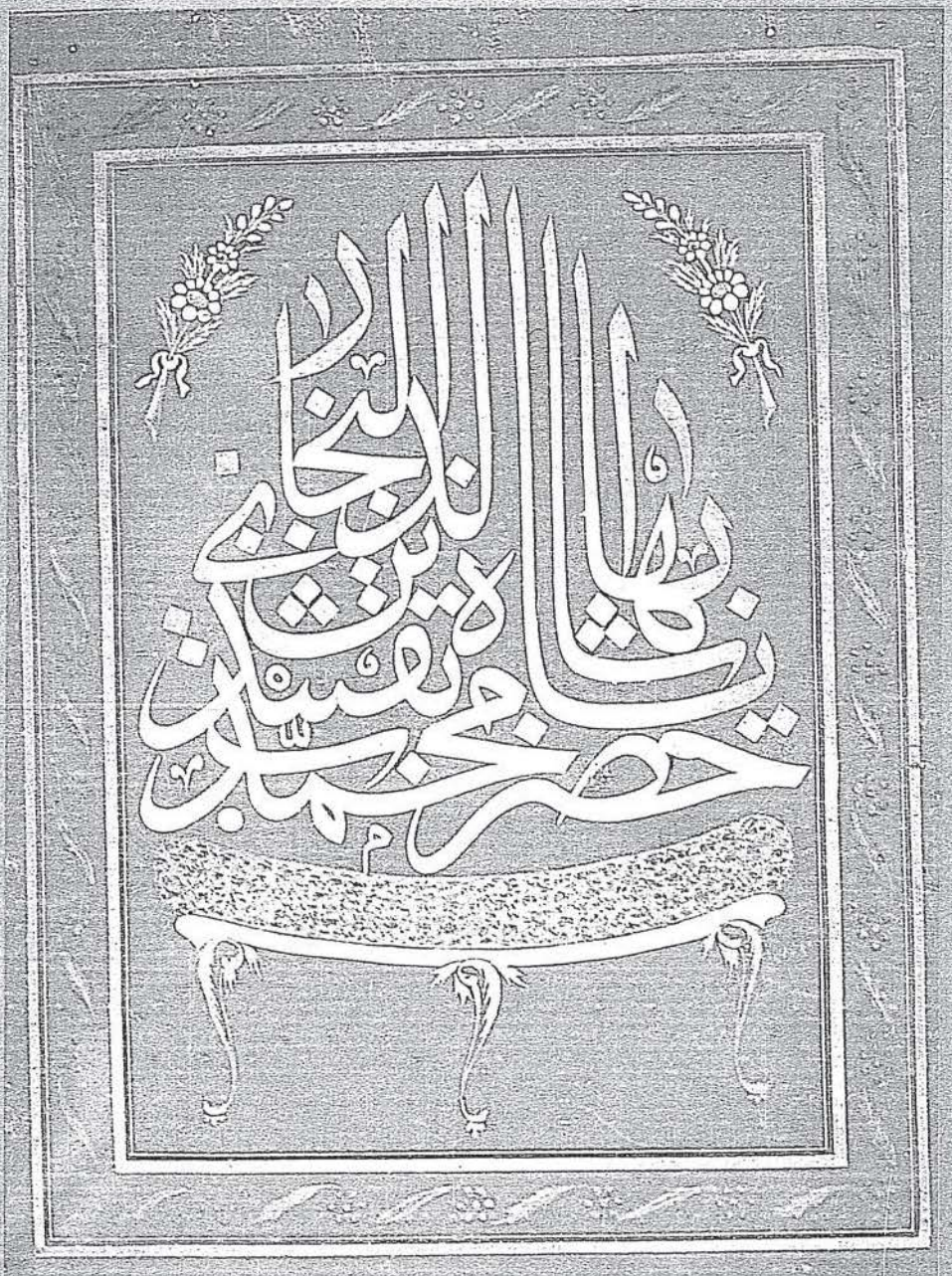
NAQSHBANDIS

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 Naqshbandiyya of Afghanistan on the Eve of the 1978 Coup d'État

BO UTAS

In 1977 and 1978, I spent some time in Afghanistan collecting certain data on the *khānaqāhs* there. My investigation originally sprang out of an interest in the relation between oral and written traditions among Sufis. I had previously been occupied with studies in the manuscript transmission of Sufi texts, often stretching through more than five centuries. Now and then, in such manuscript traditions, it is possible to demonstrate the influence of oral sources, as e.g., in the early stages of the works ascribed to Khoja 'Abdu'llāh Anṣārī of Herat,[1] but on the whole, evidence of interaction between oral and written traditions is quite difficult to find. For various reasons my studies of oral traditions never got very far in the Afghanistan where I found myself at a time that soon proved to be the inception of a national catastrophe. The morning of the 27th of April 1978 I spent in the Ministry of Education in Kabul in order to secure a permit to travel to the provinces for my khānaqāh studies. Around 11 o'clock, I heard explosions. The coup d'état had started, and one of the most traditional of all Muslim countries of those days had began to change precipitately and beyond restoration.[2]

Between the beginning of April and the middle of June of that year, I visited twelve functioning khānaqāhs in Afghanistan: seven of them Naqshbandī, three Qādirī and two Chishtī. This was part of a plan to make a more thorough description of khānaqāhs and *ṭarīqa* life in this country. In 1980, I published a preliminary report of those studies in an article entitled "Notes on Afghan Sufi orders and Khānaqāhs."[3] There I tried to systematize the main socio-religious functions of those khānaqāhs as: (1) the seat of a *pīr* and his family, (2) shrines *ziyārat* of previous charismatic leaders ("saints"), generally the forefathers of the present *pīr*, (3) a local mosque (generally not a Friday mosque), (4) a *madrasah* or Qur'ān school, (5) a guest-house (which could be called the khānaqāh proper). The central characteristic of the *pīr* himself seemed to be his possession of so called *barakat* (divine power or blessing). In my article, I summarized his personal functions as: (1) instruction, *ta'līm* or *irshād*, (2) authorization, *ijāzah*, of disciples, *murīds*, (3) responsibility for spiritual exercises (*a.o. chilla*), (4) leading the *dhikr*, (5) healing, *du'ā-khwānī*, and making of amulets, *ta'vīẓ*, (6) arbitration of disputes, *iṣlāḥ-i ikhtilāfāt*. To this could be added, at least in some cases, tending to the welfare of the adherents (providing wells, bridges, etc.).

The situation of Sufi life and practices in pre-coup Afghanistan is, I think, of great interest also from a general point-of-view. The Afghanistan of those days was in

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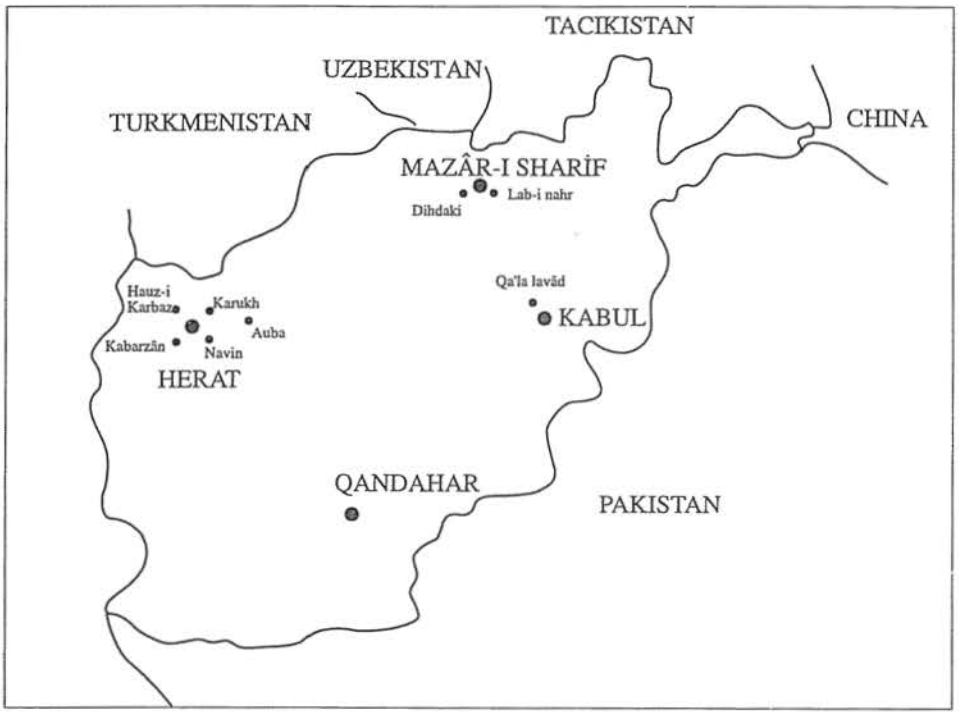
1 Cf. Bo Utas, "The *Munājāt or Ilāhī-nāmah* of 'Abdu'llāh Anṣārī", *Manuscripts of the Middle East*, 3 (1988), 83-87.

2 Cf. Bo Utas, "Recents events in Afghanistan", *Annual Newsletter of the Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies*, 11/12 (1977-78, publ. 1979), pp. 3-21.

3 *Afghanistan Journal*, 7 (1980): 2, 60-67.



A map of Afghanistan showing the places visited by the author during his research in 1978.

many respects relatively untouched by modernisation. Of course, many things had already changed and others were rapidly changing, mainly because of the quick development of communications - roads and vehicles as well as radio and taped music, for example. Those were the days of the triumphal progress of the transistor radio and, in a basically non-electrified country. To this came the spread of a secular school system. But so much of the traditional structures was still intact that I think it was possible to get a reasonably good picture of the age-old centrality of the *ṭarīqas* in this part of Asia.

First of all, I observed that almost every grown-up man in the country seemed to have some kind of relation to a Sufi sheikh, *pīr*, *murshid*, *āqā*, *miyān*, *īshān*, khalīfa, or whatever they called him.[4] This relation was quite multi-faceted and concerned either a few, or many, or all of the functions I mentioned before. This means that a *pīr* could at the same time be a spiritual guide on a high level of consciousness to the most well-educated people as well as a healer and practical instructor of people in the simplest circumstances. This also means that the distinction between an advanced (supposedly more spiritual) *taṣawwuf* and belief in healing powers and other phenomena that we often think of as superstitions and regard as part of "popular" or "folk" religion was, on the whole, non-existent. Some scholars have tended to detach the last-mentioned complex from "true" Sufism and call it "maraboutism" or the like.[5] With regard to what I saw in Afghanistan in the 1970s, that is definitely wrong. When functioning properly, the traditional Afghan *ṭarīqa* showed a full integration of the various functions of the *pīr*. It is another matter that a part of the small, modern, westernized intellegentsia of Afghanistan took over the view that contemporary Sufi

4 For a Soviet view on the characteristics of Central Asian "īshāns", see S. M. Demidov, *Sufizm v Turkmenii*, Ashkhabad (Ylym), 1978, pp. 105-113.

5 See esp. Olivier Roy in many works, e.g. "Sufism in Afghan resistance", *Central Asian Survey*, 4 (1983): 2, 61-79; repeated in his "La naqshbandiyya en Afghanistan", in M. Gaborieau, A. Popovic and Th. Zarcone (eds.), *Naqshbandis. Cheminements et situation actuelle d'un ordre mystique musulman*, Editions ISIS, Paris, 1990, p. 480.

practices in their own country were somehow degenerated. This may be seen in books like the *Ṣair-i taṣavvuf dar Afghānistān* ('An overview of Sufism in Afghanistan') by a former Afghan ambassador to the UN,[6] which bases its description of Afghan Sufism on stories about the great Classical Persian poets, partly recovered from Western sources, completely ignoring actual Sufi activities in his own country.[7] There are, however, also excellent examples of the opposite: learned and knowledgeable Afghans who combine high education with a thorough knowledge of traditional culture, including Sufism (there is hardly a better example of this than Ravān Farhādī).

Before turning to the present Naqshbandi order and what I saw of its life and ways in the Afghanistan of the 1970s, it might be useful to take a look at some developments in the earlier history of the Naqshbandiyya, or rather the Khojagān as it was generally called in Central Asia. This early history has been summed up by Western scholars, notably Marijan Molé[8] and Hamid Algar,[9] and much of it can be gathered from Classical Persian sources like the *Rashaḥāt 'ain al-ḥayāt* by 'Alī b. Husain Vā'iẓ Kāshifī (Fakhr al-dīn Ṣafī)[10] and the *Qudsīya* by Khoja Muḥammad Pārsā.[11] The *silsila* or spiritual genealogy of the Naqshbandi order is well-known.[12] The founder of the Khojagan proper, i.e., 'Abd ul-Khāliq Ghujduvānī (d. c. 1220 A.D.), apart from being a disciple of the renowned Khoja Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf Hamadānī, is said to have experienced a spriritual intitiation through the mysterious, immortal, "green" prophet, Khidr (Khezr). This took place when he was contemplating the 55th verse of the 7th Sura of the Qur'ān: *ad'ū rabba-kum taḍarru'an wa-xufyatan* 'call upon your Lord humbly and in concealment', and was taken as a call to introduce the silent *dhikr* or (Persian) *zikr/zekr* (also called *khufya* or *dhikr-i khafī* or *dhikr-i qalb*). This is one of the foundations of the famous eight rules or holy utterances, *qalamāt-i qudsīya*, that 'Abd ul-Khāliq instituted.[13]

The silent *dhikr* was thus made one of the fundaments of the Khojagān, but according to the *Rashaḥāt 'ain al-ḥayāt* of 'Alī b. Vā'iẓ Kāshifī already the second successor of 'Abd ul-Khāliq, i.e. Maḥmūd Anjīr Faghnavī (d. 1272), took up the practice of *jahrī* or vocal *dhikr* again. This might suggest increased activities among broad layers of people, for which the sophisticated silent *dhikr* would seem less suitable. However, with the appearance of Muḥammad Bahā al-Dīn, also called Shāh-i Naqshband, who gave his name to the continuation of this order, it seems that the use of silent *dhikr* was reinstituted (supposedly through a spiritual or *rūḥānīya* relation with 'Abd ul-Khāliq). The Shāh-i Naqshband died in 1389 and was buried in his native village Qaṣr-i Hinduvān (later Qaṣr-i 'Āshiqīn) near Bukhara, and with his successors the order began to spread widely in Central Asia and Khorasan, including northern present Afghanistan. With his second successor, the Īshān Naṣīr al-Dīn 'Ubaidu'llāh Shāshī, known as Khoja Aḥrār, and his family,[14] an important principle

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6 'Abd al-Ḥakīm Ṭabībī, *Sair-i taṣavvuf dar Afghānistān*, Kabul, 1357/1977.

7 Cf. also Bo Utas, "Scholars, Saints and Sufis in Modern Afghanistan", in Huldt and Jansson (eds.), *The Tragedy of Afghanistan*, Croom Helm, London- New York- Sydney, 1988, p. 100.

8 Marijan Molé, "Autour de Daré Mansour: l'aprentissage mystique de Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband," *Revue des études islamiques*, (1959), 35-66.

9 Hamid Algar, "The Naqshbandī Order: a Preliminary Survey of its History and Significance," *Studia Islamica*, 42 (1976), 123-152; "A Brief History of the Naqshbandī Order", Gaborieau et al. (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp. 3-44.

10 Newal Kishor, Cawnpore, 1912 (and other Indian editions).

11 Ed. Ahmad Ṭāḥirī 'Irāqī, Tehran (Ṭahūrī), 1354.

12 See the just mentioned sources or J. S. Trimingham, *The Sufī Orders in Islam*, Oxford 1971, p. 93.

13 Cf. A. A. Xismatulin, "Pragmaticheskiy sufizm v bratstve Nakshbandiya: teomnemiya (zikr)," *Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie*, Vypusk 7, Sankt-Peterburg, 1995, pp. 245 ff.

14 Cf. Jo-Ann Gross in this volume.

was established that was to become central in the later Afghan Naqshbandiyya: the inherited leadership, that is that a son succeeds his father as *pīr of* the local order and khānaqāhs. This means that the divine blessing, the *barakat*, was supposed to be inherited rather than acquired through instruction, knowledge, spiritual excercises and divine grace. Furthermore, it probably often led to a gradual decline of the learning of the *pīrs*. Among the seven branches of the Naqshbandiyya that I visited in 1978 all affiliations were since long hereditary, and that was not only true for the family of the *pīr* but generally also for the families of the adherents. These virtual Sufi dynasties were often interrelated, but during my rather preliminary studies I did not succeed in collecting complete information on their affiliations.

There was, however, a definite line of separation between the *pīrs* of direct Central Asian affiliation and those who belonged to the Mujaddidiyya introduced from India.[15] In spite of the fact that both Muḥammad Bāqī b'illāh Bīrang (d. 1603) and his disciple and successor Aḥmad Fārūqī Sirhindī, the renowned *mujaddid-i alf-i thānī* ('the renewer of the second millennium'), must have come to India through what is now Afghanistan, it seems as if the establishment of the explicitly Mujaddidiyya branch of the Naqshbandī order appeared rather late in Afghanistan. Thus a scion of the Mujaddidī family established himself in Kabul first in the beginning of this century, possibly with the active support of British interests (and parallel to the case of the Qādirīyya sheikh called Naqīb-Ṣāḥib-i Chārbāgh of Jalālābād, born c. 1862 in Baghdad and died in Jalālābād in 1941). The name of this Mujaddidī in Kabul was Qayyūm Jān Āghā, of the 7th generation after Aḥmad Sirhindī. He became known in Kabul as the Ḥaẓrat-Ṣāḥib-i Shōr-bāzār (after the location of the original khānaqāhs).[16] He was succeeded as 'Ḥaẓrat' by his son Faẓl Muḥammad Shams ul-mashāyikh, also called Shāh Āghā,[17] who died in 1924 and who, in his turn, was succeeded by his brother Faẓl 'Umar Nūr ul-mashāyikh, also called Shēr Āghā. The latter became an influential politician under Nādir Shāh: e.g., minister of justice 1929-1932. In 1936 he was given land in Qal'a Javād outside of Kabul and built a big khānaqāh there, which became the head-quarters of this branch of the Mujaddidis.

I visited Qal'a Javād a couple of times in April 1978 and met the Ḥaẓrat-Ṣāḥib of those days, Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Ẓiyā' ul-mashāyikh, according to Adamec also called Shēr Pāchā.[18] He had succeeded his father, Faẓl 'Umar, in 1956. His son, Muḥammad Isma'īl was also present. That was just before the coup d'état and the atmosphere was already rather tense. The place seemed to be under surveillance. Some preaching and agitation went on in the mosque, but the Ḥaẓrat-Ṣāḥib was not very informative to a foreigner like me. He instructed me in general words about the preference of *shahūdiyya* to *vujūdiyya* etc., but on the whole I did not learn much from him about the Mujaddidīya in Afghanistan. - According to later reports, the whole family was arrested and presumably executed in 1979.[19]

I had recommendations to the family from a second cousin of Muḥammad Isma'īl, namely Sibghatu'llāh Mujaddidī,[20] a man who had an interesting carrier. He

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15 For the later development of the Central Asian Naqshbandiyya, see Baxityor M. Babadzanov, "On the History of the Naqšbandiyya Muğaddidīya in Central Māwarā'annahr in the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries," *Islamkundliche Untersuchungen*, ed. M. Kemper, Bd. 200: *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Century*, Berlin, 1996, pp. 385-413.

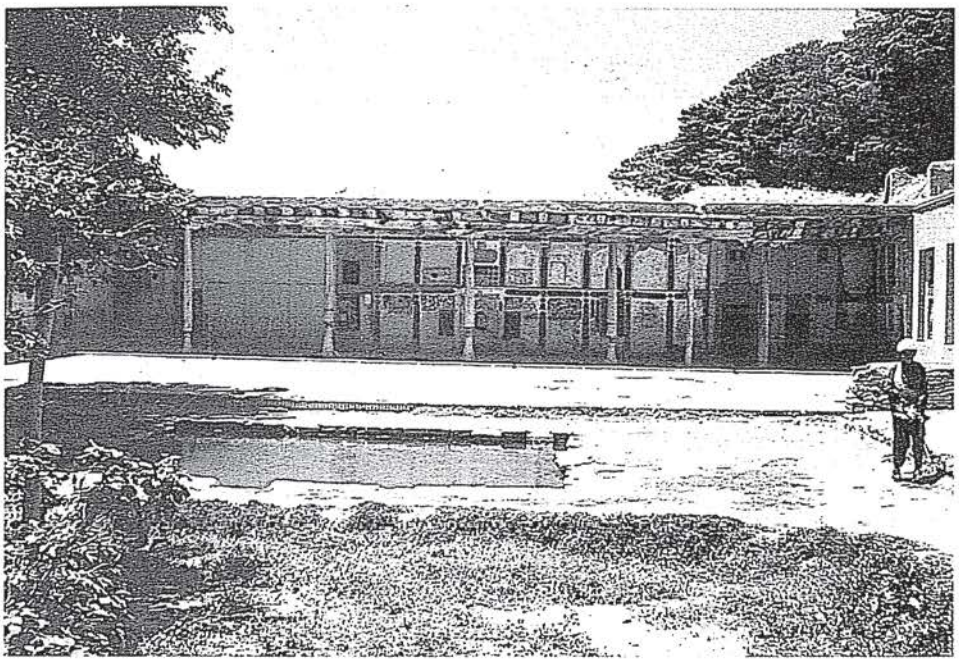
16 Cf. Ludvig W. Adamec, *Historical and Political Who's Who of Afghanistan*, Graz, 1975, p. 215, Table 86.

17 Cf. Ludvig W. Adamec, *A Biographical Dictionary of Contemporary Afghanistan*, Graz, 1987, pp. 122 f.

18 Adamec, *Biographical Dictionary*, p. 124.

19 See Olivier Roy, "*La naqshbandiyya*," p. 448.

20 Adamec, *Biographical Dictionary*, p. 125.



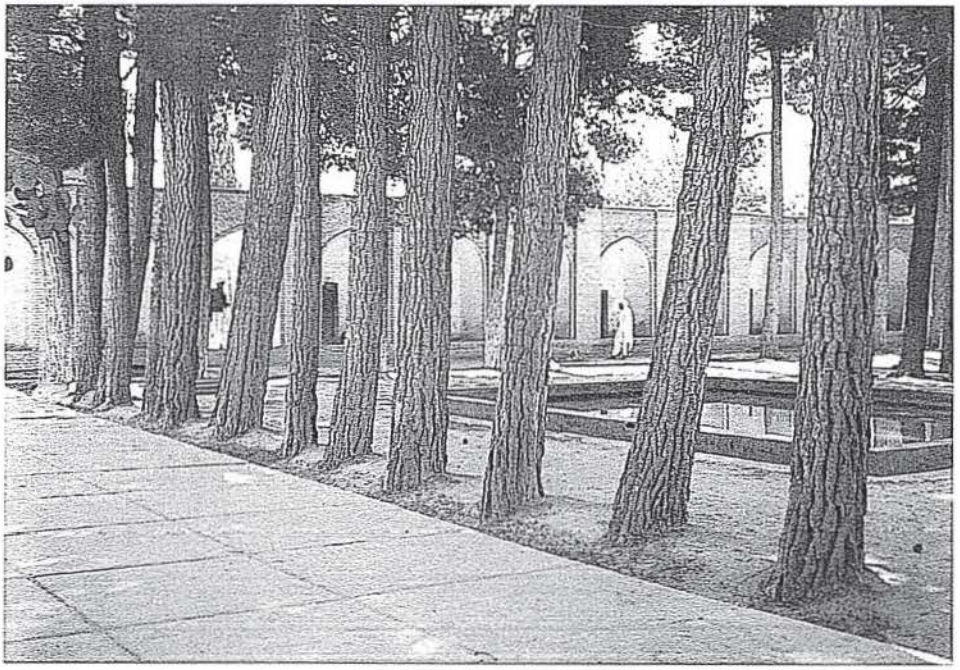
The somewhat dilapidated courtyard of the khānaqāh of Karukh. The pond is said to contain holy fish (B. Utas, 1978).

was born in 1925, became a theologian and teacher of Islamic law in Kabul, was kept in jail 1959-64 accused of being an *ikhvānī*, visited the United States in 1968-70, then came back home and was active in Islamicist religious politics. Finally, he became the head of the Islamic Center in Copenhagen 1974-78, where I met and interviewed him in the early spring of 1978. At that time, he definitely distanced himself from Sufi beliefs and practices, and when I referred to him at Qal'a Javād, his relatives seemed unwilling to talk about him. After the coup, he founded and led the resistance organisation *Jabha-i najāt-i millī-yi Afghānistān* (The Afghan National Liberation Front), obviously exploiting the Mujaddidī network. For a while he was an interim president of the post-Najīb republic.

Other branches of the Mujaddidī family were also active in Afghanistan in the 1970s. One of the more influential, apart from the Ḥaẓrat-Ṣāḥib-i Shôr-Bāzār, was the Ḥaẓrat-Ṣāḥib of Jaghartān, Herat. At the time of my stay in Herat in May of 1978, however, it proved impossible to get in touch with the then Ḥaẓrat-Ṣāḥib, 'Abd al-Bāqī Jān, a son of the influential Ḥaẓrat Faẓl Aḥmad, who had also been a Minister of Justice under Nādir Shāh (in 1933).[21] 'Abd ul-Bāqī Jān had himself been a member of parliament, and his great grandfather Ṣāḥibzāda 'Umar Jān had led the *ghāzīs* at the battle of Maiwand (in 1880). In Afghanistan this family was originally known as the Sirhind Pīrs. Their activities show how deeply involved these branches of the Mujaddidī family where in the politics of Afghanistan. It is also well known that they were among the leaders of the revolt against Amānullāh in 1928-29. My difficulties in arranging a visit to the khānaqāh of the Ḥaẓrat-Ṣāḥib of Jaghartān was, most likely, a result of political prudence.

Otherwise, Sufis were quite active in Herat in the 1970s. A Qādirī *dhikr* was regularly arranged in the great mosque right after the Friday prayer, in the winter in the courtyard and in the summer in the southern vault. I was present a couple of times and was allowed to make a recording. As for Naqshbandī khānaqāhs, I visited those in Ḥauẓ-i Karbāz and Navīn, both in the outskirts of the city. A special

21 Adamec, *Historical and Political Who's Who*, p. 139, Table 88.



The *madrasa* of the khānaqāh of Band-i Banafsh at Auba (B. Utas, 1978).

case was the khānaqāh of the Āqā-Ṣāḥib-i Kabarzān, Sayyid 'Abd al-'Alī Shāh, also known as Āqā Dīwāna, 'the mad master' (a name inherited from his father, Mīr Shams al-Dīn Āqā). This family was related to the Naqshbandī Khalīfa-Ṣāḥib of Navīn, but the Āqā-Sāhib rather followed Qādirī rites. His *jahrī dhikr* has been carefully described by the musico-ethnologist John Baily.[22] I myself had more opportunities to follow the Āqā's rather imposing practice as a healer.[23]

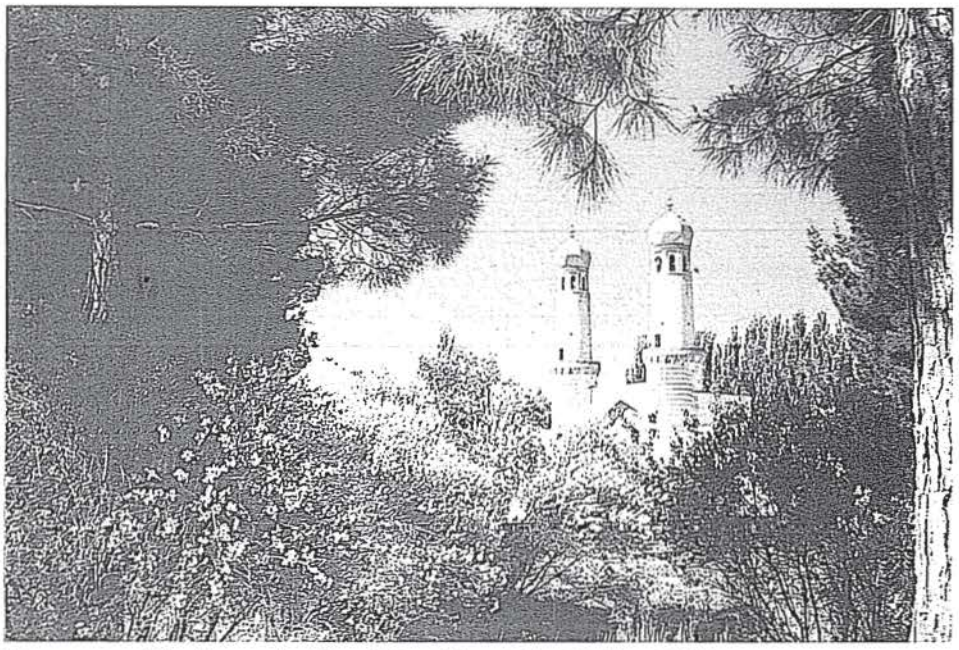
The two proper Naqshbandī khānaqāhs of Herat looked less lively, however. I visited the Khalīfa-Ṣāḥib of Ḥauẓ-i Karbāz, whose proper name was Mīr Farīd ud-dīn, son of Mīr 'Imād al-Dīn, who died in 1973.[24] The young Khalīfa-Ṣāḥib had an older Mawlawī, named Abū Bakr, at his side, but apart from their families the khānaqāh appeared completely deserted. It seemed as if the young Khalīfa-Ṣāḥib had not been able to take up the mantle of his father and keep his influence over the adherents of his family. The situation would thus be symptomatic of a late stage of disintegration of a traditional local brotherhood. Today, I am told, this part of Herat is completely destroyed. The khānaqāh of Navīn seemed more active. I visited it both in 1977 and 1978. The *pīr* of that time, Mīr Muḥammad Ṣiddīq, had succeeded his father, Sayyid 'Abd ur-Raḥmān, called Khalīfa-Ṣāḥib-i Navīn, around 1970. They belonged to a Sādāt family originally from Ghur. Apart from the residence of the *pīr*, the khānaqāh complex included a Friday mosque, a *madrasah*, a number of *ziyārats*, shrines, and a guest-house. The *dhikr* was said to be silent, i.e., *khufya*.

The khānaqāh of Karukh, famous as the birth-place of one of Anṣārī's main disciples, is situated about 40 kilometres north-east of Herat. The proper name of the *pīr*, the Ḥaẓrat-Ṣaḥib-i Karukh, was Sayyid Muḥammad Mukarram, a descendent of Sheikh al-islām Sūfī Islām, an Uzbak from Maimanah and Bukhara, who established

22 It is not known to me whether this description has been published, but cf. John Baily, *Professional Musicians in the City of Herat*, (Cambridge Studies in Ethnomusicology), Cambridge, 1989, pp. 154-155.

23 On healing through *pīrs*, see also Harald Einzmann, *Religiöses Volksbrauchtum in Afghanistan*, Wiesbaden, 1977, pp. 105-106.

24 For Ḥauẓ-i Karbāz Roy, "La *Naqshbandiyya*," p. 452, mentions a *pīr* named 'Abdullāh.

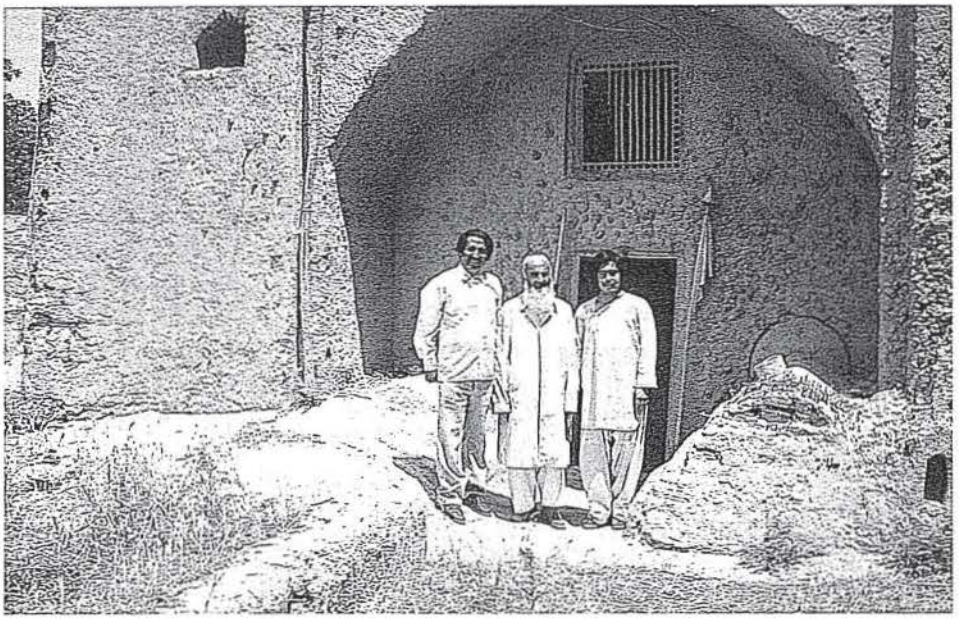


The mosque of the khānaqāh of Band-i Banafsh at Auba, (B. Utas, 1978).

the family in Karukh at the end of the 18th century. He was killed in the war against the Qajars in 1807 and is buried in the khānaqāh.[25] Apart from residence and *ziyārat*, this khānaqāh, too, contained a mosque, a *madrasah* and a guest-house, all situated in a grove of stately cedars. A pond with holy fish belonged to the ensemble. A quite knowledgeable Mawlawī by name of Ghulām Muḥammad Najībī was in charge of the *madrasah*, which functioned as a normal Qur'ān school. After the morning prayer, however, there were recitations of poetry by Jalāl al-Dīn Balkhī/Rūmī. The *dhikr* was said to be both silent, *khufya*, and in *ḥalqa*, i.e., vocal or *jahr*. The *pīr* claimed to have deputies, khalīfas, in many places, especially in northern Afghanistan, e.g., Sheikh Thamar al-Dīn in Lab-i Nahr in Mazār-i Sharīf, and many of the followers seemed to belong to adjacent nomadic tribes. They used to come to the khānaqāh twice a year during their seasonal wanderings in order to show their allegiance, *bai'at*, to the *pīr*. All in all, this seemed to be a fully functioning traditional khānaqāh, but there were signs of stagnation. Both in 1977 and 1978 the *pīr* was away when I first came to the khānaqāh, and some people said, maliciously, that he had to travel around much to collect revenues from his adherents, perhaps not the best sign as regards his authority.

The most lively Naqshbandī khānaqāh in the Herat region at the time of my visit was probably that of Band-i Banafsh ('The violet pond') in Auba in the mountains east of Herat. The Sheikh-i Auba'ī, Ḥājjī Muḥyi'al-dīn Akhundzāda, generally referred to as Āqā-Ṣāḥib, was an imposing man of around 60-65. His grandfather had moved in from Qandahar, and the *silsila* of the family was said to go back to Aḥmad Sirhindī (although separate from the affiliation of the family now known in Afghanistan as Mujaddidī). Like Karukh, this khānaqāh was also a complete complex of residence, mosque, shrines, *madrasah* and guest-house, situated in a beautiful grove of old pine-trees. The *madrasah* had about 15 pupils, starting from illiteracy and studying 4-5 years. In contrast to most of the earlier sheikhs I have described, Ḥājjī Muḥyi'al-dīn gave the impression of learning, and this khānaqāh was very live-

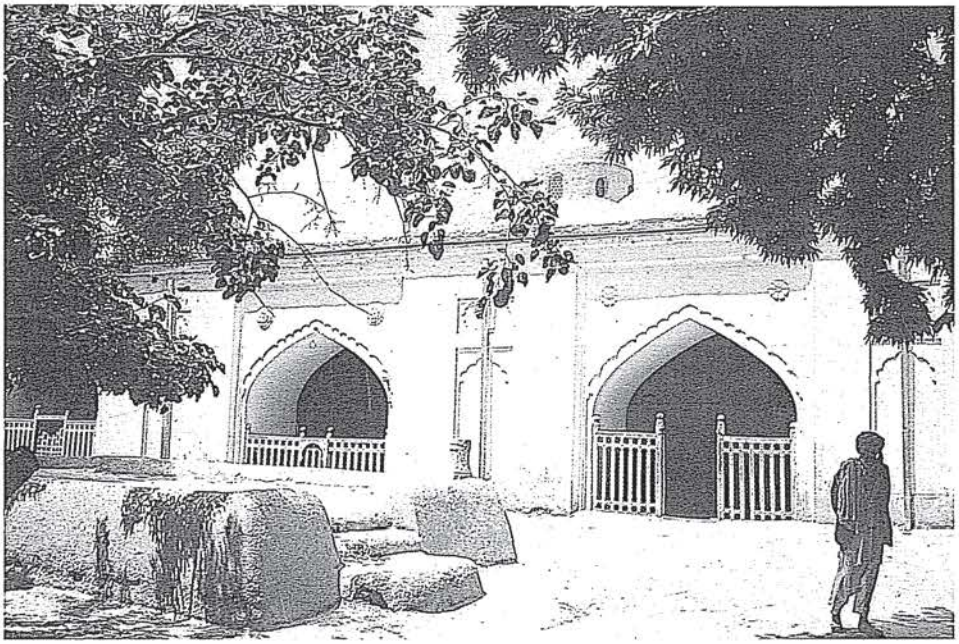
25 Roy, "La *naqshbandiyya*", pp. 448 and 452, maintains that the "generic" name of the Ḥaẓrat of Karukh is Sharafatuddin (sic!).



Sayyid Dā'ūd Āqā, flanked by two young relatives, in front of his private mosque at Dihdādī (B. Utas, 1978).

ly, indeed. Lots of disciples came and went, including old, white-bearded khalīfas from other parts (conspiciously many were Pashtuns). Female family members were also among the guests: they disappeared quickly into the *andarūn*, the women's quarters. There was a library that also contained manuscripts, e.g., a treatise ascribed to Khoja Muḥammad Pārsā (copied in 16th century Bukhara), lithographs, e.g., a commentary of Ibn al-'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ ul-Ḥikam* etc. Incidentally, the sheikh mentioned an inclination towards *vujūdiyya*. *Dhikr* was individual and silent. According to the sheikh, the *jahr* performed in *ḥalqa* in Karukh was an innovation that Sufi Islām had brought in from Bukhara. *Chilla* was never used; at times, however, a ten days seclusion, *daha*.

One of the most well-known Naqshbandī khānaqāhs in northern Afghanistan was that of Dihdādī in the southern outskirts of Mazār-i Sharīf. The *pīr* at that time was Sayyid Muḥammad Dā'ūd Iqbālī, often referred to as Sayyid Dā'ūd Āqā. He was the son of Sayyid Iqbāl Khān, son of Sayyid Aḥmad Balkhī. He was a lively, pleasant man of about 70. The various functions of the khānaqāh were not concentrated around the residence in the ordinary way. There was a small mosque, which Sayyid Dā'ūd proudly maintained he had built with his own hands, but the *ziyārāt* of the family were situated around the Masjid-i jāmi' of Dihdādī at some distance from the residence. This was a nicely decorated mosque, in which also the *madrasa* was situated. The latter was said to have 5-10 pupils who were taught by a special Mawlawī, perhaps not directly belonging to the khānaqāh. I first met the sheikh in the booksellers' bazaar of Mazār-i Sharīf and we had a very nice and interesting conversation, but when I came to visit the khānaqāh I had, unfortunately, to bring quite a delegation from the local office of the Ministry of Culture, and this made a trustful exchange of questions, answers and views difficult. This was already six weeks after the coup d'état and tension was mounting in the country. Obviously, the sheikh felt disturbed in this company, something I regret very much, because he seemed to be a very interesting man of broad views and accustomed to talk to foreigners. But as the situation was, the information I gleaned is uncertain. Among other things I was told that *dhikr* is performed both *as khufī* and *jahrī*, the latter even with musical *samā*, including the use of *nai*, supposedly through influence of the Mawlawiyya. (A

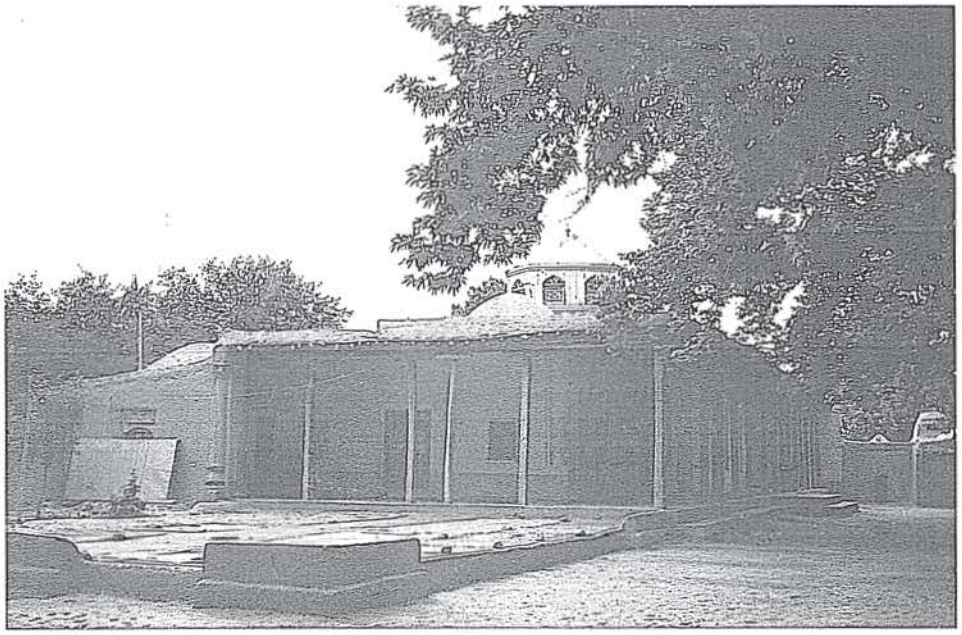


The Friday mosque of Dihdādī, housing also a *madrasah* and some *chilla-khānas* (B. Utas, 1978).

recording of a vocal *dhikr* in this khānaqāh was made a few years before my visit, at the time of the celebrations of Jalāl al-Dīn - in the presence of, among others, Annemarie Schimmel, Christoph Bürgel and Ravān Farhādī). Interestingly enough, the sheikh said that *chilla* was still practiced, and quite widely (I was shown a number of *chilla-khānas* in the Masjid-i jāmi'). There was also an interesting library in the residence, containing many manuscripts and old lithographs. Unfortunately I found no opportunity to study them more closely.

In the southeastern outskirts of Mazār-i Sharīf there was the Khānaqāh-i Lab-i nahr ('on the river bank'). The Sheikh Thamar al-Dīn, son of Sheikh Shihāb al-Dīn (said to have died in 1319 H. Sh.), was a tall man of 53, quite talkative but perhaps not so reassuring. As mentioned before, he was a khalīfa of the Ḥaẓrat-Ṣāḥib of Karukh. This khānaqāh had also a mosque, shrines of the ancestors, and a crumbling *madrasa-yi ṣūfīya* that was not in use any longer. *Dhikr* was said to be performed exclusively as *jahr* (especially after night prayer the night before Friday), but with a declining number of participants (at the time, about 15). *Chilla* had been used among the Naqshbandīs who practiced *ḥalqa-yi jahr* but not so any longer. Finally, the sheikh maintained that he was in great demand as a healer.

This has been a few gleanings from my field notes of 1977 and 1978. The khānqāhs that I have described had, all of them, a similar structure. They were basically residences of dynasties of *pīrs* furnished with mosques, *madrasahs*, shrines and guest-houses. At the same time many signs of decline were noticeable: in various degrees, however, from the still quite dynamic Khānaqāh-i Band-i Banafsh of Auba to the, at least seemingly, dormant Khānaqāh-i Ḥauẓ-i Karbāz of Herat. The civil war was already looming on the horizon, and most, if not all, of these traditional centres of Sufi life were soon to be swept away. Some members of the sheikhly families joined or even led various resistance groups, drawing, of course, on their charismatic influence over their adherents. Some went into exile and probably had difficulties in adjusting to a life outside of the well-established khānaqāh. Whatever way they chose, the traditional networks were broken up and changed into new constellations.



The khānaqāh of Lab-i nahr in the outskirts of Mazār-i Sharīf (B. Utas 1978).

I dedicate this simple presentation to the memory of those *pīrs*, some of them remarkable men and probably all of them now gone.

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