lifeworld's colonisation.

Countering colonisation: rules and their performance

Reflecting on current circumstances in Iran, one Sufi stated: "We are now where all started, with individuals and small groups, without formal organisation." An 'actual Sufism' had now rejoined the 'essential Sufism'. It reminded of Corbin's invocation of the sixth imam: "L'Islam a commencé expatrié et redeviendra expatrié. Bien-heureux les expatriés!"[100] Sufism's basic social dilemma had always reflected tension between the actual and the essential states: "Sufism is about religious experience, not about social organisation. But without social organisation, religious experience is obstructed by enemies. All organisation corrupts, but without it Sufism would be destroyed as well."[101] Others felt contempt for the last part of the equation, and cited the histories of Sufi martyrs "who were way be-yond caring about their bodily survival."[102] Both the realist and the

any other source of knowledge, then it is doubtful if rite-ridden Freemasonry ever fitted the criterion of rationality.

[98] HABERMAS, 1990: 17, 99.

[99] *Interview*, 02/21/97.

[100] CORBIN, 1971, (1): 33. The saying actually stems from the Prophet (MEIER, 1992, (4): 105).

[101] Another observer similarly reflected: "Sufi groups have split in tens and tens. They don't bureaucratise. That would kill charisma" (*conversation*, 10/19/96).

[102] It is a favourite saying among Sufis, based on a (prophetic) ḥadīs̱, that "one has to die before one dies."

idealists, however, envisioned a cosmic drama in which an ideal Sufism, a path without organisation, had become polluted by worldly forms. Now it was reaching a return to its original, essential self, in contrary circumstances, in the preordained shape of a full circle.[103]

"There are no preconditions to love in the *khānaqāh*", Sorūsh wrote, moulding Sufism into a pluralist political agenda.[104] But lodge life has been as regulated in the Islamic Republic as it was in the Pahlavi dynasty, bearing temporally distinct relations to state and jurist regimes. Historical charters of Sufi 'order' have been laid down in rules, and Sufism's "sanctity of rule [...] means in practice the preservation and perpetuation of the *adab* (decorum or discipline)."[105]

Persistent political concerns provide a context for the universality of Sufi rules. Sufism's repression was often followed by internal reforms in Sufi assemblies, which increased the number, severity and reach of rules. The killing of Ḥallāj was among the reasons for the development of Sufi manuals that contained guidelines for the right teachings - the outstanding historical exemplar.[106]

[103] The circle has been a beloved metaphor for idealists of all times and places. In the above statement, there is a resemblance to Plato's Pure Ideas, which become polluted through earthly matter. The British poet Kathleen RAINE in Nasr's *Sophia Perennis* referred to Plotinus' aesthetics: "A circle is a circle whether it be drawn in ink or chalk or inscribed on the stone of new Grange or the turf of Stonehenge; and [it] is neither 'the ink on the page' nor the 'construction in space'" (1977: 57).

[104] *Ṣeraṭhā-ye mostaqīm: sokhanī dar plūrālīsm; moṯbat va manfī*, 1376/1997: 7.

[105] MCGREGOR, 1997: 261; cf. MEIER, 1992, (3): 57. EICKELMAN stated: "there is an 'essential looseness' [...] about Islamic religious organization, which means that it is much more responsive to local social contexts then has often been the case in Christianity" (1981: 293). 'Essential looseness' is contradicted by the rule-led nature of Neʿmatollāhī Sufism. The rules have, however, made Neʿmatollāhīs flexible with regard to (lateral) jurist and (vertical) state political contexts.

[106] Abuʾn-Najīb as-Sohravardī's (d. 1168) *Ādāb al-murīdīn* and Abū Ḥafṣ as-Sohravardī's (d. 1234) *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif* are among the most important *ādāb*-treatises (Cf. MEIER (1992, (3): 489) and TRIMINGHAM (1971: 34-6)). It is often claimed that the rule-led nature of Sufi orders was related to Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī's 'reconciliation of mysticism with orthodoxy' (in his *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*), as part of a trend of Sufi 'conformity' towards temporal and religious authorities (KEDDIE, 1963: 33, cf. BALDICK, 1981: 65-7, MEIER (1976 (2): 379) and CAHEN, who stated: '[D]er Ṣūfismus [entwickelte] organisatorische Formen des Zusammenlebens und damit auch einen Schutz gegen Exzesse von Sonderlingen' (1991: 222)).

Figure 15. The *kashkūl* in the Ṣafī ͨalīshāhī lodge (courtesy Moḥammad Yāvarī)

Pand-e Ṣāleḥ and other Neʿmatollāhī sets of rules had jurist or state concerns for law and order as a context. Thus, both figuratively and literally, 'rule' and 'order' have been intimately related, and this relation had a rationale in concerns for survival. The twentieth-century Ḥāmidīya Shāḏilīya order in Egypt survived through rules. Facing jurists, rulers and a modernising society, its leader charted an intricate system of 'laws' that in turn modernised the order. This made it hard on anyone to denounce it as traditional or heretic, its organisation sharing in the modernity of governmental institutions, its teachings being directed towards the Islamic law.[107] On top of the occasional jurist attack, twentieth-century Khāksār Sufis were persecuted by Reza Shah, and the order responded, similarly, by organisational reforms which enhanced the Khāksār Sufis' lasting survival.

In the Neʿmatollāhī regimes, tacit and written rules have enhanced both secrecy and the reproduction of order (which were, in turn, related). Rules have regulated interaction in and outside the lodge into levels of formality and proximity, i.e. distributing discourse and practice along a scale of external-formal, internal-formal, external-informal and internal-informal components. These historically articulated distributions, which corresponded to differentiated Sufi 'levels of teaching',[108] aided integration into the Pahlavi dynasty and accommodation vis-à-vis the Islamic Republic. The rules of Reżāʿalīshāh were beneficial to the Solṭānʿalīshāhīs' civil and religious integration under the Shah, while in the Islamic Republic, rules enhanced accommodation to regime religiosity in the lodge of Ẓahīr od-Dowle. In either case, the rules protected the internal and informal spheres, the esoteric core of which has consisted of friendship

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[107] GILSENAN, 1973 (*Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt*).

[108] Cf. KEDDIE, 1963: 34. Formality/informality differentiation in discourse has been theorised by IRVINE (1979), and, in relation to *ādāb*, by GILSENAN (1973, 1982). GRAMLICH testified to the rule-led nature of Neʿmatollāhī ceremony in the Pahlavi era. There were "Regeln über Essen und Trinken, Fasten und Fastenbrechen, Gesundsein und Kranksein, Reisen und Daheimsein, Eintreffen und Abschiednehmen, Alleinsein und Beisammensein, Reden und Schweigen, Umgang mit Höhergestellten [...] und Untergebenen, dazu Normen für anständiges Sitzen, Blicken, Niesen, Husten, Naseputzen, wie man die Schuhe anzieht und auszieht, wie man sein Bündel packt und auspackt, anschnallt und abschnallt, wann der Kopf bedeckt sein soll und wann nicht, wann man Grüßen soll und wann nicht und dergleichen mehr" (1981, Vorwort).

with God/guidance (*valāyat*).[109] The claims and proofs of friendship with God were not carried outside the lodge for public display, and *valāyat* - belonging to the innermost realm of experience where God took over - ultimately breached any formality.

Ādāb circumscribe three interrelated realms of cultivated inner states, moderated outer behaviour and a disciplined learning of the features of the Sufi path.[110] Regarding their proper, political functionality, *ādāb* do not easily compare to *civilité*, in definitions laid down in the manual books of the European Middle Ages and Renaissance.[111] In European court-settings, the rationale of etiquette consisted primarily of safeguarding internal cohesion and the integration of nobles. Notwithstanding royal relations, court positions and a religiosity which at times became *salonfähig*, the Neʿmatollāhīs have remained powers in their own right: as inviolable realms of sheikhal authority. In the first instance, therefore, Neʿmatollāhī *ādāb* functioned as protective devices, shielding a proper religiosity.

Ṣafīʿalīshāh distinguished 'outer etiquette' (*ādāb-e ẓāher*) from 'inner sophistication/dealing with people properly' (*solūk-e bāṭen*). Qazvīnī related the esoteric to thought (*khiyāl*) and the exoteric to language (*zabān*), which implied that anything a Sufi might tell about Sufism could be radically separate from Sufism itself.[112] The view that held politics to be "something that operates only in the world of the *ẓāhir*" - a conception widespread in Iranian society at large - has been more than a quietist rejection of politics.[113] It was simultaneously a religious and a political economy, which allocated meaning according to levels of formality and proximity.

The component of reproduction which was external (i.e. not primarily having to do with the affiliates, their initiation, with liturgy or the lodge) and informal (i.e. not being circumscribed in or derivative from any Sufi rule, despite being very common and offering legitimisation) consisted of public relations to people in high places.

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[109] Protection of an esoteric core characterises most orders. 'Listening' (*samāʿ*) among the Khāksār was a carefully kept secret (*serr*) only entrusted to those on higher stages of initiation into the order's hierarchy (GRAMLICH, 1981: 63). Equally important to this organisational logic, the rituals concerned have often been the target of jurists' and rulers' denunciation - as heretical.

[110] My paraphrase of MEIER, 1992, (3): 55.

[111] Cf. ELIAS, *in* GOUDSBLOM and MENNELL, 1998: 51-2.

[112] QAZVĪNĪ, 1376/1997: 430.

[113] Cf. MIR-HOSSEINI, 1994, (1): 273.

Sufis claimed in writing (and surely, orally as well) that they had predicted and aided Reza Shah's ascent to power and prevented his son from being assassinated. Power in the high Society of Brotherhood was reflected in the elected leadership belonging to the co-opted Pahlavi elite, despite claims of strict and by implication classless Sufi equality. Solṭānʿalīshāhī sources too, mentioned politicians in the Khorasani lodge and meetings with the royal family. But they also documented relations to and authorisations by several of the Sources of Emulation. In the Islamic Republic, legitimisation for instance came through references to the Imam and to his son, Aḥmad.

Formal and external aspects of reproduction in the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī and Solṭānʿalīshāhī orders involved charitable donations during the Iran-Iraq war, announcements in newspapers of public gatherings, 'open houses' on Shiʿite occasions, and public services such as the Ṣāleḥīya clinic. They were also evident in the Sufi language of regime religiosity, which constituted sublime, traditional performances of either 'authentic' respectability or 'dissimulation' (*taqīya*).[114] In either case, they matched the (formal) request in any of the written rules for (external) respect for the social order. The forceful, public statements of allegiance to the religious order in Ẓahīr od-Dowle's lodge carried their own subversion in the private ideology of submission to unlimited sheikhal authority. To this day, Solṭānʿalīshāhī leaders have maintained that Reżāʿalīshāh's Khomeynist religious perspective on human rights was an authentic representation of Solṭānʿalīshāhī views, while many affiliates (whether they are right or not) 'knew better' and said, tongue in cheek, that this manifesto was what being a *mojtahed* had (only) outwardly required of their master.

Paradoxically, Reżāʿalīshāh's rejection of universal human rights was forwarded from an Islamic anthropology, as much as Sorūsh's

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[114] The doctrine of *taqīya* of one's true beliefs was developed by the sixth imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, in the context of Sunnite repression of Shiʿites. It has been claimed that "Among the Ṣūfīs the execution of al-Ḥallāj led to the charge that he had been guilty of unveiling the arcane in his claim of union with the divine, and a recommendation of precautionary public silence or dissimulation. Among both Ṣūfīs and Shīʿites, although the cautionary motive probably predominated in early *taqīya*, there developed the notion that there was something religiously wrong or desecrating about revealing one's true beliefs to the non-initiate, and indeed only the initiate would be able to understand them" (KEDDIE, 1963: 52, cf. *op. cit*., p. 51). Iranian dissimulation, in pre-modern as well as modern times, has been described as an 'essential way of surviving' (HALLIDAY, 1986: 667).

promotion of universal religious pluralism. People who put their trust in man, abused reason, and thereby put themselves 'out of the ranks of mankind'. Freedom of thought, conscience and belief was allowable only to the extent that it did not clash with the Qurʾān or the Holy Law. As to equality, "Islam lays the foundations of excellence, nobility, and superiority in the degree of faith." Thus, the unfaithful were 'outside the pale of humanity'.[115] All rights of man in Reżā-ʿalīshāh's treatise emanated solely from God's grace. Where the Western human rights declaration went essentially wrong, was in putting man in God's place.[116] Not going into Sufism or *valāyat* in any detail, this (formal) treatise belonged to the (external) outside world.

Formal and internal aspects of reproduction consisted of activities such as mental counselling and financial charity towards the flock. Among Neʿmatollāhī liturgy, *ẕekr* has provided the primary occasion and locus for formal and internal reproduction. When performed impeccably, *ẕekr* integrated affiliates into the orders, thereby reproduced hierarchy and respectability, and contained dissent.

In the late Pahlavi era, Ṣafīʿalīshāhī *ẕekr* provided affiliates with Sufi symbolism and preserved their allegiance, while these symbolic performances were simultaneously detached from the inner, Freemasonry concerns of the Heyʾat-e Moshāvere. Among the Solṭān-ʿalīshāhīs, concerns for order, hierarchy and religious respectability[117] led to a 'reform' of the admonition (*vaʿẓ*) and *ẕekr*-sessions. Laxity had evolved in them,[118] and Reżāʿalīshāh invoked the image of 'monkeys climbing the pulpit' to admonish his following.[119] No issues

[115] Tᴀʙᴀɴᴅᴇʜ, Sultanhussein. 1970: 15, 70, 17-8.

[116] My paraphrase of ‹Mᴀʜʙūʙʿᴀʟīsʜāʜ›, 1373/1994-5: 120-2.

[117] Reżāʿalīshāh felt that "[t]he audience must pay heed to the dignity of the gathering and respect the rules for outer behaviour such as quietness and paying proper attention. It should not believe that crying is required in itself, because tears that do not stem from [...] the confession of remorse and awareness are not desirable. The auditor must be aware that the outer defeat of the guiding imams (peace be upon them) was in reality their total victory and self-sacrifice [....] The speaker must also hold these sessions in sincerity and in trying to please God, not for building a reputation or assembling a following" (‹Mᴀʜʙūʙʿᴀʟīsʜāʜ›, 1373/1994-5: 120-2).

[118] Reżāʿalīshāh "greatly suffered from the chaotic situation that was sometimes witnessed in the gatherings, given his great interest in the mourning and *ẕekr*-sessions in remembrance of the calamities of the Guiding Imams [...] and he considered it far removed from *ḥaqīqat*. In his view, this situation subverted the service of the speaker [...] and the audience" (‹Mᴀʜʙūʙʿᴀʟīsʜāʜ›, 1373/1994-5: 120-2).

[119] "With respect to sermons, he had particular thoughts: 'unauthorised people ought not, under any condition, during the sermon [...] and the Remembrance of the

could be expounded in the religious sessions which were 'unclear' or might cause affront and conflict among the Muslims.[120] In an ultimate gesture of Shiꜥite respectability, Reżāꜥalīshāh finally proposed the supervision of the Sources of Emulation over Shiꜥite sermons.[121]

In the Islamic Republic, the split Ṣafīꜥalīshāhī orders had 'impeccable', i.e. orderly and regime-accommodated performances to the extent that they were public and formal. However, even the most impeccable performances in the main lodge were never quite the 'more peaceful arena of Sufi ritual'.[122] As Ṣafīꜥalīshāhīs had been without undisputed, centralised leadership since the revolution, meditations became an arena for competition rather than authority transmission.

Regularly, the informal leadership of the Heyʾat-e ꜥOmanā requested the audience to keep its volume in check, not to monopolise the singing, and reminded it was forbidden to incur physiological effects on itself through headbanging. "If we have no concentration, then our circle (ḥalqe) is broken." A rebellious crowd that used to assault collective discipline (reyāżat) came, it was felt by one affiliate,

Catastrophe (ẕekr-e moṣībat), to go up to the pulpit (menbar), because the pulpit is a high position that is reserved for the Prophet and the Imam (peace be upon him) and their representatives. And the dream of the Honourable Prophet in which monkeys climb his pulpit - interpreted as the Ummayads - actually has no exclusive connection to the Ummayads. It includes every person who behaves contrary to the Islamic and religious commands'" (‹MAḤBŪBꜥALĪSHĀH›, 1373/1994-5: 121-2).

[120] "As concerns the sermon and ẕekr leaders, he stated they should be recommended to thoroughly internalise the historical sources of Islam, and particularly the life and deeds of the Guiding Imams (peace be upon them) so that the true traditions (akhbār) be distinguished from the false traditions, and they would only speak that which is transmitted and trustworthy, and would refrain from invoking some of the matters which are not clear and which cause affront [....] In the pulpits, persons ought not to engage in self-praise or vilification either, and they should abstain from personal affections and spite, and from the exposition of those issues which cause conflict among Muslims. They should base themselves on the thought and the deeds of the great personalities" (‹MAḤBŪBꜥALĪSHĀH›, 1373/1994-5: 122).

[121] "[H]e deemed necessary the supervision over the sermon [...] by the Honourable Sources of Emulation and even recommended the foundation of an educational branch for the sciences of admonition (vaʾẓ) and the sermon (khaṭāba), so that the appropriate and educated people, who would also be taken sufficient care of in a material sense, could engage in this work, and this important task would be saved from confusion. It was because of this very respect he had for the pulpit [...] that if by chance [someone] turned his back to [it] because of a lack of space, he immediately ordered for him to change his sitting situation [to face the pulpit], and he reminded that the pulpit was the place of the Prophet of God (may God send greetings to him) and his legatees (owṣiyāʾ)" (‹MAḤBŪBꜥALĪSHĀH›, 1373/1994-5: 121-2).

[122] GILSENAN, 1982: 101.

"from other orders, in order to disrupt our sessions." Others, however, felt they wanted to revive the pre-revolutionary Sufi grandeur. Then, *zekr* had been "much heavier, and much better. Then, everything was there; you had restaurants, discos, clubs, music. If among all these distractions a person would come to the lodge, it implied a conscious choice. Now, many people come to the lodge in a flight".[123] When the informal leader of the Board of Trustees had once been absent, scandalous laxity had occurred in religious performance, according to one Sufi. "You saw people stretching their legs, as if they had come here to relax. They think it is O.K. to come here and have a party; to have a good scream, just like children."[124]

Paradoxically, impeccable performances bore witness to spiritual authority and (Sufi) order, while simultaneously negating the pluralistic civility that Sorūsh saw represented in Sufism.[125] "God accepts any appearance" (*khodā har kolāhī bakhshad*), it was heard from individual Sufis, but not in public sessions. Instead of spiritual universalism, impeccable performances staged religious nationalism, and, to some extent, racism, as when the nationalist cause was made into an anti-Arab contest to which Sufism was the militant and indigenously Iranian response.[126] Ṣafīʿalīshāhī *zekr* in the main lodge (not

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[123] *Interview*, 12/19/96.

[124] *Conversation*, 02/06/97.

[125] Some famous Sufis in Islamic history have been associated with Universalist, monotheistic ecumenicalism and compassion towards their fellow humans. But exceptions aside, the value of universalism - which is a religious and a psychological concept in Sufism - is hardly ever laboured unto a practical theory of pluralism, on the social plane, and with respect to concrete others who share a common social space. Among the exceptions (at the level of discourse) are the Lebanese al-Aḥbāsh, whose vision is "a society of normalcy and stability, where social and religious pluralism is the mode for Muslims [...] and in their relations with non-Muslims [...] the Ahbash emphasize the need for *civility* and moderation at the individual, societal, and state levels" [italics mine] (NIZAR HAMZEH *et al*., 1996: 224). For these reasons, the Aḥbāsh were mentioned in the context of 'enlightened Islamic spiritualism'. The Iranian context has not seen any of these developments.

[126] The encounter of the Other met with an irrevocable fear of difference in one Khāksār sheikh. In a rage, he declared that the world was nowadays ruled by homosexual, British members of parliament (*interview*, 10/22/96). He evidenced a forceful correspondance between mystic attitudes and nationalist ideology, the sort of analogy that Thomas Mann described with frightful certainty in the hypnoticist Cipolla vis-à-vis prewar fascist Italy (in *Mario und der Zauberer* (1990 [1930]). Nationalist themes were absent before the revolution, cf. GRAMLICH, 1981. In a Khāksār lodge he noted references to (spiritual) kingship unheard of among Neʿmatollāhī Sufis in contemporary Iran: "Erlaubnis des Meisters und des Königs"

in any other) always commenced, where formerly the Shah or 'King ʿAlī' were celebrated, with an emotional appeal that sought to safeguard blessing for the Iranian nation and the religion it embodied:

> *Dūr kon az mā / doshmānān-e ahl-e beyt /*
> *doshmānān-e ahl-e beyt dar miyān-e mā na-gozīr*

> Keep far from us the enemies of the People of the Household /
> do not let the enemies of the People of the Household among us

> *ānhāʾī ke bar mellat o dīn-e mā khiyānat mī-āvarand /*
> *dūr az mā kon*

> keep far away from us /
> those who bring treason upon our nation and our religion

Solṭānʿalīshāhī meditations were always fully formal and public, and clerical attendance had legitimised them religiously. Even a critic of Sufism had to admit that "the Gonābādī Path [...] established order in the Sessions of Poverty (*jalasāt-e faqrī*) and [that they are led by] well-informed and faithful persons, more so than in other Sufi branches."[127] The Solṭānʿalīshāhīs had a silent 'ẕekr of the heart', Reżāʿalīshāh had performed religious nationalism in the *ḥoseynīya*, and the *arbaʿīn* morning session on June 26, 1997, suitably and conventionally ended with the invocation of Āmolī's true Sufi/Shiʿite.

But despite impeccable performances that were able to rally and retain a large following, many affiliates 'knew' that inside the hardened shell of conformity, a vulnerable pearl, a cherished lifeworld lay in concealment. After all, "the *foqahāʾ* were only scribes, while the Friends of God were the representatives of the Imam."[128] They had 'known' Khomeyni as a Sufi-ʿāref, Reżāʿalīshāh to have performed dissimulation in his Islamic human rights tract, Maḥbūb-ʿalīshāh to have died an Islamic martyr's death, and Majẕūbʿalīshāh to be an icon of freedom, through his ties to the Nehżat-e Āzādī. They particularly 'knew' the exoteric to be hierarchically subordinate to the esoteric in many respects, and the performance of dissimulation, accommodation, order and rules to be required for its protection. Through rule-led communicative differentiation, the cherishing of *valāyat* among these Solṭānʿalīshāhī affiliates institutionally

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(*op. cit.*, p. 68); "O Hand des Meisters und des Königs" (*op. cit.*, p. 69); "Khāksār [...] Sucher der Armut des mannhaften Königs" (*op. cit.*, p. 105).

[127] Chahārdahī, 1361/1982-3: 223.

[128] *Interview*, 07/17/97.

eluded another constitution: that of the Islamic Republic, which sought to monopolistically impose the jurists' *velāyat*.[129]

Public space in the mystic regimes was shielded by secrecy - rules distributing interaction according to levels of proximity and formality - and their public remained internal. For these reasons and others - such as primordial structures in internal relations and unabated state affiliation externally - the orders have not been a part of the associational life of civil society as it has been classically understood. However, secrecy and inward, internal audiences also characterised Western civil societies, when these were faced with an overbearing, representative public space. Because of its proper institutional life, providing spiritual masters, liturgy and lodges, Sufism testified to a religiosity of its own, no matter how much it accommodated to regime religiosity. In its master-disciple relations, it resembled spiritual authority as embodied in the state. Public space was claimed in a monopolistic fashion by the state, and the mystic regimes needed shielding against it, for them to retain a religiosity of their own. For this set of reasons, the mystic regimes engaged in an - unsought - competition for spiritual authority with the state.[130]

A Sufi held the state to be fearful of the Path because "when people go after Ultimate Reality, then its legitimacy crumbles." A Tehran-based Ḥojjat ol-Eslām confirmed that "since the killing started, people have massively turned to the Sufi lodge." The politicised mosque had become a shadow of its former self as a beacon of authority, and one only went there nowadays, a Sufi said defiantly (and in private), to urinate.[131] "Religion is losing out everywhere in the

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[129] "Le régime [...] a fondu le discours révolutionnaire et les principes de légitimité religieuse pour occuper l'espace public" (ADELKHAH, 1997: 9). I do not suggest that *valāyat* is intrinsically opposed to *velāyat*. Only the terms' exclusive readings make their relations problematic. Lastly, *valāyat* and *velāyat* do not exhaust Shiʿite terminology to discuss leadership: "If we consider the ruler as a *valy* [....] then we are speaking of obligation, but if we consider him as a *vakil* [...], then we are speaking of the rights of the people" (ALINEJAD, 1998: 31, citing Sorūsh).

[130] At the high tide of civil society discussions (1993), SALAMÉ's *Democracy Without Democrats? The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World* appeared, in which it was effectively argued that some form of democracy had emerged in many (Islamic) Middle Eastern Countries, without there being, however, a deep and broadly shared commitment to ideas of democracy.

[131] *Conversation*, 11/27/96. Ayatollah Mahdavī Kanī spoke out against the state ownership of mosques in *Resālat* (Ābān 12, 1375/November 2, 1996), citing Khomeyni: "He said: do not allow mosques to become state owned, because what

world, also here in Iran", another Sufi said, and implicated it was
only the Sufis, not state clerics, who could upkeep it.[132] The state and
the Sufi orders have constituted competing public spaces, as the Is-
lamic Republic's all-inclusive representative authority was chal-
lenged by the Sufi orders' proper religiosity - whether or not ex-
pressed as regime-religiosity. In this respect, the Neᶜmatollāhī orders
were not at variance with the reported representatives of the Iranian
civil society, such as magazines in Khatami's Iran, which have been
described as a *Gegenöffentlichkeit*.[133] The Neᶜmatollāhī mystic re-
gimes were part of it, to the extent that through variously layered sets
of cultural performance they retained the integrity of their lifeworlds.

* * *

When I came to meet the sheikh, I had trouble in locating his house.
"He lives up the mountain, and everybody knows him over there", a
person told me along the mountain road. But nobody actually did.
And when one seemed to do, he asked: "Sheikh? You mean Mollah."

Further instructions finally brought me to the house, and the
sheikh/mollah let me in. He put me stationary in the yard and went
away. When he returned to escort me to his living quarters, he had
put on a *kafan* and an inscribed, felt *tāj*. The sheikh confirmed that
he had also been a mollah and then produced an amount of know-
ledge that left me permanently bent down writing in my notebook.

We talked for a long time without me noticing and then suddenly
he declared the meeting over. He told me to go ahead and wait for
him. Outside the gate I saw him rushing over the yard, returning
without his *tāj* and now wearing a mollah's ᶜ*abā* over his *kafan*.

He winked at me and escorted me to a taxi that, it seemed, had
suddenly appeared. The driver greeted, the sheikh/mollah nodded
both amiably and naturally and told him to get me where I wanted. In
a decisive gesture, he grasped my right hand and left a little sweet in
my palm. My stupefied gaze met with the sheikh/mollah's serene
tranquillity, then our eyes met in silent, hilarious laughter, which
later on stirred up violently in me every time I reflected on the scene.

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the [...] clergy needs is independence." The ayatollah's suggestion that this matter
would be negotiable, completely ignored the reality of state Islam.

[132] *Interview*, 05/01/97.
[133] Cf. AMIRPUR, 1998: 74.

WEBER wrote that "the most irrational form of religious behaviour, the mystic experience, is in its innermost being not only alien but hostile to all form" (1977: 342). Even in its 'innermost being', however, time leaves its marks on Sufi experience. Distinct temporal ranges emerge from the gulf that separates Enteżām's secular and elitist view on Sufi experience in the Pahlavi dynasty and the populist Sufi celebration of mystical martyrdom in the Islamic Republic.

Even while "Kay Kaʾūs says, in his description of the *darvīsh*, [that] 'The essence of truth (*rāstī*) is the negation of ambivalence ([*dogānegī*]),"[134] this essay has argued that it has been, paradoxically, an essential ambivalence, which maintains and reproduces Sufi truth. Reżāʿalīshāh was a pole as well as a jurist, and the resulting room for manoeuvre enabled his affiliates to read the defence of an authentic spiritual realm through their master's exterior words. Ṣafīʿalīshāhī masters retained spiritual authority through abstaining from public claims to it, sharply separating inner and outer realms. It has been these performed, historical balances of religious urge and constraint, in the Islamic Republic as in the Pahlavi dynasty, which made the Ṣafīʿalīshāhī and Solṭānʿalīshāhī Sufi orders into mystic regimes.

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[134] BATESON, ET.AL., 1977: 273, citing the *Qābūs-nāme*.

APPENDIX 1.

Genealogy of Iranian, Shiʿite Sufi orders

Abuʾl-Qāsim al-Junayd (d.910)

Bāyezīd Basṭāmī (d.874)

Aḥmad al-Ghazzālī (d.1126)

Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī (d.1111)

Yūsuf b. Ayyūb al-Hamaẕānī (d.1140)

Abuʾn-Najīb as-Sohravardī (d.1168)

Abuʾl-Fażl al-Baghdādī (d.1155/6)

ʿEyn ol-Qożāt al-Hamaẕānī (d.1131)

ʿAbdulkhalīq al-Ghujduvānī (d.1220)

Aḥmad Yasavī (d.1169) YASAVĪYA

Abū Ḥafṣ as-Sohravardī (d.1234) SOHRAVARDĪYA

ʿAmmār al-Bidlīsī (d.1194-1207)

Bahāʾ od-Dīn Naqshband (d.1389) NAQSHBANDĪYA

Najmeddīn Kobrā (d.1221) KOBRĀVĪYA[1]

(SH) KHĀKSĀR

ʿAlāʾ od-Dowle Semnānī (d.1336)

Ṣafī ed-Dīn Ardabīlī (d.1334) (SH) ṢAFAVĪYA

Ḥājjī Bektāsh (d.#1335) BEKTĀSHĪYA[1]

ROKNĪYA

ʿAlī al-Hamaẕānī (d.1384)

HAMADĀNĪYA

Isḥāq Khottalānī (d.#1423) IGHTISHĀSHĪYA[2]

Shah Neʿmatollāh Valī (d.1431) (SH) NEʿMATOLLĀHĪYA

ʿAbdollāh Barzeshābādī Mashhādī (d.1467/8) (SH) ẔAHABĪYA

Moḥammad b. ʿAbdollāh Aḥsāʾī Nūrbakhsh (d.1465)

Qāsem Feyżbakhsh (d.?) (SH) NŪRBAKHSHĪYA

Sayyed Mahdī Baḥr ol-ʿOlūm (d.1797/8) (SH) ḤOJJAT ʿALĪSHĀHĪYA

Sayyed Ḥoseyn Astarābādī (d.?) (SH) SHAMS OL-ʿORAFĀʾ

Mollā Reżā Kowṣarʿalīshāh (d.1831) (SH) KOWṢARĪYA

Monavvarʿalīshāh (d.1884) (SH) ẔOʾR-REYĀSATEYN

Ṣafīʿalīshāh (d.1899) (SH) ṢAFĪʿALĪSHĀHĪ ORDER

Solṭānʿalīshāh (d.1909) (SH) SOLṬĀNʿALĪSHĀHĪ ORDER

LEGEND. The genealogy charts central nodes in the main Shiʿite Sufi spiritual lineages, not each and every historical succession. (SH): Shiʿite Sufi order; (1) The Kobrāvīya and Bektāshīya had Shiʿite leanings/offshoots but remained mainly Sunni; (2) The Ightishāshīya (‘rebels’) were not exactly a Sufi order, but a label for Kobrāvī groups that split off after Isḥaq al-Khottalānī (sources: cf. GRAMLICH, 1965; TRIMINGHAM, 1971; ZARRĪNKŪB, 1990, (1)).

APPENDIX 2.

Geographic concentration of Shiʿite Sufi orders in Iran

ARMENIA   AZERBAIJAN

TURKMENISTAN

← TURKEY

Caspian Sea

•**Tabriz**(2)
ẒAHABĪYA

•**Mashhad**(3)
KHĀKSĀR

KURDISTAN
(S)QĀDERĪYA
(S)NAQSH-
BANDĪYA

•**Tehran**(1)
KHĀKSĀR
ṢAFĪʿALĪSHĀHĪ ORDER
SOLṬĀNʿALĪSHĀHĪ ORDER
ẒAHABĪYA
ẒOʾR-REYĀSATEYN

•Beydokht
SOLṬĀNʿALĪSHĀHĪ
ORDER

IRAN

IRAQ

AFGHANISTAN

KUWAIT

•**Shiraz**
ẒAHABĪYA

Persian Gulf

SAUDI ARABIA

OMAN   PAKISTAN

QATAR

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES →

LEGEND. This non-exhaustive map mainly charts current, official centres, and does not account for the fact that unofficial Sufi activity extends to the smallest villages in Iran. The distinction between Sunni and Shiʿite among Sufi orders in Iran roughly coincides with the distinction between rural/tribal and urban. Rural/tribal Sunni orders are generally known for regional rather than local concentration. The Qāderīya and Naqshbandīya orders have been included to bring these distinctions - and thereby the specificity of the Shiʿite orders - to the fore.

(S): Sunni Sufi order.

(1) The Tehran list stems from personal observations, which also holds for my inclusion of the Ẓahabīya in Shiraz.

(2) I have no conclusive evidence about the Ẓahabīya in Tabriz, but still decided to include them as GRAMLICH's (1965: 89) pre-revolutionary account is matched by post-revolutionary remarks *in* MOMEN (1985: 212) and NASR (1991: 216).

(3) The mention of Khāksār in Mashhad is based on GRAMLICH's (1965: 90) account, and more recent suggestions *in* CHAHĀRDAHĪ (1361/1982-3: 25, 31) that Mashhad is still a Khāksār centre. The *Iran Lonely Planet Travel Survival Kit* (Hawthorn 1992: Lonely Planet Publications) mentioned Naqshbandīs using a 'mausoleum' at the Gonbad-e Sabz in Mashhad (p. 174). As CHAHĀRDAHĪ (1361/1982-3: 31) mentioned the Khāksārīs' Gonbad-e Sabz *khānaqāh*, however, I hold it likely that the *Survival Kit* referred not to Naqshbandī but Khāksār Sufis.

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