Şūfism

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1 Introduction

The chapter offers an overview of Şūfism (*taşawwuf*), covering Şūfi beliefs and practices, as well as their historical and social dimensions. First, it provides an introduction to the origins of the term ‘Şūfism’ and its etymology, with the aim of identifying the core of the Şūfi ethos, and the ways it is manifested through ritual. The historical development of Şūfism is explained from its initial otherworldly impetus to its routinisation, first into lodges scattered across the world, and later into well-established Şūfi Orders (*ṭuruq*, sing. *ṭarīqa*). The face of Şūfism today is then considered, by introducing the reader to today’s most relevant *ṭuruq*, and its location and influences. Finally, the chapter assesses the manifold influences Şūfism has exerted in religious as well as social and political movements across the world.

2 Şūfism: Genealogy of a Term

The term Şūfism has long been widely used in Western academia. Today, it is also of common usage in popular parlance, employed when people want to refer to a broad array of phenomena, from some types of music or particular kinds of devotional dances, to ritual practices such as trance or religious healing. But what do we mean when speaking about ‘Şūfism’? The association of the term with such a diverse range of phenomena has admittedly obscured its meaning. This ambiguity, often embedded in a mysterious and exotic tone, is a feature that has characterised the term since its inception, and it is related to the patchy knowledge Europeans had about Islam.

Up to the end of the eighteenth century, Europeans’ knowledge of *taşawwuf* was admittedly scant (Chodkiewicz 1994: 12; Schimmel 2011: 7–8). Prior to colonialism, some of the beliefs and practices that were to be later associated with the Şūfis attracted the attention of some European travellers, and they provided almost the only knowledge of *taşawwuf* that Europe had had up to that time. For example, the Italian merchant Giosafat Barbaro (d. 1494), as well as the Spanish Ambassador of the Castilian King Ruy González de Clavijo

(d. 1412), travelled through Anatolia (De Nicola 2016: 59) and left accounts of encounters with Qalandar dervishes, devotees of a mendicant religiosity of an antinomian nature in pre-modern Islam (Karamustafa 1994). In the sixteenth century, there are also accounts of Europeans who travelled to Istanbul and visited a “dervish convent in the city” (Jezernik 2007: 166), and in the seventeenth century of travellers who returned to Europe with descriptions of dervish rituals (Schimmel 2013: 179). Yet, none of these explanations provides evidence of the authors being good *connoisseurs* of what they were describing. On the contrary, since exploring religious aspects was not the main objective of their trips, the superficial acquaintance that characterises their reports is only to be expected.

The word ‘Sūfism’ came to be coined during the Enlightenment. From the eighteenth century onwards, the addition of the suffix ‘-ism’, characteristic of European language and often used to denote ‘ideology’ or ‘worldview’, was added to the root ‘*ṣuf*’. It is unclear what the root ‘*ṣuf*’ actually means. Some have connected it to the term *ṣafā* (purity), or to *ṣafwā* (‘the elected, the chosen ones’), or even to *ṣuffā* (bench, in reference to a supposed group of contemporaries of Muhammad who would have gathered on a bench, symbolising a primordial community of paupers) (Ernst 1997). Nonetheless, it is clear that the combination of ‘*ṣuf*’ with ‘-ism’ made the term Sūfism an etic attribution, with no single emic translation in the languages spoken in Muslim-majority societies.

In addition, the sparse, sometimes inconsistent knowledge Europeans had about the religious realities of Muslim-majority societies contributed to a representation of Sūfism within an atmosphere of ambiguity. One of the results of the ambiguity connected to this orientalisng gaze is that those aspects of Islam that became commonly associated with Sūfism were extremely diverse in nature. So varied was the miscellany of ideas, personas, and practices that were from then on considered Šūfī that, one may argue, it would be difficult to find, other than Islam, a common denominator to connect them. In the eyes of the observer however, they were part of a unique, well-defined world, and they were typified accordingly. Most of the religious doings were perceived as practices that stood ‘at the fringes’ of what was perceived to be ‘normative’ within Islam, the dichotomy being in itself a further attribution of its dubious correlation with living religion. The orientalisng gaze through which Europeans often looked at Muslim-majority societies often meant that Islam was viewed quite negatively. It follows that since Sūfism was perceived as not exactly part of Islam, the ‘foreignness’ attributed to Sūfism within its own tradition gave it a more positive connotation. That meant that, for Europeans, over time the term became useful to designate different Muslim beliefs and practices that

for whatever reason were met with more interest and congeniality than the other Islamic beliefs and practices considered to be less congenial (Ernst 1997).

The religious manifestations that were viewed more favourably included certain types of poetry and musical genres, particular traditions of foretelling the future and interpretation of dreams, rituals connected to the practice of God's remembrance (*dhikr*),¹ pilgrim worship at tombs and mausoleums (*ziyāra*),² and religious healing (*shifā'*) (the latter three being practices that on occasion involved practitioners entering states of trance). It was in this context that *taṣawwuf* began to be located either outside or at the fringes of the Islamic tradition. This positioning gave Şūfism its current traditional association with 'mysticism' (that is, a human effort to get closer to the divine often beyond or at the expense of particular religious traditions). Most notably, the positive connotation acquired by Şūfism grew in direct contrast to the negative one acquired by Islam, to such an extent that, at least for some, the Şūfis came to be viewed as non-Islamic devotees in Muslim-majority societies. Orientalists such as Sir William Jones (d. 1794) or Sir John Malcolm (d. 1833) represent the classical view of this approach. Şūfism from this perspective was 'non-Muslim within Islam,' and was defined as an offshoot of Hindu yoga, Greek philosophy, and Buddhism (Ernst 1997). By the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century, the term sometimes also became linked to pantheistic beliefs; that is, the creed in which the human is perceived to be identical to the divine.

3 Şūfism's 'Foreignness' and 'Impurity'

The tendency to associate Şūfism with something other than Islam has continued until the present day, and Şūfism's foreignness to Islam is an idea that is still quite popular in the Western world and among (an ever-increasing number of) Muslim opponents of *taṣawwuf*. In the West, the twentieth century saw the popularisation of the idea of Şūfism as 'the non-Islamic mysticism' put into practice. As a result, we have witnessed the emergence of groups in Europe and North America who describe themselves as Şūfis, but do not consider

1 *Dhikr* (Arab.) is generally translated into English as 'remembrance'. It denotes a ritual commonly performed by Şūfis that consists of mentioning a previously memorized formula. *Dhikr dġālī* refers to the performed ritual when the formula is uttered aloud, whereas *dhikr khāfī* refers to the one practiced either in silence or in low tones. Both can be performed either individually or collectively.

2 *Ziyāra*, pl. *ziyārāt* (Arab.) is a Şūfī pious visitation, pilgrimage to a holy place, generally a *zāwiya*, tomb, or shrine.

themselves to be Muslims. Organisations such as the Šūfi Order International, for example, consider Šūfism to be a 'universal' (that is, not bounded to Islam) religious tradition, with the current leader, Zia Inayat Khan (b. 1971), expressing his views on the non-Islamic nature of Šūfism in a famous essay called "The Paradox of Universal Šūfism" (Inayat Khan 2016). Equally, the International Šūfi Movement and the Šūfi Ruhaniat International, based in San Francisco (Šūfi Ruhaniat International 2020) are groups that see themselves not as part of the Islamic tradition, but of a 'Universal' one. Finally, special mention is given to Idries Shah (d. 1996), arguably the greatest populariser of the 'non-Islamic' tendency within Šūfism. The Indian spiritual teacher and prolific author became famous for suggesting that Šūfism, a 'universal' religiosity, *predates* Islam. Although his scholarly credentials have been widely questioned, he is well known for 'guiding' and being a source of inspiration for famous personalities, such as the Nobel Laureate Doris Lessing (d. 2013) and the American psychologist Robert Evan Ornstein (d. 2018). He was also in close contact with members of more recently formed religious groups, including Gerald Gardner, (d. 1964) the founder of Wicca, and John Godolphin Bennett, (d. 1974) the British scientist and disciple of G.I. Gurdjeff (d. 1949) (Wellbeloved 2003). Although these ideas have contributed to make Šūfism known in some non-Muslim milieus unfamiliar with Islam, they are certainly not representative of the majority of Šūfis. In fact, a more 'mainstream' identity within contemporary Šūfism positions *tašawwuf* right at the core of the Islamic tradition, or as epitomising its essence, in Alexander Knysh's words: "[Šūfism is] Islam in miniature [because] all the features of the encompassing larger tradition (Islam) are reflected in its ascetic-mystical stream (Šūfism)" (Knysh 2017: 7).

Also common, however, is the tendency to view Šūfism as something that has departed from a 'normative' understanding of Islam, at least from the point of view of orthopraxis. This conceptualisation of Šūfism is becoming more popular not only in the West, but also in some Muslim-majority societies. It is clear that the practices that today are perceived as 'Šūfi' (for example, *samā'*,³ *shifā'*, *ziyāra*, and *dhikr*) have accepted a wide variety of performative styles according to cultural variations to give Šūfism a reputation of being syncretic. Clearly, as a living tradition, Islam has largely embodied a multiplicity of rhythms, looks, and cadences, generating today's characteristic stunning

3 *Samā'* (Arab.): type of music used in Šūfi rituals of *dhikr*. Today it has become a musical style in its own right and is performed in non-religious settings. *Samā'* literally refers to the act of hearing, but more precisely denotes 'that which is heard'. In Šūfism, *samā'* is often used to refer to the hearing of music, the spiritual concert, in a more or less ritualised form. In medieval Šūfi writings *samā'* is perceived as a means of enriching the soul that often induces pronounced emotional states (*aḥwāl* sing. *ḥāl*), including episodes of trance.

diversity, for which Şūfism is evidently not solely responsible. It is also true that Şūfism has historically played (and continues to do so) a significant role in Islam reaching new cultural milieus. In fact, it is often claimed that *taşawwuf* has been a decisive element in the historical spread of Islam, and in the development of local Islamic cultures across the globe.⁴ Therefore, the location of Şūfism at 'the fringes', both in religious terms, and especially in geographical terms, makes sense to a certain degree.

Nonetheless, the single most significant reason why Şūfism today may be considered to be insufficiently Islamic, and as a result viewed in a negative light by Muslims, is the often unsympathetic attitude that certain reform movements have had towards *taşawwuf* since their inception in the late eighteenth century. It should be noted that (although probably the best-known) reformists' attacks against Şūfism were not the first or only criticisms faced by *taşawwuf*. As early as the tenth century, one of the most renowned Şūfi personalities, the medieval mystic Mañşūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 922), was executed for proclaiming his mystical union with God in a manner considered extreme by his detractors. Literalist and legalist interpreters of Islam have long opposed the ideas of the Şūfis. They have argued over centuries that Şūfi Orders provide means for non-Islamic practices and are based in beliefs of idolatry (*shirk*), considered by Islam an unforgivable sin. Yet it was the reform movements that made these criticisms widespread from the eighteenth century onwards.

Most famous for its outright opposition to Şūfi practices and beliefs was the Arabian Wahhābī movement, as well as India's Ahl-i Ḥadīth (Robinson 1988). With their emphasis on correctness in religious performance, these groups saw practices such as the veneration at the graves of the *awliyā'* *Allāh*⁵ as a breach of the belief of *tawḥīd* (the principle of Oneness of God) fundamental articulation of the monotheistic ethos in Islam. These criticisms were present in diverse cultural settings within Muslim-majority societies. We find them, for example, in the activities and teachings of 'Abd Allāh ibn Idrīs al-Sanūsī (d. 1931) (Vikør 1995) and the 1930s Society of Algerian 'Ulamā' in North Africa, in the Jadid movement in Central Asia (Khalid 1999; Baldauf 2001), and in the

4 There are a number of studies devoted to the spread of Islam that support this view: for example, Buehler (1998), Le Gall (2010), Cornell (1998), and Vikør (2000). However, an increasing number of scholars are questioning this view by arguing that this is a claim made *a posteriori* by Şūfis of later periods (DeWeese 1994), or in particular by members of Şūfi Orders willing to legitimate their institutions.

5 *Walī Allāh*, pl. *awliyā' Allāh* (Arab.): *walī* can be translated as manager, guardian, protector, and also intimate or, most commonly, friend. *Walī Allāh*, generally translated as 'friend of God', is the term used to designate a Muslim saint, one who intercedes for others as Allah's deputy or vice-regent on earth.

Muḥammadiyya in Indonesia (Anwar 2005). In the Arabian Peninsula, as early as 1803, the Wahhābī seizure of Mecca and Medina brought about the destruction of all the tombs that existed in and around the city (Bruinessen 2009). Attacks on Šūfī shrines in the name of Islam's 'purification' have persisted to this day; in Libya, for example, as recently as 2012, there was desecration of at least six Šūfī shrines and complexes,⁶ and in Pakistan two bomb attacks—at the shrine of Hazrat Data Ganj Baksh Ali Hujwari in Lahore in 2010, and at a Šūfī Festival in southern Punjab in 2011—killed around a hundred people and injured many more. These are just a few of numerous examples. Confrontation between 'Šūfis' and 'anti-Šūfis' has recently become the norm rather than the exception in many Muslim-majority societies (Sirriyeh 1999).

The opposition between Šūfism and anti-Šūfism is not straightforward, and various aspects deserve to be highlighted. First, it has been claimed that 'fundamentalist' voices within Islamism have been able to elaborate on their religio-political identity thanks to and against a backdrop of 'two others' (an external other, the West, and an internal other, Šūfism) (Weismann 2011). As our knowledge of both Šūfism and Salafism expands, a view in which Šūfism is both the antithesis and a foundational background to Salafism is gaining ground, at least within academic circles (for example, Ridgeon et al 2015). Considering Šūfism as merely antithetical to militant Islam is therefore misleading, in that it purportedly forgets the relevant role Šūfism has had in Islamic history, in among other things, the creation of groups and ideologies from which Islamists (Salafis among them) stem. Thus, the structure typical of the *ṭuruq*, if not their core doctrines, has provided inspiration for Islamist political organisations such as the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*, founded 1928), a spin-off of the *ṭarīqa* Ḥaṣāfiyya Shādhilīyya (Johansen 1996). Thus, Salafism can be seen more accurately, or at least partly, as a modern result of a religious trend that was at the same time Šūfī and reformist, rather than the negation of Šūfism in itself (Weismann 2011).

Second, the relationship between Šūfis and their detractors is also complex because some of the verbal attacks pronounced against Šūfism have been and are vocalised from within the Šūfī movement; therefore, these critics should be viewed not as opponents of Šūfism, but as proponents of change from within *taṣawwuf*. One example of this interesting relationship is Deobandism, a

6 Attacks on: the al-Maṣrī shrine in Tripoli (October 2011), Sīdī 'Ubaīd's tombs' complex in Benghazi (January 2012), the tomb of a fifteenth-century scholar 'Abd al-Salām al-Asmar (d. 1575) in Zlitan (March 2012), Abdul Salam Al Asmari's shrine, mosque, and library, Hazrat Sheikh Aḥmad Zarrūq's (d.1493) tomb, and the al-Sha'ab al-Dahmān mosque, which lodged a number of Šūfī graves, including the tomb of the Šūfī scholar 'Abdullah al-Sha'ab (d. sixteenth century) (August 2012). At <http://themuslim500.com/2013-2/issues-of-the-day/destruction-of-šūfī-shrines>. Accessed 01/07/2020.

reformist trend that is often referred to as 'South Asian Wahhābism' and which shows, at the same time, accommodation and acceptance of Şūfism. Yet clearly the two seem to differ, as noted by Oliver Roy when speaking about the situation in Afghanistan, in that:

The Deoband school rejected innovation (*bi'dā*), kept to a strict orthodoxy and would not permit the cult of the saints; nevertheless, it accepted Şūfism and many of the teachers were Naqshbandi or Qadiri [these are the names, as we shall see later, of two of the most relevant Şūfi Orders], which, in itself, clearly shows how the fundamentalism of the school is distinct from that of the Saudi Wahhabi. Once again, the link between fundamentalism and Şūfism was to be the hallmark of the orthodoxy of the 'ulama of the subcontinent, Afghanistan included.

ROY 1990: 57

Similar to the situation with Deobandism, many reformers in other parts of the world, did not, at least initially, oppose Şūfism *per se*, but some of the practices that were more often associated with this type of religiosity (the veneration of saints, the visitation of tombs, faith healing, miracle claims, and so forth).

In most cases, they were very critical of Şūfism in its organised form, the Şūfi Orders, being lines of thought inspired, for example, by the Egyptian thinker Muḥammad 'Abduh or Indonesia's Muḥammadiyya movement. Such objections attest to the anti-*ṭarīqa* stance of many nineteenth and early twentieth century Islamic trends, rather than a mere anti-Şūfi position. These perspectives could also be applied to (both Islamic and secularist) nationalist circles in many Muslim-majority societies. The most famous example is the policies of the Turkish Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who suppressed Şūfi Orders because they were seen as a tie to the past and an impediment to the modernisation and advancement of the nation. Other countries, such as Egypt, aware of the effective powers that Şūfi leaders and their organisations exerted over vast groups of the population, attempted to limit their influence and bring them under state control.

A further aspect of the complex confrontation between Salafis and Şūfis is the inner diversity existing within the two. For example, several attacks on centres of Şūfi piety have been authorised by supporters of the Salafiyya, yet not all Salafis support acts of violence against Şūfis, even though, in many cases, they consider the veneration of Şūfi figures as an innovation (*bid'a*) with no place in Islam. Soon after the desecration of shrines in Egypt on March 2011 by Salafi vigilantes, the Salafi leader 'Abd al-Muna 'im al-Shahha publicly condemned the attacks as criminal acts, declaring they were completely impermissible

because, in his view, Salafis oppose the veneration of graves but do not advocate their destruction. This statement proliferated on Salafi websites, and attacks on Šūfi shrines ceased immediately (Brown 2011: 10).⁷

4 The Making of a Religious Tradition

But what really is Šūfism, and how did it come to be what it is today? Albeit historically not proven, Muslim tradition speaks of the existence of people with mystical inclinations that were companions of the Prophet. Somewhat vaguely defined, it is difficult to know exactly what bound these people together and differentiated them from other Muslims (Knysh 2017: 247).⁸ Additionally, there are references to ascetics as part of the *taṣawwuf* trend (for example, *faqīr*, *ʿārif*) in source material. Despite these few cases, the formative period of what we refer to today as Šūfism can be more generally identified between the ninth and twelfth centuries, a long-lasting period of time in which a wide range of diverse religious ideas and practices became a 'recognised religious tradition', which included a body of religious literature, a set of principles, and a compendium of ritual exercises. Historians have identified a significant number of religious trends within 'Islamdom' that tried to use the human soul as a mechanism and tool to experience reality during the ninth and tenth centuries (Karamustafa 2007). At first, these sometimes quite distinct religious movements were not part of a single unified trend, but rather diverse groups based across the world.

In this early phase, Baghdad was important in terms of the innovation of mystical trends, but it was by no means the only place where they existed. Lower Iraq, North-Eastern Iran, and Central Asia, for example, were places with a vibrant mystical life, as exemplified by groups such as the Malāmatis and authors such as Sahl ibn ʿAbdullā al-Tustarī (d. 896) or Abū ʿĪsā Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā ibn Sawrah ibn Shaddād al-Tirmidhī (d. 892).⁹ Some of these renunciant trends, such as the Malāmatiyyā or the Karrāmiyyā, have been identified as being too distinct as to be considered 'Šūfi'. They are oftentimes referred to as made of 'the people of the *khānaqā*' (a lodge for spiritual retreat), the

⁷ This was published on Salafi websites. See: www.salafonline.net/frontend/newsdetails.aspx?ftid=11&nid=65. Accessed 19/05/2016.

⁸ Examples of the early mystics are ʿAbū Ḍarr al-Ghifārī al-Kinānī (d.652), ʿAbū'l-Dardā' (d.639), Hudhayfā ibn al-Yamān (d.656), or, ʿImrān ibn al-Hussayn al-Khuzā'i (d.672), ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAs (d.685), see Knysh (2017: 247).

⁹ For a more detailed analysis of earlier groups and personalities, see Karamustafa (2007).

khānaqā'īyyūn (Maqdisi in Melchert 2001: 237).¹⁰ In any case, they contributed to the consolidation of Şūfism.

In time, Baghdad would emerge as a major capital of Şūfi ideas, and Baghdadi trends were exported to more distant parts of the Islamic world, such as the Iberian and Arabian Peninsulas, where they became fused with local practices and ideas. As a result, a growing gap emerged between what Ahmet Karamustafa (2007: ix) called the “metropolitan” version of Şūfism (distinctive of Baghdad) and a series of “provincial” counterparts. These flourishing mystical trends should be viewed within the context of a rapidly evolving intellectual milieu within Islamic thought during this period of consolidation of Islam as an established World religion.

However, it is the creation of a distinctively Şūfi literary genre during the tenth and eleventh centuries that has been seen as the historical landmark in the birth of ‘Şūfism’, that is, a self-conscious religious tradition. The literary output produced in this phase—first in Arabic from the eleventh century onwards, and later on in Persian—has been viewed as a sum of attempts to unify the eclectic ‘metropolitan-versus-provincial’ compendium of mystical trends into a single normative corpus. At the same time, Şūfism incorporated doctrinal corpuses from other traditions (for example, Neoplatonic, Hellenic, Gnostic) elaborating on a theosophical system. The contributions of other traditions are evident in the writings of one of the theosophical Şūfis *par excellence*, the Persian al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191), who is said to have incorporated Zoroastrian and Hermetic concepts into his thought.¹¹

The process of developing an ‘orthodoxy/orthopraxis’ was meant to define the boundaries and somehow assimilate the diversity of mystical approaches that existed, with mystical writers of the period disagreeing over matters of religious norm, and also in that they positioned themselves and their views of Islam in rather different ways. The literary genre introduced the tradition to new audiences, contributed to building new solidarity between groups, and preserved and evaluated the legacy of earlier paragons (Le Gall 2010: 676). The process of tradition-building was further consolidated by the emergence of a new type of religious institution, the Şūfi lodge (sing. *zāwiya*, *ribāt*, or *khānaqā'*).

10 A good approximation of these distinct early renouncing movements that appeared mostly in Nishapur, see Melchert (2001).

11 A later but very relevant theosophical author was the Murcia-born Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 1240), one of the major exponents of theosophical Şūfism and the perhaps most important author in the development of the idea of sainthood in Islam. For further reference, see Renard (2008).

Šūfi lodges housed a new type of congregation comprising a religious leader, the *shaykh al-tarbiyya*, and his followers. A religious 'method' emerged as the key that brought together the master and his disciples.¹² These communities soon became regulated by manuals of conduct and etiquette (*adab*) by which communal living was organised. The ultimate goal of the Šūfi method was, the rationale goes, fusing the devotee with God, an objective ultimately attained after undertaking a journey through a 'path' (*ṭarīqa*) consisting of 'stations' (sing. *maqām*) and a series of feelings or 'states' (sing. *ḥāl*) derived from the experience of being in those stations. Šūfism understands that the journey is a way of progressively overcoming the machinations of one's carnal soul or ego-self (*nafs*) and detaching oneself from those mundane aspects that habitually estrange the spirit from its godly source (Ohlander 2015: 61). By eliminating these impurities, the devotee is understood to finally return to the 'original source', God. By undertaking the journey, the devotee seeks ultimately to attain experiential knowledge (*ma'rifa*) of God's unity, distinguishing the reality of the Islamic profession of faith 'There is no god but God' from the physical world.

It was assumed, however, that the sojourner required guidance to navigate the path. The *shaykh*'s 'educational' (*tarbiyya*) role consisted of training and closely supervising the spiritual transformation of the devotee. The link between *shaykh* and disciple was conceptualised as *maḥabba* (divine love) and routinely manifested by personal submission and obedience. Loyalty to those masters became more formally established over time by developing the notion of 'initiation', signalled by the *bay'a*¹³ (oath of allegiance), and thus the exclusive connection that a disciple had with the *shaykh* became a feature of that master-disciple relationship. Each *ṭarīqa* then became a group of disciples living in a lodge with their *shaykh* and following his particular method to attain the Divine.

In most cases, the small communities that were created around particular masters did not survive more than a few generations. Nevertheless, it was not long until a new concept, that of the *silsila*, became central to Šūfism, and groups would often consolidate to become more sizeable and stable. The notion of the *silsila* connected particular individuals that had studied with a master to him and his unique method/path. The idea of the *silsila* helped to

12 A more detailed explanation of this method of spiritual attainment is given by Schimmel (2013: 99–148), Knysh (2010: 301–311), Ernst (1997: 98–108), and Hodgson (1974: 232–227).

13 *bay'a* (Arab.) is generally used to refer to an 'oath of allegiance' pledged to a religious or political institution or leader. In Šūfism, it signifies a vow of allegiance to a Šūfi saint (*walī Allāh*). Sometimes members of Šūfi Orders refer to it as 'the pact'.

develop webs of individuals and far-flung spiritual families, relating people from distant times and places.¹⁴ Through the notion of the *silsila*, particular sayings were linked to specific personalities, in a development that resonates with the concept of *isnād*, the authentication mechanism that is characteristic of hadith literature. However, these incipient ‘chains of authority’ found in early Şūfism soon gave way to veritable Şūfi genealogies, by which all the *awliyā* within a given path had to be connected by a shared pedigree. The Şūfi communities grew not only larger, but also more important.

The role played by the lodges is the key to understanding the evolution of Şūfism from a dispersed and liminal mystical movement to a consolidated and vastly spread religious tradition. Şūfism underwent a process of institutionalisation, by which the small religious communities articulated around specific lodges came into contact with relevant political and social players. The *ṭuruq*, thence, emerged from a dynamic of routinisation that made the Şūfis both more famous and more powerful. In a variety of political scenarios, we see that by the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh century, rulers in highly volatile political contexts began to support with patronage (*waqf*) ‘ulamā’, Şūfis, and scholars of law, as a way to try to cement their legitimacy among local communities.¹⁵ In time the groups became more complex: the lodges that housed them often turned to sponsorship from wealthy donors in the form of charitable endowments, a partnership between religious and economic or political personalities that often benefitted both parties.

In addition, these communities soon acquired pivotal roles in their local societies, with their leaders frequently becoming significant and well-known personalities, not only with a saying about religious matters.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the *ṭuruq* of this period showed little resemblance to those we know today, with ‘modern’ *ṭuruq*, or as they are often called “full-grown brotherhoods” (Abun-Nasr 2007), emerging from the eighteenth century onwards.

14 The earliest known exponents of such genealogies are Ja’far al-Khuldī (d. 959), who declared that Junayd had inherited his teachings ultimately from the followers via a chain that included Ḥasan Yasār al-Baṣrī (d. 728) and, soon after Khuldī, Abu Ali al-Daqqaq (d. 405/1015) who also traced Junayd’s teaching to the followers, but via Dawud ibn Nusair al-Tāī (d. 781-2) (Karamustafa 2007: 116).

15 This has, for example, been analysed by Erik Ohlander (2008) in his study of tenth-century Palestine.

16 Multiple instances can be cited for the political influence exerted by Şūfis at different times and in different regions. A notable example is that of the movement led by the Qaramanoghlu, which resulted in the foundation of the Safavid dynasty in Persia, a dynasty that traced their origin back to a Şūfi personality, the dervish Nura Şūfi (Trimingham 1973: 239).

Prior to the twelfth century, the Šūfi concept of ‘friendship with God’ (*walāya*), which gives a special ‘saintly status’ to particular Šūfi personalities, developed independently from the existing groups that gathered around lodges (Karamustafa 2007). However, the mushrooming success of these mystical communities in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries has been seen as both the cause and the consequence of the integration the *walāya* cosmogony into the routinised structure of the lodges. It is during this period that local *awliyā*’ began to be adored by wider crowds, becoming the axis of posthumous veneration. Thus, the *walī*’s tomb became a symbol of the vector connecting the ordinary with the otherworld. These graves were converted into shrines and worshippers developed series of rituals around the *walī*’s tomb, for it was perceived as a point of connection between humans and God.

The *awliyā*’s descendants used their ancestors’ charisma to convert the lodges into centres of increasing economic and social power. More sizeable communities of devotees were created around these nuclei, many of which were organised along tribal or ethnic lines. The *ṭuruq* began to ramify, with groups in different regions claiming adherence to particular *awliyā*’ with common ancestry. Šūfism grew in popularity beyond recognition, attracting audiences of an increasingly diverse social and economic background. Such growth promoted its fame and attracted renewed criticisms from both non-Šūfis and insiders, who sometimes considered that a tendency towards routinisation would bring about the loosening of the moral and radical freshness that Šūfism stood for.

By the fourteenth century, the transformation of Šūfism from a minority religious trend manifested by a fringe community of wayfarers into one of the most widespread traditions within Islam, with a significant impact at social, economic, and political levels, was concluded. By then, Šūfism was “a religious and social presence embedded in a distinct tradition of piety, anchored in coherent local associations, and integral to the world of Muslim scholarship and the fabric of Muslim societies” (Le Gall 2010: 677).

5 The Šūfi Brotherhoods

Scholars still lack a more distinct understanding of the transformation that Šūfism underwent from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century (Le Gall 2010). The fourteenth century saw the success and consolidation of the *walāya* concept, connected with the establishment of a ‘culture’ of Šūfism. In this context a *ṭarīqa* consisted of a *walī*, a doctrinal body and a series of distinct ritual practices that were often not distinct from those of other *ṭuruq*. In

addition, there was a network of shrines geographically dispersed and connected through a number of Şūfi pilgrimage routes. I define this landscape as a 'culture of Şūfism', denoting that the travel to various shrines and participation of pilgrims in rituals performed in them was a common practice and implied devotion to *awliyā'* from different *ṭuruq*. In other words, a notion of 'exclusive membership' did not exist within the *ṭuruq* system. Although Şūfism as a 'culture' is still widespread today, over time this loosely organised form of saintly veneration has had to learn to coexist with an increasingly structured type of Şūfism, that of the modern established Orders.

By the eighteenth century, and not entirely historically coincidental with the emergence of non-Şūfi revivalist trends, a further step in the process of institutionalisation of the *ṭuruq* system had been observed (for example, Abun-Nasr 2007). The Şūfi Orders of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are considered to be a major foundation for understanding the recent dynamics of Şūfism, as they developed organisations and leadership that are pivotal in setting the discourse and defining the issues of Şūfism in the modern period (Ohtsuka and Voll 2016). Crucially, the *ṭuruq* of that time, which was more similar to today's Orders, began to exhibit a more restrictive idea of membership, the concept of *bay'a*, which acquired a renewed relevance because it signifies exclusivity in the bond between devotee and *walī*. As a result, religious authority tended to concentrate more exclusively on the *walī*, and *baraka* (Colin 2016), the force by which God is believed to emanate his/her/its source into the ordinary, became increasingly associated with *awliyā'* at the expense of other sources of veneration, such as objects and places. Although in many cases the 'new' *ṭuruq* were just branches of the old ones, they were a totally new breed and with *awliyā'*'s renewed claims of genealogical connection to Muḥammad, they have to be seen as fully fledged and highly influential distinct sources of Islamic revival.

In a development that predates the beginning of the eighteenth century, rituals adopted distinctive features and were associated with a formal chain of spiritual descent (*silsila*) which indicated that the person leading the ritual (or instructing others in geographically distant places on how to do so) took its formula from a *walī* who took it from another *walī* and so on, in a line extending back to the founder, and then often beyond the founder to the Prophet Muḥammad (Ohtsuka and Voll 2016). As Orders consolidated, leadership would pass from one shaykh to the next, sometimes along blood lines and less often on the basis of spiritual seniority/mastery within the *ṭarīqa*. Sometimes branches would disappear over succession disputes, while in others a devotee would attain sufficient charisma to establish a recognised 'sub-branch' within a pre-existing Order or initiate a whole new *ṭarīqa* (Ohtsuka and Voll 2016).

Overall, the structures of Šūfi religious authority that we know today were well established by the eighteenth century.

6 Šūfism and Šūfi Religious Organisations

From the eighteenth century onwards, the *ṭuruq* became “full-grown brotherhoods” (Abun-Nasr 2007), ‘religious organisations’ that were to a certain extent comparable with those developed by other religions. In particular, there are parallels in that the concept of membership attained by most Šūfi Orders since then would easily comply with the definition proposed by sociologists of religion when referring to religious groups in general. Stolz, for example, defines it as the situation in which:

The individual may consider him or herself to be a member of a group, giving him or her certain rights to the resources (such as knowledge, rituals, friendship) of the group. Among these resources we normally find ‘chains’ of salvation means leading to salvation ends. In return, the individual normally gives up control over certain actions or resources (for example, agrees to follow certain rules, subscribe to certain beliefs, support the group financially, etc.). Memberships are normally indivisible, and not alienable. They are often exclusive; the group thus forbids membership of other religious groups.

STOLZ 2006: 24

This notion of membership is certainly applicable to many Šūfi Orders today. Nonetheless, some specific points are worth considering in the case of *taṣawwuf*. First, the laxity of the bond between *walī* and devotee is often still significant. For example, in many Šūfi organisations, both in Muslim-majority societies and in the West, there are a significant number of people at the gatherings who are not formal members of the Order, but people just ‘tasting’ Šūfism (to use the jargon of Šūfi Muslims). Although in some cases these individuals will in time become fully committed members of the *ṭarīqa*, others will have a noncommittal in-and-out relationship for as long as their association with the organisation lasts; this is sometimes a period of time that is much longer than the Order would like it to be. In some cases, as is the case with some branches of the Qādiriyya, such as the Būdshīshīyya, those ‘tasting’ Šūfism are asked for a certain degree of commitment and exclusivity, and at least for the time period in which they are ‘tasting’ they are prevented from visiting other brotherhoods (Dominguez Diaz 2014: 129).

Second, although a number of known organisations conform with this pattern, Şūfism displays an entirely parallel dimension that escapes the formality, exclusivity, and commitment imposed by the idea of membership. On the one hand, the aforementioned ‘culture’ of Şūfism, with its “routes, circuits and networks which pilgrimage and visitation establishes” (Werbner 2015: 299) is still vigorous and compelling to millions of Muslims. On many occasions, these networks contain shrines whose *awliyāʾ* do not belong to the same *silsila*, and thus not to the same *ṭarīqa* either (in fact, these shrines are often not associated with particular Orders at all). In Central Asia and North Africa, especially, there are plenty of local groups that have evolved around particular shrines or families. *Awliyāʾ* with a renowned reputation for their religious excellence and *walāya* might attract crowds during their lifetime, but these followers might fall away once they die; thus, Şūfi Orders with a stable body of formal disciples are not created. Tombs of such pious teachers exist throughout the world and are vibrant centres of popular piety and the rituals performed there sometimes combine the styles of various Orders. These practices might be indirectly identified with Şūfism in a more general way, and less so with a particular path, although the real impact and identity of these manifestations is not general or vague, but specific and local. This type of Şūfi centre is called “shrine-Şūfism” by Kazuo Ohtsuka and John Voll (2016), and it is an important aspect of modern Şūfism that does not conform with, and in some cases defies, the rule of exclusive membership followed by the largest brotherhoods.

Third, there are other types of Şūfi groups that similarly defy the notion of exclusive membership. Some groups, often those that stand closer to New Age religiosities, evolve around a loosely organised structure, with a lax attitude towards affiliation for which they are often very proud. In these groups, participants are not asked for any form of exclusive affiliation and, in fact, it is often the case that attendees discuss and compare the practices of the group with those of others at ritual sessions; for example, this is found among members of the *ṭarīqa* Naqshbandiyya in various European countries.

Despite all the aforementioned issues, the majority of Orders have a clearly defined notion of membership, or at least one that is more evident than that of the pre-modern groups. The orders that developed from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries onwards are, by and large, more stable structures than their pre-modern precursors. They represented a new organisational direction and were “relatively more centralized and less prone to fission than their predecessors” (O’Fahey 1990: 4). They were also different from the old *ṭuruq* in a number of other ways. The new orders tended to place less attention to the joyful aspects of Şūfism and became more ‘sober’, and also, typically, became more concerned with matters of Islamic law.

7 Şūfism's Vitality in Modern Times

By the mid-twentieth century some observers thought of the *ṭuruq* as remnants of the past, with little chance of surviving the rapid changes being experienced by Muslim societies. They believed that as societies became more industrialised and technology was made more widely accessible, the social functions once played by the Şūfi *awliyā'* and their Orders would be replaced by other forms of social participation, such as the labour unions (Gilsenan 1967). In some parts of the world Şūfi activity appears to have decreased, partly due to the increasing success of the aforementioned attacks by reformists and secularists. In countries such as Tunisia, for example, Şūfism has become relegated to almost minimal expression. In other countries, such as Turkey, there has been a diminished role of several Orders, and in most other places some of the typical characteristics of the *ṭuruq* have undergone significant changes.

Today, for example, the role played by the internet and mobile phones in the reaffirming of Şūfi charisma through the sharing of saintly imagery, although yet to be formally assessed by the academe, is a key aspect in the religious lifestyles of some Muslim youth. Equally, the transnational impetus acquired by many Orders via an increasing flow of international migration and cosmopolitan ties was difficult to predict forty years ago. Nevertheless, the dramatic changes that Şūfism has undergone, and contrary to the predictions of decline, demonstrate quite the opposite, that *ṭuruq* continue to be a fundamental element of Muslim religious life everywhere.

Şūfi Orders have also been capable of integrating into the local religious cultures of disparate corners of the globe, becoming effective vehicles of religious proselytization. In some cases, Şūfi Orders have adopted a *laissez-faire* attitude with regard to legal matters, becoming *de facto* friendlier to the pre-existing religious fabric of the lands in which they arrived. This has contributed to minimising the confrontational aspect of inter-religious encounters and facilitated the success of Islam in many regions of Africa and South-East Asia. Şūfism has demonstrated the ability to adapt to local religious laws and cultures, and has also brought about, for the new devotee, the opportunity to be incorporated into a wider religious community, the *umma*, which has provided a new and dynamic identity to the communities it has reached. For example, in West Africa, the flexible structure adopted by the Qādiriyya allowed this *ṭarīqa* to engage with local tribal leaders who have played a key role in the function of the organisation (Brenner 1988). Similarly, the Neo-Şūfism of the Shaṭṭāriyya and the adaptable character of the master—disciple relationship, in particular in West Sumatra, has facilitated expansion of the Order within South-East

Asia, especially during the late nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century (Fathurahman 2003).

It is worth noting, however, that patterns of change coexist with continuity of other aspects, and that of the features that have defined Şūfism for many centuries are still part of what it is today; in fact, these are essential to understanding its modern success. Thus, Şūfi Orders continue to facilitate spaces of religious devotion that often pervade social class, race, and ethnicity—nowadays, in some cases, even gender. The culture of saint veneration that occurs around shrine and tomb complexes is as vibrant and flourishing as it was before the advent of nation states. Moreover, the consolidation of social and political structures such as political parties and labour unions have not threatened, as predicted earlier, the survival of the Orders; instead *ṭuruq* have become new ways of articulating civil society in many Muslim majority societies. In some cases, the *ṭuruq* advocate political quietism, as it is often the case among Şūfi Orders in countries such as Germany or Holland, yet in others they are involved in political matters, as in Afghanistan and Iraq. The political involvement of Şūfism has sometimes been open, such as in war-torn scenarios, yet in other instances it has been more discreet. For example, in several countries in the West, Şūfi groups of different leanings have been supported economically by governments as part of their efforts to combat home-grown jihadism (see Muedini 2015).

7.1 *Transnational Şūfism*

Several Orders have thrived to such an extent that they have developed inter-regional networks of religious followers and personalities. The example of the Naqshbandiyya in the Levant, analysed in detail by Itzchak Weismann (2007) in his famous monograph, is a good example of the geographical expansion that Şūfism can achieve. This Order, originally from Central Asia, has extended into South Asia and to Ottoman lands via Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1625) and his successors on one hand, and by the earlier line of ʿUbaydullāh Aḥrār on the other. By the eighteenth century, dignitaries of this Order were well known among Istanbul's most illustrious circles as well as in other major Ottoman capitals, such as Damascus. In Syria's capital, for example, the great Ḥanafī *muftī* Muḥammad Khalīl al-Murādī (d. 1791) was part of a family associated with the Naqshbandiyya. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Shaykh Khālīd al-Baghdādī (d. 1827), part of the Mujaddidī line within the Order, led a significant revivalist movement in the lands of the Fertile Crescent, and the religious life of Naqshbandī's Khālīdī line has been famously defined as being "the paramount order in Turkey" (Algar and Nizami 2016).

The *ṭarīqa* has also become well known for developing a stable network of commercial and intellectual ties across distant lands, with students, pilgrims, and travellers who visit city after city being housed with physical shelter and religious instruction in the *ṭarīqa*'s lodges. Sobieroj (2016) has studied one of these devotees, the scholar Ma Mingxin (d. 1781), who left his homeland China in order to study in Naqshbandī lodges in Central Asia and the Arabian Peninsula, including the important Naqshbandī centres of Mecca and Medina. Combined networks of commercial activities and pious instruction can be seen in the activities of family-based *ṭuruq*, as in the South Arabian 'Aydarusiyya, a Ṣūfī order of a notable family of the Hadramawt region that has expanded into Egypt and the islands of South-East Asia, as well as into India (Ohtsuka and Voll 2016).

Furthermore, Ṣūfism's characteristic adaptability, a feature that stems from the fact that it often generates relatively small gatherings and less formal congregations than those in mosques, has facilitated the renovation of Muslim piety in situations where Muslims are in the religious minority, and thus have less capability to develop the religious infrastructure (such as mosques and madrasas) that Ṣūfis can manage without. Likewise, in the highly volatile religious countries of the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Ṣūfism has successfully engaged devotees in endeavours of religious proselytization (*da'wa*), giving Ṣūfī groups a distinct power in social milieus with a large degree of religious pluralism.

The good press that *taṣawwuf* often gets in the West has allowed Ṣūfī groups to continue to thrive and gain converts to Islam in times of somewhat extended anti-Muslim sentiment. Thus, the transnational character of some of the pre-modern Orders still prevails among various groups today. The Qādiriyya Būdshīshīyya is a case in point: it is an order that originated in North-Eastern Morocco but in the last thirty years has expanded, through both migrant and cosmopolitan connections, to sub-Saharan Africa, Western Europe, and South and North America. Although most of its followers are Moroccans or of Moroccan origin, the *ṭarīqa* has been successful in attracting former non-Muslims as well as Muslims from other non-Ṣūfī and/or non-Moroccan religious backgrounds.¹⁷ One of the mechanisms through which the Order has been effective in attracting new devotees is through its online presence, with sites in various languages.¹⁸ Similarly, the *ṭarīqa* Burhāniyya that originated

17 For an ethnographic study comparing the diverse branches of this order, looking in particular at the religious identities of its female members, see Dominguez Diaz (2014).

18 See for example, the following internet sites: <https://www.tariqa.fr/espanol/index.php>, <https://www.tariqa.fr/it/index.php>, <https://www.tariqa.fr/ar/index.php>. All accessed 01/07/2020.

in the Sudan with Burhānī (d. 1983) has spread to various countries in North Africa, the Levant and the Gulf, Western Europe, South Asia, and North America.¹⁹ A visit to their YouTube channel will acquaint the reader with the impressive following of the Order's gatherings.²⁰

Another often cited example of a transnational Şūfī Order is the *ṭarīqa* led by Nazim al-Qubrusī al-Haqqanī (d. 2014). The organisation is connected to the worldwide spread of the Naqshbandī trend, although it is an offshoot of the mainstream *ṭarīqa*. Whereas, the original Naqshbandiyya traces its origins to Central Asia, the Haqqaniyya branch, in contrast, relates its ancestry to the Caucasus region through a linkage to the Indian Mujaddidiyya tradition. Nazim al-Qubrusī al-Haqqanī moved to London in the 1970s to establish a European branch of the Order, then led by Abdullah Fa'izi al-Daghestani (d. 1973); this was a successful endeavour that today has resulted in the *ṭarīqa* having a significant and active following in places such as North America and most of Western Europe, the Middle East, and South and South-East Asia.²¹ Although it also exists in various parts of the world, this *ṭarīqa* in particular has had success in attracting non-Muslims to Islam. It also is quite visible on the internet.²²

Particular mention should also be given to the Chishti Order, an organization that originated in Herat. Although most of its followers are in Afghanistan and South Asia, it has recently, through migration, been established in the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, and East and South Africa. The Ajmer (Rajasthan) shrine of the Order is the tomb of Moinuddin Chishti (d. 1236) and it receives many visitors during Şūfī celebrations, particularly Urs.²³ Finally, it is good to remind the reader that the number of Orders with an international outreach is too large for them all to be mentioned individually. Moreover, not only that they are too many to mention, but one of the consequences of *taṣawwuf's* flexible nature is that new groups of devotees are created, whereas others disappear, on a regular basis, complicating the scholarly task of accurately mapping the Orders and their transnational outreach.

19 For an interesting study of the German branch of this Order see Lassen (2009).

20 Their channel, at <https://www.youtube.com/user/TariqaBurhaniya/videos>, at the time of writing has 5,930 subscribers, and some videos have garnered over 24,000 views. Accessed 01/07/2020.

21 The Order was studied in an ESRC project let by Nielsen, Yemelianova and Stringer. See <http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/wwwroot/nielsen.htm>. Accessed 28/09/2018.

22 See <http://www.naqshbandi.org/>, <http://Şūfilive.com/>. Accessed 28/09/2018.

23 To obtain a more accurate idea of the Order's following see <http://dargahajmer.com/photo-tour/>. Accessed 28/09/2018.

7.2 *The Legacy of Šūfism in Non-Religious Organisations*

Šūfism has been and continues to be a fundamental element in the religious fabric of Muslim contexts, and it has an impact on all sorts of aspects of Muslim culture, from music, to poetry, and even dress. One of the consequences of this pervading influence is to be found in civil society and politics where Šūfism has played a key role in the ways in which a variety of organisations are structured. For example, in South Asia, Šūfi culture has given rise to political parties and platforms. In Pakistan, for instance, the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) was formed in 2010 as a coalition of Bareilvi Muslims; Barelvism is the largest Islamic orientation within Pakistan, and one that has been based mainly on Šūfism throughout its history (Eppin 2013). The SIC is an alliance of Islamic political parties with followers numbering about 160 million people.²⁴

Similarly, various African countries have seen Šūfi orders intertwined with or transformed into political parties, since the way in which some of the *ṭuruq* have been organised has provided the basis for the creation of political parties. The leaders of the Tijaniyya in Senegal have entered politics by becoming part of the ranks of the existing Parti de l'Unité et du Rassemblement (PUR). The Tijani leadership had initially expressed a desire to found their own party but the Senegalese constitution forbids the formation of political parties of religious nature. Nevertheless, the PUR has been significantly influenced by the Šūfi background of its leaders (Samson 2000).

Šūfism has also exerted its influence on non-political organisations. In Senegal, the Murīdiyya evolved into an organisation that was key in transforming and modernising agriculture. During Soviet times, various *ṭuruq* in areas of Central Asia created modern organisations tolerated by the state, and so Islamic communal life could endure the challenges they faced when the state applied severe efforts to suppress religion. In Afghanistan after 1979, the *ṭuruq* system and, notably, the Qādiriyya and Naqshbandiyya Mujaddidiyya Orders have been central in recruiting *mujahideen*, in which traditional Orders turned *de facto* into modern military units. Another example is the Sudanese *ṭarīqa* Khatmiyya, which served as a basis for the emergence of the National Unionist Party, later the People's Democratic Party; by the end of the twentieth century, the head of the Order was also the president of the Democratic Unionist Party (Ohtsuka and Voll 2016).

7.3 *Non-ṭarīqa Religious Organisations*

The ethos and the intellectual legacy of Šūfism have been equally pivotal in the constitution of some of the most widespread religious organisations within

24 For a more detailed study of the coalition see Khan (2011).

Islam, groups that are often not Şūfi Orders. These groups are not organised according to the principle of *walāya*, and therefore they do not develop a master—disciple relationship, or at least not one that is representative of the traditional patterns of Şūfi religious authority. One example of this type of organisation can be seen in the informal networks of women in Istanbul who gather to perform Şūfi practices but whose groups only present a weak connection and little resemblance to traditional established Orders (Raudvere 2002).

Another example of a group that does not conform to the patterns of the *ṭuruq* is the Gülen movement, which is a transnational religious movement led by the Turkish Islamic preacher Fethullah Gülen. There are several elements that are typical of Orders that do not apply to the Gülen movement. A *ṭarīqa* has a leader, a *shaykh*, who in turn has a group of devotees. Devotees shall, in most cases, formally initiate into the *ṭarīqa* in order to become disciples of the master. Additionally, every *ṭarīqa* has a chain or lineage (*silsila*), as we have seen, through which it endorses religious legitimacy by establishing a genealogical line that connects the current head of the Order to previous ones, and from them to one of the founder fathers of Şūfism (for example, in the case of the Qādiriyya, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, d. 561 AH/1166 CE). The role of the shaykh is still educational, even though, in a number of modern *ṭuruq*, religious instruction has been diluted or somehow transformed. This education, as we have seen before, is generally based on a ritual discipline. The discipline is supposed to progress as the disciple ascends in his religious education to more complex stages of religious learning. Conversely, the Gülen movement does not show any of these features. Fethullah Gülen considers himself an intellectual who is not the *shaykh* of a *ṭarīqa*. More relevant perhaps is the fact that there is no initiation and there is no specific set of ritual practices unique to the movement. The Gülen movement is Şūfi only to the extent that Şūfism, as an intellectual and religious legacy, has heavily informed the thinking of the founder. It is often noted that Fethullah Gülen was influenced by Said Nursi and the Nur movement, another group with relevant Şūfi underpinnings but no *ṭarīqa* structure in the traditional sense.

A further example that illustrates the religious influence of Şūfism beyond the world of Şūfi Orders is to be found in the three, perhaps, most famous proselytising Islamic religious groups that exist in South Asia, namely the Tablighī Jamā‘at, the Da‘wat-i Islāmī, and the Sunnī Da‘wat-i Islāmī. These movements, with an effective missionary outreach, are believed to be comparable in size and scope to Christian Pentecostalism (Gugler 2009). To various extents, the three represent examples of the legacy that Şūfism has contributed to Muslim religious life beyond the *ṭuruq*, as they all are based on what has been called ‘Sunnization’, a doctrine heavily influenced both by Şūfism and the Salafiyya

(Gugler 2009). These movements are not obvious heirs of Šūfism, as the incorporation of the Šūfism legacy into their practices is complicated. For example, in the case of the Tablighī Jamā'at, the founder had been initiated in a number of *ṭuruq* (Chishtiyya, Suhrawardiyya, Qādiriyya, and Naqshbandiyya) and whereas the structure and aesthetics of this organisation relies heavily on Šūfism, Tablighīs support a reformed version of Islam that outwardly rejects certain Šūfi practices, which they deem to be synchronous with Hinduism. In this sense, the group has attracted the criticisms that Šūfism had to face from Salafi orientations, as discussed previously.

8 Conclusion

The once questioned capacity of Šūfism to adapt and overcome the challenges of the modern world has been easily overcome. Šūfism has demonstrated an impressive capacity to maintain its significance in the religious life of millions of Muslims across the world. The contemporary face of Šūfism has achieved an impressive transnational spread, thanks mainly to globalisation, and to the interaction and assimilation of peoples and cultural aspects, including religious ones, although, as we have seen, this is not an entirely new phenomenon. On the contrary, historical studies indicate that there is something inherently cross-cultural in the conceptualisation of the *ṭuruq* world. In addition, the relationship between Šūfism and the organisations that have been developed by the Šūfis is not straightforward. In fact, a recurrent feature within *taṣawwuf* has been the existence of Šūfis, masters, and devotees, and of Šūfi gatherings and networks of pilgrims, that evade the constrictions of the patterns characteristic of *ṭuruq*, with lodges made up of a substantial following of 'non-formal' devotees of any *ṭarīqa*. Additionally, the Šūfi Orders do not seem to be in decline. On the contrary, they are important elements of the Islamic religious landscape, and our understanding of the *ṭuruq* world, I would contend, is key for obtaining an accurate picture of (at least a significant part) of the existing spectrum of Islamic sects, trends, and organisations. The Orders, with their often quite traditional ways of approaching religious authority and discipleship, have been able to gain a substantial following among both Muslims and non-Muslims who have converted to Islam to join them, generating networks that thrive in very diverse societies. Also, modernity has shown us the vibrancy of Šūfism outside the *ṭuruq* system and *taṣawwuf*, and as an ethos, it has become part of organisations of various sorts, from labour unions and political coalitions and parties, to non-*ṭarīqa* religious groups. The importance of the study of Šūfism and its legacy in social, political, and economic terms is

central to acquiring a well-informed picture of the sects, trends, and organisations that exist in Islam today.

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