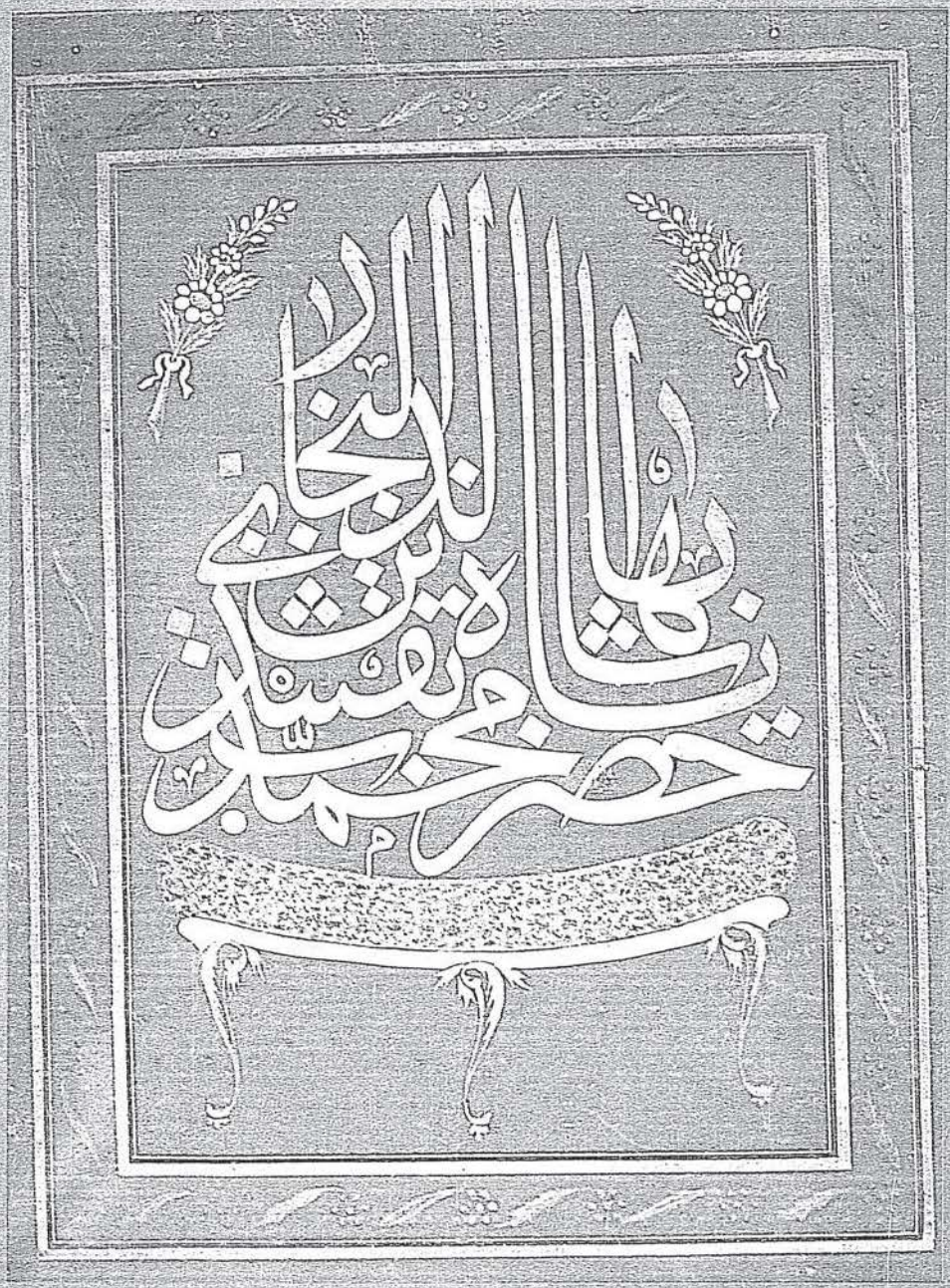


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NAQSHBANDIS

IN WESTERN AND CENTRAL ASIA



Edited by Elisabeth Özdalga

SWEDISH RESEARCH INSTITUTE IN ISTANBUL 1999



**NAQSHBANDIS
IN WESTERN AND CENTRAL ASIA
CHANGE AND CONTINUITY**

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The Naqshbandī Sheikhs of Hawrāmān and the Heritage of Khāliddiyya-Mujaddidiyya in Kurdistan

FERHAD SHAKELY

The history of the Naqshbandī order has been extensively recorded and studied not only by Western scholars, but by leaders of the order and their followers as well. However, such studies, understandably, do not parallel the various historical periods or geographical extent of the order. As far as Kurdistan and the Kurdish Naqshbandīs are concerned, almost all the studies have tended to focus on Mawlānā Khālid Shahrāzūrī (1193/1779-1242/1827), the eponym and founder of the Khāliddiyya suborder, and the early years in the development of Khāliddiyya. In contrast, this paper is confined to studying the post-Mawlānā periods of the Khāliddiyya suborder, and more especially the Naqshbandī sheikhs of Hawrāmān, the Sirāj al-Dīnī family, who have been the most influential and prominent representatives of the Khāliddiyya branch in Kurdistan and in the whole Middle-East. A great emphasis will be put on the family's role in spreading the Naqshbandī order from the time of Sirāj al-Dīn I. The main features of the order, which have been shaped in the span of more than one and a half centuries, are studied in the light of, and in comparison with, the situation of the order at the time of Mawlānā Khālid at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Mawlānā Khālid and Khāliddiyya

The Naqshbandī order, as it was introduced in Kurdistan at the beginning of the nineteenth century by Mawlānā Khālid, had special features that, no doubt, contributed to its development and the spread of its teachings. Those features were identical, for the most part, with the mainstream Sufi views established and/or reestablished by sheikh Ahmad Sirhindī (d. 1624) and his successors. It is, therefore, quite natural that Mawlānā Khālid would represent the ideas and teachings of his masters in the subcontinent, by whom he was initiated to the path. But it is also true that Mawlānā Khālid was not just one of those hundreds or perhaps thousands of deputies who were initiated, trained and instructed by sheikh 'Abdullāh Dihlavī, also known as Shāh Ghulām 'Alī, (d. 1240/1824). He was, due to several reasons, exceptional in his position, qualities and abilities.

Shāh Ghulām 'Alī conferred upon Mawlānā Khālid "full and absolute successorship," *khilāfa tamma muṭlaqa*, a rank which he seems to have denied other deputies. There are statements by Shāh Ghulām 'Alī in which he expressed his awareness of

the unique position of Mawlānā Khālid.¹ After staying one year in the *khānaqāh* in Delhi, Shāh Ghulām ‘Alī, tells Mawlānā to go back to Kurdistan. While he and his master were bidding one another farewell, they had an interesting conversation, at the end of which Shāh Ghulām asked, “what else do you want?” Mawlānā replied, “I want religion (*dīn*) and I want the world (*dunyā*) to strengthen the religion.” The Sheikh tells him, “Go, I gave (bestowed upon) you the whole of it.”²

Mawlānā Khālid returned to Kurdistan in 1811 but left it for good and went to Damascus in 1822. Even during those eleven years, he spent more than five years of his life in Baghdad.³ This period, although relatively short, was quite important and decisive for the order since it was during these years that the order was firmly established and most of the great and prominent deputies initiated. It was also during this time that he had heated discussions concerning different religious questions with Iranian scholars he encountered on his journeys to and from India through Iran. He survived an assassination attempt as well.

The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya was recognized as an anti-Shi‘a order. This was due partly to the fact that there was a great Shi‘a population in the original regions of the order in the Indian subcontinent, as well as the daily confrontations strengthening that tendency. There were certainly also historical reasons for the tension in the relations between the Naqshbandīs and the Shi‘a. But when Mawlānā Khālid returned to Kurdistan this aspect had been minimized. There was no need to emphasize anti-Shi‘ism because there was no direct confrontation with the Shi‘a. On the other hand, the Indian Mujaddidis were on good terms with the leaders and followers of the Qādiriyya order; Mawlānā even received a *Khilāfa* even for the Qādiriyya order. But once Mawlānā was back in Sulaimani, he was confronted with great rivalry by the leader of the Qādirī order, sheikh Ma‘rūf Nodē (Nūdahī) (1175/1761-1254/1838). The Qādirī order was well established in Kurdistan at that time and had great influence upon the people and even the rulers of the Kurdish Baban principality. The return of Mawlānā Khālid and the rapid spread of the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya as a new and energetic order disturbed the Qādirī leaders, who strongly resisted Mawlānā Khālid. The rivalry was escalated to such a degree that even Mawlānā’s trustworthiness as a Muslim was questioned by sheikh Ma‘rūf who also accused him of being a liar and a heretic. The presence and influence of the political factor in this conflict should be emphasized. The Baban Maḥmūd Pāshā harbored ill will against Mawlānā Khālid and feared his influence upon his brothers and cousins. It is not unlikely that the Pāshā played a role in deepening the dispute between the two orders for the benefit of his political ends.⁴

Although Mawlānā Khālid was deeply touched by the circumstances, he showed, nevertheless, great restraint and never allowed himself to be pulled into polemics. He expressed his willingness to have discussions and dialogue with his opponents. In letters to one of the Baban princes, ‘Uthmān Pasha, he suggests that sheikh Ma‘rūf and “great scholars” should come to meet him and he would debate and converse

1 ‘Abd al-Karīm (Malf) Mudarris, *Yād-i mardān* (Remembering the Great Men), vol. 1, pp. 326-327. A letter of Shāh Ghulam Alī to Mawlana Khālid. See also, Butros Abu-Manneh, “The Naqshbandiyya in the Ottoman Lands in the Early 19th Century,” *Die Welt des Islams*, 1-4/XXII (1984), 5.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 32

3 This is probably the main reason why a number of historians and scholars call Mawlānā, Baghdādī Mawlānā. Of the nearly 300 letters and treatises to which we have access, he signed them using a variety of titles including al-Kurdi, al-Jāfi and al-Shahrazī; in no instance did he use al-Baghdādī. The insistence on calling him Baghdādī is apparently a political stance aiming at denying his Kurdishness.

4 Mudarris, *ibid.*, p. 47.



The shrine of Mawlānā Khālid al-Kurdī al-Shahrazūrī in Damascus.
(Ferhad Shakeley, 1993)

with them (in faqīr ba 'Uhā mubāḥatha va guftgū mīkunam). He suggests further that 'Uthmān Pasha himself would be present in the meeting.⁵

Mawlānā Khālid's attempts to achieve a peaceful solution did not appear to be successful. Thus, he chose to leave Sulaimani and to reside in Baghdad, where he stayed about three years. When Maḥmūd Pasha succeeded his father, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān Pasha (d. 1228/1813), as the ruler of the Baban principality, he visited Baghdad and invited Mawlānā to return to Kurdistan, which he did in 1231/1816 or 1232/1817. Apparently the situation was such that it was not proper for Mawlānā to stay a long time, therefore he left Sulaimani for good on the 25th of October, 1820.⁶ Apart from the summer months of 1821 and 1822 which Mawlānā spent in Hawrāmān, he stayed in Baghdad. After spending the summer of 1822 in Kurdistan, he left via Urfa and Dayr az-Zūr to Damascus where he arrived most probably late in November 1822.⁷ It is often indicated that Mawlānā left Kurdistan, and Baghdad, for Damascus to escape the Qādiris' hostility. Considering the situation from an historical perspective, it should be kept in mind that it was necessary for the Order to expand and not be limited to Sulaimani or Baghdad. A sort of settlement was, however, reached with the Qādiri leaders while Mawlānā was still alive; sheikh Ma'rūf Nodē declared his repentance in his letters to Mawlānā and by sending his envoys to him, asked for a meeting and reconciliation, as well as forgiveness for his shortcomings.⁸

The time between Mawlānā's return to Kurdistan as a sufi guide and his death was relatively short, but he succeeded in establishing the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya as the most powerful and influential sufi order in the Middle-East. He is compared in this respect to Shāh Ghulām 'Alī.⁹ In 1820, when he was still living

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

⁶ Claudius James Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan*, vol. I, 2nd ed., England, 1972, p. 320.

⁷ Reading Mawlānā's letter from Damascus, dated 17th of Rabī' al-Awwal 1238 (2 December, 1822), to two of his deputies in Baghdad, one can easily infer that he had arrived there quite recently. See Mudarris, *ibid.*, pp. 416-417.

⁸ Mudarris, *ibid.*, pp. 396-397.

⁹ Abu-Manneh, *ibid.*.

in Kurdistan, the number of his disciples was estimated at 12,000,¹⁰ which is not easy to verify or disprove. One thing is certain in this context; no other Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi sheikh before him succeeded like him in initiating so many great and distinguished scholars to the order.¹¹

The Sirāj al-Dīnī Sheikhs

The Sirāj al-Dīnī sheikhs have been the most prominent representatives of the Khālidi suborder in Kurdistan since the time Mawlānā Khālid left Kurdistan for Damascus at the end of 1237 A. H./autumn, 1822. Indeed, sheikh ‘Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn I (1195/1781-1283/1867) was the most important figure among Mawlānā Khālid’s disciples even while Mawlānā was still living in either Kurdistan or Baghdad. The two men knew each other as students of Islamic sciences (*faqē* in Kurdish), and they met once again in Baghdad in 1226/1811 during Mawlānā’s five-month stay in the mosque of sheikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gaylāni, shortly after his return from India to Sulaimani.¹² It was then that Faqē ‘Uthmān, who afterwards was known as Sirāj al-Dīn I, was initiated into the path by Mawlānā. After two years of spiritual training, he was the first person to become a full-fledged *khalifa*, deputy, of Mawlānā.¹³ He was then thirty three years old. Sheikh ‘Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn was born in Tawēla, in the region of Hawrāmān, near Halabja. According to many sources, his parents were descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad. The family, thus, is a sayyid family. But the Sirāj al-Dīnī sheikhs never claimed being sayyids. Sheikh ‘Uthmān signed his letters with his own name followed by al-Khālidi al-Mujaddidi an-Naqshbandi.

Sheikh ‘Uthmān accompanied his preceptor during the years in which Mawlānā was twice obliged to leave Sulaimani for Baghdad. In Sulaimani, sheikh ‘Uthmān usually substituted for Mawlānā in the *khatm* assemblies. The disciples were instructed by Mawlana to attend ‘Uthmān’s *khatm* circles. Among these were outstanding names such as Sayyid Ismā‘il Daghistāni, Mullā ‘Abd al-Hakīm Kūshgharī and sheikh Muhammad of Halabja.¹⁴ Apparently, Mawlānā Khālid, who had much organisational ability, was preparing his disciple to succeed him and to take the difficult and crucial responsibility of spreading the order in Kurdistan. When Mawlānā left Sulaimani for Baghdad for the last time in 1820, sheikh ‘Uthmān did not follow him. He moved, instead, to his home region, Hawrāmān, and began to establish a strong base for the order, which became one of the most important centres for the Khālidi suborder in the whole Middle East, continuing to be such until the 1950s. This centre not only contributed greatly in spreading the sufi teachings of the Naqshbandi order, but also produced a number of poets whose poems are the most marvellous and significant examples of sufi poetry.

This indispensable position of Sirāj al-Dīn for Mawlānā and for the order, becomes more clear when we learn that during the summer months of 1236/1821 and 1237/1822 Mawlānā left the heat of Baghdad for the summer resorts of Hawrāmān, where he met Sirāj al-Dīn and supervised the Naqshbandi networks in Kurdistan. Sheikh ‘Uthmān also visited Mawlana in Baghdad, at least once, during this period.

10 Rich, *ibid.*, p. 141.

11 Mudarris, *ibid.*, p. 40.

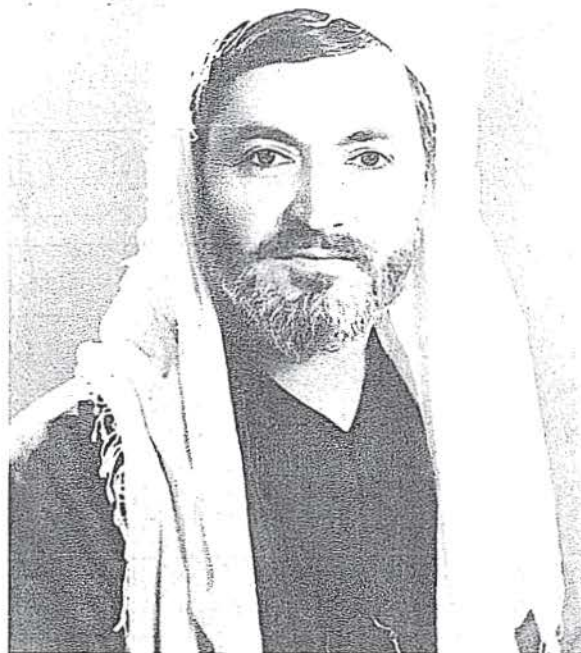
12 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

It was from Kurdistan, not from Baghdad, as it is commonly, but wrongly, accepted in the sources about the Khālidi suborder, that Mawlānā Khālīd went to Damascus.

After leaving Sulaimani in 1236/1822, Mawlānā was represented in his Sulaimani *khānaqāh* by sheikh ‘Abdullāh Hirātī (d. 1245/1839-40), who was assisted by sheikh Muḥammad Ṣaḥīb (d.1283/1866), the brother of Mawlānā. When Mawlānā died in 1242/1827 Hirātī, and a short time later also Ṣaḥīb, left for Damascus. A few years later, in 1254/1838 the Baban Aḥmad Pasha invited sheikh ‘Uthmān to be in charge of the Khālidi *khānaqāh* in Sulaimani. The sheikh accepted the task and supervised the *khānaqāh*, but he did not abandon Hawrāmān, returning there often.



Sheikh Muḥammad ‘Uthman Sirāj al-Dīn II (1896-1997) at middle age.

With the exception of those two years, sheikh ‘Uthmān lived in Tawēla and Biyāra, in Hawrāmān, from 1236/1820, the year Mawlānā left Sulaimani for Baghdad, until his death in 1283/1867. In nearly half a century he had become the most prominent *khalīfa* of Mawlānā Khālīd in Hawrāmān and Baban regions.¹⁵ The sheikh had a great number of *khalīfas* and *mansūbs* /deputies and affiliates, from different regions in Kurdistan and the Middle East. In his hagiography about Mawlānā Khālīd and the Naqshbandī sheikhs of Hawrāmān, Malf ‘Abd al-Karīm-i Mudarris enumerates 96 *khalīfas* and 33 *mansūbs* of sheikh ‘Uthmān. Among them we find many great ulema and poets in addition to two powerful rulers - Aḥmad Pāshā of Baban and Rizāqulī Khān of Sina (Sanadaj) in Ardalān. This is contrary to what many researchers suggested - that the Naqshbandiyya was only an assembly for opposition sects in Kurdish society.

In addition to his letters, there are a few lines of poetry and ten advisory articles by sheikh ‘Uthmān, in which he instructs his disciples in the ways of the order. In one of these articles, dated 1272/1856, he appoints his sons Muḥammad Bahā’ al-Dīn and ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān as his deputies and successors and advises his followers to obey them. Sheikh ‘Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn I was succeeded in turn by five sheikhs in his family. However, it should also be indicated that other members of the family have been in charge of the path in different periods, each with his own disciples and *khānaqāhs*. Sheikh ‘Uthman Sirāj al-Dīn was succeeded directly by his son sheikh Muḥammad Bahā ad-Dīn (1252/1837-1298/1881). Although in his testament, Sirāj al-Dīn had appointed two of his sons - Bahā al-Dīn and ‘Abd ar-Raḥman Abu al-Wafā (1253/1837-1285/1868) - to be his successors, except for a very short time, sheikh ‘Abd al-Raḥman declined the position and resided in Baghdad. He was a creative poet. The small

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

number of poems to which we have access today, some 70 poems in Persian, mostly *ghazals*, indicates his talent as a sufi poet. Bahā al-Dīn was also a poet, although only a few of his poems are extant.

The third sheikh in the Sirāj al-Dīn *silsila*, initiating chain, was sheikh ‘Umar Dhiā’ al-Dīn (1255/1839-1318/1901). He was distinguished from his predecessors in some respects. It was during his time as a sheikh that *dhikr-i jahr*, vocal remembrance, was practiced in addition to *dhikr-i khafī*, silent remembrance. He was known for his enthusiasm for science and education, and for culture as a whole. He built several new *khānaqāhs* in Khānaqīn, Kifrī, Qizrābāt, Biyacra, Tawēla and Sardasht. He was a brilliant poet in Kurdish, Persian and Arabic. In his poems he used “Fawzī” as his *takhalluṣ*, pen name. We have access to some fifty letters written by him to his deputies or to the great men of his time, among whom we find the Qājāri Shāh Muẓaffar al-Dīn (reigned 1896-1907) and the Ottoman Sultan Abd al-Ḥamīd II (reigned 1876-1909). There are, moreover, three treatises on sufi teachings. A remarkable feature in the life of sheikh ‘Umar Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn was the good relations he had with the Qādiri sheikhs and their disciples and followers, which will be dealt with later.

The immediate successor in the chain was his son sheikh Najm al-Dīn (1280/1863-1337/1918), who was known for his *zuhd*, renunciation. The Ottomans wanted to give him a monthly salary to use for the *khānaqāh* and its visitors, but the sheikh rejected the offer. He had great interest in intellectual conversations with the scholars who so often visited the *khānaqāh* in Biyfra. He was a poet, but the number of the poems available to us is very small. Sheikh Najm al-Dīn was succeeded by his brother sheikh Muḥammad ‘Alā al-Dīn (1280/1863-1373/1954). He wrote a treatise in Arabic entitled *Tibb al-Qulūb* (Healing the Hearts) which contains advice and recommendations. He was a well-known physician who helped thousands of people in the region and he prescribed herbal medicine to them.

When sheikh ‘Alā al-Dīn died in 1954, he was succeeded by his son sheikh Muḥammad ‘Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn II (1314/1896-1417/1997), who was already a well-known and established sufi leader. Sheikh ‘Uthmān II was deeply learned in Islamic theology as well as in Kurdish and Persian poetry. He was, moreover, a skillful physician with wide knowledge of herbal medicine. When the monarchy in Iraq was overthrown by General ‘Abd al-Karīm Qāsim, sheikh ‘Uthmān left Iraqī Kurdistan in 1959 and resided in Iranian Kurdistan for about two decades. After the Iranian revolution he came back to Hawrāmān, Iraqī Kurdistan, but he soon left it for Baghdad. He spent the last seven or eight years of his life in Istanbul, where he died on 30 January, 1997. He was buried inside his residence, close to the *khānaqāh* in Istanbul. Sheikh ‘Uthmān was also a poet; two volumes of his poems, in Kurdish and Persian, are published,¹⁶ as well as a volume of his treatises and letters entitled *Sirāj al-Qulūb* “Lantern of Hearts”¹⁷ of which an English translation is also published.¹⁸

Sheikh ‘Uthmān’s brother, sheikh Mawlānā Khālid, also a sufi leader, died almost simultaneously in Sanadaj Iranian Kurdistan. It seems that neither one of them knew about the death of the other, thus fulfilling a great wish of their lives. Both had wished that he may never experience (the literal Kurdish expression here is “not to see”) the death of his brother. In tens of poems and hundreds of letters exchanged between them in the span of the last 70-80 years, they expressed that wish time and

16 *Chapkaḡulē la ḡulzār-ī ‘Uthmānī* (A Bouquet from the ‘Uthmānī Rose Garden), (first volume) compiled and edited by ‘Abdullāh Mustafā Sāliḡ (Fanāyī), 1st ed., Baghdad, 1989, 2nd ed., 1992 (although no place is given, it is certainly printed in Istanbul); vol. 2, Istanbul, 1995.

17 *Kitāb Sirāj al-Qulūb*, li al-Sheikh Muhammad ‘Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn an-Naqshbandī [n. d., n. p.].

18 *Sirāj al-Qulūb* (“Lantern of Hearts”), by Hadrat Shaikh Muhammad Uthman Sirag Ad-Deen An-Naqshbandī, Khankah Canada, Canada, 1992.

again. This was one of the last wondrous deeds, *karāmāt*, so often attributed to them throughout their lives. When they died, sheikh ‘Uthmān was 101 years old and sheikh Khālid 99. Sheikh ‘Uthmān was named after his great-grandfather, ‘Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn I, while sheikh Khālid was named after Mawlānā Khālid.

The role of the Naqshbandī sheikhs of Hawrāmān in spreading and establishing the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya-Khālidiyya in Kurdistan and in parts of the Middle-East is of central importance. It was under their guidance, as well as that of their deputies, that the order reached most of the regions in Iraqī and Iranian Kurdistan, Turkman Şahrā in Iran, Northern Syria, Lebanon and Bosnia. Nevertheless, they still identified themselves as Khālidiīs and Mujaddidiīs, and never invented, or claimed to have invented, a new sub-order.

The Post-Mawlānā Naqshbandī-Mujaddidī in Kurdistan: Development and Evolution.

The characteristics of the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya that Mawlānā Khālid introduced in Kurdistan were not everlasting; they were, to some extent, the products of the Central Asian and Indian circumstances. The new Kurdish environment obviously had its impact on the development of the Khālidiyya sub-order and shaped it to adjust to the Kurdish reality. It should be emphasized here that the adjustment did not involve the principal conceptions or teachings of sufism, but mostly concerned the practical aspects: silent or vocal *dhikr*, the attitude towards other sects and communities, the Shī‘a and the Qādiris, or the stance that should be adapted on politics and political authorities. The only exception, may be the opinion of Ibn ‘Arabī and his theory of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, which is not properly relevant in this case.

The first great problem to face Mawlānā Khālid and his newly established sub-order was the hostile attitude taken by the leader of the Qādiri order in Kurdistan, sheikh Ma‘rūf Nodē, with all the complicated consequences the conflict implied, as was mentioned previously. Sheikh ‘Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn I had to deal with this conflict and with the new situation as a whole when Mawlānā Khālid left for Damascus and died thereafter in 1242/1827. The reconciliation reached at between Mawlānā Khālid and sheikh Ma‘rūf put an end to any further open dispute between the two men and their followers. The position of Sirāj al-Dīn as the main representative of the order in Kurdistan necessitated starting new and friendly relations with the Qādiri order. This new attitude marks the two orders’ relations in the coming decades and among the succeeding generations. Among the letters sent by Sirāj al-Dīn to different people we find a letter to Hājī sheikh Kāk Aḥmad (1207-1305), son of sheikh Ma‘rūf Nodē which contains many friendly and sincere expressions.¹⁹

Sheikh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Tālabānī (d. ca 1275/1858) of Karkūk (Kirkuk) was one of the prominent leaders of the Qādiri order, with whom Sirāj al-Dīn was on good terms. This relation was developed further when Sirāj al-Dīn sent his son ‘Umar to study at the Tālabānī *tekke* in Karkūk, where he lived within sheikh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s family and studied in the company of his son, ‘Alī, who afterwards succeeded his father and became the leader of the Qādiri order. Sheikh ‘Umar Ḍiyā al-Dīn later married a niece of sheikh Ḥasan Qarachēwār of Qādir Karam, Karkūk, who also was a leader of the Qādiri order.

In a letter to the Naqshbandī deputies and novices in the Juwānro region, sheikh ‘Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn reminds them that their order is a combination of five orders,

¹⁹ Mudarris, *ibid.*, pp. 44-45.



Sheikh Muḥammad 'Uthman Sirāj al-Din II (1896-1997).
(Zinet Shakeley, 1993)

including the Qādirī, and that sheikh Sirhindī regarded Ḥaḍrat-i Ghawth, i. e. sheikh 'Abd al-Qādir Gilānī (d. 561/1166), the all-embracing means without whom nobody would be favoured on the path.²⁰ Apparently, some people had behaved rudely with the dervishes of sheikh 'Abd al-Raḥmān (probably sheikh 'Abd al-Raḥmān Tālabānī). The sheikh orders his followers "to treat them as a beggar treats a king." He further tells them that he regards himself as the ground under the feet of the lowest of the sheikh dervishes (khāk-i qadam-i 'adnā darvīshī ... dānesta va mīdānam). Sheikh 'Umar Ḍiyā al-Dīn, in a letter to one of his deputies, emphasizes that there is no difference between the Qādirī and the Naqshbandī orders, and whoever makes such a difference, bears the signs of misfortune.²¹ In another letter, addressed to sheikh Hasan Qarachéwâr, a leader of the Qādirī order, he begs him for attention, *tawajjuh*, and describes himself as a servant, *chākar*.²²

This genuine and friendly relation between the Qādirīs and the Naqshbandīs was not limited to the leaders of the two orders. The Kurdish sufi poet Mawlawī (1221/1806-1300/1882) was a deputy of sheikh 'Uthman Sirāj al-Dīn I and his son sheikh Muḥammad Bahā al-Dīn, but, at the same time, he was a good friend of sheikh 'Abd al-Raḥmān Tālabānī and sheikh Kāk Aḥmad, both great leaders of the Qādirī order, visited them and sent letters to them. He wrote poems in praising sheikh 'Abd al-Raḥmān and wrote two elegies when the sheikh died.²³ His friendship with the family continued even after the death of the Sheikh. Mawlawī visited sheikh 'Alī Tālabānī and on one occasion he stayed several months in the Qādirī *tekke* in Karkūk.

The third and fourth generations of Qādirī and Naqshbandī sheikhs kept all the avenues and bridges between them open and developed their relations further, cooperating even on the political level when the circumstances of the Kurdish liberation movement demanded such cooperation. Sheikh 'Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn II, praises sheikh Maḥmūd Ḥafid (1881-1956), king of Southern Kurdistan (October 1922-

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 239.

²³ *Dīwān-i Mawlawī*, compiled and edited by Malā 'Abd al-Karīm Mudarris, Baghdad, 1959, p. ٤ (Yā, y). See also Mudarris, *ibid.*, pp. 486-87.

August 1923) in one of his poems and wishes to sacrifice his head, fortune, heart and soul for him.²⁴ These were not merely words of courtesy or politeness since we know that the Naqshbandī sheikhs of Hawrāmān supported sheikh Maḥmūd politically and militarily. In May 1919 Maḥmūd Khān Dizlī, a chief from Hawrāmān, encouraged directly by the Naqshbandī sheikhs, came with 300 of his men to Sulaimani. After clashes with the British troops, he occupied the city and took the British officers as prisoners. This operation enabled sheikh Maḥmūd to strengthen his authority as the governor of Southern Kurdistan.²⁵ It was during the same period that another Naqshbandī sheikh, sheikh Aḥmad of Barzān, the elder brother of the legendary Kurdish leader Mustafa Barzani, started a campaign among the tribes in his region to support sheikh Maḥmūd and his uprising against the British colonialists.²⁶

The relations between the Qādiri and Naqshbandī orders assumed a political and organizational form in the middle of the 1940s when there was a need to build a new party to lead the Kurdish struggle in Iraqi Kurdistan. Malā Mustafā Barzānī, a general in the army of the Kurdish Republic in Mahabad in 1945-46, sent his representatives to Iraqi Kurdistan to build such a party. In his absence - since he was outlawed by the Iraqi and British authorities - he appointed sheikh Latā Ḥafīd (1917-1972), son of sheikh Maḥmūd, as the first vice chairman of Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) that was founded on August 16, 1946.²⁷ This decision had both historical and political significance. Barzani evidently wanted to mark the new party as a continuation of the Kurdish aspirations, of which sheikh Maḥmūd was a great symbol. Moreover, it was of great importance to include sheikh Laṭīf in the leadership of the party to ensure support from different regions of Iraqi Kurdistan, but also because he was an outstanding figure among the Qādiri sheikh, including the Ḥafīd sheikhs in Sulaimani, whose influence, socially and politically, should be taken into consideration. This symbolic significance was reassured a half century later when the remains of Muṣṭafā Barzānī were brought to the Great Mosque in Sulaimani and put beside the graves of sheikh Kāk Aḥmad and sheikh Maḥmūd one night, before he was moved to Barzān to be buried in his native village, in 1992. Even in our days we find that one of the three political advisors of Mas'ūd Barzānī, chairman of KDP, is a professor of law from Karkūk who belongs to the Qādiri sheikhs.

Sheikh 'Umar Diyā' al-Dīn, as was mentioned above, was sent by his father to study at the Qādiri *tekke* in Karkūk, where he was treated as a member of the family and established a friendship with sheikh 'Alī Tālabānī that lasted throughout their lives. This intimate acquaintance with the Qādiri order had its impact on the practical aspects of the Naqshbandī order. When sheikh 'Umar succeeded his father as the leader of the Naqshbandiyya-Khālidiyya, he introduced the vocal remembrance *dhikr-i jahri*, into the order besides the silent remembrance *dhikr-i khafi*, that has been, and still is, characteristic for the Naqshbandiyya.

The Sirāj al-Dīnī sheikhs who were always identified as Naqshbandīs began to initiate their disciples even to the Qādiri order and to consider themselves as leaders for both orders. Sheikh Muḥammad 'Alī al-Dīn was the first to use the title *Khidim at-Ta-rīqa an-Naqshbandiyya wa' l-Qādiriyya* (servant of the Naqshbandī and Qādiri orders).

24 Sālih *op. cit.*, pp. 22-24.

25 M. R. Hawar, *Sheikh Mahmūd-ī Qāramān u dawlatāka-y khwarū-y Kurdistan* (Sheikh Mahmud the Hero and the State of Southern Kurdistan), vol. I, Jaf Press, London, 1990, p. 489. See also, Hilmī, Rafīq, *Yāddāsh* (memoirs), vol. 2, Baghdad, 1956, p. 115.

26 Mas'ūd Barzani, *Al-Barzani wa l-Haraka al-taharruriyya al-kurdiyya 1945-1958* (Barzani and the Kurdish Liberation Movement 1945-1958), n.d.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 24. See also, Sharīf, 'Abd as-Sattār Tāhir, *al-Jan'iyyat wa l-munattamāt wa l-ahzāb al-Kurdiyya fī nisī qarn 1908-1958* (Kurdish Societies and Organizations during Half a Century, 1908-1958), Sharikat al-Ma'rifa, Baghdad, 1989, p. 154.

The Attitude towards Ibn 'Arabī and His Doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*

The earlier leaders of the Naqshbandiyya were apparently acquainted with and interested in the teachings of Ibn 'Arabī (560/1165-638/1240), especially his doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, the unity of being, in as early as the eighth/fourteenth century. This familiarity with Ibn 'Arabī and his teachings can be traced in the numerous treatises written by the prominent Naqshbandī sheikhs in Transoxiana, as well as their disciples and deputies.²⁸

Mullā 'Abdullāh Ilāhī (d. 896/1490), a deputy of Khoja 'Ubaydullāh Aḥrār (d. 895/1490), was the first to introduce the Naqshbandī order in the Ottoman lands. Ilāhī, who was trained by Aḥrār and had had contact with 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 898/1492), was greatly influenced by the teachings of sheikh al-Akbar, which had an impact on his writings.²⁹ The Naqshbandīs in Kurdistan were not far removed from that influence. Evidently, the works of Ibn 'Arabī were read and studied in the sufi, and intellectual, circles in Kurdistan and there was a serious interest in them among the educated Kurds.³⁰ A literary and poetic expression of Ibn 'Arabī's ideas, especially the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, is found in the poems of the Kurdish sufi poet Malā-ye Jazīrī (1570-1640). These teachings are also artistically interwoven with the events of the Kurdish national epic *Mam u Zin* by Aḥmad-i Khānī (1651-1707).³¹

The first Naqshbandī leader who took a critical attitude towards Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* was sheikh Aḥmad Sirhindī, the Mujaddid. This attitude marked to some extent the order in the Indian subcontinent after Sirhindī, the post-Sirhindī period, that was called henceforth Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya. As far as the Khālidiyya branch of the order is concerned, it is obvious that Mawlānā Khālīd Shahrāzūrī was an initiatic descendant of sheikh Aḥmad Sirhindī by five generations, and an enthusiastic Mujaddidī. It is, therefore, presumed that he was influenced by the teachings of Sirhindī. We do not find in the letters of Mawlānā Khālīd, of which nearly three hundreds are extant, or in his treatises, any reference to sheikh al-Akbar and his teachings. Nonetheless, he wrote several times to his deputies and disciples advising them to read works written by leaders of the *tariqa* and scholars who were known for their enthusiasm for Ibn 'Arabī and his teachings, such as 'Ubaydullāh Aḥrār, 'Abd al-Raḥman Jami, 'Abd al-Ghafur Lari and 'Abd al-Ghanī an-Nabulusī.³² It is only in later hagiographies that a critical attitude concerning Ibn 'Arabī's *waḥdat al-wujūd*, is ascribed to Mawlānā Khālīd. Mala 'Abd al-Karim Mudarris in his *Yād-i Mardān* quotes sheikh Shahab ad-Din Alusi as stating that he had heard that Mawlānā Khālīd forbade his disciples to read Ibn 'Arabī's *Futuḥāt al-Makkiyya* and *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*.³³ Alusi was himself a *mansūb*, member, of Mawlānā Khālīd and studied Islamic law under him. Nevertheless, when relating Mawlānā's attitude towards Ibn 'Arabī's works, he states that he had heard about it.

The Iraqi historian 'Abbas al-'Azzawī indicates in an article that he had seen a list of the books belonging to Mawlānā Khālīd, in which he did not find anything of the

28 Hamid Algar, "Reflections of Ibn 'Arabī in Early Naqshbandi Tradition," *Journal of Islamic Research*, 1 (1991), 3.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

30 Martin van Bruinessen, "The Naqshbandi Order in 17th century Kurdistan," in Marc Gaboriau, et al. (eds.), *Naqshbandīs. Historical Developments and Present Situation of a Muslim Mystical Order*, Editions ISIS, Istanbul-Paris, 1990, p. 346.

31 'Izz al-Din Mustafa Rasul (ed.), *Aḥmad-i Khani*, Baghdad, 1979, pp. 455-464.

32 Mudarris, *ibid.*, pp. 321, 338-344.

33 Mudarris, *ibid.*, p. 67.

books by the extremist Sufis. Then, praising Mawlānā Khālid, he adds “far be it from him that he inclines to such books.”³⁴ The sentence here is not clear since ‘Azzāwī does not specify what “such books” means. But in the preceding pages in the same article, he quotes the above-mentioned sheikh Ālūsī, stating that Mawlānā Khālid had a pure faith, and “he did not believe in unity, unification and incarnation,” which explains ‘Azzāwī’s doubts. This is, undeniably, contradictory to the assertion found within other sources that there were several of Ibn ‘Arabī’s works in Mawlānā Khālid’s library.³⁵

Although most of the leading Sirāj al-Dīnī sheikhs have been good poets and active letter writers, there is not a single comprehensive work on the philosophical and theoretical aspects of the Naqshbandī order amongst their writings. Most of the letters and treatises were written to reply to deputies, followers and friends. In many cases they are devoted to explaining questions related to *shari’a*, or simply contain instructions about everyday matters. A number of these letters were written to the rulers of the time (including the Ottoman Sultan and the Qajar Shah) to ask them a favour or just to send them a few words of courtesy. The letters and treatises of sheikh ‘Umar Diya’ al-Dīn are, probably, the most comprehensive among the writings of the Sirāj al-Dīnī sheikhs. In a few of them, he discusses briefly the questions of *fanā’* and *laṭā’if* and other related topics, but the question of *waḥdat al-wujūd* is not dealt with anywhere.

The Cultural Heritage

In addition to hundreds of letters and a great number of treatises, Mawlānā Khālid also wrote tens of poems in Kurdish, Arabic and Persian. These were collected and printed in Istanbul in 1260/1844, only eighteen years after his death. Even in his letters, Mawlānā Khālid usually quotes lines of poetry. Often these are lines by known poets like Hafiz, Mawlānā Jalal al-Dīn Rūmi, Shah-i Naqshband, Shabustarī, Jāmī, Bidel-i Bukhārī and others. But he enriches many of his letters with lines of his own poetry. The addition of these lines of poetry clearly shows Mawlānā’s sophisticated taste and appreciation of poetry, as well as and the impact of words as a whole. This tradition was developed further by the Naqshbandī sheikhs of Hawrāmān, the Sirāj al-Dīnī sheikh family. In the 1830s, sheikh ‘Uthman Sirāj al-Dīn I, had already turned his home region to an important centre of sufism and culture, which attracted a great number of the poets and scholars. Other sheikhs in the family, who succeeded him during the last one and a half century, continued to promote Kurdish culture. Among their disciples, there have always been great scholars and poets who not only contributed to the spreading of the order, but also created great works that constitute the grounds of Kurdish sufi literature, which is an important feature of Kurdish culture as a whole. Many of these poets and scholars dwelled permanently in the Naqshbandī *khānaqāhs* or visited frequently and stayed there long periods.

Malā Ḥāmid-i Kātīb (1225/1810-1310/1892) was initiated into the path by sheikh ‘Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn I in 1250/1834 and remained with the family until his death. He served as *kātīb* to the sheikh and his sons Muḥammad Bahā al-Dīn and ‘Umar Diyā al-Dīn. Malā Ḥāmid was writer and poet, but his poems are mainly devoted to record social events, including the births and the deaths of the prominent members

³⁴ Al-Muhami, “Abbas al-’Azzawi: Mawlānā Khālid an-Naqshbandī,” *The Journal of the Kurdish Academy*, 1 (1973), p. 709.

³⁵ Algar, *ibid.*, p. 20, n. 75.

of the Sirāj al-Dīn family or of the order in general. His works include six books, the most important of which probably are the interpretation of the *Mathnawi-ye Ma'nawī* of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī in three volumes, his commentary on *Gulshan-i Rāz* by Maḥmūd Shabustarī and *Riāḍ al-mushtaḳīn*, a hagiography about the lives of Mawlānā Khālīd and sheikh 'Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn I. Even though none of these works are printed, manuscripts are extant.

Another two great Kurdish sufi poets are Sayyid 'Abd ar-Raḥīm Mawlawī, also known as Ma'dūmī, and sheikh Muḥammad Maḥwī (1830-1906) who undoubtedly merit being studied thoroughly as examples of excellent and significant sufi literature. Other important poets and scholars affiliated with the Naqshbandī sheikhs of Hawrāmān are Hājji Sayyid Ḥasan Chorri (d.1323/1905), Malā 'Abdullāh Jalī Koyī (1250-1326), sheikh Salīm Takhtayī, also known as Sālim-ī Sina (1845-1909), sheikh Muḥammad Amin Hawleri (Al-Kurdī al-Arbillī), sheikh 'Umar Ibn al-Qaradaghī (1303-1353), sheikh Bābā Rasīl Becdanī (1303-1363), sheikh 'Abd al-Karīm Aḥmadbirinda (d. 1361), Malā Maḥmūd Beckhud (1878-1955), sheikh Aḥmad Shākālī (1903-1982) and Malā 'Abd al-Karīm Mudarris (born 1901).

Conclusion

The return of Mawlānā Khālīd in 1811 from India marked the beginning of a new period in the history of the Naqshbandī order in the Middle East. Although a representative of the Mujaddidi branch of the order, the charismatic character of Mawlānā Khālīd made him the eponym of a branch called Khālidiyya, which spread rapidly throughout the whole Middle East. Many of the leaders of the Khālidiyya played an important role in the political history of Kurdistan in different periods. Sheikh 'Ubaydullāh Nahrī (in 1881), sheikh Sa'id Pīrān (in 1925) and Malā Muṣṭafā Barzānī (1945 until 1975), leaders of the Kurdish liberation movement, belonged to the Mujaddidi-Khālidi branch of the Naqshbandiyya. The role of the order in the development of Kurdish culture was even greater, since many significant scholars and poets were among the deputies and disciples of the Khālidiyya.

The first deputy of Mawlānā Khālīd was sheikh 'Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn I, who was the founder of the Sirāj al-Dīnī sheikh family, also known as the Naqshbandī sheikhs of Hawrāmān. The Naqshbandī centre started in Hawrāmān in the 1830 has continued to be the most important sufi and cultural centre in Kurdistan during the last one and a half centuries.

In 1997 one of the most influential sufi sheikhs of Hawrāmān, sheikh Muḥammad 'Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn II, died in Istanbul, without appointing any one of his sons or deputies to succeed him. This was an unprecedented event in the history of the family. There are now speculations that the leading role of the family has come to an end. It is not obvious, however, to what extent this will affect the development or the survival of the Khālidiyya-Mujaddidiyya in Kurdistan.