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The Tariqa's Cohesional Power and the Shaykhhood Succession Question

Shaykh Succession in the Classical Naqshbandiyya: Spirituality, Heredity and the Question of Body

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Abstract

This article discusses the succession issue within a particular Sufi order, the Central Asian Naqshbandiyya, during it pre-modern period, that is from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century. Although the Naqshbandi tariqa is theoretically opposed to the hereditary mode of succession and defends a strictly spiritual process, the history of the order shows a fairly different image. From the early founding principles to the Makhdûmzâda Khwâjagân, we find controversies and changes in the regulation of shaykh succession (for example, the question of primogeniture or the notion of *nisbat*). However, I wish to reconsider the consistency, rather than the contradiction, of the various and successive rules of Naqshbandi succession. It seems that, throughout its pre-modern history, the order experienced an accumulation of ways of succession while it tried to maintain a rigorous continuity, in practice and in doctrine as well, oriented toward the *sunna* and the Prophetic model. Thus the various shaykh succession logics appear as anxious attempts to struggle against the double danger of a decline and of the growing distance from the Prophet. And among them, Naqshbandis found a paradoxical solution in heredity, perceived as embodiment, rather than simple imitation, of the Prophetic ideal.

Introduction

The Naqshbandiyya Sufi order—especially in its "classical" form, that is the Khwâjagân-i Naqshbandiyya, or pre-Mujaddidiyya—is traditionally considered to be one of the most orthodox *tarîqas*, and more precisely one of the most respectful of the non-hereditary, only spiritual, mode of shaykh succession. The chain of transmission (*silsila*) could have been rejected, at least in words, if not by facts: 'Abd al-Rahmân Jâmî's *Nafahât al-uns min hadarât al-quds* reports this famous response given by Bahâ' al-Dîn Naqshband to someone who asked him where his *silsila* went back to: "With a *silsila* no one goes anywhere"['Abd al-Rahmân Jâmî 1981: 391].[1] Devin DeWeese showed that

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1) "*Kasî az îshân pursîd ki*: *silsila-yi hazrat-i shumâ bi kujâ mî risad*? *Furmudând ki*: *az silsila kasî bi jâyî namî risad*."

this kind of rhetoric used by the Khwâjagân against traditional features of institutional Sufism (like the *silsila*) was motivated by the necessity of highlighting their uniqueness as alternatives to other Sufi groups or practices in 13th-15th centuries Central Asia [DeWeese 1999].[2] It reveals likewise a tendency, in the Naqshbandiyya in particular, towards a special, closer relationship with the Prophet and his experience in order to be an accomplished shaykh: bypassing the *silsila* allows a strict spiritual initiation (the *uwaysî* mode particularly) and a direct uptake of *baraka*. More commonly, again in the *Nafahât*, the candidate for shaykhhood is supposed to be the one who "has reached the degree of direction and experience" (*dar maqâm-i irshâd û shaykhûkat muta'ayin bûdand*) ['Abd al-Rahmân Jâmî 1981: 408, note 455].[3] In other words, the future shaykh is required to have accomplished, under a rigorous spiritual guidance naturally, the spiritual path and the whole mystical travel (*sulûk*) to be able to lead the travellers (*sâlik*). The rightly-guided master can guide in turn the disciples, as the rightly-guided Caliphs could guide the Muslim believers—the *irshâd* passes to the *râshidûn* so to say; the *khulafâ'* should be *khulafâ'-yi râshidûn*. This is one of the analogies[4] often used by Sufis referring to the Prophetic model. And we know how far it constitutes not only a model (the "beautiful example" or *uswatun hasanatun* of the Quran 33: 21) but a source for Sufism.

In the same Naqshbandî records from the *Nafahât*, it is said that "Khwâja Yûsuf Hamadânî [the 12th century eponymous founder of the Khwâjagân, d. 1140] sat during more that 60 years on the carpet of shaykhhood and direction (*ziyâdat az shast sâl bar sajjâda-yi shaykhî û irshâd nishasta bûd*) ['Abd al-Rahmân Jâmî 1981: 381, note 437].[5] Behind this overvaluation underlining the fact that Hamadânî, as an ascetic permanently in retreat or concentration, never went outside of his lodge except on Fridays,[6] stands an allusion to the 60-year old Prophet Muhammad. This allusion to the canonical age of the Prophet regarding shaykhhood becomes an application of the Prophetic model in Hamadânî's succession: he is said, indeed, to have appointed four successors called *chahâr khalîfa*

2) In a recent article, the same author (DeWeese) has dealt extensively with the modes of legitimation of Bahâ' al-Dîn Naqshband, which appear multiple and not limited to the *silsila*, before the crystallization of the *silsila* principle in the 15th and 16th centuries: see [DeWeese 2006].

3) The note deals with Mawlânâ Sa'd al-Dîn Kâshgharî (d. 1456 or 58), the *murshid* of Jâmî, though the quotation does not imply himself but another Sufi called Shaykh Zayn al-Dîn Khawâfî. In fact, most of the Naqshbandî authors emphasized the necessity of the spiritual perfection to be a true shaykh: "In order to describe the requirements a true Shaykh has to comply with, the Naqshbandî sources appear to have a marked preference for the adjectives 'perfect' (*kamîl*) and 'perfecting' (*mukammil*, *mukmil*). The true Shaykh is required to have reached the 'level of perfection and leading [others] to perfection (*martaba-i kamâl wa ikmâl [takmîl]*)" according to [Ter Haar 1999: 318].

4) One could mention the *bay'a*, the *ashâb* and so on.

5) A literal translation seems to me more appropriate. One could also translate it as: "led the order more than 60 years."

6) "*rûzî dar zâwiya-yi khud bûd* (...) *'âdât-i way ân nabûd ki dar ghayr-i jum'a bîrûn âyad*"

(namely: Khwâja ʻAbd Allâh Barqî, Khwâja Hasan Andaqî, Khwâja Ahmad Yasawî, Khwâja ʻAbd al-Khâliq Ghijduwânî) [ʻAbd al-Rahmân Jâmî 1981: 382, note 437]. This four-Caliph structure echoes with what ʻAlî al-Hujwîrî (11th-Century)—often quoted by the Khwâjagân authors—exposed in an entire chapter of his *Kashf al-mahjûb* about the four-Caliphal origins of the four fundamental features of Sufism [Hujwîrî 1976: 70-74 (Ch. VI "Concerning their Imâms who belonged to the Companions)]:[7] Abû Bakr al-Siddîq—"the Sufis have made him their pattern in stripping themselves of worldly things, in fixity, in eager desire for poverty, and in longing to renounce authority (...)"; ʻUmar b. al-Khattâb—"the Sufis made him a model in wearing a patched frock and rigorously performing the duties of religion"; ʻUthmân b. ʻAffân—"the Sufis take ʻUthmân as their exemplar in sacrificing life and property, in resigning their affairs to God, and in sincere devotion"; ʻAlî b. Abî Tâlib—" ʻAlî is a model for the Sufis in respect to the truths of outward expressions and the subtleties of inward meanings, the stripping one's self of all property either of this world or of the next, and consideration of the Divine providence." Here again, one should add that Hujiwîrî and his contemporary fellows were obviously anxious to defend themselves against hostile feelings towards the Mystics of the time, but what is more relevant here is, once again, the relation to the Prophet and the model he represents.

Through these examples, I want to point out that the spiritual criterion in Naqshbandî shaykh succession represents a permanent tendency throughout the history of the order, to keep, to preserve the Prophetic paradigm according to Sufis, that is the *sunna*, the *baraka*, and mystical dimensions like the *nûr muhammad*. Of course, the history of the Khwâjagân-i Naqshbandiyya presents many apparently contradictions with its founding principles, such as the spiritual succession in particular. From as early as the 14th century up to the 17th century, the Khwâjagânî shaykhs split into numerous hereditary branches and formed several rival dynasties. This evolution is usually considered as a decline of spirituality, as a loss of mystical authenticity and as the result of a power struggle. However, while keeping in mind that the Prophetic paradigm remains the central concern of the Naqshbandiyya, one can read this conflicting history through the religious debates again, and consequently reconsider the controversies and changes in Naqshbandî succession logic as successive efforts to restore the Muhammadan model. I do not mean that the problem of succession is only theoretical, peaceful and entirely without a financial or political agenda in the background, but I wish to understand exactly its own logic and continuity, not only its factual evolution. I assume

7) Some examples of tarîqas and their primordial Caliph (from [Trimingham 1998: 149-150]): ʻAlî is the primary source; the Naqshbandiyya, the Yasawiyya and the Bektashiyya have a line to Abû Bakr; the Rifâʻiyya to ʻUmar; the Zayniyya to ʻUthmân.

that the succession issues were not being drowned out in bare strategic stakes. Rather, I will suggest the possibility that, along with the debates about shaykh succession in the Naqshbandiyya's long history, has arisen a far more complicated question, that of the passing of time. The more the tarîqa expanded the more it was exposed to the dangers of perdition and decline. Like other Sufi shaykhs, the Naqshbandî masters were aware very early on that the primeval purity of their path—whether real or ideal—could vanish into the ruts of time, and if the shaykhs were to succeed each other, if they had to make history, at the same time they had to go back in time, to get closer and closer to the Prophet.

1. The *silsila* of the Khwâjagân-i Naqshbandiyya

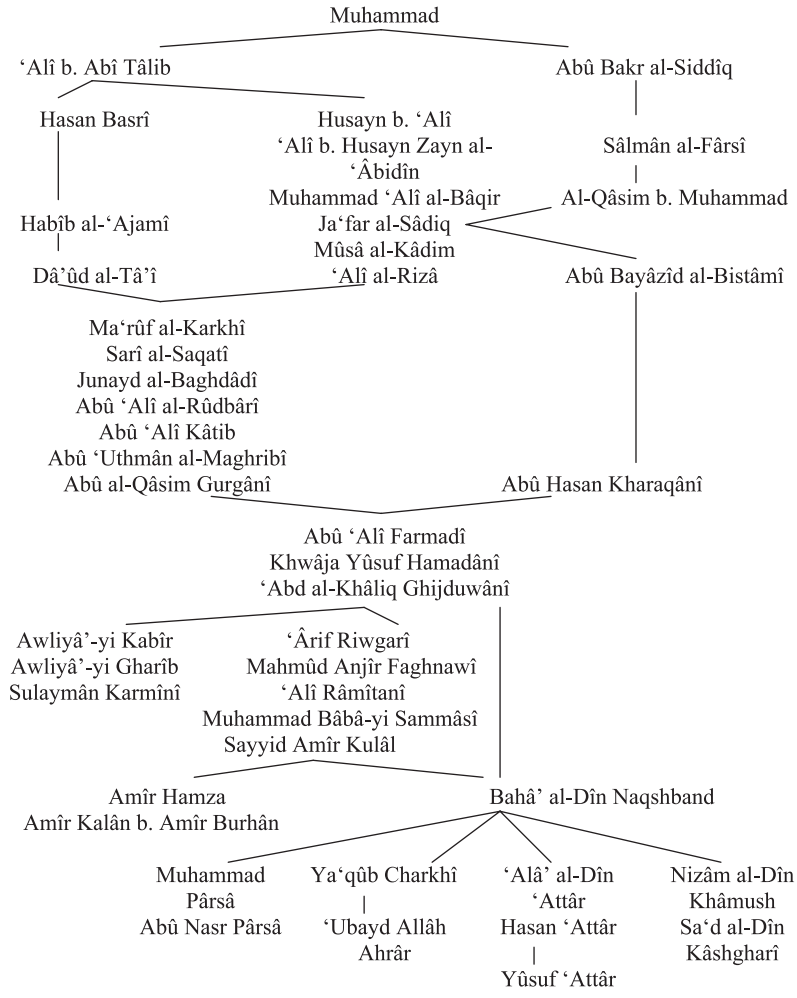
First of all, let's present the tree (*shajara*) of the Khwâjagân-i Naqshbandî *silsila* [Muhammad Pârsâ 1975; Khismatullin 2001]:[8)]

2. The Founder Shaykhs and the Ambiguous Successions

The history of the Khwâjagân, i.e. the protohistory of the Naqshbandiyya, has all the appearances of a pure initiating shaykh succession. Reading the classical *Qudsiyya* by Khwâja Muhammad Pârsâ, one follows a clear *silsila* progression from shaykh to shaykh [Muhammad Pârsâ 1975: 8-15]. Nevertheless, the chain of spiritual transmission shows, since the beginning, an ambiguity insofar as several shaykhs—and prominent ones—have been initiated "magically" by a deceased shaykh. This is of course the well-known *uwaysî* way of initiation, which was frequently used in the early Khurâsânî Sufism [Uludağ 2002: 362; Ter Haar 1999; Gril 1995: 31, 36]. Such is the case for Bâyazîd Bistâmî initiated by Imâm Ja'far al-Sâdiq, then Abû al-Hasan Kharaqânî by Bistâmî, and also Bahâ' al-Dîn Naqshband himself by 'Abd al-Khâliq Ghijduwânî. About the Naqshbandî *silsila*, Muhammad Pârsâ makes sure he specifies that "a large number of its shaykhs were *ûwaysî*" (*bîsyârî az mashâyikh-i îshân ki dar în silsila mizkûrand ûwaysî and*) [Muhammad Pârsâ 1975: 14-15]. Beside the common spiritual initiation process which, after all, remains physical, engaging "real" persons and physical rituals such as *bay'a* in particular, the *uwaysî* mode represented a pure spiritual, esoteric (*rûhânî*, *rûhâniyyat*) guidance able to switch the succession logic. Significantly, this method seems to disappear progressively within the Naqshbandiyya,[9)] while its opposite, i.e. the hereditary

8) Needless to say, this is a basic and retrospective version of the Khwâjagân *shajara*, there are numerous problems concerning segments, affiliations and identifications that cannot be examined here.

9) This does not mean that spiritual training by a deceased or an absent shaykh disappeared in the Naqshbandiyya. See for example the *râbita al-shaykh* where the disciple concentrates his gaze on the face of his master until he internalizes the ideal master. On the *râbita* in the Naqshbandî tradition, see [Meier 1994: 17-241].



way, developed extensively.

In his study of the medieval Central Asian Naqshbandiyya, Jürgen Paul considered that "since Amīr Kulāl (d. 1370) seems to have followed the tradition of hereditary shaykhhood in naming his own successor, his complaint that Bahā'uddīn (d. 1389) took over not only his murīds, but also his son [Hamza], may be a sign that heredity also was an issue in this conflict" [Paul 1998: 55-56]; later, "the branches stemming from Bahā'uddīn's successors betray a tendency to become hereditary" [Paul 1998: 69]. At least, two great figures, Muhammad Pârsâ (d. 1420) and 'Alâ' al-Dîn 'Attâr (d. 1400), tried to establish their own hereditary eponymous lines, creating for instance a *tâ'ifa* called 'Alâ'iyya with Hasan 'Attâr then Yûsuf 'Attâr [Tosun 2002: 132]. Thus, despite the criticism from Bahâ' al-Dîn himself against heredity, as we have seen above, and despite the *silsilas* too, composed at a time

which avoided hereditary links [Paul 1998: 65], such practices were clearly a reality in the shaykhs' appointment process, even on behalf of Bahâ' al-Dîn.[10] Nevertheless, the Sharifian origin—about *Sayyid* Amîr Kulâl notably—did not seem to interfere in the succession logic at this time. There was apparently no argument about that in the Naqshbandî contemporary texts. On the other hand, we notice that, here again, a nearly contemporary Naqshbandî hagiography such as the *Nafahât al-uns* (composed between 881/1476-77 and 883/1478-79), makes a point of naming four *khalîfa* after Bahâ' al-Dîn: the aforementioned 'Alâ' al-Dîn 'Attâr and Muhammad Pârsâ, plus Ya'qûb Charkhî and Nizâm al-Dîn Khâmûsh ['Abd al-Rahmân Jâmî 1981: 394-404, notes 447, 448, 451, 453]. If the Prophetic *ancestry* did not play any role yet in succession logics, the Prophetic *descent* remained a central principle. Obviously, this four-*khalîfa* form of Bahâ' al-Dîn Naqshband's succession corresponds to a certain version of events, actually a distorted one, but what is not a distortion is Jâmî's concern for respecting the Prophetic paradigm in the Sufi succession.

3. Khwâja 'Ubayd Allâh Ahrâr and the Hagiographical *Silsila*

This contradiction between words and deeds in Central Asian Khwâjagân-i Naqshbandiyya increased during the second half of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century, more precisely under the shaykhhood of Khwâja 'Ubayd Allâh Ahrâr (d. 1490) and his first successors. As is well known, this famous shaykh developed the Naqshbandiyya *silsila* in an extraordinary way [Algar 1990], mixing different methods of affiliation [Paul 1991: 533-548]. Indifferently, Khwâja Ahrâr used both hereditary and spiritual succession logics: heredity through his first son Khwâjakâ (Muhammad 'Abd Allâh) [Wâ'iz Kâshifî 1977: 472-579] and his second son Muhammad Yahya (d. 1500) [Wâ'iz Kâshifî 1977: 579-593]; spirituality through, for instance, Mawlânâ Muhammad Qâzî (d. 1515 or 16) [Wâ'iz Kâshifî 1977: 626-631].[11] Yet, Khwâja Ahrâr did not defend the hereditary mode of shaykh succession. In the *Malfuzât-i Ahrâr*, composed by his disciple Mîr 'Abd al-Awwal Nîshâbûrî, there are three consecutive sayings which identify *irshâd* and *takmîl*, the spiritual accomplishment [Nawshâhî 2001: 195-196]. The first one claims: "Spiritual direction and accomplishment have two conditions: firstly, the knowledge of certainty in acts of approaching [God]; secondly, arriving to the stage at which acts of appearance do not prevent the witnessing [of God]. When someone arrives to this degree, he is counted among the mature ones. The accomplishment of

10) For example through matrimonial strategies: 'Alâ' al-Dîn was married to the elder daughter of Bahâ' al-Dîn, Bîbîcha Khâtûn-i Kalân, who gave birth to Hasan 'Attâr.

11) For an overview of Ahrâr's successors, see [Tosun 2002: 170-188].

competence concerns him."[12] According to this formula and others, spiritual competence seems to be the only criterion for shaykhhood according to Khwâja Ahrâr.

Moreover, Aleksej Khismatullin, in his encyclopedia article on the Khwâjagân[Khismatullin 2001: 109-115], explains how 'Alî b. Husayn Wâ'iz Kâshifî, the author of the Ahrârî hagiography *Rashahât-i 'Ayn al-Hayât* (written in 909/1503-04), has reconstructed the Khwâjagân-i Naqshbandiyya *silsila* by concealing hereditary cases in the central chain, but not in the rest. Interestingly, Kâshifî rejected the principle of primogeniture (the elder son as first *khalîfa*) in hereditary shaykh succession. No doubt, there was a strategic reason for such a rejection, that is Kâshifî's opposition to the rival Naqshbandiyya Jûybariyya branch which relied on the primogeniture principle—to which I will return shortly—but at the same time, beyond this controversy, the Naqshbandî hagiographer was particularly careful to restore or reconstruct—more rigorously or artificially than Jâmî—the four-*khalîfa* logic of succession along the *silsila*, at least from Khwâja Yûsuf Hamadânî to Bahâ' al-Dîn [Wâ'iz Kâshifî 1977: 13-101]. All this hagiographical argumentation full of nuances means, firstly, that heredity was both legitimately and effectively admitted. Henceforth, Naqshbandî circles would produce not only *silsilanâma* (like Muhammad b. Husayn Qazwînî's *Silsilanâma-yi Khwâjagân-i Naqshband*) but also genealogical pamphlets (*nasabnâma*), exposing the various lineages founded by the shaykhs (for example 'Abd al-Hayy al-Husaynî's *Nasabnâma-yi Khwâja Ahrâr*, the anonymous *Bayân-i awlâd-i Makhdûm-i A'zam*, etc.). Secondly, it means that the Prophetic heritage appeared more and more as a frame in succession logic. From this controversy and change expressed by Kâshifî, one can deduce a dual purpose: resolving the contradiction between spiritual and hereditary succession logics while applying literally the Prophetic way of succession.

4. *Nisbat-i sûrî* and *Nisbat-i ma'nawî*

The famous second-generation descendant of Khwâja Ahrâr, Ahmad Kâsânî Dahbidî, alias Makhdûm-i A'zam (d. 1542),[13] has represented a watershed, a turning point, in Khwâjagân *silsila* at three different though inseparable levels: first, as a theorist of shaykhhood; second, as a *sayyid*; and last but not least, as a founder of hereditary saintly Naqshbandî lineages. According to Bakhtyar Babajanov, Ahmad Kâsânî considered that the Naqshbandî leader (called *shaykh-i pîshqadam* or *pîr-i pîshqadam*) ruled not only over the disciples but also the other shaykhs of the order [Babad-

12) *"irshâd û takmîl du shart ast yakî 'ilm al-yaqîn bi a'mâl-i maqraba duwîm rasîdan bi ânjâ ki a'mâl û ishghâl-i zâhirî mâni' nayâyad az shuhûd û âgâhî waqtî ki kasî bi în martaba rasîd û râ az bâlighân shumurda and takmîl-i musta'iddân bi û mîfarmâyand."*

13) He was a *murîd* of the aforementionned Muhammad Qâzî.

zhanov 1996, 1998]. This "universalist" claim was clearly a way to present himself as the leader of a community, not only as a *tâ'ifa* chief. Such ambition led Ahmad Kâsânî to restrict his ascendancy to one lineage,[14] and to extend his descent to multiple Sharifian genealogical lineages. At these three levels, Kâsânî endeavored to renew, and to reconstruct, the Prophetic model. Although the four-*khalîfa* frame—which has never been systematic—became less meaningful,[15] this did not correspond to a renouncement of the Muhammadan succession pattern. On the contrary, the Prophetic paradigm aroused an even more literal application under Ahmad Kâsânî's shaykhhood.

Beyond the four-*khalîfa* tradition, beyond the need of a Sharifian ascendancy, it seems that the Sharifian family itself represented the new ideal of succession in the Naqshbandiyya *silsila*. Significantly, the Kâsânî hagiographies often used the Persian term *khânawâda*, family,[16] and the Persian nobiliary suffix-*zâda* in Makhdûmzâda, to name the Naqshbandî branch founded by Makhdûm-i A'zam. Furthermore, the Kâsânî hagiographies composed new types of *silsila* structured on the distinction between the physical lineage (*nisbat-i sûrî*) and the spiritual lineage (*nisbat-i ma'nawî*).[17] I can mention, for instance, Abû al-Baqâ''s *Jâmi' al-Maqâmât*, completed in 1026/1617, but likewise later hagiographies such as the anonymous *Tadhkira-yi Natâ'ij al-'Ârifîn* (circa 1550-1650)[18] or Mîr Khâl al-Dîn al-Yârkandî's *Hidâyat Nâma* composed in 1143/1730. Following the detailed genealogi-

14) This is exposed in his treatise *Silsila al-Siddîqîn*: Makhdûm-i A'zam, *Majmû'a-yi rasâ'il*. İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi 649, ff. 160a-169a.

15) One should qualify this statement since, during the late history of the non-Mujaddidî Naqshbandiyya, we find a quite common representation of the Naqshbandiyya sub-orders following the four-*khalîfa* frame: for instance, 'Abd Allâh Nidâ'î Kâshgharî (1688-1760), a Central Asian Makhdûmzâda Naqshbandî shaykh who settled in Istanbul in 1746, explains in his *Risâla-yi haqqiyya* that: "The *tarîq-i khufiyya* has been taught (*ta'lîm karda*) by Abî Bakr Siddîq, the *tarîq-i kubrawiyya* by 'Umar, the *tarîq-i 'ishqiyya* by 'Uthmân, the *tarîq-i jahriyya* by 'Alî (...) " ([Nuhoğlu 2004: 36-37 in the Persian edited text]; f. 13a in the Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Aşir Efendi 411). In passing, we see that the Kubrawiyya is integrated into the Naqshbandiyya; and that the *'Ishqiyya* is not the name of the order founded by Abû Yazîd al-'Ishqî (13th-c.) but the name of the Âfâqî branch whereas the Jahriyya corresponds to the Ishâqî branch. Later in time, in another region of Islam, we find a similar representation: according to the French explorer Henri d'Ollone who, in the early 20th century, asked a Chinese Naqshbandî imam (*ahong* in Chinese) about the different Sufi orders in Northwestern China, "each of the four caliphs (...) established a particular rite; the Muslims in Gansu are divided between these four rites: Abû Bakr established the Khufiyya who practice the silent prayer; 'Uthmân the Jahriyya who practice the loud prayer; 'Umar the Kubrawiyya and 'Alî the Qâdiriyya" [D'Ollone 1909: 574]. Interestingly, Chinese Muslims oftenly call the Sufi tarîqas *madhhab*, following here again a four-way model which refers to the foundations of Islam.

16) There are other occurrences of the term *khânawâda* in Central Asian Naqshbandî texts, but they seem to designate broadly the affiliates of the *tarîqa* or the circle of disciples of a particular shaykh. More generally, we must keep in mind that, from a Sufi point of view, the *tarîqa* always appears as a family, the *murshid* as a father, the *murîds* as sons and brothers. It is well known that Bahâ' al-Dîn was called 'son' by Muhammad Bâbâ-yi Sammâsî.

17) As a Sufi terminology, the vocabulary of the *nisba* is also used—though in a different way—by the Suhrawardiyya and the Kubrâwiyya.

18) On this manuscript, see [Papas 2006].

cal chains exposed in the first chapter of the *Jâmi‘ al-Maqâmât*, one finds two Sharifian Bakrî lineages regarding Makhdûm-i A‘zam: a first one physical through Sultân Ilak Mazî, Burhân al-Dîn Qilîch[19] and Abû Bakr;[20] a second one spiritual through the aforementioned Muhammad Qâzî and Khwâja Ahrâr.[21] The unique manuscript of the *Tadhkira-yi Natâ'ij al-'Ârifîn* contains a folio which shows the *silsila* in the guise of two columns corresponding to the two *nisba*. In others words, the Kâsânî hagiographical tradition synthesizes the Prophetic genealogy and the Prophetic initiation. From then on, the history of the Khwâjagân-i Naqshbandiyya would be marked by the double *nisba* structure and would identify both heredity and spiritual status in shaykh successions.

5. The Makhdûmzâda Khwâjagân-i Naqshbandiyya: From Heredity to Primogeniture

After the death of Makhdûm-i A‘zam in 1542 there started an extraordinary expansion of the Makhdûmzâda Khwâjagân-i Naqshbandiyya, primarily due to its succession process. Insofar as the *irshâd* was given to numerous disciples (often linked by marriage to the Makhdûmzâda family) and to the thirteen sons of Makhdûm-i A‘zam as well, several important branches developed throughout Central Asia during the second half of the 16th century and the 17th century. The first two major branches were the Jûybâriyya and the Chustiyya. Here I shall sum up a part of my book entitled *Sufism and Politics between China, Tibet and Turkestan* which deals with the Makhdûmzâda [Papas 2005: 38-40 *passim*]: Khwâja Islâm Jûybârî (d. 1563) was a disciple of Kâsânî, and he was also linked to the family by the marriage between one of his daughters and one of the sons of Kâsânî, Muhammad Amîn (d. 1597). The second shaykh is Mawlânâ Lutf Allâh Chustî (d. 1571). He was also a disciple of Kâsânî, and one of his daughters married the son named Ishâq Khwâja (d. 1599). A serious conflict broke out between these two figures over the question of Makhdûm-i A‘zam's succession.

Aside from the details, what is particularly interesting in this conflict is the controversy over the primogeniture principle. Indeed, Khwâja Islâm Jûybârî defended this last principle and presented his own son-in-law, that is Kâsânî's elder son, Muhammad Amîn, as the legitimate leader (*pîshwâ-yi tarîqa*). In opposition to this, Lutf Allâh Chustî—and many Hanafî 'ulamâ' in Bukhârâ—supporting another son of Kâsânî, Ishâq Khwâja, brandished the Quranic verses 175 and 176 of the 4th surah alluding to the succession: "*Then those who believe in Allah, and hold fast to Him,- soon*

19) On these semi-legendary figures in Central Asian genealogies, see [Abashin 2001].

20) Abû' al-Baqâ', b. Bahâ' al-Dîn b. Makhdûm-i A‘zam. *Jâmi‘ al-maqâmât*. Bodleian Library, Ms Indian Institute Persian 118, ff. 3a-b.

21) Abû' al-Baqâ', ff. 10a-b.

will He admit them to mercy and grace from Himself, and guide them to Himself by a straight way"; "*They ask thee for a legal decision. Say: Allah directs (thus) about those who leave no descendants or ascendants as heirs. If it is a man that dies, leaving a sister but no child, she shall have half the inheritance: If (such a deceased was) a woman, who left no child, Her brother takes her inheritance: If there are two sisters, they shall have two-thirds of the inheritance (between them): if there are brothers and sisters, (they share), the male having twice the share of the female. Thus doth Allah make clear to you (His law), lest ye err. And Allah hath knowledge of all things.*"

Thereafter, it seems that hereditary succession was no longer an issue, it was rather the primogeniture. Beyond the strategic reasons and the economic interests, beyond the passion for power more generally, one can view this evolution in Naqshbandiyya succession logics in continuity with its permanent concern about the Muhammadan heritage. There was a will to transmit it by the Sharifian way, as though the initiation process was no longer enough or no longer secure. It was a matter of incarnating the Prophetic paradigm, not only applying it, because this was the best way to preserve it. So the question was: 'How can we identify as rigorously as possible the Prophetic genealogy and the Prophetic initiation?' Primogeniture was an answer because this rule had the fundamental advantage of securing the passage of shaykhhood from one generation to the next one without any rupture. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that the 17th century Khwâjagân-i Naqshbandiyya has been characterized by a long-term conflict around the primogeniture principle.[22] Following the Jûybâriyya and Chustiyya split in Western Turkistan, the Khwâjas of Eastern Turkistan split into the Âfâqiyya/Âqtâghlîq and the Ishâqiyya/Qarâtâghlîq branches [Muhämmäd Sadiq Qäshqäri 1986: 40 *sqq*], the first one supporting primogeniture, the second one rejecting it [Papas 2005: 72-73]. Nevertheless, the two rival branches employed different means to achieve the same goal: preserving the Makhdûmzâda saintly lineage in order to preserve the Prophetic heritage.

6. The Necessity of Blood and Body

To sump up what has been discussed, I would point out that, in spite of the controversies and changes we can find among the premodern Central Asian Naqshbandîs, continuity remains: the will to apply the Prophetic paradigm. Facing divisions, conflicts, and more generally worldly affairs, the Khwâjagân-i Naqshbandîs aimed to maintain a strictly Sufi version of the Sunnî framework, that is a mystical tradition *stricto sensu*. It seems to me that this major concern became so dramatic, so disturbing in the course of history that the Naqshbandî shaykhs experienced the necessity

22) The Khwâjas' religious memory recounts the origins of the conflict: see [Muhämmäd Sadiq Qäshqäri 1986: 36-37].

of incarnating, embodying the Muhammadan experience. They had to go beyond the *imitatio Prophetae* which had prevailed since the 13th century. The Prophetic Sufi ideal had to come down to the blood and body, there was no way round it. I mean that the Naqshbandî shaykhs, as early as the 14th and 15th centuries, were highly aware of the probable loss of spirituality in their own ranks, of the institutionalization of their spirituality,[23] in other words they were conscious of the usual dangers of time, so they found a solution in the identification of initiation and heredity. They even felt the critically growing distance between them and the Prophet: beside the nostalgia for Muhammad's life and community, significant was the appearance of the question of the generations in Sharifian genealogy, more exactly the number of intermediaries between the Khwâjagân and the Prophet. The question was so sensitive among the Khwâjas of Eastern Turkistan that their hagiographical writings became progressively more concerned with this aspect: for example, a major late text (completed in 1730) such as Mawlânâ Mîr Khâl-Dîn al-Yârkandî's *Hidâyat Nâma* was entirely structured on a number of chapters (*bâb*) equivalent to the number of Sharifian intermediaries (*wâsita*)—this esoteric structure is revealed by the author at the end of the text.[24] This kind of hidden argument may not be so usual, one has to admit, nevertheless it heralds the future controversies in Eastern Turkistan and Ferghana about the lineage of the Khwâjas.

Therefore, instead of perceiving the hereditary logic of shaykh succession—and its success—as a decline of spirituality in Sufism and in Sufi tarîqas during the premodern times, I would rather consider these controversies and changes as attempts to struggle against the danger of a decline. Thus blood and body appeared as paradoxical and valuable arms. They afforded several advantages to the premodern Naqshbandiyya: at a basic level, heredity could insure the transfer of any material possessions (*waqf* goods in particular), or the transfer of the sociopolitical status held by the shaykh-father. There would be many examples to illustrate this point once one mentions the Ahrârî shaykhs as well as the Khwâjas of Eastern Turkistan (of whom the aforementioned al-Yârkandî is a major biographer). From the organizational point of view, the advantage would have been—at least in theory—to reduce the occasions of conflict between candidates to the succession. The establishment of rules in the hereditary succession process, such as the primogeniture principle or any kind of rules, aimed to make it more systematic—like other types of lineage. Moreover, the point was to avoid any interruption in the chain of transmission: 'How could you find a better disciple, continuator and

23) See notably DeWeese [1999: 506] who writes that "the issues [in the *Manâqib* of Khwâja 'Alî Râmîtanî] raised for the most part deal with the social profile of Sufis, and the positions taken are in the main couched in terms of opposition to or contrast with several elements that had become normative features of 'public,' institutional Sufism in Central Asia during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries."

24) On this point, see [Papas 2005: 170 *passim*].

heir than your own son; or a better master, initiator and legatee than your own father?' The family structure could guarantee the handing over of exoteric and esoteric knowledge, from the gift of the shaykh's private library to the teaching of secret formulas. In many respects, the family appeared as a way to protect the material and spiritual patrimony of the Naqshbandî tradition against all contingencies. Therefore, the deep meaning of such a hereditary-orientation is probably to be found in a permanent struggle against the impermanence of time, its setbacks, its pitfalls, its oblivions, and its distance from the Prophetic moment.

Just a word to conclude this section: we find an interesting expression of this incarnation—though not yet bloody—of the shaykh succession ideal in the classical *Nafahât al-uns* that I already quoted at the beginning of my article: "His hand is my hand and his tongue my tongue" (*dast-i û dast-i man ast wa zabân-i û zabân-i man*) ['Abd al-Rahmân Jâmî 1981: 490-491, note 509]. This formula has been written by Maktûb Kamâl al-Dîn 'Abd al-Razzâq in an *ijâzat* letter given to a *murîd*. This is certainly a way of expressing the loyalty as well as the authority passing from a master to his disciple. In fact, the formula is not originally Sufi, it comes from a political context where a *pâdishâh* delegated his power to his favorite (*muqarrab*). Yet, I would interpret this sentence in another way: the *irshâd* needed more than a *bay'a*, more than a handshake (*musâfaha*), it needed a physical continuity, from body to body. The question which arises is how to guarantee this continuity, how the shaykh's or the saint's hand could be the Prophet's hand.

Conclusion: Shaykh Succession and the History of Sufism

The question of shaykh succession is a central issue for every historian of Islamic mysticism. It raises the problem of the evolution of Sufi orders, whatever their orthodoxy or heterodoxy may be—if these words have any relevance. Assuming that the above demonstration is right, the example of the classical Naqshbandiyya reveals the complexity of its evolution since the origins to the 17th century, and assuredly, the Naqshbandî case is not isolated. It warns the historian not to simplify the history of the *tarîqas*; to not, in other words, reduce it to a simple—and rather historicist—pattern, assuming the progressive foundation, succession, scission and decline periods. It shows that the Sufi orders faced precise problems even if they did not always give them a formulation. It shows equally that they tried to find solutions to these problems, even if they did not always succeed. No doubt the history of Sufism—like other mystical traditions—is neither the history of a growing, triumphal, pure spirituality, nor the history only of great spiritual heroes. Yet, the transformation of Sufi orders on the *longue durée* never presents simple decay scenarios.

Such historicism fails to understand why a Sufi order like the Naqshbandiyya, which developed

various ways of legitimization and succession, and which asserted its hostility to the hereditary mode of shaykh appointment, has promoted so extensively the family institution as a Sufi mode of organization. I believe that the question of time and the solution of body can provide a plausible hypothesis for a wider and more complex explanation. After all, the problem was a classical one: the way to fulfill a mystical relationship with the Prophet, which can be found in different versions from one period to another, from one part to another of the Muslim world. Further study adopting this comparative scale might help towards a better understanding of how, historically, an esoteric ambition sought an exoteric means to achieve its aim.

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