The *Khalifeh al-kholafa* of the Safavid Sufi Order

By Willem Floor, Bethesda

Introduction

It was the followers of the Safavid order who put their spiritual leader (*pir* or *morsbed-e kamel*) on the throne of Iran. Despite the order's crucial role hardly anything is known about its organization and its ritual. That the order and its leaders played an important role in the new Safavid state is clear from the fact that the only function that was added to the array of religious offices was that of the *khalifeh al-kholafa*, the administrative head of the order. A second new religious office, that of the *molla-bashi*, signaling the victory of Imamite Shi‘ism over Sufism, was added only around 1705. The creation of the former function, the subject of this study, was the result of the changed role of the spiritual leader of the Safavid order, who had become shah of Iran in 1501. The only other study discussing this official’s function was published 36 years ago¹ and focused on the conflict between the shah/*morsbed* and the *khalifeh al-kholafa*, Hoseinquoli Rumli, in 1576. However, as important as that conflict may have been, (and I disagree with Savory’s analysis thereof), there is much more to be said about the development of the function of *khalifeh al-kholafa* and the Safavid Sufi order that was in his charge. This function existed from the beginning till the end of the Safavid regime, though with the fading of the Qezelbash rallying call and the rise of Imamite Shi‘ite orthopraxis both the Safavid Sufi order and its administrative head gradually lost influence and importance, finally to disappear completely. In view of the mobilizing role of religious groups in Iran in general and of the Safavid order in particular it is of interest to have a more detailed view and better understanding than has hitherto been available of the function of the *khalifeh al-kholafa*.

The organization of the Safavid order

The spiritual leader, *pir* or *morshedi-e kamel*, of the Safavid order had his seat in Ardabil, but the majority of his followers were living in eastern Anatolia and northern Syria, in addition to north western Persia, by the end of the 15th century. Most of the followers of the Safavid sheikhs were Turkmans, but they included Iranian speakers. Although many of the Safavid followers were nomadic or semi-sedentary, there were also many sedentary rural and urban followers. These followers shaped many of the ritual practices of the Safavid order and consequently they were similar to those found among other darvish orders in the same geographical area. To strengthen the ties with, if not exercise control over, his followers, who were called *morid* or *taleb*, the head of the order (*morshed*) had trusted agents among the various nomadic clans, villages and towns where his followers were to be found. From the very beginning of the existence of the Safavid order missionaries, or so-called *da'is*, had tried through peaceful proselytizing to make converts. As early as 779/1377–1378, a Safavid propaganda base had been established in Herat by the *da'i* Qasem al-Anvar.2 As of the mid-15th century, these agents were no longer referred to as *da'is*, but were called *khola'fa* (sing. *khalifeh*) or lieutenant (and in one case *amin* or *confidante*). In what follows, the term *khola'fa* will only refer to the function of *khaliqf al-kholafa*, while, when referring to more than one *khalifeh*, the term *khalifehs* will be used. After having received the necessary instruction (either in Ardabil or from another *khalifeh*), the *khalifehs* became the leaders of the Safavid *morids* in their locality. The *khalifeh* was in fact the deputy or *na'eb* of the *morshed*; his orders had to be followed by the *morids* as if they were from the morshed himself.3

The *khalifeh* system also existed among other Sufi orders such as the Kabiriyiyah, Murshidiyyah, and Ne'matollahi (although Gramlich in his study of the Persian darvish orders makes no mention of this office).4 A letter

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allegedly written by Shah Esma’îl I in 918/1512 to introduce the khālīfeh
Nur ‘Ali, who had been sent to invite Safavid morids in Anatolia to come
to Tabriz and join Shah Esma’îl’s forces, referred to Nur ‘Ali as khālīfeh-
fe esteqâqlal or independent khālīfeh, Esma’îl’s na‘eb or deputy, from whose
orders the morids should not deviate.5 A Venetian report of 1501 also refers
to the intermediary function of the khālīfeh between spiritual leader and fol-
lowers.6 The devotion to the morshed continued to be extended to his deputy
later in the 16th century; for example, the Sufis undertook to obey Hamza
Mirza because his father, Shah Mohammad Khodabandeh, their morshed,
had made him his vakil or regent and vali ‘abd or heir apparent.7 Qomi also
noted that among the Safavid adherents the sentimients of tashayyo’ and sufi-
gari that they bore towards the Safavid family in general were strong.8

Eleven other officials assisted the Safavid khālīfeh. According to the hier-
archy of the Safavid order the most important subordinate official was known
as the pireh, the deputy (qa’em-maqam) of the khālīfeh. Eskander Beg substi-
tutes dedeh for pireh in one case, but in general it seems that the term dedeh
does not refer a Sufi order function.9 The orthography of pireb, perhaps,
follows the same model as that of amir/amireh. The term may refer to the
function of the pir-e dalil or the master of ceremonies of the majles-e niyaz,
as this functionary was known among other Sufi orders. As such the pir was
the one who lead the ceremonies, for he knew the rites best.10 Other officials
such as the naqib, khadem, dhakeri, shamkhali, gözcu or watcher, gapuchi or
doorman and tariqchi or tick carrier, who used the stick to administer the
chub-e tariq ceremony, further assisted the khālīfeh and pireb.11

khālīfehs and da’is in 1029/1619–1620”; Eskander Beg Monshi: Tarikh-e ‘Alamara-
Mohammad who showed a book with all the names of the morids and the kholafla, a total
of 3,700 persons, with every hundred morids under one kholafla. Richard Gramlich:
Die schiitischen Derwischorden Persiens. 3 vols. Wiesbaden 1965–.

6 Biancamaria Scarica Moretti: Shah Isma’îl I. Roma 1979, p. 3.
7 Qadi Ahmad ibn Sharaf al-Dîn al-Hosein al-Hoseini al-Qomi: Kholasat al-
as Qomi).
9 Savory: History, vol. 1, p. 463; Monshi: Tarikh, vol. 1, p. 328; Mohammad Yusef–
Minorsky also mentioned the function of abdal among the hierarchy of the Safavid order. This he based on the name of Abdal Beg, one of the leaders of the Safavid Sufis, but other evidence does not yet support his conjecture. The term abdal usually refers to the 40 persons, who, in Sufi ideology, have the power to change from physical to spiritual forms. In the Safavid period, according to Olearius, the term referred to wandering dervishes, who were dressed in coarse woolens or simply animal skins and who had a snakeskin as a kind of belt. The abdal, also called kalantar, was “ordained” in the Sufi khanehs of Ardabil, Esfahan and Mashhad by the Sufi-bashi, or the chief of the Sufis. They preached love for ‘Ali and their holy men, cursed the Sunnis, and thus spread Shi‘ism. Nobody, however, wanted to have them in their homes and that was why small chapels were built next to the mosques where they lodged; they also often spent the night in the field or in caves. The largest concentration was in Ardabil. Sanson wrote:

“Derviches, or Abdals; they lead a poor and austere Life; they preach the Alcoran in the corners of Streets, Coffee Houses, publick Ways, and, in short, where ever they can find Auditors. They talk with a great deal of Zeal, and some of ’em have a little Eloquence. They know nothing but the Fables, with which they amuse the Vulgar. They are no more esteem’d of by Men of Wit, than the Charlatans are in France.”

According to Kaempfer abdals were dervishes who only begged for others, but met their own needs out of an entitlement; they could be recognized by the animal skins that they wore. It is noteworthy that at the end of the Safavid dynasty there was a court official known as qalandar-bashi, who may have been in charge of these and other dervishes.

*tariq and qizilbash ritual in Safavid Persia.” In: Jean Calmard (ed.): Etudes Safavides. Paris/Tehran 1993, p. 233. After Chahardehi’s death his library was bought by the Dar al-Ma‘aref-e Bozorg-e Eslami. The director of the Dar al-Ma‘aref was kind enough, at my request, to make a search for the manuscript partially published by Chahardehi, without success. This is because the library has not yet been completely catalogued, and possibly the manuscript is part of another manuscript bearing another title. It is of great importance that this manuscript be found and published.

The role and function of khilifeh al-kholafa

When Sheikh Esma'īl, the spiritual head of the Safavid order had become Shah Esma'īl I of Iran, he created the office of khilifeh al-kholafa for the entire Safavid order. It is not exactly known what the duties and responsibilities of this new official were, but most likely, he, as deputy (na'eb) of the morsbed, was in charge of those matters that did not require the attention of the spiritual leader of the order. That he also directed in particular the relations of the Shah with his adherents outside Persia, as Savory has suggested, is possible, but this is not borne out by textual evidence. The first khilifeh al-kholafa was Khadem Beg Talesh, a non-Torkoman and companion of Esma'īl I during his exile in Gilan. He was also governor of Baghdad and therefore he cannot have held a function that supervised the day-to-day concerns of other khilifehs.17

Unfortunately, we have only spotty and very incomplete information about those who were khilifeh al-kholafa. Those whom I have been able to identify are listed hereunder.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>904–921/1498–1514</th>
<th>Khadem Beg Talesh18</th>
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<td>946/1539–1540</td>
<td>Shahqoli Khilifeh Qurughlu Dhu’l-Qadr19</td>
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<td>984/1576</td>
<td>Hoseinqoli Beg Rumlu</td>
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<td>984/1576</td>
<td>Bolgar khilifeh al-kholafa Rumlu20</td>
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<td>984–985/1576–1577</td>
<td>Dedeh Kholafa Ostajalu21</td>
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17 After the conquest of Baghdad, Khadem Beg, the emir-e divan, was appointed khilifeh al-kholafa. MONTAZER-SAHEB, pp. 165, 169.
19 MORTON: “chub-i tariq”, p. 228, n. 9; ASTARABADI: Az Sheikh, p. 62; he became mohrdar, Qomi, vol. 1, p. 223.
<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Ruler</th>
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<tr>
<td>995/1586-1587</td>
<td>Shahqoli Soltan Rumlu&lt;sup&gt;22&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>995/1587</td>
<td>Soleiman Khan Turkmen&lt;sup&gt;23&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>996/1588</td>
<td>Kur Qur Khoms Khan&lt;sup&gt;24&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>996/1588</td>
<td>Shahqoli Khan Kholafa&lt;sup&gt;25&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td><strong>995/1587</strong></td>
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<td>1036/1626-1627</td>
<td>Yadegar 'Ali Soltan Talesh&lt;sup&gt;26&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>1036-1039/1627-1629</td>
<td>Badr Khan Soltan Talesh&lt;sup&gt;27&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>1039/1629</td>
<td>Pir Budaq Khan Parnak Turkmen&lt;sup&gt;28&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>1043/1634</td>
<td>Rezaqoli&lt;sup&gt;29&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>1046/1636</td>
<td>Maqsud Soltan Qaradaghi&lt;sup&gt;30&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>1081/1670?</td>
<td>Mahmud Soltan&lt;sup&gt;31&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Mohammad Qasem Soltan Nasiri&lt;sup&gt;32&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<sup>22</sup> Qomi, vol. 2, p. 668.


<sup>26</sup> Yadegar 'Ali Soltan Talesh was one of the great emirs and held the post of khalifeh al-kholafa. He was the grandson of Khadem Beg Talesh, the khalifeh al-kholafa and governor of Baghdad under Esma'il I, he died in 1036/1626. Savory: *History,* vol. 2, pp. 1295, 979; Monshi: *Tarikh,* vol. 2, pp. 1070, 782.

<sup>27</sup> Badr Khan Soltan, who succeeded Yadgar Soltan as khalifeh al-kholafa, was governor in several places in Talesh; Savory: *History,* vol. 2, p. 1312; Monshi: *Tarikh,* vol. 2, p. 1086.


<sup>30</sup> Esfahani, p. 235.


<sup>32</sup> Yusef Rahimlu (ed.): *Alqab va mavaheb-e doureh-ye salatin-e Safaviyeh.* Mashhad 1371/1993, p. 35. He was also governor of Qarachehdagh at the same time. The chronological sequence of this individual and the next three ones is uncertain, but it would seem that this order is correct as is their presence during the period after 1670.
In addition to the necessary religious training the *khalifeh* also received the Safavid *darvish* hat or *taj* and a sword from his *morshead*.

"A *taj* or crown is a cloth cap, usually red, with a baton-shaped upright about which was tied a turban. The *taj* itself is a single-piece skullcap topped with a cone-shaped peak. When the turban is wound around the *taj*, the only part showing through is the peak. This peak resembles a red baton among the folds of the turban. Concealed are twelve folds indented on the lower part of the *taj*; each stands for one of the Imams of the Shi'i creed."

This practice persisted throughout most of the 16th century; the acceptance of the *taj*, or investiture by the Shah, constituted the formal declaration of fealty to the Safavid cause. The rank-and-file Qezelbash received their *darvish* hat, or *taj*, and garment from the *khalifeh* after he had established the suitability of the candidate. The *khalifeh* also made it a point to personally invest each individual Qezelbash with these attributes (according to the Dastur al-Moluk, only the *shah* or *khalifeh* al-*khola fa* could bestow the *taj*). Contrary to other *qalandar/darvish* groups, the Safavid disciples neither cut their beards or their moustaches. To boost their standing in the Qezelbash community the *khalifehs* acquired items such as shoes and clothes that had been worn by the *morshead*, which were venerated as if they were the *sheikh/shah* itself.

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<th>Imamqoli Beg Suklan(^{33})</th>
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<td>Mohammad Amin Khan Nasiri(^{34})</td>
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<td>Mohammad Reza Khan Kengerlu(^{35})</td>
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<td>1142–1161/1729–1747</td>
<td>Mirza Nasiri Kafi Kholafa</td>
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33 Rahimlu: *Alqab*, p. 35. He had been *mobdar* or keeper of the great seat (*homayun*) prior to this function.

34 Rahimlu: *Alqab*, p. 35. He was also governor of Qarachehdagh and the brother of Muhammad Qasim Sultan Nasiri, the earlier *khalifeh* al-*khola fa*.

35 Rahimlu: *Alqab*, p. 35. He was governor of Nakhjivan at the same time.


The khalifeh also collected votive offerings or nadhr from the morids, which were brought to the morshed. The founder of the order, Sheikh Safi al-Din, had forbidden the practice of nadhr; but the practice was widespread at least since the days of Joneid (d. 1460), Shah Esma'îl I's grandfather. According to the Italian traveler Membre the morids had to pay 10% of their annual income. This practice (especially by adherents from Rum, Qarajeleh, and Ahar) continued while Esma'îl was hiding in Gilan; when Esma'il's “faithful disciples contrived secretly to send him gifts and various stores, thus putting to the test the coin of their devotion”. Sometimes large amounts in gold were taken from Ottoman territory to Ardabil, which after 1510 had to be smuggled into Persia. The contributions, however, were probably more fluid, and often made in kind according to the means of the donor, which may have been occasioned by the fact that the majority of the morids originated from the lower classes. For example, very few members of the beg class were to be found among the Sufis who migrated to Persia to join Esma’îl I.

Italian observers, such as Minadói and Balbi, reported:

“Under the Mustaed-Dini are the Califes, and these are they that execute their daily service in their Moschees or Temples. The chiefe of these Califes is he that putteth the Horne upon the kinges head, when he is first inthronized: A ceremonie now performed in Casbin, because the Turkes forbad it to be performed in Case neere unto Babylon, where also in times past (as we have sayd before) the Persian kinges were wont to girde themselves with their sword.”

In Persian sources there is no evidence for this “crowning event” in the careers of the khalifeh al-kholafa. The standard Safavid Sufi practice, such as when Soltan ‘Ali transferred his power to Esma’il, was that “he took Sultan Haidar’s cap from his own head, and placed it on his brother’s, and then bound his own girdle round his brother’s girdle. After this he spoke into his

Montazer-Sahebi, p. 188; Membre, pp. 41–42; p. 18 for the granting of the taj by the shah to Torkomans on pilgrimage.

Membre, p. 37.


Sohrweide, p. 191.


ear those maxims which he had received as an inheritance from his noble ancestors.” Esma‘īl pledged himself to follow the constant practice of Sufis of the Safavid order, namely, to honor the father and the elder brother. Khodabandeh transferred his crown to his Hamza Mirza’s head, girded him with a jeweled dagger belt and sword belt, clothed him in a splendid robe of honor, and named him heir apparent. He did the same with ‘Abbas Mirza and, in addition, “he committed to his son those principles of spiritual guidance handed down in the Safavid family from generation to generation.”

In appointment diplomas the khālīfehs were instructed to see to it that the talehs followed the shari‘eh and the Safavid tariq or discipline. They further had to devote themselves to dhekrs, vigils on holy nights, acts of obedience and worship, ordering the good and forbidding evil deeds; sometimes, forbidding the association with strange women and other such matters also was added. Later diplomas are more detailed and follow orthodox Shi‘ite conventions closely, although the basic message is the same. It is interesting that the 17th century diplomas made reference to “strange women,” which has to do with the mythical practice of cheragh-e kushan, of which all minority and heterodox groups in Persia and elsewhere in the Middle East have been accused. This shows how much Safavid officialdom had become separated from the spiritual Sufi base of the state’s foundations in the 17th century. The original Qezelbash heterodox ritual had acquired an aura of wildness, secretiveness, and mystery. Allegedly, the original Qezelbash ritual included promiscuous and licentious behavior between the sexes during the ritual ceremonies when the lights had been put out. Starting with Shah Tahmasp I this practice, if it really ever existed, was forbidden. Contemporary

descriptions, such as by Membre, do not lend credence to such a belief. The Dastur al-Moluk, a Safavid state manual written in 1726, further states that the khalifehs had to train all Sufis in reciting the loud (jalli) and quiet (khafi) dbekr, in the traditions of the order, and to command the good and forbid the bad.

There existed a special type of royal decree for the appointment of a khalifeh, to wit: the shajareh diploma, thus called because it began with the genealogical tree or shajareh of the Safavid morsbeds. These diplomas had been written by the morshed of the Safavid order, allegedly since the days of its founder Sheikh Safi al-Din, in the name of the appointed khalifeh. Until about 1603, these shajareh diplomas did not bear the shah’s seal, because it had not been customary prior to Esmail’s I accession to the throne. The diploma, therefore, only bore the seal of the shah’s deputy or kholafa. However, at the urging of a khalifeh from Turkey (Rum), Shah ‘Abbas I initiated the practice of applying the royal small seal (mehr-homayun-e sharaf-e nasfadh) to the shajareh diploma. The royal seal, however, was not put, as usual, at the head of the document, but rather in the margin, below the introductory formula or toghra, because the names of God, the prophet and the imams were mentioned in the text. The earliest known shajareh diploma bearing a royal seal is dated 1012/1603. What evidence there is, in the form of appointment letters, demonstrates that these appointments were handled by the administrative department of the royal secretariat (divan-e a’la).

Although we know how a khalifeh was appointed, it is not clear whether these appointments were limited in time or not. The morshed-e kamel could, of course, take the office away from someone in whom he had lost confidence. This happened several times, as will be detailed below. However, we also know of the case of Shahqoli Soltan, a former khalifeh, later reappointed to the office with the government of Demavand and Heblurad as his revenue assignment (teyul).

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51 Jahangir Qaem-Maqami: Moqaddameh'i bar shenakht-e asnad-e tarikhi az Jalai’iryan ta Pahlavi. Tehran 1350/1971, pp. 93ff., 207; H. Horst: “Zwei Erlasse Shah Tahmasps I.” In: ZDMG 110 (1961). Doc. 2 is an exception, dated 955/1548, because it is not a shajareh diploma, although the addressee was also appointed as khalifeh al-kholafa.
Safavid ritual

Many aspects of the ritual of the Safavid order were un-Islamic, although very little is known about them. A typical Qezelbash ceremony was the *chub-e tariq* ritual for which the *khaliifehs* always carried a stick in their hand.\(^{53}\) *Membre* has left an early description of this Safavid ceremony.

*"The Sufis start to chant for one hour ‘la illah illaillah’; then they continue to chant the praises of Shah Esma‘il I and Tashmasp I. Then one of them gets a drum and while beating calls the name of each one present in the room. Each one who is mentioned replies by saying ‘cbaich pashi! The khalifeh had a wooden staff with which he beat each one of those present, who went in turn into the middle of the room and lied down face downwards, on their bottom. Then each one of them kissed the staff."*\(^{54}\)

The same practice could also be administered by someone who had been delegated by the shah, such as Soleiman Beg *quy-yasawol*, who had been ordered to cut off Khalil Khan Dhu’l-Qadr’s head (governor of Shiraz), because the latter had not taken an active part in the battle at Chaldiran. When he arrived at Khalil Khan’s residence Soleiman Beg told him that he had been ordered to strike him with the staff for dereliction of duty. Soleiman Beg suggested that to save the governor from public humiliation, he should beat him in private, to which Khalil Khan agreed, and laid himself on the floor to receive the required 12 strikes. However then he was told that he was to be executed and Khalil Khan got up and submissively bent his head.\(^{55}\)

Another important rite for the Qezelbash was the *ayin-e jam*, which was also practiced by the Bektashis and other heterodox Shi‘ite groups.\(^{56}\) “They formed a circle of divine unity [halqeh-ye toubid], as is the custom of Sufis of the Safavid order, and began to chant the name of God and to declare his unity.”\(^{57}\) This usually took the following form. The participants would gather in one room, sitting in rows. Led by the *khaliifeh*, they would praise Allah and the *morsheds*, which was followed by a *dhekr* for one hour and then recite of poems of the *morsheds* (Esma‘il and Tashmasp). Next, the *talehs* would be called by name and asked to contribute money. The *chub-e tariq* or ritual beating, took place, after which songs (of an anti-Ottoman nature) took place, followed by dancing. The ceremony was concluded by a meal.\(^{58}\)

\(^{53}\) *Membre*, pp. 32, 42; see *Morton*: “chub-i tariq” for a detailed discussion.

\(^{54}\) *Membre*, p. 48; see also p. 47 for other items peculiar to Safavid sufis.


\(^{56}\) *Sohrweide*, p. 189. In general see *Moosa*, pp. 231f.

\(^{57}\) *Savory*: *History*, vol. 1, p. 463; *Monshi*: *Tarikh*, vol. 1, p. 328.

\(^{58}\) *Membre*, p. 48; *Montazer-Saheb*, p. 474. Babur allegedly asked for the *chub-e tariq* to atone for his misbehavior; see also p. 531 for the cutting of Khalil Khan’s head.
Della Valle wrote that even people of great standing would prostrate themselves before the chief Sufi (khalifeh al-kholafa), saying that they repented their sins, and asked to receive forgiveness. The khalifeh would beat them with the stick. This act of confession was referred to as e'tenaf. This notion of confession was also referred to under Safi I, when the ishik agbasibashi (master of ceremonies of the royal council) did not confess his sins [for misbehavior]. According to Yusef Qazvini, he should have confessed (mo'taraf) and taken refuge in the touhid-khaneh and not have left that place until the morsbed had forgiven him, but because he had not done so, he was punished. These concepts of confession and sinfulness were probably central to the beliefs of the Safavid order, which assumed that the talebs were "men of ignorance and people of deviance (ashab-e jehalat va arbab-e zalalat)."

The important influence that the Sufis had is not only clear from the participation of their leaders in the country's administration at the highest level, but also from the popular activities that the Sufis held in honor of Shah Esma'il I and Shah Tahmasp I, their morsbed-e kamel. These festivities and acts of piety undoubtedly had an impact on a population that wanted to join in the celebration:

"During these three days [of a feast that started the first of February 1545] the Sufis came on foot from their homes with their khalifehs and their instruments, 50 to 60 per group, and came to that meidan. There they made a circle and began to dance one by one, two by three or four, whilst the others made noise and sang the praise of God and Tahmasp. One of the khalifehs bore a staff in his hand; of these come a multitude many of whom bring presents to the shah; these 10 [e.g.,] roosters, these lambs, these horses, according to their means. But they say that the Shah receives one-tenth of what these people earn every year, for being their prophet. [At the end of three days the shah left as did the grandees,] but the Sufis who came for the praising remain during the night; the entire night they praise the shah while singing and yelling; this lasts three days and then they leave."62

Ritual cannibalism

Un-Islamic in particular was the practice of cannibalism (zendeh-khvvari) which occurred during Esma'il I's reign. The fort of Osta was taken in 909/1504 after a siege of 33 days. No one was spared. Morad Beg Jahanshahi,


60 Yusef, p. 145.

61 See the text of the appointment diplomas, and in general Moosa, pp. 125–132.

the local ruler, was roasted, and his flesh eaten by the vengeful Safavid soldiers.\(^6\) Shah Esma‘il I himself encouraged his followers to do likewise on a later occasion, according to reliable witnesses. When Sheibak Khan, the ruler of the Uzbegs, had died in battle in 916/1510, Esma‘il I ordered his head to be cut off. He then slashed the corpse’s belly three times and told his qurchi and ghazi: "Whoever loves my head should eat part of the body of this enemy." The soldiers fought and, we are told, even killed one another to get a piece and ate the ‘forbidden’ (haram) flesh raw mixed with blood and dirt.\(^6\) These and other examples show that the Sufis were fierce supporters of their morsbed willing to go to great lengths to prove their utter devotion. For example, in 994/1586, some of the leaders of the order (rish safidan) and Sufis met in the royal palace. After the customary dhekr, they listened to a speech by the shah who asked them what the punishment was for one who went against the will of his morsbed? Because they knew he referred to Vali Khan, governor of Hamadan (who had yielded land to the Ottomans), they said that they would eat such a one’s meat raw.\(^6\) In 999/1590, Doulatyar, governor of Hamadan, at orders of the shah was torn apart on the meidan and the Sufis ate his meat raw, while the people killed the vizier and some of his companions.\(^6\)

As time went on the practice abated. When Esma‘il II wanted to make an end to the cursing of A‘isheh, he asked khalifeh al-kholafa, Bolghar, about this practice. Bolghar replied that cursing was but submitting one’s case to God. When asked where he had heard such nonsense, he replied that the ‘olama under Tahmasp I had advanced this idea. When some sycophants cried that the khalifeh was lying Esma‘il II said: "a khalifeh who is lying to his morsbed deserves to be punished." The Sufis then fell on him and beat him hard and left him for dead. Esma‘il II appointed Dedeh Kholafa Ostajalu as his successor.\(^6\)

Under ‘Abbas I anthropophagy persisted. Molla Jalal reports that in 1010/1602 an Uzbek prisoner was brought to ‘Abbas I for interrogation. Because the Uzbek prisoner refused to talk, ‘Abbas I ordered his execution, whereupon the executioners ate him alive.\(^6\) The executioners mentioned by Molla Jalal undoubtedly were Safavid Sufis. Pincon, Sherley’s secretary, wrote that

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\(^6\) Qomi, vol. 2, p. 802.
\(^6\) Qomi, vol. 2, pp. 1085, 1090. These sufis included kholafa, dbakerin, and tariqchiyan.
'Abbas I sometimes behaved inhumanly, for he was wont to give people alive to "the forty Anthropophagi and man-eaters that he has always by him." It may be that the following incident that occurred during the siege of the Portuguese castle on Qeshm island in 1620 also refers to this cannibalistic practice. The Persians had taken a boat with "10 Lascarins from Ormuz, whom they had taken to the fort, where they had killed them, and cut their bodies up in slices, making a public proclamation that all might come and buy the flesh of those traitors, and gratify on them their hatred of the Portuguese." This practice does not seem to have survived after 'Abbas I. However, Shah Soleiman (r. 1666–1694), being angered at a Tatar who had paid blood money to a victim's family whom he had killed, had that criminal put in pillory and cried out: "Whomever loves me will execute the death penalty." As a result those present drew their daggers and leapt at the man, killed him and cut him into a thousand pieces.

**Political role of the khalifeh al-kholafa**

The khalifehs played an important role in mobilizing support for the Safavid cause, both by leading Safavid followers from Anatolia to Persia as well as by influencing the Persian masses. A late case was that of Hoseinpologi kholafaye Rumlu, who came with some 10,000 Sufis from Anatolia in the 1570s. After 1510 this proselytizing in Ottoman territory became a dangerous undertaking, because the Ottoman Soltans had given instruction to kill all Safavid khalifehs, when found. These khalifehs not only led warriors to Persia, but also exported funds to Esma'il I. In addition, the khalifehs smuggled Shi'ite books into Turkey which was not appreciated by the Ottoman Soltans either. The common rank-and-file Safavid adherents, when caught, usually were banished to Hungary or Cyprus. In the 17th century, the khalifehs apparently continued to mobilize military recruits, for their appointments also had to be checked with the yuz-bashi (officer of the Qezelbash troops) of the group or district for which the khalifeh was responsible.
The Khalifeh al-kholafa of the Safavid Sufi Order 65

The khalifehs actively participated in the creation, strengthening and consolidation of Safavid power over the conquered lands. Khalifehs moreover actively participated in battle, often leading the Qezelbash troops; they were strongly represented in the country’s administration. An Italian report of 1501 mentions that Shah Esma’il I had 40 governors, “who are called Caliphani [khalifeh].” Quite a few of the khalifehs were indeed among the leading (namdar) emirs.77 We find khalifehs holding functions such as mohrdar, qurchi-bashi, ishik-aghasi bashi, motavalli, and ambassador.78 In addition, they functioned as governors of cities as diverse in size as Qom, Sanqur, Qarachédagh, Hamadan, Qandahar, Veramin, Tehran, Darabjerd, Soltaniyeh, Souj-Bolagh, Qa’en, Sabzavar, Tun va Tabas and Kashan.79 They, moreover, were found as close companions of the shah, Safavid princes or as tutors (dedeh) to the royal children, and the early khalifeh al-kholafa belonged to the inner circle of the power elite, the so-called abl-e ebtesas, who governed the country.80

Organization of khalifehs

There was not usually just one khalifeh per Qezelbash tribe, but rather one for each clan within the tribe, if it was a big one. If there was more than one khalifeh per tribal group or per distinct geographical area the shah/morshed would appoint a khalifeh al-kholafa, or chief khalifeh for such a tribal group or area. Often these chiefs were simply referred to as kholafa and sometimes as kholafa-beg.81 Kholafa were often appointed from among influential local families.82 Each of the big tribes, such as the Shamlu, Rumlu, Tekkelu, Torkoman, Qajar, Dhu’l-Qadr as well as the small ones such as the Alav-ot, Qaradaghlu, ‘Enanlu, and Ansar, had a khalifeh.83 In addition, each major clan in these large tribes also had a khalifeh. For example, there was

a khalifeh for the Begdeli, Taqshar, Mulanshah, Maskarabad, Id Oghullar, Delu Oghullar, and Qapukhdeluk-e Dash (all Shamlu clans) in the Asrasbar area in 1108/1696. There was also a khalifeh for the Shaqaqi tribe in 1112/1700, while there were two for the Jalayer tribe. There were khalifehs for the Saru 'Alilu, Baharlu, Khvajeh Abu Eshaqlu clans in 1126/1714, one of whom also became the khalifeh for the Chuldur and Qapanat clans. Finally, there also existed khalifehs for the qurchis (royal household troops).

In case of the sedentary population there was a khalifeh for one or more villages. Membre reported that when Shah Tahmasp passed through Azerbaijan the villagers arrived to perform ceremonies together with their khalifeh, "that is village headman and priest." In 947/1540, a khalifeh was appointed for the Hamaygan district, in particular in the villages of 'Ali, Ardakan, Mahrajian and Shulestan in Fars province. In 1012/1603, khalifehs were appointed in Shahaq, Rudvan, Pir-e Ganjeh, Aq Gol, and Pir-e Tankhva. In 1109/1697, khalifehs were appointed for Hamadan, Darjazin, Lavahiqshareh, Jarusaq and Harraqan. There was also a khalifeh of a district (mahalleh) of Lahejan.

Under Tahmasp I we do not hear about the khalifeh al-kholafa until some time into the reign. Emir Sayyed Sharif Baqi was appointed as sheikh al-islam, and simultaneously khalifeh-kholafa, sardar and kalantar of Fars in 955/1548. This piece of information implies that this title referred to somebody who was in charge of a number of khalifehs in a certain area such as Fars province or within one tribe. This also seems to be borne out by the fact that Qomi reports that the khalifeh Asadolllah Esfahani was "one of the leading sayyeds and khalifehs of Esfahan." Eskander Beg mentioned that in 1018/1609, Borhan al-Din succeeded his father as khalifeh and was enrolled him among the khalifehs of Qarajehdagh. A Russian report dated 1725 described the situation in the Shirvan governate. In the Shabran district, for

84 QOMI, vol. 1, p. 316; MUSAVI 1977, doc. 18.
85 KARIMZADEH-YE TABRIZI, pp. 33, 37; MUSAVI 1977, doc. 19.
86 MUSAVI 1977, doc. 20.
88 Membre, p. 25.
90 Q'EMMAQAMI: Moqaddameh'i, p. 93f.
91 DEHGAN, p. 179f.
example, a number of village headmen (kadkhoda) were responsible to a yuz-bashi. A number of yuz-bashis were under a darugheh, who was responsible for tax collection and public order and who settled disputes jointly with a khalifeh. A similar situation existed in the small district of Shesh-para. The same report remarks that the khalifehs, qadis and darughehs in the government were in charge of judicial affairs and could impose penalties.96

Un-Sufi like behavior (na-sufigari)

Opposition to the morshed-shah was a risky affair, especially if the shah was not afraid to impose himself. After all, the relationship between the pir and morid was one where one “did not leave the side of one’s morshed in adversity or prosperity; to endure patiently all kinds of misfortune; and to put acquiescence to the will of the morshed before all worldly interests.”97 In 932/1526–1527, the Sufis led by their khalifehs tried to mediate between the opposing Qazelbash tribes. Qasem Khalifeh Varsaq was sent to admonish the Ostajalus.98 Tahmasp I kept Elqas Mirza imprisoned, because the elders of the exalted Sufi class were not willing that he should be released.99 They continued to be the binding element that had a common, rather than a parochial goal.

Shah Esma‘il II himself on occasion interfered when Sufi behavior became too much of a nuisance. According to Qomi, he ordered the killing of a group of Kurdish Sufis from Diyarbekr, who had taken up residence next to the khaneh-kholfa in Qazvin. Because they had not previously been troublesome the shah had not taken measures against them, but after they had struck the darugheh-ye bazar, he felt he could not tolerate their behavior. Orders were given to kill them; 500 of them were killed; the rest were taken prisoner, and were later pardoned by the shah.100 From Monshi’s account, however, it is clear that a political motive was the real cause for the massacre. “Because the Shah bore a grudge against the Sufis, because of their devotion to kholafa, he ordered the emirs to take punitive action against the Sufis and allowed a general massacre, after they had attacked the darugheh of Qazvin.”101 These Sufis were followers of Hoseinqoli Rumlu, the khalifeh

al-kholafa, with whom Esma‘īl II was having trouble about the question of who was in charge of the Safavid Sufis (see further below).

In 1582, a conflict had arisen between Shah Khodabandeh and the Ostajalus. “They wanted to put their problem to him and ask him to resolve it, as is the normal practice between morshed and his disciples. Their leaders went as a delegation to Hamzeh Mirza. They formed a ‘circle of divine unity’ [balqeh-ye touhid] as is the custom of Sufis of the Safavid order, and began to chant the name of God and to declare his unity.” Finally, the Ostajalus decided to proceed in conformity with the rules of Sufi behavior. “Since we have been guilty of shortcoming in our duty toward our spiritual director, and until he pardons us we shall be debarred from our homes, our wives and our children, and we shall have no peace of mind.” They then camped outside the royal palace awaiting their leader’s pardon.

`Abbas I likewise punished Shahverdi Khan, governor of Qarajehdagh, a descendant of the Lahejan Sufis, and one of the leaders of the Safavid order.104 Because of suspicion of having collaborated with the Ottomans during their occupation of Tabriz, and even having forced his followers to take the oath of allegiance to the Ottomans, he was executed. When some 20 years later, in 1023-1024/1614–1616, some of his associates fell into `Abbas I’s hands he immediately had them executed for “un-Sufi-like behavior” (nasufigar). He ordered the governor of Qarajehdagh, Maqsud Sultan, together with Mohammadqoli Kholafa-ye Rumlu, who was khalifeh al-kholafa, to conduct an inquiry and to purge all traitors who had followed the example of Shahverdi Khan. Most of those who had been guilty had died; those that were still alive were executed, for they were no longer part of the circle of Sufis.105

**Conflict between the morshed and the khalifeh al-kholafa**

In 1576, Hoseinqoli Khan Rumlu held the office of khalifeh al-kholafa at court, and “though he was not an emir possessing military band and banner, he was greatly respected, and his counsel was much sought after. Men of the Sufi brotherhood who gathered at the Safavid court from Diyar Bekr and all parts of Anatolia were completely subject to his authority.”

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103 SAVORY: *History*, vol. 1, p. 304; MONSHI: *Tarikh*, vol. 1, p. 204.
104 Soleiman Khalifeh, the son of Sohrab Khalifeh Torkman, khalifebs and descendants of khalifebs who had to their credit years of service under Shah Tahmasp rebelled and became traitors [1002/1593–1594]. SAVORY: *History*, vol. 2, p. 651; MONSHI: *Tarikh*, vol. 1, p. 477
consul Balbi, who mentioned that the *khalifeh al-kholafa* was the principal leader of the faith, also confirms this. Hoseinqoli Khan Rumlu fell foul of Esma‘il II’s paranoid suspicion of anyone with a power base independent of the shah. Esma‘il II told the *khalifeh* to step down and accept the function of *vakil* or regent instead; Hoseinqoli Khan refused, because he did not want to give up his powerful position for one that he deemed had little authority. Esma‘il II then asked the Rumlu emirs:

"... according to the rules of conduct drawn up by the Safavid sheikhs, what is the penalty for any Sufi or *taleb* who transgresses the limits of the words and directions of the *morsbed-e kamel*? They replied: 'Whosoever opposes or disobeys the will of the *morsbed-e kamel* is guilty of error and is to be rejected.'"

Hoseinqoli Khan was greatly perturbed by the turn of events and tried to patch up his quarrel with the shah. However, access to the shah was denied, because he had not been forgiven for his error. When the Rumlu emirs interceded for Hoseinqoli Khan and asked the shah to forgive him Esma‘il II said that if he really were repentant he would be appointed *qurchi-bashi* of Mashhad, for which post he must leave immediately. Although upset, Hoseinqoli Khan, abandoned by his supporters, left for Mashhad at once; en route, at the orders of Esma‘il II, he was blinded.

It is indeed interesting, as Savory has observed, that Hoseinqoli preferred to be the supreme leader of the Safavid order rather than be the Shah’s *vakil* or regent. This means that *sufigari* was still a major force; that the *khalifeh*, despite the fact that we hear little about it, was still a very prestigious and influential function; and that Esma‘il II’s position was still very insecure. Hoseinqoli and his Rumlu supporters were willing to challenge the Shah’s position as *pix*. However, the Shah appealed to the rules of the Safavid order and was able to sway the majority of his followers at court. Esma‘il II was thus able to neutralize Hoseinqoli and to force him to accept whatever punishment would be imposed on him. When Hoseinqoli finally left Qazvin he was a defeated man.

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108 Berchet, p. 282.

109 Savory: *History*, vol. 1, pp. 202–203; Monshi: *Tarikh*, vol. 1, p. 121; Qomi, vol. 2, p. 622; according to D’Allessandri the *khalifeh* had his eyes taken out and was banished, because of a conflict with the shah about his Sunni leanings. *Carmelites*, vol. 1, p. 57.
Decline of Sufi influence

The importance of the role of the khalifehs declined with that of the Qezelbash tribes, the main source of the followers of the Safavid order. Shah ‘Abbas I effectively reduced the power of the Torkoman Qezelbash tribes by reducing their revenue entitlements, financial and administrative independence and by strengthening the countervailing power of the Caucasian groups especially, who henceforth supplied an important part of Iran’s fighting forces within Iran. The shah therefore was not totally dependent anymore on the Torkoman Qezelbash tribes, who having played their cards unwisely in the 1570s and 1580s, acquiesced in this new reality.”

This did not mean, however, the end of the Safavid order and its khalifehs, or for that matter of Sufism in Persia. Although Shah ‘Abbas I reduced the role of the Qezelbash militarily as well as that of the Sufis politically, the latter continued to venerate him as their morshed-e kamel. Shah ‘Abbas I did nothing to disabuse them of this attitude, being a practical man who would not throw away a politically advantageous tool when it was offered to him. When they wanted to make him their tool, however, as they had with his predecessors from 1576 to 1584, he struck and hard. In 1598/1589–1590, certain interest groups wanted to put his father Khodabandeh back on the throne. They induced a number of Sufis to request a meeting with ‘Abbas I for the purpose of asking him who was the real morshed-e kamel, he or his father? If he were to recognize that his father was pir then he was holding the throne illegitimately. ‘Abbas I, having been warned of their intentions, dismissed the assembly and invited a delegation of three persons to meet with. When the delegation arrived they were killed on the spot, and on hearing of this, the other Sufis fled.”

Although ‘Abbas I clipped the wings of the Safavid Sufis and their khalifehs he continued to be morshed-e kamel and to appoint khalifehs. In fact, the function was still considered to be an important one and the office holders were considered to be among the great emirs. Nevertheless, Eskander Beg scoffed that among the Qezelbash Sufis there were those “brainless simpletons who are called pireb and khalifeh.”” He also reported, however, that Yadgar ‘Ali Soltan Talesh had been sent as ambassador to India, and had just been promoted to the high office of khalifeh al-kholafa. He was the grandson of the first khalifeh al-kholafa, who was one of the Sufis of

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111 Falsafi, vol. 1, p. 185.
Lahejan. Their descendants were still known as veteran Lahejani Sufis and therefore took precedence over other Sufis. The rallying cry of the Safavid Sufi cause still had a strong appeal around 1600. When ‘Abbas I re-took Tabriz from the Ottomans, the population of Tabriz, as soon as they saw the Qezelbash troops, rushed to demonstrate their "love of the shah" by donning their taj-e heidari, which for fear of the Ottomans they had kept hidden in the basements and other places during the occupation. Likewise, some tribal groups renewed their allegiance to the shah and donned the twelve-gored hats of the twelver shi‘ahs. Also, the shah continued the traditional role of morsbed by granting deserving followers the standard Sufi present of the Qezelbash hat and other accoutrements. He also continued the practice of inducting khalifehs [al-kholafa] into their function.

During battle, Sufi fervor was still an important driving force for acts of bravery. For example, in 1015/1606, "150 intrepid young men, who considered it the supreme act of devotion to the Safavid house to lay down their lives in its service, holding their shields above their heads, rushed at the tower ... the defenders rained down a hail of arrows, musketballs, naptha pots and other incendiary objects." This may have been simply a rhetoric device employed by Eskander Beg Monshi, but improbable given the many other examples of the persistence of Qezelbash fervor and devotion to the Safavid cause under ‘Abbas I.

‘Abbas I also still honored the taj granting ceremony to his Qezelbash soldiers, as witnessed by a contemporary European traveler in 1626. The Qezelbash emirs and other followers still practised their ritual at court. Della Valle reports that even people of great standing would prostrate themselves before the chief Sufi [khalifeh al-kholafa], saying that they had

repented their sins, and asking him to give them penitence and forgiveness, which act of confession was referred to as e’teras. The khalifeh would then beat them with the stick.¹²¹ This kind of confession continued into the reign of Safi I when the ishik aghasi-bashi failed to confess his sins [for misbehavior], as we have seen.¹²² Almsgiving to the morshed-e kamel also persisted under ‘Abbas I; Della Valle observed in Farahabad “the solemn and general almsgiving, which is continual at the gate of the king, to the Sophi, who call themselves religious persons of the Persian sect.”¹²³

Even outside Persia, the Safavid morshed-e kamel still had followers. It was at the urging of a khalifeh from Rum (Ottoman Turkey) that Shah ‘Abbas I abandoned the practice of having the shajareh diplomas sealed by the khalifeh al-kholafah and as of 1603 they were sealed by the shah with the royal seal.¹²⁴ Some Sufis from Rum who were Shahsevan, known as sufiyan-e Marand, came to join the shah’s banner.¹²⁵ Other evidence of the continued Safavid links with their followers in Turkey dates from 1028/1619. In that year, it would appear that, the Safavid morshed-e kamel was still being venerated in Anatolia, among members of the Ottoman janissaries corps. A document recording the interrogation of the heterodox believers states:

“This first, this misguided group gives the title of morshed (spiritual guide) to Shah ‘Abbas I, who, for these people, is the oracle to whom they have recourse [as proof] for their vain theory. Second, they call the person who, in Moslem countries and those of the monotheists, secretly teaches and relates to whomever wants to listen, the false doctrine of the said morshed, khalifeh (deputy).”¹²⁶

It comes therefore as no surprise that ‘Abbas I’s succession was carried out with the consent of and according to the rules of the Safavid Sufis. Eskander Beg reports that on the death of Shah ‘Abbas I the shah’s ministers (E’temad al-Douleh, qurchi-bashi, and the ishik aghasi-bashi) invited

“... all the khalifehs, Sufis, murids and the adepts of this holy house to sign a diploma (vahiqeh) concerning the appointment of the Shah’s successor, and all acted in conformity with the principle of the pir and murid and signed and sealed the diploma.”¹²⁷

¹²² Yusef, p. 145.
All the *khalifehs*, Sufis and disciples and devotees of the Safavid house who were at court accepted the order of their *morshed-e kamel* unquestioningly.

"They drew up a statement to the effect that it had been the dying Shah’s wish that kingship be conferred on Sam Mirza. ... and affixed their seal to this document. ... without delay, they placed the prince on the throne, in accordance with the custom and practice of the Sufis of the Safavid house and they laid out the rug of spiritual direction, an heirloom handed down in the Safavid family, and kissed the shah’s feet."\(^{128}\)

Shortly thereafter, devoted Sufis shouldered Shah ‘Abbas’ bier and the cortège made its way to Kashan.\(^{129}\)

Later shahs continued to allow room for the activities of the Safavid Sufis, which took place at court, although its spiritual significance had diminished significantly. There was still a *khalifeh al-kholafa*, whose position, however, had much lost in importance. No longer (if he had ever done so) did he crown the shah by putting the *taj* or crown on the shah’s head, as is reported in the 1580s. For Shah Safi I was “crowned” in 1629 by Mir Damad, a Shi’ite theologian and not by the chief *khalifeh*.\(^{130}\) Nevertheless, Safavid Sufis continued to be mentioned as a positive force. Eskander Beg mentions the role of Beiramqoli Soltan Mir Sufi, the governor of Deilam, and his *jonud-e sufiyeh* and ghaziyan-*e sufi* in suppressing the revolt under Gharib Shah in Gilan in 1630.\(^{131}\) Chroniclers also were wont to mention when a particular individual such as Rostam Soltan Suklan Dhu’l-Qadr was known to be one of “sufizadegan-*e pak e’teqad-e selseleh-*ye aliyyeh-*ye Safavi*”, or a group was known for its *sufigari*.\(^{132}\) Also, Shah Safi I was sometimes mentioned as giving advice as a spiritual leader (*nasaye-h-e morshedaneh*).\(^{133}\) On the occasion of the appointment of Aghurlu Khan, the *ishik aghbsi-bashe*, Shah Safi I himself gave him the ritual *tariq* beating.\(^{134}\) Shah Safi executed the *keshik-chi-bashe*, who was drunk on the job and was hit over the head with a staff by another drunken courtier, for having acted “*khelaf-e ‘aqidat-e sufiyan-*e pak e’teqad*”.\(^{135}\) Olearius also mentions the persistence of Safavid Sufi ritual involving, inter alia, the ritual beating with the stick.\(^{136}\)

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130 Esfahani, p. 38. The crowning included the girding of the sword and the positioning of the *taj*.
131 Yusef, p. 17.
133 Yusef, p. 112.
134 Esfahani, pp. 95–96.
135 Yusef, p. 145.
136 Olearius, pp. 590–591.
It is therefore no surprise to see that Sufis and their *khaliфеhs* continued to function as an important aspect of the Safavid state system. As in the 16th century, the Shah continued to appoint *khaliфеhs* for tribal groups and villages in those areas where Safavid *morids* were living down to the end of the Safavid dynasty. It was the role of the *khaliфеh al-kholafa* to suggest names for each local opening for a *khaliфеh* post in the provinces.\(^1\) The continued existence of the function of *khalifeas* was more than a religious anomaly.\(^2\) True, the traditional role of the *khalifeas al-kholafa* had become less important, but the function was still significant as a binding element within the Qezelbash tribes in general and with the *khalifeas* of the various tribal clans and villages in particular. The latter, in the Qezelbash areas, still had both a religious, but above all, an administrative function. As such the *khalifeas al-kholafa* was their spokesman at court and a possible mobilizer of their forces. As such the ritual was not entirely meaningless and was still done with pomp and veneration. Nevertheless the old Sufi flame was much tempered as compared with the situation in the 16th century. Already Qomi, at the end of the 16th century, (though he also admits that *sufigar* was still strong),\(^3\) made qualifications such as such and such a person was “one of the old Sufis”\(^4\).

From the few surviving documents (oddly mainly from the 16th and beginning of the 18th century), it is clear that the function of *khalifeas* also tended to be hereditary in certain families, which development was already clear by the 1570s.\(^5\) Consequently, the Safavid state administration kept careful records of the hereditary rights of the *khalifeas* as well as their claims to fiscal benefits.\(^6\) What is clear from these decrees is that there was good record-keeping as to the “line” of *khalifeas*. For the function of *khalifeas* was accompanied by the grant of a stipend, usually in the form of a *soyurghbal* (a tax-free source of income granted by the Shah for eternity), certainly as of the 17th century.\(^7\) These grants did not come free of charge; in one case it is

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\(^1\) *TM*, p. 55. See also YUSEF, pp. 85, 149, 192, which mentions at various occasions kholafa (father to son – *vala-ye kholafa’s*).


\(^6\) MUSAVI 1977, docs. 18–20; DEHGAN 1348, p. 179ff.; KARIMZADEH-YE TABIRIZI, pp. 33, 37; L.P. PETRUCHEVSKII: *Ocherki po istorii feodal’nikh otnosheniy v Azerbaydzhanе i Armenii v XV–nachale XIX vv.* Leningrad 1949, doc. 3.

reported that the *khalifeh*’s soyurghal bore the duty to supply eight armed horsemen in case of war when called up. The *khalifehs* continued also to play a role in government, for they were sent on mission as ambassador, and were courtiers in the shah’s household.

The *khalifeh al-kholafa*’s role, in addition to propose candidates for the function of *khalifeh*, continued to be to lead the Safavid morids in *dheker* congregations on Thursday evenings, in the *touhid-khaneh* or *khalil-khaneh*, as he had done in the 16th century. These *dhekers* constituted of reciting “*la allah illa-llah*” in the jali (loud) fashion, while the participating darvishes were given bread, sweets (*halva*) and food on Thursday evening and bread, sweets and a standard meal (*ta’am-e moqarrari*) on the other days. The *khalifeh al-kholafa* was assisted in his task by two or more *khalifehs* and servants (*khadem [bashii]*) as well as other staff (*‘amaleh*), whom he had the right to appoint.

The shah, as *morshid*, still kept about 200 Sufis in his direct employ. These Sufis “have the Guard of the King’s Person, and of the Gate of his Palace”.

According to *Chardin* the role of Sufis as the shah’s lifeguard had been initiated by Safi I. However, Sufis already performed the role of guards in the 1570s. For it was then reported that “the *tupchiyan* and *tofangchiyan* consisting of *gholaman* and *sufiyan* took up guard positions.” The Safavid Sufis, as life and palace guards, wore the *taj*, a saber, a dagger, and an ax, which they carried on their shoulder. Their hat was a simple red *taj*, which was narrow at the brow but tapered outwards and was flat on top. The *taj* had 12 gores and on top a type of protruding cone. Only the members of the Safavid order were allowed to wear the *taj*. “They wear an high Red Velvet Cap, plaited at top like a Cap of Maintenance; whence on a Wooden Crest they fix a little Brass Ball, tied on with three wreathen Chains, which they bring down strait to the fore-part of the Bonnet, whose lower Brim is bound about with a White

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144 Petruchevski: *Ocherki*, doc. 3.
145 Maqsud Sultan Kholafa, governor of Qezel ‘Ajaj, was sent as ambassador to Istanbul; *Yusef*, pp. 193, 204, 251. Safi I’s *soreh basbi* was Khalaf Beg, who later became *charkhchi basbi*, and was one of leaders of the Safavid sufis of Qarabagh; *ibid.*, p. 277.
150 Kaempfer: *Am Hofe*, p. 48; Sufis with their leaders and *taj*, p. 187; Sufis on plate opposite 188; also runners, p. 85; see also picture of Sufi royal runner opposite p. 160, 163; *Ibid., Ameenitatum*, pp. 44–45, 85, 175, 177, 210–211.
Sash, and sometimes a Plume of one Feather is set up with the Crest, much after the same fashion the Noble Senators wear in the King's presence: Besides which they have a Surcoat of Scarlet Cloth." The Sufis also served as royal executioners, especially in case of politically sensitive cases.

As part of their function to guard the shah's person and that of his family, a group of Sufis usually rode a couple of hours ahead of harem to clear the road and announce the qoruq; for this reason they were also called qoruq-chis. Du Mans writes that these Sufis were considered riff-raff (bi sar va pa), because they were carrying out only menial functions such as sweeping the royal buildings. Ange de St. Joseph also notes that "the Sufis are now somewhat despised". Whatever the reputation of these Sufis may have been, however, their leader remained an important court official, while their ritual continued to play an important role at court as well.

Because of their unconditional support for the shah, whom they venerated, the Sufi guards were allowed to brag about their special relationship with the monarch. However,

"Their prescribed Number cannot enlarge itself to all of their Sect; wherefore they are interspersed among the common People, some following Trades and Husbandry, and others other Employments; retaining always their Habit, which none of the Vulgar dare affect or strike, however provoked; but taking off their Sufi Cap first, and kissing it, laying it down reverently, they will not then be afraid to cuff them, or drub them to purpose; being careful in the mean while to offer no Indignity to the Order, while they revenge themselves on the Persons."

The Sufis serving in the royal court made their devotions close to the shah. "Their President, whom they call Kodafa [sic!; kholafa], is the King's Chamberlain, and who assembles 'em together every Thursday in the Royal Mosque to pray for his Majesty's Prosperity." As is clear from the Dastur al-Moluk, the khalifeh was joined by all high-ranking officials who had been granted the right to wear the taj such as emirs, beglerbegis, khans, sultans etc. Further, the khalifeh played a role during religious holidays.

154 Du Mans, pp. 16-17, 86-87; see also Sanson, pp. 27-29.
158 Sanson, p. 28.
Although not exactly in the Royal Mosque, the Sufi *touhid-khaneh* was situated in an alley just inside the principal gate of the Ala Qapi palace.

"Through the entrance hall of the Ali Qapı, in the middle of the court yard is a high domed holy building with an octagon base. Every other second side is without a wall and only serves as entry. However, one must enter without shoes, which given the high Estrichs – three foot from the bottom – is quite difficult. One side of the octagon is 10 feet long, so that it easy to calculate its entire circumference. This building serves as the place of devotion (*touhid-khaneh*) for those that have taken refuge and seek asylum [in the Ala Qapi] as well as for the Shah's messengers or Sufis. These, following ancient tradition gather here each Friday eve to pray for the well-being of the Safavid royal house in a way which can only be qualified as barbarian chants."\(^{160}\)

Although Shah Soleiman did not emphasize his role as *morshed-e kamel*, he nevertheless acquiesced in it, for he continued to have Sufi ceremonies, such as that of *chub-e tariq*, performed at his court. He also was not above dipping his finger in a bowl of water, which was to be used as a medicine for a very sick courtier. It was generally believed by the Persians that the shah, being the descendant of the Imams, had healing powers.\(^{161}\) Shah Soleiman also wore the *taj*, and *Ange de St. Joseph* notes, "the Xans and the Sufis had a crown of the same model; maybe the kings of Iran are descendants of the Sufis, but this is a delicate subject".\(^{162}\)

Reference is also made to the *omara-ye tajdar* at court.\(^{163}\) The *khalifeh*, as *'aliyah* and *moraqqab al-khaqan*, was to be seen regularly at court, which was not only due to his spiritual role, but also, because the shahs usually appointed the governor of Qarachehdagh as *khalifeh al-kholafa*,\(^{164}\) a custom

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\(^{159}\) *DM*, p. 73.

\(^{160}\) *Sanson*, p. 167; *Richard*, vol. 2, p. 65; *Chardin*, vol. 7, p. 371. "They are allowed a peculiar Misse, or Service, in a Chappel apart in the Alacoppe, or place where the Grand Council sit, where they attend the King, or one in his stead, every Friday Night, at the Sacrament of Holway [halva] (or Wafer made up in Sweetmeats,) in Imitation of the Shew-bread." *Fryer*, vol. 3, p. 60.


\(^{162}\) *Ange de St. Joseph*, p. 83.

\(^{163}\) *Yusef*, p. 256.

\(^{164}\) *Nasiri*, p. 81 (Bayandor Soltan, son of Mahmud Soltan kholafa, governor of Qarachehdagh). The reason was that members of the Nasiri families held the quasi-hereditary functions of governor of Qarachehdagh and of *motazawili* of the tomb of Shehab al-Din in Ahar, while members of that family also were regularly appointed to the function of *khalifeh al-kholafa*. *Rahimlu: Alqab*, pp. 35, 109.
that was not entirely adhered to anymore under Shah Soltan Hosein, according to the Dastur al-Moluk. This must be a late development, because the office of governor of Qarabagh had been held by the Ziyadoghlu Qajar clan in the time of Tahmasp I, and also thereafter regularly. In the 1630s, Pir Budaq Khan Parnak Torkoman indeed held both functions.

"He presents himself before the King with all the other Ministers of the Order, on all Holy Days: he holds a Bason of Sugarcandy in his Hand, and wishes a happy Feast to his Majesty. He mumbles a Prayer, as it were, to beg a Blessing on this Sugarcandy, and then in a humble manner goes to present it to his Majesty; who taking a piece of it, all the Grandees do the like, putting it upon their Heads and their Eyes, to shew their great Respect. This Ceremony is observ’d after the same manner at the Birth of their Princes, and when the King has obtain’d any signal Victory. This Kodafa [sic: kholafa] has his Seat at Publick Feasts. These Sephi’s were heretofore in great Veneration, but at present are in greater Disgrace; for they are accus’d of keeping Nocturnal Assemblies, which Modesty does not permit me to explain. Their Society now serve for nothing else but Porters, bailiffs, and Common Executioners of Justice. Nevertheless, all the Great Men of the Kingdom have been of this Order, and of whom the King was Head; which has given occasion to Strangers, to give him the title of Great Sophi: I say to Strangers only; for such a Name would be but ill receiv’d in Persia. The Kings assigns the Stipends of these Officers, upon the Demesns [sic] and Forfeited Estates."

Members of the Qezelbash tribes also continued to take pride in being a member of the Safavid order. We observe that new members regularly were initiated and joined the order’s ranks. For well-connected new members the initiation ceremorial was even performed at court in the presence of the shah.

"Two young men were together led into the hall; one of them held the function of palace supervisor of Gaskar (in Gilan), while the other held a similar high function. While the grand vizier made introductory remarks to the Shah, the two young men stood motionless, until the king looked at them, and because he found them handsome he granted them their wish. Then the palace’s master of ceremonies (the chief messenger or yasavol who is in this respect only subordinate to the isbik aghasi) left the hall, to change his turban for the taj. When he returned in Sufi dress he ordered the two candidates to lie flat on their belly, but to keep their hands and arms close to the thighs. Then the master

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165 DM, p. 74
168 Sanson, pp. 28–29.
of ceremonies waited for a sign of the shah with his high held staff, who was having a pleasant conversation. When he received the consenting nod he dealt them three stiff strokes with the stick on their bottom, while he at the same time murmured some kind of formula. In this way the candidates became Sufis. They were covered with the *taj* and told them to be fit to apply for any kind of court or state function. The young men bent their knee and kissed the staff, with which they had been beaten; as sign of their gratitude they pressed it three times to their forehead and mouth. After they had been girded with a dagger by the master of ceremonies, they left the hall filled with satisfaction of their new worth.\[169\]

In addition to the *dhikr* and *halqeh-ye touhid* ceremonies in the *touhid-khanéh* in Isfahan, every Thursday evening, when the shah was travelling, a mobile tent *touhid-khanéh* accompanied him, where the Sufis performed their invocations. All costs and outlay necessary were met from the royal household or *khasséb* department.\[170\] It is also interesting to read in some decrees, drawn up in the names of various officials in Georgia in the 1690s, who probably were crypto-Christians, that reference is made to their devotion, bravery and *sufiγar*!\[171\]

The evidence cited above shows that the Safavid Sufis continued to play a role in Persia’s political life. True, their role did not have the same importance anymore after the 1620s, but it was not non-existent. It may all have been just a ritual, but it was a meaningful ritual, if only for political and financial reasons. The Safavid administration kept the *khalifeh* system alive, despite the growing anti-Sufi, or rather anti-heterodox Shi’ite, policy allegedly pursued by Shah Soltan Hosein due to the growing influence by the Shi’ite orthodox olama such as Mohammad Baqer Majlesi. A late 18th century text even claims that Shah Soltan Hosein had rejected Sufism, although it was peculiar to his family. “Amongst other things he had closed the touhid-khanéh, which was situated in the royal palace next to the ‘Ali Qapu, where the Sufi sheikhs used to congregate every Thursday evening to be engaged in ecstatic practices whilst crying ‘ya hu’ with the emirs and the *khalifehs*.\[172\] It is also

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169 Kaempfer: *Am Hofe*, p. 216; ibid.: *Amenitatum*, pp. 241–242; this is confirmed by Chardin, vol. 5, p. 363. The *yasavol [-bashij]* probably was the *khalifeh*. The *isbik aghasi basbi* was the secular chief of the sufi messenger-guards. ibid., vol. 5, pp. 362. During the ceremony the *isbik aghasi basbi* loudly cried ‘Allah’ after the first stroke, ‘Mohammad’ at the second, and “Ali” at the third stroke with the stick. Rahimlu: *Alqab*, p. 18.

170 DM, p. 73.

171 V.S. Puturidze: *Gruzino-Persidskie Istoricheskie Dokumenty*. Tiflis 1955, docs. 150, 153, 156. Also, that the *taj-e vahbat* was still bestowed upon deserving courtiers. Doc. 178, which is also confirmed by the DM.

claimed that he expelled all Sufi sheikhs from Isfahan;\textsuperscript{173} there is, however, no proof for any of these claims. There were plenty of Sufis in Persia in general, and in Isfahan in particular, both belonging to the Safavid and other orders. In August 1721, for example, the Dutch agent in Isfahan reports that "a group of Lurs and dervishes had so much influence with the Shah that he re-appointed 'Ali Mardan Khan as Vali of Loristan."\textsuperscript{174} Shi'ite orthodoxy also had the ear of the Shah, but this did not mean that it excluded Sufis or that orthodoxy had the ear of the entire populace. The fact that there was a growing anti-Sufi literature (\textit{radd} pamphlets in particular) indicates that Sufism was still strong and that the fight about market share between the orthodox \textit{olama} and the Sufi sheikhs, both of whom claimed to possess the absolute truth, had now seriously begun.\textsuperscript{175} Shah Soltan Hosein wore the \textit{taj-e vahbaj} (the resplendent Safavid headdress) during his crowning ceremony.\textsuperscript{176} In fact, the Shah visited the \textit{touhid-khaneh} himself with his emirs wearing the \textit{taj-e vahbaj}, and engaged in his ancestral order ceremonies such as the \textit{halqeh-ye dbeker} and \textit{halqeh-ye touhid}.\textsuperscript{177} These visits by the leading courtiers were a standard procedure, so much so, that Bardsiri implies that these gatherings also served as a political club.\textsuperscript{178} In addition, the \textit{chub-tariq} ceremony was a standard feature in case of elevation of courtiers to the rank of \textit{yasavol-e sobbat} throughout Shah Soltan Hosein’s reign,\textsuperscript{179} while mention is made of the Sufi spirit prevailing among the courtiers and of the \textit{khoolafa} as a fixture at court.\textsuperscript{180} Also, there were still many Sufi \textit{olama}, one of whom,

\textsuperscript{173} Röhrborn: \textit{Provinzen}, p. 38; Atabay, p. 48, n. 1; see Reza Qoli Khan Hedayat: \textit{Rouzat al-Safa}, vol. 8, p. 256, who mentions the case of the expulsion of one \textit{‘alem} only. See also L. Lockhart: \textit{The Fall of the Safavid Dynasty and the Afghan Occupation of Persia}. Cambridge 1958, p. 38.

\textsuperscript{174} \textit{Algemeen Rijks Archief (ARA)}, the Hague. KA 1875, Schorer to Oets. Isfahan, 16/8/1721, f. 183.

\textsuperscript{175} This issue deserves further serious study, which only has begun recently. The fact that some of the contemporary orthodox shi’ite \textit{olama} stated that the “Sufis are Sunnis, and Sunnis are Sufis” indicates that seeking the Truth, or providing spiritual guidance, was not the purpose of the mud slinging “debate”, but rather to attract support for one’s own position. For if there was one thing clear the Sufis in Safavid Persia were anything but Sunnis.

\textsuperscript{176} Nasiri, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{177} Nasiri, p. 56.


\textsuperscript{179} Nasiri, pp. 55, 58, 111; the ceremony continued throughout Shah Soltan Hosein’s reign, see e.g., \textit{Willem Floor: Bar Ofiadan-e Safavyyan va Bar Amadan-e Mahmud Afghan}. Tehran 1365/1987, p. 33, n. 21.

fulminated against the Shi‘ite orthodox ‘olama, whom he accused of having been responsible for the Afghan conquest. Furthermore, the veneration for Sheikh Safi al-Din, the founder of the Safavid order, was still very strong and, around 1717, thousands still flocked annually to Ardabil. Finally, both the Dastur al-Moluk and Tadhkereh al-Moluk state that the toubid-khaneh was still functioning prior to the Afghan invasion.

The last khalifeh al-kholafa

Although the chief khalifeh did not play the exalted and important political role that he had in the 16th century, he remained nevertheless a remunerated court official of the ‘alijah and moqarrab al-khaqan rank, and often, as of the 17th century, a governor of Qarachehdagh, who had his place in the royal council. We do not learn, however, about any political activities that the khalifeh may have been involved in during this period. After Tahmasp Mirza’s flight from Isfahan in June 1722, he tried to raise troops. One of his supporters, Fath ‘Ali Khan Qajar, appealed to the sufigar of his adherents and in this manner was said to have raised a considerable army due to the ta‘assob-e Qezelbash. However, despite these efforts to appeal to the morshed-e kamel–morid relationship it failed to have the desired effect and galvanize the opposition against the Afghan occupation force.

It is therefore surprising to find that there was still a khalifeh al-kholafa as court official in 1732 when the Dutch report that Miersa Kaffie, “chief of the Sophies is very well loved by the Shah [Tahmasp II] as well as greatly appreciated by Thamas Coelie [Tahmaspqoli Khan, the later Nader Shah].” The kholafa, as he was usually referred to, also had a role in the negotiations with the Ottomans in 1731/1732 when he, the mo‘ayyer-bashi, and the mollaby-bashi were send by Tahmaspqoli Khan to Tahmasp II to undo the Ottoman peace treaty. He had visited Tahmaspqoli Khan in Herat prior to

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182 BELL, p. 296.
183 DM, p. 73; TM, p. 55. See also appendix.
185 ARA, VOC 2323, van Leypsigh to de Cleen, Isfahan, 26 July 1732, f. 286; RAHIMLU: Alqah, p. 35.
his arrival in Isfahan.\(^\text{187}\) After Shah Tahmasp’s II fall from power, the \textit{kholafa} played a leading role, on behalf of Tahmaspqoli Khan (the later Nader Shah), to determine the extent of the privileges of the Dutch East Indies Company in Persia. The Dutch reported, “Miersa Kaffie, Miersa Taggie and the Gollafa are three gentlemen who have more influence with Thamas Coelie Chan than anybody else.”\(^\text{188}\) On March 1, 1734, the \textit{kholafa}, who arrived from Nader’s army camp in Shiraz, told the Dutch that Tahmasp II might be reinstated again, which was but one of similar rumors circulating at that time, such as that on 25 November 1733 when it was reported that Tahmas Khan [Nader] had sent Tahmasp II a crown “taaes tommar [taj va tomar].”\(^\text{189}\)

Mirza Nasiri Kafi Kholafa continued to play an administrative role at Nader Shah’s court. He was selected as ambassador, together with Mirza Ashraf\(^\text{190}\) to the Russian court in 1147/1734–1735, where he was known as Kholafa Khan.\(^\text{191}\) The Dutch mention in April 1737, “nothing is being heard from \textit{kholafa}, who seems to enjoy himself [in Russia]. It is believed that he has neither haste nor interest to return, because he does not like to return to court due to the manner of [oppressive] behavior there.”\(^\text{192}\) Nader Shah was angry that the \textit{kholafa} took so long in returning,\(^\text{193}\) but it was only in October 1737 that news reached Isfahan that the \textit{kholafa} was on his way back to Persia. He had send money to his family to settle his affairs, informing them that he did not expect to come back alive.\(^\text{194}\) The \textit{kholafa} returned to Persia towards the end of 1738;\(^\text{195}\) it is not known how he was received, but it is clear that he was not well rewarded by Nader Shah. Russian sources mention that after his return the \textit{kholafa} and his wives were about to die from hunger and acquaintances of his were in the same position. This probably was the result of his,...
of the ruinous state the country was in due to the incessant military operations mounted by Nader Shah. He therefore asked for assistance from the Russian ambassador in Isfahan in 1739. In 1746, the English traveler Cook mentions meeting “Kulipha, chief priest of Persia, and one of the Shach’s principal counsellors, who had formerly resided many years as ambassador in St. Petersburg.” The former ambassador, who spoke Russian tolerably well, was attached to the visiting Russian embassy, although it is not clear in what precise function. He apparently still held a function of some importance at court, for Nader Shah had charged him with handing over the royal orders for the Russian embassy. He continued to play the role of liaison official under ‘Adel Shah, Nader’s successor. As such he wrote a letter to the Russian ambassador in mid-1747, professing the desire of the new shah to maintain good relations with the Russians. We do not hear anymore about Mirza Kafi or the function of khalifeh al-kholafa after this date, so that the office most likely was abolished, as serving no useful political or ceremonial role anymore in a state that was no longer Safavid.

Conclusions

After its spiritual leader, the khalifeh al-kholafa was the most important function in the hierarchy of the Safavid order. He was probably in charge of a network of khalifehs and also nominated candidates for that function from the local representatives of the order. Authorized by the spiritual head or morsbed-e kamel of the order, the khalifehs were responsible for ensuring the proper adherence by the Safavid disciples to their religious duties and practices. The latter included many un-Islamic activities, reason why the Safavid state tried both to Islamicize the order’s ritual as well as to replace it with Imamite Shi’ite orthopraxis in the 17th century. Inside the Safavid State the khalifehs became part of the state apparatus. It was also part of their function to mobilize the ‘troops’ and help manage the country in such a way that the Safavid State prospered, the shah-pir’s reign was beneficial, and that the Safavid rank-and-file got their due. The situation was slightly different in case of those khalifehs who, either because they came from outside the borders, or because they had not accepted their absorption into the Safavid


The administrative system, maintained the chiliastic methods and ideals of the order at around 1500. We see therefore that one such khalifeh, Hoseinqoli Rumlu, who had sought refuge with his 10,000 followers in Safavid Persia from persecution in Anatolia, rebelled against the prescribed role that Safavid Sufis and their khalifehs had by then accepted. This led to a political and ideological clash with Shah Esma'îl II, when his reign was insecure. Old loyalties died hard, however, and the Shah, by appealing to his authority as pir, was able to do away with the rebellious khalifeh al-kholafa.

The Safavid Sufis and their order suffered a significant decline as a consequence of 'Abbas I's purge of the rebellious Qezelbash leaders and his reduction of their role accordingly. Although Safavid Sufi ideology was still referred to after 'Abbas I's reign, it was almost as an echo of a bygone epoch, and Safavid spiritual practice had become a ritual without much meaning beyond the political and financial gain that it brought. Although Safavid courtiers continued to wear the Safavid head-dress or taj on hey-days it was no longer an expression of an ideology, for at the end of the 17th century, contrary to one century earlier, non-Qezelbash courtiers also wore the taj. The Safavid order, despite its continued existence, had become devoid of any ideological or spiritual content, so that the Shah as pir of the order was unable to mobilize his adherents to oust the Afghan rebels, who brought his dynasty and country to a fall. With the short-lived resurrection of the Safavid dynasty, which lasted until 1736, we see that the structure of the order, complete with a khalifeh al-kholafa, still persisted. By then, however, it really had become a vestige of a past that was not and could not be revived. With the demise of the Afsharid regime the function of the khalifeh al-kholafa also came to its natural end.

Appendix

[This is a translation of the section dealing with the function of khalifeh al-kholafa from RAHIMLU, YUSEF ed. Alqab va mavajeh-e doureh-ye salatin-e Safaviyeh (Mashhad 1371/1993), pp. 35-37. It is a text by Mirza 'Ali Naqi Nasiri, who was majles-nevis from 1729-1732, written during the reign of Tahmasp II, probably in 1730].

Income: On account of the governate of Qarachehdagh: 359 tomans and 6,000 and odd dinars have been allotted to him. After [payment] of the wages of 100 regular retainers of the aforesaid governate, 300 tomans Tabrizi remain for him. On account of the soyurghal, which he collects from the aforementioned governate, the original amount of 24 tomans and the saldo thus comes to 100 tomans. On account of the teyul, which he has from the Kamareh area, [he receives] 400 tomans.
Together with the fees and votive offerings, which people bring to the **touhid-khaneh** the total comes to approximately 1,000 tomans per year.

Subordinates (**tabinan**): all **dhakers** and Sufis from all parts of the kingdom are his subordinates. His seat in the royal council is on the right side of His Majesty (**bandegan-e ashraf-e a’la**), and he is seated lower than the mostoufi al-mamalek, as will become clear, in what follows, when [we discuss] the function of mostoufi al-mamalek in the ranks of the highest office holders.

With the **taj** and **tomar** on his head, his task is to come the **touhid-khaneh** with the **dhakers** and Sufis to be engaged in **dhek** on Thursday evenings (**layali-e jom’eh**). Of the Sufis who come to him from the [various] parts [of the kingdom], whoever has the aptitude for the office of **khela**fat and for providing guidance (**ershad**), he appoints to the office of **khali**feh and has his **shajareh** decree written by the **monsbi al-mamalek** and confirmed by the great royal seal (**mohr-e athar-e ashraf**). This [decree] contains several conditions, indicating how to provide guidance to the people and to enjoin the good and ban the evil in a manner that will be made clear in what follows. It is the rule that every one to whom an office or service in the palace or the provinces has been granted, has brought votive offerings to the **touhid-khaneh** out of devotion and Sufi spirituality (**sufgar**i) in the form of cash, kind, and sweetmeats. What is brought, after he has deducted (**vaz’**) his fees, is divided among the Sufis and tenants (**mojavers**) of the **touhid-khaneh**. Two hundred dinars of that amount is put in the golden skinner (**kafgir**) and given to the **khali**feh of the **touhid-khaneh** so that he may bring it to His Majesty as a blessing. He has to instruct (**qadamghan**) the leading emirs of the royal court to come on Thursday evenings to the **touhid-khaneh** with their **taj-e vahhaj** and to remain in his circle of recitation (**halqeh-e dhek**r) for one hour and recite the **fatihah** for His Majesty’s well-being. To everyone who is negligent in coming, he sends the **qurchis** (royal lifeguards) to remind them. If then he does not show up (**takhallof**), [the **khali**feh **al-kholafa**] appoints a fee collector who collects a certain amount, which is divided among the Sufis. He does not allow anybody to enter the **touhid-khaneh** armed. He opposes the expulsion from the **touhid-khaneh** of any criminal and the like who seeks sanctuary there, provided there is no order from His Majesty to make him leave. If someone stands at the palace gate (**dar**) for a claim or a grievance he [i.e. the said officer] must immediately inform His Majesty of his grievance. After having been dismissed [by His Majesty] the said officer takes the man away from the palace gate (**dar**) and satisfies his grievance.

The ritual (**tariq**) of staying at the palace gate (**istadan beh dar**) consist of this: every time that injustice has befallen someone or when he himself has a request that he wants to be heard by His Majesty (**‘izz al-ajnab**), he, with the **taj** on his head, positions himself at the entrance of the king’s palace or at a place that he selects at random, and stands on his feet (**barsarpa**) with his face towards the **qiblah**. He spreads his prayer-mat, because, after he has become incapable to stand any longer, he will commence to pray so that, in doing his genuflections (**rak’ats**) and prostrations (**sujud**s), he may nevertheless find total peace of mind. He does not speak at all; he does not answer any one who puts a question to him, unless to the **khali**fehs
who have been sent by the king. In this manner, [even] if he has to make his stand three days and nights, and nobody has been sent on behalf of His Majesty to release him, he does not say a word, he does not eat at all, he does not go anywhere, and he does not sit down, save in prayer.

Having observed this situation, the Sufis and the onlookers inform His Majesty about this. [HM] charges the khalifa al-kholafa to go to that person and make him speak and ask him what his grievance is. The said official does as ordered, and after investigation of his grievance, submits it to His Majesty. Once the grievance of that person is satisfied, he inevitably leaves the palace gate and is released. Otherwise, it is the rule that he stands at the palace gate until his grievance is met. If, without his grievance being met, he walks away from the palace gate and goes elsewhere (beh kenari), the Sufis, after having taken this man, punish and fine him, because he has violated the rules of the palace gate (adab-e dar) by not having respected its sanctity.
Der muslimische Beitrag zur religiösen Dichtung Marāṭhī-sprechender Hindus

Von Hugh van Skyhawk, Mainz

Auf zwei Seiten seiner Geschichte der Marāṭhī-Literatur bis 1818 faßt Shankar Gopal Tulpule den Beitrag muslimischer Dichter in der Marāṭhī-Sprache zusammen. Dabei widmet er nur einem Dichter mehr als die flüchtige Erwähnung von Namen, Lebenszeit und ihm zugeschriebenen Werken.1 Von Šekh Mahammad Šrigondekar, geboren 1560 im Dorf Dhārūr, District Bīl, gestorben 1650 im Dorf Šrigonde, District Ahmadnagar, Maharashtra, zitiert Tulpule auch ein Gedicht, das unter Marāṭhī-sprechenden Hindus gut bekannt ist, und daraufhin einen sinnverwandten Zweizeiler von Kabīr. Zuerst Šekh Mahammad:

Through the grace of (god) Gopāla,  
I have transgressed all notions of purity and impurity.  
The jack-fruit has a thorny skin,  
but inside it are lumps of sugar.  
The bee-hive with all its humming bees  
contains the very nectar inside.  
(So also) Sheikh Mahammad may be an avindha,  
But in his heart he has the very Govinda.2

Dann Kabīr:

The Hindu died crying ‘Rām’,  
the Mussulman crying ‘Khudā’.  
Kabīr, that one will live  
who keeps away from both.3

