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Reading Sufi history through ādāb: The perspectives of Sufis, Jawānmardān and Qalandars
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Introduction

Ādāb in the classical Islamic tradition defies a simple and single definition, as the term denoted a range of different forms of conduct and ideals. Sufis of this period, typified by Abū Naṣr al–Sarrāj (d. 378/998), were well aware of this problem and sought a solution by delineating a tripartite classification of ādāb in which the Sufi perspective and model was established and contrasted with others; there were ādāb for worldly people, for the people of religion (ahl al–dīn) and for the select ones of religion (the Sufis). Despite this endeavour to narrow the classification of ādāb into three groups, the attempt to reduce even Sufi ādāb to its bare essentials was problematic, which is illustrated in the words of Abū Hafs al–Nishapūrī as cited by Sulami (d. 412/1021): “Sufism is made up entirely of ādāb; for each moment there is [an appropriate] ādāb, for each spiritual station there is [an appropriate] ādāb.” The magnitude of attention demanded by Sufi ādāb must have conditioned the very essence of the individual and in effect, Sufi ādāb comprised ideal conduct, externally among fellow seekers and in the world at large, and also internally in respect to correct thoughts, attitudes and reflections towards others and to God. To further illustrate the problem of attaining to this ideal, it is instructive to reflect upon the deconstruction of ādāb made by other Sufis, such as Ibn ʿA ṭāʾ (d. 309/921–2) who observed that “violating the rules of proper behaviour amidst its upholders is itself [a sign] of proper behaviour,” or upon the assertion of Junayd (d. 298/910) that “when one’s love [of God] is true, the rules of proper behaviour fall away.”

Yet an investigation of Sufi ādāb, notwithstanding the difficulties in defining the term mentioned above, offers historians a way to comprehend developments in the Sufi tradition. As in most socio–religious movements, the rules for correct behaviour often mirror changes in the larger contexts, be they political, social, economic or otherwise. This essay will attempt to demonstrate that a careful reading of Sufi literature reveals the following dialectic movement in the tradition. The starting point is the thesis of Sufi apologetics, which is challenged by the antithesis of alternatives and alterity within the tradition that finally results in a synthesis of accommodation. This theory is not applicable to the whole of the Sufi movement, rather, it is a speculative attempt to relate

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1 The term has been defined in scholarly sources in a similar fashion. For example, Khaleghi–Motlagh in his article “Adab” in EIr, states “adab in Persian means education, culture, good behaviour, politeness, proper demeanour; thus it is closely linked with the concept of ethics.” Ohlander (“Adab, in Sufism”, EI3) observes “Adab in Sufism includes the exposition, delimitation, and interpretation of rules and norms pertaining to individual conduct, social etiquette, and spiritual comportment.” Similarly Metcalf (“Introduction,” Moral conduct and authority, 4) states that it denotes “correct order, behaving r, and taste. It implicitly or explicitly distinguishes cultivated behaviour from that deemed vulgar.”


3 Tabaqāt al–ṣūfiyya, 119.

4 Qushayri’s epistle on Sufism, 295–6.

5 Sufi literature is vast, but this essay investigates works on Sufi ādāb manuals of Sufism, and associated Sufi literature of specific Sufi groups in the classical period from the fourth/tenth century through to the early pre–modern era of the eleventh/seventeenth century.
sober and shari‘a–minded Sufism with developments leading to a more popular and inclusive tradition, which provoked alternative forms of Sufi expression that were frowned upon by some of those within the “normative” camp.\(^6\) Pressure from various socio–political and religious forces persuaded adherents of alternative forms of Sufism to return to the “mainstream” and conform to the more acceptable manifestations of the tradition. A summary of this dialectic is presented below:

(i). Apologetics

The early period of Sufism is typified by a very general concept of ādāb which could easily apply to any person wishing to live an inner, spiritual life. In effect, it was a form of Sufi apologetics that was designed to create a space for Sufism within “normative” Islamic observance.\(^7\) This kind of Sufism continued as mainstream, sober Sufism into the medieval and post–Mongol period.

(ii). Alternatives and Alterity

The eleventh–thirteenth centuries witnessed a number of changes in the Sufi tradition which were partly due to the increasing fragmentation of political power. These included the institutionalisation of the khānqāh, political manipulation between Sufis and secular rulers, and the increasing levels of popular participation within the Sufi movement that culminated in the synthesis of Sufism with the tradition of futuwwa. Consequently, in the thirteenth century there was the emergence of what Karamustafa calls “deviant dervishes” which was a reaction to both sober Sufism and the popularisation of the tradition.\(^8\)

(iii). Accommodation

It is the third stage that is perhaps the weakest link in the hypothesis because it rests upon rather circumscribed evidence. It is to be hoped that future research will determine the extent to which this model is correct. However, at present the hypothesis argues that as a result of socio–political forces some of the deviant dervishes reverted to a form of normative Sufism, and their rituals and practices became sanitised and domesticated.

Apologetics

Abū Naṣr al–Sarrāj was one of the first Sufis to compose a comprehensive manual of Sufism that elaborated on Sufi history, beliefs, expressions and practices. His Kitāb al–luma‘ī fī l–taṣawwufīs is of particular interest for our study because of its twelve books, the seventh is devoted to the ādāb of Sufi rituals, including chapters pertaining to the devotions incumbent on all Muslims, and those which are more usually associated with the Sufi tradition, such as the samā‘, specific forms of clothing, seclusion, travelling, and

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\(^6\) By sober and shari‘a–minded Sufism I refer to Sufis who were devout and assiduous in performing Islamic rituals, who refrained from prohibited acts such as drinking wine or eating pork, and observed the necessary conditions for conducting Sufi rituals such as the samā‘. These Sufis were also cautious about the terms and words that they used to describe God, and avoided the more ecstatic forms of expression.

\(^7\) It should be noted that the Sufi works of this nature were not entirely apologetic, but were also “consolidations of Sufi teachings that had hither–to–fore been scattered”. See Khalil, “Abū Ṭālib al–Makkī & the Nourishment of Hearts (Qūt al–qulūb) in the context of early Sufism,” 342–4.

\(^8\) Karamustafa, Deviant dervishes
the ādāb for Sufis who are engaged in work, who are married and have children, ādāb relating to hunger, sickness and death. It is of note that the ādāb for shaykhs and for the beginner and disciple (murīd) occupy only two chapters, a significance that becomes evident in subsequent centuries when the shaykh–murīd relationship assumes far greater importance in the Sufi manuals. Another crucial aspect of his work was the tripartite division of ādāb: the ādāb for worldly people included eloquent speech, learning wisdom, the stories of kings, Arabic poetry and acquiring the knowledge of trades; the emphasis of the ādāb of the religious people was on both religious ritual performance and correct inner attitudes; this is then contrasted with the ādāb of the select (the Sufis) which was primarily related to perfection in inner attitudes (the inference being that this is in addition to the formal religious observance).

Sarrāj’s perspective on ādāb became the normative sober Sufi worldview, and this was further propounded by ‘Abd al–Rahmān al–Sulamī whose Jawāmīʿ ādāb al–ṣūfiyya was probably the first single treatise composed by a Sufi on the theme of Sufi ādāb. Sulamī portrayed correct behaviour in such a fashion that any individual interested in leading a pious and spiritual life would have benefitted from the work. In his introduction he admitted that he wanted to reveal the truth about the Sufis in response to the criticism of individuals which was based upon their ignorance of Sufi customs. The short work elaborates mainly on correct spiritual attitudes; indeed, there is little that is related to specific “Sufi” rituals and practice. Sulamī’s treatise should be understood in the context of competing spiritual movements in his own time and geographical location, including the Karrāmiyya and the Malāmatīyya (whom Sulamī incorporated into the general Sufi movement).

Within a generation or so after the composition of Sulamī’s treatises, the Kashf al–mahjūb was set out by Hujwīrī (d. c. 465/1072). He did not address ādāb in such a specific fashion as found in the works of his Sufi predecessors, however, his manual does clarify how there were some within Sufi circles who perceived of ādāb in a non–homogenous fashion. This is clear in his anecdote between the Malāmatī Ḥamdūn Qaṣṣār (d. 271/884–5) and a brigand (ʿayyār) named Nūḥ. The anecdote does not use the term ādāb, rather correct behaviour is rendered by the Persian word jawānmardī (or young manliness) which is the equivalent of the Arabic term futuwwa:

[Ḥamdūn Qaṣṣār said], Nūḥ was the name of a brigand, well–known for his futuwwa [...] One day I saw him in the street and I asked [him], “What is jawānmardī?” He replied, “Are you asking about my jawānmardī or yours?” I said, “Tell me about both.” He said, “My jawānmardī is that I cast aside this robe of mine and I wear the patched [Sufi] gown and act in a way that accords with it so that I may become a Sufi, and in that garment I refrain from committing sin out of shame before the people. Your jawānmardī is that you cast aside the patched [Sufi] gown so that you will not be deceived by people and they will not be deceived by you. So my jawānmardī is the protection of the sharīʿa by making something clear, and your jawānmardī is the protection of the haqiqa by protecting secrets.”

The anecdote reveals the tension that existed between formal “Sufi” observance of ādāb and the Khurāsānī Malāmatī desire to forego such rigid regulations. Ḥamdūn Qaṣṣār’s jawānmardī transcends Sufi ādāb, thereby incurring blame from those around him. He conceals his true spirituality by refraining from public performance of Sufi rituals, avoiding spiritual hypocrisy, and at the same time his nafs is belittled by the censure of others for not engaging in such activities. Although it has already been noted that Sulamī cited the Malāmatī Abū Ḥafṣ Nishapūrī to the effect that “Sufism is ādāb,” his words do not necessarily convey approbation, rather, they may be taken as a stinging indictment of external manifestations of spirituality. Hujwīrī expressed circumspect of the Malāmatī position, highlighting the danger of individuals abandoning the law and deliberately committing an irreligious act, and then defending their actions with recourse to the Malāmatī path. He remarked that there were many individuals in his own time who engaged in such a practice. The Malāmatī view of Sufi ādāb then was one that had to be treated with extreme caution. The existence of such a perspective demonstrates that the tendency to alternatives and alterity was present within the Islamic world even before the twelfth–thirteenth centuries when the Qalandars appeared.

The association of the brigand (mentioned by Hujwīrī in the anecdote cited above) with Sufism introduces another intriguing feature in the development of Sufism, namely the connection between the spiritual ādāb of the Sufis and those of “worldly people” such as the ʿayyār who have frequently been linked with the tradition of futuwwa which has been associated with urban corporate associations and attributes such as muruwwa (a term almost synonymous with futuwwa). This connection is apparent in the following citation from Hujwīrī, who also echoes Sarrāj’s tripartite classification of ādāb in the following fashion:

\[ \text{Ādāb in worldly relations (mardumī) is guarding manliness (muruwwa), and within religion it is guarding [the prophetic] tradition (Sunna) and within love (mahabbā) it is guarding [the Truth’s] greatness (ḥurma). They are all connected to each other for whoever has no manliness is not a follower of the prophetic tradition, and whoever does not protect the prophetic tradition does not honour [the Truth’s] greatness.} \]

What is clear in Hujwīrī’s brief comments relating to ādāb is that like Sarrāj and Sulamī there is nothing overtly mystical (that is, it is not connected with ontological union or the more controversial notion of ḥulūl), rendering the concept safe from accusations of innovation or heresy.

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16 See note 3.
17 Hujwīrī, Kashf al-maḥjūb, 89–90.
18 The disappearance of the Malāmatīs is probably due to their distaste for disseminating their beliefs in the form of teaching manuals, and disguising their true motives. The writing down of such ideas by the Malāmatīs may have been considered reprehensible because of the danger that it would nurture intellectual pride. Yet it must surely have limited the propagation of the movement. In addition, their apparent “disregard” for the shariʿa would certainly not have endeared them to alternative forms of Islamic spirituality. On the Malāmatīs see Sviri, “Ḥakīm Tirmidhī and the Malāmatī movement in early Sufism,” 583–613. See also Zarrinkūb, Justujū dar taṣawwuf-i Irān, 335–57, and Chabbi, “Remarques sur le développement historique des mouvements ascétiques et mystiques au Khurasan,” 5–72.
20 Hujwīrī, Kashf al-maḥjūb, 491.
Thus far, the Sufis highlighted in this essay have recognised the range of ādāb, and the literature also provides evidence of a concern with ādāb and its association with futuwwa. Just as it is necessary to be cautious when discussing ādāb within the Sufi and spiritual traditions, so too futuwwa demands clarification due to its diverse forms. In the early period of Islamic history, when the term was not associated with Sufism, there were various manifestations of futuwwa. Linkages have been made between futuwwa and groups of young men who enjoined hedonist parties, with the Shuʿubiya movement that was concerned with the promotion of the Persian language, and with groups of brigands some of whom probably lived on the margins of society (and others who formed localised urban gangs). The diverse nature and raison d’être of these associations render it problematic to witness a particular futuwwa ādāb. However, it may be speculated that it was the ‘āyyār; the brigand, with his ethic of individual courage and bravery, loyalty to the group, selflessness and generosity that provided an inspiration for emerging generations of more spiritually inclined individuals.

A similar perspective to the Sufi tripartite classification of ādāb was offered in the Qābūs–nāma (a treatise started in 460/1082–3), which uses the term jawānmardī (the Persian equivalent of futuwwa) as a semantic synonym for ādāb. The Qābūs–nāma presents an idealised brigand through a discussion of jawānmardī and also constructs a hierarchy of excellence for “manliness”. Brigands, soldiers and merchants were exponents of jawānmardī in worldly relations; the ideal brigand is described as manly, forbearing in all tasks, sexually pure, not causing anyone harm to benefit himself, speaking truthfully and granting justice. The ideal brigand deserves the descriptor jawānmard because of his excellence in worldly relations (mardumī). Above the brigands, soldiers and merchants in the social hierarchy of the Qābūs–nāma are the Sufis, who are bettered by the wise men and prophets, and the highest rank in jawanmardī is possessed by the rūḥāniyān, or spiritual beings. It is easy, therefore, to see how the brigand’s attributes dovetailed neatly into a Sufi or spiritual worldview, and why jawānmardī became an important character trait that was the subject of interest for Sufis.

It is of interest that one of the first Sufi discussions of futuwwa occurs in the Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīn where Manṣūr Ḥallāj (d. 309/922) appropriated the term to portray his faithfulness, loyalty and selflessness before God. However, it was not until the next century that futuwwa was analysed regularly in the Sufi manuals. Perhaps the best example of this is a short treatise by Sulamī entitled Kitāb al-futuwwa in which the emphasis is primarily on ādāb, that is to say, on correct behaviour when in society and when paying devotion to God. As such, futuwwa is an adab that is all encompassing, and demands continual observance. Sulamī cites the view of Abū Ḥafṣ Nishapūrī that “Futuwwa is ādāb,” reflecting his observation that “Sufism is made up entirely of ādāb”. Sulamī’s Kitāb al–futuwwa, like his Jawāmīʿ ādāb al–ṣuḥūyya is not a mystical text; his primary aim is to present Sufism as a normative form of Islamic spirituality rather than an innovation or deviant tradition. That some critics regarded Sufism as a distortion of a pure and spiritual manifestation of Islam helps to explain Hujwīrī’s

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22 Kaykāwūs, Qābūs–nāma, 247.
23 A translation of Ḥallāj’s understanding of futuwwa is found in Sells, Early Islamic mysticism, 266–81. Sells uses “valour” to translate futuwwa.
24 Sulamī, Kitāb al–futuwwa, 305.
citation that “today Sufism is a name without a reality, but formerly it was a reality without a name.”

Another reason why some Sufis utilised futuwwa to fashion a framework that was synonymous with Sufi ādāb is related to attempts to present Sufism as a tradition that was easily comprehensible for the urban people who were already familiar with the ideal behaviour of the brigand or the corporate worker. Yet Sufis such as Sulamī were careful to add a twist of decency to the tradition, as Sufi literature of the time manifests a concern to protect the Sufi movement from the abuses of charlatans who desired to share in what they saw as the benefits that Sufis enjoyed (such as receiving bestowments and influencing notables in society). These abuses explain for the almost repetitive warnings from major Sufis concerning the caution required when deciding which individual to choose as a Sufi guide. Sufis such as Sulamī, Hujwīrī and Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) attempted to locate Sufism within a system of normative spiritual ādāb and thereby offer the tradition some protection during a period that was still relatively close to the era of Ghulām Khalīl (d. 275/888) who persecuted a number of famous Sufis in Baghdad. The continuing caution that Sufis needed to exercise may be evidenced from the persistence of criticisms made against the movement, typified by the condemnation of elements of the tradition expressed by Ibn Jawzī (d. 578/1200) in his Talbis Iblis. Apologetic Sufi works were composed in the twelfth century by the likes of Ghazālī, whose Kīmyā–yi saʿādat is a large work that is composed of four books, the second of which is predominantly about ādāb. It follows in the tradition of Sarrāj and Hujwīrī by attempting to locate Sufism within a “normative” Islamic framework. However, the difficulty faced by Ghazālī was related to the need to preserve the “integrity” and “purity” of the tradition while at the same time promoting it among a wider cross section of society. There are clear indications that some Sufi masters desired to provide a way for worldly people to abide by a system of ādāb that bridged specifically worldly affairs with those of the Sufi realm.

During Ghazālī’s lifetime Sufism was becoming increasingly popular, which was attributable to the development of the khānqāh (probably inspired by the example of the Karrāmiyya) which gave the Sufis space to practice their own ritual activities and host not only fully committed individuals but also a large number of “lay–affiliates”. This would have included the equivalent of a “soup–kitchen” for the needy and a safe place to stay for travellers. One of the best examples of this is the khānqāh of Abū Saʿīd b. Abī l–Khayr (d. 427/1049) where “ordinary people, poor folk and labourers, urban and rural [and] even the most ostracized outcasts of society, such as a wretched young drunkard in one instance” received hospitality. The presence of such lay–affiliates with resident Sufis, and the sheer size of the institution which could cater for up to 120 individuals necessitated a system of rules and regulations for his followers, a new form of Sufi ādāb. Moreover, whereas many Sufis had been extremely cautious about permitting the “un–initiated” into specific Sufi rituals, it is reported that Abū Saʿīd encouraged wide

27 Margoliouth, “The Devil’s delusion.”
participation in Sufi devotions, such as the *samā‘*. The promotion of a form of Sufism that benefited worldly people who desired some degree of spiritual benefit occurred at a time when the Sufi movement in general had to respond to the difficult situation it had been facing in relation to political power. Whilst the Sufi ideal was to focus on God and promote spirituality within the immediate circle of like-minded seekers, the tradition was at the same time enmeshed within worldly concerns. As a result of the increasing popularity of Sufism it was clearly in the interest of worldly rulers, sultans and local magnates to extend their political legitimacy by associating and allying themselves with those who enjoyed spiritual capital. A number of scholars have indicated how Seljuk, Mamluk and Ayyubid leaders were inclined towards influential Sufis, to the extent that they offered them patronage and built *khānqāhs*, as it was in their interests to support a form of *ādāb*-bound Sufism that promoted order. One of the best examples of this is the *khānqāh* built in Cairo by Saladin in 569/1173, which stipulated that it was to provide for foreign born dervishes, trained in *Shāfiʿī* or *Mālikī* *fiqh*, as well as Ashʿarī theology.

The proximity between Sufis and the community at large resulted in some Sufi masters targeting, allowing modifications in the *ādāb* demanded at the *khānqāh* or in meetings. This perfectly illustrated in *Kitāb *ādāb al-murīdin*, by Abū l–Najīb Suhrawardī (d. 546/1168). Like Sarraj and Hujwirī, Suhrawardī classified *ādāb* into three groups: *ādāb* for people of the world, for the people of religion, and for the choicest of the people of religion. However, in an attempt to attract the people of the world to the Sufi tradition, Suhrawardī listed up to forty dispensations (*rukhsa*) by which the lay affiliates were permitted by the Sufi shaykh to refrain from certain activities, the performance of which were essential for full-time Sufis, or else they were permitted to engage in other actions that were forbidden to Sufis. These included the dispensation not only to be present in the *samā‘*, but to get up and move and dance, to joke, to be engaged in business and to eat delicious food. Whereas in the tenth and eleventh centuries the impetus of Sufi *ādāb* was to establish space for the tradition within “normative” Islam, by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the pressure for a flexible form of *ādāb* came from below, from the like of trades people and merchants.

The extent of intermingling between leading Sufis and worldly people is evident in Aflākī’s hagiography of Rūmī (d. 672/1273) whose sessions were attended by ordinary folk, women and *akhīs*, and in the anonymous hagiography of Awḥad al–Dīn Kirmānī (d. 635/1238) there are several examples of him engaging in *samā‘* with the local population who were not his disciples. But the best example of the increasing attraction that Sufis held for worldly people is the attempt by Abū l–Najīb Suhrawardī’s nephew, Abū ḤaṣʿUmar Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234), to fashion the tradition of *futuwwa* into a kind of second-class Sufism which seems to have been designed specifically for

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34 The forthcoming work of Nathan Hofer examines this institution in great detail.
lay people. Suhrwardi’s endeavour in this regard may be related to the Caliph’s efforts to appropriate the urban futuwwa groups in Baghdad that operated as vigilante groups and were at times hardly conducive to harmonious communal living. Be that as it may, Suhrwardi’s promotion of these “second-class” Sufi organisations permitted him to advocate his case for a sober form of Sufism in society. His futuwwat-ādāb allowed worldly people the opportunity to engage in Sufi-esque devotions and rituals under the supervision of a master who was clearly supposed to be learned not only in Sufism, but also the Holy Law (since he was permitted to issue fatwas). Suhrwardi’s futuwwa-ādāb attempted to connect the ādāb of general courtesy and civility, with both a legalistic ādāb based on the shari’a and a Sufi ādāb which promoted devotional piety and shared Sufi courtesies. A feature of the Sufi–futuwwat treatises from the thirteenth century onwards is the emphasis on the correct ādāb for initiation (which sometimes included restrictions on membership), the proper ādāb for communal living (such as the ritualised gathering for meals), and the appropriate ādāb for Sufi ceremonies such as the sama’. All of this contributed to a sense of cohesion, belonging and solidarity. In many cases this was legitimised with reference to Islamic precedents, which suggests that the authors of the treatises were concerned to teach new adherents the Islamic credentials of futuwwa activities. The second class and diluted nature of these works is typified in a futuwwa treatise that culls passages, rather than complete chapters on topics such as sama’ and the ādāb for communal eating from Ghazâlî’s Kīmyâ–yi sa’ādat. Although I have termed these associations “second–class Sufi organisations,” it is at the same time true that Suhrwardi’s treatises demand conformity to the conditions of a total ritualistic regime.

While ādāb-bound Sufism enjoyed the patronage of rulers who desired order and stability and thereby were the natural supporters of ādāb, there are indications that the relationship between secular rulers and leaders of spiritual movements was not always harmonious. Suhrwardi himself remarked somewhat cryptically that the lodge of futuwwa is built with the income from the spiritual masters, whereas the khângâhs of the Sufis are built with the income from kings and princes. Nevertheless, in general the futuwwa literature emphasises the rules and regulations of the tradition which suggests that adherents recognised that order was indeed necessary in the tradition. Implicit, however, is the tension inherent in over–regulation that threatened to unravel the organisation.

Alternatives and Alterity

The aim of the Suhrwardîs in opening the khângâh doors was to allow greater participation and perhaps prevent the Sufi tradition from becoming ossified and stale. Yet the inherent danger of this policy was that the movement would become more closely linked with worldly engagements, thereby deviating from the God–centred Sufi life–style. This explains for the stress on ādāb in their Sufi and futuwwat compositions.

38 Ridgeon, Jawamnardi, 25–41.
40 Ridgeon, Jawamnardi, 138–46.
41 Ridgeon, Jawamnardi, 58.
Along with the growth of Sufi–futuwwa, the tradition of normative Sufism continued, and this is apparent in the kinds of treatises that are typified by Abū Ḥafs Suhrawardī’s ‘Awārif al-ma‘ārif which promoted a sober and rule-bound version of spirituality in which copious attention was paid to correct ādāb. Similar works that were concerned with the preservation of a regime of ādāb that regulated and ritualised the smallest details of communal behaviour for the Sufi in a khānqāh include a risāla by the thirteenth century Persian speaking Sufi, ‘Azīz Nasafī entitled “Explaining the Ādāb of the Sufis.” Nasafī elaborated on rituals of prayer, travelling and ādāb in the khānqāh; the latter included specific rulings such as entering the khānqāh with the right foot first and leaving with the left foot, not speaking or reading books with a loud voice and walking silently so as to not disturb other dervishes’ concentration, regulations that were designed to solve disputes between khānqāh inhabitants, conventions of a Junaydian nature for the correct performance of the samā’, and rules on approved table-manners. In short Nasafī offered a rigidly formal regime of Sufi ādāb which might have been considered excessively dry and unappealing to the emerging numbers of “deviant dervishes” who were seeking to express new forms of piety.

The Sufi tradition has often been associated by its opponents with antinomian expressions of experience or non-conformist ways of behaviour that were more conducive to individualistic rather than communal forms of living. (Early examples of this include the individuals associated with the Malāmatiyya). Those who sought such a lifestyle were known under the general rubric of “Qalandar”, typified in a literary genre known as qalandariyyāt. Qalandarism was manifested by individuals who either completely rejected society or those who revealed certain forms of antinomian behaviour, such as Shams-i Tabrīzī (d. 645/1247). In addition, it is intriguing that both Suhrawardī and Nasafī provided hints of the existence of such seekers who sought their spiritual life outside of normative Sufi ādāb, which was being pulled into the orbit of a more worldly orientation for the reasons suggested above by the thirteenth century. Suhrawardī described an individual who was separated from others (tajrīd), lived in seclusion (tafrīd) in the level of singularity (tawḥīd) and was absolved from certain conditions pertaining to formal ādāb. Likewise, Nasafī mentioned a type of perfect person who fled from association with people. These vague allusions to individuals who lived outside of society, and perhaps beyond the terrain that necessitated “social” ādāb, do not permit an explicit association with types of deviant dervishes that have been categorised as Qalandars. Yet it is interesting that the two individuals (and their immediate followers) who have been regarded as the inspiration for the social phenomenon of Qalandarism (as opposed to the simple literary trope) appeared around the same time that Suhrawardī and Nasafī composed their treatises.

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42 Ohlander, Sufism in an Age of Transition. For Suhrawardī and ādāb see Huda, Striving for Divine Union, 62–72.
43 Nasafī, Kitāb al-insān al-kāmil, 120–30, lists eight ādāb, the first seven of which outlined the correct performance of prayer, while the eighth endorsed travelling (safar).
44 Nasafī, Kitāb al-insān al-kāmil, 120–30.
46 Lewis, Rumi: Past and Present, East and West, 135; Shams-i Tabrīzī's individualistic and antinomian tendencies are evident in his own writings, see his “autobiography,” the so-called Maqālāt-i Shams, which has been translated by Chittick as Me and Rumi.
47 Ridgeon, Jawawmardī, 83.
48 Nasafī, Kitāb al-insān al-kāmil, 9.
These two proto-type Qalandars were Jamāl al-Dīn Sāwī (d.ca. 630/1232–33) and Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥaydar (d.ca. 618/1221–22), who both fled from society and adopted lives of seclusion (the former in graveyards while the latter preferred mountainside retreats). Moreover, the usual Sufi ādāb were abandoned, typified by the rejection of the Sufi khīrgā; Jamāl al-Dīn Sāwī is presented as having a preference for nakedness or later for heavy woollen garments, while Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥaydar clothed himself in leaves. In addition, they both had unconventional ways of styling their facial hair; Jamāl al-Dīn Sāwī is attributed with the so-called “four shaves” (chahār ẓarb), while Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥaydar may have shaved his beard but let his moustache grow, and he may have sported long hair locks.

Karamustafa’s analysis of the growth of these kinds of dervish groups rests upon the hypothesis that “the entrenchment of Sufism in society in the form of ubiquitous social institutions refranchised the dormant otherworldly trends of renunciation and anarchist individualism within Sufism.” In other words, it is possible that the appearance of deviant dervishes was motivated by the formalisation of Sufi ādāb, the lack of individualism and a desire for more intense piety and spiritual poverty. The “four shaves” are indicative of this, as the existing literature on the topic associates shaving facial hair with the ritual of shaving during the ḥajj that is connected with Q 48:27. In effect, the rationale behind the shaves was a symbolic presentation of the individual in a state of purity before God. Likewise, the manifestation of variant modes of clothing may be considered a return to primal states of existence. While the ideal may have been to focus on purity and piety, at the same time it is likely that there were individuals or groups associated with the Qalandar that deviated from this, resulting in the rejection of the Qalandar movement by many. Suhrawardī is a case in point, as he claims that “they respect no custom or usage and reject the regular observances of society and mutual relationship [...] they concern themselves little with ritual prayer and fasting except such as are obligatory.” In his recent work Green is more forthright in his remark that, “whether through strolling around naked, openly using drugs and alcohol, or torturing their bodies with spikes and chains, the qalandars deliberately rejected all social norms in a way that was antithetical to the conformist Sufi mainstream.” In addition he discusses the context in which such groups emerge, for the Mongol period in Central Asia, Anatolia and Iran resulted in a weakening of traditional religious authority that permitted the development of new modes of spiritual expression which may have borrowed elements of Shamanism. The spread of such forms of Sufism that had alternative ādāb had much to do with changing patterns of patronage, and the “vernacularization of Sufi teachings” that permitted Turkish and other languages outside of the “sophisticated” Arabic and Persian traditions to express Sufi spirituality to the less classically educated. In Green’s words “we are dealing here with wilder, charismatic

49 Khaṭīb Fārisī, Qalandar nāma–yi Khaṭīb Fārisī.
50 For Jamāl al-Dīn Sāwī see Karamustafa, God’s Urtuly Friends, 39–44; for Quṭb al-Dīn Haydar see ibid. 44–6.
51 The chahār ẓarb involved the removal of head hair, eyebrows, moustache and beard. For Jamāl al-Dīn Sāwī and hair see Karamustafa, God’s Urtuly Friends, 43–4; for Quṭb al-Dīn Haydar the information is less precise and relies on the assumption that groups of Qalandars known as Haydaris copied his example. See ibid. 44–6.
52 Karamustafa, God’s Urtuly Friends, 99.
55 Green, Sufism, 80. The reference to spiking bodies and the use of chains (for self-flagellation?) is a reference to some Sufis (particularly of the Rifā’ī order) who became infamous for their antinomian practices that included eating live snakes, entering ovens, rolling in fire and eating it. See Trimingham, The Sufi orders in Islam, 38–9.
figures more likely to be seen wearing the skins and horns of animals than the plain cloak and turban of the scholar.”

Accommodation

The very first generation of deviant dervishes witnessed the difficulties in maintaining their individualistic piety. As Jamāl al-Dīn Sāwī was obliged to accept a group of followers, his individualistic ādāb was reformed to the extent that his nakedness was now concealed beneath woollen garments. Moreover, the tendency for Qalandars to congregate in groups (rather than preserve an isolated, individual existence) is illustrated in the famous (but perhaps apocryphal) story of Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Irāqī (d. 688/1289) who became enraptured with a young Qalandar male, whilst studying within the madrasa in Hamadān, and immediately left to join this band of itinerants. Although some of these Qalandar ādāb placed adherents outside of “normative” Sufism, many of the rituals and devotions of the former were borrowed from the latter tradition, including practices associated with purity, self-denial, control of the naṭṣ, travelling, the need to follow a guide, and specific body coverings. The Qalandar adoption of a “mirror” image from the Sufis for their own faith and practice was a reaction to the continuing formalisation of Sufi ādāb. The increasing ritualisation of Sufi ādāb (which may have been a result of the development of specific orders with their focus on particular ritual activity) is evident in the well-known treatises of Abū l-Mafākhīr Yahyā Bākharzī (d. 736/1335–6) and ‘Izz al-Dīn Kāshānī (d. 735/1356–7). The former composed a work entitled Āwrād al-ahbāb wa-fuṣūs al-ādāb (“The Litany of the Lovers and the Ring-Stones of Manners”). This second part of this work (“The Ring-Stones of Manners”) is over 350 pages in the edited version and is composed of chapters discussing the correct performance of Sufi rituals and spiritual attitudes in great detail and precision. The 434 pages of Kāshānī’s Miṣbāḥ al-hidāya is divided into ten sections, each of which has ten chapters, and of significance is the sixth and longest section, entitled “On Ādāb” which focuses in particular on the relationship between the shaykh and his disciple, travelling, eating, and clothing. These kinds of works contributed to the perpetuation of what might be considered a sober, sharīʿa-minded form of Sufi ādāb which in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries existed alongside the “second-class” Sufi–futuwwa groups.

The sober, sharīʿa-minded form of Sufism thrived in the Mongol and post-Mongol periods, and this is neatly illustrated in the works that were composed by Ḥusayn Wāʿīz Kāshifī (d. 1504), who is commonly associated with the Naqshbandī order. Interestingly, Kāshifī was also the author of the most comprehensive of treatises on futuwwa, namely, the Futuwwat-nāma-yi sulṭānī. While the book does contain much information on futuwwa, Kāshifī also included abundant material about Sufi material culture, such as the different kinds of robes and headware that was current among the dervishes of his age, and the symbolism of the shapes, materials and colours of these items. This must have represented to some the external trappings of a spirituality that had been lost—
indeed, sartorial ādāb is far removed from the concerns of the Malāmatīs of tenth century Khurāsān. And the futuwwa associations endorsed this formalised ritual activity—indeed, the idealised version that was delineated by Suhrawardī described how a nasal hair had to be removed if it protruded from the nose.61 Suhrawardī also insisted that the futuwwa brothers appear in smart and clean garments, again, a stark contrast to the Malāmatīs who liked to wear the clothes of tradespeople.62 The ādāb of futuwwa also encompassed regulations for initiation, rules for polite table manners, requirement to overlook the brothers’ sins, generosity and magnanimity. Ontological and esoteric understandings of tawḥīd are not features that seem to have concerned the futuwwa brothers: of greater importance was the social bond between members which necessitated clearly demarcated rules and regulations. This explains why futuwwa literature usually includes sections on who may be admitted into the group and the necessary attributes that such a person must possess.63

Unsurprisingly, deviant groups of dervishes flourished in the post–Mongol period. An example of such a Qalandar is Otman Bābā, who rejected the sober, sharīʿa–minded form of Sufism and the masters of such institutions. He attracted a following of several hundred dervishes and had good relations with the Ottoman sultan Meḥmed II.64 Other examples of Qalandar groups in the period between the thirteenth and sixteenth century abound.65 It is noteworthy too that in this period, the great Persian poet Ḥāfiz posits the “rends and qalandars as the very embodiment of virtue and piety,”66 while Sufis are described as “dishonest and deceitful and whose cloaks of poverty are stained by the secretly forbidden wine.”67 Yet by the beginning of the sixteenth century, the centralising political rule of the emerging Ottomans and Safavids were to put an end to the largely uncontrolled tradition of futuwwa, and many Sufi groups suffered as a result of the perception that they challenged rulers and monarchs. This did not mean an end to the Sufi orders, for acquiescent shaykhs were useful to the aspirations of the new political realities. Indeed, in Ottoman territories the state manipulated certain Sufi orders, such as the Bektashis, and bound them within its sphere of control.68 Even so, the tensions inherent between secular and Sufi reappeared with regularity.69

However, semi–independent futuwwa groups and ecstatic and uncontrollable forms of messianic Sufism were not tolerated.70 What was required was a strictly ādāb–bound version of Sufism that was prepared to recognise the new political configuration. It is ironic that Qalandar groups in Iran benefitted from political centralisation and control, for while the major Sunni–Sufi orders were either expelled, repressed or persuaded by the new monarchical–clerical alliance to realign their denominational preferences in Shi’ite Iran, the Shi’ite Ḥaydari Qalandars appear to have profited from state patronage in ritually cursing the Sunni tradition.71 It remains to be proven,
however, the extent to which Qalandar associations remained as distinct antinomian dervish groups during the Safavid period, and whether they merged into urban centres and adopted trades and occupations which had their own particular forms of ādāb.

The latter is worthy of consideration, especially in light of the theory that connects the Qalandar with specific trades, many of which had their own specific ādāb that were elaborated within occupational treatises, also known as futuwwat–nāmas. The Qalandar have been linked with barbers because both groups shared the emphasis on the tools of the trade (scissors, mirror and whet-stone), indeed, the Qalandar have been considered as inheritors of the trades–people, that is to say, the jawānmardān, or the members of the futuwwa associations. The content of these occupational treatises reflects a high degree of similarity with earlier works on futuwwat from the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries. These include forms of initiation, mythic history and literary style. With the weakening of the futuwwa and akhī institutions in the sixteenth century, it appears that craft and trade associations emerged as natural successors to Sufi–style futuwwa, and continued many of the futuwwa ādāb (correct external behaviour and appropriate spiritual attitudes). However, the establishment of guilds in the domains of the Safavids ensured that the ādāb of the crafts and occupational associations were regulated in a system that was overseen by a state official. In this way, the ādāb were respectable and conformed to a sober and non–ecstatic variety of spiritual expression.

Outside of the terrain of the Safavid state, it appears that there were also some Qalandars that conformed to a more conventional form of ādāb. This is typified in a treatise known as Adāb al-ṭarīq, which was composed in 1050/1672 in the region of Bukhara by a certain Hajji ‘Abd al- Rahīm. The work is composed of twelve chapters which investigate the material culture of the Qalandar: thus there are chapters on the hat, the hair, the cloak, the belt, the staff, the begging bowl, the pumpkin–pot, the table (sufra), service, the animal skin, the broom and different clothes of poverty. The author clearly identifies the path as pertaining to the Qalandars, yet at the same time he refers reverently to Shāh Naqshband and calls the Khwājagān the best of all [Sufi] orders. The combination of Qalandari and Naqshbandi associations appears rather unusual, especially as their own respective forms of ādāb are more commonly perceived to be quite different. To take one example, the Qalandars are visually distinct because of their practice of the four shaves, whereas this is not associated with the Naqshbandis. Yet Hajji ‘Abd al–Rahīm only discusses the shaving of the head, and he admits that letting the hair grow was the practice of Muḥammad, even though shaving the head was also the Sunna (justified with reference to Q 48:27). The attempt to bridge the divide between the traditions of the Qalandars and the Naqshbandis appears to veer heavily towards a sober–based, sharīʿa–minded Sufism. In his closing comments on the chapter concerning head hair, he comments, “Know that the purpose of this discussion is guidance for seekers and wayfarers of the path so that they do not step out of the prophetic sharīʿa.

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72 Gevorgyan, “Futuwwa varieties and the futuwwat–nāma literature.”
73 This theory has been argued by Mihrān Afshārī, and is summarised in Ridgeon, Morals and Mysticism in Persian Sufism, 133–5.
74 This refers to the origin of the occupation and spiritualised employment of the tools of trade. See for example the last two chapters of Kāshīfī, The Royal Book of Spiritual Chivalry, 269–497.
75 I possess two manuscripts of this treatise. The first is kept in the Majlis Library, Tehran (manuscript number 1055) but actually bears the title “Lords of the way” (arbaʿ al-ṭarīq). The second manuscript is entitled Adāb al-ṭarīq and is kept in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg (manuscript number B946). The two manuscripts are virtually the same; the major difference is the title, which is most the result of a scribal error.
76 Hajji ‘Abd al–Rahīm Majlis library 1055, fol.38.
77 Hajji ‘Abd al–Rahīm Majlis library 1055, fol. 29.
but engage in ascetic discipline: ‘Ādāb is a hat of divine light/ Place it on your head and wander wherever you wish’. The prophet said, Ādāb is a command of God, the Most High.”\(^7\) This esteem for the shari‘a is not an isolated instance, as there are many other references that indicate that the author endorsed a version of Qalandarī–Naqshbandī Sufism that he believed was rooted firmly in conventional ādāb. Most of the chapters describing the material culture of the dervish pivot around discussions of the origins and spiritual meanings of the various implements (which parallels that found in the occupational treatises)\(^7\) in a fashion that even the most “conservative” Naqshbandī would probably have found unproblematic.

I do not wish to suggest that from the seventeenth century onwards the unconventional forms of Sufism simply ceased to exist (indeed, the literature indicates that this was not the case).\(^8\) What I am arguing is that it is possible to trace a tendency towards the sanitisation and domestication of some deviant groups, which was complemented by the weakening of the Sufi–futuwwa associations, whose energies were most likely channelled into occupational associations (which continued to be inspired, however, by Sufi teachings). While Shi‘ite Qalandar groups seem to have survived the general onslaught against Sufism during the Safavid period,\(^9\) it is likely too, that their ādāb needed to be adjusted to reflect the socio–political changes. A similar process occurred in some Ottoman territories, where the Kadizadeli movement assisted the rulers to regulate Sufi orders and antinomian, devious dervish tendencies.\(^10\) In fact, the pressure and tendency to conform and integrate into the sober, shari‘a–minded Sufi orders existed at the very birth of the Qalandar movement in the thirteenth century and continued until the weakening of such movements in the seventeenth century.\(^11\) The success of Qalandars in resisting these demands depended on the frailness of centralising forces, and by the seventeenth century the authority and ability of the Ottoman and Safavid states to implement a policy of religious conformity was far greater than the centripetal forces of earlier periods.

**Conclusion**

This diachronic study of Sufi ādāb has examined the changing nature of the concept with reference to the socio–political context of Sufism in general within Persianate territories from the emergence of the early masters such as Sarrāj in the tenth century to the formation of powerful and centralised states in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The hypothesis herein rests upon a dialectic development of Sufism. This commences with Sufi apologetics, the success of which resulted in a greater degree of popularisation and political patronage. The appeal of Sufism may be witnessed in the emergence of the Sufi–futuwwa movement, which was a form of “second–class” Sufism for the masses that became widespread by the thirteenth century in Iran and Anatolia. At the same time,

\(^7\) Ḥajjī ‘Abd al–Raḥīm Majlis library 1055, fol. 38.  
\(^8\) See the remarks of the Russian traveller to Isfahan in the mid–seventeenth century relating to the debauch and corrupt nature of the Qalandars, cited in Ridgeon, *Manners and Mysticism in Persian Sufism*, 133.  
\(^10\) Arjomand, “Religious extremism (ghuluww), Ṣūfism and Sunnism in Safavid Iran,” 1–35.  
\(^12\) Watenpaugh, “Deviant dervishes,” 552.
there was growing rigidity within certain understandings of Sufi ādāb. The increasing levels of popular participation on the one hand and escalating formality in ādāb on the other helps to explain for the rise of “deviant dervishes”, or Qalandars, whose antinomian behaviour rejected the prescribed structures of ādāb, and who also desired a more intensive form of spiritual expression. However, the pressures of political persuasion and centralising forces caused many within these antinomian movements to conform to a more domesticated and sober form of Sufi expression which endorsed traditional Sufi ādāb. In short, the dialectic moves from apologetics to alternatives and alterity to accommodation. All of these developments are evident within Sufi writings that portray the appropriate form of ādāb.

A focus upon Sufi ādāb from its formative period until the very beginning of the modern period in the sixteenth century offers a dialectic that does not differ fundamentally from the views of other scholars who have traced the historical trajectory of Sufism. However, the concept of ādāb within the Sufi tradition provides a useful yardstick by which it is possible to analyse the various movements and manifestations. It is dangerous to essentialise a classical form of Sufi ādāb that persisted from the formative period of the tenth century and lasted in a pristine fashion until the sixteenth century. That there were controversies and challenges to “normative ādāb” is typified in the discussions and practice of the samā’, which ranged from Ghazālī’s caution, to Rūmī’s more open and ecstatic performance, and further to the supposed homoerotic practices of Kirmānī. However, the persistence of a sober, shariʿa–minded Sufi ādāb, represented by the continuing popularity of works by scholars such as Ghazālī and Suhrawardī, indicates that there was indeed a standard of belief and practice that persisted within some Sufi circles during the period in question. Such an essential foundation of Sufi ādāb, and the challenges posed to it by alternative forms of spirituality resembles Ernest Gellner’s theory of the cyclical pattern of state–formation or dynasty initiation. Gellner argued that when “High Islam” (represented by the scholars, reason, order and sobriety) struggled for its enforcement, it was “Low Islam” (comprised of the uneducated tribes and masses who were more inclined to ecstasy than rule observance) that was used by rulers to enforce or clean up the corruption. And when Low Islam had succeeded in temporarily routing High Islam, it conformed to the strictures of “orthodoxy” and High Islam became the standard once more. While there are some difficulties with Gellner’s theory, the parallel between High Islam and Low Islam with “sober Sufism” and “deviant dervishes”, and the movement within Sufism from apologetic to alterity to accommodation spring readily to mind.

Bibliography

Primary sources

84 Trimingham, The Sufi Orders in Islam; Green, Sufism.
87 The distinction between “High Islam” and “Low Islam” is problematic, although Gellner does acknowledge that the boundaries between them are not precise.


Ḥajji ‘Abd al-Raḥīm. *Ādāb al-ṭarīq*. MS Arbāb al-ṭarīq, Majlis Library, Tehran (manuscript number 1055) and MS Ādāb al-ṭarīq, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg (manuscript number B946).


**Secondary literature**


