



Imam  
Musa Kazim  
and Sufi  
Tradation

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## IMĀM MŪSĀ AL-KĀZIM AND ṢŪFĪ TRADITION

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It is well known that the Imams from the *Ahl al-Bayt* enjoyed, both during their lifetime and posthumously, the respect and veneration of many within the Islamic community who were not, in the strict sense, their followers. This was no doubt a principal reason for the persecution and confinement to which the Imams were repeatedly exposed. Prominent among those who did not belong to the Shī'ah faith but nonetheless held the Imams in high esteem were those ascetics and Sufis who came to believe, like the Shī'ah, in the initiatic transmission of a special body of knowledge and, seeing in the Imams exemplars of the spiritual virtues, included them among their spiritual teachers and forebears. Thus al-Kalābādhī (d.385/995) begins his listing of "those who spoke concerning the sciences of the Sufis" with a mention of the first six Imams<sup>1</sup>; Hujwīrī (d.ca. 465/1071) lists them immediately after the *Rāshidūn* Caliphs as "the *imāms* of the Sufis"<sup>2</sup>; and Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār opens his celebrated compendium, the *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, with a detailed mention of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and closes it with a similar account of Muḥammad al-Bāqir, thus symbolically including the numerous Sufis whose lives he describes between these two Imams from the Household of the Prophet.<sup>3</sup>

It is indisputable that the early Sufis drew inspiration, in a general sense, from certain dicta and teachings of the Imams. In addition, however, widespread traditions -- repeated down to the present -- associate each of the first eight of the Twelve Imams personally with one or more of the well-known Sufis.<sup>4</sup> These traditions have not yet been evaluated in any systematic way, and it is possible that at least in some cases their foundation in historical fact may be weak. Nonetheless, the very existence of these traditions, together with their persistence, demonstrates how the Imams have served as poles of the spiritual world for many Muslims, even after the Sunnī-Shī'ī division crystallized in more or less sectarian form. We propose to examine here the accounts that link to Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm the

names of Shaqīq Balkhī (d.194/810), Bishr al-Ḥāfī (d.227/841), and Ma'rūf Karkhī (d. 200/815) and to suggest in what additional ways the Imam played a role in the shaping of Sufi tradition.

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All who have written of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm are unanimous in ascribing to him high spiritual virtues. In addition to *al-Kāzīm* ("the one who vanquishes anger"; cf. al-Qur'ān, III :134), he was known to his contemporaries as *al-'abd al-ṣāliḥ* ("the righteous servant of God") and was celebrated for his asceticism, piety, mildness of demeanor, and trustworthiness in transmitting *Ḥadīth*.<sup>5</sup> He was much given to prolonged prostration<sup>6</sup> and to supplicatory prayer, declaring of the latter that it was able to repel even that which had been predetermined.<sup>7</sup> Some of the prayers he composed have been preserved in both Shī'ī and Sufī manuals of devotion.<sup>8</sup> Among his predecessors in the line of Imams, he has been well compared with Imam 'Alī Zayn al-'Ābidīn for gentleness of character and asceticism of nature.<sup>9</sup> All this suggests that in both Madinah and Baghdad he must have served as a pole of attraction for those who sought to cultivate the spiritual life and shun what was perceived as the corruption of the day. In a sense, he continued to fulfil this function after his death in 183/799, for his tomb in Baghdad became a favoured place of pilgrimage where prayers were thought likely to be accepted; among the people of the city, it was known as *Bāb al-Ḥawā'ij* ("the gate to the fulfilment of needs").<sup>10</sup> None other than Imam Shāfi'ī is reported to have said that his tomb was "a well-proven antidote" (*tiryāq mujarrab*).<sup>11</sup>

Shaqīq Balkhī is the Sufī whose name is most commonly linked to that of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm. According to the conventional accounts, Shaqīq was deflected from a life of worldly neglect by a series of encounters and incidents experienced during his travels as a merchant, becoming thereafter a pupil of the well-known ascetic, Ibrāhīm b.Ad'ham (d.c.165/782). He is said to have been martyred at Khuttalan in Transoxiana in 194/810. The dicta attributed to him relate mostly to *tawakkul*, and his principal disciple was Ḥātam al-Aṣamm.<sup>12</sup>

There is, however, a lengthy story, not found in the earliest Sufi compendia, that associates Shaqīq with Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm. It is said that while on his way to the Ḥajj in the year 149/766, Shaqīq noticed among his fellow travellers, during a pause at Qādisīyah, a young man of

striking appearance — handsome, slender, and dark brown in complexion. Telling himself that the young man must be a mendicant Sufi, intent on exploiting the charity of the pilgrims, Shaqīq went up to him with the intention of reproaching him. But before he had a chance to utter a word, the young man said, "O Shaqīq, 'avoid excessive suspicion, for some suspicion is sinful' (al- Qur'ān, XLIX :12)." Overcome with remorse, Shaqīq tried to follow him in order to ask him to pray for the forgiveness of his sins, but he lost sight of him in the crowd. Somewhat later, he glimpsed him again, now standing in prayer, "with his limbs trembling and his tears flowing down." When he had completed his prayers, he turned to Shaqīq and said, "O Shaqīq, recite this saying of the Almighty: Certainly I am oft-forgiving to those who repent, believe and do right, and who are ready to accept true guidance' (al- Qur'ān, XX:82)." Thus the young man had again divined what Shaqīq had intended to say, leaving him with the conviction that he must be one of the *abdāl*. After a further interval, Shaqīq noticed him preparing to fill his waterskin. Hiding in a nearby well, Shaqīq saw the water rise up miraculously to fill the waterskin. The young man then made his ablutions with the water and filled the skin with sand. He shook the skin, turning the sand into water, which he then drank. Shaqīq now made his presence known, and begged to be allowed to drink of the water that had been miraculously transmuted from sand. The young man consented, saying, "O Shaqīq, the bounties of God reach us unceasingly, both apparent and hidden, so view your Lord with favour." Shaqīq drank from the waterskin and, according to some versions of the story, found it to contain a substance akin to *sawiq*, a kind of mash made from corn and dates.<sup>13</sup> Thereafter he felt neither hunger nor thirst for several days. It was not until reaching Makkah that Shaqīq finally discovered the identity of the mysterious young man. Seeing him surrounded by hundreds of devotees as he circumambulated the Ka'bah, Shaqīq asked a bystander who it was that had aroused such fervour, and he was told that it was Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm.<sup>14</sup>

Absent not only from the standard sufi biographical dictionaries but also from early authoritative accounts of the lives of the Imams, such as the *Kitāb al-Irshād* of Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022), this narrative is to be found in a wide variety of later works, of both Sunnī and Shī'ī authorship. It is worth stressing, however, that the story makes its first appearance in Sunnī sources. The earliest author to record it seems to

have been Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Khallād Rāmhurmuzī (d. ca. 360/970), a *qāḍī* of Khuzistan better known to posterity as a *Ḥadīth* scholar than as a biographer of Sufis.<sup>15</sup> Rāmhurmuzī's *Karāmāt al-Awliyā'*, a work now apparently lost, is cited by many later authors as one of their principal sources for the story of Shaqīq's encounter with Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm.<sup>16</sup> Next come two works of the celebrated Ḥanbalī *faqīh*, *muhaddith* and historian, Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200), *Ṣifat al-Ṣafwah*, a critical digest of Abū Nu'aym Iṣfahānī's *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*; and a still unpublished work referred to by various titles of which the most correct appears to be *Muthir al-Gharām al-Sākin fī Faḍā'il al-Biqā' wa'l-Amākin*.<sup>17</sup> The Istanbul manuscript of *Ṣifat al-Ṣafwah* cites as authority for the story Khushnam b. Ḥātām al-Aṣamm, who heard it from his father, who heard it from Shaqīq himself.<sup>18</sup> The next author to write of the encounter between Shaqīq and the Imam was al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Azīz b. al-Akḥḍar al-Junābadhī (d. 611/1214-15), a Ḥanbalī *faqīh* of Baghdad originally from Nishapur. His still unpublished *Ma'ālim al-'Itrat al-Nabawīyah* is cited as authority for the story by a number of later writers.<sup>19</sup>

A full *sanad* is given by the historian al-Sibt ibn al-Jawzī (d. 654/1256) for his telling of the story in *Tadhkirat al-Khawāṣṣ*; it contains eight names, the last of which is again Khushnam, the son of Ḥātām al-Aṣamm.<sup>20</sup> Contemporary with al-Sibt ibn al-Jawzī was a certain Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ṭalḥah al-Ḥalabī (d. 652/1254), a Shāfi'ī *muhaddith* who taught in Aleppo and Damascus.<sup>21</sup> He tells the story of Shaqīq's encounter with Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm in his *Maṭālib al-Su'ūl fī Manāqib Āl al-Rasūl*, giving precisely the same *sanad* as al-Sibt ibn al-Jawzī.<sup>22</sup>

Two further Sunnī compendia on the lives of the Imams content themselves with a retelling of the story as found in earlier sources (notably Rāmhurmuzī, Ibn al-Jawzī and al-Junābadhī) without supplying any *sanad*. These are the *Kashf al-Ghummah fī Ma'rifat al-A'imma* by Abū'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. 'Īsā al-Irbīlī (d. 692/1293)<sup>23</sup> and *al-Fuṣūl al-Muḥimmah fī Ma'rifat al-A'imma* by Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī b. Muḥammad (d. 855/1451), known as Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh, a Mālikī *faqīh* resident in Makkah.<sup>24</sup> Finally we may cite the well-known anti-Shī'ī polemic, *al-Ṣawā'iq al-Muḥriqah*, of the Shāfi'ī *muhaddith* and *faqīh*, Ibn Ḥajar al-Haythamī (d. 973/1565); he quotes as his sources for the encounter of Shaqīq with Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm Ibn al-Jawzī and Rāmhurmuzī.<sup>25</sup>

It is to be noted that in none of these sources is there any indication of further contact having taken place between Shaqīq Balkhī and Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm, or of the threefold encounter on the road to Makkah having served as an initiatic experience for Shaqīq. The same is true of the first two Shī'ī sources to speak of an encounter between Shaqīq and Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm: the *Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib* of Ibn Shahrāshūb (d. 588/1192) and the *Minḥāj al-Karāmah* of 'Allāmah Ḥillī (d. 726/1325). The account given by Ibn Shahrāshūb is the second (or possibly the third) oldest of all tellings of the story, whether in Sunnī or Shī'ī sources, but it seems hardly ever to have been quoted, even in later Shī'ī works. For his part, Ibn Shahrāshūb cites as his source a work unmentioned elsewhere, the *Amthāl al-Ṣāliḥīn* of an unnamed author.<sup>26</sup> 'Allāmah Ḥillī recounts the story as told by Ibn al-Jawzī in *Ṣifat al-Ṣafwah*, without adding any comment of his own.<sup>27</sup>

By contrast, a near-contemporary of 'Allāmah Ḥillī asserts flatly that Shaqīq Balkhī was the *murīd* of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm, while dispensing with all anecdotal evidence. This is Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī, the Shī'ī gnostic of the eighth/fourteenth century who maintained true Sufism to be identical with true Shī'ism. Describing in the *Jāmi' al-Asrār wa Manba' al-Anwār* the alleged transmission of esoteric knowledge by the Imams to certain among the Sufis and ascetics, he asserts that one line of transmission went from Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm to Shaqīq Balkhī and "from him to his students and disciples."<sup>28</sup> Āmulī was followed some hundred years later by Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsā'ī (d. post 901/1496) who similarly stated in his *Kitāb al-Mujlī* that Shaqīq was the disciple of (*akhadha 'an*) Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm.<sup>29</sup> A further element was added to Shaqīq's association with the Imam by Qāḍī Nūr-Allāh Shūshtarī (d. 1019/1610), who claimed in his *Majālis al-Mu'minīn* that Shaqīq was in fact a Shī'ī and was even martyred for his beliefs in Transoxiana (*ba tuḥmat-i rafḍ shahīd shud*).<sup>30</sup> This identification of Shaqīq as a Shī'ī was not widely followed by later Shī'ī authorities. Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī (d. 1111/1700), for example, contents himself with a retelling of the story as found in the works of Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Irbīlī and Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh, not even making of Shaqīq a disciple of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm.<sup>31</sup> Muḥammad Bāqir Khwānsārī (d. 1313/1895), author of a well-known biographical dictionary of Shī'ī notables, *Rawḍat al-Jannāt fī Aḥwāl al-'Ulamā' wa'l-Sādāt*, records non-committally of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm that he has been related to be the master (*ustādh*) of Shaqīq Balkhī, without classing Shaqīq as a

Shī'ī.<sup>32</sup> Finally, Muḥammad Ma'ṣūm Shīrāzī, known as Ma'ṣūm 'Alī Shāh (d. 1344/1926), draws together in his encyclopaedic work on Sufism the evidence of both Sunnī and Shī'ī sources, and concludes that Shaqīq Balkhī was invested with a cloak (*khirqah*) by Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm, making him a *murīd* of the Imam but not an adherent of the Shī'ah.<sup>33</sup>

The second Sufi whose name has been linked to that of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm is Abū Naṣr Bishr b. al-Hārith al-Hāfi, usually referred to as Bishr al-Hāfi. According to the standard Sufi biographies, he was redeemed from a life of dissipation and drunkenness by the simple act of cleansing and perfuming a scrap of paper bearing the divine name that he found on the road.<sup>34</sup>

Other sources, however, attribute his salvation to Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm and relate the following story. One day the Imam was passing in front of Bishr's house in Baghdad and was distressed to hear echoing from it the sound of music and frivolous rejoicing. A maidservant emerged from the house, and the Imam asked her whether the owner of the house was a freeman or a slave. She replied that he was a freeman, whereupon the Imam observed that must indeed be the case, for if he were a slave, he would engage in acts of servitude (i.e. worship of God). When the maidservant returned inside, Bishr asked her what had delayed her. She recounted what Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm had said, and Bishr was overwhelmed with remorse. Barefooted, he rushed out of the house and catching up with the Imam fell penitently at his feet.

It appears again to have been Ibn al-Jawzī who first related this story. Muḥammad Bāqir Khwānsārī writes in his *Rawḍat al-Jannāt* that he had seen the autograph copy of a work by Zayn al-Dīn al-'Āmilī al-Shahīd al-Thānī (d. 966/1588) citing the *Kitāb al-Mud'hiṣh* of Ibn al-Jawzī as authority for this narrative of Bishr's repentance.<sup>35</sup> In this telling of the story, however, the Imam in question is 'Alī Zayn al-'Ābidīn, not Mūsā al-Kāzīm, a gross chronological error that it is difficult to attribute either to Ibn al-Jawzī or to al-Shahīd al-Thānī. It is also worth noting that Ibn al-Jawzī makes no mention of encounter between Bishr and Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm in the section he devotes to the former in his *Ṣifāt al-Ṣafwah*.<sup>36</sup> It nonetheless seems probable that the story entered circulation some time before the seventh/thirteenth century, for it is taken up by 'Allāmah Hillī in *Minhāj al-Karāmah*.<sup>37</sup> Hillī is cited in turn by Qāḍī Nūr-Allāh Shūshtarī in *Majālis al-Mu'minīn*<sup>38</sup> and by Ma'ṣūm 'Alī Shāh

in *Tarā'iq al-Haqā'iq*.<sup>39</sup> However, the story never came to enjoy the same widespread circulation as that relating to Shaqīq Balkhī, and it is completely absent from the well-known Sunnī works on the lives of the Imams.

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The third and last Sufi said to be connected with Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm – if we ignore the manifestly ahistorical claim made by the *Khāksār derwishes* of Iran that the Imam nominated Ḥallāj as the *quṭb* of the age<sup>40</sup> — was Ma'rūf Karkhī. Far more commonly, Karkhī is held to have been an associate of the eighth Imam, 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā, who is said to have presided over his conversion to Islam.<sup>41</sup> However, Shāh Ni'mat-Allāh Walī (d. 834/1437), founder of the Ni'matullāhī order of *derwishes* and one of the principal figures in the history of Shī'ī Sufism, attributes the conversion of Karkhī to Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm and states that he acted as the Imam's gatekeeper for ten years.<sup>42</sup> The same view was expressed by the author of *Uṣūl al-Fuṣūl*, who added that Karkhī kept his position as gatekeeper during the Imamate of 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā.<sup>43</sup> Ma'ṣūm 'Alī Shāh – himself, of course, an affiliate of the Ni'matullāhī order – regards this as possible, and suggests even that Karkhī may have enjoyed the company of Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq.<sup>44</sup> By contrast, another relatively modern Shī'ī-Sufi author, Ihsān-Allāh Iṣṭakhrī of the Dhahabī order, rejects any association of Ma'rūf Karkhī with the Shī'ī Imams before the time of 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā.<sup>45</sup>

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The accuracy of these various accounts linking Sufis with Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm must now be assessed. The fact that they are not included in the earliest Sufi and Shī'ī sources counts, no doubt, as an argument against their authenticity. In his attempted refutation of Hillī's *Minhāj al-Karāmah*, Ibn Taymīyah (d. 728/1328) dismisses, with his customary acerbity, the Shī'ī scholar's telling of the stories concerning Shaqīq Balkhī and Bishr al-Hāfi as mere "lies."<sup>46</sup> The modern Iraqi scholar, Muṣṭafā al-Shībī, who has written a detailed and fully documented study of the historical relations between Sufism and Shī'ism, casts doubt on the historicity of the traditions in question, suggesting that they are a by-product of the Sufi claim to initiatic descent from 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.<sup>47</sup> From a somewhat different perspective, the Lebanese writer Ḥāshim Ma'rūf al-Ḥasanī, determined to prove what he calls "the great gap"

between Sufism and Shi'ism, denies even the possibility of sympathetic contact having taken place between any of the Imams and any of the Sufis.<sup>48</sup>

It may be argued, on the other hand, that although we are in the habit of calling Sufi *tadhkirahs* biographical dictionaries, works such as 'Attār's *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'* are in fact remarkably sparse in strictly biographical information; far more attention is given in them to the dicta of the Sufis in question than to the details of their travels and encounters. It is therefore conceivable, in principle, that Shaqīq Balkhī and Bishr al-Hāfi should have had initiatic encounters with Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm that went unnoticed by the earliest Sufi writers. That Mūsā al-Kāzīm had contacts beyond the immediate circle of his followers is suggested by the occurrence of *ḥadīth* narrated by him in such Sunnī books of tradition as the *Musnad* of Ibn Hanbal, the *Sunan* of al-Tirmidhī, and the *Sunan* of Ibn Mājah.<sup>49</sup>

In the case of Shaqīq Balkhī, it is true, as Ibn Taymīyah points out, that in 149/766 – the year of the alleged encounter with Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm while *en route* to the Hajj – the Imam was still resident in Madinah; his father, Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, had died the previous year, and it was not until the caliphate of al-Mahdī began, some ten years later, that Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm was taken to Baghdad.<sup>50</sup> This does not exclude, however, the possibility of the Imam having undertaken himself an earlier journey to Baghdad, and in any event not every telling of the story supplies a year for the encounter. Most sources place it, in fact, after the release of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm from confinement in Baghdad by the Caliph al-Mahdī.<sup>51</sup> The *sanad* given by al-Sibt ibn al-Jawzī and Muḥammad b. Ṭalḥah al-Ḥalabī must count as an argument in favour of the authenticity of the story, and it seems unwise to dismiss it out of hand. The most judicious conclusion is that of Ma'sūm 'Alī Shāh, who suggests that while Shaqīq Balkhī counts primarily as a disciple of Ibrāhīm b. Ad'ham, he also received the spiritual grace (*fayḍ*) of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm.<sup>52</sup> The Indian hagiographer Ghulām Sarwar Lāhūrī enchoes this conclusion with the statement that Shaqīq Balkhī kept the company of both Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm and Ibrāhīm b. Ad'ham.<sup>53</sup>

As for Bishr al-Hāfi, the story of his repentance at the hands of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm occurs in relatively few sources, and in none of them is a *sanad* cited. The argument of Ibn Taymīyah that Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm

was unlikely to be walking through the popular quarters of Baghdad and thus chance on the house of Bishr clearly deserves attention.<sup>54</sup> The story may nonetheless be taken as indicating a certain attachment to the Imam on the part of Bishr, for Qushayrī reports a dream in which Bishr saw the Prophet and was told by him that his spiritual attainments were due, in part, to his love of the *Ahl al-Bayt*.<sup>55</sup>

By contrast, the tradition linking Ma'rūf Karkhī to Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm lacks all plausibility, given the greater weight of those traditions that associate him with Imam 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā.<sup>56</sup> If Ma'rūf was indeed converted to Islam by the eighth Imam, it is hard to see on what basis he could have been associated with his predecessor.

In short, the historicity of the narratives linking these three Sufis to Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm is unproven; only the story of Shaqīq Balkhī's encounter with him can be regarded as fully plausible. The traditions in question nonetheless have their historical and even spiritual significance. First occurring in almost exclusively Sunnī sources of the fourth/tenth to seventh/thirteenth centuries, they demonstrate how pro-'Alid segments of Sunnī opinion gave shape and substance to the veneration of the Imams as part of the spiritual patrimony of all Muslims. That Sufis were chosen to figure as associates of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm (as well as of other Imams) suggests, too, that a particular affinity was seen to exist between the Sufi and Imamite traditions.

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The place of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm in Sufi tradition is not limited to the stories – apocryphal or otherwise – that link him to individual Sufis. In so far as he is the predecessor of Imam 'Alī al-Riḍā, who is regarded in turn as the preceptor of Ma'rūf Karkhī he belongs to the ancestry of all those numerous Sufi lineages that claim descent from Ma'rūf Karkhī. In other words, he forms the penultimate link in what is known as the Golden Chain (*silsilat al-dhahab*), i.e. the initiatic line connecting the Sufis through the first eight of the Twelve Imams with the Messenger and with the Source of Revelation.<sup>57</sup>

Remarkable, too, is the number of Sufis who claim physical descent from Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm (or on whose behalf such descent is claimed). Earliest among them is Junayd Badhdādī (d. 298/910), separated – according to the *Tiryāq al-Muhibbīn* of Taqī al-Dīn al-Wāsiṭī

(d.774/1373) — from the Imam by five generations of descent.<sup>58</sup> This genealogy appears difficult to reconcile with the predominant view that Junayd was of Iranian ancestry.<sup>59</sup> By contrast, the Mūsawī genealogy of Sayyid Aḥmad al-Rifā'ī (d. 578/1183), eponym of the Rifā'ī order, seems to be universally agreed on; fourteen generations of descent connect Aḥmad al-Rifā'ī with Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm.<sup>60</sup>

Real or pretended descendants of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm came to play an important role in the eastern Islamic lands in general and Iran in particular during the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries, a period of intense interaction between Sufism and Shī'ism. Many Sufis gave new prominence to their traditional devotion to the Family of the Prophet, re-emphasizing the role of the Imams as a fountainhead of spiritual tradition, while at the same time some Shī'is experimented with the organizational forms of Sufism. It is thus not surprising that a number of Sufi movements with Shī'ī or proto-Shī'ī colouring came into being, at least four of which were founded by persons regarded as the descendants of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm. First among them was Hājji Bektāsh (Hacı Bektas), said to have been born in Nishapur some time during the seventh/thirteenth century and to have migrated by way of Makkah and Najaf to Anatolia, where he established the beginnings of the order that came to bear his name. The Bektāshī order certainly cannot be designated as Shī'ī in any real sense of the term, given its general disregard for the *Shari'ah*; nonetheless it professed loyalty to the Twelve Imams. Hence it was claimed on behalf of Hājji Bektāsh that he was the son of Muḥammad b. Mūsā, a great-grandson of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm.<sup>61</sup> This is clearly impossible for chronological reasons, but the possibility remains that Hājji Bektāsh was indeed born to a family of Mūsawī *Sayyids* in Nishapur and that the full genealogical record was lost somewhere between Khurasan and Anatolia. By contrast, the Mūsawī lineage with which the Safavid family sought to adorn itself in the course of its transformation from Sufi order to ruling dynasty is now generally recognized as spurious, the outcome of an attempt made not later than the reign of Shāh Tahmāsp (930/1524 — 984/1576) to efface the humble Kurdish origins of the Safavids.<sup>62</sup> Nonetheless, the choice of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm as the ancestor is a further illustration of the prestige that attached to Mūsawī descent. Another claimant to Mūsawī lineage active in the ninth/fifteenth century was Sayyid Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh (d. 869/1464), founder of the Nūrbakhshī order that branched off from the Kubrāwīyah and survived in various regions of Iran

until the mid-Safavid period.<sup>63</sup> Finally, mention may be made of Sayyid Haydar Tūnī (d. 830/1426), sometimes regarded as the ultimate ancestor of the infamous Ḥaydarī gangs that plagued numerous Iranian cities in the Safavid and Qajar periods. This Sufi claimed both physical and spiritual descent from Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm, his initiatic chain going back through five generations to a certain Sayyid Ibrāhīm Khwārazmī, described as a "devoted follower" of the Imam.<sup>64</sup>

\* \* \* \*

It might be thought that this prominence of claimants to descent from Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm in various Shī'ī-Sufi movements simply reflected the numerical predominance of Mūsawī *Sayyids* in Iran. After all, Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm fathered no fewer than thirty-seven children, more than any other of the Imams, and many of them had lived and died in Iran.<sup>65</sup> The shrines built over their tombs came indeed to function as some of the principal sites of pilgrimage in Iran, even in pre-Safavid times. Notable examples are the shrine of Ḥusayn b. Mūsā in Qazvin (known popularly as Shāh Chirāgh Ḥusayn), that of Aḥmad b. Mūsā in Shiraz (designated locally as Shāh Chirāgh), that of Ḥadrat Fāṭimah bint Mūsā in Qum, and above all, of course, that of the eighth Imam, 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Ridā in Mashhad. These shrines certainly helped to anchor the lineage of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm in the pious awareness and the religious consciousness of Iran, and to establish real or alleged descent from him as a title to honour and pious repute. It seems unwise, therefore, to attribute the popularity of a Mūsawī lineage among the founders of Sufi-Shī'ī movements to mere statistical chance.

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In short, Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm won in his own lifetime a reputation for piety, asceticism and spiritual virtue that transcended the boundaries of the Shī'ah. The accounts linking various Sufis to him, even if not of proven historical authenticity, serve to illustrate the posthumous echo of the appeal he exerted. It is noteworthy that these accounts first occur almost exclusively in Sunnī sources and were taken up by Shī'ī authorities only after a considerable interval.

It was also in Sunnī Sufism that descent from Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm first came to be regarded as spiritually prestigious before emerging as a prominent factor in the crystallization of Shī'ī forms of Sufism in the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries.

The memory of Imām Mūsā al-Kāzīm thus played a role in the evolution of Sufism. This can be taken as a minor illustration of the way in which the Twelve Imams of the *Ahl al-Bayt* have formed part of the spiritual patrimony of the Muslim community as a whole.

## NOTES

- (1) *Al-Ta'arruf li Madh'hab Ahl al-Taṣawwuf*, eds. 'Abd al-Ḥafīm Maḥmūd and Ṭāha 'Abd al-Bāqī Surūr (Cairo, 1380/1960), p.27.
- (2) *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, ed. V.A. Zhukovskiy (Leningrad, 1926), pp. 85-97.
- (3) *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, ed. Muḥammad Isti'lāmī (Tehran, Sh. 1347/1968), pp. 12-18, 819-20.
- (4) See, for example, S.H.Nasr, *Sufi Essays* (London, 1972), p.114.
- (5) Aḥmad b. Yūsuf al-Oarāmānī, *Akhbār al-Duwal wa Āthār al-Awwal* (Baghdad, 1282/1865), p. 112; Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-'itidāl fī Naqd al-Rijāl* (Cairo, 1964), vol. iii, p. 201.
- (6) See Shaykh 'Abbās Qummī, *Bāqiyāt-i Šāliḥāt*, in margin of *Mafātīḥ al-Jinān* (Tehran, 1381/1961), p.96.
- (7) Ibn Fahd, *'Uddat al-Dā'ir* (Tabriz, 1274/1857) p.5.
- (8) *Mafātīḥ al-Jinān*, p.44; *Bāqiyāt-i Šāliḥāt*, pp.433, 469, 577, 590; Aḥmad Kumushkhanawī, *Majmū'at al-Aḥzāb* (Istanbul, 1298/1881), vol. iii, p.558.
- (9) Kāmīl Muṣṭafā al-Shībī, *al-Šilah bayn al-Taṣawwuf wa'l-Tashayyū'* (Beirut, 1982) vol. i, p.232.
- (10) Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rīkh Baghdād* (Damascus, 1945), vol. i, p.120.
- (11) Quoted in al-Barmūnī, *Tanqīḥ Rawḍ al-Azhar* (Tripoli, n.d.), p.239.
- (12) For the biography of Shaqīq Balkhī, see 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Šūfiyya* (Cairo, 1953), pp. 61-66, and 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, pp. 232-44.
- (13) *Sawiq* is mentioned, for example, by Majlisī (see n. 31 below).
- (14) The details of the story are more or less uniform in the various sources discussed below. In many cases, the narrative is followed by a telling of the story in anonymous verse.
- (15) Concerning Rāmḥurmuzī, see Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden, 1967), vol. i, pp. 193/94.
- (16) *Karāmāt al-Awliyā'* is not listed among the works of Rāmḥurmuzī either by Sezgin or by 'Umar Ridā al-Kaḥḥālāh in his *Mu'jam al-Mu'allifin* (Damascus, 1376/1957), vol. iii, p. 235.
- (17) For this title of the work, see C. Brockelmann and Ahmed Ates, "Ibnulcevzi," *Islam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 2, p. 850.
- (18) Ibn al-Jawzī, *Šifat al-Šafwah*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mu'īd Khān (Hyderabad Deccan, 1389/1969), vol. ii, p.104. In some printed versions of the story of Shaqīq, the name Khushnam – obviously unfamiliar to speakers of Arabic – has been changed either to Hishām or to Husām.

- (19) See Ḥajjī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, eds. Serefettin Yaltkaya and Rifat Biğle (Istanbul, 1971), col. 1726.
- (20) *Tadhkirat al-Khawāṣṣ* (Najaf, 1964), p. 348.
- (21) See Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur, Supplement I* (Leiden, 1937), pp. 838-39.
- (22) *Maṭālib al-Su'ul* (Tehran, 1285/1868), p. 196.
- (23) *Kashf al-Ghummah* (Tehran, 1294/1877), pp. 242-43.
- (24) *Al-Fuṣūl al-Muhimmah* (Tehran, 1303/1886), pp. 245-47.
- (25) *Al-Šawā'iq al-Muhriqah* (Cairo, n.d.), p. 203.
- (26) *Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib*, ed. Ḥāshim ar-Rasūlī al-Maḥallāū (Qum, n.d. ), pp. 302-303.
- (27) 'Allāmah Ḥillī, *Minḥāj al-Karāmah*, contained in prefatory matter to Ibn Taymīyah, *Minḥāj al-Sunnat al-Nabawīyah*, ed. Muḥammad Rashād Salīm (Beirut, 1962), vol. i, pp. 101-102.
- (28) *Jāmi' al-Asrār wa Manba' al-Anwār*, ed. Henry Corbin (Tehran, Sh.1347/1969), p.224. Muḥammad Ma'sūm Shīrāzī (Ma'sūm 'Alī Shāh) quotes in his *Ṭarā'iq al-Ḥaqā'iq* (ed. Muḥammad Ja'far Maḥjūb [Tehran, n.d.], vol. 11, p. 173) a *silsilah* from Zayn al-'Abidīn Shīrīnī's *Bustān al-Siyāḥah* that passes from Imām Mūsā al-Kāzīm to Shaqīq Balkhī and from him to Abū Turāb Nakhshabī. Given the fact that Abū Turāb died in 245/859, it is unlikely that he should have been a *murīd* of Shaqīq. However, he is said to have kept the company of Shaqīq's principal disciple, Ḥātam al-Aṣamm (see 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmi, *Nafahāt al-Uns*, ed. M. Tauḥīdīpur [Tehran, Sh. 1336/1957], p. 51).
- (29) Quoted in *Ṭarā'iq al-Ḥaqā'iq*, vol. ii, p. 310.
- (30) *Majālis al-Mu'minin* (Tehran, 1376/1957, vol.ii, p.24.
- (31) Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. xiv iii (Tehran, 1396/1976), pp. 80-83.
- (32) *Rawḍat al-Jannāt* (Tehran, 1307/1889), p.328.
- (33) *Ṭarā'iq al-Ḥaqā'iq*, vol. ii, p. 173.
- (34) See, for example, Jāmi, *Nafahāt al-Uns*, pp. 48-49.
- (35) See the discussion in *Ṭarā'iq al-Ḥaqā'iq*, vol. ii, p.186.
- (36) *Šifat al-Šafwah*, vol. ii, pp. 183-90.
- (37) *Minḥāj al-Karāmah*, p. 102.
- (38) *Majālis al-Mu'minin*, vol. ii, p.12.
- (39) *Ṭarā'iq al-Ḥaqā'iq*, vol. ii, pp. 184-85.
- (40) Richard Gramlich, *Die schiitischen Derwischorden Persiens: erster Teil, die Affiliationen* (Wiesbaden, 1965), p. 84.
- (41) See, for example, 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, p.324.



- (42) See the poem of Shāh Nīmat-Allāh Wafī quoted in *Tarā'iq al-Haqā'iq*, vol. 1, p. 458. The theme of a Sufi acting as gatekeeper to an Imam is not restricted to the case of Ma'rūf Karkhī. According to Ḥaydar Amulī, Bāyazīd Bistāmī (d. 261/875) was gatekeeper to Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq; see *Jāmi' al-Asrār wa Manba' al-Anwār*, p. 224.
- (43) I have been unable to identify the author of *Uṣūl al-Fuṣūl*; he is quoted in *Tarā'iq al-Haqā'iq*, vol. ii, 299.
- (44) *Tarā'iq al-Haqā'iq*, vol. ii, p.298.
- (45) *Iṣṭakhrī, Uṣūl-i Taṣawwuf* (Tehran, Sh. 1338/1960), p. 89.
- (46) Ibn Taymīyah, *Minhāj al-Sunnat al-Nabawīyah* (Cairo, 1322/1904), vol. ii, p.124.
- (47) Al-Shībī, *al-Ṣilah bayn al-Taṣawwuf wa 'l-Tashayyu'*, vol. ii, p. 108.
- (48) Al-Ḥasanī, *Bayn al-Taṣawwuf wa 'l-Tashayyu'*, pp. 241 ff. This book represents throughout an angry denial of al-Shībī's thesis that important historical interaction has taken place between Sufism and Shī'ism.
- (49) See Ibn Taymīyah, *Minhāj al-Sunnat al-Nabawīyah*, vol. ii, p. 124; al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-I'tidāl*, vol. iii, p. 202.
- (50) Ibn Taymīyah, *Minhāj al-Sunnat al-Nabawīyah*, vol. ii, 124.
- (51) This is done contextually rather than by explicit statement.
- (52) *Tarā'iq al-Haqā'iq*, vol. ii, p.173.
- (53) Lāhūrī, *Khazīnat al-Asfiyā* (Kanpur, 1332/1914), vol. ii, p.133.
- (54) Ibn Taymīyah, *Minhāj al-Sunnat al-Nabawīyah*, vol. ii, p.124.
- (55) *Al-Risālat al-Qushayrīyah*, eds. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and Maḥmūd b. al-Sharīf (Cairo, 1385/1966), p. 69.
- (56) See n. 41 above.
- (57) Concerning the concept of the Golden Chain, see Gramlich, *Die schiitischen Derwischorden Persiens*, p. 15.
- (58) *Tiryāq al-Muhibbīn* (Cairo, 1340/1922), p.36.
- (59) See Suleyman Ates, *Çuneyd-i Bağdadi, Hayati, Eserleri ve Mektapları* (Istanbul, 1969), p.8.
- (60) See 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Kan'an, *Aḥmad al-Rifā'ī* (Istanbul, 1340/1922), p.3.
- (61) Abdülbaki Golpinarli, *Vilayet-Name:Manakib-i Haci Bektas-i Veli* (Istanbul, 1958), pp. 1-4.
- (62) See Ahmad Kasravī, *Shaykh Safi va Tabarash* (Tehran, 1323/1944), and Zeki Veli Togan, "Sur l'origine des Safavides," in *Melanges Massignon*, III (Damascus, 1959), pp. 345-57.
- (63) Al-Shībī, *al-Ṣilah bayn al-Taṣawwuf wa 'l-Tashayyu'*, vol. ii, p.296, n.5.
- (64) Ḥāfiẓ Ḥusayn Karbalā'ī, *Rawdat al-Jannāt va Jannat al-Jinān* (Tehran, Sh. 1344/1965), vol. i, p.468.
- (65) For the names of these thirty-seven children, see Shaykh al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, translated by I.K.A. Howard (London, 1981), pp. 457-59. Majlisi suggests higher estimates for the number of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm's offspring (*Bihār al-Anwār*, xiv iii, p.288).

## ASPECTS OF AL-MUBARRAD'S\* LINGUISTIC THOUGHT OF THE GLORIOUS QUR'AN

SAMI A. HANNA & AHMAD S. ABU RA'D

THE birth and scholastic work of al-Mubarrad in the city of Basra shows the rise of an Arab grammarian and philologist who left his mark on the whole Arab and Islamic thought in general and in the field of Qur'anic linguistics in particular. In Basra, al-Mubarrad was taught by well-known scholars of his time such as Abū 'Umar al-Jarmī, Abū 'Uthmān al-Māzīnī and Abū Ḥatīm al-Sijistānī, the pupil of Aṣma'ī.<sup>1</sup>

When al-Mubarrad went to Baghdad, he became "a very busy teacher,"<sup>2</sup> and the "Imam of the Arabic language."<sup>3</sup> Moreover, he led seminars devoted to the study of Sibawayh's *al-Kitāb* after he "had mastered it at the hands of his Basrite masters who, in turn, allowed him to teach *al-Kitāb* at a young age."<sup>4</sup>

Al-Mubarrad's works are numerous and are mentioned in many sources.<sup>5</sup> However, one of them, namely, *Kitāb Ma'tafaqa Lafzuhū wa' Khtalafa Ma'nāhu* [On Words Which Have the Same Utterance but Different Meanings] seems not to have received enough attention.

A careful examination of the long list of al-Mubarrad's works reveals that he probed many fields: linguistics, prose, poetry, rhetoric, prosody, grammar and Qur'anic semantics and sciences. In order to thoroughly understand and appreciate his book, *Kitāb Ma'tafaqa Lafzuhū wa' Khtalafa Ma'nāhu*, it is important to examine similar works by other authors.

\* Abu'l-'Abbās Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Thumālī al-Azdī, an Arab philologist, born on 10 Dhu'l-Hijjah in the year 210 Hijra, in the city of Basra, is commonly known as al-Mubarrad. However, in his recent study, Professor Ahmad M.S. Abu Ra'd asserts that the name is al-Mubarrid which means "the consolidator of truth" (*al-muthabbīt lil-ḥaq*). Al-Mubarrad acquired this nickname when Al-Māzīnī asked him about a certain difficult problem which al-Māzīnī had encountered during his compilation of the book *al-Alif wa'l-lām*. When al-Mubarrad presented the best answer, al-Māzīnī told him, "Arise, for you are the *mubarrid*," i.e., *al-muthabbīt lil-ḥaq*. See Ahmad M.S. Abu Ra'd, *Mat-tafaqa lafzuhū wakhtalaf ma'nāhu min al-Qur'an al-majīd*.