Islam and Sufism

Brief Overview (for more on specific persons, starting with Prophet Muḥammad, see next section)

[Note: The saying or writing of the names of Prophet Muḥammad and the other prophets [Jesus, Abraham, et al.] and certain eminent saints, but most especially that of Prophet Muḥammad, when spoken by pious Muslims are always followed by inclusion of the reverential saying, Sall-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam, “God’s peace and blessings be upon him” (sometimes abbreviated in English as p.b.u.h.). For ease of readability, I have omitted that pious custom here.]

[Note: The official Muslim calendar, which I have also not used here, is based on the lunar year of 354 days, twelve months of 29 and 30 days, beginning with Prophet Muḥammad’s emigration from Mecca to Medīnā in 622. To compute a year in the Common Era (C.E. / A.D.) from a Muslim year (h.), multiply the Muslim year by 0.969 and add this to 622. Example: 300 h. = 912-3 CE; 600 h. = 1203-4 CE; 1300 h. = 1881-2 CE.]

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Islām, meaning “submission to Allāh/God,” was founded by Prophet Muḥammad (571-632) and seen by his fast-growing community as God’s way of bringing a revealed religion to the Arabian people. It all began one day in the year 610 CE, when Muhammad, who had been orphaned in youth and raised by a series of relatives to become a respected figure in the community, was with his wife Khadija on Mt. Ḥīrā (Jebel al-Nūr, Mountain of Light), not far from their home in Mecca, Arabia. They were engaged, as was their custom, in deep meditation on Allāh. Muhammad experienced an overwhelming presence of divine beauty and majesty which left him inspired but terrified. He saw an amazing vision, ostensibly of Angel Gabriel, appearing as a gigantic man, present wherever he looked, and this figure urged Muhammad to “Recite.” Muḥammad, whose education apparently did not surpass that needed to become the overseer of Khadija’s caravan-business, began to receive revelations, which continued over the next twenty-two years. These ongoing revelations came to comprise the Qur’ān, the sacred scripture of Islam, held by Muslims to be the very word of God. Khadija, some years older than her husband, gave him tremendous emotional and spiritual support at this time, and through the subsequent years of self-doubt, trial, and tribulation.

The quality of these revelations was formidable, possessing a strange and powerful beauty in the original Arabic. The Qur’ānic utterances began to deeply impress a group of people—including extended family and many persons from the marginalized lower classes. But Muḥammad incurred the wrath of members of the dominant Quraysh clan. They deemed him a troublemaker who was “reviling” the way of their ancestors. Accordingly, they subjected Muḥammad and his small community of believers to all manner of persecution, harassment, threats of death and even executions. This continued for some ten years. It was toward the close of this period that, while sleeping one night in a corner of the Ka’aba, the sacred Arabian shrine housing the black stone, an ancient meteorite, Muḥammad experienced his famous Night Journey (isra’) and Heavenly Ascent (mi’rāj) above Jerusalem and up through the seven heavens. He was carried aloft by the mythical beast Burāq in the company of angel Gabriel, and met various prophets en route to the throne of Allāh. This was his major initiatory experience, a radical kind of ego-death and spiritual rebirth in God. (A famous later saying of Muḥammad, part of the Ḥadīth collection of the customs and sayings of the Prophet, is that “you must die before you die.”)

Finally, in 622, Prophet Muḥammad and his group of several dozen families made the momentous move to break away from the Arabian tribal structure. They fled north to the city Medīnā, where the Prophet had been invited by warring factions to preside as arbitrator. This famous emigration is known as the hijra, and it marks the beginning of the era of Islām, from which Muslims (those who practice Islām) date the beginning of their calendar. Here in Medīnā, Muhammad’s unique Muslim community, the ‘umma, the first Arabian society based on religion, not tribal allegiance, began to really flourish. The first mosque was built so
that the faithful could come together in prayer. It was here in Medina that Muḥammad began to realize that Islām was a revival of the original monotheistic religion of Abraham, not merely the “poor cousin” to the current expressions of Judaism and Christianity.

Muḥammad and his followers, forced by the Quraysh clan into an adversarial, militant relationship, later won several battles over these forces trying to preserve the status quo in Arabia. In 630, two years before Muḥammad’s passing, his troops made a triumphant return to Mecca, casting out the pagan idols at the Ka’aba, and eventually winning over most of the town’s inhabitants to the new faith. Through it all, Prophet Muḥammad proved himself a consummate statesman as well as mystic visionary, a gracious, humorous man who eschewed fancy living and extended kindness and compassion, though he was the first to admit that he was prone to anger and occasional poor judgments. In a few decades, Islām spread through the Middle East, and, by 750 A.D., from Spain to Indonesia. It is now the second largest religion on Earth, at over 1.3 billion people.

Islām comprised a very forward-looking, egalitarian religion for its time. It had no priests, nor any cult of sacrifices or sacraments. It was distinctly monotheistic, and non-creedal. (Muḥammad was highly suspicious of how Christianity had not only turned God into a trinity, but also had virtually deified human thought in the form of theological dogmas and creeds.) The duties of all Muslims were to be the “five pillars” of Islām: 1) Simple confession of the shahāda: “There is no god but God (no reality but Spiritual Reality), and Muḥammad is His prophet (La ilāha illa Llāh, Muḥammad rasūl Allāh). 2) Fivefold daily prayer (ṣalāt), at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, right after sundown, and early evening, involving a series of prostrations and recitations of lines from the Qur’ān as well as the overall attitude of surrender of the ego to Allāh. 3) Almsgiving (zakāt) to those in need. 4) Observing the fast (ṣawm) during the lunar month of Ramadān—refraining from all food or drink from sunrise to sunset—in solidarity with those who have no food. 5) Making the ḥajj or pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in one’s life. (Concerning the Ramadān fast, scholar Michael Sells observes: “It would be hard to find a more rigorous practice than Ramadan enjoined upon an entire community of believers within a major religious tradition.” The five-times daily prayer, likewise, takes an amount of time surpassing the devout Jew’s thrice daily prayer/tefillah of the ‘Amidah or the devout Christian’s daily ritual of mass.)

After Prophet Muḥammad’s passing, his sayings and customs were collected from those who had known him well, including a few of the women who had become his wives after the passing of Khadija in 619. Incidentally, almost all these women were presented to him in political alliances by his close friends and leading Arabian citizens. His favorite among these wives he accepted after Khadija’s death was young Ā’ishah, who had been betrothed to the Prophet at age 9 before becoming his wife upon reaching acceptable age. The sayings of Muhammad gathered by his family and friends comprise the Ḥadīth, precious to all Muslims, and second only to the Qur’ān in spiritual authority as a guide to life.

Within a few decades, under the Umayyad dynasty (661-750), headquartered with pompous extravagance at Damascus in modern-day Syria, Islām was being undermined. Not only institutionalized, its basic practices and beliefs were being subverted by old cultural and ethnic habits falsely ascribed to the Prophet. The situation only continued to worsen under the Abbasid dynasty (750-1258), which based itself in Baghdad, Iraq. In response to this growing mediocrity, a number of pious souls succeeded in not only preserving but also further developing the spiritual power of the faith. This movement culminated in the rise of a distinct way of spiritual practice known as tasawwuf or Sūfism, first emerging in Iraq, then spreading eastward to Iran and beyond (Central Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia), northward into Anatolia (Turkey), and westward all the way from Arabia, Egypt and Sudan to Morocco and Spain.

The derivations of the words tasawwuf and Sūf are obscure. From the Arabic roots sa-wa-fa and sa-fa, some have argued it derives from sūfyya, those who have been purified, or sūfī, the low ledge, bench or verandah outside the Prophet’s house in Medina, where the good-hearted gathered to hear his counsel on God-realization; finally, some assume Sūf comes from sūf; wool, referring to the coarse garments characteristicly worn by the early ascetics. And at first this Muslim mystic trend, later known as Sūfism, was a small
movement of very ascetic souls going into relative isolation within certain quarters of the city or out into the desert, memorizing the Qur'an, keeping long, meditative vigils through the night, fasting extensively, and keeping the heart/mind pure and undistracted, maintaining a strong remembrance or zikr of Allāh. They were attempting to deeply interiorize Muslim practice. Of course, this development of “desert spirituality” almost exactly mirrored what happened in Christianity four centuries earlier in Egypt, Palestine and Syria. Christian mysticism and Hindu/Buddhist mysticism coming down the Silk Road, were major influences in the rise of this Sufi expression of Muslim mysticism. Eventually a strongly devotional, heart-centered element would soften Sufism (as it had softened Christianity and the Eastern religions), and turn it into a lovely and quite powerful expression of the Divine within the world’s sacred traditions. Over the centuries, Sufism has nurtured many thousands of saintly lives.

Sufis trace their origins back to Prophet Muḥammad himself, and even earlier to the other great prophets. Along with the mystical Shi’a sect of Islam (which broke off from the Sunni branch of Islam), they trace their line, not through the Sunni or “orthodox” kulaʃas/caliphs who came to preside over Islam—Abū Bakr, Umar, Uthman, et al.—but through Muḥammad’s younger cousin and adopted son, later his son-in-law, ‘Alī, and his two sons, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (Muḥammad’s heirs). Sufis would say that Muḥammad, Khadijā, daughter Fāṭima, her husband ‘Alī, their sons (especially Ḥusayn), and Muḥammad’s close friends, the so-called “companions of the cers,” were the prototypical Muslim Sufis. Ḥasan al-Asrāfī (640-728), an ascetic from Bāṣra, Iraq, who studied under ‘Alī and preached wonderful sermons at Baghdad, would be remembered by posterity as the “Patriarch of Sufism.”

Since then, many remarkably holy souls emerged to carry on the development of Sufism along various lines, including asceticism, devotion, intuitive, nondual wisdom, spiritual retreat, ecstatic trance states, sacred arts, and so forth. Especially prominent Sufis among the thousands of beloved saints and sages included Ibrāhīm ibn Adham (d. 790), who renounced the princely life in Bakh, Khurāsān (eastern Iran), to become the first Sufi model of poverty, abstinence, and complete trust in God (tawakkul). The much-beloved Rābi’a al-‘Adawīyya (717-801) of Bāṣra, Iraq, blended strict asceticism with a tremendously sublime and heart-felt devotion. Sayyida Nafisa (d. 824), great-granddaughter of Ḥasan, was a fervent and respected mystic. We also have Dhū’n-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. 859), an Egyptian miracle-worker, alchemist and author; the “Divinely-intoxicated” Persian saint, Bāyazīd al-Bīštāmī (d. 874), Sufism’s first great ecstatic mystic who underwent his own astonishing mi’rāj or heavenly ascent; Iraqi Sufi al-Khrārāzī (d. 899), who elaborated on Dhū’n-Nūn’s and Bīštāmī’s notions of fanā’-baqā’ (ego-death and rebirth in God) and tawḥīd (unity); the highly influential and “sober Sufi” mystical writer of Baghdad, al-Junaydī (d. 910); the celebrated martyr Maṣūr al-Ḥallāj (858-922) put to death by the orthodox over political intrigues and for openly declaring “I am the Absolute Reality—Anā l-Haqq.” A few generations later, the eminent orthodox theologian-turned-mystic, Abū Ḥamdī al-Ghazālī (1058-1111), whose voluminous writings brought much credibility to Sufism; wonderworker and preacher Abdul-Qādir al-Jilānī (1078-1166) of Baghdad, one of the most popular Sūfīs of all time; the eminent itinerant Spanish theologian of “unity of Being” (waḥdat al wujūd), Muḥyuddīn Ibn al-‘Arabī (1165-1240); the Persian poet-saints Farīduddīn ‘Aṭṭār (d. 1220), Mevlana Jalāluddīn Rūmī (1207-73), illustrious poet-saint who inspired the founding of the Mevlevi whirling dervishes; Shabistarī (d. 1320), Ḥāfīz (d. 1389) and Jāmī (d. 1492). Then come the great missionary Sūfī saints like Mu’inuddīn Chishti (d. 1236), a Persian who brought a highly musical Sufism to northern India; and Shāh Ni’matullāh Wālī (1331-1431), renowned miracle-worker and author from Aleppo, Syria, who settled in Persia and led hundreds of thousands of disciples.

Just a few others of note (see section below for many, more figures): Jahānārā Begum (1616-83), daughter of Mughal Emperor Shāh-Jahān, who aided the poor and would have been selected to lead a major Sūfī order of India “had such a thing been possible” for a woman in those days; Shaykh ad-Darrāqī (1738-1818) and Aḥmad al-‘A lãwī (1869-1934), two hugely popular saints of North Africa; Indian Sūfī musician, Ḥāzrat Ināyāt Khān (1882-1927), who brought Sufism to the West; Ḥāzrat Bābājīn (1790-193 1), a former Afghani princess who left home at an early age to become the long-lived, enigmatic wonder-worker of India; her spiritual son, Meher Bābā (1894-1969) brought a Vedantized Sūfism to Europe and America in a powerful way. Other modern-day Sūfīs highly esteemed in the East and West have been Muṣaffar Ózak
Efendi (1916-87) of Turkey, Śrī Lankan mystic Bāwā Muḥaiyaddeen (d. 1986), London-residing Persian Ni’matullāh psychologist-poet-saint Dr. Javad Nurbakhsh (1926-), and Naẓīm al-Qubrasī al-Ḥāqqānī (b.1922), a Turkish master of the Naqshbandi order, and Grand Mufti of Turkish Cyprus, one of the most widely respected Sūfī shaykhs in the world today.

A number of different ṭuruq (singular: ṭarīqa) or Orders or spiritual ways of practice have evolved over the centuries, which take Sufis beyond observance of Muslim law (sharī‘a) and externalities (zāhir) related to the personality into the interior depths (bātín) of the transpersonal Reality, the Divine Truth (ḥaqīqa). These ṭuruq have entailed spiritual communities that in many cases led to offshoot branches, and so forth. (A list of such ṭuruq is to be found later in this handout.)

In contrast to the claims of some early Western scholars, Sūfism is still very much alive in many circles of West and North Africa, the Middle East, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, and now in the West. It has been estimated that 3% of the world’s 1.3 billion Muslims are Sūfis—in countries like Egypt, Senegal, India, Pakistan, and several others, this figure is obviously much higher (20%-40%)—meaning that quite a large number of souls are endeavoring to perfectly remember Allāh and merge in Him, the Sole Reality, the Supernal Light.

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Notes on Muslim Sūfī Tradition—Persons, Movements, Terms, Places and Resources
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I. -- Prominent Muslim Sūfī Masters, Saints, Teachers:
(Most of the Sūfis from the classical and middle periods of Sūfism [up to the 19th century] have their vitae and teachings presented in one or more of the following works: Annemarie Schimmel, 1975 (magisterial work), A.J. Arberry, 1970, Margaret Smith, 1972, Javad Nurbakhsh (several works), Michael Sells, 1996, S.A.A. Rizvi, 2002, and elsewhere. Where useful, another source for these Sūfis’ lives or teachings is given, if not listed under their own name in the bibliography. With the maturing of the Internet, the reader can now find entries on many of these Sūfis at the online anonymous encyclopedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_famous_Sufis)

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Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh (571?-632)—born in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, to the family of Banū Ḥāshim in the economically dominant Quraysh tribe, then orphaned in youth, Muḥammad was raised by different relatives. As a young man he distinguished himself as director of caravans; at age 25 he married his employer, the older widow Khadijā (d. 620), said to be about 40 at their wedding. They had 6 children—two boys (neither survived into adulthood) and four girls. At age 53, a few years after Khadijā’s death, political alliances with close friends led to his marrying other women: four widows and five other women, chief of whom was young Ā‘ishā (d. 678). Muhammad had the Divine scripture of Islām, the Qur’ān, revealed to him in trance states by angel Gabriel from 610-632 C.E. Khadijā would be of great emotional support to him, especially in the early days, when he felt he was going mad. Collections of Muḥammad’s sayings and customs, known as the Haddīth, are important for every Muslim. The Muslim lunar year (354 days) dates from his emigration (hijra) in 622 from Mecca (where he had been harassed and threatened with death for some years by the Quraysh tribe) up to Medina. Here he founded the theocratic community (umma) of Islām in order to effect social justice and restore monotheism. Eight years later, he returned triumphantly to Mecca, and his compassion and power drew thousands to become Muslims. He died and was buried in Medina. Considered to be “Seal of the Prophets,” Muḥammad appears in the sources as a kind, generous, humble, playful and contemplative man. He and his fourth daughter, Fāṭima (d. 633)—through whom came his only two heirs (Ḥusayn and Ḥasan)—were considered by later Sūfis to have both been “sinless.” Muḥammad was succeeded by his two friends (and later fathers-in-law), Abū Bakr (d. 634) and ‘Umar (d. 644), and then by his two sons-in-law, ‘Uthman (d. 656) and ‘Ali (d. 661).
Ā‘isha (c.614-78)—married to Muḥammad at age nine; she was the one to whom Muḥammad directed his followers to go for counsel in his absence; he spent most of his domestic life with her, and said, “She is the only woman in whose company I receive my revelations.” Ā‘isha learned the text of the Qur’ān by heart. She is of crucial importance for also remembering 1,210 credited sayings (Ḥadīth) of Muḥammad. Umm Salama, another of Muḥammad’s later wives, was, along with Ā‘isha, considered a chief authority on Muḥammad’s life and teaching.

‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (c.600-661)—Muḥammad’s cousin and son-in-law, husband of Fāṭima, and the 4th and last of the “righteous” Caliphs of Islām. A distinguished, courageous warrior in the early battles, ‘Alī served as adviser to the first three Caliphs, playing a large role in the creation of the Islāmic state. He then split from the orthodox Suňni Muslims at the appointment by ‘Umar of his son ‘Uthman to the Caliphate. After the latter’s murder, ‘Alī was proclaimed Caliph by the Medinians, but he was opposed by the Quraysh elite at Mecca, including a group headed by Ā‘isha and one headed by the savvy Mu‘awiyya, governor of Syria, who succeeded in outmaneuvering the gentle, idealistic ‘Alī and taking over the Caliphate. A group of ‘Alī’s troops rebelled; they were put down. A remnant group became the Kharijites, one of whom in 661 assassinated ‘Alī near Kufa. ‘Alī is beloved as first of the Ḥāmīs in Shi‘a Islām, which moved away from the Suňni Muslims during this fractious early period of Islām. ‘Alī was one of the Prophet’s main scribes, collecting numerous Ḥadīth sayings and customs. Sūfis claim Muḥammad passed the esoteric wisdom to ‘Alī, not to the more legalistic Caliphs preceeding him. By all accounts (both Shi‘a and Suňni) ‘Alī was indeed a very pious man and an inspired orator. His sermons, lectures and discourses were collected in the 10th century as the Nahj al-balāghah.

Fāṭima al-Zahrā (c.606-33)—youngest of Muḥammad’s four daughters, wife of ‘Alī, and mother of their two sons, Ḥusayn and ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib. She was indeed a very pious and beloved woman, and an inspired orator. His sermons, lectures and discourses were collected in the 10th century as the Nahj al-balāghah.

Ḥusayn (626-80)—son of ‘Alī and Fāṭima, much loved by the Prophet. During his youth he was devoted to serving his father. He grew to become a pious, humble, noble man, eloquent and generous. He often spent his nights in spiritual devotions. Later he fearlessly refused to acknowledge Yazīd as heir-apparent to the Umayyad dynasty and in 680 he escaped from Medina with his family and relatives to Mecca, then headed for Kūfa to mobilize support for his cause. The Umayyads, however, intercepted him near Karbalā and annihilated Ḥusayn’s heavily outnumbered forces (4,000 to 92 men), then massacred his male children and infants (only one, Zayn al-Abidin, survived). This violence against the Prophet’s own descendants shocked the Muslim world and was memorialized in the Shi‘a tradition of Islām. Ḥusayn’s stand against the evil Umayyads became the prototypical example of the need to revolt against unjust (zalim) regimes.

Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī (d. c.670)—the eldest son of ‘Alī and Fāṭima, also much loved by his grandfather Muḥammad. After his mother’s death, he grew estranged from his father, and spent most of his early adulthood making and unmaking scores of marriages, along with having 300 concubines. A peaceful man, he renounced the Caliphate after his father’s death, allowing Mu‘awiyya that role; the latter gave him a large pension and he retired to Medina, dying there of consumption.

Aṣḥāb aṣ-ṣuffah: the “companions of the ledge” or “people of the bench,” the mystical companions of the Prophet: they included not only ‘Alī and family, but also Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī (d. 653), prototype of the true ḥaǧīr, the poor person possessed by God; Salmān al-Fārisī, Muḥammad’s Persian-born barber, the model for spiritual adoption and mystical initiation, also linking Arab and Persian cultures; Uways al-Qarānī, from Yemen, who never met Muḥammad but whose piety Muḥammad felt from a distance—Persians considered him the prototype dervīsh, who often prayed through the night for help/initiation. All these persons belong to the Shi‘a school of Islam, which traces its lineage to Muḥammad through fourth Caliph (Khalīfah) ‘Alī, not through Abū Bakr (the first Caliph).

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (640-728)—from Baṣrā, Iraq, the “Patriarch of Sūfism,” he studied under companions of Prophet Muḥammad, especially ‘Alī, practiced austerities, and went on to preach eloquent sermons at Bagh-
dad against the worldliness engendered in Islam by the Umayyad dynasty (661-750) at Damascus, which was mainly interested in conquest and luxury. Hasan spoke of the transiency of the world and urgent need for devotion to God. His disciple ‘Abdu’l Wāḥid ibn Zayd (d. 794) brought Hasan al-Baṣrī’s ideals to Syria, where Abū Sulaymān ad-Dārānī (d. 830) and his disciple, Aḥmad ibn Abīl-Hawārī (d. 851) carried on the Baṣrīan ascetic movement.

Imām Ja’far aṣ-Ṣādiq (d. 765)—sixth Imām of Shi’ite Islam from c735 on, and one of the greatest teachers of early Sūfism and Islām in general, attracting to his home in Medina large numbers of scholars, both Sunni and Shi’a, with the power of his learning and “exceptional insight into mystical phenomena.” He is considered the father of jafr, “secret knowledge.” He posited four levels of interpretation of the Qur’ān, the higher three being mystical. Sufis would interpret the Qur’ān according to his views. Ja’far speaks of the key Sūfi themes of fanā‘ and baqū‘, “annihilation” (of ego) and “abiding” (in God). He allegedly introduced an authentic love-mysticism into Islām, and he preached an almost theosophical doctrine of Muhammadan Light (Nūr). Something of a quietist, he eschewed involvement in the politics of his day, and thus helped position the Imām-ship as more of a religious leadership role. In his theological writings, he espouses a position between determinism and free will. An enormous set of alchemical and astrological writings are attributed to him, probably spuriously.

Ibrāhīm ibn Adham (d. c790)—renowned the princely life in Balkh, Khurāsān (eastern Iran), to become a model Sūf of poverty, abstinence, and complete trust in God (tawakkul). He was associated with the circle of Imām Ja’far. Ibrāhīm is credited with making the first classification of the stages of zuhd, asceticism.

Rābi‘a al-‘Adawiyya (c717-801)—Iraqi Sūf, kidnapped and sold into slavery as a child, her master set her free upon witnessing her holiness. She evidently never had a teacher, yet was venerated as an authority on Sūfism who enjoyed an amazing familiarity with God. According to ‘Atṭār, who over 400 years later collected the many orally transmitted tales of her, many disciples came to see Rābi‘a at Baṣra, Iraq, and to hear her mystic teaching on single-minded sincere love for God alone, and obliviousness to desire for heavenly reward or fear of hellish punishment. In such love for the Beloved, even love for the Prophet Muḥammad and aversion to Iblis/Satan are distractions. (M. Smith, 1950, 2001)

Fudayl ibn ‘Iyād (d. 803)—a highwayman from Merw, Khurāsān, who converted to Sūfism. He was, though married, very ascetical. His disciple Bishr al-Ḥāfī ("the barefoot one") (d. 841), also from Merw, came to Baghdad, the great capital of the Abbasid dynasty (750-1258), where he taught the Sūfī way, emphasizing ikhlās, “absolute sincerity” in every thought/action.

Shaqiq al-Balkhī (d. 809)—from Balkh, Khurāsān, not only a Sūfī expert on tawakkul, but also first to discuss the “mystical states” (ḥāl) and, like Rābi‘a, he emphasized “the light of pure love of God.”

Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī (d. 815)—lived in Baghdad, esteemed for his mystical powers. A close companion of 8th Imām Riddā (the last open, explicit link between Sūfīs and Shi’ites), al-Karkhī was one of the first to speak about divine love.

Sayyida Nafīsa (d. 824)—the great-granddaughter of Ḥasan, son of ‘Ali and Fātimah, was esteemed for her great devotion and energy. Nafīsah made the pilgrimage (ḥajj) to Mecca 30 times, fasted frequently, and knew the Qur’ān by heart; buried at Cairo.

Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Antākī (d. 835)—a Syrian Sūfī who lived and wrote on mystic asceticism.

Fāṭima of Nishāpur (d. 849)—a female teacher highly esteemed by Sūfī saints Dhū‘n-Nūn and Bāyazīd Bīstāmī (q.v.); she was married to Aḥmad Khidrūya.

Ḥārith b. Asad al-Muhāsibī (d. 857)—Iraqi theologian turned Sūfī, born in Baṣra but spending most of his life up at Baghdad, he had many disciples and wrote numerous works of moral psychology, chiefly con-
cerned with constant awareness and love of God, *ikhlāṣ* (sincere purity of intention), *muḥāṣaba* (conscientious analysis of the *nafs* or ego-self), ascertaining the source of inclinations (from ego, from Iblis/Satan, or from God), and ongoing awareness of death as coming sooner than later—so as to purify all egotism and worldliness. He gave Sūfism a good technical vocabulary.

**Abu’l-Fayd Thawbān bin Ibrāhīm Dhū‘n-Nūn al-Miṣrī** (d. 859)—Egyptian Sūfī, condemned for his public teaching, though highly esteemed among Sūfis of his time. Considered a great miracle worker and alchemist, Dhū‘n-Nūn was the first to compose Sūfī poems and to formulate a theory of *mā‘rifā* (Divine gnosis). Dhū‘n-Nūn emphasized the majesty of God, and complete *fanā* (ego-annihilation) and *baqā* (life in God), teaching that God takes over the life of the *‘ārif* (gnostic) and acts through him/her. Unlike earlier ascetics, he valued nature as a “testimony to Thy Unity.” A black slave-girl, whom he met by chance, was his teacher.

**Sarī as-Saqaṭī** (d. c.867)—al-Kharkhī’s disciple at Baghdad, and a guide to many Sūfis, he discussed the mystical stages and was the first to define mystical love as “real mutual love between man and God.” This was a scandal to the orthodox, who accepted “love of God” only in the sense of obedience to the transcendent almighty One.

**Yahyā ibn Mu‘ādh ar-Rāzī** (d. 871)—Persian Sūfī, honored as “al-wā‘īz,” “the preacher,” gave eloquent sermons to the public on “real love.” His main disciples were **Abū ‘Uthmān al-Ḥīrī** (d. 910), who emphasized purification of the soul, and **Yūsuf ibn Ḥusayn ar-Rāzī** (d. 916), who taught on sincerity and constant recollection of God.

**Bāyazīd (or Abū Yazīd) al-Bīstāmī** (d. 874)—a major exponent of early Persian Sūfism, one of Sufism’s first “Divinely intoxicated ecstacies,” and a prime developer of a *nondual* Sūfī doctrine. Bāyazīd was born at Bīstām in northwest Iran, grandson of a Zoroastrian convert to Islām. He began his career as a promulgator of Ḥanafi law. A student turned him toward Sūfism. He later embraced solitude and the contemplative life, but allowed himself periods of teaching disciples at Bīstām. He evidently wrote nothing, but some 500 of his sayings (coming down to us only in fragments in later Sūfis’ works) stress the complete *fanā*-annihilation in God, and are filled with Divine devotion, nondual wisdom, and certain enigmatic utterances, like the much-discussed line, “Glory be to Me, how great is My majesty,” probably a bit of “Divine prophet-speak.” Of crucial interest is his account, variously re-told, of a mystical ascension beyond heaven to Allāh, similar to the *mi‘rāj*-ascent of Prophet Muḥammad, Enoch, et al. Bāyazīd Bīstāmī early on came to symbolize one of two main trends in Sūfism, namely, the eastern, Khurāsān, Persian-speaking “(God-) intoxicated” variety, contrasted with the western, Arabic-speaking, Baghdad brand of more “orthodox” Sūfism represented by the more sober sage, al-Junayd. Bīstāmī’s ecstatic Sūfism strongly influenced the later Persian-speaking Sūfī mystic love poets like Sanā‘ī, ‘Aṭṭār, Rūmī, Ḥāfez, et al., as well as the “mad” Malāmaṭī and Qalandarī dervīshes.

**Sahl at-Tustaṭī** (d. 896) of Baṣra, Iraq, and his disciple **Ibn Sālim** (d. 909), taught about constant repentence and the need for combining *tawakkul* (complete trust in God’s providence) and responsible work. Their teaching is known as the Sālimiya school. Tustaṭī was influenced by Dhū‘n-Nūn, and in turn influenced not only Ibn Sālim but also al-Junayd and al-Hallāj.

**Abū Sa‘īd Aḥmad al-Kharrāz** (d. 899)—Iraqī Sūfī, disciple of as-Saqaṭī of Baghdad, said to be the first to deeply and more formally discuss the doctrine of *fanā*-*baqā* (annihilation and subsistence in God), and to redefine the important notion of *tauḥīd* (God’s unity) in strict nondualist terms: “Only God has the right to say ‘I.’” He emphasized *ishārāt*, subtle allusion to the highest spiritual truths, not speaking about them openly.

**‘Amr Bin ‘Uthmān al-Makkī** (d. 909)—Whereas others wrote of spiritual progression in terms of gnosis, al-Makkī of Baghdad wrote a systematic treatise on increasing degrees of love, intimacy, and proximity to God. With its clear intellectual focus, psychological rigor and interest in balancing orthodox Islām with...
at-Tirmidhî (d. 932)—Irish Sufi, surnamed al-Hakîm, “the philosopher,” developed the notion of the ghauth (pole) or ghauth (help), who is the leader of the Sufi spiritual hierarchy, the seal of the saints. He sketched the various degrees of sainthood according to gnosticism.

Abû’l-Qâsim Muḥammad al-Junayd (d. 910)—Persian-Iraqi Sufi, “the undisputed master of the Sûfîs of Baghdad,” a disciple of at-Tustarî and al-Kharrâz, and nephew of as-Saqâtî. Junayd kept only a small circle of disciples, but was a very influential author, much cited by later Sufis. He emphasizes constant purification and watchfulness against the wiles of egocentricity, and affirms the majesty and nonduality (tauhîd) of God. He speaks relentlessly of the role of ba‘ltâ, the trial and torment which is a Divine test of the aspirant, who must undergo the most thorough fanâ annihilation of the subtest and insidiously layered forms of delusion (which are ultimately Divine self-deception). Junayd thus outlined various stages to God, and developed major Sufi doctrines, such as the value of sahîw (sobriety or clarity) over sukr (mystic “intoxication”). He made great use of Arabic word play on the root w/j/d, as in wajîd and wu‘jîd, “finding,” “existence,” “ecstasy.” He taught that a man should return to that origin “as one was before he was” (cf. Jesus in Gospel of Thomas, 19) but that, in this return to the Real (Alläh), “you will not attain Him through yourself. You will attain Him only through Him.” (Sells, 1996)

Ahmad bint Muḥammad Abû’l-Ḥusayn al-Nûrî (d. 907)—great ascetic and teacher of Baghdad, disciple of as-Saqâtî; a clairvoyant spiritual director, persecuted for adhering to Sufism. He was a model of brotherly love and emphasized pure, single-minded love for God. Considered a heretic (zîndîq) by the orthodox for being a “lover of God.”

Sumnûn (d. after 900)—of Baghdad, surnamed al-Muḥîbb, “the Lover,” highly praised for his extremely moving sermons on love for God, which love he considered superior to gnosticism.

Abû Muḥammad Ruwaym ibn Abû’l-Theology is actually not pantheist, as many believe, but a panentheist expression of God’s transcendent nonduality paradoxically and immanently expressing as everything. Some say it was God who spoke the “blasphemous sayings” through the selfless al-Ḥallâj; other Sufis like Junayd thought he erred in “openly revealing love’s secrets.” (Massignon/Mason, 1994)
Abū Bakr ash-Shiblī (859-945)—friend of al-Ḥallāj, an eccentric Sūfī (occasionally confined to an asylum) who was known for his paradoxical sayings. He urged contemplation of God alone, with no thought of His acts of grace, angels, etc. Considered to possess miraculous powers, he told his disciples that he would be always protecting them.

Abū Bakr al-Wāsīṭī (d. 942)—Persian Sūfī, settled in Baghdad for a while, emphasized tauḥīd (God’s non-duality) and absolute concentration on God.

‘Abd al-Jabbār ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Niffarī (d. 965)—Iraqi Sūfī, a highly esteemed, paradoxical teacher and author who, like Muḥammad, claimed that God revealed the teachings through him. His most famous work is the Kitāb al-Mawāqif (Book of “Standings,” being riveted in God), perhaps compiled by his son from the scraps of paper on which Niffarī is claimed to have written all his Divine messages. Niffarī stressed prayer (as God’s great gift) and complete fanā, even beyond the “veil of gnosis.” He died in Egypt. (Sells, 1996)

Abū Sa’īd ibn al-‘Arābī (disciple of al-Junayd, d. at Mecca, 952) and Abū M. al-Khulīdī (d. 959)—two of the early historians/compilers of Sūfism whose works, unfortunately, do not survive. (Note: this Ibn al-‘Arābī is not to be confused with a more famous namesake, d. 1240)

Abū Naṣr as-Sarrāj (d. 988)—from Tus, Iran, was for a time a disciple of Ibn Khafif of Shiraz (c882-982). He traveled widely, and was a spiritual director and esteemed systematizer of Sūfism. His Kitāb al-Luma’ (Book of Flashes) is “the first systematic exposition of Sūfism as a way of life and thought.…. If there is a guide who can take us back to those extraordinary early years of Sūfism, introduce us to the major actors, ease our way into their debates and conversations, and provide us with a theologically and psychologically sensitive interpretive framework, that guide would be Abu Nasr as-Sarraj.” (Sells, 1996).

Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Kalabādhī (d. c.990)—influential Afghani author of a widely-read if rather dry book on Sūfī doctrine, the Kitāb at-ta’arruf, which articulated a middle ground between orthodoxy and Sūfism.

Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 996)—of the Sālimiyya school, he lived and taught in Mecca, Baṣra, and Baghdad. His works include a very comprehensive manual of Sūfism, the Qūṭ al-qlūb.

‘Abdur’-Rahmān as-Sulāmī (d. 1021)—influential biographer and teacher who wrote on the classes of Sūfī saints and different strands of Sūfism in his Tabaqāt as-ṣūfīyya.

al-Kharaqānī (954-1034)—Arabian Sūfī, an illiterate peasant, initiated by the spirit of Bāyazid Bīstānī, he became a fervent poet; many miraculous tales were told about him.

Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1037)—compiled the Ḥilyat al-auliyya, a 10-volume hagiography on Sūfī saints.

Abū Sa’īd bin Abīl Khayr (d. 1049)—born in Khurāsān, he underwent very difficult ascetic practices, but later lived more comfortably with his Sūfī friends. Abīl Khayr wrote many mystical quatrains, the first examples of Persian poetry. He delineated “40 stations” to God-Realization, and was the first Sūfī to draw up a preliminary monastic rule for his disciples. (Nasr, 1972; Smith, 1972; Schimmel).

Abū-Qāsim ‘Abdul’-Karīm al-Qushayrī (d. 1074)—Persian Sūfī, born near Nishapur in Khurāsān, was trained in the full Islāmıc education of law and theology. He memorized the Qur’ān by heart (such a one is called a hāfiz). Qushayrī was a disciple of Sūfī master Abū ʿAlī ad-Daqqāq (d. 1021), a disciple of as-Sulāmī. He authored many works, including a valuable reference book, the Risāla, a lucid, refined, and widely-read treatise on the theoretical structure of Sūfism; in chapter 3 of this work he delineates 45 stations
to God-Realization, based on an interdependent web of different psychological states. (Sells, 1996; Von Schlegell, 1992; Arberry, 1970).

‘Alī ibn ‘Uthmān al-Hujwīrī or Data Ganj Bakhsh (d. c1071)—Afghani Sūfī, died in Lahore, Pakistan, the first major Sūfī after al-Ḥallāj to venture that far eastward. He wrote the oldest, best-known treatise in Persian language on Sūfism, the Kashf al-mahjūb. During his life he had shown major concern for the poor and needy; his large tomb-shrine-mosque complex is one of the largest and most popular of any saint in Pakistan, visited by Muslims, Hindus, Christians and others for the fulfilment of their prayerful yearnings. (Nicholson, 1959; Ernst, 1999; Rizvi, 2002)

‘Abdullāh Ansārī (1006-89)—a Persian Sūfī, disciple of Kharaqānī, he was persecuted by the orthodox and lived in destitution, but was a prolific writer. He was known especially for his short orisons in the Munājat, which are “unsurpassed” in prayer literature. He flourished and died in Herat (eastern Iran/Afghanistan). (Thackston, 1978)

Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (or: Ghazzālī; 1058-1111)—a Persian orthodox theologian turned Sūfī, often called “the greatest Muslim since Muhammad,” and most influential theologian of medieval Islam, even hailed as the mujaddid or renewer of the faith with the marriage of mysticism and law, ecstasy and intellect in his writings. He criticized both the legalist pedantry of scholars and excessively obscurantist esotericism of Ismā‘īlī sectarians. Born in Tūs in eastern Iran (near present-day Meshed) to a family of wool-spinners, Ghazālī was educated at Tūs and at Gurgān and, significantly, at the madrasa at Nīshāpūr, where he studied under al-Juwaynī, afterwards joining the retinue of ulamā scholars at the Seljuk court of vazir Nīzām al-Mulk. In 1091, Ghazālī was appointed professor of philosophy at the most important of the Nizāmiyya madrasas in Baghdad. An inner crisis and nervous breakdown in 1095 over the absurdity of worldly ambition prevented him from eating and speaking/teaching but led him to adopt the mystical path of Sūfism. He read the works of the Sūfis, especially al-Makki of the Sālimiya school, then made the hajj pilgrimage to Mecca. Here and at Jerusalem, Damascus and other places, he met Sūfī mystics, performed austerities and preached to the public and a circle of disciples. Altogether he spent ten years in the dervish life. It was during this period that he wrote his tremendously influential, 4-part, 40-chapter book in Arabic, the Iḥyā ‘ulūm ad-dīn (“Revival of the Religious Sciences”), “a turning point for Islamic spirituality” in balancing formal religious practice and mystic life. The Iḥyā’s Part 1 discusses “Acts of Worship/Service,” Part 2, “Customs,” Part 3, the vices “leading to hell,” and Part 4, the virtues “leading to Salvation” and diverse aspects of mystical life and attainment. Then Ghazālī returned home to Tūs. In 1105/1106, he was persuaded to return to Nīshāpūr to teach for three years before retiring again to Tūs. Ghazālī was a prolific writer, and his mystical theology gave Sūfism a new, long-sought respect among orthodox Muslims and did much to bring Sūfism to the fore of Islamic life. His corpus includes over 80 works, featuring not only the Iḥyā but also an autobiographical account of the stages of his intellectual and spiritual search, the al-Munqidh min al-dalāl (“Deliverance from Error”), as well as a highly mystical little treatise Mishkāt al-anwār (“Niche for Lights”), and the Kīmiyā’ al-sa‘āda (“Alchemy of Happiness”), a Persian synopsis of his Arabic Iḥyā. We also have a very interesting collection of 26 letters of guidance to Seljuk sovereigns and prime ministers, whom he did not hesitate to rebuke. Ghazālī’s “emphasis on the spiritual life and the possibility of harmonizing mystical practice with the regulations of the religious law guaranteed a place for the emerging Sūfī brotherhoods within the mainstream of Islāmic life. This, in turn, was to provide orthodox Islām with a source of spiritual and cultural vitality that remained influential down to [the present day].” (Dennis MacEoin, Who’s Who of World Religions). (See www.ghazali.org)

Ahmad al-Ghazālī (d. 1126)—younger brother of Abū Ḥāmid, acknowledged by the latter as superior in the “path of love.” Ahmad was a preacher, spiritual director, and author of mystical treatises, including the Sawaynīh, his longest and most important work in Persian, and one of the greatest Sūfī works on chaste love for God. Indeed, Ahmad al-Ghazālī is considered the first to write explicitly (if rather unsystematically) about the metaphysics of Love. Herein, Ahmad says that when a mystic transcends the phenomenal world, he passes through three different levels: the Heart (dil), the Spirit (rūḥ), and the Secret (sirr). The spirit or soul level in this schema is thus intermediate, and it is the proper domain of love. It is here that the mystic
becomes a lover of God, not merely a knower. Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī’s most famous disciple was ‘Aynu’l Qudāt Hamadhānī (1098-1132), a young spiritual genius who wrote a popular work on love, the Tamhīdāt; he was executed in Baghdad, probably by a jealous rival.

Abūl-Majd Majdūd ʻḤakīmʼ Sanāʾī (d. c1131)—pioneer author of mystical Sūfī love poems in Persian. Born in the latter part of the 11th century in Ghazna (eastern Afghanistan), Sanāʾī spent much of his life in the great cities of Khurāṣān (eastern Iran). Sanāʾī left the security of his position as court poet while still in his youth to rely fully on Divine providence, adopting the dervīsh life and thereafter composing poems only for God on mysticism and love. Sanāʾī spiritually transformed the frivolous ghazal “ode to love” poetry sung at the Persian court and created “the first sizable collection of this kind of [ghazal] poetry known in the history of Persian literature.” (de Brujin) He turned the qaṣīda poetic form into a vehicle for religious instruction on asceticism and mysticism. He had written in his youth an entirely secular mathnawī poetic work of rhyming couplets, filled with panegyrics and satire; now he wrote a more spiritual mathnawī of less than 800 verses (often strongly allegorical) in honor of his patron and evident spiritual guide, Muhāammad ibn Mansūrūr, a famed preacher of Sarakhs, Khurāṣān. In his old age, back at Ghazna, now living in greater seclusion, Sanāʾī wrote his magnum opus, Ḥadiqat al-Haqqīqa, “Walled Garden of Truth,” a mathnawī of over 5,000 couplets, rich with spiritual wisdom and interspersed with anecdotes, fables, parables, proverbs, etc. (It was originally known as the Fakhrī-nāma, an honorific name for his patron, Ghaznavid Sultan Bah-rām-shāh.) It comes to us in several versions differing in arrangement and number of verses—apparently Sanāʾī died before fixing a final version of his poem. This last Divān collection of poems hugely influenced Ṭūṭūr and Rūmī. One can say that ‘Atībī’s five mathnawī poems and Rūmī’s single huge Mathnawī took up where Sanāʾī left off, with greater poetic flourish. Yet the Ḥadiqat al-Haqqīqa is more simple and direct in its wisdom counsels than the poetic works of Ṭūtībī and Rūmī. (de Brujin, 1983)

Yūsuf Hamadhānī (d. 1140)—from Central Asia, “the imām of his time,” was influenced by Bīṭāmī and Kharaqānī. Two major Sūfī orders stem from him: the Yasawīyya Order in Central Asia (founded by his Anatolian disciple, Ḥāmid Yasaవī [d. 1166]); and the powerful and especially widespread Naqşbandīyya Order, which evolved from his other main disciple, ʻAbdu’l-Khāliq Ghījduwānī (d. 1220).

ʻAbdu’l-Qādīr al-Jilānī (1078-1166)—Persian-Iraqi Sūfī, considered the founder of widespread Qādirīyya order of Sūfis, the first and largest of the Sūfī brotherhoods. A tremendous ascetic in the first half of his life, the example of Prophet Muḥammad inspired him at age 51 to marry; he eventually fathered 49 children by his several wives. Al-Jilānī was a great preacher of a sober, sincere Sūfism, hailed as a miracle worker by the crowds who came to see him. By number of followers, al-Jilānī may be the most popular saint in Islam. His burial shrine is in Baghdad. (www.albaz.com)

Abū Najīb al-Suhrawardī (d. 1168)—Sūfī philosopher, disciple of Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī. His Adāb al-murīdīn handbook of Sūfism was widely read.

Shuhda bint al-Ībārī (d. 1178)—of Baghdad, she came to be called the “glory of womankind,” with numerous disciples (mainly male) seeking her out for her degree of religious learning and expertise on the ḥadīth.

Shihābuddīn al-Suhrawardī Ḥalabī al-Maqṭūl (d. 1191)—originally from Iran, this Suhrawardī settled in Aleppo, Syria, where at age 38 he was executed for “Bāṭinite heresies.” Called “master of the philosophy of illumination” (shaykh al-shrāq), he wrote nearly fifty books, emphasizing a Light-philosophy and angelology; he combined Hermetic and Platonic traditions into his Illuminationist, theosophical Sūfism, which rebukes the Aristotelianism of Avicenna. (See the various works of Henri Corbin)

Rūzbihān Baqī (d. 1209)—another great Persian author of works on mystic love; he lived into old age in Shir-raz. (Ernst)
Fariduddin ‘Attar (d. 1220)—Persian Sufi; a pharmacist by trade, he traveled widely in studying Sufi saints, and later became himself a saintly contemplative recluse. He wrote not only a colorful and extensive collection of lives of the saints (Tadhkirat al-auliyā’), but also great mystical poems that express the theme of painful longing for God. These poems are contained in his Ilāhiānāme (Divine Book), Muṣībatnāma (Book of Divine Affliction), Ushturnāme, and his celebrated long allegorical poem, Mantiq ut-tayr (Concourse of the Birds). He is famous—infamous among the orthodox—for the mystical saying, “hama āst,” “everything is He,” expressing the utter nonduality of God. (M. Smith)

‘Abdu’l-Khaliq Ghijduwānī (d. 1220)—disciple of Yūsuf Hamadhānī, he taught the tarīqa-yi Khwājagān, “the way of the Khojas, or teachers” in the Transoxania region of Central Asia. He set up the “eight principles” upon which Naqshbandiyya Sufi practice was later built.

Abū’l Jannāb Aḥmad al-Kubrā (1145-1220)—born in Khiva, Central Asia, he traveled widely before returning to Khwarizm in 1185. A prolific writer, al-Kūbra taught an elaborate mystical psychology of ecstatic experiences, miraculous powers, color symbolism, etc., and stressed an austere spiritual lifestyle. He founded the Kibrāwiyya order, which spread to Turkey and India. Disciple Najmuddin Dāya Rāzī wrote the Mirād ul-‘ibād, a popular mystical book.

Shihābuddin Abū Hafs ‘Umar al-Suhrawardi (1144-1234)—Persian-Iraqi Sufi; nephew of Abū Najīb Suhrawardī, he was main founder of the Suhrawardiyya order and an esteemed exponent of nondual Sufi views. A great spiritual director and prolific writer, famous especially for his ‘Awārif al-ma‘ārif, he also served as Caliph Naṣir’s ambassador to other kingdoms (the Ayyubids and Seljukids).

‘Umar Ibn al-Fārid (d. 1235)—an ecstatic, mystic contemplative from Cairo who settled in Mecca, then returned home. Fārid is seen as the greatest Arab mystical poet. He dictated his poems after coming out of ecstatic trances, some of which lasted for days. The Tā ṯya, his masterpiece, is thought by many Sufis to have magical qualities. (Homerin, 2001)

Mu’inuddin Chishti (d. 1236)—born in Sistan, eastern Persia, he came to Delhi, India, in 1193, settled in Ajmer, Rajasthan, and founded the musically oriented Chishti order which has flourished in India. His tomb in Ajmer is attended by beautiful music and qawwāl singing. After his death, his many khalifas/successors spread his ideals of love, generosity, mildness, modesty and a classless brotherhood throughout India. A main line of succession is through his disciple Qutbuddin Bakhtiyār Kākī (d. 1235) of the Delhi area, succeeded by Bābā Farīduddin (d. 1265 or 1280), a tremendous ascetic and mystical poet who settled in the Punjab area, where he and his disciples lived in great poverty but amidst the spiritual splendor of Divine fellowship, into which he included non-Muslims. Bābā Farīd had seven major disciples, chief of whom was Nizāmuddin Auliyā (d. 1325), a well-known theologian and mystic of Delhi, whose positive, spiritualizing influence on the people of Delhi became legion, and who helped make Sufism a mass movement in northern India. It is with Nizāmuddin Auliyā that we have one of the first really reliable collections of discourses by an Indian Sufi master. (Alas, his predecessors had utterly spurious works attributed to them.) Amir Khosrau, a poet and founder of Indo-Muslim musical tradition, and Hasan Sījzi Dihlawī (d. 1328), who collected Nizāmuddin’s teachings, were two of the master’s leading disciples. One of Nizāmuddin’s successors was Burhanauddin Gharīb, who settled in the Khuldabad region (near Aurangabad); his other successor, Chirāgh-i-Delhi (d. 1356), taught Muḥammad Gisādarāz (d. 1422), a prolific writer of prose and poetry in Arabic and Persian who did much to popularize Ibn ‘Arabi’s theosophical and nondual views in Sind. (Rizvi, 2002; Lawrence 1993, 2006)

Bibī Fāṭima Sam (flourished first half of 13th century)—came to Delhi between 1210 to 1236 as an impressive wandering spiritual teacher; little is known about her. Her burial site at Kaka Nagar, New Delhi, is a popular shrine.

Muḥyīuddin Muḥammad Ibn ‘Arabī (1165-1240)—this “supreme theorist of philosophic Muslim mysticism” was born at Murcia, Spain. His father was a prominent state minister, and the family moved to

Seville, where Ibn ‘Arabī underwent a profound mystical opening at age 15. He was initiated into a Sufi order at age 20, and studied Islamic sciences, soon gaining fame as a scholar. In the 1190s he left Spain, never to return. He traveled widely and taught from North Africa (Tunis, Fez, Marrakesh) to the Middle East (Mecca for a two-year sojourn in 1202-4, Mosul, Cairo, Baghdad, Aleppo, Quniya, Mecca again), then to Anatolia (Turkey) for nine years before settling in 1223 in Damascus, Syria, at the invitation of the governor, where he taught until his death in November 1240. He was generally well-received, though the ‘ulamā in Egypt had branded him a heretic, and he was almost assassinated. Ibn ‘Arabī became known as “the greatest teacher,” shaykh al-akbar, and served as a link between eastern and western Sufism, synthesizing Muslim, Hellenic, Persian, and Indian thinking into his system. He was an original and most influential formulator of theosophical Sufi doctrine with his panentheist (not pantheist) notion of wahdat al-wujūd or “unity/singleness of Being.” This wahdat al-wujūd teaching holds that a Single Reality emanates all beings and objects as modes of expression; all phenomenal existence is the manifestation of the Divine Substance. God, the Source and Cause of all, is neither wholly transcendent nor wholly immanent—really, God is the Only One, the Absolute Essence (Dhāt / Zāt) or Absolute Being (wujūd al-μτlāq). Says historian Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi (2002), “His God was not [merely] the transcendent God of the orthodox but the Absolute Being who manifested Himself in every form of existence, and in the highest degree in the form of the Perfect Man” (al-Insān al-Kāmil), the Prophet or Saint. Ibn ‘Arabī prolifically wrote an alleged 800 booklets and books (400 are said to survive), including works of Arabic poetry and explications. His philosophical works, the Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam (Bezels of Wisdom, a synopsis of his work) and the very long Al-futūhât al-makkiyya (Meccan Discourses), his Tarjumān al-aswāq (Interpretation of Divine Love), and his Dīvān of Arabic poetry, are most important. His works are dense with symbols and metaphors, making them difficult to read. He promoted ecumenical love, tolerance, compassion and fellowship with all, and distrusted the narrow intellect as a veil promoting egotism. “Within my heart all forms may find a place, the cloisters of the Christian monk, the idol’s place a pasture for gazelles (love-objects), the Ka’ba of God, the tablets of Torah, the Prophet’s Qur’ān. Love is the religion I follow; whichever way its camels take, for this is my religion and faith…. ” His tomb at the foot of Mt. Qasıiyūn outside Damascus is a popular spot for pilgrims. His main disciple and stepson, Ṣadruddīn Qunawī (d. 1274), initiated by the master at Quniya in 1210, began the line of influential commentators and popularizers of Ibn ‘Arabī’s treatises to make their ideas more accessible (a group that would come to include prominent Sufis like Jāmī of Herat and al-Jīlī of Baghdad). Ṣadruddīn, who was also mentored by one of Ibn ‘Arabī’s favorite companions, Suhrawardī shaykh Awḥaduddīn Kir-mānī (d. 1238), wrote his own influential works, and served as chief shaykh of Konya, Anatolia. (Chittick)

Abū’l Ḥasan ‘Alī ash-Shādhili (d. 1258)—a disciple of ‘Abdu’s-Salām ibn Mashīsh (a Moroccan mystic whose teachings survive in a number of Maghrebi orders), he went from Spain, via Tunis, to Alexandria where he settled and later died. Had great insight into men’s souls and transmitted great mystical fire; he advocated the householders’ life; his followers organized the Shādhiliyya Order in his name, the largest of the Sīfī orders along with the Qādiriyya.

Jalāluddīn Tabrīzī (d. 1244)—this Anatolian served Abū Hafs ‘Umar Suhrawardī at Baghdad for seven years before heading to India with Bahā’uddīn Zakariya (see below); they parted at Nishāpūr. Jalāluddīn Tabrīzī came to Delhi for a time, enduring the repeated plots against him by a jealous shaykh. Eventually he went all the way eastward to Bengal, successfully establishing the Suhrwardīyya order in that region.

Bahā’uddīn Zakariya Multānī (1182-1262)—born in Multān, India (now in Pakistan), he studied in Khurāsān, Iran, for seven years, then Bukhara (becoming known as “the angel”), before making the ḥajj to Mecca. He studied hadīth for five years at Medina, then became the prime khālīfa/deputy of Abū Hafs ‘Umar Suhrawardī at Baghdad after a training period of only 17 days marked with visions and paranormal transmissions of power and authority. Bahā’uddīn returned home to Multān, praying and meditating in solitude along the way while his friend Jalāluddīn Tabrīzī visited Sūfīs. Initially resisted by local Muslim leaders, Bahā’uddīn Zakariya established the Suhrwardīyya order in India. For half a century, Shaykh Bahā’uddīn was the most celebrated Sīfī in the region, designated a “Shaykhhu’l-Islām” by Sultan Itutmish in the late 1220s. He became a prosperous family man, and kept court like a nobleman—all his wisely-saved wealth was then given away by his oldest son Ṣadru’dīn to the poor (who were wretched during this time of
repeated Mongol invasions). Shaykh Bahā’uddīn’s most outstanding khāliṣa was Fakhruddīn Ibrāhīm ‘Irāqī (1213-89), who strongly amplified the Suhrawardīyya influence in India and elsewhere through his Persian poetry and prose. In his youth in the ancient city of Hamadān of western Iran, he memorized the Qur’ān at a precocious age and recited it before rapt local audiences, becoming famous by the time he was 8. ‘Irāqī is said to have mastered all the Muslim sciences by age 17 and had begun to teach others. One day a band of wandering galāndar (unaffiliated) Sūfī dervishes came to town, singing their verses of spiritual freedom and ecstatic love for Allāh; ‘Irāqī was smitten with them, threw away his books, and left to join them. They wandered over Persia and then came east to Multān c1238, stopping for a time at Shaykh Bahā’uddīn’s khāniqāḥ before moving on. Separated from his galāndar friends in a duststorm, ‘Irāqī was drawn to visit the Shaykh again and to enter the Suhrawardīyya order. Two weeks into his 40-day meditation retreat, however, the Shaykh heard an ecstatic ghazal ode on Divine love by the gifted young ‘Irāqī, in violation of the strict Suhrawardīyya rules. Deeply impressed, the Shaykh ordered ‘Irāqī to stop his meditation retreat, get married to the Shaykh’s daughter, and devote himself to a new vocation: composing ghazals.

The move shocked the other disciples but the Shaykh retorted: “Such behavior may be prohibited to you—but not to him.” ‘Irāqī served the Shaykh for 25 years. After the Master’s death, a few other disciples’ jealous plots constrained ‘Irāqī to leave Multān with some Sūfī friends. They went on ḥajj, ‘Irāqī’s renown bringing him a lavish welcome by the Sultan at Oman en route to Mecca. He then traveled widely with his friends and disciples and “wherever they went they were received with honors.” He stayed in Konya, meeting Jalāluddīn Rūmī and joining in the music, poetry and sacred whirling sessions. At Konya, he was inspired to write his famous prose treatise on gnostic love, the Lāmā’at (Flashes), after learning the views of Ibn ‘Arabī after meeting the latter’s stepson, Shaykh Ṣadruddīn Qunawī (d.1274), with whom ‘Irāqī remained in close contact even after ‘Irāqī moved to Tuqat in Anatolia. The governor of Anatolia built a khāniqāḥ for ‘Irāqī and his disciples there, a major center for their Sūfī musical gatherings, and later gave ‘Irāqī all his wealth before the Mongols killed him. ‘Irāqī took none of it but gave it all to the astonished Sultan in Egypt when ‘Irāqī had to flee from a Mongol attempt on his own life. The Sultan made him chief shaykh of Cairo. ‘Irāqī thus was able to promote more widely the views of Shaykh Bahā’uddīn and Ibn ‘Arabī through his own ministry of love. ‘Irāqī knew well his Muslim theology and the Arabic and Persian teachings and poetry of earlier Sūfīs, including not just Ibn ‘Arabī, but also Bāyazıd, al-Ḥallāj, Kharaqānī, Sanā’ī and Aḥmad Ghazālī. ‘Irāqī wanted to spend his last years in Damascus, where he was again lavished with honors and support. When he died, he was buried near the tomb of Ibn ‘Arabī: the “ocean of the Persians” next to the “ocean of the Arabs.” (Chittick & Wilson, 1982; Rizvi, 2002)

Jalāluddīn Rūmī (1207-1273)—hailed as Mevlâna (Maulâna), “Our Master,” Rūmī was born in Vaksh, Afghanistan, 150 miles northeast of Balkh. About age 9 he left home with his father, Bahā’uddīn Walad (d.1231) and family, eventually coming to Konya, Anatolia (modern-day Turkey), where Bahā’uddīn, a mystical theologian, taught under the patronage of the Anatolian Seljuks. Rūmī married in his 17th year, and, while still a very young man himself, fathered two sons (and later another son and daughter by a second wife after his first wife died c1242). He was 24 when his father died; he went to Aleppo and Damascus, Syria, for further study. With the spiritual tutelage and help of his father’s friend and disciple Burhānuddīn Moḥaqeq, who took him much deeper into the path of Sūfism, Rūmī, now a contemplative veteran of several long solitary retreats, succeeded his father at the theology post in Konya as a full-fledged Shaykh. Then he underwent a radical spiritual deepening and triggering of his poetic outpourings under the mystical influence of the itinerant sober Sūfī, Shamsuddīn Tabrīzī, with whom Rūmī spent long periods alone. (Note: we now have a much better knowledge of the extent of the influence of these three mentors for Rūmī with translations of their writings and sayings.) Rūmī had a large circle of disciples and became the most famous of the Persian poet-saints. At the behest of his first successor, Ḥusāmuddīn Čelebi (d. 1284), Rūmī wrote his long, beautiful, influential Mathnāvī of rhyming couplets (25,577 lines), filled with stories and the Sūfī lore gathered before him. This and his enormous Dīvān of poems (44,292 lines of ghazals, qasīdas, rubā’īyāts and tarji-bands) and many lectures (Fihe mâ fih) and letters comprise the opus of this widely beloved and influential poet-saint. Rūmī’s son Sultan Walad (1226-1312) set up the Mevleviyya (“whirling dervish”) order to carry on his father’s work. Rūmī’s tomb in Konya attracts many Sūfīs, especially for the samā’ celebration of his passing (his ‘urs, or “wedding night” [with the Beloved]) on Dec. 17). (See Franklin Lewis, 2003, for the very best overall book on Rūmī’s life and work.)
Muṣliḥ-ud-dīn Saādī (Sa’dī) Shīrāzī (c.1184-1291)—orphaned in youth, Saadi left his hometown of Shīrāz (south-central Iran) for a traditional Muslim education at Baghdad’s Nizāmiya College, where he met ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī. The Mongol invasion led him to adopt the dervish life. He then embarked on a long journey that saw him in central Asia and India, then Yemen, Ethiopia and Mecca. Captured by the Franks in Syria, he worked at hard labor until ransomed. He then proceeded to North Africa and Anatolia (where he befriended Jalālūddīn Rūmī), before returning to his native Shīrāz in 1256. Rather than seek out the high and mighty for patronage (like Marco Polo), he “mingled with the ordinary survivors of the Mongol holocaust. He sat in remote teahouses late into the night and exchanged views with merchants, farmers, preachers, wayfarers, thieves, and Sufi mendicants. For twenty years or more, he continued the same schedule of preaching, advising, learning, honing his sermons, and polishing them into gems illuminating the wisdom and foibles of his people.” (www.iranchamber.com/literature/saadi/saadi.php) Back at Shīrāz, lovingly received and supported by the people and by prince Sa’d ibn Zanki, he gratefully took the prince’s name as his nom de plume and in 1258 wrote his Gūlistān (Rose Garden) of prose stories, maxims, admonitions and verses, his mathnawi verse-work Bustān (Orchard), and two verse collections: Ghazaliyat (“lyrics”) and Qasa’id (“odes”). His Gūlistān is one of Persia’s most famed works and one of the first to come to wide attention among Europeans (with translations starting in 1651). Saadī apparently lived to be well over a hundred years in age, and allegedly performed miracles by Divine Grace. (Translations of Saadī’s Gūlistān and Bustān can be found at the above website and elsewhere on the Net.)

Hāmiduddīn Suwālī Nagōrī (d. 1274)—one of the early Chishti saints of India, noted for his poverty, vegetarianism, and a widely read Sufī treatise, the Surūr as-sudūr.

Aḥmed El-Badawi (c.1200-76)—Likely from Fez, he came to Mecca with his family at age 11, and studied the Qur’an. Later a preacher of a certain brand of Islām, he vehemently countered detractors. He then withdrew from society, refusing to talk, communicating by gestures. A vision ordered him to go to Tanta, Egypt. He went first to Iraq with his brother, Hassan, and, on his return to Mecca, fasted and deprived himself of sleep for 40 days. He came to Tanta where he preached in a rather frenzied style for long hours from the terrace of a house. Unmarried, he died several years later without an heir, but his postmortem reputation as a visionary quickly spread, and his followers founded the Ahmadiya order. His burial shrine attracts thousands from all over the country every year at the time of his moulid, one of the most celebrated in Egypt.

Qazi Ḥāmiduddīn Nāgōrī (n.d.)—this Suhrawardiyya saint of the same name as the Chishti saint came from a family that migrated from Bukhara to Delhi before 1200. Ḥāmiduddīn didn’t like the life of a qazi (scholar of Muslim law) and went west to Baghdad, becoming Suhrawardī’s most learned disciple, then staying for four years in Medina and Mecca before visiting a large number of towns. Back in Delhi, he befriended Chishti Sufī saint Qutbu’d-dīn Bakhtiyar, and became a fan of the Chishtiyya Order’s sama’ mystic music ceremony, defending it for years against the persecution of the Delhi ‘ulamā. He wrote several noted advanced works on Sufism, including the ‘Ishqīyya, wherein he says that although lover and Beloved appear as two entities, they are identical. One who is lost in Being is a part of God’s attributes. The extinction of “I” brings the predominance of “He.” The essence of all existent beings is Allāh.

Aḥmad Tājuddīn Ibn ‘Aṭa Allāh al-Iskandarī (1250-1309)—a leader in the Shādhilīyya order, he wrote the Latā’if al-minan and Ḥikam, the latter a book of 262 aphorisms very popular throughout the western and central Muslim world.

Yūnus Emre (d. 1321)—of central Anatolia (Turkey), wandered through the country, influenced by the Yasawiyya Sufis, and was the first to use the Turkish language to write beautiful mystical poems. Emre is often referred to as the “Turkish national poet.” He is a key representative of early Turkish mysticism, along with Rūmī and the Mevlevis. He can be considered founder of the Alevi-Bektashi literature, and his influence on later tekke poetry was huge. His ilāhi hymns have played a big role in Turkish Sufī rituals. (Grace Martin Smith, 1993)
Shāh ‘Bu ‘Ali Qalandar (d. 1324)—an unaffiliated Sūfī saint of Pañjab, India, who authored many letters of guidance.

Bībī Fātima Ḥajrānī (fl. early 1300s)—of Sind/Pakistan, was a ḥafīza (someone who knows the Qurʾān by heart) and Persian poetess who performed many miracles.

‘Alā‘uddaula Simnānī (d. 1336)—a Kubrāwīyya Order shaykh, a fine mystical psychologist/philosopher who questioned Ibn ‘Arabī’s non-dual, panentheist views and emphasized the transcendental majesty of God.

Ḥājjī Bektāş (c1247-1338?)—came to Anatolia from Khurāsān in the 13th century; he stands as the legendary founder of the Bektashi order, which became allied with the Janissary military corps (the corps fell in 1826). The order claims its second master to be Bālim Sultan (b. c1500).

Maḥmūd ash-Shabistārī (1288?-1340?)—Persian Sūfī, educated and lived mostly at Tabriz; he became steeped in the symbolic terminology of Ibn ‘Arabī. His 1,000 verse Gulshan-i-raz (Rose Garden of Mystery), written around 1311 in the mathnawi style of rhyming couplets in response to 26 questions on Sufi metaphysics posed to him by Rukh al-Dīn Amīr Ḥusayn Harawi (d. 1318), is one of the best and most straightforward accounts of Sūfism in Persian. (Lewisohn)

Sharafuddin Ahmad ibn Yahya Maneri (c.1263-1381)—a very long-lived Indian Sūfī saint, disciple of Najibuddin Firdausi of Delhi. Maneri brought the Firdausi Order to Bihar state. He lived for many years at the holy Rajgir Hills, but later was persuaded to come live and run a center at Bihar Sharif, where he wrote many influential teaching letters; he is beloved to both Hindus and Muslims. (Paul Jackson, various works)

Muḥammad Shamsuddin Ḥāfiz (1319-89)—Persian Sūfī who, in his impoverished youth memorized the Qurʾān by heart (hence his title, ḥafiz), as well as large portions of Saadi, Rūmī, and others. Ḥāfiz became a noted poet, addressing many of his poems to Shakh-e Nabat, a rare beauty he pined for in his youth. After apprenticing to Shaykh ‘Aṭṭār (not the famous ‘Aṭṭār), Ḥāfiz became a court poet and teacher of Qurʾān studies at the royal college, experiencing the favor, disfavor and then favor of changing political leadership. At age 60, he experienced full awakennng to Allāh after a 40 day austere retreat and a blessing from his master. More than half of his poetic output of ghazals occurred after this breakthrough, and for these ten remaining years he also served as a spiritual director to a few disciples. His widely-read Dīvān collection of poems, compiled after his passing, holds that God is revealed through nature and humble, ego-free submission to a Shaykh. His verses are not especially numerous (a little over 500 ghazals, 42 rubā’iyāts, and a few qasīdas), because they were composed only after he had experienced what he felt to be authentic Divine inspiration. These verses are beloved among the Persian people, seemingly quoted more often even than Rūmī’s.

Sayyid ‘Ali Hamadānī (1314-85)—a respected saint of the Kubrawīyya order, born in Hamadān, Iran, he establish this branch of Sūfism, with the help of a large number of disciples who came with him, in India’s Kaśmīr valley, beginning in 1381. He traveled extensively in Kaśmīr, leaving twenty Iranian Sūfī shaykhs in different parts of the region where they set up khānīqāhs and langars (Sūfī centers and canteens)—unfortunately, their searing missionary zeal had them demolish Hindu temples for their sites (this contrasts strongly with the peaceful Chistiyya Order Sūfī leaders). Hamadānī wrote some 50 short treatises on mysticism, ethics-etiquette, and a famous religio-political manual. He staunchly advocated Ibn ‘Arabī’s wajdat al-wujūd nondual doctrine. He died en route to the hajj in 1385. (S.A.A. Rizvi, 2002)

Masud’ Bakk (d. 1387), ‘Alam Pandawi (d. 1415), Jahāṅgīr Simnānī (d. 1425)—three Chishti saints of India known for their letters of instruction.

Naqshband Bahā‘uddīn (d. 1390)—after whom the powerful Naqshbandiyya Order is named. Naqshband first taught at Bukhara, and then his order spread and grew wealthy by connecting with trade guilds and merchants; it later came to influence the Timurid court, during which time it became more politicized.
Ibn ‘Abbād ar-Rondī (1332-90)—a respected preacher and spiritual director of the Shādhiliyya who lived in Fez, Morocco; he is noted for his edifying letters of instruction, which emphasize gratitude, watchfulness, and sobriety.

‘Imāduddīn Nesīmī (d. 1417)—a great Anatolian mystical poet of the Shi’ite Ḥurūfī Sūfī order who was later flayed alive in Aleppo for his views.

‘Abdu’l Karīm Jīlī (d. 1428)—Iraqi Sūfī of Qādiriyya order, lived and taught in Baghdad. A prolific, influential writer, especially of works popularizing Ibn ‘Arabī’s views, e.g., his work on the Perfect Man, Al-Insān al-Kāmil.

Shāh Nūruddīn Ni’matullāh Wali (1331-1431)—born in Aleppo, Syria, the son of a Sūfī master, he had vision of Uways at age 5. Later he sought out and studied for seven years under the enlightened shaykh ‘Abdullāh al-Yāfī (1298-1367) of the Shādhili and Qādirī orders. Shāh Ni’matullāh then traveled to Egypt, Persia, and into the midst of the Mongol forces (he became good friends with Shāh Rukh). His spiritual ministry flourished in Herat (now Afghanistan), Kerman and Mahan (S.E. Iran), where he started the Ni’matullāhī order, allegedly with hundreds of thousands of followers. Emphasizing love and Divine nonduality, he wrote volumes of essays and poems. He taught that one should always dwell on the Name(s) of God, especially those signifying mercy and generosity, which would lead to expansion (bast) of the heart, rather than contraction (qabd). Eschewing elitism, he opened his movement to anyone who loved God wholeheartedly, and forbade followers from wearing special garb. A renowned miracle worker, in his later years he was never observed to sleep or eat. His tomb-shrine is in Mahan. His son Shāh Burhānuddīn Khalīlullāh (1373-?) succeeded him, moving to Bidar, India; here the Ni’matullāhī order flourished for more than three centuries before returning to Persia, where it is now the most widespread Sūfī order and most prominent of the few Shi’a Sūfī orders in Islām worldwide. (Pourjavady & Wilson, 1978)

Maulāna ‘Abdu’r-Rahmān Jāmī (d. 1492)—Persian-Afghani Sūfī, of the Naqshbandiyya Order, spent most of his life at Herat; a famous poet, hagiographer and clarifier of many Sūfī doctrines, especially those of Ibn ‘Arabī. (Whinfield, 1994)

Kaygusuz Abdī (15th cent.)—an eccentric, mystic Anatolian poet (Bektashi order) who settled in Cairo; used very paradoxical and/or crude phrasings.

‘Abdu’l-Quddūs Gangūhī (d. 1538)—a leading Indian Chishti saint and prolific writer, who expounded waḥdat al-wujūd nondual doctrines of Ibn ‘Arabī.

Pīr Sūltān Abdāl (d. c.1560)—of the Bektashi Order, he is one of the best mystic poets writing in Turkish, later executed for his association with the Persian Shi’ite Safawid dynasty.

Muḥammad Ghauth Gwaliorī (d. 1562)—an Indian Sūfī for whom Emperor Akbar (d. 1605) built a magnificent tomb; he is the main representative of the Shattāriyya suborder in India; Muḥammad Ghauthī (d. after 1633), another member of this order, composed a voluminous book on saints, including 575 Sūfīs.

Shaykh Ṭahīr (16th cent.)—called Lāl Udero by the Hindus, he was an Indian mystic claimed as a saint by both Hindus and Muslims; he defended the “unity of being” (waḥdat al-wujūd) mysticism of Ibn ‘Arabī.

‘Abdu’l-Waḥḥāb Sha’rānī (1493-1565)—”last great Muslim mystic of Egypt,” he founded the Sha’rāwīyya branch of the Badawiyya order; wrote on mysticism, love, and lives of saints.

Bāyezīd Ansārī Pīr-i Roshan (d. 1585)—founder of the Roshaniyya mystical movement in Afghanistan’s Pathan area. He was a staunch nondualist, and the orthodox cruelly drowned his sons for this “sin.” One of his later descendants, Mīrzā Khān Ansārī (early 18th cent.) was a leading mystical poet of the Pashto language. (Schimmel, 1975)
**Aḥmad Sirhindī** (1564-1624)—disciple of the Naqshbandiyya master, Khwāja Bāqi-billāh, he was influential in India for his 534 letters and his books which, while very mystical, also criticize the Shi'a tradition and Sufism's “misleading” wahdat al-wujūd doctrine of Ibn ‘Arabī. Sirhindī instead posits the more sober view known as wahdat ash-shuhūd, which precludes any ontological unity of God and man. (He appears to have misunderstood the wahdat al-wujūd idea that only God is real; “man” doesn’t ultimately, really exist.) Sirhindī and his son, Muḥammad Ma'sūm (d. 1668) as well as his next two successors, were considered by him to be the highest “elect” of God in the Naqshbandiyya order.

**Miān** (or Miyan) Mīr (1550 [possibly 1532]-1635)—part of a potent line of Sūfis in western India to leave their careers to live as ascetics and hermits and yet still have great influence on the Mughal Court. Born in Siwistan, Sindī (Pakistan), to a family of qāzi scholars of Muslim law, he studied the same, but influenced by his mother’s mysticism, he did austerities and long meditation in the jungle. Initiated as a Qādirīyya Sūfī under a hill-dwelling recluse, Shaikh Khizr, he came to Lahore where, with a few disciples, he began an ordered life of solitary meditation, group prayer and visiting the Sūfī tomb-shrines. Growing fame led him to become a recluse, meditating in the forest by day and a cell at night. Master of rigorous Qādirīyya breath exercises, he never slept at night and for several years allegedly used only one breath lasting for the entire night. He taught absolute trust in God (tawakkal), saying one could only pray free of anxiety (namaz-i be khatra) only when totally committed to God. Starting in 1620, Emperors Jahāngīr and then Shahjahān visited him when in the area, impressed by his wisdom and sanctity. Miān Mīr refused all entreaties to become a permanent court advisor. He lived simply and dressed like his fellow Muslims (he decried the Sūfī patched cloak as a “uniform” to get Sūfīs special treatment), and rejected the gifts people wanted to lavish on him, saying they had mistreated him for a beggar when he was rich with God. A sober Sūfī, never “indulging” in ecstasies, Miān Mīr drew many disciples among theologians and legal scholars. He taught that man’s nafs or “animality” needed taming by sharī’ah (to which he closely adhered his entire life), man’s heart (qalb) needed purifying by association with Sūfis (tariqa), and his spirit needed opening into haqīqa or Divine Truth. Miān Mīr realized and promoted the truth of wahdat al-wujūd, that only God exists, the true essence of everyone, but he believed this nondual teaching so esoteric that he refused to divulge it to ordinary Muslims, preferring that they let go of ego and trust in God. He died of dysentery and was buried southeast of Lahore at ‘Alam Ganj / Dharampur, prince Dārā Shikōh building his elegant little tomb shrine. Miān Mīr is an especially honored Sūfī among the Sikhs for his interventions to save the fifth and sixth Sikh Gurus from Mughal harm; he was invited by Sikh leaders to lay the foundation stone for the Sikh Golden Temple at Amritsar in 1588. Miān Mīr had several really notable disciples. His favorite was the miracle-worker Miān Nat-tha, a student since 1599, and one often almost constantly immersed in meditation and austerities; it led to his having the ability to communicate with animate beings and even inanimate objects, thus, for instance, stopping rain and hailstorms; Nattha died young in 1618/9. Another disciple, who also spent much time training in the jungles like his master, was Mulla Khwāja Bihārī, who once demonstrated the truth of wahdat al-wujūd to a traveling teacher and to his own Sūfī friends gathered round a fire by jumping into the fire and remaining for some time without getting burnt or hurt! He remained unmarried his entire life and did not formally teach disciples, though in his gift for conversation, he shared great wisdom, among other things, he said the essence of wahdat al-wujūd was to not be pleased by praise nor get angered by abuse. Miān Mīr’s most prominent disciple was Mullah Shāh Badakshī (1584-1661), about whom we also have a fair amount of detailed information since he became pīr to the imperial family, Emperor Shāh Jahān and especially to his two most impressive children, Jahānārā Begum and Dārā Shikōh, who each wrote about him and his master, Miān Mīr, in their books. It was to Mullah Shāh that Miān Mīr seems to have entrusted the training of several prominent disciples in this lineage, including the two royal siblings. (S.A.A. Rizvi, 2002)

**Bībī Jamāl Khātūn**, younger sister of Miān Mīr, and a spiritual guide to Jahānārā and Dārā Shikōh (see below), was an outstanding sānt of the Qadiiriyya Sufī order, though little is known of her life other than that she was trained in Sufism by her parents, then by her older brother. She married, got permission to leave the marriage after ten years, and carried out great austerities in a life of ardent meditation. She is reputed by

Dārā Shikōh in his writings about the siblings to have been graced with paranormal powers. Miān Mīr frequently referred to her spiritual practices when conversing with his own disciples.

Dārā Shikōh (1615-59)—son of Mughal emperor Shāh Jahān, he was drawn to the Qādiriyya order as taught by Miān Mīr and Mullā Shāh Badakshi of Lahore, and became, with his sister Jahānārā, the two leading disciples of Mullā Shāh. Dārā wrote two early books about his masters and is especially famous for his remarkably open-minded ecumenism and for his hugely important translations into Persian of key Hindu Vedānta works—the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gītā, and Yoga Vasistha, the first two scriptures coming into European translations and greatly influencing the German Romantics and American Transcendentalists. Dārā’s sympathy and openness toward Hindus is remarkable for a Muslim, a big step even beyond the exemplary open-mindedness shown by his great-grandfather Akbar. The prospect of what he might have done had he ascended the imperial throne is fascinating. Unfortunately, he and his wife (who died on the way) had to flee when Shāh Jahān fell ill and the emperorship was perceived by his his power-mongering younger brother Aurangzeb as up for grabs. When finally caught, Dārā was executed as a “heretic” by Aurangzeb. (S.A.A. Rizvi, 2002)

Jahānārā Begum (c.1613-83)—Indian Sūfī, daughter of emperor Shāh Jahān and older sister to Dārā Shikōh. She became a practicing Sūfī within the Chishtiyya Order, writing a biography of its founder in 1639-40, but later she became a disciple of Mullā Shāh Badakshi of the Qādiriyya, about whom she also wrote a book in 1641; she would have become this formidable saint’s khalīfa (successor) “had such a thing been possible” for a woman in those days. Jahānārā was revered in the Delhi and Agra areas as a great saint herself. Forever remaining celibate and unmarried, she served as a charitable, loving friend to children and the needy, and to her father, imprisoned by her other brother Aurangzeb, to whom she also ministered later in life, serving him as spiritual counselor. She sponsored the building of many mosques and gardens, especially those honoring Mullā Shāh. (M. Smith, 1972, and S.A.A. Rizvi, 2002).

Sarmad (d. c1657)—Persian Jewish intellectual who became an “intoxicated,” unconventionally behaving Sūfī poet; he flourished in Dārā Shikōh’s circle of Sūfīs in Delhi, India. He often went about stark naked. Martyred for his views and behavior by Aurangzeb, he was buried opposite the Jami Masjid, Delhi. (Behari, 1971; S.A.A. Rizvi, 2002)

Niyāzī Miṣrī (d. 1697)—a fine Anatolian poet and spiritual leader of the Khalvetiyya order.

‘Abdu’r-Raḥmān Bābā (d. 1709)—a Pathan mystic of the Chishti order in southeastern Afghanistan, he led a life of seclusion; usually regarded as the best mystical Pashto poet. Khwāja Muḥammad Bangash (18th cent.) is another Chishti mystical poet of the Pashto language. (Schimmel)

Shāh ‘Ināyat Shahīd of Jhok (d. 1718)—a great Sindhi (Pakistani) Sūfī saint with a big following; they donated a large amount of land to their master, which he then distributed amongst the followers, making him, in the eyes of certain historians, a pioneer land-reformer. A pious mystic, he was accused of conspiracy against the Mughal throne and martyred. (Schimmel)

Shāh Sa’dullāh Gulshan (d. 1728)—a much-loved Naqshbandiyya master of Delhi, India; a prolific poet in Persian, and very fond of music. His disciple Wālī was considered the greatest lyrical Sūfī poet of southern India. Gulshan was also friends of Bedīl (d. 1721), a reclusive poet not associated with any order, whose mystical poetry, emphasizing longing for God, influenced Afghan and Central Asian literature.

Bulleh Shāh (1680-1752)—considered greatest of the Panjabi mystical poets, he was born into a family of Sūfī dervishes, did austerities in his youth, and became a student of Shāh ‘Ināyat near Lahore (d. 1727). Thrown out of the latter’s circle for expressing his divine joy before the uninitiated, he later came in disguise as a dancing girl, apologized and was accepted back. A nondualist and transcender of sectarian differences, he lived in poverty and died in Lahore. Bulleh’s kāfīs or verse songs are famous over Pakistan. (Behari)
Laṭīf Bhitārī, Shāh ‘Abdu’l (1689-1752)—Indian Sūfī born into a rich family, wandered with yogis in his youth, and later lived and taught a life of austerity and nondualistic devotion to God; Shāh Laṭīf is considered the greatest of the known Sūfī saints of Sind/Pakistan, and greatly expanded and enriched the Sindhi language through his works. (Behari; Schimmel). His disciple Ṣaḥchal Sarmast (1739-1826) was a “God-intoxicated” Sūfī and a great poet, speaking about the “divine secrets” more openly than his master, who was quite fond of veiled allegory. (Behari; Schimmel)

Shāh Waļullāh (1702-62)—of both the Qādiriyya and Naqshbandiyya orders, he was a scholar and mystic who tried to bring more orthodoxy into Indian Sūfism; his descendants fought to defend Muslims from the Sikhs (who, in turn, had earlier been violently persecuted by certain Mughal and other Muslim leaders).

Ḵhwājā Mīr Dārd (d. 1721-85)—Indian Urdu poet and author, who became a sober mystic after a period of “intoxication”; he felt completely identified with his father. Sayyid Muḥammad Nāṣir ‘Andalīb (1697-1758) (a disciple of Sa’dullāh Gulshan and of Pir Muḥammad Zubayr of the Sirhindī line). Dārd, sternly ascetic, flourished in Delhi, and founded the Muẖammadīyya tarīqa, which emphasizes Naqshbandiyya practices (but also a very musical samā’) and eschews the nondualist waḥdat al-wujūd doctrine.

Jānūlāh of Rohri (latter 18th cent.)—great Persian poet of Sind, a Suhrawariyya mystic.

Naẓīr (1735-1846)—Indian Sūfī poet, born in Delhi, he practiced poverty and supported his family on a small salary as a tutor (he once even refused large riches given to him); a nondualistic devotee of Ḥodū, he came to transcend all sectarian differences, occasionally praising Lord Krishna as well as Muhammad and ‘Alī. He lived to be very old and witnessed the encroachment of the British. (Behari, 1971)

Aḥmad Ḥaṭīf of Isfahān (d. 1784)—Persian Sūfī and famous writer of ghazal odes.

Ma’sūm ‘Alī Shāh (c1738-1797)—born in India to a wealthy family, he gave away his riches to friends so as to follow the Ni’matullāhī master, Ṣāhīd ‘Alī Shāh Deccānī (d. 1799, either 104 or 120 years old). Ma’sūm brought the Ni’matullāhī Order back to Persia at his master’s request, in spite of a prophecy that he would be martyred there. He arrived with his wife in Shiraz, Iran, 1775/6, and soon met his disciples Fāyḍ ‘Alī Shāh, the latter’s son Nūr ‘Alī Shāh, and Mūṣṭaq ‘Alī Shāh (a pre-eminent musician and charismatic majdhub mystic). Persecuted for their brand of “intoxicated” Sūfism, emphasizing ardent Divine love (‘ishq), they left for Isfahān c1778, where their Order began to flourish. Persecuted again, they left in 1780/1 and came to Herat, 1782. Nūr ‘Alī and Mūṣṭaq were sent to Kirmān to correct the worldly king; there, Mūṣṭaq and a friend were martyred by the ‘ulamā’ (1792). Ma’sūm traveled to India, returned to Kerman, Persia, where he was joined by Nūr ‘Alī. They had some 60,000 followers at the time; he was murdered by the ‘ulamā’ Bihbahānī around 1797. (Pourjavady & Wilson, 1978)

Nūr ‘Alī Shāh (c1760-1797/98)—successor to Ma’sūm ‘Alī, he was poisoned to death in Mosul by Bihbahānī’s people after a life of traveling with his master all over Iran, bringing Sūfism to the masses (he also journeyed to Baghdad, etc.). A very insightful, original writer of prose and poetry, Nūr ‘Alī is still famous in Iran as a beautiful, youthful archetype for the devotional orientation. Nūr ‘Alī initiated and later married Ḥayātī Kirmānī, who became an eminent Sūfī poet. Her brother, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Rawnaq ‘Alī Shāh (d. 1815), another disciple of Nūr ‘Alī, was noted for his generosity and many miracles. Nūr ‘Alī’s appointed successor, Ḥusayn ‘Alī Shāh Isfahānī (d. 1818), onto whom fell responsibility for the entire Ni’matullāhī Order after the death of ‘Alī Ridā Deccānī in India (1799), helped make the Order more “orthodox” in the public eye, as did his successor, Mājdhub ‘Alī Shāh (d. 1823). After Mājdhub ‘Alī, the Order branched and flourished all over Iran. (Pourjavady & Wilson, 1978)

Maṣṭ ‘Alī Shāh (1776-1837)—most accepted of the successors of Mājdhub ‘Alī, he traveled widely throughout the Muslim world and wrote accounts of various orders and religions he encountered, as well as some poems. He passed away in Jeddah, on making the Ḥajj-pilgrimage with his wife. He turned over the leadership of the Ni’matullāhī Order to Raḥmat ‘Alī Shāh (1793-1861), who was later made vice-premier.
of Fars by Muḥammad Shāh (one of the few Sūfī dervīsh kings in Islam); Rahmat was esteemed for his generosity and forgiveness toward those who had earlier persecuted him, and is generally considered the true leader in the line of succession down from Majdhub ʿAli Shāh. Rahmat’s main successor was Munawwar ʿAli Shāh (1809-1883/4), whose main successor was his son, Wafāʿ ʿAli Shāh (1847-1918). (Pourjavady, 1978) (See more Ni’matullāhī figures below)

Mawlay al-ʿArabī al-Ḥasānī ad-Darqāwī (c.1738-1818)—memorized the Qurʾān at an early age; he then met shaykh Abū ʿl-Ḥasan al-Jamāl of Fez in 1767 and went on to found the important Darqāwī branch of the Shādhilī order in North Africa. He authored a famous collection of 228 letters to his disciples in which he stressed nondualism, fanā and love of God. An ascetic family man, it is said ad-Darqāwī trained 40,000 disciples to teach others. His main two zāwiyah monasteries are at Banū Zarwāl (Jabal az-Zābīb), near Fez.

Aḥmed Ibn Idris (19th cent.)—famous Moroccan mystic teacher whose influence has spread widely.

Aḥmed Ziyāuddīn-i Gumush-khanewī (1813-93)—this dignified, ascetic, yet tender and very charitable Turkish Sūfī master of both learned-knowledge and inspired-knowledge, stood as the “shaikh of shaikhs” during the turmoil of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. Shaikh Ziyāuddīn was so advanced as to be regarded as having developed a new sub-branch in the Ḥalidīyya line of the Naqshbandīyya Sūfī tariqa, yet he refused all luxury or pomp. An expert on the ḥadīth, kalām (theology), fiqh (jurisprudence) and tāsawwuf (Sūfism), he wrote nearly 60 books on these subjects, in Arabic. He emphasized love as the quintessence of Sūfism. His Gumush-khanewī Dargah was converted from an old abandoned mosque opposite the main government building in Istanbul. Its entry motto read, “This is the Naqshbandi Dargah, a joy-giving place, a square of love; my dear, come and join in peace!” It soon became an influential institute for Sūfism and ḥadīth, and from this center he produced 116 adept spiritual guides and educators. He urged them to uphold tolerance and not meddle in other Muslims’ ways of doing things. As a boy, he had read the entire Qurʾān at age five. At age ten he came with his family to Trabzon, where he worked in his father’s shop and also studied long hours with local scholars in Islamic sciences. He ventured penniless to Istanbul for 13 years of education until 1844, then taught Islamic lore at a few madrasas. He had studied Sūfism since his youth, but in 1845 he began a 16-year Sūfī training under first one, then another, of the leading deputies of great shaikh Khalid-i Baghdādī. He was finally appointed a Shaikh with overseership not only of Naqshbandiyya but other Sūfī Orders as well. At a certain point in life he made the first of his two pilgrimages to Mecca and Medīna; after the first, he married. After his second ḥajj he and his wife and children stayed in Egypt for three years, where he taught and trained disciples. Here and back in Turkey, he loved to mingle among the people and serve them. Among his charitable projects was an interest-free Muslim credit union. A patron of education, he set up a print shop and had many books freely distributed to teachers and seekers; he founded four libraries, each with c18,000 books, in Istanbul, Bayburt, Of and Rize. Shaikh Ziyāuddīn lived an ascetic, God-conscious life and was evidently gifted with clairvoyance and remote influence. He talked little, slept little, ate little and would not eat any meal without a guest. He observed all voluntary fasts. Twice a week he held a dhikr chanting of the Divine Name(s). Tuesday nights he performed 70,000 Kalima-i Tuḥid dhikrs. Twice a year he went into khalvet (retreat) and took any disciples wanting to do likewise.

Mama Sliman—a self-taught woman who in the 1920s became the leader of an association of holy women among the Mzab Berbers around Ghardaia in the Algerian Sahara; she wrote voluminously and assembled a civil and moral code which she and her sister saints imposed on men and women alike.

ʿIsa Nūr ad-dīn Aḥmad Al-ʿAlawī (1869-1934)—Algerian Sūfī master, a disciple of Sīdī Muḥammad Al-Būzhīdī in the Darqāwī Shādhilī order; a wonder-worker in his youth who later founded a new branch of the Darqāwī order, he came to have many disciples taking retreats under his spiritual directorship. He flourished at Mostaganem-Tigitt by the sea, where his burial shrine is now a pilgrimage spot, along with his famous zāwiyah, retreat center. Al-ʿAlawī taught a sophisticated nondual Sūfism. (Lings, 1973)
Muḥammad Amīn al-Kurdī al-Shāfiʿī al-Naqshabandī (d. 1914)—a native of Irbil, Iraq, author of Tan-wir al-qlūb. His successor, Salāma al-'Azzāmī of al-Azhar University in Cairo, notes that Shaykh Muḥammad worked miracles and was said to be dazzlingly luminous in his last days.

Muḥammad Iqbal (1876-1938)—an influential orthodox Indian Muslim Sūfī writer, disciple of Shaikh Muḥammad Zakariyya.

Hazrat Ināyat Khān (1882-1927)—an Indian Sūfī and musician of the Chishti order, he gave up his musical career and was instructed by his master, Abū Hashim Madānī, to bring Sūfism to the West, which he did in 1910, teaching in Europe and then the United States for the next 17 years of his life until his passing. The 16 volumes published as The Sūfī Message are his teachings as transcribed from lectures and talks given from 1914 to 1926. His Sūfī Order of the West was the first such organization in Europe and America. At his sudden death in 1927 (his tomb-shrine was built in the Nizamuddin Auliyyā section of Delhi), leadership of the Sūfī Order passed to his female successor, Rabīa (Ada) Martín (d. 1947), who had been initiated by Ināyat Khān in 1910. But European patriarchal rejection of her female status gave the successorship eventually to Ināyat Khan’s son, Pir Vilāyat Khān (1916-2004), who in youth studied under Abū Hashim Madānī, given that his own father passed on when Vilāyat was only 1 year old. From the 1960s onward, working to synthesize spiritual traditions of East and West, Pir Vilāyat sponsored international interfaith activities, and promoted social action as an integral part of spiritual life, particularly with the creation of the Hope Project in Delhi, India. He wrote several books—most notable for Sūfis is his evocation of the wisdom of the great Sūfī sages, In Search of the Hidden Treasure: A Conference of Sufis.

Georges Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (1877-1949)—born in Russia, he traveled in Central Asia and the Middle East in his youth, studying under some Sūfī teachers. In Moscow, he began to teach students his unorthodox brand of Sūfism, which he termed “the Work,” emphasizing constant watchfulness and integration of the spiritual-psycho-physical centers, using interesting methods such as the “stop” technique.

Hazrat Bābājan (c.1800?-1931)—born Gūl Rukh to a royal Muslim Pathan family of Baluchistan, in the eastern area of Afghanistan; she became a hafīza (memorizer of the Qurʿān). At age 18 she fled an arranged marriage and wandered deep into India, studying with both Hindu and Sūfī teachers. She attained to fanā- baqā around age 65; a great wonderworker, this long-lived, charismatic qalantar (unaffiliated Sūfī saint) lived her last decades in Poona, east of Bombay, living extremely austerely under a neem tree, revered by many thousands of people for her power of baraka (divine influence). The newspapers announced her age as perhaps 125; but she might have been even older.

Meher Bābā (born Merwin Sheriar, 1894-1969)—Indian God-man of Persian Zoroastrian ancestry; Merwan’s father had wandered as a Sūfī-style dervīsh for years in Iran, then in India. Merwan was initiated in 1914 by the powerful Sūfī matriarch, Hazrat Bābājan, after which he fell into such a deep state of God-awakening that he did not eat or sleep for fully nine months, but was seen often beating his head against the stone floor or stone wall trying to have a “body experience” again. Meher was “brought down to his mission as avatāra” under a Hindu guru, Upāsani Bābā Mahārāj of Sakori, under whom Meher Baba spent a seven-year apprenticeship while still mainly living in Pune. From Upāsani, Meher Baba gained a strong orientation toward Hindu Advaita Vedanta to go along with his Sūfī outlook. By the early 1920s, Bābā was already attracting many disciples, for whom he created a life of delightful Divine activity combined with unpredictability in location and activity and great demands on their stamina. Bābā observed complete silence from 1925 onwards, but via an alphabet board and later only hand gestures he communicated many discourses, emphasizing nondual love and wisdom. Meher went on to travel widely in Europe and America from 1952 on. One of his major and highly unusual works was going all over India with his disciples to search out and find masts, persons so God-intoxicated as to be largely or completely oblivious of their bodies and society, and to help “give a push” to their souls toward greater clarity and God-realization. Meher Bābā’s tombshrine and Pilgrim Center are in Meherabad, Maharashtra state, India. The late Murshida Ivy Oneita Duce (1895-1981) is one of his disciples who have carried on his work, with her organization, Sufism Reoriented, a rein-

carnation of the Sufi Order in the West that was earlier led by Murshida Râbia Martin (d. 1947).

Shams al-'Urfâ (1871-1935)—an outstanding master of the Persian Ni’matullâhi Order, after whom one of its branches (the Shamsiyyah) is named; a disciple of ‘Abd al-Quddûs Kirmânshâhî (d. 1892), his khânîqâh in Teheran was very popular; at his time of passing, he apparently wanted his disciples’ allegiance transferred to Mûnis ‘Alî, but some of them have continued the order independently. (Pourjavady & Wilson, 1978; Nasr, 1972)

Mûnis ‘Alî Shâh (1873-1952)—son of Wafî ‘Alî Shâh (1848-1918) of the Ni’matullâhi Order, in his youth he became a master of both the sharî’a and tariqâ (Islamic law and the Sûfî way), and was later esteemed for spreading science and supporting education, the arts, and service activities. His tomb is in Kirmanshah, western Iran. (Pourjavady & Wilson, 1978)

Javad Nurbakhsh (1926-)—a leading master of the Ni’matullâhi Order who has, since age 26, directed the Mûnisîyyah branch since the death of his master, Mûnis ‘Alî in 1952, the same year that Nurbakhsh received his diploma as a medical doctor. For many years Nurbakhsh headed the Teheran University’s psychiatry department and teaching hospital before moving to London in the wake of the 1979 Islamic Revolution. By that point he had established over a hundred khânîqâhs or Sûfî centers in Iran. He and his disciples have founded a few dozen more centers in Europe, America, Africa and Australia (the first one outside Iran was in San Francisco, set up in 1975). Nurbakhsh is a gifted poet and a prolific author of many books on Sûfism (and on psychiatry). He and his disciples publish a very fine journal, Sûfî, with many articles on the great mystic saints of Islam and important topics in Sûfism.

Ni’mat ‘Alî Shâh (20th cent.)—made a shaykh of the Ni’matullâhi Order by Mûnis ‘Alî in 1933; he has many devotees in Isfahan, Iran. Nâsîr ‘Alî Shâh (20th cent.)—a disciple of Maḥbûb ‘Alî Shâh (1862-1955), he is head of the Kâwtharîyyah branch of the Ni’matullâhi Order, lives in Rayy, Iran, with disciples in America as well as Iran. Rîdâ ‘Alî Shâh, Sultan Husayn Tâbândah (1914- )—present head of the Gunâbâdî branch of the Ni’matullâhi Order, which traces its lineage back to a disciple of Rahmat ‘Alî; it is numerically one of the largest Sûfî orders in Iran, and is characterized by strict adherence to the Shari’âh (Law); the Gunâbâdî masters have all been farmers, in addition to serving as mullâs, and so forth.

Seyyed Hûssein Naṣr (1933-)—a highly respected scholar and also a practitioner of Sûfism, Naṣr is descended from a line of physicians to the royal Iranian court, who helped him receive a thorough education in the best of East and West. He had been brought to the USA at age 12 and was valedictorian at the Priddie School in New Jersey before going on to get a B.S. in Physics at M.I.T. (where he clearly saw that science cannot answer the ultimate questions) and a Ph.D. in Science at Harvard, completed in his 25th year. During these years he also traveled in Europe, meeting the deeply spiritual Traditionalists and converts to Sûfism, Frithjof Schuon and Titus Burckhardt, also traveling to Morocco where he adopted the practice of Sûfism in the line of the illustrious Shaykh ʿĀḥmad ʿAlâwî of Algeria (d.1934). He taught as a professor of philosophy and the history of science at Teheran University from 1958 on (in 1963 becoming the youngest full-fledged professor in the history of the institution), during which time he also furthered his education with an intense training in Islamic and Sûfî studies under some of the best masters in Iran. In 1973, the Queen of Iran appointed Naṣr to establish under her patronage the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, soon to become one of the most important centers of philosophical activities in the Islamic world. The Islamic Revolution in 1979 led to his moving his family to the USA, where he became professor of Islamic Studies at Temple University in Philadelphia from 1979 to 1984 and then at George Washington University from 1984 to present. Naṣr is a major figure, along with predecessors like Frithjof Schuon, Rene Guenon, A.K. Coomaraswamy, Titus Burckhardt, Marco Pallis, Huston Smith, Martin Lings, et al., in the promotion of the Perennial Wisdom of the “Great Tradition.” The Foundation for Traditional Studies, which disseminates the Traditionalist view (e.g., via its journal Sophia), was established in 1984 under the direction of a board presided over by Naṣr. Naṣr has written and edited many important volumes on Sûfism and Islâm, philosophy, science, nature and the arts, and trained many American and European students. Among many other
awards and honors, Naṣr was the first non-Westerner to be invited to deliver the prestigious Gifford Lectures, at Scotland’s University of Edinburgh in 1980–1981.

**Muzaffer Ozak Efendi** (1916-87)—a leading Turkish Sufi master of the Halveti al-Jerrāhi Order, with many students in Turkey and the West; a masterful dream interpreter and author of many books on Sufism, his primary successor is **Sheikh Sefer Dal Efendi** of Istanbul. Their Western disciples-teachers include **Lex Hixon** (Nur al-Jerrahi, 1942-95), **Tosay Bayrak**, **Shems Friedlander** and **Robert (Ragip) Frager**.

**Idries Sháh** (1924-96)—controversial Afghani author, raised in England from early childhood. After writing a few non-Sufi books such as the occultist *Oriental Magic* (1956) and *Secret Lore of Magic: Book of the Sorcerers* (1957) and *Gerald Gardener: Witch* (1960), about the occultist whom Sháh served as secretary, in his 40s Sháh sought to “exploit a niche” by becoming known as a Naqshbandi Sufi teacher and collecting disciples. He succeeded in this, coming to fame in the 1960s with pseudonymously-written works and later works of dubious authorship published through his own Octagon Press that lavishly praise himself as “Grand Sheikh” and “Qutb/Axis of the Age,” his fame also resting on his books of Sufi stories (concerning the character Mulla Nasruddin) and Sufi wisdom (the latter deeply flawed), written in his own name, which sold millions of copies. Shah’s disciples, such as Doris Lessing, regard him as chief teacher of “60 million disciples” in the “worldwide Mu’assissa” (Sufi network), but this is sheer hyperbole. James Moore has written a more critical assessment of Shah and his humanistic “neo-Sufism” in an article, posted at several places online, which concludes: “his is a ‘Sufism’ which Baha’ad-Din Naqshband would find unrecognisable and repugnant; … a ‘Sufism’ without self-sacrifice, without self-transcendence, without the aspiration of gnosis, without tradition, without the Prophet, without the Quran, without Islam, and without God.”

**Ahmed Murad Chishti Samuel Lewis** (1896-1971)—the “first American-born Sufi master,” a disciple of Indian master Hazrat Inayat Khán, he later traveled to the East and Middle East, where it is claimed he was “recognized by eight Sufi brotherhoods,” and received teachings from Sufi, Zen, and Vedánta teachers. Began the American Sufi Dances and Sufi Choir in the late 1960’s in the San Francisco area. The Sufi Islamia Ruhaniyat Society, headed by Moineddin Jablonski, carries on his work.

**Bawa Muhaiyaddeen** (d. 1986)—a long-lived Sinhalese Sufi master, “born well before the turn of the [20th] century,” who spent his early years traveling through the Middle East and India, examining the world’s religions and a myriad of spiritual practices. Around 1914 pilgrims traveling through the jungles of northern Sri Lanka first saw him. Awed by his sanctity, they asked him to return to their village as their teacher. Much later [early 1940s] he fulfilled their wish, thereby beginning a life of public service—feeding, healing, and uplifting the lives of all who came to him, including Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and Christians. He came on invitation to the U.S. in 1971 and several times thereafter, establishing a Sufi community in Philadelphia, PA, where he lived until his death on December 8, 1986. “Speaking in person on university campuses, in churches, meetinghouses, and private homes, as well as on numerous radio and television programs, he reached audiences around the globe, from the United States and Canada to England and Sri Lanka. He was interviewed by *Time* magazine, *Psychology Today*, *Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, and numerous other publications. Over 20 books of his discourses and songs were published, as well as scores of audio/ video cassettes.” Bawa taught the path of wisdom and devotion, transcending any particular religion, and was esteemed as a healer, clairvoyant, storyteller and sage. Interestingly, when Sheikh Bawa first came to the U.S., he taught as a “universalist” holy man from the Asian subcontinent; his disciples actually called him “Guru,” the term for a Hindu sage. Slowly, over the years, he shifted his community into an appreciation and participation in the rituals and customs of Islam as an exoteric context for the esoteric Sufi teachings of the Qādiriyya Sufi lineage that he had been giving from the start (this is in reverse order compared to the way most other Muslim Sufis teach). In 1983 Bawa consecrated a good-sized mosque in Philadelphia, which now draws immigrant Muslims/Sufis and African-American Muslims in addition to the Anglo-Americans who primarily formed his initial community. His mazar shrine at their farm in Coatesville, PA, draws pilgrims who see him as not having perished but continuing to guide disciples from beyond.
Sheikh Nazım al-Qubrusi al-Ḫāqqani (b.1922)—this widely traveling Turkish master of the Naqshbandi order is Grand Mufti of Turkish Cyprus and one of the most respected Sufi shaikhs in the world today, with many thousands of disciples; he emphasizes a sublime, sober Divine unity. The Sheikh conducts popular zikrs, open to all, some of which have been filmed and are available for purchase. His prominent western emissary, the Lebanon-born Hisham Kabbāni, has helped open over two dozen Naqshbandi centers in North America alone.

Shaykh Abdallāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Yusuf al-Hirari, a.k.a. al-Habashi “the Ethiopian” (1920-)—saintly founder and spiritual leader of the important Aḥbāš movement of decidedly anti-fundamentalist, moderate Muslim Sūfīs, headquartered in Lebanon, also known as the Jam‘īyya (Jam‘īyyat al- Meshari’ al-Khayriyya al-Islāmīyya or Society of Islamic Charitable Projects; see their western Association of Islamic Charitable Projects; www.aicp.org). Shaykh Habashi’s peaceful yet very assertive Aḥbāš/Jam‘īyya stands as a bulwark against the rigid, violent forms of Ḥūmūd, chiefly the anti-Sūfī, puritanical Wāhhabīya (of Saudi Arabia), the Muslim Brotherhood (al-Ikhwān al-Muslihimūn, based in Egypt), and the Jam‘ā’at-i-Islāmīya (Islāmic Society, Pakistan), all of which have expanded beyond their land of origin (the Wāhhabīya and Jam‘ā’at-i-Islāmīya richly endowed with Saudi petrodollars) to create a widespread ideology of rigidity, narrow-minded bigotry, and occasional violence, branded by moderates as “Islamo-fascism.” The Aḥbāš, not just opposing these groups’ ideology and their aim to establish an Islāmīc order, have also taken a public stand against superstition masquerading as forms of Sūfism. Born in al-Hirara, near Somalia, in 1920, Shaykh Habashi studied Shāfī‘i jurisprudence and became a mufti in the Oromo tribal region. In 1947, he came to the Hijaz after he deportation from Ethiopia when his progressive teachings were judged a threat by Emperor Haile Selassie. In 1948, he came to Jerusalem, then to Damascus, Syria to study with the Rif‘ā’iyya and Qādiriyya orders. In 1950 he settled in Beirut, Lebanon and was made a shaykh by al-Azhar University’s Lebanese branch. His followers in 1983 peacefully took over the Jam‘īyya (founded by Shaykh Ahmad al-Ajuz in 1930). By the late 1980s, Aḥbāš had become a large Lebanese Islāmic movement; during the civil war, it grew from a few hundred members into a large organization by infiltrating the Sunni militias and schools. When ‘Abd al-Hafiz Qasim’s militia disbanded in 1984, Aḥbāš recruited its members but abstained from creating its own militia and from involvement in intersectorian violence and fighting Israel; its main aims were recruitment and a paradigm of moderation. In the early 1990s, Aḥbāš began to win seats in the parliament. It continues to grow, maintains good relations with most Arab governments, is conciliatory toward the West (USA and Europe), and has dozens of branches in over a dozen countries. Shaykh Habashi’s approach blends elements of Sunni and Shi‘a theology with deep Sūfī spirituality, and an open-minded respect for Muslim pluralism, and has won the support of leaders within many Sūfī orders, especially the Qādiriyya, Rif‘a’iyya and Naqshbandiyya. The administrative president of Aḥbāš, Shaykh Nizar al-Halabi, was assassinated in August 1995 by a radical Islāmīst group; vice-president Shaykh Husam Karakira took the reins as president.

Celaleddin Celebi (1926-96)—the 21st generation grandson of Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi and head of the Mevlevi Order which had moved its center of operations to Aleppo, Syria after all Sufi orders were banned in Turkey by Ataturk in the early 20th century. Celaleddin was born in Aleppo, Syria, son of M. Bakir Celebi, the Postnishing (head of the religious order) of the Mevlevi Dergah in Aleppo, and grandson of Abdulhalim Celebi Efendi, the last Postnishing of Konya Mevlana Dergah and vice-president of the parliament of the new Turkish Republic, Celaleddin was given a good education at Beirut American University and French schools in Syria. He studied law, engaged in agriculture and trade for a period, then turned over his business to his son, Faruk Hemdem Celebi, and devoted himself to Rumi and Sufism. After World War II, his all property was nationalized by the Syrian government when he refused to abandon his Turkish citizenship for a Syrian identity. He became head of the Aleppo-based Mevlevi Order after his father’s passing. Back in Turkey, at Konya, he joined the cultural activities of Konya Selcuk University and went on to become a prominent lecturer in Turkish, Arabic, French and English languages, on behalf of Rumi and his universalist spiritual message of love in many countries at many venues, including UNESCO. Among other things, Celaleddin explained to his audiences the significance of the beautiful Mevlevi samā’ “whirling dervish” ceremony, which was led at Konya and abroad by his friend Suleyman Dede, permitted by the government as a “cultural activity.” Celaleddin died in Istanbul.
Suleyman Dede (d. 1985)—a beloved Turkish Sufi adept and successor in the Mevlevi Sufi lineage of Rûmî who lived at Konya, and endured the long oppression of overt Sufi activities by the secular Turkish government, helping to keep the Mevlevi tradition alive. His son Jelaluddin Loras (1950- ) has, since 1981, resided either in Marin County, California, or in Konya, leading zikrs and samâ’ ceremonies, and training students—both men and women—as part of his Mevlevi Order of America.

Hassan El Shennawi (n.d.)—a professor of religious philosophy at the prestigious Al-Azhar University, which is as close to a central authority in Islam as its decentralized nature allows. Shennawi took over from the late Abul-Wafa’ El-Ghunaymi El-Taftazani, dean and professor of philosophy at Cairo University, as head of Egypt’s Supreme Council of Sufi Orders, the government body composed of 15 members elected every three years that oversees the 75+ Sufi orders and sub-orders, regulating their affairs and ensuring the propriety of their doctrine and practice. Egypt is the only Arab country where mysticism has a solid legal basis, supported by the government. This government sponsorship of Sufi Orders, explains scholar Valerie Hoffman, goes back to the time of Saladin, who founded a Sufi retreat centre called Said Al-Saada and gave its sheikh preeminence over other sheikhs, with the title sheikh al-shi’uykh, head of the Sufi Orders. “This position remained in [the sheikh’s] family until 1946, when Ahmed Murad El-Bakri died and the position was taken over by Ahmed El-Sawi [El-Imrani].” After 1982, the head of the Sufi orders was Taftazani, followed by Shennawi.

Shaykh Hassan Cisse—Imam of the Grand Mosque in Madina Kaolack. An eminent leader of the Tijani Order; he brought this lineage to the U.S. in 1976 and has gained substantial recognition from the UN. Senegalese statesman Shaykh Abdoulaye Dieye (1938-2002), inspirer of lovely dhikrs and ecstatic dancing, headed various Sufi associations in the Khidmatul Khadim, a sub-branch of the Mouridiyya Order of engaged spirituality founded by illustrious Shaykh Ahmadou Bamba (1854-1927). (Senegal’s new president, Abdoulaye Wade, belongs to the same order.) Shaykh Abdoulaye Dieye and his followers are very open-minded, progressive Sufis, and promote public zikr ceremonies using beautiful African melodies.

Irina Tweedie (1907-99)—this Russian woman was educated in Vienna and Paris; after World War II she married an English naval officer, whose death in 1954 propelled her onto a spiritual quest. With a background in Theosophy, she traveled to India in 1959, at the age of fifty-two, where she met an Indian Naqshbandi Sufi teacher (now deceased) of the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya tradition, known only as “Bhai Sahib.” After her five-year apprenticeship, she moved to London where she quietly taught a circle of disciples. Daughter of Fire (1986), her account of the arduous, strict training under her teacher, has been widely read (it was first published in 1979 in abridged form as Chasm of Fire). Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee (b.1953), a British disciple of Tweedie, moved to northern California in the 1990s where he promotes Sufism through his Golden Sufi Center.

The Sabri Brothers—a name for an especially adept Qawwali singing band of the Sabriya order, an offshoot of the Chishti order. Descending from a family of musicians allegedly going back to Miân Tansen, who inspired the Mughal court in the 13th century, the Sabri Brothers came onto the scene in 1958 with their first of many recordings, led by Ghalam Farid Sabri (1930-94) and his brother Maqbool Ahmed Sabri (b.1945), both taught by various teachers including their father, Inâyat Sen Sabri, who had moved the family from India to Pakistan after the Partition in 1947. The Sabri Brothers traveled the world, giving their famous mystical concerts of ecstatic, highly rhythmic devotional Qawwali music, which is designed to induce divine trance states in the listener. The Sabri Brothers, now led by Maqbool and his cousin Mehmood Ghesnavi Sabri, have always emphasized the bringing of Sufi authors (Khusrau, Rûmû, Bulleh Shâh) and Sufi themes into their work.

Nusrat Fateh ‘Ali Khan (1948-97)—before his death this Pakistani was hailed as the “greatest living exponent of Qawwali music.” In 1965 he was given leadership of his family’s longstanding Qawwal troupe with the inner inspiration of his late father, Ustad Fateh ‘Ali Khan (d.1964). Nusrat, singing in his native Panjabi as well as Persian and Urdu, and often incorporating into his long pieces the intense style of...
classical scale-singing (sargam), proceeded to tour and record extensively, becoming one of the first South Asian singers to perform before large Western audiences, thanks to his friendships with several prominent western rock stars. He holds the world record for the largest recorded output by a Qawwali artist—a total of 125 albums. His extremely talented brother Farrukh Fateh ‘Ali Khān (d.2003) played the harmonium and contributed vocals; his son Rahat Nusrat Fateh ‘Ali Khān now leads this Qawwal troupe.

II. -- IMPORTANT TERMS:
(Note: there is no single common system for transliteration from the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, so some of these terms may be spelled differently in different Muslim / Sūfī circles; most of the following have been taken from Annemarie Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions of Islam, Univ of N. Carolina Press, 1975.)

Allāh: God. Allāh has 99 Names (asmā) as His nondual aspects, qualities, functions, divided into jamāl / lutfiyya, those connected with His beauty/lovingkindness, and jalāl / qahriyya, those connected with His wrath/majesty. The 99 Names start with Yā Raḥmān, Yā Raḥīm, “O Merciful, O All-Compassionate,” and end with Yā Šābīr, “O Patient.” Other Names include Yā Akbar, “O Great”; Yā Wadīd, “O Loving-Beloved”; Yā Ḥāfīz, “O Preserver”; Yā Rūqī, “O Nourisher”; Yā Muḥī, “O Bestower of Life”; Yā Jamāl, “O Beauty”; Yā Karīm, “O Generous.” Sūfīs utilize these Names to promote corresponding spiritual traits. Yet there are specific rules for when and how certain names should be used—for instance, the name al-Fā‘īq, “the Overpowering,” should never be used by a beginner, but only by a highly adept gnostic; the name, al-Latīf, “the Subtle,” should be used by a contemplative in seclusion to make his nature more subtle.

tawḥīd / tauḥīd: Divine affirmation that God Alone IS, God is the only One, the sole, nondual Reality (the goal of Sūfism is to completely realize the truth of tauḥīd, the nonduality of Divine Being)

Islām: complete “subscription” or “surrender” to God; Muslim: one who practices Islām.

Ka‘bah / Ka‘aba: the sacred, ancient Arabian shrine at Mecca, which contains the hallowed Black Stone. Prophet Muhammad consecrated this site for Islām, claiming it was originally built by Abraham. All Muslims orient their fivefold daily prayer in the direction (qibla) pointing toward the Ka‘bah.

Qur‘ān / Koran: “recitation”—the name of the Muslim scripture recited by angel Gabriel to Prophet Muhammad, the various suras (chapters) received in trance states from 610-632 C.E.

Hādīth: “tradition”—Prophet Muhammad’s sayings and customs, each saying having its own witness or chain of witnesses to guarantee its authenticity; over the years there appeared many hadīth of dubious authenticity; collections of such sayings are known as aḥadīth.

sunna: tradition, customs of the Prophet after which orthodox Sunni Muslims have modeled their behavior and policies; related to these are the ījmā, the consensus of the doctors (the ‘ulamā) of the law on various legal points, based on the Qur‘ān and the sunna (there were four orthodox schools of legal interpretation, founded by Abū Ḥanīfa, Mālik ibn Anās, ash-Shāfi‘ī, and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal of the 8th-9th centuries, the Ḥanbal being the most conservative of the four).

mī‘rāj: the famed mystical “ascension” (or īsrā, “night journey”) of Muhammad in 620 over Jerusalem, through hell, up through the seven heavens and meetings with the Prophets, astride Buraq and accompanied by Gabriel; finally he went beyond all created forms into utteraloneness with God. There was a tradition of such “heavenly ascents” in the Near East, including earlier works like the Enoch texts and later works, like the accounts of Bāyazīd Bīstāmî’s mī‘rāj.
hijra: Muhammad’s emigration from Mecca to Medina in 622 C.E., where he first organized Islām as a religion with his community (umma) which transcended all tribal connections.

nūr muḥammadi: “Muhammad’s pre-existent Light”; a doctrine central to the veneration of Muhammad as incarnating the Light of God (this is not to be confused with Christian or Hindu notions of a God-man).

arkān ud-dīn: the “five pillars” of Islām: 1) the shahāda, the Muslim witness to faith; 2) prayer (ṣalāt; namaz in Persian and in Turkish); 3) almsgiving (zakāt); 4) fasting (ṣawm) during the month of Ramadān; and, if possible, 5) the pilgrimage (hajj) to Mecca.

shahāda: the Muslim profession of faith; the first of the “five pillars” (arkān ud-dīn) of Muslim practice.

Lā ilāha illā Allāh: the first half of the shahāda: “There is no god but God” or, as the Sūfis say, “There is no being/reality but the [Absolute] Being/Reality.” Lā ilāha indicates negation of everything worldly, while illā Allāh indicates affirmation of God as the Sole Reality.

Muḥammad rasūl Allāh: the second half of the shahāda: “Muhammad is God’s Prophet”

ādhān: the call to prayer, issued in a riveting voice by the muʿadhīn (muezzin), traditionally from the manāra (minaret) before each of the five daily times of ritual prayer, ṣalāt

tasawwuf: Sūfīsm (the word “Sūfī” probably originates from “those who wear wool [ṣūf]”; Sūfis were also called al-qawm, “the Folk”

zāhir: the Outward (a Name of God), used to refer to the outer personality or ego-self and/or exoteric religious practices and Qurʿān interpretations of orthodox Islām

bāṭin: the Inner (a Name of God), used to refer to the inner, subtler self or even the transpersonal Self and/or esoteric spiritual practices leading to the Sūfī ideal of full annihilation (fanā) in God; the term also refers to the esoteric practices and Qurʿān interpretations of Shiʾite Islam

sharīʿa: Divinely given laws of Orthodox Islām; the first stage of Sūfism

ṭariqa: the Way, the second stage of Sūfīsm (also refers to the various Sūfī orders/fraternities that arose from the 12th century on—these are, when using the plural, called ṭuruq, also called silsilas or spiritual lineages)

ḥaqīqa / al-Ḥaqq: the Divine Truth, the Absolute Truth, the third and final stage in the Sūfī way of God-Realization

1) sunna: the orthodox customs of Islām; 2) īmān: faith, a second, more interior stage of Muslim mysticism, contrasted with sunna of Islām; 3) iḥsān: excellence, mysticism—the third, most interior stage in this particular schema of Muslim mysticism, beyond īmān; herein one is only concerned in seeing God everywhere as the Sole Reality.

maʿrifah / ʿirfān (equivalent to ḥaqīqa and iḥsān): gnosis, the Divine knowing by God of God through a human being.

ʿārif: the gnostic

shaykh (sheikh) / murshid / murād / pīr: the Sūfī teacher (master)

al-insān al-kāmil: the Perfect, Complete Man of God-Realization (Ibn al-ʿArabī’s term)
qutb: the “pole, axis,” the highest member in the hierarchy of saints; also designates the leading saint of a time and place; ghauth: the “help,” another name for the qutb

Khidr: the legendary guide of the Sūfī mystics, who appears out of the imaginal realm from time to time

Mahdi: the hidden Imām of Shi’a Islām, the “Guided” one, destined to reveal himself at the appointed time in the future

Ḩādī: the Guide or Herdsman of the flock, a Name of God, also sometimes given to Muḥammad or a great saint

mujaddid: the “renewer” of spirituality prophesied by Muḥammad for every century after him

sayyid: a bloodline descendant from Muhammad through ‘Alī and Faṭima; such sayyids (there are hundreds of thousands of them) have great prestige in their local communities

walī (pl. awliyā): saint—literally, “friend” (of Allāh); early Sūfis called themselves awliyā Allāh, the “friends of God”

walāyah / bay’ah: initiation

wilāyah: sanctity, initiatic power

silsilah: the chain of initiation down from the Prophet; a Sūfī order/fraternity

baraka: an oft-heard term referring to the blessing-power/grace communicated to the aspirant by the shaykh, the Prophet, the community of Sūfis, or holy places, especially Mecca and the tombs of saints

himma: the spiritual power of the shaykh

irshād: spiritual guidance of the shaykh, operative even after his passing

tasarruf: the power of the shaykh to bring about events

tawfiq: Divine grace

sakīna: the Divine presence (similar to the Jewish notion of Shekinah)

karāmāt: the miracles of saints, which are wrought by God through these pure instruments

muqaddam: representative of the shaykh

khalīfa: “successor,” or “deputy” appointed by the shaykh to teach others and to succeed him after his passing; sometimes a Sūfī saint is called a khalīfa, in that he/she executes God’s will

murīd: disciple, novice

sālik: a wayfarer (aspirant)

faqīr (pl.: fuqarā; Persian: dervīsh/darwīsh): “the poor,” the Sūfī practitioner(s)

zāhid: ascetic; ‘ābid: devotee; ‘āshiq or yar: lover; ‘ārif: gnostic—various other names for the Sūfī
qalandar: a wandering dervîsh who performs only the minimum in religious duties and is known for a more free, expressive spirituality

khâniqâh (Turkish: tekke): the meeting place for a Sûfî tarîqa (the shaykh usually lives here, perhaps with his family; and he is usually buried here)

kâwiya: “corner”; a smaller meeting place, or the shaykh’s dwelling place

dargâh: “door, court,” a dervîsh convent

ribâf: a dervîsh meeting place or convent

khirqa: the frock worn by Sûfî initiates

tâj: the cap or headdress worn by Sûfî initiates

tasbîh: rosary used for dhikr (remembrance of God)

adab: correct behavior or courtesy in the presence of the brethren and shaykh

khidmat: service

tawajjuh: concentration by the disciple on the shaykh or by the shaykh on the disciple

rabita kurmak: to “establish a tie” between master and disciple

maulid: the birthday of the Prophet or of a celebrated saint

‘urs: the “wedding night,” the date of a saint’s passing, usually celebrated each year with a special samâ’ (sacred poetry recitation / musical prayer ceremony, often involving the meditative dance—such as in the Mevlevi tradition; in Pakistan and India the ecstatic qawwali music is sung)

‘âlam an-nâsî: world of the human senses (in Ibn ‘Arabi’s schema, the lowest plane of existence)

‘âlam al-malakût: world of the Dominion (will and power)

‘âlam al-jabarût: world of the Domination (life)

‘âlam al-‘Izzah: “world” of Sovereign Power, the Ultimate Reality and transcendental Source of all worlds/realms

sûrah: phenomenal aspect of a thing

ma’nâ: the inner essence of a thing, referring to the One Noumenonal Essence

nafs: lower soul, carnal self, egocentric tendencies

an-nafs al-mutma’îna: the soul at peace

an-nafs al-qaddîsa: the sanctified soul

asfal sûfîlîn: worldly passions and heedlessness
**hadath**: defilement; **ḥudāth**: ephemeral existence

*ʾaqīl*: reason, intellect

*ʾilm*: (ordinary) knowledge

*qaļb / dīl*: heart

*sīrī / lubb*: innermost heart

*rūḥ*: spirit

**salāt** (Arabic) / **namāz** (Persian, Turkish): Islām’s formal ritual prayer, held five times daily (dawn, noon, midafternoon, right after sunset, and early part of the night), with Friday noon prayer being the only required congregational prayer. Each prayer session involves a fixed number of bowings (rakʿah) (two in the morning, four at late-night prayer); the bowing itself consists of seven movements and concomitant recitations: 1) “Allāhu akbar” with hands open on each side of the face; 2) recitation of Qur’ān’s opening sura and other passage(s), while standing upright; 3) bowing from the hips; 4) straightening up; 5) gliding to the knees and a first prostration with face to ground; 6) sitting back on haunches; 7) a second full prostration. The second and later bowings begin with the second of these movements and at the end of each pair of bowings and the conclusion of the whole prayer one recites the *shahāda* and ritual salutations.

[See sequence of ritual prayer, outlined and illustrated by Farah Michelle Kimball and Imam Bilal Hyde, below:]

**wudū / ṭahāra**: the ritual purity required for prayer, symbolically achieved via washing face, arms, and feet

**dhikr / zikr**: recollection, remembrance of God, silent or vocal repetition of the Divine Name(s), the crux of Sufism and the basic communal practice of most Sūfī orders, emphasizing the first part of the *shahāda*, sometimes just the affirmative part “ʾillā Llāh” or, more simply, “ʿAllāh”
khalwah: extended spiritual retreat

ḥızb / wîrd (pl. aurād): special (longer) prayer litany

duʿā: the type of prayer entailing personal entreaties and petitions to Allāh

munājāt: devotional consensual prayer between the lover and Divine Beloved

fard, mandūb, mubāh, makrūh, and ḥarām: behaviors which are, respectively, 1) obligatory, 2) recommended, 3) permitted, 4) strongly discouraged or 5) forbidden

tawājud: night vigils and prayer, practiced by Sūfis to deepen their spiritual state and reach ecstasy

qillat al-kalām: little speech; qillat at-taʿām: little food; qillat al-manām: little sleep (ascetic practices)

futuwwa / muruwwat / maḥāsīn / fadāʿīl: different terms for virtue

ḥāl (pl. ahwāl): temporary special states of consciousness, usually due to the grace of God

maqām (pl. maqāmāt): stations (abiding stages or traits of consciousness, lasting virtues on the way to full God-realization (a number of these are listed among the following terms:)

tawbat: repentance; inābat: conversion; zuhd: renunciation; tawakkul: the total trust or confidence in and reliance upon God; ṭajrīd: equanimity, detachment; muwāfaqat: greement or equanimity under all situations; waraʾ: abstinence; ridā: contentment; salām: peace; sabr: patience; jahd: effort; ṣafā: purity; shauq: longing (for God); ikhlās: sincerity; shukr: gratitude; qabd: contraction (the “sadness” or “fear of God” felt by ascetic Sūfis); basṭ: expansion (the more joyful or hopeful way of Sūfi practice); maḥābbat / ḥubb: love; wudd: love, charity; ʿabada: worship; qurb: proximity or nearness to God; muḥāsaba: self-examination.

(Note: many schemas are presented by Sūfī sages over the centuries articulating various ahwāl/states and maqāmat/stages; all these are interiorized versions of Allāh’s 99 Names; moreover, these virtues are to be in equilibrium, so that one does not succumb to imbalance)

nazār bar qadam: Naqshbandi discipline of watching over one’s steps

nigāh dāsh: Naqshbandi discipline of watching one’s thoughts

yād dāsh: Naqshbandi discipline of concentration upon God

tafakkur: meditation; fikr: forms of meditation

murāqaba: (preliminary) meditation, contemplative attention, vigilance

shuhūd: contemplation or witnessing

mushāhada: direct contemplative “vision” (or sense of God’s presence)

ʿiyān: “face to face,” direct vision of the divinity

ʿilm al-yaqīn: knowledge of certitude

ʿayn al-yaqīn: vision of certitude

haqq al-yaqīn: real certitude (achieved only in fanā, see below)
dhauq: “tasting”; direct experience
tawājud: the attempt to “find” (ecstasy); or, alternatively, a general term for all Sūfī practices
wa'jd: the ecstasy of “finding” (God);
sukr: intoxication (ecstasy); istilām: uprootedness (similar to sukr)
shaṭḥiyyāt: ecstatic utterances (of one in the intoxicated state)
majdūb: “attracted,” one lost in the ecstasy of God, often oblivious of the world
ṣāḥw: sobriety (a more mature, integrated spiritual stage, said by the sober Sūfī Junayd to be beyond sukr)
tajallī: mystical revelation, illumination
rujūʿ ikhtiyārī: voluntary return to God through ego-death and virtue; contrasted with hawā, egotistic caprice
fanā: annihilation (of the separate-self ego-sense); this is the aim of every Sūfī. Sometimes this is spelled out further as fanā fī ‘sh-shaykh: annihilation in one’s teacher; fanā fī r-rasūl: annihilation in the Prophet(s); and fanā fī Allāh: annihilation in God
baqā: the “remaining” or “subsistence” in God (the “resurrection” which comes after fanā fī Allāh) (perfect God-realization)
jamʿ: unification, collectedness (somewhat equivalent to fanā)
jamʿ al-jamʿ: “the gathering of gathering” (equivalent to baqā)
hikmat-i yamanī: intuitive wisdom
ḥikmat al-ilāhī: divine wisdom
wisāl: union with God
ittihād: union of lover and Beloved (sometimes considered a heretical term, since there is not really a distinct self separate from God)
uns: intimacy with God
‘ishq: passionate love for God, from God; ‘ishq-i majāzī: “metaphorical love” for God via creation’s beauty
ahadīyya: transcendent oneness, the pure nonduality of formless Noumenon, absolute awareness.
wāḥidīyya: immanent oneness, embraces and unifies all apparent diverse phenomena
al-wāḥid al-kathīr: One/Many, God’s nonduality as Sole Reality and apparently multiple Names and phenomena
al-ḥadrat al-ilāhiyya: the Divine Presence, that which comprehends everything that exists
shirk: “associating something with God”; polytheism (not having fully realized tauhīd, unity)

alif: the first letter of the Arabic alphabet, symbolizing God’s unity

wahdat al wujūd: unity of being (Ibn ‘Arabī’s term, signifying that everything “found” is Allāh)

wāhid al-wujūd: the Only Being, the One Who Alone Is

wahdat ash-shuhūd: unity of vision, a notion posited as antidote to the “pantheistic” (sic) idea of Ibn ‘Arabī as some interpreted his thought; it holds an ontological distinction between God and man in the subjective experiencing of unity

dhāt: essence (a female term, used by Ibn al-‘Arabī to indicate a feminine aspect of God)

al-Ḥaqq: the Absolute Truth; anā’-l Ḥaqq: “I am the Absolute Truth” (cf. Vedanta’s “Aham Brahmasmi”), Mansūr al-Ḥallāj’s “heretical” statement—or God’s statement through al-Ḥallāj—of nondual identity as the Sole Reality

III. -- USEFUL PHRASES:

Bismi ‘Llāh ir-Rahmān ir-Rahīm: “In the Name of God the most Merciful, the most Compassionate”—the great invocation of Islām and Sūfism, uttered at the beginning of any discourse or action.

Allāh hu Akbar: “God is great”—a very oft-used phrase, especially by the muezzin/nu’adhīn, the person who calls the Muslim community to the five daily times of prayer with his soulful calls from the mosque’s minaret / manāra.

inshā’Allāh: “if it please Allāh” or “God willing.” Used whenever one expresses an intention, expectation, or hope. So, for example, “Hopefully we will meet again, inshā’ Llāh.”

salām alai Kum: “Peace upon you”; the common Muslim/Sūfī greeting; when greeted with this, one always responds: wa-laikum as-Salām, “And God’s Peace be upon you.”

al-Ḥamdu li ‘Llāh: “Praise/thanks be to God.”

ma sha’ Llāh: “it is as Allāh has pleased,” used whenever one feels admiration for a person or thing.

jazā-ka-Llāh: “May God reward thee,” or jazā-ka-Llāh u khairā: “May God give you good reward”; when receiving a gift from another or receiving any good, one thanks the bestower of the gift with this phrase.

subḥāna-Llāh: “Glory to God,” a general phrase of praise to God, also used when one has to give expression to the fact that one is not free from imperfections or has made an error. This phrase is also used when one sees another person making a mistake, thus bringing the attention to the all-good God.

yarḥamu-ka-Llāh (“May God have mercy on you”) is a prayer for someone in distress. Innā li-Llāhi wa innā ilai-hi rāji ‘um (“Surely we are God’s and to Him we shall return”) is said when one is informed of the death of a person or anyone’ major loss.

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IV. -- SYMBOLIC POETIC TERMS:

It is helpful to know that in Persian Sūfī poetry (Sanā’ī, ʿAṭṭār, Rūmī, Ḥāfīz, Shabistarī, et al.), many of the following nouns have fairly consistently encoded certain symbolic meanings. For example:

*Wine*: spiritual love and/or knowledge, which brings about a spiritual rapture (symbolized as drunkenness or intoxication) in which all but the formless God is transcended and forgotten

*Wine-seller*: the beloved spiritual guide (shaykh, pîr, murshid)

*Saki*: the cupbearer, also symbolizing the spiritual guide

*Cup*: the human body or the spiritual heart, a receptacle for the overwhelming divine love/wisdom

*Tavern*: the khāniqāh (Sūfī meeting-place) or the world as a whole

*Rind*: the people of the tavern (i.e., the Sūfī dervîshes)

*Sleep*: God-absorption via deep meditation or contemplation

*Beauty*: the glory of God

*Lips*: usually red, as if wine-stained; lips give the “kiss” of Unity in God-intoxication

*Curls and tresses*: the plurality veiling the Unity of God; also signifies the attractiveness of God, who is seducing the lover (the dervîsh)

*Cheek*: the Divine essence of Names and qualities

*Mole*: the beauty spot, the primordial blackness symbolizing the divine origin of all phenomena

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V. -- HETERODOX MOVEMENTS (dissenting from the mainstream body of Sunni Islām):

*Shīʿa / Shīʿites*: a major faction of Islam which developed at the start of Islām by ʿAlī, now dominant in Persia/Iran and eastern Iraq, which opposes “orthodox” Sunni Islam. Shīʿa will sometimes admit that ʿAbū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, and ʿAlī were all “rightfully guided” Caliphs after Muḥammad, but accepts only the authority of ʿAlī and his descendants. Thus, Shīʿa repudiates the validity of the traditions (ḥadīth) collected by those who opposed ʿAlī, proclaiming the validity only of traditions derived from ʿAlī and his supporters. Whereas orthodox Sunni Islam mainly emphasizes the exoteric law, or *shariʿa* (and note that Sūfism arose within Sunni Islam to emphasize the inward way of *tarīqa* and the ultimate spiritual truth, or *haqīqa*)—Shīʿa Islam from the start recognized not only the *shariʿa* but also emphasized the esoteric interpretations of the Qur’ān and instructions of the Prophet, the *asrār*. Whereas the Sunni believe that Muslims are to be governed by consensus (*ijmaʿ*) through an elected head of state, the khilīfa, the Shīʿa believe that the leader of Islām (whom they call the *Imām*) must be a *sayyid*, a descendant of the Prophet. For Shīʿa Muslims, the first six Imāms are ʿAlī, ʿHasan ibn ʿAlī, Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī, ʿAlī ibn Ḥusayn, Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Ḥusayn al-Bāqir, and Jaʿfar as-Sādiq. The Imāmī Shīʿites (dominant in Persia and with followings in India, Iraq, and Syria) posited a succession of six more Imāms, totaling twelve infallible Imāms as incarnations of the Divine Light (*Nūr*) who were representatives of Islāmic esotericism. The last of the Twelve disappeared in 873 and his return is still awaited; he is Mahdī, the Guided, who is concealed now, but is to openly reveal him-
self at the Last Day. Shi‘ites also differ from the Sunni Muslims by having a clergy, and by interpreting the Qur’an according to the esoteric spirit of the law, rather than the letter of the law. A less extreme form of Shi‘ism is the Zaidi sect, still dominant in Yemen highlands, who ascribe no infallibility to the Imāms. Sufism is considered to have first developed under the influence and writings of the early Shi‘a Imāms, and the Sūfīs were openly linked with these Imāms until the 8th Imām, Ridā. However, almost all the major Sūfī orders that arose, except the Ni‘matullāhī and Nūrbakhshe of Persia, are Sunni. Shi‘ism has influenced Sunni Islam with its veneration of Prophet Muḥammad and ‘Alī, and its doctrine of Divine Light (Nūr) and of the Imāms’ sinlessness (attributes which are applied to Muḥammad).

**Mu‘tazilā:** a group of Muslims who stayed neutral during the struggle between ‘Alī at Kufa and his enemies in Syria; they were later condemned by orthodox Muslims and Sūfīs alike as heretics for believing in the created origin of the Qur’an, belief in free will, and rationalism.

**Ismā’ilīs:** an extreme branch of Shi‘a Islām which broke away from the majority after the sixth Imām Ja‘far aṣ-Ṣādiq’s eldest son Ismā’il predeceased his father, and the Imāmship passed to third son Mūsā al-Kāzīm. The majority of Shi‘a (the so-called “Twelvers”) followed Mūsā’s lineage, whereas the Ismā’ilīs (“Seventers”) took off on their own direction. The Ismā’ilīs, out of which arose many subsects (e.g., Qarmatians, Nizārīs, Assassins, Musta‘līs, Druzes and Muqann’ah), were dominant in Persia in the medieval period, waging political conquest against orthodox Muslims and, later, against the Crusaders. This was the powerful Fāṭimid dynasty, which the Ismā’ilīs established in North Africa in the early 10th century, extending its control in the 11th century to Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Hijāz, Yemen, and Sind (Pakistan), until its power was curtailed by the orthodox Sunni Muslims near the end of that century. The Ismā’ilī principle of ta‘wīl, allegorically interpreting the Qur’an, was effectively criticized by the great medieval mystical theologian, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī. The Ismā’ilī form of Islām still thrives, its largest surviving group the Nīzārīs, numbering some 20 million, found in communities from East Africa to Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Pakistan and India, where they are known as the Khojas, their Imām being the Aga Khān.

**Safavids:** a Shi‘a group headed by Shāh Ismā‘īl Safawī (d. 1504), whose conquests made Shi‘a Islam the official creed of Persia/Iran.

**Ṣālimiyya:** a strain of Sūfīsm which, in contrast to many of the ascetics who relied totally on trust in God (tawakkul) for their provisions, praised work as legitimate livelihood.

**Malāmatiyya:** the “blameworthy”—an oft-criticized proto-Sūfī movement whose exponents “hid their sanctity” from the public through unorthodox or contemptible “mad” behaviors to bring scorn and wrath as a test of equanimity. Groups of early Christian mystics had done the same.

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**VI. -- SŪFI ORDERS (Tārīqa, singular; Tūruq, plural; also known as silsilas):**

(Sufi brotherhoods are, on the whole, not antagonistic toward each other, but simply represent different aspects of spiritual practice or a different emphasis on stages toward God, like different Catholic monastic orders. In 1960 it was estimated that 3% of Muslims were Sufis, roughly 30 million people, in 70 tūruqs. Note that not all Sufis belong to the following major orders.)

**Qādiriyya:** founded on the influence of the highly esteemed Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī (d. 1166), it is a fairly “sober,” “orthodox” and tolerant order, the most widespread Sūfī order of Islam, especially popular in India. Baghdad is the main headquarters, to which the various lineages are loosely attached.
Rifā‘iyya: founded by al-Jilānī’s nephew, Ḍhūl-Qarnayn (d. 1182), a sub-order of the Qādiriyya, known for its “howling dervishes” who loudly chant the dhikr; they are more fanatical, self-mortifying and thaumaturgical (fire-swallowing, glass-eating, serpent handling) in their practices. Dominant in Iraq, with branches in Syria and Egypt.

Shādhiliyya: founded by the disciples of Abū Ḥasan al-Shādhili (d. 1258) (who himself eschewed monasteries, etc.), it is, along with the Qādiriyya, probably the largest tariqa, yet is more extravagant in ritual and more ecstatic than the Qādiriyya; it has spread over N. Africa and into Arabia and beyond. Many sub-orders arose, like the austere, orthodox Darqawīyya (flourishing in Morocco and Algeria the last two centuries), and Isawiyya (with its sword-slaughtering ritual).

Suhrawardīyya: f. by Shihābuddin Abū Hafs ‘Umar al-Suhrawardi (d. 1234) in Baghdad, this order branched into many lines, spreading to Iran, Afghanistan, India and Africa; its practices vary from the wildly ecstatic to meditative.

Melevīyya: organized by Jalāluddin Rūmī’s son, Sultan Walad (d. 1312), this order was based in Konya, Turkey (underground in Turkey since Ataturk abolished all Sufi orders in 1925) and survives in Aleppo, Syria, and a few other towns; now also represented in the U.S.; it is famous for its whirling dervishes and musical samā‘.

Chishti: founded in India by Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishti of Syria (d. 1236), and carried on by different lineages of his disciples, the wandering dervishes of this order specialize in music; the order has flourished only in India, where it has in some circles been “Hindu-ized” to a great extent. The Sufi Islamia Ruhaniat Society of America is a kind of non-Muslim suborder of the Chishti movement.

Shattārīyya: a sub-order of the main Chishti and Suhrawardīyya which is restricted to India and Indonesia, its main representatives were Muḥammad Ghauth Gwaliori (d. 1562), and Muḥammad Ghauth (d. after 1633).

Naqshbandīyya: named after Khwāja Bahā‘uddīn Naqshband (d. 1389), this is a sober, highly orthodox school, which arose in Turkestan, Central Asia under the influence of Yūsuf Hamadhānī (d. 1140) and his disciple Ghijduwâni (d. 1220); it became associated with trade guilds and merchants, and became highly politicized, influencing the Timurid court; it is now propagated widely, from the Near East to to central Asia, China, Indonesia, and especially from India and Pakistan, where it opposes syncretistic and ecstatic tendencies in Sufism. It emphasizes an austere, eightfold spiritual practice and an intimate master-disciple relationship.

Bektashiyya: founded by Hājji Bektaş of Khurāsān (14th cent.), and influenced by the Yasawiyya Order of Central Asia (founded by Hamadhānī’s disciple, Alīmār Yasawī), this “rustic” and very secret order, fully established by the late 15th cent., combines Shi‘a and Sunni elements; it went further than most orders in regarding outer ceremonies of Islām as unnecessary, also neglecting dhikr in favor of a Christian-style confession and communal meal with bread, wine and cheese; once prestigious due to its association with the Ottoman Empire, it now survives only in Albania. It is noteworthy for treating women as equals (women have fared well since ancient times in Turkey).

Kubrawiyya: founded by Abū’l Jannāb Alīmār al-Kubrā (d. 1220) of Khiva, central Asia, this order spread to Turkey and India (Kashmir).

Khalveīyya: a branch of the Suhrawardi order, originally in Khurāsān, it has been propagated in Turkey, Egypt and Syria since the 18th cent. by the Anatolian, Mustafā al-Bakri (d. 1749); it is an influential, orthodox order; the Jerrāḥi Order is an important sub-order, recently spread to the West by the late Shaikh Mu‘azzīr Efendi (d. 1987).
Badawiyya: founded by Aḥmad al-Badawī from Tanta (d. 1278), an Egyptian “rustic” order. The most noteworthy representative of this order was al-Sha‘rānī (d. 1565), who founded the Sha‘rāwiyya suborder.

Tijāniyya: founded by Aḥmad al-Tijānī (1737-1815) from Tahmut, Algeria; emphasizes submission to the government and more sober, orthodox practice; it flourishes in West Africa (where almost every Muslim is a Sufi belonging to the Tijāniyya), North Africa and Sudan.

Ni`matullāhī: a Shī‘ite order descending from Qādiriyyya, founded by Shāh Ni`matullāhī (d. 1431) of Persia, it flourished in India for 3 centuries after his son/successor moved there, but was brought back to Persia and spread to the masses by Shāh Ma’sūm (d. 1797) and his disciple Nūr ‘Alī (d. 1798). It is now the most widespread Sūfī order in Persia/Iran, with many centers also in the West. A relatively sober, quiet order, in contrast to the “intoxicated” orientation of its 18th cent. Indo-Persian leaders.

Nūrbakhshī: founded by Muhammad ibn ‘Abdallāh, of Persia, who sought to create a bridge between and combine Sunnism and Shī‘ism.

Qalandarīyya: very loosely organized, this order is the most famous of the many beshar (irregular) orders flourishing in India; it is comprised of wandering dervishes, who emphasize music and poetry.

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VII. IMPORTANT PLACES:

Mecca, Saudi Arabia: site of the Ka`bah and Mt. Arafat; one of the five pillars of Islām is to make the pilgrimage (ḥajj) to the Ka`bah and Mt. Arafat at least once. (Mecca and Medina are off-limits for non-Muslims.)

Medina, Saudi Arabia: the center of incipient Islam, before Mecca was acceded to Muḥammad. At the Baqī‘ cemetery are the tombs of Muhammad, daughter Fāṭimah, and others.

Jerusalem, Israel: the Mosque of the Dome of the Rock; third most important shrine in Islām.

Baghdad, Iraq: site of the capital of the Abbassid dynasty [750-1258], which succeeded the degenerate Umayyad dynasty and marked the high point of Muslim culture; many early Sūfīs flourished here, such as Ḥasan al-BAṣrī, al-Muhāsibī, al-Nūrī, al-Junayd, Qādīr al-Jīlānī, and a great number of pious women saints.

Damascus, Syria: tomb of Ibn al-Arabī (miraculously found by Selim II) is here at Salihyya. This was the old capital of the Umayyad dynasty; many saints lived and taught here through the centuries.

Konya, Turkey: a flourishing Sūfī/Muslim center especially during the time of the Mongol conquests; some beautiful mosques and the tombs of Rūmī and other Mevlevi teachers are here.

Meshed (Mashhad), Iran: tomb of 8th Imām of Shī‘a Islām, Alī al-Ridā, to whom Persians pray for help in finding a spiritual master.

Tūs, near Meshed, Iran: tomb of Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, Islām’s great medieval orthodox theologian turned Sūfī.

Mahān, Iran (southeastern): grand tomb of Shāh Ni`matullāh Walī (1331-1431).
Shiraz, Iran: a large Sufi center, the tombs of Shāh Dā‘ī Shīrāzī and Rahmat ‘Alī Shāh of the Ni’matullāhi Order are here.

Fez, Morocco: a major centre for N. African Sufi groups.

Cairo, Egypt: Muqattam Hill—tombs of many Cairo Sufi saints.

Giza, Egypt: tomb of early mystic Dhūn-Nūn al-Misrī.

Ajmer, Rajasthan, India: tomb of Mu‘īnuddîn Chishti and other Chishtiyya Order saints. Great qawwâl music is sung every Thursday night.

New Delhi, India (S.E. section): tombs of Nizāmuddîn Auliyā, Jihānārā Begum, Hazrat Ināyat Khān, et al. Tomb of Chishti’s disciple, Qutbuddîn Bakhtiyār Kākh is in Merauli section, near the Qutb Minar in (south) New Delhi. Another great site for qawwâl music on Thursday nights.

Khuldabad, India (north of Aurangabad, near Ellora): tombs of Burhān-al-Dīn Gharîb and many other early Chishti saints and Muslim rulers

Hyderabad, India (outskirts): tomb of Ridā ‘Alī Shāh, of the Ni’matullāhi Order, who lived to be 120 years old.

Lahore, Pakistan: first site in Pakistan of Persian Muslim influence. Many saints lived and died in or around Lahore, so one finds here the tomb shrines of Data Ganj Baksh (Hujwīrī, d. 1071), Miān Mīr (d. 1635), Bulleh Shāh (d. 1752), and many others. Thursday nights are the primary night for these shrines in Lahore and other parts of Pakistan and India to host ecstatic qawwâl music.

Multan, Pakistan: tomb of Bahā‘uddîn Zakariya Multānī (d. 1262), a Suhrawardîyya saint.

Bhit-Shah, near Hyderabad, Pakistan: tomb of Shāh ‘Abdu’l Laṭîf (one of the most beautiful tombs in all Islam, to Pakistan’s most popular of poet-saints).

Jhok, Pakistan: tomb of Shah Ināyat Shāhīd (early 18th cent.).

Tatta, Pakistan: Maklī Hill—tombs of many Sindhi saints.

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VIII. SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF USEFUL WORKS ON SUFISM:
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--The finest overall online networking site for İslām and Sūfism, with hundreds of links to other webpages, is Professor Alan Godlas’ website, “Islam and Islamic Studies Resources”: www.uga.edu/islam/home.html. See especially the Sufism section (www.uga.edu/islam/Sufism.html), and specific subsections like “Sufi Orders and Their Shaykhs.”