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Short Back and Sides: Were the Qalandars of Late Safavid Iran Domesticated?

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I. Introduction

The Qalandars, supposedly antinomian Sufis, are one of the subaltern groups of Safavid Iran whose voices are rarely heard, but their faint echoes resonate between the lines of European travel writing, official court chronicles, histories, biographical records and hostile clerical treatises. These were Sufis who most probably emerged from the literary trope that became popular from the twelfth century,¹ but were active as a social phenomenon from the thirteenth century. Their reputation for expressing antinomian forms of Islam ensured that they existed on the margins and periphery of the Sufi movement; doubts were expressed even by Sufis as to their attachment to canonical devotional duties, associated as they often were with wine-drinking, the use of narcotics and sexual immorality.² This perception of Qalandars representing an alternative form of Sufism has been neatly captured in the term “deviant dervishes”, so eloquently coined by Ahmet Karamustafa.³ The hostility that the Qalandars faced in medieval times continued into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, typified by the views expressed by several Safavid anti-Sufi clerics (whom are mentioned in the course of this article). It would be a mistake, however, to simply regard the Qalandar along with other Sufi groups in this period and claim that they were all persecuted. While scholars such as Arjomand

¹ J.T.P. de Bruin, “The Qalandariyyāt in Persian Mystical Poetry from Sanā’ī Onwards,” In L. Lewisohn (ed), *The Heritage of Sufism: The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism* (London: K.N.P., 1992), pp. 75-86.

² For example, as early as 1240 Muḥammad bin Ṭayyib accused the Qalandars in his *Fuṣṭāṭ al-‘adāla* of drinking wine and using intoxicants. Cited in ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Zarrīnkūb, *Justajū dar taṣawwuf-i Irān* (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1369/1990-1 (4th edition)), p. 363. The comments of the famous Sufi Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar Suhrawardī are also instructive. Cited and translated in Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God’s Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Middle Period 1200-1550* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), p. 34.

³ Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God’s Unruly Friends*.

have argued that state building in Safavid Iran “required a ruthless religious policy in the eradication of millenarian ‘extremism’ (*ghuluww*), persecution of Ṣūfism, suppression of Sunnism, and finally, the propagation of Shi‘ism”,⁴ he is careful to disassociate the Qalandars from other Sufi orders. Arjomand’s careful study has the benefit of focusing upon a broad range of Sufi orders which suffered similarly in being persecuted over the Safavid period. However, he observes that “the ecstatic and antinomian Ṣūfism of the hirsute Qalandars – roaming dervishes – and the quasi eremitical Ṣūfism of the ascetic virtuosi are the polar opposites from the viewpoint of religious discipline. But what they have in common is the strong capacity for survival under persecution owing to the absence of congregational organisation and the emphasis on the individualistic mode of activity.”⁵ In short, Arjomand accepts the “two wave” theory of general persecution of the Sufi orders in Safavid Iran,⁶ but he repeats his claim about the lack of Qalandar “congregational organization,” which aided their ability to survive when other Sufi groups were less fortunate.⁷

Arjomand analysis of the Qalandar in Safavid Iran is based upon etic sources, which is unsurprising given that when he composed his article emic sources were simply unavailable. There are several reasons to explain for the absence of Qalandar writings. The first may simply be attributable to the hostility that was directed at the Sufi movement in general by some of the anti-Sufi clerics. Second, the lowly social origins of many members of the Qalandar movement would have contributed to very poor standards of literacy and would thus have contributed to comparatively few written records. Third, Qalandars may have been reluctant to record any form of instruction simply because many on the Sufi path shunned and belittled books; reason and systematic book study were not the appropriate means to learn the Sufi *ṭarīqa*, rather aspiring darvishes were trained under the guidance of a *shaykh* or *pīr*. The acquisition of knowledge, it was argued, came through experience and practical ascetical discipline.⁸ The

⁴ S.A. Arjomand, “Religious Extremism (Ghuluww), Ṣūfism and Sunnism in Safavid Iran: 1501-1722,” *Journal of Asian History*, (15)1, 1981, p. 20

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁶ The first was primarily focused on opposition to the recitation of the *Abū Muṣlīm Nāma*, which occurred in the context of the waning of Qizilbāsh power, and most probably was not directed specifically at the Qalandars. (See K. Babayan, *The Waning of the Qizilbash: the Spiritual and the Temporal in Seventeenth Century Iran*, unpublished PhD thesis (Princeton University, 1993); Leonard Lewisohn, “Sufism and the School of Isfahan,” in L. Lewisohn and D. Morgan (eds), *The Heritage of Sufism: Late Classical Persianate Sufism (1501-1750)*, (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), in particular see section II, “The Suppression of Sufism in Safavid Persia,” pp. 67-77). The second wave was more concerned with general Sufi practices and the associations between the *‘irfānī* (or gnostic) persuasions of scholars of the School of Isfahan and Sufism (See Andrew Newman, “Sufism and Anti-Sufism in Safavid Iran: The Authorship of the ‘Ḥadīqat al-Shī‘a’ Revisited,” *Iran*, vol. 37 (1999), pp. 95-108).

⁷ S.A. Arjomand, “Religious Extremism (Ghuluww), Ṣūfism and Sunnism in Safavid Iran”, p. 24.

⁸ The information is frequently very general in fashion. One interesting exception to this rule is Valī Qulī Shāmlū, *Qiṣas al-khāqānī* edited Sayyid Ḥasan Sādāt Nāshīrī (Tehran: Farhang va Irshād-i Islāmī, 1381/2002-3). In this work the author provides a short Safavid history of Shāh Ṣafī and Shāh ‘Abbās II. Also included are three

paucity of emic sources may be a reason why studies of Iranian Qalandars in the Safavid period by modern Persian scholars are scarce,⁹ and less has been offered by academics in the West.¹⁰ European and North American researchers have tended to focus on what might be termed “high” Sufism, or *‘irfān*, during the period of Safavid rule in Iran, that is to say, the writings of the Sufi-philosophers of the School of Isfahan, typified by Mullā Ṣadrā (1571/2-1640) and Mīr Dāmād (d. 1631-2), amongst many others.¹¹

Despite the problems facing modern scholars in their attempts to survey Qalandar history during the Safavid period, this article proposes an alternative to Arjomand’s theory related to the survival of the Qalandar during this time frame, and as such it offers a new way to think about Qalandars in Safavid Iran. The thesis herein is built upon a range of primary material that leads to conclusions that contradict the “normal” view of Qalandars in society. In the present age it may difficult for some to see beyond the “conventional” understanding of Qalandars as miserable beggars who engaged in acts that were not endorsed by *shari‘a* law.

biographical lists; the first contains 25 entries on the clerics, philosophers and learned men; the second contains 101 entries on the men of literature; the third contains 19 entries of Sufis. This last category is of interest because Valī Qulī Shāmlū actually names these Sufis; they are not anonymous and featureless individuals. However, he does not give their affiliation (if they had any to speak of) such as Qalandariyya etc. Despite this, the identification of some of these 19 Sufis with Qalandar style Sufism is possible due to their names, such as Darvīsh Bābā Kalb‘alī (v. II. pp.179-191), Bābā Quṭb al-Dīn Ṣāqīdī (v. II. p. 199), and Darvīsh Bābā ‘Alīkhān (v. II. p. 200). Bābā was frequently used as a name of Qalandar darvishes.

⁹ In the Persian speaking academic world the standard reference that many scholars give is ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Zarrīnkūb’s chapter entitled “Qalandar va Khāksār,” in his *Justajū dar taṣawwuf-i Irān*. There is little specific information about Qalandars during the Safavid period in Zarrīnkūb’s work. More recently M.R. Shafrī-Kadkanī has published *Qalandariya dar tārikh* (Tehran: Sukhan, 1385/2007-8). Useful as this work is, the focus is primarily on Qalandars prior to the Safavid period. The work of Mihrān Afshārī should be mentioned, as he has edited and published a number of treatises that were either penned by Qalandars in the period in question, or else reflect Qalandar interests. See in particular Mihrān Afshārī, *Āyīn-i jawānmardī* (Tehran: Daftar-i pizhūhish-hā-yi farhangī, 1384/2005-6), pp. 70-5; Mihrān Afshārī, “Kārvūsh-i Qalandarī,” in Mīr ‘Abidīnī & Afshārī, *Āyīn-i Qalandarī* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Farārawān, 1374/1995-6), pp. 25-71.

¹⁰ The three “Round Table” international Colloquia on the Safavid period surprisingly yielded little material related to Sufism, to say nothing of the Qalandars. Exceptions include K. Babayan, “Sufis, dervishes and mullas: The controversy over spiritual and temporal dominion in seventeenth century Iran,” in C. Melville (ed), *Safavid Persia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996), pp. 117-38. A number of works treat Sufism and the Qalandars within their broader research. Worthy of mention are Rula Jurdi Abisaab, *Converting Persia: Religion and Power in the Safavid Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004); Rudi Matthee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Drugs and Stimulants in Iranian History, 1500-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Kathryn Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran* (HCMES, 2002).

¹¹ Analytical studies of the scholars of the School of Isfahan include Leonard Lewisohn, “Sufism and the School of Isfahan,” in L. Lewisohn & D. Morgan (eds), *The Heritage of Sufism: Late Classical Persianate Sufism (1501-1750)*, (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), pp. 63-134; Ian Netton, “Suhrawardī’s Heir? The Ishrāqī Philosophy of Mīr Dāmād,” in L. Lewisohn & D. Morgan (eds), *The Heritage of Sufism*, pp. 225-46; Hamid Dabashi, “Mīr Dāmād and the Founding of the ‘School of Isfahan’” in S. H. Nasr & O. Leaman (eds,) *History of Islamic Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp 597-633; Sajjad Rizvi, “A Sufi theology fit for a king: The *Gawhar-i murād* of ‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī (d. 1072/1661-2),” in Ayman Shihadeh (ed), *Sufism and Theology* (Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 83-96. Translations of texts composed by Mullā Ṣadrā are also plentiful. Among the most notable are Colin Turner, *The Three Principles of Mulla Sadra: Divine Gnosis, Self-Realisation and the Dangers of Pseudo-Knowledge in Islam* (Routledge, 2014); William Chittick, *The Elixir of the Gnostics* (University of Chicago Press, 2003).

Such perspectives may be infected by the influence of positivist thinking that took hold in locations such as Iran in the 19th and 20th centuries, typified by the anti-Sufi writings of scholars such as Aḥmad Kasravī.¹² The present article is not simply speculative thinking, for the sources themselves lead to the conclusion that during the Safavid period, the Qalandars were part of a Safavid constituency and enjoyed a more sedentary, urban lifestyle, engaging in trades associated with the barbers. This is a new line of thinking in the Iranian context, but one that has been applied to other groups of Qalandar in the Islamic world.¹³ The social and economic pressures on antinomian groups to “domesticate” and “sanitise” their practices and beliefs must have been strong.

Rather than view their lack of congregational organization as a primary cause of Qalandar survival, I argue herein that it was partly a result of their organization, their very presence in the centre of urban society, and their willingness to participate in the Safavid constituency that rendered them safe. While there is a body of material in both Persian and Western languages that indicates this may be so, an emic source was published more recently which supports this theory.¹⁴ The publication in question is a Qalandar treatise dedicated to Shāh Sulīmān (r. 1666-94) and it is this important work that is considered at length towards the end of this article. This Persian treatise, written in 1079/1668, has yet to receive adequate scholarly attention.¹⁵

This article will commence by examining the position of the Qalandars in the Safavid period, noting the potential they offered to the Safavid authorities in their denominational proclivity and their effectiveness in providing an efficient conduit for state propaganda from one direction and information about intrigues and dangers from another. Subsequently, the article will highlight the opposition to the Qalandars by examining the hostility and threats from their clerical adversaries. Finally, the Qalandars themselves will be allowed to speak through a description and analysis of this un-named treatise. For the sake of convenience it will henceforth be termed the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma*. The treatise offer a glimpse of Qalandars

¹² Lloyd Ridgeon, *Sufi Castigator: Ahmad Kasravi and the Iranian mystical tradition* (London: Routledge, 2006).

¹³ See for example, Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh, “Deviant Dervishes: Space, Gender, and the Construction of Antinomian Piety in Ottoman Aleppo,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 37/4 (2005), pp. 535-565. The same process of domestication is evident in another Qalandar treatise from Bukhara in the seventeenth century which reflects the influence of the strong Naqshbandiyya which was eclipsing other Sufi orders in the region. I possess two manuscript copies of this treatise. The first is kept in the Majlis Library, Tehran (manuscript number 1055) but actually bears the title “Lords of the way” (*arbāb al-ṭarīq*). The second manuscript is entitled *Ādāb al-ṭarīq* and is kept in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg (manuscript number B946). The two manuscripts are virtually the same; the major difference is the title, which is most the result of a scribal error.

¹⁴ Mihrān Afshārī & Mīr ʿAbidīnī & Afshārī, *Āyīn-i Qalandarī* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Farārawān, 1374/1995-6), pp. 79-213.

¹⁵ The treatise was briefly mentioned in Lloyd Ridgeon, *Morals and Mysticism in Persian Sufism: A history of Sufi-futuwwa in Iran* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 145-8.

that stands at odds with the received image of the Qalandar Sufi. While such emic material needs due caution, it is just as true that the received image requires a commensurate degree of rigorous critical analysis in order for a more accurate image of Safavid Qalandar to emerge.

II. Domestication of the Safavid Qalandars in Iran

(a). Co-operation with the Safavid State

Given that the denominational preference of the Safavids for Shīʿa Islam coincided with that of the Qalandars in Iran, or rather, a group known as Ḥaydarī Qalandars, the potential for co-operation between the two was high. The Shīʿa leanings of Iran’s Qalandars may be traced back to the fifteenth century, as Nūr Allāh Shustarī (d. 1610) mentions that the followers of Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥaydar Tūnī (d. 1427),¹⁶ who is considered as one of the forefathers of Iran’s Qalandars (indeed he is mentioned in the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* that is the subject of this article –see below), whispered curses that were directed at Sunnis into their ears of initiates.¹⁷ This anti-Sunni sentiment would have been favoured by early Safavid Shāhs, such as Tahmasp (r. 1524-76) who sent a document to the Sunni Ottoman Caliph, noting that he had ordered a group known as ritual disavowers (*tabarra’iyān*) and also the Qalandars to chant curses at the Sunnis, which of course included the Caliph himself in Istanbul and his Sunni subjects.¹⁸ Disavowing (*tabarra’iyān*) seems to have been prevalent in the first century of Safavid rule, and it continued subsequent to this period, even though there is no evidence of an official group that carried out this function.¹⁹ As we shall see later, the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma*, endorses the practice.

The public nature of such rituals bears some similarity with other Qalandar practices; some modern scholars have observed that the Qalandars would chant benedictions for the Imāms, and earn money or receive donations for public forms of recitation of popular stories such as *Husayn-i Kurd*.²⁰ European travellers to Iran mention the kinds of practices that may

¹⁶ Ibn Karbalā’ī, *Rawzat al-Janān wa Janāt al-Jinan*, edited by Jaʿfar Sulṭān al-Qurra’ī (Tehran: Bungāh-i tarjuman wa nashr-i kitāb, 1344/1965), p. 467.

¹⁷ Nūr Allāh Shustarī, *Majlis al-Mu’minīn*, Sayyid Ḥusayn Tihirānī (ed) (Tehran: Kitābfurūshī ‘Ilmiya, 1354/1975-6), vol. I. p.82.

¹⁸ Cited in Rosemary Stanfield Johnson, “The Tabarra’iyan and the Early Safavids,” *Iranian Studies*, 37.1, 2004, p. 51.

¹⁹ Rosemary Stanfield Johnson, “The Tabarra’iyan and the Early Safavids,” p. 67.

²⁰ *Qissa-yi Husayn-i Kurd Shabistari*, edited by Iraj Afshār and Mihrān Afshārī (Tehran: 1385). In his introduction to this edition, Afshārī commented on page 19, “Probably, at the end of the Safavid period, wandering storytellers, or those Sufis and Qalandars who were in the service of the Safavid monarchs, and who spread the bigotry

have been performed by Qalandar Sufis. The French merchant Jean Baptiste Tavernier (who passed through Iran on several occasions between the 1630s-1650s) describes that the attachment of some to Shī'a Islam resulted in their practice of publicly teaching the *shari'ca*,²¹ and according to Father Nicolas Sanson, who was in Iran between 1683 and 1691, there were Sufis “preach[ing] austerely on street corners and coffee houses.”²² While such sources do not identify the Qalandar specifically, it is possible that they can be included amongst those who did perform such ritual activity.

The Safavid authorities would have welcomed the assistance of the Qalandars in converting Iran into a predominantly Shī'a land. Despite efforts in making this denominational change there must have been resistance and opposition to these endeavours of the Safavid monarchs. Even among the Safavids rulers and their high officials there remained some sympathy for the Sunni tradition. Ismā'īl II (r. 1576-77) manifested pronounced Sunni sympathies, and his high ranking official named Mīrzā Makhdūm Sharīfī (d. 1586) was known as a Sunni devotee. Indeed it was these two who were “responsible for banning the ritual curse,”²³ and “the official group of the *tabarra'i'yān* ... were required to return to their freelance status.”²⁴ This suggests that the attempt to transform the peoples of Iran into Shī'a believers was not so easy. Some have claimed that Shī'i indoctrination was necessary, even into the second century of Safavid rule. Babayan points to the *Qisas al-khāqānī* (composed in 1664-5) and claims that “twenty dervishes [were] engaged in the process of converting the general public to Islam.”²⁵

Despite their co-operation in ritual cursing, the Qalandars may have been considered somewhat dangerous, unconstrained and independent of the establishment's authority. The Safavid state's taxation policy seems to have functioned as a means of control, as lists of

of praising the Imams and cursing the Sunnis and who were also masterly in story-telling, read aloud the story of Husayn-i Kurd to the people so that they would not forget the exploits of Shah 'Abbās's heroes and maintain the influence of the Safavid government.”

²¹ Cited by Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs* p. 443, 474, n. 15.

²² Sanson, *The Present State of Persia*, pp. 153-5.

²³ Rosemary Stanfield Johnson, “The Tabarra'iyan and the Early Safavids,” p. 61.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

²⁵ Kathryn Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs*, p. 428. I have not seen the manuscript copy that Babayan has used in her work. However, in the edited version of the *Qisas al-khāqānī* there are only nineteen darvishes listed. Moreover, it is problematic to claim that all of these were engaged in converting the public to Islam. Whilst it is true that some of these Sufis were indeed engaged in the performance of “normative” Islamic rites and in the promotion of Shī'a themes in their poetry (such as Mawlānā Mīrzā Muḥammad, whose pen name was Muḥaqqiq, and who praised the *imāms* in his works - see *Qisas al-khāqānī*, p. 197), others among these nineteen engaged in specifically Sufi devotions, and there is no mention of “normative” Islam or specifically Shī'a themes (see for example, the entry for Shaykh 'Imād Māzandarānī, who engaged much in seclusion within the *zāwiya*, and disliked the association of common people, although many of the nobles and distinguished people of Astarābād were his disciples (*Qisas al-khāqānī*, p. 192).

taxable occupations and groups of individuals include those which were not subject to the normal guild tax, but which paid customary dues (*rusūm*); this latter group included the Qalandar.²⁶ Significantly, the list indicates that such groups were supervised by a senior government official (*naqīb*).²⁷ The existence of the term Qalandar on such a list calls into question the notion of wandering dervishes with no fixed abode, and who were carefree of the demands of government. Instead, it might be possible to discuss sedentary Qalandars who were based in their own *khānaqāhs* or *takkiyahs*, under the surveillance of the Safavids, and performing the kinds of acts of devotion in public of which the state approved. Indeed, it is clear that the Qalandars were on occasions the recipients of *khānaqāhs*, as the *Tadhkirah-yi Naṣrābādī* states that Shah ʿAbbās donated a *takkiya* in the main square of Isfahan to a Qalandar leader named Bābā Sulṭān Qalandar Qummī.²⁸

(b). The Qalandars in Society

The shared interests of the Safavid authorities and the Qalandars in promoting Shīʿa Islam might have been a stage in the gradual domestication of the Qalandars during the Safavid period. This represents a change in the “typical” Qalandar lifestyle, away from traditional patterns of Qalandar-Sufi style activity. In short, the wild, untrammelled Qalandar, typified by Baraq Bābā (d.c. 1307-8), or the more literary, yet still itinerant types, such as the well-known Fakhr al-Dīn ʿIrāqī (d. 1289), were replaced by Qalandars whose livelihoods were not dependent upon the fruits of begging, or who wandered the length and breadth of Iran and adjacent territories, instead residing for periods in various convents. These Safavid Qalandars had professions or a respectable occupation. The suggestion is that the Qalandars were assimilated into the ranks of the trades during the Safavid period, in particular, that of the barbers and possibly the eulogisers. This domestication of the Qalandars may also be associated with the increasing growth of Iranian cities such as Isfahan towards the end of the 16th century, when large scale building projects must have offered employment to various skilled and

²⁶ Mehdi Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life in the Later Safavid Period* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, Verlag, 1982), p. 54. Keyvani is explicit in mentioning the Qalandar on his third list of fourteen groups. Unfortunately, the sources for these lists are not explicitly clear. He states, “It has been possible to compile from the various sources three lists of guilds or professional groupings at Isfahan in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries” (p. 49). These sources are not given.

²⁷ Mehdi Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life in the Later Safavid Period*, p. 53.

²⁸ Mīrzā Muḥammad Tāhir Naṣrābādī, *Tadhkirah-yi Nasrabadi*, edited by Vahīd Dastgirdī (Tehran: Furūghī, n.d.), p. 284.

unskilled men. Among the most famous of these structures and buildings in Isfahan are the *maydān-i naqsh-i jahān*, the Luṭfallāh Mosque, the Royal Mosques, and the ʿĀlī Qāpū palace.²⁹

The increase in economic activity is reflected in the volume of guild-literature in Iran which proliferated from the fifteenth century, and during the Safavid period onwards the majority of such manuals reflected the tradition of the *futuwwat* associations that had become popular in Anatolia and Iran from the thirteenth century.³⁰ These manuals are significant in the context of Qalandar history because there is a similarity between such guild literature and Qalandar treatises (such that exist), including the emphasis on Sufi ethics, forms of initiation, a mythical history that is traced to a “patron-saint”, the importance of certain individuals such as Salmān-i Fārisī (a well-known companion of Muḥammad), and the simple and non-verbose literary style. Worthy of careful consideration are the manuals depicting the “secrets” associated with the barbers’ trade.³¹ It is here that a link with the Qalandars should be foregrounded due to the detail and attention that the Qalandars paid to the *chahār ẓarb* (the distinctive four shaves of the Qalandars which made them appear so distinct in traditional Muslim company: the head, the eyebrows, the moustache and the beard were all removed). In Qalandar treatises there are frequent references to the utensils used by barbers (the whetstone, razor and mirror),³² and in such works the name of Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥaydar Tūnī (mentioned above) is often considered a spiritual ancestor of the Qalandars. In addition to his spiritual activities, Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥaydar Tūnī may have engaged in the profession of a barber. His name, Tūnī, may not be the adjective of the city of Tūn (in south Khurasān), but may be derived from *tūn* (or the stove of the *hamam*) where the barbers also worked.³³ The claim that the tasks of the barber

²⁹ On the urbanisation and building projects in Isfahan, see Andrew Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), pp. 55-67.

³⁰ For *futuwwat* in the thirteenth and fourteenth century see Ridgeon, *Morals and Mysticism*, pp. 61-91.

³¹ Such manuals begin to appear more frequently during the Safavid period, although it is difficult to determine their precise dating. For an example of these manuals, see the relevant treatises in Mihrān Afshārī & Miḥdī Madāyīnī (ed), *Chahārdah risāla dar bāb-i futuwwat va aṣnāf* (Tehran: Nashr-i chishma, 1381/2002-3).

³² See in particular, the “Tarāsh-nāma-yi qalandarī” (The Qalandar Book of Shaving), included in M.R. Shafīrī-Kadkanī, *Qalandariya dar tārikh*, pp. 414-20.

³³ Mihrān Afshārī, *Āyīn-i jawānmardī*, 1384/2005-6, p. 72. The possible connections between the Ḥaydarī Qalandarān and the artisans and tradespeople has been traced back to the eleventh century *Qābūs nāma* which discusses the *javānmardī* of the tradespeople and the Sufis and the soldiers (Mihrān Afshārī, *Futuwwat nāma-hā wa rasā’il-i Khāksāriyya* (Tehran: Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, 1381/2003), p. 35). This threefold classification is reflected in the thirteenth century *futuwwat nāma* of Najm al-Dīn Zarkūb (d. 1313), who mentions three types of initiation into *futuwwat*: initiation by the leather belt for soldiers, by the woollen belt for the Sufis, and by the cotton belt for the tradespeople (Najm al-Dīn Zarkūb, “Futuwwat nāma” in M. Ṣarrāf (ed), *Rasā’il-i javānmardān* (Tehran: Institut Français en Iran, second edition 1991), pp. 188-90). The claim is that the individuals of this latter group (the tradespeople) were ascetic professional tradespeople, and the Qalandars were the descendants of these kind of *javānmardān*, that is, those “who were tradesmen and frequenters of the *langar*, and their way of life had a Sufi colouring.” Whereas Sufis were influenced by the ethics of *javānmardī*, the Qalandar tradesmen were *javānmardān* influenced by Sufism (Mihrān Afshārī, in Mīr ‘Abidīnī & Afshārī, *Āyīn-i Qalandarī* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Farārawān, 1374/1995-6), p. 47).

extended beyond grooming should be noted; the barber also worked at the bath-houses, where they were also masseurs, pulled teeth and let blood.³⁴

As such, this theory supposes that the domestication and the sedentary and urban lifestyle of the Qalandars commenced even prior to the Safavids. The theory also supposes that the urban tradespeople might have preserved forms of Sufi belief in spite of attempts by the authorities of the Safavid period to expel much of the tradition from the territory of Iran. Yet it is clear that the artisans and tradespeople of Safavid Iran were reluctant to renounce their Sufi beliefs, which is manifest in the many trades' manuals, which often contained clear indications of an *irfānī* belief.³⁵ Indeed, the partiality of Sufism among the masses is indicated by Mullā Ṣadrā who observed that the attraction of the Sufis over the people was very great, for their power was “such that craftsmen and artisans leave their jobs and follow them.”³⁶ It cannot be denied, however, that Mullā Ṣadrā's comments may have been an exaggeration or an attempt to criticise the “low” manifestations of Sufism.

The importance of these groups of guildsmen and tradesmen of Safavid Iran assumes even greater significance if these individuals are the forefathers of communities that had settled in urban areas during the Safavid period, and which were involved in the communal violence between the Ḥaydarī and Niʿmatī wards of Iranian urban areas.³⁷ Afshārī understands these Ḥaydarīs as descending from the aforementioned Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥaydar Tūnī, although this claim is disputed by Shafīʿī-Kadkanī.³⁸ The famous Iranian historian of Sufism, ʿAbd al-Ḥusyan Zarrīnkūb offered a frustratingly brief hint of the origins of the conflicts in his comment that “the altercations between the Ḥaydarīs and the Niʿmatīs ... which apparently arose from the conflicts of the *ʿayyārān* and the *jawānmardān* of various localities of the city, did not leave for the Haydarīs a single trace of the simple, peace-seeking life of the Qalandars of old.”³⁹ Zarrīnkūb may well have been attempting to present a romantic and rosy vision of “the Qalandars of old”, but his linkage of Haydarīs with the Qalandars is speculative of a lineage connecting the Haydarīs to the older Qalandars. It is interesting that Zarrīnkūb also stated that the *takkiya* of Mīr Ḥaydar in Tabriz (who was considered among the *jawānmard-*

³⁴ This is the claim of Mihrān Afshārī, who has discussed the Qalandars at length with me on several occasions.

³⁵ See for example, Mihrān Afshārī (ed), *Siḥ futuwwat nāma*, in Iraj Afshār (ed) *Pizhūhish-hā-yi Irānshināsī*, vol. VII, (Tehran: 1372/1993-4), pp. 3876-7.

³⁶ Cited by Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs*, p. 446.

³⁷ For these disputes see Hossein Mirjaʿfari and J. R. Perry, “The Ḥaydarī-Niʿmatī conflicts in Iran,” *Iranian Studies*, 12, 3-4, 1979, pp. 135-162

³⁸ The difference of opinion is summarised in Lloyd Ridgeon, *Morals and Mysticism in Persian Sufism* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 138-9.

³⁹ Zarrīnkūb, *Justajū dar taṣawwuf-i Irān*, p. 370

ān – who are connected by Afshārī to the Qalandars) was closed at the order of Shah ʿAbbās, as it was considered a centre of contamination, defamation and corruption.⁴⁰ Without further knowledge of the context in which the *takkiya* was closed, it can only be speculated that this is an indication of the pressures that were exercised by the state on Qalandar groupings when they had exceeded the boundaries of acceptable behaviour.

III. Opposition to the Qalandars

That the state required some degree of control over Qalandar groups is evident in the kinds of threats that Sufī groups posed. Typifying this is a chain of events that were reported in the *Tārīkh-i ʿĀlam-ara-yi ʿAbbāsī* which was written by Iskandar Bek Munshi in the early seventeenth century. The author discusses the affair of four different Qalandar pretenders to the Safavid throne around 1580-1 (which has been termed “a curious episode of Safavid history,” by a modern observer).⁴¹ The language used to describe the Qalandars and their supporters is quite revealing: “ignorant rustics [who] were deceived by the absurd utterances of that fool who had turned aside from the path of reason”: “[that] unintelligent group of people”⁴²; “hemp addicted qalandars.”⁴³ Such language is typical of the polemical vocabulary that was often used in the pre-modern period to describe opponents or critics. The continuing linkage of these kinds of darvishes with poverty, low-class and antinomian behaviour is also evident in some reports by European travellers to Iran in the seventeenth century. For example, a Russian visitor to Isfahan in the mid-17th century described a group of Qalandars and was shocked by their nakedness (except for a sheepskin) and their drinking and fornication.⁴⁴ Others mentioned shabby dervishes clustering around coffee-houses, although their generic descriptions do not convey sufficient information that can specify these Sufis as Qalandars. For example, Chardin describes the Safavid coffee-house and mentions that “mullas, dervishes,

⁴⁰ Zarrīnkūb, *Justajū dar tasawwuf-i Irān*, p. 370. Zarrīnkūb’s source here was al-Qurra’ī’s editorial information to his edition of Ibn Karbalā’ī’s *Rawzat al-Jinān*, p. 597.

⁴¹ Roger M. Savory, “A curious episode of Safavid history,” in C.E. Bosworth (ed), *Iran and Islam* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1971), pp. 461-73.

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 464.

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 466. Mention should also be made of Darvīsh Kūchak Qalandar who was involved in the Nuqtavi movement in Iran in the late sixteenth century. It is unclear if he had any “traditional” form of Qalandar sympathy. It may be the case the word Qalandar in his name signifies no formal affiliation, and may even have been a term that was associated with a family relation. It is possible that prior to becoming associated with the Nuqtavis he was a Qalandar. In any case, specific links between the Qalandars and Nuqtavis have yet to be made. See Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs* p. 107.

⁴⁴ Cited by Mehdi Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life in the Later Safavid Period*, p. 54

and poets take turns telling stories in verse or in prose.”⁴⁵ He then adds that the customers were served by pretty Georgian boys between the ages of ten to sixteen, and these were houses of sodomy.⁴⁶

One of the difficulties facing historians in attempts to trace the Qalandars during the Safavid period is that many of the sixteenth and seventeenth century sources simply speak of Sufism, as if there were no distinction among the various groups. The fortunes of the Sufis probably fluctuated as the policies of the various monarchs oscillated between support for and opposition to the Sufis. In particular, during the first half of the Safavid period, relations were effected by how the Safavid monarchs’ perceived their relationship with their once devout supporters, the *qizilbāsh*. It is to be wondered if Sufism in general suffered specifically because of the *qizilbāsh-Shāh* dynamics (°Abbās I massacred these Sufis in Lāhījān in 1614-15). The clerical establishment included proponents who favoured such a crusade against Sufis as a whole. Many of the writings of such ‘*ulamā*’ do not specify the names of particular Sufi associations, but there can be little doubt that one of their targets was the Qalandars. An example of such an anti-Sufi work is the well-known Persian treatise, *al-Fawā’id al-dīnniyah fi’l- radd ‘alā’ ḥukumā’ wa’l ṣūfiyya*, composed by Mullā Muḥammad Ṭāhir Qummī (d. 1686).⁴⁷ Although not mentioning Qalandars in his list of twenty reprehensible Sufi groups, Qummī may well have had them in mind when attacking the practices of these twenty deviant and heretical groups.⁴⁸ The clerical refusal to use the name of Qalandars (and that of other Sufi groups) reflects a wilful negation to grant any agency to their opponents. It was part of an attempt to control and dominate the discussion on spirituality; any deviation from what was considered “normative” was spelt out by naming such groups with artificial nomenclature that reflected their “errors” and “sins”.⁴⁹ Although Qalandars remained anonymous in many texts, there are a few examples of clerics penning specifically anti-Qalandar sections in their tracts. For example, °Alī Karakī (d. 1534) wrote a very short answer to a question put to him about the Qalandars and if they are misguided. He responded with a curt answer, saying that the particular Qalandar Shaykh in question was misguided, and he refused the opportunity to

⁴⁵ Chardin, *Voyages*, 4.68, translated by Rudi Matthee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure*, p.166.

⁴⁶ Chardin, *Voyages*, 4.69, translated by Rudi Matthee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure*, p.170. This atmosphere of the coffee-house is often reflected in the literature produced by modern Western scholars. For example, Rudi Matthee speaks of “Qalandar types” creating “an atmosphere of merriment that served as a screen for depravity and more specifically public pederasty.” (Rudi Matthee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure*, p.169).

⁴⁷ Andrew Newman, “Sufism and anti-Sufism in Safavid Iran,” pp. 95-108.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 104.

⁴⁹ Another example of such clerical general hostility to Sufism, without targeting specific and recognisable groups, is al-Ḥurr al-°Āmilī (d. 1695), *Risālat al-Ithnā°ashariyya fi’l radd ‘alā al-Ṣūfiyya* (ed. Muḥammad al-Tafrashī Durūdī (Qum: al-Maṭba°a al-°Ilmiyya, 1408/1987),).

engage in lengthy polemic against the Qalandar,⁵⁰ and Ni^cmatallāh al-Jazā'irī (1640-1701) appears to have had a particular dislike for the Qalandars. Rula Jurdi Abisaab has summarised his perspective, and she states:

Al-Jaza'iri likened the world to a human organism, and compared the king's to a man's head and the ^culama to his heart. In this order, the Qalandars were analogous to a man's pubic and armpit hair because they have no function in the body. It is harmful and must be plucked out in the same way, as the Qalandars need to be uprooted from society.⁵¹

There were also clerics who were sympathetic in general to the mystical tradition, such as Mullā Ṣadrā, whose world view, while mystical, was still critical of the more emotional, ecstatic and antinomian forms of Sufism.⁵² He refrained from targeting Qalandars in his *Kasr aṣnām al-jāhiliya fī dhamm al-mutaṣawwifīn* (“Smashing the idols of ignorance in condemnation of the Sufi pretenders”) which has been described as “a fairly standard manual depicting the notorious antinomian excesses of certain Sufi followers.”⁵³ Mullā Ṣadrā was certainly not an exception, as there were other philosophically inclined “mystics” of the School of Isfahan, such as his own student and son-in-law, ^cAbd al-Razzāq Lāhijī (d. 1661-2), whose *Gawhar-i murād* attempted to fuse “high” Sufism with Shī^cism, and reject the blind obedience found in “popular” Sufism (in particular, the *pīr-murīd* relationship) and those that ignore the intellectual foundation of the spiritual path.⁵⁴

IV. The *Sulīmān Shāh Qalandar-nāma*

(a). Introduction to the Treatise

Having summarized the context related to the Qalandars in the middle of the seventeenth century (aspects of which promoted their position in Iran and others which compromised their position), it is now possible to investigate how the Qalandars presented themselves. This can be achieved by carefully analysing a text that I shall refer to as the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma*.

⁵⁰ Rula Jurdi Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, p. 26. Karakī was vehemently opposed to the Qalandars and issued fatwas against them. See *ibid*, p. 44.

⁵¹ Rula Jurdi Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, p. 136.

⁵² See Colin Turner, *Islam without Allah* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), p. 173.

⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 185, n.108.

⁵⁴ Sajjad Rizvi, “A Sufi theology fit for a king”. Similarly, Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ (d. 1680) was critical of popular forms of Sufism (Hamid Dabashi, “Mīr Dāmād,” pp. 597-634.).

As stated previously the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* was finished in 1668, which means that it was composed towards, or at least reflects the end of Shāh ʿAbbās II’s reign.⁵⁵ This was a period in which a high degree of complexity is observable in the monarch’s policy concerning religion. ʿAbbās wished to limit the influence of the Uṣūlī clerics in political spheres, and this, combined with his interest in Sufism explains why he bestowed favours upon a number of darvishes,⁵⁶ and often supported the clerics who were sympathetic to Sufism, such as Muḥammad Tāqī Majlisī (1594-5/1659-60),⁵⁷ or at least those who endorsed the philosophically tinged version of it (such as Mīrzā Rafīʿa Nāʾinī (d. 1669-70) and Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1680). It may be as a reaction to the patronage offered to Sufis by the “dervish-loving monarch,”⁵⁸ that the period witnessed the second wave of anti-Sufi polemics, typified in the writings of Mīr Lawhī (who wrote his anti-Sufi tracts in the mid-1650s), Muḥammad Tāhir Qummī (d. 1689) and al-Ḥurr al-Amilī (d. 1693). Rula Jurdi Abisaab has claimed that such clerics were “threatened by the popular radical implications of their [Sufi teaching’s] socio-economic content ... Popular Sufism under the Safavids became a vehicle for political dissent among disadvantaged social sectors, particularly craftsmen in several guilds who challenged the clerical aristocracy and the state by undermining the *shariʿa* and expressing defiance to the *mujtahids*.”⁵⁹ She observes an increase in “attacks against the Qalandars in the late Safavid period” as a reflection of the dire politico-economic conditions; such criticism “underscore[s] the interconnection among economic dispossession, vagrancy, anti-Safavid political rebellion and, above all, Sufism-dervishism.”⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Paul Luft, *Iran unter Schah ʿAbbās II (1642-1666)* (dissertation, Georg-August Universität Göttingen, 1968).

⁵⁶ K. Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs* p. 410; 432, n. 25.

⁵⁷ Muḥammad Tāqī Majlisī was a scholar who included the earliest and according to some the most unreliable *ḥadīth* of the Imāms. He is often associated with Sufism. Momen calls him an adherent of the Dhahabiyya Sufi order (M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shiʿi Islam* (Yale University Press: 1985), p. 115). More details on Majlisī Senior’s Sufi sympathies (or similarities between Sufism and his version of Shiʿa Islam) are found in Ali Rahnama, *Superstition as Ideology in Iranian Politics* (Cambridge: University Press, 2011), pp. 173-9.

⁵⁸ Muḥammad Tāhir Vaḥīd Qazvīnī, *ʿAbbās-nāma*, ed. I. Dihqānī (Ārāk: Dāvūdī, 1950-51), p. 255. Cited in Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs* p. 411.

⁵⁹ Rula Jurdi Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, p. 115. See also Andrew Newman’s comments, “Sufism and anti-Sufism in Safavid Iran,” *Iran*, 37 (1999), p. 95.

⁶⁰ Rula Jurdi Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, p. 136. This claim requires further investigation, firstly because her source for the “late Safavid period” include a work that refers to an incident that took place in the early 1580s, and secondly because Qalandar involvement in all of the aforementioned socio-economic circumstances are far from well documented. For example, the idea of disadvantaged “social sectors, particularly craftsmen,” needs clarification, especially as other scholars have claimed that the period is best characterised as one “of relative tranquility and economic prosperity” (Rudi Matthee, “Abbas II,” *Encyclopedia Iranica* (<http://iranicaonline.org/articles/abbas-ii-2013>). Accessed 24.01.2014). ʿAbbās II’s reign appears to have witnessed more economic stability, whilst during that of Sulīmān, his successor, there was “a fall in agricultural output, growing numbers of commercial bankruptcies, and a deteriorating currency.” (Rudi Matthee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure*, p. 26). It is difficult to demonstrate that economic reasons were behind clerical antipathy to the Qalandars. Even though Abisaab suggests this may indeed have been the case, she points to the connections of the Qalandar with “earlier Sunnite *ahl-i futuvvat*,” which “emphasised a solid work ethic and avoidance of deceit”.

The name of the author of the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* is unknown, indeed, it has been suggested that the work is a compilation of several different Qalandar compositions.⁶¹ If this is this case, the skill of the compiler must be applauded because of the relative lack of repetition that would probably have resulted had a number of Qalandar treatises been assembled randomly. The edited version of the treatise accounts for 134 pages. The edition is based on a single manuscript, which is stored in the Central Library of the University of Tehran (no. 3478). It is difficult to distinguish clear divisions in the edited text (there are no chapter divisions or headings), which presumably are not present in the manuscript.⁶² The editors have inserted sub-titles in brackets which tend to distract the reader's attention from the more logical breaks in the text which are marked by "In the name of God, the Merciful and the Compassionate," and which then summarise the treatise's contents in the next few lines. Based upon such a reading of the "logical breaks" it is possible to discern eight "chapters" (including the introduction).⁶³ In the sections below the contents are listed, and subsequently an analysis is made of the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* that focuses on its pedagogical style, the Shī'ā nature of the treatise, and particular aspects associated with Qalandarism.

(b). Contents of *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma*

1. The introduction includes neither the title of the treatise nor the name of the author, nor the reason for the composition of the text. (It is possible that this was included in the original version of the treatise, but the first couple of lines are missing from the manuscript). It simply proceeds to praise Shāh Sulīmān, offering a Qur'ānic verse to further sanctify the monarch's standing: "*It is from Sulīmān and it says: In the name of*

(Rula Jurdi Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, p. 115). Treatises on *futuwwat* certainly do foreground such idealised qualities, and are present in the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma*. But there is little evidence in this Qalandar work, however, to indicate anything about the economic conditions of Iran; the reason for clerical antipathy for Sufism is perhaps more explicable from a purely ideological perspective.

⁶¹ Mihrān Afshārī suggested to me in conversation that the treatise may simply have been a recording (or transcript) of the sessions, or meetings of the Qalandars. If this is true, then a number of questions spring to mind. How do we account for the diversity of themes in the sessions? How frequent were these meetings, and was the content in them repeated? My own view is that the diversity of material suggests that these are not simply transcripts from various Qalandar meetings. At the same time, the very loose structure of the text which I have divided into eight chapters might suggest that the author/s did not have a plan, or a fixed outline of what to include in the text. It may be possible that the author/s compiled the treatise from a number of existing works, and formulated a more or less coherent and structured whole.

⁶² I have been unable to see the manuscript.

⁶³ I am conscious that these divisions are somewhat arbitrary, and the breaks for "In the name of God, the Merciful and the Compassionate" also occur within the divisions I have made below. However, the content justifies the inclusion of several such sections commencing with this Qur'ānic citation within one over-arching chapter.

God, the Merciful and Compassionate” (27.30). The introduction subsequently glorifies at length the prophets and *imāms* in both prose and verse.⁶⁴

2. “Some advice about the lords of poverty because poverty is a fruit [for] travelers of the path of the *ṭarīqat* and searchers in the alley of the Truth [who] listen to his excellency Jaʿfar Ṣādiq in the right manner.” The chapter continues by praising the *imāms*, in addition to focusing upon important individuals in the history of the Qalandar movement. It discusses the significance of concepts such as *islām*, *imān iḥsān*, *sharʿat*, *ṭarīqat* and *ḥaqīqat*. Particular Qalandar themes include the symbolism of the *shadd* (the initiatory belt confirming an oath between master and pupil) and the *pūst takhta* (animal pelt) that Qalandars traditionally wore over their shoulders.⁶⁵
3. “Explaining the divine ordaining, the offices, the courtesies and conditions of *futuwwat* and the *shadd*, girding (*miyān bastan*), repentance, and the swearing allegiance of prophets to the *imāms*,⁶⁶ and from the *imāms* to the leaders...” The chapter discusses the tradition of girding, its varieties and its origins, and the girding of ʿAlī by Muḥammad.⁶⁷
4. “The oath of girding and the taking brothers are demonstrated for the searchers and masters of the path.” This chapter includes a treatise within a treatise (the *futuwwat-nāma-yi Amīr al-mūminīn*), and discusses specific Qalandar rituals (shaving) and the kinds of implements used in ritual activity.⁶⁸
5. “The virtues (*faḍīlat-nāma*) of the Commander of the Faithful, ʿAlī.” This chapter repeats some previous discussions concerning the *pūst takhta* and the *khirqā*, but also lists the different kinds of Shīʿa Islam.⁶⁹
6. “Explaining the gates of the Qalandariyya”, which describes the specific forms of clothing worn by the Qalandars, including the *tanūra* and the *lung*, and the various kinds of implements that they carried with them, such as the *jarīda* and the *tawgh*.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ *Āyīn-i Qalandarī*, pp. 79-106.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 106-129.

⁶⁶ This may be a scribal error. The content of the chapter suggests that it should have been “the swearing allegiance of the *imāms* to the prophets”.

⁶⁷ *Āyīn-i Qalandarī*, pp.129-140.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 140-147.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 147-157.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 157,164.

7. “Explaining the *sharī‘at* and *ṭarīqat* and *ḥaqīqat* and the obligatory commandments and conditions, and the oath and allegiance and the promise, and the stone and razor, and the four *pīrs*, the four *takbīrs*.” (The list at the beginning of this “chapter” continues with other issues and topics, however, the subsequent contents of the “chapter” foreground more specific Qalandar themes, including clothing such as the *tāj* (crown), and individuals who performed particular ritual activities, such as giving water (*saqā’ī*). There are also verses which describe the spiritual lineage of Shāh Ni‘matullāh and Sulṭān Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥaydar.⁷¹
8. This “chapter” consists largely of poetry, mainly couplets that relate to generic Sufi ideas such as love. The following is a typical example:

The glory of the sun and the morning is love
 The family and children of Muṣṭafā are love
 We are all nations of your forefathers
 The lord and light for our eyes is love
 Love is in a maṣjid and a tavern
 Love is in the *ka‘ba* and in the idol-temple.⁷²

Most of the pieces of poetry are unattributed, although there is couplet that the author claims comes from Ḥāfīz,⁷³ and several lines that mention Rūmī, although the verse does not come from his pen.⁷⁴ At the end of the chapter, and seemingly out of place within the chapter as a whole, there are four lists relating to the Shī‘a Imāms.⁷⁵

The way that the contents of the treatise have been assembled demonstrate a clear attempt to present different elements of the Qalandar path; they range from allegiance to Twelver Shī‘ism, ritual performance, ethical perfection, and mythical history. There are some elements which deserve further consideration because they contribute to the way in which the Qalandar should be considered within Safavid Iran.

(c). Pedagogical style

⁷¹ *Āyīn-i Qalandarī*, pp. 164-185

⁷² *Ibid*, p. 192.

⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 188. The author cites these lines which are not in recent editions of Ḥāfīz:

فرست اهل دلی تا کند دلالت خیر که مابه خویش نبردیم ره به هیچ طریق

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 188. The four lines end with the following couplet (which the author says re recited by the possessors of perfection:

نام مولانا نشد سلطان عشق تا غلام شمس تبریزی نشد

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 185-213,

The lists of the twelve *imāms* in correct chronological order, and the praise of each of the *imāms* in Persian verse suggests that some parts were intentionally composed in a didactic fashion, oriented to novices or those who knew very little of the Qalandar path. The aim of the sections was to provide an *aide-mémoire* for aspiring novices and perhaps the young.⁷⁶ The pedagogical nature of the text is also evident in sections and lists of pious character traits that are ordered alphabetically, as each letter of the alphabet is related to a key word in a sentence that begins with the same letter. For example the letter *‘ayn* is associated with *‘ibādat* (worship), the letter *fa’* is linked with *fanā* (annihilation), and *qāf* is connected with *qanā‘at* (satisfaction).⁷⁷ In addition, some of the text bears the stamp of catechistic authority, detailing the answers that must be given if a novice is asked a particular question, for example: “If they ask, ‘What is the origin and key and fruit and jewel of poverty?’ Say that the origin of poverty is love, the key of poverty is knowledge, the fruit of poverty is gnosis and the jewel of poverty is recognising God, Most High, just as his excellency the King of the Friends, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib has said, ‘*He who knows himself knows his Lord.*’”⁷⁸ There are also quatrains that would have been easy to memorize for those with little learning, containing no literary or structural complexity other than very simple rhymes (*sharī‘at bāshad, ṭarīqat bāshad, ḥaqīqat bāshad*):

Knowing the wisdom of religion is the *sharī‘at*.
 When you put it into practice it is the *ṭarīqat*,
 Once wisdom and practice are joined together
 For the sake of the Truth’s satisfaction it is the *ḥaqīqat*⁷⁹

It is tempting to make linkages between the narration of these kinds of lists and verses with the observations of Tavernier and Sansom of Sufi (Qalandar?) preaching in coffee houses and street corners. Occasionally the dry pedagogical prose is broken with a single line of clever verse. The example verse below only makes sense in the context of *futuwwat* and perhaps Qalandar meetings when the refreshment served after devotions was halva:

Turn to the *sharī‘at*. Know the *ṭarīqat*. Practice the *ḥaqīqat*.
 Because sugar, oil and wheat mixed together make halva.⁸⁰

⁷⁶*Ibid*, p. 91.

⁷⁷*Ibid*, pp. 92-4.

⁷⁸*Ibid*, p. 166.

⁷⁹*Ibid*, p. 167.

⁸⁰*Ibid*, p. 187. For the linkage of *futuwwat* and halva see *Futuwwat-nāma-yi sulṭānī*, edited by M. Mahjūb (Tehran: Bunyād-i farhang-i Irān, 1971), pp. 128-30.

An associated point worthy of mention is that the text demonstrates that not all Qalandars were illiterate, rather, the author of the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* must have received sufficient education, perhaps within a *madrāsah* to be able to include citations from the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth*.⁸¹ The inclusion of these in the text suggests that some of his audience would also have been familiar with a modicum of Arabic, which is not subsequently rendered in to Persian. Moreover, the audience or readers are expected to be familiar with the contents of fundamental (and long) texts of *ḥadīth*, which are not included in the treatise (even though they provide the subtext of the discussion). An example of this occurs at the beginning of the treatise when the author discusses the *sharī‘at*, *ṭarīqat* and *ḥaqīqat*.⁸² While this discussion may appear to be quite elementary, the author offers an explanation through a *ḥadīth* which has become known as the “*ḥadīth* of Gabriel”, which equates the *sharī‘a* with *islam*, the *ṭarīqat* with *īmān* and the *ḥaqīqat* with *iḥsān*.⁸³ Taken as a whole, the treatise presents elementary information about Sufism and Shī‘a Islam alongside more nuanced and sophisticated discussions. The two may be reconciled by the possibility that the audience had different levels of understanding and experience of Sufism, Qalandarism and Shī‘a Islam. Did the author/s address multiple readers? On the one hand, the treatise addressed the monarch, and those clerics who were more favourably inclined to Sufism without causing them any undue concern. On the other hand, it reached out to those who were more predisposed to forms of popular Sufism by delineating the particular interests of Qalandars. Just like the Shāh, perhaps the Qalandars too were concerned to construct multiple constituencies, and thus enhance their position in society.

(d). The Shī‘a Flavour of the Text

One of the most striking features of the text lies in the importance allocated to Shī‘a related themes in each chapter. Of note is the poetry in chapter one which lists the Twelve Imāms in chronological order. Subsequently in chapter two a connection is made between poverty and Ja‘far Ṣādiq, and this is followed by simple sayings from an un-named *imām* that the *sharī‘at* is a path, the *ṭarīqat* is walking on the path and the *ḥaqīqat* is reaching the destination. In the third chapter there is a long description of the events at Ghadir Khumm during which (according to Shī‘as) Muḥammad designated ‘Alī as his successor, and here the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* is no exception, even including *aḥādīth* such as, “*Of whosoever I am master,*

⁸¹ Many of the *aḥādīth* are typical sayings attributed to Muḥammad that are frequently found in Sufi texts, such as “He who has no Shaykh has Satan for his shaykh,” (p. 130) and “die before you die,” (pp.115, 134).

⁸² *Āyīn-i Qalandarī*, p. 106-7.

⁸³ For the full text and analysis of this *ḥadīth*, see S. Murata & W. Chittick, *The Vision of Islam* (New York: Paragon House), pp. xxv-xxxix.

‘Alī is [also] his master,’⁸⁴ and “Your body is my body, your blood is my blood and your spirit is my spirit. Oh ‘Alī you are to me what Aaron was to Moses, but there is no prophet after me.”⁸⁵ In the fourth chapter, there is a sub treatise entitled the “*futuwwat nāma-yi Amīr al-mūminīn*”. This chapter lists the spiritual virtues that a master of *futuwwat* should possess, and these originated with Muḥammad who passed them on to ‘Alī, who is also described as the Master of the *sharī‘at* and *ṭarīqat*. Moreover, the eminence accorded to ‘Alī is reflected in the *ḥadīth*, “I am the city of knowledge and ‘Alī is its gate.”⁸⁶ Chapter five also contains a section with a title specific to ‘Alī, the first few lines are worthy of citation since they reflect the veneration given to the first *imām*:

Ja‘far Ṣādiq related that Muḥammad Muṣṭafā was sitting in Medina and he said, “Whoever wants to see Adam with his chosenness, Noah with his prophecy, Solomon with his kingdom, Abraham with his nature, Job with his fortitude, Idris with his form, David with his deputyship, Moses with his prayers and me, Muḥammad, with my obedience, should see that person who has stood by the door.” Umm Salama said, “When I looked, I saw ‘Alī. I said, ‘Does the son of Abū Ṭālib have this magnificence and greatness?’” [Muḥammad] said, “I do not say this. It is God Most High in the Glorious Word who has compared him with twelve prophets, for example

He said of Adam: *Verily Allāh chose (iṣṭafā) Adam.* (3.33)

He said of ‘Alī: *Then We bequeathed the book upon those whom We chose (iṣṭafānā) of the servants.* (35.32)

He said of Noah, “*He was truly a very thankful (shakūrān) servant.*” (17.3)

He said of ‘Alī, “*We have guided him upon the path, either as thankful (shākīrān) or thankless.*” (76.3)⁸⁷

The citations from the Qur’ān continue this way (although the comparison with all twelve prophets mentioned above is limited to nine), revealing that the author had a sound knowledge of Arabic and the Qur’ān. Chapter five also contains a simplistic list of the various Shī‘a denominations.⁸⁸ Chapter six contains fewer references to Shī‘ism; there is only passing reference to ‘Alī who was present and may have been instrumental in tying the initiatory

⁸⁴ *Āyīm-i Qalandarī* pp. 130-1. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 4, p. 281 (Cairo: Maṭba‘a al-Maymāniyya, 1313/1896).

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, op. 130-1. Ibn Ḥanbal contains several variations of this *ḥadīth* in his *Musnad*, vol. I, pp. 170, 173, 174-5, 179, 182-3, 184, 331.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 143.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 147-8. The Qur’ānic linkage of these verses to ‘Alī is dubious, however, this is not the place to discuss the matter further.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 154. These include the Imāmiyya zaydiyya, the Kaysāniyya, Tāwūsiyya, Wāqifiyya, and the Ithnā‘ashariyya.

futuwwat-apron around Salmān-i Fārisī.⁸⁹ There is also a reference to the qualities of the apron coming through love for the twelve *imāms*.⁹⁰ Chapter seven makes explicit connections between the *imāms* and the ritual activity and initiation of the Qalandars, discussing how Muḥammad was the recipient of the razor and whetstone, the crown (*tāj*), the shirt of Ibrāhīm, the *khirqā*, and the belt (*kamar*) of Iṣḥāq, and then he had his head shaved. The “Necessary Existent” then proceeds to state, “Whoever among your community shaves his head, like you, will have 70,000 rewards written in his scroll of acts.”⁹¹ Subsequently Muḥammad shaves °Alī’s head and gives him all of the aforementioned gifts, and the latter then passes them to Ḥusayn. And each of the twelve *imāms* (mentioned by name) have their heads shaved by their predecessor. There is further Shī’a symbolism in the chapter, such as the discussion of the *tāj*, which was given to Adam, Noah, Ibrāhīm, Muḥammad and °Alī: °Alī’s *tāj* has twelve peaks which is symbolic of the twelve *imāms* (reminiscent of the Qizilbash twelve-peaked *tāj*).⁹² Moreover, the famous Sufi aphorism, “Whoever knows his soul [or himself] knows his Lord” is attributed to °Alī.⁹³ Other ritual activity that is linked with Shī’a Islam includes the practice of offering water, which is connected to the third *imām*, Ḥusayn.⁹⁴ (This practice of offering water became one of the most distinctive of “popular” Sufi ritual activities, and is linked in the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* with Ḥusayn, who is called the “*imām* of the fountain of Kawthar” (*imām-i ḥawḍ-i kawthar*),⁹⁵ and was especially associated with Khāksār dervishes in the Qājār period.⁹⁶) The last chapter, which contains many couplets relating to aspects of Qalandar ritual, concludes with four lists that re-inforce Shī’a doctrines. The first records the names of the fourteen, pure infallibles (*ma’cūm-i pāk*) who were all murdered (*shāhid shud*) by their opponents. This is not a list of the fourteen infallibles as understood by most scholars and twelver Shī’as (Muḥammad, Fāṭima and the twelve *imāms*); the first individual on the list is indicative of this: “Know that the first infallible is Muḥammad Akbar bin °Alī ibn abī Ṭālib, his brothers are *imāms* Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, and his nick-name is “the Manifest” (*Zāhir*) and

⁸⁹*Ibid*, p. 158. A *tanūra* is an apron which is mentioned in the last chapter of the *Futuwwat-nāma-yi sulṭānī* that discusses tradesmen that use tools with handgrips. See *Futuwwat-nāma-yi sulṭānī*, p. 391. This must have been adopted and worn by the Qalandars.

⁹⁰*Ibid*, p. 159.

⁹¹*Ibid*, p. 170.

⁹²*Ibid*, pp. 172-3: Andrew Newman, *Safavid Iran*, p. 241, n. 63. The connection is repeated later in the chapter (p. 176), and it is related that °Alī’s *tāj* is red.

⁹³*Ibid*, p. 166.

⁹⁴*Ibid*, p. 175.

⁹⁵ *Kawthar* is understood in the *ḥadīth* as a river in Paradise. Ḥusayn is often associate with water because he pleaded for water at the events during Karbala. See M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shī’ī Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 30.

⁹⁶ For the ritual of water bearing see Mojtaba Zarvani and Mohammad Mashhadi, “The Rite of the Water-Carrier: From the Circles of Sufis to the Rituals of Muharram,” *Journal of Shī’a Studies*, 4(1), 2011, pp. 23-46.

his mother is Fāṭima Zahra. He was martyred by a blow from ʿUmar Khaṭṭāb and his tomb is in Baqīʿ.”⁹⁷ The second list gives the length of the lives and the period of leadership of Muḥammad and the twelve *imāms*.⁹⁸ The third list records the mothers of the *imāms*.⁹⁹ The final list notes the names of the murderers of the *imāms*.¹⁰⁰ As such, these lists are interesting because they reveal how much the Qalandar initiate was supposed to know about the Shīʿa tradition. Theological discussions were clearly irrelevant to the Qalandars, what was required was a simple “factual” history lesson which was implemented through rote recitation and learning. There is no sophisticated discussion about the need to keep the human-divine communication open through the *imām*, or the equating of the *imām* with the Perfect Person (*insān-i kāmīl*). These ideas were perhaps beyond the speculative capacities of the ordinary Qalandar dervish.¹⁰¹

From the above summary, what emerges are very different dimensions of how the Qalandars manifested their Shīʿa persuasions. On the one hand are the lists in chapters one and eight which must have served as pedagogical tools, and were perhaps recited verbally in ritual initiations or to the young who were learning their religion. As previously noted, it is tempting to link these lists with the observations of European travellers about Sufis preaching on street corners. And yet by the time this treatise was composed the Safavids had been hammering these doctrines for the past one hundred and fifty years, and coffee houses most probably were not the most conducive place for the repetition of dry lists. Nevertheless, the very existence of such basic lists, and the possibility that Qalandars may have been reciting such material is suggested of the persistence of Sunni sentiment in Iran, and also the more “popular” Shīʿa *ghuluww* beliefs with which the clerics and the Shāhs were in battle.

Aside from the lists of *imāms*, their lives, mothers, and killers, the treatise also reveals how the Shīʿa faith became entwined with Qalandar ritual activity, and the extent to which the Shīʿa *aḥādīth* became part of the armoury of these Sufi groups. This is a phenomenon which has been observed in other Sufi treatises of the time. For example the author of *Tuḥfah-yi ʿAbbāsī* of Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAlī Muʿadhdhin Sabzawārī Khurasānī (d. 1667) was “a pioneer who offered a creative and new vision for how Sufism as a longstanding institution, could maintain its central role in guiding the religious imagination of the public and

⁹⁷ *Āyīn-i Qalandarī*, p. 209.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 210-11.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 211-12.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p. 212.

¹⁰¹ The “simple” lessons in Shīʿa history and belief within the *Qalandar nāma* may reflect “the appearance of many Persian-language religious primers on various, basic aspects of Twelver doctrine and practice written by clerical associates of the court.” Andrew Newman, *Safavid Iran*, p. 69.

maintaining the moral fabric of society in a new era by tapping into an alternative source of legitimacy: the Shiite hadith literature.”¹⁰² The increasing focus on Shī‘a *ḥadīth* during this period is best typified by Majlisī.¹⁰³ Parts of Majlisī’s work are known to have been completed by 1670,¹⁰⁴ that is, two years after the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* was composed. Nevertheless, the scale of Majlisī’s work must surely be indicative of the prevailing atmosphere from the middle of the seventeenth century, and perhaps exercised an influence upon Sufi texts.

What is also interesting about the text in the context of late Safavid Iran is that there is no mention of the “hot” topics of the day that were of significance to Shī‘a Islam, such as the permissibility of Friday prayers, the legitimacy of the Shāh as ruler of Iran, or even the hostility among some of the clerics towards the Sufi tradition. The issue over Friday prayers was problematic for some clerics because of the belief that during the occultation of the twelfth *imām* it was illegitimate for anyone to usurp his right to lead Friday prayers. The Safavid monarchs assumed this responsibility (or rather delegated it to their representatives). At the heart of this difference of opinion was the struggle for power between the Shāh and the clerics. This became such a burning issue, reflected in the proliferation of treatises debating the topic that Shāh Sulīmān convened a “synod of *‘ulama* to decide on whether Friday prayer should be convened or not.”¹⁰⁵ There is only brief, passing reference in *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* to this issue which occurs in a list, in verse form, of the seventeen great spiritual leaders, which ends with the founder of the Safavid dynasty, Shāh Ismā‘īl. In one couplet the author states that the sermon of the twelver Shī‘as (*khuṭba-yi ithna ‘ashara*), or the sermon after Friday prayer, commenced from his time.¹⁰⁶ This is presented as a positive statement, as in the same *mathnawī* the previous sixteen spiritual leaders are also described in an affirmative fashion. The *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* also appears to legitimise Safavid rule all too briefly in its praise of Shāh Sulīmān at the very start of the text, as mentioned earlier.¹⁰⁷ It is also striking that after the introduction, the first chapter commences with a Qur’ānic verse (cited previously) from the chapter named “The Ants” (27.30),¹⁰⁸ in which the name Sulīmān occurs.

In general, the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* challenges neither Safavid rule nor any of the policies promoted by the monarchs. Yet it is difficult to assess the usefulness of the Qalandars

¹⁰² Ata Anzali, “The Emergence of the Ṣahabiyya in Safavid Iran,” *Journal of Sufi Studies* 2 (2013), p. 166.

¹⁰³ For this point see Rahnema, *Superstition as Ideology in Iranian Politics*, pp. 173-9.

¹⁰⁴ Andrew Newman, *Twelver Shiism: Unity and Diversity in the Life of Islam, 632 to 1722* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013) p. 188.

¹⁰⁵ Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, p. 125.

¹⁰⁶ *Āyīn-i Qalandarī*, p. 104.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p. 79.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. 80.

to the royal court in its attempts to build constituencies of support. As mentioned previously, Afshārī regards the Qalandars as being in pay-roll of the Shāh, serving as spies and performing the “ritual cursing”. The *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* certainly suggests that the Qalandars performed the latter task, and establishes it as one of the principles of religion (*uṣūl-i dīn*). The *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* lists these principles in the following way:

If they ask, “How many are the principles of religion?”

Say, “There are eight: first unity, second justice, third prophecy, fourth Imāmate, fifth commanding the good, sixth prohibiting evil, seventh praising (*tawallā*) [the family of Muḥammad], eighth disavowing (*tabarrā*) the enemies of °Alī.¹⁰⁹

This inclusion of praising and disavowing needs to be understood in the context of Shāh Sulīmān’s observance of a peace treaty that had been concluded with the Sunni Ottomans in 1639.¹¹⁰ Even so, the period has been characterised as one in which popular Sufi practices were permitted, and Yazid and the Ottomans were cursed.¹¹¹ Yet, given the lengthy period of over one hundred and fifty years of Shī‘a state sponsored indoctrination, the reason for public recitation of basic and fundamental doctrine may have served purposes other than the support of the Safavids. The number of popular Shī‘a festivals and commemorations during the Safavid period has been studied by Jean Calmard,¹¹² and it is possible that the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* included its own Qalandar linkages to such fundamental Shī‘a occasions, such as Ghadir Khumm, in an attempt to claim the event as their own, that is, to assert the right to participation in religious ceremonies, and thus inclusion within society and wider Safavid structures.¹¹³

(e). Sufi Themes in the Treatise

Although there is evidence to suggest that the author and the readers or audience of the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* were not illiterate, at the same time the text is not as refined and erudite as other Sufi texts that were composed at a similar period. A good example is the aforementioned

¹⁰⁹ *Āyīn-i Qalandarī*, p. 122.

¹¹⁰ See Rudi Matthee, “SOLAYMĀN I,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2015, available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/solayman-1> (accessed on 14 November 2015).

¹¹¹ Andrew J Newman, *Twelver Shiism*, p. 189.

¹¹² Jean Calmard, “Shī‘i Rituals and Power,” in Charles Melville (ed), *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996), pp. 139-90.

¹¹³ Foregrounding a relationship between the Qalandars and Shī‘a festivals on the basis on textual referencing to events such as Ghadir Khumm is problematic. There is evidence of a certain degree of °Alidization in Persian and Turkish *futuwwa* texts from the 13th century, and these Qalandar texts have more than a passing similarity to such material. The influence therefore may not necessarily reflect Safavid pressure, but may simply reflect the legacy of medieval *futuwwat* upon the Qalandars. See Lloyd Ridgeon, “°Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib in Medieval Persian Sufi-*futuwwat* Treatises” in M.A. Amir-Moezzi (ed), *Esotérisme shi’ite, ses racines et ses prolongements* (2016 forthcoming).

Tuḥfah-yi ʿAbbāsī.¹¹⁴ This treatise includes copious and lengthy citations from authoritative and seminal Shīʿa authors (which betrays the lengthy seminary training of the author), in addition to the lengthy quotations from Persian Sufi masters. *Tuḥfah-yi ʿAbbāsī* occupies a middle ground between the mentally demanding texts on *ʿirfān*, by the likes of Mullā Sadrā, and the much more particularised and basic *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma*.

The existence of such a range of texts sympathetic to Sufism would seem to suggest there was sufficient space for Qalandars to operate within late Safavid Iran. However, there are also strong indications that in Iran during this period Sufis needed to exercise a degree of caution due to the opposition that they faced. Typifying this is the *Ḥadīqat al-Shīʿa* which lists twenty-two different Sufi groups,¹¹⁵ some of which seem to have been invented simply to enable the author to categorise a list of “deviant” practices or beliefs (some names, however, are clearly recognisable, such as the Malāmattiyya). Another anti-Sufi work of a similar period, the *Salwat al-Shīʿa*, does not include specific names of any group. In its introduction it states, “a group among the deceivers have deviated from the highway of the *sharīʿa* of Muṣṭafā and the *ṭarīqa* of Murtaḍā due to [their] laziness, stomach-worship, indolence and worship of this world. They have called love of this world ‘renunciation of the world’, and they have turned the *dhikr* of God into a means of deceiving men and women.”¹¹⁶ The author is careful not to taint all Sufis with the same brush, and he even cites some of the great Sufis to chastise those whom he believes have deviated from the true path.¹¹⁷

Such clerics would most likely have criticised a number of elements within the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma*. For example, they would have found problematic the very foundation of Qalandarism and Sufism, namely gnosis or intuition (*maʿrifat*) which Sufis believed transcended the rational knowledge of the clerics. Like so many Sufi texts, the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* does not deny reason and the learning associated with the clerics, however, it located this form of knowledge as only the first step on the path to God. This is stated in an unambiguous fashion: “One must learn the Holy Law from a *mujtahid* or a *muqallid*, and one must learn the path (*ṭarīqat*) from a teacher (*ustād*) or *pīr*, because God, the most high, says,

¹¹⁴ Translated as *The Golden Chain of Sufism in Shīʿite Islam*.

¹¹⁵ Newman, “Sufism and Anti-Sufism in Safavid Iran,” p. 104.

¹¹⁶ *Safwat al-Shīʿa* in Jaʿfariyān (ed), *Mirāth-i Islām-i Irān*, vol II, (Qum: Marʿashī Najafī Public Library, 1374), p. 343.

¹¹⁷ *Safwat al-Shīʿa*, p. 344. This text adopts a far less polemical attitude towards the groups it dislikes than other treatises that were composed at a similar time. For example, the *Ḥadīqat al-shīʿa* taints a number of Sufi groups with all manner of deviant sexual practices, whereas the *Safwat al-Shīʿa* refrains from this, suggesting that the author was more realistic. For the sexual practices attributed in the *Ḥadīqat al-shīʿa* to various Sufi groups see Andrew Newman, “Sufism and Anti-Sufism in Safavid Iran,” pp. 95-106.

“Moses said to him, ‘Shall I follow you so that you may teach me of the good things?’ (18.66).”¹¹⁸

Another reason for clerical hostility to Qalandarism and Sufism in general concerns the ontological perspective that entailed connotations of incarnationism or unification (*ḥulūl* and *ittihād*). There are some passages in the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* where the distinction between God and man is erased, which the anti-Sufi clerics sought to preserve. For example at one point the treatise states: “The Truth, Most High, said, ‘There is a drink with me that when I give to the Friends (*awliyā*) and they drink it, they become intoxicated. They strive, and when they strive they become connected. When they become connected there is no difference between the lover and the beloved.”¹¹⁹ The kind of mystical speculation, and witnessing the divine and its associated theology is, however, largely absent; there are very few such passages (which are frustrating brief), but at the very least they suggest that the author was aware of these kinds of discussions. Whether or not he possessed detailed knowledge of the speculative systems of thought that were enshrined in the theosophies of Ibn ‘Arabī or Mulla Ṣadrā cannot be established. For example, in one short paragraph the author plays with the word *fath*, which in the context of the Qur’ān means a victory, but Sufis associated it with the vision of the divine, and this explains why Ibn ‘Arabī’s magnum opus is called the “Meccan Openings” (*futuḥāt al-makkiya*). The *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* states,

Poverty is the manifest victory (*fath-i mubīn*) and an exquisite path. So whoever stepped correctly upon it yielded victory. God, Most High, gave him victory, just as He says, *And that Allah may give you a mighty victory* (48.3). Even if there is danger at the beginning, there is witnessing (*naẓar*) at the end. At the start is distance, but he makes the connection at the end. The prophet, peace be upon him, said, ‘*The heart of the believer is between the two fingers.*’¹²⁰ Oh dervish! What is the meaning of these two fingers? It is two [divine] self-disclosures (*tajallī*): one is majesty (*jalāl*) and one is majesty (*jamāl*). If you cannot endure the majesty how [will] you reach [his] beauty?”¹²¹

¹¹⁸ *Āyīn-i Qalandarī*, p. 187. The Qur’ānic quote comes in the story of Moses and his un-named guide (identified later as Khidr). The former is associated with the *sharī‘a* and formal law, and the latter is understood as having secret knowledge that Moses did not possess.

¹¹⁹ *Āyīn-i Qalandarī*, p. 182.

¹²⁰ A sound *ḥadīth* included in many of the authoritative collections. See for example, Ibn Qutayba, *Mukhtalif al-ḥadīth*, 263 (Cairo: 1328).

¹²¹ *Āyīn-i Qalandarī*, p. 181.

Yet, as stated above, the text generally avoids such speculation, perhaps because its readers did not have a philosophical background or the kind of education that would have engaged with such ideas.

Another major issue of the anti-Sufi literature was *ghinā*, or singing.¹²² Newman has argued that the foregrounding of clerical complaints about singing at this time suggests that there must have been an increasing level of such Sufi activity, which most probably would have been performed in ritualised *samā*^c sessions or perhaps singing in the coffee houses.¹²³ And yet the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* is silent on the topic of singing; there are no sections on the *samā*^c or associated topics. On only one occasion is there a passing reference to dancing, in a section that the editor of the text has entitled the “courtesies of the way” (*ādāb-e ʿarīqat*). The author states that one must not dance in front of the *pīr* (*pīsh-i pīr raqṣ nā-kardan*).¹²⁴ This obviously begs a number of questions; were the Qalandars allowed to dance when the *pīr* was not present? Did they have ritualised *samā*^c sessions when the *pīr* was absent? Or was dancing at any time forbidden? The avoidance of the discussion does not necessarily mean that it was not a burning issue for the Sufis and the Qalandars, just as it was for the clerics. But it is unlikely that the author was being diplomatic by politely refraining from including signing or the *samā*^c in his treatise, simply because the text would have upset the anti-Sufi clerics in any case. There is more than sufficient material about “innovations”, such as the headgear (*tāj*), or the praise of “ecstatic” Qalandar forefathers. Moreover, the absence of discussions about the *samā*^c and singing in the treatise may be attributable to the desire to foreground specifically Qalandar themes and topics, rather than generic Sufi discussions.

(f). Specific Qalandar Themes

The treatise is littered with mythic history, rituals and elements of belief that are particular to a Qalandar form of Sufism. One of the most distinctive is the inclusion of spiritual genealogies (and in particular the seventeen girded-prophets,¹²⁵ the seventeen individuals girded by ^cAlī,¹²⁶ and the seventeen spiritual guides of the Qalandars).¹²⁷ The significance of the number

¹²² See Andrew Newman, “Clerical Perceptions of Sufi Practices in Late Seventeenth Century Persia: Arguments over the Permissibility of Singing (*Ghinā*),” in L. Lewisohn & D. Morgan (eds), (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), pp. 135-64.

¹²³ Andrew Newman, “Clerical Perceptions of Sufi Practices in Late Seventeenth Century Persia,” p. 154. An example of a Sufi text discussing music and the *samā*^c is *Tuḥfah-yi ‘Abbāsī*, pp. 189-92.

¹²⁴ *Āyīn-i Qalandarī*, p. 167.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 129.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 90.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 102, 104, 105, 106.

seventeen may have held some special relevance to the Qalandars, however, it is not clear what this was. The identity of the seventeen spiritual past masters appears in a *mathnawī* of 67 couplets.¹²⁸ The order appears to be roughly chronological and is as follows: Ibrāhīm Adham (c. 730-777), Sayyid Jamāl [al-Dīn Sāwī] (d. 13th century),¹²⁹ Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥaydar (d. mid-13th century),¹³⁰ Aḥmad Jām (d. 1140), Shāh Qāsim Anwār (d. 1433),¹³¹ Shāh Ghiyāth, Bābā Sangavī (c. 15th century),¹³² [Ḥajjī] Biktāsh (d.c. 1270), Maḥūmd Ni‘mat-Pā, Shāh Rukn al-Dīn, Shāh Murtaḍā-yi Dāmghān, Shāh ‘Abdallāh (*gil-surkh*), Ni‘matallāh [Valī] (d. 1431), Sayyid Bābā, [Quṭb al-Dīn] Ḥaydar Tūnī (d. 1426/7), Shaykh Ḥaydar (d. 1488),¹³³ and Shāh Ismā‘īl (1487-1524).¹³⁴ The lifestyles and literary contents of some of these individuals would have epitomised for some of the clerical opponents of Sufism the very problems associated with the tradition. For example, the first on the list, Ibrāhīm Adham, had been king of Balkh but renounced his throne and lived a solitary life in a cave, refused to marry or engage in a socially meaningful life.¹³⁵ The next two individuals on the list are often regarded as the “founding fathers” of the Qalandars. Both adopted extremely ascetic forms of devotions, and isolated themselves from society, either in graveyards or on mountainsides, and both are known to have had very unconventional forms of clothing (or unclothing), and shaved the hair on the faces and heads in unusual ways.¹³⁶ Fourth on the list, Aḥmad Jām, is more usually known as a dry and sober Sunni, however, there is a collection of ecstatic verses attributed to him, which have been termed “almost pantheistic”. Moverover, a group of Qalandars emerged, known as Jāmīs (tracing their spiritual ancestry to Aḥmad Jām) who had long hair and whose apparel included bells, iron rings bracelets and ear-rings.¹³⁷ [Ḥajjī] Biktāsh is also worthy of mention,

¹²⁸ *Āyīn-i Qalandarī*, pp. 102-04.

¹²⁹ Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Sāwī was one of the forefathers of the Qalandar movement in the 13th century, sporting unconventional shaving habits, and adopting extremes of ritual isolation. See Karamustafa, *God’s Unholy Friends*, pp. 39-44.

¹³⁰ Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥaydar was another of the thirteenth century Qalandar forefathers. See Karamustafa, *God’s Unruly Friends*, pp. 44.6.

¹³¹ Shāh Qāsim Anwār was a poet whose verses reveal a distinct inclination to Sufi ideas. He is known to have followed the path of Ṣafī al-Dīn Ardabīlī, a forefather of the Safavid dynasty. See “Qāsim Anwār”, in ‘Alī Akbar Dihkhudā, *Loghatnāma*, vol. 10 (Tehran: Dānishgāh-i Tehrān, 1372/1993-4), pp. 15281-2. A summary of his life and selections of his poetry have been provided in English by A. J. Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2004 – reprint of 1958 edition), pp. 417-20.

¹³² Bābā Sangavī has an entry in Dihkhudā, *Loghatnāma*, under “Bābā Sangkū”. The entry calls him a *majdhūb darvīsh* who had powers to perform miracles (*karāmāt*). He lived during the reign of Timūr. (‘Alī Akbar Dihkhudā, “Bābā Sangkū”, *Loghatnāma*, vol. 3 (Tehran: Dānishgāh-i Tehrān, 1372/1993-4), p. 3272.

¹³³ Shaykh Ḥaydar was one of the shaykhs of the Safavid order and who organised his followers into an association known as the Qizilbash.

¹³⁴ Shāh Ismā‘īl was the founder of the Safavid dynasty.

¹³⁵ Ibrāhīm Adham’s life is discussed in more detail in the work of ‘Atṭār, *Tazkirat al-Awliyā*, translated by Paul Losensky as *Farid al-Din ‘Attar’s Memorial of God’s Friends* (New York: Paulist Press, 2009), pp. 127-154.

¹³⁶ See Karamustafa, *God’s Unruly Friends*, pp. 39-49

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 78-81.

simply because a group of Qalandar like Sufi appeared in the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century who were called the Biktāshīs and who derived their lineage from him. They shaved their heads and faces, carried musical instruments, suggesting that they engaged too in singing, which, as noted above, was one of the most controversial issues among the Safavid clerics.¹³⁸ Ni^ʿmatallāh Valī should also be noted because he was known as a great interpreter of Ibn ^ʿArabī’s ideas of the Unity of Existence. The last individual on the list, Shāh Ismāʿīl is the founder of the Safavid state, and who wrote poetry which has messianic connotations.¹³⁹ The details of the lives of some of the others are unknown.

Another specifically Qalandar related theme that would have generated much hostility among the clerics concerns the association that is often made between Qalandarism and begging. Although it is not a pronounced theme in the treatise, begging is mentioned twice. It does not appear to be an internalised or spiritual form of begging (i.e. begging to God for his grace), but it seems to indicate a literal application of the term, as the text mentions that the food eaten from begging (*gadā ʿī*) is legally forbidden (*ḥarām*).¹⁴⁰ Caution is also expressed as the treatise advises the Qalandars to beg infrequently (*daryūza kam kunad*).¹⁴¹

One of the most distinctive features of the Qalandars is their unusual appearance, most notably their tradition of removing head and facial hair. This practice resulted in many Qalandar treatises including sections on the significance of mirrors, razors and whetstones, and some have speculated that such attention suggests that they had a special affinity for the trade of the barbers, perhaps that they themselves also practiced the occupation. The special importance given to Salmān Fārisī, who is also considered to have practiced the trade, is another indication of Qalandar interest in this area. Reference was made earlier to the close relationship between the Sufis and the tradespeople, and it is here that the increasing domestication of the Qalandars in the Safavid period might have occurred. The *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* suggests such a link; the ritual of the *chahār ẓarb* appears in chapter seven, and there are also frequent discussions related to the tools of the trade. As in similar treatises that concern the tools of specific trades, the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* does not relate the specific technical skills that are necessary to perform the trade, rather, an account is given that

¹³⁸ There are sartorial similarities between these Ottoman Biktāshī groups and the way that the Qalandars are described in the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma*. In particular, the headware of the former is described as a twelve gored conical cap of white with writing on four sides. “There is no god but God,” “Muḥammad is his messenger,” “‘Alī Murtaḍā,” and “Ḥasan and Ḥusayn”. (See Karamustafa *God’s Unruly Friends*, p. 83. The *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* (pp. 176-7) states that there are Qur’ānic verses written in these four locations, and likewise there is a discussion about the symbolism of the twelve peaks.

¹³⁹ See V. Minorsky, “The Poetry of Shāh Ismāʿīl I,” *BSO(A)S* 10, 1938-42, pp. 1006a-53a.

¹⁴⁰ *Āyīn-i Qalandarī*, p. 116.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 128.

spiritualises the tools and implements. For example, “The meaning of the razor is killing your own soul, and the meaning of the whetstone is the [spiritual] aspiration (*himmat*) of men and the inner dimension of the *pīr*.”¹⁴² The treatise makes further connections to the barbers when it discusses how the apron of the Qalandars (*lung*) which appears to have also been called by other names, including *tanūra* (apron), *langūta*, and *satr-pūsh* (or covering).¹⁴³ This garment, and especially the ritual girding with this covering is associated with Salmān,¹⁴⁴ and the author also states that it is the covering used by the barbers.¹⁴⁵ Salmān is traditionally understood as a barber in Iran, and indeed, the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* includes him among those who ritually shaved the head of the followers of ʿAlī.¹⁴⁶

Conclusion

The nature of the Qalandars of the Safavid period pose scholars serious questions because the material presents conflicting images. It is to be expected that the few emic sources available present the Qalandars in a positive, *sharīʿa*-observant fashion. It would be unthinkable for Qalandar authors to do otherwise. Does this mean that such treatises as the *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* should not be taken seriously, or with a rather large pinch of salt? Does it mean that scholars should accept at face value the negative reports of the anti-Sufi scholars of the seventeenth century? Due caution is necessary with all of this kind of material. While the reports of European travellers such as Kotov may be accurate in depicting Qalandars fornicating in Isfahan, this should not necessarily taint all Qalandars. There are sufficient clues that point to a domestication of such groups in Iran. The wild and unruly darvishes of the thirteenth century emerged in a context in which central political authority was weak, whereas the establishment of the Safavid state offered relative order and security for the creation of an empire in which spiritualities that were not endorsed by the monarch were placed under strict surveillance or else were eliminated. The domestication of the Qalandars as a result of increasing power of the central authorities or other forms of pressure exercised by competing authorities is witnessed in other eras and geographical region.¹⁴⁷ In addition to the above, when assessing the history of Sufism in Safavid Iran, the received image of the Safavids being inherently anti-Sufi from the turn against the Qizilbash needs to be reconsidered. Newman has

¹⁴²*Ibid*, p. 171.

¹⁴³*Ibid*, p. 158.

¹⁴⁴*Ibid*, p. 157, 158, 162.

¹⁴⁵*Ibid*, p. 162-63.

¹⁴⁶*Ibid*, p. 170.

¹⁴⁷ See footnote 15.

argued that following the death of Tahmasp, “the broadening of the number of its constituencies, increasing institutionalisation and economic growth ... the smooth succession of Sulayman ... show that the Safavid project itself had succeeded in becoming bigger than any one of its rulers and associated key political personalities.”¹⁴⁸ The *Sulīmān Qalandar-nāma* may be representative of one of these constituencies. Although there is only a single copy of the manuscript, suggesting that it was not widely disseminated, it may still be the case that it reflects the desire among these Qalandars to stress their loyalty to the Shāh and enjoy the benefits of relative stability and security from the hostility that was directed at Sufis from some clerical quarters. The significance of the text may also be related to the perpetuation of Sufi cultural continuity within Iran, strengthened by the Qalandars (who had not been expelled from the realm, but had perhaps been co-opted) due to their activities in the urban landscape, whether as ritual cursers, water carriers or barbers. In this sense the significance of the Qalandar contribution to Iranian culture has been overlooked.

¹⁴⁸ Andrew Newman, *Safavid Iran*, p. 124.