



## ŞADR

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**ŞADR**, Arabic term (“chest, breast, bosom, foremost”; plur. *şodur*) used in the Iranian lands mainly to denote an outstanding person (scholar or otherwise); hence it was also applied as a personal title: (1) initially, for leading religious scholars in Transoxiana (Bosworth, “Şadr”); (2) later, also for high administrative dignitaries; (3) as of about 1380 until the end of the 18th century, for the head of the government-appointed religious establishment; and finally (4) for the grand vizier and other dignitaries under the Qajars. The office of şadr was known as *şadārat*

*Samanids, Ghaznavids, and Saljuqs.* Traditionally, scholars in Transoxiana had been the object of great respect and were given Persian honorifics such as *dānešmand* “wise, learned” or *ostād* “outstanding” (see Floor, “Ustādh”). As a consequence, it is not surprising that leading members of the religious institution in Transoxianian towns (e.g., Bukhara, Khojand, Samarqand), who also held functions such as *ra’is* “mayor” (see Bosworth, “Ra’is”) and *kaṭīb* “preacher” (Pedersen), were also honored with the title of şadr “pre-eminent.” In Bukhara, the title *şadr-e jahān* “foremost of the world” became hereditary in the 12th-13th-century *Āl-e Borhān* family. According to Ebn al-Aṭīr (Beirut, XII, pp. 257-58; Faṣiḥ Aḥmad, II, p. 282), the high-handed manner of one of them, Moḥammad II b. Aḥmad b. ‘Abd-al-‘Aziz Borhān-al-Din, during the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1207, caused other pilgrims to refer to him as *şadr Jahannam* “foremost of Hell.” Because of their standing in the region, the leading religious personality of the day from the Borhān-al-Din clan would be referred to as *şadr al-şodur* (şadr of the şadrs; Barthold, *Turkestan*, pp. 15, 326,



353-55; Samʿāni, ed. Margoliouth, pp. 243-46; Naršaḳi, p. 4; tr. Frye, p. 4; for primary information on the family, see *Čahār maqāla*, notes, pp. 59-65). ʿAbd-alʿAziz Borhān-al-Din even had the title of *şadr al-emām*. These şadrs were in close contact with ruling houses, and their eponym, Borhān-al-Din ʿAbd-al-ʿAziz b. Māza, had married the sister of the Saljuqid Sultan Sanjar b. Malekšāh (d. 1157).

The Transoxianian şadr families were not only noteworthy for their leading role in religious affairs, but also because of their economic and political power. The latter, when exercised too bluntly and in opposition to the ruler, might lead to execution of the intrepid şadr, as in the case of the şadr Esmāʿil b. Abi Naşr Şaffār, who was killed by the Qarakhanid Şams-al-Molk (r. 1068-80) in 1069, allegedly because he had “exhorted the Khān to carry out the ordinances of religion and restrained him from things forbidden” (Samʿāni, apud Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 316). When the Borhān-al-Dins were ousted from their exalted position by a popular uprising, the family that took over their position also acquired the title of *şadr-e jahān* (Barthold, *Turkestan*, pp. 316, 320, 360, 379).

Under the Buyids, the term şadr does not occur among the titles of officeholders analyzed by Heribert Busse (1969, pp. 250-61). By the 11th century, however, under the Saljuqs and K̄vārazmšāhs, the title of şadr was not only used to denote any leading religious scholar, but also to refer to high administrative dignitaries. Royal documents, for example, were addressed to *kāns*, *maleks*, viziers, şadrs, *amirs*, and other dignitaries. This wider use of “şadr” was common, not only in Transoxiana and Khorasan, but also in Azarbaijan (Horst, pp. 17, 100, 106, 110, 113, 166, 168; Minorsky, 1958, p. 117; Masʿud b. Nāmdār, foll. 66b, *al-şadr al-kabir*, 101b, *şadr-al-Eslām wazir-al-moḥaqqeqin*).

*Il-khanids*. Under the [Il-khanids](#) and Jalayerids, the title continued to be accorded to both religious and secular officials. In general, the term şadr was used to indicate all dignitaries (Naḳjavāni, II, pp. 12, 13, 17, 38, 78, 85, etc.). The term *şadr-e aʿzam* was used to address the *malek-al-tojjār* “principal merchant” (see Gilbar; see also [CITIES iii.](#), p. 620), the scribe (*kāteb*) of the *divān* or central administration, the vizier, the *nawwāb*, the *wakil-e kāşşa*, and all *aʿzem* or high-ranking dignitaries (Naḳjavāni, I/2, pp. 326, 366, 461, 498). In fact, the term was in such common use that there was great variation in its application (see [Table 1](#)).

The honorific *şadr-e jahān* also reappeared, such as in case of Şadr-al-Din Aḥmad Kāledi Zanĵāni, the vizier to several Il-khanids (*Ḥabib al-siar* III, pp. 129, 135-38, 140, 145-48, 151, 165; K̄vāndamir, pp. 305-12; Ahari, pp. 144-45). The author of the *Margub al-qolub*, Noḡawāt al-sādāt, also had the honorific *şadr-e jahān* (Aubin, 1982, p. 213). A leading Mughal official sent to the Uzbeks in 1586/87 also wore the title of Mir Şadr-e Jahān (Riazul Islam, II, pp. 212, 214). The term *şadr* was also used to show respect to past great scholars such as Şadr-al-Şari‘a Boĵāri (d. 1346/47; ‘Abd-al-Razzāq Samarĵandi, I, p. 96; Hedāyat, *Rawzat al-şafā* IV, p. 661, VIII, p. 155; Aubin, 1982, p. 96). The title of *şadr* remained an honorific for important dignitaries until about 1370 (Herrmann, pp. 278-95).

*Timurids.* At the end of the 14th century, the term *şadr* had acquired a distinct character, denoting the most important religious official in the state, while the *qāzi’l-qożāt* (chief judge) took second place. The first known appointment of such a *şadr* dates from 1380 for the city of Herat and its districts (Herrmann, pp. 287 f.). The position of *şadr* was one found only in the Persian culture area (e.g. Persia, Central Asia, Mughal India). Under the Timurids as well as under the Qara Qoyunlus and Āq Qoyunlus (q.v.), the *şadr* had become the most important, government-appointed, religious official (Hinz, pp. 115, 134; Minorsky, 1939, pp. 150, 153, 161; Barthold, 1935, p. 153; Herrmann, p. 281; Yazdi, pp. 128, 1234, 171). As such, the *şadr* was the head of all religious offices (*manāşeb-e şari‘at*), as well as the person responsible for all pious endowments (*mawqufāt*). It was therefore stressed that the *şadr* should be a descendant of the Prophet (*sayyed*), a leading scholar of exemplary behavior, and an experienced administrator. Under the Timurids, the *şadr* was to see to it that pious endowments, both state and private ones, prospered, which also meant that the buildings had to be well looked after. He also was in charge of appointing all kinds of personnel who were needed to manage and operate mosques, *madrasas*, and the like, such as sayyeds, jurists (*foqohā’*), and Sufi shaikhs, as well as to take care of the poor, the needy, and the orphans. These functions were, furthermore, often shared by more than one person. In addition to a central government *şadr*, there were also provincial *şadrs* under the Timurids, who were not necessarily subordinate to their colleague in the capital city. Şadrs also could have more than one function, sometimes even combining it with that of *qāzi* or judge (see [JUDICIARY](#); Herrmann, pp. 280-82; ‘Abd-Allāh Morvārid, comm., pp. 144-46; Aubin, 1956, pp. 18, n., 68, 70, n., 72, n.).



*Safavids*. Under the Safavids, the şadr was the most important religious state official. The role of şadr under the Safavids was limited to managing the properties, finances, and staff of the religious endowments, and distributing its largesse to the various entitlement holders (ulama, sayyeds, theology students [*tollāb*], the poor), but with the additional task of being chief judicial officer for the religious courts. Although he was the head of the religious institution, the şadr was not independent of the Safavid military-political establishment. In fact, he was part of it, even participating in military campaigns. Like other high-ranking state officials under the early Safavids, the şadr held the rank of *amir*. The last amir şadr who held office died in 1525. Whether this marked a change in Safavid policy from expansionism toward consolidation, as Roger Savory has it, is unlikely. For we neither observe a change in the function nor in the powers of the şadr after that period (Savory, 1960, 1961, 1964).

Savory (1961) concludes that the Safavid religious institution was already independent of the Safavid political system, to which it was nominally subordinate, because the şadr had been given the exclusive charge of all matter concerning *soyurğāls* (hereditary fiefs exempt from taxation, mostly bestowed upon members of the religious class; see also Mirzā Rafī‘ā, 2002, comm., pp. 255-56 and n. 95). Evidence of actual practice, however, does not bear out such a conclusion; besides, the term *soyurğāl* used in the text that Savory referred to only concerns *waqf* property (Savory, 1961, p. 79, n. 10; for more details, see Floor, 1999, p. 60). Nor was the şadr the chief protagonist to promote Shi‘ism. Some of the early şadrs were often Sunnis in disguise. For instance, Mir ‘Abd-al-Bāqi (şadr in 1512-13) was the shaikh of the Ne ‘mat-Allāhi order; and Sayyed ‘Abd-Allāh (şadr in 1515), was the shaikh of the [Dahabiya](#) order. Both orders were, to begin with, Sunnite, with friendly leanings towards Shi‘ism (Aubin, 1988, p. 92). Therefore, these appointments were of a purely political nature to bolster the Safavid’s regime’s position, in southwestern Persia, and also to get general political support after the defeat in the battle of [Çālderān](#) against the Ottomans in 1514 (Aubin, 1988, p. 116).

Provincial şadrs also existed under the Safavids, during at least the first nine decades of the 16th century. For example, Amir Ġiāt-al-Din Moḥammad b. Yusof, the şadr of Ṭahmāsb Mirzā, was şadr and governor of Khorasan in 1518 (*Ḥabib al-siar* IV, p. 576). In 1523, the appointment of the şadr of Herat is mentioned (Montażāer-e Şāḥeb, ed., pp. 612, 618). The şadr of Şakki and Şarvān was appointed in Ramażān 957/September 1550, just after that region’s

conquest. The local population was ordered to pay the *koms* and *zakāt* to him, while the *qāzis*, the *mohtaseb* (market inspector and supervisor of public moral), and the *m otaşaddis* (managers of royal gardens and palaces) were appointed and dismissed by him (Musavi, 1977, doc. 1; Todua and Shams, eds., II, p. 254). Khan Aḥmad (see [GILĀN v.](#)), the local ruler of Gilān, also appointed as *şadr* a certain ‘Abd-al-Razzāq, who was sent to the Safavid court in 975/1567-68 to express remorse for Khan’s Aḥmad’s behavior (Eskandar Beg, I, p. 112; tr. Savory, I, p. 185). In 1582, Mir ‘Alā’-al-Molk Nabi Mar’aşı, after having been *qāzi-’askar* (military judge; see Mirzā Rafi’ā, 2002, comm., pp. 278 ff. with further references), was appointed *şadr* of Gilān, with a *soyurğāl* of 20 tomans (Qāzi Aḥmad Qomi, II, p. 724; Eskandar Beg I, p. 146; tr. Savory, I, p. 234, also giving an appreciation of his standing in society; Wāleh Eşfahāni, p. 415).

The Safavids also continued the Timurid practice of having more than one person hold the function of *şadr*. From 1503 onwards, the function of the central *şadr* was intermittently held jointly by two persons, who were referred to as partners (*şarik*) or as half-*şadr* (*nim-şadr*); and, as of 1509, the function was always held by sayyeds (Qāzi Aḥmad Qomi, I, p. 296). In 970/1562-63, Shah Ṭahmāsb I (r. 1524-76) divided the jurisdiction of the function into two parts, thus formalizing the usually split function of the *şadārat* office. He appointed one *şadr* for the *kāşşa* (crown) and another for the *mamālek* (state) lands. They were referred to as *şadr-e ‘amma* and *şadr-e kāşşa* or as *şadral-mamālek* and *şadr-e divān* (Gaffari Qazvini, p. 308). Thus the alleged split of the function in 1606 attributed to Shah ‘Abbās I (r. 1588-1629), or to Shah Solaymān (r. 1666-94) around 1672, was neither correct nor a sign of the weakening of the function of the *şadr*, as Savory and Röhrborn have it. Minorsky, too, was mistaken to state that Solaymān separated the offices into *kāşşa* and *‘amma* jurisdictions, as was Kaempfer, who says that this happened in 1670 (*Taḍkerat al-moluk*, ed. Minorsky, p. 111; Kaempfer, p. 98; Röhrborn, p. 117). The new formal division reflected a territorial, administrative concern, not a religious one, for the jurisdiction of each *şadr* was the same in his own territory. The territorial division between the two *şadrs* changed over time (Floor, 2000b).

It would seem that the *şadr-e kāşşa* was higher in rank in the second half of the 17th century. Jean Chardin maintained that the *şadr-e kāşşa* was the more important one of the two and called him the “le grand pontife,” similar to the *mofti* of the Ottomans, and that he was in charge of the finances of the “church” (Chardin, ed. Langlès, VI, pp. 51, 46). In terms of social standing, however, the distinction between the two *şadrs* was not so clear-cut. The *şadrs*



were both entitled *nawwāb*, and they both sometimes married Safavid princesses. At official functions, both şadrs were treated with equal deference (*Tadkerat al-moluk*, ed. Minorsky, p. 111; Sanson, p. 13; Kaempfer, pp. 97-98). During the last 100 years of Safavid rule the function was shared between three families that were all related to the Safavids. (For a list of all the holders of the office of şadr during the Safavid period see Floor, 2000b.)

One person might hold both functions at the same time, which, as has been already shown, also occurred before the formal division of the function (Kaempfer, p. 98; *Tadkerat al-moluk*, ed. Minorsky, pp. 42, 111). It could also happen that the şadr-e *kāşşa* was *qāzi-‘askaror nā‘eb-e şadr-e mamālek* at the same time, as was the case during 1696-1705 (Mirzā Rafi‘ā, 1967-68, pp. 64-66; ed. Afšār, pp. 492-93; Dabihi and Sotuda, pp. 58, 66). It probably could also be the other way around, which may explain why Sanson (p. 15) refers to the şadr-e *mamālek* as the deputy of the şadr-e *kāşşa*. Sometimes the shah did not appoint a şadr at all for a number of years. This happened towards the end of the reign of Shah ‘Abbās II (r. 1642-66; Chardin, ed. Langlès, IX, p. 515). Also, from 1680 onwards, Shah Solaymān took charge of the office of şadr-e *kāşşa* himself for a number of years, when he had the previous officeholder imprisoned for alleged *lèse-majesté* (Kaempfer, pp. 98, 104; Kroell, p. 46). The şadr was always a religious scholar and, as of 915/1509-10, always a sayyed. This was a departure from pre-Safavid practice, when very few şadrs were sayyeds (Herrmann, p. 281).

*Judicial tasks.* Together with the *divānbeği* the şadr-e *mamālek* and the şadr-e *kāşşa* sat in judgement on religious law disputes (Mirzā Rafi‘ā, 1968-69, pp. 64-65, 87; ed. Afšār, pp. 492-93, 517; *Tadkerat al-moluk*, ed. Minorsky, pp. 42, 111). The role of the *divānbeği* in judging cases and executing verdicts was preponderant, and gradually the şadrs hardly attended the court’s sessions anymore. This subordination of the religious (*şar‘i*) courts shows the continuation of the practice applied by Muslim states to limit the powers of the *ulama* (Olearius, p. 674; Modarresi Ṭabāṭabā‘i; Floor, 2000a). Provincial state officials also wanted to make inroads on the prerogatives of the şadr, but they were ordered to respect him and not to interfere in his affairs or the execution of his functions (Musavi, 1977, doc. 2).

The şadr was in charge of judicial affairs related to religious (*şar‘i*) law and as such had the sole right to appoint and dismiss judges (*qāzis*), *mohtasebs*, *motawallis* and other religious officials (*Tadkerat al-moluk*, ed. Minorsky, p. 42; Mirzā Rafi‘ā, 1968-69, pp. 64-65; ed. Afšār, pp. 492-93; Musavi, 1977, docs. 1, 2;

Kaempfer, p. 114; Chardin, ed. Langlès, VI, pp. 49-50). Only in the appointment of judges did the şadr share responsibility. The şadr had the right to appoint the “chief judges” (*qāzi-e koll*), while the *şayk-al-Eslām* only appointed the “district judges” (*qāzi-e jozw*). The şadr-e *kāşşa* also appointed his deputy or *nā’eb-eşadr*, who assisted him in the management of all şadārat-related affairs (Bāfqi, III, pp. 371, 376; Bardsiri, p. 262), and the şadr-e *kāşşa*’s main provincial deputy was the *modarres* (Sanson, p. 141). Röhrborn, therefore, is hardly justified in his conclusion that the *modarres* was, rather, the provincial representative of the şadr-e *mamālek* and that the *nā’eb-e şadr* was the provincial representative of the şadr-e *kāşşa* (Röhrborn, p. 69; *Taḍkerat al-moluk*, ed. Minorsky, p. 42; Chardin, ed. Langlès, VI, p. 62; Mofaḵkam, doc. 6; Fragner, doc. 8; see further, Floor, 2000b, p. 469).

As overseer of the religious judiciary the şadr was called upon to examine the *esteḥqāq* (legal inheritance rights) of heirs to a *soyurḡāl* (Jahānpur, doc. 13; Puturidze, no. 29; Dabiḥi and Sotuda, docs. 18-19, 32, 37; see also Richard, II, pp. 121-22, 325). He also had to approve changes in aspects of a *soyurḡāl* deed (Dabiḥi and Sotuda, doc. 37). In both these cases the term *soyurḡāl* was used as a synonym for *waqf*. His role with regard to religious matters also extended itself to non-Muslims, including members of the European Christian clergy residing in Persia. For example, when the Carmelite monks were granted a certain privilege, the decree was witnessed and sealed by the şadr (Mofaḵkam, pp. 155, 158). Non-Muslims often turned to the şadrs’ court in case of conflicts about non-Muslim endowments and property. In addition, the şadr also gave to a Christian, who reverted from Islam to his old religion, which the Persians allowed, “an Authentick Certificate for Safety sake, in which he calls them by the name of Apostat” (Chardin, 1927, p. 185; Papaziyan, doc 3; *Taḍkerat al-moluk*, ed. Minorsky, p. 111). Although the office of şadr was not a theological one charged with the preservation of the tenets of Shi’ite Islam, the şadr’s court had the exclusive authority to deal with religious personnel. This was not abnormal, because, similarly, army personnel were judged by their chief commander rather than by the *divānbegi* and his secular (*’orfi*) court (“Moullahs, or Mahometan Priests, are to sue or to be su’d in this Court,” Sanson, p. 144).

*The şadr as administrator of endowments.* Because of the şadr’s identification with the management of the pious endowments, he also was known as *şadr-e mawqūfāt* (Roemer, p. 146; Chardin, ed. Langlès VI, p. 50). The administration and control of all so-called *tafwiziwaqf* property (royal pious endowments),



which were endowments granted from *kāşşa* property dedicated to the memory of the Fourteen Immaculate Ones (*Āhārdah ma'şum*), was in the hands of the *şadr-e kāşşa* as the head of the *divān-al-şadāra* (Mirzā Rafi'ā, 1968-69, p. 64; ed. Afşār, p. 492). The term *tafwizi* (lit. “delegated”) referred to a category of endowments of which the Safavid monarch himself was the nominal superintendent (*motawalli*) and of which he delegated his authority, in this case to the *şadr-e kāşşa* as the head of the *divān al-şadāra* (Mirzā Rafi'ā, 1968-69, pp. 64-65; ed. Afşār, pp. 492-93; 2002, comm., pp. 262-63, 601; *Taḍkerat al-moluk*, ed. Minorsky, p. 42).

The total value of the waqf properties was estimated by Father Raphaël Du Mans at 25,000 tomans, although according to some, he noted, it amounted to 100,000 tomans (Richard, II, p. 323). According to Chardin, the revenues of the *şadr-e kāşşa* alone amounted to as much as 200,000 tomans (Chardin, ed. Langlès, IX, p. 562; for a discussion of these rather too high estimates of the value of waqf property, see McChesney, pp. 186-87; see also Waḥid Qazvini, p. 223, who mentions an annual revenue of 14,000 tomans). Thus, control over the waqf properties held considerable attraction for the political and religious elites, and the *şadr* appointments often had little to do with religion. For example, the *wakils*, or vicegerents did their utmost to have their own man chosen, given the economic importance of the function (see e.g., Aubin, 1988, p. 116). At times, the function was even sold to the highest bidder, for it is reported that Mir Ġiāt-al-Din Moḥammad Mir(-e) Mirān Eşfahāni paid a large amount of money for the *şadārat* (Qāzi Aḥmad Qomi, I, pp. 561, 564). The *şadr* of Herat paid a large bribe (*reşwa*) to become *şadr* (Montazer-e Şāheb, ed., pp. 612, 618). The function of *şadr* offered substantial opportunity for the accumulation of wealth; and, therefore, it comes as no surprise that those *şadrs* who were dismissed for untoward behavior had to pay heavy fines. Despite the scope for enriching himself, the *şadr* also received various fees for his upkeep. He was, for example, entitled to the *rasm al-şadāra*, which only he was permitted to collect (Qāzi Aḥmad Qomi, I, p. 392). Because the *şadr* also was responsible for the collection of the religious taxes, viz. the *zakāt* and *koms*, he received a fee for this trouble as well (Musavi, 1977, doc. 1). In late Safavid times, the *şadr-e kāşşa* also received an annual sum as *madad-e ma'āş* (a supplementary subvention; see Floor, 1999, pp. 63 f.; Mirzā Rafi'ā, 1968-69, pp. 65-66, ed. Afşār, p. 493, tr., pp. 76, 588).

*Afsharids, Zands, Qajars*. The function of head of the religious establishment continued to exist under the Afsharids and Zands, but with a much reduced

role presaging its demise (Şefatgol, pp. 431-49; Roschanzamir, p. 157). There were also scholars who were honored with titles such as *şadr-al-ḥokamā'* and *şadr-al-mota'allehin* (Hedāyat, *Rawzat al-şafā* VIII, pp. 584-85). The function was abolished in the early Qajar period, probably due to the breakdown of the earlier centralized system and the rise of the role of the *mojtaheds* (see [EJTEHĀD](#)). The early meaning of the title, that is, an outstanding, pre-eminent person, was used in the Qajar period until the end of the dynasty as a prefix to many of the titles awarded to dignitaries (Solaymāni, pp. 95-99). The most important of these titles was that of *şadr-e a'zam*, which was given for the first time in 1809 to Mirzā Şafi' Māzandarāni, the grand vizier of [Fath-'Ali Shah](#) (r. 1797-1834), "following the rule (*qānun*) of the Ottoman empire" (Fasā'i, ed. Rastgār, I, p. 701; see also Athar Ali, "Şadr-ı A'zam," *EI*<sup>2</sup>).

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