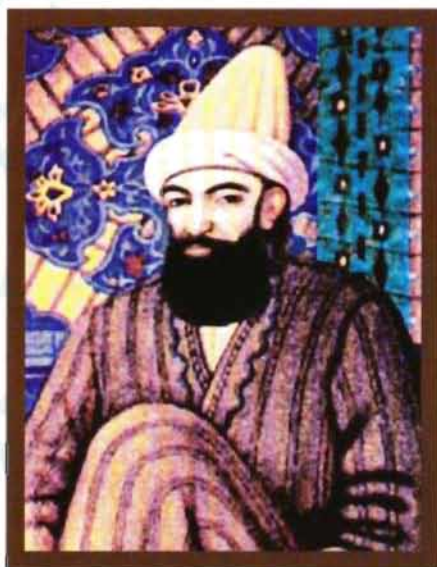


Celebrating
A SUFI MASTER



A Collection of Works
on the Occasion of the
First International Symposium on
Shah Nematollah Vali

Sponsored by: San Jose State University
October-2002

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INTRODUCTION: General Considerations

Hazrat Seyed Nourod-din Shah Nematollah Vali is considered the greatest Sufi master and one of the most eloquent Iranian poets of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries A.D. In Sufism he belonged to the Ma'rufi Order and was a disciple of Sheikh Abdullah Yafei, who died in Mecca in 768 A.H. (1362 A.D.).

The Ma'rufi Order is traced back through Sheikh Ma'ruf Karkhi to Imam Reza, the eighth Shi'ite Imam, and from the latter to Imam Ali (peace be with him). The Sufi instructions and teachings of Shah Nematollah Vali were welcomed at a time when some people called themselves Sufis without knowing the truth about Sufism. Therefore, with the advent of Shah Nematollah Vali, the Ma'rufi Order came to be widely recognized and accepted in Iran and many Islamic countries of those days, and many became his disciples. That is why thereafter the Ma'rufi Order became known as "Nematollahi."

In addition to having reached the highest levels on the Sufi path, Shah Nematollah Vali is among the greatest scholars and poets of Iran. From the point of view of the quantity of his published writings, he is rare among the masters of Sufism. The number of his articles and papers, most of which are on Sufism, has been estimated to be about five hundred. His collection of poetry consists of 12,000 verses in which mystic concepts have been written in a symbolic form.

In the later years of his life, Shah Nematollah Vali established a large Khaneqah in Mahan, near Kerman, in the South of Iran, in which he instructed and enlightened the seekers of knowledge. He died in the same place in the 834 A.H. The Khaneqah was expanded by his followers during the centuries that followed and today it is regarded as one of the most beautiful and magnificent historical mausoleums of Iran.

After Shah Nematollah's death, his son, Shah Khalilollah who was his successor, moved to Dakan in India where the Order thrived for more than three centuries, when the current master, Rida 'Ali Shah Dakani sent two of his authorized sheikhs to Iran, after which the Order continued there.

During the period of Hajj Mulla Sultan Mohammad Gonabadi known as "*Sultan 'Ali Shah*" (born in Gonabad, Khorasan 1251 A.H./1835 A.D.), the Nematollahi order regained its prominence and today is referred to as the Nematollahi Gonabadi or Sultan 'Ali Shahi, it is the largest and most popular of the Sufi orders and schools of thought in Iran.

In spite of Hazrat Shah Nematollah Vali's extensive reputation and popularity in Iran and India, Western nations know very little about him and his teach-

ings. For this reason a number of his dedicated followers created a foundation in the United States in 2002 in order to fully introduce this great mystic master and his works and teachings to the American public.

One of the first actions of the foundation was the decision to organize a number of symposia on Shah Nematollah Vali, the first of which was initiated by Dr. Seyed Mostafa Azmayesh in cooperation with San Jose University, and was held from 11 to 12 October 2002.

The symposium was attended by interested scholars and thinkers from various countries of the world. Unfortunately, however, because of entry visa problems several Iranian scholars were unable to participate.

In addition to lectures and workshops, the symposium's program included a performance of music, a slide show and a film entitled "From Mahan to Gonabad" that had been specifically prepared for this gathering. The meeting began with an inaugural address sent by the present Master of the Nematollahi Gonabadi order, Dr. Nour 'Ali Tabandeh, known as "*Majzoob 'Ali Shah*," and was concluded after two days of activity.

This book consists of a collection of selected articles, papers and lectures presented at the symposium. It is appropriate at this point to express our gratitude to all the speakers who addressed the symposium. We are also greatly thankful to the head of San Jose University group and Professor Chris Jochim.

**Simorgh Sufi Society
New York, May 2003**

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Opening Statement

Dr. Nour Ali Tabandeh (Majzoob 'Ali Shah)

I am very delighted that a group of scholars are assembled in this spiritual and academic gathering to honor one of Iran's greatest men of literature,

Irfan (Sufism) and Islam. For my part, I appreciate and admire the efforts of all, especially Dr. Azmayesh, the founder and organizer of this gathering.

Wherever our great men are honored and accordingly a gathering is organized, we are obliged to take part as ones who have views on the matter. Thus, when I found out about the good intention of the Symposium on Shah Nematollah Vali, I approved it and viewed the request for a paper favorably. I hereby respectfully offer a green leaf from the ever-living tree of *walayāt*.¹

Hazrat Shah Nematollah Vali was one of the greatest Sufis. His name is mentioned in the pages of Iranian history for various reasons. In fact, history's pages are adorned by the existence of such men. The works and opinions of this great Sufi can be analyzed and researched from many different angles. From the literary point of view he has produced multiple articles in prose, in which he has argued mystical issues along with pure Islamic beliefs, and has explained these very clearly. Of course, I don't intend to enter into details here, for I am informed—praise and thanks be to Allah—that the very knowledgeable participants have written articles on the occasion of this Symposium or will give speeches, such that the above subjects will be explored in detail. I only mention how the subject matter of his work ranks among the intricacies and positive aspects of the history of Iranian spiritual development.

Also in terms of poetry he has an abundance of poems in which instead of devising panegyrics, again he has put his efforts in explaining the spirituality of Islam and its mystical points. Of course, in Iran's history of literature there have been many great poets like Manuchehri, Asjudi and Anwari and the likes, who wrote panegyrics. From a literary point of view they are all highly valued and hold a distinguished position, and we shouldn't forget them. But the enormous rank of Shah Nematollah Vali is as high as that of Ferdowsi, Sa'di, Mowlavi (Rumi), and Hafez. There will definitely be articles about his poetry, and the important points will be mentioned.

However, the most important aspect of his life, which is also what he is renowned for, is the mystical aspect, and the fact that during a period of time, he has been the *Qutb* of Sufism and the dervishes, so that his followers after him became famous as the “Nematollahi Order”.

Regarding the issue of *silsileh* (order)² and the understanding of the meaning of it within the domain of Sufism, we should return to the beginning of Islam. During the time of the Messenger himself, [may Allah’s blessings and greetings be upon him and his family], there may have been differences in regard to style, taste and opinions among Muslims, but they never became cause for major disagreement, because the final decisive word, regarding every single subject, was what the noble Prophet himself would say, or what was divulged in the form of revelation. However, immediately after his death a dispute arose; in that a group of Muslims and great [men of God] such as Salman Farsi, Abu Zar, and ‘Ammar who had heard the holy words of the Messenger directly, from his own tongue, or indirectly, knew that ‘Ali, peace be upon him, had been assigned by the Messenger to succeed him.

Regarding the issue of *risalat* (being the Messenger of God), everyone believed that the Messenger was the last Prophet of God—the “Seal of the Prophets”—and after him there would be no other messenger. Therefore, the issue of succession of ‘Ali was regarded as one within the internal domain of Islam. A verse of the Noble Quran says: O Messenger! “*You are but a warner and to every nation [there is] a guide.*” (13:7) Of course, this verse applies more to future times, after the Prophet. The Messenger had two aspects; one was the warner and one was the guide. The warning aspect, which pertains to prophethood, ended with the death of the Messenger. However, the guiding aspect remains until the Day of Resurrection. God ordered the Messenger to hand over to ‘Ali the duties of *Walayat* and guidance. Consequently, in contrast to the Companions of the Messenger who had dedicated their *bay‘at*³ specifically to ‘Ali, another group did not take the precious words of the Messenger as determination of his successor as being ‘Ali; and said that the purpose of his words was to show the position and rank of ‘Ali and not his assignment. They said we also accept these ranks and we regard ‘Ali as being in possession of high rank in Islam; and since the Messenger has not specified anyone for leadership of the Muslim community (*ummah*), we among ourselves must specify someone for leadership. Thus, they specified one of the special companions of the Prophet, Abu Bakr, for the position of Caliphate. They said whatever the *ummah* has decided is valid and should be put into practice.

Due to the fact that the subject is extensive, and during the course of history hundreds of books have been written about it, I do not intend to argue the point here. The purpose is to show how these two groups were formed: the first group was called the Shi’ites [followers] of ‘Ali. During the history [of Islam] this

group has been given various names. For a period of time they were even called *rafidi*. *Rawafid* is the plural of *rafidi*, meaning someone who has abandoned the religion. In other times they were called *shu'ubi* (nationalist), since this group referred to this verse of the Quran: “*O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations (shu'ub) and tribes that ye may know one another. Verily, the most honored of you with God is the one with the most taqwa (God-wariness). Lo! Allah is the Knower, Aware.*” (49:13), and their motto was: “*Verily, the most honored of you with God is the one with the most taqwa (God-wariness).*”

These names were coined later, however the core of Shi'ism comes from the Messenger's word, who said: “For whomever I am the *mowla* [leader], truly, this 'Ali is his *mowla*.” If historians and orientalist are to discuss the issue of the dates that Shi'ism started, they should not mistake the origin of the word “Shi'ite” with the origin of the faith itself. Of course, the word “Shi'ite” and other terms for them developed during the course of history, but the root of Shi'ite belief was the holy words and the rulings of the Messenger of God. 'Ali, peace be upon him, also according to the Messenger's recommendation and order, gave Imam Hasan the position of Imamate (leadership); also Imam Hasan [transferred this position] to Imam Hossein, and Imam Hossein to Imam Sajjad, [and so on] to the end.

Considering the fact that God in the Quran said: “*Verily, We sent down the reminder, and verily, We are its protector.*” (15:9), the Shi'ites have assumed that the survival of the religion [is based] on the continuation of this chain of spiritual authorization [succession]. They have believed that there is continually a guide and a leader present in the world, who is assigned to this position by the “previous hand.” Of course, the continuation of the chain of authorization for spiritual guidance is one of the instances of the above verse: “*Verily, We sent down the reminder, and verily, We are its protector.*” (15:9), although the wording of this verse refers to the Quran itself, which is the only heavenly book that, praise be to God, has remained guarded from the tampering of enemies.

The issue of Imamate continued until the time of the twelfth Imam who disappeared from view. His occultation [disappearance] was also in accord with divine wisdom. There is certainly wisdom for us to fathom in the occultation. Although we do not believe in reasons or causes for divine decrees and commands, we can try to comprehend the wisdom. One aspect of the wisdom behind the occultation was that the Imam went out of the reach of the oppressive caliph. In the future too, spiritual leaders wouldn't be within the reach of governments that would cause them trouble or would destroy them. Another aspect of this wisdom one may consider is that during the time when the Imam was present, the Shi'ites and their sincere followers would bring all their inquiries and refer whatever problem they had to the Imam, without using their minds themselves or giving themselves the trouble of problem solving. Whatever the Imam would

say would be taken as valid and to be acted upon. And thus this matter could have prevented the intellectual growth of the Shi'ite community and Shi'ism. But once the Imams said that all religious problems were propounded and stated in the Quran and *sunnah*, and we have previously explained them too, the Shi'ites became certain that the solution to all of the religious problems, until the Resurrection Day, could be found in previous reports about the Imams. Hence, they should find the answers to their problems by thinking on their own. Accordingly, the subject of *ijtihad* came about and the *Usuli School* of jurisprudence was formed along these lines.⁴

Here a question is posed. Since contacting the Imam is not available for all Muslims and the Shi'ite community, what duty do people have? For example, during the occultation, what is the duty of the Muslims regarding *bay'at ma'navi* (spiritual) or *bay'at walayati*,⁵ which was one of the fundamentals of the holy *shari'ah* (divine law) of Islam and was made part of *shari'ah* at the time of the Messenger and became a rule for which no verse of the glorious Quran, and for which no order has been reported regarding its cancellation, considering that early on the Imams also used to personally take *bay'at* [initiating followers], and even the oppressive Caliphs used to take *bay'at*?

The successors of the Messenger, the holy Imams, were always under pressure and were silenced. As such, numerous stories have been mentioned in historical works about the severe suppression during the time of the holy Imams, particularly after the time of Imam Reza (peace be upon him). For example, from the time of Imam Ja'far Sadiq (peace be upon him) whose "*akhbar-e irfani*" [reports related to Sufism] and *ahkam-e shari'ati* [rules concerning Islamic law] have been amply reported, it is believed that in response to one of his Shi'ite followers who called him "*Amir al-Mo'menin*" [Commander of the Faithful], he said: "Do not call us '*Amir al-Mo'menin*', this title is specifically for our forefather, Imam 'Ali." But this same Imam, due to the extreme oppression of the times, and the fact that Mansoor, the Abbasid caliph, summoned him several times in order to kill him, found no choice but to call Mansoor "*Amir al-Mo'menin*." Even if you refer to the stories written in *Mafatih al-Jinan*,⁶ you will find the evidence of this extreme oppression. For example, in the time of Imam 'Ali Naqi (peace be upon him), one of the Shi'ite followers who was enthusiastically waiting to visit with him said, "The Imam was under surveillance in his own home. I reached him in a hurry. Only a minute had passed, when he told me to leave immediately because [by staying there] I would get in trouble." Numerous stories such as this have been reported.

Thus, if the caliphs were to find out that the Imams were taking *bay'at* with their followers, the life of the Imam, and even the lives of all the Shi'ites around them would be in danger—regardless of the fact that the *bay'at* was not for governance or gathering supporters. Hence, the caliphs were constantly watching

the Imams. And accordingly, the Imams had to specify representatives to take *bay'at* on their behalf, and these representatives in turn were also often authorized to assign representatives [of their own]. Similarly, Imam Ja'far Sadiq assigned Bayazid Bastami as his agent for taking *bay'at*. Sheikh Ma'ruf Karkhi, who was the disciple of Ja'far Sadiq, obtained his authorization and permission later on during the time of Imam Reza. Due to the oppression at that time and lack of access to the Imam, Ma'ruf Karkhi obtained authorization to specify a successor for himself, as well. It is quite obvious that, the successor had to be verified by the Imam of the time. Thus, with the approval of the Imam, Sheikh Ma'ruf Karkhi appointed Sheikh Sarri Saqati. Also Sarri Saqati, again with the approval of the Imam, appointed Junaid Baghdadi. Junaid was authorized by the living Imam, the twelfth Imam, for *bay'at manavi*. He had authority and permission to specify a successor during the time of the Occultation. Thus, he specified a successor who was Sheikh Abu 'Ali Rudbari.

The issue of specifying the successor in Sufism is a fundamental principle, that is, no one without being authorized by the previous *pir*,⁷ can reach the stage of guidance, and even the training of each *salik* [traveler on the path] depends upon the fact that he or she submits wholeheartedly⁸ to the *pir*. This succession and sequence of authorization of masters and spiritual guides in Sufism has been commonly termed *silsileh*. Of course, during the course of history, these spiritual representatives, who take *bay'at* have been called by different names, such as, *Qutb*, *sheikh*, *pir*, *murshid*, and others.

In this chain of spiritual authorization or *silsileh*, whenever one of the sheikhs has had a prominent characteristic, the *silsileh* has become popular through his name. For example, the *salasel-e Ma' rufiyya* are those orders that originated from Sheikh Ma'ruf Karkhi. Or since Shah Nematollah Vali found a prominent position and significance in the history of Sufism, the Ma'rufiyya *silsileh* came to be called the *silsileh Nematollahi*. Similarly, along the same lines, towards the end of the thirteenth century (A.H.) [approximately early twentieth century], the late Hajj Mulla Sultan Mohammad Baydukhti Gonabadi, titled "Sultan 'Ali Shah," held a special social, spiritual, and scholarly position. Thus, the *silsileh* after him was called "Nematollahi Gonabadi."

The true *salasil*, which were numerous in the past, all trace their authorizations back to Imam 'Ali. This is due to the fact that the principle of Sufism is based on the fact that each successor must be authorized by the previous hand. This chain of authorization of the sheikhs, according to the beliefs of the true followers of Sufism, continues until the day of resurrection. However, only the orders that are traced to an Imam are valid, and these orders all trace back to 'Ali (peace be upon him), because all the orders have originated from 'Ali who had permission from the Messenger himself. Basically, no one after the Messenger made any claim regarding a special authorization from the Messenger. Even Abu

Bakr, with all his greatness and the high position he held among Muslims, never claimed that the Messenger appointed him as his successor. However ‘Ali (peace be upon him), from the beginning announced that he was the true successor and caliph of the Messenger.

Thus, in regard to Shah Nematollah Vali a question is posed that requires much discussion and analysis, as to whether he was a Shi’ite or a Sunni.

First we should consider who is a Shi’ite? Who is a Sunni? During the course of history in every dispute among people—whether religious, political, or social—always the group that for whatever reason was more powerful and overcame its opponents found pejorative titles and nicknames for the defeated side; and every possible negative characteristic that could be thought of is normally summed up in these names. For example, in the history of Islam the words *mulhid*⁹ and *malahida* were taken to signify all of the negative qualities that people could associate with a word, so that they could easily and at once defeat a person or a group of people by calling them “*mulhid*.” Of course, there might have been some characteristics that fit, but they were not certain and should not have been generalized.

The words “Shi’ite” and “Sunni” were also coined on the basis of the disputes between the two groups. Every day they increased the differences between them, they even added issues that are irrelevant to being Shi’ite or Sunni. For example, while at the beginning there were no disputes about the date of birth, death, and migration of the Messenger, and even in the book *Usul al-Kafi*¹⁰ regarding the Messenger’s biography it is stated that the birth and death were on the twelfth of Rabi‘ al-Awwal, but later on, in the course of history, other differing narrations were reported, so that the Shi’ites, since then, have taken note and acted upon those reports, which called the birth on the seventeenth of Rabi‘ al-Awwal, because they considered these reports more credible. Of course, there is nothing to prevent different historians from reporting the dates of historical events differently; this has been a feature of history writing, at least among the early historians. For example, if you refer to books on the history of literature, you will find many disputes among historians regarding the birth and death of poets as well, although the dispute is irrelevant to the character of the poets themselves or their poetry. Accordingly, believing in the birth of the honorable Messenger to be the seventeenth of Rabi‘ al-Awwal does not necessarily classify one as a Shi’ite, or if someone says it is the twelfth of Rabi‘ al-Awwal, he does not necessarily become a Sunni—this argument has no relevance to being a Shi’ite or a Sunni. The main and primary difference between Shi’ite and Sunni is what Shi’ites believe: the successor of the Messenger, and essentially, the successor of the representative of God is always assigned. That is, succession is based on the selection of the prior representative, whereas Sunnis say the leadership of the *ummah* must be left for the review and election of experts and influential people.

In any case, whoever believes in ‘Ali as the successor of the Messenger, even though he has no choice but to accept the historical fact that Abu Bakr became the Caliph, is regarded a Shi’ite, for although ‘Ali did not oppose the government openly, he was against this kind of practice.

Of course, later on with regard to issuing of religious precepts and rulings on matters of jurisprudence there were disagreements among the Shi’ites and the Sunnis and even occasionally, among the Shi’ite *mujtahids*¹¹ or among the Sunni *mujtahids*. In the early centuries there were more differences of opinion among the Sunni jurists about matters pertaining to religious precepts. As history books indicate, at one time there were five hundred *mujtahids* in Baghdad each of whom would issue his own legal opinion. Hence, the caliphs of the time decided to reduce or eliminate these widespread differences. Accordingly, among the greatest jurists who had larger numbers of followers, six were accepted as *mujtahids*: Abu Hanifa, Shafī‘i, Malik, Ahmad Hanbal, Tabari, and Abi Davud. It was announced that every one should only follow them. Gradually, Tabari and Abi Davud were cast aside and the leaders of the Sunnis were limited to these four persons. However, Islam is not just precepts and is not limited to them. Islamic law is one of the pillars of Islam, but another important pillar is dogma.

Therefore, these differences in juridical precepts do not cause differences in the religion of the faithful—as to make one a Muslim and the other a non-Muslim. Thus, when the Shi’ites are called “*rafidi*,” meaning those who have abandoned religion; certainly if those who were known as *rafidi* were truly *rafidi*, they would not be accepted by the Shi’ites or the Sunnis. The truth of the matter is that this word was coined in order to label the Shi’ites, and declare a Shi’ite as a *rafidi*, although the person had never abandoned religion.

Shah Nematollah Vali was also in such social circumstances. Among the poetry from his youth or the times of “*irshad*” [guidance] there are many verses in praise of ‘Ali (peace be with him). Of course, the present scholars will certainly talk amply about these poems; and in order to avoid a lengthy speech I will not mention them here. However, during the time that he lived near *Haramayn Sharifayn* [Mecca and Medina] and he was under the training of his master, Sheikh Abdullah Yafei, the Muslim community there required that he formally condemn the *raids*. This is the reason he has expressed odium toward the *rafidis* in some poems. Of course, he was a Shi’ite, but he was not a *rafidi* with the connotation that their opponents used to state. The reason being, that hostility with Caliphs, which according to adversaries was among the characteristics of *rafidis*, is not among the pillars of Shi’ism.

We all consider Ali’s enemy as our enemy, and we definitely do not accept anyone who has enmity for him. Shi’ites, and possibly the entire Muslim population of the world, would not accept him. However, the dispute is over who is really an enemy. For example, some people say Abu Bakr was hostile to ‘Ali,

and forcefully took away the right of caliphate from him. However, the caliphate was the duty of ‘Ali, not his right. The issue of right exists in our minds when we become worldly and consider material belongings and positions as our right. It is then that we would say the caliphate is the right of ‘Ali, which was taken away from him. Nonetheless, ‘Ali (peace be with him) says, “To me your caliphate is not worth as much as this torn shoe.”¹² Such a person would not fight for that right, which is worth as much as an old torn shoe.

Caliphate was not the right of ‘Ali; it was the nation’s right and was ‘Ali’s duty. That is, after the Messenger, we as Muslims had the right to have ‘Ali as the caliph and successor. Others barred this duty from being performed. Imam ‘Ali did not pay attention to this for years, as well. When the obligation of government was brought up and people persistently pleaded with him to take it up, and to accept the delayed duty, having no other choice, Imam accepted. Thus, one cannot say that caliphate is the right of ‘Ali.

Some historians from the opposing side also say that had ‘Ali become the [first] Caliph, the Muslim community would have fragmented, and others—God willing with good intention—tried to prevent this division. It is obvious that, quite possibly, love of position, or for example, family problems may have also been involved. It is incumbent upon scholars to clarify these issues. In any case, the caliphates of Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Usman have been verified in history, and this was the realization of what was written by the pen [of God]. That is how it has been reported in the history books. And we have nothing to do with the goodness or wickedness of others. However, among the companions of the Prophet, we prefer ‘Ali and we follow him. Shah Nematollah Vali was also a follower of that same Imam.

Unfortunately in recent times, many great misunderstandings along with biased judgments have been expressed against Shah Nematollah, although he was one of the greatest men of knowledge and Sufism in Iran. Among them is prejudice against the word “shah” in his title, such that in many of the written and spoken material, including books, and at Iranian gatherings held outside of Iran, the word “shah” is omitted, and he is called: “Seyed Nematollah Vali”. It is true that he was also a *Seyed*,¹³ and in his poetry, he takes pride in this. However, he is known throughout the history as Shah Nematollah Vali. Eliminating the word *shah*, when it is part of a name, is not correct. Now if we want to know the true meaning of *shah*, in this context, it is better to study the third volume of the book *Tara’iq al-Haqayiq* in the part regarding the meeting of one of Shah Nematollah Vali’s later devotees, Nour-‘Ali Shah the First, with the famous jurist of the time, Ayatollah Seyed Mahdi Bahr ul-Ulum. And I refer our friends to that.¹⁴

Another point, which has been posed as a criticism, although it is not that much related to Hazrat Shah Nematollah, and yet there is room for it to be discussed, is the issue of the implicit objection of Hafez to Shah Nematollah. Hazrat Shah says:

*We alchemically transmute the dust of the path with a glance
We cure one hundred ills with a glimpse.*

Similarly, the following is in the poetry of Hafez:

*Those who alchemically transmute the dust of the path with a glance
Would it be to turn a glimpse toward us?
My illness is better hidden from those who claim to be physicians
May its cure come from His hidden treasure.*

Some in the position of criticism say that; the second verse of Hafez's ghazal in which he has mentioned "those who claim to be physicians," refers to Shah Nematollah Vali. However, this criticism would be true only if Hafez had already heard that poem of Shah Nematollah Vali before, and basically if Shah Nematollah had composed this first, before the time that Hafez had written this poetry. However, this matter cannot be substantiated at all. Shah Nematollah Vali had composed a lot of poetry about his own spiritual stations, and there was no reason to suddenly make such a claim. Thus, it is possible that Hafez may have written this poem first, of course, after he had been disappointed by all those who merely claimed to be Sufis, who were famous as "Sufi" only in name, and about whom he wrote where he speaks negatively about Sufis. However, since Hafez knew that there are definitely people who alchemically transmute dust with a glance, he asked God, "O God! Is it possible that those who can do so might glance toward us?" In the following verse of the same poem, there is a hint that he regrets his own past, as well. He comes to the conclusion, with a view to his past, that those he imagined to be Sufi were in reality pretenders, or in his words, "those who claimed to be physicians." Thus, he says it is better for his illness to be hidden from all these pretenders, so that it may be cured by the treasure of the Unseen. In fact, after receiving this poem, Shah Nematollah Vali invites Hafez to come to him by saying: "We alchemically transmute the dust of the path with a glance."

Now, suppose that is not even the case. It is true that Hafez was a great man and held a distinguished position in Sufism. But the Hafez that most people know, including critics of Sufism, is a *rend*¹⁵ and a man of literature who only speaks poetry. The adherence of such a person to Shah Nematollah Vali is no honor to the Sufi Order, regardless.

*If all the universe became disbelievers,
Not a speck of dust would fall on the skirt of His grandure.*

Maybe it has been for the same reason that Shah Nematollah gave new in-

instructions to his order that were appropriate to his times. These instructions were in consideration of the fact that in those times some people had been known as “Sufis” who were notorious and whose conduct was not in accordance with “*faqr*”¹⁶ and being a dervish. Of course, each *Quth* and leader of *faqr*, according to the requirements of the time, can issue fresh and new instructions. He can even reverse the prior instructions temporarily or permanently.

Among the instructions Shah Nematollah had given was that the dervishes of the Nematollahi Order should not be without employment and should not beg. Another one was that they should not wear any special Sufi clothing. Of course, this instruction regarding prohibition of dervish vestment was cancelled several centuries later, by one of his successors, Hazrat Reza ‘Ali Shah Dakani regarding two of his authorized sheikhs; Hazrat Ma’sum ‘Ali Shah and Hazrat Nour ‘Ali Shah I, whom he had sent to Iran. These two great men entered Iran wearing special dervish robes and carrying the *kashkul*¹⁷ and *tabarzin*¹⁸; while chanting in praise they toured various cities. The reason had been that since the time of the Safavids there had been very harsh treatment toward all dervish orders, and the masters of the Nematollahi Order had practically all left Iran. It reached the point that in the final years of the Safavids the enemies of the Sufis and dervishes had power in some governmental organizations and exercised influence. Hence, among the general population no one knew what a dervish is, and in this regard everyone was in confusion. The conduct and the unique appearance of these two Sufis attracted attention. After investigations and inquiries they realized that there was something other than what they had been practicing so far, another religious path, which could ensure the tranquility of their hearts.

Particularly after the martyrdom of such great men in the Nematollahi Order as Hazrat Seyed Ma’sum ‘Ali Shah, Hazrat Moshtaq ‘Ali Shah, and Hazrat Mozafar ‘Ali Shah, people paid more attention to appreciate this path. Thus, in Iran, during the time of these two great Sufis, based on the needs of the time, Shah Nematollah’s instructions regarding clothing were annulled. Then later, after Hazrat Nour ‘Ali Shah I, the leaders and *Quths* of the Nematollahi Order did not behave in this manner. It remained so until the time of Hazrat Rahmat ‘Ali Shah, when some masters such as Hazrat Hossein ‘Ali Shah or Hazrat Majzoob ‘Ali Shah even appeared among the exoteric ‘*ulama*. After the time of Hazrat Rahmat ‘Ali Shah, his successor, the late Sa’adat ‘Ali Shah was apparently not considered as one of the ‘*ulama*, and did not possess scholarly knowledge. This, on its own, indicates that Sufism has no relationship with exoteric knowledge and education. It is an individual state and spirit. Having considered this, Hazrat Sa’adat ‘Ali Shah was greatly respected and honored by the great philosopher of the time, Hajj Mulla Hadi Sabziwari. In a meeting, after responding to the inquiries of Hajj Mulla Hadi Sabziwari’s students and novices, and after they had received satisfactory answers, many students, particularly Sultan

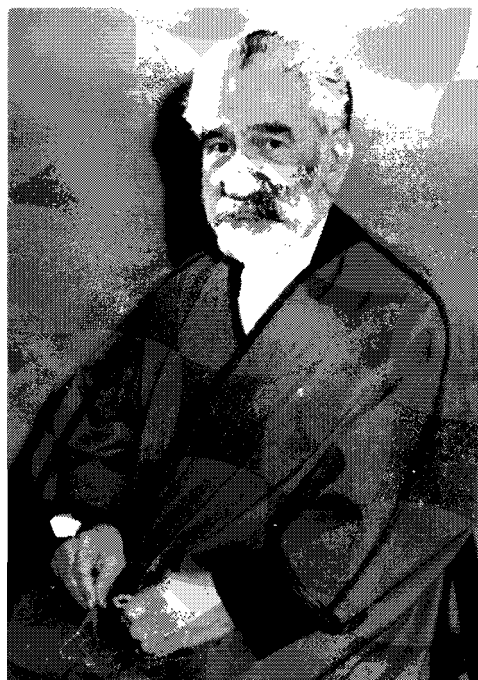
‘Ali Shah, conceded to Hazrat Sa‘adat ‘Ali Shah and were initiated to *faqr*. However, Hazrat Sultan ‘Ali Shah Gonabadi, the successor of Hazrat Sa‘adat ‘Ali Shah, was also one of the topmost *‘ulama* of the time, who similar to Mowlavi (Rumi) had given his hand of discipleship to his master [Shams Tabrizi].

In conclusion, to those who have helped with this symposium, I wish you all success, particularly Dr. Seyed Mostafa Azmayesh. May this symposium take place successfully, so that those who have not known Shah Nematollah Vali or know little of him get to know him well, God willing. Accordingly, I won't speak too much and I leave the complete explanation of the subjects to the care of the great scholars who have participated in the symposium, and have submitted articles, or will later deliver speeches. Truly, their expertise in this field has been and will be a lot more than mine.

Al-salamu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullah wa barakatuh.

Hazrat Dr. Hajj Nour Ali Tabandeh (Majzoob ‘Ali Shah), the Qutb

[Leader] of Nematollahi Order, was born on 21st of Mehr, 1306 Hejri Solar, (October 13, 1927). His noble great grandfather, Hazrat Sultan ‘Ali Shah Gonabadi (passed away 1327 Hejri lunar), was among the most famous “Urafa” and “Ulama” of his time, and accordingly after him the Nematollahi Order became famous as the Nematollahi Gonabadi. Dr. Nour Ali Tabandeh received his theological education from his father, Hazrat Saleh ‘Ali Shah. He later studied with the renowned religious scholars of Tehran, at University of Tehran, and later obtained his Ph.D. degree from the University of Paris. In Paris, he also attended the classes of the late Islamic scholar and philosopher Professor Henry Corbin. Since Corbin was an expert in Islamic studies, academic research, and Sufism, including Nematollahi Gonabadi Order, Dr. Nour Ali Tabandeh and Professor Corbin undertook the task of collaborating a series of articles about this order. Dr. Nour Ali Tabandeh has held important judicial and cultural positions



in Iran, including judge and legal consultant (attorney) at the Ministry of Justice and Professorship at the University of Tehran and other Universities around the country. He has also translated and edited several books on legal, social, and spiritual subjects, among which we can mention “A Collection of Religious Law and Social Articles” and “Familiarity with Irfan and Tasawwof”. Hazrat Majzoub ‘Ali Shah was initiated in the path of Sufism during the time of his eminent father. After the death of Hazrat Mahboob ‘Ali Shah, the Honorable leader of the order, and according to Hazrat Mahboob ‘Ali Shah’s command the Leadership and Guidance of the travelers of the Nematollahi Order was bestowed upon Dr. Tabandeh in 1375 Hejri Solar (1996).

Notes

- ¹ *Walayat* is the inner spiritual dimension of Islam which was continued after the Prophet by Imam ‘Ali and his successors. (All footnotes are by the translators.)
- ² *Silsileh* (pl. *salasil*) literally means a chain, indicating a chain of authorization associated with a Sufi Order.
- ³ A two sided transaction done between a person intending to enter the Path of Allah and the Caliph of Allah or his representative. By virtue of this transaction Allah has promised His satisfaction and paradise for the person. For an excellent explanation of *bay‘at* and its related issues please see the article: “Observations on the Meaning of Bay‘at” by Hajj Dr. Nour‘Ali Tabandeh (Majzoub‘Ali Shah) published in *The Sufi Path*, (Tehran: 2001).
- ⁴ *Ijtihad* is the derivation of the rules of Islamic law from their sources: the Qur’an, *hadiths*, reason and consensus. The *usuli* school of jurisprudence believed that scholars must practice *ijtihad*, while their opponents of the *akhhari* school believed that all juridical questions could be answered directly through the Qur’an and *hadiths*.
- ⁵ See footnote 2.
- ⁶ A book mostly containing a collection of supplications, in Arabic, primarily reported from the Imams, collected by Hajj Sheikh Abbas Qumi.
- ⁷ Literally, in Persian *pir* means *elder*. Among the Sufis it is used to designate the spiritual master.
- ⁸ What is meant here is that the *salik* should make *bay‘at* with the *pir*.
- ⁹ The term *mulhid* (pl. *malahida*) is used to signify those who deny religious truths; atheists, disbelievers.
- ¹⁰ *Usul al-Kafi* written by an early Shi‘ite writer, Kulayni (d. A.H. 328-9) is one of the four major Shi‘ite collections of narrations.
- ¹¹ Experts of Islamic jurisprudence.
- ¹² See Seyed Razi, *Nahj al-Balagha*, ed. Subhi Salih (Beirut: 1980), Sermon 33.
- ¹³ One descended from the Prophet.
- ¹⁴ Muhammad Ma’sum Shirazi, *Tara’iq al-Haqa’iq*, ed. Muhammad Ja’far Mahjub, Vol. 3 (Tehran: 1365), 199-200.
- ¹⁵ A *rend* is a rascal who does not care about formalities and religious laws.
- ¹⁶ Literally *poverty*, it refers to the absolute poverty of man compared to God. It is used as another term for Sufism.
- ¹⁷ A special vessel often made from a dried sea-cucumber.
- ¹⁸ A special axe used by Sufis as a tool and to symbolize the cutting away of worldly attachments.

Keynote Speech

Richard N. Frye

A keynote speech is supposed to be general and not directed to details, such as episodes in the life and times of Shah Nematollah Vali, and I follow this road in sketching broad remarks. These may not reveal novelties, but at least they may cause reflection on a large vista of our common interests. Furthermore, sometimes meditation on generalities can set trees in the perspective of a forest. When one approaches the end of life it is commonplace for memories to usurp the place of detailed investigations, and for this I beg your indulgence.

The common, popular conception of Sufism or a Sufi, is one who retreats from the world, and goes off by himself to contemplate his navel, or to reflect on personal salvation. On the contrary, I maintain that is only a caricature of a Sufi. Of course he spends time in thought and devotion, but he does not leave or forget the world. Rather he is, or should be, the moral conscience of humanity, by example, and by teaching to seek the betterment of all in this world, not just his own self-centered view of life. He becomes part of a brotherhood of those who have gone before him, valuing their contributions to the Sufi way of life, and hopefully adding to it in his own time. A mystic, yes, but life and the creation of life itself is a mystery. The more we know, and the more we advance technologically, the more awesome and incomprehensible life and the world become.

The examples and models of the lives of great Sufi teachers of the past provide a guide to thought and action in the present world, and believe me, we need their lessons now more than ever. The belief among many today that there are no universal verities, that truth and morality is relative, is just contrary to Sufi beliefs. When we see the greed, the corruption, and the ruthless striving for power and control over others, whether CEOs of the business world, or politicians, then surely we have lost the path of eternal righteousness in the lives of men. That is why this conference is more than a simple exercise of investigations into the life and times of the master Shah Nematollah Vali, but it has a meaning for all of us today. Sufism does have a role to play in the modern world, and we should not minimize or exclude the teachings of the masters of the past from our own lives.

Let me turn now to reminiscences. I would like to make confessions about several revelations I have had which changed my beliefs regarding Iran. Others undoubtedly have had similar changes in direction, so what I say is not new, but it is personal.

The first came in 1975 with the publication of my book, *The Golden Age of Iran*, with the subtitle: *The Arabs in Iran*. You can imagine the scandal that caused among the Westernized elite of Shemiran. How could a specialist on the Achaemenids and Sasanids commit such a heresy, by exalting the dark days of the country's history?

Believe me I did not seek this conclusion, but I felt compelled to admit, against my will, that the culture and civilization created in the first five centuries of Islam were not only brilliant, but far surpassing anything in Iran before or since. The fact that the vehicle of that culture was the Arabic language obscured the overwhelming influence of Iranians in the creation of that culture. I don't want to repeat the names of a galaxy of people in all realms who participated in making that period so glorious, Ibn Sina, Al-Biruni and so on. I hope you will agree with me that the title of the book is true.

The second revelation came later, following on the first, and that is even more heretical from a religious point of view. In my opinion, Islam in most of its manifestations is primarily an Iranian creation. Granted that Arabic played the same role in the Middle East as Latin in Europe, it is surprising that only Iran has had a continuous philosophic tradition down to the present, with the Arab world not even approaching it. Sufism is one part of that tradition and again it is predominantly an Iranian specialty. Others, hopefully, will discuss topics such as the role of eastern Iran, with such figures as Ibrahim ibn Adham of Balkh, and the background of Buddhism in the thinking of converts to Islam in the East. Here I only wished to share with you changes in my beliefs about the past. Notice that I did not say exclusive to any of the above.

Obviously there were many participants in the creation of Islamic civilization in all of its aspects, but the role of the Iranians really is that of the principal innovators and teachers. This is especially noticeable in the time of the three empires, Ottoman, Moghul and Safavid. Only in the last did the spirit of inquiry and innovation continue to revise older traditions. In the Sunni world fixation and lack of change was the watchword, for the Bab of Ijtihad was closed by the time of the Mongol invasion, at least for the majority Sunni world. Iranian influence on the Moghuls and Ottomans is well known and only shows the importance of the Iranian component in the fashioning of the Islamic world that we know today.

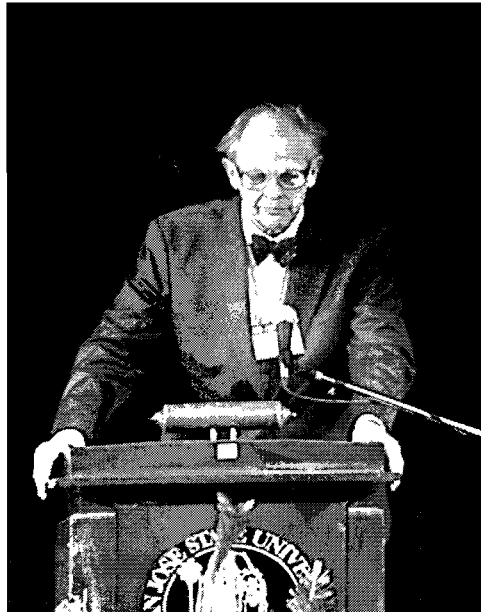
Furthermore, the Iranians were the only people in the entire Islamic world who were able to preserve their ancient identity, and blend it with the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim creation and sustaining myths. Jamshid was identified with Solomon, and many other comparisons, made the Iranian view of the ancient past compatible with the Old Testament of the Bible. Others, such as Egyptians and Iraqis, forgot their pre-Islamic past, so all they had was Iranian memory, until archaeologists unearthed their past, and cuneiform and hieroglyphic writings were deciphered.

My third revelation was a personal Sufi experience with the Khaksariyya dervish order in the Chihil Tan Khaneqah of Shiraz, when I lived there. I don't wish to go into that experience here except to say that I came to the conclusion that the best response to death is through poetry and music, for death, because of man's memory, is what it's all about.

One could say that the Sufi brotherhoods, in one sense, are the practical, everyday results of Sufi writings. The various branches of the Nematollah order of Sufis reveal the importance of the founding father of most of them. Sublime poetry is the hallmark of Sufism, and Hafez, Rumi and many others may be counted as among the brotherhood. In this vein, I conclude these general remarks of an aged seeker after knowledge and enlightenment, and beg your indulgence for listening to my remarks. As they used to say in the Soviet Union, "Thank you for your attention."

Richard Nelson Frye:

Dr. Frye received his Ph.D. from Harvard University. He was an associate professor of history at Harvard University, and also a visiting professor at Frankfurt University, and Hamburg University. From 1970-1975 he served as the Director of the Asia Institute at Pahlavi University, Shiraz, Iran.



Cultural Transformations of Contemporary Sufism

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Islam, Ideology, and Sufism

One of the major trends in the development of Islamic religious culture over the past two centuries has been what one may call the Islamization of Islam. With the growing domination of European culture through colonialism, the modern western concept of religion was applied to categorize what we now familiarly call the religions of the world. Islam, an Arabic term designating both the individual act of surrender to God and the corporate performance of ritual, became the accepted designation for one religion among many.¹ 19th-century European Orientalist scholarship played a key role in developing this “religionizing” concept of Islam, which excluded many of the intellectual and spiritual dimensions of the tradition; at the same time, colonial policy marginalized and privatized the institutions that had supported and transmitted these aspects of Islamic culture in Muslim countries. Curiously enough, 19th-century Muslim thinkers, in part responding to this colonial concept, articulated positions of reform and revivalism that mirrored the Orientalist concept of Islam. In the 20th-century, Islam has been increasingly used by fundamentalists as an ideological term for mobilizing mass activism against colonial interests or the secular post-colonial state, and this simple, hard-edged formula of opposition has been totally accepted and reproduced by Western media outlets.

Up till now, one major aspect of the Islamic tradition has been frequently omitted from discussion: Sufism, or Islamic mysticism. In a recent survey, I have argued that Orientalist scholarship has, since its inception two centuries ago, systematically attempted to exclude Sufism from its definition of Islam.² In this literature, Sufism was almost invariably defined as the product of “foreign influences,” which might be anything from Greek philosophy to Buddhism to yoga. This exclusion of Sufism from Islam was paralleled by the revisionist concepts of Islam that were being introduced at the same time by Islamic reformists, forebears of today’s fundamentalists. What both Orientalists and fundamentalists failed to acknowledge was the way in which Sufism, broadly defined, char-

acterized most of the leading Muslim religious thinkers of the premodern period. Certain tropes of hagiography, such as the execution of the Sufi martyr Hallaj (d. 922), were interpreted to mean that Sufism was totally opposed by “orthodox” Islam (however, or by whomever, that is to be defined). The fact that Muslim scholars from al-Ghazali (d. 1111) to Shah Wali Allah (d. 1762) were saturated with Sufi teachings was an embarrassment to be left out of the history of Islam. Even those figures most often invoked by today’s anti-Sufi ideologists, such as Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), were themselves members of Sufi orders, despite their critiques of particular Sufi doctrines and practices. Muslim modernists like Sir Mohammad Iqbal have also tended to reject Sufism as medieval superstition, contributing further to the notion that Sufism is irrelevant to Islam.

It was not possible to ignore Sufism completely, however. Again, in what conspiracy theorists might call a deep collusion, Orientalists and fundamentalists both conceded that Sufism was once legitimately Islamic, but this concession was tempered by being limited to a classical golden age in the distant past. One could confidently speak well of Sufi masters who were safely buried centuries ago; Europeans, particularly the Protestant British, agreed with the Wahhabi founders of the Sa‘udi regime that dead saints are lifeless dust—this in contrast to the vehement pronouncements of Sufis, that the saints in their tombs are living conduits to the divine presence. In practice, this attitude had the added advantage that one could safely dismiss contemporary Sufis as the degenerate representatives of a once-great tradition. As far as the study of Sufism is concerned, the golden-age attitude translated into a direct correlation between the relative antiquity of a Sufi and the attention of which he was deemed worthy; studies of Sufism in the 19th and 20th centuries, except from a purely political perspective, are extremely rare.³

Nevertheless, upon closer examination, it turns out that Sufi leaders, Sufi institutions, and Sufi trends of thought have been surprisingly resilient and adaptive to the contested situations of modernity. 19th-century Sufi leaders such as Emir ‘Abd al-Qadir of Algeria were not only active in anticolonial resistance, but also were connected with reformist circles. Much the same could be said of Indian Sufis such as the Naqshbandi leader Ahmad Barelwi and the Chishti master Hajji Imdad Allah, the North African sheikh Ahmad ibn Idris, and many others. Today, both in traditionally Muslim countries and in the West, a battle is being waged for control of the symbolic resources of Islam, and in this contest, fundamentalists and modernists regarded Sufism as their chief opponent. In spite of appearances generated by the media, if Sufism is defined broadly to include a range of devotional practices including the intercession of saints and reverence for the Prophet Mohammad, it may fairly be said that the majority of Muslims today still adhere to a Sufi perspective on Islam. The aim of this paper is to illustrate how proponents of Sufism and admirers of its cultural products have

expressed themselves through the communications media of modern technology, and to venture some speculations about the kind of community that is sustained by this technology. In making this analysis, I rely in particular on the insightful observations of Manuel Castells, in delineating varied cultural expressions found in the media of print, sound recording, broadcast media and film, and the interactive networking of the Internet.⁴

Sufism in Print

In European history, it has become a truism to state that the Protestant Reformation was to a certain extent the child of print; Gutenberg's invention of moveable type made possible the first modern best-seller, Martin Luther's German translation of the Bible. In a comparative extension of this topic, Sinologists are now examining the relationship between religion and print in China, where the long history of printing is closely tied to religious texts. Anthropologists and historians of religion alike have focused on the question of the relation between the oral and written aspects of sacred texts. Yet for Islam, perhaps preeminently the "religion of the book," research on the relationship between religion and the technology of print is still in its infancy. Partly this is due to the relatively late introduction of print to Muslim countries; despite the existence of Arabic printing in Europe by 1500, there were only a few experiments with printing in Muslim countries by the 18th century, and it was not until the late 19th century that printing became a major factor in the dissemination of Islamic texts.

To date, much of the scholarship on the subject of Islam and print has focused on the phenomena most easily accessible to Europeans, such as the presses established by European Christian missionaries and by governments, whether native or colonial; many other aspects of printing in Muslim countries remain unexplored, however. Orientalists have speculated, often in a condescending way, on the possible causes that hindered the introduction of printing among Muslims until such a late date. Was it an economic threat to the thousands of calligraphers who made their livelihood from copying manuscripts? Was it a problem of capital formation and marketing, due to the difficulty of recouping the large sums required to invest in the machinery of a printing press? Or was it a profound attachment to the oral transmission of the divine word as embodied in the Quran? These questions, and many others, will remain highly debatable as long as the actual history of printing in Muslim countries remains relatively unknown. Clearly, even establishing the outlines of this history will require the labors of scholars working on many different regions and languages, so these large questions remain premature, and may not even be useful. What is most questionable, however, is the degree to which inquiries about Islam and print have been posed from a thoroughly Eurocentric perspective, rather than from a comprehensive inquiry as to the religious purposes to which Muslims turned the new technology.

To be sure, scholars such as Barbara Metcalf have recognized the important role of print in the Islamic religious academies of 19th-century colonial India. Since the *'ulama'* (religious scholars) have been the articulators and transmitters of Islamic religious texts, they are certainly a key element to examine for the relation between Islam and print. Yet they are not by any means the only actors to consider. In a provocative essay, Francis Robinson has argued that Islamic religious scholars in India accepted print because, under colonial rule, “without power, they were fearful for Islam”.⁵ He also points out that the adoption of print for religious texts had several unexpected results: 1) the rise of “Islamic Protestantism,” i.e., a scripturalist revivalism that rejected many aspects of traditional Islamic practice; 2) the internationalization of the Muslim community; and 3) the democratization of religious knowledge and the consequent erosion of the authority of the *'ulama'*. Robinson observes that “print came to be the main forum in which religious debate was conducted,” but he restricts his attention to a certain number of sectarian groups.

Another aspect of this topic that has recently claimed the attention of scholars is the use of print (and other means of communication, like the cassette) by 20th-century Islamist or fundamentalist groups to propagate their ideologies. Certainly the ability of print to fix a text without variants has contributed to the bibliolatriy and scriptural literalism that characterizes these groups. But partly because of the way in which these groups have succeeded in monopolizing Islamic symbolism, both in the eyes of foreign journalists and in indigenous forums, those who raise the question of Islam and print have not been impelled to look past these highly visible phenomena. A cynic might call this the closed-feedback loop in which Western media and scholarship use and are used by twin agendas, that of the fundamentalists and that of the secular governments which they oppose. Once again, those topics of most interest to the West are most prominent in research.

If I am right in suggesting that the modern history of Sufism has been neglected, because of the blinders of Orientalist scholarship, then the production of printed texts on Sufism in the 19th and 20th centuries will be an important area in which this assertion can be tested. Robinson, for example, has coupled the “democratization” of Islamic religious knowledge by printing in 19th-century India with the assertion that organized Sufism became largely discredited by reformist Islam.⁶ It is not clear how this assertion meshes with his notion that print decentralized religious authority in general, since decentralization suggests the possibility of a multiplicity of competing voices. The existence of significant numbers of publications on Sufism would seem to support the idea that the community of readership of these texts was an important factor in shaping Muslim culture throughout the modern period. The evidence for Sufism in print suggests that, contrary to the assertions of anti-Sufi ideologists and the European scholars who study them, Sufism has been more than a marginal aspect of Islamic culture in South Asia.⁷

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the emergence of Sufism as a topic in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been the publicizing of a previously esoteric system of teaching through modern communications media. Today, Sufi orders and shrines in Muslim countries produce a stream of publications aimed at a variety of followers from the ordinary devotee to the scholar. Just as the recording industry democratized the private rituals of *sama* ' (listening to music) for a mass audience (see below), the introduction of print and lithography technology made possible the distribution of Sufi teachings on a scale far beyond what manuscript production could attain. As has been noted in the case of Ibn 'Arabi's Arabic works, when they first emerged into print early in the nineteenth century, suddenly a work that had existed in at most a hundred manuscripts around the world (and those difficult of access) was now made easily available at a corner bookstore through print runs of up to a thousand copies.⁸

Evidence is still far from complete, but it has been recently suggested, largely on the basis of Arab and Ottoman evidence, that the main patrons of publishing in Muslim countries in the nineteenth century, aside from governments, were Sufi orders.⁹ What was the character and extent of publication on Sufism?

The evidence is still very thin. What is available, however, is suggestive. For instance, a preliminary survey indicates that there were about 112 native presses in various parts of India publishing books in Persian and Urdu during the first half of the 19th century, and that most of their publications were on religion, poetry, and law.¹⁰ It is quite likely that many books falling into the categories of religion and poetry could be described as connected to Sufism. Lists of books published in the early 19th century from Bengal include the philosophical encyclopedia of the Brethren of Purity (both in Arabic and in Urdu) and Persian literary classics by Sa'di, Jami, and others.¹¹ The prominence of Persian literary classics in the Indian native presses mirrored their importance in the presses operated by Europeans in Calcutta in the late 18th century.¹² Likewise, books published in Iran since the mid-19th century fall primarily into the categories of classical Persian literature, religious writings, and romantic epics and popular narratives, all of which overlap to some extent with Sufism.¹³ Similarly, in the press founded by the Egyptian ruler Mohammad 'Ali in 1822, in addition to a large number of translations of European works on subjects like military science, there were significant works on religion, ethics, and poetry. Among these were a number of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish Sufi texts by authors such as Sa'di, Rumi, and Ibn 'Arabi.¹⁴

The publicization of Sufism occurred at precisely the time when Sufism was becoming an abstract subject, separated from Islam in Orientalist writings, and condemned by reformists as a non-Islamic innovation. Some of these publications in turn responded directly to presentations of Sufism by Orientalists, fundamentalists, and modernists. In this category one can find not only editions of

“classical” Sufi texts in Arabic and Persian (and their Urdu translations), but also writings of contemporary Sufi leaders, including discourses, lectures and essays, biographies, prayer and meditation practices, and manuals for using talismans and charms bearing the names of God (*ta‘widh*). Since all these books were available commercially, this new trend amounted to a mass marketing of Sufism on an unprecedented scale.

Through printed books, today one can also gain access to Sufism through scholarly publications from Western-style universities, learned societies, and cultural centers with government sponsorship. In format and style, these works are very much in the same tradition as European academic Orientalism; European-style punctuation, footnotes, and editorial techniques have been largely adopted in Arabic-script publishing. In contrast to the elite monopoly on culture characteristic of the manuscript, book publication presupposes a mass audience created by public education and sustained by print capitalism. While access to manuscripts in the premodern period was rare and difficult, and scribal errors required the comparison of different manuscripts, print makes books easy to acquire and standardizes their texts. Therefore, when a scholar today edits a classical Sufi text, it does not merely replicate the experience of an eleventh-century author for the modern reader. Carrying official authorization as part of “classical” Islamic literature, the printed text now functions in new ways to defend Sufism from the polemics of both fundamentalists and Westernized secularists. In countries like Pakistan where Arabic and Persian both function as “classical” languages, there has been a concerted effort to translate the whole curriculum of Arabic and Persian Sufi literature into Urdu. Like the classical Greek works of Aristotle and Euripides at Oxford bookstores, the Arabic Sufi works of Sarraj, Qushayri, and Suhrawardi are now to be found in Urdu versions on bookshelves in Lahore. Their eminence and Islamic scholarship makes them powerful allies in the defense of Sufism against ideological opponents.

A striking evidence of the newly specialized situation of Sufism is the way Sufi leaders could focus on marketing to their disciples through the publication of serials, a topic that is only beginning to be explored. Probably the first leading Sufi involved in publication of serials in India was Hasan Nizami, a prolific author and publisher in Urdu from 1908.¹⁵ Arthur Buehler has shown how the modern Naqshbandi teacher Jama‘at ‘Ali Shah (d. 1951) directed his movement through *Anwar al-Sufiyya*, a periodical aimed at Sufi devotees. Mandatory subscriptions for disciples combined with a rigorous train-travel program for Jama‘at ‘Ali Shah enabled him to use modern technology to keep in touch with a far-flung network of followers.¹⁶ The role of modern communications technology in Pakistani Sufism is also evident in the case of the Chishti master Zauqi Shah (d. 1951). Educated at Aligarh and trained as a journalist in both English and Urdu, he founded a Sufi magazine, *Anwar al-Quds* (The Lights of Holiness), which

was published in Bombay from October, 1925 to February, 1927. He continued to publish in newspapers, including some pieces in *Dawn* (Karachi, 1945-6) and a weekly column in *The People's Voice* (1948-9). While he published some polemical articles on the superiority of Islam in the magazine of Abu'l 'Ala' Mawdudi, *Tarjuman al-Quran*, he also wrote essays refuting the claims to authority by the fundamentalist leader of the Jama'at-i Islami. In recent years, his successors have published an intermittent English language journal called *The Sufi Path*. A number of other periodicals devoted to Sufism are published in India and Pakistan currently in Urdu and other languages.¹⁷ There are likewise numerous other examples of Sufi periodicals in Egypt and Turkey. Periodicals have the effect of preserving a sense of community among individuals scattered far from the traditional local center.

Sufis were not without ambivalence regarding the use of print for these purposes. Early in the 19th century, the Naqshbandi master Shah Ghulam 'Ali was enraged to hear that pictures of saints (evidently printed) were available at the great mosque of Delhi. In a conversation that took place in the 1890s, Haydar 'Ali Shah (a prominent Chishti leader of the Punjab, d. 1908) denounced the production of printed prayer manuals. Affirming the supreme value of oral transmission, he stated that even if a master got the Arabic names of God wrong, and taught disciples to say the nonsense words *hajj qajjum* instead of *hayy qayyum* ("The Living, the Subsistent"), his instruction was to be preferred to an impersonal practice derived from a book. This prejudice did not, however, prevent his disciples from publishing his Persian discourses in 1909.¹⁸ Yet it is striking to see that ritual could be adapted to the new technology, as in the case of constructing documents of initiation. Typically, initiation into a Sufi order in previous times had involved the disciple learning by heart and then transcribing by hand the family "tree" of the Sufi lineage, inscribing his own name at the end of a line traced back to the Prophet Mohammad. With the availability of print for this ritual process (as in the mass production of *qawwali* recordings), some Sufi groups produced ready-made printed lineage documents, with the "tree" ending in blank spaces for the would-be initiate and the master to inscribe their own names.¹⁹

The publicizing of Sufism through print (and, more recently, electronic media) has brought about a remarkable shift in this tradition. Advocates of Sufism have defended their heritage by publishing refutations of fundamentalist or modernist attacks on Sufism. In this sense the media permit Sufism to be contested and defended in the public sphere as one ideology alongside others. This is very much the case, for instance, in the numerous publications of the Barelvi theological school in South Asia, which over the past century have defended the devotional practices of Sufism against the scripturalist attacks of the Deoband School.²⁰ Biographies and discourses can also create an intimate relationship

between readers and Sufi masters: although this was also the function of those genres in manuscript form, the wide distribution of print greatly enlarges the potential audience. Through these modern public media, Sufism is no longer just an esoteric community constructed largely through direct contact, ritual interaction, and oral instruction. Now that it has been publicized through mass printing, what are the changes in personal relationships that the new media entail? As Dale Eickelman has observed, "The intellectual technologies of writing and printing create not only new forms of communication, they also engender new forms of community and authority."²¹ Many questions remain about the number and kinds of books produced on Sufism, the number of copies printed, the kind of audience they were aimed at, the publishers themselves, etc., but the only way to begin to answer these is through systematic research on the actual books themselves.

It is my assumption that the extent of publication on Sufism has been seriously underestimated, partly for the ideological reasons mentioned above. But this misreading is also a result of the entirely inadequate access to these publications in Euro-American libraries, and the quite limited amount of historical research that has been done on printing in Muslim countries. For instance, a knowledgeable British scholar, Graham Shaw, estimated that Munshi Nawal Kishor, the Hindu founder of the most important Persian/Urdu press in 19th-century India, had published around 500 books by the time of his death in 1895.²² But Prof. Mohammad Tavakoli-Targhi of Illinois State University a few years ago acquired a complete collection of the publications of the Nawal Kishor press, consisting of nearly 5000 volumes! No doubt some of these were printed by Nawal Kishor's successors, but less than one-fourth of these titles are listed in European or American libraries.²³ A great many of these publications were classical Persian poetry (including Sufi poetry), Sufism, and Islamic religious texts. This striking undercount appears to me to be quite typical. To be sure, many of these publications were produced in very short runs and were available only locally, which is why they are so hard to find. But it is certain that the major libraries of Muslim countries hold a considerable number of volumes on Sufism still unknown in the West, so at the very least, the question of Sufism in print provides a charter for further research.

Audio and Film

After the late introduction of print in Muslim countries, the technological pace picked up quickly in the 20th century with the introduction of mass media, including sound recordings, film, radio, and television. Sufi-related music, which may be founded many countries, soon began to become available in commercially available recordings. This was at first produced both for popular local audiences, as in the case of Indian *qawwali* recordings in a 1920s and 1930s, as

well as for highbrow European ethnomusicologists some years later.²⁴ In neither case can this be said to be a product of traditional Sufi *tariqa* organizations; it is, instead, a reconfiguration of cultural products for resale on the mass distribution market (whether one calls it “pop culture” or not).

In recent years, Sufi music has been the subject of a new appropriation that may be called “remix.” In World Music albums, international festivals, and fusion performances, Sufi music has been performed in contexts never before envisioned. To take but a single example, the *qawwali* music of Pakistani singer Nusrat Fateh ‘Ali Khan (“Must Must Qalandar”) was remixed by the British trip-hop group Massive Attack in 1990 to become an international dance hit with a strongly reggae flavor. At the same time, performers who were once low-status service professionals catering to the spiritual experience of elite listeners have made the shift to become box office superstars who are regarded as spiritual personalities in their own right. A glance of the top 25 recordings listed under Sufi music by on-line bookseller Amazon.com indicates the remarkable variety and profusion available to the world of consumers today. But this is best described as a cultural and commercial appropriation of Sufism rather than as the dissemination of Sufi teaching and authority.²⁵

Broadcast media in most formerly colonized countries are typically under control of the state, and so is not surprising to find that films prepared for television distribution in Muslim countries strongly reflect government interests. This political emphasis is obvious in the few documentary films on Sufism that have been produced in non-European countries, in contrast with the cultural focus of the ethnographic films on Sufism made by Western anthropologists. A notable example of the official documentary film on Sufism is “The Lamp in the Niche,” a two-part film produced by the Ministry of Information of the Government of India. This film portrays Sufism as a broadly tolerant movement, Islamic in its origins to be sure, but more closely akin to the devotional Bhakti currents of Hinduism than to anything else. Likewise, the secular government of Turkey has produced a film called “Tolerance,” devoted to the life and teachings of the 13th-century Sufi and poet Jalalod-din Rumi. Rumi is here portrayed as a universal polymath who foreshadows both Turkish nationalism and the secular values of post-Enlightenment modernity, an ironic configuration in a country where the practice of Sufism has been illegal since 1925. The Board of Tourism of the government of Uzbekistan has also released “The Shining One,” a film on the famous 14th-century saint of Bukhara, Baha’uddin Naqshband. The commercial slant of this film, evidently aimed at encouraging pilgrimage from South Asia and Turkey, reveals the curious indecision of post-Soviet societies striving to recapture an Islamic identity; at a loss to explain the mystical charisma of the saint, the narrator ends by comparing him to Gandhi and Tolstoy.²⁶ Like the occasions when official television broadcasts the ceremonies at annual festivals

held at saints' shrines, these official films show a clumsy approach in attempting to manipulate the symbolism of Sufism for the benefit of the state.

On the Internet

The apparent paradox of publicizing an esoteric tradition is nowhere more apparent than on the Internet, where the open secret of mysticism must be reconfigured in terms of what are basically advertising paradigms. There are today a host of Sufi Web sites that proclaim themselves to interested Internet surfers, offering everything from detailed textual materials online to boutiques of unusual products. Some of these are related to traditional Sufi orders, such as the Nematollahi, Naqshbandi, Rifa'i, and Chishti orders (see a representative listing at <http://world.std.com/~habib/sufi.html>). Sometimes they appear to prolong and perpetuate the authority of the printed text, as one can see from the extensive devotional and spiritual treatises available online, in English translation, in the elaborate Web sites of the American Naqshbandi order led by Sheikh Hisham Kabbani (<http://www.sunnah.org/>). This Web site also features extensive polemics directed against fundamentalist forms of Islam, and the name itself indicates an attempt to appropriate the key symbolic term of the Prophet's moral example (*sunnah*). Although many of the Sufi Web sites do have some interactive features, such as email addresses, in terms of their religious message they tend to be largely informational with a proselytizing touch.

In contrast, the web sites associated with Hazrat Inayat Khan in North America play much more fully into the Internet sensibility. Pir Vilayat Khan, Sufi Sam, and other representatives of this Sufi tradition have a massive presence that is ramified in a number of parallel but distinct organizations as well as individual Web sites. These sites feature numerous interactive features including discussion groups, travel schedules of leaders, online classes, daily inspirational messages, audio files, and massive collections of links to sites on Sufism and other religions. Discussion groups associated with these sites have free-ranging and sometimes combative debates on topics such as the relationship between Sufism and Islam. This kind of Web Site may truly be said to constitute a "virtual community," which has been defined as "a self-defined electronic network of interactive communication organized around a shared interest or purpose, although sometimes communication becomes the goal in itself."²⁷ I shall return to these groups below, in connection with the de-emphasis on Islam found in these popular forms of Sufism.

The variation in the kind of Internet presence maintained by different Sufi groups can be understood in terms of some of the fundamental characteristics of modern communications media and technology. As Castells points out, "in a society organized around mass media, the existence of messages that are outside the media is restricted to interpersonal networks, thus disappearing from the col-

lective mind.”²⁸ This new situation constitutes a challenge for groups that were traditionally defined by granting access to esoteric teachings reserved for a spiritual elite. Last year I asked the leader of a South Asian Sufi group whether or not he was interested in setting up a WebSite (I posed this question on email, since he has access to this technology in his professional capacity as an engineer). He responded by quoting the words of a 20th-century Sufi master from his lineage: “We are not vendors who hawk our wares in the bazaar; we are like Mahajans (wholesale merchants) — people come to us.” Nevertheless, he indicated that he did find the idea interesting, and it turns out that Malaysian disciples of this order have in fact set up a Web site where English language publications of the leading masters of the order are offered for sale.

We should not imagine, however, that Internet representation is completely displacing earlier forms of communications and technology. The history of technology indicates that older cultural forms persist alongside newly introduced forms of communication. Well after the introduction of writing, and even after the invention of printing, oral forms of culture have persisted up to the present day. The vast majority of participants in the Sufi tradition in Muslim countries are still from social strata that have very little access to the most modern forms of electronic communication, and many are indeed illiterate. Lower class devotees who attend the festivals of Sufi saints in Egypt and Pakistan are not represented on the Web. The effect of the spread of Internet technologies is likely to be “the reinforcement of the culturally dominant social networks, as well as the increase of their cosmopolitanism and globalization.”²⁹ As might be expected, the authors of Sufi Web sites tend to be members of such cosmopolitan and globalizing classes: either immigrant Sufi leaders establishing new bases in America and Europe, immigrant technocrats who happen to be connected to Sufi lineages, or Euro-American converts to Sufism in one form or other. Outside of America and Europe, the chief locations for Sufi Web sites are predictably in high-tech areas like South Africa and Malaysia.

Changing Forms of Community

These new forms of communications technology have introduced a tension into the internal aspect of religious community associated with Sufism. There is, on the one hand, a continued need for personal mediation and interpretation by the Sufi master, combined with the ritual use of texts. On the other hand, texts are published for external audiences, both as printed books and increasingly on the Internet, as invitations to approach the inner teachings. This constitutes, in effect, a kind of Sufi preaching (*da'wa*) that has a self-consciously public posture far in excess of what was known to previous generations. But the alternative would be a privatization amounting to complete obscurity. Some Sufi Web Sites are tantalizing advertisements of spiritual authority, using sparing amounts of

text, graphics, and occasionally photographs to convey the powerful mediating effect of Sufi masters and lineages; their primary interactive goal is to get the viewer into direct personal contact with the Sufi group. Other sites are comprehensive vehicles for virtual communities, loaded with extensive texts and links, where new forms of personal interaction are carried out and mediated by the technology itself.

The spread of new communications media has also had unforeseen effects in allowing popular culture to trump ideology. Muslims who came to the United States after the liberalization of immigration laws in 1965 have tended to be middle-class technical and medical specialists who gravitated towards reformist and fundamentalist forms of Islam. Their children, who are reaching college age today, have been unexpectedly enchanted by the world music phenomenon, and large numbers of them are discovering Sufism through the powerful music of Nusrat Fateh ‘Ali Khan and others. In view of the overwhelming anti-Muslim bias in the news media, the stunning popularity of the Sufi poetry of Rumi is another surprising embrace of a manifestation of Islamic culture—although, to be sure, Rumi’s Muslim identity is frequently underplayed or elided in favor of a universalist spirituality. Nevertheless, despite the anti-Sufi influence of Saudi-financed forms of fundamentalism, there are increasing signs of interest in Sufi devotionism in American Muslim communities (particularly among those of South Asian origin, about 45% of immigrant Muslims).

Another consequence of the new media is the erosion of textual authority and the social hierarchies associated with religion. The multiple “translations” of poets like Rumi and Hafez illustrate a very postmodern concept of the poetic text. Almost none of these are by authors conversant with the original language, and while some like Coleman Barks are professional poets who work closely with translators and standard editions, there are “versions” of the Sufi poets that have no discernible relationship with any original text. This form of “Sufism in print” sometimes verges on total fantasy, in which the imagined words of the mystic poet become the protean mirror of desire.³⁰ It is striking, too, that the gender separation and stratification associated with traditional Muslim societies has been ignored in many new Sufi groups in the West. Not only are some groups actually headed by women, but women also join with men in performing ritual music and dance in public (like the *sama* of the Whirling Dervishes). It would be hard to find any precedent for this in traditional Sufi orders.

In addition, Sufism is no longer just for Muslims. The oldest modern presence of Sufism in Europe and America, dating from the early years of the 20th century, derives from the Indian Sufi master Hazrat Inayat Khan. In view of the anti-Muslim feeling that still dominated the late colonial era, he presented Sufism as a universal form of religion beyond any particular religion or creed, despite its acknowledged Islamic roots. Other Sufi teachers who have come to the West,

like the Sri Lankan teacher Bawa Muhaiyadeen, have followings comprised of both Muslims and non-Muslims, who dispute the ultimate religious identity of his teachings. While this erosion of Islamic identity fulfills the predictions of anti-Sufi fundamentalists, it is balanced by groups that insist upon Sufism as the true essence of Islam. Sufism has become a contested badge of identity, which is announced, performed, and disputed through all of the new forms of communication.

Sufism is a form of identity that was in part severed from Islam during the traumatic experience of European colonial domination over most of the rest of the world. It has been defined by Orientalists, maligned by fundamentalists, and condemned as irrelevant by modernists. Yet it has proven to be a highly resilient symbolic system that has endured in local contexts even as it has been appropriated by cosmopolitan elites, both Muslim and non-Muslim. In private networks, publications, pop culture, and virtual communities, it may be expected to continue operating for the formation of identity and community in a variety of situations. And it is safe to say that Sufism will continue to be a formidable issue for Islamic identity in the foreseeable future.

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Notes

- ¹ The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites Edward Lane's 1842 *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* as the first use of the term "Islam" in English. Prior to that, "Muhammadanism" was the common designation for this religion. Both terms conveyed the Enlightenment concept of religion as one of many competitive belief structures.
- ² See my *Guide to Sufism* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1997).
- ³ The critique of "golden-age" approaches to Sufism has been fully developed in Carl W. Ernst and Bruce B. Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love: The Chishti Sufi Order in South Asia and Beyond* (Palgrave Press, forthcoming in 2002). For brief surveys of 19th- and 20th-century Sufism, see the following articles listed under "Tasawwuf" in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999), X:313-340: "4. In 19th and 20th-century Egypt" (F. de Jong); "5. In Persia from 1800 onwards" (L. Lewisohn); "6. Amongst the Turks (c) The Ottoman Turkish lands and Republican Turkey in the 19th and 20th centuries" (Th. Zarcone); "7. In Muslim India (b) In the 19th and 20th centuries" (C. Ernst); "8. In Chinese Islam" (J. Aubin); "9. In Africa south of the Maghrib during the 19th and 20th centuries" (J. O. Hunwick).

- ⁴ Manuel Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, volume 1, *The Rise of the Network Society* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1996), pp. 327-75.
- ⁵ Francis Robinson, "Technology and religious change: Islam and the Impact of print," *Modern Asian Studies* 27/i (1993), pp. 229-251, quoting p. 240. Revised version: "Islam and the Impact of Print in South Asia," in Nigel Crook, ed., *The Transmission of Learning in South Asia* (Delhi: OUP, 1996), pp. 62-97.
- ⁶ Robinson, "Islam and the Impact of Print in South Asia," p. 89.
- ⁷ See my article in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (above, note 3).
- ⁸ Martin Notcutt, "Ibn 'Arabi in Print," in *Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi, A Commemorative Volume*, ed. Stephen Hirtenstein (Rockport, MA: Element, 1993), pp. 328-39.
- ⁹ Muhsin Mahdi, "From the Manuscript Age to the Age of Printed Books," in *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East*, ed. George N. Atiyeh (Albany: State University of New York Press/Library of Congress, 1995), pp. 6-7. Mahdi suggests that the large followings of mystical orders made such publishing economically feasible.
- ¹⁰ Seyed Jalalod-din Haider, "Munshi Nawal Kishore (1836-1895): Mirror of Urdu Printing in British India," *Libri: International Journal of Libraries and Information Services* (Copenhagen, Denmark) 31 (1981), pp. 227-237, citing p. 230.
- ¹¹ B. S. Kesavan, *History of printing and publishing in India: a story of cultural re-awakening* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1985), pp. 396, 398-402.
- ¹² Examples include *Layli-Majnun* by Hatifi, edited by Sir William Jones (1788); the text and translation of Sa'di's ethical treatise, *Pand nama*, ed. Francis Gladwin (1788); Sa'di's complete works (1791 and 1795); and the poems of Hafiz (1791). See Graham Shaw, *Printing in Calcutta to 1800: a Description and Checklist of Printing in Late 18th-century Calcutta* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1981), nos. 111, 113, 181, 186, 277. See also C. A. Storey, "The beginning of Persian printing in India," in *Oriental Studies in Honour of Cursetji Erachji Pavry* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), pp. 457-461.
- ¹³ Ulrich Marzolph, *Narrative Illustration in Persian Lithographed Books* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).
- ¹⁴ Titles include the anonymous *Jawhar al-tawhid* (1241/1825); Sa'di's *Gulistan* (1244/1828 and 1287/1841); 'Attar's *Pand nama* (1244/1828, 1253/1838, and 1257/1842); a Turkish commentary on Hafiz (1250/1835); *Ma'rifat nama*, a Turkish work on mysticism by Ibrahim Haqqi (1251/1836); a three-volume Turkish commentary on Rumi's *Masnawi* by Kefravi (1251/1836); Ibn 'Arabi's *Fusus al-hikam* (1253/1838); the Ottoman poetry of Sheikh Ghalib (1253/1838); a Sufi Quran commentary by Isma'il Haqqi (1255/1840); the Persian poems of Hafiz (1256/1841); and several Turkish works on Sufism. See T. X. Bianchi, "Catalogue Général des livres arabes, persans et turcs, imprimés à Boulac en ... gypte depuis l'introduction de l'imprimerie dans ce pays," *Journal Asiatique* (July-August 1843), pp. 24-61, citing nos. 19, 46, 47, 97, 109, 113, 137, 148, 149, 190, 199, 201, 202, 209, 217.
- ¹⁵ Nithar Ahmad Faruqi, ed., *Khwaja Hasan Nizami* (New Delhi: Mahnama Kitab-numa, 1994), esp. pp. 89-107. See also Ernst and Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love: The Chishti Sufi Order in South Asia and Beyond*, chapter 6.
- ¹⁶ Arthur F. Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet: The Indian Naqshbandiyya and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Sheikh* (Charleston SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1998). This periodical has recently been revived in English: *Sufi Illuminations (Risala-yi Anwar as-Sufiyya 1/1-2)* (1996), available from the Naqshbandiya Foundation for Islamic Education, PO Box 3526, Peoria, IL 61612-3526 (individual subscription \$10/year).
- ¹⁷ The Khanqah Mujibiya in Phulwari Sharif, Bihar, published a journal called *Ma'arif* from the 1950s up to the 1980s; see Fozail Ahmad Qadri, *The Celebrated Garden: A Study of Phulwari Sharif Family of Muslim Divines* (Shillong: North-Eastern Hill University Publications, 1998), p. 68. American libraries have holdings of several Sufi periodicals from Pakistan published over the past two decades, including three from Karachi (*Darvish*, *Rumi Digest*, and *Sachal Sa'in*) and one from Quetta (*Dastgir*).
- ¹⁸ Ghulam Haydar 'Ali Shah of Jalalpur Sharif, *Nafahat al-mahbub* (Sadhura, Pakistan: Bilali Steam Press, 1327/1909); Urdu trans. from Persian by 'Abd al-Ghani as *Malfuzat-i Haydari* (Lahore: al-Qamar Book Corporation, 1404/1983-4).

- ¹⁹ *Silsila-i 'aliyya-i Chishtiyya Nizamiyya Fakhriyya Sulaymaniyya Lutfiyya*, ed. Hajji Makhdum Bakhsh (Lucknow: Nawal Kishor, 1913). For other examples of printed *shajara* genealogies, see Qadri, p. 43, n. 16, and Liebeskind, p. 219.
- ²⁰ This controversy has been discussed at length by Usha Sanyal, *Devotional Islam and politics in British India: Ahmad Riza Khan Bareilwi and his movement, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). See also the extensive list of Bareilvi publications offered for sale in the large (224 page) catalogue *Kitabi Dunya* offered by Nizami Book Agency of Budaun, U.P. (1988-89).
- ²¹ Dale F. Eickelman. "Introduction: Print, Writing, and the Politics of Religious Identity in the Middle East," *Anthropological Quarterly* 68 iii (1995), pp. 133-38, quoting p. 133.
- ²² G. W. Shaw, "Matba`a [printing]. 4. In Muslim India," *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (new ed., 1991), 6:806.
- ²³ The Persian titles of this magnificent collection are in the private collection of Prof. Tavakoli-Targhi; the Urdu volumes (about 15% of the total) have been purchased by the University of Chicago.
- ²⁴ See *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism*, pp. 189-91, 195-96.
- ²⁵ Regula Qureshi. "'Muslim Devotional': Popular Religious Music and Muslim Identity under British, Indian and Pakistani Hegemony," *Asian Music* 24 (1992-3), pp. 111-21.
- ²⁶ This latter film should definitely be viewed in conjunction with "Habiba," a New Age film distributed by Mystic Fire Video in their "Women of Power" series. While this female healer quotes the Quran, the Prophet Mohammad, and the Sufi saints, she also makes mysterious references to "the snakes" and to the Goddess, as she leads followers on pilgrimage both to the tomb of Baha'uddin Naqshband and to the tomb of his mother.
- ²⁷ Castells, I:361.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, I:336.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, I:363.
- ³⁰ See the recent recording, "a gift of love: deepak & friends present music inspired by the love poems of Rumi" (tommy boy music RCSD 3078), featuring readings by such luminaries as Deepak Chopra, Goldie Hawn, Madonna, Demi Moore, Rosa Parks, Martin Sheen, and Debra Winger.

هو ۱۲۱

Shah Nematollah Vali and the Expansion of Sufism in India

Heshmatollah Riazi

According to historian, Balazari¹ in 637 A.D., during Omar's ruling, Muslims migrated to Sind, the eastern province of India (now in Pakistan). Since then, during Osman and Imam Ali, other people such as rulers, soldiers and merchants traveled there and reached as far as Peshawar and Lahur. Their contribution to the expansion of Islam was negligible until 93 Hejri (The Islamic calendar denoted as "h" from here on) when Mohammad-bin-Qassem attacked India and penetrated as far as Moltan;² and in 256h. When Yaghoob Layce invaded and captured most of the Sind³ province. Following many invasions, it was time for missionaries to enter India. In 270h., the first Ismaeli missionaries went to Sind. Because of their strong spiritual influence, they were able to establish the first Shi'ite Ismaeli government in 372 h. in Moltan.⁴

According to historians, in 369 h., Saboktakin Ghaznavi conquered Penjab and Peshawar and his son Sultan Mahmood invaded it up to 17 times from 391h. to 417h. to expand Islam. It is argued that his true motivation was the collection of wealth and expansion of power. Subsequently, many people converted to Islam out of fear for their lives. However, force and tyranny could not change the true cultural and spiritual beliefs of the people. Eventually many scholars, artists, poets and other philosophers migrated into India where they influenced and spread Iranian culture and Sufism in Lahur, Kashmir, Moltan and Delhi. Furthermore, these cities became the cradles of Islamic/Persian culture, and Sufism. Many mosques and schools were established and hundreds of literary and poetry books were published. Approximately 32 Persian-speaking dynasties ruled there, from 369 to 1275h. who supported Persian literary and mystical scholars, and regularly invited them to their courts.

Sheikh Ismael, an Iranian scholar, went to Lahur in 395 h. followed in 431 by Ali Hajviri, who wrote *Kashf-ol-Mahjoob*. Both were welcomed and well treated by the people of Lahur.⁵ At the same time, Seyed Nat-har Shah and Seyed Fakhroddin had gone to Dakan, in Southern India and attracted a large following.

In the seventh century, cultural and spiritual elements were slowly provided for great scholars, such as Khaja Moeenod-din Cheshti, a spiritual Master in

Cheshtiyya, who started guiding people in Ajmir. Later, Qutbod-din Kaki and Nezamod-din Oliyaa provided spiritual guidance in Delhi. It is reported that Amir Khosrow Dehlavi and Hassan Dehlavi were trained by them and introduced to the world of literature.⁶ At the same time Ghyasod-din Bolbon invited Sa'di to India, but he declined the invitation and sent his poetry instead. It is reported that one century later Ghyasod-din Aazam invited Hafez to India, who also declined the invitation out of fear of traveling by sea. Hafez also sent a copy of his poetry (*Ghazal*) instead.⁷

There were several spiritual Masters who traveled to India on their own motivation namely Seyed Ali Hamedani, (714-786h.) who lived in Kashmir for five years and helped convert thousands of Buddhists to Islam and attracted Muslims to Gnosticism (*Irfan*). After Hamedani's death, two branches of Nourbakhshiyya and Zahabiyya were developed in Kashmir, Iran and India.⁸

In the seventh century (666), the Suhrawardiyya Order was established by Zacharia Moltani in Ocheh. In other Indian cities, scholars like Iraqi and Haravi were actively spreading and teaching Gnosticism (*Irfan*). In the eighth century, the Qaderiyya Order was active in some parts of India and scholars like Abdul Qader Sani and Dehlavi and Prince Dara-Shokouh gained fame.⁹

In the ninth century the Naghshbandiyya Order spread throughout India by the efforts of Khaja Mohammad Parsa and became known as the "Way of the Khajegan." At the same time, spiritual orders such as Cheshtiyya, Suhrawardiyya, Qadariyya, and Naghshbandiyya—all branches of Junaidiyya Sufism—were also very active.

Shah Seyed Nematollah Vali, a mystic scholar born in 731h. in Halab, Kerman, revolutionize Sufism in Central Islamic countries, such as Iran, Turkey, Syria and Northern Africa. Ever since childhood, Shah Nematollah had received training and guidance by scholars and mystics of his time. He studied in depth the *Esharat* written by Avicenna (Abu Ali Sina) and received training from many other notable scholars until he selected Sheikh Abdullah Yafei, the 15th Master of Ma' rufiyya as his master and studied under him for seven years.¹⁰ Later he became the 16th master of the Ma' rufiyya order and embarked on an ambitious promotion of his teachings which was based on the following six principles:

1. Belief in the twelve Imams of the Shi'ite sect. By wearing a handmade hat adorned with twelve stripes he brought attention and recognition to the twelve Imams of the Shi'ite sect, which was at the heart of Islamic Sufism. He was able to revive this ideology after 600 years of being dormant and subsequently attracted the attention of many from Halab to Samarqand.
2. Commitment to Shariyat (Islamic Practices) as he himself headed the public prayers.

3. Hard work and effort as essential practices for all.
4. Discontinuation of the practice of wearing special clothing intended to distinguished one from the general public. He dressed like the common people.
5. Strong prohibition against seclusion, laziness and the use of narcotics.
6. Freedom of speech and expression in religious and spiritual thought.

These principles led to Shah Nematollah's widespread popularity and respect among his peers and political leaders, including Indian Bahmani Kings. This ideology breathed a fresh new life into to the Shi'ite school of thought.

The Relationship of Bahmani Kings and Indians with Shah Nematollah and his Descendants

Meanwhile in Iran, the Sarbedari, Sheikh Saffiod-din Ardebili and Shah Nematollah Vali movements were reforming the traditional society. In the south of India, some governments were reflecting mostly of Shi'ite ideology. Because of this, they kept their eyes on the birthplace of Sufism and science—namely Iran.

Among all these, the one person who combined all the qualities of science, Sufism, mysticism and was devoid of bias, prejudice and politics; and was very popular was Shah Nematollah Vali. It is reported that Shah Ahmad Bahmani had a dream in which, a mystical man handed him the throne. Soon after the dream, he won the battle with his uncle, Firooz Shah. Upon this victory, Shah Ahmad sent a large gift to the Master and invited him to his court. The Master declined the invitation and sent his twelve-striped hat instead and a letter. In the letter, the Master addressed the King as "Ahmad Shah Vali," which flattered the King. Ahmad Shah requested a visit by one of the Master's grandchildren; subsequently, Nourod-din was sent. Shah Ahmad welcomed Nourod-din, and treated him with the highest honor by betrothing his daughter to Nourod-din. The king also gave the title of "Sheikh-ol-Mashaekh" (Master of Masters) to Nourod-din, who devoted his life to teaching and spreading Sufism in India through the continuous support of Shah Ahmad.¹¹

The Arrival of Shah Khalilollah, the Son of Shah Nematollah, in India

After Shah Nematollah's death in 834h., Shah Khalilollah who was born in 775h., was fifty nine years of age when he followed in his father's footsteps in guiding his pupils in the teachings of the Ma'rufiyya Order. He was the 17th

spiritual master, whose guidance resembled that of his father. His principles were as follows: commitment to religious rules, hard work and industriousness, refusal of charity donations, narcotics-free living, service to humanity and non-exclusivity of membership.

His virtuous practices earned him immense popularity, which eventually led to envy and slander by the governor of Kerman and Shahrokh Timuri.¹² It is reported that Shah Khalilollah forwarded a large donation of gold and jewelry received from an Indian Rajah to Shahrokh Timuri in order to alleviate any retribution and to thwart further envy.

In response to an invitation by Shah Bahman, Shah Khalilollah left Kerman leaving his son, Mir Shah Shamsod-din Hossein, as his representative. He established residence with his two sons Mohebod-din and Habbibod-din in Dakan.

At this time, Indians were invading Bahmani territories and Sultan Ahmad was in battle. Shah Khalilollah decided to join the fighting as well and went to the battleground. This action aroused fear in the Indians and it is reported that a Yogi spotted Shah Khalilollah on an elephant and cried, "The man riding the elephant is of divine descent and winning the battle would be impossible for the Indians." The Yogi surrendered to Shah Khalilollah and begged for his mercy and blessing. Some soldiers also surrendered and others fled the battle scene.

Upon observing this, Sultan Ahmad felt reverence to Shah Khalilollah and kissed his hand. Subsequently, he committed his life to service and support of the Nematollahi Sufi teachings. This event expanded Nematollahi's following among Muslims in all walks of life. There were regular gatherings of his followers and students where readings and discussions of Mowlana and Mohyod-din were common.

Shah Khalilollah's life came to an end in 860h. He was buried in Hyderabad, the capital of Bahmani Kingdom. His mausoleum was later the burial site of his children as well.

Shah Khalilollah was survived by four children as follows:

Nourollah who went to India on the request of his grandfather Nematollah, married Shah Ahmad's daughter and reached the level of mastery (*Sheikh-ol-Mashaeikh*, translated as "The Master of Masters") and had a strong following.

Shamsod-din, as mentioned above, stayed in Kerman and continued his Sufi teachings. He raised children who became famous names in Nematollahi thought and practices.

Mohebod-din, who was known as *Mujahid* (fighter), was well known for his braveries in the battlefield with foreign invaders of the time. He was killed in 864h.

Habibod-din, the youngest son, followed in his father's footsteps as the 18th spiritual master of Nematollahi Ma'rufiyya Order.¹³

Shah Habibod-din, the Eighteenth Master

Upon Habibod-din's arrival in Dakan, he found himself the bearer of the grave responsibility of leading in his father's (Shah Khalilollah) footsteps. He handled this responsibility well and attracted a major following from all levels of society. Shah Ahmad Bahmani gave his granddaughter's hand in marriage to Habibod-din.

He built and founded a school (*Khaneqah*) near Ahmadabad, Bidar and devoted his life to service to his followers and the public at large. His popularity and influence had grown so much that Sultan Homyoon Bahman, the successor to Ahmad Shah's throne, who was known as a ruthless and unjust dictator, did not see fit to treat him and his followers with anything but consideration and respect.

Habibod-din, like his father and grandfather, exhibited bravery in the battlefield and in his personal life. He participated in many defensive battles against the Indian Rajah. It is reported that he fought and was victorious with 160 mounted soldiers against forty thousand mounted and ten thousand foot soldiers of Indian Rajah. He died in 914h. and was buried next to his father and grandfather in Bidar.

Habibod-din was survived by 41 of his 73 children, most of whom promoted the spread of the Nematollahi Order throughout India. Three of them, Abdullah, Safiollah and Tahirod-din, went to Yazd and Kerman and continued the teachings. From this point on, the history of the remaining descendants is unclear. Exhibit A shows the line of succession of the Nematollahi descendants based on what little can be found in various sources.

The nine members of Nematollahi family had a prominent role in keeping the Sufi teachings alive in Dakan and in India because their activities were limited in Iran due to the fanatical Islamic views of the religious leaders of the time.

After a century and a half of unavailable history of the Nematollahi successors, Abdul Jabbar Hindi in his *Tazkerat-Oliyaa* identifies the 26th master as Sheikh Mahmood Dakani.

Sheikh Mahmood Dakani

According to the *Tazkerat-Oliyaa*, Sheikh Mahmood's grandparents were born in Najaf, Iraq but he traveled to India in pursuit of the 25th Nematollahi master of the time who was identified as Mir Shah Shamsod-din Hosseini. He spent three years studying and receiving guidance under him, after which he received permission to teach and provide spiritual guidance. He traveled to Hyderabad, Pakistan, which was under the control of Qutb-Shahian Dynasty. He built a *Khaneqah*

(school) in a remote mountain site that was later named Mount Mahmood Shah, in honor of him. The challenge of building the school is described in full in *Raahian-e Safar-e Rohani*.¹⁴

Before his death, Sheikh Mahmood appointed his son Shamsod-din, known as “Shams Mullah,” as the 27th successor of the Nematollahi order. He also attracted large followings in both Shi’ite and Sunni sects and maintained a good rapport with the spiritual leaders of other sects.

It is reported that Sheikh Shams Mullah spent most of his time in seclusion and would receive his students and followers only one day a week at heavily attended sessions.¹⁵ He was known as charismatic and influential. He died at age 80 in 1161h. and was buried next to his father at the school in the remote mountain site which is now a holy shrine for the Nematollahi followers.¹⁶

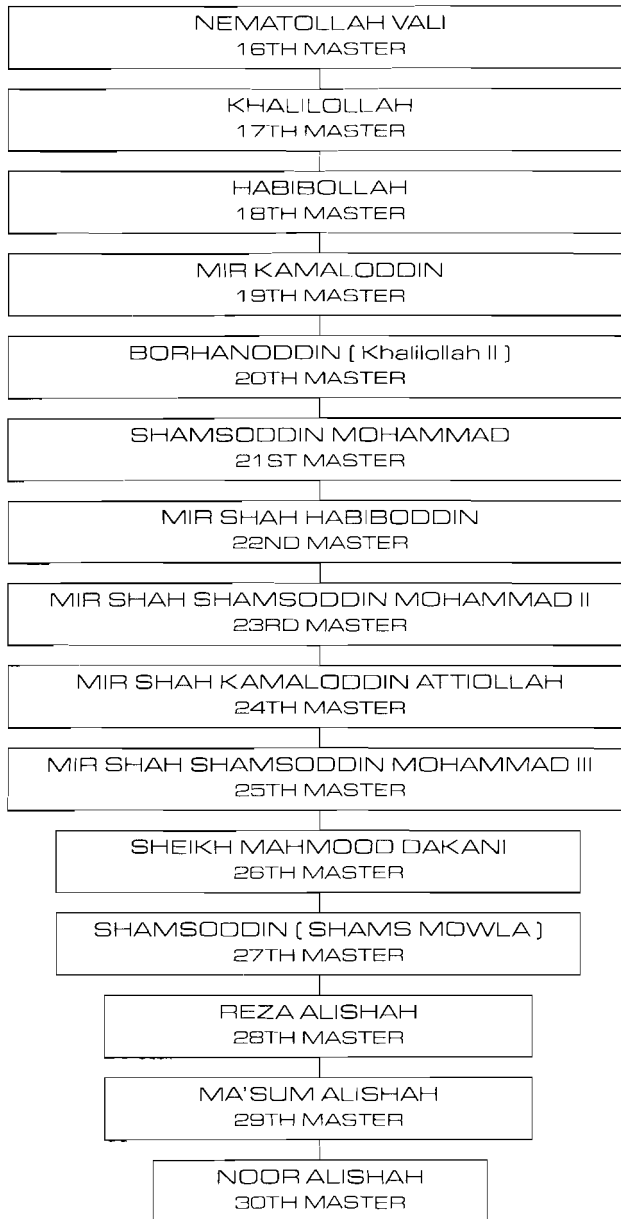
Shams Mullah’s oldest son, Alireza, also known as “Reza ‘Ali Shah,” was appointed as the 28th master. He was very passionate and devoted to the Nematollahi teachings. His cooperation and assistance to the Hyderabad Army led to their triumph over occasional tribal uprisings. This in particular led to his increased popularity among the general public and other spiritual teachers. He also developed many scholars from his students namely, Ma’sum ‘Ali Shah, Mahmood ‘Ali Shah, Assad ‘Ali Shah, Tahir Dakani and Hossein ‘Ali Shah Esfahani. Reza ‘Ali Shah designated Ma’sum ‘Ali Shah as the Master for the Iranian Territory and died soon after in 1215h.¹⁷

IRAN: THE CENTER OF SUFISM AND GNOSTICISM (*IRFAN*) ONCE AGAIN

Seyed Ma’sum ‘Ali Shah, the successor of Reza ‘Ali Shah migrated to Shiraz with his family during Karim Khan Zand’s rein in 1194h. in Persia. In Shiraz, there were two Sufi giants named Feiz ‘Ali Shah and Nour ‘Ali Shah who became Reza ‘Ali Shah’s students and soon after received permission to guide. Nour ‘Ali Shah was selected as his successor. After awhile, the envy and slander of ill-intentioned people led Karim Khan Zand to request their departure from Shiraz. Subsequently, Ma’sum ‘Ali Shah along with his followers, namely Feiz ‘Ali Shah, Nour ‘Ali Shah, Moshtaq ‘Ali Shah, Nazar ‘Ali Shah and Hossein Ali left for Esfahan. They could not last in Esfahan for long and were expelled to Khorasan soon after.

Eventually, Ma’sum ‘Ali Shah and Nour ‘Ali Shah entered Tehran, the present capital of Iran, and were welcomed by Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar (the Persian king) who had heard about them in Shiraz. The two scholars traveled across Iran and ended up in Atabat, Iraq. On their return to Iran, they were captured by Agha Mohammad Ali Mujtahid, a fanatical cleric who arranged for their assas-

EXHIBIT I
SHAH NEMATOLLAH VALI
THE LINE OF SUCCESSION

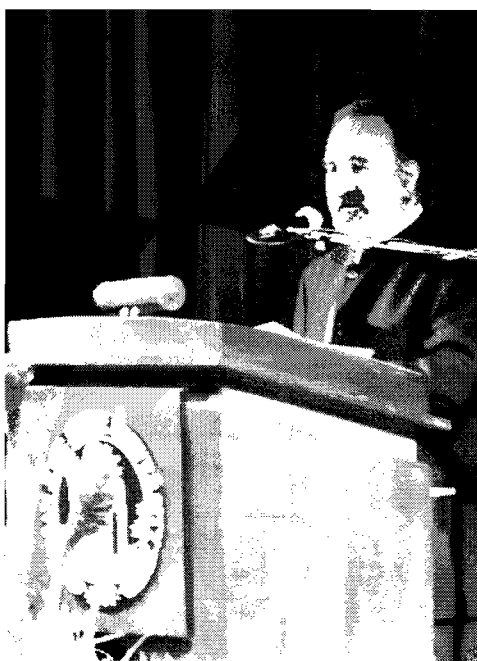


sination by drowning in the Ghar-e-soo River in 1212h.

Meanwhile in India, after Reza 'Ali Shah's death in 1215, there was no successor worthy of the title. The influence of British colonialism had also weakened the Islamic influence and thwarted the growth of Shi'ite mystical thought of the Nematollahi Order.

At the present time in Iran, Nematollahi thought is strongly followed by tens of thousands of seekers who keep the flame of mystical enlightenment lit in their hearts, freely and openly.

Dr. Heshmatollah Riazi graduated from Teachers college of Tehran. He completed his graduate work in philosophy and theology and has taught in various universities in Tehran. Dr. Riazi has published many books in the field of Sufism.



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In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

A Grand Sufi Master Shah Nematollah Vali

Mohammad Rezakhani

The light of lights, the master of righteous, the eternal grand Sufi Master (Qutb), and grand scholar, son of Abdullah, Seyed Shah Nematollah Vali—may his grave be fragrant, after the fourteen Infallibles, and may God’s blessings and greetings be upon them all— is one of the greatest saints in Shi’ite world.

He states his own name and title like this:

The title of Nematollah is “*Nourod- din*” (the light of religion)
So seek the light of religion from Nematollah.

His Highness’s great spiritual domination is so enormous that it cannot be contained in one article or even in several books.

Until one is annihilated in the absolute manifestation of His Holy Oneness, the way Seyed Shah Nematollah Vali was, recognition of the spiritual reality of His Highness is impossible.

Now it is not in my reach to know the Shah, the same as the old lady who offered her hank of threads to his Highness Saint Josef to be bought by him, this sinner by this article is also putting himself as one of the vendors to that light of light.

As stated before, the interesting point in this article is the fact that since the time of the grand absence of the twelfth imam (God’s greatest friend) even from the beginning of the creation of Adam, for the sake of God’s human beings to receive esoteric and apparent blessings of the Lord, there have always been and will always be a Grand Sufi Master. Mowlana Jalalod-din Rumi in his book “Masnavi” says:

“So in every period there is a Lord
So is the temptation perpetual ‘til the resurrection.”

King of Gnostics, beauty of theologians, head of the religious men, a complete ascetic, and of high morals, Hajj Sultan Mohammad Gonabadi, “Sultan Ali Shah”, may his grave be sanctified, in his commentary and interpretation of this “*Ayeh*” from the Holy Quran, “*Ya ayyoha Al lazina amino a konooa ansaro Al-*

lah” has written “Oh you who have *Walawi Bay’at* to God (The other *bay’at* was the *bay’at* of faith, which was considered different from the *bay’at* of Islam). In fact, this *bay’at* was made with the aspect of the *walayat* of the Prophet. Those who submitted to the prophecy of the Messenger in Mecca or afterward (and submission in Medina implied submission to the government of the Prophet), entered among the people of faith by this *bay’at walawiyyah*. Of course, there was a group at that time who considered the prophecy of the Messenger to be a criterion, and they imagined that the *bay’at* of Islam was the same as acquiring faith. Hence, in the *Surah Hujrat* it says: “The dwellers of the desert say: We believe. Say: You do not believe, but say: We submit; and faith has not yet entered into your hearts”.

From this, the differentiation of Islam from faith becomes clear. Islam means submission to the government, which is obtained by the verbal declaration of the two testimonies, but faith pertains to the heart. Following this, the Prophet is addressed by God: “They count it as a favor to you that they have submitted. Say: Do not count your submission as a favor to me, nay, rather God confers a favor on you, in that He guided you to faith, if it be that you are truthful.” From this verse it is clear that Islam precedes faith, that is, there can be no faith without Islam, while Islam without faith is possible. Of course, at the end of this verse it says, “... if it be that you are truthful.” That is, if you are truthful in becoming Muslims, not that you have become Muslims because of fear of the government. Considering these observations, one should note that in the time of the Prophet, the *bay’at* of faith was separate from the *bay’at* to the government, but after the passing away of the Prophet, the *bay’at* of faith was due to the *walayat* of Ali, and none of the other “rightly guided caliphs” claimed to take such a *bay’at*. However, during the Ummayid and Abbasid periods (since for the most part they did not believe from the depths of their hearts), they did not differentiate these two important kinds of *bay’at* from one another, and hence, they imagined that *bay’at* was only for the sake of governing. Therefore, if they had noticed that our Imams were taking *bay’at*, the lives of the Imams would have been in danger.

According to the article “Observations on the Meaning of *Bay’at*” by Hajj Dr. Nour’Ali Tabandeh (Majzoob ‘Ali Shah), “Be a friend of God, since human gentleness is natural.” Gentleness, which is the chosen humanity, is the symbol of God almighty and its victory is the symbol of otherworldly, and pious behavior. All are by the help and victory of God. Successor and God’s *caliph* are also symbols of God. His help and victory is the help of God. Therefore, using victory and help of God indicated “victory and help of God,” and “the help of the same gentleness and the same caliph.” In other words, to show the victory of these two, is in fact the victory of God. In the opinion of this sinner, all the prophets, messengers, and saints sent by these great men are God’s representatives and all of them have the same source of holy luminosity. That aspect of superior and

holy luminosity is the Truth, (The Grand Sufi Master), who appears with a new face in every time and era.

His Highness Mowlana in the following poem from “*Kolliat-e Shams*” is telling us about the same concept and meaning:

Ta sourat payvand Jahan boud Ali boud
Ta naghsheh zamean boud o' zaman boud Ali boud

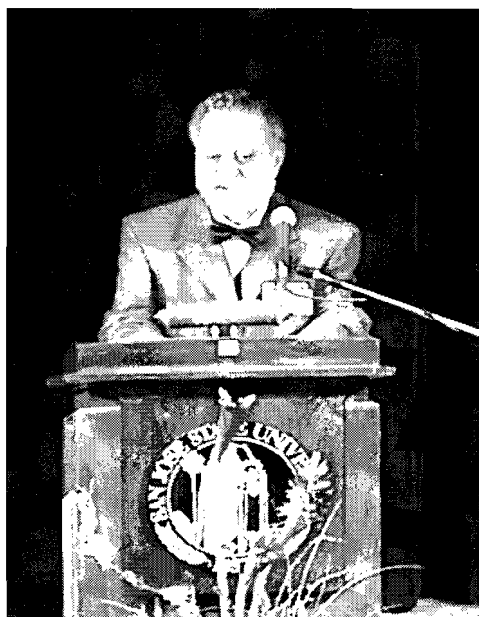
“Tafseer Byano Al Sadeh” is one of the most essential books in mysticism. Except for grand guardianship of Allah, the Sacred Book, and the words of Master of all saints, lord of all the monotheists, His Highness Ali, the trustworthy reports from the Ma’sums (the Shi’ite saints) in this book are most carefully noted. The path to Allah has been shown. explicitly and with a fine precision in all areas of scientific foundations, and philosophic concepts.

I propose, with permission from Valiyeh Asr—the Grand Sufi Master—and with the help of this great audience, that an international symposium on His Highness Sultan ‘Ali Shah—may his grave be sanctified-be held.

At the end I wish prosperity, good health and all the success from God almighty and from the heart of all the lord’s saints, for the members of this symposium. Peace be upon you all, with Allah’s mercy and blessings.

Mr. Hajj Mohammad Rezakhani:

Mr. Rezakhani received his B.S. degree from the University of Tehran and his degree of Ejtehad from the Marvy School in Tehran. Mr. Rezakhani has written many books about Sufism.



Civilization: A Global Journey

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“In each ... civilization, mankind... is trying to rise above mere humanity—above primitive humanity—that is—toward some higher kind of spiritual life... civilization, as we know it, is a movement and not a condition, a voyage and not a harbor.”

— Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975), 1948

*“We turn the dirt into gold with alchemy.
We heal every pain with a glance.”*

— Shah Nematollah Vali (1329-1431)

Abstract

Civilization has been often employed as an ideology to assert ethnocentric prejudices that promote myths of racial or cultural superiority. This essay argues that in reality there is only a single global civilization with many branches. All nations have contributed to global civilization by their scientific, technological, and cultural gifts. For the last seven million years of human life on earth, the torch of global civilization has been handed from nation to nation as in a relay marathon. The spiritual unity of all sentient beings and the loving relationship among them is the foundation stone of global civilization and its secret of survival. This perspective has found its highest expression in the works of great mystical poets, philosophers, and religious leaders such as Shah Nematollah Vali. In the Islamic tradition, the Sufi saints are the greatest exponents of what in the humanist tradition has been called “the perennial philosophy”.

Introduction

Civilization is a murky concept. Among the more concrete variables that determine the behavior of actors on the global scene, the concept of civilization entails many ambiguities. Those who define it primarily in geopolitical terms see a clash of civilizations (Huntington 1996). Others who consider it mostly in nor-

mative terms call for negotiation of global ethics (Kung 1991). Those who find it to be a more complex phenomenon encompassing both evolving structural foundations and cultural variations witness the birth pangs of a global civilization (Tehrani and Chappell 2002). The new global civilization incorporates a unity of core values borrowed from all traditions of civility allowing for a diversity of cosmologies and cultures. Diversity of cultures clearly responds to the differences in physical and social environments. The emerging unity of core values is laying the foundation for a truly global civilization.

Despite the current conceptual confusions, civilization has been playing an increasingly fashionable role as the moral justification for international actions. Political actors have been unabashedly pursuing their material interests, yet they have justified them more and more in terms of fuzzy civilizational goals. Osama Ben Laden justified his complicity in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States in the name of a hypothesized Islamic civilization. Since Ronald Reagan, U. S. Presidents have justified their foreign policies as defense of Western civilization and “our way of life”. In its bloody war against the Chechnyan independence movement, Russia also has invoked civilizational values. State and non-state terrorists are thus increasingly resorting to civilizational rationalizations. Transnational corporations (TNCs) lust for profits, yet they do it in the name of civilizational progress. Even scholars have lately succumbed to the temptation to argue that a clash of civilizations is shaping our own post-cold war era. Collateral damages in people, pestilence, and pollution are often dismissed as the price we have to pay for civilizational advance. In this foggy discourse, the realities of naked material interests driving the global actors are generally mystified. The clash of collective egos, dogmas, and aggressive politics are too easily taken for a clash of cultures and civilizations.

Is civilization on trial?

In the last few decades, a variety of “fundamentalisms” have captured the political imagination of some political actors. Militant movements, ranging from market¹ to Islamic, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist “fundamentalists”, have taken center stage in some societies (Marty & Appleby 1991, 1992, 1993). I employ quotation marks around “fundamentalism” because in traditions that have no Holy Books on which to rely for a literal understanding, fundamentalism is a misnomer. However, secular or religious dogmas often gain currency in demagogic politics. What unify such worldviews are literal beliefs in some dogmas. When combined with fervent zeal, the beliefs turn into a mass movement to establish religious or secular utopias on earth.

In recent decades, the clash of fundamentalisms has indeed put human civilization on trial (Ali 2002). The term “civilization” has been often employed in international discourse to camouflage the dogmas. Due to geographic proximity

and economic interdependence, the Western-Islamic ideological confrontation has shown a particular intensity. Another type of confrontation was the order of the day during the Cold War (1947-1989). In the 1960s, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev dramatically boasted that communism will “bury” the capitalist world by its superior civilization. In the 1980s, U.S. President Ronald Reagan spoke of the defeat of the communist “Evil Empire” as a moral imperative facing the civilized West. Starting with the Bandung conference of the non-aligned nations in 1955, the ideological struggle took a three-way war of words among the Sino-Soviet, Western, and non-aligned blocs. All rhetoric was cast in the name of civilization.

The discourse on civilization has not been very civilized. Dubious defenders of civilization have urgently called our attention to this troublesome concept. Some scholars have plausibly argued that due to the decline of nation-states and empires, civilization presents a category of analysis more relevant to the post-Cold War conditions (Huntington 1993). Despite the claims of decline, however, nationalism and imperialism continue to show vibrancy. The ethnic groups that are denied statehood, such as the Palestinians, Uighurs, Chechnyans, Kurds, and Tibetans, continue to struggle for recognition. In contrast to these material forces, the ideational role of norms and values in international politics is at best ambiguous. To understand this role, we must achieve some level of clarity about normative concepts such as civilization. Arnold Toynbee’s seven-volume *Study of History* provides a good starting for understanding the complexity of the subject. But his *Civilization on Trial* (1948) can better remind us of the parallels between the immediate postwar era and our own turbulent times.

In times of historical transition, the role of foundational myths and core values embedded in civilizational conflicts becomes critical. Both Cold War and post-Cold War periods represent such epochs. They have been marked both by bitter disappointments and fervent utopian hopes. The end of WWII was marked by the hopes for a new world order characterized by Great Power cooperation to maintain collective security through the United Nations Security Council. Those hopes were dashed by a balance of terror between two superpowers armed to the teeth by nuclear weapons. Similarly, the end of the Cold War promised freedom from the dark nuclear shadow overhanging the earth. It also gave rise to great hopes for peace dividends resulting from disarmament and supposed to be channeled toward global prosperity. Within a decade, however, the Gulf War, ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia, genocide in Rwanda-Burundi, and the relentless confrontation between the Israelis and Palestinians tore those dreams into tatters. The terrorist acts of 9/11 and their aftermath are casting on the world the specter of a global civil war without physical or moral boundaries.

Is civilization a good idea?

When someone asked Mahatma Gandhi what do you think of Western Civilization, he promptly replied, "It would be a good idea!" The same irony can be thrust upon any other civilization, whether Eastern or Western. No civilization has ever lived up to its own ideals. Having traveled along the ancient Silk, Spice, and Incense Roads², I am increasingly doubtful of distinctions between Eastern and Western Civilizations. It is more historically realistic to think of civilization in the singular rather than plural. All other civilizations may be considered branches of an awesome Tree of Global Civilization. Put more simply, there are many cultures but only one global civilization. And global civilization is a good ideal to strive for. If and when civilization's costs and benefits are more equitably shared, we may even approach that ideal!

Cultural exchange has been going on for untold centuries. We can find few cultures in the world that have not borrowed from others. The first globalization took place along the ancient Spice, Incense, and Silk Roads. The second globalization occurred when Columbus "discovered" the New World. The European colonization of Africa, Asia, and Americas forcibly brought East and West into intimate contact. The third globalization is now in progress through global communication and markets. It has led to the rise of a new global Network Civilization (see chapters 2 and 7).

Discerning students of history cannot fail but to note an overwhelming fact. We may loosely speak of Western, Chinese, or Islamic civilizations, but in reality there is only one civilization to which we all belong. In every major city, we can now witness its mixed blessings, including Coca Cola, Pizza parlors, Sushi bars, Sony, IBM, CNN, and BBC. All these products are clearly gifts of the industrial world to the rest. But who invented fire? Probably the Africans. The wheel? Probably the Central Asian nomads. Decimal numbers? The Indians and Arabs. Writing? The Egyptians, Sumerians, and Greeks. Postal system? The Persians. Gunpowder, paper money, silk, and compass? The Chinese. Printing? The Chinese, Koreans, and Germans. I can go on and on.

Like a torch in a relay marathon, civilization has been passed on from hand to hand. Paleontologists tell us that the African hunters and gatherers led the way. The latest ancestor of *homo sapiens* has been found in Chad in a skeleton dating back seven million years. The agriculturalists of major river basins followed. The traders of the Silk and Spice Roads then accumulated huge fortunes in such commercial cities as Xian, Samarkand, Bokhara, Isfahan, Baghdad, Aleppo, Athens, Venice, and Rome. With the introduction of manufacturing and rise of industrial societies, the turn of Western Europe came. Industrial civilization was subsequently exported to the New World. Ever since the rise of informatics, the United States has been on the forefront.

The civilizing process³

Human civilization has thus developed from its nomadic phase (99% of human history) to the agrarian, commercial, industrial, and informatic stages. Two facts of history stand out in this process: Domination and Resistance. Those peoples who have led the way technologically and economically also have dominated the world militarily. In empire after empire, those who have fallen behind have resisted the dominant. It is foolishly human for those who are temporarily ahead to claim some kind of moral superiority. But technological, economic, and military advance do not automatically confer moral superiority.

The Golden Rule may be reasonably considered a good universal litmus test in moral achievement: "In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you." This is a paramount Judaic-Christian ethical imperative that has perennially resonated in the Greek, Confucian, Buddhist, and Islamic philosophies. On that test, most of our civilization is failing today. On that test, civilized persons must have a capacity to empathize with "the other." Those who inflict violence must feel the pain and suffering of their victims and ask themselves if the moral cause they espouse justifies such extremity. On that test, moral causes embedded in ideological and normative concepts such as liberalism, nationalism, communism, democracy, and freedom cannot pass easily.

Only self-defense may pass that test. But in self-defense, we have a range of options from violent to non-violent means. Non-violence is natural. Violence is a deviance. If it were the reverse, we would not have over six billion people living in the world today (Page 2002). Self-interest primarily dictates human cooperation and co-existence. Self-defense in the present global technological and economic environment is a legitimate but complex moral choice. Do we have the moral right to unleash nuclear, biological, chemical, or suicide bombing on non-combatants? Military jargon identifies such damages to people and property as "collateral damage." More accurately, such damages reveal a cultural lag between our rapidly advancing technologies of warfare and our old-fashioned rules of conduct in military confrontations. Our moral, political, and legal rules have clearly not kept up with the accelerating ferocity of technologies of warfare.

Civilization demands rules of conduct commensurate with the level of complexity of each historical epoch. The new high-tech technologies of mass violence cross all past physical and moral boundaries. They require new rules of conduct going well beyond national flags and boundaries. For that if no other reason, civilization must be considered a global journey not a destination. Like democracy, it is an unfinished global project. We are deluding ourselves if we claim to have arrived at a civilized or democratic state. Civilization and democracy are ideals worth striving for. No nation has yet completely banished violence from its social life. A democratic government of the people, by the people, and for the people has not yet been achieved anywhere in the world. Some coun-

tries may have advanced ahead of others in this journey. But since weapons of mass destruction and terrorism know no boundaries, the civilized and democratic rules of conduct cannot be drawn up by one state and imposed on others. They must be negotiated globally through the global institutions we have currently at our disposal.

The beginnings of a World Constitution can be found in the UN Charter. It is not perfect and needs to be democratized (Camilleri, Malhotra, and Tehranian 2000; Aksu and Camilleri 2002). We also have a global Bill of Rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its ancillary documents. The rule of international law is far from ideal, but we have the World Court and now the International Criminal Court. An emerging global society also has contributed to the World Constitution by such documents as the Earth Charter (www.earthcharter.org) or the Universal Declaration of World Citizens (www.toda.org). The monument of a global civilization is being built brick by brick, tear by tear.

The purpose of this volume

This volume focuses on the long journey. It thereby analyzes the impact of globalization on international relations. It argues that we are currently witnessing the birth pangs of a global civilization. If the new civilization were to survive, it would have to be grounded on the common humanist norms of all past civilizations. Aldous Huxley has identified that continuing tradition of civility as *perennial philosophy* (Huxley 1944). But the birth pangs of a global civilization are currently hostage to the conflicts between centers and peripheries of power. Stemming from two power polarities, Globalism and Tribalism are the two most potent ideologies that threaten the birth of a humane global civilization. I use “Tribalism” in this context as a metaphor and *not* in its literal sense. As a metaphor, Tribalism suggests the rise of a variety of religious, nationalist, ethnic, and sectarian causes that demand total and often totalitarian devotion to a single identity, group, and often-charismatic leader. Globalist and Tribalist ideologies are energized by two dominant pathologies of the modern world: commodity and identity fetishism. Only genuine dialogue among the different branches of a single global civilization can rescue the world from a protracted global civil war of terrorism and counter-terrorism waged by the Globalist *cum* Imperialist and Tribalist forces. To reverse the current trends, however, the dialogue must be focused on the most urgent needs of our own era, including a war on weapons of mass destruction, poverty and ignorance, and for sustainable and equitable world development, as well as democratic governance.

Few have more eloquently identified the civilizing force of compassion than Mahatma Gandhi (1996, 242-243):

“We must either let the Law of Love rule us through and through or not at all.

Love among us based on hatred of others breaks down under the slightest pressure. The fact is such love is never real love. It is an armed peace. And so it will be in this great movement in the West against war. War will only be stopped when the conscience of mankind has become sufficiently elevated to recognize the undisputed supremacy of the Law of Love in all the walks of life. Some say this will never come to pass. I shall retain the faith till the end of my earthly existence that this shall come to pass . . .

“...Non-violence is a weapon of the strong. With the weak, it might easily be hypocrisy. Fear and love are contradictory terms. Love is reckless in giving away, oblivious as to what it gets in return. Love wrestles with the world as with itself and ultimately gains a mastery over all other feelings. My daily experience, as of those who are working with me, is that every problem would lend itself to solution if we were determined to make the law of truth and non-violence the law of life. For truth and non-violence are, to me, faces of the same coin.

“Whether mankind will consciously follow the law of love I do not know. But that need not perturb us. The law will work, just as the law of gravitation will work whether we accept it or no. And just as a scientist will work wonders out of various applications of the laws of nature, even so a man who applies the law of love with scientific precision can work greater wonders. For the force of non-violence is infinitely more wonderful and subtle than the force of nature, like for instance electricity.

“The person who discovered for us the law of love was a far greater scientist than any of our modern scientists. Only our explorations have not gone far enough and so it is not possible for everyone to see all its workings. Such, at any rate, is the hallucination, if it is one, under which I am laboring. The more I work at this law, the more I feel the delight in life, the delight in the scheme of this universe. It gives me a peace and a meaning of the mysteries of nature that I have no power to describe.”

The diasporic cosmopolitan identity thus responds not only to a subjective need but also to the objective circumstances of what has come to be vaguely known as “globalization.”

The values that underlie such a nascent global civilization are often contradictory. They have visibly entailed both commodity as well identity fetishism, market as well as religious fundamentalism. For the purposes of this volume, however, I would characterize a civilized global order as follows:

- **Respect for the Planet Earth and all its sentient beings.**
- **Respect for human rights and responsibilities, including life, liberty, equality, community, diversity, and pursuit of happiness.**
- **Respect for the common heritage of humankind.**

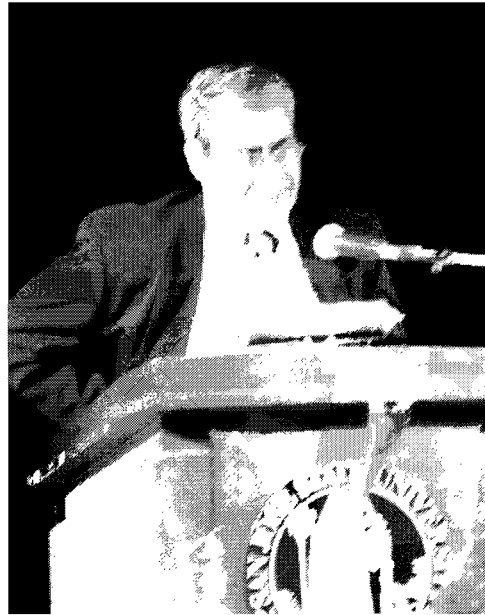
- **Support for all scientific, cultural, and artistic creativity.**
- **Maximization of peaceful conflict resolution through adjudication, arbitration, negotiation, mediation, and satyagraha (i. e. active resistance against injustice).**
- **Minimization of manifest, latent, and structural violence.**
- **Construction of just and democratic governance at all levels from local to global.**

Conclusion

This essay has argued that we are witnessing the birth pangs of a new phase in the development of global civilization. Given the enormous material and cultural diversity in the world, the new phase inescapably involves clashes of interests and cultures. To mitigate such clashes and channel them instead into creative cultural encounters and dialogue, the world needs more than ever before global as well as national citizenship. Without a spiritual life imbued with love such citizenship would be a pious wish. Living under similar circumstances in the 13th century during which the Mongol invasion was undermining all civility, a great Sufi poet Rumi thus celebrated human diversity in divine unity:

*What shall I say, O, Muslims, I know not myself
 I am neither a Christian, nor a Jew, nor a Zoroastrian, nor a Muslim
 Neither of the East, nor of the West, nor of the desert, nor of the sea
 Neither from the land, nor of the sky
 Neither of the earth, nor of water, nor of wind, nor of fire
 Neither of the high, nor of low, nor of space, nor of time
 Neither an Indian, nor Chinese, nor Bulghar, nor Saksin
 Neither of Iraq, nor of Khorasan
 Neither of this world, nor of the next, nor of paradise, nor of hell
 Neither of Adam, nor of Eve
 My place is the placeless, my sign is the signless
 There is neither a body nor a soul
 For I am of the Beloved.*

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Notes

- ¹ Market fundamentalism is generally identified with a naïve view of the ability of the market forces to solve society's problems without interventions by government or civil society. U. S. Ronald Reagan and U. K. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher inaugurated such an ideological era.
- ² These are labels given to a complex of land and ocean routes from Asia to Africa and Europe that facilitated trade, technology, and cultural exchange among the peoples of the ancient and medieval worlds. With the introduction of European ocean faring in the 16h century, the routes over the Eurasian landmass went into decline. Europe advanced, and Asian societies subsequently declined (Tehranian 1995).
- ³ This is the title of an important book by Norbert Elias (1994) who considers good manners associated with civilized behavior has their origin in the formation of state.

Shah Nematollah Vali Kermani as a Mystical Poet: Three Trends of Islamic Mysticism and Three Bases of His Poetry

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*One can find Nematollah by the light of love.
Whoever does not have love, how will he find him?¹*

*The old man of the tavern of love gave me a cup of wine,
appointed me cupbearer to his rends.²*

As it is evident from the heading, my paper will only deal with the mystical poetry of Shah Nematollah, leaving aside his prose writings. For a number of reasons, I have not been able to study his treatises properly until now. Therefore I decided, instead of making superficial comments, to refrain from discussing them altogether and to confine my discourse to his poetry.

If this piece of writing is published, I hope that the masters of hearts and possessors of insight will advise me of the errors and mistakes they come across, so that, with the help of their lofty aspiration, my work might reach its perfection.

I have divided my discourse into three parts: the first of them contains an analysis of the relationship between the teachings of Shah Nematollah and those of the school of Ibn al-‘Arabi. The second explores the connections between Shah Nematollah and the school of Bayazid Bastami (also known as “the school of intoxication” (mazhab-e sukr). The third examines the links between the teachings of Shah and the beliefs of the malamatis, the qalandars and the rends.

I. Shah Nematollah Vali and the school of Ibn al-‘Arabi

Since it is impossible to question or to deny the shah’s acquaintance with the teachings of Ibn al-‘Arabi and his school, I thought it best to begin with an analysis of the spiritual relationship between those two great Sufis and a discussion of the how the shah borrowed from the Greatest Sheikh. Hopefully, this will give me credibility in the eyes of the experts in the field, and win their support for riskier ideas.

The main book³ of Ibn al-‘Arabi that the shah used in his studies was “The Bezels of Wisdom” (*Fusus al-hikam*)—the work which up till now remains the main textbook of theoretical mysticism (*irfan-e nazari*) and, as such, is studied both at traditional seminaries and modern universities. Shah Nematollah himself testifies to this in his “Commentary on the verses of *Fusus al-hikam*”:

*The words of “Fusus” in our heart
fell like a gem [falls] in its [proper] bezel.
From the Messenger of God they came to him (i.e., Ibn al-‘Arabi – J. E.);
again, [coming] from his spirit they stuck to our heart.⁴*

One of the most important things Shah Nematollah borrowed from Ibn al-‘Arabi is the teaching of the systematizing of divine manifestations (self-disclosures): by dint of divine names and fixed entities they are placed into different levels (*maratib*) and loci of manifestation (*mazahir*). Undoubtedly, the mystics regarded things as talismans of divine names long before *Ibn al-‘Arabi*: the root of the teaching of divine names and their places of self-disclosure must be sought in the Holy Quran. The merit of *Ibn al-‘Arabi* lies in developing the initial intuition into a theoretical system. Combining this idea of the “archetypal” role of divine names with his other teachings – such as the teaching about the “fixed entities” (*a‘yan thabita*) (which is based on an earlier Ash‘aris teaching about “non-existents” (*ma‘dumat*)) and that about the “most holy and holy effusions” (*fiyad aqdas wa fiyad muqaddas*), he managed to build an integral system of spiritual cosmology.

In Shah Nematollah’s *Divan*, these teachings are most minutely discussed in the *masnavis*. For example, in one of them he says:

*The locus of manifestation of our entities (a‘yan) is our spirits (arwah);
the locus of manifestation of our spirits is our apparitions (ashbah).
All spirits are a shadow of entities;
all apparitions are a shadow of spirits.
Again, the entities are a shadow of the names of the Real;
again, the names are a shadow of the Unbounded Essence.
His Essence reveals itself in a name;
the name discloses itself in entities.
The name, the entity, the spirit and the body— all four of them—
are a shadow of one Essence, remember this well.
All of them are existent (mawjud), but [this is] due to Being (wujud).
Without Being, how will they “be” (= exist)?⁵*

Although Shah Nematollah accepts Ibn al-‘Arabi’s system of spiritual cosmology and uses it in his works, he focuses his attention on the idea of the one-

ness of being of the Real (*wahdat-e wujud-e haqq*). He explicitly states that being (i.e. existence) on all levels subsists by the being of God's Essence, which is the entity of being and the Real Being. Hence, when we discuss the "levels" (*maratib*) of being, we actually discuss the levels of the shadow of the Real Being, which differ from each other in their intensity and weakness, subtlety and density etc. It is evident that a shadow does not have any real existence without the individual who possesses it. When a mystic considers these levels of shadowy being in his mind, he considers them as things of an entirely relative (*nisbi*) character, or, rather, as pure relations (*nisab*) – and whichever thing is such, is not worthy of the attention of the masters of hearts. In another *masnavi* Shah Nematollah thus describes the entification of entities through the most holy effusion:

*The Effuser, through the most holy effusion, o soul,
deigned to order the entification of entities.
The entities are fixed in [God's] knowledge;
know that by their essence they are that very Essence.
When the name lifts [its] veil,
every entity shows itself to you openly.
Know that all His attributes are [but] relations,
from all of them read: "human being" (insan).
The sea, the foam, the wave and the brook are [outwardly] four;
by necessity, all four are [inwardly] one.⁶*

It seems that, after the examination of all the multiple avenues of thought, offered by Ibn al-'Arabi, the shah chooses the avenue of oneness, i.e., the oneness of all levels of being, which he views as shadows of (the possessors of) the true reality and radiances of a single sun. Hence, he regards their unity as real, but treats their manyness as supposititious (*i'tibari*) and intelligible (*ma'qul*) (wherefore this manyness can be left out and not paid attention to). In his poetry, the Shah often ponders on the images of "foam," "wave," "brook," and "the sea," always coming to the conclusion that, since the reality of these four things is the single reality of water, every difference and distinction between them is metaphorical and supposititious.

As we know, Ibn al-'Arabi spoke of five presences (*hadarat*) or five worlds, which comprise all levels of being, both the unseen (*ghaybi*) and the witnessed (*shuhudi*). Shah Nematollah accepts this gradation and likewise speaks of five presences:

*The "Unbounded Unseen" (ghayb-e mutlaq) is one of His presences,
the world of [fixed (?)] entities is at his service.
The "Witnessed [domain]" is another presence,*

*its world is a kingdom of pleasant form,
 Another presence is the "Ascribed Unseen" (ghayb-e mudaf),
 [which is situated] between both presences without discord.
 Know that side of it which is turned to the Unbounded Unseen [as]
 "Domination" (jabarut),
 study the science of the intelligibles from this world.
 It has also been called "The Unbounded Image" (mithal-e mutlaq);
 mystics have pierced many pearls (i.e., discussed the topic eloquently
 and at length – J.E.).
 Another side of it (i.e., "The Ascribed Unseen" – J.E.) is "The Sovereignty"
 (malakut)
 with its bright moon-faced image.
 Call this image "Delimited" (muqayyad),
 seek the World of Sovereignty here.
 Keep in memory as "The Perfect Human Being" (insane-e kamil)
 the presence which contains in itself all four [presences].
 Look at four presences in one presence
 in order to see five presences, o son!⁷*

In spite of Shah Nematollah's apparent acceptance of this Ibn al-'Arabi's teaching, it would be wrong to say that this theory—like other theories of theoretical mysticism—has greatly influenced his own practice-oriented teaching, constituting its innermost core. Rather, these theories make up a set of common beliefs, shared by most (if not all) Sufis of Shah Nematollah's time. These beliefs had become extremely widespread in the Islamic intellectual milieu after the dissemination of the teachings of Ibn al-'Arabi's school in the Muslim world and the subsequent "theorization" of mysticism (i.e., its turning into a complex of sophisticated theoretical teachings and assuming a shape of a speculative science). (At the same time, I have to say: Praise be to God! In the Eastern parts of the Muslim world, particularly in Iran, mysticism has never become a purely theoretical, speculative method, i.e., a collection of refined intellectual teachings deprived of faith, love and taste—and, if God so wishes, it never will!)

Another important teaching of Ibn al-'Arabi, adopted by Shah Nematollah, is that of the "new creation" (*khalq jadid*). This theory states that the world perishes and is created anew in every instant. Due to the utmost resemblance between the perished and the newly-created worlds, the common people hardly ever notice this permanent perishment and recreation (also known as "the change of likenesses" (tabaddul al-amthal)), but the mystics witness it with the eyes of their heart. In one of his *ghazals* Shah Nematollah says:

In both worlds there is [but] one existent,

*which takes a renewed form every instant.*⁸

Elsewhere he is more explicit:

*[He] permanently takes the creation away and brings it forth.
That is why the world does not remain in one state.*⁹

At the same time the shah – like Ibn al-‘Arabi himself – is fully aware of the relative character of the concepts of “the Real” (*haqq*) and “creation” (*khalq*), “oneness” and “manyness”, “names” and “attributes”, and “entities”, “levels” and “loci of manifestation”:

*If you say “Everything is the Real”, this is true,
and if you call it “creation,” this is not wrong.¹⁰
What you call “manyness” and “oneness”
are both [but] suppositions of the intellect.
My learning and intellect, and asceticism [all] vanished and were
reduced to dust.
Except the memory of Him, [everything else] was erased from my memory.¹¹
Know all levels [of being (?)] [to be] supposititious (*i‘tibari*).
Make out this subtlety well – and fare thee well!¹²
We are the lovers, [who have got] drunk from the cup of the wine of oneness.
What is [the import of] the intelligible manyness of imaginations (*khayalat*)?
Since [this] is the corner of seclusion of the tavern of love,
in respect to our way-station, what is the way and the stations?¹³
Union and separation appear [to be] supposititious.
At times He appears [to be] near to you, at times-far [from you].¹⁴*

It must be mentioned that the supposititious principle (*i‘tibariyyat*) (i.e., the supposititious character of all things and concepts), induces us to view things in different aspects and from different points of view and pay attention to the manyness of relations between them. This is evidently the most basic principle of theoretical mysticism as it is represented in the teachings of Ibn al-‘Arabi’s school: indeed, without this principle such a school, in all likelihood, would never have come into existence. (Ibn al-‘Arabi believes that the perfection of the mystic lies in bewilderment (*hayra*), which he understands as the bewilderment with the supposititious (*i‘tibari*) nature of the things.)

Shah Nematollah also asserts the supposititious character of divine attributes:

*Know the attributes to be supposititious to us,
although in reality they are the Essence itself.*¹⁵

But perhaps it is only possible to know God's Essence through the names and attributes.

*The mystic (knower) who boasts of [mystical] knowledge
to us is but the knower of [God's] names.¹⁶*

Elsewhere Shah Nematollah explains:

*Without a name, no-one can grasp the named [thing].
If there is no name, no-one can distinguish the things.
Although the intellect is purified and refined,
It cannot perceive God otherwise than through [His] names.¹⁷*

But the true mystic and lover is fully aware of the deficiency of this sort of knowledge, therefore he says:

*Insofar as I am aware of His names and attributes,
I am distracted from the presence of His Essence.¹⁸*

Is there a better way, then, to know God – a way, which could rid a man of God of this deficiency? In answer to this question, let's suffice for now with the assertion that, as far as the human being looks at God with the eyes of intellect and there is some kind of twoness between them, this is the only way open to him, i.e., he can only know God through His names.

Perhaps it is time to make an attempt to formulate precisely Shah Nematollah's attitude to the "oneness of being" (*wahdat-e wujud*) – the teaching with which Ibn al-'Arabi's school has been associated for several centuries. (I must say, however, that its becoming famous by this name has more to do with Ibn al-'Arabi's well-known opponent the Hanbalite jurist Ibn Taymiyya (d.728/1328) than with Ibn al-'Arabi and his disciples.¹⁹)

What is Shah Nematollah's own view on it? I shall give two answers to this question. The first one is that he apparently professes oneness of being and manyness of manifestation (*wahdat-e wujud wa kathrat-e zuhur*), as he seems to indicate in the following verses:

*In [terms of] being He is one, so that you know.
What did this twoness arise from? From "me" and "you."
In [terms of] manifestation, this one appeared [as] a thousand.
It appears [to be] a thousand, but where [is the thousand]?²⁰*

Elsewhere he says:

*This twoness comes from manifestation, from “me” and “He.”
He is manifested through us and we abode through Him.*²¹

At the same time, he says: do not pay attention to the manifestation and the multiple loci of manifestation, but give your attention to the manifested one (*muzhar*):

*The locus of manifestation and the manifested is one to us,
the water of these waves and [that of] this sea is one.*²²
*The locus of manifestation and the manifested [thing] is one to us,
look at the form and the meaning, the high and the low!
Come you, o our friend, and worship the Unbounded
if the worshipper of idols worships the delimited.*²³

Elsewhere the shah says:

*The world consists of the spreading out (= expansion) (bast) of His common
being (wujud-e ‘am).
Everything that you find comes from His common munificence (jud-e ‘am).*²⁴

The second answer is, perhaps, more insightful. I firmly believe (which, still may prove to be false), *wujud* (“being” and/or “finding”), the key concept of theoretical mysticism, is *not*, however, the key concept of experience-based doctrine of Shah Nematollah and does not play the crucial role in his innermost teachings. Rather, to him, it is yet another supposition and a concept of supposititious character. He reiterates many times that the true lover and rend, in order to enter the tavern of love, must trample under his feet both being (of course, he means the metaphorical and shadowy being of one’s own, not the Real Being) and non-being (‘*adam*):

*We have taken repose both from being and non-being
we have escaped from annihilation and subsistence.*²⁵

His *mazhab* (“method of wayfaring”) is that of love (*mazhab-e ‘ishq*); hence, the key concepts of it are also “love” (‘*ishq*) and “taste” (*dhawq*), not “being” (*wujud*). (As if he wanted to hint at the unworthiness of the term “*wujud*” and its insufficient capacity as a symbol of the all-encompassing Reality, proposing to use “‘*ishq*” instead of “*wujud*”.)

*The whole world is a body and love is the soul,
the soul and the beloved of lovers is love.*²⁶

*“There is no one in the abode except Him” —
this hadith was transmitted by love.²⁷*

Hence, since Shah Nematollah apparently thought it more suitable to name this Reality “love” rather than “being”, it is better, in respect to his teaching, to speak of the “oneness of love” (*wahdat-e 'ishq*) instead of the “oneness of being” (*wahdat-e wujud*).

*That is love who is the lover and the beloved:
such is [the creed of] the school of lovers.²⁸
“Lover” and “beloved” were derived from “love”,
If you are a yearner (*mushtaq*), look at this derivative (*mushtaq*).²⁹
You are the lover, the beloved and the love, o dear:
keep [in memory] these words in remembrance of me.³⁰*

However, let us postpone a more detailed discussion on love and “the school of lovers” (which, to my firm belief, is the real school of Shah Nematollah) for a while, so that we can finish the discourse on the Shah’s relations with the school of Ibn al-‘Arabi. There is no doubt that Shah Nematollah attentively studied Ibn al-‘Arabi’s *Fusus* and extensively used his ideas in his own writings. In his treatment of theoretical matters, Shah is certainly a devoted follower of the Greatest Sheikh, but we have to bear in mind that his mysticism is mostly – or rather essentially – of a practical character (i.e., it is “*irfan-e ‘amali*”, not “*irfan-e nazari*”).

I am quite convinced that Shah Nematollah and his followers in the core of their teaching, i.e., in their secret heart and inmost consciousness, are miles away from the (method of) wayfaring of theoretical mysticism and the school of Ibn al-‘Arabi. Why? Theoretical mystics are mostly those who believe they have reached the station of “sobriety after intoxication” (*sahw ba’d az sukr*). They claim to witness simultaneously “oneness in manyness” and “manyness in oneness,” while to Shah Nematollah this sort of simultaneous witnessing is rather a sign of squint (strabismus) of one’s mystical eye. The shah, like many of the early mystics of Iran (Bayazid, Hallaj etc.), was always busy witnessing oneness in manyness. He believed the witnessing of manyness in oneness to be the result of following to the wandering and wine intellect and an indication of the lack of true love, or even of its complete absence.

*This is the presence of the witness of love and the drunken folk are
professors of oneness,
[so] speak about our oneness, don’t tell the tale of [the manyness of]
creations (*khala’iq*).³¹*

*We are the lovers [who have got] drunk from the cup of the wine of oneness.
 What is [the import of] the intelligible manyness of imaginations (khayalat)?³²
 Love sees one and the intellect two.
 Lovers are drunk and the one who perceives [things] by intellect ('aqil)
 in hung-over.³³
 Drinking the wine of oneness to the health of Nematollah,
 What worry do the intoxicated have about the hangover of the
 intelligible manyness?³⁴
 Don't go to his street like a sober man, o heart.
 Disengage yourself like a rend and travel through in a drunken fashion.³⁵*

II. Shah Nematollah Vali and the School of Bayazid Bastami (The School of Intoxication)

Since we have started to talk about drunkenness and intoxication, it is necessary to mention the blessed name of the guide of this path and the master of this school (i.e., the school of intoxication) Aby Yazid Bastami (188/804 (?) – 261/875).

It is interesting to discover that, despite all the greatness of Ibn al-'Arabi and his being apparently the most important figure of theoretical mysticism, and Shah Nematollah's extensive use of his teachings, to our knowledge, he never wrote a *ghazal* or a *qasida* in his praise. On the other hand, the chain (*sisilah*) of Shah Nematollah's sheikhs leads to Junaid Baghdadi (d. 910), the guide of the path of sobriety and the founder of this school, but he has never written a poem in his praise either.³⁶ Meanwhile the Shah's *Divan* contains at least two *ghazals* in praise of Bayazid, a significant member of verses in other poems alluding to him expressly or impliedly. One of these two *ghazals* has a *radif* "Bayazid". Here are the first and the final *bayts* of it:

*The sun of the firmament of meaning, Bayazid,
 The shadow of the most high sun, Bayazid.
 Seyed, you are [one] of the masters of hearts. By necessity
 Bayazid has manifested himself in your soul.³⁷*

In another *ghazal* every bayt begins with the word "Bayazid". Here are its *matla'* and *maqta'*:

*Bayazid is the soul (jan) and also the beloved (janan) of the heart,
 Bayazid is the ruler of the heart.
 Bayazid is, Bayazid is, Bayazid
 the lord of the clime of the seven terraces of the heart.³⁸*

What is the secret of Bayazid? In one of his *masnavis*, Shah Nematollah explains that “Bayazid” is actually a symbol of the perfect mystic who has annihilated himself in the Real and become subsistent through Him, thus removing any sort of duality between him and God. Perhaps it is more correct to say that Bayazid has become a locus of manifestation of the Real. Due to the overwhelming (*ghalaba*) and intoxication, he thinks that “Bayazid” has ceased to exist, i.e., that Bayazid is the Real and the Real is Bayazid, wherefore it does not matter whether we call this single individual “the Real” or “Bayazid”.

*The ruler of form and meaning –
I shall tell you who it is, namely;
it is Bayazid, and [at the same time] Bayazid certainly
is not present—look at this wonder!
The cause of duality was entification;
one of [these two] entities was named “Bayazid”.
[Give me] a reward for the good news that there is no Bayazid left:
he does not have any inclination for Bayazid left.
By annihilating yourself you will find subsistence;
through this loosing of yourself you will find yourself God.
Leave behind you being and non-being:
you ought not to be here, [so] leave [from here].
Your being is His shadow, o friend!
Leave behind the shadow [, so that] whatever are you, is He.³⁹*

If one studies carefully Persian mystical poetry, he will certainly notice that Bayazid is praised in it more frequently and in a more ecstatic manner than Junaid – the *Divan* of Shah Nematollah just provides us with some typical examples of this general rule. What causes this preference of Bayazid over Junaid? I think that the inclination to the school of Bayazid (also known as “the school of intoxication” and, in a somewhat wider sense, as “the school of Khorasan”) and giving preference to it over the school of Junaid (also famous as “the school of sobriety” or “the school of Bayazid”) is one of the specific features of Iranian mysticism.

What we know as “the school of Khorasan” is a sort of practical mysticism which is busy seeking the nearness of the Divine Beloved and looking for Him in all things, but does not reflect much upon these things as such, assuming them, as His loci of manifestation, to be identical with the manifested. (“All is He” (*hama ust*) is, therefore, not a creed of simpletons unable to perceive subtleties: the phrase conveys a deliberate decision not to take into account what might be regarded as “not He”.) One can say, due to the extreme intoxication of these lovers⁴⁰ with the wine of oneness, they took little notice of the cup from which they drunk it.

These drunken lovers, even if they attempted to conceal their intoxication and to drink wine secretly in the tavern, as a rule, were unable to keep their secrecy for long, because, in the state of drunkenness, as the mystic said, “wine is shattering the cup.” Shah Nematollah gives his drunken folk a good advice at the beginning of the carousal:

*Drink, and conceal [your drunkenness], and be silent and happy.
Don't reveal [your intoxication], drink secretly!*⁴¹

But it does not take long this advice to become useless, because the sheikh and the cupbearer himself gets drunk – actually, much more drunk than his disciples:

*My cupbearer set out and the rends after him,
[holding] a cup of wine in his hand, and the drunken folk after him.
Aiming for the [tavern of the] ruins of Magi,
the lovers and the worshippers of wine after him.
Giving a drunken roar every minute,
the cries and shouts of the lovers after it.⁴²
In the sacred enclosure of the magnificence of His love
[one perceives] [but] the cries and shouts of lovers and [the ceremony of] sama'.⁴³*

Of course, the dispute between the sober and the intoxicated is a lengthy one and has never actually ended, and each group insists that only their path leads to perfection and enables the wayfarer to reach the ultimate destination while the path and the method of their rivals is imperfect and deficient. God knows better with whom the truth is, but the bold servant who has never felt the aroma of courtesy says, “May the sobriety of the sober ones become a sacrifice to the dust of the footprints of the intoxicated! Don't go to his street like a sober man, o heart!”

If only I knew how one who has withdrawn to a seclusion with the beloved, and is enjoying his company, can pay attention to the mirrors and loci of manifestation which reflect the (image of) the beloved and scrutinize them in his presence! I definitely do not want to deprive these mirrors and loci of manifestation of their supposititious value and rob them of their metaphorical and shadowy being. I just wonder if this shadowy being deserves to be taken into account and paid attention to by the lover while he is in the presence of the beloved.

III. Shah Nematollah Vali, the Malamatis, the Qalandars and the Rends

Malamatiyya⁴⁴ and Qalandariyya were two groups whose members regarded their obscurity and inconspicuousness as conditions of the path (shurut-e rah).

Due to the fear of hypocrisy and insincerity, they refrained from expressing their beliefs in writing and showing their virtues in public. There is little wonder that we do not have firsthand testimonies about their doctrines and courtesies and even do not have the lists of the names of their elders. Therefore we know the names of only a few of them.

One of the Qalandari sheikhs, whose name and the place of burial are known to us, is Qutbod-din Haydar, a native of the town of Zawa. He died in 613/1227 or 618/1232 and was buried in his native Zawa, the name of which was later changed to “Torbat-e Haydariyya” (“The Tomb of Haydar”) to honour him and his tomb. Shah Nematollah wrote a *ghazal* to praise this Qalandari sheikh, the first and the final *bayts* of it are as follows:

*I am a lover of that Qutbod-din Haydar
and of those friends of Qutbod-din Haydar:
It befits a Seyed (i.e., a descendant of the Prophet—J.E.) like me
to be a friend of the friends of Qutbod-din Haydar.*⁴⁵

Several others poems of Shah Nematollah also contain praise of Qutbod-din Haydar or the Qalandars in general. E.g., in one of the *masnavis* he says:

*O cupbearer, give the redds a cup of wine,
give a kiss on the lips of the companions.
I am disordered, bewildered as a madman
with the beauty of the qalandar, o friends.
To a happy arising [constellation], I drink
to the cheer of Mahmud the wine of his love.
Seek the path of love in the path of qalandars
(‘ashiqi dar qalandari mi ju),
seek the aching (dardmandi) from the path of Haydar.*⁴⁶

We do not know any details about the shah’s contacts with the Qalandars. During his travels to the different parts of the Muslim world, he likely met some followers of Qutbod-din Haydar and was deeply impressed by their method of way-faring (*tarz-e suluk*) and courtesies (*adab*). Perhaps he even tried to follow their path to a degree.

Such great scholars as the late Jalalod-din Homai and Badi‘ al-Zaman Foroozanfar have pointed to the existence of strong links between the poetry of Hafez and certain *malamati* teachings.

Following in their footsteps, I would like to say that there is a great probability that “*rendi*”, as a path of mysticism, developed within and arose from the milieu of the *malamatis* and *qalandars*. However, since obscurity was an obliga-

tory condition for those who travelled this path (besides, they never used to compose theoretical treatises and keep the lists of the names of their masters and disciples), apparently we shall never be able to find documentary evidence to support this hypothesis. The problem of the genesis of the rends will remain a matter of tasting (*matlab-e dhawqi*).

One might ask how it is possible to believe that a descendant of the Prophet and Imam ‘Ali, who has received his *khirqa* from a Sheikh, whose chain of succession leads to Junaid, Ma‘ruf al-Karkhi, Hasan al-Basri and, eventually, to the Prophet himself, can become an adherent of this obscure sect, so that he sees in their “courtesies without courtesy” (*adab-e biadabi*) and haughty negligence (*laobaligari*) the perfection of (mystical) insight?

I would like to caution against jumping to conclusions. To my understanding, “*rendi*” is, first and foremost, a state of spirit which apparently does not have any outward sign by which it could manifest itself to the “people of appearances” (*zahirbinan*).

Don't go to his street like a sober man, o heart!

*Disengage yourself like a rend and travel through in a drunken fashion.*⁴⁷

Thus “rend” is the one who has disengaged himself from the whole world; he is bold and fearless, and drunk-not with wine but with the reflection of the face of the Cupbearer, which he sees in the cup. The “homestead” (*mawtin*) of the Sufi is Sufi *khaniqah*; the “homestead” of rend is the tavern (*maikhana*) in the “avenue of ruins” (*ku-ye kharabat*). His prayer is “may the taste of lovers increase!”⁴⁸

That is to say, rend is a man of taste who drinks the wine of the manifested (*muzhar*) from the cup of the loci of manifestation (*mazahir*). His only business is with the cup, the wine and the cupbearer, and he pays no attention at all to what is other than the beloved (or “other than God,” if you like) and does not ask the cupbearer for anything else except to increase the taste.

Who, then, is he arguing with and what is the name of his opponent? Apparently this is the “drunken ascetic” (*zahid-e makhmur*) (who is drunk with his own asceticism) and the “conceited Sufi” (*sufi-ye ra'na*) who has practised ascetic exercised, travelled through stations, received a *khirqa* from the hands of his master, and got his name recorded in the book of his *tariqa*. If one studies Shah Nematollah’s *Divan* carefully, he will certainly encounter this troublemaker many times. Among other places, he is the addressee of the following:

Travel this desert path without head and foot,

*don't seek a way station, because this path has no end!*⁴⁹

Since this is the corner of seclusion of the tavern of love,

in respect to our way station, what is the way and the station?

*We are drunken lovers, what are the miracles [of God's friends];
we are the worshippers of wine, what are the secret counsellings (munajat)?
We are the confidants of the rends of the marquee of love.
In our assembly, what are the states of overwhelming (halat-e tamat)?⁵⁰*

Hence, rend is a mystic who does not attach importance to the rites and courtesies of the Sufis and does not observe them—and in this sense “rend” is a special term of mysticism. “Rend” is the one who only asks God to increase his taste. The ascet (*zahid*) and the Sufi are people of reason; the rend is a man of love, the one who says: only taste, and love, and the ache for the friend (*dard-e dust*) matters, nothing else. Drunkenness and love, and taste, and the ache for the beloved— and the witnessing of the oneness in manyness and heedlessness of the manyness in oneness:

*This is the presence of the witness of love and the drunken folk are professors
of oneness,
[so] speak about our oneness, don't tell the tale of [the manyness of] creations!⁵¹
We are the lovers [who have got] drunk from the cup of the wine of oneness.
What is [the import of] the intelligible manyness of imaginations
(*khayalat*)?⁵²*

— and not paying attention to the station (*maqam*) but giving it to the state (*hal*):

*Since this is the corner of seclusion of the tavern of love,
in respect to our way station, what is the way and the stations?⁵³
The Sufi and the corner of seclusion; the rend and the tavern.
Everyone is [busy] seeking [something]; we are busy with [our] state.⁵⁴
The lover who had a state from love—
although the lover did not subsist, his state did.⁵⁵*

It must be kept in mind that many Sufi masters rejected the positive impact of the states (*ahwal*) and insisted on avoiding them at all cost, because they held them to prevent the wayfarers from reaching a higher station. Hence, it is no wonder that the conceited ascetic and the courteous Sufi regard the person who professes such views (i.e., extols the importance of the “states” and neglects the “stations”) as a ruffian, churl or even a highway robber. By virtue of this, they call him a “rend”, i.e., “vaga-bond” (*awbash*), “thief” and “robber”—namely, a spiritual vagabond and thief who prevents the wayfarers from reaching their destination and robs them of their possessions (i.e., the praiseworthy deeds and attributes, of which they have come into possession with great pains). There is no doubt that it must have been difficult, or rather

impossible, for the conceited ascetic and courteous Sufi to bear the company of redds, because often even their devoted friends had to forsake their company.

*We have left the flower-garden with [its] nightingales, o Saeb:
who can bear the company of this folk?*⁵⁶

I shall not dwell any longer on the redds. Of course, the topic merits more research, but, since I don't have access to many of the necessary manuscripts and documents, I have to suffice with the guesses I have made. On the other hand, this is certainly a matter of taste and, as such, it is a secret which is and will remain hidden from the eyes of the unworthy: "the meaning of the collection of roses can only be explained by the bird of dawn." If I have made wrong guesses or broken the rules of courtesy, I ask the spirits of the pure redds and the lofty aspiration of Shah Nematollah to forgive me.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the mysticism of Shah Nematollah has several "bottoms" or levels (we have spoken of three levels but this is only a theory). The first and most manifest one is that of the mysticism of Ibn al-'Arabi. The influence of the Greatest Sheikh on Shah Nematollah in the matters of theoretical mysticism is undeniable – whoever has studied the *Fusus* and the shah's *Divan*, will readily agree with me. Among other borrowed concepts and theories one can mention those of the holiest and holy effusions, entification and fixed entities, five presences and, to a degree, the oneness of being (*wahdat al-wujud*). However, despite Shah Nematollah's adherence to the teachings of Ibn al-'Arabi in theoretical matters, in practical mysticism he is the follower of Bayazid Bastami. Like Bayazid, he must be considered as a representative of the school of intoxication, i.e., as the one, who has submerged himself in the (witnessing of) Divine Presence and is heedless of the loci of manifestation and their relative manyness (though he admits their supposititious value). The third level – the deepest one into which we could penetrate – is the level of "reddi" and the (school of) the folk of the tavern – those who do not attach importance to the observance of the outward courtesies, being permanently drunk with the wine of oneness and drowned in the ocean of love (or rather being themselves pure love), and do not ask God for anything else except the increase of taste and tasting the dregs of the ache for the beloved. Perhaps it is not inappropriate to end this paper with this prayer of redds:

*This is the assembly of love, and the cupbearer is present.
O Lord, may the taste of [Thy] friends increase!*⁵⁷

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Notes

- ¹ Shah Nematollah Vali Kermani, *Divan*, introduction by S. Nafisi, 2nd edition, Tehran: Sima-ye Danish 1378 S. H., p. 158.
- ² Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 4.
- ³ Apart from “Fusus”, Shah Nematollah studied minutely at least two other textbooks of theoretical mysticism (writing commentaries on both of them), namely, Sadrod-din Qunawi’s *Fukuk* and Fakhroddin ‘Iraqi’s *Lama’at*. See the list of Shah’s writings in ‘Abd al-Razzaq Kermani’s *Manaqib-e hadrat-e Shah Nematollah Vali* in “Majmu’aye dar tarjuma-ye ahwal-e Shah Nematollah Vali Kermani”, ed. J. Aubin, 2nd ed., Tehran: Entesharat-e Tuhuri 1361/1982, p. 117.
- ⁴ “Sharh-e abyat-e Fusus”, quoted from S. Nafisi’s introduction to the *Divan*: Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 21 (of the introduction).
- ⁵ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 559.
- ⁶ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 580.
- ⁷ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 559.
- ⁸ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 198.
- ⁹ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 247.
- ¹⁰ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 126.
- ¹¹ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 582.
- ¹² Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 554 and 560.
- ¹³ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 184.
- ¹⁴ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 259.
- ¹⁵ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 560.
- ¹⁶ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 421.
- ¹⁷ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 637.
- ¹⁸ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 328.
- ¹⁹ One of Ibn Taymiyya’s treatises is entitled exactly *Ibtal wahdat al-wujud* (“Showing the falsity of the oneness of being”). See: Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmu’at al-rasa’il wa al-masa’il*, vol. 1, Beirut: 1983, p. 61-120. Professor W. C. Chittick, who has spent many years studying the works of Ibn al-‘Arabi and other representatives of his school, says that he has never come across the term “wahdat al-wujud” in Ibn al-‘Arabi’s own writings, while his direct disciple Sadr Qunawi employs it only twice, in the sense “the oneness of the Being of the Real” (wahdat-e wujud-e haqq) – once in *Miftah al-ghayb* and once in *Al-nafahat al-ilahiyya* (see: W. C. Chittick, “Rumi and wahdat al-wujud”, in *Poetry and Mysticism in Islam: the Heritage of Rumi*, eds. A. Banani, R. Hovannisian and G. Sabagh, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press 1994, p. 70-111).
- ²⁰ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 435.
- ²¹ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 440.
- ²² Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 565.
- ²³ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 121.
- ²⁴ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 561.

- ²⁵ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 21.
- ²⁶ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 74.
- ²⁷ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 75.
- ²⁸ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 91.
- ²⁹ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 281.
- ³⁰ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 410.
- ³¹ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 315.
- ³² Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 184.
- ³³ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 265.
- ³⁴ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 346.
- ³⁵ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 403.
- ³⁶ In one of his short mathanawis Shah Nematollah contrasts Junaid with Bayazid: while Junaid regards as his ultimate achievement his talking with God, Bayazid speaks of his annihilation in the Real. -- Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 549. (See of the quotation in the text: "The ruler of form and meaning...")
- ³⁷ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 255. ("Seyed" is, of course, Shah Nematollah himself.)
- ³⁸ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 322.
- ³⁹ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 549.
- ⁴⁰ It is apparently more correct to call the representatives of the school of Khorasan "lovers" ('ushshaq; 'ashigan), not "mystics" or "knowers" ('urafa; 'arifan). The following lines of Mulla Sadra seem helpful in explaining my point:
- The knower prides himself on the inner knowledges,
the lower gives his soul for the friend.*
- Mulla Sadra, *Majmu'a-ye ash'ar*, ed. M. Khajavi, Tehran: Entesharat-e Moula, 1376 S.H., p. 78.
- ⁴¹ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 311.
- ⁴² Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 311.
- ⁴³ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 313.
- ⁴⁴ Hujwiri's *Kashf al-mahjub* contains a large section on the malamatis and gives a detailed analysis of the views of the apparent founder of this sect Hamdun Qassar (d.271/885). See: 'Ali ben 'Uthman al-Jullabi al-Hujwiri, *Kashf al-mahjub*, ed. V. Zhukovsky, Leningrad: 1926, p. 68-125. There are, of course, quite a lot of books about the malamatis and qalandars written by their contemporaries (not to mention numerous writings of modern scholars). However, the representatives of these groups hardly ever wrote themselves.
- Certain Sufis (e.g., Ruzbehan Baqli Shirazi (522/1128 - 606/1209). See: Ruzbehan Baqli Shirazi, *Sharh-e Shathiyyat*, 3rd ed., Tehran: Ketabkhare-ye Tuhuri, 1374/1995, p. 99. (Let's not forget, however, that Ruzbehan himself had a malamati Sheikh.)) have pointed out to the traces of malamati teachings in the method of wayfaring of Bayazid Bastami. While such traces may indeed be present there, I do not see sufficient evidence to regard Bayazid as a malamati in the strict sense of the term. ("Hujwiri names the adherents of the teaching of Hamdun Qassar "qassariyya" while calling the followers of the path of Bayazid "tayfuriyya" (after "Tayfur", the first name of Bayazid). —Hujwiri, *Kashf al-mahjub*, p. 228.)
- ⁴⁵ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 270.
- ⁴⁶ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 549. ("Mahmud" is apparently the name of a qalandar in whom Shah Nematollah sees the perfection of love.)
- ⁴⁷ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 403.
- ⁴⁸ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 6. Cf. Shah's own daily prayer, as quoted by 'Abd al-'Aziz ben Shir Malik Wa'izi, the author of *Sayr-e hadrat-e Shah Nematollah Vali*: "O God! Provide me with Thy

love, and the love of those who love Thee, and the love of the deed which brings me near to Thy love, and make Thy love more beloved by us than cold water is beloved by a thirsty man!" – *Majmu'a-ye dar tarjuma-ye ahwal-e Shah Nematollah Vali Kermani*, p. 272.

⁴⁹ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 89.

⁵⁰ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 183-184.

⁵¹ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 315.

⁵² Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 184.

⁵³ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 184.

⁵⁴ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 482.

⁵⁵ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 199.

⁵⁶ Saeb Tabrizi, *Kulliyat*, ed. A. Firuzkuhi, Tehran, 1333 S.H., p. 274.

⁵⁷ Shah Nematollah, *Divan*, p. 259.

Shah Nematollah Vali's Poetic Commentary on a *Ghazal* of Mowlana Jalalod-din al-Balkhî —Rumi

Translation, transliteration, and commentary by
Ibrâhîm Gamard*

In the “Collected Works” (*Kolliat-é Ash`âr*) of Shah Nematollah Vali (d. 1431 C.E.) there is a very interesting interpretation of a *ghazal* by Mowlana (No. 1095 in Foroozanfar's edition). Shah Nematollah has added his own commentary using the same meter and rhyme: first he quotes two verses of Mowlana's *ghazal*, followed by two interpretive verses of his own, then two verses of the original *ghazal*, and so on. The result is a poem that is twice as long, which expresses Shah Nematollah's appreciation and love of Mowlana's poetry. The text which Shah Nematollah used has a different ordering of some of the verses as well as textual differences in most of the verses (primarily minor differences, but some major ones) when compared to the earliest manuscripts of Mowlana's “Divan” (as edited by Foroozanfar).

In what follows, Mowlana's *ghazal* is transliterated and translated based upon the text in Foroozanfar's edition. Shah Nematollah's poetic commentary is transliterated and translated from his *Kolliat-é Ash`âr*. Comments by this author are made about Shah Nematollah's poetic commentaries in each section. This includes mention of major textual differences (between the text that he used for Mowlana's *ghazal* and the text in Foroozanfar's edition) which affected his interpretations. A listing of the minor and major differences are added in footnotes below (based on *Kolliat-é Ash`âr-é Shah Nematollah Vali*, edited by Javâd Nûrbakhsh, *Qasîda* No. 17, pp. 641-643). In addition, explanations of key terms and word plays in both Mowlana's and Shah Nematollah's verses are included in the footnotes.

Mowlana (11564):

*dâd jârôbê ba-dast-am ân negâr
goft k-az daryâ bar-angêzân ghubâr*

(11565):

*bâz ân jârôb-râ z-âtesh be-sôkht
goft k-az âtesh tô jârôbê bar-âr*

That (beautiful) idol* put a broom into my hand (and) said, "Raise up the dust from the ocean!"

Also, he burned the broom with fire (and) said, "Bring up a broom out of the fire!"

Shah Nematollah:

*'aql jârôb-at negâr ân pîr-é kâr
bâtin-at daryâ-wo hastî chûn ghubâr
âtesh-é 'ishq-ash chô sôz-ad 'aql-râ
bâz jârôbê ze- 'ishq ây-ad ba-kâr*

The "broom" (is) the intellect (and) the "(beautiful) idol" is the experienced (spiritual) Master. The "ocean" is internal (consciousness), and (self-) existence (is) like the "dust."

When the fire of his love burns up the intellect, the broom (of intellect) again comes into action by the means of love.

Commentary

Mowlana describes a situation of being asked to do the impossible by his spiritual master, Shams Tabriz. Shah Nematollah interprets it to mean that what is impossible for the spiritual disciple to do is to sweep away the "self-consciousness" of the ego by means of his own mind. But by the power of the Sufi master's spiritual love, and the grace of God, the ordinary mind and ego of the disciple may become burned up and "annihilated," with the result that the intellect is reactivated by the means of love (with new abilities to understand and know).

Mowlana (11566):

*kard-am az Hayrat sujûdê pêsh-é ô
goft: bê-sâjid sujûdê khwash be-y-âr*

(11567):

*âh, bê-sâjid sujûdê chûn bow-ad?
goft: bê-chûn bâsh-ad-o bê-khâr-khâr*

Out of amazement, I made a prostration (of obeisance)* before him. He said, "Produce an attractive prostration without a prostrator!"

(I said), "Oh, how can there be a prostration without a prostrator?" He said, "It is unlike (anything) and without (an) itch of desire."

Shah Nematollah:

*'aql lâ-y-é nâfiyah mê-dân hamê
'ishq iSbât-é Haqq-ast ay yâr-é ghâr
sajda bê-sâjid na-dân-î chûn bow-ad
ya 'nî bê-hastî-yé sâjid sajda âr*

You should know that the intellect is the “No” of denial (of other gods)* (while) Love is the affirmation of (only) God, O Friend of the Cave.*

Don't you know how there is a prostration without a prostrator? The meaning (is): Produce a prostration without the (self-) existence* of the prostrator.

Commentary

Here, Shah Nematollah gives his answer to the commands to do the seemingly impossible: the broom can be used and the prostration can be done as commanded— only if it can be done without the “self-consciousness” of the ego. The self-centered ego, with its obsessive preoccupations with worldly desires, must be negated by the denial of its hidden belief that it is a separate “god” and by the affirmation that the only Self-Existence is the One Reality— God, Who is Ever-Living and Eternal.

Mowlana (11568):
*gardan-ak-râ pêsh kard-am goft-am-ash
sâjidê-râ sar be-bor az Zol-faqâr*

(11569):
*têgh tâ ô bêsh zad sar bêsh shod
tâ be-rost az gardan-am sar Sad hazâr*

I put (my) neck forward (and) told him, “Sever the head of a prostrator with (the sword of) Zol-Faqâr!”*

As much as he cut more with the sword, more heads came to be—until a hundred thousand heads grew from my neck.

Shah Nematollah:
*gardan-am ya 'nî sar-é hastî bow-ad
têgh têz-é 'ishq bâsh-ad Zol-faqâr
chûn sar-é hastî be-bor-îd az badan
ma 'rifat shod âshkârâ Sad hazâr*

“My neck” means that the head of (self-) existence is (continuing). The “sword of Zol-Faqâr” is the sharp (quality) of Love.

When you cut the head of (self-) existence from the body, spiritual insight*

becomes a hundred thousand (times) clearer.

Commentary

Shah Nematollah explains how difficult it is to annihilate the self-existence of ego. But by the power of Love, self-existence can pass away, and the “broom” of intellect can understand and know Divine realities with great clarity.

Mowlana (11573):

ay mizâj-at sard, kû tâsa-yé del-at?
andar-în garm-âba tâ kay ân qarâr?

(11574):

bar-shaw az garm-âba-wo golkhan ma-raw
jâma kan dar-be-n'gar ân naqsh-o negâr

O you, with your cold temperament, where is the restlessness of your heart?
How long (will there be) this comfortable rest in the hot bath?

Get up from the hot bath and don't go (toward) the (burning) bath furnace.
Peel off (your) clothes (and) look at the pictures and (beautiful) images (on the bath house walls)—

Shah Nematollah:

gar fosorda nêst-î bar-khêz garm
tark-é Sûrat kon ba-ma'nî kon goZâr
Tâs-é del bar-kan az-în Hammâm-é tan
sôy-é bâgh-é jân kherâm ay bâ-waqâr

If you aren't frozen, get up fervently!* Abandon (outward) form (and) put (yourself near) to (inner) meaning.

Break the bowl of the heart of this hot bath of the body (and) walk gracefully to the Garden of Soul, O man of dignity.

Commentary

Here, Shah Nematollah's interpretation is based on the words “Tâs-é del,” referring to a bowl used in bathhouses— whereas the earliest manuscripts of Mowlana's Divan have the word “tâsa-yé del,” which means “restlessness of the heart.” Despite this difficulty, his interpretation here is faithful to two of Mowlana's major teachings: (1) the need to transcend the limitations of the body; (2) the need to go beyond forms [Sûrat] and to concentrate on inner meanings and spiritual realities [ma'nà].

Mowlana (11575):

tâ be-bîn-î naqsh-hây-é del-robâ
tâ be-bîn-î rang-hây-é lâla-zâr

(11578):

khâk-o âb az 'aks-é ô rangîn shoda
jân be-bârîda ba-tork-o zang-bâr

So that you may see the images of heart-attracting (beloveds), (and) so that you may see the colors of the tulip garden.

From his reflection, earth and water* became colored (and) life rained upon Turks and (those from) Zanzibar.

Shah Nematollah:

az Hujub bêrûn kherâm-ad bê-Hijâb
rawnaq-é gol-zâr-o jân-é lâla-zâr
lâla-zâr-o naqsh-hây-é bê Hisâb
az tajallî bâsh-ad ay Sâhib-waqâr

He struts nobly beyond the curtains [of illusion] without a veil* (toward) the Splendor of the rose garden and the Soul of the “tulip garden.”

(There) the “tulip garden” and the countless (attractive) “images” are from (Divine) Splendor, O possessor of majesty.

Commentary

Here, the text used by Shah Nematollah differs substantially: “Water and earth became luminous from His Light” [âb-o khâk az nûr-é ô rôshan shodeh]; “So that you may see countless images” [tâ be-bîn-î naqsh-hây-é bê-Hisâb]. Mowlana continues to mention the attractive pictures (which apparently include flowers) on the bath house walls that remind him of his spiritual beloved and master. Shah Nematollah focuses on how the “tulip garden” symbolizes the spiritual splendor of the soul which is enjoyed by the illuminated Sufi who strolls through the beauty of such a “garden”—free of the veils of the ego and worldly-desires.

Mowlana (11572):

sharq-o maghrib chî-st andar lâ-makân?
golkhanê târik-o Hammâmê ba-kâr

(11576):

chûn be-dîd-î sôy-é rôzan dar-negar
*k-ân negâr az 'aks-é rôzan shod negâr]**

(11577):

*shash jehat hammâm-o rôzan lâ-makân
bar sar-é rôzan jamâl-é shahr-yâr*

What are east and west in (the midst) of the placeless? (Merely) a dark bath furnace* and a bath (ready) to be used.

[11576 When you have gazed, look toward the window, since that picture became an image (of a beautiful beloved) by means of the window's reflection (of light).]*

(Now) the hot bath is the six directions* and the window (is) the placeless (and) the beauty of the king is above the window.

Shah Nematollah:

*khalwat-é del lâ-makân-ast az yaqîn
rôzan-ash jân-ast-o jânân shahr-yâr
golkhan-é târik nafs-é shawq-é to-st
chî-st Hammâm in tan-é nâ-pây-dâr*

The “placeless” is certainly the (spiritual) solitude of the heart, its “window” is the soul, and the “king” is the Beloved.

The “dark bath furnace” is your craving ego. What is the “hot bath?” It is the impermanent body.

Commentary

Here, Shah Nematollah's text lacks a line from Mowlana's original *ghazal*, where the listener is asked to imagine himself gazing at the pictures on the walls and then looking toward the window of the bath house, which he interprets as symbolizing the source of the beauty gazed upon—beauty deriving from the “king.” Shah Nematollah interprets the “king” as the “Beloved” and the “placeless” as having a window into the realm of the soul. Surprisingly, he ignores Mowlana's own interpretation: “the window is the placeless.” Instead Shah Nematollah interprets the “window” to mean the soul and considers the “window” an attribute of the “placeless,” which he interprets as meaning the solitude of the heart. Although Mowlana's own interpretation is that “the hot bath is the six directions” (meaning the physical dimensions of the world—since the heading of his well-known parable reads: “The Similitude of the World (Being) Like A Bath Stove” [miSâl-é dunyâ chûn gôlkhan]), Shah Nematollah takes a narrower view that it symbolizes the impermanent body. He interprets that the “dark bath furnace” is the craving ego [nafs-é shawq], which is more consistent with what Mowlana said: “The craving desires of the world are like a bath furnace” [shahwat-é dunyâ miSâl-é gôlkhan] (Masnavi IV: 238).

Mowlana: (11570):

*man cherâgh-o har sar-am ham-chûn fatîl
har Taraf andar gerefta az sharâr*

(11571):

*sham '-hâ mê-war-shod az sar-hây-é man
sharq tâ maghrib gerefta az qiTâr*

(Then) I (became) a lamp and every head (became) like a wick; every side was seized by sparks.

Candles kept rising from my heads, (and) east to west was taken (up) by rows (of them).

Shah Nematollah:

*chûn goZar kard-î az ân-o ân ba- 'ishq
jâma dar pôsh az Sifât-ash Zât-wâr
bâz chûn ham-rang-o bôy-é ô shod-î
yâr-é khwod bîn-î negâr-é har negâr*

When, together with Love, you have passed on from “this and that,” put on the clothing of Its Qualities in the (same) manner as the (Divine) Essence.

When you have again become the same “color and scent” as It, (then) look upon your own Beloved—the (lovely) sweetheart of every beloved.

Commentary

Here, Shah Nematollah has quoted from lines that appear earlier in the original *ghazal*, but since he is quoting these lines later, he has to give them more lofty spiritual meanings. Furthermore, his interpretations seem to have little to do with Mowlana’s verses, which first mentioned “east and west”— which he then interpreted to mean: “What are east and west in (the midst) of the placeless? (Merely) a dark bath furnace and a bath (ready) to be used.”

Mowlana: (11579):

*rôz raft-o qiSSa-am kôtah na-shod
ay shab-o rôz az HadîS-ash sharm-sâr*

(11580):

*Shah Shamsod-din-é Tabrizî ma-râ
mast mê-dâr-ad, khumâr andar khumâr*

The day has gone and my story has not been short. O night and day, (be)

ashamed (to compare yourself with the length) of the story about him!

King Shamsod-din of Tabriz keeps me drunk with all the effects of being intoxicated.

Shah Nematollah:

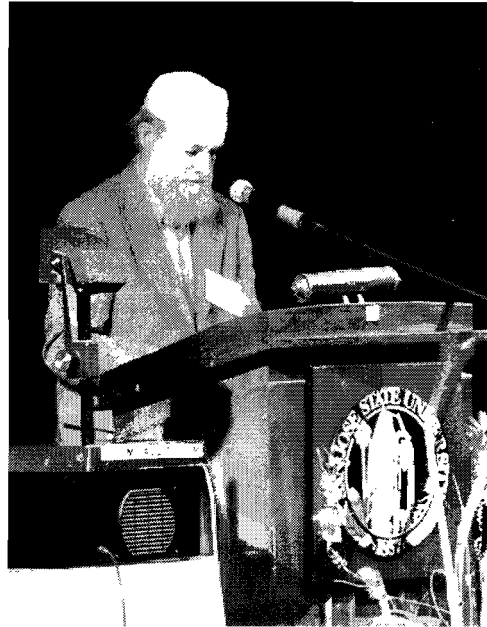
*Seyed-é mulk-é wudûd-am lâ-jaram
ân-che penhân hûd kard-am âshkâr*

Without doubt, I am the chief of the kingdom of existence. I have revealed that which was hidden.

Commentary

This does not appear to be an interpretation of Mowlana's final lines (for claiming to be the chief [Seyed] of the kingdom of existence would not be compatible with the mention of Shamsod-din Tabrizî as his king). Rather, Shah Nematollah seems to be referring to his own high rank of spiritual enlightenment, and how he has revealed the hidden secrets of Mowlana's *ghazal*.

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Notes

Translation: I am grateful for the previous translation of this *ghazal* by A. J. Arberry ("Mystical Poems of Rumi," 1968, pp. 116-17) which served as an excellent guide to the meaning of the words. And I wish also to express my gratitude to Dr. Ravân Farhâdî for suggesting that I translate this particular poem from Shah Nematollah 's "Kolliat-é Ash'âr" and for sending me a photocopy of it.

- (11564) (beautiful) idol [negâr]: lit., “picture,” “image.” An idiom meaning “a beautiful beloved,” which in Sufi poetry means the spiritual master, whose image is frequently visualized in the heart of the disciple.
- (11566) a prostration (of obeisance) [sujûd]: a type of prostration made to kings, as well as to sufi masters (“dervish kings”), which symbolized submission— but which were understood to be different from the prostration of worship done only to God. Shah Nematollah ‘s commentary) the “No” of denial (of other gods) [lâ-yé nâfiyah] refers to the Islamic testament of faith, “There is no divinity except (the One) God” [lâ ilâha illâ ‘llâh]. The first part (“There is no divinity”) involves denial [nâfiyah] and the second part (“except God”) involves affirmation [iSbât]. Shah Nematollah ‘s commentary) Friend of the Cave [yâr-é ghâr]: refers to Abû Bakr, the companion of the Prophet Mohammad who shared a cave with him when enemies were searching everywhere in order to kill the Prophet.
- (11567: Shah Nematollah ‘s commentary) without the (self-) existence [bê-hastî]: refers to the sufi teaching that God cannot be known unless the ordinary ego-driven self [nafs] disappears through the mystical experience of “passing away” and “annihilation” [fanâ].
- (11568) (the sword of) Zol-Faqâr: refers to a famous sword owned by ‘Alî (given to him by the Prophet Mohammad) who was famous for his manliness and valor. The name means “possessed of the power to pierce”—causing death.
- (11569: Shah Nematollah ‘s commentary) spiritual insight [ma’rifat]: a technical term in sufism, meaning knowledge gained directly in a spiritual state of consciousness transcending the ordinary intellect or mind.
- (11573: Shah Nematollah ‘s commentary) If you aren’t frozen, get up fervently: a word-play between the word “frozen” [forsorda] and “fervent”—literally, “warm” [garm].
- (11575: Shah Nematollah ‘s commentary) beyond the curtains [of illusion] without a veil: a word play between the word “veil” [Hijâb] and the plural form, “curtains” or “veils” [Hujub].
- (11578) earth and water [khâk-o âb]: an idiom meaning the human body, made from “water and clay” (see Qur’an 49:18; 72:26-27).
- (11572) a dark bath furnace [golkhanê târik]: see the comparison of the world to a bath furnace [gôl-khan] in Masnavi IV: 237-256.
- (11576) the six directions: means north, south, east, west, up, and down. Means the dimensions of the material world and the universe.

Differences in the text of “Kolliat-é Ash`âr-é Shah Nematollah Vali” as compared to Foroozanfar’s text:

11564: ... goft az-în daryâ 11565: bâz ân jârôb dar âtesh be-sôkht/ goft az-în âtesh. . .

11566: sujûdê khwash bar-âr

11567: bê-châr-châr. The editor (Javâd Nurbakhsh) also lists the variant: “bê-khâr-khâr.”

11568: gardan-am-râ ... bâ Zol-faqâr

11569: identical texts

11573: kû Tâs-é del-at ... z-în qarâr

11574: golkhan be-mân ... jâma bar-kan be-n’gar ân

11565: naqsh-hây-é bê-Hisâb.

11578: âb-o khâk az nûr-é ô rôshan shoda ... jân be-tâzîda ba-tork

11572: identical texts

11576: this line is absent from Shah Nematollah’s text, and therefore he made no commentary on it. It is also possible that he omitted it in order to reduce Mowlana’s *ghazal* to 16 lines, rather than an odd number of 17 lines, in order to add his own two-verse commentaries following two of Mowlana’s verses.

11577: bar sar az rôzan

11570: man cherâgh-é har sar-am ... jumla-râ andar gerefta

11571: sham'-hây-é sar shoda sar-hây-é mâ/ sharq-o maghrib-râ gerefta dar qiTâr

11579: shab goZasht-o qiSSa-am ... az HadîS-at

11580: Shah Shamsod-din-é Tabrizî ke man/ mast-am az Hâl-ash ba-qâl-ash dar khumâr

The editor (Javâd Nûrbakhsh) lists the variant: Shah Shamsod-din-é Tabrizî ma-râ/ mast mê-dâr-ad ze-jâm-é bê-khumâr

A Comparative Study of Doctrinal Views of Shah Nematollah Vali and Jami

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A comparative study of the thoughts of these two great men would not mean elevating one and humiliating the other, especially when the comparison is based on accurate criticism and fair appraisal. The study is truly difficult at the beginning stages, because the critic, although thoroughly aware of the worldviews of both men, may not be able to express the truth as it really exists. Therefore, in the realm of criticism, relativity always overcomes absoluteness and those who consider criticism as an accurate assessment are influenced by imagination and stay far from reality.

God created each man with his own unique character and has bestowed upon each individual a particular set of talents and abilities. Taking into consideration the diversity of issues and multifaceted properties of the world of creation, one could see that all creation phenomena have their own special place. It is this order that gives the mystic an aesthetic insight wherein he observes everything beautifully, attractively and good-naturedly. Diversity of creation sometimes causes criticism to lose its clarity as the secret of the unity of existence and the basis of man's individuality. Nevertheless, common personality traits, similar cultural and social circumstances and people's different reactions have paved the way to criticism and have made critics' endeavors seem viable and logical.

Shah Nematollah Vali and Jami are both poets of 9th century A.H. (A.H. =After Hejri, i.e., after the Prophet Mohammad's (S)* migration from Mecca to Medina). Their mysticism made them compose poems on Gnosticism and/or mysticism. Shah Vali was born in the year 731. When he died he was 103 years old. He started to compose poetry after his sixtieth birthday. He could be considered a 9th century poet.

The 9th century, on one hand, is the era of the downward trend of Persian literature. On the other hand, it is the era of expansion and blossoming of scholarly Sufism. In this century, poetry lost its liveliness, freshness, beauty and attractiveness due to imitation, redundancy and repetition of predecessors' styles. Timurid kings were fond of literature and knowledge. They encouraged many a poets through financial support. This made lots of flatterers gather around the

kings and hence caused literary quality, which had already reached its peak, to decline. The improvement trend of a higher class of poetry started with Rudaki and ended with Hafez. In Jami's era, the quality of poetry decreased. The reason he is called the "last of the poets" is not due to the high quality of his poems, but because he is the last poet of Iraqi-style poetry. Shah Nematollah Vali had no intention of showing off in the realm of poetry. He was not a high ranking poet. Instead, he achieves fame in the realm of mysticism. One can truly claim that he gained no rivals in the realm of mysticism thereafter.

Why have we chosen to compare Jami with Shah Nematollah Vali? The main motivation for the comparison is the differences between the two. There are a host of common points between the two as well, which many scholars have listed.

It is amazing that Jami, listing over 600 so-called mystics in his work, *Nafahatol ons*" the majority of whom could hardly be ranked as literate people, let alone mystics, ignores the high position of the great mystic, Shah Nematollah Vali. The reason may be Shah Nematollah Vali's bright character which prevents Jami from mentioning the name of a rival whose impression and influence occupies the hearts of many followers even after his death. Obviously, Jami wouldn't like to mention the name of his rival Shah Nematollah Vali.

The following passage is quoted by Qazvini:

"In his work; *Nafahatol ons*, Jami lists the names of some naïve, illiterate persons who don't feel any obligation to carry out religious rites and ceremonies under the title of "Attractors," while he ignores such great mystics as Seyed Nematollah Kermani, Sheikh Azar Esfarayeni, Sheikh Safiod-din Ardebilli and so on. Dowlatshah Samarqandi, a Sunni clergyman who lacks prejudice, speaks highly of the above-mentioned mystics."

A transitional study of the two men's doctrines and their movements would help acquaint us with their ideologies, since both were living in the same historical and social environment along the mainstream current of mysticism during late the 8th and early 9th centuries.

During the 9th century, we are faced with two factors:

1. Kings' support to expand Sufism and development of *Khaneqah*
2. The Spread of scholarly Sufism.

The Timurid kings and princes' strong belief in Sufi Sheikhs made the 9th century an appropriate time for the expansion of Sufism. The entire history of the Timurid dynasty is full of instances wherein government officials paid tribute and respect to Sufi leaders who were considered as religious guides. In this era, we do not only rarely run into disputes which used to exist between Sufis and other custodians of religion, but also could hardly differentiate them, except in peculiar Sufi schools such as Shah Ghasem-e- Anwar's, which has been accused of ignoring Shariah and Sunnah practical laws.

Shah Nematollah Vali and Jami both played a considerable role in the spread of

Sufism. Their prose works are evidence of the above claim. Jami's paraphrase of Ibn al Arabi's *Fusus-ol- Hekam*, Iraqi's *Loma-a* and *Lawayeh* are works that attained fame for him in this respect.

An interesting point is that Shah Nematollah Vali penned the same works a half century before Jami. The question is why were Jami's works more famous and also more available than Shah Nematollah Vali's? The reason undoubtedly was the support of Timurid kings and princes such as Sultan Hossein Baygaran and Amir Alisheer Nawa'i of Jami. Shah Nematollah Vali preferred anonymity. Anyhow, both men's prose works are under the influence of Mohyod-din Arabi.

The sphere of Shah Nematollah Vali's activity covers India, Turkey and Iran. During this time, it was customary for scholars to migrate to different lands to stay safely away from the Mongols' invasion. Migration of mystics to India eventually led to an admixture of Indian and Iranian mystical thought. Naturally, all religious doctrines were mixed with other schools of thought, yet, this doesn't mean that a particular doctrine has to be rejected without logical and correct evaluation. Islamic mysticism has been influenced by Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, etc. from the outset. If this is considered as "picking of thoughts," it would have a negative meaning. From a positive angle, this could be the outcome of collaborative efforts as a result of intrinsic and common viewpoints. It true that the turbid current resulting from the admixture of Gnosticism and mysticism deprived thirsty seekers of drinking the clear water of truth, but through scrutinized studies, one could find the source of the turbidity.

Certainly mystics, no matter how noble and pious, cannot be free from errors as infallible Imams—yet it can be said that their virtues outweigh their vices.

Shah Nematollah Vali plays a major role in distinguishing Islamic Sufism from non-Islamic thought. Considering the importance of the *Nematollahi* sect over other Sufi sects, one can claim Shah Nematollah Vali as the representative of pure Sufism in Iran and neighboring lands. The difference of thought between the two men stems from their Sufi doctrines. Jami was a follower of the *Naghshbandiyya* sect and Shah Nematollah Vali was the founder of the *Nematollahi* school.

Yet, there are other considerable differences between the two as follows:

Jami was an ardent follower of the *Naghshbandiyya* sect founded by Khajeh Bahaol-Hagh-Waddin-e-Naghshband. The bases of this sect include eight principles:

1. Attention to each breath
2. Watching each step
3. Traveling at home
4. Solitude amongst the crowd
5. Recollection
6. Return

7. Maintenance of the above
8. Self-reminder and/or self-control.

Followers are required to consider three levels:

1. Level of considering numbers
2. Level of considering time
3. Level of considering the heart

Jami was younger than Shah Nematollah Vali. He was 17 years old when Shah Nematollah Vali passed away. Yet, he followed a sect wherein an outdated dust cover was spread. It is amazing that despite living in the era of Shah Nematollah Vali, and with all virtues attributed to the *Nematollahi* school of Sufism, Jami, full of religious prejudice, did not change his sect, taking into account the Quranic verse 5.104; “We are followers of our ancestors...”

The *Nematollahi* sect is derived from the *Ma' rufiyya* sect, founded by Ma' ruf Karhki – a disciple of the eighth imam (A). The sect, being the main trunk of various branches of Sufism, is called by the name of “*salasel*,” as well.

The author of *Tara-Eqol-Haqayeq* says:

“Ma' ruf Karakhi has had the honor of bearing his knowledge from Hazrat Reza (A). This honor suffices for the *Nematollahi* sect that the mainstream of their knowledge stems from Imam Reza (A).”

He then goes to say on that:

“The followers of the *Nematollahi* sect are open to “Expansion”, while the followers of other sects are exposed to “Depression.”

When you lack a friend,	Why don't you seek one?
Finding one in the end,	Enjoy together like none.

It is based on the above poem that boundaries between the nations are broken and deep unity is achieved:

*One has to be the man of intrat,
Be him of Egypt, be him of Herat.
(Divan of Shah Nematollah Vali, p. 608)*

Shah Nematollah Vali's followers have no special garments to wear, for they believe God's worship can be done in any dress:

*The pious man must seek God,
 Be him in white or in black,
 Turn into a man of color's lack
 Of what avail is black and white to dod?*
 (Divan of Shah Nematollah Vali, p. 611)

The garment of poverty is in fact submission to God and being content with Him. This is contrary to most sects, followers of which put on special garments to take privileges.

The third point is that in this sect, the followers do not leave their business because of laziness, for all men, no matter what business or craft they possess, could worship God Almighty.

Furthermore, according to the late Mr. Foroozanfar, all Sufi schools, consider Ali(A) as their guide and support except for the *Naghshbandiyya* sect, which considers Abu-Bakr as its ancestor. They all love Ali(A) as their absolute leader and guide. The important point is that *Nematollahi* followers believe in *Shariah* and do carry out all their religious duties, contrary to followers of some sects who ignore these functions.

Perhaps one of the factors of growth and personal progression of Shah Nematollah Vali was the strength of the migration factor in his life. Regardless of the role of fate and God's decree, his migration stemmed from the liveliness of the bird of his soul that prevented him from getting bound to earthly boundaries as long as it was in the level of coloring. In this respect, he says:

*To Egyptian, Baghdad counts none,
 Kooh-Banan is naught, while nil is Kerman.*
 (Divan of Shah Nematollah Vali P. 155.)

He goes on to say:

*Towns are my places of residence, whether in Iran or Turkistan,
 To my sincere Turkish followers, I migrate as a sultan.*
 (Divan of Shah Nematollah Vali p. 761-762).

It is clear that he does not consider the spiritual sultanate as particularly related to a specific earthly place when he says:

*Celestial throne belongs to the pious man,
 Not to earthly Yazd and terrestrial city of Kerman.*
 (Divan of Shah Nematollah Vali, p. 748)

When he achieves the stage of Submission, he does an inner travel to the Egypt of his soul:

*Head for inner Egypt, and leave Kerman City,
How long are you going to stay in Kerman in pity?*

(*Divan* of Shah Nematollah Vali, p. 609)

In the cave of his heart he plays the role of his cave-mate himself and grasps the jewel of his existence in the city of meaning and concurrently leans over the throne of sovereignty:

*I would never, ever travel 'round the desert,
Why should I suffer from all in strangeness?
In heart-cave I would be my own cave-mate, aspert,
When, back to my own town, I would return in witness.*

(*Divan* of Shah Nematollah Vali, p. 415)

Shah Nematollah Vali was a specimen of “the perfect Man” who manifests beyond his own time and space. He resides in faraway and rural areas such as Kooch-Banan and Mahan for some time. The people are attracted to him in such a manner that after almost 5 centuries, the truth-seekers are still after his ways of worship and mysticism.

Based on his prose and poetry- full of Gnostic truths- it would not be an exaggeration to call him a remaining figure in the realm of literature and mysticism.

He had many pilgrimages to Egypt, Transoxania, Samarqand, Mashhad and so on. He spent 25 years of his bountiful life in Kerman and Mahan. It is most likely that the existence of noble mystics and truth seekers made him stay in Kerman. Although he was not from Kerman, yet, he was so attracted by them that bow at their thresholds. He takes himself as the most humble being and calls Kerman the heart of the universe:

*Feeling ashamed of their course of generosity,
No doubt, I have been brought up of the clay and water of this land.
There is no such land as Kerman all over the world,
Kerman is the heart of the world, as we are generous men.*

The above quatrain- attributed to Shah Nematollah Vali, appears on page 456 of “Tareekh-e- Kerman thus:

*Though we've been brought up of the clay and water of this land,
We are undoubtedly ashamed of the generous ones,*

There is no place in the world as Mahan, which is a world center of the wise and we are among the wise men.

Reza Qoli Khan Hedayat- author of “Majma-ol-fosaha” says this about the migration of Seyed to Kerman:

“(Seyed Nematollah) was a contemporary of Timurlane. Once, near the village of Organj a crowd of 90,000 paid tribute to Seyed because of certain noble behavior. “Amir Seyed Kelal – leader of the *Naghshbandiyya* sect got upset and said to Ami Timur that Shah Nematollah Vali intends to rebel against the king to become king. So he must be exiled from this region to stop mischief. Since Amir Kelal spoke ill of Shah Nematollah Vali, Amir Timur met Seyed (Shah Vali) in a midway cave and ordered him to leave the area.”

He then comments that Shah Nematollah Vali replied, “Whenever we go the land belongs to you, let’s first have Amir Kelal’s Halva (a sweet customarily prepared after a person’s death) and then I will leave the place.” This is among Shah Nematollah Vali’s noble actions. Before long, “Amir Kelal” died as he had predicted. It’s most likely that the enmity of the two sects started at this time.

Mr. Moheet Tabataba-ee says the reason Vali adopted the title “Shah” (although his penname was Seyed) is that the title Shah has replaced the Arabic term Seyed before the names of Iranian religious leaders. Hence: Shah Abdull Azim, Shah Nematollah and Shah Ghassem Anwar have in fact been; Seyed Abdull Azim, Seyed Nematollah and Seyed Ghassem Anwar. The term “Shah” has been used in East Iran, Afghanistan and India as a title for “Sadat-e Alawi”. One can still hear these sort of titles as a blessing of their relations to Sadat-e Alawi.

A short review of the two men’s doctrinal views shows abundant differences of opinion and common views between Shah Nematollah Vali and Jami. Since poetry reflects one’s inner thoughts, the social environment and one’s worldview towards existence, the study focuses on the poetry of the two without any reference to their prose.

COMMON VIEWS:

Their common views revolve round mysticism. But their differences are presented in the realm of the poetry of both men.

First, we present a review of their common viewpoints:

1. Pursuit of “The Perfect Man”

Shah Nematollah Vali is among mystics who believe in finding a pivot to

follow. He himself travels frequently in pursuit of noble men and intelligent persons from one place to the other. In this respect, he says:

*You would not get to the right house,
If you do not have a guide of enough wit,
So pray to God with enough rouse,
For a pivot to save you from falling in pit.*
(*Divan* of Shah Nematollah Vali, p. 227)

In other parts he goes on thus:

*You cannot stay away from misleaders,
Unless you get hold of true leaders,
The path to God is a land dark
Can you pave it with no lead? Hark!
You get nowhere with no pivot,
As ships wrecked with no pilot.*
(*Divan* of Shah Nematollah Vali, p. 708)

We might view Shah Nematollah Vali's traveling from one place to the other as contrary to Sufi doctrine, but his sole motivation was the pursuit of "The Perfect Man." The following point supports this claim:

*Oh, King! Do not invite me to Shiraz or Esfahan, at hand,
For I have the splendid intention of going to Samarqand.*
(*Divan* of Shah Nematollah Vali, p. 407)

He considers himself at a higher level of the realm of existence, not belonging to earthly lands and cities and just feels himself bound to the truth:

*I am not human, I am not jinn,
I do not belong to the sky, I do not belong to the earth.
I am not from China, neither from Bulgaria nor from Azkand.
I see no one except Him. To whom can I make hearty ties?
That's why you see me on throne of justice sometimes,
And in the caves of Alvand mount in other times.*
(*Divan* of Shah Nematollah Vali, p. 408)

Jami, like all other Sufis, believes that paving the dark and frightening path of religious progression cannot be done without the companionship of a Khezr-like guide. Jami suffered a lot in acquiring his knowledge. But he did not hear

anything about “ Eyn-al –Qozat-e- Hamedani. In this regard, he says of himself;

*To the faithful and the pure, he turned,
All the knowledge from their books, he earned.*
(Jami’s “Haft Owrang”, p. 461)

He received his true insight and lightheartedness as the disciple of Ahmad Ghazali, and could see the expansive presence of true Unity in the whole universe. His verse is thus:

*The road is dark, thieves in ambush in the full darkness of the night,
Fools are those who tread the path without the bearer of the light.*
(Jami’s *Divan*, p. 138)

Jami apparently felt great respect toward “ Sheikh Ahmad Jam” known as “Zhendeh Peel.” This was one of the two reasons he took the pen name of Jami, besides the fact that his birthplace was also called “Jam” as mentioned in the following verses:

*My birthplace is “Jam.” men!
The ink-flow of my pen,
A sip of Sheikh-ol-Islam Jam*; my lord,
My penname, Jami, a double-meaning word. *(goblet),*

In the beginning stitch of a sonnet, he points out to the penname thus:

*Do not talk to me of felicity and misfortune for the “line of Jam.”
Is full protection against revolution and zodiac of lion and ram.*

Here the beautiful word play he makes out of “line of jam” refers to the golden line round goblet as well as the land of Jam, Jami’s birthday, and the line about Sheikh Ahmad, his spiritual guide’s, patterns of thought. He goes on thus:

*In sweet sleep, I had a dream of a noble wise
Whose goblet’s smell was the envy of paradise
He told me “It ‘s a pity to hold the cash of life,
When every moment, death comes to one’s strife.
So creep under the shadow of the man whose high-mindedness bird
Spreads the shadow of its wings all over the firmament, sky and eird.*
(Jami’s *Divan*, p. 119)

Reading between the lines of Shah Nematollah Vali's works, one can assess the extent of his respect towards Sheikh Ahmad-e-Jam:

*Sheikh-ol-Islam Ahmad Jami,
Who made the dead alive,
His wine turned to honey,
Don't ask about honey and hive,
For in a magic-like movement,
His wine barrel stopped to ferment.
Neither wine grape, nor honey need,
He got rid of the sugar and the reed.*

Shah Nematollah Vali, praises Sheikh Ahmad Jam, yet, since he is selfless and full of Truth, considers himself higher than Ahmad:

*Though man's alteration is a pleasant process,
But reaching nothingness is a more Valid progress.
Nematollah, the king of the soul-drunken community,
Forgot his self and became full of God Almighty.*
(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 753)

From Sheikh Ahmad Jam's biographies, one can see that a halo of ambiguity surrounds his character. It seems that the Sheikh does not deserve to act a model for numerous followers. That's why Shah Nematollah Vali—so scrupulous and accurate in his selection of guides—did not choose him as a leader. He traveled a lot, in pursuit of "The Perfect Man," both inside and outside the country, until he met Sheikh Abdullah Yafei and submitted his own self to the ocean of Yafei's existence as a drop of water that joins an ocean. Shah Nematollah Vali accepted Sheikh Ahmad Jam as a mystic, but never took him as his teacher as Jami did. His view about Yafei is as follows:

*Abdullah is the symbol of God's great attribute,
Abdullah is in fact the one and only slave of God.
Nematollah confesses with sincerity and truth,
That, save Him alone, there is surely no God.*
(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 824)

Sheikh Abdullah Yafei could really quench Shah Nematollah Vali's spiritual thirst by the water of knowledge as his guide. Sheikh-ol-Shiokh Yafei has authored many books on Sufism and is respected by all. It suffices as his virtue that he reared a man like Shah Nematollah Vali, whom all Sufis highly respect."

Dowlatshah Samarqandi writes about the Sheikh in a biography, “Shah Nematollah Vali considered the prophet Mohammad as the great attribute (Grand Name) of God Almighty.”

*The prophet is the symbol of God's attributes,
For Mohammad Mostafa is our revered master.
(Shah Nematollah Vali's Divan, p. 10)”*

He continues:

*Beg the great attribute of God from the perfect man,
For it's he who can reach the name and its Talisman.
(Shah Nematollah Vali's Divan, p. 686)*

Shah Nematollah Vali's view on the notion that Yafei is the symbol of God's names stems from the fact that, according to mystical views, he believed that there is always one noble and perfect man in each era who would act as the guide of truth seekers.

2. He had a high respect for Hazrat Ali(A)

Both Shah Nematollah Vali and Jami felt deep respect towards Ali(A) and the prophet's household. Traces of this respect can be vividly seen in the works of both men. In spite of their religious differences their love of Ali(A) is an indication of the unity of a true pivot in their world view. Their poems are quite different, but both try diligently to lessen the degree of religious differences among Muslims.

Nematollah, in his love for Ali(A) says:

*I swear to Mohammad's right and infallible soul of Ali,
That no one reaches prophethood, before he becomes a Vali.
He who follows Ali(A) attains abode of Valayat (to be Vali),
So, Vali, full-heartedly follow the path of Ali(A).
(Shah Nematollah Vali's Divan, p. 595)*

Shah Nematollah Vali considered the followers of the household of the prophet rightful believers, and he stated that those who deny their infallibility are in enmity with God Almighty.

*He who is of the clan of God, follows prophet's house
He who denies the prophet's household is in hostility with God.
The love of the prophet's household is change of all the louse,
The spirit of Ali(A), the leader of the faithful from heaven trod.*

In form, he is “ Hal atta ”, in meaning, he is enne-mma*
Father of Hassan and Hossein, cousin of Mostafa.
His guidance is truth , right path and bravery,
He is the Sultan of manliness and generosity.*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 52)*

(*reference made to parts of Quranic verses)

In another poem, he states his endless love for his master and guide, Ali(A):

*Ali(A) is the soul of prophet Mohammad, from heaven not far,
No man braver than him, no sword sharper than “Zol’faqr.”***

He then goes on to stress his love as follows:

*He whose enmity with Ali(A) is as small as a piece of hair,
Has no faith, otherwise he would be his pure follower.*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 621)

(*Two-pronged sword presented to Ali(A) by Prophet Mohammad(S)).

In this regard, Jami composed the following:

*Prophet Mohammad is the last of all prophets,
After him, Ali(A) becomes the last of Caliphs.
Some broke their oath of fealty
What wrong they committed in oath of loyalty
To break the faith with the men of perfection,
Is the result of ignorance and mental flexion.
To turn away from a Sultan and Imam like Ali(A),
Puts the sinner in the meanest level of fire in hell.*

(*Haft Owrang* Jami, p. 52)

The enthusiastic love of Jami towards Hazrat Ali(A) can not be denied. In his pilgrimage to the holy shrine of Ali(A) he says:

*Oh! Amir of Najaf, here I am as your pilgrim,
With my life to sacrifice at thy threshold.
You are the Mecca of all seekers,
Who beg at thy threshold from all sides.
I kiss the threshold of thy glorious castle,
While eyes full of tears of sins past.*

(Jami's *Divan*, p. 25)

Doctrine

There are differences of opinion over the two men's religious beliefs. Some consider both as Sunnis, while others consider their beliefs to be different. Most of the writers such as Reza Qoli Khan Hedayat, Abdul-razzaq Kermani, Qazvini and Zabihollah- Safa, say Shah Nematollah Vali is a Shi'ite Muslim and that Jami is a Sunni Muslim.

Jami is a follower of the *Naghshbandiyya* school of Sufism, which belongs to Sunni religion, yet only a few of the followers claim that they are Shi'ites. The *Nematollahi* School was considered to be one of the influential Shi'ite sects during the 9th century with a host of followers in Iran, India and Turkey. It played a major role in the spreading of Shi'ism.

The contrary poems of the two men on religious beliefs, undoubtedly are reflections of the overwhelming atmosphere of the 9th century. The reason is that the religious history of Iran is full of disputes and fights between the followers of Shi'ia and Sunni Muslims, which reached its peak at the close of the century. The dispute ended when Shah Ismael Awal was victorious, and the Shi'ites gained a winning position. Jami's biography and works vividly show the existence of such disputes. Jami, according to the circumstances, was one of the great scholars and leaders of the Sunni sect, yet, always showed his respect toward the fundamental doctrine of Shi'ism."

Differences between the two men's religions are so abundant that it is difficult to believe that those who claim these two men had the same religion. Jami is a follower of the *Hannafi* religion that, either by ignorance or through severe prejudice, insults the members of the Prophet's clan. He composed the following to contempt Abu Talib, the revered uncle of prophet and father of Ali(A).

*Abu Talib who lacked the seeking power,
Was the Prophet's uncle and Ali's father.
Though he was a member of the clan,
Yet, in religion he didn't possess a plan.
No use to him was the relation in which he fell,
Like Bu-Lahab who would reside in hell.
(Haft Owrang Jami, p. 151)*

Generally, there is no room for discussing the differences of Shi'ism and Sunnah, in the world of mysticism. The reason is the principle of "the unity of existence," which reduces the challenges between sects and religions. Mystical poets, such as Sa'di, Attar, Mowlavi and Hafez, considered the above principle, and taking into account the circumstances, paid their utmost respect to the infallible Imams, yet, never disclosed their allegiance to Shi'ism.

Therefore, it can't be said with certainty whether Shah Nematollah Vali and mys-

tics like him, have been Shi'ite or Sunni. Perhaps the following verses, which indicate Shah Nematollah Vali is a Sunni Muslim, were composed under the special circumstances prevailing at his times:

*Take the path of Sunni that is our faith,
Otherwise you are going to get astray.
I am not Rafedite, yet I am of pure piety.
I am surly the enemy of Mutezelite.
I have the religion of my master, the prophet,
After that, I am a follower of Ali (A), his successor.*
(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 594)

In the entire *Divan* of Shah Nematollah Vali, there are only three instances where he has expressed his respect for the three first Caliphs. Yet, the number of poems in praise of Ali(A) and his household is so numerous that one can't believe he is not a Shi'ite Muslim:

*Breath by breath, one should express love for Ali Morteza,
All the time, one should get hold of the hem of "The Five Infallible Beings."
The image of their love, one should carve on tablet of the soul,
The seal of Heydar, one should stamp on one's heart.
Do not talk of him who is not familiar with Ali,
When breathing, one should share it with a friend of Ali(A).
One should follow the fourteenth infallible in both worlds,
One should knock at the holy threshold of "The Five Infallibles."*
(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, pp. 662-63)

He then goes on as follows:

*I have raised a flag of Imam Ali's love,
Why should one play drum under the cover?*

The above verse shows that Shah Nematollah Vali, in spite of his own willingness and inner love for Ali(A), tried to keep his true religion a secret among Muslims, in order to stop hypocrisy and separation. But compared to Jami, he has more brevity and courage in this respect. Jami was always seeking positions in kings' courts, while Shah Nematollah Vali, in spite of his power and popularity among people, was exiled to Kerman. He did not stop and before long, migrated to Kerman.

On the other hand, during the Safavid dynasty, at the peak of Shi'ites' power, the number of Shah Nematollah Vali's followers increased and on the order of

Shah Abbas II, a shrine was built for him in Mahan. But the Safavid Kings showed their hostility to Jami because of his poems against Abu. Talib, Ali's(A) father, who, according to Jami, did not accept Islam as his religion. Even King Ismael I ordered Jami's grave exhumed, but his son had transferred the body to another place. So after the occupation of the heart, Shah Ismael ordered the names of all places called Jami to be changed to "Khami".

The attention paid by Safavid kings to Shah Nematollah Vali's shrine and its expansion on one hand and lack of attention to Jami on the other, at a time when neither was were alive, is a strong reason for Shah Nematollah Vali's Shi'ism. Another reason is the lack of attention that Jami paid to Shah Nematollah Vali and many other Sufis that is recorded in many books, indicating Jami's religious prejudice.

As previously stated, in his book, *Nafahatols*, Jami has listed a long list of names of a group of nameless, non-knowledgeable Naghshbandiyya Sheikhs. However, due to prejudice, he made no mention of such great noble men of generosity, such as Safiod-din Ardebilli, Ali-Ibn Tavoos who had performed magic-like actions and Sheikh Ben Fahad Helli was known for his piety.

The above Sheikhs have been as famous as the sun with many works to illumine the whole world from their time until doomsday so that people would benefit from these works to expand Shi'ism.

The other reason is that Seyed Nematollah granted a twelve-pronged crown (a sign of the twelve in Shi'ism) to some of his followers as a token of accepting the follower as a Sufi.

An anonymous man is reported to have said, "I got a hold of Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, and decided to take a chance on the truth of his religion. After opening the *Divan*, I had the following in my face:

*If you like to make your soul and body safe from fire like me,
Become a [follower of the] twelve of Shi'ism,
as I have chosen that as a life plan.
Our Imams, we have three Mohammads and four in the name of Ali,
Then, we have Jafar, Mosa, Hossein and two Hassans."*

On one hand, he calls himself a friend of Sunnis, while on the other, he claims to have the religious of Imam Hossein:

*My friend, I am of the religion of Hossein,
With full respect for the ethics of Hassan.
Your knowledge is all disputes over and again,
Yet My religion is a heritage from master of the clan**

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 821)

* Prophet Mohammad (S.)

Here we have the best proof that Shah Nematollah Vali had no intention to oppose any religion or sect. He was highly impressed by his mystical view of sustainable peace and unity among both groups, while no one can deny his strong attraction to Shi'ism.

Shah Nematollah Vali, due to his Gnostic nature and his benevolent manner, has preference over Jami. This lowers Jami's position among Sufis— especially those with wider viewpoints and more moderate temperaments. Taking into account the fact that no Sufi sect flourished as much as the *Nematollahi*, while Jami is “the last of poets,” it would not be an exaggeration to call Shah Nematollah Vali the “leader” of Sufis during the 9th century.

3. Mystical views:

The similarity of the worldviews of Shah Nematollah Vali and Jami with respect to creation and its reflection on their own manners and attitudes actually stems from the fact that mysticism and Sufism are fed from two great schools of thought. The *Mowlavi* School is full of ecstasy; music and dance; word and song. The *Suhrawardi* School focuses on praying, performing religious practical laws, continuing Islamic Sunnah customs and recollections, and performing necessary religious actions. The *Suhrawardi* sect was influenced by two schools of thought: Mohyod-din Arabi and Ibn-al-Farez of Egypt, as well as a theoretical school named Awaref Al Ma-Aref .

Shah Nematollah Vali and Jami were both influenced by the ideas of Suhrawardi and Ibn-al-Arabi. Like most Sufis, they gained theoretical fundamentals from Arabi and practical ones from Suhrawardi. Therefore, the bases of their ideas are derived from Arabi's *Fotuha-te-Maki-yeh* and Ibn-al-Farez's *Ghassideh Ta-ee-yeh*. The majority of Sufi rites and prayers in general and the *Naghshbandi* and *Nematollahi* sects in particular, irrespective of *Khaneqah*, stem from Suhrawardi's book. As previously stated, the common prose works of the two, especially the paraphrase of Arabi's *Fosus-ol-Hekam*, are among important mystical works.

Common views of the two can be cited as follows:

A) The Unity of Existence

Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan* is full of practical examples of the above concept. Perhaps it could be said that all his poems revolve around the notion of the unity of all objective things in the world of creation, expressed in different ways. Terms such as wave, bubble, sea, drop, spirit (drink), *saqi* (cup bearer), atom (particle), sun and shadow, abound in his *Divan*:

*There is one being and many an "attribute"
It is the being that unites the scatter.
Drink the wine of unity from the goblet of the Multitude,*

Try to deeply understand this matter.

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 2)

He goes on thus:

*Wine and the wine bearer are one,
Master of drunkards is one,
Though Sea and Wave are two names,
The essence of them is one.*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 598)

*Wave, bubble, water and Sea
Are all one thing to me.
One is Water, Wave and Bubble ball,
It's the Sea that knows the truth of all.*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 24)

*The light of Him made the world bright,
Show me an atom without God's light.*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 223)

*He is the Sun, the world is a canopy,
His light covers you, them and me.*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 190)

Shah Nematollah Vali believes in the "unity of existence." He explains this from different similes. Yet, he vividly gives man the roles of seeking, seeker and sought:

*You who are seeking the world of fraught,
Know that you are soul, heart and even the beloved.
You are the seeking, the seeker and the sought,
Beware that you are all that comes to your thought.*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 805)

In his view towards unity, there is no doubt and that he sees God Almighty as the absolute sovereign:

*No doubt that in all the world, except God Almighty,
There is nothing else except the presence of the deity.*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 75)

In another poem he answers the question:

*How could a creature become God?
If turned to God, why does he leave the world?
Can man be a god? Certainly not,
But he could become naught and selfless.*
(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 627)

Jami's poems about the unity of existence are not as numerous as Shah Nematollah Vali's, but in two or three sonnets, he clearly points out this matter:

*A hard tradition of lack of untruth
Says there is no one except the truth,
Truth is one and its unity,
Is clear to men of divinity.
But because of differences,
It is both absolute and dependent.
Stay away from names and attributes,
And do not let existence be divided.*
(Jami's *Divan*, pp. 298-299)

In his opinion, existence, with regard to its levels, is sometimes absolute and sometimes dependent. If one could remove the veil of the senses, he would find out that there is no discussion about absoluteness or dependency. When we close our eyes to unfavorable events and the ugly ups and downs of the world, we notice that the sources of existence which were originally united, would all become one. He goes on thus:

*When you close your eyes to outer effects,
The infinite and the derived are actually one.*
(Jami's *Divan*, pp. 298-299)

In using this terminology, Jami is at one with Shah Nematollah Vali. The following poem includes the terms Sun and Shadow (Shade):

*The truth of the Sun and the world is like a Shadow, my friend,
See how God Almighty spreads the Shadow.
Existence of Shadow and Sun are truly one,
Although to commoners this sounds difficult.
The moment the Sun stops shining brightly,
Name it the Shadow, although it is the Sun.*

*The light of the Sun on earth is Shadow,
The moment someone stands in between the two.
(Jami's Divan, p. 307)*

Jami also uses terms sea, rain and drop in the following:

*A united sea is composed of different attributes,
Rain, drop, shell and pearl have come to being.
There is nothing except the lover and the beloved,
Both names are derived from the same stem.
No buds blossom In the orchard of love
Except the flower of unity,
that once appears red and once yellow.
(Jami's Divan, p. 427)*

B) Intoxicating Religious Practice

Taking into account the context of both men's poems, one can list both of them among intoxicating Sufis. Ecstasy and intoxication from the wine of truth, cause them to get closer to God, and stay away from hypocrisy. This theme is seen in most of their odes, as Shah Nematollah Vali says:

*Hark! You intoxicated lover, leave selfishness,
Turn to God's threshold and leave hypocrisy.
(Shah Nematollah Vali's Divan, p. 318)*

*The beloved is in the middle of the scene and I am at beloved's side,
Or He is at my side and I am in the middle of the heart.
(Shah Nematollah Vali's Divan, p. 387)*

*The following poem belongs to Jami:
Oh Jami! From whose goblet did you drink wine that again
I see you intoxicated and ignorant of the affairs of both worlds?
(Jami's Divan, p. 120)*

Both men feel great respect for Bayazid Bastami and other intoxicating Sufis:

*The Sun of inner meaning sky is Bayazid,
The shadow of the high Sun is Bayazid.
True knower of the divine secrets,
Discoverer of the inner words; Bayazid.
Seyed!* For you are among men of wisdom,*

On your soul, Has cast light; Bayazid.

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, pp. 309-310)

*Shah Nematollah Vali (monolog).

Jami pointing out in a sonnet to; Bayzid Bastami, Sheikh Forghani, and Abu-Saeed Abel Kheyr, all devoted to the intoxicating school, shows his own relationship to them:

*My heart trembles from Khorasan's name,
Wherein lies the ocean of poverty and selflessness.
The first pearl of the sea is Shah Bastami,
Who is the pivot of sincere seekers of God.
Demolish the garment of pride, for Sheikh Forghani,
Is standing there, waiting for granting garments.
Praise the great mystic of the land of Mahand,
Whose non-praise makers are punished by love.*

(Jami's *Divan*, p. 131)

Their intoxicating behavior means, they prefer the presence of followers to loneliness. In their circle of friends they achieve the unity of the lover and the beloved.

Shah Nematollah Vali states:

*Absent witnesses are present along with intoxicated unidirectionals,
Talk of our unity, don not mention the commoners' stories.*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 379)

Jami cites:

*If you want circle of friends, throw away worldly tools,
The seed of the heart's unification is the divider of earthly matters.*

(Jami's *Divan*, p. 131)

C) Exoterically Opposed

The poems of the two men clearly reflect the conditions and thoughts prevailing in their times. They really act as the mirrors showing the atmosphere of their times—full of fraud and deceit. The 9th century, with a few exceptions, resembles the 8th century with regards to social aspects. In the 9th century, there were fights between “Rends” (rogues, knaves) and “Zaheds” (devout zealots). “Sufis” and “Arefs,” have been illustrated beautifully in Hafez’s sonnets. In his

sonnets, Shah Nematollah Vali, occasionally comments on social problems, while Jami can be ranked higher concerning the expression of social fluctuations. Jami has composed social poems, in addition to ones with mystical themes. Their differences will to be examined in future chapters.

Shah Nematollah Vali, fed up with hypocrites, says:

*I am fed up with these hypocrites.
Oh! Where are you cup-bearer of knaves?
Seeing the bright eyes of tavern-keepers,
I have lost my willingness towards religions and piety.*
(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 612)

He leaves paradise and its Huris to the devout who have no familiarity with the tartar of wine and pains therein.

*Paradise and Huris, I leave with the devout,
But the tartar of wine and the pain of His love, I accept myself.*
(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 4)

In Shah Nematollah Vali's opinion, the paradise of Sufis, is to pattern one's behavior after Allah's attributes, and attain God Almighty's attention.

*Gnostics have another kind of paradise,
Which is more pleasant than the pious.'
When you follow God's attributes,
Then, you belong to Aref's paradise.
So, try to know His Names ,
To get a portion of His compassion.*
(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 721)

He goes on thus:

*Oh! Heart, stay away from hypocritical piety.
If you seek God Almighty's right path.
Throw away pride and desire,
Beware of daydreams and selfishness.
Don't get proud by prayers and piety,
Otherwise you would get the tongue of Satan.*
(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 733)

Shah Nematollah Vali contrasts hypocrites with Rends, symbols of sincerity and pureness. Shah Nematollah Vali ranks Rends higher than Jami does:

*Always make friends with unidirectional Rends,
Avoid friendship with the hypocrite wise even for one second.*
(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 406)

The sonnet through which he praises the Rends, starts thus:

*Rend wine drinkers who are friends of the goblet
Know the secrets of the universe and fate of the people.*

In addressing rigid hypocrites, he says:

*Don't look low upon true lovers.
For they are the dearest to Allah.
They are the bezel of and the last ring of prophet-hood,
They are the treasure of the world
and the light of the eyes of the prophet.*
(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 635)

A Rend is, in reality, the perfect Aref who is at the door of the tavern of love, with no dependence on the world or the hereafter, no dependence on existence and nothingness, no dependence on mortality and perpetuity:

*We have fallen drunk at the door of the tavern,
With no veil and free from both worlds.
We are at ease with existence and death,
We are intoxicated Rends in the Magi's place,
If you are looking for Nematollah, come and join us.*
(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 24)

He washed his garment in the wine of truth, so that he deserves to pray in it. Of course, the concept is beyond the scope of understanding of commoners and may even causes misunderstandings, for this kind of true cleansing is only within the scope of understanding of "Rends":

*I have made my garment, pray-worthy by washing it in wine,
Rends would only understand this kind of cleansing is another way of purification.*
(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 80)

But sometimes Shah Nematollah Vali considers himself higher than a Rend or Sufi, and puts his kingdom's throne at another threshold:

*Rends are at the doors of Taverns, Sufis are in the corner of monasteries,
Yet, our throne of kingdom is at another threshold.*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 81)

*The hypocrite turned his hundred- bead rosary so frequently,
That all point at him all over the city.*

(Jami's *Divan*, p. 72)

Jami who attained the highest levels of love, without selecting any spiritual guide, found all his wishes fulfilled by his life. So he refrained from any worldly position. In this respect he says:

*Do not call me Rend, Sufi, Aref or Jami,
For I have gotten lost in witness and can not tolerate names.*

(Jami's *Divan*, p. 73)

When the police administration during this period took a hypocrite countenance, whipped people to deprive them from drinking from one side and the other, he himself committed the acts of wine drinking and defaming Islam:

*Office of Mohtasib crosses its limit to stop people from drinking,
He stops the expansion of Islam by doing wrong actions to stop people.*

(Jami's *Divan*, p. 73)

Jami firmly fought against rigid, surface hypocrites, who had not the faintest smell of *Irfan* (mysticism.) He also disagreed with those who misused the laws of Shariah as an instrument to punish sincere people:

*Oh God! Give the proud Sheikh, some fairness and equity,
Not to look with contempt at Rends.
He has considered Shariah as an instrument to hurt sincere people,
That's why he has chosen as his attitude, the way of hurting.
Those who deny truth cannot benefit from Irfan,
Because they are inwardly ignorant and deny the truth.*

(Jami's *Divan*, pp. 70-71)

D) Opposing philosophy

Although both men started their education with the knowledge of the intel-

lect, philosophy and speech, in the end, they found Greek philosophy and wisdom unable to uncover the truth. They preferred inspired knowledge and mystical visions to all other types of knowledge.

Shah Nematollah Vali said the following about it:

*Pay attention to intoxicated sayings,
What do you do with Avcina's speech?*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 25)

Jami noted:

*The wisdom of the Greeks is the message of self and desire,
It is the wisdom of the faithful that is the prophet's (S) command.
What use has the owner of inspired knowledge for writing and speech?
His book is the tablet of his heart, he who knows the Quran by heart.*

(Jami's *Divan*, p. 44)

He goes on thus:

*My heart became a treasure of Irfan secrets,
Never would I buy exaggerations of philosophers for half a penny!*

(Jami's *Divan*, p. 47)

Their opposition to philosophy does not mean they absolutely oppose all kinds of knowledge. Their poems encourage pupils to learn science and knowledge are evidence of this.

*Shah Nematollah Vali says the following:
Go and seek knowledge if you are wise,
For any possessions other than knowledge take you to hell!*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 649)

He goes on thus:

*Cow is an accuser. Hardship brings Ambergris and fragrance,
But as antelopes, the wise men always have new musk (fragrance).*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 646)

Shah Nematollah Vali tries his best to learn formal knowledge. But this knowledge cannot enliven his enthusiastic nature. He is fed up with the disputes of the teachers, for he feels all have theories, but lack practicalities:

*They waste their life all days and nights,
Discussing, disputing and fighting!*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 4)

Jami disapproved of knowledge whose outcome is but pride, boasting and selfishness. Interpreting the Quranic verse: "Verily, we presented our faith unto the sky and the earth ... they became cruel and ignorant," Jami says the cruelty here means vanishing one's self into the truth, which is the very essence of justice. "Ignorance" means clearing the heart from everything but God Almighty, the very essence of knowledge. Therefore true knowledge is to purify one's heart from everything except God:

*Cruel is he who makes his existence,
vanishing into the perpetuity of God Almighty.
His ignorance, concerning everything except God,
He cleared its form from the tablet of the heart.
True cruelty, which is the essence of Justice,
Surprises ignorance, which is the core of divine insight.*

(Jami's *Divan*, p. 72)

In its positive sense, true knowledge is one that takes away the veil from man's eyes and guides him towards God:

*Verily all men are dead,
Except for the men of knowledge.
The knowledge that shows you the way,
To reach God Almighty.
To uncover the veil from your eyes,
To put nothing but the truth before your eyes.*

(*Haft Owrang* Jami. p. 140)

E) Intellect and love

In the realm of human beings' existence, intellect and love are quite symmetrical and in the company of each other. It is not correct to utilize the idiom and interpretation of contrast between intellect and love, although a majority of mystical poems express the inability of the intellect and power of love to reach the desired destination.

The frequent use of the term love in mystical poetry leads us to the where there is no term for the word "intellect." It should be noted that the difference in the power scope of each term does not have any discrepancy with the integrated cohesiveness of the two terms.

Shah Nematollah Vali says:

*In the province of the body, intellect is the practical resolution,
In the countries of the soul, It is love that guards the heart.*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 388)

He considers the intellect as a piece of emerald whose brightness blinds the eyes of the large serpent of the commanding soul. This is a precious jewel to challenge the commanding soul of the intellect;

*Emerald is the essence of intellect,
The great serpent, the commanding soul.
It did not see the essence of Adam,
How could earth possess this jewel?*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 645)

But in the threshold of God Almighty, it is like a disabled clown:

*Intellect at the threshold of revered love,
Is as disabled as a clown.*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 598)

Therefore, one has to leave the intellect and play mad like Majnoon. But actually, becoming mad in his point of view is a like gaining intellect of a higher level:

*Leave the intellect, go and become mad,
So that you become a new kind of wise like Majnoon.*

True love gives one another a type of understanding and intelligence. He has presented this theme through a beautiful paradox:

*We are intoxicated, drunk lovers of no intellect,
But, our soul has reached a new intelligence and understanding.*

Jami considers the intellect as an arm in fighting against the self. At the end of his book (*masnavi* of lovers) *Salaman Wa Absal*, he considers the Shah as a secret of active intellect to whom is continually sent bounties and virtues from heaven, while everything is under his occupation:

*When the revered Creator, built the universe,
He first created the intelligence and understanding.*

*There are ten steps of intellect, Oh! Knower of details,
The tenth rank is the effective one in the world.
For It is the factor that works all over the world,
That's why, they call it active Intellect.
(Haft Owrang Jami, p. 363)*

Salaman is the symbol of the speaking Soul (reason) and *Absal* is the symbol of the desire body. Finally, by the aid of intellect, *Absal* dies in the fire of severe hardships and *Salaman*, falling in love with the planet Venus, as the symbol of noble attributes and perfection, reaches the land of intellect, brightens the face of intelligence and becomes the king of humane land:

*What is Venus, the height of perfection,
Whose connection makes the soul worthy.
It gives light to the face of intellect,
To become the king of human beings.
(Haft Owrang Jami, p. 364).*

Intellect is the ladder of climbing and the platform of love's flight. As Mowlavi expresses, for the novice at the beginning of his progression, intellect is the teacher of the seeker. But when the seeker reaches the stage of perfection, the intellect becomes the disciple of the seeker, like Gabriel—whose nature is pure intellect. In general all angels belong to the realm of intellect and know nothing about love. The night the prophet Mohammad (S) ascended, Gabriel could not pass from *Sedratol-montaha* even one single step. Therefore, Hazrat Mohammad (S), riding the horse of love, continued all the way to the position of *Qab-e Qowsein-o- Adna*:

*When the teacher of man is love,
Afterwards, intellect becomes man's pupil.
Intellect as Gabriel would say: Oh! Ahmad,
I would burn, if I come forward a single step!
(Masnavi, First Book, B 66-1065)*

In Shah Nematollah Vali's opinion, the intellect in the feast of love is like a lamp put in the current of winds:

*Do you know what is the position of intellect in the feast of love?
is exactly like a lamp that is put in the wind.*

Finally, the seeker reaches the beginning of love's path.

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*Do you know what is the position of intellect in the feast of love?
is exactly like a lamp that is put in the wind.*

Finally, the seeker reaches the beginning of love's path.

Here, love catches up and leaves the intellect behind for miles:

*What intellect would call the ultimate goal,
Is the beginning in the realm of love.*

Since Shah Nematollah Vali is famous for his sonnets more than other poetic forms, and as the sonnet is an appropriate vehicle to value love and disable the intellect, therefore, sonnets have crystallized in his poetry more than other forms. In his *Masnavis*, Jami pays attention to intellect and in his sonnets pays tribute to love.

1. Redundancy of poetic themes:

One of the common aspects of Jami and Shah Nematollah Vali stems from their realm of poetry. Although, the comparison would not be a correct one, for Shah Nematollah Vali is known as a great Sufi of nobility and generosity, in the literary history of Sufism and Jami has the character of a poet. Yet, neither is considered as weighty a figure as Ferdowsi, Sa'di, Mowlavi and Hafez. This theme can be reviewed from two directions:

A) Lack of imitation and innovation

As previously stated, this specific aspect is generally related to 9th century literature either in poetry or prose. Poets arrived at the peak of their art in a unique manner during the 6th through 8th centuries. Shah Nematollah Vali mostly composed sonnets. As we know, in the realm of the sonnet, Sa'di, and Hafez are at the pinnacle. Jami's fame revolves around his seven-part *Masnavis*, which are mostly imitations from Nezami yet lack the brevity of Nezami's poems.

B) Common mystical themes

The two have paid more attention to mystical themes in their poetry. Generally, these themes are alike among poets of these literary genres. So the mystical themes used by these two men revolve round the realm of *Irfani* (Gnostic/ mystical) idioms.

Themes such as:

1. The unity of seeker, the sought, and the act of seeking
2. Getting intoxicated from the cup-bearer's goblet
3. Sacrificing ones self for the beloved
4. Staying distant from hypocrisy, accidents on the surface of earth
5. Unity of existence
6. Feeling love towards all creation
7. Staying away things which bind us to material world

can be seen—with minor differences—in the majority of Sufi poetry.

Basically, Sufis' breadth of thought revolves around a world without multitude and diversity. Therefore, redundancy is a normal matter against which critics remain silent.

D) Different moral and ethics

Differences can be reviewed from two directions; First, in regards to inner characters and ethics. Second; is concerning their power of poetics.

First, let us discuss individual differences:

1. Language of protest and criticism

The language of the poet, on one hand, acts as a mirror reflecting the circumstances of his times and on the other reveals his innermost feelings, ethics and character. Although Shah Nematollah Vali and Jami lived in the same era and earned their high positions within similar social conditions, but their styles, thought processes, individual behavior, and attitudes were quite different. Their age difference made the two face different social circumstances and perhaps these unfavorable conditions have made Jami preferred over Shah Nematollah Vali in terms of criticism and protest. He called all clergymen, from Sufi, Sheikh and Faqih to laymen as tailors and weavers a bunch of hypocrites and brainless persons who think they have reached the realm of humanity:

*Everybody thinks that it is he, only and merely,
That has reached the realm of the humanity.
(Haft Owrang Jami, p. 73)*

Once in a while Jami complains of being far from the beloved. Thus:

*Remoteness from friends makes my sorrowful soul sadder.
Oh! I wish I could get to you by means of my hair!
My soul garment is rent because of your remoteness,
Do come please, Oh! You, the symbol of wishes-to-come true.
(Jami's Divan)*

His complaints change direction to cruel times:

*Under this old sphere of light blue,
Stones are thrown at the glass of generous ones.
The base of the firmament is tilted as a bow,
The straight men are forced to stand as arrow.*

When complaining about the Sheikh, who, due to ignorance, insults men of heart, he does not hesitate to reply thus:

*The Sheikh scorned the secrets of the men of the heart,
He knows not that man doesn't shake from ignorance.
He blasphemed the old Magi, now it suffices,
For he has been ashamed of his own religion.
His manner is not patterned after righteousness,
Do not expect a temperate manner from a diverted nature.*

So many complaints and grievances in Jami's poetry show his restless, and variable character, while Shah Nematollah Vali has a temperate, peaceful and mild behavior, indicating that he has reached higher levels in mysticism. Jami, in few instances, has shown his superiority over Shah Nematollah Vali in poetry. However, nowhere in his *Divan*, can one run into complaints about the times, separation, disasters etc.... It is as if he is the symbol of true Sufis who see every thing as beautiful, because of the level of satisfaction he attains from the Beloved. His reaction toward disasters is that of full patience and submission. As he cites about God's satisfaction:

*The pain is itself the cure.
Get medicine, whether ill or safe,
when disasters are sent by God,
Take them as God's generosity and grants.*

He goes on thus:

*We seek disasters from God almighty, but His grants,
All are bestowed upon Job,
making him patient and tolerable.*

One of the results of his mystical, positive insights is love, affliction and lack of suffering of all people. He believes that every one has a path towards God that is not understandable to others:

*Because there is an opening from every creature towards God,
It is worth its while if you do not disturb the memory of an ant.*

*Did I see anyone being strange with God? No!
For all creatures are familiar with Him.*

In his school of thought, one is not allowed to disturb an ant, let alone disturb human beings. In his doctrine, the path of lovers, hurting creatures is a blasphemous act:

*If an ant stings me, I would not hurt it,
What do I have to do with people's hurting?
Near us, weeping is better than hurting, so do weep,
So you are not caught by those who like to hurt creatures.
Heartbreaking is blasphemous, in the path of lovers,
Why then hurt creatures if you are a true Muslim?*

He goes on as follows:

*No one has the slightest unhappiness from me,
Never, ever, did I make dust to settle on people's garment.*
(Ibid. p. 404)

Non-hurting is based upon the fact that everything belongs to the Beloved:

*Whatever we see, has an image of our beloved,
Therefore, we do not scratch anyone's heart a hair's width.*
(Ibid. p. 463)

Contrary to Shah Nematollah Vali, Jami considers non-hurting as an atheistic view. Because the boundary between the necessary and the forbidden is broken, and the extent of legitimate and illegitimate is demolished, one must think of the consequences therein. According to Jami, he whose doctrine is based on non-hurting, has no religion and intellect:

*He is far from the signs of religion and intellect,
Whose doctrine is based on non-hurting.
The motto is an old free doctrine that says;
Just do not hurt creatures,
But then, do whatever you like.*

It seems that Jami did not understand the secrets of Gnostic terminology and like a kernel-less walnut, tried to deceive the public at large:

*This is not Sufism, but it is heresy,
It is not unity, but it's disunion.
Sufi's terms have memorized,*

*To repeat parrot-like for people,
He does not know the secret of the work,
Apparently knowledgeable, but not a mystic at all.
(Haft Owrang Jami, p. 102)*

2. Weakness of speech

As previously stated, the poetry of Shah Nematollah Vali and Jami belongs to the 9th century. Their works are mostly imitated and not innovative. As an example, Jami's *Salaman* and *Absal* and a poetic work of Shah Nematollah Vali are both imitations of Mowlana's *Masnavi*. During this era, poets, due to lack of originality, would lose their ethical control and use sarcasm against each other.

Jami, impressed by the poetical prevailing atmosphere, tried to blame it on his rivals. He shows his weakness in protesting the term *Saqari* as follows:

*A cup-bearer would say that the thieves of meaning,
Have stolen colorful themes from my poems wherever possible.
I have seen most of his poems; none had meaning,
The poor was right, all meanings have been stolen.*

In a quatrain, Jami, using nonsensical terms, criticizes the fights of Shi'ites and Sunnis. The interesting point is that he starts to preach to the public with nonsensical terminology!:

*Do not open your mouth to unworthy terms,
Do not wipe unworthy terms by improper words.
Do not swear with prejudice,
Do not mention names without goodwill.
(Haft Owrang Jami, p. 148)*

Shah Nematollah Vali's poems indicate an atmosphere of good disposition and ethical values, which exemplify his soul's development and the perfection of his character.

3. Self-praise

The self-praise of each poet falls in a different area. In Shah Nematollah Vali's poems, he takes into consideration his mystical views and beliefs in the unity of existence, while Jami's poems are related to poetics and techniques of speech.

Apparently, self-confidence and self-praise covers the entire *Divan* of Shah Nematollah Vali. A superficial review would lead us to accuse him of possessing pride and self-praise, but a deeper review of his philosophy would show that all

these praises stem from his unity and oneness with the world of existence. He not only considers himself a symbol of God's great attributes, but says all people are symbol of it, which is just one:

*We are the symbol of God's great attribute,
Who else can be the great owner?
There are so many this and that throughout the world,
Yet there is just one Nematollah in the whole world.*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 407)

He just sees the light of God cast on the old and the young, in the stage of vanishing:

*Our "we-ism" was uncovered, while His "He-ism" appeared,
How nicely I saw Him through His eyes with no veil.
The hidden treasure came into light in my eyes,
The covered secret, was revealed to me without any veils.
It is of Nematollah's light, that world has become bright,
See how his light has made the young and old so bright!*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 410)

When he really reaches the level of God Almighty's slavery, he has become the king of thousands of sultans. No doubt, if another person attained this level, he would become king of the universe:

*I am the slave of God almighty,
I am the king of thousand sultans.*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 423)

Considering the above, his selfishness or thought deviations on the "Unity of Existence" become straightforward. His aim is to draw hearts towards the center of the universe. Therefore, as the spiritual guide, he is obligated to entice motivation in truth seekers:

*If you seek to taste, ask us to give it to you,
Forget your own self, and seek God Almighty.*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 521)

In a *Masnavi* titled *Ganj-Al-Arefeen*, he discusses numerous ethical points such as abstinence from boasting and selfishness:

*Do not boast to be pious and religious,
Forget claims and ask for the meaning,
Ask for seeking the level of "getting close to God".
Do not praise yourself as hypocrites,
For hypocrites cannot tread this path.*

In the Shah's opinion, any person who can absolutely be the symbol of comprehensive being, can be the Shah of Kerman. So this position cannot be monopolized by anybody:

*Comprehensive being is the level of existence of humans,
This kind of being can be the Shah of Kerman.*

As stated earlier, Jami's self-praise is in the realm of poetry:

*Do not part a single breath from the circle of Jesus- breathers,
The cash of breaths is worthy, take privilege of the breaths.
My speech nature is the sugar- beak parrot,
Whose beak is red- colored because of its broken heart.
Oh! Jami, your heart-ravishing poems have an exquisite nature,
because they are mild, both in terms of surface and inner meanings.*

He goes on as follows:

*At the dawn I told the messenger of speech
That you are the commander, In spite of rivals,
I would like to keep calm and take a rest,
After all these poems I have composed with sufferings.
He answered: " Oh! Jami, You are the treasurer of secrets,
Do not stop me from unlocking the treasure box.*

All his poems are imitations of other poets, either from rhyme, rhythm and poetical themes. Yet, when it comes to self-praise, he considers his poems better than others':

*The difference in Sa'di's and Jami's works is
That Jami's poetry is all delightful and pleasant.
But Shah Nematollah Vali has nothing to say in this respect:
To tie the relation of poetry to me,
Is like the relation of ABC to my master ancestor**

*The prophet Mohammad (S).

4. The Praise of kings

One of the most conspicuous characteristics of Shah Vali clearly seen in his poems is his nobleness and generosity, which made him refrain from bowing at the threshold of any king. He accepted the slavery to his eternal beloved God Almighty. This noble nature enabled him to sit on the throne of Sultanate:

*For a long time, I played the role of slave to the Sultan,
And got Sultanate, because of the close slavery.*

One of the pivotal thoughts in his *Divan* is the lack of need in relation to people and showing his power and sovereignty. He uses the terms "Sultan," "Shah," "Khosrow," and "Malek" to show his lack of need for commoners. When he says, "We have found prosperity in poverty," or "We have found Solomon's ring through begging," he undoubtedly speaks of the high level of "Poverty is my honor," cited by Hazrat Mohammad(S).

Not only him, but anyone who attains high levels through hardships like Nematollah, would get hold of the Sultanate of the world. When he confesses that he is the beggar at the threshold of God, it means that he would never beg from kings and sultans through flattery or apple-polishing:

*We begged from the door of the Shah,
That's why we got the Sultanate of the two worlds.*

Shah Nematollah Vali's spiritual influence made him the focus of attention from all directions. He did not only feel greedy over King's wealth, but contrary to that, Kings were waiting for his grants.

It is related that:

"When Sultan Ahmad Bahmani of India sent lots of Indian goods along with some cash to Seyed Nematollah, the tax would be more than seventy thousand tomans. The ruler of Kerman wrote a letter to Shahrokh Mirza, son of Amir Timur, in Herat requesting the king to issue a decree to collect tax from Nematollah. Gowhar Shad Agha, made Shahrokh forget about this. She said, "Beware of this decree, which will be recorded in world history, that the Shah Of India sent so much cash and goods from India to Iran for Seyed Nematollah Vali, but the Shah of Iran got so much tax and one/tenth from him."

Seyed's generosity and nobility is praiseworthy. It is no wonder his followers were numerous. It is noted in this regard that, "Once they brought lots of goods from India and left them near the river in Mahan. Since Seyed was in his forty-days of prayer, no one dared to bring the matter to his attention. After Seyed's prayer was finished, he came out and asked what these were.

"These are the budget of a region," they answered.

Seyed instructed them, "Divide them into three parts. Send one-third for Shahrokh to spend for the army of Islam. Send another part to Khalilollah in India and spend the third part on Mahan's threshold."

Then, he took a one-meter square of cloth (*Karbas*) left with the goods and said: "Let us dry our sweat, too!"

Jami, despite of all virtues attributed to him, praises kings. Professor August Bickto, on justifying Jami's praise of kings, says that Jami wanted to show off his art and craft. He says that poets could not make ends meet except through presenting them to the courts.

In rejecting this objection, Jami says:

*Praise of kings in poetry is by their request,
Not by apple-polishing nor one's own need.
While being weighted by the king,
If you do it hundreds of times.
You would not remember a word of praise,
To ask the king and to be greedy.
Because you will never see a line of request,
After the lines that are full of kings' praise.*

In justifying his praises, he says that the intention of praising kings is actually the praise of the King who has all seven countries under his power:

*My intention of praise is another Shah,
Whose crown of prosperity is right now on his head.
All seven countries are under His command,
All seven seas are a drop of His generosity.
Praise of specified persons, is better kept secret from commoners,
For wise was the Sufi who said:
"It is better that others' attributes,
Are said under the disguise of others'"*
(*Haft Owrang* Jami)

Jami considered kings as the shadow of God. Their praise was, in fact, God's recollection:

*But kings are His shadow, full of His attributes,
Their praise is really the praise of Him.
Their recollection is in fact His,
Thinking about them is thinking about God.*
(*Haft Owrang* Jami)

How can a poet refrain from King's grants reciting praiseful themes and yet, does not expect anything from him? Jami Praises Sultan Abu Saeed as follows:

*King (Sultan) Abu Saeed ranks so high,
That low appears, in comparison, the sky.
All his ancestors have been kings,
Even his servants are of high ranking,
When his hand becomes generous,
Seas and mines would become his treasurers.*
(Jami's *Divan*)

It should be said that Shah Nematollah Vali had had no need to praise sultans and kings. And actually this is one of the reasons for his popularity among nobles and commoners as well. But Jami was attracted to the court and the Poet Laureate. This gave him an ambiguous role among the scholars of his time.

5. Generosity and Nobility (*Karamat*)

Nematollah was a generous and noble man without ever expressing that. In most cases, the events are not recorded to avoid self-praise and showing-off. Najmod-din Razi does not classify things such as reading peoples' minds, knowing secrets, walking on water or in the air and paving the earth in a short time as *Karamat*, for these could be done by the faithful and the unfaithful as well. But true *Karamat*-specific to men of religion—happens after states of spiritual vision and getting to know the unknown.

Shah Nematollah Vali cites the following on *Karamat*:

*I am a drunk Rend of the tavern; I have no Karamat,
Only in the corner of the tavern, I am always praying to God.
I am the leader of the Rends, I am the cup-bearer of my rivals,
I am not a pious Dervish, but I am the Sultan of the Tavern.*

He stays away from the kinds of *Karamat*, which are used by some to acquire fame and so on. He says:

*Do not boast of being a Sheikh, a pious and a man of Karamat,
Because this is a path full of fears and disasters.*

It is related that Seyed Hossein Akhlati who was familiar with occult sciences such as *Kimia* and *Limia*, showed off in front of Shah Nematollah Vali. When it was Shah Nematollah Vali's turn, the Shah said: "Our aim is Mohammad's (S) *Kimia* of poverty—not material *Kimia*!"

Certainly, a person such as Shah Nematollah Vali, who faced hardships in spiritual realm, possessed *Karamat*, although he kept it secret. Of the many instances in history books, the following is a worthwhile specimen: "It is related that Seyed had excellent ethics. Gifts of either food or other items from Sultans and ordinary people were always being presented to him. He would first have some and then would send the rest to the needy. Once the great Sultan Shahrokh Bahador Gorkan, may God enlighten his reasoning, asked Hazrat Seyed, may God sanctify his secrets, 'I hear you eat foods of doubtful origins. What is the wisdom behind that?'

Nematollah recited the following poem in response:

*If the life of all people comes under my possession,
Never would a man of God eat, unless allowed by religion.*

Shahrokh Sultan did not find the answer a mild one. A few days later, just to test Seyed, he said to his cook, 'Go and get a sheep by force from someone without paying for it and then take it to our kitchen to prepare some food!'

The man did accordingly and got a fat sheep from an old woman after whipping her. Then he brought the sheep to sultan's kitchen and prepared it. The Sultan invited Seyed to share the food with him. Shahrokh then said to Seyed, 'You said you would not eat food unless it was 'Halal.' I ordered my men to take this sheep by force from an old woman.'

He explained every thing that happened. Seyed said, 'Oh, Great Sultan! Please order this matter to be investigated fully. Maybe there is some expediency by God Almighty in this regard.'

The Sultan commanded his men to take the old woman to the court and asked her, 'Where were you taking this sheep? How did you own it?'

She replied, 'I had vowed that if my son returned safely from his travel, I would present the sheep to Seyed. My son came home safely and I was so happy that took the sheep on my back and was on my way to Seyed's house when your soldiers got it forcefully from me. The more I cried, the less they listened.'

Shahrokh, who promised not to test Seyed again, discovered that God Almighty kept his friend safe from having *Haram* and doubts. So he apologized to Seyed."

It is also related that Sheikh Abu Es-Hagh Al Bahraini Al Shirazi and with two other friends came to visit Seyed. Each of the guests wanted a different kind of food but one of the wishes was for *Shir Berenj*. When lunchtime arrived, every man received the food he had wished for without disclosing it to anyone!

Other comparisons can be found in the realm of poetry. Shah Nematollah Vali's poems are in the form of odes, full of mystical meanings. In terms of the number of poems and diversity of themes, Jami has precedence over Shah

Nematollah Vali. Jami's language in his *Masnavis of Haft Owrang* is mostly full of advice and guidance. Even in *Leily-o-Majnoon*, *Yusef-o-Zoleykha*, and *Salaman-va-Absal*, which are apparently love-stories, the element of preaching, advice and education is stronger.

6. The difference in their sonnets

When assessing the two men's sonnets, we find the following differences:

1. Imagination

Imagination is stronger in Jami's than Shah Nematollah Vali's. Generally Vali's language is a simple one. It does not entrap the reader in complicated figures of thought. Like Attar, or Mowlavi, he is after meaning and uses words just to convey his special concepts. While Jami is after figures of speech and rhetorical figures to force the reader to think about their meaning.

Some beautiful specimens are as follows:

*The comb has no freedom to pass through you hair,
Never tie several broken hearts to each shaft of hair.*

(Euphemism) (*Hosn-e-Taleel*)

(Ibid. p. 189).

*I would like to have a heart of Iron with magnetic properties.
So as soon as you throw the arrows of eyelashes, it attracts them.*

(Ibid. p. 189) (the same figure)

*The jeweler who calls your lip small,
Can't prove its existence, except by logic.*

(Ibid. p. 224) (Simile)

*I took the memory of your mole under the ground,
As ants take down seeds towards their nests.*

(Ibid. p. 283) (Simile)

One sometimes runs into poems that show Shah Nematollah Vali's power of imagination:

*In a rose garden, the bud, in order to see you,
Has appeared with rent dress, no skirt and collar anew. (Metaphor)
His figures of speech are of different kind,
For the Quran has been sent to him with no doubts. (metaphor)
The newlywed bride of my thought is heart enlivening,*

In holy places she wants a witness who has come from the world of secrets.

(eloquent simile)

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 553)

2. Paradox

Paradox plays an important role in Shah Nematollah Vali's poems because of mystical themes. Paradox is the special element of these poems:

Immersed in sweet water, but in deep thirst, isn't it strange?

Living in our own house, but as an outsider, isn't it strange?

In the embrace of the beloved, but distant from him,

I am remote from him, but He is in close range.

I am delighted and glad, while deep in pain.

Why should I fear, when the beloved is a physician?

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 74)

Paradox in mystical works, stems from their unity-centered view that sees the praying and the prayed, the worshipped and the worshipper all as one:

In some stage praying, in some prayed,

In some stage slave, in some educator,

In some stage praised, in some praising,

In some stage vanishing, in some eternal,

In some stage gone, in some existing.

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 236)

In the stage of gathering, he sees himself in unity with God, pleased with his unifying thought, which is far from polytheism:

I know enough about knowledge of God's oneness,

I never speak of two for I am not a polytheist,

I just speak of one God because I am a Muslim.

Once I am in crowd, remote from division,

Once I am entangled, like the hair of dolls,

I am always at one with my God Almighty,

Never would I claim that I am God myself,

I am the symbol of His attributes,

*In my memory, I have verses of the *Quran* letter by letter.*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 427)

Sometimes, he explains the paradoxes in his poems:

*Seyed is Shah and Slave is Slave,
If you want to be Shah, go and become a beggar.*
(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 534)

In the following sonnet, he explains how one person can be both king and beggar:

*Forget your being and your lack of being,
If you want to be the king,
Become a beggar at His presence,
For He is the helper of the needy.
Look for His help and become helpless.*
(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 535)

3. Diversity

Jami's sonnets have more diversity than those of Shah Nematollah Vali. Jami has three types of poems: sonnet, mystical and social love poems—though his mystical poems outnumber the other two types. But Shah Nematollah Vali's poems are considered purely mystical. Below is a specimen of Jami's sonnets with quite a mystical theme:

*At the dawn, the holy bird called to me from a lote-tree,
Keep calm in this eventful trap of disasters.
Angels and holy beings have prepared a mansion of love for you,
And you are sadly trapped in this sorrowful land.*
(Jami's *Divan*, p. 256)

Some of Jami's sonnets are reflections of circumstances of his time. In one instance, he says:

*Oh! Alas from these fools! Donkeys with no ears and tails,
Some are Sheikh makers and some are Sheikh sellers.
Each follows you two or three days,
So that you know they lack knowledge and they have no mind.
Not on the outside, the slightest flicker of light,
Not in the inside, the slightest flame of love.*
(Jami's *Divan*, p. 276)

Some of his poems are love poems such as:

*You are gone, but I am still staying here,
Because of my tears, I am still caught in the mud.*

*So swiftly you drove away with you titter, as lightning,
But, as a cloud, I am still raining tears after your titter:*

(Jami's *Divan*, p. 269)

*Directed towards unity from the Alif of your tallness,
Are those who understand the virtual forms of the letters.*

(Ibid. p. 265)

4. Practicality

The differences in the meaning of practical terms in the sonnets of the two poets can form the basis of some studies. Here, only a few instances are referenced, due to the vastness of the subject:

A) The Concept of Alchemy

One of the indices of Shah Nematollah Vali's ideology is his belief in the Perfect man's Alchemy— including himself. In this respect he says:

*We would turn the dust in the path into Alchemy,
We would cure hundreds of pains by casting a glance.*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 470).

Perhaps at first glance, one considers him to be a selfish person. After some reflection, we would find out that this theme stems from the unity of existence, which covers a vast area of his thought. Shah Nematollah Vali sees the whole universe as a bubble over the sea of truth and considers the Perfect Man a symbol of God's attributes reflecting God's power. His action derives from God's action. One could say that his self-praise stems from the same thought. In general, Sufis are more humble than proud.

As he says:

*He who thinks highly of himself,
Will be humiliated near men of nobility.
He who is humiliated and low in this world,
will truly be great, hereinafter.*

(Shah Nematollah Vali's *Divan*, p. 276)

Some say Hafez, reading Shah Nematollah's poem, wrote this sonnet:

*Those who turn dust into Gold through Alchemy,
Would it be that they cast a glance at us?*

(Divan Hafez, p. 131)

This is most unlikely, for Shah Nematollah Vali composed the sonnet after Hafez's death. Taking into consideration that Shah Nematollah Vali started composing poetry at the age of 60, and Hafez died in 791/792, it is unlikely it is true. Anyway, in theoretical mysticism, alchemy refers to a human being's excellence and perfection that takes place through a guide's spiritual advice.

Here dust has a metaphorical meaning referring to man's imperfect existence. Mowlavi expresses the same theme as follows:

*Swords are at the leaders' arm-house,
Seeing them, is your Alchemy.*

(Masnavi, first book, B, 716)

True Alchemy is Mohammad's poverty that can take man from the lowest points of inability to the highest levels of ability. But in practical mysticism, to develop spiritually and ethically, he says the best recipe for alchemy is endeavor and effort. In answering a Dervish who asks about alchemy, he tells him to go cultivate melons and sell the crop. He, afterwards casts a meaningful glance at the man saying that there is no alchemy as good as farming:

*Listen to my good advice,
Do good acts and receive good in return.
Do farming, do not be a beggar;
Attain prosperity by your allowed business.
If you are seeking alchemy,
Go and seek gold from black land.*

In Jami's poem, alchemy has two meanings: accepting the advice of men of perfection which takes man to higher levels of excellence, and the man of alchemy, who, in mysticism is the spiritual leader and can turn the copper of man's imperfect soul into Gold of perfection. The following is his:

*The greedy life wasted in pursuit of Alchemy,
Our Alchemy is when men of nobility accept us.*

(Jami's Divan, p. 147)

*On the stone of testing, would not balance with Gold,
The copper which does not follow the rules of Alchemy.*

(Ibid., 221)

B) The Concept of Wine:

In some poets' works such as Hafez's, the word "wine" has several meanings. In some instances, one cannot firmly say that his aim is the mystical meaning of the drink. In its absolute sense, "wine" means love and attraction to truth that is similar to the intoxication of wine:

*We drank what was poured in the goblet,
whether, wine of paradise or intoxicating drink.
(Divan Hafez, p. 19)*

In the majority of Hafez's poems, the mystical meaning is meant. For example, when he says:

*Isolated clergy, went to the tavern last night,
Breaking his promise, he grasped the goblet,
Mad Sufi who used to break goblets yesternight,
Became as sane as the wise, drinking one droplet.
(Ibid., p. 114)*

Certainly, the wine which makes man sane and wise cannot be grape wine. Although Hafez, in this verse assesses Sufis sarcastically, it is not farfetched to say that he considers the wine of love and recognition as something that increases one's knowledge. But in Shah Nematollah Vali's poems, one sees more clarity. He considers wine something apart from what people are after; something higher than the material world which opens one's eye to the world of secrecy, uncovering all veils:

*Drink this goblet of wine to our cheer:
So that you can take the gist of the life.
Not the wine they say here and there,
But the wine that has a special brewer.
If you have the slightest veil as thin as hair,
Take away our head.
(Shah Nematollah Vali's Divan, p. 319)*

The wine he is talking about is the wine of unity related to the unity between him and the world. That is why he always talks about the wine and encourages people to drink:

*Nematollah is the wine, and the world is the goblet,
This is the sort of wine I drink frequently.
There is no "allowed" wine except this one,*

He who drinks some other wine, it is forbidden.

(Ibid., p. 391)

He sees the world as a vast tablecloth of compassion and mercy spread by God Almighty, around which cup bearers offer Rends wine. Whoever deprived anyone of this wine, has been cruel to himself:

*Bunkers full of wine, and the cup bearer generous,
There are few Rends Master. Do not say we are short of wine.*

(Ibid., p. 97)

As God Almighty says in the Quran:

“Verily, God is not cruel against people, but it is people who are cruel to themselves.” — 240/ Johna.

In the majority of Jami’s poems, wine carries a mystical meaning:

*Oh, cup bearer! Go around and give us red wine,
And I will tell you what is the end result of this work.
To the birds of the love tavern,
What is more delicious than wine and sweet?
If our guide has not drunken a sip in hiding?
What’s all that effect of night wine in his eyes?*

(Jami’s *Divan*, p. 125)

The effect of night drinking in the old guide’s eyes is because of his night praying at the threshold of his beloved, which is totally mystical.

But in the following sonnet, Jami says:

*Oh cup bearer! The moon looks like a golden goblet,
Give us wine to the cheers of Sultan Abu Saeed’s sovereignty.
The lock that fasting, put at happiness and joy,
The shape of crescent moon, has made a grape wood key for.
From now on, we feast, drink red wine and get cash,
We have no more promises and no more fears.*

(Jami’s *Divan*, p. 222)

Certainly, the wine that is drunken cheering Abu-Saeed’s sovereignty, and a key that is made of grape wood, cannot have a mystical sense. He says thus:

*There is nowhere whose picture is not found,
It is mirrors fault if it shows not the pictures.
That old barrel is my wine, cup-bearer,
I receive a new bounty, from my guide every moment.*
(Jami's *Divan*, p. 256)

Taking into account the first line, which expresses the light of truth in the realm of creation, the wine in the second line must have a mystical meaning, for he clearly considers the inner hearth of the old guide as an old barrel, which grants him bounties every moment.

As stated previously, Shah Nematollah Vali was a mystic with a spiritual character. He was not a man of letters. His works are in a category of poets with Sana-ee, Attar and Mowlavi, who value meaning more than form.

He listened to the speech of the beloved who says, "Do not think about anything except my visit." Redundant and repetitive themes of Shah Nematollah Vali sometimes make his poems boring for the reader. Almost two thirds of his *Divan* includes redundant themes and one third is enough for expressing his ideology. That is why, in the realm of literary criticism, only a few of his poems can be criticized. What has made him renown in the world is not his poetry, but the charisma and spiritual magnetism of his soul. This attracts a host of seekers to him, in such a way that he is known as the leader of one of the temperate and dynamic sects (i.e. *Nematollahi* in Iran, India and Turkey, which relegates other Sufi sects as *Naghshbandi*).

The interesting point is that, although Shah Nematollah Vali and Jami both follow their predecessor poets, the title "The last of the poets" remains for Jami. On one hand, he is the last Iraqi poet, and on the other, his poetic power is stronger than Shah Nematollah Vali's. Perhaps comparing the two in the field of literature and poetry would not be a correct action.

However, Shah Nematollah Vali leaves Jami behind in terms of his spiritual influence and attracting the hearts of truth seekers in a manner that greatly decreases Jami's position.

In other words, Shah Nematollah Vali captures the spiritual land of mysticism and sits on the Sufi throne while Jami draws peoples' attention towards himself in the field of poetry.

May Peace be Upon the Followers of Guidance.

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Notes

- * (S) Stands for "Salavat Ollah-e Allayh." Used only for prophet Mohammad meaning, "May god's praise be upon him."
- * (A) Representing "Allay-I-hessalam." meaning, "peace be upon him."
- ¹ "Jelveh hayeh Irfan dar sher'e Jami" article by Mohammad Alavi Moghaddam, pages 168-169.
- ² *Jami*, Ali Asghar Hekmat, page 400.
- ³ *Tarikh adabyat'e Safa*, 4th volume, page 67.
- ⁴ "Tafavot'e Jami ba Shah Nematollah," article by Farzam, pages 13-14.
- ⁵ *Nafahatol Ons'e Jami*, corrected and introduced by Tohidipoor, page 140.
- ⁶ The introduction to *Kolyat'e Shah Nematollah*, Javad Nurbakhsh, page 7.
- ⁷ *Tarayeghol'haghayegh*, Ma'sum 'Ali Shah'e Shirazi, corrected by Mohammad Jafar Mahjoob, first volume, page 459.
- ⁸ Next to, 3rd spit, page 20.
- ⁹ *Sharh'e ahval va nagh'd'e asar'e Faridaddin Mohammad Attar'e Neyshaboori*, Badi'ozzaman' Foroozanfar, pages 56-57.
- ¹⁰ The introduction to *Divan'e Shah Nematollah'e Vali*, commented by Esmayil Shahroodi, page 7.
- ¹¹ *Majma'ossofaha*, 4th volume, pages 87-88, selected from *Tahghigh dar ahval va asar'e Shah Nematollah*, Hamid Farzam, pages 95-96.
- ¹² *Ayandeh Gooyi'e Shah Nematollah*, Mohammad Mohit'e Tabatabayi," collected by Mahmood Afshar, second volume, pages 102-104.
- ¹³ *Tarikh'e Adabyat'e Safa*, 4th volume, page 348.
- ¹⁴ *Tarayegh-ol'haghayegh*, Ma'sum 'Ali Shah, corrected by Mohammad Jafar Mahjoob, second volume, page 667.
- ¹⁵ *Tahghigh dar ahval va asar'e Shah Nematollah*, Hamid Farzam, page 336.
- ¹⁶ *Tarikh Adabyat'e Safa*, 4th volume, pages 76-78.
- ¹⁷ *Jami*, Ali Asghar Hekmat, page 6.
- ¹⁸ *Tarikh Adabyat'e Safa*, 4th volume, page 299.
- ¹⁹ *Jami*, Ali Asghar Hekmat, page 51 and 406.
- ²⁰ *Tarayegh-ol'haghayegh*, Volume I, page 282.
- ²¹ Next to, first volume, page 488.
- ²² Next to, 3rd volume, page 18.
- ²³ Next to, 3rd volume, page 21.
- ²⁴ The introduction to *Nafahatol Ons'e Jami*, edited by Tohidipoor, page 136.
- ²⁵ *Az Sa'di ta Jami*, Ali Asghar Hekmat, page 686.
- ²⁶ *Tarikh Adabyat'e Safa*, 4th volume, page 193.
- ²⁷ Next to, page 200.
- ²⁸ *Jami*, Ali Asghar'e Hekmat, page 135.
- ²⁹ *Tarayeghol'haghayegh*, 3rd volume, page 13.

- ³⁰ Next to, page 13.
³¹ *Jami*, Ali Asghar Hekmat, pages 95-96.
³² Next to, pages 95-96.
³³ *Mersadol'ebad*, Mohammad Amin Riyahi, pages 313-314.
³⁴ The introduction to *Divan'e Shah Nematollah'e Vali*, Esmayil Shahroodi, page 8.
³⁵ Selected of *Tazkeratosh'sho'ara*, pages 373-374.
³⁶ *Tarayegh-ol'haghayegh*, 3rd volume, page 48.

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- ¹ *Az Sa'di ta Jami*, Edward Brown, translated by Ali Asghar Hekmat, Amir Kabir Publishers, fourth edition, 1357
- ² *Tahghigh dar ahval va naghde asar va afkar-e Shah Nematollah Vali*, Hamid Farzam, Soroosh Publishers, first edition, 1374
- ³ *Tarikh-e adabiat dar Iran*, Zabihollah Safa, Ferdows Publishers, fifth edition, 1368
- ⁴ *Tazkeratoshoara*, Dolatshah Samarghandi, research and correction by Mohammad Abbasi, Barani Bookseller's publication, Tehran
- ⁵ *Tarikh-e Kerman*, Ahmad Ali Khan Vaziri, edited by Bastani Parizi, Ebn Sina Publishers, second edition, 1352
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- ⁹ *Zendegi va asar-e Shah Nematollah Vali*, Javad Nurbakhsh, first edition, Moosavi Printing House, 1337
- ¹⁰ *Sharh-e ahval va naghde asar-e Sheikh Faridaddin Mohammad Atar Neishaboori*, Badiozzaman Froozanfar, Elmi va Farhangi Publishers, seventh edition, 1373
- ¹¹ *Traiegh-ol'haghaiegh*, Ma'sum 'Ali Shah shirazi, edited by Mohammad Jafar Mahjoob, Sanaei Library publication
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- ¹³ *Kolliat-e ash'ar-e Shah Nematollah*, edited by Javad Nurbakhsh, Publisher: Javad. e. Nurbakhsh, fourth edition, 1374
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- ¹⁷ "Tafavot-e Jami ba Shah Nematollah", article by Hamid Farzam, *Magazine of the Literature*, College of Esfahan University, 1344
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The Teachings of Shah Nematollah Vali (1330-1429 CE): A Quotation-Based Preliminary Research

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Nourod-din Shah Nematollah Vali, who chose to stay and live in the city of Kerman, was a teacher of the Sufi path. He was born on 14 Rabi-ul-Awwal 731 Hejri (26 December 1330) in Aleppo. His father belonged to an Arab Seyed clan and his mother was born in Persia, and was probably Persian speaking. He says:

*nowazdahom jedd-é man rasûl-é khodâ-st
âshkâr-ast, nêst penhâni*

My nineteenth ancestor is the very Messenger of God.
This is manifest and not a hidden secret

When he was young, he was greatly affected by the *Fusûs-ul-Hekam* (Gems of Wisdom), a profound Sufi interpretation of the symbolic meaning of the prophets by Sheikh Mohyod-din Ibn ‘Arabi (d. 1240). Later, when he was finally established in Kerman, Shah Nematollah translated the book into Persian and provided commentary. Before that, he traveled to many places until he met Sheikh ‘Abdullah Yâfei in Mecca and accepted him as his Sufi master. The spiritual guide of Yâfei was Sheikh Sâleh Barbari, whose spiritual lineage derived from early Sufi masters such as Junaid of Baghdad, Ma‘rûf of Karkh, Davûd of Tâei, Habib ‘Ajami, and Hasan of Basrah. Following the later teachings of Shah Nematollah, this Sufi path, called “Yafei,” became known as “Shah Nematollahi.”

By that time, the people of Khorasan were 85-90 percent Sunnites. We read in a *ghazal* of Shah Nematollah (*ghazal* 1499, Collected Poetic Works, p. 594):

*ay ke hasti-yé moHebb-é âl-é ‘ali
mû’men-é kâmel-i-wo bê-badal-i*

Oh you who love the clan of ‘Ali,
you are a perfect believer and have no equal.

* * *

*rah-é sunni gozîn ke Mazhab-é mâ-st
warna gom-gashta 'i-wo dar khalal-i*

Take the way of the Sunni, for this is my religious path.
Otherwise, you will be lost and in trouble.

* * *

*dôst-dâr-é Sahaba-am ba-tamâm
yâr-é sunni-wo khaSm-é mu'tazeli*

I am a loving friend to all the companions of the Messenger of God.
I am a supporter of the Sunni and the opponent of the Mu'tazili.

* * *

*Mazhab-é jâme' az khodâ dâr-am
in hedâyat marâ bûd azali*

I have an all-encompassing creed coming from God.
This has been my guidance from pre-eternity.

In the sixteenth century, the majority of Khorasan and Iran became Shi'a after the hegemony of the Safavid dynasty. In this poem, the Sheikh speaks about the "all-encompassing creed." This shows that his believers are above Sunnism and Shi'ism and free from this dissent.

With regard to the admiration and love of the family of the Messenger (peace be upon him), all the great Sufi poets who were Sunnis, such as Sa'di, Hafez, Mowlana Jalalod-din (Rumi), 'Iraqi, and finally Jami, maintained it in common.

Sheikh Nematollah lived about one hundred years. He died on Thursday 22 of Rajab 832 (May 28, 1429 CE) in Kerman. His *Zeyârat* in Mahan (near Kerman) is a pilgrimage site of the Shi'as, as well as the Sunnis.

No major study exists in the English language of the poetic or prose works of Shah Nematollah. This article is only an introduction to the teachings of Shah Nematollah. This article being brief, we have used a method mainly based on quotations from Shah Nematollah's works.

We have adopted poetry as the basis for choosing the quotations, because Shah Nematollah's prose cannot be easily summarized. We have chosen the po-

etic form of the quatrain (rubâ'eyât), because it summarizes the basic concepts for this introduction to the teachings of Shah Nematollah. We look forward to seeing a major work of translation of Shah Nematollah's works into English, or another western language.

Shah Nematollah greatly appreciated the previous Sufi poets. He believed that Sheikh Faridod-din 'Attar (d. 1220 CE) was replaced, over the course of time, by Sheikh Fakhrod-din 'Iraqi (d. 1282 CE). 'Iraqi was a contemporary of Mowlana Jalâlod-din Balkhi, known as "Rumi" (d. 1273). The following quatrain of Shah Nematollah, as well as other sources of cultural history, shows that all of the poetry of Mowlana, including the *Masnavi* were not yet well-known in Khorasan. Only some of his selected poems were well known in the East. Shah Nematollah, like Mowlana, avoided composing poetry for many years of his life. It is said that all his poems were composed after his sixtieth year of life:

(Rubâ'i 77)

gar qatra namân-ad, âb bâqi bâsh-ad
war kûza shekast, bahar sâqi bâsh-ad
 "Attar ba-sûrat az Khorasan gar raft
 âmâd 'ewaz-ash shaykh 'Iraqi bâsh-ad

Even if a drop has not been left, the water subsists.
 If a jar breaks away, the very ocean becomes the cupbearer.
 If 'Attar has left Khorasan in an outward form,
 He has been replaced by Sheikh 'Iraqi.

Like many early Sufi masters, Shah Nematollah appreciated both Tariqat (the way of Sufism) and Shari'at (the religious law), and recognized the coexistence of these both as a path towards Haqiqat (the [Divine] truth):

(Rubâ'i 79)

dânestan-é 'elm-é din shari'at bâsh-ad
chûn dar 'amal âwar-i Tariqat bâsh-ad
gar "elm-o "amal jam" kon-i bâ ekhlas
az bahar-é reZây-é Haqq Haqiqat bâsh-ad

The knowledge of religious science is *Shari'at* (Law).
 If you put it into practice, that is *Tariqat* (the Sufi way).
 If you sincerely join the science and the practice
 For the sake of pleasing God, that is *Haqiqat* (Truth).

Knowing God and worshipping Him starts with recognizing His Oneness

(tawhid). The human intellect ('aql) cannot serve as a guide in the matter:

(Rubâ'i 227)

*tawhid ba-tawhid nekô mēdân-ēm
khod-râ ba-khodâ-wo ô ba-ô mēdân-ēm
khod-râ-wo torâ ba-ô shenâs-ēm ay 'aql
tâ Zan na-bar-i ke ô ba-tô mēdân-ēm*

We know well the Oneness of God through the knowledge of Oneness.
We know ourselves through God and we know Him through Himself.
O intellect, we know ourselves and we know you through Him.
Don't hold the opinion that we know Him through you!

One cannot become a Sufi simply by using rhetoric and eloquence. The taste of the Loving God is not secured by the path of the intellect, but by drinking (spiritual) wine:

(Rubâ'i 61)

*nâ-khworda sharâb, Zawq-é may na-t'wân yâft
ân Zawq-o bayânê ze-bayân na-t'wân yâft
în lazzat-é 'âsheqi ke mâ yâfta 'ēm
az sofra-wo lût-é 'âqelân na-t'wân yâft*

One cannot enjoy the taste of wine without drinking it;
Any taste explanation of it cannot be found by eloquent explanations alone.
This deliciousness of Love, which we have been blessed with,
Is not available in the banquets of intellectuals.

Love is like the infinite ocean, and the intellect ('aql) is unable to resist it:

(Rubâ'i 25)

*mâ 'ēm chonin tashna-wo daryâ bâ mâ-st
andar hama qatra 'ê muhite paydâ-st
'eshq âmad-o be-neshast ba-takht-é del-é mâ
chûn ô be-n'shast, 'aql az ânâ bar-khâst*

We are thirsty but the sea is there with us.
And in every drop, we discover an ocean.
Love came and sat down on the throne of my heart.
When Love sat down, the intellect had to get up and leave.

(tawhid). The human intellect ('aql) cannot serve as a guide in the matter:

(Rubâ'i 227)

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chûn ô be-n'shast, 'aql az ânâ bar-khâst*

We are thirsty but the sea is there with us.
And in every drop, we discover an ocean.
Love came and sat down on the throne of my heart.
When Love sat down, the intellect had to get up and leave.

When Love comes, it becomes a monarch and the intellect becomes a slave:

(Rubâ'i 62)

*'eshq âmad-o 'aql rakht bar-bast-o be-raft
ân 'ahd ke basta bûd be-sh'kast-o be-raft
chûn did ke pâdshah dar-âmad sar-mast
bêchâra ghulâm rakht bar-bast-o be-raft*

Love entered and the intellect moved away and left.
The intellect was unfaithful to its own promise and left.
When the intellect saw that the king entered joyfully,
It moved away, like a poor slave, and left.

The Sufi has to recognize himself so that he recognizes God, and has to seek himself so that he finds God:

(Rubâ'i 1)

*matlub-é khod az khod Talab ay Tâleb-é mâ
khod-râ be-shenâs-o yak zamânê ba-khod â
gar 'âsheq-é Sâdeqi, yaki-râ dô ma-gô
kâfer bâsh-i agar ke gôy-i dô khodâ!*

Seek from your own self what must be sought, O seeker.
Recognize yourself and come to your self in an instant.
If you are a sincere lover, do not call "two" what is One.
For if you claim there are two Gods, you will be known as a heretic!

The Sufi has to seek God and not anyone else:

(Rubâ'i 294)

*az bahar-é khodâ, agar khodâ mêjôy-i
mêdân ke khodâ-râ ba-hawâ mêjôy-i
ô-râ be-Talab tâ ke be-yâb-i ô-râ
ghayr-ash che kon-i, ghayr cherâ mêjôy-i?*

For the sake of God, if you are seeking God,
Know that you are seeking God through your (worldly) desires.
Seek him until you find Him.
Why would you search for other than Him? What would be the use?

Worshipping God cannot be performed by pursuing one's personal ambi-

tions in the world:

*bâ ânke tô andar pay-é maqSûd-é khod-i
nê wâjed-é ghayr-i-wo na mawjûd-é khod-i
maqSûd-é tô az Tâ'at-é ma'bûd agar
beh-bûd-é khod-ast pas tô ma'bûd-é khod-i*

As long as you are following in pursuit of your own aims,
You will not find another and you will not be present to your own self.
If while praying to the worshipped one, your aim is
Your own personal welfare, then you are the worshipper of your own self.

He advises the novice to choose the state of “non-being,” and this will lead him to genuine existence:

(Rubâ'î 129)

*hasti yaki-st ânke hasti shâyad
in hasti-yé tô ba-hêch kârê nâyad
raw nêst shaw az hasti-yé khod, hamchûn mâ
k-az hasti-yé tô hêch daré na-g'shâyad*

Being is one that is for the person worthy of existing.
This “being” of yours serves no purpose.
Go! Become annihilated from your own being, like me.
For because of that “being” of yours, no gate will be open to you.

The Sufi has to be able to discover a master able to untie his “knots”:

(Rubâ'î 257)

*ay dar Talb-é gereh-goshâyê morda
dar waSl fotâda w-az jodây-i morda
ay bar lab-é bahar teshna dar khwâb shoda
ay bar sar-é ganj, w-az gadâyi morda*

O you, dying in search of someone to solve your problems.
You are dying in separation, when you have the opportunity for union.
You have been thirsty in your dreams while on the seashore of pure water.
You are dying from being a beggar while living over a treasure.

The Sufi has to seek the kernel of the truth in his heart, in order to discover the glorious manifestation of God in every atom:

(Rubâ'i 240)

*del maghz-é Haqiqat-ast, tan pôst, be-bin
dar keswat-é rûH, Sûrat-é dôst, be-bin
har Zarra ke ô neshân-é hasti dârad
yâ sâya-yé nûr-é ô-st yâ ô-st, be-bin*

See that the heart is the kernel of Truth, and the body only a skin.
Observe the form of the beloved in the garment of the spirit.
Any atom which has the sign of existence—
See that it is either a projection of His Light or Himself.

The Sufi, therefore, has to renounce this world:

(Rubâ'i 152)

*be-n`shin be-neshin w-az hama `âlam bar-khêz
`âlam che bowad ze-bûd-é `âlam bar-khêz
dar katm-é `adam be-yâ-wo bâ mâ be-neshin
az bûd-é wujûd-é khwêsh-tan ham bar-khêz*

Stay on, stay on, and relinquish all the universe.
What is the universe? Discard its very existence!
Come into the covering of non-existence and stay with me,
And discard your own being and existence.

The Sufi master speaks to his heart and asks it to not be of “two hues,” or dispositions:

(Rubâ'i 50)

*ay del ba-Tarîq-é `âsheqî râh yaki-st
dar keshwar-é `eshq banda-wo Shah yaki-st
t â tark-é dô-rangi na-kon-i dar rah-é `eshq
wâqef na-shaw-i ke Nemato `llâh yaki-st*

O heart, there is only one path in the journey of being a lover.
In the realm of Love, king and slave stand equal.
As long as you don't abandon being two hues on the path of Love,
You will not be aware that Nematollah is only one.

Love is the source of life, and everything is existent because of love and maintained by it:

*'eshq-ast ke jân-é 'âsheqân zenda az ô-st
nûrê-st ke âftâb-é tâbanda az ô-st
har chiz ke dar ghayb-o shahâdat yâb-i
mawjûd bowad ze- 'eshq-o pâyenda az ô-st*

The soul of the lovers is alive because of Love.
The light by which the sun is shining is from Love.
Anything you discover in the hidden or manifest world
Exists because of Love and continues by means of Love.

Love is the way of the “rogues” (= “rend,” a word that cannot be translated into English—especially with the meaning that the Sufi poets have attributed to it, such as Hafez of Shirâz.)

The “rogue” is not attached to worldly desires. He drinks spiritual wine in the way of the rogues, without being intoxicated. However, Shah Nematollah does not seem to preach the way of the *malâmatîyya* (= those desires to be “blamed” on the common people):

(Rubâ‘i 97)
*rend ân bâshad ke mayl-é hasti na-konad
w-az khwêsh gozashta khod-parasti na-konad
dar kôy-é kharâbât-é mughân rendâna
may nôsh konad mudâm-o masti na-konad*

The “rogue” is one who does not care for existence,
And who quits his self and is free from self-preoccupation.
In the tavern quarter, like a real “rogue,”
He drinks continuously and does not act like a drunk.

The “rogue,” like the attractive “idol” of the tavern, drinks from the self-bubbling jar of wine:

(Rubâ‘i 260)
*dîd-am Sanamé, jâm-é mayê nôshida
az naqsh-o khayâl jâma `yê pôshida
goft-am ze-kojâ sharâb nôsh-i? goftâ:
az khumm-é mayê ke khod ba-khod jôshida!*

I met an attractive “idol” who had been drinking a cup of wine,
Wearing a garment of images and imagination.
I asked, “From where have you been drinking this wine?”

The answer was: “From a self-fermenting bubbling jar!”

The “rogue” is free of selfishness:

(Rubâ‘i 206)

*rend-ast kasê ke az khodi wâ-rasta
paywasta yagâna bâ-yaki paywasta
bar-khâsta az har dô jahân rendâna
dar kôy-é kharâbât-é mughân be-n ‘shasta*

The “rogue” is that one free of selfishness;
He always lives by himself, and is ever the companion of the Single One.
He has renounced, rogue-like, both this world and the Hereafter.
He is dwelling in the tavern quarter of the Magi.

Therefore, the Sufi master recognizes each “rogue” as his dearest companion:

(Rubâ‘i 43)

*may-khâna tamâm waqf-é yârân-é man-ast
har rend ke hast jân-o jânân-é man-ast
farmân-bar-é sâqi-yé kharâbât-am az ân
sâqi-yé kharâbât ba-farmân-é man-ast!*

The entire tavern is an endowment dedicated to my confidants,
And to any “rogue” who is my companion and dear fellow.
I am obedient to the cupbearer of the tavern because
The cupbearer of the tavern is obedient to me!

The Sufi makes the chamber of his heart a private residence for the Beloved
and does not see anyone else:

(Rubâ‘i 180)

*tâ khâna-yé del khalwat-é ô sâkhta ‘am
ghayr az naZar-é khwêsh be-y-andâkhta ‘am
chûn har che naZar mêkon-am Ô mêbin-am
be-shenâkhta ‘am chonânke be-sh ‘nâkhta ‘am*

Since I have made the house of my heart a private chamber for Him,
I have dismissed everything else from my view.
The more I look around, the more I see Him.
I have recognized the manner that I have recognized.

Love transports the Sufi beyond non-existence:

(Rubâ'i 187)

tâ bâ gham-é 'eshq-é ô ham-âwâz shod-am
sad bâr zeyâda bar 'adam bâz shod-am
z-ân sôy-é 'adam nêz basi paymûd-am
râzê bûd-am, konûn hama râz shod-am

Since I have become the companion of the grief of love for Him,
 I have become a hundred times more open to non-existence.
 I have traveled so much beyond non-existence,
 That I was already a secret,* but now I am totally a secret!

(*If we read this as "I was already Razi," this quatrain may belong to Najmod-din Razi, known as "Dâya," d. 1247 CE, the author of *Mirsad-ul-'Ibâd*. If this is the case, Shah Nematollah may have quoted it as a quotation and a scribe added it to the *Divan* of the Sheikh.)

The body, heart, and soul of the lover become the Beloved:

(Rubâ'i 82)

tâ dârûy-é dardam sabab-é darmân shod
pasti-y-am bolandi shod-o kufr emân shod
jân-o del-o tan har se Hejâbam bûdand
tan del shod-o del jân shod-o jân jânân shod

Since the remedy for my pain became the cause of my healing,
 My low rank became eminence and my disbelief became faith.
 The body, heart, and soul were all veils to me,
 Until the body became the heart, the heart became the soul, and
 the soul became the Beloved.

The wine of Love frees the Sufi from the bonds of both being and non-being:

(Rubâ'i 203)

z-ân bâda nakhworda 'am ke hoshyâr shaw-am
ân mast ne-y-am ke bâz bêdâr shaw-am
yak jâm-é tajalli-yé balây-é tô bas-am
tâ az 'adam-o wujûd bêzâr shaw-am

I haven't drunk the kind of wine after which I become sensible and sober again.
 I am not that drunkard who later becomes awake and aware again.
 A single cup of the affliction of your glorious manifestation is enough for me,

So that I became fed-up with existence and non-existence.

The lover throws away his existence, like a moth:

(Rubâ'i 235)

*mâ'êm ze-khod-é wujûd pardâkhtagân
w-âtash ba-wujûd khod dar-andâkhtagân
pêsh-é rokh-é chûn sham'-é tô shabhây-é darâz
parwâna-Sefat wujûd-é khod bâkhtagân*

We are those who have abandoned self-existence—
Those who have set fire to their own being.
During long nights in the presence of your candle-like visage,
We have gambled away our existence, like moths!

In this stage, the lover discovers the glorious manifestation of God in the entire universe:

(Rubâ'i 201)

*dar Zât, hama jalâl-é ô mêbin-am
dar Husn, hama jamâl-é ô mêbin-am
bin-am hama kê'enât dar 'ayn-é kamâl
in niz ham az kamâl-é ô mêbin-am*

In being, I behold all His Glory,
And in the attractive, I contemplate all His Beauty.
I see the entire universe in its excellence.
But also, in the universe, I admire His Perfection.

Wherever the lover looks, he finds the Glorious Divine Light:

(Rubâ'i 29)

*dar dida-yé mâ naqsh-é khayâlash paydâ-st
nûr-é-st ke rôshnâyi-yé dida-yé mâ-st
dar harche naZar konad khodâ-râ binad
rôshantar azin dida degar dida kerâ-st?*

In my eyes, there is the image of His reflection.
And there is a light that is the brightness of my eyes.
These eyes see God in whatever they contemplate.
Who has eyes more clear-sighted than mine?

In this spiritual state, the Sufi is freed from the limits imposed by time:

(Rubâ'i 169)

*az dawlat-é 'eshq, 'aql gashta pâ-mâl
mustaqbal-o mâZi-y-am hama âmada Hâl
ne di-wo na fardâ-wo na SubH-ast-o na shâm
iman shoda 'umr-am ze-mah-o hafta-wo sâl*

The intellect has been overwhelmed by the fortune of Love.
Both my future and my past are here now present.
There is no more yesterday or tomorrow, morning or evening.
My life is protected and safe from week, month, or year!

The lover, like the legendary crystal goblet of King Jamshid, becomes a mirror revealing the creation of Adam, and the pre-eternal day of humanity's declaration to God of faith:

(Rubâ'i 232)

*ham jâm-é jahân-nomâ'i 'âlam mâ'êm
ham âyena-yé rôshan-é Âdam mâ'êm
gar yak nafasê az dam-é mâ zenda shaw-i
mêdân ba-yaqîn k-in dam-o ân dam mâ'êm*

We are the world, as well as the world-revealing goblet.
Also, we are the bright mirror revealing the creation of Adam.
If you become alive for a single moment with our breath,
Know with certainty, that we are that very "moment" and that "breath."

The lover has the potential to read the secret texts of Destiny in the upper world:

(Rubâ'i 226)

*mâ maHram-é râz-é HaZrat-é sultân-êm
aHwâl-é darûn-o ham berûn mêdân-êm
munshi-yé qaZâ har che newisad mujmal
bar lawH-é qadar mufaSSal-ash mêkhwân-êm*

We are the confidants of the secrets of the Sultan of the Universe.
We know both the inward and outward conditions.
Whatever the Angel-Scribe of the Divine decrees and writes in a summary,
We read in full detail in the Tablets of Destiny.

All the Beautiful Names [Qur'an, 17:110] of God are engraved in the heart of the lover:

(Rubâ'i 30)

*may-khâna-yé 'eshq-é ô sarâ-yé del-é mâ-st
w-ân dordi-yé dard-é del dawây-é del-é mâ-st
'âlam ba-tamâm jumla asmây-é Ilâh
paydâ shoda 'ast az barây-é del-é mâ-st*

The home of my heart is the tavern of His Love.
And the dregs of the heart's yearning ache is the remedy for my heart.
The universe, with all the Names of God
Has become manifest for the sake of my heart!

The lover happily discovers that the words of God are guiding his speech:

(Rubâ'i 42)

*in haft falak setâda az âh-é man-ast
'arsh-o malak-o setâra hamrâh-é man-ast
in man na man-am jumla az Ô mégôy-am
in gofta-yé man hama ze-allâh-é man-ast*

These seven heavens are sustained by my sigh.
The Throne, angels, and stars are my companions.
This which I am saying is not mine: it belongs to Him entirely.
These sayings of mine all belong to my God.

These are all ecstatic words. One should not imagine that Shah Nematollah Vali has any other claim. When he is in a state of intimate prayers (munâjât), he is a humble beggar and the slave of God's decrees:

(Rubâ'i 208)

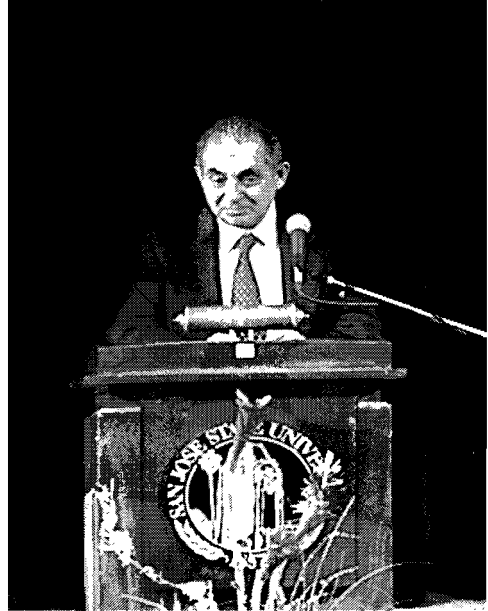
*Shahâ naZaré kon ke faqirân-é tô 'êm
gar nêk-o bad-êm har che hast ân-é tô 'êm
farmân-é tô-râ kamar ba-jân mêband-êm
zêrâ ke hama banda-yé farmân-é tô-êm!*

O King, look upon us, for we are Your humble beggars.
Whether we are good or bad, we belong to You whatever happens.
We are fastening the belts of our souls, ready to obey Your commands,
Because we are all slaves obeying Your decrees.

Acknowledgment:

My friend, Dr. Ibrâhim Gamard transliterated these quatrains according to classical Persian pronunciation, including Dari-Persian vocalization. He has also made helpful suggestions for the translations of the quatrains.

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A Comparison of the Poetry of Shah Nematollah Vali and Hafez

Dr. Hanna Stemerding

Both Shah Nematollah and Hafez composed mystic poetry; yet one cannot say that both were poets. Yes, Hafez was above all a poet. He depicted his images in poetry like miniatures, rich in colors, states of mood. He crossed all dimensions in space and time. His literary talent is above all doubt.

Shah Nematollah was first of all a musician. You can hear him dance, sing and move on rhythms and tunes, and he clothes his rhythms with words. Visually, his poems evoke a view of the street where we see a joyful company of intoxicated dervishes following the *sagi*, who has a glass in hand and is always intoxicated. So in fact a comparison between the poetry of the two great masters is a rather precarious job. However, if we embark on this journey of comparison we can perhaps arrive at unexpected conclusions. Let us go!

In general poetry can be compared in three ways:

1. rhythm
2. symbolism
3. melody (*radif* and *qafieh*)

RADIF: the ending word repeats in every verse.

QAFIEH: words with the same melody (rhyme) before the *radif*.

Radif comes after *qafieh*.

The competition of poems of Shah Nematollah and Hafez finds its issue in remarkable similarities in the poems in the three aspects mentioned above: rhythm, melody, (*radif* and *qafieh*) and the symbolism of the poetry.

For instance, let us consider the following two poems of Shah Nematollah and Hafez concerning the subject of “dervishes.” Both composed a poem about dervishes, ending on the word: “dervishes”. Although (in the Persian language) the *qafieh* and rhythm are not the same, the *radif* is the same: “*darvishan ast.*” And what about the symbolism? Let us see:

Hafez (nr. 50):

1. *The garden of lofty Paradise is the retreat of Dervishes:
Grandeur's source is the service of Dervishes.*

9. *O potent one! Boast not all this pomp: for thy
Head and gold are in the keeping of the blessing of Dervishes*

10. *The form of the object that the King of the worlds seeks,
is the reflection in the mirror of the appearance of the Dervishes.*

11. *Hafez! Be here with respect, for sovereignty and country,
all are from the service of the majesty of Dervishes.*

12. *I am the slave of the glance of the Asaf of the age, who
has the form of chieftain and of the mind of Dervishes.*

Shah Nematollah nr. 1:

*Come, my heart and my soul are filled with love of the dervishes
Come, for the king of the world is a beggar with the dervishes.
The presence of Seyed, the joy of the dervishes,
and the sama of the musicians,
all this is made possible by the breath of creation of the dervish.*

In comparing the symbolism of the poetry we discover an interesting fact.

Both are describing the importance of a dervish: Hafez from the perspective of the grandeur, fortune, victory over tyranny, blessing, the majesty of the dervish, and Shah Nematollah from a viewpoint of love for, presence of and vibration, breath of creation of the dervishes. Upon careful examination, however, we see that they speak about the dervishes from a different point of view, they depict different characteristics.

Hafez says, "Everybody is begging the favor of the king ... but only Caesar is a slave before the dervishes," and,

"What the king of the world seeks, is the reflection in the mirror of the dervishes." He continues, "I am the slave of the Asaf who has the same virtues as the dervishes."

It is as if Hafez does see and acknowledge the virtues of the dervishes. According to him, it is only the king who gets the favor of the dervishes; everybody begs the king for what they get from the dervishes.

Shah Nematollah says, "Come, my heart and my soul is filled with love of the dervishes. Presence of Seyed, the joy of the dervishes, and the sama of the musicians, all this is made possible by the breath of creation of the dervish. The

voice of chanting of the lovers and the joy of our gathering are examples of the presence and vibration of the dervishes. The joy of the dervishes, the sama, all is made possible by the breath of the dervishes."

It is like Shah Nematollah is more in contact with the "energy" of the dervishes; he is sharing it. He enjoys also, he loves, he feels the joy of the gathering, etc.

The point of view about the dervishes says something about the poets themselves:

Shah Nematollah expresses the joy to be with the dervishes; he is participating. Hafez presents himself as a poor beggar, who is observing the virtues of the dervishes. Hafez says that the people are begging from the king because the king receives from the dervishes. We see the Shah himself in contact with the dervishes. It is as if he is among them, while Hafez is painfully separated from them.

Let us continue in comparing their poems wherein we discover some similarities.

2. In a Poem of Shah Nematollah:

*"The intoxicated Saqi came in our assembly
By reason of his presence what I wished was realized.
The Zahid left our reunion when the intoxicated Saqi came in.
We asked the pardon of God for our repentance;
This repentance, if we did it, was wrong."*

Poem of Hafez:

403. *Of the zahid's word, we repented;
And of the worshipper's deed, we seek the pardon of God.*

And in 404: *"That one am I who without you breathe. What shame!
Perchance, you may pardon. If not, the excuse for sin is what?"*

Here we see again a resemblance in their poems. Although the *radif* and *qafieh* are different, there is the same structure in rhythm and melody, and the contents of the poems are on the same spiritual frequency. There must be a rapport between both. Both criticize the *Zahid*, the man of "the religious practice of repentance." Hafez says, *"We ask the pardon of God for our worshipper's deeds and we repent of the words of the Zahid."* Shah Nematollah however says, *"This repentance was wrong."* How could he say that repentance was wrong? There is only one answer: because he was a "rend," a man of absolute inner freedom—knowing no repentance.

It seems that gradually two profiles are beginning to become visible. Let us continue first before drawing conclusions.

3. Shah Nematollah:

(23) *Our preoccupation is to be drunken and in love
and the point of the gathering of the lovers is our vow.*

*We are friends with the glass, and we keep company with the "rend."
In the garden of love we are drunken nightingales.*

*Visiting the people of the heart is our garden.
In the storehouse of the universe all that you find comes from our bazaar.
The source of the water of life is to the thirst at the glass of wine.
And our poetry is a secret that comes forth from our mysteries
And the one who is one of our intimates knows these mysteries.*

*Nematollah is intoxicated, with glass of wine in hand!
He is the happy cupbearer of our time!*

Hafez 460: *Two friends of understanding, and of old wine a quantity, two
"mans,"*

Hafez 461: *Drink the cup of the wine of unity of a "man."*

(A "man" is a measure, a quantity of 3 kilo).

*A little leisure, and a book and a sword corner:
For this and the next world I give not this state;
Though, momentarily, full upon me a crowd.
Every one who for the world's treasure gave the treasure of contentment*

...

*If for thee out of the country of contentment, desire makes a native land.
From the fierce wind of vicissitude one cannot see
That in the sward has been a red rose or a wild white rose.
From this simum that by the garden borders passed,
Wonder that the color of a rose remains or the perfume of a jasmine.
O heart! Strive thou for patience. For God delivers not
A seal ring so precious to the hand of an evil one.*

...

In both poems we find the same musical structure (rhythm and melody, *radif* and *qafieh*) And both begin as an ode to drinking wine and being with the be-

loved. *Drinking wine and loving the beloved is the main occupation; being in a nice garden as drunken nightingales* (Shah Nematollah).

Two friends of understanding and of old wine a quantity of two "mans", a little leisure a book and a sword corner. (Hafez).

But then Shah continues, "*We are in the company of the rend, he who knows the mysteries, the happy cupbearer.*" Hafez at first praises the state of this contentment. Then however he continues, "*Behold the hidden form in the mirror of the Picture establisher if out of the country of contentment desire makes a native land,*" and "*from the fierce wind of vicissitude one cannot see that in this sward has been a red rose or a wild white rose. Wonder that the color of the rose and the perfume of the jasmine remained!*"

While Shah Nematollah easily continues light heartedly, Hafez appears here as the poet in colorful images of changing mood. Here come the calamities of the vicissitudes. They who are struggling on the Path will recognize the calamities of Hafez, and by contemplating the "miniatures" of Hafez one gains recognition and more comprehension of one's own moods by the vicissitudes in life. Here he is pointing to the importance of patience, etc. In other words, Hafez's poem is like a teaching. Trying to understand the meaning of his words we get the lesson. Shah's light and joyful words are like a direct encouragement. He seems to be saying, "*Perhaps one day this joyful state will also be yours!*"

Considering that these two great Sufi's were living at the same time in the same country, composing poems with similar subjects and literary structure, we can ask the question: did they know each others work, or even did they ever meet each other?

Searching in their poetry we find indeed indications that it is even probable that they reacted to each other in their poems. Although Hafez mentions many names in his poems, he never mentions Shah Nematollah. Shah Nematollah did mention Hafez in only one poem, but we will come back to this later.

Let us now consider one poem of Shah Nematollah:

4. *"The king of love took possession of whole of the world my life
be satisfied for him
because he occupied every place in the world.*

This poem has the same musical structure (rhythm, *radif* and *qafieh*) as the following poem of Hafez:

Yes, by concordance, the whole world one can take

We clearly see a rapport in meaning here, the possession of the whole world, yes this possible "by concordance," but then Hafez speaks (in 87)

There is a secret in my chest, if I it, the fire will take my tongue."

He speaks of a "concealed fire in his chest" and "a rose that boasted of the Friend." Finally he says, "In jealousy the breeze took the breath from my mouth".

*From out of this concealed fire that is in my chest
The rose wished to boast of the color and the perfume of the Friend in*

After this it seems that we hear some notes of envy and sulking.

*Wrested apart I was like the compass
At last me into the center like a point , time took
Regard opportunity. For when uproar fell upon the world
Sufi struck at the cup, and through grief, the corner took*

It is not unthinkable that here we see a response in a mood of some rivalry. If Hafez says at the end of this poem, "Like water, grace trickles from thy verse, on it, nice distinction, the envious one how took?" We hear the word "distinction," or "who is the best?" Hafez was the great poet of his time—the celebrated poet of Shiraz. Could it be that he was challenged by the poetry of Shah Nematollah, the Sufi king of his time? Was this a competition?

If we look at the following two poems of Hafez and Shah Nematollah, there can be no doubt that one poem is written in response to the other:

Hafez wrote:

*Those who are capable of changing dust into gold with a glance,
Pray they look once at us from the corner of their eye*

And Shah Nematollah wrote:

*we can change the dust of the earth into gold
with only a glance*

*We remedy a hundred sufferings only with one glance.
In the prison of form we still rejoice*

Both use the same rhythm in this poems, while the *radif* in the poem of Hafez is "konand" (they do), it is "konim" (we do) in the poem of Shah Nematollah.

In Hafez's first line: "pray they may cast a glance at us," we hear a deep wish. Is Hafez seeking Shah Nematollah as a master? Or is he at least seeking to be respected or accepted by Shah Nematollah? Let us look further in Hafez's poem:

*Better to hide my pain from false physicians
(allusion to the remedy of 100 sufferings?)
Hoping my remedy may lie with the Hidden Treasure.*

*Since the beloved uplifts not the veil from his face
Why does everyone in imagination a tale make?*

Then there follow some lines on pride and hypocrisy, and he continues:

*How much misfortune hides behind the veil?
What shall we not see when at last the screen falls?*

And at the end of the poem Hafez concludes:

*union forever can never be attained,
Kings care little for the cares of beggars!*

We feel the disappointment and disillusion, and we hear the desire, the prayer, “look at us.” Hereafter we hear the criticism of not be responded to. We feel the disappointment and withdrawal with the resigned conclusion, “union is unattainable.”

It is if our searching journey now comes to a dramatic climax.

The next two poems have the same musical structure, the same *radif* and the same frequency. Shah Nematollah writes:

*With this pain of heart
One cannot look for a remedy
It is the result of the dear life
One cannot leave it.*

Now we have to consider the poem of the Shah, the only one wherein Hafez is mentioned: “*We grew up, and Hafez is in decline.*” Was Shah Nematollah responding to Hafez in the former poem? Let us examine this poem of Hafez:

*Into the curve of that doubled tress, the hand one cannot put:
Reliance on Thy covenant and the morning breeze, one cannot make.*

*Whatever is the effort I do in search of Thee
This is the extent that alteration of fate, one cannot make.*

With the blood of a hundred hearts the Beloved's skirt fell to my hand:

For the great reproach that the enemy makes, release one cannot make

And so he continues with more complaining, then he finished this poem with:

*Only one of pure vision can behold the Beloved's face:
For save with purity in the mirror, one glance one cannot make.*

*Jealousy became mine that Thou art the Beloved of the world.
But day and night, conflict with the creatures of God, one cannot make.*

Is Hafez responding here to Shah Nematollah? We cannot be sure about who is responding to whom. But psychologically, we can perhaps speak of probability.

Some historical facts are known. Shah Nematollah did not go to Shiraz before the death of Hafez. He went there only two times after his death (Hafez died in 792 or 803). During the lifetime of Hafez, Shah Nematollah went to Yazd and stayed there for four years. Historically it is known that Hafez was in Yazd for two years during that period. (Hafez was in Yazd in 788.) Four years later, he left his body.

It is rather out of the question that these two great Sufis would not have met each other. It is plausible that Hafez was searching for the Shah's guidance, but was not accepted as such, and he expressed his disappointment and criticism in response to Shah Nematollah. (It is not impossible that Hafez expected to see the Shah in Shiraz and when he did not come there, Hafez went to Yazd to seek him.)

Let us look at the following poem of Hafez:

*Not in pursuit of pomp and of pageant, to this door we have come
For shelter of ill fortune, here we have come.*

*Wayfarers of love's stage are we, and from the limits of nonexistence
Up to the clime of existence all this way we have come.*

*The freshness of Thy down, we saw and from the garden of paradise
In search of this love-grass we have come.*

*With such treasure whose treasurer is the faithful spirit,
In beggary to the door of the Shah's house we have come.*

*O bark of grace! Thy anchor of patience is where?
For in this ocean of liberality, immersed in sin we have come.*

O cloud, sin-cleansing! Honor goes, rain!

For in the court of action, black of book, we have come.

*Hafez this woolen Khirqa, cast, for
From behind the kafila with the fire of sighing we have come.*

Hafez came asking for something. It was not material; it had a spiritual purpose. Could it be that he asked to become an adept at Shah Nematollah's door?

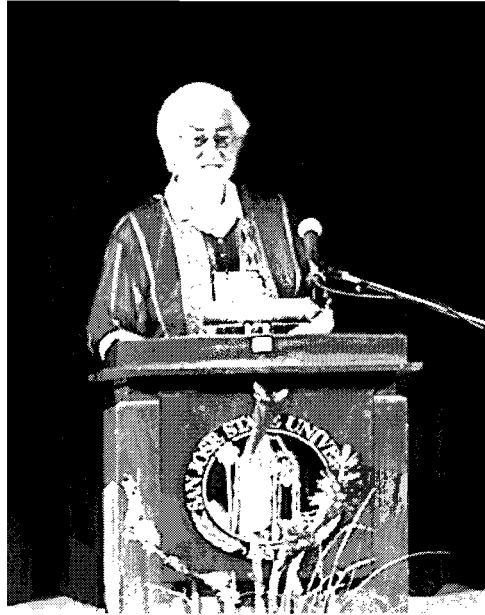
Of course this is a supposition—not a scientific conclusion.

And we can ask what was the use, the importance of our journey? I can share with you what it was for me. During my visits to Iran, I was interested in the poetry of Hafez. The teachings were very useful on my own spiritual path and, in a certain sense, were guidance. Digging into the possible meaning of the poems, struggling with the often contradictory images, I came to a deeper understanding about the essence of Sufism, the meaning of love, the relation with the Beloved, the purification by the pain of separation, etc. In this sense, the poems of Hafez were real teachings for me. But now, in comparing the poetry of two great Sufis, two living figures are coming forward, each in his own quality.

Hafez, is a sublime talented poet, rich in his imagination, in depth and literary capacity. Behind his wonderful poems arises a man, I now see as a tormented seeker himself, now high in ecstasy then deep in sorrows and pain. His Beloved passed by. His Beloved is a cruel killer and slayer. His Beloved is coming and going all the time. He yearns for God but is ever in lover's grief in seeking the Master who can bring him to that state of Union. Now I understand that is exactly why he can be a teacher on the Path.

Behind the cheerful and lighthearted tunes of Shah Nematollah however appears a man who is arisen above all duality of the world, above the struggles of the Path. He is forever joyful, full of love for his fellowmen and in a absolute free state, a *rend*, a saintly being, inviting, uplifting encouraging, promising "*La o baly.*" With Hafez, I can recognize, be moved and I can learn. Shah Nematollah is a lightning lamp directly kindling a light within me. It makes me extremely happy that he is able to make one intoxicated.

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Archaeology and the Meanings of Persepolis

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Introduction

Persepolis was the Achaemenian capital, called Parsa, for less than two centuries. The great platform and remains of its palaces were burnt by Alexander the Great and briefly reoccupied by local dynasts, the Fratadara. The majority of its long existence has been as ruins, almost 2000 years. The purpose of this paper is to explore the effect these ruins had on the Persian population of this part of Iran. This inquiry is based on an assumption, too often ignored by archaeologists, that long before scientific excavation and historical studies, ancient ruins were an active part of the social ecology of this region. Far from being inert testaments to the past, these ruins were constantly used and explained.

In contrast to the careless graffiti left by modern visitors to Persepolis, a number of medieval inscriptions record formal “state” visits to these ruins. A particularly interesting example, written in Kufic, reads: “The prince Abu Shuja, Adud al-Dawla, God strengthen him, was present here in Safar month, in the year 344/ 954, and the writing on these ruins was read to him. It was read by Abi ibn al- Sarri, the secretary from Karkh, and by Marasfand, the Mobad of Kazerun.” (Donohue 1973, 78)

The secretary and mobad, a Zoroastrian priest, may have read Pahlavi inscriptions left by Sasanian visitors; if they found some cuneiform, they may have faked it and improvised a story for the Amir.

Adud al-Dawla, who ruled Baghdad and much of Iran, made his capital in nearby Shiraz. His visit was about 1000 years ago, and it was about 1000 years earlier that Persepolis was last occupied; in other words, he saw ruins only half as ancient as they stand today. What did these ruins mean to him? He was not an archaeologist, yet he had more than a great respect for ancient Iran, he tried to revive its ancient glories. Adud al-Dawla styled himself in an ancient manner (more Sasanian than Achaemenid to our eyes; Bahrami 1952); he took the title Shahanshah and built a pavilion near Shiraz, at Qasr-i Abu Nasr, which was actually a museum with examples of carvings from Persepolis.

The precise history of Persepolis had been lost and replaced by legends. There

is a connecting link between ancient Persepolis and the ruins of the 10th c.—this was the city of Istakhr. A few years after Adud al-Dawla's visit to Persepolis, the Arab geographer Muqaddasi (living in Shiraz and possibly using Adud al-Dawla's library) wrote a description of Istakhr: "Istakhr is a capital of great antiquity, well known in the old books, renowned by mankind, great in fame and in size. Originally here was the government chancellery, now in our time, it is only a provincial town with a small population and little importance. I found it similar to Mecca, since it also lies in two valleys and two mountains immediately close around it. (436)"

Istakhr excavations The ruins of Istakhr were first mapped by Flandin and Coste in 1841 (1851, 70); excavations did not begin until Herzfeld's work at Persepolis in 1932 and 1934, for the Oriental Institute. Schmidt continued these excavations, at both Persepolis and Istakhr in 1935 and 1937 (of which all are published, except Istakhr). Schmidt took a series of air photographs of the site, which revealed the city plan, the houses, streets and city wall—the town of the 9th-10th c. (the Abbasid and Buyid periods; Schmidt 1939). In 998, much of the city was destroyed and only a small village continued. One can see blocks of housing (FH trenches) oriented with a major avenue to the West Gate. Again Muqaddasi's description a few decades before the destruction helps: "At the Khorasan gate is a magnificent bridge and a beautiful park. They build their houses of mud-brick. On this side, the river comes near the city. ... The river water is unhealthy, since it flows over the rice fields. Istakhr produces much grain, pomegranates, and cereals; nevertheless the people are simple. (436)"

The trenches north of the mosque include a row of shops with formed the border of the bazaar. Behind these shops was a residential complex, three individual houses of which were excavated. Houses all had a central court, rooms opening onto the court, and a narrow entryway flanked by rectangular buttresses. The court and entryway were paved with stone or brick. This house type is paralleled at Siraf, the major port on the Iranian coast of the Persian Gulf, also dated to 9th-10th c. The Siraf houses seem to have been residences of wealthy merchants; at Istakhr, the proximity to the bazaar suggests similar merchants' dwellings. One house, excavated by Herzfeld (1941, 276, Grab 2), was so fancy he decided to call it the hospital. Study of the air photographs and excavations reveal an earlier organization now hidden under the Abbasid buildings. The houses were arranged into blocks and enclosed in a square, 400 x 400m, an area of 100 jarib in medieval measurement. This arrangement seems to be one of several urban plans utilized in the early years after the Muslim conquest (Whitcomb 1994). The SW quadrant of the early Islamic town contained the Friday Mosque, the bazaar and possibly a palace. The orientation follows that of the Friday Mosque; thus this part of the town may date from the mid-7th c. A clue is provided by Muqaddasi, who says that: "The Friday mosque stands in the bazaar.

The bazaar surrounds the mosque on three sides. In the middle of the city is a valley-like depression.” The mosque is readily identifiable from the one standing column and others found in Herzfeld’s excavations. “It is built according to the style of Syrian mosques with round columns (according to Muq), each of which has a cow at the top. They say that it was a fire temple in former times. (436)”

These Achaemenian stones suggested the presence of an Achaemenian palace to early travelers, such as Flandin and Coste. Even Herzfeld, after his excavations, retained the idea that there existed “a pre-Muhammadan sanctuary, which became incorporated into the mosque,” an idea continued by Creswell and other architectural historians. I would argue that the mosque is entirely an Islamic construction, since the columns were placed upon stone foundation plinths, a construction practice uncommon for the Achaemenians. In addition, the orientation of these foundations and absence of Achaemenian sherds make an earlier sanctuary unlikely. Who then built the mosque, using materials probably from Persepolis? Ziyad ibn Abihi came to Istakhr to put down a Sasanian rebellion and stayed on as governor from 659 to 662 AD. Ziyad was a severe disciplinarian, but he also recognized the crucial role of the mosque in the social organization of the city; he made the Friday mosque an imposing structure of stone by freely borrowing from the splendid courts of antiquity. The lessons Ziyad learned at Istakhr, he repeated in the turbulent camp towns of Basra and Kufa, in the latter borrowing columns from nearby al-Hira. As the historian, Baladhuri, put it: “For the remembrance of Allah, Ziyad raised a monument of stone,

and no longer of simple bricks. Without the intervention of human hands, who worked on the building, we would have attributed it to the work of jinns. (347)”

Curiously, it is precisely these same sentiments, the attribution to demon labor, which struck most medieval commentators on the ruins of Persepolis. While Ziyad was learning aspects of ancient Persian monarchy, to be grafted onto the new Islamic culture, he was dependent on Sasanian lore for understanding this antiquity (Whitcomb 1979, 366).

Sasanian Istakhr Outside the rigid grid pattern of the early Islamic city, is a more organic radiation of streets and alleys. The Center Test shows this transition; the deepest levels revealed buildings with another regular orientation. The Sasanian town was also laid out in a grid pattern, like Bishapur and other Sasanian cities (only a portion of the site). This was excavated only in the West Test, with its massive mud-brick walls and Sasanian artifacts (the only Islamic materials seem associated with a kiln, suggesting this was an abandoned area in later periods). Istakhr was an important city, where the Sasanian kings received their investiture (where indeed Sassan is said to have been priest in the temple of Anahita). The lack of Sasanian materials is surprising and was disappointing for both Herzfeld and

Schmidt; one block was found of a Sasanian relief, possibly like the fine Sasanian reliefs at nearby Naqsh-e Rostam (Bier 1983). Even Sasanian coins were rarely found (Miles 1959); the resulting picture remains an archaeological enigma and suggests the need for further research at this site.

The Meanings of Persepolis By the time of the first European visitors to Persepolis, there was little precise information on the history and meaning of these ruins. As Michael Rogers has observed: "The monuments of Persepolis and Istakhr no more awakened interest in Achaemenid or Sasanian life and history than ancient Rome was resurrected by the Renaissance antiquarians." (1974, 20)

A view of the terrace in 1626 shows on the hillside the prophet Daniel, an association no doubt related to Herodotus by local guides. The loss of knowledge of the Achaemenians was remarkably quick, especially in contrast to Egypt. Well before 300 AD, the Sasanians called Persepolis *sad-sutun* (100 columns), a purely descriptive name. Late in the Sasanian period, Persepolis was associated with Jamshid and known as *Takht-e Jamshid*, the throne of Jamshid (a name it still retains); to this hero and others were attributed other monuments, Istakhr with Homayun, etc. The Islamic conquest began a new set of attributions, in which Iranian heroes were replaced by Biblical (or Quranic) figures. Persepolis became the Mosque of Solomon, who commanded the Jinns to build it. (According to legend, Jamshid also commanded Jinns or demons to build Persepolis, pride in which caused God's anger and the fall of Jamshid; a familiar story). It should be noted that medieval scholars vigorously opposed this identity of Jam and Solomon (Melekian-Chirvani 1971). The connection of monuments with Solomonic themes was a strong feature of Sufi speculations from the 13th c. Rulers frequently enjoyed the title "heritors of the realm of Solomon," and by extension, the population of this region inhabited sanctified ground. The great gifts of Solomon, wisdom and justice, were contrasted with the theme of the vanity of worldly things, an idea easily evoked by once magnificent ruins. Again Sufi meditations on images (here carved) vs. reality, and on the nature of existence gave these ruins a sacred purpose, as testified by numerous inscriptions at Pasargadae and Persepolis.

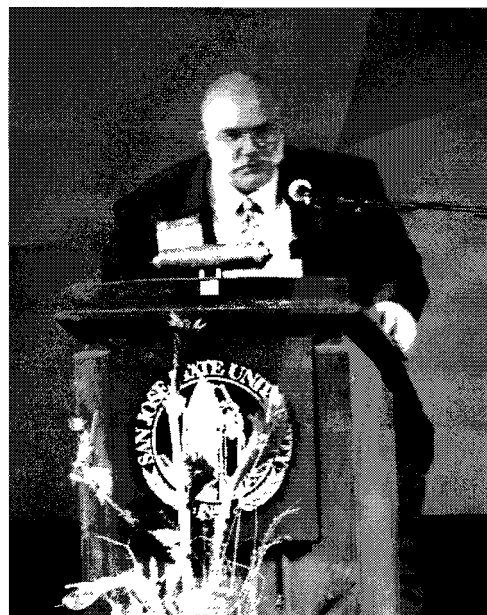
By the time of Adud al-Dawla, Shiraz had replaced Istakhr as provincial center and capital. Shiraz, a beautiful city of palaces and mosques, became the physical heritor of Istakhr and of Persepolis. Among the Buyid embellishments of this city, a subsidiary settlement was founded. This was *Kard Fana Khosrow*, with its palaces, estates for courtiers, textile industry and a mint supporting this industrial-trading center. Part of this town must have incorporated the archaeological site of *Qasr-e Abu Nasr*, 8 km east of Shiraz. Below the acropolis of this site was a building complex featuring architectural elements brought from Persepolis; this Western Area has been reconstructed as an Achaemenid pavilion, a portion of Adud al-Dawla's palace (Whitcomb 1985, 40-41). This same structure was reconstructed during the 13th century as a *khanegah*, with a *chahar fasl* and

rooms around a courtyard. Nearby was a domed structure with stucco decorations and tomb fragments suggesting a mausoleum and cemetery (Whitcomb 1985, fig. 9 and 10). This shrine complex, located near the tomb of Sa'di, may be one mentioned by Ibn Battuta as belonging to Shams ed-din al-Semnani. The continued attraction of the Achaemenid features suggests a development may have been under the patronage of Sa'd ibn Zangi, the Salghurid atabeg of Fars; Qasr-i Abu Nasr may have been another example, with Pasargadae and Persepolis, of the realm of Solomon (Melekian-Chirvani 1971; Whitcomb 1985, 37). This khanegah and shrine complex may thus represent a part of the growth of Sufi orders in southern Iran during the 13th and 14th centuries.

In summary, one may suggest that the study of ancient monuments should not neglect their existence as ruins, and, in Islamic archaeology, one might reach an understanding of their historical relationship to the present. While Achaemenian stones were used at Qasr-i Abu Nasr and Istakhr, the ruins of Persepolis were otherwise untouched. People in medieval times, as today, observe their ancient ruins and interpret them as part of their culture. The mythologizing cycle is codified in the great *Shahnameh*, immensely popular Persian stories. We can see the beginnings of this process, in the mythologizing around George Washington or the popular legends of Paul Bunyon or Johnny Appleseed. Such stories are better adapted for moral education, and are certainly more entertaining than factual history.

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In the Name of God

The Shrine of Shah Nematollâh An Architectural Review

Mehrdad Qayyoomi Bidhendi

Preface

Contrary to Sunna, Shi'ite Islam has always held a tolerant view towards building edifices over tombs. Therefore, in the world of Islam whenever Shi'ites have taken authority, we see a vast development in building mausoleums, for example in Fatimid Egypt and Buyid Iran.

The process reached its peak in Iran, especially after 16th century when a dogmatic Shi'ite dynasty, The Safavids, turned a minority of Shi'ite believers to a majority. Of course, even before the Safavids, Sunna in Iran had rarely taken a fanatically face as is seen in the Ottoman empire or preceding dynasties in Fertile Crescent or western Islamic territory in north Africa. Therefore, Iranian world has witnessed many mausoleums built even before the Safavids, although most of these buildings were built over the tombs of Sufi saints.

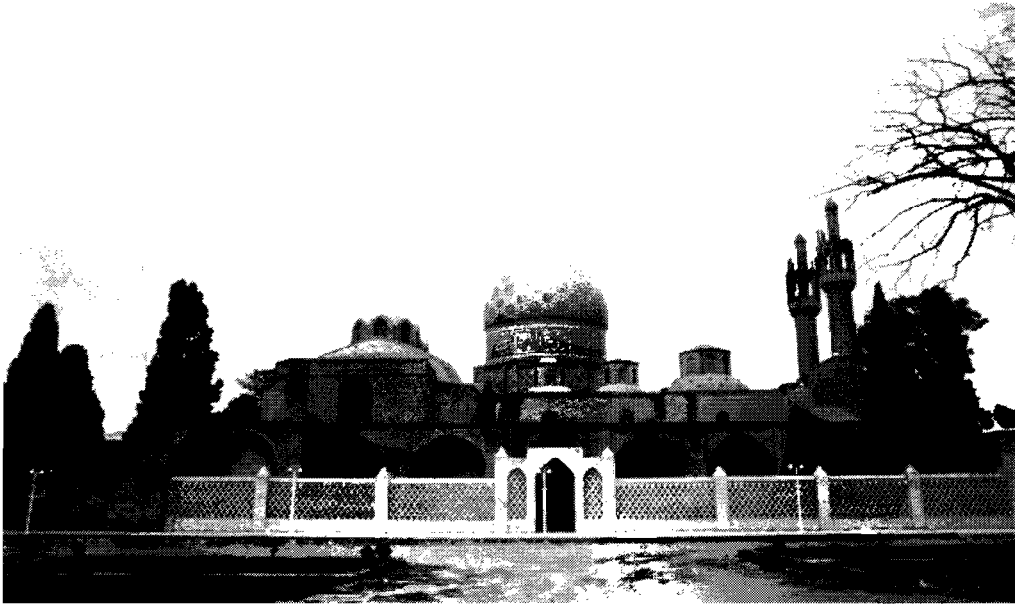
After the Safavids, developing the shrines of Shi'ite Imams, building new mausoleums for *Seyeds*, the children of the prophet (PUH), and Shi'ite Sufi saints was much sought after. The most important mausoleum for a Shi'ite Sufi saint in Iran is the shrine of Shah Nematollah in Mâhân—a small town near Kerman in southeastern Iran.

Therefore, knowing it has a special importance for the history of Islamic architecture in Iran.

The article is, before all, an architectural survey, which emphasizes on two aspects of the subject: the physical composition, and the phases of the complex's development. This survey relies on both literature and author's own observations.¹

Who Is Shah Nematollah?

Seyed Nouroddin Nematollah, the son of Mir Abdullah, known as Shah Nematollah Vali (literary: 'king Nematollah –the saint') is one of the greatest Sufi saints in Iran, to the extent that the Iranian calls him as 'the sultan of dervishes'. He was born in 1330 AD in Kooh-Banân, a small village near Kerman. After some years, he immigrated to Kerman, educated in theological sciences



and practiced mystic meditations and mortifications under guidance of his master -Sheikh Abdullah Yâfe'i. After death of his 'sheikh', he became the 'pope' for dervishes. He spent many years in Samarqand, Herat, Yazd, and finally in Mâhân on leading Sufis.

He died in Mâhân in 1431 AD, at the age of a hundred.²

He was so famous and honorable in his own time that Shâhrokh (d. 1447 AD), the famous Timurid sultan and the son of Tamerlane, honored him, and Ahmad-shah Bahmani (the sultan of Dakan peninsula in southern India) and his son were devoted to him.

When Was the Shrine Founded?

Such devotion was the motivation of building a shrine almost immediately after his death. Ahmad-shah Bahmani sent an enormous sum to build a great shrine on his tomb.³ The construction of the shrine started almost immediately after the saint's death, because he died in 1431 AD (834 AH), and the oldest inscription in the shrine, on the north portal of the domed hall, which has the name of Ahmad-shah Bahmani, is dated 1436 AD (840 AH). Ahmad-shah died in 1435 AD (838 AH) and his son, Alâ'-ad-din Bahmani, completed the building, as can be read in the inscription.⁴

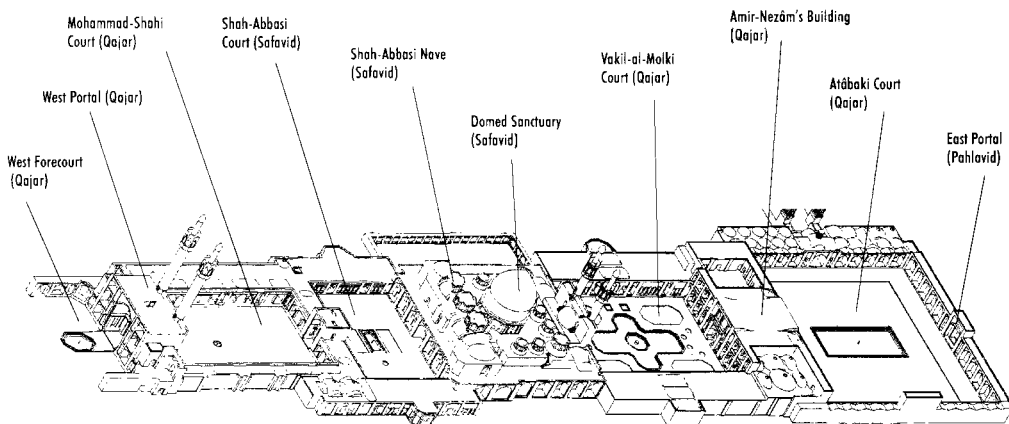
The building continued to develop after them. The spiritual impact of the saint, his miraculous deeds, the great number of his followers, his relation to the prophet's house, his commitment to the religious law (in despite of some other Sufis), and his obvious commitment to Shiism led to increasing his reverence in the time of the Sufist and Shi'ite dynasty of the Safavids. Even the anti-Sufist attitude, which devel-

oped by the late Safavid period and culminated in time of Qajars, could not decrease his reverence, despite the prosecution of his followers. Therefore, his shrine extensively developed under both dynasties.

1. OVERALL PHYSICAL COMPOSITION OF THE COMPLEX

The building of the shrine is a vast complex with closed and open spaces. Although different patrons and architects built it in different phases in five centuries, it is perceived as an integrated complex. This is especially interesting since even small buildings, which are built and developed recently do not have such coherence. Our buildings often undergo several changes during their process of development, ordered by graduated patrons and designed by qualified architects, and still there is great discrepancy between elements built in frequent phases. For the modern Man, whose mind is used to this condition, it is difficult to believe that such a vast coherent complex was built during a long period.

The complex has a linear order that is oriented towards the Kiblah (since the Kiblah in Mâhân is more or less Westwards, it will be henceforth referenced to as West).



The parts of the complex from West to East are: west forecourt and portal; Mohammad-shahi court (or *Hoseiniye*); Mir-e Dâmâd (or Shah-Abbâsi) court; the central part of the complex, which consists of the domed sanctuary, and the naves around it; Wakil-al-molki court; and finally Atâbaki court.

The site is located between two roads, an old and a new one, which link the city of Kerman to other towns in the province. There are separate entrances from both these roads. No matter which entrance we choose to enter, we still must pass

two caravanserai-like courts to reach the domed sanctuary and the tomb. In other words, the courts are introductory spaces for the holly tomb, where pilgrims have to pass them. They cannot visit the tomb unless passing these preparing spaces.

2. THE CLOSED SPACES

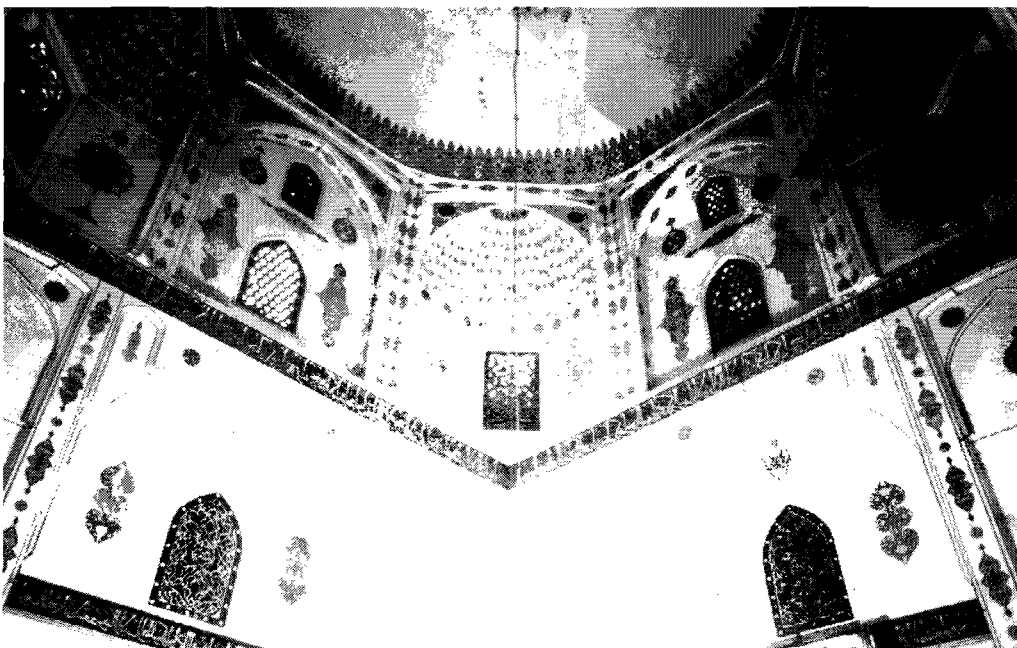
2-1. The Central Part: the Domed Sanctuary

As already mentioned, the domed sanctuary was built approximately in the middle of 15th century over the saint's tomb. This space, like domed sanctuaries in other mausoleums, has a plan with no emphasis on direction, and vertical proportion stretched upwards. At the transition zone between the basic square and the circle of the dome, subtle arch-net vaults (*yazdi-bandi*) with some ornaments fill the squinches.

The double dome consists of two interlocked domes. The interior dome is spherical. The significant point is that the starting points of the latter sit on an octagonal base with round points, and gradually transforms into a circle at upper levels.

The mosaic inscription in cursive script (*Thuluth*) runs around the walls under the dome. The plaster revetment over the inscription has Timurid ornaments. The plinth, by its turquoise blue tiles, arouses a sense of liveliness in this calm space.

The domed hall was the first building erected on the site. Probably it was a kiosk-like building (*kooshk*) in the middle of a garden, like many other mausoleums built in Iran from 15th century onward. The main entrance of this kiosk was in its west side. A very precious portal, which now settles in an enclosed space—



he west nave—is a remainder of that entrance and an evidence for it. Its design, proportions, and ornaments are as fine as other excellent Timurid monuments. The oldest inscription, which tells us some valuable points about the patrons of the complex and its foundation date, is on the entablature of this portal.

The exterior dome was built to emphasize the central kiosk-like building by its unusual height. Even now that the building has developed and many spaces have surrounded the central domed space, the dome yet is most attracting exterior element of the complex.⁵ This well-proportioned dome has a respectively tall drum, which sits on an octagonal base. Turquoise-colored faience, with large geometric patterns, covers the dome, which leads to a white and cobalt blue colored inscription. The faience seems to be Timurid, and its restoration⁶ in Safavid period must be executed according to the original.

Probably Shah Nematollah was buried in his *khâneqâh*, as was common for Sufi sheikhs. If so, there was an older building, a *khâneqâh*, in the site. In a corner of the Shah-Abbâsi nave there is a small cloister, called *chelle-khâne* (a place for meditation), which can be known as a remainder of a *khâneqâh*.

2-2. The Shah-Abbâsi Nave



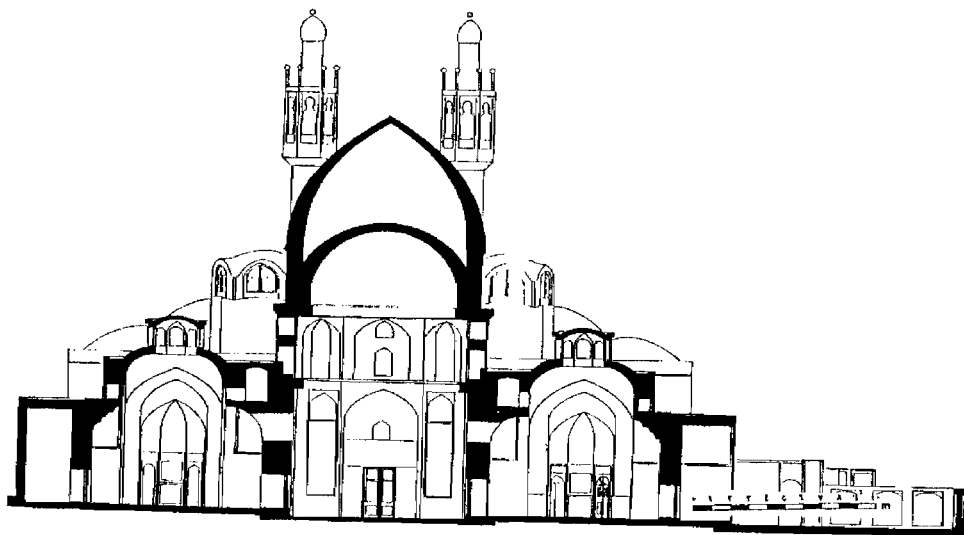
The first phase of the complex development was building the Shah-Abbâsi nave, or *ravâq-e Shah-Abbâsi*,⁷ or *dâr-al-hoffâz*⁸ in the west of the domed sanctuary. It has the most beautiful interior space in the complex. It has a series of ribbed vaults with white plaster covering, subtle arch-nets, and an octagonal skylight, each one with a helmet over it, in the middle of every vault.

This nave is the only dated nave in the complex. According to its inscription, its patron was Baktâsh-khân, the ruler of Kerman and Baluchistan provinces in the period of Shah Abbâs I Safavid (r. 1587-1629 AD). He finished the nave in 1590 AD (998 AH), as the inscription suggests.

2-3. The Other Three Naves

The other three naves, which settle on the north, east and south sides of the dome, are more related together, forming a U-shaped plan. There are different views about the date of these naves. Some of scholars believe that these naves

were built at the same time as the first nave.⁹ Others attribute the south nave to the Timurid period, to one of the saint's disciples.¹⁰



Section of Sanctuary and Naves

The north nave also covers the tomb of Shah Khalilollâh-e II, the grandson of Shah Nematollah. The east nave, called *Ravâq-e vakil-al-molki*, belongs to 19th century, the time of Qajar king, Nasser-ad-din-shah (r. 1848-1896 AD).

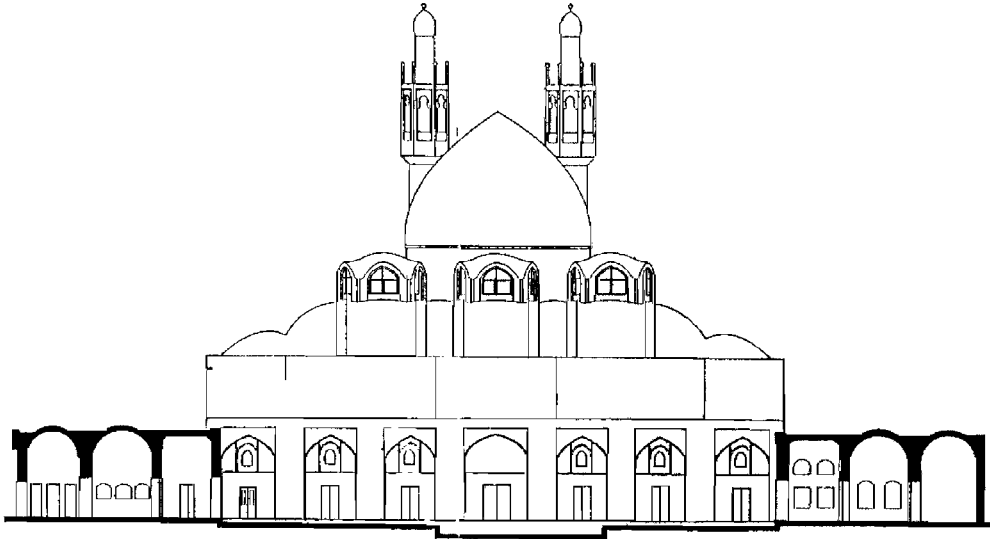
Nevertheless, it is more probable that these three naves were all built in the time of Mohammad Esmâ'il-khân (titled *Vakil-al-molk I*, r. 1858-1866 AD) and his son Mortazâ-Qoli-khân (titled *Vakil-al-molk II*, r. 1869-1878 AD), the rulers of Kerman province in the time of Nasser-ad-din-shah, probably replacing some older buildings. The vaults of these naves are more elaborated than the first nave. Although they cannot reach the beauty of the latter, especially in their proportions, their spatial and architectural sense is similar to it and is proper for the spiritual feeling of the holly shrine.

3. THE OPEN SPACES

As mentioned above, our presumption is that first the domed building was standing alone in the middle of an enclosure, perhaps a garden. Then, at the first phase of development, the west nave and the west court were added to it. The other naves and courts were built later.

Before 20th century, the main road of Kerman-Mâhân-Bam had passed from the west side of the site. Since the main entrance of the complex was the west one (at the Kiblah side), the first court was built in the west side of the dome. This

court, called Mir-e Dâmâd (or Shah-Abbâsi) court, was built in the time of the Safavid king, shah Abbâs I.



Mir-e Dâmâd (Shah-Abbâsi) Court – North-East Section

3-1. Mir-e Dâmâd Court

Therefore, the first phase of the complex development consisted of constructing both Mir-e Dâmâd court and Shah-Abbâsi nave.

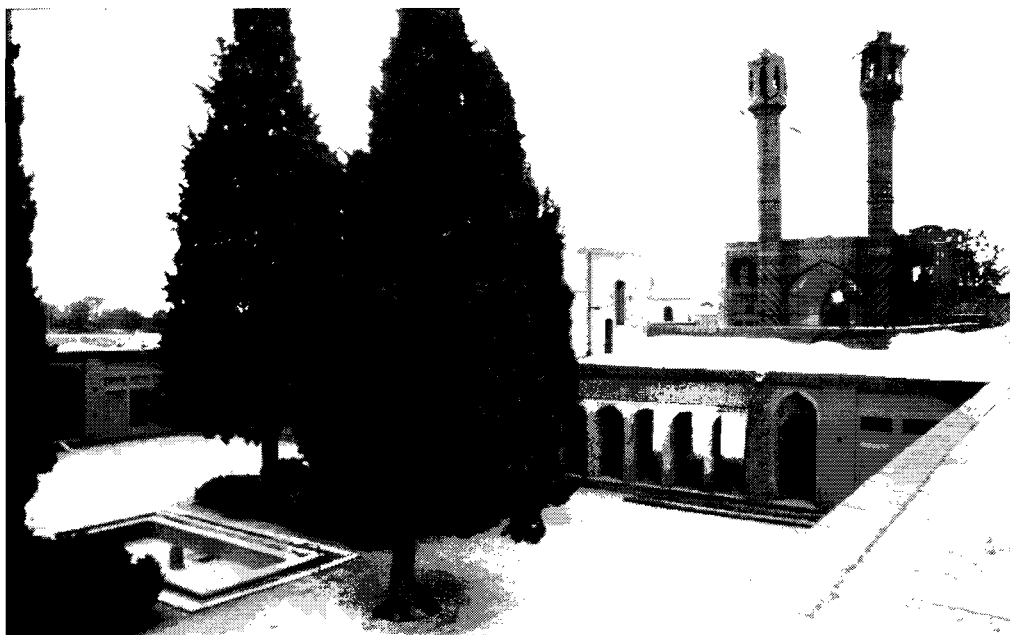
Mir-e Dâmâd court, which probably served as a caravanserai for pilgrims and a ribat for Sufis, has an elaborate design and an immaculate geometry, as other monuments of the Safavid period.

The balanced façade composition is composed by brick and mud-straw mix (*simgel*). Such rhythmic and calm composition seems to be a translation of shah-Abbâsi nave's expression into the language of an open space. The pool, the parterres on its sides, and the rhythm of the façades around a well-proportioned court, all are the words and terms in this language.

The rhythm of the court's elements is similar to the pattern of four-iwan caravanserais, but the skyline of the court has not broken above the iwans. The east side of the court, which is adjacent to the domed sanctuary, is taller.

The iwan in this side is actually the portal of the domed hall. It has an elaborated stalactite vault (*moqarnas*) with inlaid tile stars.

The west side of the court has a colonnade, which relates it to the adjacent court. A portal in the middle of this side breaks its skyline. The composition of this portal and its relations to the other court shows that it was built simultaneously with the adjacent court—this is also a Qajar extension.



Mir-e Dâmâd (Shah-Abbâsi) Court West Side

1-1. Mohammad-shahi Court

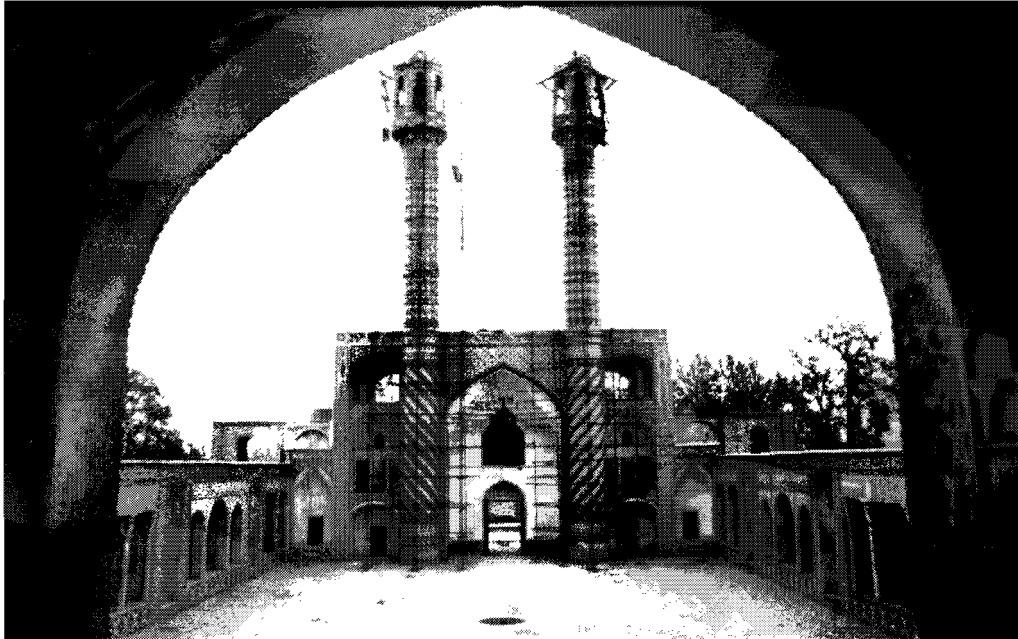
The adjacent court, called Mohammad-shahi court or the *hoseiniye*, was built at the time of the Qajar king, Mohammad-shah (r. 1834-1848 AD).¹¹ The late scholar, M. Mostafavi, dated this court to the time of Shah Abbâs I,¹² but he did not provide any evidence or reason for his judgment. The inscription on the court wall and the composition of façades are valid evidence for taking the court as Qajarid.¹³ A Qajar prince at the time of Nasser-ad-din-shah¹⁴ had also some constructions or restorations in the court.¹⁵

The rhythm of the court's elements is similar to the pattern of four-iwan caravanserais, but the skyline of the court has not broken above the iwans. The east side of the court, which is adjacent to the domed sanctuary, is taller.

This court is rectangular too, but is vaster than Mir-e Dâmâd court. Its longitudinal axis is perpendicular to the main axis of the latter. The cells are organized around it in one story. Each cell has a small iwan (*eivânche*) in front of it. Repetition of these similar *eivânches* makes a portico-like space in the north and south sides of the court. The small bays of the small entrances (*kafshkan*) between the cells create some variety in the façade rhythm. The middle bay in each side has a plate vault, which shares to create the variety and emphasizes on the axis. The longitudinal axis is more striking, because of the two large iwans at each axis end.

The revetments are made of plaster, brick, and faience with Qajarid patterns. Although the court revetments are more elaborated than that of the first court, they cannot be compared with the first court in terms of overall architectural

impact. There is a good sample of differences between Qajarid and Safavid architectural styles.



Mohammad-shahi Court—West Side

The court has no pools or parterres,¹⁶ for it was an open *hoseiniye*—a place for Imam Hussein (PUII) mourning ceremonies- that needs a vast free space for congregational mourning and playing traditional funeral theatre—*Ta'ziye*.

The east iwan leads to Mir-e Dâmâd court, and the west iwan is the entrance of Mohammad-shahi court, that is the west entrance of the complex. The portal of this entrance has two tall minarets, which some scholars place among the tallest in Iran.¹⁷ They are, as the dome, symbols for the city and the shrine complex.

1-2. The West Forecourt and Portal

This is the old entrance of the complex from the old Kerman road, as mentioned above. The entrance has a vast forecourt with a pool in the middle of it, and a huge portal. These are also made in the time of Mohammad-shah Qajar.

The portal semi vault decorated with *moqarnas*, with an opening which frames the blue sky, its elements and details, and its integration to the adjacent low walls are worth consideration in terms of architectural composition.

At first, there were two vaults crossing the road and the river, making an enclosure in front of the forecourt. Therefore, the forecourt was more prestigious. Unfortunately, a flood damaged the vaults in 1932.¹⁸



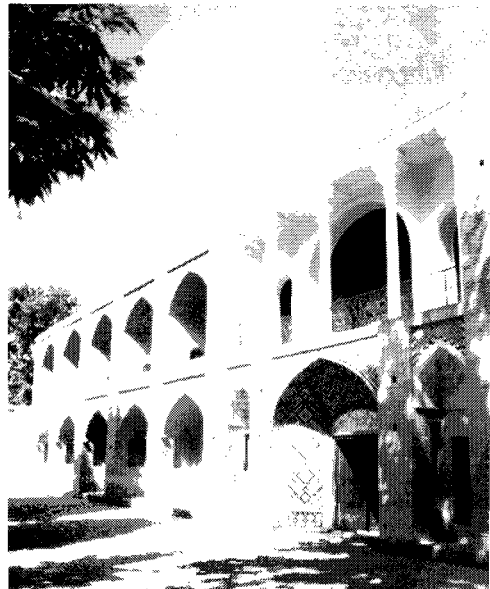
Vakil-al-Molki Court (Mahdiyye)

1-3. Vakil-al-Molki Court

The most pleasant court of the complex is Vakil-al-molki court (or *mahdiyye*), which is located on the west side of the main building. It was built, as its homonymous nave, by Vakil-al-molk I and his son, at the time of Nasser-ad-din-shah Qajar.¹⁹ It was the third court in the building chronology.

The court, in its design, shape, and cell organization, was influenced by Mir-e Dâmâd court design. However, its façades, especially in arches and ornaments, are in accordance with Qajarid style. The revetments are built of plaster, brick and faience with geometric patterns.

The west wall of the court is higher than the north and south walls. Its iwan, which has a semi vault decorated with *moqarnas* and two minarets, is also the portal for Vakil-al-molki nave. The views of this portal and the blue dome behind it make up a beautiful sight from the court.



Amir-nezâm's Building — East Side of Vakil-al-Molki Court

The east side is the only two-stories side of the court. Its second story consists of an iwan and many rooms with sash windows (*orosi*). It is indicated that this side was originally one-story until the time of Nasser-ad-din-shah Qajar. By this time, Amir-nezâm Garroosi (1821-1900), famous as a man of state as well as a literary figure and ruler of Kerman province after 1899,²⁰ built the second story.²¹ Probably, its main purpose was a residential and reception place for the ruler.²² I will return to this part later.

Among the most effective elements that created such a pleasant open space are the cross-shape pool and four parterres around it that cover most of the court.

1-4. Atâbaki Court

Through a vestibule on its east side, Vakil-al-molki court connects to the vastest and latest court of the complex—Atâbaki court. It was named Atâbaki because its patron was Mirzâ Ali-Asqar-khân Atâbak A'zam (1859-1907), titled Amin-as-sultan, the famous chancellor of three Qajar kings—Nasser-ad-din, Mozaffer-ad-din, and Mohammad-Ali-shah. Bâstâni Pârizi suggests that it was constructed in the same time of Vakil-al-molki court and restored in the time of Amin-as-sultan.²³

The overall shape of the court is similar to a simple one-story caravanserai, with rhythmic symmetric façades. There is a cistern in the middle of the north side of the court, having a wind catcher, which emphasizes that side. Nevertheless, the most striking part of the court is Amir-nezâm's building in the upper story of the west side, which has a different aesthetic. It consists of a drawing room (*tâlâr*) with fine sash windows, columned iwans overlooking to the both courts, in addition to some rooms, a kitchen and a patio.

Amir-nezâm's building is beautiful in it and reminds the upper story of the kiosk of Shah-zâde garden on the outskirts of the same town. However, it can be recognized as the only architectural flaw of the shrine complex, for it is not in harmony with other parts, both in physical and spiritual sense. The shrine belongs to a saint, who called *Shah-e Vali*, who is the sultan of divine lovers. Therefore, a mundane architecture for worldly kings is not proper for him. Amir-nezâm's building is the only part of the shrine complex that has such worldly architecture.

Pool and parterres cover most of Atâbaki court, but unfortunately, the parterres have lost their origin shape. Some modern unsuitable rough parterres have replaced it. The only remainders of its original conditions are the rectangular pool and some old trees. As mentioned, since the middle of Qajarid period, when the main road between Kerman and Bam transferred to the east side of the site, the main entrance of the shrine complex has been shifted to this side. Therefore, this court became the first phase in the pilgrimage route to the holly tomb,²⁴ and so deserves a proper design. The exterior view of this main entrance, which was reconstructed in 20th century,²⁵ has the same condition.

The Last Word

Nobody can describe the architectural quality of any space as completely as it is perceived by the one who is present in that space. The very fact has an obvious intense meaning in the case of this shrine complex. The use of several successive courts as different phases in the pilgrimage path for reaching the heart of the complex; the holly tomb with a sky-colored dome on it; several naves who circumambulate around the holly point; the naves which are fine and, at the same time, pure and mysterious, as the saint itself; and the interior dome over the tomb, which impresses the soul as if one is ascending in company with the saint's spirit; ... all are among architectural means which are in compatibility with the certain effects of Shah-e Vali's spiritual presence in the shrine.

The complex has no gildings, mirror works, or other luxurious ornaments; nevertheless, it is justly known²⁶ as one of the most spiritual, splendid and purest religious, national and historical monuments in Iran.

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Notes

¹ Transliteration of Persian terms in this article is in accordance to modern Persian pronunciation in the dialect of Tehran. In this transliteration, I used "â" for "f" as the letter "a" in "father"; "ch" for "چ" as in "child"; "kh" for "خ", as "ch" in "loch"; "zh" for "ز", as "s" in "vision"; "sh" for "ش", as in "short"; "q" for "غ" and "ق", which has no similar in English; "v" for "و"; "w" for "و", as in "low"; "oo" for "و", as in "boot"; "i" for "ي", as "e" in "be"; "y" for "ی", as in "yellow"; and " ' ' " for "ع", "ع", "ء", and "ئ". I did not make any distinction between different letters with the same pronunciation, like "س" and "ث", or "ز" and "ض".

If a Persian or Arabic word had a common spelling in English, I used the common spelling and deviate my transliteration rules, like "iwan", "Hussein", "Baluchistan", "caravanserai" and "shah".

² Ahmad-Ali-khân Vaziri, *Târikh-e Kerman* (the history of Kerman), edited by M. E. Bâstâni Pârizi, 4th edition, Tehran: Elmi Publications, 1370 (1991), pp. 574-579; Hamid Farzâm, "Sultan Ahmad Bahmani Va Shah Nematollah Vali", in *Si Gofâtâr darbâre-ye Kermân* (thirty essays on Kerman), proceedings of the eighth congress on Iranian studies, ed. M. R. Daryâgasht, Kerman: Kerman State Publications, 1356 (1977), p. 75; M. E. Bâstâni Pârizi, *Râhnamâ-ye Asâr-e Târikhi-ye Kerman*, Tehran: Nashriyeye Farhang-e Kerman, 1335 (1956), pp. 86-89; Mohammad Mo'in, *Farhang-e Farsi* (Mo'in Persian dictionary), Tehran: Amir Kabir Publications, 1375 (1996), vol. 6, pp. 2136-2137.

³ Ma'soom-Ali Nematollâhi, *Tarâ'eq al-Haqâ'eq*, Tehran: 1319 (1940), vol. 3, p. 8; Reza-Qoli-khân Hedâyat, *Majma' al-Fosahâ'*, ed. M. Mosaffâ, Tehran: 1339 (1960), vol. 4, p. 87; idem, *Farhang-e Anjoman-ârây-e Nâseri*, Tehran: Eslâmiyeh publications, pp. 670-6710; Ahmad-Ali-khân Vaziri, op. cit., p. 580.

- ⁴ H. Farzâm cites the inscription's text completely, see H. Farzâm, op. cit., p. 79; also see M. E. Bâstâni Pârizi, op. cit., p. 79.
- ⁵ The dome took some damages by the earthquake of 1981, but then restored as it was.
- ⁶ Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan*, New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 1988, vol. 1, pp. 394-395.
- ⁷ Here the term *ravâq* is not used in its common meaning.
- ⁸ Literally means: the house of who know the holly Koran by their hearts.
- ⁹ S. M. Mostafavi, *Âsâr-e Târikhi-ye Tehran: Amâken-e Motabarreke* (the historical monuments of tehran: the holly places), 2nd ed., ed. M. H. Mohaddes, Tehran: Anjoman-e Âsâr Va Mafâkher-e Farhangi and Garroos Publications, 1375 (1996). appendix, p. 371.
- ¹⁰ M. M. Oqâbi (ed.), *Dâyerat-ol-Ma'âref-e Benâhâ-ye Târikhi-ye Irân Benâhâ-ye Ârâmgâhi* (the encyclopedia of Iranian historical monuments in the Islamic period – mausoleums), Tehran: The Center for Research on Islamic Culture and Art, 1376 (1997). p. 76.
- ¹¹ Nosratollâh Meshkâti, *Fehrest-e Benâhâ-ye Târikhi Va Amâken-e Bâstâni-ye Iran* (the index of the historical monuments and ancient sites of Iran), Tehran: Sâzmân-e Melli-ye Hefâzat-e Âsâr-e Bâstâni-ye Iran, 1349 (1970), p. 153.
- ¹² M. Mostafavi, op. cit., p. 371. He suggests that this court was built in the time of Shah Abbâs I, as the first court, and the only elements built in the time of Mohammad-shah were the two minarets of its portal.
- ¹³ Of course, it is likely that there was a court in the Safavid Period, which was replace by a new one in Qajarid period.
- ¹⁴ This prince was Abd-al-Hamid-Mirzâ, titled Nasscr-ad-dowle (d. 1892), the ruler of Kerman and the patron of a striking garden in the Mâhân, called 'Bâq-e Shah-zâde' (literally: the prince's garden).
- ¹⁵ Ahmad-Ali-khân Vaziri, op. cit., p. 234,
- ¹⁶ There is a hole in the middle of the court for drawing out water from an underground stream.
- ¹⁷ M. E. Bâstâni Pârizi, op. cit., p. 76.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., p. 75.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., p. 79; M. T. Mostafavi, op. cit., p. 372.
- ²⁰ M. Mo'in, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 1698.
- ²¹ M. E. Bâstâni Pârizi, op. cit., p. 81; A. A. Vaziri Kermani, op. cit., pp. 844-845.
- ²² M. T. Mostafavi, op. cit., p. 372. Amir-nezâm was buried in the iwan of this court, as he willed in his testament. see M. E. Bâstâni Pârizi, op. cit., p. 80.
- ²³ M. E. Bâstâni Pârizi, op. cit., pp. 80-81.
- ²⁴ M. T. Mostafavi, op. cit., pp. 372-373.
- ²⁵ Ibid., p. 372.
- ²⁶ Ibid., p. 370.

Peace and Poetry

Dr. Seyed Mostafa Azmayesh

Sufism was born in the heart of Islam. The principle of this doctrine is derived from the Holy Quran and the Hadith of Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him). It is explained in a daily remembrance (zeker), which is the basis of the Sufi belief:

There is no God except Allah.

Sufism accentuates on the Doctrine of Unity, the unity between the Creator and the created, the unity between the disciple's soul and that of his master.

The practice was gradually developed and elaborated after the death of the founder of Islam, (570-80/632) by many Muslim gnostics and philosophers who delved into mysticism. The final goal of this spiritual practice is seen as the unity between the seeker and God.

***The Universe and every thing inside it,
is a reflection of the light of the Beloved.***

The model of Unity, and the best example of a deep connection between a disciple and his master is the mystical connection between the founder of Islam (Prophet Mohammad) and his successor (Ali).

Mohammad Rasoul Allah and Ali Wali Allah

Ali is considered the first mystic in the history of Islam. Through the centuries many masters (Sheikhs) have guided Sufis to his path. Accordingly, many researchers and historians believe that Sufism existed before the word "Tasawwof" appeared in south of Iran, in the 8th century.

In Sufi practice, the concept of love (Eshg)—slightly employed by the Holy Quran in the story of Joseph—holds an important place in the path to Mysticism. The personal relationship with God and realization of the concept of Unity with the Omnipresent does not exist in the limited vocabulary of many religions. Thus

it became necessary to find an inward path for exalting the sensory and feeding the desire of communion.

To further celebrate this unity, the musical practice of Sama' was introduced by the first Sufis. The word "Sam", means "audition".

This is the lover's assembly – Sama'
The reunion of the intoxicated – Sama'

For legitimizing Sama, Sufis needed to prove the existence of musical instruments and musical ceremonies at the time of Prophet Mohammad, which was not difficult to show.

Later one of the first Persian books about Sufism—written in India, around the 11th century, by Hujwiri- named "Kashf ol Mahjoub", indicates that "every thing must be respected" by Sufis, during Sama'.

Hujwiri divides the participants of Sama into two categories:

1. those who can receive the essential messages chanted by the Gawwal, and let themselves be guided by him, to the final point, or a state of exaltation called "Hal".

2. those who only listen to the sound of the music, and do not comprehend it.

According to Sufism, the inner music of the mystical poetry touches the soul directly and prepares it for a journey towards the endless.

Rumi (1207-1273) says:

*It is the vibrations of the World turning, that people
 Resonate with their tambour and vocal cords.
 The string, the drum, and the wood are not alive,
 Where does the voice of the Beloved come from?*

"Sama'" may be considered a perfect form of the musical art, because of the association between the word, the melody, the rhythm, and the harmony.

When we talk about "Sama'", we are talking about an effect produced by the internal music of a mystical poetry. With or without instruments the spiritual result is realized by the inner music of the poetry.

Objective Considerations

The music of a mystical poetry is extremely important: because it touches upon a secret language that affects and influences us regardless of words or vocabulary.

While listening to a mystical poetry, one may not succeed in comprehending all words or phrases directly, but we may be completely touched by its rhythm.

The words and the vocabulary act upon the neo-cortex, the seat of the intelli-

gence, while the rhythm of the poetry influences the Paleo-cortex, the center of the natural actions and reactions in the oldest part of the animal and human brain. Meanwhile, the inner music of a mystical poetry produces direct internal vibrations on our hearts.

The comprehension of the meaning of a piece is only limited to human beings. In this case the audience and the chanter should use the same language. Where as, being influenced by rhythms is possible for both animals and human beings.

Sa'di of Shiraz says:

*[Even a] Camel dances with the rhythm of Arabic poetry.
You must be a strange creature if you are not touched by it.*

So music produces internal vibrations that act directly on our brain, which are then transmitted by the nerves through out the body, and, the inner music of a mystical poetry influences not only human beings but also animal and plants. The vibrations affect the matter found in the liquid state. Here is how this reaction is demystified:

There are different ways of emptying a glass full of liquid. One can turn over the glass, or we can empty it by letting something fall into it. There is still another possibility. One can take the glass in hand and start walking. After a while the fluid begins to spill over. So, it is not necessary to pour out the fluid, only walking is sufficient. When you walk your body produces vibrations, wherever it is.

This vibration has “no perceptible affect” on matter in solid form. On the contrary the effect on matter in a fluid condition is quite different. The vibration of the body is transmitted by the extra vibration of the fluid.

If we take an egg, and spin it around, what will happen? By letting the egg spin, the energy applied to it, will be consumed by the turning movement of the egg. But the particles keep moving even after it has stopped rotating. Why? Because the turning energy received by the egg continues its action into the electrons of the fluid inside the egg and does not stop at the same time as the solid matter. Thus the effect on solid matter is different from fluids.

The phenomenon of “Resonance”

The effect of the external vibration produces some internal vibrations into the matter in liquid form. When the frequency of the internal and external vibrations inside and outside of a glass full of a liquid are in harmony, a new phenomenon called “resonance” can appear. For better understanding it, one can place a glass on a musical instrument, for instance an organ, and then start to play! This will perhaps be the best way to empty the glass. The vibrations of the music influences the fluid directly, and the resonance causes, it to pour out quickly.

The inner music of the mystical poetry influences every cell in our body. As you know, about 70% of the composing compounds of our body is water. That is how our physical and spiritual body is moved.

When I speak of music, this music consists of vibrations produced by musical instruments like Tar and Santoor or the vocal cords. However when I recite a poem, the poetry is based on rhythms; there is an inner music in the poem as well as the meaning of words and phrases. So, the poetry affects the body at different levels. For the Sufis, the most important part of a mystical poetry is this hidden and spiritual effect that acts directly on the composing compounds of their body, during "Sama'".

As you are aware in traditional Persian music no notes is used, instead "Tan Tánnan" or "Tan Taneh" or "Tánin", is used. The rhythms can be changed according to the poetry. When the rhythms change our reactions change.

As we mentioned before, about 70% of the compounds composing the body consist of liquid matter, water. This is an essential fluid to the heart. The result of vibrations is thus sensed in our hearts first. Accordingly, by hearing Persian mystical poetry, for instance, without necessarily comprehending the meaning of the words, one's heartbeat may change. And with the change of the heartbeat, the state of the soul changes, the chemistry of the brain changes and the functioning of the endocrine glands changes. And feelings of sadness may turn into ecstasy.

Sama' in The Shah Nematollah's Assembly

We can perhaps present a picture of Shah's spiritual assembly according to his poetry.

He would sit down on a carpet in direction of Mecca and the disciples would sit in front of him. Shah Nematollah was always surrounded by a group of musicians who could play diverse instruments of mystical music. A musician-in-a-corner – would start to play when Shah began to recite his own poetry. All followed him in its rhythm and the dervishes began standing up to dance and turn. In his presence the quality of the mystical exchange among the audiences was very strong. The spiritual energy of each person who tried to connect to Shah intensified in the assembly. This ritual spontaneity of the moment (Hal) and the authenticity of the purification (kholus) allowed for the elimination of one's ego (Fana). The presence of Shah was a deep ocean.

For the first time during, 14th and 15th century, in Shah Nematollah's time, he opened the private assembly to all people, Sunnis, Shi'ites, Muslims or no Muslims. Every one was greeted in the assembly of Shah Nematollah and had the equal footing to reach to his or her spiritual potential through mystical intoxications and Sama'.

Generally, Sufis have two kinds of ceremonies:

1. Private assembly: a reunion exclusively for the advanced Sufis.
2. Public assembly where every body can participate, even if he is not officially initiated.

During certain moments at “Majles-e Eshg” guided by Shah and his very advanced disciples, every body was plunged in his ocean.

In these moments the physical body of Shah Nematollah became a river in which fluids of his spiritual powers passed. The powerful vibrations of his magnetic presence filled the space of the assembly and every body felt like a drop in a vast and deep ocean. It is this spiritual force, which is explained by Shah Nematollah as “the Life of the Universe” or “**Jan-e- Jahan**”.

In these moments Shah Nematollah would be the Sun and the dervishes turning around him were all his spiritual planets.

Shah would change the rhythm to faster melodies and the dervishes would whirl faster and still faster. Until they were all intoxicated by the power of Shah’s love.

After one or two hours, during “Sama” in the assembly of Shah Nematollah, the doors of heavenly dimensions would open. There, one after each other, from the Earthly cages of their physical body, the birds of the Sufis soul would fly away.

Sufis believe that when the soul was first invited to enter into the body, this was an invitation in a special form, a special rhythm: **Tan Tan Tanan** or **Dar Tan Darra, Dar Tan Darra**.

With this, the soul entered into the body. Thus this is an initiating music that was originally sung behind the ray of the soul of each of us. When the soul hears this familiar tone again, she recognizes it and is awakened by it.

Tan Tan Tanánan TánTan

Sufis have found the secret to their soul—to leave their physical body here on Earth and engage in other spiritual planes. How is it possible? By forwarding mystical music into each molecule of their heart.

When the electrons of the water molecules in our cells are affected through receiving internal and external vibrations, they send a vast amount of energy. This great quantity of energy continually feeds the vital flow of energy, which runs through the body like a river. Such fluid is also acknowledged by the Chinese acupuncture. There are certain types of music, which can influence this fluid.

When this fluid catches the energy of electrons in our cells, it ignites the body from inside, or it could leave the body partially, or completely.

If it ignites the body, the Sufi becomes intoxicated.

If it leaves the body partially, one may feel energy leaving his body.

If it leaves the body completely, the Sufi may see himself, suddenly, leaving his body and turning in the space above, in a spiral movement.

For a Sufi, the change in frequency is a very important element.

The change in frequency corresponds with the speed that the soul takes in receiving vibrations, to depart from the body.

Example: Consider a boat floating in the water. The moment the motor is started the boat jumps and takes speed. By increasing the speed it rises more to the surface of the water. As the speed is still more increased, the boat goes higher and higher, rising on the surface of the water. As the speed is increased more, the boat rises and soars even further. The higher the speed, the higher the bounce!

In flying too, the power of a motor is very important. There the wings are essential to keep balance. By attaching wings and increasing the velocity, a terrestrial object may change into a celestial object. With the same reasoning the state of the soul is changed by the changes in the rhythms in the poetry of Shah.

Shah Nematollah himself would rise up while reciting his poetry. He was often intoxicated and his words would pour like a jar of wine. Shah's poems, chants, and turns in divers rhythms, kept sending vibrations all around him. His elevated state of mind lead the seekers to higher planes and dimensions while his poetry became an eternal source of joy for all thirsty souls.

Through his poetry horizontal energy crossed vertical powers of each soul and melted the seekers' hearts. This explains the symbolic architecture of his assembly and the spiritual interaction found in the powers of Qawwali. Shah in the center of the assembly is seen as the spiritual axis of the universe or Gotb.

Zekr

Shah employed diverse rhythms of zekrs in his poetry. Every body around Shah could correspond the music of his poetry chanted by Shah with the inner music of his own Zekr, inside himself.

“alhamdo llelah”, “astag ferolah”, “sobhan allah”, “allah o akbar”, “la ilaha ella allah”, “yahoo”...

The harmony between the inner music of the zekr inside each Sufi and the external music in the assembly produces a resonance in the heart of the seekers, which leads them to enter a state of enlightenment called “annihilation” .

For understanding the procedure of annihilation or “Fana”, we must know that during Qwwali every thing functions according to the principles of Sufi meditation: the Qotb or Pir (Master) is the representation of God on Earth and a channel between both visible and invisible worlds. A Sufi assembly is considered a place of transmission of the Divine's energy.

During Qwwali, a Sufi's sensory perception is replaced by extra-sensory understandings.

In this state Sufis enter another consciousness which is characterized by negation of the individual ego, similar to a voluntary death. The principle of self-negation or “Fana” is realized by annihilation into the Master's love.

After “Fana” comes “Baga”. “Baga” means to eternally join in God's presence and exist in Unity with the Omnipresence. With Baga comes a great state of illumination and perfection.

The best example of annihilating in the spirituality of his Master is the example of Mowlana Rumi. At the end of every one of his 2,000 Gazals (a group of poems), instead of using his own name as a signature, he signed the name of his Master, Shams. This signifies the unity between Rumi and his Sheikh. He said: **“I am not me, ‘no me’ is me”**.

The annihilation in the spirituality of his Master is the source of a vast love in the heart of the Sufi. It is this love that leads a Sufi to become a “Rend”.

Rend-e mastam may parastam yallali

In this state poetry becomes the rhythm and words are irrelevant.

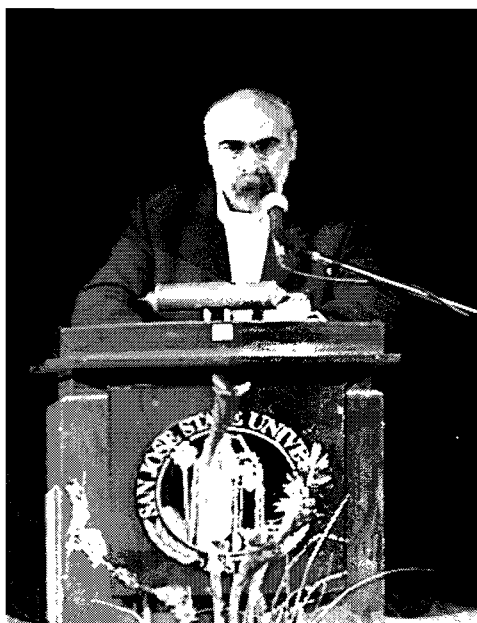
Notice that **Yallali** is not a word in any dictionary, still Shah Nematollah employs it, instead of Ya Ali.

The ultimate state of perfection is being eternally alive on the wine of love and nothing else. This love occupies the heart of seekers completely and brings total peace between them, in every corner of the Universe.

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Simorgh Sufi Society is a non-profit charitable organization registered in the state of New York. Simorgh Sufi Society believes submission to the universal concept of unity brings peace and happiness to all. The Society has organized numerous cultural and educational programs at various academic institutions in order to heighten the spiritual development of the public. It has also published many books and articles on Sufism, including **The Teachings of a Sufi Master** by **Dr. Seyed Mostafa Azmayesh**. Simorgh Sufi Society follows the teachings of the **Nematollahi Gonabadi Order**, dedicated to promoting spiritual awareness through the practice of Sufism.

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The keeper of Divine secrets,
illuminating the eternal light,
is the heart.

The mirror reflecting the whole universe,
the Seven Celestials,
is the heart.

The heavenly dwelling of lovers,
home of the intoxicated,
is the heart.

Conquer the heart,
immerse in the Beloved within you;
for the retreat of the Beloved,
is the heart.

Seek the pearls of our infinite sea,
for within them,
is the heart.

The hidden bounty of God,
that majestic treasure,
is the heart.

Search the secret of the heart in the heart,
and say the heart!
To "Seyed" the inseparable soul mate,
is the heart.

Selected poetry of Shah Nematollah Vali, Simorgh Sufi Society



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