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Shirazi Society: Patricians, Poets, and Scholars

[Hafez] reflected the life as it had been spun for the people of Iran for two thousand years. He did so with such precision, that when, today, we drink of his lyrics it is as if we are drinking of history

—*M. A. Eslami-Nodushan*
The Eternal Story of Hafez

In Hafez's Shiraz, rulers, ministers, and judges took power directly from their offices. One judge might be more or less powerful than another, but there was no question about what a judge *was supposed* to do. Below these top officials, however, the picture was different. Nowhere was the power of the *kalu*, the *pahlavan*, the teacher, and the sufi *sheikh* clearly defined. All of these persons, however—with or without job descriptions—had a share in running the city. In the last chapter we indicated something of how they did it. Beyond city administration, a crucial question remains: how did the Shirazis interact as individuals and groups and what kind of society did they form by their interactions? By extension, what manner of society formed the setting for Hafez's beautiful lyrics?

Hafez's Shiraz was above all a religious society, where the beliefs, culture and practices of Islam shaped every aspect of social life. This religious society, despite the best efforts of a strict ruler like Mohammad Mozaffar, was never puritanical, full of only somber prayers and fasts. Few Iranians of any faith have ever been full-time puritans or ascetics, and their all-embracing Islam has included widely varying beliefs and practices. The Islamic society of Hafez's

Shiraz was not straitlaced, but as rich and diverse as the Iranian imagination itself.

THE MYSTERY OF CITY FACTIONS

The factions in medieval Islamic cities are a mysterious yet crucial problem for the social historian. Why, in a given city at a given time, did one group fight another? And why, at another time or place, were there no outbreaks of factional strife? Feuding groups (called *asabiyat*) were most prevalent in the cities of Iran during the pre-Mongol era, and were strongest in the towns of Khorasan. In the tenth century there were few places in that province without factions: the populations of Nishapur, Sarakhs, Herat, Marv, and others were divided into rival parties based on religion, law school, neighborhood, or some other principle of allegiance.[1]

This factional division could lead to bloody street fighting. In the middle of the twelfth century, open warfare between Shafi'is and Hanafis left Nishapur in ruins more than half a century before the arrival of the Mongol armies.[2] The Mongols, by slaughtering members of all factions indiscriminately, ended much of the feuding in Khorasan. By the fourteenth century, the intensity of the factionalism of the earlier period was gone. In this later period, Esfahan was most famous for violent factional disputes (called in Persian *do-hava'i)*. Even there, these disputes were considered a survival of earlier practices that had died out elsewhere. According to Mostowfi, writing in the fourteenth century:

> Most of the people of Esfahan are Sunni of the Shafi'i school and observe religion exactly. But most of the time they fight and argue, for the custom of feuding (*do-hava'i*) has never disappeared from here.[3]

According to Mostowfi's account, the fighting in Esfahan was based not on opposing law schools, but on some (unknown) issue that provoked strife among the city quarters. He notes the verse:

تا دردشت هست و جوباره نیست از کشتن و کشش چاره

As long as Dardasht and Jubareh exist,
There will be endless strife and slaughter.[4]

In the fourteenth century this custom of *do-hava'i* did not extend into Fars and Shiraz. In a revealing passage describing the town of Qomisheh (later Shahreza), Mostowfi says that this town had been formerly part of Esfahan province (*Eraq-e-Ajam*) and was in his time considered the northernmost town of Fars. He adds, "Its people are temperamentally like the Esfahanis, and here the custom of factional disputes persists."[5] At the death of Shah Mahmud Mozaffari in 1374, factionalism reappeared in Esfahan, as two groups of the inhabitants, called *chahar-dangeh* (two-thirds) and dodangeh (one-third), fought over a successor.[6] Kerman also saw fighting between natives, who supported Makhdum Shah Khan Qotlogh, the mother of Shah Shoja, and the Khorasanis, who supported Pahlavan Asad, the governor of the city.[7]

This phenomenon appears in Shiraz in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the five northern and eastern quarters were called *Heidarikhaneh* and the five western and southern quarters were called *Ne'matikhaneh*. According to the nineteenth century *Farsnameh-ye-Naseri*, this division dated from Safavid times, when the rulers, on the principle of "divide and rule," split cities and villages into eastern (Heidari) and western (Ne'mati) districts. This custom resulted in three or four bloody riots a year between the rival groups in Shiraz, until the Qajar rulers suppressed the fighting in the middle of the nineteenth century. According to this account, the Heidari faction took its name from Sheikh Heidar Safavi (r. 1456-88), father of Shah Esma'il, and the Ne'mati from Shah Ne'matollah Vali of Kerman (d. 1431).[8]

There is no evidence of permanent factions in Shiraz before the Safavids. The sources mention two instances in the fourteenth century, when the neighborhood chiefs and other nobles split into rival groups whose adherents fought in the streets.

The first incident occurred in 1342 following the murder of Mas'ud Shah Inju by the Chupanid Amir Yaghi Basti. The city population divided between supporters of Yaghi Basti and Abu Eshaq Inju, who had arisen to avenge his brother's murder. Supporting the Injus were some of the most powerful figures of Shiraz, including Khwajeh Qavam al-Din Hasan, one of Hafez's “five nobles” of Fars, who later became Abu Eshaq's minister and closest advisor; Khwajeh Fakhr al-Din Salmani, a member of the powerful Salmani family;[9] Jamal al-Din Khasseh, a member of another powerful local family;[10] and Kalu Fakhr, chief of the Kazeroun Gate quarter. Supporters of Yaghi Basti included a certain Kalu Hosein and the nobles of the quarter where the Mongol governor was located. The two sides battled in the streets for twenty days until the Inju partisans received outside help and expelled the Chupanids from the city.[11]

The second outbreak of factional violence in Shiraz occurred in 1354, when the inhabitants of the Kazeroun Gate quarter joined a Shulestani army in an attempt to retake the city for Abu Eshaq. Together these proInju forces temporarily expelled the Mozaffarid ruler and attacked the Murdestan quarter, whose chief, Kalu Omar, had originally betrayed the city to Amir Mohammad's army. Only the arrival of Shah Shoja and his forces preserved the city for the Mozaffarids, who dealt a bloody defeat to Abu Eshaq's partisans. The fighting did not end until the Mozaffarids and their Shirazi allies had destroyed the Kazeroun Gate quarter and massacred all rebel prisoners.[12]

The sources do not suggest that these outbreaks of factional violence in fourteenth-century Shiraz originated in fundamental divisions in the society, such as Islamic law school or neighborhood.[13] If permanent rival factions had existed in the city, the fighting described above would have been based on social and economic class divisions, ethnic or religious differences, or on some unknown principle of allegiance. In Shiraz, there was no principle at stake, and these isolated outbreaks of violence pitting neighborhood against neighborhood were most likely not the result of permanent divisions or deep-rooted ideological differences between the battling

parties.[14] Rather, they occurred when competing Shirazi groups and individuals were drawn into the struggles of rival contenders for high office.[15]

SOCIAL LIFE

Iranians have always mixed the religious, economic, and social parts of their lives, and the inhabitants of a city that called itself “the tower of saints” (*borj al-owliya*) could never separate the religious from the secular. The Shirazi “saint” (*vali*, pl. *owliya*) did not withdraw from the realities of daily life. He was an integral part of urban society, whether involved in commerce, scholarship, or the fine arts. In fourteenth-century Shiraz, he was very much a part of the everyday world. Although often choosing holy poverty, he would seldom beg, but would practice some modest means of livelihood. The sources suggest that to find the saint one should search not only in mosques and dervish cells, but also in the shops of the bazaar, where he would be found working behind a set of scales weighing merchandise.[16]

Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage to the tombs of saints was one of the bases of social life in Hafez's Shiraz. Pilgrimage for the Shirazis, however, was never an act of dry, zealous piety. The Moslem pilgrim, much like his English contemporary in the *Canterbury Tales*, enjoyed pilgrimage as an opportunity to socialize with friends, meet different people, view the spectacle of the great shrines, and partake of the food and drink provided there. Pilgrims could see a spectacular display at the shrine of Ahmad b. Musa every Sunday between afternoon and evening prayers, when Tashi Khatun, the mother of Abu Eshaq, would visit the tomb. While the Khatun watched from an adjoining pavilion, *seyyeds*, scholars, and judges would gather to hear the recitations of the finest Qoran-readers of Shiraz while being served fruit, sweets, and other dishes. Then a preacher would ascend the pulpit and deliver a sermon. Finally, trumpets, horns, and drums sounded at the gate of the shrine, just as was done before a king's palace.[17]

Once a week, eminent Shirazis would gather at the tomb of Ibn Khafif, Sheikh-e-Kabir, in the Darb-e-Estakhr quarter. Tashi Khatun would also visit this shrine every Thursday evening. Here the ceremony was much more modest, and the pilgrims simply rubbed their hands on the grave.[18] A popular place of pilgrimage for students was the grave of Sibawayh the Grammarian (d. 796). Those hoping to learn Arabic grammar would rub their chests against the gravestone, today known as Sang-e-Siyah, the black stone.[19]

The Shirazis buried many of their dead inside the city, and thus small places of pilgrimage were scattered through the residential areas of the town. At someone's death, the members of the family would often bury him or her in one of the rooms of the house and convert that room into a small shrine. They would spread mats and carpets in the room, light candles at the head and foot of the grave, and place a door with an iron-grated window leading directly from the room to the street so that Qoran-readers could enter. The family would take care of this tomb by keeping it carpeted and its lamps lit. They would also give the deceased's share of a meal as alms for the sake of his soul.[20]

For a site to become a frequented place of pilgrimage, it was not always necessary for a famous person to be buried there. By the fourteenth century, the identity of saints buried at many famous shrines had been forgotten, and the shrines bore only popular names unrelated to their true occupants. A pilgrimage site might also arise around the site of a miracle. The garden of *Haft-tanan* (the bodies of seven saints), which today stands just north of the tomb of Hafez, originated this way. According to a fourteenth-century account in *Shadd al Izar*, one night a handsome young dervish led to the site a pious undertaker who lived near the Estakhr gate. In the undertaker's account:

> I accompanied him to a walled area in the Mosalla district, which was known as *Samdal* in those days. Then that young man said, “Wait here.” I waited for an hour and suddenly I heard *Allahu Akbar*. I went in and found that young man dead and laid out facing the Qebleh.…I was astonished and

> was wondering how I would wash and bury him alone, when suddenly six others appeared bringing winding sheets. They came and helped me prepare him for burial, then picked him up and took him outside the building. I could not follow them, so I washed and dressed and went out. I saw there was no wall or barrier, and wherever I looked were open fields and no sign of anyone. I sat and prayed, and then slept. When I awoke in the morning I saw a new grave there, freshly watered. I suspected it must have been the young man's grave.[21]

The author of *Shadd Al-Izar* adds: “After a short time, other graves appeared next to this one until finally there were seven. No one knew the identity of the seven companions, and today [i.e., late fourteenth century] the graves are marked with seven blank stones.”

Dreams and Miracles

Those persons in Shiraz who foretold the future, controlled the *jenn* (spirits), and interpreted dreams occupied a very important place in society. Their clients included the most powerful men of the city. One of these seers was Faqih Jamal al-Din Hosein (d. fourteenth century), called *mo'abber*, the dream interpreter.[22] In a vision, the Shiraz saint Ahmab b. Musa (today's Shah-e-Cheragh) led him to the prophet Joseph (in Islam known as Yusef Sadigh), who bestowed upon Jamal al-Din the gift of dream interpretation. One of his most famous clients was the *naqib* of Shiraz, Majd al-Din Mohammad, who consulted the *mo'abber* about an erotic dream. When Seyyed Majd al-Din was ashamed to relate his dream, the interpreter guessed what it was, and, in return for a gift of 1,000 dinars (in advance), told him he would make a great and advantageous marriage. As it happened, this *naqib* later married the daughter of the ruler of Shiraz, Jamal al-Din Tibi Malek-e-Eslam.[23]

Shiraz also contained miracle workers and persons who could “understand secrets.” The historian Faqih Sa'en al-Din Hosein Salmani (d. 1266) was known as *mofti al-jenn* because he could summon and command the spirits of the supernatural world.[24] A certain Sheikh Zein al-Din Ali Kolah, a contemporary of the translator

of *Shadd al-Izar*, was also famous for his ability to capture and control the *jenn*.[25]

No class had a monopoly on miracle-working in this period; persons with supernatural powers appeared among both the aristocrats (see, for example, Qazi Majd al-Din's miraculous escape from the sultan's dogs in Chapter 5) and the common people. Sheikh Shams al-Din Mohammad Sadeq (d. 1336) began as a common, illiterate man. Suddenly and miraculously he became learned, and earned great respect from the scholars of Shiraz.[26] A certain Sheikh Ali Laban (d. 1377) was a poor brickmaker who would attend meetings of scholars and had holy visions. He also understood secrets and could foretell the future. Once a man came to him complaining that his wife was disobedient but that he was too poor to divorce her and too fearful of God's wrath to kill her. The Sheikh told him, “Give something to the poor and on Wednesday you will be free of this woman.” On the following Wednesday the man returned and said, “She is not dead.” The sheikh answered, “It is still Wednesday.” When the man returned to his house he saw his wife fall off the roof and die.[27]

Asceticism and Its Opposite

Few cities combined so much hedonism and so much spiritualism as Shiraz. As far as the government was concerned, the dissipations of the *rendan* were preferable to the fasts of the *zahedan* or ascetics.[28] For, while the latter worked at the simplest jobs and paid few taxes, the former were steady customers of the *kharabat* (vice-dens) of the city—the brothels (*beit allotf*), wine-shops (*sharabkhaneh*), opium dens (*bangkhaneh*), and gambling houses (*qomarkhaneh*)—all of which, if we can believe the fifteenth-century inscription cited earlier, paid *tamgha* to the treasury.[29] The rulers, except for the strict Amir Mobarez al-Din Mohammad Mozaffar (nicknamed *mohtaseb*, or inspector), taxed rather than suppressed the *rendans'* activities, in spite of the opposition of the ascetics and other religious groups.

In the conflict between asceticism and hedonism, Hafez was firmly on the side of the latter, praising the hedonists' freedom from and indifference to respectable opinion. In one of his verses, Hafez has beautifully captured the disdain of the *rendan* for the opinion of others, while showing the heart of the opposition between *rendi* (hedonism) and *zohd* (asceticism).

عیب رندان مکن ای زاهد پاکیزه سرشت که گناه دگران بر تو نخواهد گرفت

من گر نیکم و گر بد برو خودرا باش هر کس آن درود عاقبت کار که کاشت

Do not criticize the *rendan*, O pure ascetic.
For you will not be charged with the sins of others.
Whether I am good or evil—you go and be yourself;
In the end everyone will reap what he sows.

The wine that the *rendan* drank at their taverns was stronger stuff than "the mystic symbol of divine love."[30] Hafez himself was a connoisseur who knew that good wine turned pale with aging. In the following verse he compares old, pale wine with someone frightened of the *mohtaseb*.[31]

شراب خانگی ترس محتسب دیده

Home-made wine frightened [turned pale] by the inspector.

Both the ascetics with their fasts and the *rendan* with their debaucheries were integral parts of life in Hafez's Shiraz. According to Mostowfi, the Shirazis were "much addicted to holy poverty," and were, for the most part, content to do just enough trade to avoid begging.[32] Shiraz's ascetics had different ways of withdrawing from the world, from the most personal and modest to the most extreme and ostentatious. One of the Baghnovi family, for example, went on pilgrimage secretly so that the people would not call him *haji*.[33] Mowlana Nezam al-Din Esma'il Khorasani (d. 1228) refused to accept the post of *modarres* (chief instructor) of the Fakhriyeh Seminary, but taught there instead as an ordinary scholar.[34] At the far end of the ascetic scale was a certain Sheikh Rostam Khorasani

(d. 1340), who lived in the *rabat* of Sheikh-e-Kabir. He would eat nothing in the *rabat*, but would beg his food every evening, accepting only what the people put into his mouth.[35]

Some members of the most powerful and wealthy Shirazi families would withdraw into asceticism. The son of the *naqib* of Shiraz, Seyyed Nosrat al-Din Ali b. Ahmad Musavi (d. fourteenth century) spent his life in seclusion, performing one thousand prayer prostrations every twenty-four hours. It was said that in his entire life he never saw the countryside or a tree, and when they asked him, "Is a fig tree larger or a cucumber tree?" he answered, "The cucumber." When they told him that the opposite was true, he exclaimed, "Then praise God almighty who has made the large small and the small large!"[36]

If all Shirazis had been ascetics the city would not have survived economically. Nor would it have survived physically if all the inhabitants had been *rendan*. Most Shirazis were neither, but could accept the existence of both as part of their community. The great strength of Shirazi society was its diversity—its ability to absorb a variety of human behavior without collapsing under the strains of disparate, conflicting groups. In fact, the city did not merely tolerate but valued this diversity, since the presence of so many different kinds of people—drunkards, ascetics, poets, preachers, and others—gave Shiraz a rich and varied life that encouraged the cultural flowering of the fourteenth century and inspired so many powerful images in Hafez.[37]

Shi'ism

Shi'ism was one religious current in fourteenth-century Shiraz, but its exact status there, like the entire history of Shi'ism in pre-Safavid Iran, is surrounded with questions.[38] In the fourteenth century, "twelver" Shi'ism (which would become the state religion of Iran in the sixteenth century) predominated in only a few areas of central Iran, mostly in the districts of the second-rank towns of Rey,

Varamin, Qom, Kashan, Tafresh, and Nahavand. The sources report that Shiraz, like most of the major towns, had few Shia inhabitants.[39]

We know there were Shia in Shiraz thanks to the activities of their opponents, the most adamant of whom were the Alavi patricians. Both the austere Amir Asil al-Din Abdullah Alavi-Mohammadi (d. 1286) and his grandson (through his daughter), Amir Seyyed Taj al-Din Mohammad b. Heidar Dashtaki-Shirazi (d. 1363), spoke and wrote against the Shia, the former threatening to leave Shiraz unless the Salghurid ruler suppressed Shi'ite books and *ma'rakeh* (street performances of Shia traditions).[40]

Although the evidence is not conclusive, the Shi'ism that existed in Shiraz and Fars could have been a lower class or rural movement.[41] Among some elements of society in this period there existed the expectation of the coming of the *mahdi* or messiah, whose appearance, in the form of the hidden Imam, is part of Shi'a doctrine. Certainly the unsettled political and social climate of fourteenth-century Iran contributed to such expectations. In Fars the sources record two incidents involving a purported *mahdi* during the Il-Khanid period. In 1265, a certain Seyyed Sharaf al-Din Ebrahim claimed to be the *mahdi* and led a revolt which was put down by Mongol troops.[42] In the second recorded incident, a Sheikh Shams al-Din Omar Mashhadi came to Shiraz around 1300, where he preached so effectively that some of his followers claimed he was the *mahdi;* the authorities executed him out of fear of popular religious disturbances.[43]

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, what are today the major Shi'ite shrines of Shiraz were ecumenical. They existed and flourished as centers of pilgrimage in a Sunni setting. In those days, even the ultraorthodox Salghurids, famous for their opposition to Shi'ism, endowed and venerated tombs of the family of Musa Kazem, the eighth Imam of the Shia.[44]

A little more than a century after Hafez's death, when Shah Esma'il Safavi made Shi'ism the state religion of his empire, the

Shirazis found themselves well-equipped to convert their most important shrines into centers of Shia pilgrimage and devotion. Today these same tombs link Shiraz to Shi'ism, and place Shiraz just behind Mashhad and Qom as pilgrimage sites for Shia believers from inside and outside Iran. In particular, the grave of Ahmad b. Musa, brother of the eighth Imam and popularly known as Shah-e-Cheragh, is a major shrine of the Shia world.

Academic and Social Relations

In Hafez's Shiraz, known in the sources as *Dar al-Elm* (abode of learning), thousands of scholars studied and taught. In such a setting, the relation between teacher and student was a key element of urban social life. In the fourteenth century, like today, society often described a person in terms of the quality and quantity of his education. While today we define this education in terms of the institution attended and degree earned, Hafez and his contemporaries would have defined it in terms of one's teachers and the books studied. A scholar studied a work or works with a specific teacher, and the greater the teacher, the greater the prestige of his students. A diploma, or *ejazeh*, received from a famous teacher specifying what that student had learned (for example, ten chapters of book A and all of Book B) was a precious document for a young scholar. The fame of his teacher would ensure him a supply of students who, unable to study with the great master himself, would be content to earn an *ejazeh* from one of his disciples.

The training of the author of the *Shriaznameh* is a case study in fourteenth-century education, social relations, and kinship. The historian Mowlana Mo'in al-Din Ahmad b. Abu al-Kheir Zarkub (ca. 1300-1387) was also a preacher in the Baghdadi mosque, and, as his title Mowlana suggests, an eminent teacher and scholar. In his work, the *Shiraznameh*, Zarkub provides us his scholarly resume, giving biographies of his teachers, the details of his *ejazehs*, and the works he studied.[45]

> His maternal uncle, *Sheikh Haj Rokn al-Din Mansur Baghnovi* (d. 1333). With him Zarkub studied two works on *hadith* (tradition): the *Sahih* of al-

Bokhari and the *Masabih al-Sonnat*.[46]

Sheikh Zahir al-Din Abd al-Rahman b. Ali b. Bozghash (d. 1316). In 1313, Zarkub read the sufi work *Awaref al-Ma'aref* with him.[47]

Sheikh Rokn al-Din Yunes b Sadr al-Din b. Shams al-Din Mohammad Safi (d. 1317). Under him Zarkub studied *Kanz al-Khafi min Ikhtiyarat al-Safi*, a sufi work by Rokn al-Din's ancestor, Safi al-Din Osman Kermani (d. ca. 1237).[48]

Mowlana Nur al-Din Mohammad b. Haj Sharaf al-Din Osman Khorasani (d. 1341). In 1320, Zarkub studied *Havi al-Saghir*, an important work of Shafe'i jurisprudence, under Mowlana Mohammad's tutelage.[49]

Qotb al-Din Mohammad Fali-Sirafi (d. 1321), the author of the famous *Sharh-e-Qasideh-ye-Ashknavaniyeh*.[50] With him Zarkub studied Qoranic commentaries and other branches of Islamic scholarship, reading Qotb al-Din's own *Towzih-e-Kashshaf* and the *Miftah al-Ulum* of al-Sakaki (d. 1229).

Taj al-Din Mohammad b. Sharaf al-Din Zanjani (d. 1322 at Delhi). With this teacher Zarkub read two works by the famous Qazi Naser al-Din Abdullah Beiza'i: the *Manhaj* (on methodology, or *osul*) and the *Misbah al-Arwah* on theology.[51]

Amin al-Din Mohammad Baliyani Kazeruni (d. 1344), one of Hafez's “Five Nobles of Fars.” Amin al-Din was Zarkub's sufi master, who, in 1317 in Kazeroun, granted the “inspiration of awareness” (*talqin-e-zekr*) to his disciple.[52]

In this manner Zarkub studied the branches of Islamic learning in the seminaries of Shiraz, a city which took great pride in its accomplished teachers. In addition to the branches of learning listed in Zarkub's curriculum vitae, students also studied Qoran-reading (*qara'at*), logic (*manteq*), and Arabic and Persian literature (*adab)*. Studying philosophy was frowned upon as irreligious and in opposition to *kalam* (theology). The sources record how one of the most eminent teachers of Shiraz, Mowlana Qavam al-Din Abdullah (d. 1370), flirted with philosophy in his youth. Repenting of this unbelief, he confessed his error to his father-in-law, Sheikh Ja'far

Mowsoli, who advised him to “renew his marriage.”[53] Studying philosophy had apparently made Qavam al-Din an unbeliever, and thus unqualified to be husband to a Muslim woman.

Every great teacher of Shiraz had his own circle of disciples and associates who would meet regularly for prayer, scholarly discussions, and socializing. One such group centered on the above-mentioned Mowlana Qavam al-Din Abdullah, whose pupils included the poet Hafez and the ruler Shah Shoja.[54] Other, less famous pupils of Qavam al-Din were Zein al-Din Na'ini, Mowlana Najm al-Din Mahmud Kazeruni (preacher in the Khasseh Mosque), and Haji Ali Assar, a wealthy merchant who would supply the poor oil and honey from his shop.[55]

One of Mowlana Qavam al-Din's earliest teachers was Imam Naser al-Din Mohammad b. Mas'ud (d. 1305), who had his own circle of disciples who met weekly for sufi ceremonies at his home in the *sepidan* (or *sepandan*) quarter of the Sheikh-e-Kabir district. Attendance at these meetings was limited to twenty-one persons, including Sheikh Zahir al-Din Abd al-Rahman b. Ali b. Bozghash (d. 1316) and Mowlana Jamal al-Din Kuhgiluye'i. Although Imam Naser al-Din never left his house except for Friday prayers, attendance at his circle was considered a privilege and a sign of status. No less a figure than the *qazi al-qozat* of the period, Rokn al-Din Fali-Sirafi (d. 1307), used to call on Imam Naser al-Din every Tuesday.[56]

Najib al-Din Ali b. Bozghash (1198-1279), father of one of Imam Naser al-Din's disciples, also had an impressive group of followers and associates. One of Najib al-Din's students was Qavam al-Din Abdullah's father-in-law, Sheikh Ja'far Mowsoli (d. ca. 1312). Another (would-be) disciple was the famous Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili, the ancestor of the Safavid rulers, who traveled to Shiraz for the express purpose of studying with Sheikh Najib al-Din, but arrived just after the scholar's death.[57] In addition to having married the granddaughter of the *naqib* of Fars, Sheikh Najib al-Din was associated with Sheikh Taj al-Din Ahmad Horr, a leading preacher of Shiraz; with Amir Asil al-Din Alavi-Mohammadi (d. 1286); and with

Qazi Imam al-Din Omar Beiza'i (d. 1276), the father of the famous chief judge, scholar, and historian.[58]

These teachers attained preeminence through years of study, a proper collection of *ejazehs*, and, just as important, powerful family connections. The three above-mentioned scholars—Mowlana Qavam al-Din, Imam Naser al-Din, and Najib al-Din Ali—with their retinues of students and associates were all members of important Shirazi families.[59] Another group of outstanding Shirazi teachers in the late thirteenth century consisted of three aristocrats who had studied in the *rabat* of Sheikh-e-Kabir with the famous Shafe'i teacher and sufi master, Sheikh Mo'in al-Din Abdullah b. Joneid b. Ruzbeh Kathki (d. 1253). The three were Sa'en al-Din Hosein Salmani, Sadr al-Din Mozaffar Baghnovi, and Amir Seyyed Asil al-Din Abdullah Alavi-Mohammadi.[60]

Membership in an aristocratic family was not the only qualification for education and advancement, but it gave young students the advantage of access to Shiraz's most eminent teachers, who might be blood relatives, relatives by marriage, or otherwise associated with a student's powerful family members. Such a network of friendships and relationships meant that the young aristocrat would have a much easier time securing *ejazeh*s than would someone lacking connections to the leading Shirazi families.

Outsiders did attain high positions in Shiraz's scholarly heirarchy, but that achievement usually took extraordinary efforts and patronage from a powerful local figure. When Sheikh Ja'far Mowsoli, the father-in-law of Qavam al-Din Abdullah, first came to Shiraz, he remained unknown, frequenting religious gatherings and remaining silent. People considered him a common, ordinary man until Sheikh Najib al-Din Ali recognized him as an authority. Only then, and with Sheikh Najib al-Din's blessing, did Sheikh Ja'far establish a reputation for learning among the Shirazis.[61]

Early in the seventh/thirteenth century, when Qazi Jamal al-Din Abu Bakr Mesri first came to Shiraz, he found that no one in the city

paid attention to him and that he was unable to earn a living. Facing poverty, he made himself a suit of paper clothes and sat in the vestibule of the school where Amid al-Din Afzari, the Atabek's minister, was teaching. When the minister asked the meaning of his clothes, Jamal al-Din answered:

> In Egypt it is the custom that anyone who has suffered injustice puts on paper clothes as a sign of protest. I, a learned man, have come to this city seeking advancement; but things are so bad here that I have had to sell my books.[62]

In this way, Jamal al-Din received official patronage and eventually rose to become chief judge of Fars.

A century later, the custom of wearing paper clothes to protest injustice must have become familiar in Shiraz. Hafez, complaining of the injustice of a patron's leaving Shiraz without telling him, wrote:

یاد باد آنکه ز ما وقت سفر یاد نکرد به وداعی دل غمدیده ما شاد نکرد

کاغذین جامه بخونابه بشویم که فلک ره نمونیم به پای علم داد نکرد

> Recall that one who forgot us at the time of departure,
> Who did not ease our grieving heart with a farewell.
> I will wash my paper clothes with bloody tears,
> Because heaven did not lead us to the flag of justice.

Sufi Masters and Disciples: Passing the Kherqeh

Sufism arose from the Muslim believer's desire for a religious experience more personal than what strict orthodoxy could offer. The believer, who still observed the tenets of orthodoxy, traveled the sufi path (*tariqat*) and attained this personal religious experience by asceticism, prayer, group ritual, and the understanding of esoteric knowledge (*erfan*)—all under the guidance of a sufi master, called *pir* or *sheikh*.[63]

In the fourteenth century sufism permeated all aspects of life in Shiraz. The poems of Hafez are full of images from sufi belief and

practice, the meanings of which in many instances are still obscure.[64] Even Sheikh *At'ameh* (d. 1436), the Shirazi poet of food, gives his recipe for *bu-ard* in the vocabulary of sufi practices familiar to his readers:

> *Bu-ard* is a kind of disciple (*morid*) that the master (*morshed*) in his patched-cloak (*zhendehpush*), which is vinegar, orders to retreat to its cell (the vat) for forty days of fasting and prayer (*chelleh)*. There he will experience revelation (*mokashefat*) from the world of molasses. Then he will come to the sufi retreat (*khaneqah*) of the table and sit at the prayer-carpet of bread with the other followers (*moridan*), who are the herbs. There in the world of esoteric knowledge (*erfan*), he should recite the following verse:
>
> هجر کشیدیم تا بوصل رسیدیم آیه رحمت پس از عذاب نویسند
>
> We endured separation to reach union.
> For they write the verse of mercy after punishment.[65]

By tradition, during the Buyid period Mohammad b. Khafif (882–982), famous as Sheikh-e-Kabir, first brought sufism to Shiraz.[66] In this saint's own statement of beliefs, he presents the doctrines of the sufis as follows:

> The sufi believes that poverty is more excellent than riches and that total abstinence is better than abstinence in part…. Freedom from the bondage of servanthood is absurd, but freedom from the bondage of carnal desire is possible…. Human attributes in gnostics pass away, in neophytes abate…. Spiritual intoxication is right for neophytes, but wrong for gnostics.[67]

Many sufi teachings came to Shiraz from Baghdad in the sixth/twefth century. In the first half of that century, Sheikh Qotb al-Din Abdullah Ali b. Hosein Makki, whom the Shirazis called Sheikh al-Eslam, studied with the two great rival sufi masters of Iraq, Abd al-Qader Gilani and Ibn Rafa'i (Ahmad Kabir). Returning to Shiraz, Sheikh Qotb al-Din introduced sufi ideas into his preaching. Near the the end of the century, another great teacher of Shiraz, Sheikh Mo'in al-Din Abdullah Kathki (d. 1253), studied sufism in Baghdad with Zia al-Din b. Sakineh, one of the greatest masters of the period. Kathki

in turn became teacher to three of the leading scholars of late thirteenth-century Shiraz.[68]

The overwhelming predominance of the Shafe'i law school in Shiraz meant that sufism there did not conflict with orthodoxy, and the great Shirazi teachers and scholars could be followers of both *shari'at* (Islamic law) and *tariqat* (the sufi path).[69] Just as the Shirazis measured a scholar's learning in *olum* (Islamic learning) by the quality of his *ejazeh*s, they weighed his credentials in *tasawwof* (sufism) by his *selseleh*, or the chain of sufi masters who had invested him with the *kherqeh* (Persian *zhendeh), the* patched cloak of the dervishes.

The *kherqeh* was the uniform of the sufi, a symbol of his service to God through obedience to his *morshed*, or master. He received it from the *morshed* when he was judged ready for initiation. There existed a detailed set of etiquette and beliefs concerning receiving and wearing the *kherqeh*, and about its condition and color.[70] In putting on the *kherqeh*, the wearer, by changing his outward appearance, gave up his previous (sinful) habits and desires. The cloak was ultimately a symbol of holy poverty worn in imitation of the first Moslems. Wearing the *kherqeh*, however, left the wearer open to charges of hypocrisy and ostentatious display of poverty and piety. Hafez's poems contain many references to wearing the *kherqeh*, not all of which are complimentary.[71] In one verse he says:

خرقه پوشی من از غایت دینداری نیست پرده ای بر سر صد عیب نهان میپوشم

My wearing the dervish-cloak is not because of piety.
It is a cover that I wear over a hundred hidden faults.

In Shiraz the relationship between bestower and receiver of the *kherqeh* created a network which reinforced ties among family members and between students and teachers. A person's status in the social, religious, and academic hierarchy of the city came from his family connections, the quality and quantity of his scholarly diplomas (*ejazehs*), and his chain of sufi masters (*selseleh)*. In the

earliest period, the social status of one's sufi master was less important. For example, the *Shiraznameh* records that the great Ibn Khafif received his *kherqeh* from a Sheikh Ja'far, who was only a shoemaker.[72]

By the sixth/twelfth century, however, sufism was becoming mixed with family connections and status. The great Sheikh Ruzbehan Baqli (1128–1210) settled in the Bagh-e-Now quarter of Shiraz to be near one of his earliest sufi masters, Sheikh Abu Bakr b. Omar Barkâr (d. 1145), a person of no social eminence. Later, Ruzbehan received a *kherqeh* from Sheikh Saraj al-Din Mahmud b. Salbeh (d. 1167), a member of the prestigious family of the sheikhs of Beiza.[73]

By the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the aristocrats of Shiraz were exchanging sufi credentials among themselves. Joneid Shirazi (d. 1391, the author of *Shadd al-Izar*, received his *kherqeh* from his paternal great-uncle, Sheikh Zia al-Din Abd al-Vahab b. Mozaffar Baghnovi (d. 1342). Ahmad Zarkub, author of the *Shiraznameh*, received his *kherqeh* from his maternal uncle, Sheikh Rokn al-Din Mansur Baghnovi (d. 1333), who had in turn received his from Sheikh Yusef Sarvestani (d. 1283).[74] Zarkub's ancestor, Sheikh Ezz al-Din Mowdud (d. 1265), gave a *kherqeh* to Seyyed Taj al-Din Ja'far Musavi (1217–1304), the *naqib* of Fars. Taj al-Din's son and the next *naqib*, Seyyed Ezz al-Din Ahmad b. Ja'far Musavi (d. 1313), received his *kherqeh* from Sheikh Najib al-Din Ali b. Bozghash. Sheikh Najib al-Din, whom we have earlier noted as an eminent teacher, received both an *ejazeh* and his *kherqeh* from Sheikh Shahab al-Din Omar Sohravardi (d. 1235), a member of a family of famous sufi masters of Baghdad. Sohravardi himself (see footnote 47 in this chapter) traced his sufi *selseleh* to Sheikh-e-Kabir.[75]

For the most part these sufi masters were not persons withdrawn from the world. As members of the most powerful and wealthy families of Shiraz, they consorted with rulers and ministers and controlled great wealth in the endowments of the dervish lodges (*khaneqah*).[76] Although sufism, like education, was theoretically open to all, its leading practitioners in fourteenth-century Shiraz were

members of the great families. One exception noted in the sources was Sheikh Shams al-Din Mohammed Sadeq (d. 1336), who, after miraculously becoming learned, traveled to Kazeroun and received his *kherqeh* from Sheikh Amin al-Din Baliyani.[77]

This upper-class bias may have prevented sufism in Shiraz from becoming a social or political movement, like that of the Sarbedarids in Khorasan or the later Safavid leaders of Ardabil. The sufi masters of Shiraz, like the chief judge and the leader of the *seyyeds*, were solid members of the establishment, if not of the ruling elite. With the support of the rulers, they could strengthen their own financial position and obtain valuable tax exemptions for the *khaneqah*. With the interests of the sufi orders linked to those of the patricians, we would have to look elsewhere to find a base for social movements among the Shirazis.

ARTS AND LETTERS

The rich cultural life of Shiraz in the age of Hafez occurred in spite of (or perhaps because of) the political instability of this period.[78] During the fourteenth century, Shiraz, although torn by internal and external violence, remained a center of painting, religious scholarship, and some of the world's greatest poetry. During this period, Shiraz, along with Tabriz, was one of the major centers of book illustration in Iran. In Tabriz the influence of Chinese painting was very strong, but in Shiraz, farther from the Mongol court, a more traditional Iranian style of painting survived. Four illuminated *Shahnameh* manuscripts have survived from the Inju period in Shiraz. All are dated between 1330 and 1352. One manuscript, dated 1341, was dedicated to Qavam al-Din Hasan, Abu Eshaq's great minister and patron of the arts.[79]

Islamic Scholarship

Shiraz earned its name *Dar al-Elm*, above of learning, from the presence of so many famous teachers and scholars. In Hafez's time, these scholars produced some original work and numerous

commentaries (*sharh*) upon older works, or commentaries upon commentaries (*hashiyeh)*. Near the end of Hafez's lifetime, the most outstanding scholar of Shiraz was Mir Seyyed Sharif Alameh Jorjani (1339-1413). Mir Seyyed Sharif was first brought to Shiraz by Shah Shoja in 1377 and was appointed chief instructor (*modarres*) of the Dar al-Shafa Seminary.[80] In 1387, Amir Timur took him to Samarqand, where he remained until the conqueror's death in 1405. Returning to Shiraz, he taught there until his death and was buried in an area south of the Jame' Atiq still known as Dar al-Shafa.[81]

Jorjani's descendants were known in Shiraz as the Sharifi Seyyeds, and were trustees of the endowment of the shrine of Shah-e-Cheragh.[82] Seyyed Sharif wrote mostly in Arabic, his most famous work being the *Ta'rifat*, a dictionary of terms used in sufism. He also composed numerous commentaries, including one on the famous *Kashshaf* of Zamakshari and others on the works of Qazi Majd al-Din Esma'il and Qazi Borhan al-Din Osman Kuhgiluye'i, two of the great chief justices of Fars during Hafez's lifetime. These scholars in turn had composed commentaries on earlier works of jurisprudence, methodology, and sufism.[83]

Jorjani also composed commentaries on the works of the renowned Shirazi scholar and judge, Mowlana Qazi Azod al-Din Abd al-Rahman Iji (d. 1355). Qazi Azod al-Din was an advisor of Shah Sheikh Abu Eshaq Inju, a teacher of Shah Shoja, and one of Hafez's "five notables" of Fars. Azod al-Din's most famous work was the *Mawaqiffi Ilm al-Kalam*, a study of theology, which he dedicated first to Sultan Abu Sa'id's *vazir*, Khwajeh Ghiyath al-Din Rashidi, and then to Shah Sheikh Abu Eshaq. Azod al-Din also composed a work on logic and commentaries on Ibn Hajeb's *Mokhtasar* on methodology.[84]

Poetry

Among Shiraz's artistic achievements in the fourteenth century, poetry was the crown jewel, and the poet Hafez, whose verses we have quoted frequently, was by far the most brilliant figure of this

age.[85] But his greatness should not obscure the existence of other first-rate poets at Shiraz who produced their own masterpieces.[86]

Khwaju Kermani (1280–1352) was born a generations before Hafez and much of his work with the *ghazal*, or lyric, anticipates Hafez's bringing that form to perfection. Khwaju was a disciple (*morid*) of Sheikh Amin al-Din Baliyani Kazeruni and traced his sufi line back to Sheikh Morshed, whom he eulogized in his poetry. Khwaju also wrote poems in praise of the great men of his age, including Abu Eshaq Inju, his brother Mas'ud Shah, the Mozaffarid minister and judge Borhan al-Din (d. 1359), and Qazi Majd al-Din Esma'il Fali, the great chief judge of Fars.

Hafez modified some of Khaju's verses, and transformed them from the graceful into the beautiful. For example, Khaju says:

منزل ار یار قرین است چه دوزخ چه بهشت سجده گر به نیاز است چه مسجد چه کنشت

If one is near the beloved, what difference if he be in heaven or hell?
If prayer is out of need, what difference if it be in mosque or synagogue?

Hafez transformed this verse into:

همه کس طالب یارند چه هشیار و چه مست همه جا خانهٔ عشق است چه مسجد چه کنشت

Everyone, whether he be drunk or sober, seeks the beloved.
Every place, whether it be mosque or synagogue, is the house of love.

Obeid Zakani (d. 1370) was the most original and unusual literary figure of the age. Although most famous as a satirist, Obeid possessed an excellent classical education and composed beautiful, serious poems. After completing his studies at Shiraz, he became a judge and teacher at Qazvin, his native town. By his own tongue-in-cheek account, he became a satirist after he saw that other literary pursuits led only to poverty. He relates that he had composed a

treatise on rhetoric, which he attempted to present to the king. When the courtiers told him the king was not interested in such garbage, Obeid composed a brilliant panegyric, but the courtiers told him the king did not appreciate the exaggerated flattery of poets. Realizing he would never make a living by serious literature, he began telling coarse jokes and reciting obscene verses. This new policy worked so well that Obeid soon became one of the leading figures at the royal court. When a friend asked how, with all of his learning, Obeid could bear to become a court jester, the poet answered:

ای خواجه مکن تا توانی طلب علم کاندر طلب راتب هر روزه بمانی

رو مسخرگی پیشه کن و مطربی آموز تا داد خود از کهتر و مهتر بستانی

O sir, avoid learning as much as you can,
Lest you should always be seeking your daily bread.
Go and be a clown and musician,
So you may earn your living from great and small.[87]

Obeid's satirical works included a collection of jokes (mostly obscene) called *Resaleh-ye-Delgosha;* a satirical essay on the decadent morals of his age, called *Akhlaq al-Ashraf (The Ethics of the Aristocracy);* and the humorous fable *Mush o Gorbeh (Cats and Mice*) containing the famous line which has become a proverb in Persian:

مژدگانی که گربه تائب شد عابد و زاهد و مسلمانا

Good news! The cat has repented
And become a worshipper, an ascetic, a true Moslem.[88]

Obeid's serious poems included eulogies to famous persons of his era, such as Shah Abu Eshaq Inju, Sultan Oveis Jalayeri, and Shah Shoja Mozaffari.[89] He must have been a member of Shah Abu Eshaq's poets' circle, along with the older Khaju and the younger Hafez. He lived most of his life at Shiraz and wrote verses that showed how he preferred his adopted home to his native Qazvin. Some of his lyrics are quite lovely, including one which begins:

جفا مکن که جفا رسم دلربائی نیست جدا مشو که مرا طاقت جدائی نیست

Be not false, for that is not the custom of loveliness.
Do not leave, for I cannot bear separation.

According to Arberry, the *ghazals* of Obeid, like those of Khaju, “reveal the author bridging the gap between Sa'di and Hafez.” Such a description, however, does not do justice to these poems’ beauty and originality.

Joneid Shirazi (d. ca. 800/1398), a member of the patrician Baghnovi family, was not only author of the Arabic biographical dictionary *Shadd al-Izar*, but also a poet, whose *divan* has been collected and edited by the twentieth-century scholar Sa'id Nafisi. Although as a poet he ranks below Khaju and Obeid, his verses contain a simple and charming expression of the sufi ideas that influenced his life and the lives of so many Shirazis. For example:

حدیث عشق تو با کس نمیتوان گفتن که سر دوست نشاید باین و آن گفتن

ز روی زرد من احوال درد من پیداست چو روشنست چه حاجت که هر زمان گفتن

خوشا غمی که توان گفت پیش همدردی مرا غمیست که با کس نمی توان گفتن

No one can be told the story of your love,
For one should not tell a friend's secret to this or that person.
My pain is evident from my pale, jaundiced face.
Since the pain is clear, why say it all the time?
Easy is that sorrow which can be told to a sympathizer;
My sorrow is one that can be told to no one.