

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND
CIVILIZATION (ISTAC)

KHAWAN : A SUFI LEARNING INSTITUTION
IN MAMLUK EGYPT (1250 - 1517 C.E.)

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT
AND CIVILIZATION
(ISTAC)
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE M.A. DEGREE

BY
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KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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NOTES ON FORMAT, DATES AND TRANSLITERATION

Generally, the system followed in this thesis is adopted from the manual *Standard Format: Basic Guidelines for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations* produced by ISTAC as its official guideline. Consultation also was made of Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Sixth Edition, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996) for some details. However in cases of conflict, preference is given to the former. Arabic terms which are common to English readers, like the term Sufi, will be written with proper transliteration so that it appears as 'Şüfi' instead of 'Sufi.' Date of death and period of reign are indicated by the symbol (d.) and (r.) respectively.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to give an expository account of the nature, function and historical development of the *khānqāh*, one of the most important institutions in the history of Sūfism. Emerging as a result of the systematization of the Sūfi doctrine in the eleventh century Persia, *khānqāh* gradually equipped itself as a dual-functioning institution. It became a seat of knowledge and learning activities as well as a centre of training for the practice of *taṣawwuf*. Such functions and principles embedded in the institutionalization of *khānqāh* were indeed transferred and brought all the way along as it spread throughout the Muslim world. Due to the desire of the Sunni rulers to establish an institution that could promote an inner dimension of Islamic worship, *khānqāh* was introduced in Egypt by the eve of the twelfth century. Egypt being a centre of Islamic civilization, the institution gained a prestigious position and was soon filled with pious and noble personalities and it possessed an excellent learning tradition that continued to be practiced over the centuries. The conducive intellectual environment of the city of Cairo as well as the spiritual awareness of wealthy individuals and the Mamlūk elites serve as two significant factors that led to the rapid growth of the *khānqāh* in Egypt. More interestingly, generous rulers, wealthy *amīrs* as well as rich merchants competed with each other in founding several *khānqāh* institutions hoping that they would gain rewards in this world as well as in the hereafter. The introduction of the *khānqāh* in this region led to the emergence of several institutions with almost similar aims. As a result, the *khānqāh* too began to accept innovations that later characterized it as an exclusive Mamlūk institution for Sūfis aiming at enhancing Sūfi-practice (*taṣawwuf*) in line with *shari'ah*. This characteristic was made more conspicuous by aligning the activities of the *khānqāh* to the requirements of a particular school of Islamic jurisprudence—the *madhhab*. Thus, within three hundred years, the *khānqāh* of the Mamlūks had evolved, flourished and survived within its own unique and yet admirable framework. It contributed to the glory of scholarship and knowledge within the learning and social history of Muslim Egypt.

"A *faqih* without *Şūfism* is like a slice of dry bread without anything added to enrich it."

(Zakariyya al-Anṣārī al-Khazraji)

INTRODUCTION

*Şūfism*¹ originated in Islām. Its inspiration and principles are drawn from the Qur'ān as well as the *sunnah* of the Prophet (ṣ. 'a.w), though its distinctiveness as a way of life² developed in the later period of Islamic civilization. This view is conveniently held by Muslims as well the Western scholars of Islām such as Massignon.³ This holds equally true with the "*khānqāh*", an institution which also originated in Islām and became a "product" of *Şūfism*. However, there are many views claiming that the *khānqāh* tradition was not purely Islamic for there seems to have been some "foreign" elements that had crept into *Şūfī* practices in *khānqāh*. These views need be critically examined for the following reasons. *Khānqāh* is one of numerous *Şūfī* institutions like *zāwiyah*, *tekke*, *dergāh*, etc., all of which in their own unique and distinguished ways used to promote the practice of *Şūfism* or *Şūfī* life. Though corruptions might or may

¹ The term *şūfī* is always rendered in the Western literature as equal, though it is not, to "mystic", hence *tasawwuf* as "mysticism." The origin of the term caused considerable dispute among Muslims as indicated by the early *Şūfī* literature. As reflected from the work of Abū al-Sarrāj (378/988), he believed that the term is derived from the word *şūf* (coarse and undyed wool) since historically, the wearing of woolen garment became a habit of the Prophets, saints (*awliyā'*) and the elects. Yet, the habit of wearing woolen attire which was the infallible stamp of the true *Şūfīs* remained insignificant if one missed its more important quality that is the whiteness of the wool that manifested the purity of the heart, the "inward glow". This is what the *Şūfīs* give a much more emphasis. As the intimate connection between the term *şūfī* and the ideas about purity became irresistible, it had rather urged the *Şūfīs* to trace the etymological origin of the term to words that signify purity, such as *şafā'* (purity), and the root word *şfw* (to be pure) rather than to the word *şūf*. See S. M. N. al-Aḥḥās, *Some Aspects of Şūfīs as Understood and Practiced Among the Malays*. (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute Ltd., 1963), 1-3.

² It is true that *tasawwuf*, as a distinctive way of life, did not exist simultaneously with the rise of the Prophet Muhammad (ṣ. 'a.w). Rather, it came into being some generations later, after the death of the Prophet (ṣ. 'a.w). It was a result of a great emphasis made on seeking salvation achieved through intensive devotion to Allah's command and absorption of His words revealed in the Qur'ān. The tendency as such had been showed by later generations who were prone to follow the Prophet as the perfect model and the Companions and the early Muslims. Among the first ascetics of the Prophetic times whom the later *Şūfīs* regard as their spiritual inspirers were Abū Dharr (d. 32/652), Abū al-Dardā' (d. 32/652), his wife Umm al-Dardā', Salmān al-Fārisī (d.35 A.H./655 C.E. or 37/657), Hudhayfah b. al-Yamani (d.37/657) and 'Imrān b. al-Ḥusayn al-Khuzā'i (d. 53/672 or 54/673). For a brief treatment of the phases of development in *Şūfism*, see *ibid.*, 5-20.

³ Louis Massignon constantly opined that it is from the Qur'ān that the subject of meditation and its teaching in *Şūfism* came to originate and develop. See Margaret Smith, *The Şūfī Path of Love: An Anthology of Şūfism*, (London: Luzac & Company, Ltd., 1954), 19; Unlike Massignon, Nicholson, Dozy, Goldziher and Von Kramer had attributed the origin of *Şūfism* to various foreign sources. Nicholson for example believed that although the contention that *Şūfism* drew its inspiration from the Qur'ān and the life of the Prophet to be respected, *Şūfism*, as it later developed, owed much to Hellenism and to Christianity. Meanwhile Dozy argued that Buddhism greatly influenced the *Şūfī*

happen, true Şūfis particularly those eminent Shaykhs, have always shown their commitment to keep the purity of Şūfism by enhancing its norms and values in line with the *Shari'ah*. This is evident from the composition of manuals served as guidelines for the *mutaşawwifūn* (novices) who were training to live a Şūfi life in the *khānqāh* so that they would not be "led astray." An example of this manual can be seen in the works attributed to Shaykh Abū Sa'id and 'Umar al-Suhrawardi which are considered as the gemstones: in the world of Şūfism in general and the *khānqāh* in particular.

A. *Khānqāh* Tradition and the Muslim Society

There are five basic issues concerning the *khānqāh* that will be discussed. First, its historical development; second, controversial views regarding the life and practice of people residing in the *khānqāh*; third, pseudo-Şūfi movements and their relation to the *khānqāh*; fourth, women's association with the Şūfi institutions; and finally, reflections on the major Şūfi institutions in Islamic history.

I. How did the *khānqāh* develop?

Şūfism did not immediately witness any tradition of novices residing in a place whether in a *khānqāh* or *zāwiyah* or *ribāṭ* or *tekke*. Neither was it a practice during the Prophetic time nor in the time of the Companions or during the days of *tābi'ūn* in centres of learning such as Baghdād in which many early eminent Şūfis lived. Rather, as the origin of the word itself denotes, its emergence is much indebted to the Şūfi tradition traceable to Khurāsānian Şūfis. This also points to the fact that Khurāsān⁴ survived as a center of Şūfi tradition as well as Islamic civilization shortly after the

teachings whilst Goldziher and Von Kraemer regarded the Vedantism to be the source of Şūfi doctrines. For subject quotations of Dozy, Goldziher and Kraemer see al-Aṭṭas, op. cit., 3-4.

⁴ Khurāsān was a noble Persian region located in the north-eastern region of today's Iran. Its most significant province was Nishāpūr or Naysābūr whose capital Irānshahr became a *de facto* centre of Sunni Islām after the fall of Baghdād. As a region nearest to Baghdād, it easily paved ways for the emergence of rich network of scholars and Şūfis. This is also due to the admirable and venerable personalities of its people. For insightful remarks on the personality of the Khurāsānians, see al-Maqḍisī, *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions (Ahsan al-Taqāsīm fī Ma'rifat al-Aqālīm)*, (Reading, U.K: Garnett Publishing Limited, 1994), 260-61. Henceforth cited as *Ahsan al-Taqāsīm*.

fall of Baghdād in the tenth century to the Shi'i power, the Buwayhids (or Būyids) in ca. 333/945.⁵

From this background two questions immediately come to mind. i) Why did the *khānqāh* tradition begin to develop in Khurāsān instead of other parts of the Muslim world? ii) What made the eleventh century become amenable to its growth? To answer these questions, I believe, we must go back to look at the history of Šūfi tradition before it thrived in Khurāsān i.e. the earlier Baghdād Šūfi tradition. At least until the middle of the tenth century, the metropolis of Baghdād had been noted with mystical inclinations and intellectual activities of prominent Šūfis.⁶ Yet, the institutionalization of this Šūfi traditon had not yet become visible since it rather took place in either a house of a Šūfi or in the mosque. In Khurāsān however, a new interest in Šūfism had begun to crystallize and subsequently the need for systematic spiritual training under one roof started building up. The result was the establishment of *khānqāh*, a residential teaching centre for Šūfis, in the late tenth century. This in turn, gave an impact on the history of Šūfism as well as its institutions in Baghdād, especially after control of these institutions was taken over from the hands of the Shi'i by the Sunni Saljūqs.⁷ Returning to developments in Khurāsān, the shift in emphasis to the systematic practical life of Šūfism did not however occur at the expense of its intellectual and theoretical aspects. Rather, it is evident that these Khurāsānian Šūfi scholars went a step ahead of their Baghdādi predecessors in making efforts to cultivate, elaborate and systematize the Šūfi notion. This finally resulted in the

⁵ The Buwayhids control over Baghdād ended when the Saljūqs came into power in 447/1055. On Buwayhids, see Cl. Cahen, "Buwayhids" or "Buyids," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam (EI)*, new ed. (1986), I: 1350-57; on Saljūqs, see R. E. Darley-Doran, "Saldjukids," *EI*, (1995), 8: 936-78.

⁶ As early as the ninth century, many great Šūfis were born into the metropolis of Baghdād. Among the famous names were Sari al-Saqāfi (257/870 or 253/867), Sahl a-Tustāri (203-83/818-96), al-Hallāj (244-309/857-922), al-Nūri (d. 295/907), al-Junayd (d. 298/910) and al-Hallāj (244-309/857-922), besides the earlier ones like Ḥasan al-Baṣri (21-110/642-728) and Rabi'ah al-Adawiyah (b. 95/714 or 717/18, d. 185/801).

⁷ Baghdād had been ruled by Shi'i power for a century. Within this span of time, Šūfism developed and gained its fullest momentum in Khurāsān. The good nature of its people served as a good breeding ground for those Šūfis to pursue their movements there. On this, see footnote no. 4 above.

composition of vast Ṣūfi manuals and treatises by the Khurāsānian Ṣūfi scholars, especially towards the end of the eleventh century.⁸

The reasons for the spread of the *khānqāhs* all over the region of Khurāsān especially in the late eleventh century Nishāpūr, though may be assumed obvious, need explanation. It should be noted that not every *khānqāh* that emerged in Khurāsān represented genuine Ṣūfism, rather, some of them became centers for the activities of pseudo-mysticism. *Khānqāhs* of this nature were associated with the Karrāmiyyah, a group of mystics which was known for holding mystical doctrines at odds with Ṣūfism. This group had gained popularity among the Nishāpūrians and this is evident from the emergence of a large number of *khānqāhs* there, headed by the influential family of Mahmashād.⁹

The threat and challenge from the above group perhaps became a driving factor to the rapid founding of the *khānqāh* by the Ṣūfi *fuqahā'* and theologians (*mutakallimūn*) at the end of the tenth century.¹⁰ These *khānqāhs* served to counter the Karrāmiyyah rivals in educating the Muslims to the right path of Ṣūfism and Muslim devotion. It was in this *khānqāh* i.e. of the *fuqahā'* and *mutakallimūn*, that the initiator of the so-called Persian Ṣūfism, Shaykh Abū Sa'id ibn Abī al-Khayr (d. 441/1049) was educated with a strong foundation of true Ṣūfism and was initiated to the Ṣūfi Way. Due to his vast experience with the *khānqāh* life and tradition since his

⁸ The earlier Ṣūfi commentaries of the Qur'ān are attributed to among other people, Sahl al-Ṭustāri (203-83/818-96) and al-Hallāj (244-309/857-922). Both works are well preserved in the work of the later Khurāsānian al-Sulamī and Ruzbihān Baqli (d. 606/1209). Meanwhile, biographical works emerged as another favourite form of Ṣūfi literature. This type of work formed a basis of documentation of the sayings of the earlier Ṣūfi Shaykhs. This original format was later on gradually transformed into the story of the deeds of the Saints, a fact which is exemplified in the work of Abū Nu'aym al-Isfahāni (d. 428/1037) in Arabic and *Manjiq al-Ṭayr* of Farid al-Din al-Attār (d. 617/1220) in Persian. The latter was then translated into various modern languages.

⁹ This family was famous for strong ascetic tendencies among its member. The Karrāmiyyahs were strongly opposed by the Ṣūfi groups as well as the Saljūq authorities who banished their leader, Ibn Karrām from Khurāsān to Jerusalem. Despite all the opposition, their leaders were so influential and their doctrines were well accepted by the masses inside and outside of Khurāsān. This is evident from the spread of their *khānqāhs* such as in Nishāpūr, itself, in the urban and rural areas of Khurāsān, Transoxania, Jerusalem and the Cairo's Fustāt. See Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000), 90-91. Henceforth cited as *Islamic Mysticism*; for the history of Karrāmiyyah, see C. E. Bosworth, "Karrāmiyya" *EP*, (1978) 4: 667-69; and Ira M. Lapidus, "Muslim Cities and Social Societies" in *Middle Eastern Cities: A Symposium on ancient, Islamic and Contemporary Middle Eastern Urbanization*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 25. Henceforth cited as "Muslim Cities."

¹⁰ Ibn al-Munawwar, *Asrār al-Tawhid fi Maqāmāt al-Shaykh Abi Sa'id (The Secret of Gods Mystical Oneness)*, trans. John O'Kane, (Costa Mesa: Mazola Publishers, 1922), 410-11. Cited by Th. Emil

childhood, the Shaykh became the pioneer of the first systematic regulations governing communal living in the *khānqāhs*.

This does not mean that Shaykh Abū Sa'id claimed or intended to make Ṣūfism to be only practiced within an institution and not outside it. It should be noted that Ṣūfism, the inner dimension of Islām, aims at refining the activities of the soul, which does not require any physical space or room. In fact, what is meant here is that a place or a centre or an institution is deserved by the beginners in the way of Ṣūfism (*mutaṣawwifūn*) to learn every aspects of their life under the proper guidance of an eminent Ṣūfī Shaykh.¹¹ This method of learning is known in Ṣūfī terminology as "*ṣuḥbah*" (companionship). A long time association with eminent Ṣūfī Shaykhs is undoubtedly regarded as the best method to grasp Ṣūfī teachings and guidance. Therefore, the emergence of such a centre wherein the novices would be provided with shelter and food, helped these novices to realize their aim. They lived there for long periods of time and regularly attended the teaching of the Shaykh who usually resided there. Since the novices came from different cultural and psychological backgrounds, it was natural that good systematic regulations were badly needed to govern their communal living. Thus, the formulation of ten regulations of communal living by Shaykh Abū Sa'id, who commanded a respected stature among the masses as well as the Saljūq rulers, was the first of its kind in the history of *khānqāh*.¹² Such an effort was later on followed by his younger Ṣūfī-scholar, al-Ḥujwīrī (d. 1071) who devoted several chapters of his *Kashf al-Mahjūb* to highlighting the proper etiquettes and rules for companionship (*ṣuḥbah*) in such residences. About two centuries later, Abū Najīb al-Suhrawardī came out with his *Adāb al-Murīdīn* and was then followed

Homerin in "Saving Muslim Souls: The Khānqāh and the Sufi Duty in the Mamluk Lands," *Mamlūk Studies Review*, 3 (1999), 59-60. Henceforth cited as "Saving Muslim Souls."

¹¹ It was reported that al-Ghazzālī established a similar institution i.e. *khānqāh* in his hometown, Tūs, one of the regions in Khurāsān. In this *khānqāh* he trained the young disciples in the theoretical and practical aspects of Ṣūfism. This incident occurred when he returned to his hometown after retiring from professorship for the second time and most probably before he went to Nishāpūr in the course of the year 499/1105-6 to teach at the Nizāmiyyah college there. See Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism*, 142.

¹² For further discussion on this see Chapter One below under the section on Persia; On the ten regulations set up by Shaykh Abū Sa'id, please refer to Appendix I.

by his nephew, 'Umar al-Suhrāwardī who elaborated his uncle's work and produced an excellent manual, *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif*.

Khānqāh became a platform for the transmission of the Ṣūfī Shaykh's teachings from one *murīd* (Ṣūfī seeker) to another, a fact that indirectly contributed to the emergence of the *silsilah*,¹³ one of the branches of sciences in Ṣūfism. The stage at which a *murīd* began to adhere to a Shaykh and started to form a school to transmit and perpetuate his teachings, mystical exercises (*adhkār*) and his way of life finally resulted in the formation of the Ṣūfī *Ṭarīqah*¹⁴ in the thirteenth century. Later on, in the fifteenth century, several new branches of Orders began to rise along the *Ṭarīqah* lines and thus marked a new era in the institutionalization of the Ṣūfī movement namely the *Ta'īfah* stage. This is the opinion of Trimmingham who argues that there are three stages of development in the institutionalization of Ṣūfism. It began with the *khānqāh* then *Ṭarīqah* and finally *Tāi'fah*. Be that as it may, this view highlights the importance of *khānqāh* in the historical development of Ṣūfism.¹⁵

II. A Ṣūfī-life in *khānqāh* and its criticism

The history of Ṣūfī tradition and customs which surround the life and people of the *khānqāhs* was never devoid of criticism from a group of *fiqh* oriented scholars like Ibn al-Jawzī (597/1200) and Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1328). The former dedicated almost half of his works on criticizing the Ṣūfis. He denounced the legality of the existence of such an institution for six reasons, among which the *khānqāh* is considered as a harmful innovation (*bid'ah*) encouraging celibacy that aped the Christians and running counter against the Prophetic custom in favour of marriage.¹⁶

In one passage, he remarks:

¹³ Inspired by the *silsilah* or "chain of transmission" which was first applied in the science of *hadīth*, Ṣūfis used the same method in spreading the teachings of a Shaykh. A critical study of this chain of transmission that usually went back all the way to the Prophet (ṣ. 'a. w), could certify the authority of a teaching as well as its transmission.

¹⁴ According to Trimmingham, the thirteenth century Saljūqs was the formative period of "Ṣūfī Orders," a Christian terminology borrowed by the writers of Ṣūfism in English which signifies the *Ṣūfī tarīqah*. For further insight into its definition, please refer to his *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 4-5. Henceforth cited as *Sufi Orders*.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 102-3.

¹⁶ See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbis Iblis*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutb al-'Ilmiyyah, 1403/1984), 200-01. Henceforth cited as *Talbis Iblis*. On the partial translation of *Talbis Iblis* see D. S Margoliuth, "The Devils

We have seen a horde of more recent Şūfis lounging around in *ribāṣ* so as to avoid working for a living, occupied by eating and drinking, song and dance; they seek the things of the world from any tyrant, not hesitating to accept the gift of even tax-collector. Most of their *ribāṣ* have been built by despots who have endowed them with illegal properties... The Şūfis' concern revolved around the kitchen, food, and ice water... While they spend most of their time in amusing conversation and visiting the nobility...¹⁷

Ibn Taymiyyah criticized the practice of his contemporary Şūfis and issued various *fatāwā* condemning their customs of lavish banquet, seeking ecstasy through the Şūfi mystical invocations (*samā'*) and dancing¹⁸ as well as their clothings.¹⁹ Criticism was also leveled at other popular customs of the Muslim masses including the practice of shrine visiting with offerings, vows and invocations.²⁰

The proper subject of criticism should be the popular practices of pseudo-Şūfis who must be distinguished from the genuine or higher Şūfis.²¹ Thus, a strict jurist and scholar like Ibn al-Jawzī, for instance, strongly voiced out his criticisms on what he considered as malpractices while restraining himself from condemning Şūfism outright. Unfortunately, even in making these categorical criticisms, there were always possibilities of succumbing to unscrupulous judgments.²² Furthermore,

Delusion." *Islamic Culture* 9, no. 1-3 (1935): 1-21, 187-208, 377-99, 533-57; 19, no. 1-3 (1935): 69-81, 171-88, 271-89, 376-83; and 20, no. 1-3 (1945): 58-71, 181-9, 297-10, 408-21. Henceforth cited as "Devils Delusion."

¹⁷ See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbis Iblis*, 201; Carl W. Ernst, *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center*, (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 16-17. Henceforth cited as *Eternal Garden*; Homerin, "Saving Muslim Souls," op. cit., 64.

¹⁸ *Samā'* included the chanting of poems including the love ones. Sometimes *samā'* was performed with the accompaniment of music and dancing in a Şūfi context i.e. as the outcome of the ecstasy caused by *samā'*. This latter point had been disapproved of by Ibn al-Jawzī who regarded it as unlawful and a sign for the presence of the evil influence in it. He opined that music makes one to be misguided or leads someone astray from the Divine thought (*dhikr*). The most extreme of his views was that he considered music (*ghinā'*) and adultery (*zinā'*) to be on equal footing. See *Talbis Iblis*. On more views on *samā'*, see Sirajul Haq, "Samā' and Raqs of the Dervishes," *Islamic Culture* 18, no. 2 (1944): 111-30.

¹⁹ For further details on this issue, please refer to Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, (Riyād: Dār 'Ālim al-Kutb, 1412/1991), Vol. 11, 557-607.

²⁰ Trimmingham, *Sufi Orders*, 242.

²¹ The Şūfis meant here include those of true *Tariqah* as well as some misled group or charlatans.

²² Ibn al-Jawzī criticized the earlier and prominent Şūfis as well as his contemporaries concerning their customs of taking food and drinks. He remarked that the devil (*iblis*) went as far as to delude (*talbis*) the original Şūfis. [like Abū Talib al-Makki the author of *Qūt al-Qulūb* and *Dhu'l-Nūn al-Misri* in their ways to achieve a certain state of spiritual experience], incited them to minimize their food, to have it as coarse as possible, and to abstain from cold water. As for his contemporaries, he criticized those Şūfis who rested from their work for being caught with amazement at the amount they ate and the luxury of their lives. Part of this translation is adopted from Margoliuth, "Devils Delusion," 77; for a further insight into Ibn al-Jawzī's criticism over Şūfi's custom of taking food and drinks, please refer to his *Talbis Iblis*, 234-48.

although it is true that some of the institutions had become seats of charlatans,²³ yet to denounce the very existence of the institution per se was in itself an act worthy of criticism.

We hold the same position with regard to the controversial Şüfî custom of *samâ'*. Though severely criticized by *fuqahâ'*, many Şüfî oriented scholars had managed to view the issue in more categorical, less hostile or offensive manner. It may be interesting to know why Imâm al-Ghazzâlî, for example, viewed this ritual as permissible (*mubâh*) under several strict conditions.²⁴ In the same manner, the later Şüfî scholar, Abû Najîb al-Suhrawardî (ca. 490-563/1097-1168) laid down certain conditions regarding the performance of *samâ'* and stressed that not everybody is qualified to participate in such a ritual.²⁵ The Mamlûk prominent scholar, al-Sha'rânî also approved *samâ'*. He relied on Ibn 'Arabi's Şüfî manuals that outlined two conditions in which the performing of *samâ'* is allowed; first, no outsiders are to be present, including Şüfis who are opposed to *samâ'* and second, the poems recited are to be only those in praise of God; panegyrics and love poems are forbidden.²⁶

III. Pseudo-Şüfî movements and their links to *khânqâh*

It is unfortunate to realize that in the history of Şüfism, there emerged groups of charlatans whom we shall refer to as pseudo-Şüfis. Among them were Qalandariyyah,

²³ It is true that not everyone who resided in the *khânqâh* was a pious individual. This fact has been shown in the experience of the celebrated Şüfî 'Alî bin 'Uthman al-Hujwiri (d. ca. 465/1072) during his lodging in a certain *khânqâh* in Khurâsân. See Abû 'Uthmân 'Alî al-Hujwiri, *The Kashf al-Mahjûb*, trans. R. A. Nicholson, (Lahore: Islamic Book Foundation, 1980), 69; Homerin, "Saving Muslim Souls," 59-84.

²⁴ For an insight on al-Ghazzâlî's view on *Sama'*, please refer to an unpublished article by the late Profesor Fazlur Rahman, "Development of the Doctrine of *Samâ'*," Fazlur Rahman Collection, ISTAC Library.

²⁵ See Menahem Milson, *Şüfî Rules for Novices (Adâb al-Muridin)*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975).

²⁶ Most of the *Shari'ah*-abided Şüfî Shuyûkh prohibited the use of musical instruments in the recitations of poetry during the *samâ'* session. Among them were Shaykh Muhyi al-Din al-Jilâni and Shaykh Nizâm al-din Awliyâ' of India who forbade their disciples (*murids*) from attending the *samâ'* where the music was played with the accompaniment of unlawful instruments such as tambourines, flutes, drums and etc. On the same manner, al-Sha'rânî, though he was not taking an extreme attitude as the former two Shaykhs, disliked listening to musical instruments which accompanied the recitations of the poetry, since it distracted Muslim from the Qur'ân and the *dhikr Allâh* (God's remembering). He believed that the Prophet (s.'a.w.) had forbidden it precisely for this reason. See Michael Winter, *Society and Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt: Studies in the Writing of 'Abd Wahhâb al-Sha'rânî*. (London: Transaction Books, 1982), 89. Henceforth cited as *Society and Religion*.

Ḥaydariyyah, Abdāls of Rūmī, Jāmis, Bektashiyyah,²⁷ Shamsī Tabriziyyah in Asia Minor and Madāriyyah and Jalāliyyah in Muslim India. According to historical records, pseudo-Şūfī groups had emerged by as early as the thirteenth century. The earliest among them were Qalandariyyah and Ḥaydariyyah, both of whom were linked to Iranian masters.²⁸ The former first flourished in Syria and Egypt and the latter took shape in Iran. Both had rapidly spread from their places of origin to India and Asia Minor respectively. Thus, before the end of the thirteenth century, other pseudo-Şūfī groups appeared in Asia Minor and western Iran, the majority being the followers of Barak Bābā's circle in Syria. Two centuries later, several new groups such as Abdāls of Rūm, Jāmis, Bektashiyyah, and Shamsī Tabriziyyah in Asia Minor and Madāriyyah and Jalāliyyah in Muslim India emerged.²⁹

The pseudo-Şūfis were usually characterized by their extreme ways and practices of showing their renunciation of the world such as by practicing nudity or improper clothing,³⁰ shaving all bodily and facial hair and the use of intoxicants. This suggests that they were influenced by other traditions outside Islām. The group of Qalandariyyah that existed in Khurāsān in the eleventh century, for instance, is said to have been much influenced by the Buddhist tradition.³¹ Naturally, these groups were met by strong opposition from the Muslim authorities and stern actions were taken against them. In 761/1360 for instance, Sulţān al-Malik Nāşir (second r. 755-62/1354-61) issued a decree to prevent the Qalandariyyah from shaving and dressing in a manner of Zoroastrian and non-Arab people (*al-Majūs wa 'a'jam*) and oblige them to adopt normal dress.³²

²⁷ The Bektashiyyah referred to here were those who belonged to the early period i.e. before the sixteenth century. After this period, their doctrines were revised and modified according to the Shari'ah.

²⁸ The Qalandariyyah was founded by Jamāl al-Dīn Sāvī (d. ca. 618/1221-22), and eponymous founder of Haydariyyah was Quţb al-Dīn Haydar (d. ca. 618/1221-22).

²⁹ Ahmed T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friend*, (Salt Lake City: University Of Utah Press, 1994), 1-4. Henceforth cited as *God's Unruly Friend*.

³⁰ On the illustrations of their abnormal dressings, see *ibid*.

³¹ Tahşin Yazıcı, "Kalandariyya". *EP*, (1978) 4: 473-74.

³² Al-Maqriẓi, *al-Mawā'iz wa al-'Itibār bi dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa al-Āthār*, (Beirut: Dār Şādīr, n.d.), 2: 433. Henceforth cited as *al-Khiṭaṭ*.

Though deviant in character, these pseudo-Şūfī groups had contributed to the history of the *khānqāh* in their own ways. In a few cases, they had won considerable support from rulers. Taking Syria as a first case, during the reign of al-Mālik al-Zāhir, the Qalandariyyah leader, Muḥammad al-Balkhī built a *zāwiyah* for his followers under the expense of Public treasury (*Bayt al-Māl*). During the former's visit, the latter was bestowed with a gift of one thousand *dirhams* (silver coins) and special rugs to his group, who hosted the Sulṭān in their place. Not only these, al-Zāhir also arranged for delivery of a yearly stipend of thirty sacks of wheat and daily allowance of ten dirhams to al-Balkhī's followers.³³ It was during this period that Haydaris entered the city and a hospice was constructed for them in the quarter of 'Awniyyah.³⁴

In 695/1295-96, Sulṭān al-'Ādil Kitbughā (r. 694-96/1295-97) is reported to have traveled to Damascus with Ḥasan al-Jawālaqī al-Qalandārī, who had earlier founded a *zāwiyah* for Qalandariyyah groups in Cairo. While the former visited the group in the Mountain of al-Mizzah, a large gathering was organized in the *zāwiyah* of al-Ḥarīrī as a show of gratitude to a gift of one thousand *dinārs* that he received from Kitbughā.³⁵

In Egypt, particularly in Damietta, there was a group of Qalandariyyah in the hospice of Jamāl a-Dīn Sāvi, headed by Shaykh Faṭḥ Takrūrī at the time of Ibn Baṭṭūṭah's visit to the town in 725/1325. In Egypt, as has been mentioned earlier, there was a *zāwiyah* founded by Hasan al-Jawalaqī in the direction of Qarāfah which emerged as a centre of Qalandariyyah in Cairo.

The definitive establishment of the great regional empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, Uzbeks, and Mughals during the sixteenth century led to the suppression of these pseudo-Şūfī groups. As a result, some of them, the Bektashiyyah in Asia Minor and Balkans, for instance, under the suppression of the Ottoman '*ulamā*' and rulers,

³³ See Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friend*, 52.

³⁴ See al-Nu'aymi, *Tārīkh al-Madāris*, (Damascus: Maktabah al-Thaqāfah al-Diniyyah, 1988) 2: 212.

³⁵ See al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khitat*, 2: 433.

had totally changed their doctrines and practices.³⁶ Meanwhile, in India, the Qalandariyyah had infiltrated into the socially respectable *Ṣūfī Ṭariqahs*, which led to the emergence of a sub-*Ṭariqahs* like the Chishtiyyah-Qalandariyyah.³⁷

IV. Women and the *khānqāh*

Female mystics were never incorporated into *khānqāhs* and orders as spiritual succession could not be traced into them. Often they became hermits or lone dervishes and more often than not, lived without the comforts, both spiritual and material, provided by *pirs* and *khānqāhs*.³⁸

The above quotation suggests that as far as the history of *Ṣūfī* institutions is concerned, there was no indication that women ever attached themselves as *Ṣūfī*-members of any *khānqāh* and *zāwiyah*.³⁹ However, a thorough examination of the history would reveal instances that strongly indicate their association to *Ṣūfī Ṭariqah*. This is evident for example in the account of the fourteenth century that the grandmother of a young male is reported to bestow him a *khirqah*, the robe that a *Ṣūfī* novice would normally receive from his Shaykh.⁴⁰

Despite the fact that they have never identified themselves as members of any *Ṣūfī* institutions in much of the Islamic history, yet Muslim women especially of the Mamlūk period were inclined to establish institutions which promoted *Ṣūfism* and its practical life i.e. *khānqāh* and *ribāṭ*,—examples for the latter will be discussed in the next chapter. The then presence of *Khānqāh Ummu Anūk* in the fifteenth century Mamlūk Egypt, for example, was a clear manifestation of women's inclination and effort to participate in the tradition of *khānqāh*. As reflected by its name, this *khānqāh*

³⁶ Such a transformation occurred in the sixteenth century under the Grand Shaykh Bālim Sultan, the second 'Pir' of Bektashiyyah. For further insight into Bektashiyyah, please refer to John Kingsley Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, (New York: Ams Press, 1982); and R. Tschudi, "Bektashiyya", *EP*, (1986) 1: 1161-63.

³⁷ Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friend*, 4. As influenced by the Qalandariyyah, the occupants of some of the *Khānqāh Chishtiyyah* in India were required to shave their head.

³⁸ See Sayyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., n.d.), 403, Appendix B. Henceforth cited as *Sufism in India*.

³⁹ Most of the cases reveal that women who were attached to the *khānqāh* were wives or female members of the Shaykh's family. Here, they resided in the apartment built specially for the Shaykh. Such a fact is supported by the architectural outlook of the *khānqāh* buildings erected over the course of the Mamlūk rulings in Egypt as well as in Anatolia and India. The latter case i.e. India, Bibi Rāni, the wife of Sayyid Maḥmūd Kirmāni, the Shaykh of Chishtiyyah *Khānqāh* of Ganji Shakar in Ajudhan, can be cited as an example. See Rizvi, *Sufism in India* 2: 46.

⁴⁰ Ibn Hajar, *al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A'yān al-Mi'ah al-Thāminah*, (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Hadithah, 1966), 1: 320.

has been founded by al-Khātūn Ṭaghāy al-Khawandah al-Kubrā (d. Shawwāl, 749/January 1349), the wife of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad⁴¹ and the mother to al-Amir Anūk. Located in the desert outside the Bāb al-Barqiyah, this *khānqāh* was built besides the tomb of al-Amir Ṭāshatmir al-Sāqī, one of the Mamlūk amir during that time. Once completed, she had appointed a number of Ṣūfis and *qurrā'* (Qur'ān readers)⁴² into it, and bequeathed considerable *waqfs* to fund its maintenance. It is interesting to note that, in operating her *khānqāh*, Ummu Anūk had also appointed her slave girls to play different roles.⁴³ This emphasizes the possibility that women probably fully managed their own *khānqāh* in which females were the absolute members.

V. Major Ṣūfī institutions: Some reflections on their definitions

The main terms which describe Ṣūfī institutions and which are our major concern here are: *khānqāh*, *ribāṭ* and *zāwiyah*. The term "*khānqāh*" is derived from the Persian words (*khāna-gāh*), meaning "a place of residence" for Ṣūfis, or "place of the table," or "place of recitation."⁴⁴ This word is found to be used in the Persian regions and also in the Arab regions such as Syria, Irāq and Egypt, i.e. in the regions once ruled and dominated by the Saljūqs and its associated rulers, the Ayyūbids. Whatever the etymology of the term, *khānqāh* denotes a meeting centre for "mystically" inclined people. In terms of membership, it is open to everyone who wishes to live a Ṣūfī life.

⁴¹ It is well recorded that, from the time of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's rule, women of the household of the Mamlūk sultāns posed themselves as diligent founders of various religious buildings. Sitt Hadaq (740/1339-40) built mosques, others built *madrasahs* like the *madrasah* of Umm al-Sultān Sha'bān (770/1368-69); Khawand Tuibāy built her *khānqāh* in 765/1363-4. See Leonor Fernandes, "Mamluk Architecture and the Question of Patronage," *Mamlūk Studies Review* I (1997): 115. Henceforth cited as "Mamluk Architecture".

⁴² Besides appointing *qurrā'* into her own founded *Khānqāh*, Ummu Anūk also appointed numbers of them into the *Turbah* (tomb) of her son, i.e. in the *Qubbah* within Madrasah Nāṣiriyyah's complex. See al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭat*, 426.

⁴³ Apparently this Khātūn was very rich, it is worth noting that when she died in Shawwāl 749/January 1349, she left about 1000 *jāriyahs*, 80 servants and a large estate. She was buried in this *Khānqāh*. See al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khitat*, 2: 425-6.

⁴⁴ For the etymology of the term see Jacqueline Chabbi, "Khānkāh," *EP*, (1978) 4: 1025-6. Henceforth cited as "Khānkāh"; Muhsin Kiyāni, *Tārikh-i Khāniqāh Dār Irān*, (Tehrān: Kutubkhānih-i Tahūri, 1369), 162. Henceforth cited as *Tārikh-i Khāniqāh Dār Irān*. For the general treatment of *khānqāh*, see Trimmingham, *Sufi Orders*; esp. 5-10, 17-23 and 168-72; Marcia K. Hermansen, "Khānqāh," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, ed. John L. Esposito, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) 2: 415-417. Henceforth cited as "Khānqāh"; and Bruce B. Lawrence, "Khānqāh," *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade, (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1987), 8: 278-9.

Interestingly, its Ṣūfī members were those not exclusively belonging to a certain *ṭarīqah*, yet there was always a Shaykh who acted as the director of their communal living.

*Ribāṭ*⁴⁵ is believed to be the first institution associated with Ṣūfīs and their activities. It emerged in Arab-controlled regions. Originally, the word *ribāṭ* used to refer to "a frontier-post or watch-station which served as a cell for Muslims in non-Muslim environments." These cells were often used to shelter those effective *du'āt* (propagators) of Islam. In its first stage of evolution, the *Shaykh-murīd* (Master-disciple) relationship did not take a ground in them, a very significant feature which distinguished it from the *khānqāh*.⁴⁶ However, during its second stage of organizational development, *ribāṭ* started to embrace the same spirit of *khānqāh*: i.e. as the centre of a teaching and guiding master. This has been strikingly exemplified by the two *ribāṭs* of Suhrawardī in Baghdād. At the same time, *ribāṭ* is a non-committal term since there continued to exist the frontier-mentality *ribāṭs* and there were also others, as in Mecca, which functioned more than a hostel for Ṣūfī travelers and pilgrims. Moreover, the term *ribāṭ* is also used by the Muslim author like al-Irbilī to designate a special convent for women, while the term *khānqāh* is used to refer to the convent for man.⁴⁷

The Arabic term *zāwiyah* is derived from the root *zawā* (z-w-y) which means "to bring together, gather, contract, conceal."⁴⁸ The usage of this word is known to be predominance in the Arab regions which signifies the influences of the Maghribi Ṣūfī *Ṭarīqah*. In Egypt particularly, the *zāwiyah* signifies a small construction wherein the Shaykh of a certain *Ṭarīqah* used to meet and teach the students to submit to the rules and his *Ṭarīqah*. In other words, *zāwiyah* was usually an institution for Ṣūfīs who belong to a specific *Ṭarīqah*. Unlike the *khānqāh* and *ribāṭ* whose headship were

⁴⁵ On the etymology and the historical development of *ribāṭ*, see Nasser Rabat, "Ribāt," *EP*, (1995) 8: 493-506.

⁴⁶ Trimmingham, *Sufi Orders*, 167.

⁴⁷ As cited by Trimmingham, *ibid.*, 18.

⁴⁸ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, (Beirut, Lubnān: Dār Ihyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1417/1997), 6: 119; For a general treatment on *zāwiyah*, see E. Lév-Provençal, "Zāwīya," *E. J. Brill's First Encyclopaedia of Islam (1913-36)*, (1987) 8: 1220. Henceforth cited as "Zāwīya."

usually appointed by the authority (*wāqif*), the *Shaykh al-Zāwiyah* was elected by the *ikhwān* (bretheren) within a given *Ṭarīqah*. This implicitly reveals the line of succession in which a proper candidate will be chosen to continue the teaching of one Ṣūfī Shaykh there.⁴⁹ Financially, *zāwiyah* survived on its own financial condition and was not endowed like *khānqāh* and *ribāṭ*.

B. Objective and Organization of Study

This study is an attempt to expand the fact that the institution of *khānqāh* was a fruit of the symbiotic relation that occurred between *taṣawwuf* and learning traditions of the Muslims. In other words, learning of at least one branch of Islamic sciences such as *ḥadīth*, a main core to *sharī'ah* or theology, became a prerequisite for novices in the *khānqāh* to pursue the Ṣūfī Way and elevate themselves to higher spiritual stages in *taṣawwuf*. A *khānqāh*, therefore, must be viewed as a dual-functioning institution initiated and systematized by those early Ṣūfī-scholars particularly at the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh century Khurāsān. Since this dual-functioning institution had spread into various Muslim regions particularly into Egypt—an important centre of learning and knowledge seeking activities after Baghdād in the fifteenth century—it is important to know, how it was received and treated by the Muslim rulers at that time of Islamic history and how it contributed to the development of Ṣūfism as well as to view the impact and relation of its activities upon Muslim societies and other institutions.

In order to achieve this purpose, this study was divided into three chapters. In Chapter One, after a brief introduction given on the *khānqāh* tradition in the Muslim society, a reflection was made regarding the evolution of the *khānqāh* and its similar institutions within the various Muslim regions.

In Chapter Two, our discussion focussed on the development of various Sufi institutions during the Mamlūk period. A glimpse on a historical account regarding the pre-Mamlūk rulers and their treatment of Ṣūfīs as well as their institutions during

⁴⁹ Trimingham, *Sufi Orders*, 20.