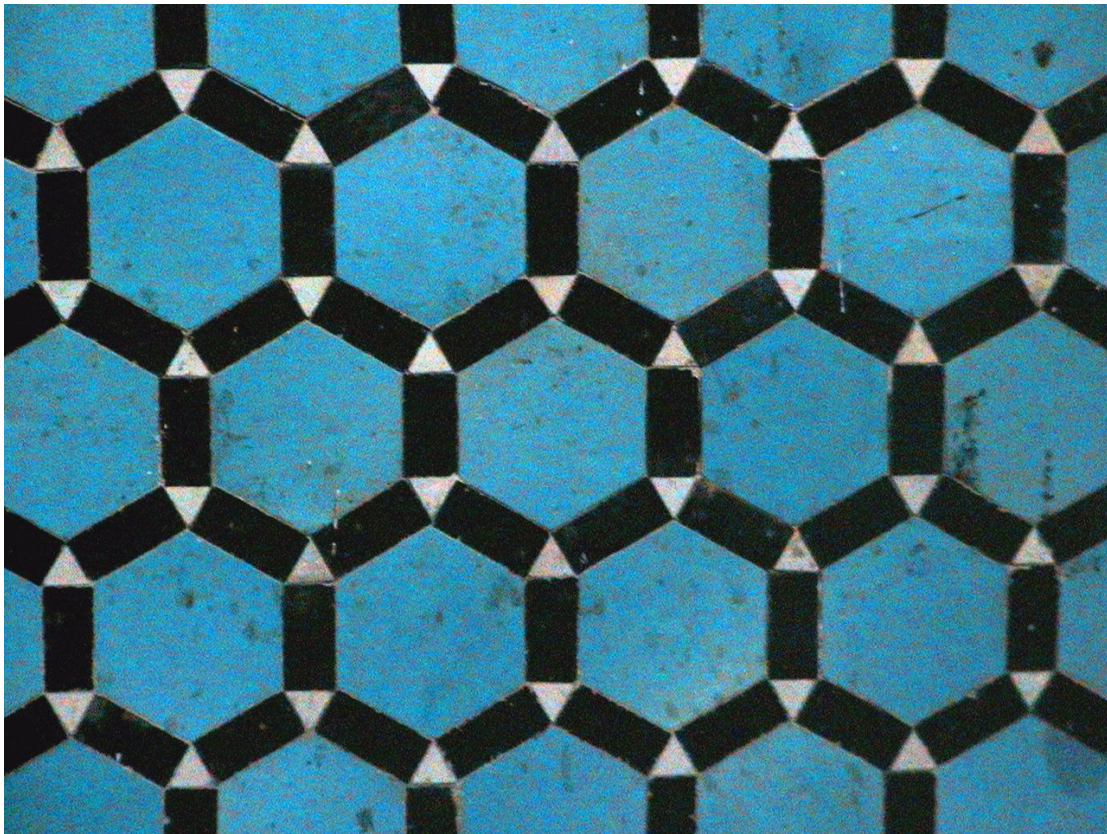


Sufis and Mullahs: Sufis and Their Opponents in the Persianate World

*A Three-Day International Conference at the Institute
of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter*

14-16 April 2016



CONVENORS:

Dr Reza Tabandeh and Dr Leonard Lewisohn, Centre for Persian
and Iranian Studies, Institute of Arab & Islamic Studies,
University of Exeter, U.K.



PROGRAMME

Day 1 (April 14): The Theological Background: Conflicts Between Doctors of the Law and Sufis in Early Sufism

8:30-9:15 Coffee and Registration

9:15-9:30 Welcoming Remarks

9:30-10:30 Chair: Prof. Ian Netton (IAIS, University of Exeter)
Prof. Hermann Landolt (Prof. Emeritus, McGill University; Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Ismaili Studies, London)
First Keynote Address: “Who Opposed Whom?”

10:30-11:00 *Coffee/tea*

SESSION 1: BETWEEN *MADRASA* AND *KHANAQAH*: THEOLOGICAL AND JURIDICAL OPPOSITION TO SUFIS AND SUFI ORDERS IN CENTRAL ASIA, IRAN AND ANATOLIA

Part 1: Early Tenth-Century Sufism and Anti-Sufism

11:00-12:30 Chair: Dr. Annabel Keeler (University of Cambridge)
Dr. Saeko Yazaki (University of Glasgow, Scotland)
“Sufi-Hanbali dialogue: Abu Talib Makki (d. 386/996) and the Meaning of Piety”

Speaker to be announced

“Sobriety in a Drunken Universe: The Paradox of Junayd of Baghdad (d. 297/910)”

12:30-1:30 Lunch

Part 2: Opposition to Sufism in Mediaeval and Late Classical Anatolia

1:30-3:30 Chair: Dr. Fatih Ermiş (University of Tübingen, Germany)
Prof. Ahmet T. Karamustafa (University of Maryland)
“Situating Sufism in Islamizing Anatolia (14th & 15th centuries)”

Dr. Eliza Tasbihi (Concordia University, Canada)

“Conflicts between Sufis and Qaḍizadeh ‘*Ulama*’ in Seventeenth-century Turkey: Isma‘il Anqarawi on the Faith of Pharaoh”

3:00-3:30 *Coffee/tea*

**SESSION 2: EARLY PERSIAN SPIRITUALITY AND SUFI LOVE-MYSTICISM AND
THEIR JURIDICAL OPPONENTS**

Part 3: Clerical Opposition to Malamati Sufism and Antinomian Traditions

- 3:30-5:00 Chair: Prof. Ahmet T. Karamustafa (University of Maryland)
Dr. Annabel Keeler (University of Cambridge)
“Wisdom in Controversy: Abu Yazid’s (d. 261/875) Challenge to Others and Himself”
- Prof. Sara Sviri (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
“Al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi’s (d. c. 295/908) Critique of *Malamatis* & Others”
- 8:00-10:00 Conference Dinner (Speakers Only)

***Day 2 (April 15): Persianate Sufism and its Opponents in Medieval
and Early Modern Central Asia and Anatolia***

- 9:00-10:00 Chair: Prof. Robert Gleave (IAIS, University of Exeter)
Prof. James Morris (Boston College, Boston)
Second Keynote Address: “The ‘Ibn ‘Arabis Created in Beliefs’: Exploring a Complex Legacy”

**SESSION 1: CONFLICTS BETWEEN DOCTORS OF THE LAW AND SUFIS
IN BAGHDAD AND KHURASAN**

Part 1: Sufis and ‘Ulama in Concord and Discord

- 10:00-11:30 Chair: Prof. Sara Sviri (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
Prof. Erik S. Ohlander (Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne)
“Who Were Ibn al-Jawzī’s “Deluded Sufis”?”
- Prof. Devin DeWeese (Indiana University)
“When the Paradigm Breaks: Sufis and the ‘Ulama in 17th-Century Central Asia.”
- 11:30-12:00 *Coffee/tea*

Part 2: Sufi Symbolism and Doctrine: Exoteric and Esoteric Perspectives

- 12:00-1:30 Chair: Dr. Reza Tabandeh (University of Toronto)
Speaker to be announced
“Conflicts between Jurists and Ni‘matullahi Sufis in the Qajar Era”
- Nicholas Bolyston (Georgetown University)
“Reminding the Scholars What it Means to be Muslim: Themes of Religious Identity and Diversity in the Poetry of Sana’i (d. 1131)”
- 1:30-2:30 *Lunch*

SESSION 2: METAPHYSICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SHARI‘A-ORIENTED VERSUS TARIQA-ORIENTED ISLAM

Part 3: Opposition to Sufism in Anatolia

- 2:30-4:00 Chair: Dr. Eliza Tasbihi (Concordia University, Canada)
Prof. Bilal Kuşpınar (Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya, Turkey)
“Isma‘il Anqarawi (d. 1631) on the Controversy of Music and *Sama*”
- Roderick Grierson (Rumi Institute, Near East University, Nicosia, Cyprus)
“‘Auspicious Events’? The Suppression of the Bektāşi Tarikat in 1826”
- 4:00-4:30 *Coffee/tea*

Part 4: Persecution of Sufi and Mystical Sectarian Movements

- 4:30-6:00 Chair: Prof. Hermann Landolt (Institute of Ismaili Studies)
Dr. Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (Institute of Ismaili Studies, London)
“Victims or Rivals? Persecution of the Hurufis and its Possible Reasons”
- Prof. Shafique Virani (University of Toronto)
“Sufi or not Sufi – That is the Question: Re-examining the Sufi-Ismaili ‘Symbiotic Relationship’ Thesis”

EVENING CONCERT

- 8:00-9:30 Acclaimed Persian Vocalist – Sepideh Raissadat in Concert

Day 3 (April 16): Clerical Polemics Against Sufis, Suppression of Sufi Orders in Iran from the Safavids to the Islamic Republic, and Anti-clericalism in Classical Persianate Poetry

9:00-10:00 Chair: Prof. Sajjad Rizvi (Director, IAIS, University of Exeter)
Prof. Andrew Newman (University of Edinburgh)
Third Keynote Address: “Sufis, Shahs and Mullas: A Consideration of Considerations of the Anti-Sufi Polemic in Seventeenth-century Isfahan”

SESSION 1: CLERICAL POLEMICS AGAINST SUFIS AND SUPPRESSION OF THE SUFI ORDERS IN SAFAVID AND QAJAR PERSIA AND CONTEMPORARY IRAN

Part 1: Anti-Sufi Traditions and Polemics in Shi‘ite Islam

10:00 -11:30 Chair: Dr. Michael Axworthy (IAIS, University of Exeter)
Dr. Alessandro Cancian (Institute of Ismaili Studies, London)
“Between Reform and Bigotry: the Gunabadi *Silsila* in Two Early Twentieth-century Anti-Sufi Works”

Speaker to be announced
“The Sayings of the Shi‘ite Imams and Sufism”

11:30-12:00 *Coffee/tea*

Part 2: Shi‘ite Fundamentalist Opposition to Sufism in Qajar Persia

12:00-1:30 Chair: Dr. Leonard Lewisohn (IAIS, University of Exeter)
Dr. Reza Tabandeh (University of Toronto and University of Exeter)
“Enraptured Sufi and Shi‘ite Philosopher: Majdhub ‘Ali Shah, Champion of Theological Reconciliation between Sufism and Shi‘ism”

Prof. Oliver Scharbrodt (University of Chester, U.K.)
“Anti-Sufi Polemics in Early Qajar Iran: Aqa Muhammad Bihbahani (d. 1801) and his *Risala-yi khayratiyya*”

1:30-2:30 *Lunch*

**SESSION 2: ANTI-CLERICALISM AND ANTINOMIANISM
IN CLASSICAL PERSIAN/PERSIANATE SUFI POETRY**

Part 3: Anti-clericalism in Persianate Sufi Poetry

2:30-4:00 Chair: Dr. Zia Shakeb (Ilmi Majlis, London)
Dr. Lloyd Ridgeon (University of Glasgow)
“Friends or Foes?: Sufi-Mullah Relations in Ibn Jawzi’s *Talbis Iblis* and the Hagiography of Awhad al-Din Kirmani (d. 635/1238)”

Neda Saghaee (Erfurt University, Germany) “A Critical Examination of Influential Religious Groups in Eighteenth-Century India Derived from Mystical Persian Writings”

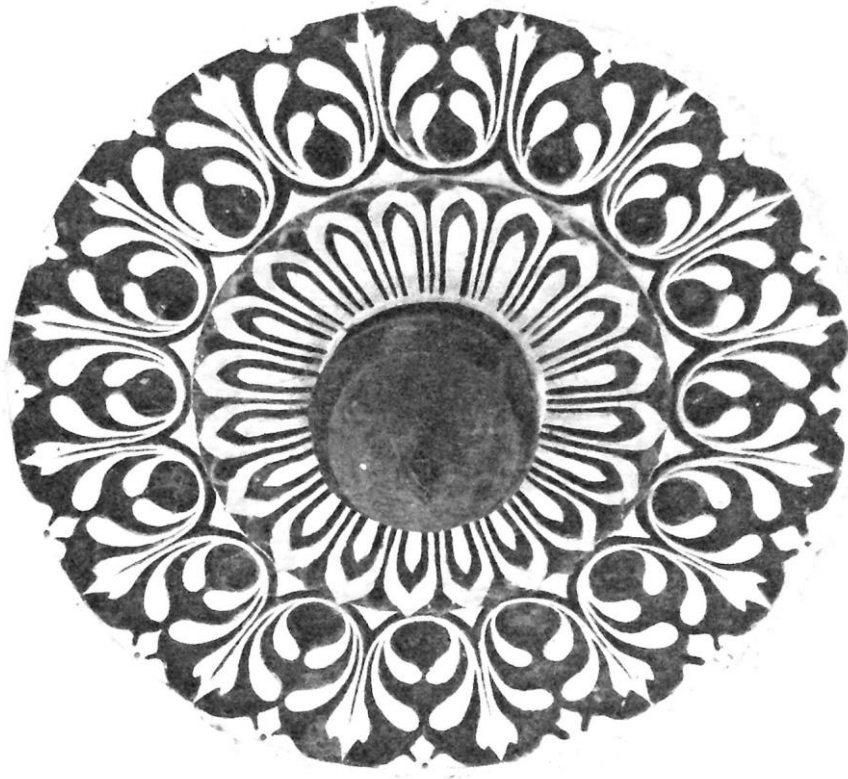
4:00-4:30 *Coffee/tea*

Part 4: Sufis and Mullahs in Classical Persian Poetry

4:30-6:00 Chair: Nicholas Bolyston (Georgetown University)
Dr. Leonard Lewisohn (University of Exeter)
“The *Malamati* Sufi Counterculture: Anti-clericalism in Mediæval Persian Poetry from Nizari to Jami”

Prof. Asghar Seyed-Gohrab (University of Leiden)
“Enemies of Mystical Love: Mullahs against Mystics in Persian Mystical Poetry”

6:00-7:00 Concluding Remarks by Keynote Speakers



Collected Abstracts

Reminding the Scholars What It Means to Be Muslim: Themes of Religious Identity and Diversity in the Poetry of Sanā'ī of Ghaznah

– Nicholas Bolyston –

The genre of antinomian mystical lyric poetry, used by Persian poets through the centuries to criticize the attachment to the letter of the law rather than the spirit, emerges in the work of Sanā'ī of Ghaznah (d.1131). However, Sanā'ī's closest associations were not with Sufi circles but rather with the *'ulamā* and orators of Khurāsān. Furthermore, Sanā'ī's critiques of the *'ulamā* are not limited to this stylized genre, but rather take diverse forms across his oeuvre. In this lecture I approach Sanā'ī's critique of the *'ulamā* across the genres of his poetry, situating it within the social and religious contexts of early 12th century Khurāsān. By focusing on themes of religious identity and otherness in his work I will explore how Sanā'ī brought a rigorous mystical and ethical critique of the *'ulamā* into their own circles.

Between Reform and Bigotry: the Gunābādī-Ni'matullāhī *Silsila* in Two Early Twentieth-Century Anti-Sufi Works

– Dr. Alessandro Cancian –

The *Radd al-ṣūfiyya* (Refutation of Sufis) became a sub-genre of Shi'ite religious literature during Safavid times, mainly animated by groups of religious scholars from Isfahan, Qum and Mashhad. The trend continued, under a number of pretexts well into the Qājār era, down to the 20th century, and continues today. This polemical verve has been directed to both Sufi practices and ideas, alternatively considered heretic, extremist, only mildly Islamic, potentially leading to agnosticism or the abandonment of the *Sharī'a*, or representing a threat to the authority of the *'ulamā*'. As much as Sufism was and is a multi-faceted phenomenon, whose boundaries are not always easy to define, so is anti-Sufism. In this essay, I will present and examine two anti-Sufi works coming from authors with different backgrounds, the *Exposé of the Mystery (Rāz-gushā)*, by an ex-Ni'matullāhī master who disowned his Sufi allegiance, 'Abbās 'Alī Kaywān Qazwīnī (d. 1938); and *The Truth of Mysticism (Ḥaqīqat al-'irfān)* by the *mujtahid* Sayyid Abū'l Faḍl 'Allāma' Burqī'ī (d. 1993). In doing so, I will specifically focus on the way the two authors have represented Gunābādī-Ni'matullāhī personalities, ideas and practices.

When the Paradigm Breaks: Sufis and the *'Ulamā* in Seventeenth-Century Central Asia

– Prof. Devin DeWeese –

For a good part of its history in the Islamic era, Central Asia offers a distinctive contrast to the pattern of antagonism and hostility that often existed between Sufis and the *'ulamā*; it would be misleading to suggest that these two groups had, instead, a symbiotic relationship, or simply

amicable relations, because for much of the 16th, 17th, and even 18th centuries, the Sufis *were* the *'ulamā*, and vice-versa. This pattern, indeed, can be traced somewhat earlier, and persists with only partly altered circumstances during the early 19th century. The reasons for this 'coincidence' of Sufi and juridical identities are not altogether clear; they may lie in the shared response, generally, of Sufis and jurists alike to the challenges of the Mongol conquest and the ideology of Chinggisid rule—which began a half-century earlier in Central Asia than elsewhere in the Muslim world, and extended far later (at least to the middle of the 18th century), or in the specific contrasts in the ways particular Sufi communities responded to Mongol rule (which served to 'internalize' the Sufi-*'ulamā* tension within the world of Sufi groups more broadly—i.e., the tension between the Yasavī and Naqshbandī traditions—and thus ensured that criticism of particular Sufi views or practices came chiefly from other Sufis), or in internal patterns of training and organization that favored initiatic and instructional continuities within social networks framed chiefly in familial terms. What is clear, however, is that despite earlier patterns of hostility between Sufis and the *'ulamā* (e.g., Sufi reactions to the persistence of Mu'tazilī strength in at least one region of Central Asia, down to the 14th century), and despite the emergence of hostility toward certain practices linked with Sufism among some learned circles in Central Asia during the 18th and 19th centuries, the often antagonistic relationship between Sufis and juridical scholars encountered elsewhere in the Muslim world is largely absent from Central Asia during the 16th and 17th centuries; it is difficult to find, during the 16th and 17th centuries, active participants in the enterprise of the *'ulamā* in Central Asia who were not also linked initiatically with one (or more) of the three major Sufi orders active in the region—the Naqshbandī, Yasavī, and Kubravī *ṭarīqas*.

This lecture will explore the shared Sufi-*'ālim* identities of several figures in 17th-century Central Asia, a period for which studies of Sufi groups and of intellectual history more broadly are quite sparse; for some it is still possible to delineate the two distinct spheres of their activities—i.e., the Sufi careers of the *'ulamā*, and the activities of Sufi shaykhs in the realm of the *'ulamā*—but in other cases even this distinction seems to lose significance. In particular, it will examine various groups and individuals active in Bukhara during this period, including especially the circles associated with Kamāl al-Dīn Faghānzavī and Muḥammad Sharīf Bukhārī.

'Auspicious Events'? The Suppression of the Bektāṣi Tarikat in 1826

– Roderick Grierson –

The debate that led to the suppression of the Bektāṣiye in 1826 represents the most dramatic confrontation between the ulema and any of the Ottoman tarikats during the nineteenth century. It also implicated tarikats such as the Nakṣibendi, Halveti, and Mevlevi, and it transformed the relationship between ulema and tarikats in general until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire almost a century later.

The decision to suppress the Bektāṣiye is often misunderstood because the religious nature of the dispute has been seen as little more than an excuse or disguise for agenda that were fundamentally political, economic, or military. The lecture will therefore reassess its significance, explaining why contemporary documents that were used to justify the execution or exile of Bektāṣi shaykhs and the destruction or confiscation of Bektāṣi tekkes as a defence of *Ehl-i Sünnet* should be taken seriously rather than ignored or reinterpreted.

I shall therefore provide a brief summary of the events of 1826 so that they can be understood by participants in the conference whose expertise lies elsewhere. I shall present in a handout, and in the published version of the lecture, modern transcriptions and English

translations of the *hatt-ı hümayûn* that defined the Bektaşîye as *mülhid* and justified the suppression of the tarikat. I shall explain the problems that have resulted from an uncritical reading of the official chronicles of the period, such as *Üss-i Zafer*, *Târih-i Cevdet*, and *Târih-i Lütfî*. I shall examine the reasons why a tarikat that had been established and supported by the Ottoman state was finally denounced by the most prominent ulema as heretical, and I shall discuss the lasting impact of the suppression of the Bektaşîye on other tarikats throughout the final century of the Ottoman Empire

At the end of the lecture, I shall ask why the events of 1826 resemble controversies or disputes in Iran and elsewhere. In other words, I shall consider what seems to be characteristic of a general tension or hostility between ulema and tarikats and what may have been specific to the Ottoman Empire, especially to the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century.

Situating Sufism in Islamizing Anatolia in the 14th & 15th Centuries)

– Prof. Ahmet T. Karamustafa –

Between the definitive weakening of Byzantine control over it following the Battle of Manzikert (1071) and its almost total incorporation into the Ottoman Empire during the last quarter of the fifteenth century, Anatolia was a politically fragmented land with an extremely complicated and diverse population. Inhabited by city-dwellers, villagers, and nomads –many of them immigrants or sojourners– from different ethnic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds, this geographically heterogeneous peninsula was also the stage, during the period in question, for the twin processes of Islamization and Turkicization that ultimately altered its cultural topography in lasting ways. Sufi forms of especially Persianate Islam played distinctive and determining roles in these intertwined processes in practically all social and cultural settings, but particularly among Turkish speakers. In this talk, I will explore the attitudes of some prominent Turkish Sufis of the period towards the *'ulama* and other members of the learned elite who often owed their elite status to their proficiency in Arabic and/or Persian, indeed in works of Sufism in Arabic and Persian. The Turkish language works of such Sufi authors as Yunus Emre (d. 1320?), 'Aşık Paşa (d. 1332), Elvan Çelebi (d. after 1358-59), Kaygusuz Abdal (d. first half of 15th century) and the brothers Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed (d. 1466?) and Mehmed (d. 1451) display a full spectrum of attitudes towards scholars and scholarship, ranging from explicit rejection to avid espousal; as such, these works provide us with the opportunity to situate Turkish Sufis who functioned in the Turkish vernacular into the larger historical context of Islamic cultural history of Anatolia in particular and Sufi history in general. In the process, I hope to identify and describe in broad strokes the fault lines that often ran between Sufis who expressed themselves primarily, even exclusively, in the Turkish vernacular and other Sufi and non-Sufi Muslim learned elites who foregrounded their expertise in Arabic and Persian instead. The ultimate goal, which I am pursuing in a larger book project, is to lay bare the contours of early Turkish vernacular Islam.

Wisdom in Controversy: Bāyazīd's Challenges to Others and Himself

– Dr. Annel Keeler –

It is said that the much-loved but controversial 3rd/ 9th mystic Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (popularly known as Bāyazīd, d. 261/875) was banished from his home town seven times during his life. Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār (d. 618/1221), in his hagiographical work, the *Tadhkīrat al-awliyā'*,

explains that this was because things that Bāyazīd said were beyond the comprehension of the ‘exotericists’ (*ahl-i zāhir*). No doubt ‘Aṭṭār was here referring to Bāyazīd’s notorious ecstatic utterings (*shathīyyāt*), such as ‘Glory be to me, how great is my majesty!’ (*subhānī mā a azama sha’nī*), or his replying to the question ‘What is the Throne?’ with the answer ‘I *am* the Throne’.

We might assume that by *ahl-i zāhir* Aṭṭār had in mind the scholars of outward knowledge, that is, knowledge pertaining to the *sharī‘a*, theological belief and so on. Indeed, in the collections of reports about Bāyazīd’s life, we read of various occasions when he was criticised or questioned closely by an individual scholar (*‘ālim*) or jurist (*faqīh*), and of Bāyazīd’s rejoinders to such objectors. Moreover, we find among these reports several derisory comments that Bāyazīd made about such scholars, as when he said, ‘People take their knowledge from the dead, but I take my knowledge from the Living, who never dies’; or ‘The mystic (*‘ārif*) is above [the level] of what he says, while the scholar (*‘ālim*) is below the level of what he says; [...] the mystic only looks at his Lord, while the scholar only looks at his *nafs*.’ But scholars were not the only religious group to be mocked and challenged by Bāyazīd; we find him also targeting ascetics or renunciants (*zuhhād*), in particular, as well as devout worshippers (*‘ubbād*), pious Qur’ān reciters (*mutaqarri’ūn*) and even mystics (*urafā’*) – anyone, in fact, who turned their practice or state of being into a veil, or who made claims for themselves.

This might seem paradoxical, given some of the audacious claims that are reported from Bāyazīd, as for example: ‘My punishment is more severe than His [God’s]’, or ‘My banner is greater than his [the Prophet’s]’. Such sayings, however, may be offset by his numerous statements of self-reproach, such as his repeatedly expressing the feeling that after long years of devotion and self-mortification he still finds himself to have a polytheist’s girdle (*zunnār*) around his waist. Not surprisingly, ‘Aṭṭār includes many such sayings in his biography of Bāyazīd, perhaps to counterbalance the controversial ones, even though he does provide explanations for the latter.

In this paper, I shall draw on some of the earliest sources on Bāyazīd’s life, namely the *Kitāb al-Luma’ fī taṣawwuf* of Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988), the *Kitāb al-Nūr min kalimāt Abī Tayfūr* of Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Sahlagī (d. 476/1084), as well as later ones such as the *Tadhkīrat al-awliyā’* of ‘Aṭṭār and the *Dastūr al-jumhūr* of Aḥmad b. Ḥusayn Kharaqānī (fl. 8th/14th century), and examine ways in which he challenged, on the one hand, the *ahl-i zāhir* and others with his controversial statements and critiques, and on the other, himself through his severe self-reproach and abasement. It will attempt to show how these were ways in which Bāyazīd seems to have manifested doctrines that a century later were to become firmly associated with the Way of Blame (*Malāmatiyya*). It will also consider his numerous, ostensibly blasphemous sayings (defined by Corbin as ‘*paradoxes*’). Were they all actually *shathīyyāt*, i.e. words uttered in a state of drunken ecstasy? Or did some of these constitute part of a powerful spiritual rhetoric, one through which Bāyazīd taught his followers about a path to God that was wholly uncompromising?

Ismā‘īl Anqarawī on the Controversy of Music and *Samā’*

– Dr. Bilal Kuşpinar –

The seventeenth-century Ottoman State, as well recorded in the primary historical sources, witnessed a great deal of tension and even confrontation between two influential rivalry groups of the time, preachers and gnostics, on some of the crucial concepts and practices of the Sufis, especially on Mawlawīs’ use of musical instruments and performance of *Samā’*. Many people from both sides had been involved in these confrontations at various capacities, either by giving

moral support with their regular attendance to their respective congregations and listening to the discourses of their leaders or by composing books and treatises in defending their positions and thereby providing justifications for their legitimacy from their vantage point. Ismā‘īl Anqarawī (d. 1631) was one of these prominent figures who, as we have shown in several of our writings, not only single-handedly introduced Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī’s (d.1191) philosophy of Illumination to the Ottoman intellectuals through his Commentary on the *Hayākil al-Nūr*, but also took active part in the defense of the most central ritual of the Mawlawī Sufī Order, i.e. the *Samā‘*. To this effect he composed at least two important treatises, one *Hujjat al-Samā‘* (*The Proof of Samā‘*) and the other *al-Risālah al-Tanzīhiyya fī Sha’n al-Mawlawiyya*. These two works have already been studied by some of the researchers in Turkey and made available in Turkish language. In this study we shall focus rather on how Anqarawī dealt with this crucial issue, what sort of role he played during this critical period, and what kinds of methods, sources and materials he employed in arguing and defending his position against his opponents.

Who Opposed Whom?

– Prof. Hermann Landolt –

The lecture will begin with a few general reflections about the topic of opposition and polemics in traditional Islam. It will first address the varieties of Sufi experience as opposed to the claim that ‘all are one’ (as made, for example, by the author of *Asrār al-tawhīd*). This question can be approached on various levels, from institutionalized forms of behavior (*adab*) to such elevated things as M.S. Hodgson’s ‘*ḥaqīqat*-mindedness’. This will lead to another question: was ‘*ḥaqīqat*-mindedness’ the privilege of the Sufis, or should we turn our attention to other factors shaping Islamic culture, such as the ‘philosophers’ and the Ismailis—and their internal differences or oppositions? These and related questions will be discussed more concretely by examining the example of three pairs of ‘opponents’: Two authors of a book with the same title (the Sufi Hujwīrī and the Ismaili Sijistānī); two thinkers of the same *nisba* (Abū Ḥafṣ Suhrawardī and Yaḥyā Suhrawardī); two influential thinkers of the Mongol period associated with the same Sufi ‘order’ (‘Azīz-i Nasafī and Simnānī).



The Malāmatī Sufi Counterculture: Anti-clericalism in Persian Poetry from Nizārī to Jāmī

– Dr. Leonard Lewisohn –

*Paradise is a place where no mullah can be found;
Mullahs' frenzy and mullahs' fury there are not heard.
Let the world be free of the mullahs' furore
So no one need ever heed their hysteric fatwas!
Whatever city in which the mullah makes his home,
There, you'll never find one single seer, one single sage.*

—Dārā Shikūh

Sociologists have documented how during the 1960s-1970s a distinct “counter-culture” emerged in many Euro-American societies. This underground yet publicly disseminated culture espoused ecstatic and Dionysian values, was anarchic, romantic and anti-rational, scorning the reverence for ‘law and order’ demanded by our modern technocratic civilization. It was alienated from the work ethic and over-orderliness of mainstream society, being radically non-conformist and anti-authority. The historical origins of the 1970s’ counter-culture are indefinite and obscure, but many correspondences between the modern counter-culture movement and both nineteenth-century English Romanticism and Renaissance Italy can be found.

In this lecture, I will argue that the doctrines of the School of Blame (*maktab-i malāmatī*) in medieval Persian Sufi poetry shared much in common with the values and ideas of both the 1970s’ counter-culture and English Romanticism. On the one hand, the *malāmatī* counter-culture espoused the ideals of a ‘religion of love’ which disdained to affiliate itself with—while claiming to transcend—legalistic religion. The Sufis’ *secta amoris* idealized romantic extremism (*rindī*), erotomania (*‘āshiqī*), and advocated a spirituality of love, believing that mortal beauty reflects and exemplifies divine loveliness, since only in the mirror of the former the latter can be contemplated. The poets indulged in a *carpe diem* exaltation of sensual pleasures, bacchanalian exuberance and antinomian excess. Their antinomianism, however, was never simply ‘blasphemy for the blasphemy’s sake’, but rather it was a counter-ethic of bacchanalian piety put at the service of *Eros*, the Sufi poets utilizing a *qalandarī* lexicon of the profane to scoff at religious cant and sanctimony.

This poetic counter-culture was also intensely anti-clerical, lampooning all rites and rituals relating to *Sharī‘a*-oriented clerical Islam, mocking the sanctimonious fundamentalist puritan, ultimately judging infidelity (*kufr*) as superior to displays of hypocritical ascetic piety. The Persian Sufi poets who raised aloft the flag of this *malāmatī* Sufi counter-culture typically glorified their “heresy” and filled their verse with invectives against the Judge (*qāḍī*), Preacher (*wā‘iz*), Puritan (*zāhid*) and Jurisprudent (*faqīh*), while overtly courting public blame, pursuing notoriety and vaunting their ill-fame (*bad-nāmī*).

Focusing on the anti-clerical lexicon of ten key Persian poets of the fourteenth and fifteenth century – Nizārī Quhistānī (d. 721/1321), Amīr Khusraw Dihlavī (d. 725/1325), Maḥmūd Shabistārī (d. after 737/1337), Awḥadī Marāghī (d. 738/1338), Khwājū Kirmānī (d. 742/1342), ‘Ubayd Zākānī (d. 773/1371), Kamāl Khujandī (d. 803/1400), Basāṭī Samarqandī (d. 814/1411), ‘Iṣmat-i Bukharā’ī (d. 829-30/1425-26), and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 898/1492) – in this lecture I aim to elucidate the key theosophical themes of this spiritual utopia inhabited by the rogues, reprobates and renegades of the Persian Sufi counter-culture, and hopefully

explain what caused the grand Sufi sage and scholar Prince Dārā Shikūh (d. (d. 1070/1659) to exclaim: “Paradise is a place where no mullah can be found.”

Victims or Rivals? Persecution of the Ḥurūfīs and its Possible Reasons

– Dr. Orkhan Mir-Kasimov –

‘I testify that this person is a Ḥurūfī, and his father was a Ḥurūfī, and the Ḥurūfī school is wrong, and whoever belongs to it should be killed and his blood should be shed.’ This statement by a religious scholar at the anti-Ḥurūfī trial organised after the failed attack on the Timurid prince Shāhrukh in Herat in 830/1427 expresses the hostile attitude of the ‘mainstream’ Muslim clergy that is further attested in some bio-bibliographical works as well as in historical accounts relating the persecutions and executions of the Ḥurūfīs. What did the Ḥurūfīs, a mystical and messianic group founded in the second half of the 8th/14th century by Faḍl Allāh Astārābādī (d. 796/1394) do or say to elicit such an aggressive reaction? An answer to this question will be sought through the reading of available sources, including Ḥurūfī doctrinal and apologetic works as well as anti-Ḥurūfī writings. These readings bring forward a rather complex pattern of relationships between the Ḥurūfīs and the religious establishment. On the one hand, the Ḥurūfī case underscores the fact that the hostile stance of the ‘official’ religious scholars was often not primarily due to purely doctrinal or theological disagreements, but to political and intellectual rivalries. It is remarkable that some Sufi thinkers, such as Ṣā’ in al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (d. 835/1432) and ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Bistamī (d. 858/1454) also criticised the Ḥurūfīs while developing similar theories. On the other hand, after the death of its founder, the Ḥurūfī movement ceased to be a homogenous body. Its doctrine received various interpretations depending on regional groups and individual thinkers. Some of these groups may have developed antinomian attitudes which were not explicitly contained in the original doctrine of Faḍl Allāh, thus attracting the disapproval of not only Sunni scholars, but also of moderate Ḥurūfīs. A particular case of the confrontation with the religious establishment partly inspired by Ḥurūfī tenets is the life and poetry of ‘Imād al-Dīn Nasīmī (d. 820/1417–1418). Nasīmī apparently combined Ḥurūfī ideas with the ‘ecstatic’ form of Sufism represented by Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922), as well as the *malāmatī* kind of spirituality. This prominent figure symbolises the courage and self-sacrifice of a mystic who rejects with disdain any formal restriction in his passionate quest for ultimate enlightenment. The present lecture analyses the diversity of polemical and apologetic exchange between Ḥurūfīs and their critics.

Sobriety in a Drunken Universe: The Paradox of Junayd of Baghdad

– Speaker to be announced –

Known as the ‘Leader of the Tribe’ of Sufis’, Abū’l-Qāsim al-Junayd (d. 297/910), is famous for his extraordinary piety, self-restraint and careful observance of the Canon Law of Islam or *Sharī’a*. Yet there lies a paradox at the heart of his thought. The remark by Ja‘far al-Khuldī (d. 348/959), a disciple of Junayd and one of the main transmitters of his sayings, draws our attention to this paradox. “Junayd,” he asserted, “made a synthesis of knowledge (*ilm*) and mystical consciousness of states of being (*ḥāl*).” Khuldī’s remark is, I think, very telling from a socio-religious standpoint. On the one hand, Junayd was the founder of one of the main currents of Sufism, namely the ‘School of Sobriety’ (*ṣaḥw*), and on the other hand, he managed to maintain and cultivate friendly relationships with exoteric clerics and the official legalist circles

during one of the most difficult junctures in the entire history of Sufism, in which pressure on and persecution of the Sufis at the hand of formalist *Sharī'a*-minded legalism side was at its peak. In the intensely charged anti-Sufi political atmosphere of late ninth and early tenth-century Baghdad, the paradox – and genius – of Junayd lay in his successful unification of ‘knowledge’, which addresses the outward, worldly concerns of the exoteric class of Muslim clerics (*'ulamā' al-zāhir*), with the Sufis’ focus on their *état d'âme* or ‘mystical consciousness’ (*ḥāl*), that is, the interior life of spiritual practice and experience.

Junayd, it may be recalled, was an iconic figure in ninth and tenth century Sufism. His theosophical vision was unlike none of the Sufis of his day and age, and his statements about his fellow Sufis and their views about him reveal substantial differences between them. The very epithet: ‘Peacock of the Theologians’ (*ṭāvūs al-'ulamā'*) given him by his contemporaries, attests in a way to his sense of superiority to his peers, if not self-righteousness. He managed not only to leave a significant legacy of written works behind, but sustain until the day of his death the central paradox of his life: the union of opposites between esoteric and exoteric approaches to the spiritual practice.

Although Junayd refused to don the garb of the Sufis, he remains one of the creators of their cryptic terminology, the famous *lisān al-ishāra* or ‘Language of Symbolic Allusion’ of the Sufis, later to be adopted and perfected by major figures in the history of Islamic mysticism such as Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 304/922) and Abū Bakr al-Wāsitī (d. 319/931). In fact, this cryptic symbolic language served Junayd well, for by using it he kept the company and maintained friendships with the major mystics of his day and thus, in Hujwīrī’s (d. btwn. 465-69/1072-76) words, “stayed free from trouble and calamity”—the abstruseness of his diction being far over the head of ordinary religious scholars and exoteric clerics. He thus paradoxically maintained his own position among the official religious elite of medieval Baghdad, and attained fame in subsequent centuries as one of the greatest Sufis of any day and age.

Sufis, Shahs and Mullas: A Consideration of Considerations of the Anti-Sufi Polemic in Seventeenth-century Isfahan

– Dr. Andrew Newman –

This paper will suggest that a rehistoricization of the traditional understanding of the anti-Sufi polemic in 16th and, especially, 17th century Safavid Iran may cast new light on this polemic generally, and its leaders and its targets in these years particular.

This rehistoricization process will entail the re-examination some of the key texts in the polemic produced over the period, some of that polemic’s key events and various of the paradigms that continue to be referenced, and have long been valued, in discussions of later Safavid Iran and that polemic in particular. The latter include the ‘Isfahan School of Philosophy’, the migration of large numbers of Arabic-speaking scholars to Iran, the role of religious discourse in the ‘decline’ of the Safavids and the ‘decline’ itself. The discussion will also compare/contrast the discourse between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. In the process, a variety of other dynamics and methodological approaches – for example, urban/rural, elite/subaltern, literate/illiterate – will also be referenced.

Essentialist paradigms continue to be referenced in explanations and discussions of the Safavid-period polemic and, by extension, those on offer in later periods as well.

Following on the above discussion, the paper will consider the degree to which reference to essentialist or more historically-specific, particularist factors are equally as, if not more, useful in discussions of trends and events in the late-Safavid period polemic. What do the latter reveal about both the nature and, perhaps as interestingly, the extent of that polemic – especially in

comparison with other ‘debates’ that can be observed to have occurred over this important period of Iran’s modern history – that have not been taken into account in discussions and explanations thereof offered in the literature to date? What, for example, would be the features of a discussion that resituated this polemic within the context of both broader historical trends, including the period’s several other polemics, and a very wide range of specific events of the period? What implications does such an approach have for discussions about post-Safavid Iranian history?

Who Were Ibn al-Jawzī’s “Deluded Sufis”?

– Prof. Erik S. Ohlander –

A well-positioned and influential religious scholar of sixth/twelfth-century Baghdad, the Ḥanbalite jurist, traditionist and preacher Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200) was a figure whose life, career, and literary output vividly represented what the great American historian of Islam Marshall Hodgson referred to as *jamā’ī-sunnī* sharia-mindedness. A prominent and consequential form of socio-religious identity, sentiment, and praxis which was widespread throughout the central and eastern lands of Islam in the late Abbasid period, the sharia-minded *jamā’ī-sunnī* conceptualization of the meaning, place, nature, and role of both the Islamic dispensation and the community which was constituted by it was one which posited a type of exemplarism in which the Sunni ulama, as a self-constituting and self-policing sodality (supported largely by state actors through oftentimes decidedly public mechanisms of social validation), envisioned themselves as the corporate body par excellence of the *umma*, “heirs to the prophets” (*wurrāth al-anbiya*) who took it upon themselves to tend to the soteriological needs and desires of the Muslim masses.

Deeply informed by this conceptualization, Ibn al-Jawzī’s oft-cited heresiography *The Devil’s Delusion (Talbīs Iblīs)* takes to task diverse competitors—imagined or otherwise—to the Sunni ‘*ulamā*’s comprehensive claims to religious authority. Among the various sodalities taken to task in this work are those who Ibn al-Jawzī identifies as the *ṣūfiyya* (“Sufis”), a group whom he censures on both doctrinal and ritual grounds, accusing them of not only leading themselves astray, but more significantly corrupting the *umma* through gaining sway over its more innocent or gullible members. But who, exactly, did Ibn al-Jawzī have in mind when he spoke of the *ṣūfiyya*? Looking to answer this question, this paper probes the idea that the author had very particular and specific contemporaries in mind, his critique of the *ṣūfiyya* as a corporate body being rooted in certain intra- and inter-communal tensions resulting, in large part, from the increasing influx into Baghdad of Persian-speaking Sufis and ‘*ulamā*’ from points east over the course of the later fifth/eleventh through the end of the sixth/twelfth century. This influx, as is recoverable from the standard prosopographical and annalistic literature, occurred in such a way that both patronage networks and urban neighborhood alliances in Baghdad appear to have witnessed shifts which may have been perceived as disempowering by indigenous religio-scholarly elites such as Ibn al-Jawzī. In depending largely on the goodwill of fickle state actors whose fidelities were often open to change (due to matters of political expediency or otherwise) competition for patronage amongst the religious classes of the time was keen, something which was especially the case in the city of Baghdad in the waning days of the Abbasid caliphate. As the sixth/twelfth-century drew to a close in particular, Persian-speaking émigré Sufis—from wandering antinomian dervishes to more socially respectable Shāfi‘ite-Ash‘arite Sufi scholars and all those in-between—appear to have increasingly found themselves at odds with Baghdad’s Ḥanbalite establishment. Was this due simply to their increasing presence in Baghdad’s public spaces being seen as a challenge to the claims of

religious authority maintained by well-positioned and state-supported sharia-minded *jamā'ī-sunnī* ulama such as Ibn al-Jawzī, or were other factors at play?

Keeping these observations and questions in mind, this paper looks to sketch out both the general dynamics and specific details informing the composition of Ibn al-Jawzī's anathematization of the *ṣūfiyya* in the *Talbīs Iblīs*, exploring the idea that this particular portion of the heresiography might be read as being a specific denunciation of certain groups of Persian Sufis and their champions rather than a generic deprecation of Sufism as such. In addressing this matter, the paper will take into consideration the span of time from the emigration of disciples of Abū Sa'īd b. Abī'l-Khayr to Baghdad in the mid-fifth/eleventh century up to the case of arrival of Awḥad al-Dīn Kirmānī in the first quarter of the seventh/thirteenth, situating Ibn al-Jawzī's polemic in the very center as a particularly visible reaction to a broader pattern of movements associated with shifts and changes in religious conceptualization and practice on the eve of the Turco-Mongol irruption and the beginning of the Later Middle Period of Islamic history.

Conflicts between Jurists and Ni'matullāhī Sufis in the Qājār Era

– Speaker to be announced –

The conflict between Sufis and the Shi'ite jurists (*fuqahā*) was a salient characteristic of Qājār Persia (1779-1925) that had a long history behind it. Due to clerical persecution, from the middle of the Safavid era (1501-1722), the majority of the Persian Sufi Orders fled Persia and migrated to India. At the end of the Zand dynasty (1751-74), Riḍā 'Alī Shāh Deccani (d. 1214/1799) appointed Sayyid 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Ma'sūm 'Alī Shāh (d. 1212/1797) to propagate and revive the spiritual teachings and philosophy of Ni'matullāhī Sufism in Persia. Ma'sūm 'Alī Shāh and his most influential disciple, Nūr 'Alī Shāh (d. 1212/1797) played significant role in the revival of Persian Sufism, although their activities were met with harsh persecution from Shi'ite clerics.

Some of these Shi'ite jurists held key positions in the religious establishment and were supported by the Qājār monarch, and were therefore able to convince the monarch and royal court to take hostile action against the Ni'matullāhī Sufi masters, leading to their banishment and harsh persecution. At the same time, other Shi'ite scholars were inspired by the revival of Sufism in nineteenth-century Persia to become initiated into the Ni'matullāhī Order. Being educated in Shi'ite theology and law and from the clerical class of society, some of these initiates who had the spiritual aptitude later became appointed as spiritual guides. Their clerical background also enabled them to serve as moderators in the conflict between the Shi'ite doctors of law and Sufis, thus lessening the persecution of Ni'matullāhī Sufis.

This lecture provides in the first place an overview of the history of conflicts between Sufis and Shi'ite clerics in pre-modern Iran and, in the second place, reviews some of the key juridical opinions held by the masters of Ni'matullāhī Order concerning Islamic exotericism. By illuminating the historical background of the persecution of Sufism in Persia over the past two centuries, it is hoped that the socio-cultural conditions to which contemporary Sufis are subjected today in Iran will be better understood.

Friends or Foes?: Sufi-Mullah Relations in Ibn Jawzi's Talbis Iblis and the Hagiography of Awhad al-Din Kirmani

– Dr. Lloyd Ridgeon –

Awhad al-Dīn Kirmānī (d. 635/1238) is known as one of the most controversial of Sufis who engaged in the practice of *shāhid bāzī*, or contemplation of God through medium of the human form. This was a practice that to a certain extent had become ritualised among Sufis who strove to contain it within the controlled setting of the *khānaqāh* during sessions of listening to music and poetry (*samā'*). Yet this attempt to domesticate the practice of *shāhid-bāzī* within the setting of the *samā'* ceremony was not accepted by all Sufis; indeed, many were extremely cautious of the practice. There were also some clerics who were particularly critical of these practices, none more so than Ibn al-Jawzī, whose *Talbis Iblis* included substantial sections in which he castigated those Sufis who promoted *shāhid-bāzī*. This lecture will assess the kinds of criticisms featured in Ibn al-Jawzī's work, which are all the more relevant to an understanding of Kirmānī and his penchant for *shāhid bāzī* because the cleric died in 1201, just when Kirmānī would have been gathering his own circle of disciples.

It is unfortunate that little is known of Kirmānī's life, and it is difficult to piece together his worldview because he left no systematic treatise of his views. However, this talk will examine Kirmānī's *shāhid-bāzī* with reference to an anonymous hagiography, entitled *Manāqib-i Awhad al-Dīn Ḥāmid Ibn Abī'l-Fakhr Kirmānī*, which appears to have been written in the generation after Kirmānī's death. The hagiography is of particular interest because in it there does not appear to be a dichotomy between Sufis and clerics, that is, they are not always mutually antagonistic. There are several incidents in which the clerics (or those who specialised in the more formal dimensions of Islamic learning) recognise Kirmānī as an inspired Shaykh. At the same time, there are incidents in which Kirmānī appears to acknowledge the limitations within his practice of *shāhid-bāzī*. All of this serves to complicate the simplistic assumptions and arguments of Ibn Jawzī.

A Critical Examination of Influential Religious Groups in Eighteenth-Century India Derived from Mystical Persian Writings

– Neda Saghæe –

Historically, there have existed undeniable clashes between mystical and orthodox Islam. Sufis and mullahs criticize each other, with each side claiming to be the authority in Islam and representing the only true Islam. Sufis who were persecuted as heretics and many of them were executed for heterodoxy, in their books and treatises, deplored orthodox adherents and viewed them as being oblivious to religion and spiritually blind. This lecture focuses on this tension in Persian texts by selecting a particular works from Muhammad Nasir 'Andalīb (d. 1759) who was resident in Delhi. He wrote the masterpiece, *Nala-ye 'Andalīb*, an allegorical story, and a treatise entitled *Hush-Afza*, which uses the symbols of chess to convey its messages. My lecture is restricted to the eighteenth century, at the time of the collapse of the great Mughal Empire, and in the midst of linguistic reforms from Persian to Urdu. Also current were the attempts of Sufis to preserve their interpretation of Islam which was against every aspect of corruption in religion. Analyzing the historical and religious contexts, this lecture makes some basic points about 'Andalīb's critical opinions based on his redefinitions of true Islam, the purification of Sufism, and the reorientation of theology and jurisprudence. The analysis presented here focuses on 'Andalīb's criticism of conflicts within the Muslim community, as well as his views

of influential religious groups involving worldly mullahs, deviant jurists, skeptical theologians and ascetics who all imagined themselves to be the heirs of the Prophet. He lists many disputes, different interpretations of Islamic creeds and skepticism, or in his words, “never-ending doubts.” ‘Andalīb’s criticism demonstrates his aim to solve the most intricate problems of the time regarding the need for the restoration of Islam.

Anti-Sufi Polemics in Early Qājār Iran: Aqā Muḥammad Bihbahānī (d. 1801) and his *Risāla-yi Khayrātiyya*

– Dr. Oliver Scharbrodt –

With the revival of the Ni‘matullāhī Order in late eighteenth-century Iran, the confrontation between *uṣūlī* ‘*ulamā*’ and Sufis gained new momentum. While the relationship of official Iranian Shiism towards organised Sufism had been strained since the rise of the Safavids, the firm establishment of *uṣūl*-ism among Shii ‘*ulamā*’ and the Sufi revival in the late 18th century initiated a polemical discourse between both groups over the definition of religious orthodoxy.

This paper discusses the earliest manifestations of *uṣūlī* anti-Sufi polemics at the turn of the nineteenth century by focusing on the writings and activities of Aqā Muḥammad Bihbahānī (d. 1801) who was one of the fiercest anti-Sufi ‘*Alīm*’ of early Qājār Iran and earned the epithet ‘Sufi-killer’ (*sūfī-kush*) for his implication in the murders of several leading Sufis. In his major anti-Sufi polemic, *Risāla-yi Khayrātiyya*, he anathematised Sufis and Sufism and provided the religious justification for their persecution. The branding of Sufis as standing outside the pale of orthodox Shi‘ism in his treatise will be discussed which proved to be instrumental in shaping anti-Sufi discourse in Qājār Iran.

The writings and activities of Bihbahānī give evidence of the polemical discursive struggle over the definition of religious orthodoxy in early Qājār Iran. Bihbahānī’s anti-Sufi writings and activities were, however, not solely concerned with definitions of religious orthodoxy. He and other *uṣūlī* ‘*ulamā*’ competed with Sufis over patronage by the young Qājār dynasty. For this reason, Bihbahānī corresponded with members of the Qājār court, including Fath ‘Alī Shāh, in order to gain political support for his anti-Sufi stance. Thereby, Bihbahānī played an important role in the success of the *uṣūlī* ‘*ulamā*’ in gaining patronage by the young Qājār dynasty which initiated the commitment of the Qājārs to the *uṣūlī* brand of Twelver Shi‘ism. The Sufis – with the exception of the reign of Muḥammad Shāh – were left in a marginalised position, branded as heretics and religious dissidents by the religious and political establishment.

Enemies of Mystical Love: Mullahs against Mystics in Persian Mystical Poetry

– Dr. Ali-Asghar Seyed-Gohrab –

*Listen to the tale of love from Ḥāfīz and not from the preacher,
Although he has adorned his words with many arts.*

Polemics between religious scholars and Sufis recur so frequently in Persian mystical poetry that one can certainly speak of a popular topos. In this paper, I will examine how mystic poets such as Sanā‘ī, ‘Attār, Sa‘dī, and Ḥāfīz depict the religious figures distinguished variously as

wā'iz (preacher), mufti, *faqīh* (jurisprudence) *qāḍi* (judge), as *dramatis personae* in their works. The orthodox religious antagonism against mystical love is as old as Sufism itself but the depiction of orthodox figures as *dramatis personae* in poetry probably starts with Sanā'ī, and continues in the works of Persian masters in the succeeding centuries, who add new traits, employing specific types of metaphors and imagery. On closer examination, one finds that these poets treat the preacher, the mufti and the judge differently, allotting different character traits to them, using novel metaphors, ingenious allusions and other literary devices.

The Sayings of the Shi'ite Imams on Sufism

– Speaker to be announced –

The primary reference of the majority of those Shi'ite clerics who refuted the validity of Sufism are certain Shi'ite traditions (*Ḥadīth*) ascribed to the Shi'ite Imams. Although these traditions were apparently uttered by way of refutation of Sufism, one still needs to investigate the authenticity of these traditions. Most of these sayings appeared in Shi'ite texts written during Safavid era, and there are no trace of them in early Shi'ite texts. This lecture tries to investigate these traditions by examining their contexts and contents. I will also explore the sources that they were taken from so as to clarify the root of the historical animosity between Shi'ite clerics and Sufis.

Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's Critique of *Malāmatīs* and Others

– Prof. Sara Sviri –

Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī is one of the most prolific and original Muslim mystics of the 3rd/9th century. He can hardly be named *ṣūfī*, as he belonged to the Formative Period of Islamic mysticism during which this term had not yet designated Muslim mystics at large. Retrospectively, however, he became – though not unanimously – a distinguished member of the *Ṣūfī* hagiographic tradition. His main and lasting contribution to the Islamic mystical culture is his doctrine concerning the Friends of God, the *awliyā'*. This is evidenced, for example, in *Kashf al-mahjūb*, in which the compiler, al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī (d. ca. 465/1073), discusses *wilāya* in the section devoted to “the Ḥakīmīs”, the followers of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī. Influential, though controversial, was al-Tirmidhī's doctrine of “the Seal of the Friends of God” (*khatm/khātam al-anbiyā'*), an elevated figure that exists timelessly, according to him, alongside the Seal of the Prophets (*khātam al-anbiyā'*). It may well be that it was this radical doctrine, with its Shi'ite-like overtones, which had stirred up the hostility and charges against him. This, as he recounts in his autobiographical text *Buduww sha'n*, culminated in his temporary banishment from his hometown of Tirmidh.

Who were the accusers? What was the local politico-religious background for their accusations? Rather than offer speculative answers to these questions, I wish to highlight al-Tirmidhī's own critique against some of the spiritual and devotional trends of his time in the regions of Khurāsān and Transoxania. This critique he articulated clearly and explicitly in his own writing without mincing words. It was particularly levelled against two trends: first, the ascetics, *zuhhād* (i.e., the wool - *ṣūf* - wearers) and second, the *malāmatīs*, i.e. those among the devotional groups in Nīshāpūr (then the capital of Khurāsān), whose spiritual practices revolved around incurring blame on their selves.

These two trends reveal polar attitudes in the arena of efforts (*mujāhada*, *mujāhadat al-nafs*). The ascetics practiced self-denial by means of conspicuous acts such as wandering, fasting, begging and the like. Conversely, the so-called *malāmatīs* exerted effort in hiding all traces of spiritual behaviour. Thus they shunned practices such as wearing special garments, audible *dhikr*, listening to music (*samāʿ*), indulging in ecstatic manifestations and the like. Some of them went as far as exhibiting blameworthy acts in order to avoid any praise and prestige. Hence their name.

What initiated al-Tirmidhī's critique of these polar trends and of those who upheld them? What does it say about the religious and spiritual scene in his time and place? What implications, if any, did his critique bear upon later generations of Muslim mystics? I shall elaborate on these themes in my presentation.

Enraptured Sufi or Shi'ite Philosopher: Majdhūb 'Alī Shāh, Champion of Theological Reconciliation between Sufism and Shi'ism

– Dr. Reza Tabandeh –

Majdhūb 'Alī Shāh (1172/1759–1238/1823) was one of the greatest Ni'matullāhī masters who flourished during the Qājār dynasty. He became master of the Ni'matullāhī Sufi Order after a crucial period during which previous masters had succeeded in rapidly spreading their mystical and ecstatic beliefs all over Persia and converting a large mass of the populace to Sufi teachings. These masters accomplished this despite all the opposition and persecution that they had faced from fundamentalist Shi'ite clerics, who were politically and socially the most influential class in Persia. The clerics had always been able to turn the political powers against the Sufis to a certain extent, such that Āqā Muḥammad 'Alī Bihbihānī (d. 1216/1801) succeeded in persecution of number of Sufis and thus became notorious as the "Sufi-killer." During this time, although subject to criticism, Majdhūb magnificently managed to avoid prosecution by his fundamentalist foes.

Majdhūb was well versed in Shi'ite theosophy and jurisprudence, and his treatises and scholarly disputes attracted many scholars and influential members of the nobility and intelligentsia. 'Abd al-Ṣamad Hamadāni (d. 1216/1802), the author of *Baḥr al-Ma'ārif*, was initiated by Nūr Alī Shāh (d. 1212/1797), and his guide to initiation on the Sufi Path (*dalīl-i rāh*) was Majdhūb.

Majdhūb 'Alī Shāh was able to bring the Ni'matullāhī order out of its isolation through his writings and preaching, which led to the initiation of some influential people. His literary contribution to Shi'ite Sufism was enormous. His philosophical and seminarian knowledge helped him create an atmosphere of dialogue with Shi'ite clerics. He was the true heir of Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī (d. 787/1385), Maytham Baḥrānī (d. 1280/678) and all other Shi'ite-Sufi philosophers who had tried to maintain their adherence to the philosophy of the Ibn 'Arabī while reconciling it with Shi'ite theology. This lecture will explore how Majdhūb 'Alī Shāh brought Shi'ite theology and Sufi philosophy to a point of reconciliation by drawing a clear line between what he conceived of as 'true Sufism', which is the reality of Shi'ism, and pseudo-Sufism, which did not adhere to the path of the Shi'ite Imams.

Conflicts between Sufis and Qāḍīzādeh ‘*Ulamā*’ in Seventeenth-century Turkey: Ismā‘īl Anqarawī on the Faith of Pharaoh

– Dr. Eliza Tasbihi –

Ottoman Sufis in the 17th century were often accused of being engaged in *bid‘a* and deviating from the Prophetic *sunna* and “traditional” Islam, something that was considered heresy by orthodox preachers of the time such as the Qāḍīzādeh family. Mevlevī and Halvetī Sufis, who had assumed higher positions in government, were particular targets. According to the Qāḍīzādeh, Sufis were *zindiqs*, *kāfīrs* and *ahl al-bid‘a* (heretics, unbelievers and followers of innovation). This led to the prosecution of some Sufi Shaykhs, who were officially accused of blasphemy. Some, considered particularly dangerous to the political and religious stability of the Ottoman Empire, were even executed. The Qāḍīzādeh particularly objected to the Mevlevī Sufi Order, claiming that their rituals were non-Islamic.

The Qāḍīzādeh family also vehemently opposed the heavy reliance on the teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī by Sufis. My lecture’s objective is to examine the influence of Ibn ‘Arabī in the *Sharḥ-i Mathnawī* of the prominent Mevlevī Shaykh Ismā‘īl Rusūkhī Anqarawī (d. 1040/1630), a respected Ottoman theologian and commentator on both the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* and the *Mathnawī*. An expert and influential exponent of Mevlevī teachings, Anqarawī was also a deeply knowledgeable follower of the Akbarian School of Ibn ‘Arabī. There are numerous references to the latter work and to Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* in the commentary he wrote on Rūmī’s *Mathnawī*. I will examine Anqarawī’s advocacy of the concept of Pharaoh’s faith, which is discussed favourably by Ibn ‘Arabī—and the unfavourable reception he received from his detractors—mainly the Qāḍīzādeh ‘*ulamā*’—who held Ibn ‘Arabī responsible, among other things, for a decline of morals in Islamic society.

Anqarawī defends Ibn ‘Arabī at many points in his commentary, both subtly and not so subtly, on single points and in relation to the major controversies concerning the faith of Pharaoh. I will demonstrate that Anqarawī was well aware of the accusations of heresy directed at Ibn ‘Arabī, yet he never appears to be less than a strong advocate of Akbarian doctrine, trying to justify the passages for which Ibn ‘Arabī was harshly criticized.

This study will shed light on various aspects of the social and religious debates among ‘*ulamā*’ in the seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire. It will also allow for a better understanding of the intellectual milieu of the empire, the social status and political roles of the ‘*ulamā*’ and the power wielded by official religious institutions and their affiliated scholars.

Sufi or not Sufi – That is the Question: Re-examining the Sufi-Ismaili Symbiotic Relationship Thesis

– Prof. Shafique N. Virani –

“They must be slain,” “attack them and snatch the wealth from their hands,” “their property and children are to be distributed as booty,” “may Almighty God abase them and curse them!”

Thus, spewing fire and brimstone, Jalāl-i Qā’inī advised Sultan Shāhrukh (d. 850/1447) on how the Ismailis in his territories should be treated. His *Counsels to Shahrukh (Nasā’ih-i Shāhrukhī)*, one of the most important sources for the Ismailis of Quhistan after the Mongol invasions, is contained in a hitherto unpublished manuscript in the Imperial Library of Vienna.

Sultan Shāhrukh, Tamerlane's son and successor, had sent Qā' inī "to exterminate, suppress . . . kill, banish and expel the [Ismaili] community from Quhistan." In his memoir, Qā' inī is less concerned with the question of whether the Ismailis should be massacred than with the legal nicety of whether this should be done because they are apostates (*ahl-i riddat*), rebellious (*ahl-i baghy*), or non-Muslims against whom war was required (*ahl-i harb*). An adherent of the Ḥanafī school of Sunnī Islam, he was charged by Sultan Shāhrukh with the task of suppressing "heretics" (*bad-madhhabān*), who presumably included not only the Shī'a, but perhaps even non-Ḥanafī Sunnīs. One of the most frightening aspects of his tirade is its vilification of those in his own religious community who wished to live in peace with the Ismailis. He threatens the lives of these moderates with the same dire fate as those whom he deemed heretics. In a remarkable aside, Qā' inī observed that a group of people in Quhistan appeared as Sufis but were really Ismailis. While earlier scholars have frequently supposed that Ismailis of this period safeguarded their lives by practicing *taqiyya* as Sufis, this is the first positive evidence we have of the fact.

Ground-breaking research by the late French orientalist Henry Corbin and his Russian contemporary Wladimir Ivanow established as axiomatic the symbiotic relationship between Sufism and Ismailism in the aftermath of the Mongol conquests. This association was believed to have continued relatively uninterrupted from the middle of the thirteenth century until modern times. Later authors such as Hamid Algar, Nasrollah Pourjavady, Peter Lamborn Wilson, Marshall Hodgson, Leonard Lewisohn and Farhad Daftary have repeated and further elaborated upon the basic hypothesis advanced by the two earlier scholars. In essence, the currently accepted view of the relationship is that after the Ismailis lost their mountain fortress of Alamut to the Mongols, they assumed the guise of Sufism, ostensibly to avoid persecution. Hodgson extends the thesis beyond that elaborated by others, asserting that Nizārī Ismailism eventually merged into the Sufi *ṭarīqahs*. While not denying the validity of the symbiotic relationship thesis in a few recorded instances, this paper calls into question the presumptions used as evidence for the universal application of such a theory. Even the works of authors such as the Persian poet Nizārī Quhistānī (d. 720/1320), invariably quoted in support of the symbiotic relationship thesis, may be read in a manner significantly at odds with such an argument. Interestingly, the most convincing testimony that the Ismailis of this period dissimulated as Sufis, the aforementioned treatise of Jalāl-i Qā' inī, seems to have been overlooked by most scholars. In the light of such newly discovered sources, and with a re-evaluation of previously known materials, it can be demonstrated that the relationship between Sufism and Ismailism was much more multifaceted than has been assumed, with precaution against persecution by the prevailing political and religious authorities being but one aspect in the equation. While in some regions and times the cloak of Sufism was adopted, on other occasions the Ismailis self-consciously distanced themselves from the Sufi point of view and Sufi interpretations of faith, though they shared an esoteric *weltanschauung* and vocabulary with the Sufis.

Sufi-Hanbali Dialogue: Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī and the Meaning of Piety

– Dr. Saeko Yazaki –

The relationship between Sufism and Hanbalism has a complicated history. While the latter has produced famous Sufi scholars, such as ‘Abd Allāh Anṣārī (d. 481/1089) and ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166), some notable Hanbali thinkers, such as Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200) and Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), have been often considered hostile to Sufism. This paper addresses the complexity of Sufi-Hanbali relations through an exploration of *Qūt al-qulūb* (“The Nourishment of Hearts”), an early guidebook on mysticism and morals written by the Muslim preacher Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386/996), as well as an examination of the influence of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) on the *Qūt* and Ibn Taymiyya’s view of al-Makkī. The *Qūt* elucidates the ethical system in Islam by focusing on the concept of the heart as a metaphysical entity reflecting God and can be regarded as an encyclopaedic treatise on piety. In this work al-Makkī shows great respect for Ibn Ḥanbal, who is among the most frequently cited authorities, relies on his approach to Hadith and draws on his *Kitāb al-wara’* (“The book of piety”) in his account of proper behaviour.

Like al-Makkī, Ibn Taymiyya also attaches great importance to the heart as being the root of belief. Although in his *Majmū‘ fatāwā* (“Collection of Legal Opinions”) Ibn Taymiyya criticises al-Makkī for his use of questionable Hadith and treatment of dubious issues, he prefers the *Qūt* to *Iḥyā’* to the *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn* (“The Revivification of the Religious Sciences”) by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), who heavily relied on the *Qūt* in his writing of the *Iḥyā’*. Ibn Taymiyya claims that al-Makkī is “more knowledgeable” than al-Ghazālī in general, including on Ḥadīth and Sufi sayings, and his words are “undoubtedly more apposite, better and less heretical” than those of al-Ghazālī. Ibn Taymiyya shows his wide knowledge of the mystical tradition and in his *al-Ṣūfiyya wa’l-fuqarā’* (“The Sufi Way of Life and the Poor”) emphasises the importance of morality as set out in the Qur’ān and Sunna for a truly pious believer. Through exploring a little-studied area of the treatment of Ibn Ḥanbal by al-Makkī as well as that of al-Makkī by Ibn Taymiyya, this paper attempts to address the meanings of piety and the understandings of the essential components of religion in the writings of the three authors. It also hopes to contribute to the growing literature on the complexity of Sufi-Hanbali relations.



BIOGRAPHIES

NICHOLAS BOYLSTON studies Islamic intellectual history and Persian literature through the lenses of religious, intellectual and literary pluralism. He is particularly interested in the way twelfth century Persian authors create texts that are discursively pluralistic – drawing on multiple sources and espousing multiple intellectual and ethical perspectives - whilst also maintaining both narrative and intellectual consistency. He also researches literature as a means of negotiating multiple religious identities in late Qājār Iran, focusing on the versified commentary and translation of the Qur’ān by the Shi’ite Sufi, Safī ‘Ali-Shāh. These projects are part of a wider concern for understanding how Muslim authors have come to terms with the diversity of their own tradition and understood the religious other in differing cultural contexts. He received a B.A. from Harvard College in 2007, an M.A. in Islamic Philosophy from the University of Tehran in 2011. He is currently writing a dissertation entitled, “The Significance of Religious Diversity in the Works of Sanā’ī, ‘Attar and ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī,” for a

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