Encyclopædia Iranica

IRAN IX. RELIGIONS IN IRAN (2)
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SINCE THE SAFAVIDS
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Published: December 15, 2006
Last Updated: April 1, 2016

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IRAN ix, continued

ix (2.3). Shiʿism in Iran Since the Safavids

THE SAFAVID PERIOD

The Safavids originated as a hereditary lineage of Sufi shaikhs centered on Ardabil, Shafeʿite in school and probably Kurdish in origin. Their immediate following was concentrated in Azarbaijan and Gilan, although they enjoyed broad prestige over a much wider area. The lifespan of the eponym, Shaikh Ṣafi-al-Din (650/1252-735/1335), corresponded almost exactly to the period of Il-khanid rule in Persia, and Rašid-al-Din Fażl-Allāh, the celebrated vizier, was among those who bestowed land and other favors on the family. The meticulous piety that, according to hagiographical tradition, Ṣafi-al-Din displayed in childhood led him in early youth to embark on a search for a preceptor that took him to Shiraz, where he had hoped to join the circle of Najib-al-Din Bozguš, a Sohrawardi shaikh. Bozguš died shortly before his arrival, and Ṣafi-al-Din was advised instead to return to the northwest and

seek out a reclusive member of the same lineage, Zāhed Gilāni. It was only after lengthy enquiries that Ṣafi-al-Din was able to locate him, in the Helyakarān district of Gilan. He was eighty-five years of age at the time, having passed much of his life in what has been described as “rural obscurity” and “prolonged medocrity” (Aubin); it was Ṣafi-al-Din’s connection to him, cemented by marriage to his daughter, that came to earn him a degree of historical prominence.

The transformation of the Safavids from a hereditary Sufi order of conventional Sunnite orientation into a politico-military grouping espousing a deviant species of Shiʿism began with Ṣafi-al-Din’s grandson, Ḵᵛāja ʿAli (d. 833/1429), a full half century after his death. In accordance with royal precedent, Timur had exempted from taxation the land holdings of the Safavids around Ardabil, but a more signal consequence of his favor came in 804/1402, when, at the request of Ḵᵛāja ʿAli, he released into his custody the captives he had taken from the Ottoman Sultan Bāyazid at the battle of Ankara (Sümer, pp. 6-7). *Ḡolāt* Shiʿism was infinitely more rife at the time in Anatolia than in Persia, and it seems entirely possible that Ḵᵛāja ʿAli, although the benefactor of these former prisoners and the effective head of the Safavid order, found it opportune to assimilate their beliefs rather than attempting to modulate them. Whatever be the case, the liberated prisoners became the nucleus of the Safavid fighting force, while at the same time Ḵᵛāja ʿAli established a network of agents and propagandists—called *ḵalifa* in keeping with Sufi usage—in Anatolia, the southern Caucasus, and parts of Azarbaijan and Gilan. The tenure of Ḵᵛāja ʿAli’s successor, Shaikh Ebrāhim (d. 852/1448), was relatively uneventful, but the switch to militant *ḡolāt* Shiʿism became unmistakably clear with the next Safavid leader, Jonayd. He went by the title of sultan but in typical *ḡolāt* fashion also intimated that he was a divine incarnation. After a period of exile in Anatolia, he gathered a force of 12,000 in order to raid the Christian kingdom of Georgia but was killed in 865/1460 by the ruler of Širvān before he could reach his destination (Mazzaoui, p. 75). Similar fates attended Jonayd’s son, Ḥaydar (killed in 894/1488 by the ruler of Širvān), who bestowed on the Safavid strike force both its distinctive red headgear and the resulting designation, Qezelbāš, and in front of whom his followers made devotional prostration; and his grandson, Solṭān ʿAli , killed in battle by the Āq Qoyunlu ruler, Rostam. It was against this background that Shah Esmāʿil (q.v.) arose; proclaiming himself in ecstatic profusion a reincarnation of Imam ʿAli, the Twelfth Imam reappeared, and none other than the godhead himself, he lost no time in beginning the coercive

propagation of Shiʿism, initially in its *golāt* form.

It will be noted that almost all the events accompanying the rise of the Safavids to power took place in Anatolia, the southern Caucasus, and Azarbaijan. The events underway in those regions can be viewed, *inter alia*, as an intra-Turkoman struggle, in which alignments were not consistently shaped by religious allegiance. Not only did the Safavids find themselves at odds with the Qarā Qoyunlus, a dynasty with Shiʿite tendencies; they also intermarried with the Āq Qoyunlus, the Sunnite dynasty whose rule Shah Esmāʿil brought to an end. The triumph of the Safavids thus spelled an end to these Turkoman rivalries, and its principal consequences might have been felt principally in Anatolia rather than Persia had it not been for the formidable power of the Ottomans; the Safavids had, after all, been able to generate far more enthusiasm for their cause in Anatolia than in Persia, and it was primarily there that the Qezelbāš were recruited (Sümer, passim) It might indeed be argued that the rise to power of the Safavids constituted another Turkic invasion of Persia, one proceeding from the west rather than the east; insofar as the ancestors of the Qezelbāš had once passed through Persia en route to Anatolia, it might also be called a case of nomadic reflux. The ultimate result was, however, the formation of a distinctively Persian state dedicated to the propagation of Shiʿism. Although coercion played a large part in the initial stages of this venture, it is plain that far more was involved in the profound and lasting assimilation of Shiʿism that took place, which transformed Persia and made of it the principal stronghold and even—in an ahistorical sense—the homeland of Shiʿism.

It was, however, nothing less than a reign of terror that inaugurated the new dispensation. On capturing Tabriz in 907/1501, a city two-thirds Sunnite in population, Shah Esmāʿil threatened with death all who might resist the adoption of Shiʿite prayer ritual in the main congregational mosque, and he had Qezelbāš soldiers patrol the congregation to ensure that none raise his voice against the cursing of the first three caliphs, viewed as enemies of the Prophet's family. In Tabriz and elsewhere, gangs of professional execrators known as the *tabarrāʾiān* would accost the townsfolk at random, forcing them to curse the objectionable personages on pain of death. Selective killings of prominent Sunnites occurred in a large number of places, notably Qazvin and Isfahan, and in Shiraz and Yazd, outright massacres took place. Sunnite mosques were desecrated, and the tombs of eminent Sunnite scholars destroyed (Aubin, 1970, pp. 237-38; idem, 1988, pp. 94-101).

An integral part of the Safavid imposition of Shiʿism was the eclipsing or suppressing of the Sufi orders, most of them Sunnite in their orientation. As Ebn Karbalāʾi lamented, Shah Esmāʿil "uprooted and eradicated most of the lineages of *sayyed*s and shaikhs" and "crushed all the *selsela*s [lines of succession], destroying the graves of their ancestors, not to mention what befell their successors" (II, pp. 159, 491). The extirpation of the Kāzaruniya, the oldest Sufi order in Persia existing at the time, was certainly abrupt and thoroughgoing: when Shah Esmāʿil conquered Fars in 909/1503, he desecrated the tomb in Kāzarun of its founder, Abu Esḥāq, and massacred some 4,000 people in its vicinity (Aubin, 1959, p. 58). In general, however, the process was gradual and sporadic, if unmistakable in its tendency; the mid-10th/16th century appears to have been a turning point. Although the Lālaʾi branch of the Kobrawiya to which Ebn al-Karbalāʾi belonged never converted to Shiʿism, one of its members served Shah Esmāʿil as *ṣadr* (q.v. at *iranica.com*) before all trace of this hereditary line of shaikhs disappeared.

The Naqšbandiya, an order emphatic in its adherence to Sunnism, survived for a remarkably long period in northwest Persia. Ṣonʿ-Allāh Kuzakonāni (d. 929/1523), a disciple of ʿAlāʾ-al-Din Maktabdār of Herat, fled Tabriz for Bitlis when Shah Esmāʿil took the city, but, impelled by nostalgia, returned there several years later. Although he refused the full prostration before the shah decreed by protocol, he lived out the rest of his life apparently unmolested and left behind two *ḵalifa*s; they were active, not in the city itself, but in its rural hinterland, which may account for their ability to function. One of them, Darviš Jalāl-al-Din of Ḵosrowšāh, was succeeded by Mawlānā Elyās of Bādāmyār (d. 965/1558), but the situation seems to have become untenable soon after his death. Moḥammad Bādāmyāri, a successor to Mawlānā Elyās, found it politic to quit the region of Tabriz for Urmia, a still largely Kurdish and therefore Sunnite city; his line survived there for some three generations, although one of its members, Shaikh Maḥmud, decided, with ultimately fatal results, to seek his fortunes in Diyarbekir. In Qazvin, the propagation of the Naqšbandiya, under the auspices of Sayyed ʿAli Kordi, a disciple of Ḵᵛāja Aḥrār, actually started after the Safavids had taken control. Perhaps because of his success in attracting devotees, he was summoned to Tabriz and executed in 925/1519 (Algar, 2003, p. 22). The five *ḵalifa*s that he left all died peaceful deaths, but they left no spiritual issue. The persecution of Naqš-bandis may have been more general than this sparse record suggests, for Mirzā Maḵdum Šarifi (d. 994/1586), a Sunnite notable who took refuge with the Ottomans, writes that "whenever they suspect anyone of engaging in contemplation

(*morāqaba*), they say ‘he is a Naqšbandi’ and deem it necessary to kill him” (quoted in Eberhard, p. 187).

Few Shiʿite scholars of note appear to have existed in Persia at the time of the Safavid takeover, even in Qom and Kāšān, long established centers of the creed, and many Sunnite scholars chose to migrate to India, Arabia, the Ottoman lands, and Central Asia, rather than rallying to Shiʿism and the Safavids. The positive and pacific propagation of Shiʿism in Persia fell therefore to the lot of Arab scholars hailing from Jabal ʿĀmel (q.v. at *iranica .com*) in Syria (or, in terms of present-day geography, Lebanon), Iraq (especially the city of Ḥella), Qaṭif in northeastern Arabia, and Bahrayn. Their arrival in Persia has sometimes been designated as a migration, motivated in the case of the ʿĀmelis by alleged Ottoman persecution (see Jaʿfar al-Mohājer). If by “migration” is meant a wholesale and permanent exodus, the term is misapplied, for many of the scholars in question traveled back and forth between Persia and their homelands, with the result that many learned families developed separate but interrelated branches in Jabal ʿĀmel, Iraq, and Persia (a phenomenon that has persisted down to the present). The Ottomans certainly accorded privileged status to Sunnite Islam and more particularly to the Hanafite school, but in accordance with the pragmatism they generally observed in religious matters, they did not systematically persecute the Shiʿites of the Arab lands, and even the militant partisans of the Safavid cause in Anatolia were subject to only sporadic massacre. Persia was, however, a land where substantial patronage awaited the Shiʿite ulema as well as a unique opportunity for the propagation of Shiʿism. For their part, the Safavids welcomed these scholarly guests for several reasons: they represented an element that at least initially was unconnected to any of the military or bureaucratic factions with which they had to deal, and their intimate knowledge of Sunnism was a clear advantage in the sectarian polemics that accompanied the recurrent wars between the Safavids and their Sunnite neighbors, the Ottomans to the west and the Uzbeks to the east.

ʿĀmeli scholars began traveling to Persia already in the time of Shah Esmāʿil. The most significant of these early arrivals was ʿAli Karaki Moḥaqqeq, born at Karak in 870/1465, a student of prominent scholars in Ḥella and Najaf. He took the initiative of visiting Esmāʿil at Isfahan in 910/1504, and six years later he was invited by him to Herat and Mashad to help propagate Shiʿism in those still largely Sunnite cities. Karaki’s influence was consolidated during the reign of Shah Ṭahmāsb, who bestowed on him land and, more significantly,

titles such as *mojtahed al-zamān* (jurist of the age) and *nāʾeb al-Emām* (deputy of the [Occulted] Imam); the monarch even went so far as to proclaim Karaki more entitled to kingship than himself and the ruler, simply one of his executive officials (Lambton, p. 77). This was, of course, a fiction, but one convenient for both parties: it enabled Ṭahmāsb to claim a species of religious legitimacy, mediated from the Occulted Imam by Karaki, and it placed Karaki at the hand of the nascent hierarchy of Shiʿite divines. The task he and his colleagues faced in the propagation of Shiʿism was twofold: to normalize the Shiʿism professed by the Safavids and their soldiery, and to persuade recalcitrant Sunnites of the veracity of Twelver Shiʿism. In a sense, the two goals were linked, for the ʿĀmeli scholars disapproved of the violent methods applied by the Qezelbāš in confronting the Sunnites and regarded their own learning and powers of debate as more efficacious (Abisaab, pp. 16-17). They did not, however, repudiate the activities of the *tabarrāʾiān*, and Karaki wrote a treatise justifying the cursing of Abu Bakr and ʿOmar. Several of his descendants inherited his prestige, most notably his grandson, the philosopher Mir Dāmād (d. 1041/1631; see DĀMĀD), and the hereditary transmission of scholarly prowess and power within a handful of families was to become one of the hallmarks of Persian religious life, in the Safavid period and beyond.

A number of other factors were also influential in suffusing Persian culture with the ethos of Shiʿism. Pilgrimage (*ziārat*) to the shrines of eminent Sufis had been widespread in pre-Safavid times, for such purposes as the making of vows and the seeking of intercession; now *emāmzā da*s—the tombs of descendants of the Imams—became the encouraged focus of pious visitation. It is worth noting, however, that most of the important *emāmzāda*s antedated by far the rise of the Safavids; that they had attracted Sunnite as well as Shiʿite visitors; and that no wholesale validation of dubious *emāmzāda*s can be shown to have taken place. The pre-existence of *emām-zāda*s on Persian soil was a fortuitous circumstance that helped in what might be called the geographical conversion of the land. Foremost among the sacred sites was the shrine of Imam ʿAli al-Reżā in Mashad and the complex of buildings surrounding it. Already much adorned by the later Timurids, it was the object of special attention by Shah ʿAbbās (q.v.), whose pilgrimages on foot to the shrine were an inspired form of dynastic propaganda. Qom, site of the burial of Imam ʿAli al-Reżā's sister, was second only to Mashad as a goal of pilgrimage, but it was overshadowed by Isfahan as a center of learning despite its earlier prominence in the development of Shiʿite scholarship. Like Mashad, Qom was the object of royal attention in the Safavid period; four successive

rulers chose to be buried there: Ṣafi (d. 1052/1642), ʿAbbās II (d. 1077/1666), Solaymān (d. 1105/1694), and Shah Solṭān-Ḥosayn (d. 1135/1722).

The calendar also played a discernible role in the lasting popular assimilation of Shiʿism. The commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Ḥosayn on ʿĀšurāʾ (q.v.), the tenth day of the month of Moḥarram, came effectively to be the most significant religious occasion of the year, marked by ceremonies of mourning that became progressively more elaborate throughout the Safavid period, culminating in the dramatic performances known as *taʿzia*. The recitation of verse or prose depictions of his sufferings, together with those of other members of the Prophet's lineage, was regarded as a meritorious act that might be undertaken at any time during the year. Widely celebrated, too, was the ʿId al-Ḡadir, Ḏu'l-Ḥejja 18, the day on which, according to Shiʿite belief, the Prophet had nominated Imam ʿAli as his successor. The negative counterpart of this occasion was the annual festival of ʿOmarkošān, the often ribald celebration of the assassination of ʿOmar, the second caliph.

The near-complete eradication of Sunnism from the Iranian plateau, achieved by these and other means, must clearly have been gradual, and at least in some places it consisted initially of the pragmatic and superficial acceptance of a coerced creed. The Sunnite notables of Qazvin in particular proved obdurate, and several of them were executed during the reign of Shah Ṭahmāsb for religious deviance (Bacqué-Grammont, p. 83, n. 231). Nonetheless, enough of them survived to qualify (or claim to qualify) for the reward offered by Esmāʿil II during his brief Sunnite interregnum to all who had steadfastly refused to curse the first three caliphs (Golsorkhi, p. 479). There is evidence, too, for the persistence of Sunnite loyalties in some localities into the reign of ʿAbbās I, particularly in eastern Persia. In 1008/1599 he launched a campaign of persecution against the Sunnites of Sorḵa (Semnān), but three decades later Sunnism was still widespread in the city, although less so in its environs. The same monarch's exclusion of Sunnites from the tax exemptions he occasionally decreed points both to a significant survival of Sunnism in certain areas and to a determination to eradicate it. As far west as Hamadān, the Sunnites were numerous enough to provide the headman (*kadḵodā*) of the city; he was executed by Shah ʿAbbās in 1017/1608 (Arjomand, pp. 120-21). In only one recorded instance was ʿAbbās ready to countenance the unmolested profession of Sunnism in a territory under his control; on a visit to Tāleš, he resisted suggestions that he compel its people to abandon their hereditary Shafeʿism, citing the military services they had provided to his

ancestors (Algar, forthcoming). Some areas of Tāleš did convert to Shiʿism, but it may have been as late as the 19th century.

Generally speaking, however, by the end of the 16th century, Sunnism had effectively vanished from most of the central Safavid domains. The patchwork of pre-Safavid Persia yielded to a fairly straightforward pattern of Shiʿism dominating the central plateau and Sunnism relegated to frontier areas that were either contested with neighboring powers or inhabited by ethnic minorities. The Kurds ruled by Persia retained their traditional Shafeʿite loyalties (excepting, of course, the Ahl-e Ḥaqq), although the amirs of Ardalān as well as some Kurds in the city of Kermānšāh and its environs did make the transition to Shiʿism. Herat passed back and forth between the Safavids and the Uzbeks, and each period of dominance was accompanied by the persecution of Sunnites or Shiʿites according to the order of the day. The misery visited on the Sunnites by the Safavids, especially during the reign of Shah Esmāʿil, was, however, more severe than that endured by the Shiʿites under Uzbek dominance; while the Safavids engaged in wholesale massacre, to a degree that alarmed even the indigenous Shiʿite population, the Uzbeks tended to focus on well-to-do Shiʿites, whose wealth could be confiscated under the pretext of combatting heresy (Szuppe, pp. 121-42). As a result of these and subsequent contests lasting into the early 19th century, both Sunnites and Shiʿites were to be found on either side of the eastern frontier of Persia when it was finally demarcated. Jām (also known as Torbat-e Sayḵ Jām) became the most significant city in Persian Khorasan with a Sunnite population; Zayn-al-ʿĀbedin Širvāni (d. 1253/1837) remarked of its population, with obvious displeasure, that “they are all Hanafites and extremely fanatical” (p. 197). The population of Širvān (Šarvān), a principality in the southern Caucasus ruled by Persia, with intervals of Ottoman rule, from the time of Esmā’il I until its annexation by Russia in 1813, remained Hanafite, although a Shiʿite minority came into being. Severe clashes between Sunnites and Shiʿites were frequent as late as the 19th century, with occasional involvement of Daghistani tribesmen on behalf of the Sunnites (Širvāni, p. 325). Most of Lārestān and the northern shore of the Persian Gulf was able to retain a Shafeʿite character, in large part perhaps because of the region’s traditional mercantile links with Arabia and India.

The Shiʿism which thus transformed the religious map of Persia was by no means uniform. Among the matters on which disagreement persisted among the ulema throughout the Safavid period was the precise juristic status of the

monarchy. Despite public displays of drunkenness and other violations of morality by several Safavid monarchs, and the suggestion, noted by the traveler Jean Chardin (q.v.), that a religious scholar ought ideally to rule directly, not the shah (Chardin, VI, p. 65), the debate centered not on the institution of monarchy, but on two concrete issues in jurisprudence: the religiously mandated land tax known as the *ḵarāj*, and the Friday prayer. Insofar as the *ḵarāj* was indistinguishably merged with other sources of state revenue, the acceptance of royal stipends by a religious scholar could be taken to imply full acceptance of the Safavid state as a legitimate dispensation. In keeping with his general validation of Shah Ṭahmāsb—albeit fictively as his own appointee—Karaki justified his levying of the *ḵarāj* and the resultant permissibility of receiving state funds. He was opposed in this by his contemporary, Ebrāhim Qaṭifi, and later in the century by Aḥmad Moqaddas Ardabili (d. 993/1585, q.v.; Lambton, pp. 271-72).

The permissibility of holding the Friday prayer during the Occultation of the Twelfth Imam, who alone might either lead the prayer or depute someone to do on his behalf, had long been a subject of contention among Shiʿite jurists. In keeping with the status of *nāʾeb al-Emām*, Karaki declared himself authorized to organize Friday prayers and attendance at them to be religiously incumbent (*wājeb*). This was the view of many other scholars, including major figures of the period such as Bahāʾ-al-Din ʿĀmeli (q.v.), Fayż Kāšāni, and Moḥammad-Bāqer Majlesi, but it was opposed by Qaṭifi and one of Majlesi's students, Fāżel Hendi (d. 1137/1724), who saw in the holding of Friday prayers an unauthorized revival of the "special deputyship" of the Twelfth Imam that had ended with the death of his fourth named agent in 330/941 (Lambton, pp. 273-74). In the time of Shah ʿAbbās (1587-1629), the name of the monarch was included in the sermon pronounced before the Friday prayer, in clear imitation of Sunnite and specifically Ottoman practice, and he was himself encouraged to attend, with limited success, making the prayers a celebration simultaneously of royal and clerical authority. The appointment of an Emām-e Jomʿa (Friday prayer leader) was at the disposition of the monarch, as were positions of shifting importance such as the *ṣadr-al-mamālek*, *šayḵ-al-Eslām* (administrative head of the religious class in the capital and other major cities), and, towards the end of the Safavid period, the new clerical executive, the *mollā-bāši*. Despite differences among the ulema on issues touching the Safavid monarchy, it may be said that their view of the institution was instrumentalist: it was accepted as a reality, empirically useful for the establishment of a *šariʿa*-oriented society, but never incorporated into their

system of belief, in marked contrast to the Sunnite embrace of sultans and caliphs.

Another set of differences among the Shiʿite ulema of Safavid Persia related, not to details of jurisprudence with political significance, but to the very methodology of their discipline. Rationalist and traditionalist currents had both long existed in Shiʿite jurisprudence, and by the Saljuq period they had come to be designated as Oṣuli and Aḵbāri respectively. The Oṣulis espoused the permissibility, even necessity, of recourse to juristic exertion (*ejtehād*) for the deduction of detailed religious rulings from the sources of the *šarʿia* during the continued occultation of the Twelfth Imam; by contrast, the Aḵbāris laid heavy emphasis on the primary or even exclusive evidentiary value of the traditions (*aḵbār*) of the Prophet and the Imams. This division of learned opinion should not, however, be regarded as even approximately similar to that which opposed Hanafites to Shafeʿis in pre-Safavid Iran (although Aḵbāris polemically accused Oṣulis of surreptitious borrowings from Hanafite doctrine); the word *maḏhab* cannot be applied to these two traditions of Shiʿite jurisprudence. For whatever the historical reality that had played out in the cities of Persia, the Hanafites and Shafeʿites extended to each other a theoretical recognition of legitimacy, a situation that did not obtain between Oṣulis and Aḵbāris; each group identified its own position as the perennially authentic doctrine of Shiʿism and regarded that of the other as an innovation. Moreover, the divide between the contesting tendencies in Shiʿite jurisprudence had no demographic reflection; cities were not separated into localities owing allegiance to the one or the other.

It was in the Safavid period that Oṣuli-Aḵbāri polemics came acrimoniously to the fore, doubtless because the ulema were now involved for the first time in ministering to a demographically significant population. Mollā Mo-ḥammad Amin Astarābādi (d. 1033/1624 or 1036/1627, q.v.) provided a comprehensive statement of the Aḵbāri position in his *al-Fawāʾed al-madaniya*, a work written in Mecca, not Medina, despite the implication of its title. This book became the target of several refutations, and its author was accused of introducing strife into the Shiʿite community. The Aḵbāri position nonetheless enjoyed supremacy throughout the 17th and much of the 18th centuries, and many luminaries of the period adhered to it, albeit with varying degrees of emphasis; among them were Moḥammad-Taqi Majlesi (d. 1070/1660), Mollā Moḥsen Fayż Kāšāni (d. 1091/1680), and Neʿmat-Allāh Jazāʾeri (d. 112/1700). The prominence of the Aḵbāris was reflected also in the compilation of

voluminous collections of Shiʿite Hadith, especially the *Wāfi* of Fayż Kāšāni and the *Tafṣil wasāʾel al-Šiʿa* of Ḥorr al-ʿĀmeli (d. 1104/1693, q.v.; Stewart, pp. 179-85).

The Safavid period is notable also for the flourishing, among a significant number of the Shiʿite scholars, of gnostic and philosophical thought, two overlapping disciplines known respectively as *ʿerfān* (q.v.) and *ḥekmat*; the difference between the two is primarily one of emphasis, experiential with *ʿerfān* and intellectual with *ḥekmat*. This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as the "school of Isfahan" in that several of the scholars in question resided in Isfahan, which was indeed the intellectual as well as political capital of Persia from the beginning of the 11th/17th century onwards (see isfahan school of philosophy); the most significant of them was, however, Ṣadr-al-Din Širāzi, also known as Mollā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1640, q.v. at *iranica.com*), who spent much of his life in a village near Qom and then in Shiraz. A number of elements were fused in this endeavor: Avicennan philosophy as mediated by Naṣir-al-Din Ṭusi (d. 673/1274), especially its emanationist elements; the Ešrāqi (see ILLUMINATIONISM) thought of Sohravardi Maqtul (d. 587/1191), which claimed to transmit the teachings both of Hermes and of ancient Persia; and, most importantly, the concepts and worldview of Moḥyi-al-Din Ebn al-ʿArabi (d. 638/1240), entitled Šayḵ al-Akbar (the supreme shaikh), justly so in view of his lasting influence both on Sunnite Sufism and on Shiʿite *ʿerfān* and *ḥekmat*. An alternative characterization of the "school of Isfahan"—which was not of course unified in every respect—would be that it sought to unify the perspectives of obedience to revelation (*šarʿ*), mystical illumination (*kašf*), and rational demonstration undertaken by the philosophers. In addition to Ṣadrā, mention may be made of his two principal students, ʿAbd-al-Razzāq Lāhiji (d. 1072/1661) and Fayż Kāšāni; Bahāʾ-al-Din ʿĀmeli (d. 1030/1622), perhaps the most versatile scholar of the entire Safavid period; Mir Dāmād, a grandson of ʿAli Karaki; and Mir Abu'l-Qāsem Fendereski (d. 1050/1640, q.v. at *iranica.com*).

Quite apart from the profound influence of Ebn al-ʿArabi, *ʿerfān* had several other elements undeniably reminiscent of Sufism: a terminology delineating spiritual progress toward the divine presence, an emphasis on the relationship between master and disciple, and a claim to initiatic descent from Imam ʿAli and the subsequent Imams of the Prophet's Household. Sufism had, however, generally borne a Sunnite stamp throughout its history, a feature that was experienced as problematic, and most of the practitioners of *ʿerfān* therefore sought to distance themselves from it. Some scholars, notably Nur-Allāh

Šuštari (d.1019/1610) in his *Majāles al-moʾmenin*, therefore sought retrospectively to claim for Shiʿism all those Sufis who had expressed their veneration for the Imams. A more reasonable undertaking was Fayż Kāšāni's authoring of *al-Maḥajjat al-bayżā fi eḥyāʾ al-eḥyāʾ*, a redaction of Ḡazāli's *Eḥyāʾ ʿolum-al-din*, in which Hadith from Sunnite sources are replaced by those of Shiʿite provenance.

In the light of all this, it is not surprising that Sufi orders with Shiʿite affiliations fared not much better than their Sunnite counterparts. Shah Esmāʿil bestowed on Shah Qāsem Fayżbaḵš (d. 917/1511), son of Sayyed Moḥam-mad Nurbaḵš, an extension of the family lands near Rayy as a token of his favor, but Shah Qāsem's son Bahāʾ-al-Din earned the wrath of the same Safavid ruler not long after, and, as it was delicately phrased by Moḥammad Ḵvāndmir, "in accordance with the requirements of fate, he was interrogated and passed away" (*Ḥabib al-siar* IV, pp. 611-12). Perhaps as a defensive measure, another grandson of Nurbaḵš, Qiwām-al-Din, who had already tried to establish his dominance in Rayy, began building castles and fortifications on the family lands, but to no avail, for he was put to death in 937/1530 on the orders of Shah Ṭahmāsb (Bashir, 2003, pp. 87-92). Although the Nurbaḵšiya no longer functioned thereafter as an organized Sufi community with hereditary leadership, it persisted as a line of spiritual filiation; scholars as prominent as Bahāʾ-al-Din ʿĀmeli and Mollā Moḥsen Fayż Kāšāni have been identified as Nurbaḵši.

As for the Neʿmat-Allāhis, their presence in Persia as an active Sufi tradition (*ṭariqat*) was probably on the decline even before the Safavid seizure of power, thanks to Shah Ḵalil-Allāh's migration to the Deccan some sixty years earlier. Members of the family held a number of administrative posts under both Esmāʿil and Ṭahmāsb, primarily in Yazd, and they were given wives from the Safavid house. Some of them, it is true, also laid claim to spiritual functions and used typical *ṭariqat* names intended to betoken high status, but their prominence, both spritual and worldly, was at an end by the mid-11th/17th century.

The only Sufi order to survive the Safavid era more or less unscathed was the Ḏahabiya, a Shiʿite offshoot of the Kobrawiya that can be traced with reasonable certainty to Ḡolām-ʿAli Nišāpuri (d. 938/1531). He and his followers may indeed have participated in the propagation of Shiʿism in early Safavid Khorasan, aided in the task by the roots they struck among merchants and artisans. The Ḏahabis avoided any hint of antinomian tendency by donning

the garb of the ulema and presenting their precepts and practices as a natural extension of the teachings of Shiʿism. They nonetheless came under attack in Mashad early in the 17th century with the result that they transferred their center to the more congenial atmosphere of Fars; even there their security was threatened in the closing decades of Safavid rule, causing Sayyed Qoṭb-al-Din Nirizi (d. 1173/1760), their leader at the time, to seek refuge in Najaf. This was the last external crisis the order had to face (Zarrinkub, 1983, p. 263).

Non-Twelver Shiʿite communities were much affected by the rise of the Safavid dispensation. The Zaydis of Daylam and Gilān were persuaded to embrace Twelver Shiʿism during the reign of Shah Ṭahmāsb (1524-76), apparently without coercion. Although small Zaydi communities may have persisted much later, this effectively marked the final stage in the absorption of Zaydism by Twelver Shiʿism in Persia, a process which had begun much earlier (Madelung, p. 92).

As for the Ismaʿilis (see ISMAILISM), their fortunes were, typically, more complicated. Imams of the Qāsemšāhi line had established themselves at Anjodān, a large village near Maḥallāt in central Persia, not long before the Safavid triumph; Mostanṣer Beʾ-llāh (d. 885/1480), thirty-second of the line, is the first Imam known definitely to have resided there, and like his predecessors he appears to have affected a Sufi exterior, possibly as a Neʿmat-ollāhi initiate, for he was known locally at Shah Qalandar. From Anjodān, apparently successful efforts were made to contact Ismaʿili communities scattered across Persia and to have them acknowledge the authority of the Qāsemšahi Imam by sending him their tribute. The thirty-fifth Imam, Nur-al-Din Moḥammad Abu Ḏarr ʿAli, a contemporary of Shah Esmāʿil, gained the favor of the Safavids sufficiently to be given a wife from the royal household, which suggests that he was feigning Twelver beliefs (the practice of *taqiya*; Daftary, 1990, pp. 471-73). The nature of Qāsemšahi belief became still more opaque when Abu Ḏarr ʿAli's son and successor, Morād Mirzā, began associating with the Noqṭawis of Kāšān, a millenarian sect with insurrectionary ambitions. As a result, in 982/1574, Ṭahmāsb ordered him to be captured and his community in Anjodān to be punished; he escaped but was recaptured and executed (Daftary, 1990, pp. 472-73). The next Qāsemšahi Imam, Ḏu'l-Faqār ʿAli Ḵalil-Allāh, reverted to the relatively straightforward ruse of professing Twelver Shiʿism; he was rewarded with a Safavid bride, and his community, with exemption from taxation. The affairs of Anjodān thereafter remained peaceful until the transfer of the Imamate to the nearby

village of Kahak.

The rival Moḥammadšāhi Imamate was vested at the time of the Safavid conquest in the person of a certain Shah Ṭāher Ḥosayni. Like his predecessors in the Mo-ḥammadšāhi line, he resided in Ḵund, a locality near Qazvin, before being invited to the court of Shah Esmāʿil. There he aroused suspicion because of the devoted following that indiscreetly accompanied him while he was making his rounds, but he was permitted to settle in Kāšān. The resident Twelver scholars of the city seem to have penetrated his cover of *taqiya*, and they accordingly denounced him to Shah Esmāʿil; in addition, like his Qāsemšahi rival, Morād Mirzā, he was consorting with the Noqṭawis then proliferating in Kāšān. Accordingly, in 926/1520, an order went forth for Shah Ṭāher's execution, but he succeeded in fleeing to the Deccan, where he attached himself to a local ruler, Borhān Neẓāmšāh, and converted him to Twelver Shiʿism. Such zeal on the part of an Ismaʿili Imam for the propagation of a fundamentally incompatible doctrine does indeed "seem rather strange" (Daftary, 1990, p. 489), and it can be explained only by invoking, yet again, *taqiya*. Indeed, it was a question of multiple dissimulation, for Shah Ṭāher additionally cultivated links to leaders of the Neʿmat-Allāhi order, who like himself were exiles from Persia. His son, Ḥaydar, however, was hospitably lodged at the court of Ṭahmāsb when sent there on a mission by Borhān Neẓāmšāh; he returned to the Deccan on the death of Shah Ṭāher in 925/1549. The Moḥammadšāhi line was perpetuated in India until the late 12th/18th century, but it no longer had any following in Persia.

The Noqṭawi movement with which both Ismaʿili branches became entwined originated as what might be called a super-heresy, that is, as an offshoot of the Ḥorufiya that was regarded as heretical by the parent movement itself. Its founder was Maḥmud of Pasiḵān, a village near Fuman in Gilan, known to the Ḥorufis as Maḥmud-e Mardud ("Maḥmud the rejected") or Maḥmud-e Maṭrud ("Maḥmud the banished") after his expulsion from their ranks for alleged arrogance; he died in 831/1427, supposedly a suicide, having cast himself into the waters of the Aras river (Kiā, pp. 5-6). The designation Noqṭawi is taken from the doctrine that the earth is the starting point (*noqṭa*) of all things, the remaining three elements being derived from it; alternatively, it may refer to the use of two, three, or four dots, variously arranged, as cryptic abbreviations in the writings of the sect. The primacy of the earth led the Noqṭawis to believe in a peculiarly materialist type of metempsychosis, according to which the particles of the body are absorbed as a single mass into the soil, to be

reintegrated, by way of ingestion, on a plane of existence determined by the degree of virtue the deceased attained while alive. Traces of the former configuration are, however, apparent in the new: dogs could be recognized as having once been Qezelbāš Turks, their wagging tails being a trace of the swords they once wielded; and waterfowl as transmogrified clerics, their constant splashing being a relic of obsessive ablutions (Kiā, pp. 30-31). From this insight can be deduced a profound hostility to the twin pillars of the early Safavid state, the military and the religious. Insurrectionary ambitions were also implicit in the cyclical view of history cherished by the Noqṭawis: they believed that the appearance of Maḥmud marked the beginning of an 8,000-year "Persian epoch" (*dawra-ye esteʿjām*) in which Gilan and Mazandaran replaced Mecca and Medina as foci of sanctity (Kiā, p. 11). This doctrine may have helped facilitate the symbiosis of the Noqṭawis with the Ismaʿilis, who had espoused a similar view of history at certain stages in their tortuous evolution.

After an incubation lasting some eight decades, the Noqṭawi movement surfaced in Kāšān during the reign of Shah Esmāʿil I. Despite the measures he took against it, the Nokṭavi community in Kāšān persisted into the time of Ṭahmāsb, causing him to arrest many of its members, notwithstanding their intimations to him that he might be the Mahdi. The movement had spread meanwhile to other cities, including Sāva, Nāʾin, Isfahan, and most importantly Qazvin, where its leadership was assumed by a certain Darviš Ḵosrow; he housed his some 200 followers in a *takiya* (Sufi lodge) and managed to survive into the reign of Shah ʿAbbās I. For a while, the monarch tolerated the Noqṭawis and even permitted himself to be initiated into their ranks, either out of curiosity or as a means of surveillance, but in 1002/1593, fearful of the movement's insurrectionary potential, he had Darviš Ḵosrow arrested and put to death. Further arrests and executions ensued in other cities, notably Qazvin, where the sect briefly resurfaced in 1041/1631 only to be suppressed most bloodily. Artisans and literati in a handful of cities attracted by its millennarian promise had been its principal supporters, never numerous or powerful enough to pose a real threat to the political and social order (Algar, 1995b, p. 116).

Another element of urban turmoil was provided by the factions (see ḤAYDARI AND NEʿMATI) that regularly battled each other in all three of the successive Safavid capitals: Tabriz, Qazvin, and Isfahan. It has been speculated that their designations went back respectively to Mir Ḥaydar Tuni (d. 830/1426) and

Shah Neʿmat-Allāh Wali and that their mutual hostility arose from the Shiʿite proclivities of the former and the Sunnite loyalties of the latter. This, however, is uncertain; what is clear is that by the Safavid period neither group was aware of, or interested in, its origins. Their enmity showed itself with particular violence during Moḥarram, when the factions vied with each other in the extravagance of their mourning ceremonies. These irrational contests must be regarded in the first place as another surfacing of the perennial tendency to factionalism in Persian cities, not unlike the Shafeʿite-Hanafite riots that had marred cities such as Rayy down to the Mongol invasion. Thus Tabriz was divided into five Ḥaydari and four Neʿmati wards, and Isfahan into two roughly equal halves. The Ḥaydari-Neʿmati conflict was far from unwelcome to successive Safavid monarchs, who clearly saw in it a means of weakening urban solidarity; in a display of the imaginative sadism that frequently characterized his policies, Shah ʿAbbās I even went so far as to command battles between the two factions for his personal amusement (Mirjafari, p. 158). So deeply rooted was their mutual enmity, however, that it far outlasted the Safavid period, and temporarily divided the ranks of the constitutionalists in early 20th-century Tabriz.

THE INTERREGNUM OF THE 18TH CENTURY

The destruction of the Safavid state by Afghan invaders in 1722 served to demonstrate the most signal accomplishment of the dynasty: the conversion of the great majority of Persians to Shiʿism. For despite a lack of significant state endorsement for three decades or more, Shiʿism survived as the distinctive, quasi-national creed of Persia. Isfahan, however, lost its allure as a major intellectual center of the Shiʿite world, largely because of the devastation wrought by the Afghan invaders, and the focus of scholarly actvity shifted to the *ʿatabāt* (q.v.), the shrine cities of Iraq.

The Afghan invasion was the result, in part, of renewed persecution of Sunnites. Mir Ways, leader of the Ghalzais (see GĪLZI), the dominant element in Qandahār, had found himself exposed to sectarian insult during a sojourn in Isfahan; and, taking certain Shiʿite books with him to Mecca, he was able to receive a *fatwā* authorizing rebellion against Safavid rule as a religious duty (Algar, 1976, p. 290), some years before the invasion began. When it did, the Afghans also found something of a welcome among the Shafeʿites of Lārestān and other Sunnites, presumably on the basis of religious solidarity, but they were unable to form a stable polity on the ruins of the Safavid empire, let alone assault the supremacy of Shiʿism in Persia.

The challenge mounted by Nāder Shah Afšār (q.v. at *iranica.com*) was somewhat more substantial. When he elevated himself to the throne of Persia in 1148/1736, abandoning the pretense of loyalty to a Safavid claimant, he declared that his exercise of kingship was to be dependent on the abandonment by his subjects of Shiʿism as then practiced. He laid particular stress on the repugnance of *rafż*, the rejection of the legitimacy of the first three caliphs, and *sabb*, the ritual vilification of the same personages. Persians were instead to content themselves with the legalistic (*feqhi*) dimensions of Shiʿism, that is, the Jaʿfari school, so named after Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādeq, the sixth of the Twelve Imams. This was a maneuver designed to place Shiʿism on a par with the four of legal schools of Sunni Islam. With one exception, the ulema present gave Nāder Shah their written assent, for this was clearly an occasion for the exercise of *taqiya* (prudential dissimulation). Some seven years later, during his protracted campaign in Iraq, Nāder Shah convened in Najaf a meeting of Sunnite and Shiʿite ulema to endorse this project for the incorporation of a truncated Shiʿism into Sunnite Islam. The chief representative on the Shiʿite side was Mollā ʿAli-Akbar Ṭālaqāni, Nāder Shah's pliant *mollā-bāši*, and on the Sunnite side, Hādi Ḵᵛāja, the chief judge of Bukhara; ʿAbd-Allāh Sowaydi, a leading Hanafite scholar of Baghdad, was on hand to observe and arbitrate. The meeting concluded with an undertaking by the Shiʿite participants to foreswear both *rafż* and *sabb* and by their Sunnite counterparts to cease treating the Shiʿites as unbelievers (Algar, 1976, pp. 291-96).

Nāder Shah's initiative was not a religiously inspired exercise in inter-sectarian reconciliation. His conquests had brought under his rule Sunnite-inhabited territories in Afghanistan and Central Asia, and it was from there that he drew much of his soldiery; their religious sensitivities had to be accommodated. Moreover, a certain religiously tinged loyalist sentiment toward the Safavids did persist for some time after the downfall of their dynasty, and Nāder Shah wished to neutralize it with his ecumenical project. Finally, a Sunnite-Shiʿite reconciliation might have gained him some degree of legitimacy and recognition in the eyes of the Ottomans and brought peace to the western frontiers of his realm. None of the significant Shiʿite scholars of the age were involved in his project, and it died with him; his *mollā-bāši* was killed on the day of his own assassination in 1160/1747 (Algar, 1991a, p. 707). As for the practice of *sabb*, it continued, at least sporadically, until the late 19th century, when a decree of Nāṣer-al-Din Shah sought to outlaw it.

A development of infinitely greater significance than Nāder Shah's attempted revision of Shiʿism was the ultimate triumph of the Oṣuli current in jurisprudence over its Aḵbāri rival. Thanks to the devastation wrought by the Afghans and Nāder Shah's expropriation of the *awqāf* that supported the city's scholars, Isfahan had lost its primacy as intellectual center of the Shiʿite world; it was therefore in the *ʿatabāt* that the final stages in this conflict were played out. Initially the Aḵbāris prevailed; although they are said to have displayed moderation and a willingness to accept some of the Oṣulis' arguments, their dominance included a virtual prohibition on the public display of Oṣuli texts. The decisive vindication of the Oṣuli position was largely the work of a single scholar, Moḥammad-Bāqer Behbahāni (q.v.), known as the "unique" (*waḥid*) in token of his achievement. Born in Isfahan in 1117/1705, he left for Najaf with his father after the Afghan invasion and came there under the influence of Aḵbāri teachers. Perhaps a decade later, he moved to Behbahān, a town in southwest Persia relatively immune to the instability prevalent elsewhere in the country. During a residence of some thirty years, he reverted to a fully-fledged Oṣuli position and engaged in polemics with local Aḵbāris. This was but a prelude to the campaign he waged after his return to Iraq, which ended in the defeat of the Aḵbāris and the rallying to Oṣulism of some of the most prominent among them. The means Behbahāni employed were primarily those of written argumentation and debate, but the plague that ravaged Iraq in 1186/1772 also contributed to the desired outcome: while the Oṣulis regarded it as permissible to flee temporarily to unaffected areas, the Aḵbāris tended to remain behind, with fatal consequences (Cole, pp. 21-22).

Reduced to its essentials, Behbahāni's formulation of the Oṣuli position affirms the necessity of *ejtehād* (disciplined reasoning based on the sources of the *šariʿa*) as a source of guidance for the community during the continued occultation of the Twelfth Imam. Believers fall into two types: those who have attained the technical qualifications required for the exercise of *ejtehād*—the *mojtaheds*—and those who, not having done so, are religiously obligated to follow their rulings, a process known as *taqlid*; a *mojtahed* selected for *taqlid* is known as *marjaʿ-e taqlid* (source of imitation). This twofold division of the community plainly results in a higher degree of authority for the religious scholars than that implied by the Aḵbāri position, which makes of them little more than experts in Hadith. Since the matters on which guidance is sought or proffered are, in the first place, newly occurring situations and problems (*mostaḥdaṯāt*), the authority exercised by the *mojtahed* may also embrace the political sphere. Hence the increasingly visible political role of the ulema in

the Qajar period and beyond, in Tehran, the capital, and major provincial cities, especially Tabriz and Isfahan.

THE QAJAR PERIOD

The Qajar dynasty, which emerged from the prolonged chaos of the 18th century, presented itself, at least initially, as the heir to Safavid tradition, but without any distinguishing emphasis on allegedly religious credentials. Its early decades of rule coincided with the careers of Behbahāni's most important pupils: his son, Āqā Moḥammad-Bāqer, resident in Kermānšāh; Shaikh Jaʿfar Najafi, a resident of Iraq but a yearly visitor to Persia; Ḥājj Moḥammad Ebrāhim Kalbāsi and Sayyed Moḥammad Bāqer Šafti, both of Isfahan; and Shaikh Abu'l-Qāsem Qomi. Ulema relations with the second Qajar ruler, Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah (r. 1797-1834, q.v.), were relatively amicable; he sought to gain their favor by ceremonially proclaiming himself subordinate to them and patronizing shrines, especially in Qom (Algar, 1969b, pp. 46-52). Nonetheless, there were instances of friction even in his reign, including the expulsion by powerful ulema of the governors he appointed to several cities and the pressure they brought to bear on him for reopening hostilities with Russia in 1241/1826.

More numerous and significant were the clashes that occurred during the long reign of Nāṣer-al-Din Shah (1848-96), for it witnessed the beginnings of processes that were perceived as a threat to the integrity of Perso-Islamic society: foreign encroachment, widening prerogatives of the state, and a degree of westernization. At the same time, the methodology of Oṣuli jurisprudence was additionally refined in a way that further enhanced the authority of the ulema: it was propounded that the common believer choose, as his source of imitation, a *mojtahed* judged to be more learned (*aʿlam*) than all his colleagues. Such comparative evaluations of erudition were, of course, beyond the capacity of the common believer, and the emergence of a *mojtahed* as "more learned" tended to be the result of a general reputation for piety and the promotion of his claims by lesser-ranking ulema associated with him. The first *mojtahed*s to be generally accepted as *aʿlam* and therefore deserving the *taqlid* of the entire community were Shaikh Moḥammad-Ḥasan Najafi (d. 1266/1850), son of Shaikh Jaʿfar Najafi, and, more notably, Shaikh Mortażā Anṣāri (d. 1281/1864, q.v.). Neither of these had the occasion or inclination to make political use of the power that was implicit in their position, but it was Anṣāri's foremost pupil and successor, Mirzā Ḥasan Širāzi (d. 1312/1895), adorned with the honorific *mojadded*, who issued in 1308/1901 the celebrated

fatwā that forbade the consumption of tobacco as long as its marketing was in the hands of a British monopoly. Universally obeyed and resulting in violent clashes in the capital and elsewhere, this *fatwā* and the reaction it aroused marked the beginning of mass politics in Persia (Algar, 1969b, pp. 205-18). Širāzi did not, however, allow his authority to be mobilized for more ambitious purposes, and the ulema in general had as yet no interest in a comprehensive reshaping of the political order under their leadership.

Many of them nonetheless participated in the Constitutional Revolution (q.v.), despite their initial lack of acquaintance with the constitutional concept. As Sayyed Moḥammad Ṭabāṭabāʾi, one of the leading constitutionalist *mojtaheds*, freely admitted, "we had no direct experience of constitutionalism. But what we heard from those who had seen countries with constitutional regimes was that constitutionalism conduces to the security and prosperity of a country" (cited in Ādamiat, p. 226). The cause was supported to great effect by three *mojtaheds* resident in Najaf: Shaikh ʿAbd-Allāh Māzandarāni (d. 1331/1912a, q.v.), Āḵund Moḥammad Kāẓem Ḵorāsāni (d. 1329/1911, q.v.), and Ḥājj Mirzā Ḥosayn Ḵalili Tehrāni (d. 1325/1908), and the telegrams they sent to Persia proclaimed efforts to establish the constitution "equivalent to a *jehād* waged under the command of the Lord of the Age [the Twelfth Imam]" (Hairi, 1976-77, p. 144). No clearer or more categorical endorsement of the cause could be imagined. Not all the ulema, however, saw matters in the same light. Shaikh Fażl-Allāh Nuri abandoned his early support of the movement once he concluded that it had been infiltrated by "members of the new sects [an allusion to the Azali identity of some prominent constitutionalists] and the naturalists" (Hairi, 1977, p. 331) He accordingly condemned the movement as it stood and called instead for *mašruṭa-ye mašruʿa*, that is, a form of constitutional government limited by and compatible with the *šariʿa*, a slogan that soon became abbreviated to *mašruʿa* and served as the opposite of *mašruṭa*. He was answered by Mirzā Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Nāʾini, a pupil of Āḵund Ḵorāsāni, in a tract that argued that rejection of constitutionalism led ineluctably to tyranny, which is itself an ongoing violation of the *šariʿa*. Nuri did indeed associate himself with the royalist coup d'etat of July 1908 and was executed by a band of revolutionaries that included non-Muslims. This was received as an affront by the entire clerical class, as was the assassination, almost exactly a year later, of Sayyed ʿAbd-Allāh Behbahāni, a prominent supporter of the constitution. The net result of the Constitutional Revolution was to induce in the ulema a distrust of political involvement which was, in turn, one reason for their acquiescence in Reza Shah's rise to power.

Once the Oṣuli cause had triumphed in Persia, with these manifold long-term socio-political consequences, the Aḵbāri tendency became effectively confined to Khuzestan and the Shiʿite communities of Bahrayn and al-Aḥsā on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf. It was also from al-Aḥsā that emerged the Shaikhi movement, so named after its founder, Shaikh Aḥmad Aḥsāʾi (d. 1241/1826, q.v.), adding a further element of diversity to Twelver Shiʿism in Persia and elsewhere. Like the issues separating Oṣulis and Aḵbāris, the distinctive teachings that set the Shaikhis aside from the main body of the community also related to the implications of the continued occultation of the Twelfth Imam, but more to the spiritual and cosmological aspects of the problem. Shaikh Aḥmad Aḥsāʾi and his followers propounded the notion of a "fourth pillar" (*rokn-e rābeʿ*) of religion, by which was meant the presence in the world of "a perfect Shiʿi" (*Šiʿa-ye kāmel*) who serves as a privileged intermediary between the Occulted Imam and his community (Corbin, IV, pp. 274-86); implicit to this concept was the claim that first Aḥsāʾi and then his successors served as the intermediary in question. Further, they located the Imam in the imaginal realm of Hurqalyā, where they also claimed the ascent (*meʿrāj*) of the Prophet had taken place—thus denying its corporeal aspect—and the resurrection of all men will occur (Corbin, IV, pp. 28-291). Aḥsāʾi came to Persia in 1221/1806 and was met with both acceptance and denunciation. Ḥājj Mollā Moḥammad-Taqi Borḡāni of Qazvin issued a *fatwā* declaring him an unbeliever, primarily because of his teachings concerning Hurqalyā (Algar, 1969a, p. 69). Aḥsāʾi thereupon left Persia, first for the shrine cities of Iraq, where again he encountered hostility, and then for the Hijaz, dying in Jidda in 1241/1826. His named successor (*nāʾeb al-manāb*) was Sayyed Kāẓem Rašti, resident in Karbalāʾ, who had made the acquaintance of Aḥsāʾi in Yazd and then accompanied him to the *ʿatabāt*.

Rašti omitted to name a successor before his death in 1259/1843, with the result that several claimants to his mantle arose and the Shaikhi community was sundered into four. One group was led by Sayyed ʿAli-Moḥammad the Bāb (d. 1850), the founder of Babism (q.v.), a movement that lies beyond the purview of this article. Another, directed by Mirzā Ḥasan Gowhar of Karbalāʾ, never gained much support in Persia. The two factions important for the history of Shaikhism in Persia were those led by Ḥāji Mirzā Šafiʿ Ṯeqat al-Eslām and Mollā Moḥammad Mamaqāni Ḥojjat-al-Eslām in Tabriz and by Ḥājji Moḥammad-Karim Khan Kermāni (d. 1871), a member of the Qajar family, in Kerman. Both factions moved swiftly to "normalize" their doctrines, that is, to align them with the conventional beliefs of Twelver Shiʿism as then

understood, and Moḥammad-Karim Khan Kermāni in particular was energetic in distancing Shai-khism from Babism. This process of adjustment did not prevent the Shaikhis, however, from forming distinct and fairly substantial communities, under the hereditary leadership of first the Ḥojjat-al-Eslām and then the Ṯeqat-al-Eslām family in Tabriz, and of the descendants of Moḥammad-Karim Khan in Kerman. In both Tabriz and Kerman, clashes repeatedly took place between the Shai-khis and their neighbors, in yet another manifestation of the recurring propensity of Persian cities for factional warfare. The adversaries of the Shaikhis became known, in this context, as the Bālāsaris (q.v.), that is, those who paid their respects at the shrines of the Imams while standing at the head of their tombs, by contrast with the Shaikhis, who thought it more respectful to stand at the foot. It is, however, improbable that the mutual hostility derived from this or any other detail of doctrine or ritual. Shaikhi-Bālāsari clashes ravaged Kerman for a full year in 1295/1878, and for a somewhat shorter period in 1322/1905; on the latter occasion it was rivalry for the control of lucrative *awqāf* that ignited the hostilities. In Tabriz, the Shaikhis were deemed heretics and ritually unclean, and they were accordingly denied access to the city's bathhouses. Hamadān also witnessed clashes between Shaikhis and Bālāsaris in 1315/1897. Smaller Shaikhi communities than those in Tabriz and Kerman came into being in Ḵorramšahr, Ābādan, Shiraz, and Zonuz (Momen, pp. 225-31).

Yet another element of differentiation in the religious life of Qajar Persia was provided by the Neʿmat-Allāhi order of Sufis, reintroduced into the country toward the end of the 18th century by two emissaries of Rezā-ʿAlišah Dakani (d. 1214/1799). One, Shah Ṭāher Dakani, lived peacefully and largely unnoticed in Yazd, but his companion, Sayyed Mir ʿAbd al-Ḥamid Maʿṣum-ʿAlišah, a man of ecstatic temperament, met both with great success in his preaching and with determined hostility on the part of the Oṣuli ulema (*ʿolamāʾ*). He arrived in Shiraz sometime during the reign of Karim Khan Zand, probably in 1190/1776, but not long after was banished to a village near Isfahan at the urging of the ulema. The death of Karim Khan emboldened him to settle in Isfahan itself, but the enthusiastic popular response he encountered there again aroused clerical hostility. Several of Maʿṣum-ʿAlišāh's followers were mutilated by way of punishment for their perceived heresy, and two prominent disciples, Nur-ʿAlišah and Mostāq- ʿAlišah, fled to Kerman, where every Thursday evening they would lead thousands on pilgrimage to the shrine of Shah Neʿmat-Allāh in the nearby hamlet of Māhān. This spectacle—suggestive of a longstanding devotion to the eponym of the order in

Kerman—enraged a certain Mollā ʿAbd-Allāh Mojtahed to the extent that he contrived to have Mostāq-ʿAlišah executed in 1205/1790. Nur-ʿAlišah fled Kerman for Iraq, by way of Isfahan and Kermanšāh, but there, too, he was not safe; he died in Mosul in 1215/1800, allegedly as the result of a poisoning administered by two agents of the redoubtable Āqā Moḥammad-ʿAli Behbahāni, whose repeated display of murderous energy against the Sufis earned him the sobriquet of "Ṣufikoš" (Sufi-killer). It was also Behbahāni who had Maʿṣum-ʿAlišāh himself put to death in Kermānšāh in 1212/1797 (Pourjavady and Wilson, pp. 93-135).

Behbahāni sought to ground his hostility to the resurgent Neʿmat-Allāhi order in two treatises, *Resāla-ye ḵayrātiya* and *Qaṭʿ al-maqāl fi radd ahl al-żalāl*, that are replete with wideranging accusations such as pederasty, neglect of prayer, drug addiction, and the use of musical instruments. Whatever be made of these charges, it seems plain that the Neʿmat-Allāhiya as now constituted had doctrinally little in common with the order as first established by Shah Neʿmat-Allāh and his immediate descendants. The works of Nur-ʿAlišah contain many theopathic utterances; themes of *ḡolāt* Shiʿism that seem to echo the verse of Shah Esmāʿil; and repeated criticism of the ulema for their alleged corruption. The nub of the matter was, however, the claim advanced by Nur-ʿAlišah (and presumably by Maʿṣum-ʿAlišāh as well) that the Sufi master was the true *nāʾeb* (deputy) of the Occulted Imam (Algar, 1995a, p. 46). Insofar as the Oṣuli ulema were engaged, at precisely the same time, in consolidating their own claims to the deputyship, it was inevitable that the two groups should clash. The ulema were plainly the stronger party, enjoying—at least in this contest—the support of royal authority throughout the first quarter of the 19th century.

This support ceased with the accession to the throne in 1834 of Moḥammad Shah, who himself had Sufi proclivities, as did his vizier, Ḥāji Mirzā Āqāsi. The acerbity of the contest between Sufi and scholar was in any event beginning to fade as the Neʿmat-Allāhis began to adopt more circumspect attitudes, in a process somewhat similar to that undergone by the Shaikhis. The formula of Ḥaydar Āmoli, a Shiʿite gnostic of the 8th/14th century, that identified Sufism with Shiʿism was repeated by Maʿṣum-ʿAlišāh II with some elaboration: "True Sufism is true Shiʿism; the path of the Immaculate Imams is outwardly the *šariʿat* of the Imāmi Shiʿites, and inwardly the divine truths of Sufism" (*Ṭarāʾeq al-ḥaqāʾeq* I, p. 104). This implied a division of deputyship and hence of authority between the Sufis and the jurists. A fundamental antagonism has nonetheless persisted down to the present.

In addition, the energies of the Neʿmat-Allāhis were increasingly consumed by internal divisions and rivalries, the fate of so many Sufi orders. The last leader (*qoṭb*) to enjoy more or less unanimous acceptance was Moḥam-mad-Jaʿfar Kabudar-Āhangi (d. 1238/1823). Three claimants to leadership arose after his death: Kawṯar-ʿAlišāh (d. 1247/1831), Sayyed Ḥosayn Astarābādi, and Zayn al-ʿĀbedin Širvāni Mast-ʿAlišāh (d. 1253/1837). The first became the eponym of a suborder, the Kawṯariya, which continued into the 20th century, albeit with a very restricted membership; similar remarks apply to the line descended from Astarābādi, which later became known as the Šamsiya after its most celebrated member, Sayyed Ḥosayn Ḥosayni Šams-al-ʿOrafāʾ (d. 1353/1935). The main line of descent was that which passed through Zayn-al-ʿĀbedin Širvāni. He was the author of a number of treatises on the Neʿmat-Allāhi path as well as voluminous travelogues in which he displays a broad knowledge of the history of Sufism and its condition throughout the Muslim world in the early 19th century. He was succeeded by a namesake, Zayn-al-ʿĀbedin Raḥmat-ʿAlišāh, upon whose death in 1278/1861 a further trifurcation took place.

The contestants on this occasion were Saʿādat-ʿAlišah, nicknamed Ṭāʾus-al-ʿOrafāʾ (peacock of the gnostics) because of his penchant for elegant costume (d. 1293/1876 in Tehran); Ḥājj Mirzā Ḥasan Ṣafi-ʿAlišāh (d. 1316/1899); and Ḥājj Moḥammad Āqā Monawwar-ʿAlišāh (d. 1310/1884). The first-named, a minimally literate tobacco merchant from Isfahan, was succeeded by Mollā Solṭān Moḥammad-Solṭān-ʿAlišāh of Bidoḵt in the Gonābād region of Khorasan, under whose direction this line of Neʿmat-Allāhi tradition evolved into essentially a separate order, the Gonābādi. The large following Solṭān-ʿAlišāh gathered during the thirty-four years he exercised the preceptorial function was reflected in a growing accumulation of wealth in Bidoḵt; even outside Khorasan, his devotees were numerous enough to justify the appointment of five shaikhs in different regions to administer them on his behalf. Certain items of his preaching were of a nature to arouse hostility as well as admiration; he thus claimed that “whoever knows his own Imam does not need to wait for the appearance of the Occulted Imam” (Solṭān-ʿAlišāh, p. 269) and hinted that he was himself—in an undefined sense—the Imam of the Age. He claimed also to have written an Arabic commentary on the Qurʾan, the *Bayān al-saʿāda*, which evidence suggest was plagiarized from the earlier work of an Indian scholar (*al-Ḏariʿa* III, pp. 181-82). Assassinated in 1327/1909, Solṭān-ʿAlišāh was succeeded by his son, Ḥājj Mollā ʿAli Nur-ʿAlišāh, despite the misgivings of some senior dervishes and a lengthy period of alienation that had separated father and son. Nur-ʿAlišāh faced much the same problems as

his father, and like him he came to a violent end, while traveling between Kāšān and Tehran in 1337/1918. The leadership of the Gonābādi order remained in the family throughout the 20th century.

Ṣafi-ʿAlišāh, the second claimant to the mantle of Raḥmat-ʿAlišāh, also came from a mercantile background, and although initially inclined to accept the claims of Monawwar-ʿAlišāh, he put himself forward as the successor in 1279/1862; the line descended from him became known as the Ṣafi-ʿAlišāhiya, effectively a separate order like the Gonābādis, with whom they often became embroiled in polemics. Ṣafi-ʿAlišāh was succeeded by Ẓahir-al-Dawla Ṣafā-ʿAlišāh, minister of the court and brother-in-law of Moẓaffar-al-Din Shah, under whose administration the order took a turn that was both aristocratic and modernizing. Ṣafā-ʿAlišāh established a twelve-man committee to supervise the operations of the order, which now became known as the Anjoman-e Oḵowwat (Society of Brotherhood), In its rites and purposes, the society began to resemble more a masonic organization than a Sufi order (see ANJOMAN-E OḴOWWAT).

The line of the third claimant to the succession of Raḥmat-ʿAlišāh, Monawwar-ʿAlišāh, has the best claim to be regarded as the main line of Neʿmat-Allāhi descent; its adherents have continued to designate themselves exclusively as Neʿmat-Allāhi, although the clarificatory expression “line of Ḏu’l-Riāsatayn” (an epithet borne by the second and third successors to Monawwar-ʿAlišāh) is sometimes additionally used. Monawwar-ʿAlišāh had qualified as a *mojtahed*, and his descendants also cultivated formal religious knowledge to a degree unusual for Sufis in Shiʿite Persia. Among Monawwar-ʿAlišāh’s disciples, one of the sons of Raḥmat-ʿAlišāh stands out, Maʿṣum-ʿAlišāh, Nāʾeb al-Ṣadr (d. 1344/1926) author of the encyclopedic and highly informative *Ṭarāʾeq al-ḥqāʾeq*, but it was his own son, Ḥājj ʿAli Ḏu’l-Riāsatayn (d. 1336/1918) who succeeded him, possibly after an interval of four years in which he advanced to greater maturity. The primary locations of this branch of the order were Shiraz and Kermānšāh until its headquarters were shifted to Tehran in 1929.

Less widespread but also less prone to internal division was the Ḏahabiya, a Sufi order which not only weathered the storms of the Safavid period but also enjoyed the favor of Karim Khan Zand, in strict contrast to the Neʿmat-Allāhis. Shiraz was for long their principal, if not sole, base. The degree to which the Ḏahabis became integrated into the religious life of the city was made fully apparent when their leader, Mirzā Abu’l-Qāsem Šarifi “Rāz-e Širāzi” (d. 1286/1869), was awarded the administration of Shah-e Čerāḡ, the principal

shrine of Shiraz (Gramlich, I, p. 20). He was succeeded by his son, Jalāl-al-Din Šarifi "Majd-al-Ašrāf" I (d. 1331/1913), whose leadership of the order was distinguished chiefly by the expansion and organization of its following in Azarbaijan.

It is probably in the early Qajar period that the Ḵāksār dervishes first emerge, as a group, however loosely organized, bearing that designation. From the melange of legends, each more improbable than the last, that the Ḵāksār invoke in explanation of their origins, it can be surmised that they were a loose amalgam of mendicants (*qalandar*s) that gradually coalesced into an order, probably in imitation of the resurgent Neʿmat-Allāhis. This likelihood is strengthened by the fact that their two rival factions were known as Šalām-ʿAlišāhi and Maṣum-ʿAlišāhi, designations that are reminiscent of the *ṭariqat* names used by the Neʿmat-Allāhis. The sparse literature produced by the Ḵāksār, a strictly popular order favored by artisans and shopkeepers, is concerned primarily with ritual (Gramlich, I, pp. 70-88).

It was remarked above that the post-Mongol history of the Ismaʿili Imamate in Persia became intertwined with that of the Sufi orders. This remained the case into the Qajar period. The first Imam of the Qāsemšāhi line known definitely to have had a Neʿmat-Allāhi affiliation was Šāh Nezār, fortieth in the succession according to Ismaʿili tradition. Since he died in 1134/1722, several decades before the resurgence of the Neʿmat-Allāhiya in Persia, he was presumably in communication with leaders of the order in the Deccan. His name in the *ṭariqat* was ʿAṭāʾ-Allāh, a fact reflected in the designation of his nomadic followers in the Sirjān region of Kerman as ʿAṭāʾ-Allāhis. The next Imam but one, Sayyed Ḥasan Beg, moved his headquarters from Kahak to Šahr-e Bābak, also in southeast Persia, some time in the mid-18th century, and thanks to an improved flow of revenue from Ismaʿilis in India, he was able to acquire extensive property and influence in Kerman. The forty-fourth Imam, Abu'l-Ḥasan ʿAli (d. 1206/1792) was even made governor of Kerman by Karim Khan Zand, which did not prevent him from pragmatically refusing the Zands assistance against Āqā Moḥammad Khan Qājār. He remained loyal, however, to the Neʿmat-Allāhi traditions of his family and attempted, although without success, to protect Moštāq-ʿAlišāh from death at the hands of the ulema of Kerman in 1202/1791; the anticipation of Ismaʿili patronage may, indeed, have been one reason for the choice of Kerman as a principal center of activity by the Neʿmat-Allāhis. Subsequent Ismaʿili Imams and members of their family preserved both the favor of the Qajars and their links to the Neʿmat-Allāhi

order. Shah Ḵalil-Allāh, successor to Abu'l-Ḥasan ʿAli, transferred the seat of the Imamate back to Kahak for twenty years before being moving to Yazd in 1230/1815; he lost his life there two years later, during a brawl in the bazaar (Algar, 1969a, pp. 60-61).

Shah Ḵalil-Allāh's heir, Ḥasan-ʿAlišāh, was handsomely compensated by Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah with marriage to one of his daughters; an addition to the family lands in Maḥallāt; the governorship of Qom; and the grant of the title Āqā Khan (q.v.; Agha Khan) that was destined to become the hereditary designation of the Qāsemšāhi Imams (Algar, 1969a, p. 62). In 1251/1835, Moḥammad Shah Qajar appointed Ḥasan-ʿAlišāh governor of Kerman; the armed resistance with which he responded to dismissal from this post two years later was broken, but he was pardoned on condition that he retire quietly to the family estates in Maḥallāt. Instead, he gathered an army, and after about a year he launched an uprising in areas of southeastern Persia where he could count on the support of local Ismaʿilis. This venture also failed, and in 1257/1841 he crossed into Afghanistan, bringing to a definitive end the Persian period of the Imamate; Bombay became its new seat (Algar, 1969a, pp. 70-71). The Ismaʿilis of Persia henceforth found themselves traveling to India in order to convey their offerings to the Imam, just as before their Indian co-religionaries had had to make their way to Persia. Given the embrace of the first Āqā Khan by the British and the military services he rendered them in Baluchistan and elsewhere (Algar, 1969a, pp. 76-78), it seems likely that some degree of external instigation was at work in his rebellion. Another factor was, however, rivalry for the leadership of the Neʿmat-Allāhi order. The Āqā Khan's maternal uncle, ʿEzzat-ʿAlišāh, had been an intimate of Zayn-al-ʿĀbedin Širvāni, and when Kabudar-Āhangi died in 1238/1823, the Āqā Khan supported Širvāni's claim to the succession. Moḥammad Shah's minister, Ḥāji Mirzā Āqāsi, was, however, himself a minor contender for the leadership of the Neʿmat-Allāhiya, and he therefore looked askance at the activities of the Āqā Khan (Pourjavady and Wilson, pp. 126-28).

The most important developments affecting the Sunnite communities of Persia during the Qajar period all related to the activity of various branches of the Naqšbandi order. Thus in 1222/1807, Ṣufi Eslām, a Naqšbandi dervish from Bukhara, lent his energies to an unsuccessful attempt to liberate Herat from Qajar control. He was killed in battle, but the *ḵānaqāh* he founded at Karroḵ near Herat continued to exercise a powerful influence among the Hanafites of Khorasan even after the definitive separation of Herat from Persia in 1857

(Harawi, pp. 154-57). Somewhat later, a certain Ḵᵛāja Moḥammad-Yusof Jāmi, established a center of the Mojaddedi branch of the Naqšbandi order, at Torbat-e Jām near the Afghan border; it attracted devotees from Central Asia and even India as well as Khorasan. Farther to the west, Yusof Ḵᵛāja Kāšḡari, a wandering scion of the Ḵᵛājas, a Naqšbandi lineage that had ruled over eastern Turkestan, managed in 1228/1813 to launch an uprising among the Yomut and Göklan tribes of Torkman-Ṣaḥrā and to plunder the region of Astarābād before meeting his death in battle. A similar uprising under Naqšbandi leadership, this time involving the Tekke and Yomut tribes, was suppressed in 1841 (Sarkisyanz, pp. 221-22). Considerably more significant than these miscellaneous occurrences was the rise in the first quarter of the 19th century of the Ḵālediya, a derivative of the Naqšbandi-Mojaddedi order. Founded by a Kurd, Mawlānā Ḵāled, generally known as Bağdādi despite his birth in Solaymāniya, the Ḵālediya swiftly rose to prominence in all areas of Kurdish population soon after his death in 1243/1827, effectively depriving the Qāderiya of the supremacy it had previously enjoyed. Particularly influential among the inhabitants of Persian Kurdistan was the hereditary lineage established at Biyāra, just across the border in what was to become Iraqi Kurdistan, by Shaikh ʿOṯmān Serāj-al-Din (d. 1283/1867). His *ḵānaqāh* attracted devotees not only from Kurdish towns such as Sāvojbalāgh (Mahābād) and Sanandaj, but also from Tāleš, a partially Shafeʿite enclave in Gilan. One of his Tāleši *ḵalifa*s, Shaikh ʿAli of ʿAnbarān (d. 1320/1902), established in his native village a hereditary line which remained locally influential into the late 20th century. A quite separate line of Kurdish Ḵāledi descent led from the eponym to Shaikh ʿObayd-Allāh of Nehri (d. 1300/1883) in eastern Anatolia; in 1298/1880, his rebellion against the Ottoman government spilled over into an invasion of Persian Azarbaijan which included the ravaging of Shiʿite- and Assyrian-inhabited villages in the area of Urmia. Finally, there are traces of Ḵāledi implantation among the Turkmans of the northeast in the 19th century, deriving not only from Kurdistan but also from Daghistan in the Caucasus (Algar, forthcoming, p. 16).

THE PAHLAVI PERIOD

The reign of the first Pahlavi, Reza Shah (1925-41), was characterized by a cult of nationalism that glorified the pre-Islamic past of Persia and was accompanied by measures aimed at circumscribing the influence and standing of the ulema. This agenda was inspired in part by the program of virulent secularization then underway in neighboring Turkey. Initially, however,

relations between Reza Shah and the leading scholars of the day were relatively cordial. In 1924, while his formal position was still only that of minister of war, Sheikh ʿAbd-al-Karim Ḥāʾeri and others met with the future Reza Shah in Qom and and asked him to quell rumors of the impending institution of a republic under his auspices, republicanism then being regarded with abhorrence because of the association with irreligion it had acquired in Turkey. He was happy to oblige and gave assurances of his devotion to Shiʿite Islam, with the result that in October of the same year, Mirzā Moḥammad Nāʾini and Abu'l-Ḥasan Eṣfahāni signed a *fatwā* proclaiming obedience to Reza Shah to be a religious duty. The only scholar of note to oppose the foundation of the Pahlavi dynasty was Sayyed Ḥasan Modarres, put to death in 1937 after a lengthy period of imprisonment (Hamadāni, pp. 195-219).

In May 1925, a law was passed arrogating to the state the right to examine religious students with a view to their exemption from military service, and three years later a Civil Code was promulgated, greatly circumscribing the judicial functions of the ulema; this was made explicit in November 1931, when the competence of the *šariʿa* courts was limited to matters of marriage and divorce. In March 1932 came the termination of all notarial functions exercised by the ulema, reducing many of them to penury. Society as a whole was more directly impacted by the proscription of the *ḥejāb* (a veil to conceal women's hair from public view) in 1936 and the banning of the Moḥarram ceremonies that since Safavid times had been at the heart of the religious culture of Persia (Akhavi, pp. 37-40).

A number of religiously inspired uprisings against Reza Shah took place, most notably at Mashad in 1935, but the most important response to his policies, in effect although not in intention, was the renewal and development of the *ḥawza* (religious teaching establishment) in Qom by Sheikh ʿAbd-al-Karim Ḥāʾeri. Its long-term consequences for relations between religion and state in the Pahlavi period were comparable to the significance of the triumph of the Oṣulis over the Aḵbāris at the beginning of the Qajar period. Purely a center of religious learning in the 1920s and 1930s, Qom was destined to become a center of religio-political guidance from the 1960s onward. Born near Yazd in 1276/1859, Ḥāʾeri had studied with the major scholars of the day in the shrine cities of Iraq before returning to Persia in 1913. After nine uneventful years in Arāk, he settled in Qom in 1922 and set about reviving the scholarly traditions of the city: he restored a number of its *madrasa*s, brought a measure of order

to the curriculum, and arranged for students to receive fixed monthly stipends. By the time of his death in 1356/1937, the *ḥawza* numbered roughly 1,000 students, a remarkable figure considering the unfavorable political circumstances of the time. Among them was Ruhollah Khomeini (Ruḥ-Allāh Ḵomayni), then thirty-five years of age (Algar, 1988, pp. 267-68).

The deposition of Reza Shah by the Allies in September 1941 and his replacement by Mohammad-Reza Shah inaugurated a period of relatively free political competition, in which leftist and nationalist groups addressed such issues as limiting the powers of the monarchy and warding off interference by foreign states, especially Britain. Generally speaking, the *ḥawza* stayed aloof from these developments. After the death of Ḥāʾeri, it had been administered by a triumvirate of senior ulema until the assumption of its leadership in 1944 by Ayatollah Ḥosayn Borujerdi (q.v.). Like Ḥāʾeri before him, Borujerdi was quietist in policy and temperament, and he did his best to proscribe all political activity in Qom, while at the same time consolidating the administrative achievements of his predecessor. Outside the *ḥawza* and acting independently of it, a number of religious scholars did, however, concern themselves with the prime political issues of the day. Most important among them was Ayatollah Abu'l-Qāsem Kāšāni, whose activism had begun in Iraq during World War I. He allied himself at differing times both with Moḥammad Moṣaddeq of the National Front and with the Fedāʾiān-e Eslām (q.v.), the movement founded in 1945 by Sayyed Mojtabā Mirlawḥi, better known as Nawwāb Ṣafawi. Both alliances fell apart, first that with the Fedāʾiān and then that with Moṣaddeq, not long before his overthrow by the coup d'etat of August 1953 that was orchestrated by the British and American intelligence services. Kāšāni lived on until 1962 to protest matters such as the renewal of diplomatic ties with Britain, the conclusion of an agreement with an international oil consortium, and the rigging of elections to the Majles, but his voice was not widely heard. Never a mass movement, the Fedāʾiān was thoroughly dispersed after the coup and its founder was executed in January 1956; its example served, however, to inspire the Islamically-oriented guerilla movements of the late 1960s and the 1970s.

The death of Borujerdi in 1961 prompted, not only the customary search for a successor to his position as *marjaʿ-e taqlid*, but also a reexamination of the function of the *marjaʿ* and, more broadly, of the role of religion in society. Many felt that Borujerdi had failed to provide the comprehensive guidance that was needed at the time; that the *ḥawza* ought to be more rigorously

organized and its curriculum broadened and modernized; and that a collective *marjaʿiyat* might be advisable (see the collective volume, *Baḥṯi dar bāra-ye Marjaʿiyat va Ruḥāniyat*, first published in 1962). Indeed no single successor to Borujerdi emerged, and Persians, together with other Shiʿites, divided their *taqlid* among a variety of scholars in Najaf, and Ayatollahs Marʿaši Najafi, Golpāyagāni, Šariʿatmadāri, and Khomeini in Qom. Even after the triumph of the Islamic Revolution that he led, the last-named never functioned as the sole *marjaʿ-e taqlid*, but the role that he was about to play in the history of Persia and of Shiʿite Islam transcended by far that of a *marjaʿ*, in acknowledgment whereof he became known among his partisans and officially after the Revolution as "Imam."

Born in the southwestern city of Ḵomayn in 1320/1902 to a father who was murdered during the first year of his life, Khomeini joined the circle of Shaikh ʿAbd-al-Karim Ḥāʾeri in Arāk at the age of nineteen and followed him to Qom when he moved there soon after. Khomeini first excelled in *ʿerfān*, a discipline then viewed in the *ḥawza* with suspicion, the first of many indications that he would not restrict himself to the traditional technical concerns of the jurist. Loyalty to the leadership first of Ḥāʾeri and then of Borujerdi imposed on him a large measure of silence on political issues, but in 1944 he published a book, *Kašf al-asrār*, that was in the first place the refutation of an anti-religious tract but also afforded an opportunity for political comment. It was in this work that he first adumbrated the theory of *welāyat-e faqih* (the governance of the jurist) that thirty-five years later was to become the main constitutional principle of the Islamic Republic. Some allowance is made for the institution of monarchy, providing the monarch is chosen by an assembly of properly qualified *mojtaheds* and adheres to Islamic law, but even that arrangement is provisional and should obtain only "as long as no better system (*neẓām*) can be established" (*Kašf al-asrār*, p. 186).

Khomeini's struggle against the Pahlavi state began in the fall of 1962 with a successful campaign for the repeal of new laws governing elections to local and provincial councils. More significant clashes came early the next year, when a package of measures officially dubbed the White Revolution was approved by a referendum widely seen as fraudulent; the measures themselves were perceived by many, including Khomeini, as reinforcing the powers of the monarchy and American hegemony in Persia. He therefore began criticizing the regime with rising vehemence, denouncing also the unofficial but important links then being forged with Israel. On 22 March

1963, paratroopers attacked the Fayżiya *madrasa* in Qom, the site of his classes and preaching, and two and a half months later, on the occasion of ʿĀšurāʾ, he denounced the regime as "fundamentally opposed to Islam" and allied to Israel and the United States in hostility to the Qurʾan. He was thereupon arrested, and an insurrection broke out in several cities across the country (Algar, 1991b, pp. 753-54). The uprising, known by the date in Persian solar calendar on which it began as "the movement of Ḵordād 15," was a turning point in the modern history of Persia; it brought Khomeini to the fore as the most important and radical adversary of the Pahlavi regime and foreshadowed the revolution of 1978-79.

Khomeini was released in August 1963, but rearrested in October of the same year, this time being held until May 1964. Once free again, he resumed his denunciations of the regime, and in October 1964 condemned with great vehemence a recently concluded agreement on the status of American personnel in Persia. Arrested once more, he was sent into exile in Turkey, remaining there until he was permitted to proceed to Najaf on 5 September 1965. This was to remain his residence until the Iraqi government, at the behest of the shah's regime, ordered him to leave in October 1978; he then made his way to Neauphle-le-Château, a hamlet near Paris, whence he returned in triumph to Tehran on 31 January 1979 (Algar, 1991b, pp. 760-61).

During almost fifteen years of exile, Khomeini maintained unbroken contact with Persia, and his declarations and pronouncements reached the country by various clandestine means. Most significant, perhaps, was the transcript of a series of lectures he delivered in Najaf early in 1970 on the subject of Islamic government, in which he developed more fully the doctrine of *welāyat-e faqih*, supporting it with scriptural proofs and laying out a general plan for its practical implementation. In addition, a variety of individuals and organizations within the country were also influential in maintaining and fostering a specifically Islamic aspiration for radical change. Foremost among them was ʿAli Šariʿati, in many ways the antithesis of Khomeini, for he viewed the generality of the ulema with a degree of suspicion, calling for an "Islam minus the *āḵund*," and contrastingly exalted the role of the "religious intellectual" (*rawšanfekr-e maḏhabi*) as the true agent of revolutionary change (Sachedina, pp. 205-10). His lectures and writings were widely influential among the secularly educated young, and, although he died in exile in England in June 1977, about six months before the beginning of the revolution, he must be accounted one of its ideological architects.

The Sufi orders of Shiʿite allegiance were thoroughly overshadowed as foci of religious loyalty throughout the Pahlavi period by the prominent ulema we have discussed. Nonetheless, the Neʿmat-Allāhiya in its various branches continued to attract some adherents. Greatly reputed for his piety was Sayyed Ḥosayn Ḥosayni Šams-al-ʿOrafāʾ (d. 1353/1935), whose branch of the order became known as the Šamsiya; he had no notable successors. More influential was Ḥājj Mirzā ʿAbd-al-Ḥosayn Moʾnes-ʿAlišāh (d. 1372/1953), whose title Ḏu'l-Riāsatayn (the holder of dual leadership), although inherited from his father, reflected his proficiency in the world of formal scholarship as well as Sufism. Upon his death, the traditional pattern of discord asserted itself; the most successful of the thirteen claimants to his mantle was Jawād Nurbaḵš, a psychiatrist who managed to recruit many members of Tehran high society at a time when the profession of a certain type of Sufism—one that foreswore political involvement and was ostentatiously loyalist (van den Bos, pp. 111-12)—was becoming popular with official encouragement. The Gonābādi offshoot of the Neʿmat-Allāhiya was largely spared succession crises because of the hereditary mode that had characterized it since its inception; it did, however, produce a defector, Kaywān Qazvini (d. 1358/1939), who wrote several books criticizing what he regarded as the excessively authoritarian nature of all the Sufi orders. Despite certain doctrinal peculiarities, the Gonābādiya earned a reputation as *šariʿa*-observant which eased its transition into the period of the Islamic Republic; its *ḵānaqāh* in Qom was, however, razed by the municipal authorities in February 2006 for having allegedly served as a center of subversion (report in *Jomhuri-e Eslāmi*, 14 February 2006). As for the Ḏahabis, the major figure in their modern history was Mirzā Aḥmad Tabrizi "Waḥid-al-Awliāʾ" (d. 1954), renowned for a high degree of asceticism that led some to believe he enjoyed a privileged relationship with the Twelfth Imam. Shiraz remained the principal center of the order.

No particular developments of a religious nature are to be chronicled for the Sunnite minorities of Persia during the Pahlavi period. In a work published in 1971 but based in part on travels and research undertaken many years earlier, the Austrian geographer Alfons Gabriel estimated the Sunnite population at roughly two million, half of them Kurds. Of the remainder, many inhabited what he calls "enclaves" in Qohestān, such as Bojd near Birjand, Ḵᵛāf, and Zirkuh; in addition, some sixty villages in the region of Ṭabas were purely Sunnite, with a population of some 15,000 (Gabriel, p. 112).

THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC

The movement that began in January 1978 and, gradually acquiring revolutionary dimensions, resulted in the overthrow of the Persian monarchy in February 1979 represented a vast, nationwide outpouring of sentiment, outrage, and aspiration that was expressed primarily in religious terms. Comparisons are sometimes drawn between what is properly called the Islamic Revolution and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-09 in that both were allegedly coalitions between religious and secular forces. It is true that some liberal and leftist forces sought to align themselves with the movement as it approached victory in the winter of 1978, but their participation was belated and marginal. The slogans uttered during the mass demonstrations that marked the progress of the revolution were overwhelmingly Islamic; the principal weapon of the revolutionaries was, until its very last stages, their readiness to embrace martyrdom; the key events in the revolution corresponded to significant dates in the religious calendar, above all Moḥarram; its main organizational unit was the mosque; and its unquestioned leader, in terms of strategy as well as inspiration, was Khomeini.

Post-revolutionary developments are too numerous, complex, and close at hand for even cursory review or analysis. It may, however, be useful to suggest that the governmental system of the Islamic Republic represents a fusion of the constitutionalist legacy with the broad prerogatives claimed for the leader (qua *wali-ye faqih* [the governing jurist]); it includes both an elected assembly and presidency on the one hand with a leader who has wide discretionary powers on the other. The actual functioning of the system, particularly after the death of Khomeini in 1989, has, however, depended in large part on the relative strength of the personalities involved, so that the constitution does not by itself furnish an infallible guide to the formation and execution of policy. This may be regarded equally as a form of inconsistency, inbuilt in the system, or as a type of flexibility that has helped endow the Islamic Republic with a high degree of resilience. Whatever the case may be, Persia has provided the only example of a revolutionary movement that since its triumph has been consistently engaged in the enterprise of defining and constructing a modern Islamic polity.

Post-revolutionary developments touching on minor sects and the Sunnite minorities can be summarized with relative ease. One such development, of relatively minor importance, was the killing, under obscure circumstances, of Ḥāji ʿAbd-al-Reżā Khan Ebrāhimi, leader of the Nāṭeqi faction of the Shaikhi movement, on 26 December 1979 in Kerman (Momen, p. 230). His death

brought an end to the hereditary leadership of the movement that had been exercised by the Ebrāhimi family and the transfer of its direction to Baṣra in southern Iraq; the Shaikhis were already more numerous in Iraq, and elsewhere among the Shiʿite communities of the Persian Gulf, than in Persia. In 1985, the number of Shaikhis in Persia was estimated at 200,000, the principal communities being located in Kerman, Tabriz, Khorramshahr, Abadan, Tehran, Ābāda, Rafsanjān, Shiraz, and Zonuz (Momen, pp. 230-31).

The Islamic Revolution and the subsequent foundation of the Islamic Republic have had certain repercussions for the Sunnite communities of Iran but have not affected their geographic distribution or demographic weight. The autonomist or separatist movements that were active in the aftermath of the revolution in areas of Sunnite population—primarily Kurdistan, but also Turkman-Ṣaḥrā—had neither religious leadership nor motivation, with the exception of a Kurdish faction loyal to Shaikh ʿEzz-al-Din Ḥosayni of Mahābād, and the shortlived Sepāh-e Rezgāri (Army of Liberation), organized by Shaikh ʻOtmān Serāj-al-Din II (d. 1997), a hereditary Naqšbandi shaikh who had taken refuge in Iranian Kurdistan in 1958 and been closely associated with the Pahlavi regime. Shaikh Aḥmad Moftizāda of Sanandaj, who had energetically supported the revolution in the hope that it would result in autonomy for Iranian Kurdistan, sought after its triumph to bring together Sunnite scholars from various regions of the country in a nationwide organization, the Šorā-ye markazi-e sonnat (The Central Sunnite Council), but his initiative was viewed with disfavor. He was arrested in September 1982 and died shortly after his release early in 1993. In the summer of 1994, the destruction of the Sunnite mosque in Mashad by the municipal authorities led to widespread disturbances there and elsewhere in the country, which, in order to prevent the rise of sectarian hostility, were blamed by the government on the oppositional Mojāhedin-e Ḵalq organization; they were commonly interpreted, however, as an expression of Sunnite discontent. Despite a sizeable population of Sunnite migrants drawn to the capital, Tehran still lacks a Sunnite mosque. Wahhābi/Salafi influences, emanating from Pakistan and profoundly hostile to Shiʿism, have been reported at work among the Baluchis of Persia.

Demographic factors affecting the present-day Sunnite population do not exhibit a uniform tendency. An increasing influx of Azarbaijanis into the cities of Tāleš—primarily Hashtpar and Āstārā—has resulted in a proportional diminution of the Sunnite community of the region, and the offspring of intermarriages between Azarbaijani Shiʿites and Talishi Sunnites tend to be

Turkish in speech and Shiʿite in religion. None of the other areas of Sunnite predominance has witnessed a similar development, although officials appointed from the capital tend to be Shiʿite. The censuses of 1986 and 1996, like those carried out at ten-year intervals under the shah's regime, provide figures only for the non-Muslim minorities, and it is therefore impossible to make even an approximate count of the Sunnites. It is, however, noteworthy that the provinces registering the largest increase in proportion of the total population of the country between 1986 and 1996 were the predominantly Sunnite provinces of Sistān and Baluchistān; most of the increase must surely have been due to a rising birthrate in the region. Another relevant set of data concerns the *maktab*s (religious primary schools) maintained in certain areas for the provision of instruction in Sunnite Islam; there is one such school for every two villages in Turkoman-Sahra, and somewhat fewer for villages in Zābol and Baluchestān (Hourcade et al., 1998, pp. 78-80). In 1984, the Sunnites of Persia were estimated to form seven percent of the total population (Higgins, 1984, p. 47). This seems reasonable, and reflects virtually no change from the estimate of eight percent made in 1975 on the basis of the 1966 census (Gehrke and Mehner, 1975, p. 56). According to the 1986 census, 99.38 percent of the total population of Persia is Muslim (Naz5ari, 1989, p. 68); if even 10 percent be awarded to the Sunnites, the Shiʿite population still forms an overwhelming majority of close to 90 percent.

This majority status is reflected in Article Twelve of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic, which specifies that Twelver Shiʿism is and shall always remain the official school of the country, but also declares that followers of the Hanafite, Shafeʿite, Malikite, Hanbalite, and Zaydi schools are guaranteed official respect and the freedom to observe their own schools of law in matters of religious education, worship, and personal status (*Qānun-e asāsi-e jomhuri-e eslāmi-e Irān*, p. 26). This mention of the four Sunnite schools of jurisprudence as well as that of the Zaydis should not, however, be taken to imply the actual existence of Malikites, Hanbalites, and Zaydis in present-day Persia; it seems rather to be a general statement of principle with respect to forms of Islam other than Twelver Shiʿism wherever they may be practiced, for of the groups mentioned, only Hanafites and Shafeʿites have a discernible presence anywhere in the country.

On the other hand, the constitution is silent concerning the Ismaʿilis, perhaps deliberately so, but possibly because of the statistical insignificance of their community. According to postings on a website maintained by Persian

Ismaʿilis resident in the country, some 15,000 to 20,000 Ismaʿilis are now reliably said to live there: the largest community, consisting of migrants from villages in the regions of Birjand and Qāʾen, resides in Mashad, while migrants from Maḥallāt, Shahr-e Bābak, and Kerman have clustered in Tehran. Smaller communities persist in all those places of origin, although it is doubtful that even a single village could now be found with an Ismaʿili majority.

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