



THE SCIENTIFIC AND POLITICAL EVOLUTIONS OF SUFISM FROM THE LATE SAFAVID DYNASTY TO THE LATE AFSHARI DYNASTY

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Abstract

The Safavid dynasty, in its time, caused many changes in Iranian society and subsequently in Sufism and caused many ups and downs in Iranian Sufism. However, in a general view, as we approach the end of the Safavid dynasty as a mystical dynasty of Ghezelbash, we see a decrease in the position of Sufism in Iranian society. On the other hand, the teachings of Sufism were not weakened in the circle of Sufism. They began their growth in the emergence of scholars and jurists interested in practical and theoretical mysticism. In the post-Safavid era, despite the success of the Sufis in gaining their position and position, despite all their efforts, theoretical and practical mysticism continued to develop, and we are witnessing a greater adaptation of it to Shiite teachings. The present study tries to examine Sufism's scientific and political developments in the Late Safavid Dynast to the Late Afshari Dynasty.

Introduction

At the end of the Safavid era, we see a decrease in the political authority of the Safavid dynasty due to various factors, which culminated in the fall of the Safavid dynasty during the reign of Shah Sultan Hussein Safavid by the Afghan sedition in 1723 and had profound effects on the political and scientific situation in Iran. Sufism has not been without these effects and has gone through many ups and downs. A study of the political and scientific developments of Sufism in this period, in addition to recognizing the political and scientific situation of that time and the interaction those jurists had with the Sufis as legislators and governments formed at this time, will show the position of Sufis at the beginning of the Qajar dynasty in Iran.

During this period, Sufis either migrated from Iran and went to neighboring countries, such as India, or stayed in Iran and continued their activities in the scientific dimension and deepened the teachings of Sufism. In their works, they hated the common Sufism of that time, which found a market aspect and did not even comply with the boundaries of Sharia. In the political dimension, some claimants of Sufism entered this profession with their defined political goals and sought to gain political status and power. This issue has arisen since the Safavid dynasty, and the government belonged to Sufism. This paved the way for the Sufis to enter the governing structure in Iran during the Qajar period and after.

Among the sources that can be mentioned are the famous travelogues of Zein al-Abidin Shirvani, known as Musta'ali Shah, with the titles of "Bostan al-shiayah," "Riyadh al-shiayah " and "Hadith al-shiayah." Even though these works were written during the Qajar period and the author belonged to the Sufi and his support for them, he can provide good information about the Sufi of that time. Among other sources, the famous work "Taraiqat al-Haqaiq," written by Mohammad Masoom Shirazi, is known as Masoom Ali Shah, which was written during the constitutional period and after the Qajar period. His age is worth pondering, but it provides good information from sources, historical evidence, Sufi texts, and noteworthy elders. In addition to the above works, other studies and research in this field have dealt with Sufism of that time and the political, social, economic, and cultural situation of that time.



The present study intends to provide a clear answer to the following questions:

- A. What was the level of effectiveness, influence, and political and social acceptance of Sufis in the historical period in question?
- B. What has been the interaction and confrontation between Sufis with two powerful and influential institutions of religion and government in order to achieve a political position?
- C. What has been the course of scientific Sufism in this historical period?

The Scientific and Political Evolutions of Sufism from the Late Safavid Dynasty to the Late Afshari Dynasty

The Sufis enjoyed a good position at the beginning of the Safavid era because they were one of the two pillars of the Safavid dynasty in the form of the Ghezelbash Sufis. However, gradually, after going through many ups and downs, since the reign of Shah Abbas I Safavid, they were attacked by Safavid kings and government on the one hand and Shiite scholars and jurists on the other. The Safavid dynasty, which after the formation and selection of the Shiite religion as the official religion of Iran, needed to recognize and apply the views of the Shiite religion in its governmental dimensions by inviting Shiite scholars from areas such as Jabal Amel, gradually increased the position of Shiite scholars in Iran and The government became Safavid. With the growth of Shiite scholars and jurists in the Safavid era, differences between Akhbari scholars and fundamentalists who had two different bases in understanding Islamic views from Islamic sources emerged, and this trend has occurred in the time of Mohammad Amin Astarabadi, has led the Akhbari scholars to surpass the fundamentalists and this group openly opposed Sufism because of the incompatibility of the teachings of Sufism with the prophetic principles. These objections continued even with the current of philosophers of that time, and scholars such as MohagheghSabzevari (1680), Mullah Mohammad Taher Qomi (1689), and Allama Mohammad Baqir Majlisi (1789) opposed the common current of Sufism of that era.

Jurists, narrators, and sages such as Sheikh Bahaei, Mullah Mohammad Taqi Majlisi, Mullah Mohsen FeyzKashani, Mirfanderski, Mullah Rajab Ali Tabrizi, Mulla Sadra, and Fayyaz Lahiji, despite their tendencies to the teachings of Sufism and mysticism; however, they expressed their opposition to the common Sufism of the time under various titles in their works, including Mirfanderski in "ResalehSanaieh," Mulla Sadra in "KasraAsnamah al-Jahiliyyah" and "The Treatise of Three Principles, Fayyaz Lahiji (Mulla Sadra's groom¹) in" Shawarqa al-Ilham². "Of course, **the views on Sufism consisted of two parts:**

First, the Sufi teachings and mystical aspects of Sufi thought, which included issues of worldview, practical mysticism, and in other words, the ideology of Sufism, which was following the Shari'a, originated from religious teachings.

Second, the customs and political activities of the Sufis, who were mostly associated with the dervishes of the bazaar alley and the Sufi dynasties.

¹Mulla Sadra, the divine sage of that time, had married FeyzKashani and Fayyaz Lahiji for his groom, both of whom were Sufism opponents of their time.

²Pazouki, Shahram, (2003), *Sufism in Iran after the Sixth Century (Encyclopedia of the Islamic World)*, Tehran, Islamic Encyclopedia Foundation, vol. 7.



The tendency of mystical scholars was to the first part, and the criticisms leveled at them by Sufism mostly refer to the second part, which in their view was accompanied by heresy in religion.

A point that is important during the Sufism of that era is the policy of the Safavid dynasty in dealing with Sufis. According to some Orientalists, Shah Sultan Hussein Safavid, at the instigation of Shiite scholars, mistreated Sufism³, to the point that Sayyid Qutbuddin Nirizi (1759), the leader of the Zahabiyya Dynasty, wrote a letter to the Safavid king in a letter of sarcasm and curse. Some Sufi elders, even the Sufi ancestors of the Safavid Shah himself, had expressed concern in every assembly and pulpit that the Shah himself had not given up his humiliation and sarcasm in response and that Sayyid Qutbuddin had left Isfahan for Najaf Ashraf⁴ with grief. Despite these objections, the Safavid dynasty maintained its ties with the Sufis and the monastic Qalandars even until the last days of the fall of the Safavids, as evidenced by reports of the existence of a Sufi monotheism in Isfahan (located behind the Aliaqapo⁵ mansion)⁶.

In fact, the weakness of Sufism in the late Safavid era is undeniable; But in this respect, the exaggerated view of the Sofia sources cannot be trusted. For example, during the siege of Isfahan by Afghan invaders, many Sufis lived freely in the city and followed the rules of rioting. Even the Zahabiyya dynasty was revived in Persia at the end of this era, and Seyyed Qutbuddin Nirizi became famous in Persia during the reign of Shah Sultan Hussein Safavid and had many followers. Shirvani⁷, who is considered one of the opponents of the Safavid dynasty and considers the Safavid dynasty as the main cause of the fall of Sufism, has also mentioned in his works the existence of monasteries and the many Sufis in Isfahan⁸.

It seems that more than the opposition of Safavid kings and religious scholars, the internal weakness of Sufism and the reduction of social, cultural, and moral acceptance of Sufis have also played an important role in the weakness of Sufism⁹.

Due to the weak and insignificant position created for the dervishes in the political and social arenas in the last period of the Safavids, they accepted the devastating Afghan attack on Isfahan and tried to welcome them. In this way, they considered the invasion of Mahmud Afghan to the center of Iran as a matter of divine destiny. In retaliation for the mistreatment of kings and Shiite scholars and people with

³Malkam, Sarjan, (1983), *History of Iran*, translated by Mirza Ismail Hairat, Tehran, Farhangsara Publishing, vol. 2

⁴Khavari, Assadollah, (2004), *Zahabiyya (Scientific Sufism, Literary Works)*, Tehran, University of Tehran

⁵This mansion was built in appreciation of the efforts of the Ghezelbash Sufis in rescuing Tahmasb Mirza and Safi Mirza Safavid from the Afghans during the siege of Isfahan. After the suppression of the Afghans, by the order of Shah Tahmasb II of Safavid, this mansion was built for Sufis (Lawrence Lockhart, *The Extinction of the Safavid Dynasty*, Translated by Ismail Dolatshahi, (1964), Tehran, Book Translation and Publishing Firm, pp. 179-180.)

⁶Sefat Gol, Mansour, (2003), *The Structure of Religious Institution and Thought in Safavid Iran: The History of Religious Developments in Iran in the Tenth to Twelfth Centuries AH*, Tehran, Rasa Cultural Services Institute

⁷Malazin al-Abedin Shirvani is one of the followers of the Nematullah dynasty in Sufism, who has works such as *Bostan al-Siyaha*, Riyadh al-Siyaha.

⁸Shirvani, Mirza Zina al-Abedin, *Bostan al-Siyahah*, Tehran, Library of National Documents, Bita Publishing, p. 81

⁹Aghili, Noorullah, (2007), *The position and political ideas of Sufis during the rule of prisoners and Qajars in Iran (Ph.D. thesis in History)*, Tehran, Shahid Beheshti University



Sufism and the result of their curse, and by doing so, they showed their hatred of Safavids and to strengthen their position, and they took steps with the Afghans. For example, in the works of that time, Mahmoud Afghan was a dervishes and his access to the authorities of intelligence, intuition and listening to the people, legislators, and Safavids by the Afghans and the torment of this invasion¹⁰, and Shah Sultan Hussein for promoting this news in a letter He was nicknamed "Sufi Safi-Zamir"¹¹.

Despite Mahmoud Afghan's verbal and practical devotion to Sufism, which can be received by sending gifts to Sufi poles such as Sayyid Qutbuddin Nirizi and refusing to attack Shiraz at the beginning of the work on the pretext that Shiraz is the footsteps of the saints¹²; but during the rule of the Afghans over Iran, there was no change in the position of the Sufis and even many works of Sufism and wisdom were dumped and destroyed by the Afghans in the Zayandeh River of Isfahan¹³; hence, the Sufis realized that they could not hope for the changing personality of Mahmoud Afghan, and interestingly, after the destruction of Afghanistan, they tried to save Iran and destroy them as well as the initial victory of the Afghans, thanks to their blessings and oppression that attribute him¹⁴.

Sufis and dervishes also continued their activities during the Afshari period. Mystical efforts to gain a position in the government and rulers of Afshari, as well as the dervishes' use of the religious sentiments of the people, especially the enthusiasts of poems sung and recited in praise of Shiite leaders and monasteries that existed in most cities of Iran and as a place for Sufi propaganda was one of these activities.

Some believe that Nader Shah Afshar's successive victories in the Indian subcontinent and the opening of the cultural exchange route between the two countries paved the way for the re-infiltration of Sufis who had migrated to India during the Safavid era . This attracted many followers to open Iran¹⁵, which was also welcomed by Iranians and strengthened the position of Sufism in Iran; but this statement cannot be considered as a reason to find an acceptable position for Sufism in the political space of Iran at that time; because the era of Nader Shah Afshar to successive wars and conquests and he did not have the opportunity to establish cultural exchanges between Iran and other countries, in addition to the migration of Sufis from countries such as India to Iran since the late Zandi¹⁶ and the arrival of some sheikhs, the permission of the Nematullah dynasty began. During the Afshari period, we do not see these migrations, and there is no evidence of it. This was to the extent that even scholars who consider themselves Sufis considered Iran devoid of sects and dynasties for nearly seventy years and considered only Nourbakhshia in Mashhad and Zahabiyya in Shiraz as active dynasties of that time, whose followers are also in the corner, was anonymous and not famous¹⁷.

¹⁰Shirvani, *Bostan al-Siyaha*, p. 66

¹¹Marashi Safavid, Mirza Mohammad Khalil, (1949), *Majmao al-Tavarikh*, edited by Abbas Iqbal Ashtiani, Tehran, Printing Company, p. 51

¹²Hosseini Fasaee Shirazi, Mirza Hassan, (2004), *FarsnamehNaseri*, edited by Mansour RastegarFasaee, Tehran, Amirkabir, vol. 1, p. 161.

¹³Ashtiani, SeyyedJalaluddin, (1991), Introduction to Qaisari Fusus al-Hakam, Tehran, Amirkabir, p. 30.

¹⁴Khavari, Assadollah, (2004), *Zahabiyya (Scientific Sufism, Literary Works)*, Tehran, University of Tehran, pp. 314-317

¹⁵Shabani, Reza, (1994), *Social History of Iran in the Afshari Period*, Tehran, Negah Publishing, vol. 1, p. 293

¹⁶Javani, Hojjatullah, (2003), *Sufism in the Indian subcontinent (Encyclopedia of the Islamic World)*, Tehran, Islamic Encyclopedia Foundation, vol. 1, pp. 405-411.

¹⁷Shirvani, Zeinat al-Abedin, (1960), *Riyadh al-Siyahah*, edited by Asghar Hamed (Rabbani), Tehran, Saadi Publishing, pp. 654-655



Nader Shah, despite his religious tolerance, which, due to the combination of his army of Shiite and Sunni groups and the preservation of their unity, believed in winning wars and maintaining the authority of his government; but he was not happy with Sufism¹⁸, as evidenced by his unpopularity with the Sufi group¹⁹. Nader Shah's opposition to the Sufis could be due to many reasons, including the turmoil in the country and the rare conflict in civil and foreign wars, and the lack of sufficient opportunity to pay attention to this group, and the fact that the Sufis were one of the pillars of the Safavid monarchy. Unlike the Shah of Iran, who did not believe much in Sufis, his successors and courtiers approached and contacted the Sufis to take advantage of the discoveries and miracles narrated from them against their rivals. For example, Ibrahim Khan, nephew of Nader Shah Afshar, was associated with dervishes named Shafi'I Abru, and he claimed the victories of Ibrahim Khan²⁰ with foreign sciences and conquests, or Ahmad Khan Abdali, one of the emirs appointed by Nader Shah, who traveled to Khorasan at the end of Nader's lifetime. Near Khabooshan, a dervish had given him the good news of the kingdom and even placed a handful of grass as a crown on Ahmad Khan and called him "Darani" instead of Abdali²¹.

The Sufi revolts after the Safavid era is also among the issues that have been reported a lot. Perhaps it can be said that an important result that can be obtained from this kind of news was the freedom of action of the Sufis after the Safavid era. Most of these revolts should not be attributed to the Sufis, but the leaders of these revolts were adventurous and shrewd people who, knowing the situation and freedom of action and using the influence of the dervishes among different groups, shaped themselves into them. And in this way, they pursued their political goals. Of course, the main reason for the growth of such claimants was the existence of political weakness in the ruling power that could not meet the needs of the people of their time, and this weakness had led to the supply of Akhbaris, philosophers, and Sufis in society. In such a situation, the Sufi political and social aspect, which had been formed since the beginning of the Safavid era, became active after a period of decline, and its educational, intellectual, and cultural aspects lost their function²².

Individuals and groups inclined to Sufism and Islamic mysticism included both Sufis and Sufi shaykhs and traveling Sufis and Shiite scholars interested in Islamic mysticism and its teachings. Sufi mystics and shaykhs in Safavid Iran and later in the Afshari era were followers of the Safavid dynasties of Safavids, Nematullah, Zahabiyya, Nourbakhshia, and Qaderieh.

The activities of the Nematullah dynasty, which began in the Timurid period, stagnated in the middle of the Safavid era, except a few activities of this sect in the city of Kerman, and especially in Mahan Kerman, continued its activities in the Indian subcontinent. Safavids began their activities in Iran, and after Afshari and during the Zandieh period, with the migration of some elders of the dynasty from the

¹⁸For example, see: Shabani, vol. 1, p. 294.

¹⁹Shirvani, *Bostan al-Siyaha*, p. 655

²⁰Golestaneh, Abolhassan Ibn Mohammad Amin, (1977), *Majmao al-Tavarikh*, by Mohammad Taghi Modarres Razavi, Tehran, University of Tehran, pp. 27-29

²¹Asef, Mohammad Hashem (*Rostam al-Hakma*), (2001), *Rostam al-Tawarikh*, by Azizullah Alizadeh, Tehran, Ferdowsi, pp. 234-235

²²Aghili, Noorullah, (2007), *The position and political ideas of Sufis during the rule of prisoners and Qajars in Iran (Ph.D. thesis in History)*, Tehran, Shahid Beheshti University, pp. 66-67.



Indian subcontinent to Iran, they became seriously active in Iran, and since then, the dynasty has been in Iran.

The Nourbakhshia Shiite dynasty is one of the two branches of the famous Kabruyeh dynasty in Sufism; Fans of Seyed Mohammad Taqi Nourbakhsh are called. This dynasty, which showed a revolutionary tendency with the slogan of Mahdism in the political horizon of the Timurids, and together with some people from Khorasan, revolted against the then king, Shahrokh Gurkhani of Timurids, during which Seyyed Mohammad Nourbakhsh claimed to be the twelfth leader of the Shiites. They emerged and were suppressed by Shahrokh Shah's forces to eradicate oppression. Before the Safavids, this dynasty continued to exist with socio-political movements, and even before the Safavids, they thought of forming an independent Shiite government in Iran. After the rise of the Safavids, the social structure of Safavid Iran, influenced by the policies of the Safavid kings, was no longer receptive to the socio-political movements of the Sufi methods.

By observing the movement of Safavid Sufis from the sanctuary to the throne, the Nourbakhshia sect endangered its continued popularity and freedom of social action. Although the Nourbakhshia leaders, at the same time as the Safavids, had declared their political existence in the Timurid realm as a Shiite Sufi sect, But they still could not gain political power like the Safavids. Therefore, against Safavid political Shiism, they had to take different approaches in social fields such as believing in Shiism as the official religion of the country, claiming to have virtues, learning medical knowledge and using it for a more prominent presence in society, composing poems in various fields and so on to strive to continue the social and political life of their path, in the hope of achieving better conditions. Despite its efforts to promote its way, this dynasty continued its activities only in Mashhad and Khorasan.

The Qaderieh Sufi dynasty, which is considered a Sunni sect, also went through three distinct periods during its life until the end of the Safavid era to maintain its social influence in society. In the first period, which covers from the beginning of its formation until before the Mongol invasion of Iran, this dynasty, with more emphasis on the jurisprudential aspect, was able to gain a special place in society, especially among the guilds. In the second period, which includes the Mongol invasion, the Qadiriyya dynasty made changes in the method of the method, with more emphasis on the Sufi aspect. The third period, which covers the ninth/fifteenth century AD, coincides with The emergence of Shiism and saviorist sects; accordingly, the Qadiriyya dynasty, as one of the Sunni dynasties, gradually lost its social base and with the implementation of anti-Sunni and Safavid Sufism policies, weakened to the point that in Iran had no trace of this dynasty except in areas such as Kermanshah.

The Naqshbandi sect, which is one of the most important Sunni sects in Sufism, was founded by Khawaja Baha'uddin Muhammad ibn Muhammad Bukhari in the eighth century AH/ fourteenth century AD, during the Timurid period, it became popular in Bukhara and its environs, and Baha'u'llah's successors extended the dynasty to other cities across the river and Khorasan. This dynasty's famous Iranian Sufis were Khajeh Mohammad Parsa, Khajeh Obaidullah Ahrar, Saad al-Din Kashgari, KashfiSabzevari, and Abdolrahman Jami. Meanwhile, Khajeh Obaidullah Ahrar and Jami have played an important role scientifically and theoretically in promoting Naqshbandi Sufism in the history of Iranian Sufism and then in Asia Minor and the Indian subcontinent. This dynasty was revived in India during the reign of Sheikh Ahmad Sarhandi (Sohrandi) under the name of the Mujaddidi dynasty. However, in these days, which coincided with the Safavid dynasty, it did not infiltrate Iran, and later in the time of Rumi Khalid Naqshbandi, in the twelfth century AH/18th century AD, the Naqshbandi dynasty of Khalidiyeh in Iran, in Kermanshah, and Kurdistan, developed and through the successors of



Rumi Khalid to It reached Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. A number of Sunni scholars and government officials in these countries became followers of this dynasty. Most of the elders of this dynasty were from Iraqi Kurdistan, and some of them were allowed to be guided by the Qadiriyya dynasty²³.

The Zahabiyya dynasty is also one of the famous dynasties of Shiite Sufism in Iran. This dynasty was separated from the Kabrouyeh dynasty, attributed to Sheikh Najmuddin Kobra (1423) during Khajeh Ishaq Khatlani (1221). Seyyed Abdullah Barzeshabadi Mashhadi (1485) refused to pledge allegiance to Seyyed Mohammad Nourbakhsh, and thus, the Kabrouyeh dynasty was divided into Nourbakhshia and Zahabiyya²⁴.

Until the end of the Safavid dynasty, this dynasty spread first in Khorasan and then in Persia and then in Shiraz and Neyriz. At the end of the Safavid dynasty, after the death of Ali Naqi Isthahanati (1714), the poles of the time of Zahabiyya recognized Sayyid Muhammad al-Husseini, known as Qutbuddin Nirizi, like the pole of the dynasty²⁵. He was one of the students through Mullah Rajabali Tabrizi, and his thoughts conflicted with Sadra's wisdom. He was able to gain fame and many followers in Persia, and in this way, he made many efforts, including establishing relations with Sultan Hussein Safavid, King of the time²⁶. Sayyid Qutb migrated to Najaf Ashraf after his troubles with Shah Sultan Hussein Safavid over the curse of the Sufis, where he met with some Shiite jurists such as Agha Mohammad Bidabadi, Mullah Mihrab Gilani, Sheikh Ahmad Lahsavi, and probably Sayyid Mehdi Baqir al-Uloom has had resurrection and publication, and this connection with Shiite jurists, as well as his method of teaching, which has paid special attention to Shiite law and teachings, caused him to have a good relationship with legislators and religious circles. Be ruthless and blame²⁷.

After Nirizi died in (1759), his groom Seyyed Hashem Shirazi, known as Darwish Zahabi, succeeded him²⁸. Of course, due to prominent personalities such as Agha Mohammad Bidabadi and Mulla Mehrab Gilani in the followers of Seyyed Qutb, his successor was mentioned by different personalities, and this caused confusion in the succession of this dynasty²⁹. Seyyed Hashem Shirazi, the groom of Seyyed Qutb in the Afshari dynasty, was appointed head of the Istifa Court and the Ministry of Fars; but after a while, he resigned due to fatigue, and for this reason, he was arrested by Nader Shah Afshar's mother in Isfahan, who after a while was favored by Nader Shah. He also held the position of secretary at the time of Zandieh and at the court of Karim Khan Zand. In the middle of his life, he resigned due to amputation and became one of Sayyid Qutb's followers. Seyyed Hashem because of his understanding of the situation of the time and the policies governing Iran; He was able to strengthen the position of Zahabiyya in the society and be respected by the government of his time³⁰. The extensive efforts of

²³Zarrinkoob, Abdolhossein, (1983), *Sequence of Search in Iranian Sufism*, Tehran, vol. 1, pp. 211-213.

²⁴Masoom Shirazi, Mohammad Masoom (Masoom Ali Shah), (1983), *Tariqat al-Haqaiq*, edited by Mohammad Jafar Mahjoub, Tehran, Sanai Publishing, vol. 2, p. 344

²⁵Hedayat, Reza Gholi Khan, (1888), *Riyadh al-Arifin*, by Mullah Abdul Hussein Khansari and Mullah Mahmoud Khansari, Tehran, Vesal Bookstore, p. 276.

²⁶Khavari, pp. 311-314

²⁷Pazouki, vol. 7, p. 395

²⁸Masoom Shirazi, Mohammad Masoom (Masoom Ali Shah), (1983), *Tariqat al-Haqaiq*, edited by Mohammad Jafar Mahjoub, Tehran, Sanai Publishing, vol. 2, p. 217

²⁹Vahedi, Seyyed Taghi (Saleh Ali Shah), (2005), Tehran, Nakh Danesh Publishing, pp. 411-412

³⁰Fasaei Shirazi, Mirza Hassan Hosseini, (2003), *Farsnameh Naseri*, edited by Mansour Rastegar Fasaei, Tehran, Amirkabir, vol. 2, p. 118.



Seyyed Qutb and his successors and the good interaction that this sect had established with the two institutions of religion and government in Iranian society, and the characteristics of this sect, including its centrality and growth, only in Iran and its adaptation to Shiite religion and Shiite Sharia, caused The Zahabiyya dynasty became one of the most prominent sects in Iran after Safavid dynasty.

Theoretical mysticism or scientific Sufism in the post-Safavid era

Those interested in Sufism and mysticism in Iran are divided into two groups: those who belong to one of the sects of Sufism and the other who do not belong to a particular dynasty and tend to mystical teachings; In this group, most the jurists, sages and teachers of mystical books of Ibn Arabi are present. In order to achieve the truth, this group considers philosophical reasons necessary along with worship and austerity. They paved the way for integrating mysticism and Sufism with philosophical and scientific ideas. In the late Safavid era, a part of Sufi life that was far from politicization and sectarianism, which mostly included scholars and philosophers' tendency to mysticism, became more important. Perhaps the most important reasons for the decline of monastic Sufism in Iran can be divided into the following:

- The moral corruption among the Ghezelbash Sufis and their arbitrariness posed a threat to the government.
- Many Qalandar and Laabali dervishes, who were called illegitimate dervishes.
- The monopoly of the Safavid Sufis who tried to reject other Sufi dynasties
- The influence of scholars and jurists opposed to Sufism

However, many people belonged to true Sufism and complained about the situation of their time, or, like some dynasties, such as Nematullah, removed their centrality from Iran or remained in Iran like Zahabiyya, and in their works, expressed their disgust. They spoke of traditional Sufism, which was nothing but shopkeeping. Among the sages and philosophers of this era are Mir Damad, who was the interpreter of the wisdom of Nourbakhshia, or Mirza Abolghasim Fenderski, known as Mir Fenderski; but the most prominent philosopher of the Safavid era is Mulla Sadra, who in his major philosophical views and works, the domination of Sufi aspects and martyrdom to the great Sufi shaykhs and their glorification along with the teachings of the Shiite Imam is fully evident as his most famous book has written Asfar following the four Asfar of Ahl-e-Suluk. Many Sufi concepts such as "unity of existence" or "presence knowledge" have been philosophically interpreted in his works³¹. In the treatise of the Three Principles, while complaining about the jurists and theologians of the time who blamed Sufism, he defended true Sufism and defined faith from the Sufi point of view³². One of the reasons that Mulla Sadra wrote the treatise of the three principles in Persian was that his audience was the people of Iran, and he wanted to make them aware of the truth of Sufism.

FeyzKashani was another thinker who was one of Mulla Sadra's students and was the author of many works, from the interpretation of the Qur'an to theology, hadith, jurisprudence, and mysticism. In some of his works, such as "al-Mohakemah," he criticized Sufis as well as ignorant scholars who tried to

³¹Fenderski, Mirabolghasem,(2006), *Commentary on Yoga Vasistha*, edited and translated by SeyyedFathollahMojtabaei, Tehran, Research Institute of Iranian Wisdom and Philosophy, vol. 5, pp. 206 and 215-216

³²Shirazi, Sadr al-Muta'allehin, (1981), *KasraAsnam al-Jahliyah*, Tehran, published by Mohammad TafiDaneshpajoo, pp. 63, 72 and 91



persecute the true Sufism, and in other words, such as "Sharh al-Sadr," he defended true Sufism and conduct and the essence of Sufism. Read the knowledge and heritage of the prophets³³.

Bahā' al-Dīn Amili, known as Sheikh Bahai (1621), was the master of many jurists, sages, and elders of his day and whose father was also one of the great jurists of the Safavid era, was inclined to Sufism. Mohammad Taqi Majlisi, a famous jurist of this era (1659), was one of his students, and according to his son, Mohammad Baqir Majlisi, in the treatise "Ajubeh" he had received the order of remembrance and thought from Sheikh Bahai³⁴. Some treatises are also attributed to Mohammad Taghi Majlisi, including the Resaleh Tashvigh al-Salekin, which is in defense of the true Sufism and criticism of the Sufis of the time. In any case, some scholars have attributed him to Sufism. His son, Muhammad Baqir, whom he says has been trying to disprove illegitimate Sufism, acquits his father of this charge while at the same time mentioning Sufism and greatness. Because Ghazali, Rumi, and Ibn Arabi have strongly criticized; But at the same time, he calls those who reject Sufism absolutely blind. It may be said that it was because of this tense situation and the avoidance of the accusation of Sufism that some of the great Sufi elders who remained in Iran did not attribute themselves to Sufism.

Sayyid Hassan ibn Sayyid Abdul Hussein Najafi, known as Taleghani, who lived at least until 1704³⁵ was also known as a teacher of the commentary of Fusus Ibn Arabi and the works of Sheikh Ishraq. He was one of the students of Mullah Hassan Lebanese (1683), sage, and teacher of Sufism and mysticism. One of his most important students mentioned in the sources is HazinLahiji (1767), who acknowledged his master's mastery of mysticism and mystical teachings³⁶.

Mullah Mohammad Sadegh Ardestani (1722) is also one of the scholars of the first half of the twelfth century AH/eighteenth century AD and one of the teachers of intellectual, theological, and mystical texts. He was one of the contemporaries of Allameh Majlisi. No information is available on the names of his teachers, but it can be guessed that his teachers were students of Mulla Sadra. Therefore, it is possible that he used the presence of scholars and sages such as FeyzKashani, MohagheghLahiji, Sheikh Hossein Tonekaboni, Malabar Jabali Tabrizi, and Agha Hossein Khansari. Hakim Mullah Ismail Khajoui, Mullah Naima Taleghani, Mullah Hamza Gilani, Mohammad Saleh Khalkhali, Sheikh Mohammad Ali Hazin, and Qutbuddin Nirizi are among his students³⁷. SeyyedJalaluddinAshtiani refers to an exile that Shah Sultan Hussein Safavid carried out because of his thoughts, and he was exiled from Isfahan to Najafabad in the winter cold in which his young son had died from the cold³⁸. This story seems to be fabricated and exaggerated by the Sufi writers; because this was Shirvani's claim and no one had mentioned it before him³⁹; in addition to HazinLahiji, his student and one of the poets and scholars

³³Kashani, Mohammad Feyz, (1992), *Treatise of the great scholar FeyzKashani*, by Rasoul Jafarian, Isfahan, Sharh Sadr, pp. 48-49

³⁴Majlisi, Mohammad Baqer, (1991), *The thesis of question and answer*, Qom, Ansarian Institute, p.35.

³⁵SadoughiSaha, Manouchehr, (2002), *Benefits, Forty Discourses in Mysticism, Philosophy, Sufism and its History*, Tehran, Afarinesh Publishing, p.48.

³⁶HazinLahiji, Mohammad Ali, (1983), *HazinLahiji Divan*, edited by Bijan Targhi, Tehran, Khayyam Bookstore, pp. 169 and 324

³⁷SadoughiSaha, p. 85 and HazinLahiji, pp. 192 and 349-353.

³⁸Ashtiani, SeyyedJalaluddin, (1991), *Introduction to QaisariFusus al-Hakam*, Tehran, Amirkabir, p. 57.

³⁹Balaghi, Abdul Hojjat, (1998), *MaghalatalHanafa fi Maghalat Shams Al-Arfa*, Tehran, Mazaheri Printing House, pp. 169 and 324.



of that period, the date of the master's death in the year (1723) in Isfahan and at the time of the siege of that city by the Afghans⁴⁰.

In such a special intellectual, political, social, and religious atmosphere that arose in the Safavid era, and especially in the late period, the word Sufi gradually took on a distasteful and reprehensible meaning, as the writers of that period gradually avoided using it and used the word mysticism instead. The result is that in the Safavid era, although official and monastic Sufism was very weak and declining; But the pursuit of mysticism and spiritual conduct, whether in the form of the relationship between the old and the new or in the form of the tendency of philosophers and sages to the mystical foundations and the theological heritage of Sufism or the tendency of jurists and legislators to asceticism and seclusion, had continued⁴¹.

The reasons for the opposition of Shiite scholars to Sufis in this era

Jurisprudential and Sharia ideas have become more powerful in the religious structure of Iranian society in the late Safavid era and have influenced other institutions of society. Such a tendency led to conflict with the ideas of Sufism, both at the governmental level and at the level of society, and accordingly, limited the tendency of Sufism in society. Most Sufis considered jurists and legislators to be outwardly and far from the truth, and in practice, by dividing religion into three parts, Shari'a, Tariqah, and Truth, they opposed Shari'a and considered it to belong to the general public and to make the properties of Sufism unnecessary. This view was one of the issues of the jurists' opposition to Sufism and Sufism.

Some of the actions and thoughts of the Sufis led to the objections and opposition of the scholars to them, which were: their distance from learning science, abandoning their jobs and professions and marriage and taking refuge in solitude, using spells and sorcery, and summoning jinns and spirits, Acts such as listening to wealth and using daf and reeds, using cannabis and cannabis and opium, sexual intercourse, drinking intoxicants and not avoiding prohibitions. What is certain is that by observing such issues, it can be seen that the Sufi elders and those who are interested in mystical teachings were acquitted of these accusations and actions by the scholars, and the behavior of some Sufi market-goers and some biased Sufi followers was drawn to this direction.

In any case, the most important objections and oppositions of Shiite scholars to the Sufis can be summarized as follows:

- Lack of adherence of some Sufis to religious customs and rules of Sharia.
- The invention of rituals of worship or social and moral behaviors that, according to the jurists, were either contrary to the Shari'a or at least in religious sources are not known about them; Such as dhikr circles that have special etiquettes or Sufi hearings.
- Some Sufi views and beliefs that are incompatible with religious teachings are in the opinion of jurists and religious scholars.
- Belief in the esoteric aspects of religion, which in some cases lead to the interpretation of the vote.
- Opinions those are not compatible with Shiite theological principles; like the province of the Sheikhs of Sofia.

⁴⁰HazinLahiji, pp. 48 and 236

⁴¹Zarrinkoob, pp. 244-266



The Sufis' attitude towards events was in the form of indifference and sometimes based on a deterministic view. Accordingly, they did not have a clear view of governments and their legitimacy and duties. The Sufis did not have a particular opinion about government and monarchy, and based on the behavior of the sultans, they evaluated and judged governments. As mentioned at the end of the Safavid dynasty, the Sufis considered the Afghan government to be due to Safavid anti-Sufism, and at the time of the Afshari victory in Iran, because of the unkindness they had seen from the Afghans, they attributed their fall to divine wrath. In fact, the lack of a codified and specific political thought by the Sufis caused that this group could not proceed in a specific framework and with the set goals and strategies and adapt to the course of time.

Conclusions

At the end of the Safavid era, Sufis faced opposition from the Safavids and the Safavid monarchy and lost their first influence and prestige in the Iranian political arena. The fall of the Safavid dynasty and the turbulent situation in Iran after the victory of the Afghans and their domination paved the way for the re-emergence of Sufism in Iran. Some Sufis, such as Zahabiyya, lived out of social upheaval and mostly in the form of schools and with respect for the ruling system, and gained a position that led the kings of the Afghan and Afshari eras to gain their legitimacy through the Sufis.

Some Sufis also always tried to communicate with the rulers of their time, and some of them even tried to directly take control of the situation of the time, so much so that some groups in the form of Sufism called riots during the Afshari period, which had no consequence other than the disorder of society. These groups were not mainly Sufis and used the name Sufism to misuse it. Along with this manifestation of Sufism, the other dimension, which was a mystical search and spiritual journey, continued its life with the tendency of jurists and legislators to asceticism and seclusion.

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