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Publication Date

2022

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Hāfiz and the Safavids:
Cultural History of a Persianate Controversy

By

Fateme Montazeri

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Near Eastern Studies
in the
Graduate Division
of the
University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Shahwali Ahmadi
Professor Asad Ahmed
Professor Diliانا Angelova

Spring 2022

Abstract

Hāfiz and the Safavids: Cultural History of a Persianate Controversy

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures

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Professor Shahwali Ahmadi, Chair

Hāfiz (d. 1390) of the fourteenth century is admired as the most iconic Persian poet. However, almost no scholarship has examined the status of the poet throughout Iranian history. This dissertation investigates the early modern reception of Hāfiz, and demonstrates the multiple ways in which the poet was appropriated by the Safavids, the theocratic dynasty that ruled Persia from 1501 to 1722. The characteristic ambivalence of Hāfiz's language in reference to the mystical and/or the lyrical and the courtly imagery embedded in his poems allowed the shahs, in the formative Safavid period, to draw from Hāfizian legitimacy, while highlighting their Sufi background as well as the royal grandeur they were seeking. At the same time, the Safavid's major political rivals reacted to the emerging cult of Hāfiz. The Ottoman's engagement in this discourse is reflected in the commentary on *Dīvān*'s beginning line by Sūdī (d. ca. 1590) as well as in the *fatwa* issued by Shaykh al-Islam Ebussuud (d. 1574) who warned against unconditional recitation of Hāfiz's poetry.

Towards the end of the Safavid era, the courtly-sponsored approach to Hāfiz altered commensurate with the religious reorientation of the state. Having turned its support from Sufis toward Imamite scholars, the Safavid house disseminated new religious norms through the poetry of Hāfiz. Two versions of a single poetryline by Hāfiz, inscribed on two monuments in Isfahan, the capital of 'Abbās I (r. 1588-1629), capture the Persianate Sufi/Shii controversy in the seventeenth century. Finally, the attempts to read Hāfiz in line with the contemporary Safavid discourse expanded to exegetical and commentarial texts, which discussed the theological basis of Hāfiz's verse to render him a true Shii. This project, therefore, traces the contemporary intimacy of the Persian speakers with Hāfiz, in retrospect, to the early modern period, when the first Iranian nation-state self-identified with Hāfiz despite the transformative dynamics of their religious policies.

In dedication to
the memory of my parents
who infused in my life an infinite love for Persian literature

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Acknowledgements

This dissertation took many years to finish. It is impossible to enumerate and acknowledge all of those who helped me in various ways during this long journey. Yet I would like to thank my advisor and chair, Professor Wali Ahmadi, who generously supported this project since its inception and guided me through its minute details. I also benefited tremendously from comments of Professor Diliانا Angelova who patiently read the present work as well as parts that remained outside of this project to be expanded upon separately. I am grateful to Professor Asad Ahmed for his invaluable insights into the larger scope of this project, and for helping me to navigate the future of this dissertation. I acknowledge my debt of gratitude to many colleagues, scholars, and friends on whose scholarship this dissertation is built. I am also thankful to the students in my classes with whom I shared my passion for Persian literature and for Hafiz.

Last, but not least, my heartfelt appreciation go to my love and husband, Arash, whose intellectual and loving companionship illuminates this dissertation. I cannot finish this acknowledgement without naming our beloved children, Jonnon and Raz. Without their presence in my life, this project might have finished much earlier, but in a whole different shape. I feel, without a doubt, blessed for the opportunity of this entire experience. Needless to say that only I am responsible for the shortcomings.

Introduction

Shams al-Din Muhammad Hāfiz of Shiraz (ca. 715-792/1315-1390), one of the most eminent Persian poets of all times, enjoys an unrivaled position in the Persianate cultural world. He is dubbed as “the spokesman of the collective unconscious of the Persians”¹ or “the last sacred poet in the pantheon of Persian literature.”² His name, literally one who preserves, has been playfully linked to his role in the preservation of Persian culture, as suggested by the book titled “*Hāfiz Hāfizah-yi Māst*” (Hāfiz the memorizer is our memory).³ Hāfiz’s status goes beyond “the most iconic of all Persian poets” to be regarded as the emblematic conveyer of “Persian’s refined wit, beauty, satire, and struggle for social justice.”⁴ Persians of all social and educational backgrounds share an admiration for the poet, and frequently refer to his *Dīvān* in order to provide commentary on different situations. Deemed a representation of “Persian-ness,” his poetry book is arguably found in every Persian house alongside the Quran. It is a tradition to read Hāfiz’s poetry in special times of year when family members unite, such as the vernal equinox celebrated as *Yaldā*, the longest night of the year, or *Nawrūz*, the Persian new year. Indeed, if a random Persian speaker is asked to name only one poet, the answer in most likelihood will be Hāfiz.

This study is born out of my love for the poetry of Hāfiz. Growing up in a cultural environment loaded with exaltation of the poet, I used to reflect on what makes Hāfiz very special. Propelled by a childhood curiosity, I set out to trace the historical perception of Hāfiz and his poetry. As I learned more about the topic, I recognized the importance of the Safavid period (1501-1722) in today’s perception of the poet. This period not only marks the realization of the concepts of “nation” and of “Iran” so integral to the modern status of Hāfiz, but also witnesses many modes in the reception of Hāfiz that prove enduring up to the present.

The language of Hāfiz and the literary intricacies of his poetry have been abundantly discussed. In particular, a vast body of scholarship has been devoted to excavating the textual material of the virtuoso’s poetry in the hope of finding the “authorial” version. A shift is noticeable in the recent scholarship that leans toward Hāfiz’s life period. Dominic P. Brookshaw’s *Hāfiz and His Contemporaries* is one such monograph that speaks to the newly felt need by scholars to detach Hāfiz from the inaccessible pinnacle of literature returning him to the historical and literary context.⁵ Hāfiz was contemporary to several other notable poets namely Khwājū of Kirmān, ‘Ubayd Zākānī, Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Azud, and Salmān Sāvujī, works of whom share much affinity of diction, wording, themes, and imagery with Hāfiz. Codicological evidence further suggests that

¹ Bahā’ al-Dīn Khurramshāhī, *Hāfiz Hāfizah-yi Māst* (Hāfiz is our memory), (Tehran: Qatrah, 1385/ 2006-7), 128. “*sukhangū-yi nā-khud-āgāh-i jam’ī-yi aqvām-i īrānī*”.

² Leonard Lewisohn, (intro.) in Bahman Solati, *The Reception of Hafez*, (Leiden university Press, 2014), 16.

³ The phrase is the title of a work by the prolific scholar of Hāfiz, Bahā’ al-Dīn Khurramshāhī. See: Khurramshāhī, *Hāfiz Hāfizah-yi Māst* (Hāfiz is our memory), (Tehran: Qatrah, 1385/ 2006-7), 15.

⁴ Lewisohn, *Ibid.*

⁵ Dominic P. Brookshaw, *Hāfiz and His Contemporaries: Poetry, Performance and Patronage in Fourteenth-century Iran*, (I B Tauris/Bloomsbury, 2019).

the positive reception of his poetry was no different than that of his contemporaries.⁶ The commonalities of creation and reception amongst a network of fourteenth-century Persian poets, of which Hāfiz is but a representative, reiterate the unanswered question of whether all that makes Hāfiz “unique” lies in his verse. In other words, should the pre-modern and early modern patrons promote another poet for their personal, religious, and political interests, would they not enjoy the same privilege as Hāfiz does today? This dissertation contributes to our conceptualization of the phases through which the poet reached his current status. It does so by investigating the reception of the poet in the early modern Persianate world, rather than dealing with questions of authorship or hermeneutics on which the majority of the scholarship on Hāfiz has focused so far.

In contrast to pre-modern and modern eras, the appropriation of Hāfiz and his poetry in the early modern Muslim-majority societies has not received any serious scholarly attention. The long Safavid history stretching from early sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, although conventionally designated with a single dynastic name, is far from being marked by a monolithic approach to Hāfiz. Indeed, various perceptions of Hāfiz that are still viable today—such as “reading” into the *Dīvān* “national” sentiments, overtly mystical expressions, or Shiite doctrines—all originate from or at least existed in the Safavid period. The present dissertation on Hāfiz and the ways in which his personality and poetry were promoted by the Safavids and their neighbors grew out of the observation about the significance of the early modern period in our perception of Hāfiz. Drawing from a variety of historical sources, including architectural inscriptions, biographical and historiographical notices and denominational debates, this project aims at demonstrating the nuances in the reception of Hāfiz in the early modern Persianate world.

As the following chapters show, the Safavids attempted to increase their legitimacy by appropriating Hāfiz. Hāfiz’s verse provided the Safavids with the perfect cultural witness of their grandeur, and contributed to the crafting of a Persian, spiritual identity. Connection with Hāfiz persisted in the courts of various shahs; nevertheless, the dominant approach to the poet by the ruling house underwent a shift in line with the religious transformation of the state from the formative Qizilbash Sufism to a more shari‘a-base Islam in the second half of the dynastic history. Chapter one discusses how the Safavid founder, Isma‘il I (1487-1524), celebrated Hāfiz as a Sufi *par excellence* projecting in Hāfiz’s poetry a realization of his idealized self-portrait as a Sufi/king and as a poet. Chapter two examines the participation of the Ottomans in the formation of the Hāfizian discourse by responding to the Safavid claims. Chapter three studies the role of Hāfiz’s poetry in the Sufi/Shii conflicts of the reign of Shah ‘Abbās I (r. 1588-1629) demonstrating that this poetry was utilized to present a reorientation in the religious identity of the court. Finally, the last chapter traces several biographical and exegetical notices that showcase the attempts to render Hāfiz’s poetry compatible with the emerging Shii doctrines. Doing so, the present dissertation examines different phases of the early modern reception of Hāfiz, which informed cultural history not only inside Safavid Persia, but also in the greater Persianate world

⁶ Fateme Montazeri, “Gum-shudah dar Tārīkh ya bar-rasīdah dar awj: Hāshīyah va Matn dar Halqah-ye Shā‘irān-e qarn-e Hashtum,” *Iran Namag* 5, No. 2 (2020), 98.

Chapter One)

Hāfiz and the Question of Safavid Identity

The complex, multi-faceted approaches to Hāfiz (1315-1390) during the long Safavid period, stretching from the turn of the sixteenth century to 1722 are far from homogeneity. The status of Hāfiz in Safavid society oscillated commensurate with the religious claims of the ruling house. The new dynasty initially developed around Sufism.⁷ The Safavid shahs prided themselves in having descended from a Sufi lineage. Their Sufism distinguished them from previous Persian dynasties as well as contemporaneous Sunni rivals. Isma‘il (r. 1501-1524) an offspring of the charismatic Shaykh Safī al-Dīn Ishāq (1252-1334) and the founder of the dynasty who announced the formal religion of the state to be Shii Islam was treated himself as a Sufi *pir*. His Qizilbash warriors from the Turkmen tribes would allegedly show up for wars unarmed believing that the spiritual power of their leader safeguarded them. Or, they would arguably practice cannibalism in obedience of the Shah.⁸ It is in this Sufi promoting atmosphere of the early Safavid period that Hāfiz, poet of the preceding century, became to be viewed as Sufi *par excellence*, who embodied the spiritual claims as well as the royal ambitions of the new rule. The appropriation of Hāfiz by the first Safavid monarch served the same purpose, albeit in a different scale, as their claimed connection with religion: both associations, among other functions, contributed to the formation of a distinct Safavid identity and bestowing legitimacy on it. This chapter examines the ways in which Shaykh Safī’s crowned grandson, Isma‘il, found Hāfiz and his poetry particularly in tune with his spiritual claims and royal ambitions in the initial phases of consolidating power and crafting identity.

Historical background

Before examining how the contribution of Hāfiz to the Safavid cultural-political milieu parallels that of religion, it is beneficial to consider the historical context in which the Safavid power took shape in the first place and how their religious affiliation informed the process. Modern as well as pre-modern historiography closely ties the formation of the Safavid dynasty to their religious claims. The dynastic history is generally recorded to begin when the teenage Isma‘il, the head (*murshid-i kāmil*) of the Safavid *tariqah* (order) was crowned in Tabriz and declared Shiism as

⁷ The term “Sufism” has been used somewhat loosely in reference to an extremely vast semantic span. It connotes, on the one hand, the mystical aspects of the religion of Islam, as opposed to the Shari‘ah, the outward appearance of religiosity. On the other hand, Sufism refers to many pre-modern social movements that spread from Anatolia to Khurāsān. These groups, although designated uniquely when seen from outside, differ from, and at times even contradict, one another in opinion and practice. I acknowledge this scholarly unclarity and use the term to highlight the distance from Imamite Shiite character of the later Safavid period. When a particular group or practice is intended, I will use designations used by internal members, such as Qalandar or Dervish.

⁸ Shahzad Bashir, "Shah Isma‘il and the Qizilbash: Cannibalism in the Religious History of Early Safavid Iran," *History of Religions* 45, no. 3 (2006): 234-256.

the state religion in 907/1501.⁹ This account, however, like most historical narratives, tends to present the communal, gradual moves as an abrupt, out-of-context change brought about by one individual. Indeed, Isma‘il alone was not responsible for the transformation of the religious authority of the Safaviyya order, managed by his family, to the political dominion of the Safavid dynasty. Rather, this process was already started by his father, Haydar, and his grandfather, Junayd. Shii Sufis like Isma‘il, both Haydar and Junayd claimed descent from Prophet Muhammad (were Sayyids), and both—again like Isma‘il—consolidated their power through intermarriage with the Āq-qyunlūs, powerful Turkic tribal confederation in the region.¹⁰ While Isma‘il was neither the first Shiite in his Sufi family nor the first to seek political support of the local Turkmen tribes, he did make himself distinct by founding a religious-based dynasty..

Modern scholarship mainly describes the Safavid formation as an apocalyptic revolution by the young shah. however, an early sixteenth century text, the *Futūhāt-i Shāhī*, written by the chronicler Amīnī Haravī (882-941/1477-1535), underlines the role of several old veterans around the shah who acted as vital consultants and generals to wisely control Isma‘il’s journey to power.¹¹ Whether as a result of his extraordinary insight or because of the advice from the old veterans, Isma‘il accomplished to build a theocratic rule that survived for more than two centuries. Despite the long duration of the Safavid rule, the religious claims of the state (and parallel to it the reception of Hāfiz’s character and poetry) underwent considerable mutation for survival, which will be discussed in next chapters. What receives little attention in the historical accounts of the Safavid coming to power are the historical exigencies that necessitated the appropriation of a Shii identity and its ramifications for the emerging political power. Whether Shaykh Safī and other Safavid ancestors were indeed Shii and Sayyids have long been debated,¹² yet it is rarely noticed that religious affiliations of whatever nature were an inevitable response to the necessity of self-identification and distinction—a necessity similarly responded to by the Safavid appropriation of Hāfiz.

Though not his invention, Isma‘il's religious configuration of power was indispensable. In order to exert influence in the early-sixteenth-century north-western Iranian plateau among the myriad of pressures from the Sunni Ottomans of Anatolia and the Sufi-inclined Shiis of the Qarā-qyunlu,¹³ it was inevitable for Isma‘il to identify himself and his rule with a religious doctrine. The Safavid’s Sufī charisma served the new dynasty not only by mobilizing the Qizilbash around the

⁹ H. R. Roemer, "The Safavid Period," in *Cambridge History of Iran VI: The Timurid and Safavid Periods*, ed. Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhart (Cambridge University Press, 1986), 189.

¹⁰ For the extraordinary ways in which Haydar and Junayd manage to attract support from the Āq-qyunlūs. See: Walther Hinz, *Irans aufstieg zum nationalstaat im fünfzehnten jahrhundert* (Berlin, Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter & co., 1936).

¹¹ See: Ali Anooshahr, "The Rise of the Safavids According to their Old Veterans: Amini Haravi’s Futuhāt-e Shahi," *Iranian Studies* 48, no. 2 (2015): 249-267.

¹² See: Kazuo Morimoto, "The earliest Alid genealogy for the Safavids: New Evidence for the Pre-dynastic Claim to Sayyid Status," *Iranian Studies* 43, no. 4 (2010): 447-469.

¹³ See: Seyyed Mahmūd Shāh-murādī and Asghar Muntazir al-Qā’im, "Tashayu‘ Qarā Quyūnlū-hā," *Pajūhish-hā-yi Tārīkhī*, (Spring 1392/2013): 49-72.

Safavid *pirs* to engage in “jihad” against the “infidels”,¹⁴ but also by playing an instrumental role in the development of its identity. Given the historical context, it is unlikely that any political power of non-theocratic nature would have been able to survive among the inhabitants of the milieu. This is witnessed by almost contemporaneous, similar claims of the Qutb-shahis in south Sub-Continent whose Shiite rule continued from 918/1518 to 1098/1687 as well as by the religious motivations with which Uzun Hasan (1423-1478) the Āq-qyunlū moved his troops. Historians offer different analyses of the Shiite proclamation of the Safavids: Some, as early as Alessandro Bausani take the change to Shiism as a “conscious and deliberate policy carried out by the Safavids,”¹⁵ while others, such as Ali Anooshahr, interpret Isma‘il’s religious claims in light of the opportunism of the young Shah.¹⁶ Whether opportunistic or pre-planned, Isma‘il’s proclamation of a Shia state led to the establishment of a religious hegemony to counter the heterogenous perspective of the milieu through creating a distinct identity for the dynasty on the make. The following pages shall examine how Hāfiz of Shiraz was approached for the same purpose in the Safavid formative period.

The Safavids’ distinctive identity was interpreted in the first half of the twentieth century within a national framework. The idea that the Safavids founded a “national” dynasty was put forth by Edward G. Browne (d. 1926) in his famous *A Literary History of Persia*, and further elaborated upon in *Irans Aufstieg zum Nationalstaat im fünfzehnten Jahrhundert* by Walther Hinz published in 1936.¹⁷ Browne took the national nature of the Safavid rule for granted, even though he noted that this “nationalism” differed from the nationalism of his time, which was defined mainly by shared language and race.¹⁸ Observing that the Safavids were neither “Aryans” nor native speakers of Persian, Browne noticed that the most effective factor to unify them was no other than religion. Hinz, working at a time when national debates were heated in Nazi Germany, expanded the presumption and assertively wrote: “Isma‘il accomplished to establish the first Iranian national state after almost nine centuries.”¹⁹ Neither Browne nor Hinz critically engaged with what they assumed to constitute the “national” characteristics of the dynasty, but only treated it as given. Hinz even drew from the Safavid family tree to stipulate that Isma‘il had Turkish, Greek, and Georgian blood, leaving the reader only wondering in bewilderment how the product of this mixture could be considered “national.” Later Roger Savory seconded the same

¹⁴ For a secondary short overview on the qazi activities of the Safavids see: Michel Mazzaoui, “The Safavid Phenomenon: An Introductory Essay,” in *Safavid Iran and Her Neighbors*, ed. Michel Mazzaoui (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2003), 1-6.

¹⁵ Alessandro Baussani, *The Persians* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1971), 139.

¹⁶ Ali Anooshahr, paper presented in the conference “the Idea of Iran: Safavid Era” accessed 7/1/2019 at: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=IXyKoBWpiWk>.

¹⁷ Walther Hinz, *Irans Aufstieg zum Nationalstaat im fünfzehnten Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & co., 1936).

¹⁸ Edward G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), Vol. IV, 12.

¹⁹ Hinz, *Irans*, 89. Italics mine.

proposition in 1974, though in a more critical engagement.²⁰ Although often left unjustified, it is understandable why these and other scholars viewed the Safavid rise to power as a manifestation of Persian national consciousness. After all, the modern state of Iran expands relatively within the same borders that the Safavids ruled and preserves the same Shia claims introduced by the Safavids. The recent scholarship, however, has insisted on the ahistoricity of the projection of modern designations to premodern societies.²¹ For this reason, the “national” framework cannot be applied to describe the events of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a period well before the creation of nation-states in the region which happened only after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in the twentieth century.²² While not national, the Safavids and their entourage nevertheless engaged in the creation and modification of a distinctive identity that drew upon religion to define and express its characteristics. It is my intention to show that the poetry of Hāfiz also played a similar role in giving realization to the Safavid identity.

What does Poetry do in a historical account?

The earliest evidence that correlates the Safavids to Hāfiz and his poetry is found in a historiographical work. Before considering this evidence, it is worthwhile to reflect on the application of medieval Persian poetry in historical writings. To a Western audience, it might seem irrelevant, or fancy, to encounter poetry amidst biographies, hagiographies, travelogs or other types of historical accounts. However, this is one of the many usages of classical Persian poetry, which is not irrelevant to the well known function of tutelage carried out by this poetry. The poetic genre written specifically for the purpose of providing guidance to princes and rulers known as “mirror for princes” is amply discussed in Western scholarship. The instructional function of pre-modern Persian and Arabic poetry was not however restricted to courtly environments: poetry, alongside the Quran, was virtually primary material for every education before the establishment of modern educational systems in Persianate societies. In fact kids of very young age would set out their education at home or school circles held at mosques, *maktab*, by reading poetry books such as Sa‘di’s *Būstān* until recently. The citations of poems in non-poetic literary creations, whether a letter, historiography, or any epistolary compositions, can be seen as an extension of the general instructive performance of poetry by attempting to affect the audience in a way that the prosaic text fails to do by itself.

An excellent attestation to the role of premodern Persian poetry to exert influence particularly in courtly compositions comes from the *Chahār-maqālah* (lit. Four Discourses) written by Nizāmī-yi ‘Arūzī of Samarqand (fl. 1110-1161) for the Ghurid prince Abul-Hasan Hisām al-Dīn Alī around 551-552/1156-1158. In each one of the four discourses, ‘Arūzī explicates one social class that any ruler needs for prosperity. These categories include *dabīrs*, poets, astrologers, and physicians, “who are intimates to the *padshah* and there is no alternative to them. [Because] the stature of the rulership (*mulk*) is by the *dabīr*, survival of [ruler’s] perennial name by the poet, arrangement of the affairs by astrologer, and health of the body by physician.” [*dabīr u shā‘ir u*

²⁰ See: Roger Savory, “the Safavid State and Polity,” *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 7, n. ½ (1974): 179-212; Ali Sālārī Shādī, “Naqd va Barrasī-yi nazariyāh-yi Tashkīl-i Hākimiyyat-i Safavī,” *Tārikh-nāmah-yi Iran ba’d az Islam* (1393/2014): 71-96.

²¹ For a most recent work in this regard, see: Mana Kia, *The Persianate Selves: Memories of Place and Origin before Nationalism* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2020).

²² Michel Mazzaoui, “The Safavid Phenomenon,” 1.

*munajjim u tabīb az khawās-i pādshah-and va az īshan chārah-ī nīst. Ghavām-i mulk bi-dabīr ast, va baqā-i ism-i javdanī bi-shā'ir, va nizām-i umur bi-munajjim, va sihhat-i badan bi-tabīb...*²³ Scrutiny in the virtues enumerated for the first two groups, i.e. *dabīrs* and poets, speak to the crucial functions of poetry in the pre-modern Persianate world.

The first and foremost career that is indispensable to the kingly might, according to 'Arūzī, is that of *dabīrs* (lit. writer). This group includes scribes, historians, and those involved in the epistolary tradition of a chancery. Among other qualifications, 'Arūzī contends that *dabīrs* should habitually undertake the recitation of the Quran, the prophetic life stories and traditions, as well as poetry. He recommends the authors at the service of a king to read "...from the collections of Arabic poetry the *Dīvān* of Mutanabbī and Abīvird and Ghuzzī and from Persian poetry the poems of Rūdakī and Firdawsī's mathnavī (the *Shāhnāmah*) and 'Unsurī's panegyrics."²⁴ It is valid to ask, why should a court scribe be constantly reading these texts as a requirement to write about contemporary events? The answer could be sought in the short anecdotes that 'Arūzī offers as best examples of each profession. According to one of such narratives that exemplifies the influential power of a good piece of poetry, Nasr b. Ahmad the Sāmānid (r. 301-331/914-943), who used to move from his capital Bukhārā to a warmer city in Khurāsān in winters, was once so enticed by the beauty of Herat that extended his seasonal stay year after year. After four years when his entourage was terribly longing for family and homeland, no one could convince the Samanid Amir to return but the poet Farrukhī of Sistān (d. 329/940). Farrukhī, "knowing that prose does not take into him [the shah]," accomplished the mission by a poem which moved Nasr to the extent that he did not waste time to put on his shoes but sat on the horseback and embarked on the return even before the poem ended.²⁵

The *Chahār-maqālah*, written in the sixth/twelfth century, speaks to the functions that poetry was supposed to fulfill. Persianate poetry was not a leisure time performance in the pre-modern milieu, yet as Julie S. Meisami has shown its images and metaphors were indeed "argumentative means" or "persuasive devices" that claim a similitude without providing evidence.²⁶ The poetic lines, tentatively already known and admired by the audience, quoted amidst the prosaic text of a composition provide further support for the narrative by inviting the reader to make an analogy. Describing war of a ruler for instance when combined with the quotations of the heroic acts of Rostam from the *Shāhnāmah* or the hagiography of a Sufī when juxtaposed with a poem on the miraculous deeds of a prophet would lead the reader to connect and compare the two acts and the two protagonists. In making such comparisons, it should be noted that the rhetorical exemplars used to metaphorically evoke particular known values in the Persianate world. Jamshīd for one signals justice or Solomon is an embodiment of wisdom.²⁷

²³ Nizāmī-yi 'Arūzī Samarqandī, *Chahār-maqālah*, ed. Muhammad Qazvīnī (Tehran: Jāmī, 1380), 18.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 53.

²⁶ Julie S. Meisami, *Structure and Meaning in Medieval Arabic and Persian Poetry* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 342-343.

²⁷ Colin P. Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran: power, Religion and Rhetorics* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 15.

In dealing with the poetry of Hāfiz that is quoted in the Safavid historical and other writings, this function of poetry in claiming a comparability is exceedingly fruitful. In the following pages, I shall examine several accounts that draw from the poetry of Hāfiz for purposes other than introducing the poet per se. Investigating the context in which Hāfiz's poetry was quoted furnishes a glance to comprehend, or rather reflect on, what is being likened to the content of Hāfiz's poetry, what makes this comparison justifiable, and the dynamics with which this poetry was used to introduce or criticize varying claims particularly of the ruling class.

Hāfiz and the pre-enthronement Safavids

The earliest account that links the Safavids to the poetry of Hāfiz, although in a pejorative fashion, predates the formal formation of the dynasty. Fazl Allah b. Ruzbahān Khunjī (d. 927/1521) provides a valuable eighth/fifteenth century perspective of how attribution to religion and association with Hāfiz participated in the presentation of the Safavid image even before Isma'īl. Khunjī was a religious scholar and a prolific author active in Uzbek Transoxiana, Central Iran (Kashan), and the Āq-quyunlū Diyarbakir. His chronicle *Tārīkh-i 'Ālam Ārā-yi Amīnī*, written between 892/1487 and 908/1493 for Sultan Ya'qub b. Uzun Hasan (r. 1478-1490), is the most informative source from the late Turkmen courts. A Fars born staunch Sunni, Khunjī does not hesitate to criticize in his works any infringements from the *Shariah*. Not surprisingly, the target of Khunjī's harshest criticism has been Isma'īl and his fathers.

Khunjī depicts the motive of the disciples who gathered around the Safavids before their rise to power to be no other than Islamic fervor. According to him, the contemplative adherents of the Safaviyyah order engaged in "ghāzī activities," or holy wars, only after their religious sentiments were manipulated by the Safavids. Khunjī, clearly following an anti-Safavid agenda, does not hesitate to interpret the religious gesture of the Safavids as deceiving. "Out of extreme deceit," Khunjī writes, "they [Isma'īl's fathers] put on Sufi headgear and wear Sufi garments making armors at homes and preparing swords for war."²⁸ An official scribe at the Āq-quyunlū court, the author is a scholar with a vast body of Islamic writings. His description of the ideologically-driven actions of the Safavid ancestors is certainly not meant to be laudatory, but only indicative of the malicious intentions, in Khunjī's view, behind Safavid religiosity. While the polemical nature of this account strongly warns against taking it at face value, it does betray the role of the religious fanaticism with which the entrance of the Safavids to the political scene of the period was perceived by their contemporary adversaries.

The pejorative attitude of Khunjī toward the Safavids and their Sufi claims complies with no literary evidence better than Hāfiz's description of the Sufis. The Āq-quyunlū chronicler devotes a section of his historiography to "a succinct of the unacceptable traits of Shaykh Haydar [Safī's offspring and Isma'īl's father]" where he compares the relationship of Safī al-Dīn and Haydar to that of Prophet Nūh (Noah) and his son, who, according to the Quran, disobeyed father and eventually drowned in the flood with the unbelievers.²⁹ Based on this analogy, Khunjī confirms

²⁸ Khunjī, *Tārīkh-i 'Ālam Ārā-yi Amīnī* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1992), 266.

... ز غایت مکاری در سر کلاهی صوفیانه و در بر خرقة درویشانه و جوشنها در خانه ساخته و تیغها برای جنگ پرداخته

²⁹ مجمل داستان مشایخ اردبیل و شمه ای از اخلاق نامقبول شیخ حیدر

the prophet-like spirituality of Shaykh Saḫī, but renders his descendant shahs to go astray of their ancestral lifestyle just as Nūh's son did. To portray Haydar's "unacceptable traits" Khunjī quotes the following couplets by Hāfīz:³⁰

Sufi spread out [his] net and lifted the lid of his (opium) box,
He built the foundation of playing tricks on the deceiving heavens.
May the game of the revolving sky break the gem of his hat,
For he revealed the joggling tricks to the people of secrets.

صوفی نهاد دام و سر حقه باز کرد
بنیاد مکر با فلک حقه باز کرد
بازی چرخ بشکندش بیضه در کلاه
زیرا که عرض شعبده با اهل راز کرد

In quoting these verses, the author does not question the Sufi background of the Safavids, but illustrates them to be nominal, deceitful mystics intrigued by luster and worldly desires. This narrative in the royal historiography, *Tārīkh-i 'Ālam Ārā*, reflects the Āq-qyunlū perspective of the Safavid movement in which Isma'il's father and grandfather--Haydar and Junaid--accomplished to attract followers only by spreading out nets and playing tricks on them. By citing Hāfīz's harsh criticism of the Sufis, Khunjī offers a perfect rhetorical endorsement for his argument, that is, the Safavids are as "false" and as deceitful as the Sufis that Hāfīz depicts. In rejecting the Sufism of the Safavids by quoting the couplet by Hāfīz, Khunjī does not oppose Sufism as a whole. In fact, Khunjī himself was drawn to the Sufi Jāhriyyah and the Naqshbandī orders.³¹ Nevertheless, he openly criticized in his works anything he deemed non-orthodox or exaggerated such as the practices of Central Asian mystics in performing pilgrimage to the Sufi shrines.³² Khunjī's most severe attack is certainly saved for the Safavids whom he compares to the Sufis sarcastically belittled by Hāfīz. Like Hāfīz's poetic prediction, the rival historian expressed hope that the so-called Sufi Safavids would lose their gem-decorated hats, that is, crowns, hence their royal ranks.³³

The quotation of Hāfīz's verse suggests that no literary portrayal of the Sufis could provide Khunjī with a better confirmation of the dishonest nature, in his view, of the Safavid Sufism than Hāfīz's poetry created not long ago. The quotation of the above lines by Hāfīz in the *Tārīkh-i 'Ālam Ārā* is further noteworthy in two respects: First, with Khunjī's usage of the poetry of Hāfīz in describing the Safavid ancestors, the association between Hāfīz's verse and the Safavids predate their formal ascension to throne in 907/1501. That is, by Isma'il's enthronement in 907/1501, the link between Hāfīz and the Safavid family, soon to become Safavid dynasty, was already recognizable by contemporaries. Second, it is interesting to note that the Sufi themes in the *Dīvān* are linked to the Safavid claims not only by the shahs and their supporters who

³⁰ Khunjī, 275.

³¹ Haarmann, U., "Khunjī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman et al (2012), online <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4333>

³² Haarmann, U., 2012. "Khunjī."

³³ Khunjī, *Tārīkh-i 'Ālam Ārā-yi Amīnī* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1992), 266.

claimed Sufi attachments, but also by their avowed adversaries who did not doubt to show animosity for the Safavids in their writings.

Safavid Hāfiz vs. pre-Safavid Hāfiz

Not much later, verses from the same ghazal of Hāfiz are quoted in another historiography written in the eastern frontiers of the Persianate world,³⁴ namely the *Habīb al-Sīyar fī Akhbār-i Afrād al-Bashar* (The beloved of biographies reporting on multitudes of people). The preeminent historian Ghias al-Dīn Muhammad Khwāndamīr (880-942/1475-1535) composed this universal history that covers the creation up to the end of Isma‘il’s rule in 930/1524 in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. He started the work under the Timurids of Herat and finished it during the reign of Isma‘il, hence general consideration of the work as a Safavid historiography. After moving to Mughal India Khwāndamīr adjusted some Shia extravagants of the text to fit the new Sunni patronizing court.³⁵ The short description about Hāfiz seems to have remained intact from the Timurid period, to judge from the sources used by the author and those left aside and the ways in which Hāfiz is described. The description of Hāfiz in the *Habīb al-Sīyar*, most likely written simultaneous to Isma‘il’s rise to power in Azerbaijan and before his conquest of Khurāsān, reflects the pre-Safavid approach to Hāfiz. To give Hāfiz’s biography, Khwāndamīr cites Jāmī (d. 1492), the Sufi poet akin to the Timurid court of Hussayn Bayqara (d. 842/1438) while remains silent of Hāfiz’s Sufi gestures so dearly celebrated by Isma‘il and his house. Khwāndamīr deployed the same poem that Khunjī used in reference to the Safavids to illustrate another ruler, this time one contemporary to Hāfiz himself. These historiographical accounts elucidate the extent to which Hāfiz’s poetry was used to portray the premodern rulers and their religious affiliations.

A reader of the *Habīb al-Sīyar* meets Hāfiz in a section that deals with the death of Jalāl al-Dīn Shah Shujā‘, the Muzaffarid ruler of Fārs (r. 1358-84) before the rise of the Safavids to power. Having detailed the shah's demise, his preparation for death, and the burial and mourning rituals, Khwāndamīr names two major poets active under Shujā‘. Hāfiz, however, is neither the first of them nor is he introduced in a positive light as being favored by the late shah. Rather, Khwāndamīr relates the engagement of Hāfiz and his Muzaffarid patron in contentious dialogues to the extent that it was likely that religious fatwas be issued, according to Khwandamir, against Hāfiz.³⁶

³⁴ Ghazal is a poetic form that has a certain stanzaic structure and often deals with themes of love and longing and is thus comparable to odd in English. The majority of Hāfiz’s poetry is in the form of ghazal and he is in fact considered to be a master of ghazal.

³⁵ Philip Bockholt, “Khwāndamīr,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Kate Fleet, et al (2020), Available online <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_35589> Khwāndamīr wrote the main body of the text in Timurid Herat, but added the Safavid section apparently after Isma‘il’s conquest of the city. The historian eventually had to revise parts of the text by attenuating the Shia extravagance when reshaping the book as the royal chronicle of the Sunni Mughals in the Subcontinent.

³⁶ Khwāndamīr (Ghīyās al-Dīn b. Humām al-Dīn Hussaynī), *Habīb al-Sīyar fī Akhbār-i Afrād-i Bashār*, ed. by Mohammad Dabīr-Sīyaqī, intro. by Jalāl al-Dīn Humāyī (Tehran: Khayyām, 1380/2010), 315.

The historian makes no allusion to any spiritual orientations of Hāfiz. Rather, he essentially places the poet in sharp contrast to the religious demeanor of Shah Shujā'. Shah's favorite poet is no other than 'Imād of Kirmān, known as the *faqīh*, lit. jurist, whose very epithet attests to his socio-religious rank. *Faqīhs*, theologians trained in Islamic law, were historically critical of Sufis for their inward attitude to the faith and their occasional negligence of the rituals in pre-modern and even modern Muslim societies. Khwāndamīr's description of the two poets clearly describes 'Imād as a "Shaykh in possession of hospice" (*Shaykh va Khāniqāh-dār*) "in whom the shah had great belief."³⁷ The historian narrates a miraculous act by the Kirmānī poet: "It is said that whenever Khwajah 'Imād prayed, his cat would also mimic the master's ritualistic practice." Two contradictory reactions by Shah and Hāfiz followed the kitten's praying, according to Khwāndamīr: "Shah Shujā' would take this meaning as a miracle thus constantly accompanying 'Imād with an intimate step." On the contrary, Hāfiz reveals his disdain in the ghazal of which Khunjī quoted the first two lines not long ago. The sixth line of the poem directly alludes to the *faqīh*'s kitten:

ای کبک خوش خرام کجا می روی بایست/ غره مشو که گربه عابد نماز کرد

O the dazzling partridge, stop! Where are you going?
Don't take pride when the cat of the worshiper prays!

The ghazal, with the theme of criticizing Sufis and jurists alike, epitomizes Hāfiz's remoteness from any mainstream religious group; it opens by rejecting Sufis describing them as deceitful, which Khunjī finds a perfect description of the emerging Safavids. The poem also poignantly reprimands those who are fooled by the praying pet. In the context of Khwāndamīr's anecdote, Hāfiz's criticism easily targets the shah, who is just mentioned to admire the *faqīh* and his supposed miracle. The text further implies that Hāfiz's reaction in Khwāndamīr's view is triggered by his jealousy following the excessive attention of the patron to Hāfiz's rival poet, 'Imād.

Hāfiz's sarcastic allusion to 'Imād and his pet is not the sole event narrated in the *Habīb al-Sīyar* that puts our poet opposed to the jurists and the ruler who second their law-oriented religiosity. After a few lines we read that Shah Shujā' complains about the literary form of Hāfiz's ghazal but more importantly about its religious content. The Shah addresses Hāfiz and says, "None of your poems are cohesive in every line; rather, from every poem three or four lines are in praise of wine; two or three lines deal with Sufism; and one or two lines describe the beloved; and this multicoloring in a single ghazal contradicts the manner of the eloquents."³⁸ In a keen response, the poet expresses respect to Shah's judgment while at the same time shrewdly claims that the polysemy in his poems is nothing short of admirable and that he is in fact superior over his rivals that are supported by the shah, saying:

"What goes on the blessed tongue of the shah is the absolute right and the ultimate truth and yet [despite this thematic nonconformity] the poetry of Hāfiz gained complete fame

³⁷ Khwāndamīr, *Habīb al-Sīyar*, 315.

³⁸ ابیات هیچ یک از غزلیات شما بر یک منوال واقع نشده بلکه از هر غزلی سه چهار بیت در تعریف شراب است و دو سه بیت در تصوف و یک دو بیت در صفت محبوب و تلون در یک غزل خلاف طریقه بلغاست. آنچه بر زبان مبارک شاه می گذرد عین صدق و محض صوابست اما مع ذلک شعر حافظ در اطراف آفاق اشتها تمام یافته و نظم حریفان دیگر پای از دروازه شیراز بیرون نمی نهد.

all around the globe while the verse of other competitors has not stepped out of the gates of Shiraz.”

As a repercussion for the poet’s riposte, the Shah would find fault with the religious content of the poetry of Hāfiz including a controversial line by him, mentioned below. The hesitation of the ruler about the orthodoxy of Hāfiz was about to be seconded by legal activities of the jurists, Khwāndamīr accounts:

“This improvisation [by Hāfiz] triggered the Shah to await a chance to disturb Hāfiz, who had, by way of accident, then poetized a poem with this *maqta*’:

گر مسلمانی ازین است که حافظ دارد/ آه اگر از پس امروز بود فردایی

Should Muslimhood be of this sort that Hāfiz is of/ Alas if there is a tomorrow coming after today.

Shah Shujā’ heard this verse and said ‘from the content of the verse it appears that Hāfiz denies the resurrection.’³⁹ And some of the envious *fuqahā* (jurists) [of the city] decided to issue fatwas that any doubt in the Day of Judgment is heresy and this line implies this meaning.”

What preserved Hāfiz from blasphemy, according to the *Habīb al-Sīyar*, is the poetic trick he learned from a Mawlānā Zayn al-Dīn Abu-Bakr Tāybādī to compose a line to precede the controversial one so that it seems a narrator other than Hāfiz voices the heresy. Doing so, as the following lines show, it is not Hāfiz but a Christian who questions the resurrection:

“It pleased me to hear this at dawn/ That a Christian was saying with flute and tambourine in the tavern,
Should Muslimhood be of this sort that Hāfiz is of/ Alas if there is a tomorrow coming after today”

Khwāndamīr briefly sketches the biography of Hāfiz as an interlude between the two mentioned anecdotes, the one about Imād’s pet and the other about shah’s criticism of Hāfiz’s verse. In giving the poet’s biography, Khwāndamīr follows a rhetorical tradition prevalent in the ninth/fifteenth-century Khurāsān whereby biographers would consider Hāfiz too famous to need an introduction hence neglected to elaborate on his life.⁴⁰ Following Jāmī and Alīshīr Navāyī, Khwāndamīr writes, “By means of eloquence and articulation and extreme reputation due to the excellence of idioms and expressions [Hāfiz] does not need any complements by the regulators of the rhetorics.”⁴¹ Khwāndamīr borrows his sole allusion to Hāfiz’s spirituality from Jāmī. Without any addition or alteration he reproduces part of Jāmī’s account: “It is composed in the *Nafahāt al-Uns* that Hāfiz’s poetry is the *lisān al-ghayb* (the tongue of the unseen) and *Tarjumān*

³⁹ Muslims believe that every human being resurrects after death to receive the outcome of their deeds in this world.

⁴⁰ Mahmūd Futūhī and Muhammad Afshīn-Vafāyī, “Mukhātab-shināsī-yi Hāfiz dar sadah-hāyi hashtum va nuhum-i hijrī bar asās-i rūykar-d-i tārikh-i adabī-yi hermeneutic,” in *Naqd-i Adabī* 2, no. 6 (1388/ 2009), 83. The authors name Dawlatshāh as one of the followers of this rhetorical tradition, but this seems to be a mistake as I was not able to locate such a disposition in the *Tazkirah al-Shu‘arā*.

⁴¹ بواسطه بلاغت و فصاحت و غایت شهرت بحدوت لفظ و عبارت احتیاج بتعریف ناظمین مناظم سخنوری ندارد.

al-Asrār (translations of the secret) where the hidden secrets and the true meanings are covered in the guise of surface and the garment of the metaphors.”⁴² Jāmī’s description of Hāfiz, as the last male Sufi before opening the section on Sufi women in his major hagiographical encyclopedia, *Nafahāt*, lacks the usual accolades bestowed on other Sufis. Indeed, the Naqshbandī master expresses wonder of how Hāfiz’s verse gained wonderful popularity despite his uncertain Sufi affiliations writing, “Although it is unclear whether he [Hāfiz] took the hand of any *pirs* in obedience ... his words are so favored by this group (Sufis) like no other one’s.”⁴³ In writing these words Jāmī acknowledges the admirable status of Hāfiz and his verse in Sufi circles without confirming his competition of the traditional spiritual path. Khwāndamīr’s account of Hāfiz, relying heavily on Jāmī, appears to be a continuum to the pre-Safavid tradition of looking over the Sufism of Hāfiz, regarding him as a talented poet whose verse was perceived pertinent to illustrate religious affiliations of shahs, whether Sufism (as for Shah Isma‘il) or *fiqh* (as for Shah Shujā‘).

The appearance of Hāfiz in the *Habīb al-Sīyar*, which corresponds timewise to the rise of Isma‘il to power but content wise to the tradition of Timurid Herat, highlights the peculiarity of the Safavid approach to the poet. While early Safavid shahs took every opportunity to tie themselves to the poet of Shiraz, Shah Shujā‘ is rendered to have an adversarial relationship with Hāfiz by Khwāndamīr. In sharp contrast to this account, however, Hāfiz is survived by a myriad of encomiastic ghazals composed for this Muzaffarid patron. According to Qāsim Ghanī, scholar and editor of the *Dīvān*, 123 of Hāfiz’s poems allude to Shah Shujā‘ in one way or another eight of which contain the patron’s name or title.⁴⁴ Examples of the homage Hāfiz paid to Shujā‘ can be seen in this line:

مظهر لطف ازل روشنی چشم امل
جامع علم و عمل جان جهان شاه شجاع

The Epitome of eternal grace, the radiance of the sight of desire,
The summation of knowledge and action, [and] the soul of the world [are] Shah Shujā‘

Given these and other poems, it is questionable why Khwāndamīr writes nothing about the shah’s fruitful patronage of the poet but only depicts Hāfiz in irreconcilable controversies with the shah. The answer should be sought in the agenda of the text to portray Shujā‘ with utmost religious zeal and also in the perception of Hāfiz’s poetry as reflecting his somewhat heterodox beliefs: the shah favors ‘Imād the *faqīh* over Hāfiz; he complains that Hāfiz contradicted the Islamic tenet of resurrection; and jurists of Shiraz appear so close to his court that they are about to issue an edict blaspheming Hāfiz. Hāfiz’s criticism of extremist rituals and his sarcastic allusion to the Day of Judgement provided an excellent backdrop for the historiographer against which the orthodox demeanor of the shah stands out. Despite the historical contrast between *fiqh* and Sufism, the anecdotes in the *Habīb al-Sīyar* about the encounter of Hāfiz and Shah Shujā‘, both of which picturing the poet in confrontation with Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) in one way or the other, do not suggest a Sufi status for Hāfiz. Instead, the anti-religious image of Hāfiz

⁴² Khwāndamīr, *Habīb al-Sīyar*, 315.

⁴³ ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Ahmad Jāmī, *Nafahāt al-Uns Min Hazarāt al-Quds*, ed. Mehdi Tawhidi-pur (Tehran: Kitāb-Forushi-ye Mahmudi, 1337 H/ 1918-19), 614.

⁴⁴ Hāfiz and Qasim Ghanī, *Hāfiz ba yaddāsht-ha va Havāshī-yi Qasim Ghanī* (Hāfiz along with Qasim Ghanī’s annotations), by ‘Abd al-Karīm Jurbuzah-dar (Tehran: Zawwār, 1366/1987-88).

portrayed by Khwāndamīr in the cultural atmosphere of the Timurid Herat contrasts with the near contemporary treatment he received from the early Safavids. A perception of Hāfiz as the ideal Sufi-king which was promoted in the early stage of the Safavid history as such is not a direct continuum to the dominant perception of the Shirazi poet in the pre-Safavid Khurasani tradition, but rather a timely reaction to the rising situations.

Hāfiz and Sufism

Hāfiz's lines that Khunjī and Khwāndamīr quoted are often cited as evidence of the poet's disapproval of institutionalized Sufism. However, this and similar critical lines do not sufficiently represent Hāfiz's attitude toward Sufism. There are indeed verses in the *Dīvān* in which Hāfiz's playful application of Sufi themes resulted in ambivalent, long-debated understandings of the poet's Sufi beliefs. For instance, the following line echoes Hāfiz's conditional approval of Sufis:

صوفی ار باده به اندازه خورد نوشش باد
ورنه اندیشه این کار فراموشش باد

If Sufi drinks wine sufficiently, may it be sweet to them,
Otherwise, may he forget all about this.

While in many poems Hāfiz harshly criticizes the rigidity of the Shari'a legality, represented by the social class of *zāhid* and *faqīh*, respectively ascetic and jurist, by no means does he approve of Sufism in entirety. Yet, our poet goes beyond a simple dichotomy of *zāhid*/Sufi by making fun of the shortcomings of each group. He admonishes the *zāhid* for strictness and hypocrisy particularly visible in the closure of the taverns, as in the line:

در میخانه بیستند خدا را میسند
که در خانه تزویر و ریا بگشایند

They've closed the wine-shops' doors—ah, God,
Don't let them open wide,
The doors to shops whose wares are cant,
Pretentiousness, and pride.⁴⁵

Along with the pretentious *zāhid*, Hāfiz does not hesitate to berate the Sufis for being deceitful, as in the lines Khunjī quoted to describe the Safavid ancestors. Therefore, while the Safavid house and the institutions they patronized frequently attached themselves to Hāfiz's poems that cast Sufis in a positive light (examples below), their adversaries, such as Khunjī, follow the Safavid-Hāfiz attribution to conclude the opposite, that is they quote other verses of Hāfiz to depict a negative picture of the Sufi-rooted Safavids. Both types of verse, either pro or against the Sufis, are used as such to describe the Safavids, whether as praiseworthy, "true" Sufis by Safavid proponents or as deceitful, "false" ones by their opponents. In both cases, both groups tacitly confirm the link perceived between the Safavids and the poetry of Hāfiz even before the Safavid political empowerment. Although before the Safavids and even simultaneous but unrelated to the Safavids, as Khwāndamīr's note on Hāfiz shows, Hāfiz's poetry had been remembered for its popularity and presentation of perfect poetic art being particularly used for portrayal of rulers, it is with the Safavids that a Sufi understanding of Hāfiz came to the fore. In

⁴⁵ Translation by Dick Davis in *Faces of Love: Hafez and the Poets of Shiraz* (New York: Penguin Books: 2013), 85.

the early sixteenth-century Persianate world, Hāfiz was extensively approached by the Safavid house as well as their enemies to describe the Sufi claims of the rising dynasty. This process changed however as the Safavids abandoned institutionalized Sufism in favor of a more orthodox religiosity under Shah Tahmasp. (See chapter three)

The character and the poetry of Hāfiz proved particularly relevant in the process of identity construction for the newly established dynasty that initially consolidated their power over Sufi claims. Not only would the Sufi tint embedded in Hāfiz's poetry allow the Safavid shah to stress his Sufi provenance, but also the ambivalent terminology used in the *Dīvān*, particularly the frequent application of wine vocabulary that allowed for both courtly and spiritual signification, endorsed his claim of sovereignty over temporal and spiritual domains. No wonder that Isma'īl found his resemblance in the figure of Hāfiz, and self-fashioned himself as Hāfiz in his poetry as well as his political correspondence. The following pages showcase instances in which the Safavid Shahs and their affiliates, whether scribes, chroniclers, artists, or architects at their service, correlated and endorsed the Safavid rule with the poetry of Hāfiz.

Hāfiz and the Safavid Founder

- **Hāfiz and Isma'īl the Poet**

The association between the Safavid rulers and poetry, already started by the Safavid ancestor Safī al-Dīn, continued in a more pronounced way with the first Safavid shah—Isma'īl. A relatively large body of poems, in Turkish and Persian, remains from Isma'īl under the pen-name *Khatāyī*. Isma'īl's Turkish poetry, not his Persian verse, has triggered much enthusiasm among historians not only because this Turkish repertoire of almost 44000 couplets constitutes the majority of his poetic work, but also because of the religio-political significance attributed to them.⁴⁶ Shah Isma'īl's Persian verse, however, limited to only a handful of poems, has largely remained understudied.⁴⁷ It is this part of his poetic corpus that reflects his relationship with Hāfiz, both from a literary and a mystical perspective, and is thus worth further scrutiny here.

The Turkish poetry of Shah Isma'īl has long been regarded as important historical and political evidence of early Shia rule. Vladimir Minorsky (d. 1966), a Russian scholar active in the first half of the twentieth century, introduced Isma'īl's poetry as revealing otherwise less known

⁴⁶ For Shah Isma'īl's Turkish poetry see: İbrahim Aslanoğlu, ed., *Şah Isma'īl Hatayî: Dīvān, Dehnâme, Nasihatnâme ve Anadolu Hatayîleri* (Istanbul: Der Yayınları, 1992). For a most recent critical edition of his *Dīvān*, see: Muhsin Macit, ed., *Hatâyî divânı* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2017). For the collection of his Turkish and Persian poetry see: Mirze Resul İsmailzade, ed., *Şah Isma'īl Sefevi (Xetaî): Küllüyyatı Qezeller, Qesideler, Nesihetname Dehname, Qoşmalar* (Tehran: Alhoda Publishers, 2004).

⁴⁷ Khatāyī's choice of language for his poetic production has ensued some controversies. Minorsky believes that the Turkish language of the poems itself is an indication of their reception among Isma'īl's Qizilbash warriors. Comparing Turkmen Turkish of the Isma'īl's poems to the local dialects preferred by founders of esoteric sects, such as Fazlullāh Hurūfî who wrote in the dialect of Astarābādî, Minorsky attributes to the Shah's poetic choice a political motivation and supports the religio-political significance of his poetry. Gallagher, however, contends that writing Turkish verse by ruling elite is a literary tradition of the time shared by not only the Safavid Shah, but also by the Āq-quyunlū Sultan Yaqub (d. 1490), the Uzbek Shaybani Khan (d. 1510), the Mughal Babur (d. 1530?), with the ironic exception of the Ottoman Sultan Selim I, who responded to Isma'īl's Turkish poems in Persian verse.

features of the Safavid religious authority. Minorsky noticed that manuscript sup. Turc 1307 at Bibliothèque Nationale dated to eighteen years after the shah's death—which was the earliest manuscript of Khatāyī's poetry known by the time—differs conspicuously from later manuscripts in containing “unspoken” utterances of the poet's messianic, prophetic, and even divine claims.⁴⁸ The self-glorifying verses, in some of which Isma‘il speaks in the first person as the apocalyptic Mahdī, the incarnation of Ali, or the manifestation of God himself, were allegedly omitted from later manuscripts in a process of “expurgation.” Minorsky's vision on the religio-political nature of these poems was embraced and approved by the next generation of Safavid scholars, as seen for instance in the entry on *Encyclopedia of Islam*.⁴⁹ Recently, Amelia Gallagher has challenged this dominant idea by questioning the extent to which Isma‘il's poetry was indeed used for political propaganda. Gallagher finds it problematic to expand to external reality the exuberant claims found in individual poems,⁵⁰ and proposes instead that a literary, and not necessarily literal, reading of Isma‘il's poetry be undertaken. She argues that the apocalyptic vision of Isma‘il's poetry is not necessarily political; but rather a literary tradition prevalent in the sixteenth century when the context of the Hijri calendar welcomes millennialism.⁵¹ Khatāyī's extravagant claims of deification as such can be seen as a strain of Sufi expression, or *Shath*, within which Isma‘il was schooled. In this case, what the poet/lover utters is in fact the utterances of the beloved.⁵² Gallagher's argument recommends the necessity of approaching Khatāyī as a poet, when dealing with his poetic production, rather than a shah.

While conclusive evidence is absent to corroborate the political nature of Isma‘il's verse, existing evidence helps to reconstruct the poetic confluences between Isma‘il and the contemporaneous literary milieu. Isma‘il's Turkish and Persian poetry seemingly differ in their correlation with the larger literary tradition: His Turkish poems, written in an admixture of Chaghatay and Turcoman languages, prove to exert a lasting influence on Turkish poetry particularly on the poetry of the Bektashi and Elevi orders. Yet his Persian poetry, consisting of some ten ghazals, six quatrains, one *mukhammas*, and a few single lines, fairly befits the Persian lyric tradition. A continuum to the lyric tradition and following its conventional imagery and diction, Khatāyī's Persian poetry is not innovative. It implies, nevertheless, what poetry Isma‘il was exposed to and influenced by. Particularly of course, the Persian poetic corpus of the first Safavid shah depicts the extent to which he was acquainted with Hāfiz approaching his verse as a literary, and probably spiritual, model.

⁴⁸ Minorsky, V., and Shah Isma‘il, “The Poetry of Shah Isma‘il I,” in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London 10, n. 4. (1941), 1008A: 17-45.

⁴⁹ See for instance, the articles on Isma‘il I on the EI that reflects Minorsky's ideas: Savory, R.M. and Gandjei, T., “Isma‘il I,” in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. available online in May 2022 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0389>

⁵⁰ Amelia Gallagher, “The Apocalypse of Ecstasy: the Poetry of Shah Isma‘il Revisited,” *Iranian Studies* 51, no. 3. (2018): 366. She finds neither the external evidence of the circulation of the surviving manuscripts, nor the internal literary evidence in them, when viewed in the context, compelling for such an understanding. The few manuscripts of Khatāyī's *Divān* survived from his time compared to the greater remaining number of them from later periods, according to Gallagher, does not support a broad circulation of Isma‘il's poetry among his disciples.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 375.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 365.

Shah Isma‘il’s interest in Hāfiz manifests itself in his poetry. Beside familiarity with the tradition of the Persian ghazal—which suggests that Isma‘il had read Hāfiz’s *Dīvān* that was long considered the culmination of the literary form—Khatāyī’s work include explicit references to Hāfiz’s which is particularly evident in his *mukhammas*. *Mukhammas*—pentapartite—is a poetic form constructed upon an already existing ghazal. It consists of several five-line segments, in each of which three lines (*misra‘*) are composed to be followed by the two-line couplet of the original ghazal, while echoing the meter and the rhyme of the latter. The following *mukhammas* by Shah Isma‘il, inspired by a ghazal of Hāfiz, is known to be a typical example of the literary form mentioned in the manuals of Persian literature.⁵³

1

تو آن گلی که خراب تو گل‌گذارانند
اسیر بند کمند تو شهسوارانند
به بند دانه و دامت چو من هزارانند
غلام نرگس مست تو تاجدارانند
خراب باده لعل تو هوشیارانند

2

تو با کرشمه و ناز و گدا به عجز و نیاز
کنون که صاحب حسنی به حسن خویش بناز
تو را رقیب و مرا شد غم تو محرم راز
تو را صبا و مرا آب دیده شد غماز
وگر نه عاشق و معشوق رازدارانند

3

چو آفتاب رخت نیست ماه در خاور
نهاده پیش قدت سرو سرکشی از سر
ندیده دیده چو روی تو ای پری پیکر
به زیر زلف دو تا چون نگه کنی بنگر
که از یمین و بيسارت چه بی قرارانند

4

سپاه خال و خطت می کنند غارت دین
نشسته ابرو و چشمت ز گوشه ها به کمین
کشیده صف ز خطا تا به روم لشکر چین
گذر فکن چو صبا بر بنفشه زار و ببین
که از تطاول زلفت چه سوگوارانند

5

ز جور خوش پسر تند خوی عهد شکن
دل رمیده وحشی گرفته شد ز وطن
به هند می برم این بار از ختا و ختن
تو دستگیر شو ای خضر پی خجسته که من
پیاده می روم و هم‌رهان سوارانند

6

رسید موسم گل عیش و کامرانی کن
گذشت عمر گرامی به من جوانی کن⁵⁴

⁵³ Zabīh-Allāh Safā, *Tārīkh-i Adabiyāt dar Iran*, Vol. 4 (Tehran, Firdawī, 1364/1983-4), 137-8

⁵⁴ گرانی مکن روانی کن

خلاف زاهد مکار تا توانی کن
در آ به می‌کده و چهره ارغوانی کن
مرو به صومعه کانجا سیاهکارانند

7

ببین که مردم چشمت چو آهوی صیاد
ز خال و دانه و زنجیر زلف دانه نهاد
ز خال و دانه خطایی چنین به دام افتاد
خلاص حافظ از آن زلف تابدار مباد
که بستگان کمند تو رستگارانند

Khatāyī's choice of ghazal to contain in his *mukhammas* is noteworthy in itself. The love poem by Hāfiz that Isma'īl picks draws from courtly imagery to address a lofty beloved. As it lacks any direct indication of the (worldly/otherworldly) nature of the beloved, the lyric ghazal lends itself to a romantic as well as a mystical understanding. However, there is evidence that this ghazal is perceived, shortly after this period, as connoting a mystical message. In a treatise titled "*Latīfah-yi Ghaybīyyah*" by Muhammad b. Muhammad Al-Dārābī of the eleventh/seventeenth century, lines from the above *ghazal* are quoted as samples of Hāfiz's highly spiritual verse.⁵⁵ Poet, historian, and author from the city of Dārāb in the province of Fars,⁵⁶ Al-Dārābī conceived Hāfiz as a great Sufi, hence the title of his work, "*Latīfah-yi Ghaybīyyah*" (lit. the invisible intricacy). Al-Dārābī discloses his intention from creating the work being a response to frequently raised hesitations by those who would not regard Hāfiz a peerless mystic: "Intention from writing this piece is that," Al-Dārābī writes in the introduction, "it is numerous heard from a dear one who has an overall literary talent and a poetic taste that they would [not only] prioritize their own poetry over the words of *Lisān al-Ghayb* [but] rather reproach his [Hāfiz's] words."⁵⁷ This authorial statement of intent and the very creation of the treatise speak to a polar viewpoint concerning Hāfiz's Sufism that co-existed in the second half of the Safavid period. On the one hand, it was not uncommon to question the supposed mysticism of Hāfiz and his poetry that Dārābī used to "frequently hear"; and on the other, Hāfiz had proponents like Dārābī who would zealously advocate his Sufi credentials. It is sensible to imagine a third position was also viable that viewed Hāfiz from a whole different perspective irrelevant to Sufism regarding him as neither of the two, but rather a continuum to the pre-Safavid tradition of Khurasan similar to what we saw in Khwāndamīre's *Habīb al-Sīyar*.

⁵⁵ For a modern reproduction of the treatise, see: Muhammad b. Muhammad Dārābī, *Latīfah-ye Gheybi Hamrāh bā Dārābī: Latīfeh-haye 'Irfāni-ye Barkhi Ash'ār-e Hāfiz-e Shirāzi*. ed. Nosrat-Allāh Foruhar (Tehran: Tarāvat, 1385/2006).

⁵⁶ For Dārābī's biography and a summary of his works, see: Zuhrah Abulhasanī, "Sharh-i Hāl-i Shah Muhammad Dārābī va Mu'arrifī-yi Latīfah-yi Ghaybī," 8th international conference of promoting Persian language and literature, 1392/2013. Accessed Nov. 2019 at: <https://elmnet.ir> هشتمین همایش بین المللی انجمن ترویج زبان و ادب فارسی ایران
The epilogue of a manuscript of the treatise contains an autobiographical note according to which the author entered Gujarat in 1062.

⁵⁷ مقصد از تقریب این مقال آنکه از عزیزی که فی الجمله قوه نظمی و طبع شعری نیز دارد و ... مکرر مسموع شده و می شود که شعر خود را
ترجیح بر کلام لسان الغیب می دهد بلکه مذمت سخنانش می نماید.

Vahīd Dastgirdī, "Latīfah-yi Ghaybī," *Armaghān*, no. 3-4 (1304/1925): 211.

Al-Dārābī presents and responds to three types of criticism pointed at Hāfiz in separate chapters-*bābs*.⁵⁸ The second *bāb* of the “*Latīfah-yi Ghaybīyyah*” argues against the claim that “some of his [Hāfiz’s] verses are worthless and many of them concern wine and beloved.” Attempting at justifying Hāfiz’s use of such secular terminology, Al-Dārābī points to a distinction between Hāfiz’s original, Sufi-imbued poetry and verses that are wrongly attributed to him. Ironically however, by engaging in the discourse of original versus fake poetry, the author confirms that the poems dealing with wine and love are indeed “inferior.” He argues that these poems are inserted in Hāfiz’s collection of poetry by collectors who intended to complete the alphabetical order of the poems. As a classical tradition observed in the earliest complete copies of the *Dīvān*, poems are arranged based on the last letter of the rhyming word. The interpolation in the *Dīvān* is, according to Al-Dārābī, clearly distinguishable because Hāfiz’s original verse bears obvious mystical connotations that is intelligible to every “beholder of intelligence” (*sāhib-i hūsh*).⁵⁹ Among the examples presented as being unequivocally mystical, Al-Dārābī mentioned the following lines from the same ghazal that Isma‘il had quoted in his *mukhammas* a century earlier.

غلام نرگس مست تو تاجدارانند / خراب باده لعل تو هوشیارانند
به زیر زلف دو تا چون نگه کنی بنگر / که از یمین و یسارت چه بی قرارانند

Such understanding by Al-Dārābī, who wrote during the reign of Abbas II (1642-1666), suggests that Isma‘il perceived these verses similarly mystical. Yet Safavid founder’s conception of Hāfiz’s ghazal is even better visible in the points that he found worth expanding and the ways in which he went about such expansion. In his *mukhammas*, Isma‘il proves a keen understanding of the ghazal and relative capability to compose poetry in a similar vein. Although Isma‘il is described as someone who did not receive a proper princely education and who “lacked Persian literary sophistication,”⁶⁰ his *mukhammas* demonstrate otherwise. He went beyond adopting the formal features of meter and rhyme to reproduce in each segment three lines around a central theme, image, or terminology found in Hāfiz’s couplet.

The first couplet of Hāfiz’s ghazal contains two sets of binary opposition: first *ghulām* (servant) vs. *tājdār* (crowned); and second, *mast* (drunk) vs. *hushyār* (sober). Preceding the couplet, Isma‘il adds three lines that not only draws from the royal imagery already created by Hāfiz, but also reproduces a similar paradoxical dichotomy.

Hāfiz: Servants of your intoxicated eyes are the crowned (ones).
Isma‘il: Bound in the trap of your lasso are the cavaliers.

⁵⁸ The first critique is based on the argument that “some of his words are meaningless... and if they have meaning, they would read like a *mu‘ammā* (riddle) and this contradicts eloquence.” The second critical view toward Hāfiz’s poetry argues that “some of his verses are worthless and many of them concern wine and beloved.” And the third is that “his poems are compatible with the tenets of Ash‘arites [theology] that are rejected by the rightful Imamite scholars.” *Ibid.*, 212.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 213.

⁶⁰ Abolala Soudavar, “The Early Safavids and their Cultural Interactions with Surrounding States,” in *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics*, ed. Nikkie R. Keddie and Rudi Matthee (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2002), 92.

In the third line, Isma‘il plays a pun on the word “*hazār*” meaning both nightingale and thousand:

There are thousands/nightingales in your net like me.

In the fourth segment, Isma‘il expands on the poetic description of the beloved drawing inspiration from Hāfiz’s use of the word “*tatāwul*” meaning tyranny in “the tyranny of your hair.” It is common in Persian love poetry to depict the beloved as a cruel, blood thirsty belligerent using military terminology.⁶¹ While Hāfiz’s ghazal already contains such allusions, Isma‘il expands the warfare imagery by engaging geographical entities of *Khatā*, i.e. China, and *Rūm*, i.e. Roman Empire, as real threats to the state:

[Isma‘il:] The army of your moles and lines plunder religion,
[Isma‘il:] Your eyes and eyebrows take ambush from corners,
[Isma‘il:] The army of China line up from *Khatā* to *Rūm*,
[Hāfiz:] Take a look like [the breeze of] *Sabā* on the garden of violets and see,
[Hāfiz:] How many mourners are left behind the tyranny of your hair.

Khatāyī further highlights the similar notion in the next segment, while playing on the pun of *Khatā* as the origin in reference to his pen-name as well as its meaning, China:

[Isma‘il:] For the oppression of my obstinate, promise-breaker sweet boy,
[Isma‘il:] The wild heart has gone fugitive from the homeland,
[Isma‘il:] I’ll take this load to India from *Khatā* and khutan (China),
[Hāfiz:] O felicitous Khizr! You take my hands for only I am,
[Hāfiz:] Walking while the companions all go riding.

In the sixth segment, Isma‘il meaningfully complements Hāfiz’s theme whereby he invites the reader to visit wine-shops and discourages monasteries. While Hāfiz only alludes to the locale of the two opposing religious classes, namely “*mai-khānah*” (tavern) vs. “*saumi‘ah*” (monastery/hermitage), Isma‘il reinforces the classical contrast by adding:

Do as much as you can against the fraudulent *zāhid*.

Finally, in the last segment Isma‘il takes up the position of the first person narrator in the poem already voiced by Hāfiz. At the end of the ghazal, Hāfiz identifies himself as one of those entangled in the net of the beloved and at the same time expresses happiness from this enslavement, saying:

May Hāfiz not go free of that waved hair,
For the entangled in your lasso are the emancipated.

To go with Hāfiz’s final couplet, Isma‘il composes a similar verse that describes himself in the beloved’s trap, thus personifying himself with the Shirazi poet:

⁶¹ Ehsan Yarshater, “Persian Poetry In the Timurid and Safavid Periods,” in *The Cambridge History of Iran 6: The Timurid and Safavid Periods*, ed. Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhart (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Because of [your] mole and dots Khatāyī fell in the net

Isma‘il’s self identification as a Sufi and Shii in addition to, or rather prior to, being the shah, is clearly voiced in another poem survived by him:

O *zāhid*! mind your own business and do not deny my status
For you are ego-centric and arrogant, while I am intoxicated and dazzled,

...

In appearance I am Shah and Sultan, in reality I am a *rind*
Seeking Ali, saying Ali, calling Ali, knowing Ali

مشو منکر به حال من برو زاهد به کار خود
که تو مغرور و خود بینی و من سر مست و حیرانم

...

به صورت شاه و سلطانم، به سیرت رند می مانم
علی جویم علی گویم علی خوانم علی دانم⁶²

As the founder of a Shii dynasty, it is understandable why Isma‘il insists in the last line on his association with Ali, as a leader whom he loves and follows. His use of the word “*rind*,” often translated as libertine, in self introduction requires more elucidation however. For “*rind*” in the third line captures the divergence of the shah’s appearance from his true being. The “*rind*” is regarded as a signature of Hāfīz which the Safavid founder borrows here to introduce himself. Hāfīz’s “*rind*” has ignited lengthy scholarly debates. Though not his invention, the poet’s unprecedented application of the word loads the term with novel connotations, labeled a “legendary construction of him.”⁶³ Before Hāfīz, “*rind*” has been used in Persian literature somewhat negatively as referring to one without worldly attachments but at the same time reckless and irresponsible.⁶⁴ The “*rind*” of Hāfīz, however, resembles “the perfect man” of the Sufis and a social protestor who does not abide by injustice. Particularly, Hāfīz’s positive “*rind*” is created to rival the character of “*zāhid*,” the religiously orthodox persona whom Hāfīz harshly criticizes.

زاهد ار راه به رندی نبرد معذور است
عشق کاری است که موقوف هدایت باشد

Zāhid is excused for not getting a way to “*rindi*”,
[Because] love is bound to receive guidance.

Finally, Hāfīz frequently uses “*rind*” and “*rindī*” (i.e. being *rind*) as his own characteristic, thus distancing himself from both Sufis and preachers.

زاهد ار رندی حافظ نکند فهم چه شد
دیو بگریزد از آن قوم که قرآن خوانند

No wonder if *zāhid* does not make sense of Hāfīz’s *rindī*,

⁶² *Şah Isma‘il, Külliyyatı Qezeller*, 508.

⁶³ Bahā’i al-Dīn Khurramshāhī, *Chahārdah Rivāyat* (Tehran: Parvāz, 1368/ 1989-90), 4.

⁶⁴ An example of pre-Hāfīzian use of “*rind*” can be seen in the *Tāriḫ-i Bayhaqī*.

[For] the demon flees from the people reciting the Quran.

The poetic portfolio of the first Safavid monarch shows his reverence for and his influence by Hāfiz. Unlike Hāfiz's "*rind*" that stands opposed to all religious norms, however, Khatāyī makes himself distinct from *zāhid* but integrates in himself the qualities of being an intoxicated Sufi, a libertine, and a Shii of Ali.

- **Hāfiz and Isma‘il the Shah**

Isma‘il's self identification as a Sufi is apparent not only in his poetic production but also in his official correspondence as the new ruler. It is indeed his political rather than literary fashioning that justifies his desire to approach the poetry of Hāfiz in which he sought the image of an ideal "Sufi-king".

Upon enthronement, Isma‘il set out to portray himself in a Sufi light in royal letters as well as poems. In some of his early correspondences, the first Safavid shah draws from his Sufi lineage to assure his Ottoman peers of his disinterest in the worldly gains of any kind. According to *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, Isma‘il justifies his arrival in the Ottoman Erzincan in a letter written to Bayezid II (d. 1512) in 1500 saying, "I do not intend to conquer your country, but to take revenge on our enemies."⁶⁵ To emphasize the benevolence of himself and his companions the shah writes, "We are dervishes."⁶⁶ Drawing a line between dervishes and conquerors, Isma‘il defines himself to belong to the former and distinct from the latter and their devastating habits. The shah's reliance on his Sufi ancestry is understandable given the fact that his initial victories owed much to his spiritual dominion over the Qizilbash. In other words, Isma‘il would need to retain his Sufi mask even though he faced the necessity to be identified as a shah. Delineating the distinction between "dervish" and "shah" or rather blurring the contrast, as will be shown in the next chapters, continues to be a viable concern of the Safavids, when Hāfiz's take on the issue is frequently drawn upon to renegotiate the Safavid identity on either side of the dichotomy.

Surviving documents attest to a constant challenge Isma‘il and his descendants encountered to establish their new identity. Although in the letter to Bayezid Isma‘il introduces himself as a dervish, in many other documents, mostly of a later date, he indeed insists on his identity as the newly crowned sovereign. How the Ottoman sultans in return address Isma‘il, whether as Shah or Sufi, further depicts the extended identity struggle that was going on. Bayezid II (d. 1512), whose lengthy reign witnesses the most peaceful rapport between the two neighbors, acknowledges Isma‘il's spiritual status while also addresses him as shah at times. Several years after Isma‘il accession to power in 1501, Bayezid II continues to regard him the *pir* of the Ardabil order referring to him in official correspondence by "Shaykh Isma‘il-i Ardabili" or

⁶⁵ Lütü Paşa, *Tevarikh al-i Osman*, 1953: 269. Quoted in, Vural Ganç, "Ravābit-i Sīyāsī va Dīplomātīc-i Shah Isma‘il-i I va Bayezid-i II bar asās-i Asnād-i Usmānī (911-917/1505-1511)," (Political and Diplomatic Relations Between Shah Isma‘il I and Bayezid II Based on the Ottoman Documents), in *Pajūhish-hāyi Irānshināsī* 8, no. 1 (1397/2018): 139.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

“*amūr-i sayyid nejād*” in the occasion of a letter sent in 1505.⁶⁷ In a letter sent to Iran in 1506, the Ottoman ruler addresses Isma‘il as:

جناب سلطنت مآب حکومت نصاب شوکت قباب سعادت ایاب سیادت انتساب مبارز السلطنه و الحکومه و العز و الاقبال، شاه اسماعیل
اسس الله بنیان عدله و افضاله الی یوم الدین...⁶⁸

These lofty phrases praising the Safavid monarch opens Bayezid’s letter while its message confirms Isma‘il’s Sufi status. In a previous letter, Isma‘il, in the gesture of not only a shah but a Sufi leader, had requested that his followers from “*Rūm*” be allowed to go on pilgrimage to Ardabil, by which Bayezid conferred in this letter.⁶⁹

Not every Ottoman sultan did abide by Bayezid II’s seemingly amicable attitude to the Safavid religious background. When hostility between the neighbors reached its summit during the reign of Sultan Selim (r. 1512-1520), Isma‘il’s religious designations are mentioned only pejoratively. Selim addresses Isma‘il with his Sufi titles to highlight the mutually exclusive nature of the Sufi/king dichotomy implying that Isma‘il does not suit kingship. This is particularly visible in a set of Sufi accessories including ‘*abā*, ‘*asā*, ‘*tasbīh*, and ‘*Kashkūl*’ that Selim sarcastically sends with his third letter to Isma‘il in 1514 before the battle of Chaldiran.⁷⁰ The Ottoman historiographies of the time name Isma‘il as “*Sufi Ughli*” or “*Ardabil Ughli*,” literally Sufi or Ardabili “guy” in a belittling gesture.⁷¹ Associating Sufi appropriate designations and gifts with the Safavid ruler, the Ottoman Selim implicitly rejects the acceptance of Isma‘il as a ruler and warns him that he better mind his ancestral Sufi business.

Isma‘il’s search for the “sufi-king” legitimacy in the poetry of Hāfiz is manifest in a letter he wrote to an unspecified recipient in which three final lines of a poem by Hāfiz are quoted. The letter is surmised to address Sultan Hussayn Bayqara, the last Timurid ruler in Khurāsān, based on allusions therein to the shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad.⁷² Shah presents Hāfiz’s verse to ascertain the recipient of his otherworldly intentions from involvement in worldly conquests. His ultimate goal, Isma‘il claims, is no other than “the spread of the laws of the purified shia and dissemination of the remnants of the group of guardians [i.e. the imams]” (*ishā‘at-i ahkām-i shī‘ah-yi tāhirah va iza‘at-i āsār-i firqah-yi najiyyah*).⁷³ To reiterate his spiritual goals alongside kingly efforts, Isma‘il quoted the following lines:

شکر خدا که باز درین اوج بارگاه / طاووس عرش می شنود صیت شهرم

⁶⁷ Khwāndamīr, 1380, 480-481; Nasrullāh Falsafi, “Jang-i Chaldiran,” *Majallah-yi Dānishkadah Adabiyāt* 1, no 2 (1332/1953-4): 84-127; See: Vural Ganç, 2018, 139.

⁶⁸ ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Navā‘ī. *Shah Isma‘il-i Safavi: Asnād va mukātabāt-i tārikhī hamrāh bā-yād’dāshthā-yi tafṣilī* (Tehran: Bunyād-i Farhang-i Iran, 1347/1969), 56.

⁶⁹ For the letters see: Navā‘ī. *Shah Isma‘il-i Safavi*, 53-64.

⁷⁰ The religious accusations of Isma‘il by Selim and his justification of attacking the Safavids on the basis of religious duties can be seen in his second letter quoted in: Navā‘ī, *Shah Isma‘il-i Safavi*, 158.

⁷¹ Ganç, “Ravābit-i Sīyāsī,” 139.

⁷² Navā‘ī, *Shah Isma‘il*, 43.

⁷³ *Ibid.* 49.

مقصود از این معامله ترویج کار اوست/ نی جلوه می فروشم و نی عشوه می خرم
شاهین صفت چو لقمه کشیدم ز دست شاه / کی باشد التفات به صید کبوترم

Thank God for at least in this apogee of the sanctuary,
The peacock of the throne hears the fame of my quill.
[My] purpose from these deeds is to promote his [His?] work,
Neither splendor do I boast, nor wheedlings do I purchase.
When, from the shah's hand, I tasted victuals like the [mighty] falcon,
How might I care for the capture of the [mean] pigeon?

Isma'īl depicts himself as a bird of such spiritual height that the sound of his wing can be heard in the divine throne. The Safavid shah draws attestation from the poetry of Hāfiz to show that his wars have no purpose other than exerting a spiritual impact ("My purpose from these deeds is to promote his [His?] work."). To emphasize the distinction between himself and other birds the poet evokes a royal hunt scene where a falcon, so especially treated by the king, is needless of hunting insignificant creatures. In the use of this assimile Isma'īl imagines to be the falcon who does not care about hunting a pigeon, here overcoming enemies, and the shah who nurtures Isma'īl is compatible with Ali, the first imam respected by Shiis and Sufis alike who is by the way mentioned in the Shii literature as "*shāh-i mardān*". (Isma'īl too pointed to the Shia imams and particularly Ali as the shah in his Turkish poetry, as in these lines from poem N. 168 published by Minorsky:

From pre-eternity I am in love with the Twelve Shahs (Imams)
But now I have come to this shop (i.e. this mundane world)

...

Muhammad's miracles, the Shah's *Dhul-Fiqar* (Ali's sword) are signs
in my hand. Here I have come.⁷⁴

Given the hesitation of the Ottomans in perceiving the shah as a spiritual or a political leader, it is conceivable that the Safavid founder founded himself confronted with a challenge: on the one hand, he had to retain his sacred dominion with which he attracted support from and popularity among his Qizilbash chiefs, and on the other hand, as a newly crowned king who just defeated his Turkmen rivals, he would need to prove himself beyond a typical Sufi and indeed capable of ruling a kingdom. Isma'īl needed to come up with an image of himself that met this bi-faceted criterion—a need which was best attempted to fulfill through the poetry of Hāfiz. The making of such a dual identity as the Sufi-King was certainly a diachronic process. Isma'īl along with his Safavid followers would constantly be devising, re-devising, and amending various aspects of his royal portrayal based on occasional contingencies to depict himself and his eponymous dynasty capable of a rule that is simultaneously spiritually legitimate and politically powerful.

Conclusion

Isma'īl the Safavid founder approached the poetry of Hāfiz in a process of self-fashioning to construct a distinctive identity similar to his adoption of a theocratic policy. Two different approaches to Hāfiz are distinguishable in two frontiers of the early sixteenth-century Persiate

⁷⁴ V. Minorsky and Shah Isma'īl, "The Poetry of Shah Isma'īl I," 1046a. I made small modifications to the translation.

world. The eastern attitude, reflected in the *Habīb al-Sīyar*, is a continuation of the Timurid perception of Hāfiz by which the Shirazi celebrity is remembered as a great poet rather than a religious character. It is in this Khurāsānī tradition that Jāmī somehow questions Hāfiz's adherence to Sufism and *Khwāndamīr* pictures Hāfiz in contrast to the orthodox supporter of the faith, Shah Shujā'. On the contrary, the eastern attitude highlights Hāfiz's mystically-tinted verse linking it with the Sufi claims of the Safavids. The link between Hāfiz and the Safavids, which already perceived by Khunji the rival historian prior to the Safavids' enthronement although for pejorative purposes, reaches its culmination by Isma'il who appropriated Hāfiz in his personas both as poet and a ruler. As a poet, Isma'il demonstrates keen acquaintance with Hāfiz and his poetry, attempting to identify himself as the poet of Shiraz when the narrating voice is one of a proud, self-sufficient mystic. As a crowned ruler, Isma'il's correspondence with Ottoman rivals clarifies his needs for a dual identification as a Sufi-King—a desire that the shah aspired to meet through the poetry of Hāfiz. These conditions represent the reception of Hāfiz in the Safavid formative period as an ideal mystic who, like the new dynasty, is atypical and yet as much popular. These qualities, along with the polysemic nature of Hāfiz's poetry which makes it open to varying, at times contradictory, understandings, allowed the Safavid shahs to seek in this poetry their ideal image. The approach to incorporate Hāfiz in the dynastic identity that initiated by Isma'il, as will be shown, continues after him, although the religious shifts of the state led to significant alterations to the dominant perception of Hāfiz in the period.

Chapter Two)

Hāfiz and the Ottomans: Uncertainty, Ambivalence, and Antagonism

The Safavid interest in the personality and poetry of Hāfiz went hand in hand with his popularity in other parts of the Persian speaking lands that remain outside of the Safavid state boundaries. Particularly the Ottoman territory witnessed a new awareness of Hāfiz in the sixteenth century. The emergence of numerous Turkish poetic imitations and interpretive commentaries on the *Dīvān* in this period reveal the extent to which Hāfiz's poetry was celebrated by the Ottomans. Relatively at the same time, the *Dīvān* was added to the curriculum of the Persian learning circles that were expanding in Anatolia. In addition to the commentaries and manuals that made Hāfiz's poetry accessible to the Turkish audience, another wave of reaction to Hāfiz began to rise among the Ottomans which is characterized not by admiration, but rather by ambivalence and hesitation. Attitudes critical of Hāfiz and his poetry culminated in a fatwā issued by the Ottoman religious authority, Shaykh al-Islam Ebussuud 'Imādī (d. 1580), in which he warns the Turkish Muslim community against an "uncritical" recitation of the *Dīvān*. While the pro-Hāfiz opinions have been relatively well discussed in scholarship, attitudes critical of Hāfiz remain largely understudied. In what follows, I shall discuss some of these attitudes and argue that the Ottoman reception of Hāfiz, was informed by a reactionary response to the connection their prime rivals—the Safavids—sought to establish with Hāfiz as they were consolidating their dynastic rule in Persia.

The Persian word and the Ottoman world

During the lifetime of Hāfiz as well as the following centuries, Persian has been the lingua franca as well as the principal literary language of a large region, stretching from Central Asia and Asia Minor to the Sub-continent. The vital role of the Persian language in interconnecting these territories, which later began to be distinguished via "national" identities, is marked by the term "Persographia" coined to describe the region.⁷⁵ The Ottoman world in particular shows much fascination in the use of Persian in two major domains: first, at courts; and second, at Sufi centers and lodges, where Persian was used to express, respectively, "imperial intentions" and "mystical aspirations."⁷⁶ Persian particularly became the main royal language when Murad II (r. 1421-51) and his son Mehmed II (r. 1451-81) launched a number of literary, artistic, and intellectual projects in order to make an imperial language both on the model of and in competition with the Persian world. Since then, Persian did not cease to be an indispensable part of the royal education at the Ottoman courts, being used by the elite for chancery purposes, official correspondence, and also showing off literary sophistication.

By the fifteenth century, learning Persian had already gone beyond the courtly environs to be conducted in madrasas and particularly in communities gathering around Sufis, such as the

⁷⁵ See the introduction in: *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca*, ed. Nile Green (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 1-72.

⁷⁶ Murat Umat Inan, "Imperial Ambitions, Mystical Aspirations: Persian Learning in the Ottoman World," in *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca*, ed. Nile Green (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 75-91.

Naqshbandi community of Bursa and the Mevlevi order of Konya. The Sufi centers in the Ottoman territory established close ties with Iranian predecessors by frequently sending scholars to other parts of the Persian speaking lands and by adopting Persian texts as main educational material. Such classical works as *Gulistān* by Sa‘dī (d. 1292) and *Masnavī* by Rūmī (d. 1273) were appropriated in Sufi circles not only for their spiritual and moral content, but also for instructing the Persian language and its grammatical intricacies. Lāmi‘ī Çelebī (d. 1532), the Naqshbandi Sufi translator of Jāmī’s *Nafahāt*, for instance, used the introductory part of the *Gulistān* as well as a commentary he wrote on this text and a glossary of its difficult words he’d prepared for training his students in Bursa. In another Sufi locus of the Mevlevi order, Şahidi İbrahim Dede (d. 1550), taught Rumi’s *Masnavi*, on which he too composed commentaries appended by a glossary of difficult words.

Hāfiz’s *Dīvān* is conspicuously, if not surprisingly, absent from the first Persian books that received Turkish commentary for pedagogical purposes. Although Hāfiz’s poetry had reached the Ottoman world shortly after his death in the fourteenth century, as suggested by the manuscripts produced in or traveled to the Ottoman territory, it is added to the curriculum of the ever expanding Ottoman circles of Persian learning as late as the second half of the sixteenth century. Given the vast exchange of scholars and texts between the Persian and the Ottoman centers of learning, it is apt to investigate the reasons behind the belated introduction of the *Dīvān* to the Ottoman attention, which is interestingly followed by their profound appreciation of it. The answer, I suggest, lies in the Safavid attitude toward Hāfiz that ensued two divergent Ottoman responses in distinct historical phases: an initial mystification of the poet and his work, informed by and in continuation with the Safavid approach in its formative period; and a consequent reactionary demystification of Hāfiz. In what follows, I explain how the prominence of the *Dīvān* in the Ottoman territory coincides with, and indeed corresponds to, the Safavid consolidation of power and their appropriation of Hāfiz as the *Sufi-cum-king* that best represents the Safavid aspirations and concerns. To this end, a glance at the Turko-Persian cultural contacts shortly after the establishment of the Safavid dynasty would contribute to our understanding of the possible venues by which the transmission of the cult of Hāfiz occurred between the two political entities.

As discussed in the first chapter, the Safavid monarchs, whose early period of rulership is characterized by a peculiar affiliation with Sufism, sought to establish a close relationship with Hāfiz. In appropriating a venerated cult of Hāfiz, Shah Isma‘il endeavored to build a distinctive notion of self-identity represented in the character and poetry of Hāfiz. The Ottomans visiting Persian institutions of both royal and Sufi natures in the Safavid realm would naturally encounter with the sufi-royal perceptions of the Shirazi poet prevalent at the milieu. Indeed, visits by the Ottomans of various Sufi inclinations to the Sufi shrines in the Iranian Plateau, in general, and the frontier city of Ardabīl, in particular, to bestow gifts, express admiration, and build institutional affiliations predate the establishment of the Safavids. Before the coronation of Isma‘il, the Sufis of Bursa, in northwestern Anatolia, used to send to Ardabīl a yearly amount, or *akçe*, as a token of respect to the famed shrine of the Safavid ancestor. The Ottoman rulers, like the Sufis, held the Ardabīl Sufis in high esteem. When Junaid, Isma‘il’s grandfather and the contemporary *pīr* of the order, was sent to exile by the Qaraqyunlu Jahanshāh, Bayezid II provided support to him and his dervishes by allowing them to pursue their Sufi practices in the Ottoman territory and by sending them two hundred thousand gifts and gold, if *Tevarih-i Al-i*

Osman is to be believed.⁷⁷ Similar connections, visits, and correspondence between the Ottoman institutions and Persian Sufi and royal centers set a background against which the cult of Hāfiz migrated to Anatolia.

After the Safavids consolidated power and their ancestral shrine became a symbol of the empire, it was frequently visited by delegations from and members of royal families. In 873/1468 Abū Saʿīd, an offspring of Timur who moved with his army from Herat to combat the Aq-Quyunlu Uzun Hassan, met with the Safavid generals in the shrine.⁷⁸ In 1544, when the Mughal emperor Humāyūn was exiled to Iran, Shah Tahmasp welcomed him and promised him support to regain his throne. According to several historical records, Humāyūn was brought with the Safavid Shah to Ardabīl, where they performed the rite of visitation and kissed the sanctified threshold of the shrine.⁷⁹ Gifts from the exiled emperor remained at the shrine until recently, notably a Quran copy dated 952 and signed by “Humāyūn Shah bin Zāhir al-Dīn Muhammad Bābur” which was relocated in the National Museum in Tehran in 1314/1896-7. Given the Sufi gesture by which the Ottomans regarded Ismaʿil in some of their correspondence and the continuous give and take between Istanbul and Ardabīl, it is very likely that the Ottoman ambassadors were aware of the Sufi stature of Hāfiz claimed by the Safavids and represented in their ancestral shrine.

Safavid-Ottoman cultural transactions—including the importation of the cult of Hāfiz—was likely to happen not only through the peaceful exchange of ambassadors, letters, and gifts, but also during the wars. In 1514, Selim defeated Ismaʿil in the battle of Chaldiran and took with him to Istanbul many artists and craftsmen. Some Turkish sources record the number of the artists as many as 700. Although historical evidence remains silent on the importation of anything related to Hāfiz from Tabriz to Istanbul, it is highly reasonable to suspect that the Turk soldiers and courtiers, the Sultan, and/or the Ottoman Shaykh al-Islam Ebussuud, who was present at the battle, were clearly aware of the status of Hāfiz among the Safavids. In sum, Hāfiz’s reception among the Safavids might have been noticed by the Ottomans during the times of war and peace alike given the application of Hāfiz’s poetry in formal correspondences and the inscription of his verse on monuments and objects.

Given the contextual political rivalry that brought, and reinforced, Hāfiz’s poetry to the Ottoman attention, it is no wonder that the Ottomans took issue with the very assumptions about Hāfiz that the Safavids embraced. The first and foremost of these questions was whether indeed Hāfiz deserved being considered a true Sufi, a claim rooted from the Safavid milieu and further publicized by commentaries on the *Dīvān* composed at the time, namely by Sūrūrī and Şemʿī. (For these authors, see below.) The hesitant engagement of the Shaykh al-Islam Ebussuud with this question reveals that Hāfiz’s designation as a true Sufi, although not new, proved to be vital and relevant in the sixteenth-century Ottoman Empire. A century earlier, Jāmī (d.1492), the renowned Sufi poet of the Naqshbandi order in Herat, had already raised similar hesitation regarding the Sufi adherences of Hāfiz.⁸⁰ Similar trends to call into question the Sufi pedigree of

⁷⁷ Lütü Paşa, *Tevārihi Al-i Osman*, quoted in Ganç, “Ravābit-i Sīyās, 139.

⁷⁸ *Ahsan al-Tavārīkh*, part 9, p. 117b. Quoted in Hinz, 68.

⁷⁹ Iskandar Bayg Turkamān, *ʿĀlam Ārā-yi Abbāsī*, by Iraj Afshar, Vol 1 (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1387/2008-9), 100.

⁸⁰ See chapter 1.

Hāfız can be traced in Sūdī's commentary and Ebussuud's fatwā in sixteenth century Istanbul, among others, as will be discussed.

Turkish Commentaries on the *Dīvān*

The wide circulation among the Ottomans of Hāfız's poetry in the sixteenth century owes particularly to three commentaries.⁸¹ Muslih al-Dīn Sūrūrī (d.1561), Şem'ullāh Şem'ī (d. ca. 1602) and Muhammad Sūdī Al-Busnavī (d. 1590 or 1597?) each produced a voluminous commentary on the *Dīvān*, although their approaches substantially differ from one another. Sūrūrī and Şem'ī concern themselves with the mystical hermeneutics already dominant in the Ottoman commentarial tradition. While Sūdī, who produced the last and the most famous of these commentaries, countered his predecessors by approaching the poetic text from a philological perspective reading into it no more than a plain-literary level meaning. Sūdī does not suffice to adopt an approach that is different from that of his predecessors, he even at times engages in polemic contradiction with them attributing the common attempts to read mystical meanings into Hāfız's love poetry merely the result of the commentators' ignorance.⁸² Despite its many limitations, Sūdī's approach is innovative in going against the grain and countering the dominant Sufi hermeneutics of his contemporaries.

The divergence in the agenda of the commentators is clearly visible in the introductions of the works. Sūrūrī emphasizes in his preface that *all* of Hāfız's poems carry mystical connotations, even though they might appear as allegories. The reason that not everyone is capable of decoding such hidden, mystical meanings is, according to Sūrūrī, that they "are unaware of and detached from the conditions and mysteries of the mystical path." Sūrūrī writes, "In all of his [Hāfız's] poems and in each of his allegorical, enigmatic, and figurative expressions, Hāfız intends to convey the secrets of the mystical path."⁸³ In addition to revealing his attitude to the text, Sūrūrī portrays in these words his initial intention from composing the commentary; he takes up the responsibility in order to bring to light the mystical meaning embedded in Hāfız's verse. Not long later, Sūdī renders in his preface a completely different methodology. Sūdī attributes the impetus behind the creation of the work to a request by Ömer Efendi, then governor of the city, who asked Sūdī to compose a commentary on Hāfız's *Dīvān* "in such a way that it would be useful to interested readers and beginning students [of Persian]." Having specified the audience of the work, the governor goes on—according to Sūdī—to explicitly define the semantic limitations of the commentary: "it should not offer an extended or mystical interpretation. It should simply explain the grammar [of the text] by employing the method of Arabic instruction and limit itself to the meaning of the poems."⁸⁴

⁸¹ A fourth, less known, commentary on the *Dīvān* is produced in the nineteenth century by Muhammad ibn Hassan Qunyavī Mawlavī al-Ash'arī (d. 1244/1828) A Sufi of the Mevlevi order, Mawlavī believes that every single line in the *Dīvān* corresponds to a Quranic verse or prophetic saying (hadith).

⁸² Muhammad Sūdī, *Sharh-i Sūdī bar Hāfız*, trans. Ismat Sattar-zādah, 5th edition, V. 2 (Tehran: Zarrin and Nigāh, 1378/1999-2000), 97.

⁸³ Sūrūrī, Şerḥ-i Hāfız (MS Ayasofya 4056, Süleymaniye Manuscript Library, Istanbul), 1v. Quoted in Murat Umut Inan "Crossing Interpretive Boundaries in Sixteenth Century Istanbul: Aḥmed Sūdī on the *Dīvān* of Hāfız of Shiraz," *Philological Encounters* 3 (2018), 275-309.

⁸⁴ Sūdī, Kitāb-ı Şerḥ-i Hāfız (MS Koğuşlar 933, Topkapı Palace Library, Istanbul), 2v. Quoted in Inan, 2018, 276.

Sūdī's literary attitude toward the *Dīvān* certainly derives from his training as a philologist and his career as a teacher of Persian. Yet, additional, subtle reasons arguably lie behind Sūdī's curious decision to exclude from his commentary mystical lens, even though mysticism was inextricably associated with the perception of Hāfiz by this time. Murat Umat Inan notes the critical remarks that Sūdī makes throughout his commentary about the preceding commentarial works and contends that Sūdī's discontent with previous mystically-oriented commentaries plays a role in his non-mystical or rather anti-mystical approach.⁸⁵ Therefore, two opposing approaches to Hāfiz—one admiring him as a true sufi and the other approaching him cautiously only as a poet whose words do not connote anything beyond conventional literary domain—are present in the sixteenth century Turkish commentaries written on the *Dīvān*. Both orientations nevertheless responded to the way the poet was being incorporated within the Safavid ruled Iran. The first two commentaries, by Sūrūrī and Şem'ī, follow the Safavid direction of perceiving the poet in a Sufi envisioned aura, while the third, by Sūdī, opposes the early Safavid-dominant approach by rejecting excessive mystical readings.

Besides different semiotic approaches, Sūdī's commentary seems to diverge from its predecessors in its intended audience and the scope of its circulation. The commentaries by Sūrūrī and Şem'ī come from a Sufi milieu. Closely following the prevalent tradition of annotating Persian classics in Islamic and Sufi learning centers, they are primarily written for students of mysticism. Sūrūrī (1491-1561), a madrasa teacher and practicing Naqshbandi Sufi, composed commentaries on the *Masnavī* and *Gulistān* before completing his *Şerh-i Hāfiz* in 1559. He was also the tutor of Prince Mustafa, Suleiman's son. Şem'ī (d. ca. 1602), too, had Sufi ties: In addition to the *Dīvān*, he wrote commentaries on such Persian books as *Gulistān*, *Būstān*, Jāmī's *Bahāristān*, and 'Attār's *Mantiq al-Tayr*. Although commentaries by Sūrūrī and Şem'ī might have facilitated the learning of Persian for the intended Sufi audience, they were not much concerned with linguistic and pedagogical issues. Indeed, they presupposed an audience already familiar with Persian and, therefore, focused instead on mystical elaborations deemed to underlie the poetic surface. On the contrary, Sūdī's commentary, written twenty years after Şem'ī's, was intended for an interested general readership but specially for the beginning students of Persian. In addition to familiarizing the reader with lexical and grammatical points, Sūdī's commentary propagated an approach to the text that was limited to plain-level meaning analysis.

Sūdī's work proves to be the most viable of all early Ottoman commentaries on the *Dīvān*. It enjoyed an unmatched popularity not only among the Ottomans but also within a wider historic and geographic reach. European visitors of the Ottoman realm in the pre-modern era attested to such popularity. According to Antoine Galland (1646-1715), a French orientalist, Sūdī's commentary used to line the shelves of the bookseller stores in 1672 Istanbul.⁸⁶ Many orientologists

Dated 5 March 1599, this two-volume manuscript held in the Topkapı Palace Library is the oldest complete copy of the commentary. For a discussion of Sūdī's preface, see Selim S. Kuru and Murat Umut Inan, "Reintroducing Hafez to Readers in Rum: Sūdī's Introduction to His Commentary on Hafez's Poetry Collection," *Journal of Turkish Studies: Festschrift in Honor of Walter G. Andrews III* 35, no. 1 (2011): 11–34.

⁸⁵ Inan, "Crossing Interpretive Boundaries," 277.

⁸⁶ See: Antoine Galland, *Journal d'Antoine Galland pendant son séjour à Constantinople (1672–1673)*, 2 vols., ed. Charles Schefer (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1881).

were generally intrigued by the new non-figurative take on the Persian poet, which is visible for instance in the correspondences of Sir William Jones.⁸⁷ Indeed, many eighteenth and nineteenth centuries European translations and editions of the *Dīvān* were produced with frequent reference to Sūdī's work. First and foremost, Sūdī's commentary on the *Dīvān* provided the non-Persian reader with a thorough and word by word lexical analysis of the text, making the complicated poetic text approachable by removing from it the so-called mystical hermeneutics. Indeed, it is not exaggeration to say that the widespread fame of Sūdī's text, in comparison to others, owes itself to the orientalist reception of the text through which many westerners came to know Hāfiz, as attested by the early translations of the *Dīvān* to European languages.

Another reason for the popularity of Sūdī's commentary among the Europeans, Inan suggests, lies in his editorial undertaking.⁸⁸ In his book, Sūdī did not pick the poetic text from a single Persian source. Instead, he consulted eleven different copies of the *Dīvān* to collect what he considered the most accurate version of poems. Sūdī's commentary thus served as a critical, comprehensive edition at a time when the booming in the production of critical editions of the *Dīvān* was yet to emerge. Thanks to his commentarial and critical efforts, many of the earliest translations and editions of the *Dīvān* were based on Sūdī's perspective. In English, John Richardson in 1774, William Henry Lowe in 1877, H. S. Jarrett in 1881, and H. Wilberforce Clarke in 1891; and in German von Hammer in 1812, Hermann Brockhaus in 1854, and von Rosenzweig-Schwannau in 1858, all drew from Sūdī's commentary.⁸⁹ Even today, despite the enduring perception of Hāfiz as a mystic and his book as a mystical composition, Sūdī's commentary is still frequently referred to in the Hāfizian discourses of all types, including by native Persian writers and critics. Manūchihr Murtazavī, the famed Persian scholar whose *Maktab-i Hāfiz* has been a salient resource in the field for more than 50 years, regards Sūdī's text as "the best and the most comprehensive commentary on Hāfiz's *Dīvān* whose study can illuminate the path of scholars and Hāfizologists for solving [the problems of] the complicated verses of the *Dīvān*," although Murtazavī also acknowledges that Sūdī has shortcomings in the semantic and syntactic perceptions of Hāfiz's poetry particularly in the domain of mystical interpretation (*tafsīr-i 'irfānī*).⁹⁰

⁸⁷ See Jones' letter in: Lord Teignmouth, ed., *Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Correspondence of Sir William Jones* (London: John Hatchard, 1807), 60. Jones also admirably mentions Sūdī in his Latin commentary on Asian literature, *Poeseos Asiaticae Commentariorum libri sex, cum appendice; subijcitur Limon, seu miscellaneorum liber: auctore Gulielmo* (London, 1774), 235.

⁸⁸ Inan, "Crossing Interpretive Boundaries," 283.

⁸⁹ Complete references of the mentioned works include: John Richardson, *A Specimen of Persian Poetry or Odes of Hafez*, London, 1774; William Henry Lowe, *Twelve Odes of Hāfiz*, Cambridge: W. P. Spalding, 1877; H. S. Jarrett, ed., *Dīvān-i Hāfiz*, Calcutta: Urdu Guide Press, 1881; H. Wilberforce Clarke, trans., *The Dīvān-i Hāfiz*, Calcutta: Government of India Central Printing Office, 1891. Joseph von Hammer, *Der Dīvān von Mohammed Schemsed-din Hafis: Aus dem Persischen zum erstenmal ganz übersetzt*, Stuttgart and Tübingen: Cotta, 1812; Hermann Brockhaus, ed., *Die Lieder des Hafis: Persisch mit dem commentare des Sūdī*, Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1854; Vincenz Ritter von Rosenzweig-Schwannau, ed. and trans., *Der Dīvān des Grossen Lyrischen Dichters Hafis*, Vienna: K. K. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1858.

⁹⁰ Manuchihr Murtazavī, *Maktab-i Hāfiz* (Tehran: Tūs, 1365/1986-87), 166-167.

Sūdī's commentary of the beginning line of the *Dīvān*

Sūdī's attitude to Hāfīz, as atypical as it was in his time, is nowhere clearer than in his commentary on the first line of the *Dīvān*. While he follows a lexical approach throughout his voluminous work, exceeding 2500 pages in modern editions, Sūdī's treatment of the beginning line appears to be an exception to his normal method. Generally, Sūdī starts his disposition on a ghazal by quoting the original Persian verse and then parsing it into grammatical units—presented as lemmas. Sūdī hence embarks on his analysis by explaining the meanings and grammatical functions of the individual phrases. Gluing the segments together based on semantic and syntactic grounds, Sūdī then moves to provide the meaning for each line as a whole. In treating the opening verse of the *Dīvān* however Sūdī deviates from his own norm: He not only begins by quoting only part of the first line, but also delays his usual word by word analysis to focus on the genealogy of the verse and a purported literary adoption. Further scrutiny in such background information illuminates Sūdī's curious attitude toward the first line.

To showcase Sūdī's approach in his commentary on the opening line of the *Dīvān*, his text is quoted here from the earliest available manuscript of Sūdī's commentary, MS Koğuşlar 933 preserved in the Topkapı Palace Library and introduced by Inan. As a norm in medieval manuscripts, the source text of Hāfīz's poetry in Koğuşlar 933 is overlined in red to distinguish it from the commentator's Ottoman Turkish notes.

Right after a short introduction—on the intention of the author from composing the book and introducing Hāfīz drawing from the so-called “Gulandām” preface found in many early manuscripts—Sūdī opens up his commentary by quoting the first hemistich of Hāfīz's beginning ghazal.⁹¹

الا يا ايها الساقى ادر كاسا و ناولها

O the Cupbearer! Pass around a cup and give it to me.

Without quoting the first line (*bayt*) completely, Sūdī concerns himself with the origin of the hemistich (*misra*). This genealogy of the poem appears to be so significant to the commentator that he prefers to delay his usual analytical method of breaking the line to grammatical units, temporarily prioritizing a non-philological approach. In this background information, Sūdī suggests that Hāfīz's celebrated Arabic opening verse of the *Dīvān* is borrowed from Yazīd b. Mu'āwīyah, the Umayyad caliph infamous for his role in the martyrdom of Prophet Muhammad's grandson, Hussain, the third Shiite Imam: “This line belongs to the second verse of a stanza in tetrameter by Yazīd b. Mu'āwīyah,” writes Sūdī. He quotes a line that contains the hemistich of Hāfīz, though in a reversed placement, writing, “The original complete text of the stanza is as follows:⁹²

انا المسموم ما عندى بالترىاق و لا راق
ادر كاسا و ناولها الا يا ايها الساقى

I am poisoned,

⁹¹ While it is generally believed that Hāfīz did not organize his collection of poems himself, the ghazals in his *Dīvān* are traditionally arranged based on the alphabetical order of the ending letter. Sūdī follows the same order in his commentary.

⁹² MS Koğuşlar 933, 3r. Appendix D in Inan, 306.

I have no antidote or incantation,
Pass around a cup and hand it [to me],
Oh you! the cupbearer!

Having quoted the so-called Yazīd's stanza, Sūdī explains how Hāfiz adjusted and incorporated the borrowed line into his own poem. "*Khawājah* Hāfiz," Sūdī writes, "transposes the two lines [of Yazīd's] to make them fit into the rhyme scheme of his own ghazal." The Turk commentator continues to underline that this poetical undertaking by the Persian poet results in the opening of the *Dīvān* with Yazīd's line. "Incorporating these two lines into his poem, Hāfiz thus quotes Yazīd at the beginning of *Dīvān*." Why Sūdī made this claim and the consequences of this attribution have not received sufficient scholarly speculations; yet, drawing Hāfiz closer to the Sunni claims of the Ottomans and confrontation with the Safavids' appropriation of the poet could tentatively play a role in this undertaking.

The ascription of Hāfiz's poem line to Yazīd, as surprising and infuriating as it may be to the Shiis who curse the Umayyad Caliph for martyrdom of Imam Hussain, is not welcomed by Sunni Muslims either. By no means is Yazīd rendered in historical literature to be a pious character; indeed, he is known for trespassing the Islamic tenets and especially for indulgence in drinking. While pieces of wine poetry remain that are attributed to Yazīd, no one before Sūdī ever linked Hāfiz with such poetry. It is in light of this unprecedented and not welcomed attribution that Sūdī quickly moves in his commentary to quote poets that voice similar oppositions: "This is why Hāfiz was criticized by some poets," writes Sūdī. Quoting a stanza by Ahlī of Shiraz, Sūdī narrates how this poet, in a dream, queried Hāfiz about his use of Yazīd's verse. Hāfiz's response is no less telling:

In a dream one night I saw *Khawājah* Hāfiz,
I told him, "O boundless in wisdom and knowledge,
Why did you bind yourself to this verse of Yazīd
Despite your erudition and virtue?"
He said: "You don't understand the issue here:
An infidel's property is lawful to a believer."⁹³

Putting in the mouth of Ahlī of Shiraz (d. 942/ 1535-6), Sūdī raises a typical question that might occur to anyone regarding Hāfiz's quotation of Yazīd's poem: "Why did you bind yourself to this verse of Yazīd, despite your erudition and virtue?" The smart answer might appeal to a conservative, observant Muslim: "An infidel's property is lawful to a believer," referring to a religious juristic law. This response not only justifies Hāfiz's use of Yazīd's verse, but also calls Yazīd an infidel, whose property—poem here—can believers—Hāfiz here—take away.

Ahlī's poem is not the only poetic dissent quoted by Sūdī in which Hāfiz's purported use of Yazīd's line is questioned. Sūdī also quotes a poem by Kātībī of Nishapur, (d. 838 or 839/1434-36), which not only alludes to Hāfiz's borrowing of Yazīd's verse but also takes issues with Ahlī's reasoning based on the alluded Islamic jurisprudence. Surprisingly however, Sūdī's

خواجه حافظ را شبی دیدم به خواب/ گفتم ای در فضل و دانش بی حساب⁹³
از چه بستنی بر خود این شعر یزید/ با وجود این همه فضل و کمال
گفت واقف نیستی زین مساله/ مال کافر هست بر مومن حلال

arrangement of the quotations does not accord with the chronology of the poets' lifetime. While Kātibī lived almost a century before Ahlī, Sūdī quotes the first responding to the second in the following stanza:

I am confounded at *Khawājah* Hāfiz,
Such that my mind is paralyzed.
What wisdom did he see in Yazīd's verse?
To open the *Dīvān* by quoting him [Yazīd]?
Though the property of the unbeliever is
Lawful to the believer, regarding which there is no dispute.
It is nevertheless a great shame,
For a lion to steal a bite from a dog's mouth.⁹⁴

The curious treatment of the opening line of the *Dīvān* by Sūdī attracted the attention of some scholars, although no one has linked it with the neighboring Safavid developments. Muhammad Qazvīnī, scholar and editor of Hāfiz's poetry, regards Sūdī's attribution of the above line to Yazīd not only incorrect, but also the result of a conspiracy planned to blaspheme Hāfiz. According to Qazvīnī, no such line exists under the name of Yazīd in the anthologies of Arabic literature, history, or biography.⁹⁵ Nor is such a poetic imitation mentioned by any of the chroniclers who wrote on Hāfiz much earlier than Sūdī. Qazvīnī, accordingly, finds it impossible that the alleged Yazīd's poem remain unknown to all transmitters and collectors of the Arabic verse only to be "discovered" in mid-sixteenth century Anatolia by Sūdī who, after all, presents no evidence whatsoever to support his claim.⁹⁶ It is obvious to Qazvīnī therefore that the ascription of Hāfiz's verse to Yazīd is not but a narrative "extremely colloquial, absurd, completely baseless, and altogether concocted." (*bī-nahāyat 'āmyānah va sakhīf va bah kullī bī-asl va maj'ūl*).⁹⁷

The poems by Ahlī and Kātibī that Sūdī quotes to support his claim, according to Qazvīnī, ironically undermine his own argument. Qazvīnī asserts that the alleged poem by Kātibī includes words that are not semantically correct.⁹⁸ Furthermore, Kātibī's saying that "He [Hāfiz] opens the *Dīvān* by quoting Yazīd" implies that Hāfiz himself collected and arranged his poems, which is historically inaccurate. More importantly, Kātibī died a century before Ahlī and it was definitely not possible for him to compose lines in direct response to a poet who would be born decades

عجب در حیرتم از خواجه حافظ/ به نوعی کش خرد زان عاجز آید
چه حکمت دید در شعر یزید او / که در دیوان نخست از وی سراپد
اگر چه مال کافر بر مسلمان / حلال است و در او قبلی نشاید
ولی از شیر عیبی بس عجیب است/ که لقمه از دهان سگ رباید

⁹⁵ Muhammad Qazvīnī, "Tahqīq dar Ash'ār-i Hāfiz: Ba'zī Tazmīn-hā-yi Hāfiz," *Majalleh-ye Yādegār* 9 (1324/1945), 72. Qazvīnī's article is also reproduced in: *Hāfez az dīdgāh-e 'Allāmah Muḥammad Qazvīnī*, comp. Ismā'il Sārimī (Tehrān: 'Ilmī, 1367/1988), 334-346.

⁹⁶ Qazvīnī, "Tahqīq dar Ash'ār-i Hāfiz," 73.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Hāfiz az dīdgāh-i 'Allāmah Muḥammad Qazvīnī*, 337.

later.⁹⁹ Based on these semantic and chronological reasons, Qazvīnī judges that not only Sūdī's claim of the correlation of Hāfiz's verse to Yazīd, but also his evidence is fabricated and unreliable. Qazvīnī's polemical tone aside, his argument about the non-authentic poems that Sūdī quoted sounds unjustifiable and further urges one to query Sūdī's intention of such a construct.

A scrutiny of Sūdī's personal and professional background suggests that he was exposed to and informed by an anti-Safavid agenda of the time. To write his commentaries, Sūdī traveled extensively throughout Islamic lands learning from and conversing with eminent scholars. Sūdī studied under the tutelage of a certain Muslih al-Dīn Lārī, a scholar from the Iranian city of Lār, whose life was negatively affected by the Safavids. Lārī had fled Iran in the middle of the sixteenth century in response to the imposition of strict Shi'a policies by the Safavids. It is said that Lārī's family so disliked the Shiis that his father had the habit of patrolling the streets of Lār and cutting the exuberant mustaches that purportedly marked Shii men.¹⁰⁰ There is no wonder that after the establishment of the Safavid supremacy, Muslih al-Dīn had to seek refuge in neighboring lands from the onslaught of the Safavid Shiism. In diaspora, he first settled in India and then in Anatolia while in both places Lārī's knowledge of Persian brought him to the attention of rulers, respectively Emperor Humāyūn and *beylerbeyi* Iskander Paşa. Lārī spent a major part of his life in Diyarbakir, where he was assigned a teaching post at the Husrev Paşa madrasa as well as a private tutorship to the children of Iskander Pasha. Excelling in social rank, Lārī became the *mufīī* of Diyarbakir shortly before his death in 1571.¹⁰¹

While we do not know exactly what Sūdī learned from Lārī, the former's passion for Persian is undoubtedly fired by the latter. One of Sūdī's commentarial works on the *Hidāyat al-Hikmah* of Athīr al-Dīn Abharī particularly parallels Lārī's interest in and his previous engagement with the work.¹⁰² Among his lessons, Sūdī should have learned about Hāfiz from his Persian master. This is particularly likely considering Rūmlū's account of Lārī's acquaintance with Hāfiz and his annotation on the work of Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Davānī who wrote one of the earliest commentaries on Hāfiz's poetry.¹⁰³ Given this background, the anti-Shi'a (and therefore anti-Safavid) sentiments of the teacher tentatively affected the student's interpretation of the opening verse of the *Dīvān*. In addition to the likelihood that Sūdī's commentary is informed by Lārī's heated sentiments against the Shi'a Safavids, Sūdī had other professional incentives for his orientation. Being closely tied to the Ottoman court, Sūdī retained courtly responsibilities until his death in 1591. It is safe to suggest that as the *mudarris* at the Ibrāhīm Pāshā madrasa and the eminent Persianist serving the interests of the Ottoman house, Sūdī was naturally not on good terms with the Ottomans' prime political and doctrinal enemy, namely the Safavids.

Muslih al-Dīn Lārī seems to indeed have a role in enforcing the antagonistic discourse on Hāfiz among the sixteenth century Ottomans. Lārī not only triggered Sūdī's anti-Safavid attitudes,

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ See: Atāyî, Atāullah Nev'îzade, *Hadaik ül-hakaik fi tekमित is-şekaik*, (Istanbul: Şekaik zeyli, 1268/1851), 169-170.

¹⁰¹ Hamid Algar, "Persian Literature in Bosnia-Herzegovina" *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 5:2, (July 1994), 256.

¹⁰² Algar, "Persian Literature in Bosnia-Herzegovina," 257.

¹⁰³ Hassan Bayg Rūmlū, *Ahsan al-Tavarikh*, ed. 'Abd al-Hussayn Navāyi (Tehran: Babak, 1357/1978), 586.

visible in his anti-Sufi textual approach and particularly his anti-Shii treatment of the first line, but is also connected to Shaykh al-Islam Ebussuud, whose *fatwā* against Hāfiz epitomizes the mentioned discourse. When Lārī lost his favorite patron the Mughal Humāyūn in 1555, he performed Hajj and entered Istanbul in search of a new patron. Sources narrate that his short term presence in Istanbul impressed the shaykh al-Islam of the time so much that Ebussuud assigned him a daily grant of 50 *Akçe*. Sources remain silent as to the exact nature of the connection between the Persianist and the Shaykh, or the responsibility Lārī took for receiving this sum. Yet, it is perceivable that the shaykh al-Islam was not only impressed by Lārī's knowledge and character, but also attempted to shelter someone who left the territory of their political rival. Eventually however Lārī did not find this amount commensurate with his talents and left Istanbul for Diyarbakir.¹⁰⁴

Ebussuud's *Fatwā* against the *Dīvān*

The Ottoman antagonistic sentiments towards Hāfiz reach their culmination with a *fatwā*—religious edict—issued by Shaykh al-Islam Ebussuud, the prime religious authority in the Ottoman empire at the time. Before focusing on the details of the *fatwā*, it is worth noting that the edict shares its context and audience with the commentaries on the *Dīvān* written a few years earlier. The exact date in which the *fatwā* on Hāfiz's poetry is issued is not known, but Ebussuud's death in 1580 sets a *terminus ante quem*. Ebussuud's lifetime coincides with the popularity of Hāfiz's poetry among the Ottomans and the circulation of commentaries on the *Dīvān*. Not only the very creation of the commentaries point to a desire and a potential in the Ottoman society to learn Hāfiz's verse, which is at times explicitly stated as in the case of Sūdī who points in his preface to the “interested readers” of the *Dīvān*, but the commentarial content—of whatever approach—also facilitated and enhanced familiarity of the Turkish readers with the poet of Shiraz. Just like the commentaries, the issue of the *fatwā* by the Shaykh al-Islam concerning the poetry of Hāfiz further confirms the existence of enthusiastic readers of the *Dīvān* among in the pre-modern Ottoman society. Therefore, even though the addressee of the legal order is not specified, it is safe to assume that the *fatwā* is perceived by an audience that is already acquainted with this poetry. The existence of such a readership in the sixteenth century Anatolia is the backdrop against which Ebussuud's order becomes meaningful. It is this setting in which the *muftī* is asked about the permissibility of the recitation of the *Dīvān*.

Ebussuud's *fatwā* concerning the *Dīvān* came down to us in *Kashf al-Zunūn*, a salient bibliographical encyclopedia by the eleventh/seventeenth century Ottoman historian and geographer Hājī Khalīfah known as Kātib Çelebi (also spelled as Catip Celepi).¹⁰⁵ No other source, to my knowledge, preserves this *fatwā* including the collection of Ebussuud's *fatwās*. When the compilers of religious issues were not interested in the shaykh's *fatwā* on a Persian book, our bibliophile Kātib of Çeleb fortunately was. Kātib (d. 1069/1657) is surmised to start the compilation of his enormous masterpiece, with the full title *Kashf al-Zunūn 'an asāmī al-kutub wa'l-funūn* including more than 15,000 Turkish, Arabic, and Persian titles, in 1045/1635, although it was ready for publication only posthumously. Under the entry “*Dīvān* of Hāfiz,” Kātib quotes the *fatwā* after introducing the poet (i.e. Hāfiz) and his collection of poetry

¹⁰⁴ Algar, “Persian Literature in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” 256.

¹⁰⁵ Kātib Çelebi, *Kashf al zunūn 'an asāmi al kutub wa-al-funūn* (Istanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1941-43), 783.

(i.e. *Dīvān*). To do so, Kātib draws from the anonymous preface that opens many of the earliest manuscripts of the *Dīvān* whose author is believed to be the collector of Hāfiz’s poems known as Muhammad Gulandām. Apparently the *Dīvān* copy available to Kātib contained this preface for he refers to it writing, “The collector mentions in the preface to the *Dīvān* that Mawlāna Hāfiz did not organize his *Dīvān* due to his excessive engagement with annotating *al-Kashshāf* and *al-Matāli*’ and studying them, therefore [Gulādam?] organized it at the order of Qazam al-Dīn ‘Abd-Allāh.”¹⁰⁶

After elaborating on the collection of Hāfiz’s poems, Hājī Khalīfah focuses on the popular application of the *Dīvān* for prognostication. “And this *Dīvān* is famed [and] popular among the Persians,” Kātib writes, “[and] is used for divination and a lot of times whatever appears from the verse accords with the biography of the prognosticator and for this reason it is called *Lisān al-Ghayb*.” Çelebi’s words make it clear that the practice of prognostication with the collection of Hāfiz’s poetry was widespread at the time—which by the way has retained its popularity until this day. Kātib’s statement further indicates that “*Lisān-i Ghayb*”—literally the tongue of the unseen—was the title with which the poetry book was known in the sixteenth century, in contrast to the modern era when it is a common epithet of the poet. Such titling after all makes sense because the poetic content of the book was believed to reveal something from the invisible world as if the book in the process becomes the tongue with which the “*ghayb*” informs the audience of how to pursue propitious results or avoid the unpropitious. Kātib continues by providing witness to the popular use of the *Dīvān* for divinatory purposes writing, “to confirm this claim [it suffices to note] Muhammad (ibn al-Shaykh Muhammad al-Hiravī) composed a succinct treatise and gathered the accounts related to divination to it and [which that] happened in conformity with the situation of the prognosticator while he exceeded in praising the afore-mentioned Shaykh [i.e. Hāfiz]¹⁰⁷ (and al-Kufwī Mawlā Hussayn who died after 809 has a Turkish treatise on divination to the Hāfiz’s *Dīvān* filled with marvelous narratives).”¹⁰⁸

Çelebi further expands the entry by naming the Ottoman commentators and the poets who followed Hāfiz’s style: “Commentated on it [the *Dīvān*] Mustafā b. Sha‘bān known as Sūrūrī (d. 969) in a Turkish commentary whose incipit is ‘Alhamdulillah alladī hafida al-dhikr’ and so on, and [also] commentated al-Mawlā Şem‘ī in Turkish ca. 1000 and followed him [Hāfiz] in every rhyme and meter, a poet from amongst the poets of Rūm known as Fadlī (d. 970) and also poetized a book in its similarity and its rhymes Abulfadl Muhammd b. Idrīs al-Daftarī (d. 982).” Hājī Khalīfah then briefly introduces the last and the most well-known commentator of the *Dīvān*: “and commentated al-Mawlā Sūdī (al-Busnavī) a lengthy commentary in Turkish, ca. 1000 (Sūdī’s commentary has an abbreviated version).”¹⁰⁹ The entry concludes with a *fatwā* by Shaykh al-Islam Ebussuud. As such, Kātib touches respectively on the accounts of the poet’s

¹⁰⁶ Italics, phrases in brackets, and punctuation marks are mine.

¹⁰⁷ Hiravī’s book has come down to us and is published as facsimile: Muhammad b. Muhammad Hiravī (fl. ninth and tenth/fifteenth and sixteenth century), *Maftūh al-Qulūb: Tafa’ulātī bih Dīvān-i Hāfiz-i Shirāzī*, ed. Ehsān Eshrāqī (Qum: Makhzan-i Zakhā’ir-i Islāmī, 1394/ 2016).

¹⁰⁸ Parenthesis from the source, brackets mine.

¹⁰⁹ Parentheses from the source. Kātib Çelebi, *Kashf al zunūn*, 783.

fame, the collection of his work, its divinatory application, relevant treatises in Persian and Turkish, the Turkish commentators Sūrūrī and Şem‘ī, imitator poets Fadlī and al-Daftarī, again commentator Sūdī and finally the afore-mentioned *fatwā* quoted in full.

The entry on Hāfiz’s *Dīvān* is among the lengthy entries of the *Kashf al-Zunūn*. While Kātib suffices to briefly mention the book title—followed in most cases by its language and/or the author’s epithets or death date—he occasionally elaborates on the content of the book or the biography of the author. In the *Dīvān* entry however the Ottoman bibliographer makes note of various types of literature created in one way or another around Hāfiz’s poetry, including treatises on prognostication, commentaries, and poetic imitations. He completes the list by mentioning a *fatwā* in which Ebussuud recommends exerting caution in dealing with the poetry book. The inclusion of a religious edict in a book entry stands out as atypical. It requires a justification as to why the bibliophile dedicates almost one third of the entry to reproduce the *fatwā* in its entirety as the only direct quotation in the text. The conclusion of the entry by the edict suggests that the author intends to amend the preceding sayings reminding his readers that despite the great reverence paid to Hāfiz in the mentioned treatises, commentaries, and poems, and despite the widespread application of his poetry for divination, vigilance should be still applied in reading the *Dīvān*, as the *fatwā* prescribes.

The *fatwā* quoted by Hājī Khalīfah is as follows:

Sūrat-i fatwā (the question of the issued decree)

If Zayd says about Hāfiz’s *Dīvān* that this is *Lisān al-Ghayb*, then ‘Amr says that it is a mistake to call it *Lisān al-Ghayb* [and] even the chief of the ulema issues a *fatwā* on not reciting it [i.e. the *Dīvān*], [then] the mentioned Zayd insults the chief of the ulema and says that his mouth is his spoon [his issuing of the decree does not suit him?] [yet] this is from the pleasurable things. [In this case] how would the *Shari‘a* apply to Zayd?

Al-Jawāb (Response)

In the poetry of Hāfiz most of the words are tasteful words of wisdom and excellent points and indeed otherworldly (*ghaybī*) words but in their inner-relationship, it happens that there also exist superstitions outside the eloquence of the noble *Shari‘a*. [Therefore] the correct tasting [i.e. rightful approach] is that which distinguishes verse from verse not taking poison of vipers for useful antidote [and to] retain the origins of the blessing [and] avoid the causes of painful fear.

Written by *al-faqīr* (mendicant dervish) Ebussuud may he be forgiven.¹¹⁰

Ebussuud Effendī Muhammad ‘Imādī (1493-1574) was a prominent jurist, qazi, and Shaykh al-Islam tightly attached to the Ottoman house.¹¹¹ A jurist with the longest period of presence at an Ottoman court, he maintained his Shaykh al-Islam office for 30 years until the end of his life. His jurisprudence is clearly informed by his political stance. He issued many *fatwās* in favor of the Ottoman rulers against their rivals, whether political powers in the region or princes claiming

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Repp, Richard C., “Abū l-Su‘ūd,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, THREE, ed. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson, available online at http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_23159

the crown. He gave Suleiman (1520-1566) permission to kill his son, the crown prince Mustafa, and approved Selim II's murder of his brother, prince Bayezid. He also allowed the Ottomans to launch a military attack on Cyprus. When he signed in approval the *Qanūn-Nāmah* (book of law) of Suleiman the Magnificent, in which some explicit Quranic laws were circumvented, Ebussuud became known by some of the ulema to go beyond Islamic legitimacy. Nevertheless, he continued to hold the highest religious office, the chief function of which was to issue *fatwās* in response to questions from the sultan, his ministers, governors or judges, or members of the public for all matters from charitable endowments (*waqf*) to timely questions encountered by the Muslims.

Let us return to Ebussuud's edict regarding Hāfiz's *Dīvān*: The question involves an imaginary situation in which two given individuals—conventionally represented by Zayd and 'Amr in the literature—dispute over the *Dīvān*. One of them, Zayd, believes in the transcendental capacity of the *Dīvān*, regarding it as the “tongue of the invisible”, and insults “the chief of the ulema” seemingly for his anti-*Dīvān* opinions. The question as such alludes to the existence of similar *fatwās* by other Shaykhs before Ebussuud thus the living anti-Hāfiz tradition. The first part of the *fatwā* asks how such a person, who takes the *Dīvān* to be the *Lisān al-Ghayb* and insults the *mufīī* for his edict against the *Dīvān*, should be dealt with. Ebussuud's answer is smart. He does not reject the poetry book in whole, rather confirms that it has connections to the *Ghayb*. Nevertheless, it also includes, Ebussuud contends, that which is as harmful as the poison of snakes and should be avoided. By saying the *Dīvān* has both poems of “divine” and “bad taste” nature without clarifying how the two could be distinguished, the Shaykh implicitly promotes a hesitation for the Muslim community to approach Hāfiz's poetry.

The *fatwā*—similar to contemporary *fatwās*—is formulated as a question (*sūrat*, literally appearance) addressed to the shaykh, and his answer (*jawāb*). It remains speculative as to who in reality asks the inquiry. Given the historical context however both the public and the elite are likely to pose such a question. In the former case, a general reader of the *Dīvān*, who apparently refers to it for divination and who is also clearly a practicing Muslim, approaches the cleric to ensure that his practice of prognostication is not forbidden from a religious perspective. It is also possible—in the latter case—that a member of a Sufi community or even someone close to the Ottoman court finds the mystical status of Hāfiz, as taught by Sufi masters or Persian teachers, incompatible with the erotic vocabulary found in the book and thus seeks permissibility on its recitation. In either case and regardless of the answer, the relevance of the question confirms that the mystical status of Hāfiz and his *Dīvān* is a lively dispute among the sixteenth-century Ottomans. It is worth noting that jurists were frequently approached for emerging challenges and unprecedented situations which Muslims had no experience handling. For instance, as coffee culture spread in the Ottoman territory around the same time, a plethora of religious and secular orders was issued on the black brew, many of which banned it altogether.¹¹² Similarly, the very existence of the question attests to the hesitations and uncertainties confronted by the Turks following an exceeding dissemination of the copies of the *Dīvān* and its commentaries in society. The significance of Ebussuud's *fatwā* on Hāfiz's *Dīvān* cannot be examined in isolation from this context of awareness of Hāfiz's work among the Ottomans.

¹¹² The most brutal ban on coffee consumption was issued by Murat IV who punished public coffee drinkers with death penalty.

Several forms of the noun “*zā’iqah*” ذائقه, literally tasting, and its root ذوق, meaning taste and pleasure, are used in the question and the answer of the legal order. The wording of the *fatwā* in both parts reveals an integral correlation perceived between *zā’iqah* and the poetry of Hāfiz. To insist that the chief of the ulema is not authoritative to issue an edict against the poetry of Hāfiz, Zayd says that this is an issue related to “*zawqīyyāt*,” i.e. of tastefulness and pleasure, implying that this is beyond the reach of religious leaders. The response to the question, even though prescribes caution in dealing with Hāfiz’s poetry, does not reject the presumed correlation of this poetry with “*zawqīyyāt*”; rather, the *muftī* confirms that the *Dīvān* does include such pleasurable contents, saying, “there are much of tasteful wisdoms (حکم ذائقه).” Even when he eventually warns against a non-cautious approach to Hāfiz comparing it to the poison of snakes, he does not conclude that people should stop reciting Hāfiz’s poetry altogether, but that they should “retain the origins of blessing of taste (مبادی ذوق نعمتی) [and] avoid what will cause a “painful fear” (خوف), presumably in the hereafter.

Ebussuud’s *fatwā* reflects several dimensions of the reception of Hāfiz among the sixteenth century Ottomans, all of which react in one way or another to the assumptions that originated from, or at least were affected by, the Safavids. Most importantly, Ebussuud disapproves the notion that Hāfiz’s poetry is fully and unconditionally mystical—a notion upheld in the early Safavid society, reiterated by some of the commentaries, and embraced by the Ottoman Sufis and prognosticators. Questioning the Sufi affiliations of Hāfiz was not new. After Jāmī’s Persian pronouncements in the fifteenth-century, Hāfiz’s sufi pedigree was most notably questioned in Turkish by Sūdī. The rejection of Hāfiz’s Sufism seems to be the link that motivates Hājī Khalīfah to quote in his entry Ebussuud’s *fatwā* and Sūdī’s commentary in tandem, even though mentioning Sūdī in the sequence of commentators on the *Dīvān* after his predecessors would have been more natural. Sūdī, though not the first, was one who most explicitly and expansively renounced the dominant Sufi readings of Hāfiz. Weaving the duo Sūdī-Ebussuud at the end of the entry, Hājī Khalīfah corroborates their connection in sharing disapproval of Hāfiz’s Sufism.

Another aspect of Hāfiz’s poetry that Ebussuud targets in his *fatwā* concerns the practice of prognostication by the *Dīvān*, itself a by-product of the poet’s deemed mystical status. As a cultural practice still very much alive today, the *Dīvān* is randomly opened believing that Hāfiz will address the issue intended by the prognosticator. By warning against a random recitation of poems and advising readers to vigilantly differentiate verse from verse, the shaykh clearly refers to this practice, called *fāl-gīrī* in Persian. Ebussuud addresses a similar concern in several of his other orders, arranged in a section titled “Fāl” in his collection of *fatwās*, *Seyhülislâm Ebussuud Efendi fetvaları*. The aggregate of the set of “*fāl-gīrī*” *fatwās* and the edic on Hāfiz’s *Dīvān* render the practice of divination with a book, called bibliomancy, quite common in the sixteenth century Ottoman ruled territories.

And yet, comparing Shaykh al-Islam’s *fatwā* on Hāfiz’s *Dīvān* with his legal opinion in other similar subjects shows that in cautioning against the recitation of the *Dīvān*, Ebussuud is more concerned with the *content* of Hāfiz’s poetry than with the practice of bibliomancy per se. The cleric does not assert any unconditional opposition towards prognostication in other *fatwās* nor does he reject the practice categorically, but only delineates the condition in which the practice is permitted or not. For instance, he is asked whether a *muazzin* who reads fortunes from the Quran is allowed to lead the prayers. This case, according to Ebussuud, is permissible only if no other

eligible *imam* is found, “because,” the mufti explains, “the Quran may not be used for yes/no divinations.”¹¹³ His response implies that bibliomancy with the Quran is allowed should it be used for receiving explanatory responses. Or, in another question Ebussuud is asked whether the money a fortune teller makes claiming to do “divination of the prophet” is *halāl* (religiously licit) to which he answers, “*Ulmāz*,”¹¹⁴ i.e. making money is not allowed but nothing is said about the very practice. Unlike Ebussuud’s other edicts concerning prognostication, his *fatwā* on the *Dīvān* regards the very text, not the person or the practice, to be problematic, for it includes, in Shaykh’s view, material as dangerous and painful as “the poison of snakes.”

In order to examine why the cleric finds the verse of Hāfīz objectionable, mention should be made of the political context in which the *fatwā* is issued. When contextualized in relation to the ever expanding body of anti-Safavid *fatwās* issued by similarly ranked Ottoman authorities around the same time, Ebussuud’s *fatwā* gains another layer of meaning. Although the Sunni-Shiite tension was nothing new, the denominational contrast grew into a political struggle after the Safavid enthronement. The desecration of Shiites by Ottoman Sunni authorities manifests itself in an exceeding number of legal orders issued with direct or indirect references to the Safavids and their allies. Distinguished Ottoman scholar and Shaykh al-Islam, Kemal Basha, also known as Ibn Kemal (d. 940/1534), describes the Shiis as infidels whose blood should be shed, whose marriages are illegal according to the Shari‘a, and thus whose offsprings are all illegitimate. Kamal Basha condemns Shiis for taking haphazard orders of their leader, Shah Isma‘il, to signify what is incumbent on Muslims in the Shari‘a. This is why, according to him, the Shii men should be murdered unless surrendered, and their women, children, and wealth could be seized.¹¹⁵ Not long after Ibn Kemal, Ebussuud issued similar anti-shi‘a legal opinions. Ibn ‘Ābidīn (d. 1252/1836-7), who collected and abbreviated the *fatwās* for the hanafī Muslims, quotes from Ebussuud that whoever hesitates in the heresy of the Shiis is an apostate like them.¹¹⁶ In the larger anti-Shi‘a context of various edicts of this period, the *fatwā* on the *Dīvān* soundly falls within the anti-Shi‘a, anti-Safavid efforts of the Shaykh al-Islam.

Given the allegiance of Ebussuud to the Ottoman house on the one hand and the appropriation of Hāfīz by the Safavids on the other hand, the *fatwā* on the *Dīvān* can be read beyond a religious order on a literary work. Certainly Ebussuud was more than a simple jurist to the Ottoman sultans: as the chief religious authority who legitimized the Ottoman rule, he naturally had political predilection against the Safavids. According to Ibn ‘Ābidīn, Ebussuud even accompanied the Ottoman military camp in a number of battles against the Safavids, including Chaldiran, the harshest military encounter of the two neighbors lasting from 940/1533-4 to

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Mehmet Ertuğrul Düzdağ, *Seyhülislām Ebussuud Efendi fetvaları: ışığında 16. asır Türk hayatı* (Istanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1972), 199.

¹¹⁵ Ahmad b. Sulaymān Ibn Kamāl Bashā, *Khamsah rasā’il fī al-Firaq wa al-Madhāhib*, ed. Sayyid Bāghjiwan (Egypt: Dar al-Islām, 1425/2005), 195-201. In another *fatwā*, Ebussuud necessitates a “harsh punishment” (*ta’zir-i şedid*) on the sufis chanting and wandering when they come across the musical instruments. (Düzdağ and Ebussuud, 83)

¹¹⁶ Muhammad Amīn b. ‘Umar b. ‘Abdul azīz (Ibn ‘Ābidīn), *Al-‘Uqud al-Durriah fī Tanqīh al-Fatāwī al-Hamīdīyyah*, Available online (1/15/2020) at <https://archive.org/details/OukudDuryaTanqih/page/n97>.

963/1555-6. Ebussuud's role in the Ottoman rule sheds light on his *fatwā* as an effort to balance the attraction of the Turks, elite and lay people alike, to the Safavids and their Shii banners. After all, it has been shown that a new concern of the contemporary Sunni structure was to deal with the Turkish tribes who were fascinated by the charisma of the Safavids shahs, many of them—mostly from Turkmen tribes of the central and southern Anatolia—turning into Safavid disciples.¹¹⁷ No wonder that the Ottoman clerical authorities targeted the quintessential characteristics of the Safavids in their *fatwās* and attempted to demonize whatsoever Safavid. The first and foremost Safavid characteristics targeted in Ottoman *fatwās* was no doubt Shiism itself. Another one, which—as discussed earlier—the Safavids identified themselves with and drew legitimacy from, was the poetry of Hāfiz. Just like other contemporaneous anti-shi'a *fatwās*, another layer of meaning can be read in Ebussuud *fatwā* against the *Dīvān*: it not only meant to reject Hāfiz's poetry per se, but indeed attempted to discourage people from pursuing Safavid interests, whether in the areas of ideology or culture.

In sum, the Ottoman anti-Hāfiz discourse is new to scholarly attention. A thorough historical understanding of this phenomenon is yet to come. Despite our scant state of knowledge, the trio Sūdī-Lārī-Ebussuud appears to be significant in the formation of the discourse. One scholar, one literateur, and one mufti, the three individuals connected in one way or another to the Ottoman house and contributed to the formation of a new image of the Shirazi poet that was in odds with then dominant mystical perceptions of him. Through instructing princes or offering guidance to sultans, these three provided literary and religious legitimacy to the court and made possible the continuation of the Ottoman rule. Among them, Lārī with his first hand experience of living under the Safavids is most directly affected by their Shiite policies while Sūdī and Ebussuud have been in periodic contact with the Persians—the first in his expeditions for the purpose of writing commentaries on Persian classics and the second during occasional visits from Iran notably when accompanying the Ottoman camp in the battle of Chaldiran. Sūdī and Ebussuud are survived by what appears instrumental in promoting the Ottoman discourse that questions the Sufi status of the Persian poet, in contrast to the dominant attitude of the contemporary early Safavids. By respectively writing a commentary on the *Dīvān* characterized by anti-Sufi textual approach which attributes the opening verse to Yazīd b. Mu'āwīyyah and by issuing a *fatwā* that warns the Turk audience against recitation of the *Dīvān*, Sūdī and Ebussuud manifest a pronounced antagonism toward the Safavids through the Persian poet.

¹¹⁷Abdurrahman Atçıl, "The Safavid Threat and Juristic Authority in the Ottoman Empire during the 16th Century," *Journal of Middle East Studies* 49, no. 2 (May 2017), 297.

Chapter Three)

Sufi or Shii?: Negotiating Hāfiz under Shah ‘Abbās

The early Safavid shahs drew legitimacy from the poetry of Hāfiz envisioning themselves in the person of the popular Shirazi poet and the lofty kings he praised in his poetry. Filled with Sufi ideas and courtly imagery, Hāfiz’s verse provided them with the perfect cultural witness of their grandeur. By the second half of the dynastic history, the religious identity of the Safavid house had undergone a shift. In 1501 when Isma‘il announced Shiism to be the formal religion of the state, he used to enjoy a Sufi appeal among his Qizilbash soldiers. The conjunction of emblematic Sufism and Shiism in the persona of the Shah attests to the proximity perceived between the two religious institutions. By the end of the century, however, Shiism, represented by the court-sponsored ulema, has taken a clear anti-Sufi orientation evinced in the treatises written in condemnation of the Sufis and the suppression of the Sufi movements.

Shah ‘Abbās I (r. 1588-1629), generally known as the most powerful ruler of the dynasty, took several measures to restrict the Turkmen aristocracy by patronizing the Shii ulema, particularly from the Jabal ‘Amil region. According to European visitors, ‘Abbās manipulated some Sufi groups to his benefit and eradicated others as potential rivals especially if belonging to the Sunni fraction. The Italian Pietro Della Valle accounts that the Shah “sometimes intervenes to incite the two [Sufi] fractions [of Ni‘matullahīs and Haydarīs] and, having brought them satisfactorily to blows nimbly quits the field and sits at a window watching the ensuing battle and its dismal consequences.”¹¹⁸ ‘Abbās’s severe anti-Sufi policies compared to his predecessors is exemplified by his suppression of the Nuqtavī movement and its key figure, Darvīsh Khusraw. The Nuqtavī order was the antinomian and reincarnationist sect that emerged much earlier than the Safavids under the spiritual guidance of Mahmud Pasikhani in the fourteenth century. They turned into a political and ideological threat to the Safavids. According to Iskandar Beg Munshī, Tahmasp investigated Darvīsh Khusraw, who had attracted followers in a mosque in Qazvīn, but released him having not found his agenda in contrast to the sharī‘a.¹¹⁹ ‘Abbās, however, set out a harsh campaign against the Nuqtavīs: he killed Khusraw brutally by “tying [him] by his throat to the saddle of a camel and dragging him around the city.” The Shah, moreover, executed many other individuals, among them artists and philosophers who were prone to nuqtavī affiliations.¹²⁰

As Shiism supplanted Sufism as an idealized characteristic of the rulers parallel to the rising influence of the ulema, the approach of the Safavid court to the poetry of Hāfiz altered, for this poetry failed to grant the Shahs a legitimacy once sought in Hāfiz’s purportedly Sufi verse. Yet the poet of Shiraz was already an undeniably popular poet-saint among the elite and lay alike by the end of the sixteenth century, although the dominant mystical readings of his verse ceased to

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Hussayn Mūr-ja‘farī, “Munāzi‘āt-i Ni‘matī va Haydarī dar Irān”, *Nashrīyyah-yi Dānishkadah-yi Adabīyāt va ‘Ulūm-i Insānī*. n. 1. (1361/1982-3), 137-155. 134.

¹¹⁹ Iskandar Bayg, *‘Ālam Arā-yi Abbāsī*, Vol. 2, 474.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 649.

present an ideal Safavid ideology. Putting the *Dīvān* aside all together would not offer a solution to the dilemma of eroding Sufi tints from the dynastic religious image — which was inextricably intertwined with Hāfiz by the time. Instead, this very poetry was utilized to present a reorientation in the Safavid identity. In other words, rather than denying Hāfiz, efforts were exerted to read his words in a manner that would support a Shiite rendition of the poet in tune with the Safavid altering claims. While orthodox tendencies of Tahmasp had led to temporal marginalization of Hāfiz’s Sufi-perceived poetry bringing to fore his panegyrics, the mystico-lyrical verse of Hāfiz, which constitutes the majority of his poetic corpus, could no longer be overlooked in light of the explicit anti-Sufi efforts of ‘Abbās and his successors. The process of “re-reading” Hāfiz’s poetry was pursued at times at the expense of altering his very poetry, let alone its interpretations. Therefore, the perception of Hāfiz’s poetry propagated by the shah in the second half of the Safavid era is comparable to the attempts made by the ulema to re-interpret the Shia doctrines — even though Shiism has been the formal religion of the state since its formation.

The efforts by the Safavid court to present the poetry of Hāfiz segregated from its Sufi connotations is exemplified in a small inscription on the facade of the Shaykh Lutf Allah Mosque in Isfahan. The mosque inscription portrays a purposeful alteration of a hemistich by Hāfiz. Around this time, the same poem of Hāfiz was inscribed on a mausoleum known for sheltering Sufis in the Safavid capital, namely the Tikyah of Mīr-Findiriskī. In this chapter, I shall examine these two monuments and argue that the poem of Hāfiz inscribed on them, one in the original form and the other in an altered version, captures the essence of the Sufi-Shii dichotomy in the reign of ‘Abbās. The divergence of the two versions of the poem, I shall show, manifests the contentious relationship that existed between the Mosque and the Tikyah.¹²¹ This correlation, hitherto unstudied in the Safavid scholarship, is significant to understand different aspects of the early modern Persianate world and particularly the role that Hāfiz and his poetry played in it.

Hāfiz’s *ghazal* on the Tikyah of Mīr-Findiriskī

The appearance of Hāfiz’s verse on architectural settings attests that two distinct approaches to this poetry coexisted in Isfahan, the capital of Shah ‘Abbās. The first approach continued to read Hāfiz’s verse as the expression of mystical ideas while the second approach attempted to re-read and re-interpret his poetry in line with the Imamite propaganda of the state. This dual perception is exemplified in the inscription of a single poem line on two monuments: one, on the so-called *Tikyah* of Mīr-Findiriskī, the burial site of several Sufi-minded individuals; and two, on the state-sponsored Mosque of Shaykh Lutf-Allah. The nuanced alteration of a single couplet by Hāfiz on the two edifices illustrates the utilization of the poetry of Hāfiz to support Sufi and Shiite causes, as incongruent as they seemed in the seventeenth-century Safavid context.

The cemetery site of Tikyah-yi Mīr in Isfahan, named after Mīr-Findiriskī, a mystically oriented philosopher who died in 1050/1640, is inscribed with a *ghazal* of Hāfiz. Located in *Takht-i Fūlad*, the grand historical cemetery of the last major Safavid capital, it is the burial site of many notables from the Safavid as well as the Qajar and Pahlavi periods. The site consists of a central courtyard with Findiriskī’s grave located on a platform inside of a metal fence and several rooms

¹²¹ Tikyah literally means the leaning place. It idiomatically refers to the hermitages where Sufis used to gather or the Shiite ceremonies were held.

surrounding it. This unusual protection of the grave was supposed to prevent the digging up of the stones of the philosopher, who was famed for his knowledge of esoteric sciences and alchemy.¹²² One of the rooms is inscribed by the following ghazal of Hāfīz on the theme of dervishes: The inscription — each hemstitch framed in a cartouche — reads as:

روضه خلد برین خلوت درویشانست / مایه محتشمی خدمت درویشانست
 از کران تا به کران لشکر ظلم است ولی / از ازل تا به ابد فرصت درویشانست
 آنکه پیشش بنهد تاج تکبر خورشید / کیریاییست که در حشمت درویشانست
 دولتی را که نباشد غم از آسیب زوال / بی تکلف بشنو دولت درویشانست
 آنکه زر می شود از پرتو آن قلب سیاه / کیمیاییست که در صحبت درویشانست
 قصر فردوس که رضوانش به دریانی رفت / منظری از چمن نزهت درویشانست
 ای توانگر مفروش اینهمه نخوت که ترا / سر و زر در کنف همت درویشانست
 کنج عزلت که طلسمات عجائب دارد / فتح آن در نظر همت درویشانست
 خسروان قبله حاجات گشایند ولی / سبیش بندگی حضرت درویشانست
 حافظ ار آب حیات ابدی می خواهی / منبعش خاک ره خلوت درویشانست

The best eternal garden is the solitude of dervishes,
 The source of grandeur is the service of dervishes.
 From pole to pole is the army of tyranny, however,
 From primordial eternity to everlastingness is the opportunity of dervishes.
 That which the sun lays in submission the crown of glory before,
 Is a glory that is in grandeur of dervishes.
 The fortune that has no grief from the torment of decay
 Hear -- formality aside-- is the fortune of dervishes.
 What turns in its radiance the dark heart (fake) to gold (precious),
 Is an alchemy [found] in the companionship of dervishes.
 The palace of paradise which Rizvan went for its doorkeeping,
 Is but a scene from the garden of pleasure [enjoyed by] dervishes.
 O you wealthy! Don't boast with pride because,
 Your health and wealth is tied to the rope of the volition of dervishes.
 The corner of seclusion that has tilism of wonders,
 is to be captured by the glance of mercy of dervishes.
 Kings are capable of granting every wish
 [Only] because they are servants to the majestic dervishes.
 If you seek the water of endless life Hāfīz!
 Its fountain is the dust on the doorway of the solitude of dervishes.

“Dervish”, literally poor or one who seeks goods, is an ambivalent term in Persianate literature and culture. It has entered the lexicon of English and other European languages, too. While it is predominantly used in reference to the Sufis, as for the figure of “Darvish Khusraw” mentioned above, it describes more generally a state of going beyond material bonds. In effect, being a dervish is a matter of detachment from the world, regardless whether one was rich or poor. Historically, dervishes in the medieval and early modern periods constituted a social class, who would live an ascetic, itinerant life wandering around, reciting poetry and begging for food and

¹²² Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “Spiritual Movements, Philosophy, and Theology in the Safavid Period,” in *Cambridge History of Iran VI*, 676.

life's necessities. For their negative social contribution and for other — mostly political — reasons, dervishes have been criticized particularly as the court of ‘Abbās turned its support from the Qizilbash army and allocated to the Shia scholars, ulema, more power. Indeed, the inscription on the Tikyah, whose exact date is unknown, roughly coincides with the wave of anti-Sufi sentiments and the attacks on dervish groups, doctrines, and practices in the 1040s-50s/1630s-40s.¹²³ It is in this context that the poetry of Hāfiz on the Tikyah advocates dervishes.

Lavishly praising dervishes, each line of the poem rhymes at the end in the phrase *darvīshān-ast* [lit. is dervishes], thus emphasizing the theme through vocal repetition. Hāfiz portrays dervishes not as desperately poor individuals, but rather as the possessors of the true wealth. He draws from a terminology naturally related to the lofty lives of kings — including “gardens,” “treasure,” “conquest,” “gold,” “grandeur,” “palace,” and “wealthy” — to blur the polar Shah-dervish dichotomy. This ghazal has long been used to encourage patrons to support dervishes, or those who claim to be as poor or rather as spiritual as dervishes. It is inscribed in other cemeteries or shrines such as the mausoleum of ‘Abd al-‘Azim al-Hasani (d. 252/866), the Shia scholar in Ray near Tehran.

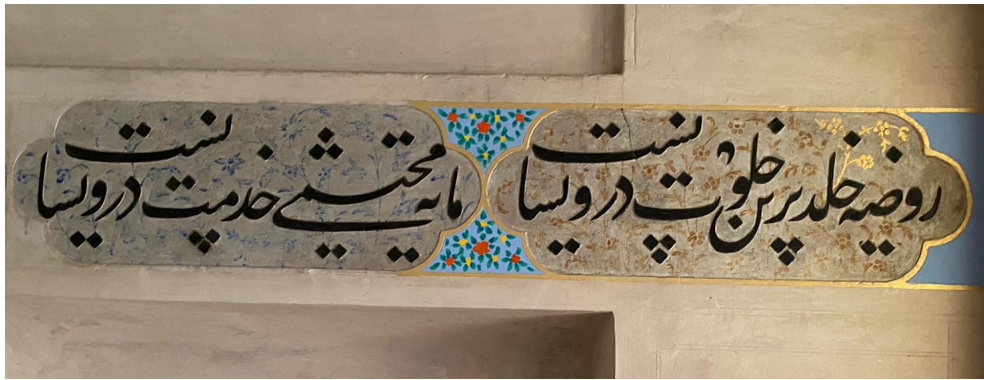


Figure 1: Inscription of Hāfiz’s ghazal on the Tikyah of Mīr, Isfahan. Photography by the author.

The *ghazal* inscribed on the Tikyah-yi Mīr (pic.1) appears in most of the surviving recensions of the *Dīvān*, although with a varying degree of variances. It is part of a larger poem in some manuscripts. The last two lines registered in the inscription are found in no copy earlier than 827/1424, suggesting that the calligrapher and/or the patron of the epigraphy used a poetic version not in conformity with the earliest *Dīvāns* available to us today.¹²⁴

In addition to the poetic theme, several components present at the Tikyah endorse the connection of the site to the cult of dervishes over an extended period of time, thus rendering the inscribed *ghazal* meaningfully selected. The inscription bears the signature of Mīr-‘Imād but lacks a date

¹²³ One of the most virulent examples is *Hadiqah al-Shi’ah* by an anonymous author. It enumerates twenty one Sufi groups and refutes each and every one of their doctrines and practices. For more about this and similar works and the controversy concerning its authorship, see: Andrew Newman, “Sufism and Anti-Sufism in Safavid Iran: The Authorship of the ‘Hadiqat al-Shi’a’ Revisited,” in *Iran* Vol. 37 (1999), 95-108.

¹²⁴ Only one manuscript, that is dated 827, out of the fourteenth manuscripts that Parviz Khanlari used in his critical edition contains the last two lines of the inscribed ghazal.

of completion. The calligrapher's death in 1024/1615 sets a *terminus ante quem* demonstrating that the site had already been inscribed with Hāfiz's poem at least 25 years before Findiriskī's death when the philosopher used to live and teach in the site. Being already marked by a poem on 'dervishes' during Findiriskī's lifetime, the Tikyah continued to attract Sufis and pilgrims after his burial. Jean Chardin (1643-1713), the French traveler who visited Isfahan several times between 1666 and 1677, wrote that dervishes used to gather in this place.¹²⁵ The site apparently preserved its attraction for Sufis as suggested by the gravestones of numerous Sufi-oriented figures of the following dynasties, among them musicians, poets, and calligraphers. Buried at the site is one Mīrza Muhammad Hussein 'Anqā (d. 1308/1890-1) who is said to have had a corner of solitude there with minimum tools (*asbāb-i mukhtasar*) and spent day and night with people of cultivation (*ahl-i fazl*) and poets.¹²⁶ The tombstone of one Seyyed Muhammad-Tāhir Tūysirkānī (d. 1327/1909) is also inscribed with the following verse by Hāfiz that reiterates the same dervish/Shah duality:¹²⁷

ما آبروی فقر و قناعت نمی بریم
با پادشاه بگو [ی] که روزی مقدر است

We will remain content and not complain of poverty
Tell the Shah that one's share is predestined.

Tūysirkānī's funeral inscription not only accords him to the side of dervishes who "remain content and not complain of poverty," but also sets his position in confrontation with the Shah, who apparently avoids paying attention and monetary support to the Sufis. The inscription of Hāfiz's poetry on the Tikyah strengthens the function of the site as sheltering dervishes vis-à-vis the Safavid court which appears disinterested in their support.

The status of Mīr-Findiriskī in contemporary society is crucial to perceive the role of the site as hosting Sufi features that were no longer appealing to the Safavid taste. Findiriskī is one of the seventeenth-century philosophers designated by Nasr and Corbin as members of the "philosophical school of Isfahan". Like his similar-minded philosophers, Findiriskī is known for incorporating spiritual illumination into his philosophical thought.¹²⁸ Several anecdotes preserved in biographical anthologies witness that he was particularly esteemed for his mystical wisdom.¹²⁹ And yet, Mīr-Findiriskī's ideas and practices among the Safavid religious elite were certainly far from the Shiite religiosity promoted by the courtly clerics.

Anecdotes point to controversies that existed between Mīr-Findiriskī and the major ulema of his time and their royal supporters. For one, Findiriskī supposedly opposed Muhammad Taqī Majlisī

¹²⁵ Jean Chardin, *Sīyāhat-Nāmah-yi Chardin* (Journal du voyage du Chevalier Chardin en Perse), tran. Muhammad 'Abbāsī (Tehran: Amīr-Kabīr, 1345/1966.) Vol. 7, 255.

¹²⁶ Sayyid Ahmad Aqīlī, *Takht-i Fūlād-i Isfahān* (Isfahan: Kānūn-i Pajūhish, 1388/2009-2010), 47.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ See: Leonard Lewisohn, "Sufism and the School of Isfahan," in idem, ed., *The Heritage of Sufism*, 3 vols. (Oxford and Boston, 1999) Vol III: Late Classical Persianate Sufism (1501-1750), 63-134.

¹²⁹ See: Sajjad H. Rizvi, "Isfahan School of Philosophy", *Encyclopedia of Iranica*, <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/isfahan-school-of-philosophy>, accessed 5/20/2021.

(d. 1070/1699), the foremost influential clergyman of the day, by pretending to disobey the Islamic practice of fasting. He is said to have kept a prune in his mouth when Majlisī visited him in the fasting month and take the fruit out only after the visitor left, asserting, “I saw that he is not with us [i.e. members of Findiriksi’s circle], so wanted to keep him away...”¹³⁰

Another anecdote further unfolds the tension between the Sufi-minded philosopher and the Shah. According to the biographical compilation, *Rayhanah al-Adab*, Mīr-Findiriskī “would prevent the companionship of the great ones (*akābir*) and spend most of his time with the dervishes and the poor and the *arbāb-i zawq va hāl* [i.e. the Sufis].” One day Shah ‘Abbās, having heard of this, told Mīr by way of allusion, “I have heard that some *tullāb* [students of Islamic sciences] stand along the gatherings of the vagrants (*awbāsh*) and listen to their nonsense.” Mīr astutely replied, “I am present there every day and never saw any *tullāb*.”¹³¹ The story reveals, on the one hand, that the Shah, even though cautious of not openly annoying Mīr-Findiriskī, was not happy with his dervish demeanor, and confirms, on the other hand, that Mīr indeed spent time with the Sufis and did not hesitate to make his visits known to the Shah.

A third narrative extolls the spiritual power of Mīr-Findiriskī over the Shaykh al-Islam of Isfahan, Shaykh Bahā’ī (d.1621). It has it that once a lion entered the presence of Shaykh Bahā’ī and Mīr-Findiriskī, while the first became frightened and the second calmly tamed the beast. An undated painting of this scene, depicting Shaykh-Bahā’ī on left and Mīr-Findiriskī adjacent to a seated lion on right, was previously hung in the Tikyah (figure 2). It reiterates the contrast between the religious ethos of the Tikyah and that of the court.¹³²



Pic. 2: Mīr-Findiriskī and Shaykh Bahā’ī and a seated lion
<http://h-fendereski.blogfa.com/category/2>

¹³⁰ ‘Abd al-Karīm b. Mahdī Gazī Bur-Khwārī (1260-1339 Q), *Tazkirah al-Qubūr* (Qum: Kitābkhanah-yi Mar’ashī Najafī, 1371/1992-93) Vol. 1. 60.

¹³¹ Muhammad Alī Mudarris Tabrīzī, *Rayhānah al-Adab fī Tarājim al-Ma’rūfīn bi-l Kunyah aw al-Laqaab* (Tehran: Khayyām, 1369/1990-91) Vol. 4, 358.

¹³² Muhammad Alī Mudarris Tabrīzī, *Rayhānah al-Adab*, Vol. 4, 357.

In speaking of the mystical attitudes of the time, it is important to distinguish between two types of Sufism and their relationship to the court. The first type was mainly concerned with the mystical path as a spiritual approach to the Truth. Some of the major religious figures close to the court of ‘Abbās I were inclined toward this type of Sufism, referred to by “*irfan*”.¹³³ Scholars such as Mulla Sadra (d. 1636) and Shaykh Bahā’ī intertwined ‘*irfan* with philosophy (*hikmah*) and the traditional fiqh and hadith in their works of poetry and prose that were patronized by the Safavid court. While they were alive, the anti-Sufi sentiments did not have a prominent reflection in society.¹³⁴ Distinct from this type are the *tariqa*-based social institutions. The beliefs and practices of those belonging to the latter and their alleged deviance from the *shari‘a* are proscribed in many anti-Sufi tracts that were written from the last years of the reign of ‘Abbās I onward.¹³⁵ A few contemporaneous texts distinguish between these two types and defend the ‘true’ Sufism. The role of Hāfiz in these treatises is discussed in the last chapter.

The distinction between the theories of ‘*irfān* and the practices of dervishes is important to understand the socio-political persecution of Sufi groups under ‘Abbās, despite his leniency toward the mystical ideas that informed the works of major philosopher-clerics associated with his court. The confrontation between Mīr Findiriskī with the likes of Shaykh Bahā’ī, who acted essentially as Shah ‘Abbās’s right hand, and Muhammad Taqi Majlisī, echoed in above anecdotes, should be viewed as an expression of the unrest between the religious policies of the court and its affiliates rather than a disputation of the Sufi concepts per se. Otherwise, Shaykh Bahā’ī and Majlisī themselves were both condemned for their sympathies with Sufism especially after the fall of ‘Abbās I and the rise to power of his successor, Safī (r. 1038-1052/1629-1642).¹³⁶ In this context, the major complaints of the dervishes, voiced through the poetry of Hāfiz, concerned the social oppression of the Sufi groups and the patronage policies of the court that was rapidly moving toward Twelver scholars.

¹³³ For the involvement of Shaykh Bahā’ī in the politics of ‘Abbās, see: Andrew Newman, “Towards a reconsideration of the «Isfahan school of Philosophy: Šayḥ Bahā al-Dīn and the role of the Safavid ‘Ulamā,” *Muslim Cultures in the Indo-Iranian World during the Early-Modern and Modern Periods*, Denis Hermann, Fabrizio Speziale (eds.) (Téhéran: Institut Français de Recherche en Iran; c2010), 83-116. It should also be noted that despite his ‘*irfan*-oriented poems, the works of the prolific Shaykh Bahā’ī also includes anti-Sufi gestures, such as the following prophetic hadīth included in his *Kashkul*: “The resurrection does not stand unless exits a group of my people called *Sufiyyah* who are not from me... [rather] they are more misguided than the infidels and they are people of hellfire.” Quoted in Hurr-i ‘Āmilī, *Naqdī Jāmi‘ bar Tasawwuf* (A Comprehensive Criticism of Sufism), tran. Abbās Jalālī (Qum: Ansārīan, 1386/2007-8) 30.

¹³⁴ Kathryn Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press) 407.

¹³⁵ Sajjad Rizvi, “A Sufi Theology Fit For the Shii King: The Gawhar-i Murad of ‘Abd al-Razzaq Lāhījī (d. 1072/1661-2),” in *Sufism and Theology* (Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 90.

¹³⁶ In a series of essays written during the reign of Shah Safī, Majlisī was attacked for his public praise of Abu-Muslim (d. 755), the Iranian agent of the ‘Abbāsīd revolution. The Abu-Muslim tradition was revived as a messianic narrative told by dervishes in coffeehouses in the 1030s and 40s/1620s and 30s. This tradition was quite popular in the socio-economically challenged Safavid society and was attacked in several tracts by the Shi‘a clerics. (See: Rasūl Ja‘farīān, *Safavīyyah dar ‘Arsah-yi Dīn, Farhang va Sīyāsāt*, Vol 2 (Qum: Pajūhishkadah-yi Hawzah va Dānishgāh, 1379/1999) 860-872.

To fully understand the function of Hāfīz's *ghazal* on the Tikyah, it is important to note that the site represents not only a distance from the Safavid house, but also an affinity in multiple ways to Mughal India. The Subcontinent was the prime refuge at the time for all dissidents from the Iranian plateau. Both the eponymous of the site as well as its calligrapher had several excursions in India. Findiriskī travelled extensively in the Subcontinent, learned Sanskrit, and served as an intellectual liaison between Islam and Hinduism.¹³⁷ He produced a summary as well as a voluminous commentary on *Yoga Vasishtha* — consisting of the long discourse between the ancient sage Vasishtha and the legendary prince Rama.¹³⁸ Some of the surviving manuscripts of the work contain Findiriskī's handwriting on the marginalia, where he recorded notes from Greek philosophy, Quranic quotations, or Persian mystical poetry that he found comparable to the Hindu text.¹³⁹ His interest in Hinduism had practical consequences: He is said to never perform the mandatory *Hajj* (Pilgrimage) ritual, seemingly to avoid the animal slaughter part at the end.¹⁴⁰

Similarly, the calligrapher of Hāfīz's poem in the Tikyah is recorded to have had tense relations with the Safavid court and connections with Mughal India. While the inscription includes the name of Mīr-ʿImād as its artist, controversies exist as to whether this is the master's original handwriting. Mīr-ʿImād, one of the most renowned artists in the history of Persian calligraphy, is highly praised in medieval and modern biographical compilations for his unrivaled excellence in writing *Nastaʿlīq*, a style developed in this period for writing Persian poetry. The biographical notices do not provide much information about the Tikyah epigraphy. Some briefly name it as the master's sole mural work, with the rest being manuscript copies or single folios of different sizes. Nevertheless, almost all early sources share an allusion to Mīr-ʿImād's eccentric beliefs and his contentious rapport with Shah ʿAbbās. Some sources describe Mīr-ʿImād to be Sunni, while others ascribe to him Naqshbandī affiliations.¹⁴¹ The death of the master is tied in some accounts to the jealousies by Alīreza,¹⁴² Shah's favorite calligrapher, and in a number of sources to persecutions at the Shah's order, thus giving him epithets such as *shahīd* (martyr) and bestowing on him an aura of sacredness.

Although dominant, the narrative of the martyrdom of Mīr-ʿImād has been questioned. Karīm-Zādah Tabrīzī devotes a monograph to argue that the murder of the artist by ʿAbbās I, so emphatically recurrent in literature, is but a conspiracy on the part of the rival Ottomans, who,

¹³⁷ For one account, Taqī al-Dīn Awhadī Balayānī (973-1040/1565-1631) a contemporary of Mīr, writes in his biographical book, *ʿArafāt al-ʿAshiqīn*, that he accompanied Mīr in his first travel to India in 1015. Mīr apparently traveled to India several other times afterwards.

¹³⁸ The protagonist of the famous epic, Ramayana.

¹³⁹ Fath-Allāh Mujtabāyī, "Mīr-Findiriskī dar hind," *Bangālah dar Qand-i Pārsī*, Shahrīyār Shāhin-Dijī. (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Sukhan, 2013) 288-296; Idem., "Mīr-Findiriskī," in *Dāyirah al-Maʿārif-i Buzurg-i Islāmī*. Vol. 6. Article # 2478 and 1047.

¹⁴⁰ Kaykhusraw Isfandīyār, *Dabistān-i Mazāhib*, with notes by Rahīm Rizā-Zādah Malik (Tehran: Tahrūr, 1362/1983). Vol. 1. 47.

¹⁴¹ Mahdī Nūr-Muhammadī, *ʿImād-i Mulk-i Khat: Zindagī va Āsār-i Mīr ʿImād-i Sayfī Hasanī Qazvīnī* (Tehran: ʿIlmī, 1394/ 2015) 142-145.

¹⁴² Jalāl al-Dīn Humāyī, *Tarīkh-i Isfahān, Vol 2: Hunar va Hunarmandān* (Tehran: Pajūhishgāh-i ʿUlūm-i Insānī va Mutālīʿāt-i Farhangī, 1996), 204-5.

according to the author, tried to render the Persian monarch against art and intellectual sophistication.¹⁴³ Karīm-Zādah reconstructs the genealogy of Mīr-‘Imād’s biographies to show that the description of the calligrapher’s death first appeared in *Gulzār-i Sawāb* by Ibrahim Nefes-Zadeh (d. 1650), Ottoman biographer, no earlier than two decades after the event.¹⁴⁴ The alleged murder of the artist by the Shah is then reproduced with more dramatic details by the next generations of Ottoman and Persian authors. Although Karīm-Zādah convincingly argues that the Ottomans may have exaggerated or even invented the event, he fails to note that Persian accounts predating the Ottoman narratives also describe Mīr-‘Imād not to be on amicable terms with the Safavid court even though they are silent about the murder of the Mīr. This is attested by a brief note found in the earliest biography of the artist by his contemporary Qāzī Ahmad (d. 1633). Without elaborating on his death, the historiographer implicitly alludes to the controversy between him and the Safavids writing that Mīr-‘Imād “is abstinent from serving and accompanying the sultan” (*az khidmat va mulāzimat-i sultān muhtaraz-ast.*)¹⁴⁵

Perhaps to underline the detachment of the artist from the Safavids, several biographical sources establish various connections between Mīr-‘Imād and the Subcontinent posthumously, although there is no evidence that Mīr-‘Imād had any travels to India during his lifetime. It is mentioned, for instance, that the artist’s death was deeply mourned in India, or that his offsprings, themselves calligraphers, fled to the Mughal territory to escape Shah’s resentment. Nefes-Zadeh writes, “When Badshah of India, Ibn Jalal al-Din [Jahangir] heard the news [of Mīr-‘Imād’s death], he cried and said if they had sent him to me instead of killing him, I would have paid them as much gold as his weight.”¹⁴⁶ A new account for the production of the Tikyah inscription in connection to the Mughals is provided by a literary figure of the Qajar era. Haydar-Alī known as Nadīm al-Mulk (1867-1938), himself a calligrapher, claimed in his *Risālah dar Tārīkh-i Isfahān* (treatise on the history of Isfahan), composed in 1345/1927, that the Tikyah inscription is but a copy of the work originally preserved in India.¹⁴⁷ According to Nadīm al-Mulk, Emperor Akbar (1542-1605) requested, at the end of a visit from Isfahan, that ‘Abbās dispatched Mīr-‘Imād’s *katībah* among other Isfahani arts and crafts. Per the Shah’s agreement, the epigraphy of Hāfiz’s poem was given to the Mughal emperor. It was copied [*gartah bardārī*] later, according to Nadīm al-Mulk, and implanted in the Tikyah. Nadīm al-Mulk concludes his account by saying that Mīr-‘Imād and another master calligrapher, Darvīsh ‘Abd al-Majīd — whose name speaks to his Sufī affiliations — are buried in the courtyard of the Tikyah site.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³ Karīm-Zādah Tabrīzī, *Ahvāl va Āsār-i Mīr-‘Imād al-Hasanī al-Sayfī al-Qazvīnī*, (London: 1380/2001).

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Munshī Qumī, Qāzī Ahmad. *Gulistān-i Hunar*, edited by Ahmad Suhaylī Khwānsārī (Tehran: Bunyād-i Farhang-i Iran, 1352/ 1973), 121.

¹⁴⁶ Autographed manuscript by Nefes Zadeh dedicated to Sultan Murad Khan b. Sultan Ahmad Khan II (1032-1049) quoted in Karīm-Zādah Tabrīzī, *Ahvāl va Āsār-i Mīr-‘Imād*, 7.

¹⁴⁷ An autographed copy of this treatise is preserved in Sarīm al-Dawlah Library, Isfahan (#990). It is published in: Mas‘ud Ghulāmīyyah and Yusuf Beig-Bābāpur (ed.), “Risālah dar Tārīkh-i Isfahān,” in *Payām-i Bahāristān* 5:17 (1391/2012), 314-336.

¹⁴⁸ Ghulāmīyyah and Beig-Bābāpur, “Risālah dar Tārīkh-i Isfahān,” 336.

Historical evidence does not support Nadīm al-Mulks’s narrative. There is no account of Akbar Shah’s travels to Iran, let alone to Isfahan. Nor does any Indian source, to my knowledge, point to the existence of Mīr-‘Imād’s calligraphy in India.¹⁴⁹ Nadim al-Mulk’s account should be perceived against the backdrop of the vast migration from Safavid Iran to the the Subcontinent and what such an association signified to early modern Iranians. The migration to India, at times called “exodus” for its prevalence among the populace, was a widespread phenomenon in the Safavid society. The following line by contemporary poet, Sā’ib (d.1676) poetically points to this fact:

همچو عزم سفر هند که در هر دل هست / سر سودای تو در هیچ سری نیست که نیست

Like the intention of traveling to India that is [found] in every heart,
There is no mind free of the secret of your love.

Although the Subcontinent was not the destination of a special social group, it particularly refuted those not at ease with Safavid strategies. Some migrants fled the strict religious policies implemented by the Safavids including conversion to Shiite Islam; some artists and poets sought patronage after the Shah’s disinterest in the visual arts and in secular poetry;¹⁵⁰ others looked for employment at the Persian-speaking Mughal courts where their native linguistic abilities would bring them rank, prestige, and wealth. Nadim al-Mulk’s account resonates with the role of the Tikiyah in representing remoteness from the Safavid taste and proximity to its rival.

The claim that the inscription of Hāfiz’s *ghazal* originated in India underscores the association of the site with a dissatisfaction with the Safavid gestures — the message conveyed by the poetic content. Describing the dervishes comparable, or rather superior, to the kings, the inscription resonates with the literary rendition of India as an Arcadia or paradisiacal refuge created by the Persian émigré.¹⁵¹ Therefore, the Tikiyah-yi Mīr in general and the epigraphy of Hāfiz’s verse in particular correspond to the imagery of India from the perspective of the early modern Iranians, including Sufis, who were not sufficiently cherished in their homeland. The poetry of Hāfiz, although used to embody the Safavid taste until recently, captures the remoteness from the Safavid court and voices a plea for the Shah’s attention by dervishes and artists who fell off Safavid favor.

¹⁴⁹ The exchange of artworks and artists between the Safavids and the Mughals was not unprecedented. A similar conversation happened, related by both Budāq of Qazvīn and Qāzī Ahmad, when Humāyūn, the second Mughal ruler, visited Tahmasp’s capital and insisted to take a Persian painter with him to India. According to the royal historians, Humāyūn not only requested the Shah to receive the artist as a gift, but also offered a monetary compensation saying “if *padshah* [Tahmasp] releases Mīr Musawwir [fifteenth-century painter] to me, I’ll give in return one thousand *tūmans*.” Qāzī Ahmad, *Gulistān-i Hunar*, 139; Budāq Munshī-yi Qazvīnī, *Jawāhir al-Akhhār*, ms copied in 1576, State Public Library, St. Petersburg, Dorn 288. f. 111a. quoted in Abolala Soudavar, “Between the Safavids and the Mughals: Arts and Artists in Transition”, *Iran* (1999), Vol 37, 49-66. 50.

¹⁵⁰ Budāq Munshi alludes to this fact describing the painter Dūst Divānah (lit. Frenzied Friend) writing, “[As] *Padshāh* [Tahmasp] became resented from this group [artists], Dūst went to India and ascended [in rank] at the service of Mīrza Humāyūn.” پادشاه ازین طایفه دلگیر شدند دوست به هند رفت و در خدمت میرزا همایون عروج کرد.

¹⁵¹ Sunil Sharma, *Mughal Arcadia: Persian Literature in an Indian Court* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2017), 184.

The Dervish-Shah Dichotomy

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the heads of the Sufi order, the Safaviyyah, started to identify themselves as shahs. Around the same time many Sufi groups proliferated in the Persianate lands with varying relationships with the rulers. In the fifteenth-century Herat, the Naqshbandī Sufis were conspicuously close to the Timurid court of Hussayn Bayqara (d. 1506), while in Safavid Qazvin of a few decades later the Nuqtavī Sufis were brutally suppressed by ‘Abbās I. Regardless of the Sufi inclinations of the court in reality, these developments created a new sensitivity to the association of shahs and dervishes, one that became frequently expressed in literary tropes.¹⁵² This discourse, voiced by Hāfiz two centuries earlier, turned into a living tradition that manifested itself in contemporary cultural productions as well as the invocation of already existing ones. As a standard token of successful authority, monarchs were frequently praised by poets and chroniclers for patronage of dervishes, or were rather encouraged in such works to show mercy to them. An alleged good term between the shah and the dervish was considered a mutually beneficial exchange by which the former furnished the latter with safety and comfort and received in return spiritual legitimacy and popularity. The poetic rendition of the shah/dervish rapport is visible, for instance, in the following couplet in which Babur (d. 1530), the Persephone Mughal emperor, describes himself:

درویشان را گر چه نه از خویشانیم / لیک از دل و جان معتقد ایشانیم
دور است مگو تو شاهی از درویشی / شاهیم ولی بنده درویشانیم

Though we are not blood relatives of the dervishes,
We wholeheartedly believe in them nevertheless.
Don't you say that being a shah is one thing and being a dervish is another,
Although we are the shah, we are indeed slaves to the dervishes.¹⁵³

Chronicles also refer to Shah ‘Abbās II (1632-1666) as *Shāh-i Darvīsh-Dūst* as a complement. The prevalence of the trope did not prevent the issue of condemnations against institutionalized Sufism under ‘Abbās II however.¹⁵⁴ To better understand the role of Hāfiz's poetry to stress the shah/dervish duality in the capital of Shah ‘Abbās, a masnavī poem titled “Shah va Darvīsh” composed by Hilālī Jaghatā’ī (d. 936/1529) provides a point of comparison.

“Shah va Darvīsh” by Hilālī Jaghatā’ī epitomizes the conceptualization of the dichotomy as a poetic theme in the early modern Persianate world. Hilālī, a Turkman brought up in Astarābād, spent most of his adulthood in Herat close to the circle of Alī-shīr Navāyī and the protection of Hussayn Bayqarā. He was eventually killed by the Uzbek ‘Ubayd-Allāh during his sack of the city in the reign of Tahmasp.¹⁵⁵ In his poem of more than 2300 lines, Hilālī refashioned the

¹⁵² There are a number of contemporaneous paintings that depict the encounter of a shah and a dervish.

¹⁵³ Shafīqah Yārqīn (Dībāj), “Shah-i Shā’irān va Bandah-yi Darvīshān,” in *Nāmah-ye Pārsī* (1380/2020) 6:2. 129-143.

¹⁵⁴ Rizvi, “A Sufi Theology Fit For the Shii King”, 90.

¹⁵⁵ The execution of Hilālī by ‘Ubayd Allāh is generally attributed to his accusation of Shiism; however, Rūmlū the contemporary historian ascribes the murder to a satirical verse by the poet directed to the Uzbek Khan. (*Ahsan al-Tavārīkh*, 1931, 222). The author of the Iranica entry on Hilālī claims that he was undoubtedly a Sunni. (Michele

expected hierarchy: “Shah” and “Darvish” are but the names of two lovers who, like Nizāmī’s famed romance *Leilī va Majnūn*, fall in love as youths at school. The story contains no elaboration on the beliefs and practices of the child named “Darvish” nor on the princely life of the one named “Shah” who, by the way, attends the same school. As the narrative unfolds, the protagonists, both being male, appear in the palace, hunting scenes, and other kingly settings where jealous snitches try to keep them away from each other. Hilālī’s *Shah va Darvish* thus can be read as a romance, should one disregard the names, and/or as a mystical anecdote if read symbolically. The anomalous appellation of the lovers and their struggles throughout the story to unite despite the social barriers suggest an additional didactic dimension. There seems to be almost a dialectical resolution here: the story’s general schema as well as individual lines therein promote a caring attention towards the dervishes by the monarchs. For instance, the poem deviates from relating how the Shah patiently dictates the letters to Darvish as school to make the following general statement:

شاه درویش دوست می باید/ تا از او عالمی بیاساید¹⁵⁶

A Shah needs to like the dervishes,
In order for the world to be comforted by [this act of] the Shah

To further underscore indispensability of dervishes for rulers despite their incongruent socio-economic status, the term “Darvish” is replaced by its synonym “*gidā*”. lit. beggar, in the following lines from another section of the story:

همه شاهان گدای درویش اند/ در پناه دعای درویشند¹⁵⁷

All shahs are *gidās* to the dervishes / [They] are safe in the refuge of the dervishes’ supplication.

The above line foreshadows the ending of the story, when the lovers eventually unite after Shah realizes that his recent victory in the battlefield was made possible only by supplications of his lover, Darvish, thus a confirmation of dervishes’ service to kingship. To give a historical context to the subject of the narrative, one should note that upon completion Hilālī dedicated the work to Badī’ al-Zamān, a son of Bayqārā, seemingly inviting him to continue his father’s supportive policies toward the Sufis. As token of gratitude, the poet was awarded a slave boy from the prince.¹⁵⁸

The seventeenth-century Isfahan was quite different from the late fifteenth-century Herat where Hilālī composed his “Shah va Darvish”. Herat was home to close ties between the sultan and the Sufis. Many attendants of Bayqara’s courtly circles were members of Sufi orders, most notably Jāmi the Naqshbandī *pīr* (master). The Safavid capital, however, witnessed harsh suppression of

Bernardini, Iranica, 2003. Vol. XII, Fasc. 2, pp. 152-154. available online at: <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/helali-astarabadi-jagatai-mawlana-badr-al-din>

For a recent study of Hilālī’s life, work, and especially death see: Firuza Melville “Hilali and Mir ‘Ali: Sunnis among the Shiis, or Shiis among the Sunnis between the Shaybanids, Safavids and the Mughals.” in *Iran* (2021) 59:2, 247-8-262, esp. 247-8.

¹⁵⁶ Badr al-Dīn Hilālī Jaghatā’ yī, *Dīvān* (selection). ed. Sa’īd Nafīsī (Tehran: Sanā’ yī. 1368/1989-90), 232.

¹⁵⁷ Hilālī, *Dīvān* (selection). 235.

¹⁵⁸ Introduction by Sa’īd Nafīsī to Hilālī’s *Dīvān*. Page Fifteen.

the Sufis under ‘Abbās I. Inhabitants of Isfahan therefore could not engage in the shah/dervish discourse except by reproaching the monarch for his lack of favor towards dervishes. The poem of Hāfiz inscribed on the Tikya-yi Mīr serves this purpose. Sarcastically alluding to this lost aspect of the Safavid rule, it reminds the audience that “the source of grandeur is the service of dervishes.” Shah ‘Abbās did not leave the criticism unanswered however. The Shah made clear in his response, expressed through an alteration made in this very poem line by Hāfiz, his plans to divert his patronage from Sufis to the Shiis.

Transformed verse of Hāfiz on the Shaykh Lutf Allah Mosque

The shift in the Safavid religious attitudes became reflected in the architectural projects of ‘Abbās I, who essentially built anew the capital of Isfahan. His grand constructional undertakings particularly the exuberant mosques and palaces built around the *Maydān-i Naqsh-i Jahān* were excellent forums for the expression of the new religious norms of the state. For the first time in any Safavid capital, congregational mosques were built following the announcement by the ‘Āmilī scholars of the permissibility of Friday prayers for the Shii during the absence of the imam. Dubbed as the “cultural repercussions of the erosion of the Qizilbash Islam,” the building projects in Isfahan manifest the move toward the dominance of orthodox Imamism.¹⁵⁹ It should be noticed that, despite the propagation of orthodox Shiism by the state, Sufism remained considerably popular among many social classes and Sufi elements continued to inform the folk faith. The Tikyah-yi Mīr inscribed with the poetry of Hāfiz, expressing the resentment of the Sufis in face of a then-lost royal patronage, provides an example of the popularity of such sentiments. Yet, Hāfiz was not exclusively adored by the Sufis; rather, a wide spectrum of social groups, including the court-affiliated Shiis, continued to admire and utilize his poetry — in one way or another — as an attestation to the truth of their beliefs.

In his rejection of the Sufis, Shah ‘Abbās could not remain ignorant of the poetry of Hāfiz and the Sufi connotations traditionally and conventionally read in it. The popularity of Hāfiz’s verse among different social strata as well as the association established with this poetry by the preceding shahs prevented ‘Abbās from overlooking the poet of Shiraz. Isma‘il had self-fashioned as Hāfiz both in his poetic and kingly persona, while Tahmasp had approached the panegyric verse of Hāfiz as an appropriate court poetry that did not contradict his orthodox agenda. Now ‘Abbās had to redefine his connection with Hāfiz while taking a visible stance vis-à-vis the Sufis. Shah ‘Abbās and his allies shrewdly responded to this need via the very tongue of Hāfiz. Instead of banning the *Dīvān* and desecrating the adored poet who was already incorporated in the Safavid identification banner, the Safavids attempted to render Hāfiz as a Shi’a, reading in his poetry what would support their Imamite assertions, even if to the expense of manipulating his verse.

The manipulative approach of the Safavids to Hāfiz’s verse is manifest in an inscription on the façade of the Shaykh Lutf Allah Mosque, built in 1617-18 in Isfahan. A small plate above the entryway registers a transformed version of a hemistich from the ghazal also inscribed on the Tikyah-yi Mīr (figure 2). While the Shaykh Lutf Allah Mosque has attracted scholarly attention as a glorious and unique — in some respects — piece of architecture, the dialogue between the

¹⁵⁹ Kathryn Babayan, “The Safavid Synthesis: From Qizilbash Islam to Imamite Shiism”, *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 27 (1994), 137.

two versions of Hāfīz’s poetry on the two almost contemporaneous Isfahani monuments has remained hitherto unnoticed. A simultaneous consideration of the two inscriptions, nevertheless, can be extremely significant from different historical, religious, artistic, and literary respects.



Figure. 2: Detail of the facade of Shaykh Lutf Allah Mosque, Isfahan. Photography by the author.

The same as the recension preserved today, the Tikyah inscription contains the following hemistich: “The source of grandeur is serving dervishes [*darvishān*].” The word “*darvishān*” is replaced in the mosque plate by the phrase “*awlād-i Alī*” thus reading as, ‘*Māyah-yi muhtashamī khidmat-i awlād-i Alī-st*’ (The source of grandeur is serving the progeny of Ali). This change clearly expresses the shift from Sufi tendencies of the patron to Shii ones.

The role of the Shaykh Lutf Allah Mosque in the Safavid imperial domain sheds light on the purposes served by the transformed verse applied on the facade of the mosque. In the process of designing the new capital, the mosque named after Lutf Allah was erected as the first edifice in the royal precinct, *Maydān-i Naqsh-i Jahān*, directly opposite the ‘*Ālī Qāpū* palace. A pinnacle of the Safavid arts and architecture with its striking beige tilework on the dome, it has extraordinary features that defy being regarded as a regular congregational mosque. Its small size, lack of minarets, and the existence of a much bigger mosque in another side of the *Maydān* suggest that the Lutf Allah Mosque was never built for public usage. A number of propositions has been put forward to explicate the peculiar features of the monument. According to one, the Shah built the mosque right across his palace for the private devotional use of his harem, thus the lack of minarets, the towers from which the public is called for prayers. Another theory has it that the mosque was built specifically for teaching and praying of Lutf Allah al-Maysī (d. 1622/3), the ‘*Āmilī* clergy who enjoyed close ties with the court.¹⁶⁰ A scholar whose family came from Jabal ‘*Amil* region in present day Lebanon, Lutf Allah received his religious training in Mashhad, but left Khurasan when the Uzbeks captured Herat in 1588/9 and massacred its Shii

¹⁶⁰ Sholeh A. Quinn, *Shah ‘Abbās: The King Who Refashioned Iran* (London: Oneworld, 2015), 51.

populace. After a period of serving the court of Shah ‘Abbās in Qazvin, Lutf Allah was appointed the shaykh al-Islam of Isfahan where he was integrated in the royal household: the cleric received a salary from royal treasury and gave his daughter in marriage to the Shah.¹⁶¹ What brought Lutf Allah particularly akin to the Safavid favors might be sought in his juridical judgment about the dilemma of Friday prayer — an issue heatedly debated at the time. Along with Shaykh Bahā’ī, Lutf Allah was one of the few jurists who allowed, and even announced incumbent upon the faithful Shii, the performance of congregational Friday prayer. This decision was decisive for the religious gestures of the Safavid house for it rendered the shah a legitimate deputy of the hidden imam during whose absence the Friday prayer was hitherto considered impermissible.¹⁶²

Hāfiz’s altered verse appears in a small palette of tilework on top of the recessed facade of the mosque beneath exquisite muqarnas decorations. It is not signed or dated, but it is attributed to Alīrezā (d. 1628) who signed the other epigraphic band on the facade, composed of white thuluth script on blue tiles that runs between the muqarnas and the door, with these words:¹⁶³

Commanded to build this blessed mosque the great sultan and the noble Khāqān, the rejuvenator of the rituals of his pure fathers, the promoter of the path of the infallible imams, Abul-Muzaffar ‘Abbās al-Husaynī al-Mūsavī Bahādur khān. May Allah perpetuate his rule and float his ship in the seas of approval for [the sake of] Muhammad and his pure, holy family of the infallibles, peace and blessing of Allah on him and on all of them. Written by Alīrezā al-‘Abbāsī 1012 [/1604-5].¹⁶⁴

Alīrezā and another less known calligrapher wrote several other inscription bands inside of the dome. Among them are inscriptions of poems by Shaykh Bahā’ī which underlines the Shii nature of the monument by naming imams. Alīrezā was the most favorite artist of Shah ‘Abbās whose signature (Alīrezā ‘Abbāsī) boasts of this association.¹⁶⁵ He was assigned by the Shah as the chief *Kitabdār*. The extent of ‘Abbās’s affection for Alīrezā is reflected in contemporary accounts that describe the monarch personally holding a candle for the calligrapher to write in its light. Alīrezā was entrusted with some of the most important royal projects including the inscriptions on the shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad, the congregational mosque of Isfahan, and the Shaykh Lutf Allah Mosque. The status of the artist as well as the religious role of the monument echo the significance of Hāfiz’s verse in projects of Shah ‘Abbās.

¹⁶¹ Babaie, *Isfahan and its Palaces* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008; 2018), 95-96.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Lutf Allah Hunarfar, *Ganjīnah-yi Āsār-i Tārīkhī-yi Isfahān* (Isfahān: Kitāb-furūshī-yi Saqafī, Mihr 1350/1971), 404.

¹⁶⁴ أمر بإنشاء هذا المسجد المبارك السلطان الأعظم و الخاقان الأكرم محيي مراسم آياته الطاهرين مروج مذهب الائمه المعصومين ابوالمظفر عباس الحسيني الموسوي الصفوي بهادر خان خلد الله تعالى ملكه واجري في بحار التأييد فلكه بمحمد و آله الطيبين الطاهرين المعصومين صلوات الله و سلامه عليه و عليهم اجمعين كتبها علي رضا العباسي ١٠١٢

¹⁶⁵ Before becoming intimate to Shah ‘Abbās in Isfahan, the artist used to sign his works as “*Alīrezā al-Kuttāb*.” To change his signature to ‘Abbāsī clearly indicates his devotion to his patron.

The construction of the Shaykh Lutf Allah Mosque began by 1011/1602-3, the date recorded on a tile inside the mosque, and finished in 1028/1618-19 judging by the signature of its architect, Muhammad Riza b. Ustad Hussayn Bannā-'i Isfahani in the patch tilework on the mihrab.¹⁶⁶ The undated inscription of Hāfiz's verse on the facade, therefore, is created between 1602 and 1619. The making of the Tikyah inscription, surmised to pre-date 1024/1615, roughly coincides with the creation of the mosque inscription. It remains speculative as to which epigraphy was virtually made in response to the other. Notwithstanding the sequence of the creation, the inscription on the mosque clearly responds and offers an alternative to Hāfiz's original poetry whether by refuting the Tikyah inscription or Hāfiz's verse in the *Dīvān* per se. Nonetheless, the contentious correlation of the two epigraphic pieces is confirmed by other monumental elements that oppose each other.

The Lutf Allah Mosque and the Tikyah of Mīr-Findiriskī inscribed by different versions of a single poem-line by Hāfiz respectively represent vicinity to and remoteness from the Safavid favors. The Mosque, physically close to the palace, used to house Lutf Allah, the state-sponsored clergy who sanctioned religious policies of the ruling house. On the other side of the Zāyandah River, the Tikyah integrated Sufi tendencies that were no longer supported by the court of 'Abbās. It housed dervishes, most importantly Mir-Findiriskī, during their lives and after death. The rival nature of the two monuments extends to their calligraphers: the first is inscribed by Alīrezā, Shah's favorite artist, while the second by Mīr-'Imād, who was undoubtedly not on good terms with the king, if not murdered by him. The two artists are mentioned in some sources to have inimical jealousies. The Mosque contains, in addition to Quranic inscriptions, verses by Shaykh Bahā'ī while the Tikyah is adorned by the complete poem of Hāfiz and a painting that depicts the Shaykh al-Islam inferior to the mystically-minded Philosopher. The Mosque represents the Safavid "self" while the Tikyah evokes their "other," that is the Subcontinent, in the memory of the early modern Iranians.

In light of the polar contrasts between the elements engaged in the two monuments, including Findiriskī on the one side vis-a-vis Shaykh Lutf Allah and Shaykh Bahā'ī on the other, Mīr-'Imād versus Alīreza, and Sufi dervishes against Shii clergies, the role of Hāfiz's poetry is fully perceivable: It is Hāfiz's verse that gives materialization to the voice of the Sufi and the demands of the dervishes; and at the same time it is this very poetry by which the Safavid house rejects their previous Sufi inclinations and announces the new religious group that is being privileged. The inscriptions of Hāfiz's poem, one original and the other purposefully altered, capture the essence of the Sufi-Shii dichotomy in the early seventeenth-century Safavid society.

¹⁶⁶ Hunarfar, *Ganjīnah-yi Āsār-i Tārīkhī-yi Isfahān*, 404.

Chapter Four)

Towards the Shii Hāfiz

The perception of Hāfiz in the Safavid era (1501-1722), informed by the religious policies of the ruling institutions, underwent a shift from a largely Sufi poet to a Shii cultural figure. This shift, however, did not happen abruptly. The attempts to render Hāfiz's poetry compatible with the emerging Shii doctrines, which were already present in the sixteenth century before the religious conflicts culminated in the following decades, drew from theological debates. How theological notions were solicited for the purpose of interpreting the poetry of Hāfiz has been hitherto absent from the studies of the poet or the religious studies of the period. This chapter aims to fill this lacuna. The following pages examines a number of biographical and exegetical accounts that trace the route along which the emphasis on the Sufi attributions of Hāfiz gradually leaned toward portraying Shii initials for the poet. In these texts, the theological basis of Hāfiz's poetry became a point of controversy in correspondence to the normalization of anti-Sufi sentiments in the Safavid society. The entry of Hāfiz in the *Tazkirah* by Taqī Kāshī (d. ca. 1016/1606-7) provides a notable case study. The theological expositions that Kāshī offers to interpret the poetry of Hāfiz shall be examined against the backdrop of two comparable texts, one by the fifteenth-century philosopher, Davānī (d. 908/1502), and the other by the seventeenth-century intellectual, Dārābī (d. ca. 1130/1717-18). A comparative perspective of these contributions enhances our understanding of the alterations made, diachronically, in the image of Hāfiz towards the Shiification of the poet in the late Safavid period.

It should be noted that the texts examined in this chapter are not necessarily representative of the dominant understanding of Hāfiz in the period. They are nevertheless illustrative of the attempts made to render Hāfiz's verse compatible with the emerging Shii taste. In other words, in lack of sufficient evidence to claim for the dominance of the theological approaches to Hāfiz, this chapter indicates the existence of such aspects to the Hāfizian discourse of the time. As discussed in the second chapter, divergent readings of Hāfiz's verse coexisted in the early modern milieu, as illustrated in the case of Sudi of Bosnia.

Taqī Kāshī and the Entry of Hāfiz in his *Tazkirah*

By the second half of the sixteenth century, the *Dīvān* was already established as a component in the canon of spirituality within the Persian and Persianate societies. After the orientation of the Safavid house towards Imamism, attempts were made to detach Hāfiz and his poetry from the affiliations to the Sufis, who were then considered heterodox. An early manifestation of this trend is attested in the voluminous compendium, *Khulāsatul 'Ash'ār va Zubdatul Afkār* (Condensation of Poems and Selection of Thoughts) by Mīr Taqī Kāshānī (d. ca. 1016/1606-7). In what follows, I shall examine Taqī's career in late sixteenth-century Persianate milieu and what his entry on Hāfiz uncovers about the reception of the poet in line with the emerging religious norms.

Our knowledge of Mīr Taqī al-Dīn Muhammad b. Ali Hussaynī Kāshānī (also Kāshī) comes mainly from the manuscripts he wrote. He spent most of his life in his hometown, Kāshān, where

he was close to the circle of Muhtasham, the revered poet famed for his Shiite-oriented verse. Taqī al-Dīn collected Muhtasham’s poetry, at the latter’s request, in seven volumes and published it along with a preface that he wrote.¹⁶⁷ Taqī’s affiliation with major courts of the time and his mercantile profession are suggested by several dedicatory notes and letters. An anthology (*jung*) of miscellaneous pieces (Ms. 4591 at Markaz-i Ihyā-yi Mīras-i Islamī, Qum), partly autographed by Taqī Kāshānī, contains a letter that alludes to his family career of *sha’r-bāfī*, a tradition of silk weaving common in the Safavid Kāshān. In this letter written to an anonymous patron addressed as ‘one of the dear friends’, Kāshī seeks to maintain a privileged office of “authorship” which has belonged to him and his relatives “since old days” and which he “has been in charge of for almost twenty years.”¹⁶⁸ The exact nature of this “authorship” remains speculative, but it potentially refers to keeping the record and transactions of the weavers or another writing task such as that of his voluminous *tazkirah*. In either case, Taqī clearly enjoyed attracting the attention of influential patrons to his authorship.¹⁶⁹

Kāshī’s renowned biographical encyclopedia, *Khulāsatul ‘Ash‘ār va Zubdatul Afkār*, is dedicated to various patrons. The first part bears the name of Tahmasp and the later that of ‘Abbās. Nathaniel Bland (1803-1865), the English orientalist who once owned a copy of the text, introduces it in an article published in *The Journal of Royal Asiatic Society* in 1847.¹⁷⁰ This manuscript, now preserved at India Office (n. 312), contains a note that shows its dedication in 1006/1597-8 to Abul-Muzaffar Al-Mu’ayyad Ibrahim ‘Ādilshāh (1558–1579), the fifth ruler of Bijapur Sultanate. Taqī of Kāshān, also known for the greatness of this work as “*Mīr-i Tazkirah*”, dedicated 30 years of his life to compiling in this magnum opus biographies and selected poems of more than 650 poets. Not a complete copy of this most copious of Persian *Tazkirahs* survived; but a handful of different sections have come down to us. Some sections, such as the geographical subdivisions of Kāshān, Isfahan, and Azerbaijan, have been edited by modern scholars and published as separate volumes, while other parts remain only in manuscript form.

¹⁶⁷ Ms. 458 at the National Library of Tehran copied in Taqī’s handwriting in 1088 has been the main copy for ‘Abdul-Hussayn Navāyī and Mahdī Sadrī to edit and publish Muhtasham’s *Dīvān* in 1380/ 2002.

¹⁶⁸ Kāshī writes that the supervision (*ishrāf*) and the authorship of the circle [*nevīsandīgī-yi halqah*] have been his family career. The word “*halqah*”—literally circle, ring—used in two phrases, “*halqa-yi abrīsham*” (circle of silk) and *nevīsandegī-yi halqah*” (the authorship of the circle) is ambiguous. It is likely that both “*halqah*”s refer to a group of *sha’r-bāfān*, silk weavers. If so, Taqī al-Dīn, once one of the weavers and indeed their supervisor, expresses in the letter his willingness to abandon the burden of weaving and its supervision (*mahānat-i sha’r-bāfī va nizārat-i halqa*) to undertake only “*ishrāf*” i.e. leadership of the circle of craftsmen as well as the required writing of the circle. In this case, Taqī al-Dīn and his ancestors were specifically responsible for keeping in writing the records and transactions of the weavers. Another possibility is that the two sets of jobs that Kāshī mentions in the letter, i.e. ‘weaving and supervision of the circle’ and ‘leadership and authorship of the circle,’ are not related. In this case, the first circle refers to the community of weavers, which Kāshī desires to relinquish, and the second circle connotes the group of writers that Taqī seeks to lead individually alone.

¹⁶⁹ Kāshī’s text quoted in: Nafīseh Irānī, “Mīr-i Tazkirah,” *Āyīnah-yi Mīrās: zamīmah-yi 24* (1391/2012-3), 14.

¹⁷⁰ N. Bland, “On the Persian Biography of Poets, by Muhammad Aūfī, and on Some Other Works of the Class Called Tazkirat aul Shuārā” *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britian and Ireland*, Vol. 9 (1874), 128.

There is evidence indicating that Taqī al-Dīn Kāshī spent part of his life in the Indian Subcontinent. In a letter preserved in the mentioned Qum anthology, he complains of being persecuted due to some unpaid taxes, from which he claims to have been once exempt. Taqī then pleads with an anonymous patron to facilitate his departure from “*vatan*.” The desire to depart his homeland along with the dedication of a copy of his *Tazkirah* to ‘Ādilshāh makes it possible that Kāshī lived for a while in the Mughal Bijapur. To add to this probability, the cataloguer Bahadur alludes to a copy of Kāshī’s poetry collection (*Dīvān*) which is housed at the Asafiyah library — now State Central Library of Hyderabad (num. 1019).¹⁷¹

While Taqī’s prolific career was patronized by different rulers, it reflects, in general, the Shii taste of the time. Aside from compiling the poetry of Muhtasham, whose religious verse was fervently praised at the court of ‘Abbās (r. 1587–1629), Taqī copied at least four major books of Shii jurisprudence,¹⁷² in correspondence to Tahmasp’s policies of translation from Arabic to Persian and dissemination of Shii texts.¹⁷³ Taqī collected numerous sayings by the imams in his autographed anthology preserved in Qum. Even his *Tazkirah*, which otherwise deals with biography and excerpts from Persian poets, includes poems attributed to Ali along with their Persian translations in verse. To corroborate the connection with the Safavid house, it is worth noting that the earliest signed manuscript of the *Khulāsul Ash‘ār* had been preserved in the Safavid’s most sanctified shrine in Ardabil and was moved to Russia after the sack of the city in 1828. The placement of the anthology at the center of the religious, political, and cultural canon of the dynasty confirms the compliance of the codex with the Safavid agenda. The entry on Hāfiz (discussed below) similarly appears to be informed by the dominant religious and cultural ethos of the Safavid society, although there is no evidence that it was written to satisfy a Safavid patron.

The entry on Hāfiz is contained in the third “*rukn*” (pillar) of the book. It reflects the initial stages in the transitive process by which the poetry book was detached from Sufi perceptions to be appropriated as a fully Shiite enterprise. Kāshī’s entry consists of three sections: first, he provides a biography of the poet; then he adds a second section under the title “*fā’idah*” (lit. advantage, benefit, useful lesson, and moral); and lastly he quotes major parts of the *Dīvān* in some thousand lines. In writing the biography of Hāfiz, as with typical pre-modern compositions, Kāshī draws substantially from existing sources, either quoting directly or paraphrasing with minor changes, without sensing any need to acknowledge the source.¹⁷⁴ A study of the genealogy

¹⁷¹ Mīr ‘Uṣmān ‘Alī K̄hān Bahādur, *Fihrist-i kutub-i maḥḥūṭāt-i ‘Arabī, Fārsī va Urdū maḥḥūṭah-yi Kutub K̄hānah-yi Āṣafiyah-yi Sarkār-i ‘Ālī*, compiled by Syed Tassaduq Hussain al-Mosavi al-Nashapur al-Kanturi (Ḥaidarābād: Kutub K̄hānah va Idārah Taḥqīq-i Maḥḥūṭāt-i Mashriqī, Ḥukūmat-i Āndhrā Prādes̄h, 2012), Vol. 4. (I was not able to check the veracity of this claim.)

¹⁷² Kāshī copied a manuscript of *Zikrī al-Shī‘a fī Ahkām al-Sharī‘a* by the foremost Shia scholar Muhammad b. Muhammad ‘Āmilī (d. 786/1384-5) known as *Shahīd-i Awwal* preserved at Mar‘ashi Najafī Library, Qum. The colophon of this manuscript states that the writing was finished in 980/1572-3 in Kāshān by hand of Taqī al-Dīn Kāshī. Sayyid Ahmad Hussaynī, *Fihrist-i nuskhah-hāyi Khatī-yi Kitābkhānah-yi ‘Umūmī Mar‘ashī Najafī*, vol 17: 126.

¹⁷³ Mahdī Rahīm-Pur, “Chand Nuskhah bah Khat-i Taqī al-Dīn Muhammad Kāshī” *Awraq-i Atiq*: 4 (1394/ 2015) 295.

¹⁷⁴ It should be noted that some of the historic details that Kāshī offers in his entry diverge from similar accounts.

of Kāshī's entry on Hāfiz shows that it borrows from Gulandām, Jāmī, and Dawlatshāh of Samarqand.¹⁷⁵ A comparative view of Kāshī's sources and his selection and arrangement of the material demonstrates his attempt to devise an unprecedented religious status for Hāfiz, which is quite original in itself. On the one hand, Kāshī insists on the sacredness of the *Dīvān* to the extent of being comparable to the Quran; and on the other hand, he rejects the poetry book as an asset of the Sufi gatherings. Correlating the *Dīvān* and the Quran Kāshī writes:

His [Hāfiz's] words have a condition that is not possessed by any other virtuous or poet, and the likes of such words are not circumscribed by any human capacity. As scholars have said, the verse of Khwājah in the midst of the verse of other poets is equal to the [words of the] Quran in relation to other words. For the majority of his verse are the Quranic concepts that are expressed metaphorically. And Khwāja's *Dīvān* is called "*vāridat-i ghaybī*" [unseen intrusions] and "*Lisān al-ghayb*" [the tongue of the unseen] and "*Tarjumān al-Asrār*" [the translation of the secrets]...¹⁷⁶

Describing Hāfiz's poetry analogous to the Quran is not Kāshī's innovation. Alī Shīr Navāyī (d. 1501) had already drawn on such a comparison to call the *Dīvān* "the Persian Quran." Taking the content of the books as his point of comparison Navāyī wrote, "since the meaning of his poetry is mostly in accordance with the Quran, it is called "*Quran-i Farsi*".¹⁷⁷ The vicinity perceived to exist between the words of God and those of Hāfiz, already existent during Navāyī's career in the fifteenth-century Timurid realm, reached its zenith in the Safavid realm and continues until this day.¹⁷⁸

The earliest connection between Hāfiz and the Muslims' Holy Book goes back to a preface found in many early manuscripts of the *Dīvān* which is generally attributed to one Muhammad Gulandām. The author of this preface claims to be Hāfiz's companion present with him in the lessons of Qavām al-Dīn 'Abdullāh (d. 772/1370-71). He had been imploring Hāfiz to gather and save his scattered work, which our poet constantly postponed due to his occupation with Islamic and literary education and his attempts at self-purification; for this reason, the author of the preface arguably collected Hāfiz's verse posthumously.¹⁷⁹ The authenticity of this account has

For example Kāshī gives the date of Hāfiz's death as 794 while the majority of the earlier accounts record it as 791 or 792.

¹⁷⁵ Muhammad Afshīn-Vafāyī, "Ahvāl va Ash'ār-i Hāfiz bah Ravāyat-i Taqī Kāshī," *Nāmāh-yi Farhangistān: The sub-continent*: No. 1 (1392/2014) 86-87.

¹⁷⁶ Quote in Afshīn-Vafāyī, 86.

¹⁷⁷ Mīr Nizamuddin Alīshīr Navāyī, *Majālis al-Nafā'is*, Alī-Asghar Hikmat (Tehran: Chāpkhanah-yi Bānk-i Millī, 1323/1944-5), 355.

¹⁷⁸ Today the *Dīvān* is considered an essential asset of every Persian-speaking Muslim household. In the traditional events when the Holy Book is physically present, such as the New Year (Nowruz) or the marriage ceremonies, a copy of the *Dīvān* is often placed side by side to the Quran, or may replace the scripture to highlight the participants' secular attitude.

¹⁷⁹ Gulandām quoted in: Mansur Rastgār Fasāyī, *Sharh-i Tahqīqī-yi Dīvān-i Khwājah Shams al-Dīn Muhammad Hāfiz-i Shīrazī: bar asās-i Tashīh-i Khānlarī*, Vol 1 (Tehran: Pajuhishgāh-i 'Ulūm-i Insānī va Mutālī'āt-i Farhangī, 1394/2015-6), 102. Moqaddamah-yi Muhammad Gulandām is reproduced in entirety in the above source, 99-103.

been questioned most notably by Muhammad Qazvīnī,¹⁸⁰ however, after coming to light of the earliest known collection of Hāfiz’s poetry less than a decade after Hāfiz’s demise with this preface at the beginning,¹⁸¹ and after encountering the name of Muhammad Gulandām as a literary figure in other ninth/fifteenth century manuscripts,¹⁸² little doubt remains as to the historicity of the preface. As with the majority of the biographers of Hāfiz, Kāshī refers to Gulandām to reconstruct Hāfiz’s life. Yet, his selective approach, reproducing part of the preface word by word and altering other parts, reflects the changing reception of the *Dīvān* as a canonical religious book over two centuries. While Gulandām praises Hāfiz’s spiritual rank and ascribes the dispersed condition of his poems to the poet’s preoccupation with Quranic lessons, the fourteenth-century author does not compare the poetry book itself to the Quran. In the following section of his preface which is quoted by Kāshī, Gulandām emphasizes the popularity of Hāfiz’s poetry in distant lands:

His [Hāfiz’s] world-conquering ghazals reached in the least of times to the confines of Turkistān and Hindūstān and the caravans of his delightful words stretched to every corner of Rūm and the two Iraqs and Azerbaijan.¹⁸³

The author of Hāfiz’s biography in the Safavid era closely, but selectively, copies Gulandām’s above lines. Nevertheless, Taqī al-Dīn prefers to modify the following section of the preface in which Hāfiz’s friend points, in Arabic verse and Persian text, to the Sufi reception of the *Dīvān* in the gatherings of dervishes as an evidence of the rapid and smooth expansion of Hāfiz’s poetry:

It [Hāfiz’s poetry] blew like the wind and crawled like Christ,
Indeed it walked the ways of proverbs and paved the paths of imagination.
The whirling dances (*sima* ‘) of dervishes is not heated except by his inspiring ghazals and the gathering of wine-worshippers is not promoted except by the sugar of his joy-inspiring (*zawq-āmīz*) words.

¹⁸⁰ Hāfiz, *Dīvān-e Khwājeh Shams al-Din Mohammad Hāfiz-e Shirāzi*, ed. Mohammad Qazvini and Qasem Ghani (Tehran: Sinā, 1320/ 1941-2), preface, footnote on pages gh-r and gh-h.

¹⁸¹ Ottoman Noor Library manuscript of 801/1399 printed in: Behrooz Imani (comp.) *Dīvān-i Hāfiz (The Oldest Complete Manuscript of the Dīvān, Copied in 1398-99)*, Tehran: Miras-i Maktoob, 2015.

¹⁸² Gulandām is mentioned in the so-called *Zilūfāf* jung (Ms. 13092, Majlis Library, Tehran) as the poet of a piece dedicated to the Timurid Sultan of Shiraz Ibrahim Mirza (r. 817-838/ 1415-1435) and is also suggested to be the author of a prose piece, “‘Ajā’ib ul-Makhlūqat” in Ms. Hz. Or. 3075 Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, dated 844-5. See: Alī Safarī Āq-Qal‘ah, “Jung-i Zilūfāf,” *Nazr-i ‘Ārif: Jashn-vārah-yi Doctor ‘Ārif-i Nawshāhī*, comp. Sa‘eed Shafī‘iyoan and Behrooz Imani (Tehran: Kitābkhānah-yi Majlis, 2012) 347-404; Alī Safarī Āq-Qal‘ah, “Asarī Ihtimālī az Muhammad Gulandām,” *Pīr-i Gulrang: Yādnāmah-yi Ustād-i Faqīd Doctor Rashīd ‘Ayyavazī* (Tehran: Adabīyāt, 1395/2017) 789-793.

¹⁸³ Gulandām quoted in Rastgār Fasāyī, 102.

رواحل غزلهای جهانگیرش در ادنی مدتی به اقصای ترکستان و هندوستان رسیده و قوافل سخنهای دلپذیرش در اقل زمانی به اطراف و اکناف [روم] و عراقین و آذربایجان کشیده قد هب هیوب الريح و دب دبیب المسیح/بل سار مسیر الامثال و سری سری الخیال.... سماع صوفیان بی غزل شور انگیز او گرم نشدی و مجلس می پرستان بی نقل سخن ذوق آمیز او رونق نیافتی

Kāshī pursues the same textual agenda as Gulnadām to demonstrate the widespread reach of Hāfiz’s ghazals; however, he changes the context in which this poetry is celebrated. Instead of pointing to gatherings of dancing dervishes, Taqī al-Dīn emphasizes the circle of orthodoxy as the locus where the *Dīvān* is placed adjacent to the Islamic scripture. In lieu of the above lines, Kāshī writes,

... and there is no place where the *Dīvān* of the *khulāsah al-Shu‘arā* (condense of all poets, i.e., Hāfiz) is not found, rather in every place where the fame of Islam is arrived right there is a *Dīvān* of Khwājah adjacent to the *Mushaf-i Majīd* [i.e. the Quran].¹⁸⁴

This is not Kāshī’s sole attempt to detach Hāfiz and his poetry from the domain of the predominantly Sunni Sufis, their gatherings, and beliefs. In the “*Fā’idah*” section of the entry that follows the poet’s biography, Kāshī presents a theoretical framework for understanding Hāfiz’s verse in contradistinction from the common Sufi ideologies. Kāshī’s exposition involves Hāfiz in theological debates of the time.

Hāfiz in theological debates

Kāshī’s treatment of Hāfiz bridges a Sufi understanding of the poet in early Safavid period to a Shii one in the later phase of the dynastic history. Without rejecting the Sufi credentials of Hāfiz altogether, Kāshī presents the poet of Shiraz as unequivocally distinct from contemporary Sufi practices and the critiques targeting them. Obscuring any such connections, Kāshī provides the following theological expositions in the “*Fa’idah*” section of his entry:

It should not remain hidden from the minds of the owners of knowledge that [they] should not take every instance when Khwajah Hāfiz—*qaddasa sirruh*—ascribes all deeds to the ‘necessary in existence’ by way of the Ash‘arite faith, for the claim of the Sufiyyah is otherwise.”¹⁸⁵

The invocation of theological thought as part of the biographical entry on Hāfiz appears bizarre at first glance. Yet, further inquiry proves Kāshī’s presentation of Hāfiz illuminating the discourses surrounding our poet. By rejecting an Ash‘arite interpretation of Hāfiz’s poetry, this account reveals not only how Hāfiz was prescribed to be viewed in the late sixteenth century, but also how he was used to be understood prior to this time. Kāshī’s defense of Hāfiz against the claim of Ash‘arism can be meaningfully situated in the context of two larger contemporary debates: one is the Imami theological polemics against the Ash‘arite criticism; and two is the wave of anti-Sufi tracts that began to flow in the scholarly and courtly circles around the same time. Kāshī hence responds to a dominant presumption about Hāfiz and his poetry as being informed by the Ash‘arite thought.

Ash‘arism, initially rooted from the ideas of Abul-Hassan Ash‘arī (d. 324/945-6), has been the most widespread school of theology in Sunni Islam for centuries. It was promoted in important

¹⁸⁴ Ms. 321 preserved in Russian National Library (formerly Imperial Public Library) Quoted in Muhammad Afshīn-Vafāyī, “Ahval va Ash‘ar-i Hāfiz bah rivayat-i Taqī-yi Kāshī”, *Shibh-i Qārrah* [Sub-continent] (1392/2013), 87.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

educational institutions in the middle period such as the Nizāmiyya of Baghdad where Sa‘dī of the seventh/thirteenth century used to study. Ash‘arite doctrines were particularly embraced by the mystically oriented including many Persian poets. Sufis found Ash‘arite worldview appealing partly because Ash‘arism legitimized post-prophetic miracles claimed by the Sufis.¹⁸⁶ A characteristic belief of the Ash‘arite thought, frequently evoked in Persian Sufi poetry, is the attribution of everything in the world, including human actions, to the divine as the sole true doer, thus a rejection of free-will. Verses in the *Dīvān* that speak to the perception of ‘predestination’ (*jabr*) are not few in number and they have been subjects of controversies. Kāshī devotes the ‘*fā’idah*’ section to insist that Hāfiz, despite his predestinatory poems, is not part of the Ash‘arite network. This undertaking reflects more than anything else an endeavor to detach Hāfiz from the Sunni Sufi theological schools that has long been the basis for understanding the poet’s verse. Instead, Kāshī introduces Hāfiz as a *true* Sufi, which he perceives on par with the emerging Shii claims of the ruling class.

In the history of Islamic thought, Ash‘arism is generally debated in confrontation with Mu‘tazilism, the other major theological school that advocates a more rational pursuit of humans for the truth. The two schools had irreconcilable controversies over key questions such as freedom vs. predestination, the existence of ethics (good and evil) independent of Divine command, and the creation of the Quran. Despite their disagreements, Abul-hasan Ash‘arī, who was a famed Mu‘tazilite theologian before his rupture with the latter at the age of 40, confirmed the capability of human intellect, and indeed human obligation to use this capacity, to reach the knowledge of the divine.¹⁸⁷ With regard to this last point, it is important to make it clear that Kāshī, who rejects Hāfiz’s Ash‘arite affiliation, does not aim to assign to him a Mu‘tazilite predilection by promoting a rational approach. On the contrary, to judge by several allusions in his *Tazkira*, including the following passage, the biographer tries to shun away from both sides of the theological divide to the benefit of a more ‘puritan’ mystical attitude. He writes,

“It is fair [to say] that one cannot see the path to the Truth with the light of the intelligence and the wise man’s thought, and one cannot reach the desirable with reasoning, but one may reach the destination [only] by means of the fire of love and the manifestations of the lights of prophecy.”

By opposing the capacity of “reasoning” and defining the true means of attaining “the desirable,” as “the fire of love” and “the lights of prophecy,” long regarded Sufi qualities, Kāshī surpasses the theological divide to delineate the essence of Hāfiz’s Sufism.

Kāshī dedicates several pages to clarify in his entry that the poet of Shiraz belongs to a specific group among all those known by the designation “Sufi”, namely the ‘*Sūfiyya-yi muvahhidah*’

¹⁸⁶ Martin Nguyen, “Sufi Theological Thought” *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) 328-9.

¹⁸⁷ Jan Thiele, “Between Cordoba and Nīsābūr: The Emergence and Consolidation of Ash‘arism (Fourth-Fifth/Tenth-Eleventh Century),” *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, ed. Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 227. It is important to note that although both the Ash‘arites and the Mu‘tazilites share the significance of human intellect, they arrive at this point via different methodologies. For the Ash‘arites, the necessity for humans to use rationality, just like other obligations, comes from Divine commands. (Ibid.)

(monotheist sufis). The characteristic of this group, and Hāfiz as their representative, according to Kāshī, is that they ascribe everything to the Divine without falling into Ash‘arism:

“...the realization of the claim of the tribe of the *Sūfiyyah-yi muvahhidah* is that the truth of being that is the same (*‘ayn*) as the ‘necessary in existence’ is neither universal (*kullī*) nor partial (*juz’ī*) and neither general (*‘ām*) nor specific (*khās*), but rather absolute from all conditions to the extent that it is devoid of the condition of absoluteness (*qayd-i itlāq*) as told by the lords of the rational sciences about the natural universal (*kullī-yi tabī‘ī*) and that mentioned truth (*haqīqat*) is reflected and appeared in all the things described as existent. Therefore in this sense, nothing is devoid of that truth.”

The philosophical exposition that Kāshī presents is taken, almost word by word, from the treatise “*Risālatul Wujūd*” (the Treatise of Being) by Ali b. Muhammad al-Sharīf Jurjānī (740-816/1340-1413), a distinguished theologian, philosopher, and litterateur who lived at the same time and place as Hāfiz. Some scholars have argued that Hāfiz was a pupil of Jurjānī and directly influenced by him, but this remains unwarranted.¹⁸⁸ While the authenticity of this account is speculative, Hāfiz’s encounter with Jurjānī is historically probable as they both were active in Shiraz in 778-792/1377-1390 and both contributed to a *jung* by Tāj-al-Din Aḥmad Vazir.¹⁸⁹ Whatever the connection between Hāfiz and Jurjani, Kāshī finds the latter’s description of “*Sūfiyyatul muvahhidah*” best compatible with the character of the poet.

But why does Kāshī dedicate his bio- and bibliographical entry on Hāfiz to the poet’s theological affiliation and relevant philosophical explanation? The answer should be sought in the contemporary anti-Sufi debates in the Safavid era. These polemics render Kāshī’s text as an attempt to exonerate Hāfiz from the accusations of Ash‘arism and polytheism that contemporary Sufis were charged with. The writings of Muhammad Tāhir Qumī (d. 1100/1686-87), Imami theologian, scholar, and *muhaddith*, provides an example of the virulent denunciations of the Sufis for their Ash‘arite beliefs. In his *Tuhfat al-Akhbar* (Gift of News) written during the reign of Shah Sulayman (r. 1026-1073/1666-1694) Qumī prove the disconformity of Sufism with Shiism writing:

If they ask, ‘the majority of the people of the Sunni persuasion belong to two tribes: one, Ash‘arites and the other, Mu’tazilites; to which group do belong the people of the *Tariqah* [i.e. Sufis]?’ We will say in response that, they are from the Ash‘arites, the followers of Abu al-Hasan Ash‘arī. But they made interpolations and inferences in the Ash‘arite faith and added infidelities to it. And it should not remain hidden that Abu al-Hasan Ash‘arī, who the majority of the Sunnis in the world are his followers, has been extremely foolish and ignorant, therefore most of the imbeciles have joined him. This man thought that it is possible to view God, even it is possible that someone views smells and voices, and a

¹⁸⁸ Qāsim Ghanī, *Bahs dar Āsār va Afkār va Ahvāl-i Hāfiz*, Vol 1 (Tehran, 1366/1987-88), 304; Josef Van Ess, “JORJĀNĪ, ZAYN-AL-DIN ABU’L-HASAN”, *Encyclopedia Iranica* XV, Fasc. 1, pp. 21-29, available online at <https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/jorjani-zayn-al-din-abul-hasan-ali> (accessed 10/1/2021)

¹⁸⁹ The *jung* is published by Iraj Afshār and Murtizā Taymūrī (*Bayāz-i Tāj al-Dīn Ahmad*, Isfahān: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Isfahān, 1353/1974) with Jurjani’s contribution (originally fols. 20-26) removed from the manuscript and now lost.

blind in the city of Andalus in the farthest west views a mosquito in the most eastern city of China. This man attributes all deeds of the servant of God, either good or bad, to God.... This man has many false, corrupted beliefs.¹⁹⁰

This and similar polemics illuminate why Kāshī insists on a non-Ash‘arī affiliation for Hāfiz. More important, perhaps, is Kāshī’s presentation of the poet as belonging to the “*Sufīyyah-yi muwahidah*”-- a group of Sufis still acceptable in the Safavid society of the late sixteenth century despite sharing its name with the (in)famous Sufism of the time. Describing the Sufis, as a group of Muslims, with the predicate ‘*muwahhid*’, meaning monotheist, may sound redundant. However, this designation, although not coined by Kāshī as evinced by Jurjani’s text, seems particularly apt in the context of the accusations of polytheism with which the Sufis were charged by the Shari‘a-minded religious scholars.

The above as well as the majority of anti-Sufi polemics come down to us from the second half of the seventeenth century--the period that witnessed the zenith of the formal confrontation with Sufism both in terms of the extreme tone and the quantity of the tracts. Nevertheless, criticizing the Sufi current, especially with regard to the recitation of the popular tradition of Abu-Moslim in coffee shops,¹⁹¹ was already present during the reign of Tahmasp when Kāshī wrote his entry in the late sixteenth century (the Moscow Ms. is dated 993/1585-6). These early critiques included invectives against a purportedly lack of thorough notion of ‘*tawheed*’ (unicity) in Sufis, which Kāshī attempts to tie with Hāfiz. While some of the early textual attacks on Sufism did not survive in totality, we know about them from the next generation of books that quoted or pointed to them. For one, we know that Tahmasp’s Shaykh al-Islam, Muhaqqiq al-Karakī (d. 940/1533-4) wrote the first of a series of textual attacks against Abu-Moslem, titled *Matā‘in al-Mujrimah*. Although *Matā‘in* did not survive, a considerable portion of the text come down to us in a book by al-Karaki’s student, Muhammad b. Ishāq Hamawī Abharī (fl. 938/1531-2).¹⁹²

Similarly, Hurr-i ‘Āmilī (1033-1104/1624-1693), prominent Twelver scholar from Jabal ‘Amil, preserved parts of the ‘*Umdatul Maqāl*’ by Karaki’s son, Shaykh Hasan.¹⁹³ This latter contains accusations of the Sufis for believing in the ‘unity of existence’ (*wahdat-i wujūd*) and incarnation of God into the bodies of the Sufis (*hulūl*). In his book, *A Comprehensive Criticism of Sufism*, Hurr-i ‘Āmilī dedicates the chapter, “Khat-i butlān bar i‘tiqād bah hulūl, ittihād, wa wahdat-i wujūd” (Falsification of the *hulul*, unicity, and the unity of existence) to argue against the purportedly polytheistic beliefs of the Sufis, writing:

¹⁹⁰ Qumī, *Tuhfah al-Akhyār: Bahsī dar Pīrāmūn-i Ārā va ‘Aqāyid-yi Sufīyyah*, Intro. Davud Ilhami (Qum: Matbu‘ātī-yi Hadaf. 1369/1991) 164-65.

¹⁹¹ Abu Muslim (d. ca. 754) was a Khurasani general who played a crucial role in the Abbasid revolution. His stories were epicized in the Safavid era and became popular coffee shop narratives. The Shi‘a Ulema close to the Safavid house who attacked Sufis also banned the recitation of the Abu Moslim tradition for its potential to invite the populace to revolt against the ruling class.

¹⁹² Muhammad b. Ishāq Hamawī, *Anīs al-Mu‘minīn*, ed. Mīr Hāshim Muhaddith (Tehran: Bunyād-i Bi‘sat, 1363/1984), 152-191. Also reproduced in: Rasūl Ja‘farīyān, *Safaviyyah dar ‘Arsah-yi Dīn va Farhang va Sīyāsāt*. Vol 2 (Qum: Pajūhishkadah-yi hawzah va dānīshgāh, 1379/2001), 863-69.

¹⁹³ Quoted in Rasūl Ja‘farīyān, *Safaviyyah dar ‘arsah-yi Dīn va Sīyāsāt*, Vol. 2, 521.

Some of them [Sufis] have gone so far as to claim that the Almighty God is the very existence, and all that exists is the Almighty God. And this assertion is tantamount to absolute infidelity and irreligion.”¹⁹⁴

Renouncing Sufism in view of Shi'a beliefs, Hurr concludes,

Falsification of this belief is among the certainties of the Shi'a faith... Whoever contends so is out of the Shii faith and it is not appropriate to entitle Shiism to those who believe in Sufism.¹⁹⁵

The accusations against the Sufis set a context for understanding Kāshī's elaboration on Hāfiz as being aloof from the Ash'ari Sufis but close to the *Sufiyyah-yi muwahhidah*. Kāshī's classification of Hāfiz as one of the “*Sufiyyah-yi muwahhidah*” resonates with the idiosyncratic usage of the phrase in contemporary debates especially by those who aim to advocate true Sufism despite contemporary practices. The predicate “*muwahhidah*” defines the condition in which Sufi beliefs meet Shii doctrines and defends the former group against the attacks of the latter. Such connotation of the “*Sufiyyah-yi muwahhidah*” is attested in the *Guhar-i Murād* by 'Abd al-Razzāq Fayyāz Lāhījī (d. 1072/1661-2), student and son-in-law of the renowned philosopher Mullā-Sadrā. A brief look at Lāhījī's use of the term is helpful in perceiving the status of Hāfiz in the Sufi-Shi'a controversies of the late Safavid period.

Fayyāz is survived by several theological and philosophical works in Arabic and ethical-spiritual writings as well as poems in Persian. He wrote *Guhar-i Murād* (The gem of meaning) as a dedication to Shah Abbas II (r. 1052-1077/1642-66). In the *proemium* of the book, Lāhījī names “*Sufiyyah-yi muwahhidah*” as one of the three sects who can obtain “the knowledge of God.” Despite varying methodologies and different appellations, Fayyāz describes theology, philosophy, and Sufism to be identical at fulfilling this most essential human task, writing:

The most necessary knowledge is self-knowledge, and return of the self, and knowledge of one's Lord and His commands. The totality of these knowledges is called the principles of religion (*usul-i dīn*) by theologian scholars (*'ulamā-yi mutikallimīn*), divine philosophy (*hikmat-i ilāhī*) by the true philosophers (*hukamā-yi muhaqqiqīn*) and gnosis (*ma'rifah*) by the monotheistic Sufis (*Sufiyyah-yi muwahhidīn*).¹⁹⁶

In the second *matlab* of the introduction, Lāhījī justifies the designation “*Sufiyyah-yi muwahhidīn*.” He insists on the monotheistic worldview of the Sufis despite their seemingly polytheistic claims, such as ‘there is nothing but God’ and ‘God is [in] everything.’ He writes,

There is no relation (*munāsibat*) between the created and the creator, the contingent and the necessary, the being existed before everything (*qadīm*) and the emergent (*hadīth*), the

¹⁹⁴ Hurr-i 'Amilī, *Naqdī Jami' bar Tasawwuf*, trans. 'Abbas Jalali (Tehran: Ansariyan, 2007), 88.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 89

¹⁹⁶ 'Abd al-Razzāq Fayyāz-i Lāhījī, *Guhar-i Murād*, intro. Zayn al-'Abidīn Qurbānī Lāhījī (Tehran: Sāyah, 1383/2004-5) 19.

ephemeral and the ever-lasting so that (the former) can hang on to it and intend His shrine, unless with the negation of all relativities (*salb-i hamah-yi nisbat-hā*)...And the intention of the “verified Sufis” (*muhaqqiqah-yi Sūfiyyah*) from the claim of the ‘unity of being’ and the assertion of the rank of absolute ephemerality cannot be beyond the meaning mentioned here, and whatever you hear except this, beware not to hear.¹⁹⁷

The last sentence is important in that it tacitly warns against the discourse that interprets the Sufi approach to the ‘unity of being’ as heretical. While Lāhījī does not advocate the practices of contemporary Sufi groups, he champions throughout the text the esoteric pursuit of the ‘*Sufiyyah-yi muvahhidah*’ which he finds particularly in conformity with Shiism.¹⁹⁸

Kāshī’s rendition of Hāfiz as a follower of the mystical approach without falling into the categories of Sunni Ash‘aris, therefore, foreshadowed the treatment of the *Sufiyyah-yi muvahhidah* by Lahiji and his likes. The term conforms to the religious orientation of the Safavids in the late sixteenth century, who were negotiating their Sufi pedigree as compliant with the Shi‘a doctrines, while condemning other Sufi groups.

Davānī: Hāfiz the Ash‘arite

Kāshī’s introduction of Hāfiz appears to be responding to Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī, the eminent Sunni Ash‘arī philosopher and scholar of Shiraz who died in 908/1502 shortly after Isma‘il’s coronation in Tabriz as the first Safavid monarch. Davānī is credited as the author of several philosophical works that present proofs for God’s existence and His attributes as well as half a dozen short texts commenting on various lines of Hāfiz. His philosophical epistles received many commentaries and glosses, among them criticism by Imami scholars of the Safavid period such as Muhammad Amīn b. Muhammad Sharīf Istarābādī (d. 1036/1626-7), famed for his systematization of a rational hadith-based approach (*akhbārī-garī*).¹⁹⁹

Alongside other responses given to Davānī by Safavid scholars, the insistence of Kāshī on the non-Ash‘arite predilections of Hāfiz can be viewed as a rejection of Davānī who reads in Hāfiz’s poetry Sunni theological notions. In one short undated text, edited and published by Hussayn Mu‘allim, Davānī draws from the tenets of Ash‘arite thought to interpret this couplet by Hāfiz:

پیر ما گفت خطا بر قلم صنع نرفت
آفرین بر نظر پاک خطاپوشش باد

Our *pir* said that no flaw was written by the pen of creation,
Bravo for his pure, flaw-covering *nazar*.

The controversial, multilayered line sarcastically confirms that there *are* defects in the creation of the world, because the *pir*, who rejected the existence of any such errors, is hiding the

¹⁹⁷ Lāhījī, 33.

¹⁹⁸ Sajjad Rizvi, “A Sufi Theology Fit for a Shī‘ī King: The Gawhar-i Murād of ‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhījī (d. 1072/1661–2),” *Sufism and Theology*, ed. Ayman Shidadeh (Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 95.

¹⁹⁹ Reza Pourjavadi and Sabine Schmidtke, “Twelver Shii Theology,” *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, ed. Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 464; Hassan Ansari, *Tashayū‘ Imamī dar Bistar-i Tahavvul: Tārikh-i Maktab-hā va Bāvar-hā dar Irān va Islam*, Vol 1 (Tahran: Māhī, 1391/2012-3), 61.

existence of such faults with his flaw-covering s “*nazar*,” referring to “eye” as well as “view point.” How Davānī sets about to solve the dilemma illustrates the earliest known engagement of Hāfiz in theological debates, which turned into a powerful discourse as the Shii Safavids attempted to retain the poet a justifiable stance amidst the denominational controversies. Therefore, the treatment of the above line by Davānī is worth scrutiny. To explain why Hāfiz describes the world as defective, the philosopher of Shiraz provides four short introductions (*muqaddamah*). In the first introduction, he defines two types of errors (*khatā*): one is error in speech which occurs when one says that which does not conform with reality; and two is error in action (*fi’l*) which disagrees with one’s interest and benefit. In the second introduction, Davānī emphasizes that the Ash‘arite doctrines are prerequisites for understanding Hāfiz’s verse. He writes, “The true doer is not but *Hazrat-i Haq ta’ālā* (the glorified Truth). This principle is based on the doctrines of the people of the Sunnah and *Jamā’ah* who are the owners of the superior times; as the salvaged group of the Ash‘arites have stated in theological books...”. Davānī further rejects the attribution of free will to humans by the Mu‘tazilite calling them the *majūs* (Zoroastrians) among the Muslims and worse, because the *majūs* believe in two true doers (*fā’il-i haqīqī*) as sources of the good and the evil whereas the Mu‘tazilites consider every human being as creators of actions.²⁰⁰

The third introduction is that God’s acts are based on “accurate wisdoms” and “brilliant interests” (*hikam-i daqīqah va masālih-i anīqah*) that cannot be circumscribed by human intellect. In the last introduction, Davānī argues that “the architect of the divine power has so designed the world that it is the best (*aslah*) in relation to the whole and in general, even though each of (the individual) elements appears otherwise.”²⁰¹ Following the four introductory remarks, Davānī interprets the couplet of Hāfiz:

To say that some acts are defective [as the poem reads] is either based on the belief of the activity of *Haq ta’ālā* in it or based on the belief of the activity of others other than *Haq ta’ālā*. The first requires to attribute fault to *Hazrat-i Haq ta’ālā* and the second requires to prove a true doer other than *Haq ta’ālā* and this is against the *mazhab-i Haq* (the faith of the Truth).

It is clear from the last sentence that by “*mazhab-i Haq*” Davānī refers to Ash‘arism and its rejection of free will. The scholar of Shiraz goes on to claim that his fellow citizen also had such affiliations:

“The poet in this verse has founded [his] words on the *madhab-i haq*, and its meaning is that whatever design appears on the tablet of the existence by the pen of creation guarantees all interests and follows the whole system [of creation]; therefore it is *sawāb* (not *khatā*).”²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī Kāzīrūnī, *Naqd-i Niyāzī: dar Sharh-i Daw Bayt va Yak Ghazal az Khwājah Hāfiz-i Shīrāzī*, ed. Hussayn Mu’allim (Tehran: Sipīhr 1373/1994-5) 269. Carl W. Ernst introduced this text to English readership in “Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī’s Interpretation of Hāfiz,” in *Hāfiz and the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (London & New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 197-210.

²⁰¹ Davānī, *Naqd*, 271.

²⁰² *Ibid.* 273.

Davānī concludes by differentiating two meanings for the word “*khatā*” (error, flaw) in the couplet: in the first hemistich (Our *pir* said that no flaw was written with the pen of creation) “*khatā*” refers to flaw in action, which the poet denies since he, according to the ‘Ash‘arite system of thought, attributes all actions to God. But “*khatā*” in the second hemistich (Bravo for his pure, flaw-covering *nazar*), denotes the errors of those who find fault in creation, which the pure glance of the *pir* has veiled.

The advocacy of Ash‘arite adherence for Hāfiz and Ash‘arite doctrines for understanding his verse by Davānī in late fifteenth century sets a backdrop against which biographers of Hāfiz in the Shi‘a ethos of the next two centuries endeavored to render the poet and his poetry detached of such affiliations.

An Ash‘arite Shii? Dārābī’s view of Hāfiz

The controversy over the Ash‘arite tendencies of Hāfiz appears to be long-lasting in the Safavid era. A century after Kāshī, Muhammad b. Muhammad Dārābī (d. ca. 1130/1717-18) wrote a mystical commentary on the *Dīvān*, *Latīfah-yi Ghaybī*, in which he devotes a chapter to argue against prescribing Ash‘arite affiliations to Hāfiz. *Latīfah-yi Ghaybī* (The intricacy of the unseen) exhibits a full-bodied pronunciation of the attempts to render Hāfiz a Sufi compliant with the Shi‘a doctrines.

Dārābī, himself a bibliographer and poet revered for his mastery of religious and literary sciences, authored many books, including *Latā’if al-Khīyāl*, a collection of biographies and poetic excerpts by 350 poets that, interestingly, starts with Hāfiz and continues up to the author’s own time.²⁰³ From his scattered autobiographical notes among his works we know that Dārābī was a pupil of Shaykh Bahā’ī in his youth; he traveled to India in 1062/1652-3, visited Ali’s shrine in Najaf in 1066/1167-8, met with the poet Sa’ib in Isfahan in the following year, and went back to India at an unknown date.²⁰⁴ Dārābī’s poetic productions have come down to us in two pen-names: ‘Ārif (lit. mystic) and Shāh, a binary whose very reference to one person alludes to the vicinity of the religious and royal institutions in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Persianate milieu.

The exact date in which Dārābī composed the *Latīfah-yi Ghaybī* is unknown. Yet, it happened most likely during the reign of Shah Sultan Hussayn (r. 1694-1722), if created in the last twenty five years of the author’s life, or, less likely, during the rule of Shah Sulayman (r. 1666-1694), if written earlier. While the creation of the treatise does not seem to be connected to the court, the author’s persistence on the Shii adherence of Hāfiz and his attempt to interpret every single line of his poetry in this light accords with the Shii gestures of the last two Safavid rulers. Sultan

²⁰³ This work is reproduced in: Hakīm Mawlā Shāh Muhammad b. Muhammad Dārābī Istahbānatī known as ‘Ārif, *Tazkirah-yi Latāyif al-Khīyāl*, ed. Yusuf Bayg Bābāpur (Qum: Majma‘-i Zakhāyir-i Islāmī) 1391/2012-13.

²⁰⁴ Ahmad Gulchīn Ma‘ānī, *Karvān-i Hind*, Vol. 2 (Mashhad: Āstān-i Quds, 1369/1990-1), 851. Muḥammad Tāḥir Naṣrābādī, the author of a major *Tazkirah* in the Safavid period, writes a brief biographical note on Shah Muhammad Dārābī in the exact year the latter returned from India. The compilation of Naṣrābādī’s *Tazkirah* between 1083/1672 and 1091/1680, thus, delineates Dārābī’s return from India.

Hussayn's enthronement ceremony in 1105/1694 exemplifies the supremacy of the Shi'a ulema over the Sufi Qizilbash. The Shah deviated from the tradition of being circled by the Qizilbash to be crowned instead by the chief Shaykh al-Islam, the junior Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī (d. 1698), who compiled the most voluminous collection of Shi'a hadiths, *Bihār al-Anvār*, in 110 volumes. In line with religious policies promoted by the court, Dārābī frequently refers in his commentary to verses from the Quran and hadiths from the Shii imams to reveal the alleged hidden meanings of Hāfiz's poetry. He respectfully dubs *Kāfī*, the compendium of hadiths collected by Kulaynī (d. 941/1535-6), "the most rightful book after the book of Allah."²⁰⁵

Several copies of the *Latīfah-yi Ghaybī* survive in museums in Iran and around the world. The treatise was published as facsimile in Shiraz in 1299 H./1881-2 and more recently in Tehran.²⁰⁶ The hand calligraphed style of the facsimile font and the existence of several words on the margin, likely the result of a collation process, suggest that a certain manuscript has been used to form the book. The publisher's preface, however, provides no information on the origin of the text. The present analysis is based on the examination of the facsimile treatise.

While Kāshī and Dārābī both aimed at detaching Hāfiz from the Ash'ari bonds, they differed in their view of the Shirazi poet. The commentators shared what Hāfiz was not affiliated with, yet each described the poet with distinct religious designations and epithets. Kāshī introduces Hāfiz as a monotheistic Sufi (صوفيه موحده), while Dārābī regards him to be a de facto "Imami Shii." For Dārābī, being a poet is only secondary to Hāfiz's character, who is described instead as a devout sh'i 'arif who would engage in writing poetry only occasionally and inevitably. Therefore, according to Dārābī,

"From the abundance of external and internal perfection, [Hāfiz] did not disregard poetizing, and if by way of accident a poem was reflected by him, it was due to that he expressed some of his states (*hālāt*) and the heart importations (*vāridāt-i qalbī*) with the idioms of *ahl-i 'Irfān* for the benefit of reminding others ..."²⁰⁷

This shift in the depiction of Hāfiz from a "true" Sufi innocent of the deviant beliefs and practices of contemporary dervishes to a foremost Imami Shii corresponds to the transformation and domination of the legitimate religious class over the Safavid intellectual and political milieu of which Hāfiz is considered a representative.

The structure and content of the preface to the *Latīfah-yi Ghaybī* reflect the author's conception of Hāfiz as a Shii par excellence. After the formulaic praise of God and his messenger, Dārābī bridges the Prophet and the Imams to the Persian-speaking poet from the province of Fārs through focusing on two sayings by Prophet Muhammad concerning the people of Fārs while alluding to his companion Salmān the Fārsī. According to the first *hadith*, the prophet says, 'Even if faith was found at *Al-Thurayyā* (Pleiades, metaphorically the highest star), some men

²⁰⁵ Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Dārābī, *Latīfah-yi Ghaybī* (Shiraz: Kitābkhānah-yi Ahmadī, 1357/1978), 120.

²⁰⁶ The *Latīfah-yi Ghaybī* was published two times in Tehran, first in 1382/2003-4 (by Nashr-i Sā'ib) and then in 1385/2007-8 (by Tarāvat).

²⁰⁷ Al-Dārābī, *Latīfah-yi Ghaybī*, 6.

from these people (i.e. people of Fars) would attain it." Annotating the saying, Dārābī provides semantical Arabic details that might seem irrelevant to an exegetical treatise on Hāfiz's poetry; nevertheless, he is careful to ensure how the prophetic hadith is to be understood so that it maps onto the poet of Shiraz as an evidence of his closeness to the messenger of Islam. Portraying Hāfiz a continuation of the prophetic line, the commentator insists that "Fārs" in the hadith, not to be mistaken for Fārsī, refers to a geographic region and therefore is not incompatible with "Arab." The opposite (*ma-'ida*) of Arab, Dārābī argues, is "ajam" not Fārs,²⁰⁸ for indeed Fārs is opposed to Iraq and Khurasan and Azerbaijan²⁰⁹ The *hadiths* followed by Dārābī's minute interpretation of them enabled the author to depict the spiritually remarkable rank of the territory of Fārs and its inhabitants, including, of course, Shams al-Dīn Muhammad Hāfiz.

Dārābī's intention from composing the *Latīfah-yi Ghaybī* is clearly stated in his introduction. The author's incentive to take up the book was to exonerate Hāfiz from the accusations he was frequently charged with. Dārābī writes:

The purpose in writing this discourse is that it has been repeatedly heard, and continues to be heard, from a dear one who has an overall potential to versify and possesses a poetic taste, and who decorates the face of utterance with the highlighter of metaphors and the adornment of similes that [not only] he considers his own poetry superior to that of the *Lisan al-Ghayb* [i.e. Hāfiz], but also reproaches the latter's [Hāfiz's] poetry.²¹⁰

Dārābī then enumerates the various types of complaints targeting the poet, writing:

It is not a secret that those fault-seekers who criticize the words of Hāfiz, the words of the king of the knowledgeable, with a [passing] glance and before much investigation, would do so in three ways: The first [charge] is that part of his words is meaningless (*bī-ma'nī*) ... and [even] if it is meaningful, it would be such as riddle (*mu'ammā*) and puzzle (*lughuz*) and this could prove disruptive to eloquence.

The author then enumerates the second common criticism of Hāfiz:

The second fault [frequently attributed to Hāfiz] is that some of his poems are inferior (*bī-rutbah*, literally of no rank) [and] many of them concern wine and sweetheart (*may va ma'shūqah*).

²⁰⁸ "Ajam" is used somewhat pejoratively in reference to the non-Arabs and particularly the Persians.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 3.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 7.

مقصود از تقریب این مقال آنکه از عزیزی که فی الجمله قوه نظمی و طبع شعری نیز دارد و چهره سخنرا بخط و خال استعارات و گلگونه تشبیهات می آراید مکرر مسموع شده و می شود که شعر خود را ترجیح بر کلام لسان الغیب میدهد بلکه مذمت سخنانش مینماید ... مخفی نیست که عیب جویان که در بادی الرای قبل از تحقیق اعتراض بر کلام حافظ کلام ملک علام مینمایند از سه وجه بیرون نخواهد بود. اول آنکه بعض سخنانش بی معنی است. مثل آنکه: ماجرا کم کن و باز آ که مرا مردم چشم/ خرقة از سر بدر آورد و بشکرانه بسوخت. و اگر معنی داشته باشد از قبیل معما و لغز خواهد بود و این مخل فصاحت است. دوم آنکه بعضی از اشعارش بی رتبه است و بسیاری در باب می و معشوقه است مثل آنکه: دل من در هوای روی فرخ / بود آشفته همچون موی فرخ- هزار آفرین بر می سرخ باد / که از روی ما رنگ زردی ببرد. سیم آنکه اشعارش موافق اصول اشعریست که علمای مذهب حق امامیه آنرا باطل می دانند. مثل آنکه: در کوی نیکنامی ما را گذر ندادند / گر تو نمی پسندی تغییر ده قضا را – این جان عاریت که به حافظ سپرده دوست / روزی رخس ببینم و تسلیم وی کنم.

Such judgment was not unprecedented. Hāfiz had long been criticized for his admiration of worldly pleasures, an example of which was examined in the second chapter in discussing Abussaūd's *fatwa*, that considered at least part of the content of this poetry as harmful as the poison of the snakes. The accusation of Hāfiz for preoccupation with worldly pleasures regains significance in the seventeenth century as one of the charges leveled on contemporary Sufis. Mullā-Sadrā, the famed philosopher whose school of thought known as '*Hikmat-i Muta'ālīyyah*' is characterized by an integration of '*irfān*', harshly criticizes the attraction of the Sufis and clerics to the "absurd" love poetry. He writes,

Most of the things that the Sufis have turned face to and the commanary preachers are preoccupied with are *kalimāt-i muzakhrāfah-yi sha'rīyah* (absurd poetic words); that is, the words that describe love, the appearance of the beloved and the images of the darlings and the pleasures of union with them and the pains of separation from them.²¹¹

Mullā-Sadrā's condemnation of the Sufis for adopting lyrical poetry delineates the context to understand Dārābī's agenda to justify in his treatise Hāfiz's use of love topoi and imagery.

Finally, as the last critical view toward Hāfiz, Dārābī tackles the question of the Ash'arite foundation of his poetry. This question, as examined above, has precedence in earlier debates including by Davānī and Kāshī. However, Dārābī's treatment of the subject includes a twist that is absent from the previous literature, for it openly advocates Hāfiz's alleged nonconformity with Shiism. Dārābī writes,

"The third [accusation] is that his verse is in accordance with the principles of Ash'arism, which is revoked by the ulema of the rightful faith of Shiism."²¹²

While Kāshī, writing in the mid-Safavid period, did not specify his exact intention from arguing against Hāfiz's Ash'arite adherence, one could speculate that he meant to detach Hāfiz from the charges leveled against contemporary Sufis. The Shii claims became much more noticeable with Dārābī in the seventeenth century however, where he refuted any Ash'arite basis for Hāfiz's poetry in light of the Shii faith.

Dārābī dedicated the third *bāb* to Ash'arite charges against Hāfiz. There, he offered Shii interpretations for several couplets of Hāfiz that appear in tune with the Ash'arite principles, including the human inability to change the predestined as well as meeting with the Divine in the hereafter. The author claimed that the poet's perspective of these themes derive, not from his Ash'arite association as often presumed, but from his Imamite persuasion. To this end, Dārābī drew attention to several sayings by the Shii imams that somehow approve of predestination. He quoted a *hadith* from the sixth imam, al-Sadiq, according to which the very creation of Adam and his descent from heaven to earth were but pre-planned:

²¹¹ Sadr al-Dīn Muhammad Shīrāzī, *Kasr-i Asnām al-Jāhilīyyah*, by Muhammad Taqī Dānish-Pajuh (Tehran: Dānishgāh-i Tehran, 1340/1961-2), quoted in Ja'farīyān, Vol. 2, 528.

²¹² Al-Dārābī, *Latīfah-yi Ghaybī*, 7.

Abu-‘Abdallah said that Allah commanded (*amara*) but did not want (*lam-yasha*’), and wanted but not commanded; Commanded Iblis to prostrate before Adam but wanted that he did not prostrate, and he would have prostrated, if [He] had wanted; and [He] prohibited Adam from eating from the tree while wanted that he ate from it, and he would have not eaten, if [He] had not wanted.²¹³

The saying distinguishes between God’s command and prohibition (*amr* versus *nahy*) and His volition (*shā*’). It implies that God’s volition determines the result, not the creatures’ will to obey or disobey His commands. The author asserts that there are numerous similar *hadiths* that approve of *qazā va qadar* (destiny and measurement), but because the divine volition and predestination is not decisive (*hatmī*), such beliefs do not contradict people’s free will. After tracing the predetermination beliefs in Shia sources, Dārābī concluded that Hāfiz was not to be blamed for composing verses that imply a lack of freedom, for he only followed the examples of the imams. “Then,” Dārābī asks, “what would be wrong with *Lisan al-ghayb*, who is among the contemplatives of their [i.e. the imams’] remnants, in saying that everything is [contingent] upon God’s *qazā va qadar* [?]”²¹⁴

Dārābī takes a radical stance to advocate the assumed Shiism of Hāfiz to the expense of accepting his Ash‘arite tendencies, which, quite ironically, appears to be at odds with the initial purpose of writing the treatise quoted above. While his intention, according to the preface, was to invalidate the assumptions of Hāfiz’s Ash‘arite persuasion among other critiques, Dārābī undermines this primary agenda to meet a more important goal, that is to defend the poet’s alleged Shiism. With regard to the below couplet, for instance, Dārābī seemingly failed to deny the Ash‘arite tint embedded therein, yet he still upheld his claim of Hāfiz’s Shiism despite such theological predilections:

گناه اگر چه نبود اختیار ما حافظ
تو در طریق ادب کوش گو گناه من است

Though it was not our freewill to commit sin,
Thou pronounce in good manners that “the sin is mine.”²¹⁵

The line shrewdly but elaborately eradicates all sorts of freedom in humans’ deeds and therefore challenges the notion of “sin.” Hāfiz admits on the one hand that he has committed sin, but at the same time, sarcastically points to his lack of freedom for doing the wrong. Dārābī, as if unable to argue against the obvious deterministic hue of the line, took another approach and set on to describe the Sunni/Shia divide to be independent of the theological differences. He wrote:

²¹³ Ibid., 113.

وقال ابو عبدالله امر الله و لم يشاء و تشاء و لم امر. امر ابليس ان يسجد الادم و يشاء ان لا يسجد و لو شاء سجد و نهى آدم من اكل الشجرة و يشاء ان ياكل منها و لو لم يشاء ما ياكل.

The word “tashā’a” underlined here seems to be a typo in the facsimile, as the gender of the verb should be masculine. In some versions of the *hadith* the verb is registered as “shā’a”.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ According to another recension, the second hemistich reads:

تو در طریق ادب باش گو گناه منست

Despite all controversies, the faith with regard to the free deeds of people is divided to three: first, the Mu'tazilite faith which views the servant [i.e. people] independent in good and bad deeds; second, the Ash'arite faith that renders them free and say that all deeds are created by God and people are only their gainers [*kāsib*]; and third is the imamate faith which holds 'neither predestination nor free will, but a matter between the two.'²¹⁶

Dārābī continues to write that not every Mu'tazili belief requires Shiism, nor does every Ash'arite conviction necessitate Sunnism. Thus, being Sunni or Shii virtually depends on who one regards as the vicegerent of the Prophet rather than their theological preferences. He concludes, "It is possible that a Shii follows Ash'arism in one matter that is the attribution of all deeds to the divine (*jināb-i ahadīyyat*) and [therefore] from the above line and its likes one cannot deduce the Sunnism of the *Lisan al-Ghayb*."²¹⁷

Dārābī's argument is theoretically correct: the Sunni/Shiite factions are not solely theological divisions. However, the Shiis have had major controversies with the Ash'arites in the history of Islamic theology (*kalām*). By portraying Hāfiz a devout Shii while acknowledging his Ash'arite predilections, the *Latīfah-yi Ghaybī* sets a new norm in the spectrum of controversies over the character and poetry of Hāfiz in the Safavid period.

Conclusion

This chapter examined biographical and exegetical texts around Hāfiz and his poetry created in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Safavid world. These texts engage the poet in theological and philosophical debates in response to contemporary negotiations over the acceptability of Sufism after the Safavid house shifted its orientation away from Qizilbash Sufism to Imamite Shiism. The entry in Taqī al-Dīn Kāshī's major *Tazkirah* exemplifies the transitive process by which the Sufism of Hāfiz is being conditioned. Kāshī renders Hāfiz innocent of two major criticisms raised in the Safavid polemics: first, he insists that Hāfiz has no Ash'arite affiliation although some of his poems appear so; and second, that he belongs to the "*Sufiyyah-yi muvahiddah*" and is thus exonerated from any polytheistic accusations. Kāshī, hence, bridges an unconditionally Sufi understanding of the poet to his perception as a devout Shii respectively represented by generations before and after him. Two scholars from the province of Fars offer divergent approaches to the Ash'arite-base predestination hue embedded in Hāfiz's poetry. Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī considers the Sunni, Ash'arite doctrines prerequisite for correct comprehension of Hāfiz's verse right before the coronation of the first Safavid Shah, while Muhammad Dārābī exhibits an extreme Shiification of the poet two centuries later, although he affirms the Ash'ari predilection of Hāfiz's poetry. Therefore, it is manifest that the doctrinal debates that aim at deciphering the poetry of Hāfiz are heated in this period in order to present the glorious Persian poet in accordance with the emerging religious norms.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 117.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 118.

Conclusion

Hāfiz is so ardently praised in the Persianate culture that the dynamic nature of perceiving his poetry throughout history is easily neglected. His high stature today allures one to imagine that Hāfiz has continuously been regarded ever since fourteenth century as exactly the same poet claimed to be today—one who encapsulates nationality, mysticism, and poetic potency. In this dissertation I have demonstrated otherwise. Tracing the links between the poet and the Safavid house, I have illustrated the ways in which the court drew legitimacy from Hāfiz and his poetry. The *Dīvān*, filled with Sufi ideas and courtly imagery, provided the Safavid shahs in the formative period with the perfect reflection of their rulership and Sufi backgrounds. Yet simultaneous with the religious orientation of the state away from Qizilbash Sufism toward Imamite Shiism, the dominant approaches to the poetry of Hāfiz altered, for the mystical readings of his verse no longer presented an ideal Safavid ideology. The attempts to connect with Hāfizian legitimacy extended, in the seventeenth century, to new emphasis placed on the exegetical efforts that drew Hāfiz closer to contemporary Shia discourse and distant from Ash‘arite affiliations generally held by the Sufis. By the reign of Abbas I (r.1588-1629), the endorsement of emerging Shiite claims through the poetry of Hāfiz was pursued at the expense of alternating his very verse. Investigating the role of these extra-textual factors that proves crucial in the early modern reception of the poet, this dissertation has highlighted, for the first time, an understudied phase in the historical processes through which Hāfiz became an exalted and enshrined figure. This study, it should be noted, does not question the literary, or mystical, value of Hāfiz’s poetry; instead, it reiterates, in a larger scope, the significance of taking critical approaches to historicizing cultural phenomena and figures as iconic as Hāfiz.

The arguments of this dissertation not only contribute to the scholarly domains of history, literature, religion, and culture, but also goes parallel to an everyday perception of Hāfiz. Hāfiz’s poetry, with exemplary polysemy and masterfully embedded intricacies, continues to appeal to Persian speakers of all backgrounds allowing them to connect with it in multiple ways. The practice of seeking “fal” (literally fortune) or prognostication with the *Dīvān*, that is very much alive today, is no doubt a corollary to the characteristic ambiguity of Hāfiz’s words. It is common for a wide spectrum of people, from high school students to participants in professional or family gatherings, to randomly open the *Dīvān* and interpret the appeared poem as the answer of the *Lisan al-Ghayb*, as Hāfiz is called, to their specific question or the poet’s prediction for their particular concern. This very equivocality of Hāfiz’s *ghazals*, nevertheless, has ignited heated disputations, especially with regard to the frequent terminology of “wine” and “love”. Whether Hāfiz was a spiritual Sufi or an opportunist libertine when he wrote verses such as the following is still a matter of controversy:

زان می عشق کز پخته شود هر خامی
گر چه ماه رمضان است بیاور جامی

From that wine of love that makes mature every crudity
Serve me a goblet, even though it is the fasting month.

This dissertation does not directly solve the puzzle of divine/human nature of Hāfiz’s love or the ecstatic/grape origin of his wine. However, it emphasizes in retrospect that this controversy is not the result of our remoteness from the poet and the inaccessibility, for that matter, of the authorial intention. This project demonstrated that, in the same manner that Hāfiz’s verse is still used to

provide witness to one's quotidian dilemmas, it was used by rulers of arguably the first modern Iranian nation-state to announce and uphold their religious and political policies.

The controversy over mystical significance of Hāfiz's poems, discussed here, is older than the Safavid era. Earlier biographical notices suggest that Hāfiz was not considered a "Sufi" in its full sense by all Timurid elites. This conflict is visible through the hesitant manner in which Jāmī (d.1492), renowned poet and the master—*pir*—of the *Naqshbandīya* order, describes Hāfiz as the very last entry in his section on "the states of the Sufi sect elders" (*Hālāt-i mashāyikh-i tā'ifa-i sūfiya*). Expressing wonder on the popularity among Sufis of Hāfiz's poetry despite his unknown Sufi adherences, Jāmī writes: "Although it is not clear whether he [Hāfiz] has shaken the hand of any *pirs* and is related to any Sufi tribe, his poetry is favored by this group more than anybody else."²¹⁸ However, not all Timurids shared the same opinion on Hāfiz and his mystical status. Dawlatshāh Samarqandī (d. ca.1494), the author of the monumental *Tazkira al-Shu'arā* (Memoirs of the poets), calls Hāfiz "the rarity of the time and the miracle of the world (*nādirah-yi zamān u u'jūbah-yi jahān*) who "has infinite perfections, writing poetry being but the least of his virtues."²¹⁹ Dawlatshāh regards Hāfiz's verse to be "beyond the human capacity" and even "celestial importation (*vāridāt-i ghaybi*) [to the heart of the Sufi], and underlines his status by pointing out that Sayyid Qāsim Anvār, the contemporary Sufi sheikh, wholeheartedly embraced Hāfiz's poetry so much so that "the *Dīvān* was being constantly read in his presence."²²⁰ The disconformity between the accounts by Jāmī and Dawlatshāh pushes the controversy around Hāfiz's Sufi orientation back to the fifteenth century. Yet what makes the Safavid period, discussed here, worthy of particular attention is that the Sufi perception of Hāfiz's poetry in this period evolved commensurates with the religious policies of the state, serving as an indispensable part and parcel of the process of self-fashioning. The maintained association of the Safavid state with Hāfiz sets a precedent for contemporary claims about the poet that describe him a "patron-saint of the land" and the spokesman of Iranian "national lyric."²²¹

The role of the poet in the process of crafting a Safavid distinctive identity and the ways in which the monarchs appropriated the poet for their agenda raise many other questions. What would Hāfiz's status in today's world look like if it was not due to the Safavid celebration of the poet for their religio-political purposes? How would the reception of the poet outside courtly environs differ or interact with the dominant perception of him that was disseminated by the centers of political power? This study has focused on the courts of Safavid shahs as major centers of cultural patronage; yet, other institutions, namely the Sufi gatherings and non-courtly centers of literary production, such as those in Shiraz, remain outside the scope of this study. While the Ottoman discourse of Hāfiz is briefly studied here, the reception and perception of the poet in the Indian Subcontinent remain to be fully explored. The Safavid appropriation of the poet of Shiraz

²¹⁸ 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī, *Nafahāt al-uns min Hazarāt al-Quds*, ed. Mahdi Tawhīdī'pūr (Tehrān: Kitāb-furūshī-yi Sa'dī, 1336/1958), 614.

²¹⁹ Dawlatshāh of Samarqand, *Tadhkiratu 'Sh-shu'arā*. Edward G Brown (ed.), (London: Luzac & co., 1901), 302.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 303.

²²¹ Leonard Lewisohn, (intro.) in Bahman Solati, *The Reception of Hafez*, (Leiden university Press, 2014), 16.

together with the Mughal and Ottoman approaches to him would offer a comprehensive cultural history of the Persianate world that is formed by and in return form the perception of Hāfiz.

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