The Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan: History, Politics and Religion from 1500 to 1750

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Thesis submitted for the degree of
Ph.D. in History

2014

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Dedicated

to the loving memory of my beloved mother

Niyozbekova Marodbegim

and my uncles

Nurmamadshoev Rahmatsho and Qudratsho

And to my father and first teacher

Nurmamadshoev Tolibsho

and my beloved wife

Nurila Makenalieva

who never failed to support me in times of difficulty.

This thesis is indeed based on my own study and research during the Ph.D. studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. I have employed some materials and interviews related to the ritual of *Charāgh rawshan* from research conducted during several field trips in Tajikistan (2004 – 2008). I have also used some general sources about history of Iran, Mughal India and Central Asia in general Islamic context by various authors as shown in footnotes and selected bibliography. The originality claimed for this work is in its attempt to be the first introductory study of the history of Badakhshan, with special reference to the Ismāʿīlī communities of Badakhshan that have been divided between modern Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

Nourmamadcho Nourmamadchoev
December 2014

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Abstract

This thesis concentrates on the history, politics and religion of Badakhshan in a broader perspective and the place of the Ismāʿīlī minority in this setting. It analyses the political, religious, and cultural life of the region within the wider historical context of Central Asia and the Persianate world from 905/1500 to 1163/1750. Its main focus is the scattered Ismāʿīlī communities in Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities. The thesis addresses the question of impact of politics on religion and religious communities, particularly the Shīʿa and Ismāʿīlī minority groups in Badakhshan.

Part One, *The Geography and People of Badakhshan*, includes Chapter 1, which describes the geography of the region and its ethnic composition. It seeks to discuss the complexity of the geographical and political borders through the prism of the nineteenth century "Great Game" and apply it to medieval and pre-modern Islamic societies. Thus, it contextualises the overall presentation and conceptualises the interrelations between geography, politics and religion.

Part Two is entitled *The Political History of Badakhshan*; it comprises Chapters 2, 3 and 4. Chapter 2, *The Mīrs and Shāhs of Badakhshan: the Politics of Rule*, explores the origin and rule of the local dynasty of *mīr*s and *shāh*s of Badakhshan. It will explore the reigns of the local *mīr*s and *shāh*s and seek to find the link between the rulers from the time of Nāṣir-i Khusraw (second half of the eleventh century) to the execution of the last local ruler of Badakhshan by the Tīmūrids in the second half of the fifteenth century. An attempt will be made to give the name and when possible the genealogy of local rulers during this period. Given the fragmentary nature of the available information, the discussion in this chapter will be more speculative than conclusive. Chapter 3, *The Political History of Badakhshan from 1500 to 1658*, discusses the change of political control over the region from the local rulers to the invading powers, such as the Tīmūrids, the Shaybānids and later on the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids. I have made an attempt to demonstrate the relationship between the last Tīmūrids and Mughals, their struggle for retaining control over Mā warā al-nahr, and the place of Badakhshan in the broader context of political discourse in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. The chapter also explores and analyses the role and influence of the Mughal Emperors on the religious and political life of Badakhshan. Chapter 4, *The Rule of the Yāribeg Khānid Dynasty in Badakhshan*, is a new chapter in the history of Badakhshan. It charts the rise of Mīr Yāribeg Khān, and the establishment in power of the Yāribeg Khānid (or Yārid) dynasty that brought relative peace to the region. Despite the fact that the descendants of Mīr Yāribeg Khān ruled Badakhshan for over two centuries, our discussion ends with the succession disputes that became the cause of disorder and internal conflict in the region, particularly with the accession to power of Mīrzā Nabāt who ruled the region from 1149/1737 to 1160/1748.

Part Three, *Ismāʿīlism in Badakhshan*, is devoted to the study of the religious composition of the region and comprises Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8. Chapter 5, *The Daʿwat-i Nāṣir: the Ismāʿīlī Mission in Badakhshan* examines the spread of Ismāʿīlī teaching in Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities. This chapter also investigates the activity of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* in the region and the adjoining territories. It will explore the limits of myth and legend and the transition to historical presentation through the figure of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, also referred to as Pīr Shāh Nāṣir, who is considered the founder of the local Ismāʿīlī communities. In line with the historical representation, this chapter will define such concepts as the *daʿwat-i Nāṣir* and the *dīn-i panjtanī*, two

distinctive terms used by the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan to identify their religious persuasion and later their allegiance to the Ismāʿīlī cause. Chapter 6, *Schism and its Effect on the Daʿwat-i Nāṣir*, investigates the continuation of the Ismāʿīlī tradition in the post-Alamūt period, particularly after the split between the Muḥammad-Shāhīs and the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārīs, which saw the local Ismāʿīlīs choosing to follow the line of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams. The theme of this chapter is to explore and investigate the transition from one branch of Nizārī Ismāʿīlism, namely the Nizārī Muḥammad-Shāhī line, to another, the Nizārī Qāsim-Shāhī line of Imams. Chapter 7, *The Role of Pīrs: Religious Authority among the Ismāʿīlīs of the Pamir*, delves into the most complex theme of the activity of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* in Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities. The discussion revolves around elaborating on the notion of the *pīr* and the institution of *pīrship* among the Badakhshani Ismāʿīlīs. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the arrival of the four *darvīshe*s and place them in a proper or approximate historical epoch. I shall concentrate on the figure of Shāh Khāmūsh and his arrival in Shughnān. This Chapter will also explore the activity of ancillary figures in the retinues of *pīr*s, such as *hādī*, *rāhī* and *khalīfa* who played a crucial role in the preservation of the Ismāʿīlī tradition. Chapter 8, the last chapter in the thesis, will discuss the tradition of *Charāgh-rawshan*. The focus of this chapter is the text of *Charāgh-nāma,* which will be deconstructed and a detailed analysis on the text will be given. I shall explore and analyse the general Islamic origin of the relevant ritual, as conveyed through verses from the *Qurʾān.* The succeeding sections will probe the amalgamation of Ṣūfī texts with the text of the *Charāgh-nāma.* They will also explore the influence of Twelver Shīʿism on this particular text and related ritual practice. This section will conclude with an attempt to differentiate between the Ismāʿīlī and non-Ismāʿīlī elements, which sometimes overlap, within the text of the *Charāgh-nāma.*

The *Afterword* summarises some of the findings of this study and provides a tentative periodization of the political history of Badakhshan. I shall also pose some questions for future studies of the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan both from the historical and from contemporary perspectives.

Words of Gratitude

Acceptissima semper munera sunt, auctor quæ pretiosa facit.

Those gifts are always the most acceptable that owe their value to the giver.

Publius Ovidius Naso[1]

The writing of this thesis would have been impossible without the help and assistance of many people in London, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Dushanbe, Khorog and Bishkek.

Firstly, I am grateful to the generosity and inspiration of my spiritual leader, His Highness the Aga Khan IV. Words fail me to express my gratitude to Him so I will simply wholeheartedly say: *Thank you very much, Your Highness.*

I am extremely grateful to Dr. Konrad Hirschler for the help and guidance I have received from him while engaged in this research. This study would not been possible without his advice, encouragement, suggestions and criticism. I can never thank him enough for his patience, support, considerate attention and kindness throughout this work.

During my studies in the United Kingdom, the Institute of Ismaili Studies was not only a place where I successfully completed a two year course in the Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities (GPISH), but also was simply a home. The IIS shaped my future life and it was due to the generous sponsorship of the IIS that I completed a one year M.Phil. course in the Department of Middle East and Islamic Studies at Cambridge University before enrolling on a Ph.D. course in the Department of History of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. I am indebted to the previous director of the IIS - Professor Azim Nanji - and to the current director and Head of the Department of Academic Research and Publication, Dr. Farhad Daftary, for granting me a scholarship to complete this research work. My thanks go to the previous Head of the IIS library, Mr. Alnoor Merchant, for helping me with manuscript sources from the IIS collections. My heartfelt thank goes to Omar Ali-de-Unzaga, Julia Kolb, Hena Miha and Dagi Dagiev from DARP, IIS, for providing the needed letters and recommendations.

I am particularly indebted to Dr. Faqiur Muhammad Hunzai, for his constant support, encouragement and guidance. Similarly, I am thankful to Dr. Shafique Virani, from Toronto University, for his kind suggestions and advice and for sharing his published and forthcoming publications. A special thanks is due to Hilary Smith and Isabel Miller for meticulous reading of the entire draft, for their criticism, suggestions and encouragements. A special thank goes to Russell Harris, who, despite his busy schedule helped me with the map of Badakhshan. Walid Ghali, Shah Hussein, Khadija Lalani, Jesica Linder, Alex James Leach and Waseem Farooq from the IIS and ISMC libraries were always ready to help with finding not only articles and books but also for their encouragement.

My wholehearted thanks goes to *Ustod* Shozodamuhammad Sherzodshoev, my BA teacher in Arabic Language and Literature at Khorog State University, who harnessed my interest in Islamic history in general and Ismāʿīlī history and thought in particular.

I would also like to extend my wholehearted thanks to Dr. Qudratbek Elchibekov and Mr. Oqilsho Khuromonov, from the Tajik Academy of Science in Dushanbe, for their support. I am indebted to *Ustod* Ato Mirkhoja for his valuable suggestions and advise. In Khorog, it was the help of Umed

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[1] Stone, *Dictionary of Latin Quotations,* London: Routledge, 2005, p. 4. Publius Ovidius Naso known also as Ovid (43 B.C. - A.D. 17).

A library is a meeting point between the past and the present. It is a space that brings together volumes of books from different countries, in different languages that span time and space. A journey into the past that is made in this research work is going to start with a distich from Nāṣir-i Khusraw's *Dīvān*, where he praises the power of speech in producing knowledge as he marvels in one of his poems:

> *The feeble frame regard not; remember rather that I*
> *Am the author of works, which outnumber and outshine the stars in the sky.*[2]

This is the speech that gives joy in searching for the truth that is hidden in the pages from the past. Modern libraries that house volumes of newly published books and collections of rare manuscripts evoke the experience of a wise man, a sage or a scholar who composed, let's say, *Magna Opera* like Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's *Mathnawī* and Abu al-Qāsim Firdawsī's *Shāh-nāma* in Persian, or like William Shakespeare, who immortalised love in the image of Romeo and Juliet in English.

The present work – *'The Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan: History, Politics and Religion from 1500 to 1750'* – aims to study the primary as well as secondary sources in order to reconstruct and present the history of the people living in that far corner of the world. It was a painstaking exercise to cross-examine the narrative stories and legends from the local oral tradition with the multitude of manuscript sources from the eleventh to the nineteen centuries in order to locate the (approximate) chronology of events. The work in your hand invites you to embark on a long journey from the past to the present, which introduces the culture, religion and daily life of the people of Badakhshan. To make this research work more readable for the reader, certain consistent academic conventions need to be followed that constitute the backbone of any scholarly presentation.

Note on Transliteration

Transliteration is the practice of converting a foreign text from one language into another. Transliteration is a key to correct production that helps with pronouncing unknown words in a new language. Therefore, it should be printed, in order to coordinate it with the language in which it will be presented. This research work employs a multitude of sources in Persian, Tajik, Arabic, Russian, English and some local dialects from the Pamir mountainous. Therefore, the transliteration system of *The International Journal of Middle East Studies* (published by the Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Middle East Studies Association of North America) was employed throughout this thesis. The table below shows the employment of Arabic (Persian) script and its corresponding letters in Roman

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[2] Nāṣir Khusraw., *Dīvān-i ashʿār,* Naṣr Allāh Taqawā, (ed.)., Tehran, p. 6. Translated by Edward Browne in an article "Nāṣir-i Khusraw: Poet, Traveller, and Propagandist," in *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society,* 1905, p. 334.

منگر بدین ضعیف تنم زانکه در سخن،   زاین چرخ پُرستّاره فزون است اثر مرا.

alphabet. The only exception in the table is the letter ث where the 'th' Romanisation is used throughout

the thesis.

Figure 1: IJMES Transliteration System for Persian									
Consonants									
Persian	ء	ب	پ	ت	ث	ج	چ	ح	خ
Romanisation	ʾ	b	p	t	th	J	ch	ḥ	kh
Persian	د	ذ	ر	ز	ژ	س	ش	ص	ض
Romanisation	d	ẕ	r	z	zh	s	sh	ṣ	ż
Persian	ط	ظ	ع	غ	ف	ق	ك	گ	ل
Romanisation	ṭ	ẓ	ʿ	gh	f	q	k or g	g	l
Persian	م	ن	ه	و	ئ				
Romanisation	m	n	h	v or u	y				

I also use the Library of Congress Russian – Cyrillic Transliteration System for sources published in
Russian and Tajik languages. It is important to note that sources

Figure 2: Library of Congress Russian - Cyrillic Transliteration System								
Cyrillic	А, а	Б, б	В, в	Г, г	Д, д	Е, е	Ё, ё	Ж, ж
Romanisation	A, a	B, b	V, v	G, g	D, d	E, e	E, e	Zh, zh
Cyrillic	З, з	И, и	Й, й	К, к	Л, л	М, м	Н, н	О, о
Romanisation	Z, z	I, i	Ĭ, ĭ	K, k	L, l	M, m	N, n	O, o
Cyrillic	П, п	Р, р	С, с	Т, т	У, у	Ф, ф	Х, х	Ц, ц
Romanisation	P, p	R, r	S, s	T, t	U, u	F, f	Kh, Kh	Ts, ts
Cyrillic	Ч, ч	Ш, ш	Щ, щ	Ъ, ъ	Ы, ы	Ь, ь	Э, э	Ю, ю
Romanisation	Ch, ch	Sh, sh	Shch, shch	ʿ (like ayn)	Y y	ʾ (Soft sign)	Ė ė	Iu, iu
Cyrillic	Я я		Ҳ ҳ	Қ қ	Ғ ғ	Ҷ ҷ		
Romanisation	Ia, ia		H, h	Q, q	Gh, gh	J, j		

Dates, Months and Years

As the subject matter of this thesis deals with Western and Eastern sources, the system of dates, months
as well as years are presented in various forms. For consistency between our presentations of the dates,
the months and years of the Islamic calendar (*After Hijra)* are shown with their Gregorian *(Common Era)*
equivalents in the following manner: 905/1500 to 1163/1750. History is the witness that testifies to the

passing of time reflected in various forms but with only one purpose: *'to illuminate reality that provides guidance in daily life and brings us tidings of antiquity'.*[3]

Abbreviations Used in the Thesis

For the full details of the published studies please refer to the bibliography at the end of this thesis.

- AKDN — *Aga Khan Development Network*
- AMCTBO — *Ancient and Medieval Culture of the Bukharan Oasis*
- BASOR — *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
- BIOPS — *British Institute of Persian Studies*
- BKSU — *Bulletin of the Khorog State University*
- BRIIS — *Bulletin of the Royal Institute of Inter-Faith Studies*
- BrisMES — *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*
- BSOAS — *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
- CAJ — *Central Asiatic Journal*
- CAS — *Central Asian Survey*
- CHCh — *Cambridge History of China*
- CHE — *Cambridge History of Egypt*
- CHIn — *Cambridge History of India*
- CHIr — *Cambridge History of Iran*
- DI — *Der Islam*
- E&W — *East and West*
- EI1 — *Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1ˢᵗ ed., Leiden 1913-38*
- EI2 — *Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2ⁿᵈ ed., Leiden 1954-2004*
- EI3 — *Encyclopaedia of Islam, 3ʳᵈ ed., Leiden 2007-*
- EIMW — *Encyclopaedia of Islam and Modern World*
- EIr — *Encyclopaedia Iranica*
- EIs — *Encyclopaedia Islamica*
- EPW — *Economic and Political Weekly*
- EPW — *Economic and Political Weekly*
- ER — *Encyclopaedia of Religion*
- ERE — *Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics*
- HCCA — *History of Civilisations of Central Asia*
- HT — *History and Theory*
- IAN Tadzh SSR — *Izvestiīa Akademii Nauk Tadzhikskoĭ SSR* (in Russian)
- IC — *Islamic Culture*
- IIS — *Institute of Ismaili Studies, London*
- IJMES — *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*
- IOS — *Israel Oriental Studies*
- IPIINKNSA — *Issledovaniīa po Istorii, Istorii Nauki i Kul'tury Narodov Srednĭ Azii*
- IrS — *Iranian Studies*
- ITI — *Intellectual Tradition in Islam*
- ITREB — *Ismaili Tariqah and Religious Education Board*

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[3] Cicero, *Pro Publio Sestio*, A well-known Roman author, orator and politician (106 BC-43 BC). Quoted online at: www.famousquotessite.com/famous-quotes-4721-cicero-pro-publio-sestio.html Accessed: 29 May 2008.

- *JA*   *Journal Asiatique*
- *JAOS*   *Journal of the American Oriental Society*
- *JBBRAS*   *Journal of Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*
- *JESHO*   *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
- *JIMMA*   *Journal of the Institute of Minority Muslim Affairs*
- *JIS*   *Journal of Islamic Studies*
- *JNES*   *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
- *JPS*   *Journal of Persianate Studies*
- *JR*   *Journal of Religion*
- *JRAS*   *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
- *JRCAS*   *Journal of Royal Central Asian Society*
- *JSS*   *Journal of Semitic Studies*
- *JSIS*   *Journal of Shiʿa Islamic Studies*
- *JTS*   *Journal of Turkish Studies*
- *KBIAS*   *Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies*
- *Lane*   *E. W. Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon*
- *MAS*   *Modern Asian Studies*
- *MES*   *Middle Eastern Studies*
- *MIHT*   *Medieval Ismāʿīlī History and Thought*
- *MQ*   *Mankind Quarterly*
- *MW*   *The Muslim World*
- *NCMH*   *The New Cambridge Medieval History*
- *P&P*   *Past and Present*
- *PPV*   *Pisʾmennye Pamīatniki Vostoka* (in Russian)
- *PRASL*   *Proceedings of the Royal Asiatic Society of London*
- *PTECIS*   *Proceedings of the Third European Conference of Iranian Studies held in Cambridge, 11th to 15th September 1995*
- *RDSO*   *Rivista Degli Studi Orientali*
- *SEPAIPK*   *Soṭsialʾno Ėkonomicheskie i Politicheskie Aspekty Istorii Pamirskikh Knīazhestv* (in Russian)
- *SI*   *Studia Islamica (France)*
- *SIr*   *Studia Iranica*
- *SJA*   *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*
- *SV*   *Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie* (in Russian)
- *VI*   *Voprosy Istorii* (in Russian)
- *YNK*   *Yadnama-ye Nāṣir-i-Khusraw* (in Persian)
- *ZVORAO*   *Zapiski Vostochnogo Otdeleniīā Rossiĭskogo Arkheologicheskogo Obshchestva* (in Russian)
- *SNV*   *Strany ia Narody Vostoka* (in Russian)
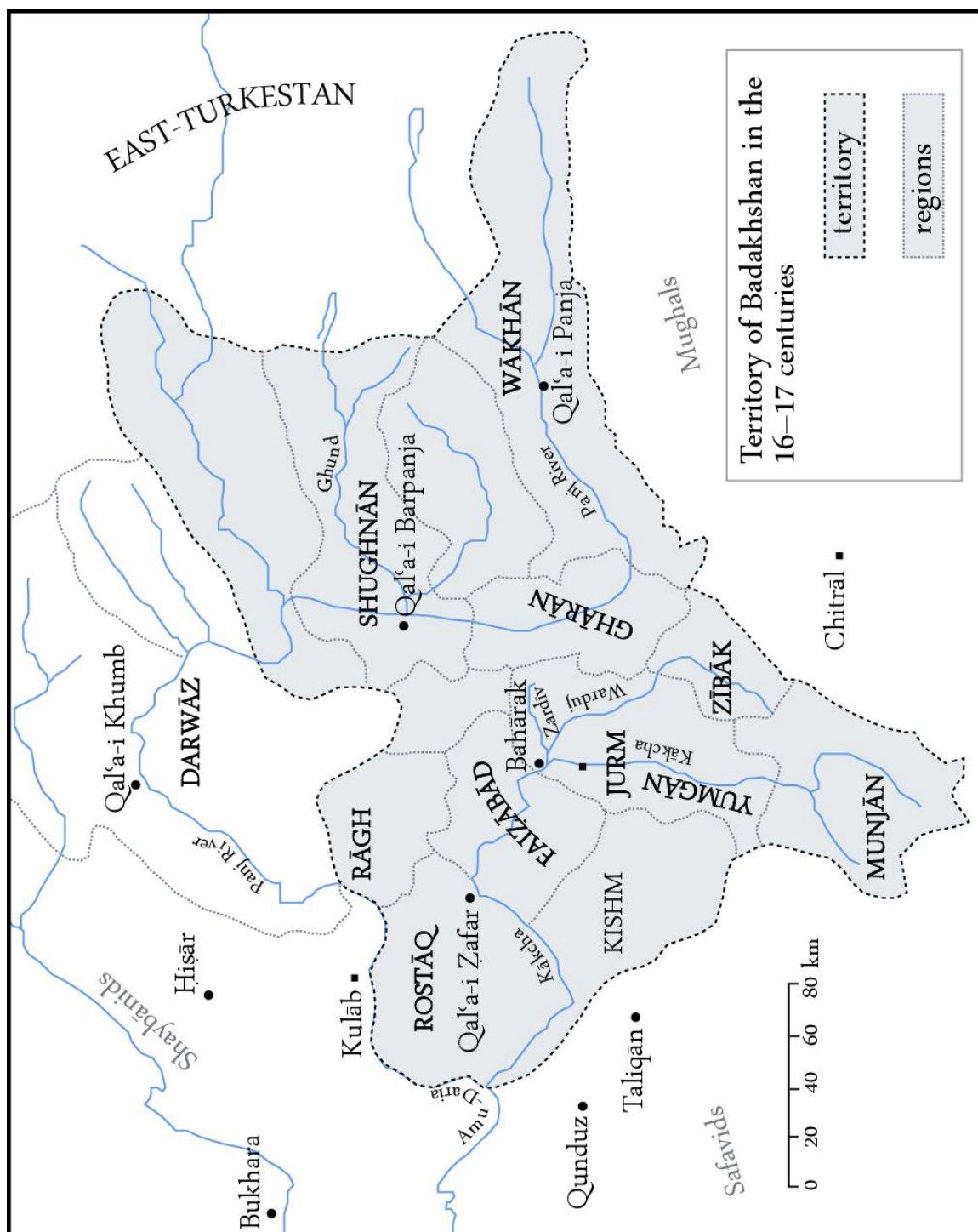
Figure 3: Map of the territory of Badakhshan in the 16th – 17th centuries

Introduction

The appearance of Badakhshan, as a political entity, traces its historical development back to ancient times. The core of this geo-political entity seems to have been based on the affiliation of the various tribes that resided in central Badakhshan and the northern mountainous land-locked regions of the Pamirs long before the arrival of Alexander the Great. The social, political and religious history of Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities, which is the subject of the present research, is intrinsically connected with the reign of various dynasties that invaded and ruled greater Mā warā al-nahr (*Transoxiana)* throughout its history. Medieval writers such as Ibn Khurradādhbih (205-300/820-911) and al-Bīrūnī (362-442/973-1050) refer to the regions of *Bālār-shāh*, *Shikinān-shāh* and *Wakhān-shāh* that stretched to the frontiers of Badakhshan.[1] Although the geographical and political frontiers of medieval and pre-modern greater Mā warā al-nahr are imprecise, the historical sources indicate that Badakhshan and its northern mountain principalities of Shughnān, Wakhān and Darwāz comprised a semi-independent political entity at this period. Their semi-independent status was always "threatened as the region was continuously raided by foreign invaders."[2] However, its inhospitable natural features and the difficulty of access to the region enabled the people to continue to enjoy their semi-independent status until the nineteenth century, particularly the "Great Game" period.

Prior to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it was trade, population movement and military encroachment into these peripheral mountain principalities known as *shāhigarī* and *mīrigarī* (lit. principalities or princedoms) that brought vassalage to greater rulers. By way of example, we should mention the vassalage to the sixteenth century Shaybānid/Tūqāy-Tīmūrid Uzbek dynasty of Mā warā al-nahr and that of the Mughals of India.[3] Located at the crossroads between the Indian, Chinese, Iranian and Central Asian civilisations, Badakhshan absorbed various social and political institutions, which changed with the arrival of religious missionaries, or the advent of new conquering dynasties.

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[1] Quoted in: Minorsky, "Shūghnān," *EI,* vol. 4 (1934), p. 390; For Ibn Khurradādhbih and al-Bīrūnī, see: Hadj-Sadok, "Ibn Khurradādhbih," *EI2,* vol. 3 (1971), pp. 839-840; Boilot, "al-Bīrūnī," *EI2,* vol. 1 (1960), pp. 1236-1238. It should be mentioned that Shughnān and Wakhān formed the northern parts of Badakhshan, while Bālār was a neighbouring region. For more details on Bālār, see: Abaeva, "Granifŝy Drevnego Bolora," *SNV: Pamir,* vol. 16 (1975), pp. 158-168.

[2] Abaeva, *Ocherki Istorii Badakhshana,* Tashkent, 1964, pp. 95-99; Bezhan, "The Enigmatic Authorship of the *Tārikh-i Badakhshān,"* East and West, vol. 58, no. 1/4 (2008), pp. 107-109.

[3] Welsford, *Four Type of Loyalty in Early Modern Central Asia: The Tūqāy-Tīmūrid Take Over of Greater Mā warā al-nahr, 1598-1605*, Leiden: Brill, 2013; Foltz, *Mughal India and Central Asia,* Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Equally, it influenced the political milieu of the region, which had been shaped by a previous dynasty, and then came to be transformed by the advent of a new conqueror. Although Ralph Cobbold (1869-1965) was writing during the "Great Game" period of the nineteenth century, the following remark from his work is quite relevant to be quoted here:

> The scenes that have been enacted on the banks of the mighty Oxus are multifarious. Indeed, one conjures up visions of mighty conquerors who have founded dynasties, which in turn have been vanquished by mightier men; of Alexander and his conquering Greeks, of the Chinese, the Arabs, the Mongols, and now Muscovites. What tales of bloody wars and countless battles could not Oxus unfold had it the gift of speech.[4]

Indeed, the story of the rulers (*mīr*s and *shāh*s) of Shughnān and Wakhān remain untold, as is the case with the *amīr*s of Badakhshan in a broader historical and geo-political context. The history of the local semi-independent rulers, in a sense, reflects the history of Badakhshan, as it provides fragmented supplementary materials related to its dynastic history as well as its relationships with the small, neighbouring, local principalities. Historically, these isolated mountain principalities formed part of central Badakhshan as Christine Noelle says:

> The political history of Badakhshan is dictated by its geographically central, though politically peripheral position in Central Asia. Seen from the point of view of the emperors, Badakhshan was subordinate to their sovereignty, but in the eyes of the provincial historians and their mentors, the rulers, an independent nation, the lineage of whose traditional rule could be traced back to Alexander the Great.[5]

In the 1870s, one of the local Ismāʿīlī *pīr*s of Shughnān Sayyid Farrukh Shāh (d. 1307/1889), the son of Shāh Partāwī, composed a *Mathnawī,* also known as the *Taʾrīkh-i Shāhān-i Shughnān,* which is furnished with a family tree listing the names of the local rulers of Shughnān. This is a unique historical document that traces the dynastic history of the local rulers of Shughnān back to a certain Shāh Khāmūsh (d. 531/1136), who is considered to be the founder of the local dynasty of *shāh*s and *mīr*s (lit. rulers). The task that Sayyid Farrukh Shāh undertook was not an easy one, as he was attempting to reconstruct the family tree of the ruling elite. We may assume that the burden of this task led Sayyid Farrukh Shāh to share with his readers his ruminations, which are also applicable to the study of the history of Badakhshan and its rulers in a broader historical context. In a passage from the *Mathnawī*, Sayyid Farrukh Shāh declares:

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[4] Cobbold, *Innermost Asia: Travel and Sport in the Pamirs*, London, 1900, p. 193.

[5] Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan,* p. 62.

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بـگـویم چـند شـاه نـامـدارش،　　　دیگـرهـارا نمی‌دانم شـمارش.

شـهانی را که دانسـتیم گـفتیم،　　　کدامی چـون ندانسـتیم نهـفـتیم.

Let me name [you] some of its eminent rulers [*shāh*s],
As I do not know the number of all the others.
The names of the *shāh*s that we knew are already given;
Those that are not known [to us] remain hidden.[6]

Although Sayyid Farrukh Shāh's *Mathnawī* is relatively short, it lists the names of several famous *shāh*s of Shughnān. Nonetheless, the exact number of rulers of Shughnān, Wakhān, Darwāz and, most importantly, Badakhshan and their inter-relations in a wider social, political, religious and historical context remains underexplored. Apart from this, it raises many questions that require rigorous scholarly studies and research. This task, however, must face another challenge, namely the scarcity of reliable sources.

An interesting passage quoted by Vladimir Bartol'd (1869-1930), a prominent Russian Orientalist of the last century, writing on the authority of Muḥammad Ḥaydar Dughlāt (d. 958/1551), opens another dimension of our discussion, locating it in sixteenth century Badakhshan:

> The daughter of the last ruler of Badakhshan is credited by Muḥammad Ḥaydar with the statement that her ancestors had ruled Badakhshan for 3000 years.[7]

This statement seems very dubious, as Muḥammad Ḥaydar fails to provide any historical evidence whatsoever to support this argument (Part 2, Chapters 2 and 3, pp. 42-97). Almost two and a half centuries prior to the completion of the *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī*, the famous Venetian traveller Marco Polo (651-724/1254-1324) wrote that the rulers of Badakhshan claimed descent from Alexander the Great.[8] The mythical nature of this claim transcends the geographical boundaries of Badakhshan and is widely narrated by the local inhabitants of Shughnān, Wakhān, Darwāz, Chitrāl, Qarātegin and other regions in the immediate proximity.

It is highly likely that these stories originated in the pre-Islamic period and were used to legitimise the rule of the *amīr*s or *shāh*s of various local principalities. Such a practice seems to have been prevalent in the region up to the sixteenth century. On the one hand,

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[6] Abibov, *Az Taʾrikhi Adabieti Tojik dar Badakhshon,* Dushanbe, 1971, p. 111. The *Mathnawī* is also known as *Taʾrīkh-i Shāhān-i Shughnān.* See: Elchibekov, "Novye Materialy po Istorii Shugnana," *IAN Tadzhikskoĭ SSR,* no. 2 (72), 1973, p. 3.

[7] Dughlāt, Muḥammad Ḥaydar, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī,* Ghafārī-Fard, (ed.)., Tehran, 1383/2004-05, pp. 276 and 329; Bartol'd, "Badakhshan," in *Sochineniïā,* vol. III: *Raboty po Istoricheskoĭ Geografii,* Moscow, 1965, p. 345.

[8] Polo, *Travels of Marco Polo,* New York, 1858, pp. 203-207.

it reflects the influence of pre-Islamic Hellenistic culture on the formation of the socio-political institutions in the region while, on the other hand, it is a fact that people did trace their historical roots back to ancient times. The historical trade routes that passed through the region spread such stories readily. With the passage of time, these legends were dispersed and started to be transmitted from one generation to the next. Such stories also remained a core concern for many travellers, who tried to find proof for such claims in the local historical sources as well as in the genealogical and biographical dictionaries of the local rulers, as is the case for the rulers of Badakhshan.[9] Although these oral stories are vastly overemphasised, they provide a useful tool for understanding the structural authentication and justification of the reigns of both local and foreign rulers, a matter which I shall discuss elsewhere in this thesis.

The spread of any religion to a newly conquered land was invariably connected with a military takeover, driven by political, religious and ideological proclivities. The ruler, as a political leader, was meant to be the main actor in establishing a dynastic rule and also of disseminating the rule of religious law – *sharīʿa*. In medieval and pre-modern Islamic history, the ruler, *sulṭān* and/or *caliph*, was referred to as "the shadow of God on earth."[10] It was the duty of a ruler to decide which religious teachings were to be honoured and which condemned. Therefore, the dictum – "people are of their kings' religion"[11] – remained the *sine qua non* in medieval and pre-modern Islamic societies, as politics and religion were inseparable aspects of social cohesion. Therefore, to understand the religious and political milieu of Badakhshan from the sixteenth century onwards, it is necessary to discuss the political history of the region and its main actors from the eleventh century in order to analyse the events in the broader political and religious context. By examining the medieval and modern sources on the history of Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities, we can clearly see the convergences and contradictions that

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[9] Wood, *Journey to the Source of the River Oxus,* Karachi, 1976, pp. 244-246; Abaeva, *Ocherki Istorii Badakhshana,* 1964, pp. 99-101.

[10] Sayyid Farrukh Shāh, *Taʾrīkh-i shāhāni Shughnān,* f. 2a.

<div dir="rtl">

که "السُّلطان ظل الله فى الارض".　　به قول آن رسول حق کم عرض،

که لطف اوست حل جمله مشکل.　　درا در سـایـۀ سـلـطان عـادل،

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Let me allude to a saying of the true messenger,　That "the Sulṭān is the Shadow of God on Earth."
Come under the shadow of the just ruler,　As his kindness is the source of solving all problems.

[11] Dughlāt, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī: A History of the Khans of Moghulistan*, Thackston, (English tr.)., Harvard University Press, 1996, p. 144.

may arise when discussing the genealogy of the political rulers and religious leaders; more detailed discussion will be furnished below.

It must be noted that, for the local population, the value of local oral history almost always prevailed over the written sources, which was simply due to the fact that most of these sources were unavailable to the general population until the modern period. In the light of this, the present thesis – *The Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan: History, Politics and Religion from 1500 to 1750* – seeks to fill the gap in our understanding of the religious, political and cultural context of Badakhshan from the sixteenth to the first half of the eighteenth century. Although we are far from being able to reconstruct a detailed picture of the dynastic history of Badakhshan and its northern Pamir principalities, the present study will focus on the shifting political and ideological stances of the rulers and the impact of politics on religion, in general, and on the tradition of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, known as the *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir*, in a broader historical and geographic context, in particular.

The Importance of Studying Badakhshan

The history, politics and culture of Badakhshan is an unstudied area in the fields of Islamic Studies and Central Asian Studies as well as the study of Persianate societies. Indeed, Badakhshan and Pamir as "a sort of cultural palimpsest, a recipient of a complex series of influences"[12] remains like an unsolved jigsaw puzzle. The influences – whether cultural, religious or political, that shaped the social fabric of these remote mountain societies from ancient times – have only ever been studied in a cursory or superficial manner. The medieval and early pre-modern history of Badakhshan, which has not been studied either chronologically or thematically, is shrouded in mystery. The question of the significance of studying Badakhshan in historical and contemporary perspectives remains without a satisfactory answer apart from the obvious, that the history of any society must be worth studying of itself. The present research, therefore, is an attempt to fill this gap that has been so long neglected.

The significance of this study lies in the cultural heritage of Badakhshan, whether oral or written, produced, copied and preserved by the local population. Although the study of the political history of Badakhshan is intrinsically connected with the rise and fall of dynasties elsewhere in Central Asia, Iran and India, its cultural and religious history has close links with Iran, expressed through the medium of the Persian language. Persian, the

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[12] Mock, "Shrine Traditions of Wakhan Afghanistan," *Journal of Persianate Studies,* vol. 4 (2011), pp. 117-118.

local *lingua franca*, was the language used to codify the cultural, poetic and oral historical traditions.[13] The best examples of didactic and homiletic poems written in Badakhshan in Persian are those of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, better known in the region as Pīr Shāh Nāṣir or Pīr Sayyid Nāṣir. For Ismāʿīlī writers his philosophical works became the wellspring of ideas. Hence, future poets and local Ismāʿīlī writers like Sayyid Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī (second half of the fifteenth century), Shāh Ziyāʾī-i Shughnānī, Naẓmī-i Shughnānī (sixteenth-seventeenth century), Mubārak-i Wakhānī (nineteenth-twentieth century), one of the most prolific Ismāʿīlī writer from Badakhshan, and many others composed their works either in style of Nāṣir or in response to his poetic and philosophical writings.[14] Equally, one can mention the name of many writers and poets from Badakhshan and its adjacent region. For example, we should mention the contribution of the famous seventeenth century Qādirī Ṣūfī and writer, Mullā Shāh Badakhshī (d. 1072/1661) who was born in the region of Rustāq, north-west of Fayżābād.

I should mention at the outset that the main focus of this thesis is the study of history, politics and religion in Badakhshan with special reference to the Ismāʿīlī communities and their relationships with other religious confessions. During the course of my work I shall also attempt to bring other aspects of the study of Badakhshan to the attention of scholars. Likewise, I shall make an attempt to divide the political history of Badakhshan into chronological periods, which so far has not been done.

The Organisation and Structure of the Thesis

> Nothing is particularly hard if you divide it into small parts.
> Henry Ford[15]

The organisation and structure of this research work echoes the dictum: "thinking is a struggle for order and at the same time comprehensiveness."[16] This sentiment is shared by graduate students who embark upon writing up a Ph.D. thesis. Planning a thesis from a blank canvas requires creative writing, logical reconstruction and the coherent presentation of historical events in line with a multitude of other considerations.[17] Hence, in order to sift a way through the debris of historical, geographical, religious, doctrinal,

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[13] Gross, "Introduction," in *JPS,* vol. 4 (2011), pp. 109-111.

[14] For more details on poets and writers from Badakhshan, see: Habibov, *Ganji Badakhshon*, Dushanbe, 1972; Abibov, *Az Taʾrikhi Adabieti Tojik dar Badakhshon*, Dushanbe, 1971; Badakhshī, *Armughān-i Badakhshān*, Bezhan, (ed.)., Tehran, 2007.

[15] Quoted in: Dunleavy, *Authoring a Ph.D.,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 76.

[16] Mills, *The Sociological Imagination,* Oxford, 2000, p. 223. Also quoted in: Dunleavy, *Authoring a PhD,* p. 53.

[17] For more details, see: Dunleavy, *Authoring a Ph.D.,* Palgrave, 2003.

numismatic, ethnographic and epigraphic data presented in this thesis, I have divided it into three interrelated parts, each of which comprises of a set of chapter(s), to make it accessible and readable.

Part One, *The Geography and People of Badakhshan*, includes Chapter 1, which describes the geography of the region and its ethnic composition. It seeks to discuss the complexity of the geographical and political borders through the prism of the nineteenth century "Great Game" applying it to the examination of medieval and pre-modern Islamic societies. Thus, it contextualises the overall presentation and conceptualises the interrelations between geography, politics and religion.

Part Two is entitled *The Political History of Badakhshan*; it comprises Chapters 2, 3 and 4. Chapter 2, *The Mīrs* and *Shāhs of Badakhshan: the Politics of Rule*, explores the origin and rule of the local dynasty of *mīr*s and *shāh*s of Badakhshan. It will explore the reigns of the local *mīr*s and *shāh*s and seek to find the link between the rulers from the time of Nāṣir-i Khusraw (second half of the eleventh century) to the execution of the last local ruler of Badakhshan by the Tīmūrids in the second half of the fifteenth century. An attempt will be made to give the name and when possible the genealogy of local rulers during this period. Given the fragmentary nature of the available information, the discussion in this chapter will be more speculative than conclusive. Chapter 3, *The Political History of Badakhshan from 1500 to 1658*, discusses the transference of political control over the region from the local rulers to the invading powers, such as the Tīmūrids, the Shaybānids and later on the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids. I have made an attempt to demonstrate the relationship between the last Tīmūrids and Mughals, their struggle to retain control over Mā warā al-nahr, and the place of Badakhshan in the broader context of political discourse in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The chapter also explores and analyses the role and influence of the Mughal Emperors on the religious and political life of Badakhshan. Chapter 4, *The Rule of the Yāribeg Khānid Dynasty in Badakhshan*, is a new chapter in the history of the region. It charts the rise of Mīr Yāribeg Khān, and the establishment in power of the Yāribeg Khānid (or Yārid) dynasty that brought relative peace to the region. Despite the fact that the descendants of Mīr Yāribeg Khān ruled Badakhshan for over two centuries, our discussion ends with the succession disputes that became the cause of disorder and internal conflict in the region, particularly with the accession to power of Mīrzā Nabāt who ruled the region from 1149/1737 to 1160/1748.

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Part Three, *Ismāʿīlism in Badakhshan*, is devoted to the study of the religious composition of the region and comprises Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8. Chapter 5, *The Daʿwat-i Nāṣir: the Ismāʿīlī Mission in Badakhshan*, examines the spread of Ismāʿīlī teaching in Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities. This chapter also investigates the activity of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* in the region and the adjoining territories. It will explore the limits of myth and legend and the transition to historical presentation through the figure of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, who is considered the founder of the local Ismāʿīlī communities. In line with the historical representation, this chapter will define such concepts as the *daʿwat-i Nāṣir* and the *dīn-i panjtanī*, two distinctive terms used by the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan to identify their religious persuasion and later their allegiance to the Ismāʿīlī cause. Chapter 6, *Schism and its Effect on the Daʿwat-i Nāṣir*, the longest chapter in this research work, investigates the continuation of the Ismāʿīlī tradition in the post-Alamūt period, particularly after the split between the Muḥammad-Shāhīs and the Qāsim-Shāhīs, which saw the local Ismāʿīlīs choosing to follow the line of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams. The theme of this chapter is to explore and investigate the transition from one branch of Nizārī Ismāʿīlism, namely the Nizārī Muḥammad-Shāhī line, to another, the Nizārī Qāsim-Shāhī line of Imams. Chapter 7, *The Role of Pīrs: Religious Authority among the Ismāʿīlīs of the Pamir*, delves into the most complex theme of the activity of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* in Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities. The discussion revolves around elaborating on the notion of the *pīr* and the institution of *pīrship* among the Badakhshani Ismāʿīlīs. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the arrival of the four *darvīshe*s and place them in a proper or approximate historical epoch. I shall concentrate on the figure of Shāh Khāmūsh and his arrival in Shughnān. This Chapter will also explore the activity of ancillary figures in the retinues of *pīr*s, such as *hādī*, *rāhī* and *khalīfa* who were not necessarily high-ranking dignitaries in the local Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* but who played a crucial role in the preservation of the Ismāʿīlī tradition. I shall therefore make an attempt to show the prevalence with which these dignitaries affiliated either to the Muḥammad-Shāhī or Qāsim-Shāhī line of Nizārī Ismāʿīlism. However, despite these differences in adherence, these figures were actively engaged in the spread of their creed in the local context. Chapter 8, which is the last chapter in the thesis, will discuss the tradition of *Charāgh-rawshan*. The focus of this chapter is the text of *Charāgh-nāma*, which will be deconstructed and a detailed analysis on the text will be given. Although the *Charāgh-rawshan* is an Ismāʿīlī tradition, the text of the *Charāgh-nāma* clearly demonstrates the relationship between the Ismāʿīlīs, Ṣūfīs and the Twelver Shīʿīs in Badakhshan. The terminological, chronological and doctrinal elements of the text of the *Charāgh-nāma*

cannot be explained without recourse to the general historical background to these relations, their convergences and contradictions. Equally, the interrelation of the Ismāʿīlī, Twelver Shīʿa and Ṣūfī movements within the context of greater Badakhshan requires a historical explanation within the wider context of Shīʿa and Ṣūfī studies. I shall thus explore and analyse the general Islamic origin of the relevant ritual, as conveyed through verses from the *Qurʾān.* The succeeding sections will probe the amalgamation of Ṣūfī texts with the text of the *Charāgh-nāma.* They will also explore the influence of Twelver Shīʿism on this particular text and related ritual practice. This section will conclude with an attempt to differentiate between the Ismāʿīlī and non-Ismāʿīlī elements, which sometimes overlap, within the text of the *Charāgh-nāma.*

The *Afterword* summarises some of the findings of this study. I shall also pose some questions for future studies of the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan both from the historical and from contemporary perspectives.

Sources and Studies

The history of Badakhshan and its contiguous areas has not been well studied either in Western or Russian academic institutions. This is also true for the study of the various interpretative communities, their interrelations and missionary activities in the region in both medieval and pre-modern times. The complexities of undertaking such a study stem from the sources available, which are often both contradictory in nature and fragmentary. Insofar as specific historical sources are lacking in relation to the history of Badakhshan, in general, and the Ismāʿīlī community, in particular, prior to the seventeenth century, it is impossible to do anything more than to use the court histories of the period, in which Badakhshan figures peripherally, to analyse the political and religious setting of the region. Therefore, it must be emphasised that the sources I have drawn on are various in nature, "whose intention was not primarily historical but which, nevertheless, contain historical information."[18]

The fragmentary nature of available local historical sources has directed me to use peripheral materials in order to construct a meaningful, coherent narrative. This is only possible by extracting relevant useful sections from the peripheral sources and analysing the information they contain about the links between Badakhshan and the neighbouring

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[18] Virani, *The Ismāʿīlīs in the Middle Ages,* Oxford, 2007, p. 15.

dynasties within a wider historical perspective. This in turn caused the horizons of my research to widen, perhaps in line with Richard Cobb's statement:

> More and more, I enjoyed the excitement of research and the acquisition of material, often on quite peripheral subjects. I allowed myself to be deflected down unexpected channels, by the chance of the discovery of a bulky dossier: it might be the love letter of a guillotiné, or the account-books and samples of a commercial traveller in cotton, or an eyewitness account of the September Massacres...[19]

The present research, therefore, attempts to describe, analyse and, where possible, reconstruct the political and religious history of Badakhshan on the basis of a variety of materials. The sources utilised in this thesis fall into several categories:

(i.)   Historical sources produced in Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities.

(ii.)   General historical chronicles from Central Asia, Iran and Mughal India.

(iii.) Nizārī Ismāʿīlī sources.

The obscurity of the period under study requires the use of any available source that might yield meaningful information. The essential aspect of any scholarly research obviously emerges when we pose questions pertaining to the sources and their authenticity, the methodologies of their analysis and the period of their composition. Therefore, in systematically analysing and presenting our findings related to a particular epoch we attempt either "to remove, if not the problem itself, then its aggravating characteristics" such as "confusion, displacement and surprise."[20]

i. *Historical Sources Produced in Badakhshan and the Pamir Principalities*

Local history writing is a conscious or unconscious reaction to the centralised authority of its time. The inclination to centralise various areas under the rule of a powerful dynasty fostered the writing down of local history.[21] In a sense, it was due to the fact that local rulers attempted to replicate the court traditions of the great empires in their vicinity. Local historians did not compose their work for these mightier rulers; rather the local semi-independent sovereigns were the ones who seem to have commissioned such endeavours. The appearance and development of the writing down of local history in Badakhshan can be dated to the mid-seventeenth century. The reason for the absence of an earlier local history tradition is, evidently, two-fold: first of all, the region was far from

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[19] Cobb, *Second Identity: Essays on France and French History,* Oxford, 1969, p. 15.

[20] Botton, *Consolations of Philosophy,* London, 2000, pp. 58-59.

[21] Lambton, "Persian Local Histories: The Tradition behind Them and the Assumptions of their Authors," in Ammoreti, and Rostagno, (eds.)., *Yād-nāma in Memoria di Allessandro Bausani,* vol. 1: *Islamistica,* Rome, 1991, pp. 227-238.

the urban centres of learning and, secondly, the religious proclivity of the majority of the mountain-dwellers was non-Sunnī. Hence, they tended to avoid publicity. Nonetheless, we cannot ignore the possibility that earlier sources might have been destroyed by conquering dynasties such as the Tīmūrids, Shaybānids or Mughals of India (Chapters 2, 3 and 4, pp. 43-117).

It is regrettable that the first local history, known as the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* (The History of Badakhshan), does not appear to have survived. This work seems to have been commissioned by Mīr Yāribeg Khān after his return from India at some point in (or after) 1099/1688. The author, according to Shāh ʿAbdullāh Badakhshī (d. 1359/1940), was a certain Muḥammad Ḥusayn (ca. first half of the eighteenth century), originally from Badakhshan, who served as a scribe and calligrapher at the court of Mīr Yāribeg Khān. Shāh ʿAbdullāh Badakhshī would appear to be the only author from the last century to have made use of this manuscript in his writings. He quoted many passages from Muḥammad Ḥusayn's work in his *Armughān-i Badakhshān* (A Souvenir of Badakhshan), which he completed at some point in the 1940s. For instance, in one passage of the *Armughān-i Badakhshān* Shāh ʿAbdullāh remarks:

> The book [i.e. *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*] was written in the time of, and at the order of Mīr Yāribeg Khān by the scholar and famous calligrapher and also the secretary of the Mīr, Muḥammad Ḥusayn of Badakhshan, in 542 pages. The manuscript copy by the author is now accessible.[22]

The second local history, also entitled *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*, is believed to have been composed by a certain Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī (d. first half of the nineteenth century). Sangmuḥammad, presumably the principal author of this local history, seems to have arrived to Badakhshan in 1210/1796.[23] His title, Mīrzā, would suggest that he was a scribe at the court of a local ruler Muḥammad Shāh (r. 1206-1223/1792-1808). A number of Soviet scholars are of the opinion that Sangmuḥammad completed the first section of the book in 1223/1808, sixteen years after the accession of Muḥammad Shāh to the throne of Badakhshan. Later, Fażlʿalībek Surkhafsar, the second author, supplemented the existing work of Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad, completing it in 1907. This is confirmed by Fażlʿalībek himself:

> In this way, from the beginning to the end, the [rule] of the Mīrs of Badakhshan has been included in this book as "A Supplement to the History of Badakhshān," in the year 1325

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[22] Badakhshī, *Armughān-i Badakhshān,* Bezhan, (ed.)., Tehran, 2007, p. 25; Bezhan, "The Enigmatic Authorship of *Tārikh-i Badakhshān,*" *E&W*, vol. 58 (2008), p. 108.

[23] Habibov, *Ganji Badakhshon*, Dushanbe, 1972, pp. 177-178.

A.H/1907 CE by the hand of Mīrzā Fażlʿalībek Ḥājī Surkhafsar. [This book] was originally authored by Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad who completed it until a certain period after which he left it, and I, the most humble servant and the second author – Mīrzā Fażlʿalībek Ḥājī Surkhafsar – within the reasonable limits of my talentless capability, resumed his writing from the place where the first author stopped. In the light of this, I completed his writing with my 'Supplement' where I narrate the events of the past 121 years,[24] which I collected from elderly and trustworthy people who witnessed, experienced and heard about them.[25]

A close examination of Shāh ʿAbdullāh Badakhshī's writings raises questions about the authorship of the second *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*, which seems to have been attributed to Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad, first by Fażlʿalībek Surkhafsar and later by Aleksandr Boldyrev (1909-1993), a Soviet scholar who published it twice.[26] Shāh ʿAbdullāh Badakhshī and Faridullāh Bezhan are of the opinion that this work was composed by a certain Muḥammad Riżā, who served as a scribe – Mīrzā – at the court of Mīr Muḥammad Shāh b. Sulṭān Shāh from 1206/1792 to 1223/1808.[27]

A third book, with the same title – *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* – was composed by Muḥabbatshāh Qurbānzāda (d. 1373/1953) and Shāh Fiṭūr Muḥabbatshāhzāda (d. 1379/1959) at some point in the 1920s. Although the title of this book is identical to that of the two previous works, the majority of its narrative is based on the local oral tradition from the northern mountain principalities of the Pamirs. Since the book is effectively a history of Shughnān, its title seems somewhat misleading. Nonetheless, the authors do also sporadically narrate events from the history of Badakhshan when these are germane.

In addition to these works, we should also mention the *Taʾrīkh-i Mulk-i Shughnān* (The History of the Land of Shughnān) composed by Sayyid Ḥaydar Shāh (d. 1355/1936), son of Mubārak Shāh. This work was written at some point in 1330/1912 and was translated into Russian by Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Semenov (d. 1378/1958), a prominent Russian Orientalist and one of the authorities on the history and teachings of Central Asian Ismāʿīlīs, who published it in Tashkent in 1334/1916. The work concerns the history of Shughnān, a region where the majority of Ismāʿīlīs reside in modern time.

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[24] It is evident that Fażlʿalībek Surkhafsar's "Supplement" only narrates the events relating to 87 years, not 121, since the advent of both Tsarist Russia and the British brought an end to the rule of the local dynasties, including the Yārids or Yāribeg Khānids.

[25] Badakhshī, and Surkhafsar, *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* Moscow, 1997, ff. 113b-114a, (Russian tr.), pp. 96-97.

[26] In 1959 Aleksandr Boldyrev introduced and published the facsimile of the manuscript. In 1997, a second edition of the facsimile of the manuscript along with the Russian translation, an extensive introduction and supplementary notes, was posthumously published by St. Petersburg's Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. This work seems to have been prepared by Aleksandr Boldyrev as well.

[27] For more details, see: Badakhshī, *Armughān-i Badakhshān,* Tehran, 2007; Bezhan, "The Enigmatic Authorship of *Tārikh-i Badakhshān,*" *E&W*, vol. 58 (2008), pp. 107-122.

Another source I have consulted in this research work is the *Taʾrīkh-i Shāhān-i Shughnān* (The History of the Kings of Shughnān), also known as a *Mathnawī*, of Pīr Sayyid Farrukh Shāh b. Shāh Partāwī. This short *Mathnawī* narrates the story of the origin of the local Mīrs of Shughnān from the time of Sayyid Mīr Ḥasan Shāh, better known as Sayyid Shāh Khāmūsh (d. 531/1137), to Mīr Yūsuf ʿAlīkhān (r. 1287-1300/1871-1883).

The *Rāhnamā-i Qaṭaghan va Badakhshān* (*A Guide to Qaṭaghan and Badakhshān*) by Burhān al-Dīn Kushkekī is a significant source for the history of Badakhshan and its neighbouring principalities. Although this work is considered to be a geographical treatise, it does also provide *en passant* information about the history, economy, ethnography and flora and fauna of greater Badakhshan. The materials contained in this work, according to Aleksandr Semenov, have been "extracted from the description of the visits by Muḥammad Nādir Khān (1883-1933), the then military minister [of Afghanistan], in 1301/1923, and by Mawlānā Burhān al-Dīn Khān Kushkekī."[28] The work was translated into Russian and published in 1345/1926 by Aleksandr Semenov in Tashkent. The Russian translation contains 34 maps and various supplementary charts.

In addition to the sources mentioned above, I should also draw attention to the *Dānishnāma-i jahān* (Encyclopaedia of the World) by Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad Amīrān-i Iṣfahānī as well as his *Nujūm* (Astrology), which provide significant information on the history of Badakhshan. Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad Iṣfahānī seems to have been involved in Ismāʿīlī missionary activity in Badakhshan at some point in the second half of the fifteenth and first half of the sixteenth centuries. His works deserve a separate study, which might shed new light on the religious history of the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan.

ii. *General Historical Chronicles from Central Asia, Iran and Mughal India*

A wide range of historical sources from Central Asia, Iran and Mughal India have been consulted in preparing this thesis in order to discuss and examine the political and religious history of Badakhshan. The significance of these sources is two-fold: first of all, for considering the reasons why the powerful neighbouring dynasties from Central Asia and Iran attempted to invade this remote region; and, secondly, for comparing the local oral narrative stories with wider historical events in order to establish a chronological framework for my research.

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[28] Semenov, "Introduction," in Kushkekī, *Kataqan i Badakhshan: Danny'e po Geografii Strany, Estestvenno-Istoricheskim Usloviīu, Naseleniīu, Ekonomike i Putīaam Soobshcheniīa,* Tashkent, 1926, p. x.

Sources such as the *Taʾrīkh-i Bayhaqī* (The History of Bayhaqī) by Khwāja Abū al-Fażl Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn Bayhaqī (384-469/995-1077), the *Taʾrīkh-i jahānkushāy* (The History of World Conqueror) by ʿAlā al-Dīn ʿAṭā-Malik Juwaynī (623-681/1226-1283) and the *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh* (Compendium of Chronicles) by Rashīd al-Dīn Fażl Allāh (645-718/1247-1318) have been consulted in order to observe the influence of Sāmānid, Ghaznavid and Mongol rule on the region. The same is applicable to the use of the *Zubdat al-tawārīkh* by Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū (d. 833/1430) and other similar sources, which present fragmentary evidence about the punitive expeditions carried out by the Tīmūrids and their predecessors in the region. These sources also yield fragmentary information about local rulers.

Information about the political history of Badakhshan can be gleaned from the *Bābur-nāma* of Ẓahir al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur (888-937/1530-1483) and the *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī* by Muḥammad Ḥaydar Dughlāt (905-958/1499-1551). These historical and autobiographical sources provide important information about the geography, politics and religious milieu of Badakhshan. The *Bābur-nāma* probes the impact of the last Tīmūrids on Badakhshan, particularly the role of Bābur *pādshāh* and his son Humāyūn (d. 963/1556). Likewise, it provides background information about the rule of Humāyūn and the rise to power in Badakhshan of Sulaymān Mīrzā, the son of Mīrzā Khān known as Sulṭān Uways Mīrzā.

The *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī*, composed in Kashmīr between 948 and 952/1541 and 1545, adds significant details to the history of Badakhshan. Although the main theme of Muḥammad Ḥaydar's work, like that of the *Bābur-nāma*, is the history of the Chagatai family from the mid-fourteenth to the first half of the sixteenth centuries, he provides a relatively detailed description of the geography and political history of Badakhshan. The gist of his narration is based on his own observations and involvement in the military and administrative work of the Mughal court.

During his long reign as the third Mughal ruler, Akbar (963-1014/1556-1605) commissioned his vizier Abū al-Fażl ʿĀlamī to write a history of his reign. Abū al-Fażl's composition is known as the *Akbar-nāma*.[29] It was written between 997 and 1010/1589-1601 and furnishes clear proof that the annals of Akbar's time were arranged chronologically, since Abū al-Fażl ʿĀlamī (as a court dignitary during the reign of Akbar *pādshāh*) had access to the original sources. Although the *Akbar-nāma* chronicles the reign of the Emperor Akbar, it was customary for such dynastic histories to include mention of the reigns of

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[29] The *Akbar-nāma* is also known as *Taʾrīkh-i Akbarī, Taʾrīkh-i Akbar Shāhī* and *ʿAyn-i Akbarī*. On the death of Abū al-Fażl ʿĀlamī in 1011/1602, the last years of Akbar's rule (1010-13/1602-04) were chronicled under the title *Takmīla-i Akbar-nāma* (*Addenda to the Akbar-nāma*). Akhmedov, *Istoriko-geograficheskaĭa Literatura,* Tashkent, 1983, pp. 54-57.

previous rulers. Because Badakhshan was controlled by Sulaymān Mīrzā, a cousin of Bābur *pādshāh*, Abū al-Fażl complemented his narrative by providing significant information about Sulaymān Mīrzā and his relationships with the Mughal court as well as his alliances or rivalries with the other rulers in the region, such as the Shaybānids and Safavids.

The *Akbar-nāma* is followed by the *Muntakhab al-tawārīkh* of Abū al-Qādir ibn Mulūk Shāh, better known as al-Badāonī (946-1023/1540-1615). This work adds significant information on the political history of Badakhshan from the second half of the fifteenth to the first half of the seventeenth centuries. Since al-Badāonī's work was a private endeavour, his composition reflects a different approach to representing the rule of Akbar and the events surrounding the history of Badakhshan.

The *Aḥsan al-tawārīkh* by Ḥasan Bek Rūmlū, composed between 980 and 985/1572-1577, is a pro-Safavid historical chronicle. It discusses the alliance between Bābur and the Safavid rulers, particularly with Shāh Ismāʿīl I (r. 907-930/1502-1524), and their mutual military campaign against Mā warā al-nahr. The *Aḥsan al-tawārīkh* and the *Taʾrīkh-i ʿālamārā-i ʿAbbāsī* (The History of the World-Adorning Abbās) by Iskandar Bek Munshī narrate similar stories, but from the perspective of the Safavid court. Both these sources add significant details about the internecine wars between the Shaybānids and Safavids and the rivalry between the two powers to conquer Badakhshan in the second half of the sixteenth century. Another source which yields useful information on the history of Badakhshan, though from a Shaybānid perspective, is the *Sharaf nāma-i shāhī* (The Book of Royal Glory). This work is also known as the *ʿAbdullāh-nāma*, on account of its dedication to the Shaybānid ruler, ʿAbdullāh Khān (d. 997/1598). Its author is Mīr Muḥammad al-Bukhārī, better known as Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanish, who composed this monumental work between 992 and 998/1584-1590. His endeavour was, however, never completed, as Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanish seems to have died at some point around 998-999/1590-1591. The *Sharaf nāma-i shāhī* follows the traditional format used by previous authors, but nonetheless, manages to incorporate some unique materials concerning the invasion of Badakhshan by ʿAbdullāh Khān and the execution of Ibrāhīm Mīrzā, son of Sulaymān Mīrzā.

Some scattered information on the political history of Badakhshan can be gleaned from the *Taʾrīkh-i Muqīm Khānī* by Muḥammad Yūsuf b. Hāji Baqā, better known as Muḥammad Munshī. The *Taʾrīkh-i Muqīm Khānī* narrates the history of Bukhara and Balkh from the rise of the Ashtarkhānids or Tūqāy-Tīmūrids in 1009/1601 to the demise of Subḥān Qulī Khān in 1114/1702. It provides fragmentary information about the relationships between the

rulers of Badakhshan and Balkh. Although the * Taʾrīkh-i Muqīm Khānī* is chiefly concerned with the history of Bukhara and Balkh, it does provide some important information on the relationship between Mīr Yāribeg Khān and Muḥammad Bī *aṭāliq*, who was the leader of the Qaṭaghan Uzbek tribe.

I must emphasise that the medieval and pre-modern authors consulted in the preparation of this thesis are all more concerned with the construction of a meaningful narrative than in recording the significant 'facts' of history. This approach is reflected in the fact that victorious rulers commissioned most of these sources and the authors had little option but to please their patrons. Equally, the pecuniary reward offered by such a victorious ruler was the one of the principal sources of livelihood for court scholars, writers and scribes.

iii. *Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Sources*

In an article entitled *"Ismāʿīlīs and Niʿmatullāhis"* and published in 1975, Pourjavady and Wilson refer to Badakhshan as a "remote 'museum' of Ismāʿīlism" as well as the "Ismāʿīlī library in Badakhshan."[30] The same sentiment is shared by earlier Tsarist Russian Orientalists, particularly Ivan Zarubin (1887-1964) and Aleksandr Semenov, who obtained a number of manuscripts from Badakhshan in 1332/1914 and 1336/1918 respectively. In the 1950s and 60s, a group of Soviet scholars under the supervision of Andreĭ Bertel's (d. 1416/1995) and Mamadvafo Baqoev (d. 1392/1972) were in charge of collecting sources from Soviet Badakhshan (1959-1963). Earlier than that, Vladimir Ivanow (d. 1390/1970), the pioneer of modern Ismāʿīlī studies, obtained several manuscripts from Afghan Badakhshan but found it extremely difficult to decipher the local handwriting, uttering such judgements about the scribe or copyist as: "Horrible! The Copyist was an idiot."[31] Despite the fact that the handwriting of the Badakhshani copyists was "horrible," Ivanow nonetheless regarded these sources as more reliable than those from a Sunnī milieu, from which the Ismāʿīlī elements were likely to have been expunged. Thus, in a letter to Henry Corbin (d. 1398/1978) dated 29 July 1953, the doyen of modern Ismāʿīlī studies states: "I therefore would trust only those copies which come directly from Badakhshan."[32] I should stress that most of the Ismāʿīlī sources found in Badakhshan are undated, as is evident

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[30] Pourjavady, and Wilson, "Ismāʿīlīs and Niʿmatullāhis," *Studia Islamica,* no. 41 (1975), p. 116.

[31] Hirātī, *Taṣnīfāt-i Khayrkhwāh Hirātī*, Ivanow, (ed.)., Tehran, 1961; Virani, *The Ismāʿīlīs in the Middle Ages*, p. 15.

[32] Schmidtke, *Correspondence Corbin-Ivanow,* Paris, 1999, p. 95.

from the colophons of some of the manuscripts where the copyist usually confirms that they have been copied from "an old and original manuscript with much difficulty."[33]

The early Ismāʿīlī sources I consulted for this research are those associated with Nāṣir-i Khusraw. The Ismāʿīlī tradition of the region is closely associated with his name and activity. His philosophical treatises as well as those attributed to him are listed in the bibliography.

Apart from works by Nāṣir-i Khusraw, I have also used the following material: the *Hidāyat al-muʾminīn al-ṭālibīn* (Guidance for Seeking Believers) by Muḥammad b. Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn Fidāʾī Khurāsānī (d. 1342/1923), the *Khitābāt-i ʿālīya* (The Book of Supreme Admonitions) by Pīr Shihāb al-Dīn Shāh al-Ḥusaynī (d. 1302/1884), the *Irshād al-ṭālibīn fī ẕikr aʾimmat al-Ismāʿīlīya* (Guidance for Seekers on the Recollection of Ismāʿīlī Imams) likely to be by the sixteenth century writer Muḥibb al-Dīn Qundūzī, and the Anonymous *Risāla-i sharḥ al-marātib* (Epistle on the Explanation of the Ranks). I should also mention the *Haft nukta* (Seven Aphorisms) by the Imam Islāmshāh (d. 827/1423), which contains a letter to the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan and Kābul, the *Pandiyāt-i jawānmardī* (The Counsels of Chivalry) by the Imam Mustanṣir biʾllāh (d. 885/1480), the *Haft Bāb* (Seven Chapters) by Abū Isḥāq Quhistānī, the *Kalām-i Pīr* (The Sage's Discourse) wrongly attributed to Nāṣir-i Khusraw as well as the *Faṣl dar bayān-i shinākht-i Imām* (Treatise on the Recognition of the Imam).[34] Various undated fragments from local private collections, which contain prayers (*duʿā*) and poetic compositions, known as *Bayāẓ* (Anthology of [Didactic and Religious] Poetry), by local poets such as Naẓmī-i Badakhsnānī, Shāh Ziyā-i Shughnānī (sixteenth-seventeenth century) and Pīr Sayyid Farrukh Shāh have also been consulted.

Relations between the Ismāʿīlīs and the Ṣūfīs are analysed primarily by recourse to manuscript copies of the text of the *Charāgh-nāma*. All available manuscripts of the *Charāgh-nāma* are listed as primary sources in the bibliography.

In addition to Nizārī sources, which are prevalent in Iran, I should also mention the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* (Pearl Scatterer) by a nineteenth century local author, Guharrez valadi[35] Khwāja ʿAbd al-Nabī valadi Khwāja Ṣāliḥ-i Yumgī.[36] The *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* seems to have been based

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[33] Bertel's, and Baqoev, *Alfavitnyĭ Katalog,* Moscow, 1967, pp. 11-15.

[34] Some of these sources were published by Wladimir Ivanow and other authors. For more details see the Bibliography where full details are provided.

[35] The term *'valadi'* means 'the son of' which is used to show the genealogical link and the *nisba* of the author.

[36] I use *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* and *Gawhar-rīz* interchangeably as a reference to the work of Guharrez valadi Khāwa ʿAbd al-Nabī valadi Khwāja Ṣāliḥ-i Yumgī or Yumgānī.

on the local oral tradition and consists of sections in prose and poetry. The narrative stories of this manuscript probe the activity of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* in Badakhshan in broader context.

Modern Studies about Badakhshan

In addition to the primary sources, I have consulted various published and unpublished studies in English, Persian, Russian and German on Badakhshan. Despite the fact that many studies have been undertaken on Badakhshan, the medieval and early pre-modern history of the country and its relationships with neighbouring countries remains a *desideratum.* Questions about its rulers and their origins, for example, remain without a systematic study. Similarly neglected has been the place and contribution of Ismāʿīlī, Ṣūfī and other religious confessions within the wider cultural and religious heritage of the region.

The study of Badakhshan dates back to the second half of the eighteenth century. One of the promoters of such studies was the Russian Imperial Geographical Society (*Russkoe Imperatorskoe Geograficheskoe Obshchestvo*) that commissioned a number of projects pertaining to the study of the region. In 1872 the Society organised an expedition to visit the region under the leadership of the Russian ethnographer and traveller A.P. Fedchenko (1844-1872). This expedition collected much valuable data about the ethnography, geography and history of the people residing in the Pamirs. Four years later, in 1876 another expedition visited the eastern parts of the Pamirs. This expedition was led by the Russian anthropologist V.F. Oshanin (d. 1917) who was accompanied by a Russian officer called Kostenko. Although politically motivated the expedition succeeded in gathering valuable data on the history of this remote region. Two years later N.A. Severt͡sev (d. 1885), another Russian traveller, again visited the mountain regions of the Pamirs. The main focus of Severt͡sev's expedition was to study the geography of the region. Ivan Pavlovich Minaev (d. 1890) is yet another Russian scholar who visited the region in the second half of the nineteenth century. He collected valuable information about the ethnography and history of the region, published in 1879 as *Svedeniĩa o Stranakh po Verkhovʹĩam Amu-Darʹi* (Information Concerning the Regions on the Upper Reaches of the Oxus River). In 1888-1889 Bronislav Grombchevskiĭ visited Central Asia and subsequently the Pamirs, Badakhshan and the northern areas of modern Pakistan. He collected important material on the history, culture and political situation of the region. In 1898 A.A. Bobrinskoĭ (1852-1927) in the company of A.A. Semenov (1873-1958) and N. Bogoĩavlensiĭ visited the Pamirs.

As a result a number of monographs were published on the daily life, customs and religious life of the mountain dwellers.[37]

In the first half of the twentieth century interest in the studies of the Pamirs and Badakhshan increased. In 1911 and 1914 two copies of the *Umm al-kitāb* were obtained from Badakhshan that posed the question of the relationship of this enigmatic book to the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan. Although this treatise was found in Badakhshan the question of its place of origin and use by the local Ismāʿīlīs remains an important topic for the future studies.

The focus of research on Badakhshan changed radically during the Soviet period. Since religion was proclaimed to be "the opium of the masses" the ideological proclivities of the Soviets stifled any discussion pertaining to religion and religious rites. Another turning point in the study of Badakhshan began with the fall of the Soviet Union when a new generation of scholars started to study not only the social structure of the society but also the relationship and place of religion in these societies. Nonetheless, the study of the Pamirs and Badakhshan in a broader political, religious and cultural context still remains largely unaddressed.

Vladimir Bartol'd's seminal article, *Badakhshan*, published in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* in 1913 opened a new dimension in Badakhshan studies which was continued by Tamara Grigor'evna Abaeva (b. 1927), Bahodur Iskandarov (d. 2006), Andreĭ Stanishevskiĭ (also known as Aziz Niallo, d. 1994), Abusaid Shokhumorov (d. 1999) and many others.

It is important to note that the study of Ismāʿīlī history in Badakhshan was not systematically undertaken by scholars. A number of articles were published in *Izvestiĭa Akademii Nauk Tadzhikskoĭ SSR* in the 1970s and 1980s by Qudratbek Elchibekov concerning the sources and the ruling elites of Badakhshan. One of the most recent studies on Ismāʿīlī history in Badakhshan are the work of Maryam Muʿizzī, an Iranian scholar, whose Ph.D. thesis traces Ismāʿīlī history in Badakhshan from the appearance of the movement in the Middle East until modern times.[38] In 2006 Abdulmamad Iloliev defended a Ph.D. thesis at Cambridge University entitled *Poetic Expression of Pamiri Ismalism: the Life and Thought of Mubarak-i Wakhani, a Nineteenth-century Mystic Poet and Religious Scholar*[39] which includes a

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[37] Litvinskiĭ, and Akramov, *Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Semenov: Nauchno-biograficheskiĭ Ocherk,* Moscow, 1971.

[38] Muʿizzī, *Taʾrīkh-i Ismāʿīlīya-i Badakhshān,* Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Tehran University, 1380 Sh./2001.

[39] Iloliev's Ph.D. thesis was published as *The Ismāʿīlī-Sufi Sage of Pamir: Mubārak-i Wakhānī and the Esoteric Tradition of the Pamiri Muslims,* Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2008.

short background discussion on the history of the Ismāʿīlīs in Badakhshan. In 2010 Otambek Mastibekov defended a Ph.D. thesis at School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, titled *Leadership and Authority of Ismailis: a Case Study of Badakhshani Community in Tajikistan.*[40]

Among western academics mention should be made of the work of Jan-Heeren Grevemeyer, *Herrschaft, Raub und Gegenseitigkeit: Die Politische Geschichte Badakhshans 1500-1883.* This work is the study of the political history of Badakhshan with special reference to the Mughals and Shaybānids. Equally I should mention the work of Gabrielle van den Berg, which grew out of her Ph.D. thesis. She published her work as *Minstrel Poetry from the Pamir Mountains: A study on the Songs and Poems of the Ismāʿīlīs of Tajik Badakhshan.*[41] Although this work focuses on the traditional devotional music known as *madāḥ* or *madāḥ-khānī*, van den Berg does provide a short historical background about the Ismāʿīlīs of the region. Benjamin Koen's work, *Beyond the Roof of the World: Music, Prayer, and Healing in the Pamir Mountains,*[42] is an anthropological study of devotional music, prayer and healing among the Ismāʿīlīs of Gorno-Badakhshan.

The numismatic and epigraphic sources used for this study consist of preserved coins and inscriptions from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries that shed new light on the chronological representation of certain historical facts. Similarly, the numismatic and epigraphic studies allow us to retrieve the names of local rulers of a given period. Therefore, modern numismatic and epigraphic studies are one of the valuable sources for the study of the political and cultural history of Badakhshan.

Methodology and Terminology

Although the principal focus of this study is history and religion, in the course of my examinations I have, of course, strayed into the fields of sociology and ethnography, which, in turn, have opened a window onto an understanding the social cohesion of Badakhshani society. Since society, as a living whole, is always in a process of dynamic change, it is important to look at all events systematically. In order to achieve a systematic analysis of events I have employed a historical and chronological method which allows me to look at events not as a single occurrence but as a set of inter-related episodes. A rigorous

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[40] Mastibekov's Ph.D. thesis was published as *Leadership and Authority in Central Asia: the Ismaili Community in Tajikistan,* London: Routledge, 2014.

[41] Berg, *Minstrel Poetry from the Pamir Mountains: A study on the Songs and Poems of the Ismāʿīlīs of Tajik Badakhshan,* Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2004.

[42] Koen, *Beyond the Roof of the World: Music, Prayer, and Healing in the Pamir Mountains,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

chronological structure is also important for analysing any event described in local sources, based as they often are on the oral tradition which tends to lack any chronological reference. Similarly, in comparing local sources with the peripheral historical writing of a particular period, chronological analysis may make it possible to reconstruct the order in which events occurred. The historical and chronological analysis may also permit an understanding of the spread and dissemination of religious teaching and its interactions with local religious beliefs, teachings, ritual and practices. In order to unfold an event(s), therefore, and to analyse their relationship with an event(s) which occurred previously requires a timescale, precise or approximate, for any given event or a set of events.

The events narrated in our sources create a complex web of inter-related issues. This is due to the fact that a particular source was composed with a specific religious, political or ideological agenda. In order to identify such occurrences, the method I shall employ is one of discourse analysis in order to examine the use of language. The strategic and persuasive use of language contributes towards shaping the reader's perceptions of an event(s), even though various segments of a given text may be sacrificed or totally changed.

It is worth mentioning that the use of narrative and local oral history requires the use of the hermeneutic phenomenological approach. This allows us to grasp the same essential meaning of a text concerning a ritual that the local population itself attaches to it. Comparison of the oral tradition with local sources requires textual analysis. Such textual and linguistic analysis is applied to the study of the text of the *Charāgh-nāma* and the ritual of *Charāgh-rawshan* as well as to some local sources such as the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz*. In order to understand the evolving nature of the text of the *Charāgh-nāma* and the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz*, my analysis allows the comparison and contrasting of an event in the folk tradition with modern studies. It also allows me to analyse the use of language and the way concepts and terms have been transmitted.

Defining the Terms

The study of Badakhshan in a historical context presents a number of challenges that are not adequately addressed either in Soviet, Russian or Western academies. Badakhshan, located on the periphery of the Islamic caliphate, was isolated from the rest of the Islamic *Umma.* The isolation of the scattered minority communities, such as the Ismāʿīlīs, contributed to the development of distinctive terminological and conceptual categories used by the local population. These categories and terms are implanted in the social and religious structure of the community and will be used throughout in the course of my

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discussion. In the conventional Sunnī, Shīʿī and Ṣūfī contexts, the terms under discussion have different rendering and meanings. Some of these terms, as I shall hope to show, carry a totally different meaning when used by the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan. The term *khalīfa* can serve a good example. Although originally meaning 'deputy' or 'successor' this term in the general Islamic context is used to refer to the ruler. The case in point is the *Khulafā al-rāshidīn* – the Rightly Guided *Caliph*s and the rulers of the Abbasid and Faṭimid dynasties. In other words, the term *khalīfa* denotes the high-ranking figure in a given dynasty who is in charge of the religious and political affairs of his domain. The same term is used among the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan to refer to a figure who, in the local hierarchy of religion, is an assistant to the *pīr* (Chapter 6, pp. 152-192). I should draw the readers' attention to the fact that a number of the terms used in this thesis do not have an exact equivalent in the English language. Therefore, I define them in the following way:

➢ *Ahl al-bayt* and *Panj tan-i pāk:* The literal translation of *Ahl al-bayt* is "the People of the House," which is used to express reverence for and devotion to the "Five Members of the Prophet's Family." I should mention at the outset that the term *Ahl al-bayt* is used in a broader Ismāʿīlī context as a reference to the extended line of Imams from ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib to the present day. The Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan use the term *Panj tan-i pāk*, as an equivalent of the term *Ahl al-bayt,* meaning the "Five Pure Bodies"[43] (Chapter 5, pp. 147-149).

➢ *Charāgh-rawshan* and *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir: Charāgh-rawshan* literally means "Lighting the Candle" or "Candle Lighting." This term is used to refer to the funerary rite performed on the second or third night after a person's death. The term *Charāgh-rawshan,* as an Ismāʿīlī religious ritual, refers to the combination of logically interrelated set of rituals also known as *Daʿwat* or *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* (Chapters 5 and 8, pp. 121-241).

➢ *Fanā* and *Baqā* – are Arabic words. *Fanā* means "to pass away," "to perish" while *baqā* means "to remain" or "to survive." In the Ṣūfī context *Fanā* means to die in God. In other words, *fanā* is the passing away of the self, which is the essential pre-requisite to the survival (*baqā*) of the selfless divine qualities placed in man by God.

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[43] The Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan express their devotion and allegiance to the *Ahl al-bayt* or the *Panj tan-i pāk* through the architecture of their houses known as Pamiri *Chid.* Structurally, the roof of the house is held on five pillars, which symbolically refer to the *Panj tan-i pāk* – the "Five Pure Bodies." Shokhumorov, "Khāna-i Payravānī Rāstī," in Shokhumorov, *Pamir - Strana Ariev,* Dushanbe, 1997; Vasil'tsov, *"Alam-i Sagir":* K Voprosu o Simvolike Traditŝionnogo Pamirskogo Zhilischa," Rakhimov, and Revan, (eds.)., *Ŝentral'naῑa Aziῑa: Traditŝiῑa v Usloviῑakh Peremen,* vypusk 2, Sankt-Petersburg, 2009, pp. 150-179.

Both of these terms are used among the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan in combined expressions such as *daʿwat-i fanā* and *daʿwat-i baqā*. *Daʿwat-i fanā* is performed for the person who has passed away while *daʿwat-i baqā* is a call for the living person to join the *daʿwat* also known as *zinda-daʿwat* (Chapter 8, pp. 215-220).

➤ *Mīr* and *mīrigarī:* The term *Mīr* is a short form of the term *Amīr*, meaning "commander," "governor" and "prince." *Mīr* in the context of Badakhshan is a reference to the ruler. The region under the control of the *mīr* is referred to by the term *mīrigarī*. The terms *mīr--mīrigarī* and *shāh--shāhigarī* are used interchangeably in this thesis.

➤ *Mustaqar* and *mustawdaʿ.* These two terms, prevalent among the Shīʿīs, in general, and Ismāʿīlīs, in particular, are used with reference to the Imamate. There is no equivalent for these terms in the English language. The term *mustaqar* is translated as "*Established*" or "*Veritable*" Imam. The term *mustawdaʿ* is translated as "*Deposition*" or "*Trustee*" Imam. The function of the *mustawdaʿ* Imam is to hold the office of the Imamate for the *mustaqar.* The *mustaqar* Imam is the one who can designate his successor while the *mustawdaʿ* Imam, as the temporary holder of the office of the Imamate, is debarred from this privilege (Chapter 6, pp. 184-192).

➤ *Rāhī* and *Hādī.* These terms are used in the hierarchy of religion known as *ḥudūd al-dīn.* These terms appear in the early nineteenth-century treatise – the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* by Guharrez the son of Khāwa ʿAbd al-Nabī the son of Khwāja Ṣāliḥ from the region of Yumgān.[44] Since the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* does not provide any definition for these terms I translate *rāhī* as "*companion.*" This term is used by the Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs in Badakhshan. The term *hādī*, which I translate as "*guide*" is used by the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan in the post-Alamūt period (Chapter 6, pp. 165-192).

➤ *Shāh* and *shāhigarī. Shāh* is a regnal title of Old Persian provenance. It is used to refer to a person who is the holder of a crown and a throne and who is considered the ruler of a country. In the political context the term *shāhigarī* is used to refer to a geographic domain controlled by the *shāh.* Terms such as "princedom" and

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[44] Yumgān (or Yāmgān) valley is one of the richest districts of Badakhshan which is watered by Kākcha River. The principal villages are Jurm and Ḥazrat-i Said. Adamec, *Badakhshan Province and Northeastern Afghanistan,* Austria, 1972, pp. 190-191; Schadl, "The Shrine of Nasir Khusraw: Imprisoned Deep in the Valley of Yumgan," in *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Cultures of the Islamic World*, vol. 26 (2009), p. 64.

"principality" are used, as the English equivalents, to denote the domain of the local ruler.

➢ *Shīʿa* and *Dīn-i panjtanī. Shīʿa* means a "party," and is used to refer to a group of people who claim that the leadership of the Muslim community, the Imamate, belongs to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), the cousin of the Prophet Muḥammad, and his descendants through Fāṭima, the latter's daughter. The use of the term *Dīn-i panjtanī,* a local equivalent of the term *Shīʿa* in the context of Badakhshan, expresses an allegiance to the Shīʿa, in general, and to Ismāʿīlism, in particular.

➢ *Symbolic* and *Functional.* These two terms are used with reference to high and low ranking dignitaries in the hierarchy of religious initiation known as *ḥudūd al-dīn* in Ismāʿīlī history. I use the term *symbolic* to refer to the Imam and his *Ḥujjat,* who, historically, were not present among the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan. The only exception is Nāṣir-i Khusraw, the *Ḥujjat of Khurāsān,* who lived the last years of his life in Badakhshan. I use the term *functional* to refer to the lower ranks of the hierarchy such as *dāʿī* (missionary, summoner), *muʿallim* (teacher), *maʿẕūn-i akbar* (senior licentiate), *maʿẕūn-i asghar* (junior licentiate) and *mustajīb* (respondent or novice).[45]

➢ *Taqiyya* – an Arabic term meaning precautionary "dissimulation of one's true religious beliefs." It is mostly used by the Twelver Shīʿas and the Ismāʿīlīs particularly in times of danger.

It is important to note that I also discuss these and other terms in the thesis. Although most of these terms are of Arabic and Persian origin they were translated into the local language as combined expressions used in religious rituals and practices. They are an integral part of the social cohesion of the society and therefore will be used throughout this research work.

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[45] The ranks of *ḥudūd* are based on: Khayrkhāh-i Hirātī, *Risāla-i Khayrkhāh,* pp. 2-3. The *Ḥudūd al-dīn* - hierarchy of initiation is discussed in "Chapter 5: *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir:* The Ismāʿīlī Mission in Badakhshan" of this thesis. For more details, see section 5.4. The Domain of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa,* pp. 137-142.

PART I: GEOGRAPHY AND THE PEOPLE OF BADAKHSHAN

The region of Badakhshan adjoins Afghan Turkistan in the east. Dominated in the south by the eastern Hindu Kush, in the east by the Pamir Mountains, and in the north by the Darwāz range, it forms a separate geographic unit, only opening in the west to the plain of Tāliqān, Khānābād and Qunduz.

Noelle, Ch., *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-century Afghanistan*[1]

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[1] Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan,* 1997, p. 112.

CHAPTER 1: BADAKHSHAN: WHERE THE OXUS RIVER TAKES ITS ROOTS

Introduction

Badakhshan, a landlocked country in the foothills of the Hindu Kush and Pamir mountains, is well known for its precious and semi-precious stones. The famous Oxus River, *Āmū Daryā,* rises in the upper reaches of Badakhshan and it has shaped the political and geographic borderlines of Iran and Turan from the ancient times. George Nathaniel Curzon (1859-1925), a famous British diplomat, traveller and writer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, in his book *The Pamirs and the Sources of Oxus*, extends an invitation to modern researchers to study this mysterious land known as the Roof of the World. Curzon says:

> Descending from the hidden "Roof of the World," its waters tell of forgotten peoples and whisper secrets of unknown lands. They are believed to have rocked the cradle of our race. Long the legendary watermark between Iran and Turan, they have worn a channel deep into the fate of humanity.[1]

The present research, therefore, aims to study the history of these forgotten peoples, their land and the social and cultural life in this remote region. Hence, this short introductory chapter seeks to fill the gap in the understanding of the geography and borders of Badakhshan and its northern mountain principalities, *shāhigarī* and *mīrigarī,* in their historical context. I start this introductory chapter from the geographical borders as defined in the modern period. I shall give a short overview of the derivation of the terms Badakhshan and Pamir and examine the people living in those areas. This will allow me to conceptualise the region in the broader cultural, religious and political context of Central Asia and Persia.

1.1. Geographic Complexities: Mirroring the Present in the Past

It was around the 1880s that the Amīr of Afghanistan – ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān (ca. 1844-1901) claimed that Badakhshan, with its northern principalities of Shughnān, Rushān and Wakhān, had been part of his emirate for a long time. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān, son of Amīr Muḥammad Afżal Khan (r. 1866-67), the eldest surviving son of Dūst Muḥammad Khān (the founder of the Barkazay dynasty in Afghanistan), participated in a series of military operations that extended the borders of his dominions to include Qaṭaghan, Badakhshan

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[1] Curzon, *The Pamirs and the Source of the Oxus,* London, 1896, pp. 1-2, and also his: *Russia in Central Asia,* London: Longmans, 1889, p. 320ff.

and Darwāz.[2] This is, perhaps, the main reason why he declared these territories part of his dynasty's domain. In opposition to him, the Emirate of Bukhara, too, put forward a claim saying that the land on the upper reaches of the Oxus River had been in their possession historically. Later on, in the period from the 1870s to the 1890s, the Russians, one of the great powers of that period, who played a major role in border demarcation during the 'Great Game', defended the claim of the Emirate of Bukhara on geo-political grounds. Henceforth, this dispute resulted in the annexation of the northern territories of the mountainous part of Badakhshan to the Russian side of the demarcation line. A similar scenario was proposed by the British colonial power in support of Amīr ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān's claim. Thus, we find the passage below on the margins of a map from the collection of the British Library in London, commissioned by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān, possibly in the 1880s, quite interesting. Despite its brevity, it provides significant information about the borders of Badakhshan and the relationship of Badakhshan with its neighbouring principalities. The author, or possibly the cartographer, wrote the following:

> Russia still upheld the claims of Bukhara to Badakhshan... and she doubted the *Amīr*'s [i.e. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān of Afghanistan] claim to Shughnān, Rushān and Wakhān farther east. The *Amīr* was emphatic that both historically and *de-facto* they were his rightful possessions. He quoted the medieval historian Mīrzā Ḥaydar ʿAlī, author of the *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī*, to support his historical claims and in 1883 he put Afghan troops into Shughnān and Rushān... The *Amīr* also installed an Afghan Governor of Wakhān. Russia claimed that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān was acting contrary to the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1873.[3]

It is obvious that the 'Great Game' period, which was to define the borders of Badakhshan between Tsarist Russia and the British Empire at the end of the nineteenth century, lies beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, I began with a passage from that particular period at the outset of this chapter on account of the fact that it raises certain important questions pertaining to the geographic, political as well as religious settings of the region in the historical context. This particular approach will allow me to examine the geographic and geo-political settings of Badakhshan retrospectively. At the heart of the passage above lie some important questions that, in a sense, constitute the core of this entire thesis. Here are the questions to be explored in this regard. Was Badakhshan, a tiny mountain region in southeast Central Asia, of great significance to the dynasties that ruled Central Asia as well as Khurāsān and modern Afghanistan? Did the post-Mongol rulers of Central Asia, such as the Tīmūrids and Shaybānids, as well as the Mughal emperors of India, lay claim

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[2] Colin-Davies, "ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān," in *EI2,* vol. 1 (1960), p. 87; Tarzi, "ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān," *EI3,* vol. 2 (2010). p. 13; Bosworth, "Shughnān," in *EI2,* vol. 9 (1997), pp. 495-496.

[3] Map of the Pamirs: Furnished by the *Amīr* of Afghanistan, 1892, in the collection of the British Library, London. BL catalogue number: 50325 (18) 1-2. See also: Bosworth, "Shughnān," in *EI2,* vol. 9 (1997), p. 496.

to this region as it was asserted by Amīr ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān at the end of the nineteenth century, on the one hand, and the Emirate of Bukhara and its allies, on the other? Did Central Asian as well as Afghan rulers, directly or indirectly, rule this region in the medieval period? For how long did the local rulers of Badakhshan keep the region under their control? What was the effect of foreign rule on the religious life of the local population, particularly on the minority groups like the Twelver Shīʿīs, the Ismāʿīlīs as well as on some local Ṣūfī movements?
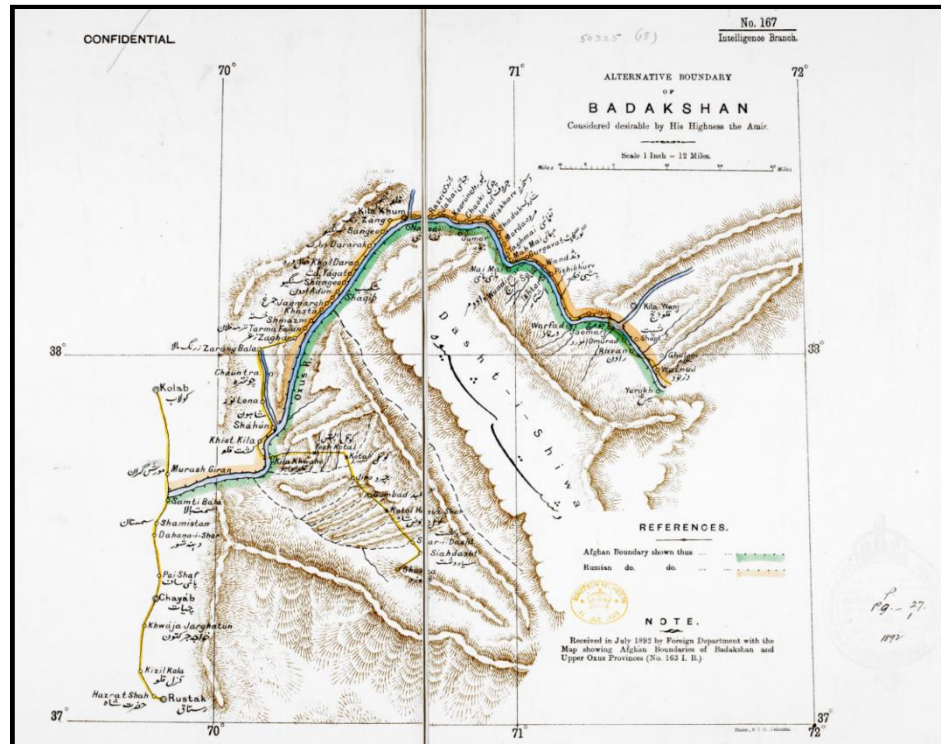
Figure 4: Map of Badakhshan commissioned by amīr of Afghanistan ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān *ca.* 1880s

It is apparent from the passage cited above that Amīr ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān asserted his claim to this land on political grounds. This was due to the fact that the two great powers of that period, the British and Tsarist Russia, were trying to expand their political influence over the region, using the strategy of 'divide and rule' in order to subjugate the region and control it in the long term. Nonetheless, Amīr ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān as well as the rulers of the Emirate of Bukhara probably knew that this was a period during which both of them could lose their political influence over Badakhshan and its northern Pamir principalities. It was predictable that local rule would later be replaced by the Russians, from the one side, and the British from the other. In other words, it was a time when the elite of Badakhshan lost the semi-independent rule over the region that they had exercised, probably, since the medieval period if not far earlier. Moreover, the small

mountain kingdoms – *shāhigari*s and *mīrigari*s[4] – that had existed there possibly since ancient times were now as a result of modern geo-political realities wiped off the political map of the world.[5] Consequently, the new demarcation line divided the land along the upper reaches of the Oxus River, known to the local population as the river *Panj* or *Pīandzh*,[6] into Tajik and Afghan Badakhshan.[7]

Modern studies on Badakhshan clearly show that the land on the upper reaches of the Oxus River was historically controlled by local, semi-independent rulers.[8] Modern scholarship uses the terms *mīr* (ruler) and *shāh* (prince) to refer to the heads or founders of local dynasties who were in charge of the political, social and religious life of their domains. Therefore, the statement of Alekseĭ Postnikov, a Russian scholar, in his book *Struggle on the 'Roof of the World': Politicians, Spies and Geographers in the Contest for the Pamir in the XIX century* is quite to the point where he aptly comments:

> The rulers of Badakhshan considered themselves semi-independent rulers of the mountainous regions. The same opinion was held about them by their neighbours.[9]

These local rulers (*shāh*s and *mīr*s) ruled the mountain enclaves on the fringes of the Islamic caliphate. The small semi-independent dynasties, directly or indirectly, witnessed certain events that were later recalled as momentous in their history. In other words, despite the fact that this region may seem inaccessible and remote from the scenes of the great historical events of Central Asia and the Near and Middle East, yet it was not completely isolated and witnessed the arrival of a new religion and new ideas, either through missionary activities or military conquests. Hence, the arrival of a new religion,

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[4] Both terms, *shāhigarī* and *mīrigarī,* are of Persian origin. *Shāhigarī* is a term that derives from the word *shāh* – meaning prince. It seems to be a short form of the term *pādshāh* - King. *Mīrigarī* is a short form of the term *amīr* and is used to refer to a ruler. Hence, in the political parlance the terms *shāhigarī* and *mīrigarī* are used to refer to a geographical domain controlled by a ruler who is a subordinate to greater powers. The English equivalents of these terms are principality or princedom which used in the thesis interchangeably.

[5] Khalfin, *Russko-Bukharskie Vzaimootnosheniĭā po Povodu Pripamirskikh Bekstv Posle Russkogo Razgranicheniĭā 1895 goda na Pamire: Po Materialam T͡sentral'nogo Gosudarstvennogo Istoricheskogo Arkhiva UzSSR,* Unpublished Report, Tashkent, 1947; Elnazarov, and Aksakolov, "The Nizari Ismailis of Central Asia in Modern Times," in Daftary, (ed.)., *A Modern History of the Ismailis,* London, 2011, pp. 48-52.

[6] *Pīandzh* is a Russianised form of the river Panj. The original term is *Panj*, denoting the number Five. However, in the geographical context of modern Badakhshan, it refers to *Panj River*, that was accepted as a demarcation line by the T͡sarist Russian as well as British Colonial powers. Thus, terms such as the Upper Reaches of the Oxus River, and river *Panj* will be employed to refer to the same river. For more details on the "Great Game" and the border demarcation, see: Postnikov, *Skhvatka na "Kryshe Mira,"* Moscow, 2001; Khari͡ukov, *Anglo-Russkoe Sopernichestvo v T͡sentral'noĭ Azii i Ismailizm*, Moscow, 1995.

[7] Badakhshan is one of the thirty-two provinces of modern Afghanistan. Tajik Badakhshan is known as *Vilāyati Mukhtāri Kuhistāni Badakhshān* - VMKB. The Russian term Gorno-Badakhshanskaiĭā Avtonomnaĭā Oblast' - GBAO is used in some western contemporary sources.

[8] Muḥammadzāda, and Muḥabbatshāhzāda, *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* Moscow, 1973, pp. 87-206; Postnikov, *Skhvatka na "Kryshe Mira,"* 2001, pp. 45-46.

[9] Postnikov, *Skhvatka na "Kryshe Mira,"* 2001, pp. 45-46.

in some cases, connected the destiny of the people of the isolated mountain regions with their neighbours in adjacent areas. Therefore, in shaping their destiny in the mountain-locked regions, which were located far from the main urban cultural centres, a vital role was certainly played by religion and its missionary activities. Even after being converted to Islam, in its various forms, these mountain-dwellers, firstly, retained the relics of their pre-Islamic culture and religions of Iranian origin, such as fire temples – *ātashkada*,[10] and later on succeeded in keeping firm to the Ismāʿīlī (particularly Nizārī Ismāʿīlī) faith, which made this remote region a vibrant and dynamic place. It should, however, be mentioned that Badakhshan was not a homogeneous space in terms of its religious composition as the Shīʿīs lived side by side with Sunnī and Ṣūfī communities. Hence, to analyse and understand the effect of politics and religion in medieval or early pre-modern Badakhshan, our journey must start in the nineteenth century 'Great Game' period, while its concentration will mainly be on the socio-religious and political issues of the region in the medieval and early pre-modern periods, particularly from 905/1500 to 1163/1750.

1.2. Geographic Location of Badakhshan

Modern Tajikistan[11] is a cradle of ancient Iranian culture, which is partly hidden in the scattered mountain regions of Badakhshan. Geographically it is the place of the convergence of ranges of high mountains, namely the Himalayas, Tien Shan, Kunlun, Karakorum and Hindu Kush. The Pamirs are the area where rises the *Āmū Daryā*, one of the main rivers of Central Asia. From here derives the name Upper Oxus (i.e. the upper reaches of the *Āmū Daryā*), by which the area is termed in nineteenth-century British political historical sources, ethnographic and military reports.[12] The employment of this term is attested in the writings of medieval European travellers like Marco Polo (651-724/1254-1324).[13] Its prevalent use may also be observed in the writings of nineteenth-century British political agents, such as Ney Elias (d. 1897), Trotter (d. 1919) and George Curzon (1925), or the agents, travellers and scholars of the T͡sarist Russian Empire, like Bronislav Grombchevskiĭ (d. 1926), Ivan Minaev (d. 1890) and A. G. Serebrennikov (d. in the first half

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[10] Scott, "Zoroastrian Traces along the Upper Amu Darya (Oxus)," in *JRASGBI,* no. 2 (1984), pp. 217-228.

[11] Modern Tajikistan was established in the 1924 as the Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic as part of the Uzbek SSR. In 1929, the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic (Tajik SSR) was created as one of the fifteen separate constituent republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics - USSR.

[12] Minaev, *Svedeniĭa o Stranakh po Verkhov'ĭam Amu Dar'i,* St. Petersburg, 1879. For more sources, see note 15 below.

[13] Yule, "Introduction," in Marco Polo, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo,* London, 1871, p. xlvi; Larner, *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World,* London, 1999, pp. 31-45; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* 2007, p. 14.

of the twentieth century).[14] At present, the majority of the indigenous population of modern Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast' (GBAO) in the Pamir Mountains are Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs – followers of Nāṣir-i Khusraw's tradition (known as *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir)* – who also refer to themselves as Pamiris. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Russian scholars and travellers referred to the people of Badakhshan as *Gornye Tadzhiki* – Mountain Tajiks.[15] Contrastingly, their neighbours from the Afghan side of Badakhshan employ rather different terms to designate themselves, namely *Badakhshī* or *Badakhshānī*, which are widely used by the local population and their neighbours.

The geographical boundaries of Badakhshan in the historical context are blurred, which is one of the causes of the various complexities and even misrepresentations that have arisen. Inappropriately defined geographic borders make it difficult to ascertain whether the region was part of the lands of Central Asian dynasties or was ruled by the powers from the northern part of Iran, namely, Khurāsān? Yet, we cannot leave aside the possibility that this land was annexed to the Mongol Empire (from the thirteenth to the mid-fourteenth centuries), an area later controlled by the Tīmūrid dynasty (from the early fourteenth up to the end of the fifteenth century). Likewise, mention could be made of its annexation to the Empire of the Great Mughals and its being ruled, directly or indirectly, by their vassals either from India or from Kābul from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries (Chapters 3 and 4, pp. 67-117). This, therefore, leads us to think that this mysterious, isolated mountainous land on the upper reaches of the Oxus River was claimed as 'a rightful possession' by different rulers throughout its history. The case of Amīr ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān, as well as the Emirate of Bukhara, when they laid claim to the region and its neighbouring principalities as their historical and *de facto* possession reflect one of the vivid historical examples of the rivalry over this remote territory. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the above-mentioned rivalry at the end of the nineteenth century led to the final border demarcation, as a consequence of its geo-political and strategic importance both to the Russian Tsarist Empire and to the British colonial power. Thus,

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[14] British sources: Elias, "Report of a Mission to Chinese Turkistan and Badakhshan 1885-1886, by Ney Elias, political agent on special duty," in Ewan, (ed.)., *Britain and Russia in Central Asia, 1880-1907*, vol. 5, London: Routledge, 2008; Curzon, *The Pamirs and the Source of the Oxus,* London, 1896 and his *Russia in Central Asia,* London, 1889; Trotter, *Account of the Survey Operations in connection with the mission to Yorkand and Kashghar in 1873-74,* Calcutta, 1875. Russian sources: Minaev, *Svedeniīā o Stranakh po Verkhov'īam Amu Dar'i*, St. Petersburg, 1879; Serebrennikov, *Ocherki Shugnana: S Kartoīu,* Unpublished Report, 1897 and his "Ocherki Shugnana," in *Sbornik Geograficheskikh, Topograficheskikh i Statisticheskikh Materialov po Azii,* St. Petersburg, 1896, pp. 1–52; Umanetŝ, "Pamirskiĭ Vopros i Ego Znachenie," in *Istoricheskiĭ Vestnik, Istoriko-Literaturnyĭ Zhurnal,* St. Petersburg, vol. 1 (1892), pp. 196-208.

[15] For more information, see: Ginzberg, "Gornye Tadzhiki," in *Trudy po Arkheologii, Etnografii i Antropologii,* vol. 16 (1937), pp. 23-35; Weekes, (ed.)., *Muslim Peoples: A World Ethnographic Survey,* London, 1984, pp. 738-739.

modern Tajik Badakhshan shares its borders with Afghanistan along the *Panj* River as far as the Darwāz region (south of modern Tajikistan). In the north, however, it shares its borders with the Kyrgyz Republic, while on the east it borders the Republic of China's Xinjiang province. The area of Badakhshan on the Afghan side, which is situated in the north-eastern part of the country, borders Tajik Badakhshan to the north. In the east, along the narrow Wakhān corridor, it shares its borders with the northern areas of modern Pakistan, the south-eastern part of China, and Tajikistan. The southern part of Badakhshan, within the broader administrative setting of modern Afghanistan, constitutes one of the 32 provinces of the country.[16]

Modern scholarship agrees that the region of Badakhshan is a place through which the historical 'Silk Road' traversed. The 'Silk Road', with its trade routes and commercial activities, eclipsed the fact that, in connecting the east with the west, it carried and spread religious ideas and beliefs. It also became an abode of refuge for religious minorities and various tribes and peoples from Central Asia and Iran, who left their homeland on account of political and religious persecution or forced migration.[17]

1.3. Derivation of the Terms Badakhshan and Pamir

As mentioned earlier, historical sources refer to the land on the left bank of the Oxus River as Badakhshan. The derivation of this term, however, is linked with a sort of ruby, called *Badakhsh* or *Balakhsh*, which has been mined in this region since ancient times. Wilhelm Eilers, for example, is of the opinion that the term Badakhshan is derived from a Sasanian official title, *badakhsh*, meaning 'inspector', and the suffix *ān* indicates that the country belonged to or had been assigned to a person holding the high rank of *badakhsh,*[18] which gives the term pre-Islamic provenance. In the modern geographical context, the term 'Badakhshan' refers to a land in the Pamir Mountains divided between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Ancient as well as modern sources use two different terms to refer to this region, namely, 'Badakhshan' and 'Pamir' (loc. Pāmir or Pomer). According to Bosworth, the term 'Pamir' is the name of a mountainous massif in Inner Asia that originates in modern Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast' (GBAO) and encompasses modern Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (新疆维吾尔自

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[16] Stein, "Marco Polo's Account of a Mongol Inroad into Kashmir," in *GJ,* vol. 54, no. 2 (August 1919), pp. 92-103.

[17] Perry, "Forced Migration in Iran during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *IS,* vol. 8, no. 4 (1975), pp. 199-215; Moreen, "The Status of Religious Minorities in Safavid Iran 1617-61," in *JNES,* vol. 40, no. 2 (April. 1981), pp. 119-134; Behera, "India's Encounter with the Silk Road," in *EPW,* vol. 37, no. 51 (December 21-27, 2002), pp. 5077-5080.

[18] Eilers, "Badakhshān: iii. The Name," in *EIr,* vol. 3 (1989), p. 361.

治区) in China as well as Afghanistan and northern parts of Pakistan. It is clearly shown by Bosworth that different sources use these two terms to refer to the same mountain region. Likewise, and with a detailed analysis, Sidorov, a Soviet scholar, states that Badakhshan is a land situated in the middle of the Asian continent, lying between the Near East, Inner Asia, Central Asia and also India.[19]

During the Soviet period, the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region was also called the Pamir, which in its turn was divided into the Western and Eastern Pamirs. The same geographical division may be seen in Burhān al-Dīn Kushkekī's seminal work, *Rāhnamā-i Badakhshān va Qaṭaghan.*[20] The Eastern boarders of Pamir were defined as extending as far as the Qāshghar mountain range, while the Western borders were located in the Hindu Kush. Furthermore, we know from Soviet sources, particularly from the works of Nalivkina, Agakhanīāiants, Sidorov and many others, that the Western Pamir was famous for its glacial topography and mainly populated by tribes of Kyrgyz nomads. By contrast, the Eastern Pamir, with its totally different natural landscapes, was populated by the *Mountain Tajiks.* In other words, the term Pamir is generally employed in reference to the Western part of the Pamir. The term 'Eastern Pamir,' on the other hand, is used to indicate the central lands of Badakhshan.[21]

As far as the etymology of the term Badakhshan is concerned, it is important to note that it does not occur in the same form in any of the ancient historical sources, whether from the Achaemenid, Sasanian, or Bactrian periods. Nevertheless, the oldest reference to the region is found in the historical annals of the Buddhist traveller, Xuanzang (Hsüen-Tsang), who passed through the region sometime in the seventh or eighth century A.D. He uses the term *Pa-mi-lo* in his writing, which was employed with reference to a region in the mountains of Pamir.[22]

European travellers, notably Marco Polo, who passed through these places on his journey to the court of the Mongol Emperor, Kublai Khān (r. 659-693/1260-1294), employs the same

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[19] Bosworth, "Pamirs," *EI2,* vol. 8 (1995), p. 245; Sidorov, "Chto Zhe Vse-taki Nazyvat Pamirom?," *SNV: Pamir,* vol. 16 (1975), pp. 5-6; For a detailed analysis, see: Agakhanīānts, *Osnovnye Problemy Fizicheskoĭ Geografii Pamira,* Dushanbe, 2 vols. 1965-66; Iskandarov, *Istoriīā Pamira,* Khorog, 1995, pp. 3-6. In the medieval period, Pamir was incorrectly also referred to as a region of 'Bālār.' See: Codrington, "A Geographical Introduction to the History of Central Asia," in *GJ,* vol. 104, no. 1/2 (July-August, 1944), pp. 27-40.

[20] Kushkekī, *Katagan i Badakhshan: Dannye po Geografii Strany, Estestvenno-istoricheskim Usloviīām, Naseleniīu, Ėkonomike i Putiīām Soobshcheniīā,* Semenov, (Russian tr. and ed.)., Tashkent, 1926.

[21] Sidorov, "Chto Zhe Vse-taki Nazyvat Pamirom?," *SNV: Pamir,* p. 6; Nalivkina, "Obzor Geologii Pamira i Badakhshana," in *Trudy Vsesoīuznogo Geologo-razvedochnogo Ob'edineniīā NKTP SSSR,* Moscow, 1932, no. 182, pp. 68-69.

[22] Bosworth, "Pamir," *EI2,* vol. 8 (1995), p. 245. Bartol'd, "Badakhshan," in *EI2,* vol. 1 (1986), pp. 851-55; Stein, "A Chinese Expedition across the Pamirs and Hindukush, A. D. 747," in *GJ,* vol. 59, no. 2 (February 1922), pp. 115-118.

term in various forms, such as *Badakhsh*, *Balakhsh* or *Badasiana*. It is noteworthy that modern scholars and medieval travellers propose contradicting interpretations concerning the origin of this particular term. For instance, Marco Polo in his travel book states that the origin of the term comes from the word *Badakhsh*, which was used to refer to the *Laʿl* – the ruby or lapis lazuli. According to him, originally the *Laʿl* was called *Badakhsh* or *Balakhsh* and this later came to be used as a place-name to refer to this mountain region.[23] Modern scholars, like Bosworth and Agakhanīānts (d. 2002), on the other hand, maintain that the term *Balakhsh* originally denoted the region and only later seems to have been employed in reference to the type of ruby in question.[24]

Another Soviet scholar, Pakhalina, approaches the etymological aspect of this term from a linguistic perspective. According to her, the term Badakhshan consists of two interlinked components, *Badakhsh* and *Ān*, which gives the meaning, 'the Land of the Kings'.[25] If we follow Pakhalina, reference to this region may be rendered as 'Empire' or 'Great Empire.' The same proposition has been brought to our attention by Georgina Hermann in her article "*Lapis Lazuli: The Early Phases of its Trade*". However, her reference is geographical rather than linguistic, as it is evident from her writing:

> The former kingdom of Badakhshan was considerably larger than the present province, and included the lands of Shughnān and Rushān in the east and Kulāb in the west.[26]

Other modern scholars propose similar contradictory interpretations when considering the term *Pamir*. A well-known Soviet linguist, Ėdelman, seeks the etymology of this particular term in ancient Indo-European languages. She is of the opinion that the term *Pamir* means 'borderlines' or 'border area.'[27] Abusaid Shokhumorov (d. 1999), a Tajik scholar from GBAO, agrees with her that the root of this term derives from ancient Indo-European languages. He too considers that the term consists of two interlinked components, as proposed by Ėdelman. Nonetheless, he disagrees with her supposition when it comes to the definition and interpretation of each term. Shokhumorov, thus, maintains that the first part of the term *Pamir* is either *Bām* or *Pām*, which denotes a 'country,' a 'land' or a 'habitat.' This is a reference to a place of abode or a geographical

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[23] Polo, *Kniga Marco Polo,* Moscow, 1956, pp. 73-76.

[24] Bartol'd, "Badakhshan," in *EI2,* vol. 1 (1960), p. 851.

[25] Pakhalina, *Pamirskie Yazyki* (*Pamiri Languages*), Moscow, 1969, pp. 5-11.

[26] Herrmann, "Lapis Lazuli: The Early Phases of its Trade," in *Iraq,* vol. 30, no. 1 (1968), p. 23. The same proposition one can find in: Mustawfī, Ḥamd Allāh., *The Geographic Part of the Nuzhat al-Qulūb,* Le Strange, (English tr.)., Leiden, 1919, pp. 196-197.

[27] Ėdelman, "Geograficheskie Nazvaniîā Pamira," in *SNV: Pamir,* vol. 16 (1975), p. 43.

location. The second part of the term *Pamir* is either *Ir* or *Er,* which specifies this geographic designation as a 'city.'[28]

As noted earlier, Badakhshan became famous for its precious and semi-precious stones, such as lapis lazuli and rubies (lit. *laʿl*), probably, in the Middle Ages or even earlier. Hence, the medieval Persian poetic sources as well as local poetic composition refer to Badakhshan by the phrase *'Laʿl-i Badakhshān'* – the Ruby of Badakhshan.[29] Furthermore, we learn from the anonymous *Ḥudūd al-ʿālam* and later from Marco Polo that Badakhshan had magnificent, broad pastures as well as highly cultivated valleys. It was praised for its excellent climate. The anonymous author of the *Ḥudūd al-ʿālam,* for instance, describes this region as "a very pleasant country and a resort of merchants."[30] John Wood (1812-1871), on the other hand, employs another phrase in relation to this mountain land; namely *'Bām-i dunyā'* or 'the Roof of the World.'[31] Today, this phrase is a common expression that is in use among the inhabitants of the region in the form *Bām-i jahān* or in many cases in its Russian form – *Крыша Мира* (Krysha Mira – i.e. the Roof of the World). It should, however, be clarified that the above-mentioned phrase used to be employed in relation to Pamir rather than the mainland of Badakhshan as such.

As far as the geographical place-names, such as Shughnān, Darwāz, Wakhān as well as Qaṭaghan*,* and other similar ones are concerned, they refer not only to the geographical location of particular urban or rural places but are also used in a broader sense, in connection with the local dynasties from medieval times up until the 'Great Game' period. The internal division of Badakhshan in a wider geo-political context clearly indicates that, geographically, Badakhshan was central whilst also politically peripheral. In other words the term Badakhshan, geographically, encompasses the central area of land plus all its semi-independent subordinate principalities known as *mīrigarī* and *shāhigarī*.

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[28] Shokhumorov, *Pamir – the Land of Aryans*, Dushanbe, 1997, pp. 33-34; (Russian tr.), pp. 8-9.

[29] Ghoibov, "Oid ba Paĭdoishi Nomi La'li Badakhshaon," in *IAN Tadzh SSR,* no. 4 (20), 1990, pp. 3-6; Herrmann, "Lapis Lazuli: The Early Phases of its Trade," (1968), pp. 21-24 for more information see: Hermann, *The Source, Distribution, History and Use of Lapis Lazuli in Western Asia from the Earliest Times to the End of the Seleucid Era,* Unpublished D. Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 1966. The use of the term *Laʿl-i Badakhshān* can be found in the poetry of Firdawsī and Sanāī. Although I could not find an early use of this expression in the local poetry, I use a distich from a certain Mīrzā Ibrāhīm, a sixteenth century local poet from Badakhshan, where he say:

<div dir="rtl">ای لعل بی بها به بدخشان خوش آمدی.   لعل ارچه در جهان ز بدخشان شود برون،</div>

La'l ar chi dar jahān zi Badakhshān shawad burūn,   Ay la'li bebahā, ba Badakhshān khush āmadī.

Habibov, *Ganji Badakhshon,* Dushanbe, 1972, p. 51.

[30] Minorsky, *"Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam:" The Regions of the World, A Persian Geography, 372 A.H.* (*982 A.D*), London, 1937, p. 112.

[31] Wood, *A Journey to the Source of the River Oxus*, Karachi, 1976, p. 236. It is appropriate to note that the phrase *Bām-i dunyā* has another version, which is *Bām-i jahān.*

Therefore, it becomes obvious that Badakhshan, one of the biggest semi-independent kingdoms, was located on the left side of the river *Panj*, beyond the sphere of Tsarist Russian influence and covered the southern part of the entire region. Shughnān, Darwāz and Wakhān are considered semi-independent principalities or princedoms (*mīrigarī* and *shāhigarī*) that later became part of Tajik Badakhshan. Therefore, it is safe to assume that Amīr ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān might have confused the border regions of his territory, particularly those of Badakhshan, with the lands of his far northern neighbouring principalities that had their own local rulers.[32] Equally, it reflects his aspiration to annexe these lands to his territories. Therefore, it is apparent from the present discussion that Badakhshan as a geographical term refers to the land on the left bank of the *Panj* River and that was controlled by local rulers known as *mīr*s and *shāh*s.

By contrast, the term Pamir refers to the area in a wider context, encompassing all of the principalities of this mountainous region. The 'Great Game,' in this case, was employed as a window for understanding the borders drawn during the period of Anglo-Russian rivalry. It showed that the definition of the borders in the medieval and early pre-modern periods was not sufficiently clear and this has led both to terminological and to contextual complexities when studying Badakhshan from a historical perspective. Despite this, our study will employ the term Badakhshan to refer to the region in a broader historical and geographical context including the subordinate mountain regions of the northern Pamir principalities. The region's political and geographic boundaries changed with the arrival of a new ruling dynasty and therefore I shall contextualise this while discussing the political history of the region.

1.4. The People of Badakhshan

In 1895, Badakhshan – the area to the north of the Hindu Kush – was divided between its neighbours, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The central lands of Badakhshan, however, remained on the Afghan side of the demarcation line. On 2nd January 1925, the Soviet government decided to create a new geographical and political entity known in modern times as the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast' (GBAO; within the boundaries of Tajikistan). In 1991, after the fall of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), GBAO remained part of the newly independent country of Tajikistan.

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[32] See map of Amīr ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān, p. 28.

In a broader context, a number of ethnic groups are present in Badakhshan. A number of small communities with the common self-designation of *Pamiri* (loc. *Pomeri;* Rus. *Памирцы Pamirt͡sy)* have inhabited the mountain regions of Gorno Badakhshan since ancient times. These minority groups speak local Pamiri languages belonging to the Iranian branch of the Indo-European family of languages. The most prevalent languages are Shughnī (or Shughnānī), Rushānī, Bartangī, Wakhī, Ishkāshimī and Rinī.[33] Although these eastern Iranian dialects use some Persian words, they have little in common with the Persian language spoken by the Tajiks. The Tajiks constitute the majority of the population of Afghan Badakhshan, while the above-named ethnic groups also constitute a small minority of the population. Apart from these ethnic groups, a number of Turkic, Uzbek and Hazara people also live in Badakhshan who speak either Persian or Turkic languages.[34] No precise statistical data exist regarding the Pamiri-speaking people on either side of the demarcation line. During the Soviet period, the small minority groups of Gorno-Badakhshan were registered as Tajiks (from Pamir). According to Russian sources, the total population of Afghan Badakhshan is around 1.2 million, whereas that in Tajik Gorno-Badakhshan it is estimated at around 210,000.[35]

The languages spoken among the indigenous population of Badakhshan, such as Shughnī, Wakhī or Rinī, have no written scripts of their own. Historical sources indicate that the local writers and poets used the Arabic (Persian) script to compose literary and historical works in the Persian language. Mention can be made of the works of Nāṣir-i Khusraw - *Vajh-i dīn, Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn*, etc. In modern time, the language spoken in Tajikistan is referred to as *Fārsī-i tājikī* – Persian-Tajik,[36] which was fostered by the Soviet authorities.[37] Badakhshan, in a broader historical context, is a multi-lingual region where people of

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[33] For more details, see: Pisarchik, *Rushanskie Texty*, Stalinabad, 1954; Zarubin, *Shugnanskie Texty i Slovar'*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1960; Karamshoev, *Badzhuwskiĭ Dialekt Shugnanskogo I͡azyka*, Dushanbe, 1963; Pakhalina, *Pamirskie I͡azyki*, Moscow, 1969; Steblin-Kamenskiĭ, and Karamshoev, (eds.)., *I͡azyki i Etnografii͡a "Kryshi Mira",* St. Petersburg, 2005; Iskandarov, *Sot͡sial'no-Ėkonomicheskie i Politicheskie Aspekty Istorii Pamirskikh Kni͡azhestv (X v. - Pervai͡a polovina XIX v.),* Dushanbe, 1983, pp. 5-8; Bosworth, "Pamir," *EI2,* vol. 8 (1995), p. 245; Ėdelman, "Sravnitel'noe Sostoi͡anie Izuchenii͡a Pamirskikh I͡azykov," *Voprosy I͡azykoznanii͡a,* no. 1, (1964), pp. 128-136; Dodikhudoeva, "The Tajik Language and the Socio-Linguistic Situation in the Mountainous Badakhshan," in *I&C,* vol. 8, no. 2 (2004), pp. 281-288.

[34] The major ethnic groups that reside in Badakhshan and the Pamirs are: Tajiks, Shughnī, Wakhī, Rushanī, Ghilzais, Turkmans, Uzbeks and Kyrghyzs. Adamec, *Badakhshan Province and Northeastern Afghanistan,* Austria, 1972, pp. 6-9.

[35] Okimbekov, *Problemy Sot͡sial'no-Ėkonomicheskogo i Sot͡sial'nogo Razvitii͡a Severo Vostoka Afghanistana*, Unpublished Thesis, Moscow: Institute of Oriental Studies, 2003.

[36] This expression consists of two terms: (1.) the term *Fārsī (Persian)* refers to the linguistic composition of Tajikistan, whereas (2.) *Tājikī* refers to the nation who traces their origins to Persia.

[37] The term *Darī* or *Fārsī-i Darī* is used to refer to the new Persian language prevalent in the Persian-speaking regions since medieval times. The term *Tājikī-i Fārsī* became popular in the second decade of the twentieth century. Burgne, *The Birth of Tajikistan: National Identity and the Origin of the Republic,* London, 2007, pp. 75-85; Lazard, "Darī," in *EIr,* vol. 7 (1994), pp. 34-35.

Iranian and Turkic origin shared a common religious and cultural heritage expressed mostly in the Persian language. Even the cultural heritage of the local minority communities who speak Shughnī, Wakhī or Rinī is preserved in Persian. Hence, the Persian language was and is the cultural backbone of the various communities in Badakhshan. The Persian language, therefore, is the *lingua franca* of their daily life. Equally, it is considered a source of national identity. It is important to mention that the Persian language has been the main vehicle for the spread of Islam in the region. Likewise, it contributed to the widespread adoption of the Persian Ṣūfī heritage and lexicon among the literary and intellectual circles of the region. However, during the Sovietisation of Central Asia in the 1930s the Roman and later the Cyrillic script replaced the Arabic (Persian) one.[38] In the modern era, the Tajik and Russian languages have served as the *lingua franca* among the inhabitants of Tajik Badakhshan. By contrast, the population of Afghan Badakhshan still uses *Fārsī* – written in the Persian script and the Persian-Dari language – in their daily communications.

Alongside the minor Pamiri languages, several dialects of the Tajik and Kyrghyz languages are spoken in some parts of Tajik Badakhshan. The upper valleys of Wakhān, Shākhdara, Ghund and Bartang have developed a peculiar parallelism of Pamiri and Turkic place names, mainly on account of bilingualism among the heterogeneous population. Historical sources indicate that the Kyrgyz tribes settled in the Pamirs in the seventeenth century, or possibly even earlier. Nevertheless, the Shughnī or Wakhānī (or Ishkāshimī) languages have remained the predominant spoken languages in these remote mountainous regions.

1.5. Religious Composition of Badakhshan

The religious composition of both Tajik and Afghan Badakhshan varies greatly. This phenomenon is mainly due to the fact that Afghan Badakhshan was located closer to the centres of Islamic learning, such as Balkh, Hirāt, Ḥiṣār and Kābul. The majority of the populations of Afghan Badakhshan are Sunnīs. It is reported that members of a number of Ṣūfī orders, like the Naqshbandī, Kubravī and Qādīrī, were also present in the region. Although no information is available on the Ṣūfī establishments in the region, native Badakhshanis were affiliated to various Ṣūfī orders in Central Asia, Persia and India. Likewise, members of various Ṣūfī orders were engaged in the promulgation of their particular understanding of Islam and the conversion of the local population.

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[38] Burgne, *The Birth of Tajikistan*, p. 83; Bertel's, "Persidskiĭ – Tadzhikskiĭ – Dari," in *IAN Tadzh SSR,* no. 12 (1946), pp. 7-18.

We know from contemporary sources that the eastern and central parts of Afghan Badakhshan are populated by the Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Kyrgyzs, who are the followers of Sunnī Islam. The regions of Dihmurghān in Shughnān and Māh-i May in the vicinity of the Darwāz region of Afghanistan, on the other hand, are mostly inhabited by Twelver Shī'īs, while Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs of the Nāṣir-i Khusraw tradition (Part 3, Chapters 5-8), who consider the present Aga Khan as their 49th hereditary Imam, mainly live in the remote mountain regions, particularly in Shughnān, Wakhān, Rushān, Ishkāshim, Zebāk, Munjān and in the vicinity of the Yumgān valley. They comprise approximately 20% of the total population of Afghan Badakhshan. The Tajik Badakhshanis, however, are mostly of the Shī'ī Nizārī Ismāʿīlī persuasion. Only certain western parts of Gorno-Badakhshan, namely the Vanj, Darwāz and Murghāb districts, are Sunnī populated areas.[39]

1.6. Badakhshan in the Broader Central Asian Context

Despite the fact that Badakhshan, on account of its mountainous terrain and harsh geographical conditions, was isolated from the adjacent regions, the region was part of the historical processes that had played out in the neighbouring regions in a broader geographical, political as well as a cultural and religious context. Historically, Badakhshan had close cultural, commercial, political and religious relations with Central Asia, Persia and India.

From ancient times, as Barrow argues, this region was populated by Indo-Iranian tribes. In his seminal article on the Indo-Aryans, he refers to these tribes as proto-Indo-Aryan. Accordingly, he is of the opinion that these tribes, due to the harsh geographical conditions, migrated to India, Persia and partly to the heartlands of the Central Asian *khanate*s.[40] Likewise, and with a further detailed analysis, Muḥammad Rashshod, an Iranian scholar, maintains that "before migrating to Iran the tribes of *Mād* and *Pārs* resided in the Pamir Mountains."[41] Although we might object to this proposition, it does imply that the population of Badakhshan had close connections with such neighbouring regions as Persia, India and Central Asia. These links forged from ancient times through trade and

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[39] Middleton, and Thomas, *Tajikistan and the High Pamirs,* Odyssey Books, 2008.

[40] Barrow, "The Proto-Indo-Aryans," in *JRAS,* no. 2 (1973), pp. 123-140. For more details, see: Yarshater, "The Persian Presence in the Islamic World," in Houvannisian, and Sabagh, (eds.)., *The Persian Presence in the Islamic World,* Cambridge, 1998, pp. 4-124; Foltz, *Spirituality in the Land of the Noble: How Iran Shaped the World's Religions,* Oxford, 2004 and also his *Religions of Iran: From Prehistory to the Present,* Oxford: Oneworld, 2013, pp. 137-228.

[41] Rashshad, *Falsafa az oghozi taʾrikh,* Dushanbe, 1993, pp. 8-11.

commerce remained intact in spite of the natural difficulties and the isolated mountainous terrain.

Culturally, Badakhshan had close links to Iranian and Central Asian sedentary and nomadic tribes. The cultural, political and commercial relationships of these regions are a good example of this. Similarly, the presence of certain linguistic usages is further evidence for the links between Central Asia and Badakhshan. The linguistic aspect of Central Asian influence becomes apparent from the use of Turkic words. For instance, words like *qishlāq* (lit. village), *aylāq* (lit. pasture), *qāshuq* (lit. fork) and many other similar linguistic terms are prevalent among the settled population in both Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities. More than that, there seems to have been close cultural and commercial relationships between Eastern Pamir and the Farghāna valley. This trade and communication route seems to have been open until the late nineteenth century.

In the twelfth century, Badakhshan was annexed to the Ghūrid state. The boundaries of the lands ruled by Ghūrid dynasty at the time stretched from the great Khurāsānian city of Hirāt to Bāmiyān.[42] This broad geo-political entity created an environment for religious and cultural exchange. It, therefore, seems safe to assume that the trade routes passing through the region greatly contributed to the commercial and cultural connections between Badakhshan, Persia and its Central Asian neighbours. The spread of Islam to Central Asia contributed to the interchange of ideas and heralded a change in the cultural and religious landscape of Badakhshan down to the modern era (Chapter 5, pp. 121-127).

Conclusion

An examination of the sources indicates that the region of Badakhshan and the northern principalities of Pamir are located at the crossroads of different cultures. The natural division of the land into mountain terrains was the main reason that the relics of the ancient civilizations were preserved, which were then absorbed into the new religion with the passage of time. Likewise, its location on the crossroads of trade offered a method for cultural and religious exchange on different levels between the indigenous population and that of neighbouring countries. We have seen from historical sources how the historic 'Silk Road' traversed these isolated communities, connecting not only the East with the West

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[42] Scarcia, "A Preliminary Report on a Persian Legal Document of 470-1078 found at Bāmiyān," in *E&W: NS,* vol. 14, no. 1-2 (March, 1963), pp. 73-85 and his "An Edition of the Persian Legal Document from Bāmiyān," in *E&W: NS,* vol. 16, no. 1-2 (March-June, 1966), pp. 290-295.

but the minority communities with the neighbouring regions of Central Asia and Persia as well as India.

The remoteness of the region and its land-locked mountain terrain also contributed to the preservation of various local dialects, which are mainly spoken by the mountain populations of the region. We have noted from various sources that the Persian (Darī and Tājikī) language served not only as the *lingua franca* among the mountain-dwellers and the mainland population of Badakhshan but has remained the backbone of the cultural, religious and literary heritage of the region from ancient times.

The main point of complexity that comes to our attention, regarding historical studies of Badakhshan, stems from the geographical borders, which were historically blurred and unspecified. The geographical boundaries are not by nature neutral. They are defined by the political and religious reality of the time. In the case of Badakhshan, it is the natural environment, such as the mountain ranges and rivers, which are the features defining a frontier line for a single political unit. Nevertheless, 'there were no signs in the border area that the traveller was approaching or had already crossed a border,'[43] from one mountainous principality to another, which in many cases became a cause of military confrontation. Therefore, the claim of the Amīr of Afghanistan, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān, with which we began this chapter, may serve as a window onto understanding of the impetus for the conquest of this land on the part of foreign rulers throughout its history. Local rulers, however, kept their semi-independent status, which was possible mainly because of the area's remoteness from the political interplay of the region in a wider geo-political context; this will be studied in greater depth in the coming chapters.

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[43] Spuler, "Trade in the Eastern Islamic Countries," in Richards, (ed.)., *Islam and the Trade of Asia,* Oxford, 1970, pp. 11-19.

PART II: POLITICAL HISTORY OF BADAKHSHAN

Badakhshan was continuously raided by foreign invaders,
including its neighbouring states. However, because of its difficult
terrain and partly because of the bravery of its people, Badakhshan
enjoyed semi-independence until the end of the nineteenth century.

Bezhan, F.. "The Enigmatic Authorship of *Tārikh-i Badakhshan*." [1]

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[1] Bezhan, "The Enigmatic Authorship of *Tārikh-i Badakhshān*," in *E&W,* vol. 58, no. 1/4 (2008), p. 107.

Chapter 2: The *Mīrs* and *Shāhs* of Badakhshan: The Politics of Rule

Introduction

The history of Islamic dynasties revolves around the figure of the individual ruler, who had the title of either *khalīfa, sulṭān, shāh* or *amīr.* The court poets and scribes in medieval and early pre-modern periods composed treatises that describe the rise and fall or victory and failure of ruling dynasties. Whether such sources are normative, descriptive or even fragmentary they yield information that can be cross-examined with other dynastic histories of a given period in order to trace the genealogy and rule of a single sovereign or of the trajectory of an empire. The absence of such sources from Badakhshan, a remote region in the southeast of modern Central Asia, makes the task of modern scholars very difficult. Tracing the origins of the local rulers of Badakhshan without sources produced in the region in the ancient, medieval or a pre-modern period is almost impossible. This short chapter, therefore, provides a tentative rather than a conclusive discussion on the origin and continuity of local ruling families in Badakhshan.

The continuity of local rule in Badakhshan is discussed within the wider context of political inter-relationships of Central Asian and Persian dynasties. The wide range of sources employed in this chapter will allow, where possible, a reconstruction of the sequence of rule, the consanguineous relationships between rulers and the era of a given ruler or dynasty that controlled the region of Badakhshan.

The chapter will trace the origin of the local rulers of Badakhshan from the time of Nāṣir-i Khusraw to the second half of the fifteenth century. Employing the term local ruler, I refer to a ruler or a ruling family who traced their origins to the local actors/individuals who kept the region under their control. I shall show that initially indigenous rulers, who lost their supremacy in the second half of the fifteenth century, managed to keep Badakhshan and its northern mountain principalities under their control. I shall also argue that the use of regnal titles, such as *pādshāh – shāh*, *amīr – mīr*, *sulṭān* and *ḥākim* as well as *malik* and *khān,* by the local rulers of Badakhshan and its adjacent mountain regions reflects the transition from one dynastic ruling family to the next. The use of these terms, in short, mirrors the subordination of the local rulers to mightier dynasties such as the Ghaznavids, Mongols and Tīmūrids.

2.1. A Brief Comment on the Origin of the *Mīrs* and *Shāhs* of Badakhshan

In 1966, a group of Soviet archaeologists, under the supervision of Mira Bubnova, discovered a number of utensils in the *Bāzār-dara* valley in the eastern Pamirs. These items were dated to the ninth and eleventh centuries respectively. Together with these utensils, the same group of archaeologists also discovered 67 written fragments of text that vary in length and content. These fragments were possibly produced sometime between "the first quarter of the ninth – up to the end of the second quarter or the middle of the twelfth century,"[2] [so] approximately a century prior to the Mongol invasion of Central Asia. All the fragmentary documents are in Arabic (Persian) script. The origins of the paper and techniques of its production were studied by Professor D.M. Flīate and one of his students, K. Vere, in 1973. Publishing their findings, they put forward a proposition according to which, "these papers may have possibly been produced in Samarqand."[3] Later, an attempt by Oleg Akimushkin (1929-2010), a Russian orientalist, to reconstruct these texts resulted in the retrieval of the names of several *amīr*s and one *ḥākim*.[4] On the basis of these findings, Akimushkin asserts:

> Judging from the fragments that came down to us, the content of these documents represents an official correspondence, orders and instructions as well as [transcribed] copies of requests and reports from a higher level of authority to the local authorities. In any case, in no less than six of these fragments, the discussion concerns three 'glorious' *amīr*s and one *ḥākim*; namely, Amīr Muwaffaq, Amīr Yārī-Khūdāy, Ḥākim Aḥmad (and a certain [unnamed] famous Amīr).[5]

Although these fragmentary materials do not provide any information about the origin of the rulers of Badakhshan, they directly refer to the relationship between Central Asia and Badakhshan in the wider social, cultural as well as geo-political context of the ninth to the twelfth centuries. Yet, these documents can also be used to raise the question of whether there was any relationship between Abū al-Maʿālī ʿAlī ibn al-Asad (second half of the

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[2] Akimushkin, "Fragmenty Dokumentov s Vostochnogo Pamira," in *PPV,* Moscow, 1972, p. 130-131; Bubnova, "K Istorii Dobychi Poleznyx Iskopaemykh na Pamire," in *IAN Tadzh SSR,* no. 3 (53), 1968, p. 69.

[3] Flīate, and Vere, "Issledovanie Starinnoĭ Bumagi Pamira," in *Voprosy Dolgovechnosti Dokumenta,* Leningrad, 1973, pp. 86-88. Also quoted in: Akimushkin, "Fragmenty Dokumentov s Vostochnogo Pamira," in *PPV,* 1972, p. 130-131.

[4] *Ḥākim* literary means a governor, a commander or a ruler. Steingass, *Persian-English Dictionary,* p. 408.

[5] Akimushkin, "Fragmenty Dokumentov s Vostochnogo Pamira," in *PPV,* 1972, p. 130-131. At the end of his article, Akimushkin provides a list of the names found in these fragments. He divides them into the (1.) **addressee**, (2.) **the sender**, (3.) **the names mentioned in the documents** and (4.) **the name of the courier**, which are as follows: **The addressees**: 1. Ḥusayn (fr. no. 20); 2. Abū al-Ḥasan ʿArkī (fr. no. 23); 3. Ḥusayn b. Abī al-Fawāris (fr. no. 23); 4. Shaykh Fāẓil al-Avjad Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan (fr. no. 29); 5. Sāḥib Khwāja Aḥmad (fr. no. 32) and 6. al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad al-Hamrāī. **The Senders:** 1. Abī al-Muẓaffar b. Abī al-Fawāris (fr. no. 20); 2. Abū Isḥāq al-Qarā. **Names mentioned in the documents:** 1. Amīr Jalīl Muwaffaq (fr. no. 25); 2. Amīr Muwaffaq (fr. no. 18 and 30); 3. Amīr Yāri Khudāy (fr. no. 26); 4. Aḥmad Ḥākim (fr. no. 32). **The Courier:** Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Raḥīm (fr. no. 20); Ibid. p. 135.

eleventh century), a prominent *amīr* of Badakhshan and a patron of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, and the *amīr*s and/or *ḥākim*s whose names appear in the fragmentary documents. Equally, they question the validity of the statement by Muḥammad Ḥaydar Dughlāt (905-958/1499-1551) that the rulers of Badakhshan controlled the region for 3000 years. This chapter, therefore, argues that there have been a number of different rulers or ruling families in various part of the region subordinate to the ruler of Badakhshan or to the mightier dynasties in Persia, India or Central Asia.

The earliest source that provides, scanty, information about the rulers of Badakhshan is the *Taʾrīkh-i Bayhaqī* of Abu al-Fażl Bayhaqī (eleventh century). In one of the passages, it narrates how, once, Sulṭān Masʿūd of Ghazna (son of Maḥmūd, the Ghaznavid ruler; r. 421-32/1030-41)[6] desired to travel from Balkh to Ghaznīn. Upon leaving Balkh in the Jumāda al-awwal 422/April 1031, Sulṭān Masʿūd visited other places *en route*. After visiting a certain Khwāja Mīkāʾīl, Sulṭān Masʿūd set off towards Badakhshan, where he was received by a certain Aḥmad ʿAlī. The passage in the *Taʾrīkh-i Bayhaqī* suggests that Aḥmad ʿAlī is a person of high authority, probably the vassal of the Ghaznavids or of a local ruler of the region.[7] The text, however, provides no background information nor does it specify the territories under the control of Aḥmad ʿAlī. Similarly, Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. ca. 470/1077), whom we shall meet in chapter 5, in his *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn*, notes that a certain ʿAlī ibn al-Asad [or ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad] was "a ruler of his ancestral land."[8] Yet, the aforementioned *Taʾrīkh-i Bayhaqī* confirms that the region of Badakhshan was part of the Ghaznavid territories, particularly during the reign of Sulṭān Maḥmūd (388-421/998-1030) and his son Masʿūd (r. 421-32/1030-40). It also confirms that the region was ruled by local semi-independent rulers, who were referred to by such regnal titles as *ḥākim*, *amīr*, *mīr*, *malik* and *shāh*.[9]

Analysing the narrative from the *Taʾrīkh-i Bayhaqī* and the fragmentary documents published by Akimushkin and Flīāte, we can see that the material contains the names of several Aḥmads (italicised in what follows), namely (1) Shaykh Fāżil al-Awjad *Aḥmad* bin al-Ḥasan, (2) Ṣāhib Khwāja *Aḥmad*, (3) al-Ḥasan b. *Aḥmad* al-Hamrāī and (4) *Aḥmad Ḥākim.* It thus seems plausible to argue that *Aḥmad Ḥākim* must have been one of the local administrators, who might later have come to power in Badakhshan. Thus, a tentative

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[6] Bosworth, "Ghaznavids: An Islamic Dynasty of Turkish Slave Origin (977-1186)," in *EIr,* 2001. Accessed online, on 29 April 2009, at: www.http://www.iranica.com/articles/ghaznavids.

[7] Bayhaqī, *Taʾrīkh-i Bayhaqī,* Tehran, 1324, pp. 235-236.

[8] Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn,* Muʿīn, and Corbin (eds.)., Tehran, 1953, pp. 5-7, pp. 100-101.

[9] Bayhaqī, *Taʾrīkh-i Bayhaqī,* pp. 235-236 and 323; Muʿīn, "Muqaddima" in Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn,* pp. 5-7.

inference might be drawn from the above discussion leading us to assume that the ruler of Badakhshan, namely the *Aḥmad ʿAlī*, mentioned in the *Taʾrīkh-i Bayhaqī*, might possibly have been related to the Abū al-Maʿālī ʿAlī ibn al-Asad who is mentioned in Nāṣir-i Khusraw's *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn.*[10]

In the eleventh century Badakhshan remained beyond the confines of Saljūq rule. It was a safe haven for Nāṣir-i Khusraw during his exile and he started to summon the local population to embrace the Ismāʿīlī (Faṭimid) faith. Surprisingly, Nāṣir found that the *amīr* of Badakhshan was already sympathetic, or even a convert, to the Ismāʿīlī cause. Thus, in discussing the rule of ʿAlī ibn al-Asad, Muḥammad Muʿīn, an Iranian scholar, in his introduction to *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn,* states:

> It seems quite possible that, in the years 429/1038 to 437/1045, when the Saljūqs subjugated the lands from Balkh and Khwārazm to Iṣfahān and Ray, the family of ʿAlī ibn (al)-Asad resided in Badakhshan, where they established an independent government [country] beyond the realm of the Saljūq territories. Later, from this family, Abū al-Maʿālī ʿAlī ibn (al)-Asad attained the government of Badakhshan but under unknown circumstances, gave up governing Badakhshan. [With the passage of time, however], he once again rose to power there. Whatever the case, in the year 462/1069,[11] he was the ruler of Badakhshan. [Thus], the reign of independent *amīr*s of Badakhshan continued in the region.[12]

The passage above raises some vexing questions in relation to ʿAlī ibn al-Asad and his predecessors' rule in Badakhshan such as: where are the exact or approximate region(s) they held under control? What was the reason(s) ʿAlī ibn al-Asad or his predecessors relinquished their rule? When did they restore their rule over the region? Did they control the whole of Badakhshan as semi-independent rulers or were they subordinate to mightier rulers like the Ghaznavids, as mentioned earlier? These questions bring us to (a.) the intersection of non-extant sources quoted in later works, (b.) sources produced in Badakhshan post-1800, as well as (c.) oral tradition recorded by later authors or even by modern historians, ethnographers and anthropologists.

Local oral tradition narrates the story of a certain Malik Jahān Shāh, who renounced his throne in Badakhshan, and Sayyid Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī who became an ardent followers of the *Ḥujjat* of Khurāsān, namely Nāṣir-i Khusraw.[13] The question that arises at

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[10] This is a tentative supposition, which requires a thorough cross-examination of primary sources and local oral tradition.

[11] Nāṣir-i Khusraw refers to the completion date of *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn* as 462/1069.

[12] Muʿīn, "Muqaddima," in Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn,* p. 9.

[13] The oral tradition gives the name of Malik Jahān Shāh as well as Sayyid Suhrāb-i Valī as ardent followers of Nāṣir-i Khusraw. For more details, see: Tavakkalov, *Zhanri Madḥiya dar Folkl'ori Badakhshan,* Unpublished Thesis, Dushanbe, 2005, p. 18. See also his "Madḥiyasarāyī va Ḥakīm Nāṣir-i Khusraw," in Niyozov, and Nazariev, (eds.)., *Nasir Khusraw: Yesterday,*

this juncture is, who was Malik Jahān Shāh? Juxtaposing this narrative from the oral tradition with other narrative stories, quoted, for example, by Shāh ʿAbdullāh-i Badakhshī (d. 1948) in his *Armughān-i Badakhshān* (Souvenir of Badakhshān), brings to the fore a peculiar interlacing of oral tradition and historical records.

Utilising various primary sources from Badakhshan, Shāh ʿAbdullāh-i Badakhshī, an Afghan scholar originally from Jurm,[14] talks about a certain Sayyid ʿUmar-i Yumgī.[15] Sayyid ʿUmar, as is evident from his *nisba*, was originally from Yumgān, a place where Nāṣir-i Khusraw spent the last years of his life. Shāh ʿAbdullāh mentions that Sayyid ʿUmar, also known as Malik Jahān Shāh, was the then local ruler of Yumgān. The territories under his control, according to Shāh ʿAbdullāh, who quotes his information on the authority of a deplorably non-extant *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* composed by Muḥammad Ḥusayn (ca. seventeenth-eighteenth century), stretched from Qunduz in the west to the borders of Turkestan in the east and from Ḥiṣār (Ḥiṣār-i Shādmān) in the north to the vicinity of Kābul in the south.[16] Sayyid ʿUmar (i.e. Malik Jahān Shāh) apparently had a castle, *qalʿa*, in the vicinity of Bahāristān. Bahāristān, known today as Bahārak, is located between Jurm and Fayżābād and still has the ruins of the castle of its local rulers.[17] Sayyid ʿUmar, according to Shāh ʿAbdullāh-i Badakhshī, passed away in the year 456/1063.[18] Here reason compels us to conclude that it was Sayyid ʿUmar (or Malik Jahān Shāh), who expelled ʿAlī ibn al-Asad or his ancestors from his *de facto* domain. In other words, ʿAlī ibn al-Asad, prior to 456/1063, seems to have been an intruder in the domain of Sayyid ʿUmar-i Yumgī. It was only after the death of Sayyid ʿUmar that ʿAlī ibn al-Asad and his family took control of the region, perhaps not earlier than 457/1064.

What is not known, however, is the geographic disposition of their domain. The domain of ʿAlī ibn al-Asad was apparently in close proximity to that of Sayyid ʿUmar-i Yumgī. It is also reasonable to argue that the domain of Sayyid ʿUmar, discussed earlier by Shāh ʿAbdullāh-i Badakhshī, appeared to be overstretched. Badakhshan, as mentioned earlier,

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Today, Tomorrow, Khujand, 2005, pp. 580-585; Badakhshī, *Baḥr al-akhbār,* Rahmonqulov, (ed.)., Khorugh, 1992, pp. 28-39; Shakarmamadov, and Jonboboev, *La'li Kuhsor,* Khorugh, 2003, pp. 49-51.

[14] Jurm (also referred to as Jirm or Jorm) is an extensive cluster of scattered hamlets with a population estimated at 400 families. It is located on the left bank of the (upper) Kokcha River and is part of the Yumgān district. Adamec, *Badakhshan Province and North-eastern Afghanistan,* vol. 1: *Historical and Political Gazetteer of Afghanistan,* Austria, 1972, pp. 88-89.

[15] Local oral tradition from Badakhshan also refers to this historical figure as Bābā ʿUmar-i Yumgī. Badakhshī, *Baḥr al-akhbār,* Khorugh, 1992, pp. 28-39; Shakarmamadov, and Jonboboev, *La'li Kuhsor,* Khorugh, 2003.

[16] Badakhshī, *Armughān-i Badakhshān,* p.96.

[17] Bārak or Bahārak is also a small village located about nine miles from Jurm. Adamec, *Badakhshan Province,* p. 41; Badakhshī, *Armughān,* pp. 91-94.

[18] Ibid. pp. 96-96.

is a mountainous region of deep, isolated, valleys. Each valley, evidently, constituted a semi-independent principality with its own ruler. I would therefore argue that Sayyid ʿUmar-i Yumgī and ʿAlī ibn al-Asad lived and ruled in different mountain valleys. Thus, Muḥammad Muʿin's proposition that ʿAlī ibn al-Asad and his family lost control over the whole of Badakhshan seems to be both justified and also questionable at the same time. This topic, therefore, remains a *desideratum* and requires a study on its own.

The next source confirming that the ruler of Badakhshan was a certain *Aḥmad* or Sayyidmīr *Aḥmad*, is a local narrative known as *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* (The Pearl Scatterer) by a local author Guharrez valadi (son of) Khwāja ʿAbd al-Nabī valadi Khwāja Ṣāliḥ-i Yumgī. The *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz,* an early nineteenth-century local source from Badakhshan, narrates the story of Malik Jahān Shāh (i.e. Sayyid ʿUmar-i Yumgī), mentioned earlier, and proceeds to recount ʿAlī ibn al-Asad's lineage. The *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* substantiates Muḥammad Muʿin's proposition about the rise to power of ʿAlī ibn al-Asad's family after the death of Malik Jahān Shāh. It also confirms that the territory under the control of Malik Jahān Shāh, was the region of Yumgān. Similarly, the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* confirms that the ruler of Badakhshan was a certain *Aḥmad* or Sayyidmīr *Aḥmad* whose lineage is traced back to a certain ʿAlī who was the son of Ḥārith. The author relates a narrative in an eloquent poetic form where he aptly comments:

<div dir="rtl">

بود از نسل آن سادات اعظم،   سید میر احمد آن قطب مقدَّم.

سـید میر احمد اولاد علی بود،   ز شاهان بدخشان او ولی بود .

علی فرزند حارث بود در اصل،   که او سید همان بُدند از نسل .

</div>

Sayyidmīr Aḥmad the principal leader,
Was from the progeny of great sovereigns.
Sayyidmīr Aḥmad was [one of] the sons of ʿAlī,
Who was the leader of *Shāh*s of Badakhshan.
In descent, ʿAlī was the son of Ḥārith,
Who is from the progeny of those sovereigns.[19]

Hence, we can ascertain that Sayyidmīr (or Sayyid Mīr) could either be a title or a pseudonym of Aḥmad. A close reading of the selected passages from the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* and the *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn* reveal an interesting convergence of names in the genealogy of local rulers. For instance, names such as ʿAlī and Ḥārith. Equally these genealogical tables reveal a strange divergence in the order of the generations. This might be an addendum

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[19] Quoted in: Shakarmamadov, and Jonboboev, *La'li Kuhsor,* 2003, pp. 50-52.

to the genealogical table. For example, according to the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz*, "Sayyidmīr Aḥmad is the son of ʿAlī and grandson of Ḥārith" while in the *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn*, "ʿAli is the son of Asad and grandson of Ḥārith."

Silk-i Gawhar-rīz	*Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn*	*Taʾrīkh-i Bayhaqī*
Ḥārith =	Ḥārith	Aḥmad ʿAlī Sabuktigin
[Asad?]	Asad	
ʿAlī =	ʿAlī	
Sayyidmīr Aḥmad		
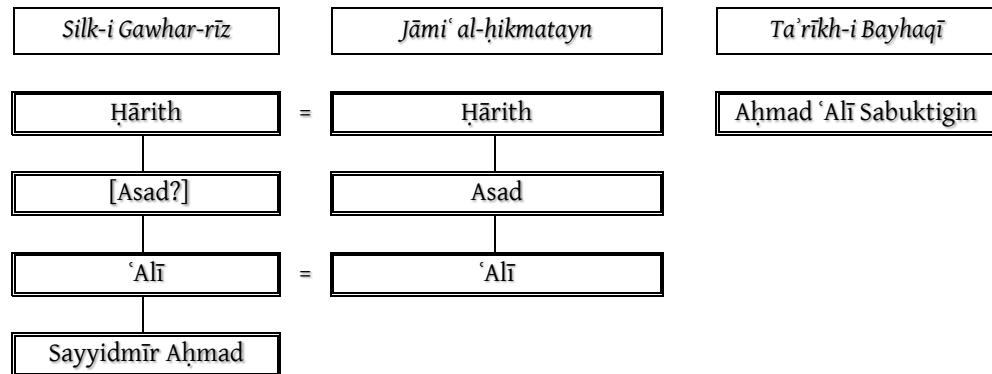
Figure 5: Eleventh century rulers of Badakhshan

Placing the name of Aḥmad Ḥākim, mentioned in the *Taʾrīkh-i Bayhaqī* and the fragmentary documents from the *Bāzār-dara* valley of Gorno-Badakhshan, into the wider picture discussed above leads us to propose a number of tentative conclusions: first of all, it is safe to assume that Aḥmad Ḥākim was the vassal of the Ghaznavids in charge of maintaining control over Badakhshan. Hence, Aḥmad Ḥākim or Aḥmad ʿAlī seems to have no relationship with the family of ʿAlī ibn al-Asad, which is evident from his peculiar family name – Sabuktegīn. Secondly, juxtaposing the genealogical tables from the *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn* and the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* clearly shows that Nāṣir-i Khusraw does not mention any rulers by the name of Aḥmad, Sayyidmīr Aḥmad or Aḥmad Ḥākim in Badakhshan during his lifetime. Thirdly, the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* brings forward a proposition according to which Sayyidmīr Aḥmad could possibly be the son of ʿAlī ibn al-Asad. Hence, one can argue that Nāṣir-i Khusraw passed away much earlier than Aḥmad or Sayyidmīr Aḥmad succeeded his father ʿAlī. Nonetheless, the absence of verifiable data from earlier sources compels us to leave this discussion as tentative until further evidence comes to light.

Overall, these sources, produced in different historical and geographic milieus, corroborate and even complement each other's statements with slight variations. In the light of the above discussion, logic compels us to conclude that local rule was not continuous and could not have lasted for 3000 years. However, we can still argue that the local rulers of Badakhshan, perhaps from the progeny of ʿAlī ibn al-Asad, controlled the region for more than four centuries.

2.2. Rulers of Badakhshan during the Mongol Period

The rule of the local semi-independent *amīr*s continued in the region during the Mongol period. Bartol'd, in his seminal article entitled "Badakhshan," which was first published in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* in 1913, argues that the region of Badakhshan was not affected by the invasion of the Mongols and until the ninth/fifteenth century remained under the rule of its native dynasty.[20] Thus, we may tentatively assume that the rulers of Badakhshan from the Mongol to the Tīmūrid period traced their origins to the family of ʿAlī ibn al-Asad. This statement also raises certain geographic concerns, as neither Bartol'd nor any of the preceding, or succeeding scholars who quoted this statement, define the frontiers of Badakhshan where the Mongol invasion started. The historical sources indicate that Badakhshan could not have escaped the external conquests of its mightier neighbouring Empires down the ages, such as the Achaemenids, Greeks, Kushans, Sasanians, Turks, and Arabs, nor yet the Central Asian dynasties, or even the Mongol invasion. Yet, it could be argued that the northern mountain principalities of Shughnān, Wakhān and Darwāz were the only parts of Badakhshan partially to escape direct Mongol invasion. The southern part of Badakhshan, however, if not subjugated directly, recognised the sovereignty of the Mongols and, as a result, paid certain types of tax and sent gifts to the Mongol rulers in order to avoid a military confrontation.

It seems surprising that Bartol'd dismisses the fact that Badakhshan was actually controlled by the Mongols. The activity of the Mongols around Badakhshan is evident in early Chingizid, Il-Khānid and Tīmūrid sources. Later such sporadic sets of narratives about the Mongols' activity around this region are also echoed even in the early pre-modern Central Asian sources (sixteenth century onwards).

The earliest record for such a set of stories appears in ʿAlā al-Dīn Aṭā Malik Juwaynī's (d. 681/1283) thirteenth-century Chingizid dynastic history – *Taʾrīkh-i Jahān-gushāy* (The History of the World Conqueror), which will be quoted below. Rashīd al-Dīn Fażl Allāh (d. 718/1318), too, in his *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh* (Compendium of Chronicles), an early fourteenth-century universal history, narrates that "in 614/1218 Chingiz Khān sent Jaba-Nayān in pursuit of Qushlūq-Khān, a Qarakhitāid Khān. Jaba-Nayān found him in Badakhshan and executed him somewhere in Sariqūl."[21] This story is also related in an eighteenth-century

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[20] Bartol'd, "Badakhshan," in *EI*, vol. 1, part II (1913), pp. 552-554.

[21] The region of Sariqūl, in the modern context is an eastern extension of the Pamir plateau, situated at the meeting point of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. It lies 300 km to the south of modern Qāshghar, in China. Rashīd al-Dīn Fażl Allāh, *Sbornik Letopiseĭ*, Smirnov, (Russian tr. and ed.)., vol. 1, part 2, Moscow-Leningrad, 1952, pp. 179-180. Smirnov

Tūqāy-Tīmūrid dynastic history – *Taʾrīkh-i Mūqīm Khānī*, which was composed by Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Munshī b. Khwāja Baqā in Balkh sometime around 1116/1704-05.[22] In another passage, Rashīd al-Dīn notes that, in 618/1221, after the conquest of Samarqand and Termez, Chingiz Khān sent his troops "to subjugate Badakhshan and its neighbouring territories partially with endearment and partially with force."[23] Rashīd al-Dīn further confirms that it was a certain Möngedü, a Mongol military commander, who "was placed in command of two *tümens* of troops in the Baghlān, Qunduz and Badakhshan area"[24] in order to control it. Juwaynī in his *Taʾrīkh-i Jahān-gushāy*, like Rashīd al-Dīn, in his *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh*, recounts many other stories about the conquest of Badakhshan by the Mongols. In another similar story, which is quoted in this and other sources, it says:

> One of the rulers of Persia [i.e. Badakhshan] sent a messenger to the Qāʿān [Khān] and accepted allegiance, sending, among other gifts, a polished ruby, which he had inherited from his forefathers. The blessed name of the Prophet had been engraved at the top and the names of the sender's ancestors beneath. He [i.e. the Khān] ordered the jewellers to leave the name of the Prophet for luck's sake but to erase the other names and engrave his own name beneath that of the Prophet. And then he sent it back.[25]

The aforementioned event occurred during the reign of Ögedei Khān (626-638/1229-1241). Although, the name of the then ruler of Badakhshan is not mentioned in any of the sources for the Mongol incursions, it leads us to assume that he was from the family of ʿAlī ibn al-Asad who, as Bartolʾd noted, ruled the region up to the fifteenth century.

After the death of Qubilai Khān in 693/1294, his grandson Temür Öljeitü (693-706/1294-1306) succeeded him. It was at some point during the reign of Temür Öljeitü that the *amīr* of Badakhshan, in alliance with one of the Mongol rulers (Bayān, the son of Qonichi) tried to disarm some of the rebellious Mongol princes. An order was sent from the Great Khān, Temür Öljeitü, commanding Bayān as follows:

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and Pankratov argue that Qushlūq-Naymān was executed in "the Vezīr valley, which is located somewhere in the vicinity of a lake Shiva to the east of Fayżābād." See footnotes on the same page. Kislīāiakov, "Istoriīā Qarategina, Darwaza i Badakhshana," in *Materialy po Istorii Tadzhikov i Tadzhikistana,* Dushanbe, 1945, pp. 92-94; Buniīātov, *Gosudarstvo Khorezmshakhov-Anushteginidov – 1097-1231,* Moscow, pp. 130-131. Buniīātov is of an opinion that Qushlūq-Nayman was caught in the *Dirāzī* valley, which is on the Pamir Mountains.

[22] Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Munshī, *Taʾrīkh-i Muqīm Khānī,* Ṣarrāfān, (ed.)., *Taẕkīra-i Muqīm Khānī,* Tehran, 1380/2001-2002. See also: *Mukimkhanskaīā Istoriīā,* Semenov, (Russian tr.)., Tashkent, 1956, pp. 45-47.

[23] Rashīd al-Dīn, *Sbornik Letopiseĭ,* vol. 1, part 2, 1952, pp. 217-218.

[24] Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh,* pp. 41-42 and 118; Boyle, "The Mongol Commanders in Afghanistan and India According to the *Tabaqāt-i Nāṣirī* of Jūzjānī," in *IS* (June 1963), pp. 239-243.

[25] Boyle, *The Successors of Chinghiz Khan: Translated from the Persian of Rashīd al-Dīn,* Columbia University Press, 1971, p. 79. A similar story is narrated in Juwaynī's *History of the World Conqueror,* which states: "*Someone sent a messenger to him [i.e. the Mongol Khān] who was son of the king [pādshāh] of Badakhshan...*" For more details, see: Juwaynī, *The History of the World Conqueror,* Boyle, (English tr.)., Manchester, 1958, p. 207.

Let your army set out at once from that direction [presumably from the west] and the army of Badakhshan, which is constantly being harassed by them [i.e. Qaidu and Duʿa] from the East... And we shall surround Qaidu and Duʿa from every side and at once make an end of them.[26]

Although these stories narrate the incursion of the Mongols into the region, they evidently fail to provide the name(s) of the local rulers. Thus, the sources consulted clearly suggest that the region nominally felt itself under Mongol control, which is also evident from coins – *sikka* – minted in Badakhshan. The absence of the name(s) of the rulers of Badakhshan in the historical sources does not necessarily mean that there was no ruler at the time. It rather reflects the lack of local historical sources concerned with the political history of the region during the Mongol period. Numismatic sources, on the other hand, provide the names of seven rulers who controlled Badakhshan during the Mongol and early Tīmūrid periods. These are: ʿAlī Shāh, Dawlat Shāh, ʿAlī Shāh II, Arghun Shāh, Shāh Bahā al-Dīn, Bahrām Shāh and Muḥammad Shāh.[27] The prevalence of coins minted in Badakhshan in the Chaghataid domain of Mā warā al-nahr testifies that the local populations were forced to pay heavy taxes in the form of local currencies, *sikka*, as well as precious and semi-precious stones in order to avoid the Mongols' wrath. The *sikka* minted in Badakhshan, therefore, confirms that the region was part of the Chaghataid domain as early as 680-690/1281-1291. Similarly, Ahmad Dani's statement supports the above-mentioned proposition, where he states:

Badakhshan was an area where the Mongols were on good terms with the indigenous populations. So the situation was quite different from that in Western Iran.[28]

While the above-mentioned passages from the *Taʾrīkh-i Jahān-gushāy* and the *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh* do not provide the names of any local rulers Ahmad Dani, using local ethnographic sources and the oral tradition, gives the names of two other rulers of Badakhshan. He mentions firstly the name of a certain Malik Pahlavān and secondly a Tāj Moghal. Furthermore, he substantiates his supposition with a reference to Hashmatullāh

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[26] Boyle, *The Successors of Genghiz Khan*, p. 329.

[27] Album, "Coins of Arghunshah from Khost in *Badakhshan*," in *Newsletter: Oriental Numismatic Society,* no. 153 (1997), p. 12. Arghun Shāh's base was in Khost, a region in the vicinity of Tāliqān in Badakhshan, where, according to numismatic sources, he ruled from 706-710/1307-11. We will discuss Bahā al-Dīn and Muḥammad Shāh and the period of his rule later in this section. See also: Petrov, "Badakhshan XIII-XIV vv. Pod vlastīu Mongol'skikh Khanov," *ZVORAO: New Series,* vol. 2, issue 27, St. Petersburg, 2006, pp. 496-540; Petrov, and Gumaīunov, "Monety Badakhshana kontsa XIII – nachalo XIV veka kak istochnik dlīa rekonstruktsii istoricheskikh sobytiĭ," in *Trudy Mezhdunarodnoĭ Numizmaticheskoĭ Konferentsii: Monety i denezhnoe obraschenie v Mongol'skikh gosudarstvakh XIII-XIV vekov,* Moscow, 2008, pp. 104-105; Petrov, and Aleksandrova, "Chagataikskie dirkhemy s imenem Amira Navruza, bytie v Badakhshane," in *Numizmatika,* no. 1:28 (20008), pp. 8-9.

[28] Dani, *History of Northern Areas of Pakistan,* Islamabad, 1989, pp. 62-63.

Khān's *Taʾrīkh-i Jammū va Kashmīr*[29] and argues that the rulers of Badakhshan even carried out military attacks on Gilgit and Chitrāl (northern areas of modern Pakistan), and enforced the conversion of the local population to the Ismāʿīlī faith.[30] This proposition is also supported by a Soviet scholar – Vadim Mikhaĭlovich Masson (1929-2010), and a Tajik scholar – Abusaid Shokhumorov who also argue that Badakhshan was controlled by local Ismāʿīlī rulers up to the second half of the fifteenth century.[31] The historical sources from the late Il-Khānid and early Tīmūrid periods confirm that the Mongols granted the conquered regions either to a Mongol prince or a trusted military commander. For instance, in the second decade of the fourteenth century (ca. 712/1313-14) the Il-Khānid Öljeitü granted Badakhshan to a dissident Chaghataid prince – Yasaʾur. Evidently, Yasaʾur was the nominal ruler of the region while the local indigenous *shāh*s remained the *de facto* rulers of their ancestral land.[32]

2.3. The *Shāh*s of Badakhshan during the Lifetime of Tīmūr

The semi-independent status of the local rulers was maintained in the post-Mongol period. The Tīmūrids, a dynasty named after Tīmūr b. Taraghay Barlas (736-807/1336-1405)[33] that controlled much of greater Mā warā al-nahr, Khurāsān and parts of north-eastern regions of what is nowadays Afghanistan, attempted to subjugate Badakhshan and its mountain principalities. However, for a long time they were unable fully to succeed in this endeavour. For instance, we learn from Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū's (d. 833/1429-30) fifteenth-century Tīmūrid universal history, *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*, that Badakhshan nominally felt itself under Tīmūrid rule in the first half of the fifteenth century. Thus, the rulers of Badakhshan and its neighbouring mountain regions supplied soldiers for the army of Amīr Tīmūr. An impression accrues from a set of stories from the Tīmūrid period that the inhabitants of Badakhshan, and the adjacent northern mountain principalities, paid heavy taxes, in the form of precious and semi-precious stones as well as in food supplies. Modern studies, particularly on epigraphy and numismatics, propose a supposition that the local rulers of

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[29] Unfortunately the work of Hashmatullāh Khān the *Taʾrīkh-i Jammu va Kashmīr,* which could have shed more light on the history of the region, was not available to me.

[30] Dani, *History of Northern Areas of Pakistan,* pp. 62-63.

[31] Shokhumorov, *Razdelenie Badakhshana i Sud'by Ismailizma,* Moscow-Dushanbe, 2008, pp. 23-46; Masson, "Istoricheskiĭ Ėtiūd po Numizmatike Chagataidov: Po Povodu Talaskogo Klada Monet XIV veka," in *Trudy Sredneaziatskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta imeni V.I. Lenina: Arkheologiiā Tsentral'noĭ Azii,* Tashkent, 1957, pp. 85-106.

[32] Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, *Żayl-i jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh-i Rashīdī,* Bayānī, (ed.)., Tehran, 1350/1972, pp. 112-115; Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamrlane,* Cambridge, 1991, pp. 24-25, 156.

[33] Manz, "Tīmūr Lang," in *EI2,* vol. 10 (2000), pp. 510-511 and her "Tamerlane and the Symbolism of Sovereignty," in *Iranian Studies,* vol. 11, no. 1-2 (1988), pp. 113-15.

Badakhshan used locally struck coins – *sikka* – to pay the imposed taxes.[34] It should be mentioned that issuing a *sikka*, minted as gold or silver coins, along with the *khuṭba* – Friday prayer address – was the prerogative and privilege of a ruling monarch only. In the absence of any central mechanism for governmental control, the Tīmūrids kept the locally struck coins in circulation but with the name of the Tīmūrid vassal (ruler) or a prince in charge of the region inscribed on them. Therefore, we learn from numismatic sources that Pīr Muḥammad b. Jahāngīr b. Tīmūr was in charge of Balkh and Badakhshan up to 808/1406. Evidently, he was succeeded by his son Qaydū b. Pīr Muḥammad. The latter figure (i.e. Qaydū) was in charge of both regions, Balkh and Badakhshan, from 808/1406 to 811/1409 and he in turn was replaced by Ibrāhīm b. Shāh Rukh, a son of Tīmūr's successor. Ibrāhīm, therefore, governed the region as a Tīmūrid vassal from 812/1409 to 817/1414.[35] The rulers of Badakhshan, as is evident from numismatic sources, continued issuing *sikka* during the rule of Shāh Bahā al-Dīn (whom we shall meet later in this chapter). It is highly likely that Shāh Bahā al-Dīn minted coins as a sign of his semi-independent rule. The Tīmūrids, on the other hand, viewed it as a deliberate repudiation of their authority over the region. Their control over Badakhshan was indirect due to the distance between the Tīmūrid court and the region.

Tīmūrid Vassals Rulers in Charge of Badakhshan

Pīr Muḥammad b. Jahāngīr (808/1406)

Qaydū b. Pīr Muḥammad (808-811/1406-1409

Ibrāhīm b. Shāh Rukh (812-817/1409-1414
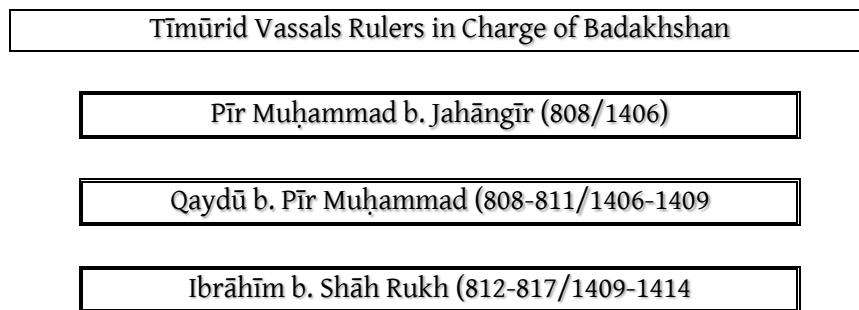
Figure 6: The Tīmūrid vassal rulers in Badakhshan in the first half of the fifteenth century

The absence of any discussion about the *khuṭba*, a Friday prayer address, raises some vexing questions about the religious composition of the region prior to, and during, Tīmūrid rule. What seems unusual is the fact that neither Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū nor any other sources discuss the religious persuasion of the local rulers. It is safe to assume that the groups affiliated with the Shīʿīs in general and the Ismāʿīlīs in particular tended to

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[34] Masson, "Istoricheskiĭ Ėtĭud po Numizmatike Chagataidov," pp. 85-106. A number of coins discovered in the 1950s in the Talas region of modern Kazakhstan indicate that the rulers of Badakhshan minted coins, which are dated to the second half of the thirteenth and first half of the fourteenth centuries. These coins had carved and sub-carved notes. The sub-carved notes indicate that the region of Badakhshan and possibly the adjacent principalities, controlled by semi-independent rulers, recognised the sovereign rule of the Tīmūrids of Central Asia.

[35] Darley-Doran, "Tīmūrids: 4. Numismatics," in *EI2,* vol. 10 (2000), pp. 525-527.

dissimulate their true religious beliefs and identity. This measure was needed in order to avoid military confrontation and, in the case of the non-Sunnī population of Badakhshan, even harsher treatment such as persecution or even extermination. Notwithstanding the lack of direct evidence from earlier pre-Tīmūrid sources about religious practices in Badakhshan, a set of fragmented narratives percolated through a number of sources, which provide a meagre insight into the different religious dispositions in the region. Early fifteenth-century Tīmūrid sources, such as Niẓām al-Dīn Shāmī's (d. 814/1411-12) *Ẓafar-nāma* and Muʿīn al-Din Naṭanzī's *Muntakhab al-tawārīkh*, relate about the widespread practice of religious heterodoxies.[36] Narratives of this nature usually circulated orally and passed from one generation to the next. A similar narrative on religious heterodoxy in Badakhshan, for instance, is found in the *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī*, the mid-sixteenth century dynastic history composed by Mīrzā Ḥaydar Dughlāt. A century later Maḥmūd b. Amīr Walī narrates similar stories in his *Baḥr al-asrār,* which was completed sometime after the 1040s/1640s.[37]

Issuing their own *sikka* and not complying with the mainstream religious practices prevalent in the Tīmūrid realm was sufficient cause to incur Tīmūrid wrath. Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, thus, sporadically notes that Tīmūr carried out a number of military campaigns against Balkh, Qunduz, Kābul, and later to Badakhshan. Yet, he does not provide the name(s) of the local rulers or any additional information about the religious practices of the local population, who, as the above-mentioned sources argue, are referred to as the "followers of the reviled *mulāḥida* sect"[38] prevalent in the region.

Ibn ʿArabshāh (854/1450), in his book *ʿAjāʾib al-Maqdūr fī Akhbār-i Tīmūr*, written sometime in the first half of the fifteenth century in Arabic, states that the region of Badakhshan "was governed by two brothers holding absolute power received from their father."[39] Ibn ʿArabshāh, however, fails to provide either the name of the father or the sons. What appears to be evidently missing from such narratives are (a.) the chronological framework for the local ruler, (b.) the consanguineous relationships between the rulers, and (c.) the territory they controlled.

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[36] Naṭanzī, *Muntakhab al-tawārīkh,* Aubin, (ed.)., Tehran, 1336/1957-58, pp. 205-208; Shāmī, *Ẓafar-nāma,* Tauer, (ed.)., *Histoire des conquêtes de Tamerlan intitulée Ẓafarnāma par Niẓāmuddīn Shāmī,* Prague, 1937/1956, pp. 14-17 and 51-53.

[37] Dughlāt, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī,* pp. 346-347; Maḥmūd b. Amīr Walī, *Baḥr al-asrār,* MS. BL I.O. 1496, ff. 275a-277a; Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty in Early Modern Central Asia,* Leiden, 2013, pp. 216-219.

[38] Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty,* p. 219, n. 168.

[39] Ibn ʿArabshāh, *Tamerlane or Timur: The Great Amīr,* Sanders, (English tr.)., Lahore, 1976, pp. 9-10.

Utilising a wide range of sources on Tīmūrid history, Beatrice Manz argues that in 761/1360-61 the *shāh*s of Badakhshan retained control over the region. Manz gives the name of the ruler of Badakhshan during this period as Shāh Bahā al-Dīn. Apparently Shāh Bahā al-Dīn was succeeded by a certain Shāh Shaykh Muḥammad and later Shāh Shaykh ʿAlī-i Badakhshānī.[40] Manz, however, does not verify their relationship due to lack of evidence in the Tīmūrid sources. Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī-i Yazdī (d. 858/1454), a Tīmūrid historian who completed his work, *Ẓafar-nāma,* sometime in 828/1425, records the names of the above-mentioned rulers and adds the names of a certain Shāh Lashgar and a Shāh Bahā al-Dīn.[41] The question that presents itself at this juncture is related to the figure of Shāh Bahā al-Dīn. Was Bahā al-Dīn the name of one ruler or two rulers ruling at different times. It is safe to assume, at this point, that there were two rulers with identical names: the first Shāh Bahā al-Dīn ruling in the mid-fourteenth and the second Shāh Bahā al-Dīn ruling the region during the first half of the fifteenth century.[42] Reason, therefore, compels me to argue that Shāh Shaykh Muḥammad, who ruled the region prior to Shāh Shaykh ʿAlī-i Badakhshānī, succeeded Shāh Bahā al-Dīn sometime between 761/1360 and 764/1363. The period of rule from Shāh Shaykh Muḥammad to Shāh Shaykh ʿAlī is not specified in the above-mentioned sources. The above narrative, however, echoes Ibn ʿArabshāh's statement that the region "was governed by two brothers holding absolute power received from their father."

The mid-fourteenth century rulers of Badakhshan

1. Shāh Bahā al-Dīn

2. Shāh Shaykh ʿAlī-i Badakhshānī	3. Shāh Shaykh Muḥammad
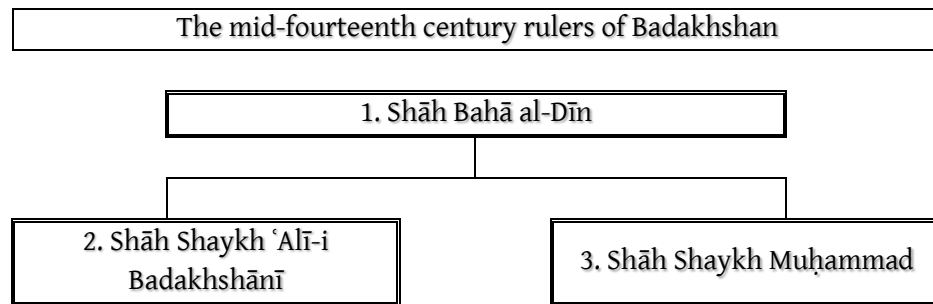
Figure 7: The rule of local ruling family of Badakhshan

In one passage in his *Ẓafar-nāma,* Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī recounts that at one time the Tīmūrids sent an army, under the command of a certain Amīr Ḥusayn (who later became the opponent of Tīmūr) to Balkh and Badakhshan. There is a hint in Sharaf al-Dīn's writing that Amīr Ḥusayn was hostile towards the rulers of Badakhshan but he does not clarify the details of this hostility. However, as such it may furnish a good reason for sending a

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[40] Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane,* p. 156; Album, "Coins of Arghunshah," p. 12.

[41] Yazdī, *Ẓafar-nāma,* Urunbaev, (ed.)., Tashkent, 1972, p. 19.

[42] This proposition is supported by numismatic evidence, *sikka,* issued by Shāh Bahā al-Dīn and his predecessors. The coins of Bahā al-Dīn are dated to 761/1359-1360.

punitive expedition to the region. When the ruler of Badakhshan, perhaps Shāh Shaykh ʿAlī-i Badakhshānī, was informed about the Tīmūrid advance, he assembled an army to face them.[43] What seems to be odd in this situation is the fact that the Tīmūrids did not advance all the way to Badakhshan but rather confronted the Badakhshani *amīr* and his army in the vicinity of Qunduz.[44] The punitive expedition strangely turns into a peace negotiation. Amīr Ḥusayn, therefore, agrees peace accord with the ruler of Badakhshan, Shāh Shaykh ʿAlī—i Badakhshānī, and both rulers with their retinues celebrated this event in Qunduz.[45] This event must have happened sometime before 769/1367 as Sharaf al-Dīn tells us of another punitive expedition sent to Badakhshan after the above-mentioned date.

During the second expedition, the Tīmūrid army entered the heartland of Badakhshan. Sharaf al-Dīn informs us that the Tīmūrid army advanced from the south and faced tough resistance from the local population. The incursion of the Tīmūrid army spread discord and the perplexed and frightened population as well as members of the local ruling family escaped to the northern mountain regions of Badakhshan, which constitute the minor semi-independent principalities of Shughnān, Wakhān and Darwāz. During this upheaval, however, those who could not escape were put to the sword. Many villages were destroyed and their flocks were taken away. The punitive Tīmūrid expedition, according to the *Ẓafar-nāma*, was successful as they apprehended the then ruler of Badakhshan, Shāh Shaykh ʿAlī-i Badakhshānī.[46] Sharaf al-Dīn does not provide further details about him which compels us to conclude that the Tīmūrids put him to sword in order to establish complete control over the region.

2.4. The Turmoil in Badakhshan and Execution of the Last Local Ruler

After the death of Tīmūr in 807/1405, his empire was divided among his sons and close relatives. The divided regions of the Tīmūrid realm, until its decline, were linked by

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[43] Yazdī, *Ẓafar-nāma,* p. 279. Persian text: *Dar ān davrān, ki shāhāni Badakhshān bā Khān wa Amīr Ḥusayn yāghī būdand, Amīr Ḥusayn lashkar kashīda ba sari īshān (i.e Badakhshāniyān) raft va shāhān nīz sipāh jamʿ āvarda pīsh āmadand va lashkari ṭarafayn dar muqābili yakdīgar nishastand...* English translation: At the time of these events the *Shāh*s of Badakhshan had hostile relations with the Khan and Amīr Ḥusayn. [Hence] Amīr Ḥusayn gathered an army and carried out a punitive expedition against them [i.e. the Badakhshanis]. The *Shāh*s also amassed an army and advanced forward and their armies stood against each other.

[44] Qunduz is a province in the north of Afghanistan which used to be part of the Qaṭaghan province. Adamec, *Badakhshan Province,* pp. 116-117.

[45] Yazdī, *Ẓafar-nāma,* pp. 279-280. Persian text: *Amīr Ḥusayn bā Shāhāni Badakhshān ṣulḥ karda... yakdīgar-rā kanār girifta ghubāri vaḥshatī, ki dar miyān būd ba kullī murtafiʿ shud...* English translation: Amīr Ḥusayn agreed a peace accord with the *Shāh*s of Badakhshan. [Consequently] they embraced each other and the feeling of animosity that they had felt towards each other was dispelled.

[46] Yazdī, *Ẓafar-nāma,* p. 283.

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personal ties rather than a formal structure of government.[47] The scattered territories of the Tīmūrid domain constituted semi-independent dynasties like those of the mountain regions. Evidently, such regions were located far from the urban centres as well as far from the places where the rulers resided. Therefore, the society lost its social cohesion on account of the fact that the rulers could not exercise panoptic control over vast mountain territories like Badakhshan. Discussing the chaotic conditions prevailing after the death of Tīmūr, Beatrice Manz proposes the following:

> The towns from which the Tīmūrids ruled their dominions were rather like an archipelago within a sea of semi-independent regions, over which control was a matter of luck, alliance and an occasional punitive expedition. Some major cities remained under their own leaders, as vassals of the higher power. All of the local rulers, of cities, mountain regions and tribes, had their own political programmes.[48]

Thus, the rulers of Badakhshan whose territory was situated on the periphery of the Tīmūrid Empire had their own political agenda; sometimes they were aligned with the Tīmūrids and sometimes not. Their religious affiliation which, as stated earlier, was different from that of their Sunnī overlords, kept them apart from the rest. Badakhshan, therefore, found itself outside the mainstream disposition of power. Being outside the Tīmūrids' disposition of power reveals that there was a remotely located opposition to the established regime, which is demonstrated in the following:

(a.) a remote mountainous region difficult to control

(b.) local ruling elite not tracing their ancestry to the house of Tīmūr

(c.) local rulers who could rebel at any time

Therefore, from the Tīmūrid point of view, the region could not be spared from sporadic punitive expeditions. For instance, in the second decade of the fifteenth century, during the reign of Shāh Rukh (r. 811-850/1409-47), Fīrūz Shāh (Jalāl al-Dīn) b. Arghunshāh (d. 848/1444-45), one of the *amīr*s and Tīmūrid military commanders of Shāh Rukh, was sent to conduct a punitive expedition against Badakhshan. In 815/1412-13 Fīrūz Shāh dispatched his envoy against Shāh Bahā al-Dīn II (d. after 821/1418-19), who according to Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, was the local ruler of Badakhshan. The Tīmūrids received a number of complaints particularly from Amīr Ḥamza (a Tīmūrid envoy) and a certain Nīkpay Shāh-i Badakshānī, a local Tīmūrid vassal in the region, whose brother was executed by Shāh

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Bahā al-Dīn II sometime in 812/1409-10. Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū reckons that Shāh Bahā al-Dīn II wanted to free his land and people from the Tīmūrid yoke. By such an action, he infuriated the Tīmūrids and was consciously repudiating the Tīmūrid control of the region. With the advance of the Tīmūrid army to Baghlān, Shāh Bahā al-Dīn II had no other choice but to conceal himself in the mountainous region of Shughnān and the western part of the Pamirs. Describing the advance of the Tīmūrid army, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū recounts:

عصاكر منصوره به عقب او روان گشته به كان لعل رسيدند و از آن گذشته به ولايت سيغناق و غُند و پامير

درامدند و آن مواضيع منبع آب جيهون است.

> The victorious army went after him [i.e. Shāh Bahā al-Dīn II], reaching the ruby mines. Passing these places, they entered the region of Sighnāq [Shughnān] and Ghund and Pāmīr, which is the source of the Oxus River.[49]

Generally, the result of such expeditions was the dethronement or execution of the local ruler and, on occasions, the massacre of the rebellious population. The concealment of Shāh Bahā al-Dīn II, therefore, enraged Fīrūz Shāh and other Tīmūrid military commanders. As a result they replaced him with a certain Shāh Sulṭān Maḥmūd.[50] Such an action by the Tīmūrids was needed in order (a.) to re-establish the mechanism of remotely controlling the region through the ruling power (a Tīmūrid *amīr* or prince); and (b.) to entrench the regime in power by means of local individuals who supported it.

A question that presents itself at this juncture is: who is this Shāh Sulṭān Maḥmūd that Fīrūz Shāh had enthroned, possibly as a new vassal of Tīmūrids, while in pursuit of Shāh Bahā al-Dīn II? Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū is evidently referring to Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad – the last local ruler of Badakhshan – whose genealogy has been traced to Alexander the Great.[51] A short reference to Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad can also be found in Dawlatshāh-i Samarqandī's *Taẕkīrat al-Shuʿarā*. Dawlatshāh mentions a certain Ṣāḥib-i Balkhī, a poet-panegyrist who used to write eulogies (*madḥiya*) for the rulers of Badakhshan during this period. Unfortunately, Dawlatshāh neither provides any background information about Ṣāḥib-i Balkhī nor any details of his relationship with Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad and his

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[49] Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, *Zubdat al-tawārīkh,* pp. 469-470.

[50] Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, *Zubdat al-tawārīkh,* pp. 469-470; Iskandarov, *SEPAIPK,* Dushanbe, 1983, pp. 44-45. It should be mentioned that the name of the last ruler of Badakhshan has various spellings in every source. For instance, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū refers to him as Shāh Sulṭān Maḥmūd, Dawlatshāh-i Samarqandī refers to him as Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh; Muḥammad Dughlāt refers to him as Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad-i Badakhshī. In some places, his *nom de plume*, Laʿlī, is also used. For the sake of consistency I will use Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad throughout this thesis.

[51] Dughlāt, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī,* pp. 137-138; Maḥmūd b. Amīr Walī, *Baḥr al-asrār,* MS BL. I.O. 1496, ff. 275a-276b; Amīn Aḥmad-i Rāzī, *Haft iqlīm,* Ṭāhirī, (ed.)., (1378/1999-2000), pp. 604-605.

court, except for a reference to his hometown, Balkh, which may be deduced from his *nisba*. The passage from the *Taẕkīrat al-Shuʿarā,* nevertheless, narrates:

. . .امّا ملوك از بدخشان خاندان قديم و شاهان كريم بوده‌اند و بعضى نسب ايشان را باسكندر فيلقوس ميرسانند كه بذى‌القرنين مشهور است، بروزگار سلاطين ايران و توران همواره ايشان را توقير و احترام بوده و پادشاهان بولايت بدخشان تعرُّض نميرسانيده‌اند . . . و از ملوك بدخشان بملازمت و برددى قانع بوده‌اند و اين حال از زمان سلاطين

ماضيه استمرار يافته بود...

Indeed, the rulers of Badakhshan come from an ancient family and they are merciful *shāh*s and some [people] trace their lineage to Alexander – son of Philip [a Greek King] who is famous as *Ẕū al-Qarnayn*. During the reigns of the rulers of Iran and Tūrān, they [the rulers of Badakhshan] have been honoured and respected... [Thus] the kings did not cause any confrontation to be brought to the region of Badakhshan... and this status of affairs continues to be prevail from the time of the previous *sulṭan*s.[52]

To draw together all the pieces – from Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, ʿAlīshīr Navāī, Dawlatshāh-i Samarqandī, Ibn ʿArabshāh, Muḥammad Ḥaydar Dughlāt and others – we might infer that Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad was the son of Shāh Qulī, (the father of Shāh Bahā al-Dīn II and Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad), apparently the previous ruler of the region. According to the *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī*, Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad was also known by his *takhallus* (i.e. pen-name) Laʿlī.[53] He was thus the brother or half-brother of Shāh Bahā al-Dīn II and, certainly, the father-in-law of Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd b. Sulṭān Muḥammad b. Mīrān Shāh (r. 855-873/1451-1469).[54] His reign coincided with the internal conflicts within the Tīmūrid realm. Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd, like his predecessors, exercised a territorial ambition prior to, and during his accession to the Tīmūrid throne in 855/1451.[55] It was only after his accession to the Tīmūrid throne that Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd "desired Badakhshan to be part of his realm."[56] As a result, he sent a number of punitive expeditions to Badakhshan, Khuttalān and Ḥiṣār and succeeded in merging these regions into the Tīmūrid domain that remained under his control till his death in 873/1469.

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[52] Dawlatshāh, *Tadhkīratu 'sh-Shuʿarā: Memoirs of the Poets,* Browne, (ed.)., London, 1901, p. 453.

[53] Dughlāt, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī,* Ghaffārī Fard, (ed.)., Tehran, 2004, p. 183; Habibov, *Ganji Badakhshon,* Dushanbe, 1972, pp. 4-5.

[54] For biography of Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd, see: Gardner, "Abū Saʿīd b. Muḥammad b. Mirānshāh," in *EI3,* vol. 2 (2013), pp. 1-4.

[55] Manz, "Tīmūrids: 1. History," in *EI2,* vol. 10 (2000), pp. 513-515; Akhmedov, "Poslednie Timuridy i Borʾba za Badakhshan," in Karimov, and Bulgakova, (eds.)., *IPIINKNSA,* Tashkent, 1993, pp. 82-83

[56] Dawlatshāh, *Tadhkīratu 'sh-Shuʿarā,*p. 453; Nawāī, Mīr ʿAlī Shīr, *Majālis un-nafāis: Galaxy of Poets,* Hekmat, (ed.)., Tehran, 1945, p. 209; Dughlāt, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī,* pp. 136-137; Habibov, *Ganji Badakhshon,* pp. 5-6, 20-21 and 38-39; for the broader socio-political environment of that period, see: Bartolʾd, "Ulugbek i Ėgo Vremĩa," pp. 147-174 and "Mir Alisher i Ėgo Politicheskaĩa Zhizn" in *Socheneniĩa,* vol. 2, part II, Moscow, 1964, pp. 200-260.

A number of sources from fifteenth century Mā warā al-nahr narrate a story that became a turning point in the history of Badakhshan. The story which percolated through literary circles tells that Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd sent an army to purge the entire ruling family of Badakhshan. The reason for such a heinous act, however, is not mentioned in any of the extant sources. Several factors might be the cause of such an action: firstly, the semi-independent status of the local rulers, which resulted in Badakhshan, remaining partially outside the established Tīmūrid disposition of power. Secondly, Abū Saʿīd seems not to have been satisfied with a condominium division of authority in his realm, particularly in the eastern part.

The narrative from the *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī* and the *Taẕkīrat al-shuʿarā* implies that Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad neither predicted such an action nor could escape it. During the first Tīmūrid attack, he was caught and brought to Herāt, while his son Ibn Laʿlī escaped to Qāshghar. Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd enthroned his son, Abū Bakr, a nephew of Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad, as the new ruler of Badakhshan. With the passage of time, Ibn Laʿlī gathered a group of supporters and returned from exile to reclaim his ancestral domain. He succeeded in dethroning Abū Bakr and proclaiming himself the *Shāh* of Badakhshan. This enraged Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd, who carried out a new campaign in the region, which resulted in the extermination of the entire family of Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad. Dawlatshāh-i Samarqandī describes this heinous act as follows:

وآن ...ولشکر فرستّاد وآن ملک را مسخر ساخت و بقتّل سلطان محمد شاه و اولاد و اقرباءِ او اشارت فرمود...

خسروان مظلوم بحکم سلطان ابوسعید بدرجةِ شهادت رسیدند و خاندان قدیم آن شاهان کریم آن ویران شد و نسل ایشان

...منقطع کشت

And he [i.e. Abū Saʿīd] sent an army and conquered the land and ordered the execution of Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh [i.e. Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad] and his family as well as his relatives... and, with the command of Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd, these rulers were put to death and the ancient family of these merciful *shāh*s was defiled and their progeny has been exterminated.[57]

The primary sources from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century as well as modern studies suggest that this infamous act, committed by Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd against the ruling *Shāh*s of Badakhshan, must have taken place in the second half of the fifteenth century. The excerpt from Dawlatshāh's *Taẕkīrat al-Shuʿarā* infers that Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd clearly did

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[57] Dawlatshāh, *Tadhkīratu ʿsh-Shuʿarā*, p. 453.

not recognise the authority of Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad over the region. According to Abusaid Shokhumorov, a Tajik scholar, Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd undertook this expedition sometime in 870/1466-67 while the *Taʾrīkh-i Muntaẓam-i Nāṣirī* places it in 872/1468.[58]

Rulers of Badakhshan	The Tīmūrids
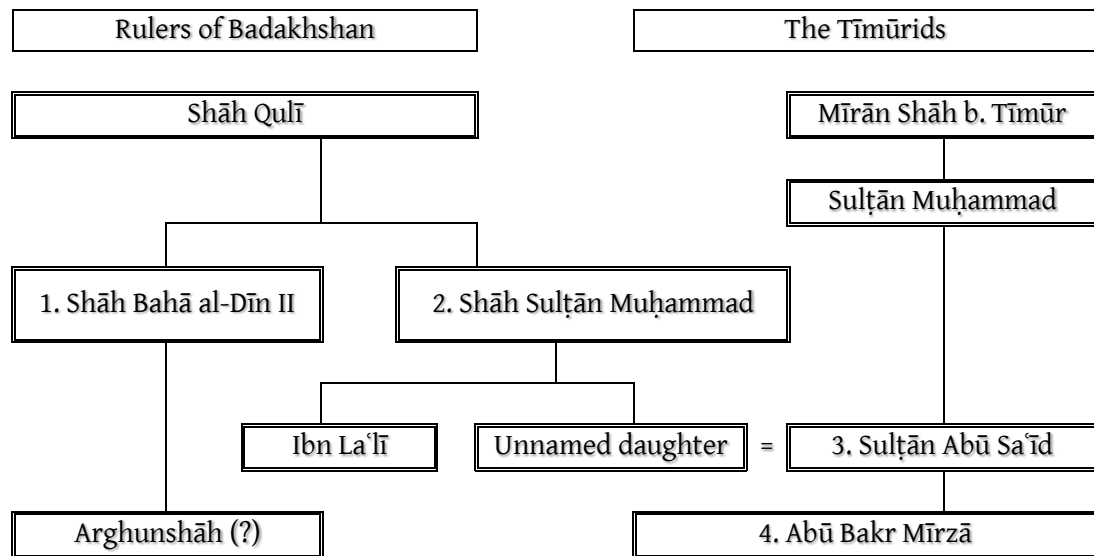
Figure 8: Family relations between the rulers of Badakhshan and Tīmūrids

At the heart of this long discussion lies a question about the relationships between the ancient rulers and the succeeding dynasty of *shāh*s and *mīr*s that were ruling Badakhshan from the sixteenth century onwards. Likewise, it implicitly raises a question of the status of religion and minority communities, such as the Twelver Shīʿīs, the Ismāʿīlīs and various Ṣūfī groups, in Badakhshan in a broader religious and political context.

Abusaid Shokhumorov argues that Ismāʿīlī teaching, which spread into Badakhshan at some point in the tenth century, was maintained in the region during the reign of the local rulers. Since these rulers were sympathetic to or had even converted to the Ismāʿīlī faith, it was maintained there for over 400 years.[59] Thus, the extermination of the dynasty of local rulers brought a new dimension to the political, cultural and religious environment of Badakhshan, whereby Ismāʿīlism was proclaimed heretical and the new rulers attempted to re-convert the local population to Sunnī Islam. Consequently, the local Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* network (Parts 3, pp. 121-192), which was founded by Nāṣir-i Khusraw, was moved from the central lands of Badakhshan to the northern mountain principalities such as Shughnān and Wakhān where the local *mīr*s and *shāh*s from the progeny of Shāh

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[58] Shokhumorov, *Razdelenie Badakhshana,* 2008, p. 26; ʿItimād al-Salṭana, *Taʾrīkh-i Muntaẓam-i Nāṣirī,* Muḥammad Ismāʿīl-i Rizvānī (ed.)., vol. II, Tehran, 1364/1944, p. 714; Habibov, *Ganji Badakhshon,* p. 6.

[59] Shokumorov, *Razdelenie Badakhshana,* pp. 27-29. I calculated this period from approximately 1064 to 1468, which gives the total of 404 years.

Khāmūsh as well as the local *daʿwa* network under the control of local *pīr*s took charge of it.

The execution of Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad and his son Ibn Laʿlī in 872/1468 was the cause of disorder in Badakhshan. Great chaos was caused by the absence of a local ruler, on the one hand, and internecine wars for political supremacy within the Tīmūrid family on the other. Moreover, it must be emphasised that Abū Bakr's establishment of complete control over the region remains questionable as it is evident that it was recognised neither by the local population nor by the powerful Tīmūrid princes including his half-brother Sulṭān Maḥmūd.

2.5. The Politics of Rule in Badakhshan from 1469 to 1500

The full subjugation of Badakhshan and the execution of the local ruling family by the Tīmūrids opened a new chapter in the history of Badakhshan. As a result, the region was drawn into the vortex of Tīmūrid political intrigues. The internecine wars between the Tīmūrids became the cause of population movement both within and outside Badakhshan. Immediately after the uprising of Ibn Laʿlī, Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd re-granted Badakhshan to his son Abū Bakr, the nephew of Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad, the son of one of his daughters.[60] Although Abū Bakr, like any other Tīmūrid prince, exercised expansionist ambitions, his army was not strong and well-equipped enough to carry out such an expedition against his more powerful relatives. The primary sources do not provide details of Abū Bakr's rule in Badakhshan, during the lifetime of his father. Nonetheless, tension in the family escalated to the extent that a new rivalry began to surface, particularly after the death of Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd sometime in 873/1469. What is unusual is the fact that sources well-disposed to the Tīmūrids keep silent about the succession dispute between Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd's sons. Dawlatshāh-i Samarqandī reckons that, shortly after the death of Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd, Abū Bakr desired to have his father's entire domain under his control. He attacked his half-brother, Sulṭān Maḥmūd Mīrzā (857-899/1453-1494), who was the then ruler of Ḥiṣār (Ḥiṣār-i Shādmān) and Khuttalān. In one of his poems, Abū Bakr expressed his desire to control his father's territories in the following eloquent fashion:

<div dir="rtl">

زچینم تا بدخشان در نگین باد .   چه سنجد در نگین من بدخشان،

</div>

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[60] Dughlāt, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī*, pp. 136-137. The name of Abū Bakr's mother, daughter of Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd is not given in any sources that I consulted. Therefore in the genealogical tables I refer to her as "Unnamed daughter."

به کوهستان سمندم را چه جولان؟   مرا میدان همه روی زمین باد .

What counts Badakhshan within my realm?
From China to Badakhshan shall be encompassed in it.
Why, my yellowish steed should whirl on the mountain,
While the entire universe is my riding field.[61]

Abū Bakr's campaign proved successful, as he annexed both Khuttalān and Ḥiṣār, the domain of his half-brother, Sulṭān Maḥmūd, to his realm. After some time, Sulṭān Maḥmūd Mīrzā gathered a large army and defeated Abū Bakr. As a result, Abū Bakr had little choice but to go into hiding. Vladimir Bartol'd is of the opinion that Abū Bakr took refuge at the court of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā (r. 874-911/1470-1506), a great-grandson of ʿUmar Shaykh, son of Tīmūr, who was the ruler of Herāt at that time.[62] Consequently, Sulṭān Maḥmūd retained control over Badakhshan and its adjacent regions. He ruled these regions for almost 26 years (from 873/1469 to 899/1494). Abū Bakr evidently lost Badakhshan to his half-brother, Sulṭān Maḥmūd, who could easily have pardoned him and even restored him to his position. In any event, there are no records of Sulṭān Maḥmūd having done so. Therefore, reason compels me to argue that Sulṭān Maḥmūd did not consider Abū Bakr of full Tīmūrid descent. Sulṭān Maḥmūd Mīrzā apparently possessed some extra claim to Tīmūrid descent, on account of his lineage and status.[63] Abū Bakr, from his maternal side, was not of a Tīmūrid (Turkic) line rather from an Iranian (Persian) pedigree. He was the nephew of Sulṭān Muḥammad, the last ruler of Badakhshan, which seems to be one of the causes of his being disregarded by his half-brother, Sulṭān Maḥmūd Mīrzā, and possibly by other Tīmūrid princes as well.

Thus, Badakhshan was merged with Ḥiṣār and remained under the control of Sulṭān Maḥmūd b. Abū Saʿīd until the incursion of the Safavids and Shaybānids into Mā warā al-nahr and later Badakhshan at the turn of the fifteenth century. The new Tīmūrid rulers of Badakhshan, however, faced both an internal and an external challenge. The internal challenge came from a certain Khusraw Shāh, who was in the retinue of several of the Tīmūrid princes while the external challenge came from a certain Shāh Raẓī al-Dīn, who seems to have been affiliated with the Nizārī Muḥammad Shāhī Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa*.

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[61] Dawlatshāh, *Tadhkīratu ʿsh-Shuʿarā*, p. 535; Habibov, *Ganji Badakhshon*, p. 6.

[62] Bartol'd, *Sochineniĩa*, vol. 3 (1963-73), p. 345. On Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā see: Subtelny, *Tīmūrids in Transition*, Leiden, 2007, pp. 43-74; Akhmedov, "Poslednie Timuridy i Bor'ba za Badakhshan," p. 82; Tumanovich, *Gerat v XVI-XVII vekakh*, Moscow, 1989, pp. 76-78.

[63] Lineage and status were two prerogatives in succession disputes in Islamic history. For example see: Walker, "Succession to Rule in the Shiite Caliphate," in *JARCE*, vol. 32 (1995), pp. 239-264; Welsford, "Rethinking the Ḥamzahids of Ḥiṣār," in *Asiatische Studien*, vol. 65 (2011), pp. 797-823.

Conclusion

The discussion presented in this chapter, as was mentioned at the outset, is tentative. The absence of early primary sources on the history of Badakhshan as well as the absence of verifiable data about (a.) the genealogy of local rulers, (b.) the period of their reign, and (c.) the consanguineous relationship between them has restricted the above discussion to a synoptic presentation. Despite these limitations, an attempt has been made to discuss the long historical period from the eleventh to the fifteenth century within the critical and analytical framework, which has yielded the following conclusions.

The region of Badakhshan, as has become evident from the above discussion, was historically a semi-independent region controlled by its local rulers. These rulers used a number of regnal titles, such as *mīr, amīr, shāh, ḥākim* and sometimes *sulṭān* to identify their rule and authority over the local population. The use of these terms to refer to the local ruler reflects a pattern of change from being independent or semi-independent to becoming a vassal state of bigger powers. Although the rise and fall of new dynasties in the greater Mā warā al-nahr contributed to the nominal annexation of Badakhshan into the domain of the Ghaznavids, Mongols, and Tīmūrids, control by the local ruling family evidently remained intact. It is the paucity of historical sources, which prevents scholars from reconstructing the succession and genealogies of the local ruling family.

The fragmentary data retrieved from historical and hagiographic sources, poetic *taẕkīra*s, books on genealogy (*Nasab-nāma*) as well as epigraphic and numismatic sources presented a meagre insight into this most obscure period in the political, religious and cultural history of Badakhshan. Nonetheless, the data retrieved on the genealogy and dominion of the local rulers evidently repudiates the claim of Shāh Begim, the daughter of Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad quoted by Muḥammad Ḥaydar Dughlāt, that her ancestors ruled the region for 3000 years.

The rise of new political dynasties whether in Mā warā al-nahr, Persia or India resulted in the expansion of their territories, which on many occasions also included Badakhshan. Such a changing scenario was a cause of hardship for local rulers and their subjects. Although the region kept its semi-independent status, the local rulers and their subjects were forced to pay heavy taxes to the more powerful dynasties in order to avoid a military confrontation.

Historically Badakhshan is presented as a refuge for minority groups such as the Twelver Shīʿas and the Ismāʿīlīs. Nor is the case of the local rulers an exception either. We have shown that the rulers of Badakhshan are migrants who arrived in the region either from Khurāsān (Persia) or from Mā warā al-nahr. It is highly likely that their affiliation to the Shīʿī Ismāʿīlī fold made them prey to their enemies. In Badakhshan, the so-called bastion of the Ismāʿīlī faith (firstly Faṭimid and subsequently Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Islam), these immigrants rose to power and controlled the region for almost 400 years.

The execution of Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad, the last local ruler of Badakhshan, in 872/1468 opened a new chapter in the history of the region. It is plausible to argue that this event changed the religious landscape of Badakhshan, too, as the Sunnī majority forced the local population to convert to their religion, a matter that will be discussed in more detail elsewhere in this thesis.

CHAPTER 3: POLITICAL HISTORY OF BADAKHSHAN FROM 1500 TO 1658

Introduction

The political situation in Mā warā al-nahr, Persia and India radically changed with the decline of the Tīmūrids and with the rise of three newly established dynasties: the Shaybānids (906/1501) in Central Asia, the Safavids (907/1502) in Persia and later on the Mughal Empire (932/1526) in India. At the same time, the last remaining *amīr*s from Tīmūr's progeny, on the edge of political fragmentation as they were, strove to hold on to greater Mā warā al-nahr – their '*parental land*' – despite the fact that they had, in reality, already lost it to the Shaybānid dynasty. The struggle for political power in a broader context shows a small mountainous landlocked country caught in the middle between these three mighty empires, which became an important place for certain *amīr*s, and a source of revenue and economic prosperity for others. The greed and rage of the conquerors and, above all, the religious persecution of the Shīʿīs, in general, and the Ismāʿīlīs, in particular, by the majority of Sunnī rulers in close proximity to Badakhshan, turned this mountainous land into a place of refuge for the laity and a battlefield for the conquerors. The struggle for freedom, however, turned the native population into mountain wanderers. Lacking an empire, a unified state or even a conglomerate of semi-independent dynasties, Badakhshan and its mountain principalities could not defend its political and religious interests and a centralised local political structure. This was particularly evident with the advent of mightier conquerors in its territories in the early pre-modern period.

This chapter, therefore, seeks to discuss the changes pertaining to the politics of rule in Badakhshan. The change in political power will be used as a window on to an understanding of the shifting dynamics of rule among the different dynasties, namely the Tīmūrids, Shaybānids, Safavids and Mughals. In light of this, I shall concentrate on the main events that, in one way or another, influenced and shaped the political environment in Badakhshan. This chapter also seeks to elaborate on the long contest for supremacy in Badakhshan between the last Tīmūrids (and later the Mughals) and the Shaybānids between 905/1500 and 1068/1658.

3.1. In the Midst of Mighty Empires: The Politics of Rule in Badakhshan from 1500 to 1509

The sixteenth century heralded a new change in the religious, political and social setting of Mā warā al-nahr and its adjacent regions. The inter-family quarrels and the weakening

of Tīmūrid rule, as discussed in the previous chapter, served as a precursor to the advent of the Shaybānids in Mā warā al-nahr, the Safavids in Persia and later on the Mughals in India. All these dynasties exercised an expansionist ambition to extend their territorial dominion. On the one hand, this territorial expansion contributed to the strengthening of the economic and military capability of these dynasties, while on the other, it contributed to the spread of their religious and political ideologies in the newly conquered lands. The geo-political and military might of these rising dynasties was confronted by the minor principalities that had been founded during the Tīmūrid hegemony throughout greater Mā warā al-nahr and Khurāsān. Unfortunately, most of these principalities were doomed: they either disappeared or were merged with one of the mighty empires that later installed vassals to rule the area on their behalf. One of these small semi-independent countries was in fact Badakhshan. It became a focal-point of confrontation for a number of reasons: firstly, it was still under the control of the descendants of the last Tīmūrids who later established the Mughal Empire in India. Secondly, its geo-political location at the crossroads of trade made it a crucial staging point between Central Asia, the Indian sub-continent, Persia and possibly eastern Turkestan (modern western China). Thirdly, it constituted a source of religious and ideological opposition to the state-sponsored religion, as a large part of its population consisted of Twelver Shīʿīs and Ismāʿīlīs. Fourthly, the local population intermittently rose up against oppression first by the Tīmūrids and later by the Shaybānids, causing the internal fragmentation of its society. Quite surprising is the fact that all of these dynasties, directly or indirectly, started to impose a new form of religion on the local population that had practised the Ismāʿīlī faith for more than three centuries.[1]

The desperate population of Badakhshan started to revolt against foreign oppression. The taxes imposed by the invaders created a burden on their daily lives. Similarly, the strict religious impositions influenced the practice of the Ismāʿīlī faith in the region. As a result, most of the Ismāʿīlī population migrated to the isolated mountain principalities of Shughnān, Wakhān and Darwāz, and even to Gilgit and Hunzā.[2] These northernmost

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[1] Shoskhumorov, *Razdelenie Badakhshana i Sud'by Ismailizma,* Moscow-Dushanbe, 2008, pp. 8-21. Historical sources as well as modern studies clearly show that the Ismāʿīlīs were considered heretics by the majority of the Sunnīs who saw it their mission to convert the non-Sunnī population, in general, and the Ismāʿīlīs, in particular, to the 'right' religion. The question of conversion, therefore, is the topic of my discussion in Part 3 which discusses the religious history of Badakhshan.

[2] These regions constitute semi-independent principalities known as *mīrigharī* or *shāhigarī.* The regions of Shughnān, Wakhān and Darwāz are located along the upper reaches of the Oxus River. For more details, see: Kamoliddinov, *Istoricheskaiā Geografiā Iuzhnogo Sogda i Tokharistana po Arabōazychnym Istochnikam IX-XIII vv,* Tashkent, 1996, pp. 215-259.

mountain principalities partially retained their semi-independent status and remained beyond the reach of central control during these imperial rivalries.

At the end of the fifteenth century, particularly after the death of Sulṭān Maḥmūd Mīrzā in 899/1494, neither of his sons – Baysānqur Mīrzā (d. 904/1499) and Sulṭān Masʿūd Mīrzā (d. 912/1507) was able to secure their father's domain – Badakhshan – where he had ruled for 26 years. Badakhshan, during this chaotic period, was in total disarray. This was due both to the absence of a local ruling family, and a total lack of Tīmūrid control over the region. The situation, therefore, changed dramatically when in 904/1498-99 a certain Khusraw Shāh succeeded in preventing both Baysānqur Mīrzā and Sulṭān Masʿūd Mīrzā from exercising power in the domain of their father. As we learn from Ẓahīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur's *Bābur-nāma* and Gulbadan Begim's *Humāyūn-nāma,* two sixteenth-century Mughal sources, Khusraw Shāh took control over Qunduz, Ḥiṣār (Ḥiṣār-i Shādmān), Khuttalān and consequently parts of Badakhshan at the end of the fifteenth century.[3] Khusraw Shāh, according to the sixteenth century sources, was a very untrustworthy and controversial figure particularly in relation to the Tīmūrids. Yet, some scholars consider him to have been one of the powerful Tīmūrid *amīr*s who controlled a vast territory on both sides of the Oxus River (*Āmū daryā*). Akhmedov argues that Khusraw Shāh was the only Tīmūrid *amīr* capable of mounting a serious threat to the Shaybānid advance towards Khurāsān.[4] Muḥammad Shibaq, better known by his *nom de plume* of 'Shībānī', the son of Shāh Būdāq, who traced his lineage through his grandfather Abū al-Khayr Khān to the thirteenth-century Mongol warlord, Chingīz Khān (d. 624/1227) , was eager to eliminate Khusraw Shāh in order to seize power and expand his newly conquered domain beyond the Oxus River.[5]

The partial annexation of Badakhshan to the realm of Khusraw Shāh, who was based in Ḥiṣār, shows his desire to subjugate this region completely. Yet, it was difficult for him to control the sprawl of remote mountain principalities. Several interconnected factors contributed to such difficulties, which are:

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[3] Bābur, Ẓahīr al-Dīn Muḥammad, *Bābur-nāma,* Thackston, (English tr.)., New York-Oxford, 1996, p. 34; Akhmedov, "Poslednie Timuridy," p. 83. Not much information is available on Khusraw Shāh and his origin in the primary sources. As it is beyond the topic of my research it is suffice to quote Thackston who writes: 'Khusraw Shāh was a Qipchāq Turk who ruled on Sulṭān Ḥusayn's behalf in lower eastern Transoxiana.' See: Gulbadan Begim, *Humāyūn-nāma (Book of Humāyūn),* in *Three Memoirs of Humāyūn,* Thackston, (English tr.)., California, 2009, p. 2, n. 2.

[4] Akhmedov, "Poslednie Timuridy," p. 84 and also his *Istoriīā Balkha: XVI-pervaīā polovina XVIII v,* Tashkent, 1982, pp. 55, 65-71.

[5] McChesney, "Islamic Culture and the Chinggisid Restoration: Central Asia in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century," in Morgan, and Reid, (eds.)., *The New Cambridge History of Islam,* vol. 3: *The Eastern Islamic World: Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries,* Cambridge, 2010, p. 239.

a) the advance of Shaybānids to Mā warā al-nahr

b) the retreat of the ineffectual Tīmūrid *amīr*s from their '*paternal land*'

c) the difficulty of gaining access to the region of Badakhshan

d) the fact that due to its difficult natural boundaries Badakhshan was not easily controllable

Consequently, in the absence of a local ruling family in charge of the political realm, Badakhshan and its mountain principalities remained under the control and leadership of a number of local *beg*s[6] who later offered stern resistance not only to Khusraw Shāh but to other foreign invaders as well.

In the year 909/1503-04 Khusraw Shāh, the ruler of Ḥiṣār, Qunduz and Badakhshan, was driven out from his domain by Muḥammad Shaybānī Khān (d. 915/1510). The advance of the Shaybānids proved to be successful as neither Khusraw Shāh nor other Tīmūrid *amīr*s including Bābur Mīrzā was able to withstand such a fierce attack. As a result, Khusraw Shāh sought refuge with Sulṭān Ḥusayn in Herat.[7] At this point, Shaybānī Khān started distributing the newly conquered domain of Khusraw Shāh between his relatives. Thus, Qunduz, Baghlān and parts of Badakhshan were granted to Maḥmūd Sulṭān (d. 909/1504), one of Shaybānī Khān's brothers; Ḥiṣār-i Shādmān was granted to Ḥamza Sulṭān and Chaghāniyān was given to Mahdī Sulṭān.[8] At this juncture too, the disloyal Khusraw Shāh, who had lost his entire domain, started to seek ways of joining the Tīmūrids, whom he had betrayed on many occasions. Hence, in the coming years he appropriated his position in the retinue of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, and sought the help of Tīmūrids to restore the vast territories he had once controlled. Akhmedov mentions that Khusraw Shāh was playing a strategic game with the Tīmūrids and the Shaybānids with the aim of regaining his lost territories. Discussing the political intrigues of Khusraw Shāh, Akhmedov quotes a passage from the early sixteenth-century work by Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, entitled *Shaybānī-nāma*, where 'Khusraw Shāh promised to acknowledge the rule of the nomad Uzbeks and even

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[6] The term *beg* or *beyg* is of Turkish origin meaning 'lord' or 'chief.' This term, which is an equivalent of Arabic term *amīr,* was also employed to refer to 'prince.' For more details, see: Jackson, "Beg," in *EIr,* vol. 4 (1990), p. 80.

[7] Historical sources do not provide the precise date of Khusraw Shāh's expulsion from Ḥiṣār and Qunduz which must have happened sometimes between 909-910/1503-04. Semenov, "Sheĭbani-Khan i Zavoevanie im Impreii Timuridov," in *Materialy po Istorii Tadzhikov i Uzbekov Sredneĭ Azii,* Stalinabad, 1954, pp. 68-72; Akhmedov, *Istoriīā Balkha: XVI-pervaīā polovina XVIII v*, pp. 70-71 and his "Poslednie Timuridy," pp. 86-88; Welsford, "Rethinking the Ḥamzahids of Ḥiṣār," in *Asiatische Studies,* 3 (2011), pp. 801-802.

[8] Maḥmūd Sulṭān, Muḥammad Shaybānī Khān's brother, was killed in Qunduz sometimes in 910/1504. Ḥamza Sulṭān and Mahdī Sulṭān were the sons of Bakhtiyār b. Khizr, who were relatives of Shaybānī Khān. Ḥamza and Mahdī were put to sword by Bābur Mīrzā sometimes after 915/1510. Welsford, "Rethinking the Ḥamzahids of Ḥiṣār," in *Asiatische Studies,* 3 (2011), pp. 801-804; Akhmedov, "Poslednie Timuridy," pp. 87-88.

mint coins in the name of Muḥammad Shaybānī Khān.'[9] The Shaybānids, on the other hand, were not seeking ways to reach a peace accord with any Tīmūrid *amīr*s including Khusraw Shāh. The loss of Ḥiṣār and other regions to Shaybānids forced Khusraw Shāh to move towards the east, particularly Badakhshan, which was a place of refuge for him. With the advance of Khusraw Shāh towards Badakhshan he was confronted by Nāṣir Mīrzā (891-921/1486-1521), Bābūr's brother, on the one hand, and the local *beg*s, on the other. We learn from the *Bābur-nāma* that at some point in 910/1504-05, Nāṣir Mīrzā established himself in Badakhshan. Khusraw Shāh, on the other hand, decided to return to his lost territories, namely Qunduz and Ḥiṣār. It was during one of his attempts to launch an attack on Qunduz that Maṭlab Sulṭān, son of Ḥamza, caught him. After this, the Shaybānids put him to the sword in 909/1505.[10]

The above passage clearly shows that the region of Badakhshan during the first decade of the sixteenth century became the place of refuge not only for the laity but also for the Tīmūrid *amīr*s who left Mā warā al-nahr for their own safety. As a result, Badakhshan served as a staging point for the exiled Tīmūrids. The advance of the Shaybānids towards Badakhshan left the local *beg*s with two options: to fight the Tīmūrids as well as the Shaybānids, or to ally themselves with the Tīmūrids and resist the Shaybānids' advance into the region. Although previously the mountain-dwellers voiced their discontent with Tīmūrid rule and even actively opposed it, they still allied themselves with them in order to resist the Shaybānid's encroachment, as the *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī* narrates:

> Some of the inhabitants of Badakhshan, refusing to bow to the Uzbeks, had dealt them severe defeats. In one place, led by the tribal chieftains under the command of Zubayr-i Rāghi, the Badakhshanis had hanged the Uzbeks.[11]

We learn from the *Bābur-nāma* about Zubayr and Mubārak Shāh, two local *beg*s from Badakhshan, who played a crucial role in mobilising the local population against the Shaybānids. Zubayr-i Rāghī, as is evident from his *nisba*, was originally from Rāgh – a region in the north-west of Badakhshan. Neither the origins of Mubārak Shāh nor his place of residence are mentioned in any of the sixteenth-century sources, including the *Babur-nāma.* We only know that he was a local ruler from the Muẓaffarid tribe.[12] The ancestors of

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[9] Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, *Shaybānī-nāma,* Nasrullo Davron, (ed.)., Tashkent, 1961, pp. 160-162; Also quoted in: Akhmedov, 'Poslednie Timuridy," p. 86.

[10] Bābur, *Bābur-nāma,* pp. 182-184; Welsford, "Rethinking the Ḥamzahids of Ḥiṣār," pp. 801-802; Akhmedov, "Poslednie Timuridy," pp. 87-88.

[11] Dughlāt, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī,* Harvard University, 1996, pp. 136-137.

[12] Pirumshoev, "The Pamirs and Badakhshan," in Adle, and Habib, (eds.)., *HCCA,* vol. 5: *Development in Contrast: From the Sixteenth to the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, UNESCO Publishing, 2003, pp. 230.

Zubayr and Mubārak Shāh, according to the *Bābur-nāma,* served as *beg*s in the retinues of the previous local rulers.[13]

The *Bābur-nāma* tells how in 911/1506-07, Nāṣir Mīrzā, Bābur *Pādshāh'*s brother, formed an alliance with both Mubārak Shāh and Zubayr to fight their common enemy, namely, the Shaybānids. As a result, Shaybānī Khān's attempt to subjugate the region was unsuccessful. As a sign of his victory over the Shaybānids, Mubārak Shāh changed the name of his fort *Shāh Tiwār* (on the bank of the Kākcha River) into *Qalʿa-i Ẓafar* (lit. Fortress of Victory),[14] which became the residence of the future rulers of Badakhshan. Nonetheless, for reasons unknown, Mubārak Shāh and Zubayr mistrusted Nāṣir Mīrzā. It seems reasonable to argue that Nāṣir Mīrzā attempted to seize Badakhshan and become the sole sovereign of the region under the patronage of his brother – the Emperor Bābur - and for this reason the local *beg*s had him driven out of the region in the same year.[15] Evidently, the military alliance of the local *beg*s was short-lived and proved unsustainable. It widened the splits in the alliance and became the cause of an internal political intrigue that escalated Zubayr's mistrust of Mubārak Shāh. The source of the political intrigues and mistrust clearly lies in the issue of authority and political hegemony over the region, which purportedly culminated in the execution of Mubārak Shāh by Zubayr-i Rāghī.[16]

The rivalry between the Shaybānids and the last Tīmūrids, on the one hand, and the Tīmūrid attempt to seize power in Badakhshan, on the other, turned the region into a battlefield. However, neither of these dynasties succeeded in subjugating the entire region, as the local population, under the leadership of Zubayr and a certain Jahāngir,[17] resisted them. In 913/1508 the situation changed, to the detriment of the local population, when a certain Mīrzā Khān executed Zubayr-i Rāghī. Mīrzā Khān was the first cousin of Bābur *Pādshāh,* who was the son of Sulṭān Maḥmūd b. Abū Saʿīd (d. 926/1520-21).[18] It is evident from the *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī* that Mīrzā Khān had claimed the throne of Badakhshan. Quite surprisingly, Shāh Begim, Mīrzā Khān's grandmother, who was a daughter of Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad (d. 870/1466-67, the last ruler of Badakhshan), supported his claim. She

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[13] Bābur, *Bābur-nāma,* pp. 179-180. It is not known which local rulers Zubayr and Mubārak Shāh's ancestors served and the *Bābur-nāma* does not provide any details on this point.

[14] Ibid, pp. 179-180; Abaeva, *Ocherki Istorii Badakhshana,* Tashkent, 1964, p. 101.

[15] Bābur, *Bābur-nāma,* 1996, pp. 230 and 248-251; Dughlāt, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī,* 1996, pp. 220-21; Habibov, *Ganji Badakhshon,* 1972, p. 8.

[16] Dughlāt, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī,* 1996, pp. 145-147; Bartol'd, "Badakhshan," in *Socheneniīā,* p. 345; Habibov, *Ganji Badakhshon,* pp. 7-8.

[17] Jahāngīr Turcoman was one of the servants of Amīr Valī, Khusraw Shāh's brother. Bābur, *Bābur-nāma,* p. 182.

[18] Lowick, "Coins of Sulaymān Mīrzā of Badakhshān," in *Numismatic Chronicles,* vol. 7/5 (1965), pp. 221-229.

was one of the wives of Yunūs Khān (818-872/1416-68). Hence, Shāh Begim claimed the region of Badakhshan for Mīrzā Khān, stating:

> It [i.e. Badakhshan] has been my hereditary kingdom for three thousand years. Although I am a woman and not entitled to rule, Mīrzā Khān is my grandson. The people will not deny me and my offspring.[19]

The *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī* as well as the *Ḥabīb al-sīyar*, the *Aḥsan al-tawārīkh* and other sixteenth century sources propose a hypothesis according to which Mīrzā Khān was elevated to a position of authority in Badakhshan with the assistance of Shāh Ismāʿīl I (Abū al-Muẓaffar, 892-930/1487-1524) – the Safavid monarch. Most obviously, Bābur depended on the military aid from the Persians in order to help him reinstate his political authority in Mā warā al-nahr. Thus, Bābur sent envoys, led by Mīrzā Khān, to the Safavid court to negotiate the conditions of such aid. Therefore, the rise of Mīrzā Khān to power in Badakhshan had a direct link with the Safavid interest in the region.[20] One of the conditions of Safavid military aid was that Bābur should accept the Shīʿa faith and recite the *khuṭba* in the name of the Persian monarch using the Shīʿa formula. Apart from that, Bābur struck coins in the name of Shāh Ismāʿīl I and the Twelve Imams.[21] What is not known is whether such a recitation of the *khuṭba* in the name of the Shīʿī Imams was prevalent in Badakhshan during this time or not.

However, it should be mentioned that prior to Mīrzā Khān's arrival in Badakhshan, there appears in the region a certain Shāh Rażī al-Dīn. This figure turns out to be one of the Nizārī Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams, namely Rażī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir (Chapter 6, pp. 165-172).[22] According to the *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī*, he was invited to Badakhshan, from Sīstān, a region in the south-east of Persia:

> Someone [from the local population] was sent to Seistān [i.e. Sīstān] to bring Shāh Rażī al-Dīn, the hereditary spiritual leader of these people, to whom and to whose ancestors they had never failed to pay their annual tithes.[23]

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[19] Dughlāt, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī,* p. 137; For Shāh Begim's marriage to Yunūs Khān, pp. 57-58.

[20] Khwāndamīr, *Ḥabīb al-siyār fī akhbār afrād al-bashar*, Tekin, (ed.)., and Thackston, (English tr.)., Harvard, 1994, pp. 592-594; Dughlāt, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī,* pp. 219-221; Rūmlū, *Aḥsan al-tawārīkh,* Seddon, (ed.)., vol. 1, Baroda, 1931, pp. 125-127; Abaeva, *Ocherki Istorii Badakhshana,* Tashkent, 1964, pp. 101-102; Dickson, *Shāh Tahmasb and the Uzbeks (The Duel for Khurasan with ʿUbayd Khan: 1524-1540),* Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Princeton University, 1958, pp. 48-49.

[21] Islam, *Indo-Persian Relations,* Tehran, 1970, pp. 192-195.

[22] The Muḥammad-Shāhī – Qāsim-Shāhī schism will be discussed in chapter 6. For the genealogy of Rażī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir, see: Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines,* Cambridge, 2007, pp. 509-510.

[23] Dughlāt, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī,* 1996, p. 146. Another passage in *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī* states: *'... Shāh Rażi al-Dīn the Chirāghkush, whom the people of Badakhshan had brought from Seistān and elevated to the rule, thus proclaiming their heresy openly.'* Ibid. p. 152.

The interplay of politics and religion becomes visible at this point, as religion seems to have been used as a tool to mobilise the local Ismāʿīlīs who, under the leadership of Shāh Rażī al-Dīn [Rażī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir], took control of the 'best part of the rest of the province, leaving a narrow stretch for Mīrzā Khān to eke out a living.'[24] Most of the sources corroborate and, in a sense, unite in narrating this event. Bartol'd surmises that Shāh Rażī al-Dīn controlled the region from 912/1507 to 915/1509, when he was brutally beheaded. His head was presented to Mīrzā Khān at *Qalʿa-i Ẓafar*.[25] Modern sources generally agree that the Tīmūrids executed Shāh Rażī al-Dīn, while the *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī* repudiates this claim. Mīrzā Ḥaydar suggests that it was an internal dispute between Shāh Rażī al-Dīn and his followers that resulted in his execution by someone from among his own followers, when he comments:

> Around the beginning of spring, a dispute broke out among Shāh Rażī al-Dīn's followers, and it escalated to the point that they cut off his head and brought it to Mīrzā Khān.[26]

The reason for his murder remains open to speculation. The *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī* provides no further evidence about the incident. The question of Shāh Rażī al-Dīn's death remains a puzzle as some authors suggest that he was murdered by his political proponents while others show it as a heinous act committed by his rivals. On the other hand, his murder became more mysterious given the fact that he was represented as one of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Imams. The second hypothesis is indicative and will be discussed later with additional details. It should, however, be mentioned that the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārīs are of the opinion that the Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārīs are not the rightful bearers of the mantle of the Imamate, which resulted from the Qāsim-Shāhī - Muḥammad-Shāhī schism[27] of the thirteenth century (Chapter 6, pp. 152-192). Nonetheless, the execution of Shāh Rażī al-Dīn opened up a new opportunity for the total subjugation of Badakhshan to Mīrzā Khān (r. 915-926/1510-21), who sought to defend his newly conquered territories from internal riots and external military campaigns. Yet, earlier, Mubārak Shāh and Zubayr had challenged his authority. Shāh Rażī al-Dīn, on the other hand, had mobilised the local population against the Tīmūrids and the Shaybānids. As a result, the local population was

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[24] Dughlāt, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī*, p. 147.

[25] Bartol'd, "Badakhshan," in *Socheneniĭā*, vol. iii: *Raboty po Istoricheskoĭ Geografii*, Moscow, 1965, p. 345; Iskandarov, *SEPAIPK*, Dushanbe, 1983, pp. 46-49; Habibov, *Ganji Badakhshon*, p. 8; Dughlāt, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī*, 1996, p. 152; Daftary, "Shāh Ṭāhir and the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Disguise," pp. 395-406.

[26] Dughlāt, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī*, 1996, p. 152.

[27] The schism and its effect on Ismāʿīlī history, in general, and on the *daʿwat-i Nāṣir* in Badakhshan, in particular, will be discussed in depth and detail in part 3, chapter 6 of this thesis, pp. 152-192.

alienated from Tīmūrid authority, leading us to assume that Shāh Rażī al-Dīn only controlled the Ismāʿīlī populated areas.

3.2. Mīrzā Khān's Rule in Badakhshan

The execution of Shāh Rażī al-Dīn, the Nizārī Muḥammad-Shāhī Imam, in 915/1509-10 opened a new avenue to the Tīmūrids' for the total conquest of Badakhshan. As a result, Mīrzā Khān re-established himself as the sole political authority in the region. Another event that contributed to the concentration of the Tīmūrid army in Badakhshan was the battle of Merv, which was fought in 916/1510. This battle resulted in the execution of Muḥammad Shaybānī Khān by the Safavid army. The *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī* tells how, in the aftermath of the battle, a cavalry troop of 20,000 Moghuls[28] sought refuge in Qunduz and eventually joined the retine of Mīrzā Khān.[29] Thus, the Tīmūrid *amīr*s stationed in Badakhshan and Qunduz as well as Bābur, who arrived from Kābul, saw this as an opportunity to march towards Mā warā al-nahr and regain control of their '*parental land*'. Consequently, within a year of the battle of Merv, the Tīmūrids succeeded in annexing Ḥiṣār to their domains. From that time onwards, Ḥiṣār was controlled on and off by Mīrzā Khān.[30] That the importance of Badakhshan for the Tīmūrids was not only as a staging point, but also as a source of economic revenue, is shown in a number of pieces of diplomatic correspondence between Bābur and other *amīr*s.[31] Bābur, for instance, being preoccupied with the conquest of Mā warā al-nahr, from 917/1512 to 918/1513, used north-western Badakhshan and Ḥiṣār as his political base as well as a staging point for his army.[32]

It should be mentioned that sources well-disposed to the Tīmūrids, including the *Bābur-nāma* and the *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī*, provide only a limited insight into the activities of Mīrzā Khān, particularly for the last decade of his life (917-926/1511-20). Even the birth of Sulaymān Mīrzā[33] in 920/1514 to the family of Mīrzā Khān is only noted *en passant*.

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[28] The term Moghul refers not to the Mughals from Tīmūr's progeny but to a group from Eastern Turkestan or Moghulistan. As no precise information is available about this group I will tentatively use the term Moghul to refer to them.

[29] Dughlāt, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī,* 1996, pp. 232-236; Akhmedov, "Poslednie Timuridy," pp. 90-91.

[30] Islam, *Indo-Persian Relations,* pp. 5-10; Akhmedov, *Istoriĭa Balkha,* pp. 55-69; Welsford, "Rethinking the Ḥamzahids of Ḥiṣār," pp. 802-805.

[31] Islam, *A Calendar of Documents on Indo-Persian Relations (1500-1750),* vol. 2, Tehran, 1982, pp. 203-204; Ḥabībī, *Taʾrīkh-i Afghānistān dar ʿasri Gurgāni-i Hind,* Kābul, 1341/1962, pp. 15-17; Akhmedov, "Poslednie Timuridy," pp. 88-90.

[32] Islam, *Indo-Persian Relations,* pp. 15-17.

[33] Sulaymān's name appears as Sulaymān Mīrzā, Shāh Sulaymān or even Sulaymān Shāh in various sixteenth and seventeenth century historical sources. For consistency, I will use Sulaymān Mīrzā throughout. It must be emphasised that Sulaymān Beg refers to the Yārid or Yārībek Khānid ruler, who should not be confused with Sulaymān Mīrzā, the last Tīmūrid ruler of Badakhshan.

Sulaymān Mīrzā, as we shall see in this section, played a crucial role in the political and religious affairs of Badakhshan during his reign, which lasted for over four decades.

The last decade of Mīrzā Khān's rule in Badakhshan was characterised by internal and external disorder. Nonetheless, his political adaptability and military flexibility brought relative peace to the region. The last decades of Mīrzā Khān's life and activity are not properly recorded in the sources. We find notes *en passant* in the *Bābur-nāma*, the *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī* and other sixteenth-century sources. These sporadic stories recount about his diplomatic correspondence with Bābur and his battle with the Uzbeks and other neighbouring principalities. For instance, in 924/1519, Sulṭān Saʿīd Khān (r. 919-939/1514-33), the Mughal ruler of Qāshghar (East-Turkestan), and Mīrzā Khān, could not come to an agreement concerning the borders of their respective territories, particularly in the region of Wakhān, which is in the north-east of Badakhshan. Saʿīd Khān became enraged and carried out an expedition to Badakhshan, but was defeated. Although Mīrzā Khān was nominally under the patronage of Bābur *Pādshāh*, the founder of the Mughal Empire tried to avoid interfering in the former's internal disputes. However, upon Mīrzā Khān's demise in 926/1520, Bābur decided to take Mīrzā Khān's son – Sulaymān Mīrzā – to his court in Kābul. By this gesture, Bābur clearly demonstrated his interest in the affairs of Badakhshan. To reinforce such a strategic and political move, he sent his son and future successor – Humāyūn (913-963/1508-1556) – to rule Badakhshan on behalf of Mīrzā Khān's son, Sulaymān Mīrzā. Thus, Humāyūn was intermittently in charge of Badakhshan from 926/1520 to 934/1529.[34] It is also important to note that by the above gesture Bābur clearly showed this region to be the *de facto* possession of his ancestors – the Tīmūrids – who had directly controlled it since 872/1467-68.

The situation changed dramatically upon the death of Mīrzā Khān. Bābur's decision to send Humāyūn to govern the affairs of Badakhshan as an appanage[35] holder shows there was a bond of contention between the father and the son. This may explain why Humāyūn's rule in Badakhshan is intermittent. For Humāyūn the throne of Badakhshan "would not have been worth half a loaf of bread"[36] were he not to have been chosen as the

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[34] Dughlāt, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī,* 1996, pp. 232-241; Dickson, *Shāh Tahmāsb and the Uzbeks,* 1958, pp. 46-49; Digby, "Humāyūn," in *EI2,* vol. 3 (1971), pp. 575-577; Asani, "Humāyūn," in Meri, (ed.)., *Medieval Islamic Civilisations: An Encyclopaedia,* London, 2006, pp. 333-335; Habibov, *Ganji Badakhshon,* p. 8.

[35] Appanage is derived from a Latin term *appanare,* meaning, "equip with bread." It is commonly used to refer to grants of land to younger sons of a ruler. Faruqui, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire: 1504-1719,* Cambridge, 2012, p. 9.

[36] Dughlāt, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī,* p. 226.

heir-designate to his father, Bābur *Pādshāh.*[37] In the light of this, the government of Badakhshan first passed to a certain Mīrzā Fakhr ʿAlī in 932/1526 and subsequently to Mīrzā Hindal,[38] the half-brother of Humāyūn, in 935/1529.[39] Yet, prior to his death in 937/1530, Bābur *Pādshāh* granted Badakhshan and its adjacent territories to Sulaymān Mīrzā as his rightful possession.[40] This, however, did not mean that the region would not become a point of contention for the later Mughal Emperors, the Shaybānids and, to a certain extent, the Safavids.

3.3. Sulaymān Mīrzā and the Mughals: The Politics of Disengagement

After the death of Bābur *Pādshāh*, the Shaybānids' strategic plan included the conquest of Ḥiṣār and Badakhshan. The demise of Bābur and the rise of Humāyūn to power became the cause of disagreement between Bābur's sons. One can assume that this disagreement relates to the issue of succession, authority and power. Meanwhile, the rise of the sixteen-year-old Sulaymān, the son of Mīrzā Khān, to the throne in Badakhshan opened a new avenue for the Shaybānids' advance into the region. Not much information, however, is available about the first decade of Sulaymān's rule in Badakhshan and the Shaybānid plan to conquer it. Several factors prevented the Shaybānids' advancing on Badakhshan at this particular juncture: first, Sulaymān was the vassal ruler of the Mughals; secondly, the Tīmūrids were still using Badakhshan as a staging point for their army; and thirdly, the Shaybānids advance on Badakhshan was prevented by the presence of Safavid forces near Balkh and Herāt. The question now arises, at least from the discursive and logical point of view, did Sulaymān Mīrzā have a mentor or an adviser to guide him in the political affairs of Badakhshan in the first decade of his reign (937-947/1530-1540)? The answer to this question must remain tentative at best as no precise information is to be found in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources. Reason, therefore, compels one to conclude that the mentoring of Sulaymān Mīrzā received advice and orders from the Mughal emperor, Humāyūn, since Sulaymān ruled this region as his vassal.

It is worth noting that after Humāyūn's accession to the Mughal throne he faced a number of internal and external challenges: first of all, to avoid any confrontation with his

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[37] Faruqui, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire: 1504-1719,* pp. 25-29.

[38] His real name was Abū Naṣr Muḥammad and he was known as Mīrzā Hindal. He was born in 925/1519 to Dilbar Begīm and killed in 952/1551. Bazmee Ansari, "Mīrzā Hindāl," in *EI2,* vol. 3 (1986), pp. 455-456.

[39] Akhmedov, "Poslednie Timuridy," pp. 90-91; Shyam, "Mirza Hindal: A Biographical Study," in *Islamic Culture: An English Quarterly,* vol. XLV, no. 1 (January 1971), pp. 115-18.

[40] Bābur, *Bābur-nāma,* 1996, pp. 379-383; Faruqui, "The Forgotten Prince," in *JESHO,* 48 (4), 2005, pp. 497-98; Shyam, "Mirza Hindal," in *IC,* vol. XLV, no. 1 (January 1971), pp. 115-120; Bartol'd, "Badakhshan," p. 346.

brothers he had to put them in charge of various regions in his realm,[41] and secondly, he had to campaign against various chieftains in the vicinity of his empire. Preoccupied with military campaigns either in Delhi or Gujarat, Humāyūn was far from Badakhshan where Sulaymān Mīrzā started to enjoy his semi-independent status. With the passage of time Sulaymān Mīrzā, who learnt a great deal about politics, governance and military affairs, started to legitimise his rule as a sole sovereign of Badakhshan. To legitimise his authority Sulaymān Mīrzā started to strike coins – *sikka* – in his own name and not as a vassal of the Tīmūrids. Although no information is available about the *khuṭba* (Friday prayer address), it is highly likely that it was recited in Sulaymān's name too.[42]
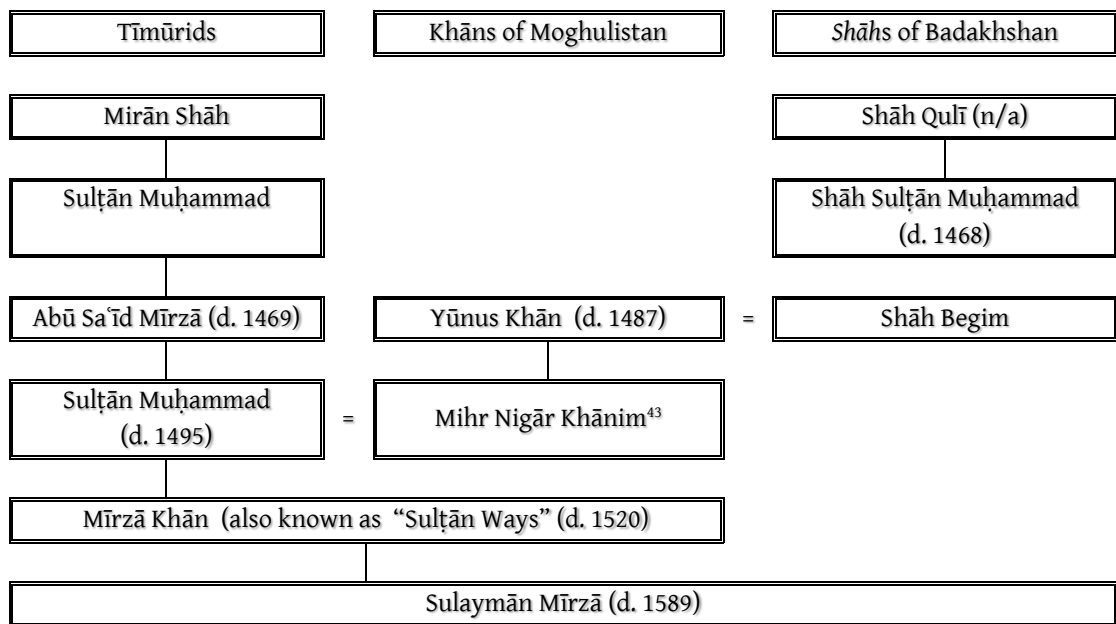
Figure 9: Three dimensional legitimation process of Sulaymān Mīrzā's rule in Badakhshan

It is useful at this point to briefly look at the genealogy of Sulaymān Mīrzā. Genealogy and lineage, as a precondition to power and authority, played a crucial role in the politics of early modern Central Asia when most of the princes traced their descent to the house of Tīmūr. Hence, to legitimise his authority in Badakhshan, Sulaymān Mīrzā, directly and indirectly, traced his lineage to three ruling houses:

1. On his paternal side, he traced his lineage to Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd b. Sulṭān Muḥammad b. Mīrān Shāh b. Tīmūr

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[41] Kāmrān was put in charge of Panjāb, Qandahār and Kābul. Hindal was granted Mewāt, Askarī was put in charge of Sambhal. Digby, "Humāyūn," in *EI2,* vol. 3 (1986), p. 575.

[42] Historical sources do not provide records on the *khuṭba* being read in Sulaymān Mīrzā's name in Badakhshan. For his coins, see: Lowick, "Coins of Sulaymān Mīrzā of Badakhshān," in *Numismatic Chronicle,* vol. 5 (1965), pp. 221-229 and his "More on Sulaymān Mīrzā and His Contemporaries," in *Numismatic Chronicle,* vol. 12 (1972), pp. 283-287.

[43] Mihr Nigār Khānim's mother, Esan Dawlat Begīm, was the daughter of a certain Shīr Ḥājjī Beg. For more details, see: Bābur, *Bābur-nāma,* pp. 12-13.

2. On his maternal side, he traced his lineage to Yūnus Khān, his grandfather, who was the ruler of Moghulistan
3. Through his grandmother (Yūnus Khān's wife) he indirectly traced his genealogy to the local ruling house of Badakhshan

Like any other ruler, the young Sulaymān Mīrzā also desired to extend his territory. Thus, we learn from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century Mughal sources that in Rabīʿ I 943/August 1536 Sulaymān carried out a military campaign against Balkh. As a result, he ousted Kistinqara Sulṭān, son of Jānībīk Khān, the then Shaybānid governor of Balkh (r. 932-951/1526-44). This seems to have been the first such major-expedition march by Sulaymān beyond the borders of Badakhshan. However, with the military aid from ʿUbaydallāh Khān (r. 940-946/1533-39), Kistinqara Sulṭān then easily expelled him from Balkh and its vicinity.[44]

The fact that Sulaymān Mīrzā had established his authority in Badakhshan and enjoyed his independence generated a sense of resentment and opposition among the Mughal nobles. Kāmrān Mīrzā (915-964/1509-1557), another half-brother of Humāyūn, who was based at closer proximity to Sulaymān's domain, was displeased with such a state of affairs. The independence of Badakhshan was evidently to the detriment of the Mughals. It is, however, quite strange that no punitive expedition was sent against Sulaymān Mīrzā, until at least 948/1541.[45]

The political situation in the Mughal realm radically changed with the growing power of Shīr Shāh Sūrī (known also as Shīr Khān). The unexpected defeat of Humāyūn at Agra in Ṣafar 946/June 1539 by Shīr Shāh was a major blow to his political authority. Later on in Muḥarram 947/May 1540 Shīr Shāh managed to expel him completely from his domain. Consequently, Humāyūn became an unwelcome wanderer in his own Empire for almost three years (or even more). Hence, he had no choice but to seek refuge and a political alliance with the Safavids of Persia.[46] In the absence of an emperor and a centralised government, the Mughal Empire divided into independent principalities under the control of Humāyūn's brothers, Kāmrān, Askarī and Hindal, who violently opposed Humāyūn during this difficult period. The negative effect of this change was later also felt in Badakhshan.

[44] Balkhī, Sulṭān Muḥammad, *Majmaʿ al-gharāʾb,* ff. 78-79; Quoted in: Akhmedov, "Poslednie Timuridy," pp. 91-92.

[45] Akhmedov, "Poslednie Timuridy," p. 92; Iskandarov, *Srednīāīā Azīīā i Indīīā,* Dushanbe, 1993, pp. 34-37.

[46] Faruqui, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire, 1504-1719,* Cambridge, 2012, pp. 250-252; For a detailed study on Shīr Khān, see: Aquil, *Sufism, Culture and Politics: Afghans and Islam in Medieval North India,* Delhi, 2007; Digby, "Humāyūn," in *EI2,* vol. 3 (1971), pp. 575-577.

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│  Ẓahīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur (d. 936/1530)   │
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Māham Begim	Dilbar Begim	Gulrukh Begim

Humāyūn (d. 964/1557)	Mīrzā Hindal (d. 957/1551)	Mīrzā Kāmrān (d. 964/1557)	Mīrzā Askarī (d. 965/1558)
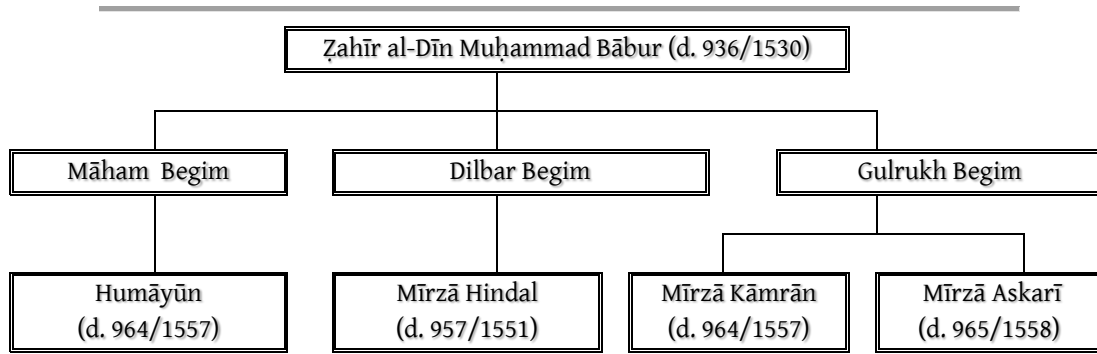
Figure 10: Bābur's sons and their relationship

In the years following the flight of Humāyūn from Hindustān (India), Kāmrān started a campaign against Sulaymān Mīrzā. He tried hard to impose his authority on Sulaymān who, in his turn, showed an uncompromising resistance. In 948/1541 during the siege of *Qalʿa-i Ẓafar* Sulaymān seems at least partially to have acknowledged the authority of Kāmrān but in subsequent years Kāmrān carried out a number of military campaigns against Badakhshan. Abū al-Faẓl ibn Mubārak (known as ʿAllāmī), in his *Āʾīn-i Akbarī*, confirms that Kāmrān Mīrzā carried out a military expedition against Badakhshan and deprived Sulaymān Mīrzā of his territory. He even succeeded in imprisoning Sulaymān and his son, Ibrāhīm Mīrzā. In unknown circumstances, Mīrzā Kāmrān then decided to release Sulaymān and his son from prison in Kābul. After his release from prison, Sulaymān Mīrzā mobilised his forces and succeeded in repossessing his *de-facto* territory.[47]

Meanwhile in Persia, Humāyūn signed a treaty with the Safavids. As a result, the Safavids provided military aid to Humāyūn to regain his Empire. In return, Humāyūn was to help them in spreading the Twelver Shīī teaching and read the *khuṭba* in the Safavids' name. Modern scholarship puts forward a hypothesis that Humāyūn did sign papers professing Twelver Shīʿism.[48] So, with the military aid of the Safavids Humāyūn embarked on a new campaign to regain his kingdom. With the advance of Humāyūn to Qandahār and then Kābul, Kāmrān fled and sought refuge with the Shaybānid ruler of Balkh – Pīr Muḥammad Khān (r. 953-974/1546-67). In early 953/1546 with the assistance of Pīr Muḥammad Khān, Kāmrān seized the western provinces of Badakhshan.[49] Surprisingly, Humāyūn also marched towards Badakhshan to punish Sulaymān Mīrzā who, like Kāmrān, had also fled beyond the Oxus.[50] Being preoccupied with the affairs of Badakhshan, Humāyūn assigned

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[47] ʿAllāmī, *The Āʾīn-i Akbarī*, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1927, pp. 311-314.

[48] Digby, "Humāyūn," in *EI2*, vol. 3 (1971), pp. 576.

[49] Badāonī, *Muntakhab al-tawārīkh*, vol. I, Calcutta, 1898, pp. 579-583.

[50] Bayat, *Taʾrīkh-i Humāyūn*, in Thackston, (ed. and English tr.)., *Three Memoirs of Humāyūn*, California, 2009, pp. 25-32; Banerji, *Humāyūn Bādshāh*, vol. 2, Lucknow, 1941, pp. 147-155.

Mīrzā Hindal to undertake the administration of the region in the absence of Sulaymān.[51] The local population asserted the right of Sulaymān to be their ruler. Thus, sometime in 953/1547-48 Humāyūn saw the loyalty of local people to Sulaymān and decided 'to pardon his past misdoings and restore him [i.e. Sulaymān] to his ancestral territories.'[52]

The Shaybānids, the bitter enemies of the Tīmūrids, learnt many details from Mīrzā Kāmrān's alliance with Pīr Muḥammad Khān. They had been waiting for an appropriate time to assail Badakhshan. The death of Humāyūn and accession of Akbar to power in Rabīʿ I 963/March 1556 was a good time for the Shaybānids to launch a military campaign against Badakhshan. However, in the midst of these events, Sulaymān Mīrzā made an unexpected move. In Ẕū'l-qaʿda 967/July-August 1560, notwithstanding his military weakness, Sulaymān and his son, Ibrāhīm, decided to carry out a military expedition against Balkh. Pīr Muḥammad Khān, the ruler of Balkh, relied on the support of ʿAbdullāh Khān II (d. 1006/1598), who readily moved his army towards Balkh. The *Sharaf-nāma-i shāhī* (the Book of Royal Glory), the late sixteenth century Shaybānid source composed by Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh, tells us about ʿAbdullāh Khān II's alliance with Pīr Muḥammad Khān. The combined forces of ʿAbdullāh and Pīr Muḥammad easily defeated the ruler of Badakhshan. Consequently, Sulaymān's army retreated from the battlefield while the victorious Shaybānid army succeeded in taking Ibrāhīm Mīrzā captive.[53] Sulaymān Mīrzā launched another attack on the Shaybānids sometime in Ẕu'l-ḥijja 967/September 1560 possibly with the aim of rescuing his son, Ibrāhīm. Muḥammad Murād Bī, one of the Shaybānid *amīr*s and the military commander who had taken Ibrāhīm captive, brought him to Balkh, to the presence of ʿAbdullāh Khān II and Pīr Muḥammad who ordered his execution. According to Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh, Ibrāhīm Mīrzā's execution took place forty days after his capture.[54]

The unforeseen execution of Ibrāhīm was an ordeal for his father, Sulaymān. This ordeal, in a sense, compelled him to retreat from the political arena for sometime. Sulaymān Mīrzā clearly mourned the demise of his son, which he expressed in one of his poems. The execution of Ibrāhīm seems also to have become a cause of quarrels between Shāhrukh

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[51] Bazmee Ansari, "Mīrzā Hindāl," in *EI2,* vol. 3 (1986), pp. 455-456.

[52] Banerji, *Humāyūn Bādshāh,* vol. 2, pp. 163-164.

[53] Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh, *Sharaf-nāma-i shāhī,* pp. 231-240.

[54] Ibrāhīm Mīrzā was taken prisoner sometimes on 26 Ẕū'l-qaʿda 967/18 August 1560 and put to the sword forty days later which falls either on the 6 or 7 Muharram 967/27 September 1560. Akhmedov quotes Sulṭān Muḥammad-i Balkhī's *Majmaʿ al-gharāʾib* which gives the date of Ibrāhīm's execution as 5 Ẕu'l-ḥijja 967/27 August 1560. The date provided by Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh is more reliable as he seems to have been in the retinue of ʿAbdullāh Khān during this campaign. See: Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh, *Sharaf-nāma-i shāhī,* pp. 236-239; Akhmedov, "Poslednie Timuridy," pp. 94-95.

Mīrzā, Ibrāhīm's son, and his grandfather Sulaymān Mīrzā.[55] What seems strange with regard to this military confrontation between the Shaybānids and the ruler of Badakhshan is that ʿAbdullāh Khān II did not proceed with the full subjugation of the region. He rather moved his army towards Khurāsān. It is a matter of historical fact that he could easily have invaded the region after the defeat of Sulaymān near Balkh. Hence, it seems safe to assume that the main cause preventing him from so doing was the fact that ʿAbdullāh Khān II was not the main decision taker in the political affairs of the Shaybānids. It was his father, Iskandar Khān (r. 968-991/1561-1583), who was still the sole ruler of the Shaybānid Empire.[56]

3.4. The Tīmūrids' Last Battle for Badakhshan

The double defeat of Sulaymān Mīrzā near Balkh by the combined Shaybānid forces became the cause of Sulaymān's withdrawal from the political affairs of Badakhshan. The affairs of Badakhshan during this turbulent period seem to have passed to the care of one of Sulaymān's sons, Khusraw Mīrzā, and his grandson Shāhrukh Mīrzā.[57]

In 971/1564, when Māh Chuchak Begum, Mīrzā Ḥākim's mother, was murdered, Sulaymān Mīrzā attempted to invade Kābul. Upon his arrival there, he sent a certain Qāżī Niẓām of Badakhshan (i.e. Badakhshānī), who was one of his honoured [Ḥanafī] ʿulamā, to the court to conduct peace negotiations. One of the conditions he proposed to his rivals was to have his name inserted in the Friday *khuṭba,* which would have meant that Sulaymān Mīrzā was acknowledged as the ruler of the kingdom of Kābul. In the aftermath of this campaign, Sulaymān Mīrzā issued *sikka* in his own name, which were widely circulated in the Kābul kingdom. However, he was driven out of Kābul shortly afterwards. The Emperor Akbar

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[55] Habibov, *Ganji Badakhshon,* p. 42.

Oh Ruby of Badakhshan, you abandoned Badakhshan,	ای لعل بدخشان ز بدخشان رفتی
You left like a glittering sun.	مانند ﺓ خورشید درخشان رفتی
You've been like Sulaymān's ring in this world,	در دهر چو خاتم سلیمان بودی
Alas, you've been lost from Sulaymān's hand.	افسوس که از دست سلیمان رفتی

[56] Mukhtarov and Mukminova, modern Tajik scholars, consider ʿAbdullāh Khān II as 'the *de-facto* ruler of Bukhārā [i.e. the Shaybānid realm] from 964/1557.' See: Mukminova, "The Khānate (Emirate) of Bukhara," Part 1: "The Shaybānids," in *HCCA,* vol. V: *Development in Contrast: From the Sixteenth to the Mid-nineteenth Century,* UNESCO Publishing, 2003, pp. 33-45.

[57] Akhmedov, *Istoriiā Balkha,* 1982, pp. 87-88; Ḥabībī, *Ta'rīkh-i Afghānistān,* pp. 73-74; Akhmedov, "Poslednie Timuridy," pp. 95-96.

sent an army in support of the kingdom of Kābul, and so the defeated Sulaymān Mīrzā withdrew his army from Kābul and its vicinity.[58]

It is important to note that neither the late Mughal nor the Shaybānid historians mention any military campaign carried out against the small mountain principalities north of Badakhshan. Sulaymān Mīrzā, who ruled the region from 937/1530 to 982/1575, was mainly concerned with resolving the political issues related to the areas within his own territory. In particular he was concerned to find ways of preventing the spread and propagation of the political, religious and ideological influences of the great empires, such as the Shaybānids and Safavids, within his territories. At the same time, he was also dealing with the Mughals.

In 982/1575, the internal rivalry between Sulaymān Mīrzā and his grandson, Shāhrukh, reached its apogee. As a result, Shāhrukh ousted his grandfather from Badakhshan. Sulaymān Mīrzā sought refuge at the court of Emperor Akbar (949-1014/1542-1605), while Shāhrukh remained the sole ruler of the region. His rule, however, was short-lived. The Shaybānids were aware of the vulnerability of the political situation in the region and attempted to seize it. We learn from Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh's *Sharaf-nāma-i shāhī* that, in 990/1583, ʿAbdullāh Khān II launched a military campaign to annex Badakhshan to his territories. This campaign was well organised, most of the Shaybānid *amīr*s seem to have taken part in it and proved successful. The victory was celebrated by ʿAbdullāh Khān II and his warlords in a place called Bābāshāh, an area near Balkh, where both Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh and a certain Nakhlī were also present. In a long poem in praise of ʿAbdullāh Khān II's victory over the ruler of Badakhshan, Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh provides a chronogram – *'mulk-i Sulaymānī girift'* – that yields a date of 990/1583.[59] The loss of Badakhshan to the Shaybānids caused Shāhrukh Mīrzā to seek refuge at the court of Akbar, as his grandfather had done. The flight of Sulaymān Mīrzā and Shāhrukh Mīrzā, who ruled Badakhshan as a vassal of Emperor Akbar marks a turning point in the history of the region. It is important to note that Shāhrukh Mīrzā requested help from Akbar, appealing to him several times. Abū al-

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[58] Badāonī, *Muntakhab al-tawārīkh,* vol. II, Calcutta, 1884, pp.4-7; Faruqui, "The Forgotten Prince," in *JESHO,* 48 (4), 2005, pp. 495-496; Schimmel, *The Empire of the Great Mughals: History, Art and Culture,* London, 2004, pp. 147-148.

[59] Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh, *Sharaf-nāma-i shāhī,* ff. 106b-110a; Habibov, *Ganj Badakhshon,* p. 9. There is a long discussion about the identity of Nakhlī and Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh in the secondary sources. It is unknown whether Nakhlī is a pen name of Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh-i Bukhārī (Bukhārāī) or whether these are two different personalities. See: Salakhetdinov, "Vvedenie," in *Sharaf-nāma-i shāhī,* Moscow, 1983, pp. 4-23. For the alfa-numerical chronogram, see a passage from the poem below:

<div dir="rtl">

شاه رُخی میرزا از ابن غم ترك سلطان گرفت.   از سلیمان شاه تا ملك بدخشان ستاند،

گفت عقل خرده بین "ملک سلیمانی گرفت".   خواست نخلی از خرد تأریخ سال فتح خوان،

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Fażl ʿAllāmī refers to them as *ʿarz-dāsht* (requests). Regrettably, Shāhrukh received no adequate assurances of assistance from Akbar for preventing the Shaybānid advance into Badakhshan.[60]

After the total subjugation of Badakhshan, ʿAbdullāh Khān II divided the fertile conquered lands among his military commanders; from that time onwards the area was governed on an *iqṭāʿ*[61] basis. In one passage in the *Sharaf-nāma-i shāhī* Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh tells us that ʿAbdullāh Khān II assigned the charge of the region to some of his commanders. Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh does not provide the name of any of the Shaybānid *amīr*s in charge of the administration of the region. Yet, we may argue that only those *amīr*s who received an *iqṭāʿ* share chose to live in Badakhshan. Shāhrukh Mīrzā, for his part, made several unsuccessful attempts to return to his lands. All of his attempts were in vain and the strong military commanders of the Shaybānids defeated him on many occasions. Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh records a number of sporadic and at the same time chaotic uprisings against Shaybānid rule in Badakhshan. For instance, in 991/1584, the local population of Badakhshan revolted against the Shaybānids, but were easily crushed.

Sulaymān Mīrzā, who had ruled Badakhshan for four decades, was eager to regain his lost possessions. The Shaybānid and Mughal sources narrate how Sulaymān made a peace agreement with his unruly grandson, Shāhrukh, in order to regain power. As a result, in Rabīʿ I 994/April 1585 they attempted to recover Badakhshan. At the time ʿAbdullāh Khān was in Bukhara and his absence served as a pretext for the campaign. ʿAbd al-Mūʾmīn, who was in charge of Balkh, with the support of Dīn Muḥammad, the ruler of Qunduz and Baghlān, as well as Maḥmūd Sulṭān, the ruler of Tāliqān, displayed stern resistance to Sulaymān Mīrzā. Soviet scholars, like Akhmedov and Salakhetdinov, mark this event as the last Tīmūrid battle for Badakhshan.[62] Yet another uprising happened in 995/1587, when a group of Badakhshanis under the leadership of a certain Shāh Niẓām marched on Tāliqān. Order was soon restored this time too, due to the fact that the troops sent to the region by ʿAbdullāh Khān II were better equipped than those of the local rebels, and because the *amīr*s in the army had the vested interest of their *iqṭāʿ* land shares in the

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[60] ʿAllāmī, *Akbar-nāma,* vol. III, pp. 245-247; Islam, *A Calendar of Documents,* pp. 209; Rahim, "Mughal Relations with Central Asia," in *IC,* vol. 11 (1973), pp. 81-85.

[61] Lambton, "Eqṭāʿ," in *EIr,* vol. 8 (1998), pp. 520-533.

[62] Salakhetdinov, "Poslednie Timuridy i Badakhshan," in *Pisʾmennye Pamīatniki i Problemy Istorii i Kulʾtury Narodov Vostoka,* Moscow, 1990, pp. 244-250; Akhmedov, "Poslednie Timuridy," pp. 90-98.

region.[63] Sulaymān and Shāhrukh eventually sought refuge at the court of Emperor Akbar. Sulaymān passed away sometime in 997/1589 while Shāhrukh Mīrzā was in the retinue of Akbar *Pādshāh* until his death in 1061/1607.[64]
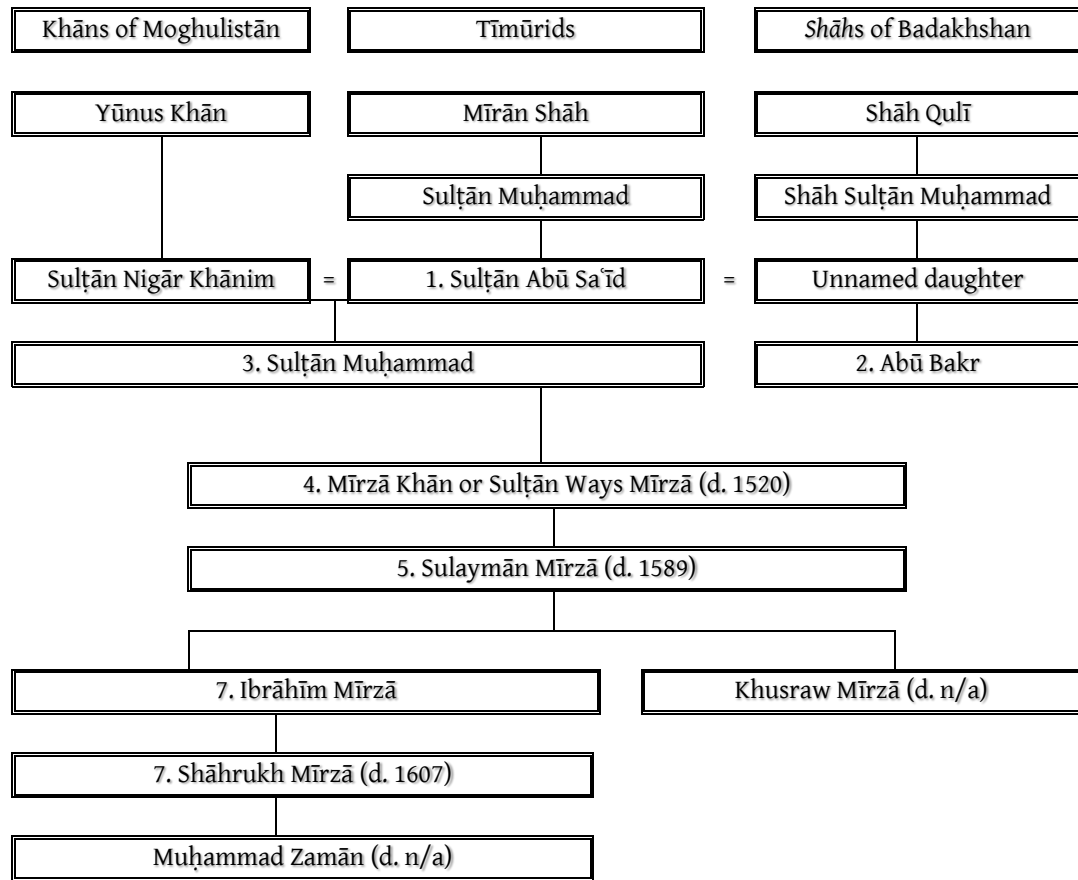
Figure 11: The Tīmūrid rulers of Badakhshan

Comparing the rule of Sulaymān Mīrzā with that of his father, Mīrzā Khān, and his grandson Shāhrukh Mīrzā throws up some striking aspects. Sulaymān Mīrzā, as compared to his father, was a charismatic leader who succeeded in mobilising the local population. He always had the ambition of extending his realm to Kābul and Balkh. These characteristics were not present in his father who was dependent sometimes on Bābur, the Mughal ruler, and sometimes on Shāh Ismāʿīl I, the Safavid king. Shāhrukh was a rebellious figure. His long fight for power with his grandfather became one of the causes of the split among Sulaymān's followers, which later weakened the power of the Tīmūrids and led to the loss of Badakhshan to the Shaybānids.

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[63] Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh, *Sharaf-nāma-i shāhī,* ff. 106b-115a; Ivanow, *Khozĭaĭstvo Dzhuĭbarskikh Sheĭkhov,* vol. II, Moscow, 1954, p. 26; Burton, *The Bukharans: A Dynastic, Diplomatic and Commercial History 1550-1720,* London: Curzon Press, 1997, pp. 52-68.

[64] Salakhetdinov, "Poslednie Timuridy i Badakhshan," pp. 249.

3.5. Tīmūrid 'Pretenders' and Shaybānid Response

The combined forces of the Shaybānids launched a military campaign against Sulaymān Mīrzā and his descendants that ended Tīmūrid rule in Badakhshan. Thomas Welsford's succinct summary of the events is to the point here as a background to the Tūqāy-Tīmūrid-Mughal contest for Badakhshan:

> Even after ʿAbdullāh had successfully reduced Badakhshan, figures associated with the previously established Tīmūrid ruling dynasty continued to claim authority over the region from their sanctuary in India... Sulaymān Mīrzā briefly regained power, before succumbing to Bukharan forces. Three years later [in 997/1589], an individual professing to be Sulaymān's great-grandson Muḥammad Zamān appeared in Badakhshan, claiming to have escaped from captivity in Bukhara. He tried to set himself up in authority, but was soon defeated and killed. Both attempts at a Tīmūrid restoration thus came to little. However, after the end of ʿAbdullāh's forceful reign in early 1006/1598, Abūʾl-Khayrīd authority over the region faltered, and a succession of individuals claiming Tīmūrid descent managed sequentially to establish themselves in authority.[65]

The sixteenth and seventeenth century sources, such as Qāżī Aḥmad Ibrāhīm-i Ḥusaynī's *Khulāṣat al-tawārīkh,* Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh's *Sharaf-nāma-i shāhī* and Abū al-Fażl ʿAllāmī's *Akbar-nāma,* recount the loss of Badakhshan to the Shaybānids. A number of records also show many claims and objections were raised by the Mughals in their attempts to regain the region. The importance of Badakhshan for the Mughals surfaced in the correspondence of Mughal Emperor Akbar with his regional *amīr*s. For instance, in a letter dated 3 Rajab 996/3 June 1588 a certain Ḥakīm Abū al-Fatḥ Gīlānī raised the question of Badakhshan. Although the letter does not mention any specific guidance or military aid for the last Tīmūrids, it clearly states that "the affairs of Badakhshan are likely to be taken up in a short time."[66] This extract evidently shows that the Mughals' response to the Badakhshan crisis was slow, which was to their detriment. However, the rule of the Shaybānids over the region also proved short-lived due to internal conflicts. Consequently, the all-powerful Shaybānid ruler, ʿAbdullāh Khān b. Iskandar Khān, who once managed to unite the Shaybānid *amīr*s and was in control of a vast territory between the *Syr daryā* and the *Āmū daryā* [i.e. the Jaxartes and the Oxus], was killed on 2 Rajab 1006/8 February 1598. Six months later, his son and successor, ʿAbd al-Mūʾmīn, was assassinated too.[67] The series of

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[65] Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty,* pp. 187-188.

[66] Ḥusayn, *Ruqaʿāt-i Ḥakīm Abū al-Fatḥ Gīlānī,* Lahore, pp. 117-120; Islam, *A Calendar of Documents,* Tx. 332.1, p. 216-217.

[67] McChesney, "Shībānids," in *EI2,* vol. 9 (1997), pp. 428-429; Ivanow, *Ocherki po Istorii Sredneĭ Azii (xvi – seredina XIX v),* Moscow, 1958, pp. 46-88; Akhmedov, "O Vremeni i Obstoĭatel'stvakh Smeny na Rubezhe XVI-XVII vv. Dinastii Sheĭbanidov Ashtarkhanidami," in *Vostochnoe Istoricheskoe Istochnikovedenie i Speͭsial'nye Istoricheskie Distsipliny* II, Moscow, 1994, pp. 161-171.

assassinations during this period marks the appearance of a new sub-branch of the Shaybānids, better known as the Shaybānid/Tūqāy-Tīmūrid, but also as Ashtarkhānids and Jānids, (r. 1006-1199/1598-1785).[68] Hence, it fell to the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids, the current dominant family in the Khānate, to maintain control over Badakhshan and its adjacent areas in the coming century.

Geo-politically, Badakhshan is located in close proximity to Kābul and Balkh and it served the Shaybānids as one of the staging points for their military expeditions against the Mughals of India. After its annexation to the Shaybānid realm in 991/1584, the *iqṭāʿ*-holding military commanders maintained control in the region. A change in ruler heralded a transformation in the political and religious realms. Unsurprising is also the fact that the change in dynasty was a precursor to a shift in political boundaries. In Badakhshan and its mountainous principalities, there was the lack of local elites to rule and mobilise the population and who could withstand the incursions of foreign invaders. In other words, the local population was not able to gain its full freedom from the Tīmūrids while the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids took it over. The military campaigns of the foreign conquerors damaged the economic well-being of Badakhshan. The imposition of heavy taxes and the fact that most of the fertile lands were shared among the Shaybānid warlords on an *iqṭāʿ* basis contributed to its economic and social decline.

In the last decade of the sixteenth century, a number of figures appeared throughout Badakhshan who traced their descent to the house of Sulaymān Mīrzā. These figures mostly appeared after the defeat of Sulaymān and his descendants, the last of whom was Muḥammad Zamān Mīrzā. Thomas Welsford employs the term 'pretender' to refer to these 'false' figures who appeared in Badakhshan between 1006/1598 and 1013/1605. Defining the term 'pretender' Welsford writes:

> By 'pretender,' I refer to an actor actively proclaiming, or having sponsors actively proclaim on his behalf, a particular identity in a bid for regnal authority which is otherwise unlikely to accrue to him.[69]

The 'pretender,' without a strong protégé, was bidding for authority in vain. Thus, most of these figures were put to the sword by the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids who intermittently controlled Badakhshan from the end of the sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century. The

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[68] After the death of ʿAbd al-Mūʾmīn b. ʿAbdullāh in 1006/1598 the title of Khān was passed to a certain Bāqī Khān whose descendants ruled Mā warā al-nahr in the seventeenth century. I, therefore, employ the term Tūqāy-Tīmūrid instead of Shaybānid in this section. For more details, see: Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty,* 2013 and Alekseev, *Politicheskaĭā Istoriĭā Tukaĭ Timuridov,* St. Petersburg, 2006.

[69] Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty,* pp. 189-190.

appearance of a certain Mīrzā Badīʿ al-Zamān in Badakhshan at the turn of the century gave a new dimension to such false claimants. Two factors contributed to the success of Badīʿ al-Zamān in comparison to other 'pretenders': he was probably related to the Mughals who supported his bid for authority in Badakhshan, and he claimed a secular as well as a spiritual line of descent to legitimise his bid.
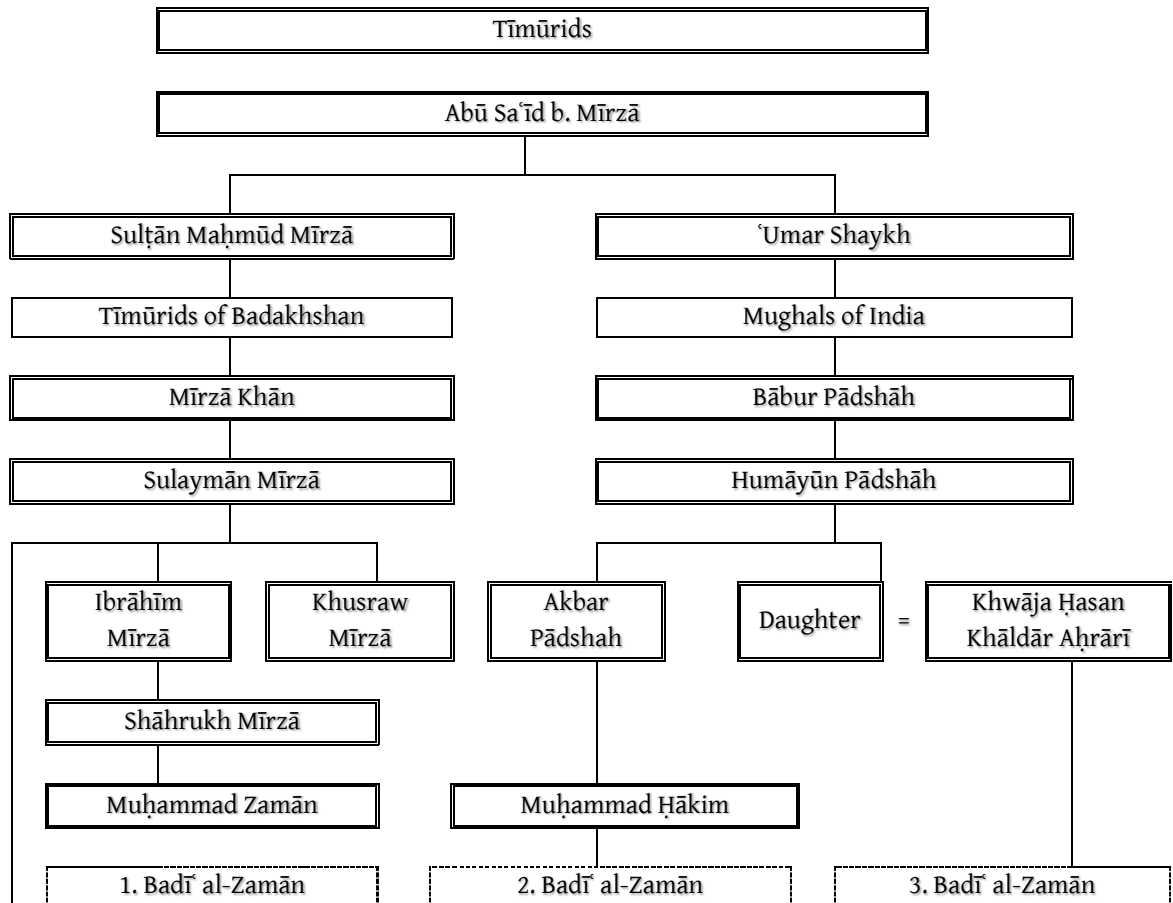
Figure 12: Three Badīʿ al-Zamāns: Pretenders in Badakhshan

His first claim links him to the last Tīmūrid ruler – Sulaymān Mīrzā. His second claim links him to the Mughal ruling family, particularly to the Emperors Humāyūn and Akbar. A third claim links him to ʿUbaydallāh Aḥrār, a famous fifteenth-century Ṣūfī from Mā warā al-nahr.[70] We may note that the genealogy of Badīʿ al-Zamān is too intricate to reveal in a short written passage. In the table below, I tentatively show three different figures. These three individuals with identical names are each associated with Badīʿ al-Zaman. The table

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[70] Iskandar Bīk Munshī, *Taʾrīkh-i ʿālam-ārā-i ʿAbbāsī,* Afshār, (ed.)., Tehran, 1972, pp. 632; Abū al-Muẓaffar Jahāngīr, *Tūzuk-i Jahāngirī,* Rogers, and Beveridge, (English tr.)., *The Tūzuk-i Jahāngīr, or, Memoirs of Jahāngīr,* vol. 2, London, 1914, p. 259; Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty,* pp. 1187-202; McChesney, "Mīrzā Badīʿ al-Zamān," in *EIr,* vol. 3 (1989), p. 379. The identity and genealogy of Badīʿ al-Zamān remains to be written as a separate study.

above shows how these figures trace their family descent to the last Tīmūrids, the Mughals of India and the Aḥrārī Ṣūfīs of Samarqand.

The above genealogical table clearly shows three figures with the identical name, Badīʿ al-Zamān. The primary and secondary sources consulted present this figure in various ways. Abū al-Muẓaffar Jahāngīr in the *Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī* tells us about a Badīʿ al-Zamān who was probably the descendant of Sulaymān Mīrzā. This figure escaped from Badakhshan in 992/1585. Consequently, his younger brothers killed him, perhaps, on the grounds of treachery.[71] The same source relates about another Badīʿ al-Zamān, whom the author identified as the son of a certain Khwāja Ḥasan Khāldār Aḥrārī. Abū al-Muẓaffar further relates that "after the death of the Prince [namely, Muḥammad Ḥākim b. Humāyūn d. 992/1585], Badīʿ al-Zamān ran away, and went to Mā warā al-nahr, and in that exile, he died."[72] More information about this figure can be gleaned from Muṭribī al-Aṣamm al-Samarqandī's *Nuskha-i zībā-i Jahāngīr,* a seventeenth-century Central Asian *taẕkīra* compilation. Muṭribī confirms that after Badīʿ al-Zamān's death in Badakhshan his body was brought to Samarqand and buried alongside Khwāja Aḥrār.[73] Khwāja Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Harawī in his *Ṭabaqāt-i Akbarī,* a late sixteenth-century Mughal source, and Ḥasan Bīk b. Muḥammad Khāqī Shīrāzī in his *Muntakhab al-tawārīkh,* an early seventeenth-century universal history, identify the third Badīʿ al-Zamān as Emperor Akbar's nephew on his sister's side. This is evident from the use of the term *khwāhar-zāda* (lit. sister's son) in these and other sources.[74] It seems safe to assume that the second and third Badīʿ al-Zamān are the same person. However, one can still object to his Aḥrārī lineage, which remains unclear and requires further research. Leaving aside his paternal lineage we may argue that Badīʿ al-Zamān, on his maternal side, is a nephew of Akbar and lived in Kābul at the court of his half-brother Muḥammad Ḥākim. Hence, the second and third individuals in the above table seem to be one, namely the son of Humāyūn's daughter.

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[71] Abū al-Muẓaffar Jahāngīr, *Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī,* vol. 1, pp. 163, 288-89 and 360 and vol. 2, p. 259; Welsford, *Four Type of Loyalty,* p. 190, n. 18; Lowick, "More on Sulaimān Mīrzā and His Contemporaries," in Cribb, (ed.)., *Coinage and History of the Islamic World,* Variorium, 1990, pp. 285-286.

[72] Abū al-Muẓaffar Jahāngīr, *Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī,* vol. 2, pp. 90-91; Welsford, *Four Type of Loyalty,* p. 190, n. 19; Foltz, *Mughal India and Central Asia,* 1998 pp. 60-61.

[73] Muṭribī al-Aṣamm al-Samarqandī, *Nuskha-i zībā-i Jahāngīr,* Bīkjanūf, and Mawjānī, (eds.)., Tehran, 1377/1999, p. 58; Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalry,* p. 190, n. 19; Muṭribī also tells us that this Badīʿ al-Zamān was killed in Badakhshan and his body was brought to Samarqand which leads us to think that Muṭribī is talking about different Badīʿ al-Zamān.

[74] Ḥasan Bīk b. Muḥammad Bīk Khāqī Shīrāzī, *Muntakhab al-tawārīkh,* MS BL Or. 1649, ff. 260b; Khwāja Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad Harawī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Akbarī,* De, (English tr.)., *The Tabaqāt-i Akbarī,* Calcutta, 1911-1939; Burton, *The Bukharans: A Dynastic, Diplomatic and Commercial History 1550-1702,* London, 1997, p. 115.

The sixteenth and seventeenth-century sources fail to provide an exact or approximate date for Badīʿ al-Zamān's arrival in Badakhshan. Muṭribī in his other work titled *Taẕkīrat al-shuʿarā,* of *ca.* 1012/1604, informs us that Badīʿ al-Zamān had managed to place Badakhshan under his control by Ẕu'l-ḥijja 1009/June 1601.[75] It was the Mughal Emperor, Akbar, who supported his bid for authority in Badakhshan. A certain ʿIbādullāh Fayyāẓ in his *Fayāẓ al-qawānīn* and Bhāg Chand Munshī in his *Jāmiʿ al-inshā* preserved a letter of Akbar to Bāqī Muḥammad Khān, the then ruler of Mā warā al-nahr. The Mughal ruler clearly supports Badīʿ al-Zamān's claim and therefore requests Bāqī Muḥammad to desist from any action against him.[76] No precise date for this letter is given in our sources. Riaz-ul-Islam, however, dates the letter to 1010/1601-02.

While the rulers exchanged letters, Badīʿ al-Zamān started to issue both *khuṭba* and *sikka* in the name of Emperor Akbar in Badakhshan. Bāqī Muḥammad, who considered the region part of the Tūqāy-Tīmūrid domain, saw this behaviour by Badīʿ al-Zamān as an instance of *lèse-majesté* and attacked the region. This campaign resulted in the capture and execution of Badīʿ al-Zamān.[77] This event must have happened in early 1011/1602. Subsequently, Bāqī Muḥammad assigned Badakhshan to his brother Walī Muḥammad, the ruler of Balkh, who in turn appointed a certain Bāqījān Parwānachī to administer in the region.
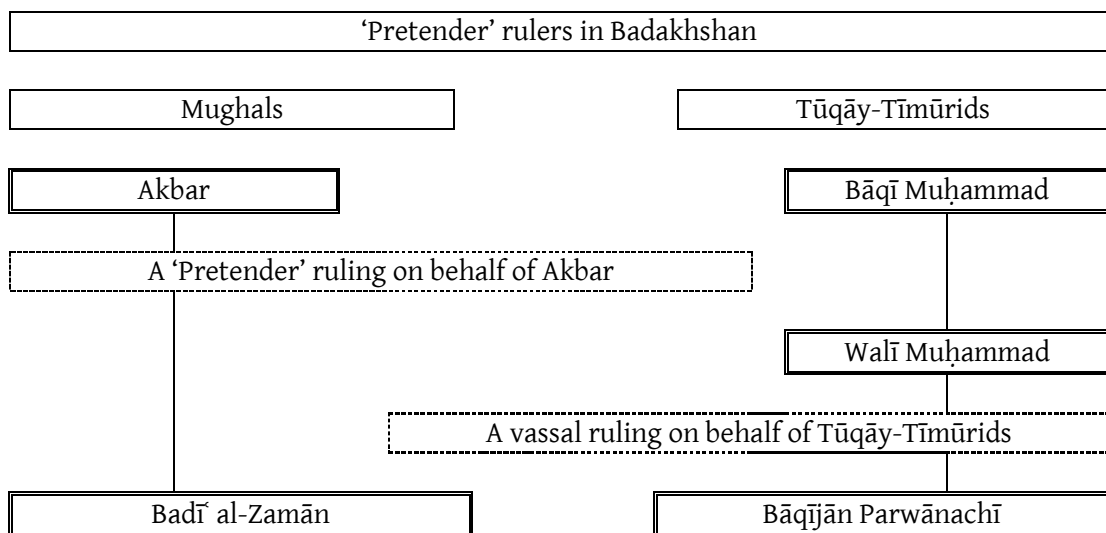
Figure 13: Mughal Pretenders or Tūqāy-Tīmūrid vassal rulers?

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[75] Muṭribī al-Aṣamm al-Samarqandī, *Taẕkīrat al-shuʿarā,* Jānfadā, (ed.)., Tehran, 1999, pp. 150-152; Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty,* p. 188, n. 6.

[76] ʿIbādullāh Fayyāẓ, *Fayāẓ al-qawānīn,* MS. BL. Or. 9617, ff. 167a-68b; Bhāg Chand Munshī, *Jāmiʿ al-inshā,* MS. BL. Or. 1702, ff. 205a-206b; Islam, *Calendar of Documents,* p. 228.

[77] Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty,* pp. 187-192.

The first decade of the seventeenth century was a period of inter-clan rivalry among the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids. The continuous struggle in Badakhshan brought the northern principalities of Shughnān, Darwāz and Wakhān to the forefront of the political and religious life of the period. These mountain principalities had demonstrated an uncompromising resistance to the Shaybānids since the conquest of Badakhshan in 992/1585. It is worth mentioning that, with the election of a new khān, the ruling elite of the regions under Tūqāy-Tīmūrid control changed. The remoteness of Badakhshan seems to play a big role in the failure to control it by the newly established *amīrs*. Lack of proper control and administration led to the loss of some parts of Badakhshan to the Safavids. For instance, Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Munshī b. Khwāja Baqā Balkhī in his early eighteenth-century *Taʾrīkh-i Muqīm Khānī*, informs us about the Safavid march towards Balkh and Badakhshan. The Safavids took control of the regions of Qunduz and Qaṭaghan, in western Badakhshan. This success was short-lived, as they then retreated towards Herāt on account of a serious outbreak of dysentery.[78] Bāqī Muḥammad, in his turn, started to punish and even purge some of his disloyal *amīrs*, particularly those who had 'assumed a greater political power'[79] among the newly emerging ruling elite. As a result, Bāqī Muḥammad succeeded in extending the geographical boundaries of his empire from Tashkent to Badakhshan. This time, it stretched from 'Turkistān to Āzād and Shighnān [Shughnān].'[80] An obvious inference can be drawn from the fact that the mountainous principalities (i.e. the *shāhigari*s or *mīrigari*s) of Shughnān, Wakhān and their neighbouring regions, because of their small population and possibly small (or even non-existent) local armies, tried to avoid military confrontations of any kind. Hence, they recognised the authority of the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids, just as they had recognised the authority of previous rulers. Consequently, these regions were included in the Tūqāy-Tīmūrid realm. Since Badakhshan was far distant from Bukhara and Samarqand, it formed part of the Balkh appanage system. Although it is difficult to conceptualise the precise geographical boundaries of the Tūqāy-Tīmūrid domain at that time, we may assume, from a discursive point of view, that it included most of the mountain principalities. McChesney's proposition in this regard is quite to the point when he asserts:

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[78] Munshī, Muḥammad Yūsuf, *Taʾrīkh-i Muqīm Khānī,* Semenov, (Russian tr.)., Tashkent, 1956, pp. 77-78.

[79] McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia,* p. 80.

[80] McChesney, "The 'Reform' of Bāqī Muḥammad Khān," in *CAJ,* vol. 24 (1980), p. 80. McChesney quotes this from Maḥmūd b. Amīr Walī's *Baḥr al-Asrār fī Manāqib al-Akhyār,* ff. 74a-74b. This is a tentative indication that Bāqī Muḥammad Khān's domain covered the northern mountainous principalities of Pamir as well.

> The eastern regions of the Balkh appanage, because of the mountainous nature of the terrain, defy precise definition. All the towns east of Balkh as far as Ishkāshim near the western entrance to the Wakhān Valley were subject to the appanage-holder of Balkh, at least through the first half of the century. As the politics of the appanage system evolved and the Uzbek *amīr*s became increasingly independent, the subordinate status of the eastern regions – Qunduz, Fayżabād, Tukhāristān, and Khuttalān – became more and more *pro forma*.[81]

Nonetheless, the inter-clan as well as inter-dynastic rivalries always influenced the geo-political and religious realm of Badakhshan and its northern principalities. The medieval Islamic sources indicate that in the Islamic context since its early history a ruler from any dynasty was considered to be the '*shadow of God on earth*.' It followed that, in order to legitimise his rule, a *khuṭba* was meant to be read in his name. In certain cases, this even led to violence and the imposition of a religious law, which was exercised by the ruler and the majority of the population. The minority communities, like the Ismāʿīlīs or Twelver Shīʿīs, living in the territories of the Sunnī rulers suffered the consequences of these political, religious and ideological transformations. Unsurprisingly, the minority groups in many cases were labelled with derogatory terms, such as *kāfir*s (infidels) and *mulḥid* (heretic), which made them prey to religious persecution throughout the Muslim world.[82] Ironically, the intrusion of Sunnī Islam with its anti-Shīʿī and Ismāʿīlī sentiments into Badakhshan during these centuries, forced the local Ismāʿīlīs to leave their homeland.

During the reign of Walī Muḥammad (r. 1013-19/1605-11), the political situation remained unchanged. The Tūqāy-Tīmūrids tried to strengthen their position in the regions of Herāt, Ḥiṣār and Badakhshan. With the passage of time, Herāt and Ḥiṣār became a focus of contention between the Safavids and Tūqāy-Tīmūrids, while the Mughal Emperor and the descendants of Shāhrukh Mīrzā strove to return their '*paternal land*', Mā warā al-nahr, which included Badakhshan and its northern principalities as well.

3.6. Under the 'Shadow' of the Shaybānid/Tūqāy-Tīmūrid *Amīr*s

In 1014/1606-1607, a mood of rebellion arose in Badakhshan under the leadership of a certain Mīrzā Ḥusayn, who was possibly one of the sons of Shāhrukh b. Ibrāhim b. Sulaymān Mīrzā. The rebellious groups dispersed as soon as news reached the region that Walī Muḥammad had dispatched an army under the command of Imām Qulī Khān, the son

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[81] McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia,* p. 98; Akhmedov, *Istoriĭa Balkha (XVI – pervaĭa polovina XVIII v.),* Tashkent, 1982, pp. 41-49.

[82] For more details on heresy in Islam, see: Lewis, "Some Observation on the Significance of Heresy in the History of Islam," in *SI,* no. 1 (1953), pp. 43-63; Taylor, "An Approach to the Emergence of Heterodoxy in Medieval Islam," in *RS,* vol. 2, no. 2 (April 1967), pp. 197-210.

of Dīn Muḥammad Khān (r. 1020-51/1611-41).[83] A second rebellion under the leadership of Mīrzā Ḥusayn broke out later that same year. This time, a large number of troops under the leadership of Imām Qulī Khān and his half-brother, Nādir[84] Muḥammad, was sent to restore order in the region. The Tūqāy-Tīmūrid campaign proved successful this time, as they captured Mīrzā Ḥusayn and consequently executed him later that year.[85] Quite strange, however, is the fact that Walī Muḥammad ignored Imām Qulī's contribution during these last campaigns. Imām Qulī's response to such an attitude was unexpected. He and his allies seized the western parts of Badakhshan, while Nādir Muḥammad, with the support of a certain Razzāq Pīrdī, subjugated Balkh. The historical sources, such as the *Taʾrīkh-i Muqīm Khānī*, suggest that the Khān agreed to negotiate a peace and even forgave Imām Qulī and Nādir Muḥammad, 'on the condition that they forfeit all rights over Badakhshan and Samarqand.'[86] The importance of Samarqand and Bukhara to the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids is obvious, as these territories constitute the heartland of their dynasty. The importance of Badakhshan to these rulers, however, remains open to speculation. Nonetheless, one can argue that the importance of Badakhshan is due to its strategic and geo-political location connecting the three empires. Similarly, its location at the crossroads of trade and the fact that it possessed mines of precious and semi-precious stones would make it more important to the *Khān* and his *Amīr*s in the coming decades.

Imām Qulī Khān and his half-brother, Nādir Muḥammad, showed a great interest in the political affairs of Badakhshan for several reasons: firstly, there was the economic dimension, as Badakhshan was a connecting point between Mā warā al-nahr, Persia and India. Secondly, it was a source of precious and semi-precious stones. Thirdly, Walī Muḥammad left both Imām Qulī and Nādir Muḥammad in charge of Balkh; and, finally, Badakhshan was far from Walī Muḥammad's court and was controlled from Balkh, as it was part of its appanage system. However, Imām Qulī and Nādir Muḥammad kept to the main condition of the peace agreement, which was to abstain from any involvement in the political affairs of the region. Viewing this event from a slightly different perspective, we can see that Imām Qulī Khān had some other confrontations and quarrels with Walī

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[83] McChesney, "Central Asia, vi: In the 10th-12th/16th-18th Centuries," in *EIr,* vol. 5 (1992), pp. 176-193; Burton, "Imam Quli and Iran," in Melville, (ed.)., *Proceedings of the Third European Conference in Iranian Studies,* Wiesbaden, 1999, p. 287, n. 1.

[84] The name of Imām Qulī's half-brother Nādir has various spelling in the primary sources as well as in modern studies. Following Burton's lead, I will use Nādir for the sake of consistency. Burton, "Imam Quli and Iran," in Melville, (ed.)., *PTECIS,* Wiesbaden, 1999, pp. 287-290.

[85] Burton, *The Bukharans,* 1997, pp. 124-129.

[86] Munshī, Muḥammad Yūsuf, *Taʾrīkh-i Muqīm Khānī,* pp. 235-240; Burton, *The Bukharans,* 1997, pp. 126-129.

Muḥammad in which the question of Badakhshan does not arise. It might, therefore, be implied that both Imām Qulī Khān and Nādir Muḥammad seem to have considered being chosen as the next *Khān* after Walī Muḥammad. In other words, the question of the succession may be considered one reason for such behaviour.

Walī Muḥammad passed away in 1019/1611, and Imām Qulī Khān (r. 1019-50/1611-41) succeeded him as the new *Khān*.[87] At some point early in his reign, he appointed a certain ʿAbd al-Karīm, an exiled prince from Qāshqhar, as governor of Kishm, a small province in the southern part of Badakhshan.[88] It seems strange that Imām Qulī Khān did not appoint him as *amīr* (governor) of the entire region. We may assume that the *Khān* was cautious about this move, as he was aware that ʿAbd al-Karīm could rebel against him if he were granted the entire region and was thus able to establish his power firmly. In other words, he could become a threat to the reigning authority and power and, to a certain degree, might limit the influence of the central apparatus on the peripheral areas. As far as Badakhshan is concerned, it was part of the appanage system of Balkh, where Nādir Muḥammad was active as ruler.

Historical sources from Persia and Central Asia as well as modern studies indicate that the newly emerging *amīr*s and *aṭālīq*s within the Tūqāy-Tīmūrid realm caused problems for the central authority. For instance, in 1039/1630-31, Nādir Muḥammad appointed his son, Khusraw Sulṭān, as ruler of Khuttalān. With the passage of time, Khusraw Sulṭān cut off all relations with his father. On many occasions, the local *beg*s and *amīr*s challenged Nādir Muḥammad's authority because he was only the nominal ruler of the region. Eventually, he conceded defeat. Bartol'd is of the opinion that Khuttalān, Darwāz and Karātegīn, in the south-west of Badakhshan, remained inaccessible to the Uzbeks. It was only in 1046/1637-38 that the Uzbek *amīr*s, possibly under the leadership of Khusraw Sulṭān and a certain Bāqī Aṭāliq (seventeenth century), sought to extend their influence to the right bank of the *Panj* River. However, they faced severe resistance from the local population under the leadership of a certain Shāh Qirghīz, who ruled the region (of Darwāz) for thirty years (1047-78/1638-68).[89] In the light of this, we may infer that Khusraw Sulṭān and his allies had been defeated and expelled from the region by the local rulers of Khuttalān and

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[87] Bartol'd, *Sochineniīa,* vol. VIII, p. 178; Abbaeva, *Ocherki Istorii Badakhshana,* pp. 103-107; Iskandarov, *Istoriīa Pamira,* pp. 77-79.

[88] Burton, *The Bukharans,* 1997, p. 135.

[89] Pirumshoev, *Taʾrikhi Darwoz: Az Qadim to Zamoni Muosir,* Dushanbe: Irfon, 2008, pp. 60-64 also his "Darwāz," in Adle, *et al.,* (eds.)., *HCCA,* vol. 5: *Development in Contrast: From the Sixteenth to the Mid-nineteenth Century,* UNESCO Publication, 2003, pp. 231-232.

Darwāz under the leadership of a certain Shāh Gharīb (prior to 1047/1638) and later his brother Shāh Qirghīz.[90] Khusraw Sulṭān's arrival at the court of Nādir Muḥammad would have been different were he not the son of Nādir Muḥammad. Because of the blood tie, Nādir Muḥammad pardoned his son and subsequently put him in charge of Badakhshan.

We learn from late nineteenth-century Russian sources that Darwāz gained greater importance during the reign of Shāh Qirghīz. Moreover, Shāh Qirghīz's nephew and successor, Maḥmūd Shāh (d. 1140/1729), attempted to extend his territory and political influence to the neighbouring mountain principalities of Shughnān and Wakhān. Thus, when discussing the reign of Maḥmūd Shāh, Kuznet͡sov, one of the T͡sarist Russian military officers, comments:

> During that reign [i.e. Maḥmūd Shāh's reign], Badakhshan, Wakhān and Shughnān were separated from Darwāz and were ruled by their own *shāh*s. From that time on, Wakhān and Shughnān paid tribute either to Badakhshan or Darwāz, depending on which *khānate* was stronger at the time.[91]

The passage cited gives us a strong indication that there was a tense relationship between Darwāz, Badakhshan and Qaṭaghan, as well as Shughnān and Wakhān. To a certain degree, this friction stems from the control and distribution of the land and the mines containing the precious and semi-precious stones. Equally, it might be related to the disposition of religious minorities in the region. By this time, the religious minorities like the Shīʿīs, Ismāʿīlīs and some Ṣūfī movements had sought refuge in the mountain principalities. As a result, the population of Badakhshan and its mountain principalities suffered the most from the disruptions and conflicts of the seventeenth century.

Historical documents and brief citations in the *waqf* documents draw our attention to another interesting fact according to which an Uzbek tribal group migrated from Samarqand and settled in Qaṭaghan. This has happened sometime in the first half of the seventeenth century.[92] With the passage of time, this migrant group evolved into a powerful tribal confederation. In 1050/1641, when Imām Qulī Khān renounced his throne and Nādir Muḥammad (r. 1050-61/1641-51) succeeded him, Khusraw Sulṭān was appointed

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[90] Bartol'd, "Tadzhiki: Istoricheskiĭ Ocherk," in *Sochineniĭ͡a,* vol. II, Part 1, Moscow, 1963, pp. 463ff; Pirumshoev, *Ta'rikhi Darwoz,* pp. 60-64.

[91] Kuznet͡sov, *Darwoz: Reconstrukt͡sii͡a Gen. Shtaba Kapitana Kuznet͡sova v 1893 g,* Margilan, 1893, pp. 3-5.

[92] Chekhovich, *Dokumenty k Istorii Agrarnykh Otnosheniĭ v Bukharskom Khānstve XVII-XIX vv,* Tashkent, 1954, pp. 21-62; McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia,* pp. 90-94; Adamec, (ed.)., *Historical and Political Gazzetteer of Afghanistan,* vol. 1: *Badakhshan Province and North-Eastern Afghanistan,* Graz, 1979, pp. 572-579.

as the governor of Qunduz, which then included Qaṭaghan.[93] Discussing the turbulent political situation in the Badakhshan of Nādir Muḥammad's era, our attention is drawn to the figure of a certain Maḥmūd Bī, the *aṭālīq* of Qaṭaghan.[94] We may assume that this time it was Maḥmūd Bī, the leader of the Qaṭaghan tribe, who ousted Khusraw Sulṭān from Qunduz. The outcome seems to have been predictable, as Qaṭaghan separated from Qunduz and formed a separate tribal centre. In the following years, particularly around 1056/1647, the newly arrived Uzbek tribes put down strong roots in the region. Maḥmud Bī was already a well-established tribal chieftain as McChesney aptly puts it:

> Maḥmud Bī, the leading Qaṭaghan *amīr*, was the principal political figure in western Badakhshan, who used his position to increase the wealth and prestige of the Qaṭaghan through frequent raids in the mountainous marsh land to the east.[95]

From this time onwards, the local historical sources also draw our attention to the harsh living conditions in Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities. This misery was inflicted upon the local population because of the raids and punitive expeditions conducted by the Uzbek tribes from Qaṭaghan during the reign of Maḥmūd Bī, on the one hand, and by the internecine wars between the neighbouring principalities, on the other. Maḥmūd Bī even appointed his people as local governors within his domain to control and collect taxes. However, some of these appointed *amīr*s then started to withhold the revenue collected for their own benefit. They even began to fight for their freedom and independence. These sporadic rebellions were quickly subdued and Maḥmūd Bī punished the instigators severely. One of these *amīr*s was a certain Yāribeg Khān, who was possibly the governor of Yaftal and Juzgūn, two regions in vicinity of Kishm in Badakhshan. As Yāribeg Khān's power and popularity grew among the local population, he succeeded in mobilising the people of the neighbouring localities against the Qaṭaghan Uzbeks. Muḥammad Yūsuf Munshī in his *Ta'rīkh-i Muqīm Khānī* and Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī in the *Ta'rīkh-i Badakhshān* recount that Yāribeg Khān's success culminated in the establishment of another confederation that grew into a local dynasty later referred to as Yārid or Yāribeg Khānid dynasty. This dynasty ruled the region for more than two centuries, as we shall discuss in more detail in the next chapter.

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[93] Lāhawrī, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, *Bādshāh-nāma,* Calcutta, 1867-72, pp. 435-437; Kushkekī, *Katagan i Badakhshan,* Semenov, (Russian tr.)., Tashkent, 1926, pp. 9-15.

[94] No biographical details are available on Maḥmūd Bī *Aṭālīq* in historical sources. He became prominent at the end of the seventeenth century and passed away in the first half of the eighteenth century.

[95] McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia,* p. 116.

It is important to note that the study of its political history has overshadowed the cultural, religious and intellectual life of the region. Despite the fact that Badakhshan was in the middle of a vortex of political intrigues during the period under study it still produced a number of important figures whose life and work remain an area to be explored. Mention could be made of Dūstī-i Badakhshānī (b. 910/1505-05), Shāh Muḥammad-i Badakhshī, better known as Mullā Shāh (990-1072/1582-1662), Mullā Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ-i Badakhshānī (d. mid-seventeenth century), along with many others. Ibrāhim Mīrzā, son of Sulaymān Mīrzā, known under his *nom de plume* Vafāī, also wrote poetry in Persian and Turkish. The scattered copies from Vafāī's writings may shed more light on the cultural life of Badakhshan in the sixteenth century and therefore their study remains a *desideratum*.[96]

Conclusion

The loss of Mā warā al-nahr to the Shaybānids at the turn of the fifteenth century forced the Tīmūrids to move towards Balkh, Ḥiṣār, Herāt, Badakhshan and eventually India where they established a new dynasty which became known as the Mughals. The Tīmūrids used Badakhshan as a staging point for their army as they desired to regain control in Mā warā al-nahr.

In the first decade of the sixteenth century Khusraw Shāh, a Tīmūrid *amīr*, challenged the authority of the Tīmūrids in Badakhshan. Their authority was also challenged by the local *beg*s, who wanted to free their people from the Tīmūrid yoke. In the second half of the first decade of the sixteenth century one of the Nizārī Muḥammad Shāhī imams, Shah Rażī al-Dīn appeared in Badakhshan and mobilised the local population against the Tīmūrids as well as the Shaybānids. After the execution of Shāh Rażī al-Dīn in 915/1509-10 Mīrzā Khān rose to power in Badakhshan. His descendants, Sulaymān Mīrzā and Shāhrukh Mīrzā, ruled the region until 993/1585 when ʿAbdullāh Khān and Pīr Muḥammad succeeded in annexing it to the domain of the Shaybānids.

During the reign of Sulaymān Mīrzā, the Badakhshanis launched a number of attacks on Balkh, Ḥiṣār and the kingdom of Kābul. As an independent ruler of the region, Sulaymān Mīrzā struck coins in his own name, which provoked resentment among the Mughals. They considered Sulaymān as their vassal ruler. The sixteenth century is also marked by the internal rivalry between Sulaymān and his grandson, Shāhrukh. This rivalry divided

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[96] The intellectual and literary life in Badakhshan remains a topic for future studies. Most of the fragmentary sources produced in Badakhshan are still un-catalogued and remain in manuscript form. For more details, see: Habibov, *Ganji Badakhshon,* Dushanbe, 1972 and his *Az Taʾrīkhi Ravobiti Adabii Badakhshon bo Hinduston* (*Asrhoi* XVI-XVII), Dushanbe, 1991; Badakhshī, *Armughān-i Badakhshān*, Bezhan, (ed.)., Tehran, 1385 Sh/2007.

the region among the supporters of Shāhrukh and his grand-father, which eventually led to the loss of Badakhshan to the Shaybānids.

Although the Shaybānids took control of Badakhshan, the region kept its semi-independent status because vassal rulers from Balkh controlled it. During the seventeenth century the new sub-branch of the Shaybānids, the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids, remained in charge of the region. Internal conflicts between the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids were one of the reasons that Badakhshan remained under the nominal control of this dynasty. A new chapter in the history of Badakhshan starts with the rise of Yāribeg Khān, an eponymous founder of a dynasty known as Yārid or Yāribeg Khānid, which I shall discuss briefly, in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: THE RULE OF YĀRIBEG KHĀNID DYNASTY IN BADAKHSHAN

Introduction

As may have been gleaned from the previous chapter, the period from the last quarter of the sixteenth to the first decade of the seventeenth century was a period of political transformation in Mā warā al-nahr and the neighbouring countries. During this period, the last Tīmūrids lost Badakhshan - their staging point for the subjugation of Mā warā al-nahr - to the Shaybānids. The last Tīmūrids joined the Mughals of India, with whom they shared a common ancestral heritage, and continued their joint struggle for Badakhshan and Mā warā al-nahr. The Shaybānids faced internal challenges, particularly after the death of ʿAbdullāh Khān II in 1006/1598. Hence, the new Shaybānid faction, known as Tūqāy-Tīmūrids, kept Badakhshan under their control until the mid-seventeenth century.

Badakhshan, during this period, remained a point of contention for the Mughals and the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids. The former desired to return their '*parental lands*' and used Badakhshan as a staging point for their army, while the latter resisted any incursions or rebellion by both internal and external powers. Badakhshan became part of the Balkh appanage system and it was controlled from there by a vassal ruler appointed by the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids. The social, political and religious landscape in Badakhshan changed dramatically. The extermination of the local ruling family during various foreign invasions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries created a void in the political structure of Badakhshan. The mightier dynasties like the Shaybānids and the Mughals filled this void with new political and religious ideologies.

The second half of the seventeenth century was the turning point in the history of Badakhshan. It was the period when the Uzbek tribes migrated to Badakhshan and established a confederation with a small power base. It was also the time that saw a certain Mīr Yāribeg Khān rise to power who consolidated various tribes throughout Badakhshan and eventually succeeded in establishing a dynasty that ruled Badakhshan for more than two centuries. I refer to Mīr Yāribeg Khān, the eponymous founder of a dynasty, which later bore the name Yārid or Yāribeg Khānid dynasty (*sulāla-i Yāribeg Khānī*) in the history of Badakhshan. This chapter, therefore, traces the rule of this hitherto neglected dynasty and the role they played in the history of the mountainous country.

4.1. The Rise to Power of the Yāribeg Khānid Dynasty in Badakhshan

We have seen in the previous chapter that the presence of the Mughals in the political life of Badakhshan came to very little. The Tūqāy-Tīmūrids who ruled this region from Balkh in the seventeenth century assigned vassal rulers to control it on their behalf. Nonetheless, they did not fully succeed in this.

In 1038/1629, during a succession crisis at the Mughal court, Nādir Muḥammad extended his domain beyond Badakhshan when he attacked Kābul. During this campaign, Badakhshan served as a staging point for the Tūqāy-Tīmūrid advance towards the kingdom of Kābul, formerly part of the Mughal domain. The Mughals, on the other hand, wanted to recapture Mā warā al-nahr, their ancestral land, which was under the control of the Uzbeks. The seventeenth-century *Shāh Jahān-nāma* by ʿInāyat Khān tells us about the Emperor's plan to recapture Balkh and Badakhshan. In one passage ʿInāyat Khān recalls:

> From the time of the last Emperor Jahāngīr's death (d. 1036/1627), when Nādir Muḥammad Khān had vainly attempted to seize Kābul, the mighty soul of the world-subduing monarch had been bent upon the countries of Balkh and Badakhshan, which were properly his hereditary dominions.[1]

As a result, Shāh Jahān (r. 1037-68/1628-57) launched a campaign against Balkh in 1055/1646-47 and succeeded in recapturing the kingdom of Kābul. Later the same year Mughal forces conquered both Badakhshan and Balkh. The Mughals even erected a mosque in the vicinity of Kābul as a sign of their victory over the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids. However, this success proved short-lived. After sometime, the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids refocused their power and regained control over Balkh. At the same time they moved their army towards Badakhshan. The mobilisation of the Tūqāy-Tīmūrid army actually represents their response to the migration of the Uzbek tribes to Badakhshan, mentioned in the previous chapter (pp. 95-96). At the early stages, these recently-arrived Uzbek tribes who resided in the region conducted infrequent and at the same time chaotic raids into neighbouring regions such as Ḥiṣār-i Shādmān and Badakhshan. We can even surmise that these were strategic moves against the remnants of the Mughal army in the region.

Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī and Fażlʿalībek Surkhafsar in the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* tell us how the Uzbek tribes of Qaṭaghan[2] under the leadership of Maḥmūd Bī, the *aṭālīq* of

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[1] ʿInāyat Khān, *Shāh Jahān-nāma,* Fuller, (English tr.) and Begley and Desai, (ed.)., Delhi, 1990, pp. 335-336; Foltz, "The Mughal Occupation of Balkh: 1646-1647," in *JIS,* no. 7/1 (1996), p. 50.

[2] Qaṭaghan is the name of a region, which was previously known as Qunduz. This region is mainly populated with by the Uzbek tribe. Adamec, *Badakhshan Province and Northeastern Afghanistan,* pp. 94-96.

Qaṭaghan, conducted frequent raids into Badakhshan in the first half of the seventeenth century. We can also postulate that other Tūqāy-Tīmūrid *amīr*s carried out similar punitive expeditions in this region as well. The marauding raiders were the cause of disturbance, rebellions and the collapse of the local economy. The despotic rule of the Uzbek tribes was so harsh that the local population sought help from the rulers of Balkh. They also sought the help of the famous Naqshbandī *shaykh*s from the shrine of *Makhdūm-i Aʿẓam* in Samarqand on account of the close religious ties between them.[3] It should be mentioned that by the end of the sixteenth century religious and spiritual authority among the Naqshbandī Ṣūfīs had become confined to three famous lineages, named after Khwāja ʿUbaydullāh Aḥrār (d. 895/1490), Khwāja Aḥmad Kāsānī, and Khwāja Muḥammad Islām Juybārī (d. 970/1563-64).[4]

Makhdūm-i Aʿẓam (the Great Master) is the honorary title of Aḥmad b. Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Khwājagī Kāsānī (866-949/1461-1542), a prominent Naqshbandī Ṣūfī from Farghāna. He was buried in the village of Dahpīd or Dahbīd, which is now part of the modern city of Samarqand.[5] The population of Yaftal,[6] according to Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī's *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*, recognised the religious and political authority of the Kāsānī Ṣūfīs.[7] Several vexing questions present themselves at this point. What was the relationship between Mīr Yāribeg Khān and the *shaykh*s of Makhdūm-i Aʿẓam's shrine in Dahpīd? In what way(s) did these *shaykh*s and their religious and political authority contribute to the rise to power of Yāribeg Khān in Badakhshan?

It is worth mentioning that the influence of Makhdūm-i Aʿẓam's teaching had already spread beyond Dahpīd when ʿAbd al-Rashīd Khān (r. 949-978/1532-1570), a Chaghataid Khān, had invited him to Qāshghar. Makhdūm-i Aʿẓam, however, sent two of his sons and several other *shaykh*s to the court of ʿAbd al-Rashīd sometime in the mid-sixteenth century. This marks the spread of Naqshbandī teaching to Qāshghar.[8]

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[3] Mukimov, "Mavzoleĭi Makhdumi A'zam," in Negmatov, Mukimov, Alieva, and Samoilik, (eds.)., *Hissorskiĭ Zapovednik i Ego Arkhitekturnye Pamĭatniki*, Dushanbe, 1994, pp. 53-67.

[4] Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty,* p. 71; DeWeese, "The Descendants of Sayyid Ata and the Rank of *Naqīb* in Central Asia," in *JAOS,* no. 115 (1995), pp. 612-632.

[5] Gardner, "Makhdūm-i Aʿẓam, Aḥmad," in *EI3,* vol. 1 (2012), pp. 150-154; Babajanov, 'Biographies of Makhdum-i Aʿẓam al-Kāsāni al-Dahbidī, *Shaykh* of the 16th-Century Naqshbandiya,' in *Manuscripta Orientalia,* vol. 5. no. 2 (1999), pp. 3-8.

[6] The name of Yaftal comes from the tributary of Kākcha River. It is located north of Faiżābād which is populated by Tajiks. The region of Yaftal consisted of 28 villages in the early twentieth century. The region of Yaftal is divided into two parts: Yaftal-i Bālā and Yaftal-i Pāyān. Adamec, *Badakhshan Province and Northeastern Afghanistan,* p. 189.

[7] Badakhshī, and Surkhafsar, *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* Moscow, 1997, f. 2b, (Russian tr.), p. 26-27.

[8] Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia,* Cambridge, 2000, pp. 157-160; Chekhovich, *Samarkandskie Dokumenty XV-XVI vv: O Vladenīākh Khadzhi Akhrāra v Sredneĭ Azii i Afghanistane,* Moscow, 1974, pp. 300-315.

Yāribeg Khān's family, who were also of Dahpīdī origin, had migrated to Yaftal, where they initially settled in the village of Kham-i Mīr,[9] possibly two or three generations prior to Yāribeg Khān's rise to power. Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad informs us that it was in 1068/1657-58 that the native population of Yaftal unanimously chose Mīr Yāribeg Khān as their ruler. Upon his accession to power Yāribeg Khān, chose the title *amīr* or *mīr* to legitimise his rule. Although it is commonly stated that success is a prelude to disaster and pointless cruelty, in the case of Yāribeg Khān, this seems quite inappropriate. The reason for this, according to the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*, seems to be rooted in the nature of his rise to power, which was not accompanied by rebellion as such. It was rather his ancestral religious and, to a certain extent, political authority that gave him an advantage over the local leaders. Yāribeg Khān, according to a narrative by Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī in the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*, was the son of a certain Shāh-i Beg, whose father was a certain Mīr Zāhid Khān. Zāhid Khān's title of *Mīr*, might suggest that he was either the governor of a region (probably Yaftal), or that he was a religious scholar or an *amīrid* official in his time. The same title is also used in association with Yāribeg Khān's name in the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān.* The absence of a genealogical tree of Yāribeg Khān's ancestors as well as any mention of them in the local and other historical sources (except in Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī's *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*) prior to their migration to Badakhshan makes it a complex task to reconstruct a detailed picture of either their involvement in the political life of Samarqand, particularly in Dahpīd or their migration to Badakhshan. Moreover, in the later period, it is difficult to ascertain their involvement in a broader context of the political and religious life of Badakhshan. Nevertheless, it is safe to assume that, after migrating to Yaftal, his ancestors first became involved in the religious life of the region, and only with the rise of Mīr Zāhid Khān and later of Yāribeg Khān himself did they start to play a prominent role in the political life of Badakhshan. The consensus of the local population about the rise of Yāribeg Khān to political power is clearly expounded in the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* as follows:

> All the people, of noble origin and the laity, agreed on the following: so far as his noble origin is of the blessed hereditary *pīr* family and he is also our religious leader, then he will be our *amīr* and chief, for he is a hereditary *sayyid*. And none will be ashamed of obedience to him and his instructions.[10]

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[9] Badakhshī, and Surkhafsar, *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* f. 2a, (Russian tr.), p. 26.
[10] Ibid. f. 2a, (Russian tr.), p. 27.

In the above passage, Sangmuḥammad refers to Yāribeg Khān's family origin and links them to the line of hereditary *pīr*s and *sayyid*s. In Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad's account, the terms *pīr* and *sayyid* are the linking point in the genealogy of Yāribeg Khān. Since the actual *Nasab-nāma* is absent, it is difficult to explain the use of these two terms by Yāribeg Khān and his ancestors as presented in Sangmuḥammad's *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*. Noticeably, the term *pīr* is of Ṣūfī provenance and is used to refer to a spiritual preceptor or a *shaykh*. Nonetheless, it is difficult to discern from Sangmuḥammad's narrative from which Ṣūfī lineage Yāribeg Khān and his ancestors claimed descent. It is impossible to know whether Yāribeg Khān's ancestors were direct members of a Ṣūfī family, particularly the Naqshbandī Kāsānī Ṣūfīs of Dahpīd, or whether they had any consanguineous relationship with them. The term *sayyid*, on the other hand, refers to the descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad through his son-in-law ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661). The issue becomes more complex if we look at the relationship between these two terms in the context of Yāribeg Khān's rise to power. What is strange in this passage is the claim of Yāribeg Khān, a Sunnī ruler, to be descended from or connected to prominent Shīʿī personalities. Hamid Algar refers to the extreme scarcity of Shīʿī Naqshbandī Ṣūfīs.[11] The Naqshbandī Ṣūfīs, in fact, were instrumental in anti-Shīʿī activities. Nonetheless, Yāribeg Khān used these slightly antagonistic terms, *pīr* and *sayyid*, in his bid for regnal authority. The terms *pīr* and *sayyid* evidently gave him a wide variety of prerogatives. The passage, therefore, explains the specific nature of Yāribeg Khān's religious authority that prepared the ground for his triumphant rise to political power without any military confrontation.

Furthermore, we learn from the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* that a consensus between the nobles and the laity on this matter was reached on account of his being from a noble family of *sayyid*s. In this manner both his religious authority and his noble origin are used to authenticate the validity of his rising political power, which in the Muslim context was defined by the Holy *Qurʾān* and prescribed religious law - the *sharīʿa*. In this regard, Mīr Yāribeg Khān sets out to admonish his people about the necessity of justice. Thus, in his own words, Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad validates the basis of his rule in the dictum of the *Qurʾān*, where Mīr Yāribeg Khān says:

> Insofar as the people considered me their hereditary *pīr* and had chosen me as their ruler [*amīr*], then I, during my rule [*amīrate*], which is in reality a sign of deputyship on earth, as it is said in the *Qurʾān*: "O David! Lo! We have set thee as a viceroy on the earth; therefore

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[11] Algar, "The Naqshbandī Order: A Preliminary Survey of Its History and Significance," in *SI*, no. 44 (1976), pp. 127-128.

judge with justice between mankind" [*Qurʾān* 38:26],[12] will hold all needful affairs within the prescribed boundaries of religious law [i.e. *sharīʿa*].[13]

Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī's narrative in this passage is different from that in the previous one. In the previous passage the narrator is presented in the third person and evidently it is the author, Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad, who is talking about Mīr Yāribeg Khān's spiritual descent. In this passage the narrator is presented in the first person. Hence, we can see that Yāribeg Khān claims descent from a family of hereditary *pīr*s. Nonetheless, Yāribeg Khān does not mention any Ṣūfī order his ancestors might have been affiliated to. It is noteworthy that Mīr Yāribeg himself does not use the term *sayyid* in justifying his bid for power and confines his claim to the legal boundaries set by the Holy *Qurʾān* and Islamic *sharīʿa* law only.

The term *pīr*, as mentioned earlier, is of Ṣūfī provenance and corresponds to the Arabic term *shaykh*.[14] It should be emphasised that, due to the turbulent political situation in the region in a broader context, certain religious terms, such as *pīr*, *ṣāhib-i daʿwat*, *shaykh* and some others, have been used in various religious contexts. Thus, the interchange of these terms transcended the boundaries of their conventional connotations by intermingling them, not only in form, but to a certain extent in meaning as well. In the case of Yāribeg Khān, as we have said, the term *pīr* transcends the boundaries of simple rulership as it combines both religious and political power together.

4.2. Yāribeg Khān's Second Rise to Power

According to the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* the rise of Yāribeg Khān to power was a good omen for the population of Badakhshan. He came to power in 1068/1657-1658 and ruled the entire region of Badakhshan till his death in 1118/1707-1708.[15] The *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* of Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad relates that with his rule, signs of economic and social prosperity began to appear in the region. A similar scenario is seen in the domain of Maḥmūd Bī in Qaṭaghan. Yāribeg Khān won the respect of both the nobility and the laity, as it was under his leadership that the Uzbek tribe of Qaṭaghan was expelled from this domain. What

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[12] Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī inserts the term *ʿadl* instead of *ḥaqq* into the *Qurʾānic* verse to validate the just rule of Mīr Yāribeg Khān. For a comparison of both texts, see: *The Qurʾān,* 38:26, which reads: يٰداوٗد انّا جعلناك خليفةً فى الارض فاحكم

and the same verse from the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* which reads: يٰداوٗد انّا جعلناك خليفةً فى الارض فاحكم بين النّاس بالعدل بين النّاس بالحقّ. See: Badakhshī, and Surkhafsar, *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* f. 3a, (Russian tr.), p. 27.

[13] Ibid. f. 3a, (Russian tr.), p. 27.

[14] Bosworth, "Pīr: 1. In the Persian and Turkish Worlds," in *EI2*, vol. 8 (1995), pp. 306.

[15] Badakhshī, and Surkhafsar, *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* 3a-4a, (Russian tr.), pp. 27-28.

seems missing from Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī's account is Mīr Yāribeg Khān's relationship with the rulers of Balkh during his rise to power and the first five years of his rule. We should therefore emphasise the point that Badakhshan was part of the appanage system of Balkh and, as mentioned earlier, most of its fertile lands had been distributed to and were governed under the *iqṭāʿ* system by powerful Tūqāy-Tīmūrid warlords (Chapter 3, pp. 82-97).

According to the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* at some point in the 1070s/1660s, Mīr Yāribeg Khān renounced his throne after a successful reign that had lasted only two years and left for India. We need to ask ourselves why Mīr Yāribeg Khān then travelled to Mughal India but not to the Tūqāy-Tīmūrid domain, particularly to Balkh. It is quite strange considering that Badakhshan was part of the Balkh appanage system and that the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids could easily have suppressed any rebellion. A number of the Tūqāy-Tīmūrid *amīr*s held *iqṭāʿ* lands in Badakhshan, too. Although the local and peripheral primary sources keep silent on this matter it is not unreasonable to argue that during his pre-migration period Mīr Yāribeg Khān's bid for power may have been supported by the Mughals.

The reasons for Mīr Yāribeg Khān's renouncement of his throne were not only the threat to his political power but also the fact that his authority was ignored in certain parts of Badakhshan. The escalating factor for this move, according to Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad's account, was the fact that the population of Lower Yaftal (*Yaftal-i Pāyān*) recognised the authority of a certain Shāh ʿImād, whom they had chosen as their new ruler with the same regnal title of *Mīr*. They even erected a fort for him in a locality known as Lāyāba, which, according to the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* is in the vicinity of Lower Yaftal.[16] With the departure of Mīr Yāribeg Khān, a period of political turmoil began, particularly since the Uzbek tribes considered this the opportune moment to attempt to subjugate Badakhshan. Both Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī and Muḥammad Yūsuf Munshī confirm that Maḥmūd Bī had seized control of the region within a short time. The *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* further informs us that Maḥmūd Bī even 'erected a fort somewhere near Jurm, a region on the left bank of the Kākcha River, and installed his vassal ruler there.'[17]

As described in the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*, it was almost an overnight campaign; suddenly the times of prosperity changed into disorder and rebellion. The Uzbeks of Qaṭaghan

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[16] Badakhshī, and Surkhafsar, *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* ff. 3a-4a, (Russian tr.), pp. 27-28.

[17] Badakhshī, and Surkhafsar, *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* f. 3b, (Russian tr.), pp. 27; For the geographical locations of Yaftal and Jirm, see: Kushkeki, *Katagan i Badakhshan,* 1926, pp. 108-110 and 119-124; Adamec, *Badakhshan Province,* pp. 88-89.

started to pillage the region's collective wealth. It does seem odd that with Mīr Yāribeg Khān's move to India he did not fight for his throne, a fact evident from the account in the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān.* However, this sequence from the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* does seem rather unconvincing and simplistic, as any link between power and violence disappears. This leads us to think that the author of the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* at this stage presented an ideal picture of a ruler, whose conduct was confined to the moral and ethical teachings of the *Qurʾān.*

But the issue of violence and state building in the Islamic context up until Mīr Yāribeg Khān's rise to power proved very different. The expansion of the Islamic *caliphate* beyond the Arab peninsula was possible not only through religious preaching but also due to certain other inter-related factors, like the economy and the 'power of the sword.' Applying Max Weber's theory of violence and state building to the Islamic context, Jürgen Paul suggests:

> [According to Max Weber's famous formula,] ...the defining characteristic of the state is its claim to monopolise all forms of legitimate violence. The state and violence, in other words, are bound together in a relationship of inextricable interdependence.[18]

It is therefore possible that Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī (and Fażlʿalībek Surkhafsar) marginalise Mīr Yāribeg Khān's political power to the context of Badakhshan only. Besides this, the local sources inadvertently deny the relationship between power, violence, political legitimacy and their importance in the process of state building. As a result, the image of the all-powerful Mīr Yāribeg Khān remains confined to the religious domain alone.

Maḥmūd Bī, the *Aṭālīq* of Qaṭaghan, on the other hand, introduced new forms of taxation in Badakhshan. He raided the region from time to time. The pre-Yāribeg Khān days started to repeat themselves throughout the region. Shāh ʿImād, the newly elected Mīr of Badakhshan, seems to have chosen to adopt a safe life of action, making no interference in the affairs of Maḥmūd Bī. The population of Badakhshan, however, sought the help of Subḥān Qulī Khān (r. 1091-1114/1680-1702), the Tūqāy-Tīmūrid ruler of Balkh. It is ironic that some local people of noble origin even went to India to invite Mīr Yāribeg Khān to return and reinstate his rule. This event is corroborated by Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī in

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[18] Paul, "Max Weber und die Islamische Stadt," in Lehmann, and Ouedraogo, (eds.)., *Max Webers Religionssoziologie in Interkultureller Perspective,* Göttingen, 2003, pp. 109-137; Paul, "Violence and State-Building in the Islamic East," in *Online Working Paper No. 4,* Available online at: www.gsaa.uni-halle.de (Accessed 20/05/2008). Also see his *The State and the Military: The Samanid Case,* Bloomington, Indiana, 1994, which is the case study of the Sāmānid Empire.

the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* as well as by Muḥammad Yūsuf Munshī in his *Tażkīra-i Muqīm Khānī*. The latter, however, notes this event only *en passant*, while the former describes it in more detail. The important element, which is missing from both accounts of his return, is the date. Insofar as the dates are absent from both the local and peripheral sources it would seem plausible to assume that Mīr Yāribeg Khān returned to Badakhshan at some point in the second half of 1068s/1670s but not as late as 1091/1681.

Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī and Muḥammad Yūsuf Munshī present his rule after his return to power in a completely different way. In one passage of the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*, describing a gathering of nobles and grandees, Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad expounds the following:

> Then [i.e. after Yāribeg Khān's return], discussing matters of the region, [they][19] agreed that first [of all] they would clear the fort of Jurm of the Uzbeks. Then, they would banish the Uzbeks from other forts in Badakhshan. Eventually, after driving them out beyond the locality of Lattaband, they would take possession of the whole of Badakhshan.[20]

It was in the midst of these struggles, Shāh ʿImād, the 'acting Mīr' of the region and his entire family were put to the sword as suggested in local sources. In this way, the fort of Lāyāba was taken over by Mīr Yāribeg's promoters.

As mentioned earlier, there is no information in Muḥammad Yūsuf Munshī's *Tażkīra-i Muqīm Khānī* about Mīr Yāribeg Khān's relationship with Subḥān Qulī Khān, the acting ruler of Balkh. Yet, the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* corroborates that, after his second enthronement, Mīr Yāribeg Khān visited Balkh, which confirms that this enthronement must have taken place before 1091/1681, that is before Subḥān Qulī Khān assumed the role of Khān of Bukhara.[21] This also indicates that Mīr Yāribeg Khān recognised the *de facto* authority of Balkh over Badakhshan and possibly the adjacent mountain principalities after his return from India. Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad narrates:

> The grandees and nobles unanimously agreed that they should go to the capital city of Balkh in order to pay homage to the Amīr of the Amīrs, his majesty *sayyid* Subḥān Qulī Khān. After meeting Subḥān Qulī Khān, he [i.e. Mīr Yāribeg Khān] received [his] consent to leave. Since Amīr Yāribeg Khān was granted the full consent of the Khān of Balkh for

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[19] The plural pronoun in this passage refers to the local population of Badakhshan.

[20] Badakhshī, and Surkhafsar, *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* ff. 4b-6a, (Russian tr.), pp. 28-29.

[21] It is worth mentioning that Subḥān Qulī Khān was the ruler of Balkh for 23 years - from 1067/1657 to 1091/1680. His rule as the *khān* of the Uzbek realm extends from 1091/1681 until 1113/1702. A detailed discussion on his reign may be found in Burton, *The Bukharans,* pp. 239-260.

independent rule in Badakhshan, it was upon his arrival that the fort of Juzgūn was founded for him and the foundations of a new city were laid.[22]

Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī affirms that Mīr Yāribeg Khān visited Balkh to pay homage to Subḥān Qulī Khān. Strangely enough Subḥān Qulī Khān also became a *sayyid* in Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad's context and is thus represented as bestriding both the political and spiritual domains. However, the author abstains from elucidating the details of Subḥān Qulī's relationship with the *sayyid* family. What becomes clear in this context is the point where from that time onwards, it became the responsibility of Mīr Yāribeg Khān to appoint people from his retinue to higher positions in order to control and maintain order in his domain. Employing Thomas Welsford's expression, the ruler of Badakhshan became the autonomous appanage holder, who from that time onwards "embodied an authority which requires no authorisation from elsewhere."[23]

Maḥmūd Bī, on the other hand, made several attempts to seize power over Badakhshan, but all of these proved to be in vain. Muḥammad Yūsuf is of the opinion that Maḥmūd Bī marched on Badakhshan in 1103/1691-92 in order to collect revenues from the ruby mines. In a battle in the vicinity of Rustāq,[24] Maḥmūd Bī defeated Mīr Yāribeg Khān's army. Consequently, the Mīr of Badakhshan was forced to agree to a peace settlement with the condition that he would pay Maḥmūd Bī two years' estimated income from the mines in advance.[25] Modern scholarship, by contrast, challenges Muḥammad Yūsuf's version, since a totally different account of this event can be found in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sources. For instance, Muḥammad Amīn b. Mīrzā Muḥammad Zamān-i Bukhārī Ṣūfīyānī in his *Ta'rīkh-i Subḥān Qulī Khān* (also known as the *Muḥīt al-tawārikh),* which was composed sometime towards the end of the seventeenth century, and Khwāja Qulī Bīk Balkhī (Qipchāq Khān) in his *Ta'rīkh-i Qipchāq Khānī*, composed around 1138/1726, presented this event as a total fiasco and highly unsuccessful. Thus, Burton's summary of this event, on the authority of Khwāja Qulī Bīk (Qipchāq Khān), is sufficiently to the point to be quoted here *in extenso*:

> When Maḥmūd Bī marched on Badakhshan after returning to Balkh, Subḥān Qulī Khān was suspicious of his motives. The *khān* believed that the *amīr* wanted to impose his own control over Badakhshan and his rich mines. He accordingly instructed the *naqīb*, Muḥammad Saʿīd

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[22] Badakhshī, and Surkhafsar, *Ta'rīkh-i Badakhshān,* f. 5b, (Russian tr.), p. 28.

[23] Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty,* p. 223.

[24] Rustāq, according to Adamec, is a sub-division of Badakhshan. It is located to the north of Qaṭaghan, and the Oxus River forms its northern and western boundaries. Rustāq is also a name of a town on the left bank of the Rustāq River, a tributary of Oxus. Adamec, *Badakhshan Province,* pp. 142-145.

[25] Munshī, Muḥammad Yūsuf, *Taẕkira-i Muqīm Khānī,* pp. 254-259; Abaeva, *Ocherki Istorii Badakhshana,* p. 106.

Khwāja, to resist such an attempt, which he did by deserting from Maḥmūd Bī's army at the crucial moment. Maḥmūd Bī was therefore defeated. He fled, leaving the Badakhshanis to sack his camps, but he later punished the Khwāja by humiliating him publicly in Qunduz. The *amīr*s of Balkh then took the Khwāja's side, withdrawing their support from Maḥmūd Bī and appointing the *aṭālīq* Muḥammad Jān to lead them against him [i.e. Maḥmūd Bī].[26]

Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad, for some reason, fails to discuss this issue. He jumps from Mīr Yāribeg Khān's arrival from Balkh to socio-economic issues. Yet, he draws our attention to the issue of religion as it comes to the fore with the arrival of the Prophet Muḥammad's *khirqa* in the region. This was an important event in the history of Badakhshan, which to a certain extent seems to have contributed towards a change in the religious landscape of Badakhshan.

4.3. The Prophet's *Khirqa* in Badakhshan

The significance of the Prophet Muḥammad's *khirqa* (lit, robe or mantle) to any believer is a topic of religious or anthropological study. However, in the context of this section, it will be used as a precursor to the religious and political elevation of Mīr Yāribeg Khān and his family enabling them to sustain power and control over the region. Many sources discuss the significance of the holy *khirqa*, together with its authenticity and importance in the anthropological and historical context. Therefore, in this section, the *khirqa* will be employed in the context of the religious as well as the political discourse.

Historical sources, such as Maḥmūd b. Amīr Walī's *Baḥr al-asrār* and Fayż Muḥammad Kātib's *Sirāj al-tawārīkh,* discuss the stories related to the *khirqa* at great length. The *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*, in its turn, discusses the arrival of the *khirqa* in a very short passage only.

According to the *Sirāj al-tawārīkh* and the *Baḥr al-asrār*, the Prophet's *khirqa* and its guardians were brought to Samarqand from ʿIrāq-i ʿArab by Amīr Tīmūr sometimes in the fourteenth century. It was housed in the village of Dahpīd until a certain Āghā Muḥammad, and Naẓr Muḥammad decided to bring it to Balkh, where it remained until 1109/1697. The aforementioned sources provide contradictory dates for the arrival of the *khirqa* in Balkh. The *Baḥr al-asrār*'s account suggests the transfer was completed by 1054/1645, which seems closer to reality. Maḥmūd b. Amīr Walī narrates that the *khirqa* was already in Balkh or possibly in Badakhshan by 1049/1640.[27] Its preservation in Balkh seems more

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convincing due to the fact that Balkh was controlled by the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids at that time, while Badakhshan was not a self-sufficient unified state.

The *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*'s account, on the other hand, draws our attention to the details of the *khirqa*'s arrival in the region but lacks a precise chronology. Robert McChesney employs some juridical documents as supplements when utilising and cross analysing the historical sources, such as the *Taʾrīkh-i Sulṭānī* and the *Taʾrīkh-i Aḥmad Shāhī*, and puts forward the following hypothesis:

> If we take the *fatwā* [i.e. juridical documents] at face value, the cloak would have been in Bukhara from 994/1586 to 1073/1663, in Balkh from 1073/1663 to 1108/1697, and then in Badakhshan from 1108/1697 to 1181/1768.[28]

All of the available sources substantiate and complete each other, albeit with slight variations, with regard to the proposed date of the *khirqa*'s arrival in Badakhshan. Hence, the date inscribed on one of the buildings where the *khirqa* was held clarifies this particular *quid pro quo* that stems from the sources. The inscription on the building is in a form of poetry, which is quoted here *in extenso*:

<div dir="rtl">

می‌دهد از ریاض جنَّت یاد . خـــرقــۀ پـاك سـیـد عـربـی،

محمل او به جوزگون افتـاد . در هـزار و صد و سـه از هـجرت،

زآن سبب نام گشت فیض‌آباد . جوزگون گشت لایق این فیض،

</div>

<div align="center">

The pure garment of the Arabian prophet,
Heralds the garden of paradise.
In the year one thousand one hundred and three after *hijra*,
His caravan settled down in Jūzgūn.
Jūzgūn rejoiced in the profit of this bounty,
And it was renamed 'the Abode of Bounty.'[29]

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Although the rhyming of this poetry is weak, it still provides date for the *khirqa's* arrival as 1103/1691, which is closer to reality. Thus, the earlier hypotheses might be discounted on the grounds that their authors were not resident in Badakhshan and that some of these sources were composed much later than the actual incident took place.

Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad Badakshī's narration draws our attention to the fact that Mīr Yāribeg Khān's success in keeping the *khirqa* in his domain was a sign of the relatively

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[28] McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia,* pp. 224-225.

[29] Badakhshī, *Armughān-i Badakhshān,* 2008, p. 42.

long-lasting peace throughout his territory. The *khirqa* was also used as a source of revenue and economic prosperity in Badakhshan, as it had been in other places too. In addition, the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* also brings forward the issue of religious interchange. Strikingly, Mīrzā Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad Badakshī represents Mīr Yāribeg Khān's pluralistic approach to the various religious groups as he recounts that:

> It was during his [i.e. Mīr Yāribeg Khān's] reign that some respected *khwājas* from Samarqand took the blessed *khirqa* of the Prophet [Muḥammad] and set off for India through Chitrāl and Badakhshan. When they passed the borders of Badakhshan and reached the Dū Rāh[30] pass, news of this event reached the *amīr*. The *amīr* [i.e. Yāribeg Khān, in his turn] without any delay sent his people, who brought the *khwājas* back from the Dū Rāh pass, and brought them to the court [of the *amīr* of Badakhshan]. Afterwards, they were forbidden to take the *khirqa* to India and agreed that the *khirqa* must remain in Badakhshan... Those who carried the *khirqa* were granted residence, land, gardens and houses in Badakhshan. To keep the blessed *khirqa*, an elevated building was erected, which was made a place of worship for believers [i.e. *muʾmin*]. The *shaykhs* from Samarqand, who had brought the *khirqa*, were elevated to the rank of *shaykhs* [Per. *shaykhī*], guardians [Per. *mutawāli-garī*] and preachers [Per. *ṣāhib-i al-daʿwat*]... When the blessed *khirqa* was housed in the city [of Juzgūn], on account of this mercy, the capital city of Badakhshan was renamed Fayżābād (lit. the Abode of God's Bounty).[31]

Upon close examination of this passage, the issue of religion unexpectedly comes to the fore immediately on the arrival of the *khirqa*. It gave prestige to the rule of Mīr Yāribeg Khān. Islam in a broader context also re-surfaced in political milieu of the time. The thin line of theological discourse becomes blurred, as is evident from the use of language and certain specific terms. For example, the term *muʾmin*, which is mostly used in the Shīʿa and particularly Ismāʿīlī context, is also employed in the Sunnī milieu. In a wider perspective, the term *muʾmin* in the text encompasses all believers. What gives weight to this interchange is the fact that the arrival of the *khirqa* overshadowed the divisions in the theological discourse.

It is especially noteworthy that the employment of terms such as *shaykh*, *mutawālī* and *ṣāhib-i daʿwat* gives a hierarchical structure to the guardians of the *khirqa*. Strictly speaking, a hierarchical structure in the matter of religion is one of the distinctive characteristics of Shīʿa Islam, in general, and the Ismāʿīlī branch of Shīʿa, in particular. The terms *shaykh* and *mutawālī* are of Sunnī provenance. However, the term *ṣāhib-i daʿwat* is mainly used to refer either to the chief *dāʿī* (*dāʿī al-duʿāt*) or, in certain cases, even directly to the Ismāʿīlī Imam.

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[30] Dū Rāh is a mountain pass connecting Chitrāl (the northern area of Pakistan) with Badakhshan. Boldyrev, "Notes," in *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* p. 106.

[31] Badakhshī, and Surkhafsar, *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* ff. 6b-7a (Russian tr.), p. 29.

What seems unresolved in this passage is the relationship between Sunnī (i.e. Ḥanafī) Islam and Ismāʿīlī teaching in the context of Badakhshan.

Historical sources from Mughal India confirm that this region, in a broader geographical context including Kābul, was a bastion of Sunnī Islam. Likewise, we know from local sources that Badakhshan, particularly the northern parts of the region, had been a bastion of the Ismāʿīlī branch of Shīʿa Islam since the eleventh century. The use of the term *ṣāhib-i daʿwat* clearly reflects the reverse order of missionary activity within the Sunnī context. Robert McChesney puts it in the following way:

> The title [i.e. *ṣāhib-i daʿwat*] may reflect a process of assimilation of the Sunnī tradition into an Ismāʿīlī one, though Badakhshī, a Ḥanafī Muslim,[32] frequently refers to the Ḥanafī-Ismāʿīlī conflict. Or, perhaps it is simply the Ḥanafī adaptation of Ismāʿīlī terminology (the Ḥanafīs may have felt it was they who needed to be missionaries to the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan).[33]

It seems safe to argue that this proposition reflects the impact of Ismāʿīlī teaching on the Sunnī theological discourse. It was only possible as part of Ḥanafī-Ismāʿīlī intellectual discussion which seems to have taken place among the religious dignitaries of both groups. Despite the fact that the local Ismāʿīlīs constituted the minority group in the region, their impact on Sunnī teaching was evidently strong, as is clearly reflected in McChesney's hypothesis.

The significance of the *khirqa*'s arrival in Badakhshan is that it seems to have broken the bounds set by religious hatred for a short period of time. The interchange of vocabulary is one of the evident examples of this short-lived transformation, which was the result of continuous debate and intellectual discourse.

4.4. Mīr Yāribeg Khān's Death and the Problem of Succession

Returning to the reign of Mīr Yāribeg Khān after the arrival of the *khirqa*, we can see the prospect of a relatively peaceful religious milieu. His fort in Fayżābād (the former Juzgūn) became a place of gathering for religious scholars, artists and poets. He ruled the region for fifty years and passed away at some point in 1118/1707-08. Local sources, such as the

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[32] Here Robert McChesney refers to Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī as a follower of Ḥanafī *maẕhab.* This information must be approached with caution, as Fażlʿalībek Surkhafsar continued the text of the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān.* The religious affiliation of both authors is difficult to ascertain from the text. It must also be emphasised that the majority of the Ḥanafī Muslims in Badakhshan were affiliated to various Ṣūfī *ṭarīqas.* Most prominent among these Ṣūfī *ṭarīqas* were the Naqshbandī Ṣūfīs. A clear example for this is the figure of Mīr Yāribeg Khān himself who as has been seen was affiliated to Makhdūm-i Aʿẓam, a prominent Naqshbandī *shaykh* from Samarqand.

[33] McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia,* pp. 224-225. In the last conversion passage, McChesney clearly points to the tension in the Sunnī-Shīʿī relationship and possibly to forced conversions to Sunnī Islam.

Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān, refrain from mentioning the names of Mīr Yāribeg Khān's close relatives, at least his brothers and sons, and the roles they played in matters related to religion and politics during his life. The presence of these relatives, particularly his sons, becomes visible only in relation to the most vexing question confronting any ruling dynasty, namely, the question of succession.

Mīr Yāribeg Khān, according to the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* and the *Armughān-i Badakhshān*, had several sons, possibly with different wives. Shāh ʿAbdullāh-i Badakhsī's source of information is also a *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*, composed not by Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī but rather by a certain Mīrzā Ḥusayn. As mentioned earlier this particular work has not survived. Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad, on the other hand, furnishes the names of several of Mīr Yāribeg Khān's sons. He collected his information from the elders of the region. We understand from the narrative in the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* that not all of the sons were listed by Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī and later by Fażlʿalībek Surkhafsar. Nonetheless, in one passage in the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*, Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad, the first author of the work, provides the names of eight of Mīr Yāribeg Khān's sons. Abaeva[34] and Pirumshoev,[35] two Soviet scholars, also base their discussion on the genealogy of Mīr Yāribeg Khān on this particular passage, which is translated below. So Sangmuḥammad narrates how Mīr Yāribeg Khān divided his domain among his sons, however, he fails to provide a date for this event and a reason for the gathering. The passage, nonetheless, implies that Mīr Yāribeg Khān advised his sons on the matters that concern the ruler and divided his domain among them on his deathbed. The passage providing the names of his sons runs:

> And among his talented and gifted sons, the eldest one was Shāh Sulaymān Beg. He gave him the region of Jurm. The second son, Yūsuf ʿAlī Khān, was given [the region of] Saddeh and Pasakukh. The third and fourth sons, Khwāja Niyāz and Khwāja Isḥāq, were given Sardīv, Sarghulām and Shīva. The fifth son, Shāh Ismāʿīl Beg, was given the land from Kishm to Farkhār, Varsaj and Tang-i Darūn. The sixth son, Ziyā al-Dīn, was appointed [governor of] Arghunchah. The seventh son, Mīrzā Qand, was appointed [governor of] Kūrān and Munjān, and the eighth son, Mīr Ulūgh Bek, was given [land] in Bāgh-i Jurm.[36]

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[34] Abaeva, *Malochislennye Narody Pamiro-Gindukushskogo Regiona Afganistana v XIX – nachale XX veka (Osnovnye Problemy Ėtno-Politicheskoĭ i Soṭs̄ia'naĭ Istorii),* Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, The Abu Raĭkhon Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies, Tashkent, 1990.

[35] Pirumshoev, "The Pamirs and Badakhshan," in Adle, and Habib, (eds.)., *HCCA,* vol. 5: *Development in Contrast: From the Sixteenth to the Mid-nineteenth Century*, UNESCO Publishing, 2003, pp. 230-234.

[36] Badakhshī, and Surkhafsar, *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* ff. 7a-fb, (Russian tr.), p. 30.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│          Zāhid Khān[37]              │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│          Mīr Shāh-i Bek              │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  1. Mīr Yāribeg Khān (d. 1707-1708)  │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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| 2. Shāh Sulaymān Beg (d. 1713) | 3. Yūsuf ʿAlī Khān (d. 1717) | Khwāja Niyāz (d. 1713) | Khwāja Isḥāq | Shāh Ismāʿīl Bek | 4. Ziyā al-Dīn (d. 1737) | Mīrzā Qand | Mīr Ulughbek |

| Sulaymān Khān | Yūsuf ʿAlī Khān II | Mīr Pādshāh | 5. Mīrzā Nabāt (d. 1159/1747) | Shāh Buzakhurbek |
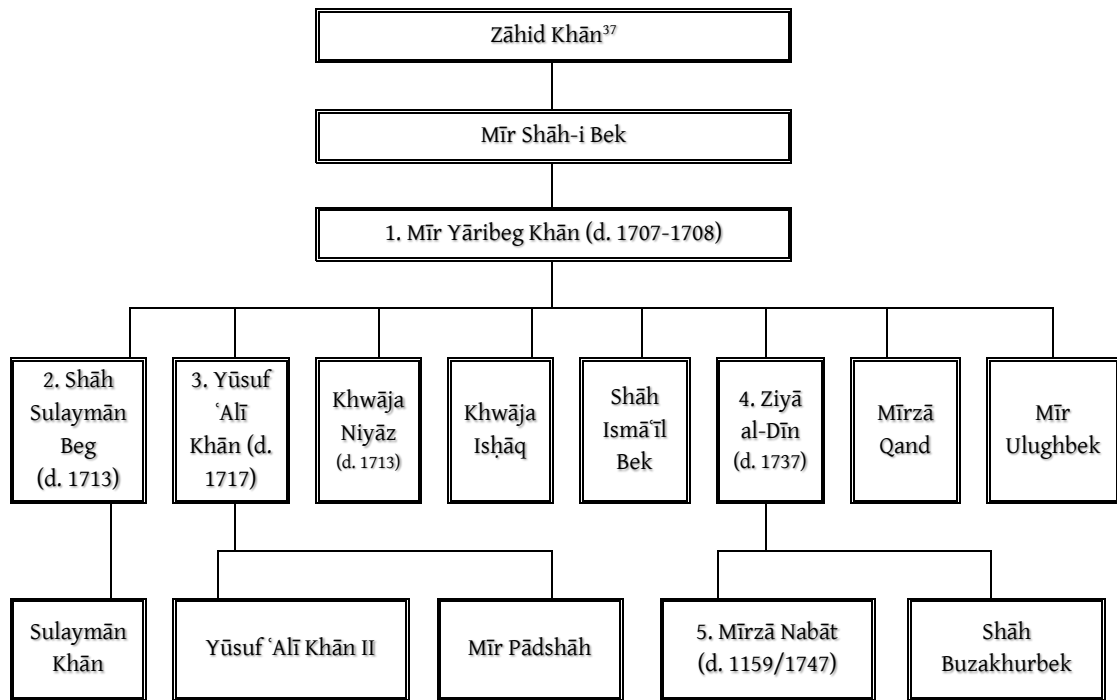
Figure 14: Yāribeg Khānid Rulers of Badakhshan

Discussing the question of succession in Islam in a broader historical perspective opens up a spectrum of inter-related and sometimes conflicting issues. The most vivid example of succession is reflected in schism, fragmentation, and downfall and, in some cases, the extinction of different dynasties. Likewise, it reflects the rise to power of a new ruling elite with modified religious and political ideologies. The rise of the Safavids, a Qizilbāsh Ṣūfī group, to power in the early sixteenth century in Iran is a good example of the transformation from Sunnī orthodox Islam to Shīʿī messianic movement. Yet, the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*'s narration of the succession, which is not mentioned in any other sources, seems very idealistic and far from reality, and so should be approached with a certain degree of caution. This particular succession narrative, in even sharper contrast to the crude succession process in the post-Humāyūn succession dispute in Mughal India and others such cases, seems like a fable in its explicitness. Yet, the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* gently brings this succession dispute to a final resolution, stating:

> The aforementioned sons [of Mīr Yāribeg Khān], due to their perfection in terms of shrewdness and knowledge, agreed on the following: Among all of us, the eldest and most knowledgeable one, [so to say] Shāh Sulaymān Beg is fitting to be an heir-successor to our deceased father on the throne in Fayżābād. Likewise, the reign of the individual and

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[37] For more details on Yāribeg Khānid rulers from 1068/1657 to 1293/1878 please refer to list of Yāribeg Khānid rulers in Badakhshan at the end of this chapter, (Figure 14, p. 114). Due to the shortage of space in this table I could not insert the available death dates of Yāribeg Khān's sons.

general government must be held by our eldest brother, and all [we] brothers must obey Shāh Sulaymān Beg.[38]

The idealistic picture of succession presented in this excerpt shows that there was a formal gathering of Mīr Yāribeg Khān's sons. Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad's narrative here excludes the grandees and nobles of the region from such an important gathering. It appears somewhat strange from the account that Shāh Sulaymān Beg was not chosen as heir-designate by Mīr Yāribeg Khān himself while he was still alive. It was rather the exclusive gathering of brothers who decided to choose Shāh Sulaymān Beg, the eldest brother, to rule the land and lead his brothers. Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad clearly shows how Mīr Yāribeg Khān had divided his realm among his sons, without furnishing any information about who would succeed to the kingship of the entire domain.

The death of Mīr Yāribeg Khān in 1118/1707-1708 opened up a new prospect for Maḥmūd Bī's conquest of Badakhshan. He and his Uzbeks from Qaṭaghan did not wait long and carried out a number of campaigns against the region to which the united army of the new Mīr and his brothers displayed a stern resistance. Maḥmūd Bī's army was not victorious and was unable to resist the combined army of Mīr Sulaymān Beg. Eventually, after a number of loses in the battlefield the Uzbek army conceded defeat. The *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* suggests that Maḥmūd Bī changed his attitude towards Mīr Yāribeg Khān's sons, and particularly towards the ruling Mīr, Shāh Sulaymān Beg. Astonished by his talent for military issues and governing the region, Maḥmūd Bī sent him a letter consisting of a single, short distich, which read:

<div dir="rtl">

شکوفه گر برود جانشین شود پسرش.   خوش آن پسر که نشیند به مسند پدرش،

</div>

Happy is the son, who succeeds his father;
When a flower fades away, its fruit will replace it.[39]

We learnt from the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* the *Taẕkīra-i Muqīm Khānī* and the *Sirāj al-tawārīkh* that Badakhshan was nominally within the domain of the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids. It is clearly shown in both sources that the Tūqāy-Tīmūrid currency, the *tanga*,[40] was in circulation in the region for economic exchange and trade. The *tanga* was usually dispatched to the

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[38] Badakhshī, and Surkhafsar, *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* f. 8a, (Russian tr.), p. 30. The notes in square brackets inserted in the text are mine.

[39] Ibid. f. 10a, (Russian tr.), p. 31.

[40] The *tanga* is a gold or silver coin used for trade in the Bukharan khanate. It was minted either in Bukhara or in Balkh and was widely used within the Tūqāy-Tīmūrid domain.

region either from Balkh or from Bukhara. Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad also recounts how a certain Bābā Qamar al-Dīn, who seems to have been in charge of trade, was sent to Balkh to fetch some of the currency. It was this Bābā Qamar al-Dīn who thought up a *coup d'état.* In 1125/1713, Bābā Qamar al-Din, with the help of one of the Mīr's brothers, namely Khwāja Niyāz, succeeded in murdering Mīr Shāh Sulaymān Beg.[41] After the murder of the Mīr, the gentle story of the ruling family turns into a horrible scenario of murder and killing. The enraged brothers of the dead Mīr sought to take revenge. As a result, Khwāja Niyāz was killed by his brother, Ziyā al-Dīn, the younger son of Mīr Yāribeg Khān. Although this event was the precursor to a new succession dispute, Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad and Fażlʿalībek, for unknown reasons, abstain from discussing it directly. The *Sirāj al-tawārīkh* and some other peripheral sources, on the other hand, seem to have possessed insufficient information to elucidate the details of this dispute. It is, however, safe to argue that it was during the period of revenge that the question of succession arose among the brothers.

The *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*'s narrative pertaining to the murder of Shāh Sulaymān Beg, the successor of Mīr Yāribeg Khān, and the question of the succession is very bitter. This feeling was engendered by the deaths of two of the descendants of Yāribeg Khān. In both cases the brothers of the Mīr were involved. Despite the bitterness of the situation, an agreement was reached between the remaining brothers that Yūsuf ʿAlī Khān (1130/1717), the second son of Mīr Yāribeg, should succeed the murdered Mīr Shāh Sulaymān Beg. It is quite ironic that, when Maḥmūd Bī wished to seize power in Badakhshan, during the reign of both Mīrs - Yāribeg Khān and later Shāh Sulaymān Beg, the eldest son of the first Mīr - Yūsuf ʿAlī Khān was, at the same time, planning the conquest of Qaṭaghan. It is also true that after the death of Maḥmūd Bī in 1123-24/1713-14 Qaṭaghan entered a period of disorder. Nonetheless, Mīr Yūsuf ʿAlī Khān's desire to conquer Qaṭaghan remained unrealised. He did, however, succeed in expanding the boundaries of his domain to include Tāliqān and some parts of the Qunduz region as well. Yūsuf ʿAlī Khān's rule over Badakhshan was short as he was poisoned by an unknown Ḥasan Bī, perhaps from the Uzbek tribe of Qaṭaghan, sometime in 1130/1717-18.[42] The *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* does not provide any information on the ensuing succession dispute and the circumstances under which his brother, Ziyā al-Dīn (1148/1736), the youngest son of Mīr Yāribeg, rose to power. Ziyā al-Dīn's rule was famous for his disputes with one of his sons, Mīrzā Nabāt, who is

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[41] Badakhshī, and Surkhafsar, *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* ff. 10b-11a, (Russian tr.), pp. 31-32.
[42] Ibid. ff. 12b-14a (Russian tr.), pp. 32-33.

described as a reckless and rude person. Upon the death of Mīr Ziyā al-Dīn, who ruled from 1130/1718 to 1147-48/1735-36, Mīrzā Nabāt succeeded him as the heir-designate. It is worth mentioning that, with Mīr Ziyā al-Dīn's death, the rule of Yāribeg Khān's immediate sons comes to an end. The era of his grandsons, which starts with the reckless Mīrzā Nabāt, is renowned for its cruelty, disorder and internal conflicts. Mīrzā Nabāt ruled Badakhshan for almost a decade and passed away in 1159/1747. From that point onwards, succession disputes were contentious throughout the descent of these grandsons. Nonetheless, all the sources agree that the rule of the Yāribeg Khānid dynasty proved a relatively peaceful period for the local population, at least in its early stages.

Conclusion

The contest for supremacy in Badakhshan continued throughout the seventeenth century. The Mughals' attempts to regain control over the region proved in vain. The Tūqāy-Tīmūrids, on the other hand, faced internal conflicts among various *amīr*s for leadership and authority. Nonetheless, both powers desired to extend their domain to Badakhshan.

Although Badakhshan was under the control of the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids during the first half of the seventeenth century, internal conflict in the western areas of the *khānate* did not allow then to consolidate power in Badakhshan; this only happened in 1038/1629 when Nādir Muḥammad used the region as a staging point for the conquest of the Kābul kingdom. Shāh Jahān's attempt to regain power in Badakhshan in 1056/1647-48 was a response to Nādir Muḥammad's conquest of Kābul. Although the Mughals extended their territory as far as Balkh, the victory was short lived. Although Shāh Jahān had a bigger plan, which was to reclaim Mā warā al-nahr, his *'parental land'*, from the Uzbeks, his attempt was not successful. This was the last attempt by the Mughals to extend their power base not only to Mā warā al-nahr but to Balkh and Badakhshan as well.

The rise of new Tūqāy-Tīmūrid *amīr*s was one of the reasons jeopardising their unity and leading to internal fragmentation. This in turn was the reason for the rise of individual *amīr*s, who would establish their own political power independent of central authority. Subsequently, most of these *amīr*s became the *iqtāʿ* landowners in the region.

The seventeenth century witnessed the appearance of rulers both in the mountain principalities of Shughnān, Darwāz and Wakhān, and in the Qaṭaghan Uzbek tribal area in the religious and political arena. Thus, the combination of internal wars for political, religious and economic domination and external wars between the Safavids, Tūqāy-

Tīmūrids and Mughals, exacerbated the situation to the extent that none of these principalities knew on whom they were dependent.

The emergence of the Yāribeg Khānid dynasty in the third quarter of the seventeenth century radically changed the political, economic and religious situation in Badakhshan. The rule of the early Mīrs of the Yāribeg Khānid dynasty proved sufficiently effective to unify the local population and put an end to the tyranny of the Uzbek tribes in the region.

Although religious allegiances lie at the heart of Yāribeg Khānid dominion, as was the case with many other empires of the time, the arrival of the Prophet's *khirqa* in the region created an environment of religious pluralism, which to a certain extent contributed to an interchange of religious vocabulary. Probably the most salient and significant aspect of the rule of Mīr Yāribeg Khān's sons is embedded in maintaining this relatively pluralistic environment up until the mid-eighteenth century.

Although the local primary sources provide a meagre insight into the political and social life of the region, they still offer a window onto the internal intrigues of Yāribeg Khāns' descendants. This is particularly evident in the disputes over the various successions.

1. Amīr Yāribeg Khān	(1657-1707)
2. Sulaymān Bek	(1707-1713)
3. Yūsuf ʿAlī Khān	(1713-1718)
4. Mīr Ziyā al-Dīn	(1718-1737)
5. Mīrzā Nabāt	(1737-1748)
6. Mīr Pādshāh	(N/A)
7. Sulaymān Bek II	(N/A)
8. Amīr Sulṭān Shāh	(1748-1768)
9. Qubād Khān	(1768 -)
10. Bahādur Shāh	(N/A)
11. Aqsaqāl Bahādur	(N/A)
12. Mīr Muḥammad Shāh	(1792-1821)
13. Sulṭān Shāh II	(N/A)
14. Mīr Yāribeg II	(N/A)
15. Murād Beg	(1829-1838)
16. Zamān al-Dīn Shāh	(1844-1864)
17. Jahāndar Shāh	(1864-1869)
18. Maḥmūd Shāh	(1869-1872)
19. Sardār ʿĀlim Khān	(1873-1878)

Figure 15: Rulers of Badakhshan from 1657 to 1878

PART III: ISMĀʿĪLISM IN BADAKHSHAN

And remember that these *murīds*

come from the same interpretation, but often with a different historical context.

The context of Nāṣir-i Khusraw is very important

and must not be forgotten.

His Highness Prince Karīm al-Ḥusaynī, Aga Khan IV
Surat India, 10 November, 1992

CHAPTER 5: DAʿWAT-I NĀṢIR: THE ISMĀʿĪLĪ MISSION IN BADAKHSHAN

Introduction

After the death of the Prophet Muḥammad in 10/632, the Muslim *Umma* faced its first challenge, the crisis of succession. The succession dispute divided the young Muslim *Umma* into two rival branches – the Shīʿa and the Sunnī.[1] The Ismāʿīlīs, the topic of the third and last part of this research work, belong to the Shīʿa branch of Islam. The historical development of Shīʿa Islam, in general, and the Ismāʿīlī movement, in particular, faced a number of succession crises that led to schisms and the appearance of various splinter groups. It should be mentioned at the outset that it is not the intention of this chapter to discuss Shīʿa and Ismāʿīlī history from its inception to the modern period.[2] The focus of Part 3 of this thesis is Ismāʿīlī history in Badakhshan and its relationship with Iran. I will, nonetheless, mention some events in Ismāʿīlī history that occurred in the Middle East and North Africa that have a close bearing on my discussion.

After the death of Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq in 147/765, the Shīʿas divided into two main groups known as the Twelver Shīʿas and the Ismāʿīlīs (or *Ismāʿīlīya*), the largest groups that have survived till modern times. The great schism, as it has been referred to in some sources, caused a succession dispute, in that Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq had several sons, who must have wanted to succeed him. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq was recognised as the fifth Imam by the Ismāʿīlīs and the sixth Imam by the Twelvers. One group of Jaʿfar's followers recognised his son Mūsā al-Kāẓim (d. 183/799) as their Imam. They argued that Imam Jaʿfar retained the *naṣṣ*, the divinely guided appointment, he had made for Ismāʿīl al-Mubārak (d. after 136/765) and appointed Mūsā al-Kāẓim as Imam instead of him.[3] They also maintained that Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar passed away while his father was still alive. By contrast, a number of Jaʿfar's followers recognised Ismāʿīl as the Imam and leader of their community. Ismāʿīl, therefore, is considered the eponymous founder of the Shīʿa Ismāʿīlī branch. After Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar, the Imamate passed to his son, Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl. As a consequence of this difference of

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[1] Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate,* Cambridge, 1997; Hodgson, "How Did the Early Shīʿa Become Sectarian?" in *JAOS,* vol. 75, no. 1 (January-March 1995), pp. 1-13.

[2] An in-depth, ground-breaking study on Ismāʿīlī history and doctrine was published by Farhad Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines,* Cambridge, 1990. The second and expanded edition was published in 2007. In 1963, Ivanow published a bibliographical study on Ismāʿīlī historical and doctrinal sources, entitled *Ismaili Literature: A Biographical Survey,* published in Tehran. Later, scholars like Poonawala, Cortese, Gacek, Daftary as well as De Blois published expanded versions of the bibliographic studies on Ismāʿīlī history and thought. The most up to date bibliographic study has been published by Daftary, *Ismaili Literature: A Bibliography of Sources and Studies,* London, 2004; See also: Jiwa, "Addenda to Secondary Sources in Ismāʿīlī Studies: The Case of the Omissions," in *MELA Notes: Journal of Middle Eastern Librarianship*, no. 86 (2013), pp. 20-101.

[3] Buyukkara, "The Schism in the Party of Mūsā al-Kāẓim and the Emergence of the Wāqifa," in *Arabica,* 47:1 (2000), pp. 78-99.

opinion, the followers of Imam Ismāʿīl went into hiding, which marks the first *dawr al-satr*, or period of concealment, in Ismāʿīlī history. Contrary to the Ismāʿīlī Imams, the Twelver Shīʿī Imams (also known as Imāmī Shīʿīs) did not go into hiding. However, most of them died in obscure circumstances. The penultimate Twelver Shīʿī Imam, Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī, was poisoned by the Abbasids in 260/874.[4]

The Ismāʿīlīs, on the other hand, upon their separation from the Imāmī Shīʿīs, organised a secret revolutionary movement known as the *daʿwa* (lit. mission or summons). In the religious and political context, "*daʿwa* is used to refer to an invitation or call to adopt the cause of an individual or family claiming the right to the imamate. This term is also used to refer to the hierarchy of ranks known as *ḥudūd* or *ḥudūd al-dīn* among the Ismāʿīlīs."[5] One of the main aims of the *daʿwa* was to challenge the authority of their rivals the Abbasids (and later the Saljūqs) and try to establish the authority of the Ismāʿīlī Imams as the true rulers of the Muslim *Umma*. The doctrine of the Imamate, which constitutes the core of the Imāmī Shīʿī theology, rotates around the figure of the divinely guided, sinless and infallible (*maʿṣūm*) Imam. Thus, the Ismāʿīlīs argue that, after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad, it was the Imam who acted as an authoritative teacher and guide with supra-human attributes to lead the community in social and religious as well as in spiritual matters.[6] This was a commonly shared heritage for the Imāmī as well as the Ismāʿīlī Shīʿīs. Both of these groups believed in the sanctity of the Prophet's family (i.e. *Ahl al-bayt*), which was the repository of the Prophet's progeny through his daughter Fāṭima (d. 10/632) and his cousin and son-in-law, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661). The core of the doctrine of the Imamate, in its turn, takes its roots from the notion of *Ahl al-bayt*. The *Ahl al-bayt,* according to the Shīʿīs, comprises the Five Holy Bodies (or Five Holy Members of the Prophet's Family); namely, the Prophet Muḥammad, his cousin and son-in-law, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, his daughter, Fāṭima, and his two grandsons, Ḥasan (d. 49/669) and Ḥusayn (d. 61/680).[7]

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[4] Arjomand, "The Crisis of the Imamate and the Institution of Occultation in Twelver Shīʿism: A Socio-historical Perspective," in *IJMES,* vol. 28, no. 4 (November 1996), pp. 491-515. Also his *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam,* Chicago, 1984 and "The Consolation of Theology: Absence of the Imam and the Transition from Chiliasm to Law in Shīʿism," in *JR,* vol. 76, no. 4 (October 1996), pp. 548-571; Prozorov, "Ucheniīā Shiitov ob Imamate v Trude al-Khasana al-Naubakhti (Koneťs IX v)," in *PPV,* Moscow, 1970, pp. 83-107; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 89. Elias gives his death date as 1 Rabī I 260/25 December 873. Eliash, "Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī," in *EI2,* vol. 3 (1986), pp. 246-247.

[5] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 515; Canard, "Daʿwa," in *EI2,* vol. 2 (1965), pp. 168-170. The Ismāʿīlīs often refer to their movement as *daʿwa* or *al-daʿwa al-hādīya* – 'the rightly guiding mission.'

[6] Al-Manṣūr, *Tathbīt al-imāma,* Makarem, (ed. and English tr.)., *The Shīʿī Imamate: A Fatimid Interpretation,* London, 2013; See also: Makarem, "The Philosophical Significance of the Imam in Ismāʿīlism," in *SI,* no. 27 (1967), pp. 41-53; Ivanow, "Book on the Recognition of the Imam," in *Ismailitica in Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal,* vol. 8, no. 1 (1922), pp. 1-76.

[7] Virani, "Ahl al-Bayt," in *ER,* vol. 1, pp. 198-199. For the Sunnī perspective on *Ahl al-bayt,* see: Badakhshī, *Nuzūl al-abrār fī manāqib ahl al-bayt al-athār,* Bombay, 1880.

The establishment of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* was represented by *dāʿīs* – missionaries, originating from different parts of the Muslim world, particularly where the Ismāʿīlī *dāʿīs* succeeded in converting new capable students to spread their teaching. The success of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa,* as mentioned earlier, culminated in the foundation of the Faṭimid Empire in North Africa in 296/909. As a result, the activity of the missionary institution led to the establishment of the Faṭimid *dawla,* which in its turn created a platform for the political and ideological activity of the Faṭimid *Caliph-Imams* in response to the Abbasids.

It needs to be emphasised that the Faṭimid *Caliph-Imams* had an aspiration to rule the entire Muslim *Umma* as the sole authoritative Imams from the progeny of the Prophet. In order to realise this aspiration, the organisation of the Faṭimid *daʿwa* made an effort to keep it active. Nonetheless, the activity of the *daʿwa* within the Empire was less dynamic than it was outside its territories, particularly when the matter of conversion arose. The *dāʿīs* were most active in the peripheral states of the Faṭimid Empire, in most cases within the territories of their rival groups and in some cases were able to challenge the ruling authority and even, succeeded in converting the ruling elite of certain dynasties. The case of the Sāmānid Naṣr b. Aḥmad b. Ismāʿīl (301-335/914-947)[8] and the conversion of Būyid Abū Qālijār (d. 439/1048) to the Ismāʿīlī cause are prime examples.[9]

The early Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa,* as modern scholars propose, might have appeared in the middle of the third/ninth century, when the unified movement loyal to the Imams drawn from the progeny of the Prophet Muḥammad was established. Two centuries later, the *daʿwa* organisation had developed a hierarchy of ranks and was divided into several regions called *jazīra* (lit. island). Although, the early Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa,* particularly after the schism, worked secretly, it retained the core of the Imāmī Shīʿī doctrine of the divinely guided Imam whose lineage went back to the *Ahl al-bayt* of the Prophet.[10] The *daʿwa* organisation did likewise, both inside and outside the Faṭimid *caliphate,* whether it was in Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Persia or Central Asia and India. The success of the *daʿwa* organisation, however, was apparent and greater in the areas where the population shared various Shīʿī sentiments. Ismāʿīlī *dāʿīs* who were active in non-Shīʿī environments faced harsh opposition, which in

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[8] Bosworth, "Naṣr b. Aḥmad b. Ismāʿīl," in *EI2,* vol. 7 (1993), p. 1015.

[9] Daftary, "The Ismāʿīlī *Daʿwa* outside the Fatimid *Dawla,"* in Barrucand, (ed.)., *L'Egypte Fatimide: Son Art et Son Histoire,* Paris, 1999, pp. 29-43; Alexandrin, "Studying Ismāʿīlī Texts in Eleventh Century Shīrāz: al-Muʾayyad and the "Conversion" of the Buyid *Amīr* Abū Kalijār," in *IrS,* vol. 44, no. 1 (January 2011), pp. 99-115; Howes, "The Qaḍi, the Wazir and the Daʿi: Religious and Ethnic Relations in Buyid Shiraz in the Eleventh Century, in *IrS,* vol. 44, no. 6 (November 2011), pp. 875-894.

[10] Madelung, "Imamate," in *ER,* vol. 7 (1987), pp. 114-119; Daftary, *A Short History of the Ismāʿīlīs,* pp. 23-33.

many instances led to their persecution or even death. The fate of Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. 481/1088) is one of the best-known examples of this.[11]

This chapter, therefore, will focus on the spread of Ismāʿīlī teaching to Badakhshan in the broader context including the northern mountain principalities. It will cover the initial phase of Ismāʿīlī history in Badakhshan, which is based on local legends and myths. Additionally, I will discuss briefly the term *Panjtanī* or *Dīn-i panjtanī*, the term used by the local population to express their allegiance first to the Shīʿī and later the Ismāʿīlī cause. The Ismāʿīlī mission or *daʿwa,* which is known as *al-daʿwa al-hādīya* (lit. the mission that guides aright*)*, is referred to as *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* (lit. summons supervised by Nāṣir-i Khusraw) in Badakhshan and the Pamirs.[12] The missionary activity of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* in this region is intrinsically connected with the figure of Nāṣir-i Khusraw (394-481/1004-1088),[13] known also as the *Ḥujjat* of Khurāsān and Badakhshan, who is considered by the local population to be the founder of the Ismāʿīlī communities in Badakhshan, the northern principalities of the Pamir, the northern areas of modern Pakistan and Xinjiang province of modern-day China. I shall also briefly discuss the practices and rituals related to the 'Tradition of Nāṣir-i Khusraw' (Chapter 8, pp. 215-241).

5.1. The Spread of Islam to Central Asia: A Short Overview

In the second half of the seventh century, the Arabs moved towards Persia, to subjugate the territories of the Sasanian Empire. In 16/637, at the battle of *Qādisiyya* (known also as Yarmūk), the Arabs defeated the Persians.[14] This event created a platform for the Arabs' move toward Mā warā al-nahr. By 23/644, the Arabs had conquered the main cities of western Persia, such as Nihāwand, Hamadān, Rayy and Iṣfahān, followed by greater Khurāsān in 34/654. Khurāsān was quickly transformed into the staging point for the organised conquest of the region. The prolonged attempts to conquer Mā warā al-nahr,

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[11] Daftary, "The Ismāʿīlī *Daʿwa* outside the Fatimid *Dawla,*" pp. 29-43; Jiwa, "The Genesis of Ismāʿīlī *Daʿwa* Activities in the Yemen," in *Bulletin* (*BSMES),* vol. 15, no. 1/2 (1988), pp. 50-63; Stern, "The Early Ismāʿīlī Missionaries in North-West Persia and in Khurāsān and Transoxiana," in *BSOAS,* vol. 23, no. 1 (1960), pp. 56-90; Hodgson, "Dāʿī," in *EI2,* vol. 2 (1965), pp. 97-98; Daftary, "Dāʿī," in *EIr,* vol. 6 (1993), pp. 590-593.

[12] It should be mentioned that the Ismāʿīlī as well as non-Ismāʿīlī sources refer to the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* or religious and political movement by various terms, such as *Sabāʿī, Ismāʿīlī, Bāṭinī, Asḥāb-i taʿlīm, Asḥab al-daʿwat al-hādīya, Ahl-i taʾwīl, Ahl-i taʾyīd,* etc. The non-Ismāʿīlī sources, particularly those reflecting anti-Ismāʿīlī sentiments, refer to this minority group in derogatory terms, such as *Qarmaṭī, Mulāhida, Zindiq, Kāfir, Thanawī, Majūsī, Hashishīya, Fidāwīya,* etc. For more information, see: Badrai, "Guftār-i Mutarjim," in Hodgson, *Firqa-i Ismāʿīlīya,* Badrai, (Persian tr.)., Tabriz, 1346 H, p. 2. The inhabitants of Badakhshan use the term *Panjtanī* or *Dīn-i panjtani* to refer to the practice of Ismāʿīlī faith.

[13] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 207; Nanji, "Nāṣir-i Khusraw," in *EI2,* vol. 7 (1993), pp. 1006-1007; Shokhumorov, "Ṭarzi Daʿwat-i Fāṭimī va Peshvāyāni Barjasta-i Mazhabi Ismāʿīlīya," in Farmand, (ed.)., *Dānā-i Yumgān: Majmuʿa-i Maqālat-i Seminār-i Bayn al-Milalī,* Kabul, 1987, pp. 152-153; Bertel's, *Nasir Khusraw i Ismailizm,* Moscow, 1959, pp. 186-190.

[14] For the detailed analysis of the battle of Qādisiyya, see: Lewental, *Qādissiyah, Then and Now: A Case Study of History and Memory, Religion, and Nationalism in Middle Eastern Discourse,* Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Brandeis University, 2011.

particularly its main cities such as Bukhara and Samarqand, lasted for almost a decade, during which time the Arab army totally failed to subjugate it. It was only in 93-94/712-713 that the Arabs succeeded in conquering these cities which were the main population centres of Mā warā al-nahr.[15] Although, the Arabs completed the conquest in the early eighth century, it took them almost a century or even longer to Islamise the native population.

During the Umayyad period (r. 41-133/661-750), the Arabs began their systematic conquest of the region in general. In 134/751, the Arab army was victorious over the Chinese army in a battle near the Talas River, and Islam started to establish a strong foothold in Mā warā al-nahr. Abū Muslim (d. after 750s), one of the Abbasid missionaries, played a major role in extending Muslim control towards the east.[16] Even though Islam appeared in Central Asia during the early period of its expansion, the local people continued their pre-Islamic indigenous ritual practices.

Prior to the Arab conquest, Central Asia was home to a range of pre-Islamic beliefs that were embedded in the religious practices of the local population. This was mostly due to its geographical location at the crossroads of trade. Central Asia, in a broader context, was a place where there emerged an interchange of different ideas which were disseminated into the neighbouring regions as Yuri Bregel, a well-known specialist on Central Asian history, remarks:

> Central Asia became a crossroads on the path of expansion of various civilisations: Chinese civilisation and the nomadic civilisation of Inner Asia to the central Islamic lands and the West; the opposite movement of, first, pre-Islamic Iranian, and then Islamic-Iranian cultural influence eastward to Mongolia and China; and Indian cultural influence which was transmitted through Central Asia further west.[17]

The appearance of a number of autonomous dynasties in ninth-century Central Asia shows the spread of the new religion into the social and political strata of the society at large. Despite the fact that they marked a change in the institutional structure of Central Asia, starting from the court of the *amīr* to the newly established institutions of learning, they evolved rapidly. During the ninth century, a number of semi-independent Islamic states began to emerge in various parts of the region, such as the Ṭāhirids (r. 205-259/821-873)

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[15] Gibb, *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia,* New York, 1928, pp. 1-59.

[16] Jalilov, "The Arab Conquest of Transoxiana," in Adle and Habib, (eds.)., *HCCA,* vol. III, *The Crossroads of Civilisations A.D. 250 to 750,* UNESCO, 1996, pp. 457-459; Goibov, *Rannie Pokhody Arabov,* 1989; Moscati, "Abū Muslim," in *EI2,* vol. 1 (1960), pp. 141.

[17] Bregel, *The Role of Central Asia in the History of the Muslim East,* New York (February, 1980), p. 6.

based in Nīshābūr (or Nīshāpūr) and the Saffārids (r. 246-393/861-1003) centred in Sīstān. They were followed by the Sāmānids (r. 203-395/819-1005), a dynasty founded by an Iranian nobleman, Sāmān from Balkh, but who ruled from Samarqand. It was during the Sāmānid era that Islam started to occupy a prominent place in Central Asia.[18] The decline of the Sāmānids in the early eleventh century heralded the emergence of new dynasties such as the Ghaznavids (366-581/977-1186), the Saljūqs (431-590/1040-1194) and the Khwārazmshāhīs (490-628/1097-1231).[19] Similarly we may mention the Zaydī rulers of Ṭabaristān who were based along the south-eastern shores of the Caspian Sea. Some of the rulers of Ṭabaristān claimed descent from the ʿAlids who were sympathetic towards Shīʿism. The Buyids or Buwayhids are the prime example of Shīʿī sympathy among the rulers of Iran and Mā warā al-nahr.[20] The pro-Shīʿī tendencies among some rulers contributed to a certain extent towards the spread of Shīʿī sentiments in Central Asia and neighbouring lands.

As far as the spread of Islam to Badakhshan is concerned, it should be noted that this was a long process due to the difficult geographical conditions and inaccessible mountain ranges. Ghafurov, a Tajik academician, in his book *The Tajiks*, argues:

> The Arab *Caliphs* could not subjugate this mountainous country. For a long time its freedom-loving population maintained their ancient religions. Even in the ninth century there were some tribes that did not accept Islam.[21]

As a result, the old pre-Islamic belief systems remained intact there until the tenth and possibly subsequent centuries. The existence of pre-Islamic religions in Badakhshan and its vicinity was recorded in early Islamic historical writings. Nonetheless, it is difficult to speculate whether Islam was already present in Badakhshan at the time of the first local Islamic dynasties, such as the Ṭāhirids, the Saffārids, or even at the time of the Sāmānid Empire. It seems plausible to assume that as the ruling elite of Badakhshan had direct relations with the rulers of Central Asia, they may have accepted the new religion. The laity, on the other hand, may not have been forced to accept Islam, as the area remained free from the military intervention that could have led to the imposition of the new faith. Thus in Badakhshan's remoter mountain regions at any rate, the issue of conversion might

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[18] Yarshater, "Iranian History: (2) Iran in the Islamic Period (651-1980s)," in *EIr,* vol. 13 (2006), pp. 225-246; Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia: The Arabs in the East,* London, 2000, pp. 74-125.

[19] Ibid. 225-246; Bausani, *Religion in Iran,* New York, 2000, pp. 111-143; Foltz, *Religions of Iran,* Oxford, 2013, pp. 137-228. Some of these dynasties were of Turkic origin such as the Qarakhānids and Ghaznavids.

[20] Foltz, *Religion of Iran,* pp. 225-246.

[21] Gafurov, *Tadzhiki: Drevneĭshaĭa, Drevnaĭa i Srednevekovaĭa Istoriĭa,* Moscow, 1972, pp. 394-395.

have followed a different scenario from that which had developed in mainland Central Asia. Nevertheless, the oral tradition narrates the story of the conversion of the local population to Islam by ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, the fourth Rightly Guided Caliph and the first Shīʿī Imam. We should note that the Shīʿī sentiment in the oral narratives reflects the inclination towards the Shīʿa rather the Sunnī branch of Islam, a persuasion which becomes clearer in their devotion to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and subsequent Imams from the Prophet's Family – *Ahl al-bayt* – and which is a prevalent practice in the region, even nowadays.[22]

Nevertheless, it seems safe to assume that Islam arrived in Badakhshan in the Shīʿī form, which eased the spread of Ismāʿīlī teaching there in subsequent centuries. Historical sources provide neither a clear chronology nor a precise place for its arrival in this region in its early stages. We may presume that the spread of Shīʿī Ismāʿīlī teaching in Badakhshan dates back to the period after the reign of the Sāmānid Amīr Naṣr b. Aḥmad b. Ismāʿīl (301-335/914-947), who, according to modern studies, was converted to the Ismāʿīlī faith by the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* active in Mā Warā al-Nahr.[23] The persecution of the Ismāʿīlīs after this particular scandalous conversion at the court of the Sāmānid *amīr* forced the Ismāʿīlīs as well as other Shīʿī inclined people to seek a safer locality. As a result, they migrated to the adjacent regions, such as Badakhshan and the northern Pamir principalities.

5.2. The Early Ismāʿīlīs in Badakhshan: Myth and Legends

The spread of Shīʿa (Ismāʿīlī) teaching into Badakhshan started long before than the arrival of Nāṣir-i Khusraw. As I demonstrated in the previous section, the spread of Islam in Badakhshan is intrinsically connected to the history of Islam in Iran and Central Asia. Badakhshan shared a socio-linguistic context with Iran, namely the use of the Persian language – a factor that contributed to the spread of Islam in Iran and Central Asia and subsequently in Badakhshan. "The Persian language," says Brett Fragner, "was the first language in history to be successfully Islamised."[24] It served as the *lingua franca* not only

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[22] Iskandarov, *SEIAIPK,* Dushanbe, 1983, pp. 35-37.

[23] The Sāmānid *Amīr* Naṣr II b. Aḥmad (d. 331/943) as well as his vizier and other dignitaries seems to have been converted to Ismāʿīlī cause by one of the learned theologians and philosophers of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* in Transoxiana, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Nasafī. Later, al-Nasafī and his associates were executed in Bukhara in 331/943 under Naṣr's son and successor, Nuḥ I, who appeased the Sunnī *ʿulamā* and called for a *jihād* (i.e. holy war) against the Ismāʿīlīs and other "heretics", such as the Qarmaṭīs. See: Gafurov, *Tadzhiki,* 1972, pp. 80-94; Daftary, *A Short History of the Ismāʿīlīs,* Edinburgh, 1998, p. 43; Poonawala, "An Early Doctrinal Controversy in the Iranian School of Ismāʿīlī Thought and Its Implications," in *JPS,* 5 (2012), pp. 18-34; Iskandarov, *SEPAIPK*, 1983, pp. 32-36; Qalandarov, *Rudaki va Ismoʿiliya,* Dushanbe, 2012.

[24] Quoted in: Arjomand, "The Salience of Political Ethics in the Spread of Persian Islam," in *JPS,* 1 (2008), pp. 5-6; Alam, "The Pursuit of Persian Language in Mughal Politics," in *MAS,* vol. 32, no. 2 (May 1998), pp. 317-349.

for everyday communication in Badakhshan but also of the faith of Islam. It easily absorbed Arabic words and inspired the development of various Islamic concepts expressed in Persian through poetry, ritual practices, daily prayers and litany as well as devotional literature.[25] In the area where the Persian language was not the mother tongue of the local population it became part of the social norm, particularly with the arrival of Persian-speaking migrants from Greater Khurāsān. Escaping forced conversion was part of a larger movement of educated Persians from various religious denominations into Badakhshan, who in due course became the backbone of immigrant culture. This immigrant culture was later highly esteemed in the region. Thus, Badakhshan and the northern principalities in the Pamirs – an inaccessible mountainous region – became the abode of refuge for minority groups from Iran and Central Asia.[26]

The arrival of migrants from Iran is a significant factor in the preserving some local practices, due to the fact that the new migrants and the local population shared a common tradition of pre-Islamic practices. The impact of these earlier rites is manifest in a certain degree of syncretism between pre-Islamic and Islamic concepts and practices. It is also important to note that a number of these migrants belonged to persecuted minority groups who, in one way or another, promoted the Shīʿa, as opposed to the Sunnī, form of Islam. This led to the appearance of some groups that promoted extreme loyalty to *Ahl al-bayt.* As groups opposed to Sunnī Islam these Shīʿa groups developed a sophisticated doctrine enriched by Hellenistic and Greek philosophy.[27] The Shīʿa reverence for *Ahl al-bayt*, therefore, spread in Iran particularly during the reign of the ʿAlids of Ṭabaristān.

Jo-Ann Gross in her article "Foundational Legends, Shrines and Ismāʿīlī Identity in Gorno-Badakhshan, Tajikistan," argues that, in the early stages, it was Shīʿa Islam that spread in Badakhshan. She based her study on the interrelation of Ismāʿīlī foundation narratives and those of local shrines in various parts of Badakhshan. These narratives and shrines authenticate the links with the family of the Prophet Muḥammad – *Ahl al-bayt* – through ʿAlī b. Ḥusayn (known as Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn; d. 95/714) and Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. ca.

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[25] Bausani, *Religion in Iran,* p. 120-121; Weber, "Kashmir ii. Persian Language in Kashmir," in *EIr,* Accessed online on 22 November 2012.

[26] Bobrinskoĭ, *Gortsy Verkhovīa Pīandzha (Wakhantsy i Ishkashimtsy),* Moscow, 1908, p. 40.

[27] Bausani, *Religion in Iran,* pp. 130-143. Ebstein in his recently published book *Mysticism and Philosophy in al-Alandalus: Ibn Masarra, Ibn al-ʿArabī and the Ismāʿīlī Tradition,* Leiden: Brill, 2014 discusses the influence of Greek philosophy on Ismāʿīlī and Ṣūfī thought. For broader discussion on religions in Iran, see: Foltz, *Spirituality in the Land of the Noble,* Oxford, 2004 and his *Religions of Iran: from Prehistory to the Present,* Oxford, 2013.

114/732).[28] Similar foundation narratives can also be found in a manuscript entitled *Taʾrīkh-i Mazār-i Shāh Qambar-i Āftāb* (The History of the Tomb of Shāh Qambar-i Āftāb). Although this manuscript lacks any details about the author(s) or a composition date it clearly relates how Islam in the Shīʿa form spread in the region sometime in the eighth century and more specifically during the Imamate of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq.[29]

Muḥammad Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn Fidāʾī Khurāsānī, in his book *Hidāyat al-muʾminīn al-ṭālibīn* (*Guidance for the Seeking Believers*), relates that Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar (d. ca. second/eighth century) due to persecution by the Abbasid caliph, went into hiding in the region of Farghāna, in Central Asia. The story relates how, when Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 169-93/786-809), the fifth Abbasid caliph, found out that Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl was secretly hiding in Nihāwand, in the Hamadān province of modern Iran, he sent a person (*kas firistād ba giriftan wa āvardani Muḥammadrā*) or possibly an army to arrest the Ismāʿīlī Imam and bring him to the caliph's presence. This attempt failed since Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl was apprised of the danger and, as a precaution, he repeatedly changed his place of residence while in hiding. The story then relates how the Imam was also informed about the danger in his new places of residence. As a result, he was offered yet another place of refuge in a different location. As the story goes, Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl accepted this offer and migrated from Nihāwand to Farghāna (*Mawlānā Muḥammad paziruft va az Nihāwand ba Farghāna raftand*).[30] If this story is true, then there must have been people in charge of the Imam's safety, most probably *ḥujja*s and *dāʿī*s, who tried to win new converts to the Ismāʿīlī cause while in Farghāna with the Imam. This story gives a new dimension to the spread of Ismāʿīlī teaching in the mountain regions of Badakhshan from the Farghāna valley. It is, however, a difficult task to place this event feasibly in a historical time-scale. Nonetheless, it is safe to assume that the Ismāʿīlī teaching spread into these mountainous regions well before the conversion of the Sāmānid ruler - Naṣr b. Aḥmad (r. 301-331/914-943).

The migration of the members of various ʿAlid families, particularly the direct descendants of ʿAlī and Fāṭima, to Iran, Khurāsān and Mā warā al-nahr heralded the spread of a specific religious idea, which rotates around the figure of the Imam from the family of the Prophet

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[28] Gross, "Foundational Legends, Shrines and Ismāʿīlī Identity in Gorno-Badakhshan, Tajikistan," in Cormack, (ed.)., *Muslims and Others in Sacred Space,* Oxford, 2013, pp. 164-192.

[29] Ms A: *Taʾrīkh-i Mazār-i Shāh Qambar-i Āftāb,* folio 2a (picture 165). A copy of this manuscript is preserved in the shrine of Shāh Qambar-i Āftāb, in Ishkashim, GBAO. I am grateful to Dr. Mastibekov for kindly providing me with a copy of this manuscript.

[30] Fidāʾī Khurāsānī, *Taʾrīkh-i Ismāʿīlīya yā hidāyat al-muʾminīn al-ṭālibīn,* Semenov, (ed.)., Tehran, 1373 Sh./1994, pp. 44-46; Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn al-Qurayshī, *ʿUyūn al-Akhbār wa Funūn al-Āsār,* vol. IV, Ghalib, (ed.)., Beirut, 1973, pp. 351-356; Ghalib, *Taʾrīkh al-Daʿwa al-Ismāʿīlīyya,* Beirut, 1989, pp. 130-133; Virani, in his book argues that Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar and Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl travelled as far as the Indian subcontinent. Virani, *The Ismāʿīlīs in the Middle Ages,* p. 99.

Muḥammad – the *Ahl al-bayt.* This became the basis for a call, *daʿwa*, to request an adhesion on the part of the local elite to provide allegiance to Shīʿa Islam, in general, and the Ismāʿīlīs, in particular. The migration of the descendants of Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq to Khurāsān and beyond, as recounted above, opens up a new possibility for research. Utilising a number of primary sources from the ninth to the eleventh centuries, Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti, a notable Italian scholar, maps the movement and possible places of residence of Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq's descendants. We learn from two of her articles - "A Historical Atlas on the ʿAlids" and "The Migration of the *Ahl al-bayt* to Bukhara in Genealogies' Books" - the itinerary of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar that alludes to the presence of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl's descendants in Khurāsān and Qum.[31] Amoretti's thought-provoking suggestion is very engaging and may yield more detailed information if one utilises further the primary sources she studied.

It should also be mentioned that a number of Shīʿa splinter groups spread their ideas without the support of a state. The question of the Islamisation of Central Asia in the Shīʿa form opens a new dimension, particularly with the appearance of missionaries. Levitzion, for example, argues that Islamisation in Central Asia is intrinsically connected with the missionary activity of the heterodox sects within Islam, such as the Ismāʿīlīs. He argues that the missionaries of "heterodox sects (Khārijīs, Shīʿīs and Ismāʿīlīs) propagated their creeds without the support of the state, and in this respect, working among the lower urban classes and rural and tribal societies, they preceded the Ṣūfīs."[32] It is, therefore, safe to assume that the activity of the "heterodox" Ismāʿīlī groups was directed towards the conversion of the population on different levels, starting from the lower urban classes and ending with the ruling elite. The conversion of the Sāmānid *amīr*, Naṣr b. Aḥmad (301-331/914-943) to the Ismāʿīlī cause is one such an example.[33] In light of this, one can argue that the spread of Ismāʿīlī teaching into Badakhshan in the broader context dates back to the time of the Sāmānid dynasty.

The activity of the early Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī*s in Iran and Khurāsān is mentioned in a number of medieval sources. We learn from Niẓām al-Mulk's *Siyasat-nāma*, an eleventh century

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[31] Amoretti, "The Migration of the *Ahl al-bayt* to Bukhara in Genealogies' Books: Preliminary Remarks," in Antonini, and Mukhamedjanov, (eds.)., *AMCTBO,* Samarkand-Rome, 2006, pp. 74-85 and her "A Historical Atlas on the ʿAlids: A Proposal and a Few Samples," in Morimoto, (ed.)., *Sayyids and Sharifs in Muslim Societies: The Living Links to the Prophet,* London, 2012, pp. 100-104, 116-117.

[32] Levitzion, "Toward a Comparative Study of Islamisation," in Levitzion, (ed.)., *Conversion to Islam,* New York, 1979, p. 17.

[33] Shokhumorov, *Razdelenie Badakhshana i Sudby Ismailizma,* Moscow-Dushanbe, 2008, p. 26; Niẓām al-Mulk, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings: The Siyar al-Muluk or Siyasat Nama,* Darke, (tr.)., London, pp. 208-227.

Persian language source, about the activity of an Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* known as Khalaf al-Ḥallāj. He actively propagated Ismāʿīlī teaching in Rayy, a town located to the south of modern Tehran which was considered the headquarters of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* in the region and beyond. Khalaf's successor was his son Aḥmad who trained the next *dāʿī*, a certain Ghiyāth, to take charge of Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* activity in Rayy.[34] This Ghiyāth became an influential person in Rayy, Qum and Kāshān particularly after a dispute with a local Sunnī jurist, called al-Zaʿfarānī, who incited the local population against him and the Ismāʿīlīs. As a result, Ghiyāth fled from Rayy and sought refuge in Khurāsān. His forced migration was somewhat of a favour to the Ismāʿīlī missionary cause since he succeeded in converting Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī al-Marwazī (or Marw al-Rūdī). This well-known figure was a local Sāmānid *amīr* who is mentioned in the *Zayn al-akhbār*, an eleventh-century historical work, produced by Abū Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Gardīzī.[35] Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī al-Marwazī, as can be gleaned from Gardīzī's work, was an influential *amīr* in Khurāsān. His conversion to the Ismāʿīlī cause prepared safe conditions for the activity of *dāʿī*s in the regions of Ṭāliqān, Maymana, Herāt, Gharjistān and Ghūr.[36] We may, therefore, conclude that Ghiyāth's missionary activities enabled the Ismāʿīlīs to establish themselves firmly in Khurāsān.

A totally different perspective on the spread of Ismāʿīlī teaching in Badakhshan is provided in a traditional narrative that originated in the Afghan part of Badakhshan; it was collected by a Tajik scholar, Elbon Hojibekov, during his field trip to Afghan Badakhshan in the summer of 2007. According to this narrative, the population of the village of Sarchashma, in the Vuzh district of Shughnān (Afghan side), is of the opinion that a certain *dāʿī* or *pīr* arrived in the region prior to Nāṣir-i Khusraw. The name of the *dāʿī*, or perhaps a local *pīr*, in this story is given as Mīr Guli Surkh. The people of Sarchashma, therefore, claim that it was Mīr Guli Surkh, who converted the population of the region to the Ismāʿīlī faith. His much visited shrine is located in the village of Sarchashma, where the local population still display great reverence towards him.[37]

Three immediate questions arise from this narrative. First of all, what is the approximate date of the arrival of Mīr Guli Surkh in the region? Secondly, is there any indication in the

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[34] Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyar al-mulūk (Siyāsat-nāma)*, Darke, (ed.), Tehran, 1347 Sh. /1968, pp. 282-306; Stern, "The Early Ismāʿīlī Missionaries," pp. 57-59; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, pp. 110-111; Madelung, "Shahriyār b. al-Ḥasan: A Persian Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* of the Fatimid Age," Schmidtke, (ed.)., *Studies in Medieval Shiʿism*, Ashgate, 2012, pp. 121-130.

[35] Abū Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Gardīzī, *The Ornament of Histories: A History of the Eastern Islamic Lands AD 650-1041*, Bosworth, (English tr.)., London, 2011, pp. 55-59.

[36] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, p. 110-111; Stern, "The Early Ismāʿīlī Missionaries," pp. 60-61; Qalandarov, *Rudaki va Ismoʿiliya*, Dushanbe, 2012.

[37] Hojibekov, *Safar ba Jumhurī-i Islāmī-i Afghānistān*, Unpublished Report, IIS, 2007, pp. 39-40.

historical sources regarding him being a *dāʿī* or a *pīr*, apart from the local tradition? Finally, why is Mīr Guli Surkh less famous than Nāṣir-i Khusraw in the broader context of Badakhshan and beyond? At this point, these questions remain open to speculation due to the lack of historical evidence. It is even difficult to ascertain whether Mīr Guli Surkh was an Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī,* a Ṣūfī *pīr,* or even a Sunnī or a Twelver Shīʿa religious scholar - *ʿālim.* It is, however, possible to assume that Mīr Guli Surkh was a well-educated person as well as a charismatic figure, whose piety and religious knowledge had a great influence in the region. Hence, by locating him in the religious context of that particular region, it becomes obvious that his activities had a great spiritual influence on the beliefs of the local population.[38] A study of the life of Mīr Guli Surkh, therefore, remains a *desideratum.*

There is further fragmentary information about the spread of Ismāʿīlī teaching to Badakhshan, prior to the advent of the Faṭimid caliphate in North Africa. Since Badakhshan is located close to Rayy and Balkh, it is safe to assume that the Ismāʿīlī teaching spread to Badakhshan in a sporadic and chaotic manner. Thus, Guharrez valadi Khwāja ʿAbd al-Nabī in his *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz,* which was composed in the first half of the nineteenth century, draws our attention to the following narrative:

> When Imam Manṣūr [Abū Ṭāhir Ismāʿīl al-Manṣūr biʾllāh, d. 342/953] passed away, al-Maʿadd [i.e. Abū Tamīm Maʿadd al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allāh, d. 365/975] became the heir-designate to the office of Imamate. Sayyid Ḥārith replaced Mīr Sayyid ʿAlī as the ruler of the Ismāʿīlīs of Balkh. Mīr Sayyid ʿAbdullāh became the ruler of Yazd in place of Mīr Sayyid Yaḥyā Qalandar and both of them proclaimed their allegiance to the Faṭimid Imam al-Maʿadd...[39]

A number of such narratives passed from generation to generation purely by word of mouth. Hence, the scarcity of historical sources and the lack of reliable information from the oral tradition gives a clear indication that these narratives can provide no clear definitive information about the *dāʿī*s or their activities in the region. Modern scholars argue that the teaching of certain branches of extremist Shīʿī *Ghulāt,*[40] such as *Mughiriyya, Mukhammisa* (the Pentadists) and *Khaṭṭābiyya* spread into the region.

The existence of Shīʿa sentiments already in the region, too, might have been the main contributory factor to the acceptance of Shīʿa Islam in its early stages that, in turn, prepared ground for the infusion of Ismāʿīlī teaching. The Shīʿa sentiment is mainly seen in the expression of the devotion and reverence of the local population towards the *Ahl al-*

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[38] The life and activity of Mīr Guli Surkh is beyond the scope of this thesis and could be studied as a separate topic.

[39] Guharrez, *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz,* pp. 77-78.

[40] For a detailed study of the Shīʿī *Ghulāt,* see: Moosa, *Extremist Shīʿītes: The Ghulāt Sects,* New York, 1987.

bayt – the Family of the Prophet. To a certain degree, the local population believed in the divinity of "the Five Holy members of the Prophet's family." This tendency is mostly seen in the teaching of the extremist Shīʿī *Ghulāt* groups that originated in the region of Kūfa in Iraq.[41] The extreme idea of the divinity of the *Ahl al-bayt,* which was alien to the mainstream Ismāʿīlī teaching, slowly percolated through to various strata within the mountain societies. This seems to have happened with the spread of Shīʿa *Ghulāt* teaching particularly with the appearance of the enigmatic work, *Umm al-kitāb.* I shall briefly discuss the praise of the "Five Holy members of the Prophet's family" with the expression, *Panj tanī pāk* or *Dīn-i panjtanī* in the next section (Section 5.6. pp. 147-149).

5.3. The Enigmatic *Umm al-kitāb* in Badakhshan

The *Umm al-kitāb* is one of the debatable books in the study of the history and doctrines of early Shīʿa Islam. Discussions and debates about the origin, doctrines and authorship of the *Umm al-kitāb*, its links with extremist Shīʿa groups and the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan still continues. "Early Persian Ismāʿīlism" says Bausani, "presents us with a problem book: The *Umm al-kitāb.*"[42] The literal translation of *Umm al-kitāb* is the "Mother of the Book" or the "Original Book." It is also called *Rūḥ al-kitāb,* the "Spirit of the Book," as it purports to contain the meaning of all books.[43] For centuries, this enigmatic and at the same time problematic treatise was preserved by the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan and the northern areas of modern Pakistan.[44] In 1902, A. Polovt͡sev, a Russian official first acquired a copy of the *Umm al-kitāb* in the upper reaches of the Oxus. In 1911, J. Lutsch, another Russian official acquired a second copy of this treatise in the Wakhān region of modern Gorno-Badakhshan. C. Saleman, the then director of the Asiatic Museum of the Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences in Petrograd, was the first scholar to work on the *Umm al-kitāb.* His unexpected death in November 1916 meant that his project remained unfinished. Ivan Zarubin (1887-1964), the well-known Russian ethnologist and specialist in Tajik dialects, obtained another copy of this treatise in the Shughnān region of Gorno-Badakhshan in 1914 which served as the basis for future studies on the *Umm al-kitāb.* In 1932, Wladimir Ivanow presented his first analyses of the *Umm al-kitāb* and later in 1936 he

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[41] Buckley, "The Early Shīʿīte Ghulāt," in *JSS,* vol. 42/2, (1997), pp. 301-325 see also his "The Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, Abū al-Khaṭṭāb and the Abbasids," in *Der Islam,* Band 79/2 (2002), pp. 118-140.

[42] Bausani, *Religion in Iran*, p. 150.

[43] *Umm al-kitāb,* Ivanow, (ed.)., pp. 106-107; Aminrazavi, "*Umm al-kitāb* - The Mother of Books (from *Umm al-kitāb),"* in Nasr, and Aminrazavi, (eds.)., *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia,* vol. 2: *Ismaili Thought in the Classical Age,* London, 2008, pp. 16-34.

[44] Mashkur, "Abū al-Khaṭṭāb va Firqa-i Ismāʿīlīya," in *YNK,* Mashhad, 1976, p. 558.

was the first modern scholar to edit and published the entire treatise. In 1966, Pio Fillipani-Ronconi published an Italian translation of the enigmatic *Umm al-kitāb.* Later on, in 1977 Tijdens published a detailed study on the *Umm al-kitāb* in *Acta Iranica.* The most comprehensive study on the *Umm al-kitāb* so far was undertaken by Heinz Halm, covering a number of publications.[45]

The study of the *Umm al-kitāb* represented a jigsaw puzzle for scholars of the last century. While unravelling the mystery of this enigmatic text scholars came across a *bricolage* of doctrines of both pre-Islamic and Islamic origins. The proposed dates for its composition extend from the early second/eighth to the late sixth/twelfth centuries. Even today the question of its dating remains unresolved. Wladimir Ivanow's dating of this treatise is a good example for illustrating the difficulty of the task. In an article published in 1932 he proposed a date at the end of the fifth/tenth century while in 1946 he proposed another date for its composition, namely the early second/eighth century.[46] The dating of this text is intrinsically connected with its linguistic and socio-religious milieu. The social and religious milieu goes back to the time of Imam ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿAbidīn (d. 95/714) and his son Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 114/732), which is as early as the second/eighth century.

The extant copies of the *Umm al-kitāb* are in an archaic form of the Persian language. However, scholars agree that the original text was in Arabic. The oldest copy used by Ivanow while preparing the first edition dates back to 1879.[47] It is important to note that neither Arabic nor Persian are the mother tongues of the inhabitants of Pamir, who copied, transmitted and preserved this text for centuries, which explains why the text of the manuscript from Badakhshan suffered from numerous textual corruptions and interpolations. Scholars agree that the *Umm al-kitāb* is a collection of three separate documents loosely brought together to form the treatise. The content of the *Umm al-kitāb* is presented in the form of questions and answers. During the sessions the followers of

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[45] Anthony, "The Legend of ʿAbdallāh ibn Sabāʾ and the Date of *Umm al-kitāb*," in *JRAS,* Series 3, 21:1 (2011), pp. 1-3; Radtke, "Iranian and Gnostic Elements in the Early *Taṣawwuf*: Observations Concerning the *Umm al-kitāb*," in Gnoli, and Panaino, (eds.)., *PTFECIS,* 1990, pp. 519-521; Ivanow, "Notes sur l'Ummu'l-kitāb des Ismaelines de l'Asie Centrale," in *REI,* 6 (1932), pp. 426-427 and his "Ummu'l-kitāb," in *Der Islam,* 23 (1936), pp. 193-196; Ronconi, "The Soteriological Cosmology of Central-Asiatic Ismāʿīlism," in Nasr, (ed.)., *ICIC,* Tehran, 1977, pp. 101-120; Tijdens, "Der mythologisch-gnostische Hintergrund des (Umm al-kitāb)," in *Acta Iranica,* 7 (1977), pp. 241-526; Halm, *Kosmologie und Heilslehre der frühen Ismāʿīlīya: Eine Studie zur islamischen Gnosis,* Wiesbaden, 1978. Also his *Die Islamische Gnosis: Die extreme Schia und die ʿAlawiten,* Zürich-Munich, 1982 and "'Das Buch der Schatten': Die Mufaḍḍal-Tradition der Ġulāt und die Ursprünge des Nuṣairitiertums (II)," in *Der Islam*, 53 (1981), pp. 15-86.

[46] Ivanow, "Notes sur l'Ummu'l-kitāb" p. 425 and his *The Alleged Founder of the Ismailism,* Bombay, 1946, pp. 99-102; Anthony, "The Legend of ʿAbdallāh ibn Sabaʾ," p. 3; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* pp. 93-98.

[47] Bausani, *Religion in Iran,* pp. 150-153; Asatryan, *Heresy and Rationalism in Early Islam: The Origins and Evolution of the Mufaḍḍal-Tradition,* Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Yale University, 2012, pp. 4-5, 75-78.

Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir pose 38 questions. On the basis of this Heinz Halm divides the work into 'horizontal' and 'vertical' layers. The 'horizontal' layers are listed as follows:

1. Introduction to the work (1-12) that describes the nature, origin and contents of the *Umm al-kitāb*

2. The Ibn Sabaʾ narrative (12-59) and the discussion between Jābir b. ʿAbdallāh al-Anṣārī and Muḥammad al-Bāqir

3. The Jābir-Apocalypse (60-248) when Muḥammad al-Bāqir discloses the secrets of the origins of the cosmos, the fall of the soul into the world and its salvation to Jābir al-Juʿfī

4. The last section (248-419) is the question and answer session of the Imam[48]

The 'horizontal' layers reflect the sequence and order of the text as a whole. "While *Umm al-kitāb* is now a unity," says Anthony, "this unity is, in essence, the result of an artificial and synthetic process."[49] The 'vertical' layers of the text, as opposed to the 'horizontal' ones, are used to define the chronological timeframe which, to a certain extent, allows its contextualisation. Employing this strategy, Heinz Halm divides the 'vertical' layers into several parts. The first 'vertical' layer, occurs in the middle of the text, consisting of the so-called 'Jābir-Apocalypse' followed by the Ibn Sabaʾ narrative. This section of the *Umm al-kitāb* belongs to the second/eighth century. The second layer is dated to the early third/ninth century, which Halm identifies with the figure of a certain ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm, who brought the text to Kūfa during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 170-193/786-809). The third layer is complex and therefore is not specifically dated by Halm. However, it reveals the Khaṭṭābī influence, particularly with the appearance of Abū al-Khaṭṭāb al-Asadī (d. ca. 137/755). The fourth layer deals with the adoption of the *Umm al-kitāb* by the Nizārī-Ismāʿīlīs which is dated to the sixth/twelfth century.[50]

The question of the transfer of the *Umm al-kitāb* to the Pamir mountains is an intricate one that is not easy to answer. Modern scholarship proposes various hypotheses concerning the arrival of the *Umm al-kitāb* in Khurāsān and Mā warā al-nahr. For instance, Fillipani-Ronconi, in his Italian translation, assumes that the mysterious *Umm al-kitāb* is a product of some Gnostic-Manichaean sect(s) that must have been residing somewhere in the Aramaic-Mesopotamian area when he aptly comments:

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[48] Halm, "Buch der Schatten," pp. 35-36 and his *Die Islamische Gnosis,* pp. 120-121; Anthony, "The Legend of ʿAbdallāh ibn Sabaʾ," pp. 7-8; Radtke, "Iranian and Gnostic Elements in the Early *Taṣawwuf,*" pp. 519-520.

[49] Anthony, "The Legend of ʿAbdallāh ibn Sabaʾ," p. 7.

[50] Halm, *Die Islamische Gnosis,* pp. 195-206; Anthony, "The Legend of ʿAbdallāh ibn Sabaʾ," pp. 8-9.

In the eighth century, the members of the Gnostic-Manichean sect became subject to Muslim persecution and fled to Khurāsān and Central Asia, where the treatise was then influenced by Buddhist ideas. Still later, the sectarians in question became Muslims, and more specifically extremist Shīʿīs of the *Mughiri Khaṭṭābī* tradition. Eventually, during the tenth and eleventh centuries, these Central Asian Shīʿīs were converted to Ismāʿīlism, without incorporating any Ismāʿīlī doctrines into the *Umm al-kitāb*, which they continued to preserve.[51]

Farhad Daftary, on the other hand, argues that a group of Shīʿī *Ghulāt*, namely the *Mukhammisa* (the Pentadists), who due to persecution lived on the fringes of the Islamic caliphate, must have produced the *Umm al-kitāb*.[52] It is evident that Badakhshan and the regions of the Upper Oxus lay on the outskirts of the Islamic caliphate, to which a copy of the *Umm al-kitāb* was possibly brought by persecuted minorities or religious missionaries – *dāʿī*s.[53]

The enigmatic *Umm al-kitāb* was composed at the time of Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. ca. 114/732). The theme of the reverence for the Prophet Muḥammad's family, *Ahl al-bayt*, is repeatedly discussed throughout the book. It is as if the anonymous *Umm al-kitāb* was brought to Khurāsān and Central Asia with the intention of converting people to Shīʿism or Shīʿī *Ghulāt* on a larger scale and hence it remained a sacred religious text among the isolated Ismāʿīlī communities of the Pamirs. As a result, we may safely assume that, due to the lack of knowledge about the sectarian nature of Islam on the periphery of the Islamic caliphate, it was easy to accept any teaching coming from the centre as if it were a form of Islam taught by the Prophet or later by the Imams.

Although, the local inhabitants considered the *Umm al-kitāb* as a sacred book of the Ismāʿīlīs, it should be mentioned that it has never been quoted in any Ismāʿīlī sources. Similarly, it does not present any salient features of mainstream organised Ismāʿīlī doctrines. The idea of the divinity of Muḥammad and Imams from the *Ahl al-bayt*, which somehow found its way into Badakhshan prior to Nāṣir-i Khusraw, remained part of the belief of the local population, which was transmitted from generation to generation. Without doubt, extreme ideas, like those of the Shīʿī *Ghulāt*, spread to these mountainous regions through books and treatises like the *Umm al-kitāb.* It seems quite possible that the local population, due to the lack of knowledge about the sectarian nature of Islam, in

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[51] Fillipani-Ronconi's introductory section in his Italian translation of *Umm al-Kitāb*, pp. xvii-lv. See also his "The Soteriological Cosmology of Central-Asiatic Ismāʿīlism," in Nasr, (ed.)., *ICIC,* Tehran, 1977, pp. 101-120.

[52] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* pp. 92-94.

[53] Traditionally the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan kept the text of the *Umm al-kitāb* secret. Anyone who decided to read it must have reached maturity, namely the age of forty or above.

general, and the Shīʿī form of Islam, in particular, accepted all teachings which, directly or indirectly, referred to the *Ahl al-bayt.* The belief in the *Ahl al-bayt* of the Prophet Muḥammad later evolved into a tradition known as *Panjtanī* or *Dīn-i panjtanī,* meaning "the followers of the religion of the Five holy bodies." Therefore, the *Dīn-i panjtanī,* in a broader sense, refers to a set of rituals and practices that has its roots in Shīʿī teaching. The core of this teaching is the doctrine of the Imamate, which is the common heritage shared by the Twelvers and Ismāʿīlīs. Hence, one may safely argue that the spread of Shīʿa *Ghulāt* teaching served as a platform for expressing devotion to the *Ahl al-bayt*, which in turn prepared a solid ground for the Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī*s to spread their teaching.

The spread of Ismāʿīlī teaching to any region within the confines of the Islamic caliphate is directly connected with missionary activity. The success of the *daʿwa* and the spread of Ismāʿīlī doctrine to various regions were in the hands of the *dāʿī*s. The subjects of the Imam received guidance during the time of *satr* (concealment), which was in the early period of the Ismāʿīlī mission, communicated through *ḥujja*s (lit. proof; chief *dāʿī*) and *dāʿī*s (missionaries). The *ḥujja* (Per. *ḥujjat*) is the second highest ranks in the Ismāʿīlī hierarchy of initiation known as *ḥudūd al-dīn.* The *daʿwa*, therefore, was a vitally important element in the success of the Ismāʿīlī movement in the various regions of the Middle East, Iran, Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent.

5.4. The Domain of the Ismāʿīlī *Daʿwa*

The term *daʿwa* is found in many verses of the *Qurʾān,*[54] where it calls upon Muslims to avoid compulsion in persuading non-believers to convert to Islam. The most acceptable way to convert someone to the new religion, according to the *Qurʾān,* is to convince the novice of Islam's teaching. This is clearly reflected in the dictum of the *Qurʾān* – "Invite to the Path of your Lord with wisdom and good advice."[55] The term *daʿwa* (pl. *duʿāt*) derives from the root *duʿā*, which literally means 'to call', 'invite' or 'summon'. The term *dāʿī* stems from the same root and is used to refer to a person 'who summons'. Its English equivalent is the term 'missionary' (Latin *mittere).* In this work I will use both terms interchangeably.

Historical sources indicate that the term *daʿwa* was employed in the sense of a prayer in one text, while having a totally different meaning in another context. For instance, in expressions such as *daʿwat al-maẓlūm*, the term *daʿwa* is employed in the sense of a prayer.

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[54] For the term *daʿwa* and its derivatives, see: *The Qurʾān,* 2:186, 2:221, 3:104, 7:193, 10:25, 10:106, 12:108, 13:36, 14:22, 14:44, 16:125, 17:52, 21:45, 22:67, 23:73, 26:72, 27:80, 28:87, 35:14, 40:10, 40:41–43, etc.

[55] *The Qurʾān,* 16:125.

By contrast, the term *daʿwa* (Arabic) or *daʿwat* (Persian) denotes preaching and sermons, in expressions such as *daʿwat-i fanā* and *daʿwat-i baqā* (Chapter 8, pp. 218-220). In the Ismāʿīlī context, the term *daʿwa,* in its wider application, was used to imply to a movement in opposition to the ruling elite and religious dignitaries.

The term *daʿwa* appears to have its origins in the time of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d.148/765), but was used in the sense of missionary activity from around the mid-ninth century.[56] Modern scholarship argues that it was Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl who founded the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* organisation, which was later controlled by the next designated Imam from the progeny of the previous Imam.[57] We might thus assume that, in its initial stage, the *daʿwa* was active in places like al-Baṣra (modern Iraq) and Salamīya (Syria), where the Ismāʿīlīs or the Shīʿīs resided. Later, Yemen became the centre of *daʿwa* activity prior to the establishment of the Fāṭimid state in North Africa.

Historical sources neither provide clear information nor explain how the *daʿwa* functioned in its early stages in different regions. With the passage of time, missionary activity spread the *daʿwa* to other regions, occupying various areas from the Arab peninsula to the Indian subcontinent. We do not have any precise information about how the *daʿwa* institution found its way into Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities. It seems likely that *daʿwa* activity was established in the remote mountain regions of Badakhshan and the adjacent areas as early as the eleventh century. This approximate date suggests that there may have been a significant presence of Ismāʿīlīs in the region and the far-flung principalities of the Pamirs prior to the arrival of Nāṣir-i Khusraw.

The institution of the *daʿwa* in its initial stages, as a religious and political organisation, was established as a movement in opposition to the Abbasids. It had a special agenda and ideology. The ideological creed of the early Ismāʿīlīs stems from the doctrine of the Imamate and its aim was to legitimise the rule of the Imams from the *Ahl al-bayt*. Because of political persecution, the Ismāʿīlīs were deprived of the opportunity to establish an empire of their own, particularly in the pre-Fāṭimid and the post-Alamūt periods, despite the fact that the institution of the *daʿwa* had been set up much earlier than the Fāṭimid Empire itself. What is more, the *daʿwa* institution, the core of Ismāʿīlī propaganda, even outlived that Empire.[58] According to Paul Walker:

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[56] Stern, "The Early Ismāʿīlī Missionaries," in his *Studies in Early Ismāʿīlism,* Leiden, 1983, pp. 189-190.

[57] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* pp. 98-114.

[58] Hamdani, *Between Revolution and State: The Path to Fatimid Statehood*, London, 2006, pp. 1-32.

The *daʿwa* was a trans-national organisation, which functioned both as a propaganda and missionary agency outside the confines of political rule and as an internal ideological organ within the state.[59]

It is evident from the passage above that the *daʿwa* was synonymous with one of the integral parts of the Faṭimid (Ismāʿīlī) Empire, namely the *dawla*. The *dawla* and the *daʿwa* are two interlinked entities connected through the medium of the *dāʿīs*. The *daʿwa* as "a trans-national organisation," in one way or another, was under the guidance of the current Imam of the Time but, during the *dawr al-satr* – the period of concealment – and also on account of its then remoteness from *daʿwa* headquarters, it was active under the supervision of some learned *dāʿīs* appointed either directly by the Imam or by the *ḥujja* active in the region. We should reiterate that the term *daʿwa* is multivalent, according to the various circumstances in which it is found. As a means for propagating the Ismāʿīlī creed, the *daʿwa* was set to spread the Imam's guidance and decrees.

The spread of Ismāʿīlī teaching to different regions of the Middle East, Iran, Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent, in its early stages, was directly linked to the *daʿwa* organisation. This, in the Ismāʿīlī context, was a missionary organisation, with an elaborate hierarchy of *ḥudūd* (stages of initiation or stages of gradation) in addition to organising the actual functioning of the missionaries. The *dāʿīs* were the representatives of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* in various regions. They propagated Ismāʿīlī teaching in the name of the Imam, whom the followers referred to as the *Ṣāḥib al-daʿwa* (*Ṣāḥib-i daʿwat* in Persian), "the master of the mission."[60] As members of the *daʿwa* organisation the *dāʿīs* were all too aware of their onerous duties. As a result, the *dāʿīs* secretly guarded the organisation and its functioning, precisely because it carried the religious, political and ideological message of Ismāʿīlī doctrine. Thus, Arnold considered the "Ismāʿīlīs as the masters of organisation and tactics."[61] Wladimir Ivanow had the same thoughts:

The only branch of Islam in which the preaching of religion, *daʿwat*, was not only organised but even considered of special importance, was Ismāʿīlism.[62]

As we can ascertain from the historical sources, the term *dāʿī* was also widely applied to missionary activities in other branches of Islam, such as the Abbasids, the Muʿtazilis and

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[59] Walker, "The Ismāʿīlī *Daʿwa* in the Reign of the Fatimid Caliph *Al-Ḥākim*," in Walker, *Fatimid History and Ismāʿīlī Doctrine,* Aldershot, 2008, pp. 1-8.

[60] Canard, "Daʿwa," in *EI2,* vol. 2 (1965), pp. 168-170; Daftary, "The Ismāʿīlī *Daʿwa* Outside the Fatimid *Dawla,"* p. 34; Ivanow, "The Organisation of the Fatimid Propaganda," in *JBBRAS,* vol. 15, 1939, pp. 4-6.

[61] Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam,* London, 1935, p. 277.

[62] Ivanow, "Satpanth," in *Collectanea,* vol. 1, Leiden, 1948, p. 20.

the Zaydis.[63] The term *dāʿī* had a wider application in the Ismāʿīlī context however, particularly in relation to the Faṭimid hierarchy of initiation – the *ḥudūd al-dīn.* For this reason, the name *dāʿī* (pl. *duʿāt*) was applied to a person who took Ismāʿīlī teaching to new regions, where his main task was to win new converts and followers for the Imam of the Time.[64] Consequently, those *dāʿīs*, who served the Faṭimid court, were trained in and taught various subjects, such as the *Qurʾān, ḥadīth* and *tafsīr* of the *Qurʾān,* as well as theology and science, before embarking on their activities in the region designated for them. For example, Nāṣir-i Khusraw was trained at the Faṭimid court for three years before being sent to preach Ismāʿīlī teaching in Ṭabaristān, Khurāsān, Balkh and Badakhshan.[65]

The Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa,* as an active missionary organisation in any particular region, was associated with social and religious activities, such as education and edification as well as conversion. The educational aspect of *daʿwa* activity is clearly reflected in the training which the *dāʿīs* received either at the Ismāʿīlī headquarters or through the teaching of the *dāʿī* in the local *daʿwa* network in their respective regions.[66] The *dāʿīs*, as we know from various sources, were the highly educated people of their time. Therefore, they were entrusted with the religious education of both new and old converts, referred to in Ismāʿīlī literature as *mustajīb* (lit. respondent or novice) in the hierarchy of initiation.[67]

Geographically, the *daʿwa* covered a wide range of countries divided into twelve regions called *jazīra* (plural *jazāʾir;* Lit. island). The term *jazīra*, however, was not employed in its geographical context as a proper island, but was used to refer to a section or part of the region where the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* was active.[68] It was the responsibility of the *ḥujjat* (lit. proof) or the chief *dāʿī* to set up a network of local *dāʿīs* in order to facilitate the winning of converts to their cause as Marshal Hodgson says:

> Instead of a single spokesmen, the Ismāʿīlīs acknowledged twelve chiefs, each with his own territory, to represent him [i.e. the Imam]; and the faithful under their command were

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[63] Racius, *The Multiple Nature of Islamic Daʿwa,* Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Helsinki University, 2004.

[64] Dodikhudoev, *Ocherki Filosofii Ismailizma: Obshaīā Kharakteristika Filosofskoĭ Doktriny X-XIV vv,* Dushanbe, 1976, pp. 27-29; Canard, "Daʿwa," in *EI2,* vol. 2 (1965), pp. 168-170; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* pp. 560-562 and his "The Ismāʿīlī *Daʿwa* outside the Fatimid *Dawla,*" pp. 34-35.

[65] Browne, "Nāṣir-i Khusraw: Poet, Traveller, and Propagandist," in *JRAS,* (1905), pp. 313-352; Hunsberger, *Nāṣir Khusraw: The Ruby of Badakhshan,* London, 2000; Shokhumorov, "Ṭarzi Daʿwat-i Fāṭimī va Peshvāyāni Barjasta-i Maẕhab-i Ismāʿīlīya," pp. 152-153 and his "Zindagināma-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw," in *Majalla-i Omurzgor,* (1991), p. 17; Kasam, "The Conversion of Nāṣir-i Khusraw," in *ʿIlm,* vol. 7, no. 1-2 (July – November 1981), pp. 28-39.

[66] Calderini, "The Portrayal of the Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* and of His Roles According to Some Ismāʿīlī and Early Fatimid Authors," in Vermeulen, and D'Hulster, (eds.)., *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras,* vol. 5, Paris, 2007, pp. 37-62; Hunsberger, *Nāṣir Khusraw: The Ruby of Badakhshan,* London, 2000; Browne, "Nāṣir-i Khusraw: Poet, Traveller, and Propagandist," in *JRAS,* (1905), pp. 311-352; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* pp. 310-330 and his "Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Movement," in Daftary, (ed.)., *MIHT,* 1998, pp. 181-203.

[67] Ivanow, 'The Organisation of the Fatimid Propaganda', in *JBBRAS,* pp. 2-3,

[68] Ivanow, *Ismāʿīlī Tradition Concerning the Rise of the Fatimids,* London, 1942, pp. 20-22.

further ranked in various numerous levels of hierarchy from the *dāʿī*s, summoners or missionaries, down to the simple converts. Those of higher ranks taught those of lower ranks as much as they were ready to learn of the Imam's secret *ʿilm*.[69]

Sharḥ al-marātib[70]	*Risāla-i Khayrkhāh-i Hirātī*[71]	*Rawża al-taslīm*[72]
Imam	Imam	Imam
Ḥujjat al-akbar (Greatest proof)	*Ḥujjat / Pīr*	*Mutaʿalim* (Learner)
Ḥujjat al-aṣghar (Junior proof)	*Dāʿī*	*Muʿallim*
Dāʿī (Summoner)	*Muʿallim*	*Dāʿī / Bāb-i bāṭin*
Maʾẕūn-i akbar (Senior Licentiate)	*Maʾẕūn-i akbar*	*Zabān-i ʿilm*
Maʾẕūn-i aṣghar (Junior Licentiate)	*Maʾẕūn-i asghar*	*Ḥujjat-i aʿẓam*
Mustajīb (Respondent)	*Mustajīb*	*Dast-i qudrat*

Figure 16: The *Ḥudūd al-dīn* or the Hierarchy of Faith according to Ismāʿīlī doctrine

The structure of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* consisted of seven ranks of initiation or ranks of faith (*ḥudūd al-dīn*). Religious knowledge was transmitted from one rank to the next, which was structured according to the Qurʾānic saying, "We exalt in knowledge whom We will: but above those that have knowledge there is One more knowing."[73] The Imam is at the top of the ranks, while the respondent (*mustajīb*) is the last in the chain to receive the knowledge.

The hierarchy of religion, *ḥudūd al-dīn* (as shown in Figure 16 above), represents a linguistic variation, which can be seen differently in other regions. What seem ironic about the hierarchy of *ḥudūd*, at least in the context of Badakhshan, is that the high dignitaries within the hierarchy were not present in the region. Hence, I employ the terms *symbolic* and *functional*. The term *symbolic* I use to refer to the highest ranks in the hierarchy of the *daʿwa*, particularly the Imam and the *Ḥujjat* who were not present in the region. The sole representative of the *daʿwa*'s high ranks who lived in the region was Nāṣir-i Khusraw, who

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[69] Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilisation,* Chicago, 1974, pp. 380-381.

[70] *Sharḥ al-Marātib* in Badakhshānī, *Tuḥfat al-Nāẓirīn,* Qudrat Allāh Beg, (ed.)., pp. 85-95.

[71] Khayrkhāh-i Hirātī, *Risāla-i Khayrkhāh,* pp. 2-3.

[72] Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī, *Rawżat al-Taslīm,* pp. 122-23 (Persian tr.)., pp. 143-44.

[73] *The Qurʾān* 12:76. See also: Virani, *The Ismāʿīlīs in the Middle Ages,* p. 73.

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was the *ḥujjat* of Khurāsān and Badakhshān during the Faṭimid period. Similarly, I use the term *functional* to refer to the lower levels of the hierarchy, from the *dāʿī* to the *mustajīb,* who constituted the backbone of the community.

The Ismāʿīlī teaching spread in Badakhshan during the Faṭimid period, particularly through the activities of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, who set up a local *daʿwa* network which will be briefly discussed in the next section of this chapter.

5.5. Nāṣir-i Khusraw and Faṭimid Ismāʿīlism in Badakhshan

Nāṣir-i Khusraw, a contemporary of the Faṭimid *Imam-caliph* al-Mustanṣir (d. 487/1094), was a prominent Ismāʿīlī figure of the eleventh century. In the Ismāʿīlī hierarchy he was a *dāʿī* (missionary) or a *ḥujjat* (chief *dāʿī*) and was also known as a philosopher and traveller. In classical Persian literature he is known for his collected poems or *Dīvān.* "The stern sage of Yumgān," says Leonard Lewisohn, "was not only a *poeta doctus,* master of rhetoric, he was also a *ḥakīm*, an occult philosopher whose poetry and prose can appear enigmatic even to the most educated."[74] In modern times he is celebrated in the intellectual, religious and cultural history of Tajikistan, Iran and Afghanistan. His life

Figure 17: Nāṣir-i Khusraw

has attracted the attention of both medieval writers and modern scholars: some celebrate him for his intellectual genius while others condemn him as a heretic.[75] His full name appears in his prose works as Abū Muʿīn Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nāṣir ibn Khusraw ibn Ḥārith al-Qubādiyānī but he is better known as Nāṣir-i Khusraw. His *nisba* shows that he was from Qubādiyān, a town in Marv, which was part of the Balkh district of greater Khurāsān.[76] In his own testimony, recorded in a famous *Qaṣīda* known as the 'Confessional Ode', he recounts his birth date as 394/1004.[77] The exact date of his death is not known which has resulted in conflicting information among scholars who variously place it between

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[74] Lewisohn, "Hierocosmic Intellect and Universal Soul in a *Qaṣīda* by Nāṣir-i Khusraw," in *Iran,* vol. 45 (2007), p. 193 also his "Nāṣir-i Khusraw's Ode to the Universal Soul and Intellect," in Hunsberger, (ed.)., *Pearls of Persia: The Philosophical Poetry of Nāṣir-i Khusraw,* London, 2012, p. 54.

[75] Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity: The Sufi Poetry and Teachings of Maḥmūd Shabistarī,* Curzon Press, 1995, pp. 25-29.

[76] Hunsberger, *Nasir Khusraw: The Ruby of Badakhshan,* pp. 4-5; Murodova, *Filosofiîa Nosiri Khusrava,* Dushanbe, 1994, p. 3ff.

[77] Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Dīvān,* 242:127.

460/1068 and 481/1088.[78] In his prose work he mostly refers to himself as 'Nāṣir' while in his poetic compositions he uses his *nom de plume*, 'Ḥujjat', meaning 'proof' which is the highest rank in the Ismāʿīlī hierarchy of initiation, the *ḥudūd al-dīn.* Among the local population of Badakhshan he is better-known as 'Shāh Nāṣir' or 'Pīr Shāh Nāṣir' or even 'Pīr Sayyid Shāh Nāṣir'.

Scholars divide his life into four periods:

1. His early years until his conversion (394-436/1004-1044)
2. His seven-year journey to Cairo, the centre of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* (437-444/1045-1052)
3. His return to Khurāsān as head missionary for the Ismāʿīlīs of the region (444/1052)
4. His exile to Badakhshan and the last years of his life.[79]

The little information about Nāṣir's life we have comes primarily from his own writings. Almost no information is available about his early years. Nonetheless, we can adduce from his own writing that he spent his early life in his home town Qubādiyān where he studied various branches of knowledge including medicine, astronomy and theology. Apparently members of Nāṣir Khusraw's family worked in government in some financial capacity. In around 420/1030 he migrated from Qubādiyān to Balkh and started working at the court of the Ghaznavids. He recounts this event at the beginning of his *Safar-nāma* where he tells us:

> I was a clerk by profession and one of those in charge of the sulṭān's revenue service. In my administrative position I had applied myself for a period of time and acquired no small reputation among my peers.[80]

It is evident from his own testimony that he served the Ghaznavid rulers Sulṭān Maḥmūd b. Sabüktegin (361-421/971-1030) and later his son Sulṭān Masʿūd b. Maḥmūd (388-

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[78] Taqīzāda, *Taḥqīqī dar aḥvāli Nāṣir-i Khusraw-i Qubādiyānī,* Tihran, 1379 Sh./2000, pp. 22-23; Scholars provide contradictory information about the death of Nāṣir Khusraw. For instance, Daftary says "Nāṣir lived to be at least seventy, dying in Yumgan at an unknown date after 465/1072-73, the latest year mentioned in most sources being 481/1088-89'. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, p. 207; Azim Nanji places his date of death "between 465/1072 and 471/1078." Nanji, "Nāṣir-i Khusraw," in *EI2*, vol. 7 (1993), pp. 1006-1007; Bausani, *Religion in Iran*, pp. 164-165; Lewisohn, "Hierocosmic Intellect," p. 193; Schadl, "The Shrine of Nasir Khusraw: Imprisoned Deep in the Valley of Yumgan," in *Muqarnas*, p. 63; Shokhumorov argues that Nāṣir-i Khusraw lived for over 90 years. Shokhumorov, "Tarzi Daʿwat-i Fāṭimī va Peshvāyāni Barjasta-i Maẓhabi Ismāʿīlīya," pp. 152-153; Bertel's, on the other hand, tentatively agrees with the date 481/1088-89. He argues: "It should be mentioned that Nāṣir-i Khusraw was still alive in the year 465/1072-73. The date of his death provided by the *'Taqwim al-tawārikh'* (481/1088-89), that for some reason was held by many scholars who wrote about Nāṣir, is also plausible, as are the other dates provided in many other sources. However, we do not possess a precise date for Nāṣir's demise." Bertel's, *Nasiri Khusraw i Ismailizm,* Moscow, 1959, pp. 186-190.

[79] Hunsberger, *Nasir Khusraw: The Ruby of Badakhshan,* p. 3. In the *Qaṣīda* known as the 'Confessional Ode,' which was written prior to his exile to Badakhshan, Nāṣir only describes three periods of his life. *Dīvān*, 242, p. 127ff.

[80] Thackston, (English tr.)., *Nasir-i Khusraw's Book of Travels - Safarnama*, California, 2001, p. 1; Hunsberger, *Nasir Khusraw: The Ruby of Badakhshan*, p. 4; Bertel's, *Nāṣir-i Khusraw va Ismāʿīlīyān,* Arinpūr, (Persian tr.)., 1345-46, pp. 170-171.

432/998-1040). While in the service of the Ghaznavids and later the Saljūqs, Nāṣir moved in the company of the rulers and the elite. He recounts in the *Safar-nāma* that he enjoyed a life of travel, study, poetry and wine. We also learn from the *Safar-nāma* that his fortieth birthday was a turning point in his life when he underwent a spiritual awakening which he refers to as a dream. We know that this event happened prior to 6 Jumada II 437/19 December 1045.[81] As a result, "Nāṣir experienced a drastic spiritual upheaval, which completely changed the future course of his life."[82] Consequently, in Shaʿbān 437/March 1046 he set off on his long journey which lasted seven years. He resigned from his position in the Saljūq court on the excuse of making the pilgrimage to Mecca. After several pilgrimages he continued his journey towards Cairo, the seat of the Faṭimid *Imam-caliph* al-Mustanṣir biʾllāh (d. 487/1094). His journey to Cairo raises the question of his conversion and his previous religious affiliation. Sadly, no precise information is available about his early religious leanings. Modern scholars like Taqīzāda and Vazinpūr argue that Nāṣir was a Sunnī by birth.[83] By contrast, Ivanow and Corbin argue that he was the follower of Twelver Shīʿism prior to his conversion to Ismāʿīlism.[84] The question of Nāṣir's conversion to Ismāʿīlism prior to his journey or during his stay in Cairo is still unresolved. If his seven-year journey was motivated by his affiliation to the Ismāʿīlī cause, it might furnish us with safe ground to argue that he had accepted the Ismāʿīlī teaching prior to his departure.[85]

According to the *Safar-nāma* it was in Ṣafar 439/August 1047 that Nāṣir, in the company of his brother Abū Saʿīd and an Indian slave, entered Cairo. He stayed in the Faṭimid capital until 441/1050.[86] During his three-year stay in Cairo, Nāṣir met al-Muʾayyad fiʾl-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 470/1078), another prominent figure of al-Mustanṣir's time, who instructed him in matters of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa*. After receiving proper instruction in Cairo, he was promoted to the rank of *ḥujja*, which is the second highest rank in the *daʿwa* organisation. We learn from Fidāʾī Khurāsānī's *Hidāyat al-muʾminīn va al-ṭālibīn* that Nāṣir was put in charge of the *daʿwa* organisation in Khurāsān, Balkh and Badakhshan:

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[81] Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Safar-nāma*, p. 2.

[82] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, p. 205.

[83] Taqīzāda, "Introduction to the *Dīvān*," p. l; Vazinpūr, "Dalāil-i Manṭiqi-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw baroi Taghyir-i Maẕhab-i Khud Chi Budaast?," in *Journal of the Faculty of Literature and Human Science of the University of Tehran*, 24:3-4 (1978-79), pp. 135-136.

[84] Ivanow, *Problems of Nāṣir-i Khusraw's Biography*, Bombay, 1956, pp. 1-17; Corbin, "Nāṣir-i Khusraw and Iranian Ismāʿīlism," in *CHIr*, vol. IV: *The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljūqs*, Frye, (ed.)., Cambridge, 1975, pp. 532-536.

[85] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, pp. 205-206.

[86] Hunsberger, *Nasir Khusraw: The Ruby of Badakhshan*, pp. 5-7; Ashurov, *Folosofskie Vzglīady Nosiri Khusrava*, Dushanbe, 1965, pp. 23-30.

> Shāh Nāṣir, you should set off towards Khurāsān, Badakhshān and Balkh for the sake of calling people to the Summons of the Truth. I have appointed you as my *Ḥujjat* (Proof) in this region.[87]

Nāṣir Khusraw arrived at Balkh (in today's northern Afghanistan) in Jumādā II 444/October 1052 which marks the beginning of his missionary activities in the region. Based on the quotation above, he must have established his headquarters in Balkh and then succeeded in extending his *daʿwa* activity to Nīshāpūr.[88] References to his missionary activity in the regions of Ṭabaristān (Māzandarān) in the Caspian province are contained in the writings of his contemporary, Abū al-Maʿālī Muḥammad ibn ʿUbayd Allāh, the author of the *Bayān al-adyān*.[89] His missionary activity marks another turning point in his life since his onerous duty as an Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* or *ḥujjat* made him a persecuted victim of the Sunnī *ʿulamāʾ* who opposed the Ismāʿīlīs. The anti-Ismāʿīlī policy in Khurāsān was so strong at the time that the *ʿulamāʾ* with the support of the Saljūq rulers suppressed and persecuted anyone who favoured the Ismāʿīlīs. According to Nāṣir's own testimony he was therefore labelled *bad-dīn* (irreligious), *mulḥid* (a heretic), a Qarmaṭī and a Rāfiẓī.[90] Consequently, he was forced to flee Balkh and seek refuge in the neighbouring regions. Although Nāṣir was refused a place of refuge in Khurāsān, he found a welcoming haven in Badakhshan under the patronage of Abū al-Maʿālī ʿAlī b. al-Asad, who, as was demonstrated in chapter 2, was one of the local rulers in the region. It is evident from Nāṣir's testimonies in his *Dīvān* and the *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn* (A Compendium of two Wisdoms) that the *amīr* of Badakhshan, ʿAlī b. al-Asad al-Ḥārith,[91] was an Ismāʿīlī.[92] Nāṣir further relates that it was in the year 462/1069 that the *amīr* sent him a *Qaṣīda* (Ode) by a certain Khwāja Abū al-Ḥaysam Aḥmad b. Ḥasan Jurjānī (flourished in the tenth century),[93] requesting him to write a response to the philosophical and religious questions posed in the *Qaṣīda*. This detail from the *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn* implies that the *amīr* was acquainted with the Ismāʿīlī doctrine. It stands to

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[87] Fidāʾī Khurāsānī, Muḥammad Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, *Taʾrīkh-i Ismāʿīlīya yā hidāyat al-muʾminīn al-ṭalibīn,* p. 79.

"شاه ناصر تو باید بروی به سمت خراسان و بدخشان و بلخ از جهت دعوت حقّ، من تو را حجت خود قرار دادم در این دیار."

[88] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, pp. 205-206.

[89] The *Bayān al-adyān* was completed in 485/1092 and is considered the earliest source that provides some information about Nāṣir-i Khusraw. Quoted in Daftary's *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 206.

[90] Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Zād al-musāfirīn,* pp. 3, 402 and in his *Dīvān,* pp. 110, 217, 430, 448; Daftary, p. 206.

[91] The name of the *amīr* of Badakhshan is given in various forms. For instance, we find it as *Shams al-Maʿālī ʿAlī ibn al-Aṣad* in the writings of Abusaid Shokhumorov. For more information, see: Shokhumorov, "Ṭarzi Daʿwati Fāṭimī va Peshvāyāni Barjasta-i Madhabi Ismāʿīlīya," in Farmand, (ed.)., *Dānā-i Yumgān,* 1987, pp. 145-153; Corbin, "Nāṣir-i Khusraw and Iranian Ismāʿīlīsm," in *CHIr,* vol. IV: *The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljūqs,* Frye, (ed.)., Cambridge, 1975, pp. 535-536.

[92] Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn,* Corbin, and Muʿīn, (eds.)., Tehran, 1953, p. 17.

[93] Daftary, *Ismaili Literature: A Bibliography of Sources and Studies,* London, 2004 p. 106; See: Mujtaba Minuvī, "Qaṣīda-i Chūn va Charo," in *Majalla-i yādgār,* Tehran, no. 7 (March-April., 1946/1375), pp. 9-21.

reason that, due to the support of the *amīr* of Badakhshan, Nāṣir-i Khusraw succeeded in establishing a local *daʿwa* network, which was active under his guidance.

An examination of some of the poems in his *Dīvān* indicates that Nāṣir-i Khusraw was engaged in producing manuals for the local *dāʿīs*, which he used to send once a year to *daʿwa* centres both outside and inside Badakhshan.[94] The years of his exile in Yumgān proved to be very productive both in spreading Ismāʿīlī teaching and in producing literary works. Apart from his *Dīvān*, which is considered to be "a poetic and metaphysical *tour de force* containing some of the finest homiletic odes in classical Persian"[95] literature, Nāṣir wrote a number of other treatises, namely the *Shish faṣl* (Six Chapters; also known as *Rawshanāʾī-nāma),* the *Zād al-musāfirīn* (Pilgrim's Provision), the *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn* (The Sum of the Two Wisdoms), the *Gughāʾish va rahāʾish* (Knowledge and Liberation), the *Khwān al-ikhwān* (A Banquet for the Brethren) and the *Wajh-i dīn* (The Face of Religion). In these works, as Schadl correctly puts it:

> Nāṣir introduces the reader to the Ismāʿīlī gnosis through *Qurʾānic* exegesis, imparting an esoteric (*bāṭin*) interpretation (*taʾwīl*) of *suras* from which religious commandments, prohibitions, and rites were derived, such as the call to prayer, the ablutions for prayer, and the five assigned times and correct posture for prayer, as well as fasting, almsgiving and the *ḥajj*.[96]

Nāṣir-i Khusraw is undoubtedly one of the top eleven great poets in classical Persian literature.[97] He is also celebrated for producing a corpus of philosophical and theological writings in Persian. He lived for over seventy (or possibly eighty) years and was buried in the village of Ḥażrat-i Sayyid in Yumgān in the southern part of Afghan Badakhshan. According to Abusaid Shokhumorov, Yumgān was the main centre for the Ismāʿīlīs *daʿwa* until the advent of the Tīmūrids although in the modern period the number of Ismāʿīlīs residing there and in the immediate vicinity does not exceed 22 households.[98] The missionary activity of Nāṣir in the region resulted in the tradition bearing his name and being referred to as the *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* or *Daʿwat-i Pīr Nāṣir*. The *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* was easily infused into the *Dīn-i panjtanī* since both of them shared a common Shīʿī heritage that rotates around the doctrine of the Imamate. The reverence towards the *Ahl al-bayt*,

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[94] Shokhumorov, "Ṭarzi Daʿwati Fāṭimī," pp. 142-156; Schadl, "The Shrine of Nasir," pp. 71-73; Shokhumorov, "Ruzgori Nosiri Khusraw dar Badakhshon," in *Pamirovedenie,* 1985, pp. 201-204.

[95] Lewisohn, "Hierocosmic Intellect," p. 193.

[96] Schadl, "The Shrine of Nasir," p. 74.

[97] Namely: Firdawsī, Nāṣir-i Khusraw, Sanāʾī, Niẓāmī, ʿAṭṭār, Rūmī, Saʿdī, Ḥāfiẓ, Jāmī, Bīdil and Ṣāʾib. See: Lewisohn, "Hierocosmic Intellect," p. 193, 220, n. 3 and his *Beyond Faith,* pp. 28-29.

[98] Schadl, "The Shrine of Nasir," p. 73; Shokhumorov, "Ruzgori Nosiri Khusraw dar Badakhshon," pp. 209-212.

referred to as *Panj tan-i pāk* in Badakhshan, constitute the doctrinal basis of Ismāʿīlī tradition which is closely linked with the name of Nāṣir as its founder.

5.6. *Dīn-i Panjtanī* and *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* in Badakhshan

The designation of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* in the historical sources reflects both the attitude of the adherents of the movement and its opponents. Reference to the *daʿwa* varies from region to region, according to the geographical, social and, most importantly, certain linguistic features of the particular area. In its early stages in the Middle East, the *daʿwa* was simply called *al-daʿwa al-hādīya*, which means "the summons that guides aright."[99] The Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs of South Asia designated the *daʿwa* as "the Path of Truth" or "the Right Way," namely the *Satpanth*.[100] In Badakhshan, in a broader geographical context, the *daʿwa* was referred to by the name of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, who set up the missionary activity in the region. As a result, terms such as *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* or *Daʿwat-i Pīr Shāh Nāṣir* are prevalent designations among the Ismāʿīlīs in Tajik and Afghan Badakhshan, the northern areas of Pakistan and certain parts of Xinjiang province in China.

The oral tradition relates that, when Nāṣir-i Khusraw arrived in Badakhshan, he started to gather people together in assemblies called *majlis-i daʿwat* (assemblies of mission) to discuss matters of religion. The aim of the *majlis-i daʿwat* was to spread the Ismāʿīlī teaching, which is based on the doctrine of the Imamate. The Shīʿī teaching, that had earlier found its way to Badakhshan, expressed as reverence for the *Ahl al-bayt*, is known as the *Dīn-i panjtanī,* as discussed earlier, which spread in Badakhshan with the arrival of Shīʿī *Ghulāt* teaching. With the passage of time, it created a platform which favoured the easy accommodation of Ismāʿīlī teaching not only for Nāṣir-i Khusraw but also for the sporadic missionary activities of earlier *dāʿīs*.

The term *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* (or *Daʿwat-i Pīr Shāh Nāṣir*) refers to a combination of religious rituals and rites logically related to each other. The term *daʿwa* is a reference to the Ismāʿīlī religious tradition, while the term *pīr* is of Ṣūfī origin, employed in the Ismāʿīlī context to refer to the leader of the Ismāʿīlī mission, particularly in the post-Alamūt period. Linguistically, it is a combination of Arabic and Persian terms covering the broad geographic area where the Ismāʿīlīs reside. It would appear that the term *pīr* was attached

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[99] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* pp. 2, 16, 213.

[100] Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Tradition in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent,* pp. 52, 120-121; Ivanow, "Satpanth," in *Collectanea I,* Leiden, 1948, pp. 1-54.

to Nāṣir-i Khusraw's name only after his death. In the local context, the term *pīr* is used to refer to an elderly, respected or learned person, a *ḥakīm*.

It is difficult to ascertain when the term *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir*, as a way of referring to Ismāʿīlī missionary activity, came into circulation among the inhabitants of Badakhshan and its mountain regions. The emergence and use of this term in the local context seems to have happened only after the demise of Nāṣir-i Khusraw. As a generic term, *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* encompasses the religious and spiritual elements of the local Ismāʿīlī tradition in Badakhshan in a specific context. In other words, *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* was conflated with the *Dīn-i panjtanī* since the two terms share a connecting point expressed in devotion to and reverence for the Imams descending from the *Ahl al-bayt*. As has been argued that the term *Dīn-i panjtanī* must have preceded *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* and that the modification came about with the changes in the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa*. The *Dīn-i panjtanī*, on the other hand, encompassed traditions and rituals linked to Shīʿa Islam. Although the term *Dīn-i panjtanī* was used in relation to Shīʿa rituals, such as *ʿĀshūrā*, in the context of Badakhshan it also includes Ismāʿīlī rituals and practices. Hence, it is used as "a shortcut to the diverse beliefs and rituals, which were added to *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir*,"[101] in the later centuries.

The political persecution of religious minorities in Iran and Central Asia in the post-Alamūt period created an environment in which Ismāʿīlī teaching absorbed certain Ṣūfī as well as Twelver Shīʿī teachings. This was as precautionary measure known as the practice of *taqiyya*, which spread to Badakhshan with the arrival of migrant communities. Consequently, it gave a new dimension to the *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* in the local context. In addition, the movement of peoples, meant that different types of religious treatises reached Badakhshan which resulted in renewal and development within the *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir*. The spread of various religious teachings in Badakhshan had a direct impact on the religious life of the local population. Although the Ṣūfī teaching was only absorbed into certain local religious rituals and practices, such as *Charāgh rawshan* (lit. Candle Lighting) and *madāḥ-khāni* (lit. singing devotional poetry), the Twelver Shīʿī elements, under uncertain circumstances, intermixed with the genealogical lines of the Ismāʿīlī Imams and even the local religious rulers (Chapter 7 and 8, pp. 194-241). This phenomenon caused an ambiguity, which will be discussed later in this thesis. We may assume that this larger scale amalgamation must have happened during the Safavid period.

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[101] Iloliev, *The Ismāʿīlī-Sufi Sage of Pamir,* p. 42.

From a logical point of view, the *Dīn-i panjtanī* combines all those elements into a single frame. Its principal element, as with the rest of the Ismāʿīlī doctrine, rotates around the issue of the importance of the spiritual authority of the ever-present current Imam who is held to be from the family of the 'Five Pure Bodies', the *Panj tan-i pāk*.[102] The most ardent proponent of the *Dīn-i panjtanī* among the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan was a certain Shāh Ziyāī-i Shughnānī, who seems to have flourished before the first half of the sixteenth century. Shāh Ziyāī refers to himself as a scion of the local rulers of Shughnān,[103] who had historically been the followers of the *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* since its inception. He wrote a long ode – a *qaṣīda* – in praise of the *Panj tan-i pāk*, which is sung during *madāḥ-khāni* or *Charāgh rawshan* in modern times. In addition to this, he composed another long *qaṣīda* known as "*Salām-nāma*." While the first *qaṣīda* is in praise of the *Ahl al-bayt* the second *qaṣīda* is an expression of allegiance to the Imams from the progeny of Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq.

It is important to note that in its initial stages the term *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* was applied in the local context to the Ismāʿīlī Fāṭimid teaching, which later absorbed the local religious rituals and transformed them within the context of Ismāʿīlī teaching. Apart from this, the term *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* is used to refer to various cultural, intellectual and religious aspects of life. According to the local population of Badakhshan the *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* consists of certain customs and traditions, such as *Charāgh rawshan, Daʿwat-i fanā* (a tradition performed after a person's death), *Daʿwat-i baqā* (a tradition performed during one's life, also known as *zinda daʿwat*) and *madāḥ-khāni* (the recitation of didactic and devotional poems; see Chapter 8, pp. 215-217). These customs and rites comprise the backbone of the local Ismāʿīlī tradition, which is embedded in the intellectual heritage of Nāṣir-i Khusraw and still practised among the local population.

Conclusion

Upon examining the various available sources, it becomes clear that the religious composition of the region changed over time. The political situation in the Middle East

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[102] It should be mentioned that, in some places in Tajik Badakhshan, one still can find shrines containing the symbolic representation of *Panjtanī* in the form of 'an open palm' (the five fingers of the hand symbolising the holy family – the Prophet Muḥammad, Fāṭima, ʿAlī, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn). This symbol can be found in the *Gumbaz-i Pīr Sayyid Farrukh Shāh* in a place called *Sarā-i Bahār* in the village of Kushk, in Porshinev. One can find the symbol of *Panjtanī* in the region of Wakhān near a spring named *Chashma-i Bībī Fāṭima-i Zahrā*.

[103] MS-1: *Bayāzi ashʿāri Naẓmī*, AS of Tajikistan, fol. 165a, where Shāh Ziyāī referring to his origin says:

<div dir="rtl">

به اصل و نسل ز شاهان ملک شغنانم،   چو لعل جای و مکان است در بدخشانم.

</div>

By birth and origin I am the scion of the rulers of Shughnān,

Like a ruby my place and residence is in Badakhshān.

and Central Asia affected the religious landscape in Badakhshan and its adjacent regions. The spread of Islam to Central Asia and Iran heralded a change in the religious, political and social spheres of life of the local population. Islam spread to Badakhshan in the Shīʿī form, expressed in devotion to the family of the Prophet Muḥammad, the *Ahl al-bayt.* The preservation of the enigmatic *Umm al-kitāb* among local Ismāʿīlīs, as a sacred religious text, implies that it originated among the extremist Shīʿa groups such as the *Mukhammisa, Mughirīya* and possibly the *Khaṭṭābiya* movements. These movements inculcated a reverence for Shīʿa Islam which later facilitated the assimilation of Ismāʿīlī teaching in Badakhshan. Reverence for the family of the Prophet is referred to by the generic term *Panjtanī* or *Dīn-i panjtanī* which in turn paved the way for the activity of the Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī*s.

As we have discussed in this chapter, Ismāʿīlī teaching reached remote Badakhshan sometime in the second half of the tenth century. Historical sources do not provide the name(s) of the *dāʿī*s active in the region. However, the person who succeeded in winning most converts to the Ismāʿīlī cause was Nāṣir-i Khusraw. He also succeeded in consolidating the teaching of the local Ismāʿīlīs through his philosophical and theological writings. Similarly, his poetic compositions together with those ascribed to him are still sung by the local population in religious ceremonies known as the *Daʿwat, Majlis-i daʿwat* or *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir.*

I have argued that it was after the demise of Nāṣir-i Khusraw that Ismāʿīlī teaching in Badakhshan came to be called the *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir.* Doctrinally, the *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* remained Faṭimid Ismāʿīlī, whereas the core principal of Shīʿism, that is to say, the religious authority of the *Ahl al-bayt*, prevailed over all other teachings. I have shown in my discussion how Nāṣir based his missionary activities on previous religious teaching particularly the Shīʿī doctrine of the Imamate. Thus, the *Dīn-i panjtanī*, which was fundamentally rooted in the reverence for the *Ahl al-bayt*, became the main platform for Nāṣir's missionary activities.

Less than two decades[104] after the death of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, the Faṭimid Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* split into Nizārī and Mustaʿlī branches. This schism, which occurred in 487/1094, deprived the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan from direct access to the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa*. As result for certain period of time the Ismāʿīlism in Badakhshan remained doctrinally Faṭimid. The next schism, which occurred in the post-Alamūt period, particularly after the death of Imam Shams al-

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[104] I count the two decades from 470/1078, which is considered the death date of Nāṣir in most western sources.

Dīn Muḥammad (d. 710/1310) divided the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs into Muḥammad-Shāhī and Qāsim-Shāhī branches, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER 6: SCHISM AND ITS EFFECT ON THE *DAʿWAT-I NĀṢIR*

Introduction

Ismāʿīlism in Badakhshan, as discussed in the previous chapter, is known as *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* – "summons supervised by Nāṣir." The period after the death of Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. 470/1078) to the mid-fifteenth century is the most obscure phase in Ismāʿīlī history, in general, and in the history of Badakhshan and its Ismāʿīlī communities, in particular. Two events in the Ismāʿīlī history of the medieval period are marked as turning points: First, the fall of the Faṭimid Empire and the succession dispute on the death of the *Imam-caliph* al-Mustanṣir (d. 487/1094), which divided the Ismāʿīlī community into the Nizārī and Mustaʿlī branches. As a result, the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan lost contact with the *daʿwa* headquarters but still followed the teaching of Nāṣir-i Khusraw. Secondly, in the second quarter of the fourteenth century, namely after the fall of Alamūt, the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs faced another schism that once again divided the community, into the Muḥammad-Shāhī and Qāsim-Shāhī branches. The Qāsim-Shāhī Imams, based mainly in Iran, lived a clandestine life mostly in hiding while the Muḥammad-Shāhīs engaged in the religious and political life of Iran, Badakhshan, Syria and, later on, South Asia.

The focus of this chapter is that second schism, occurring half a century after the fall of Alamūt. Although this period is considered the most obscure period in Iran's Ismāʿīlī history, it is evidently the most incomprehensible period in the political and religious history of Badakhshan as well. In order to understand the impact of this schism on the *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* I shall look at the relationships between Iran and Badakhshan. I shall argue that at a certain point in the fourteenth century the followers of Nāṣir-i Khusraw started to pay allegiance to the Muḥammad-Shāhī line of Imams. The Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārīs were of the opinion that the Muḥammad-Shāhīs were not the true bearers of the office of the Imamate. Nonetheless, I shall demonstrate that the Muḥammad-Shāhīs were actively involved in the religious and political life of Badakhshan. Although the Qāsim-Shāhī Imams had their followers in the region, the active engagement of the Muḥammad-Shāhīs overshadowed them. It was only in the sixteenth century that the Qāsim-Shāhīs reinstated contact with their followers in Badakhshan. I shall argue that the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan returned to the line of the Qāsim-Shāhī Imams in the first half of the sixteenth century. It is important to note that due to a lack of primary sources this discussion remains preliminary. Equally, for the sake of clarity, I briefly discuss the presence of both lines in

Badakhshan and their interactions with their Iranian co-religionists in the historical context.

6.1. The Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* in the post-Alamūt Period

After the death of the Fāṭimid *Imam-caliph* al-Mustanṣir, the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* was relocated to the region of *Jibāl* in northern Iran. In 483/1090, the Ismāʿīlīs of Iran, under the leadership of *dāʿī* Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ (r. 483-518/1090-1124),[1] succeeded in establishing a mini-state which lasted for 166 years. This state was established on behalf of the Ismāʿīlī Imam, who was in concealment. The newly established Nizārī Ismāʿīlī movement promoted "an independent revolutionary policy against the Saljūq Turks."[2] Although the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī state was not as powerful as the Saljūq empire, "it was strong enough to resist successfully the enmity"[3] of its rivals. The Nizārī Ismāʿīlī state in Iran constituted a powerful intellectual and political challenge to the ruling authorities as can be seen in the strength of the Saljūq reaction to it. The aspirations of the Ismāʿīlīs to world leadership, under the guidance of the Imam from the *Ahl al-bayt*, remained the principal inspiration of the revolutionary movement. In this quest, the *daʿwa* headquarters sent its envoys far beyond the Saljūq territories. However, there is no indication that Badakhshan and its northern mountain principalities fell under the direct authority of this Ismāʿīlī state in Iran during the era of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and his successors. Therefore, in the early twelfth century Badakhshan remained doctrinally Fāṭimid, which situation, in practical terms, lasted for a relatively short time, since it eventually absorbed the Ismāʿīlī teachings of the Iranian Nizārīs.

The transference of the Ismāʿīlī headquarters from Egypt to Iran after the Nizārī-Mustaʿlī schism of 483/1090 led, first of all, to the consolidation of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī state in Iran, which restricted the *daʿwa* from undertaking any active missionary engagement in areas beyond their reach. Moreover, it took a great deal of time to establish such a powerful mini-state in the region in the midst of Sunnī territory. As Farhad Daftary says:

> During the Alamūt period, the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs were largely preoccupied with their military campaigns and survival in their fortress communities of Persia and Syria. Nevertheless,

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[1] Hodgson, "The Ismāʿīlī State," in *CHIr,* vol. V: *The Saljūq and Mongol Periods*, Cambridge, 1968, p. 432; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 302.

[2] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 301.

[3] Hodgson, "The Ismāʿīlī State," in *CHIr,* pp. 422-423.

they did maintain a sophisticated intellectual outlook and developed their religious policies and theological doctrines in response to changing circumstances.[4]

He goes further, saying:

> The Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs of the Alamūt period did not produce learned scholars concerned with metaphysics or complex theological issues, comparable with the *dāʿī*-authors of the Faṭimid period. However, certain theological issues continued to provide the focus of the Nizārī thought of the Alamūt period.[5]

In the area beyond the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī state of Iran, the structure and teaching of the *daʿwa* remained unchanged. To a certain extent, the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* absorbed elements from local traditions. Such an assimilation took place in various regions and was due to the formation of a local network of *dāʿīs*. The main aspects of the *daʿwa*, the winning of the new converts to the Ismāʿīlī cause and the spreading of their teaching to the neighbouring areas, remained the same, despite the fact that the *daʿwa* was mostly preoccupied with finding ways to protect the community from their enemies. When the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs diverged from their Faṭimid co-religionists the *daʿwa* in the Persian lands changed its name from *daʿwat-i qadīma*, namely, "the old mission", to *daʿwat-i jadīda*, that is, "the new mission." The core literature, which was burnt during the Mongol onslaught, was all in Persian. Doctrinally, the *daʿwat-i jadīda* was an elaborate modification of the doctrine of the Imamate, implanted in the new teaching called the doctrine of *taʿlīm* (lit. teaching).

As discussed earlier, we must presume that Nāṣir-i Khusraw was the sole representative of the Faṭimid *daʿwa* in Badakhshan and its adjacent areas, in the absence of any other direct historical record for *daʿwa* activity in the region prior to his arrival. Nor is it possible to draw a clear picture of non-Ismāʿīlī preaching activity in the region. Yet, such fragmented materials as we have, along with the oral tradition from the region, refer to the coming of certain *darvīshe*s, who took an active part in the religious life of these mountain communities. Emadi, in his article "The End of *Taqiyya*", suggests that:

> After Nāṣir-i Khusraw's death, the Ismāʿīlīs in Badakhshan remained isolated from the rest of the Ismāʿīlī community, until several years later, when two Iranian *dāʿīs* visited Badakhshan.[6]

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[4] Daftary, "ʿAlī in Classical Ismāʿīlī Theology," in Ocak, (ed.)., *From History to Theology: ʿAlī in Islamic Beliefs,* Ankara, 2005, p. 62.

[5] Ibid. p. 73.

[6] Emadi, "The End of *Taqiyya:* Re-affirming the Religious Identity of Ismāʿīlīs in Shughnān, Badakhshan: Political Implications for Afghanistan", in *MES,* vol. 34, no. 3 (July 1998), p. 107.

One of the *Supplements,* added by Fażlʿalībek Surkhafsar to the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* of Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī (nineteenth and early twentieth century), which partly relies on oral traditions, presents an important detail about the arrival of Iranian missionaries in the region. As we can see, the citation above suggests that, at some point between 481/1088 and 490/1096, a *darvīsh* passing through Badakhshan arrived in Shughnān. His name is given as Sayyid Mīr Ḥasan Shāh, and he became known in the region as Shāh Khāmūsh. We learn from the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* that Shāh Khāmūsh was the predecessor of the local *mīr*s and *shāh*s and is considered the founder of a local dynasty. Following Emadi's argument we may assume that Shāh Khāmūsh must have been sent to Badakhshan from the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* headquarters in Iran. Considering this within the wider historical context of Iran, we may also suggest that this event must have happened during the Alamūt period. Gabrielle van Den Berg also supports this argument when she comments:

> It seems that the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan accepted the Nizārī Imamate before the fall of Alamūt: the Imam sent two missionaries, Sayyid Shāh Malang and Shāh Khāmūsh, to Shughnān, where they became the ancestors of dynasties of *pīr*s and *mīr*s, who have ruled this area for centuries.[7]

It stands to reason that the doctrine of *taʿlīm*, which was famous among Iranian Ismāʿīlīs, must have found its way to Badakhshan through the migration process. It is likely that *dāʿī*s, like Shāh Khāmūsh, and later Shāh Malang and others had been sent to Badakhshan and the mountain principalities of Pamir as part of *daʿwa* activity.[8]

In the eighth/twelfth century the political rivalry between the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs and Sunnī Saljūqs became one of the main obstacles to the activities of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa.* Nonetheless, its permeation into the remote mountain regions of Central Asia seems to have been inevitable. Firstly, it was persecution that caused members of the Ismāʿīlī community to migrate to other areas, such as Badakhshan. Secondly, since the area was populated by Ismāʿīlīs and it also was under the rule of the local *mīr*(s), who seem to have been sympathetic towards the Twelver Shīʿas and the Ismāʿīlīs, it was much safer for the migrants to join their co-religionists there.

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[7] Berg, *Minstrel Poetry from the Pamir Mountains,* Wiesbaden, 2004, p. 23.

[8] A detailed analysis of the arrival of these *darvīshe*s is discussed in Chapter 7 - The Role of *Pīr*s: Religious Authority among the Ismāʿīlīs of Pamir, pp. 194-213. It is a common belief among the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan that Shāh Malang arrived in the region much earlier than Shāh Khāmūsh. As no precise historical and chronological data are provided in either the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* or any other sources, I will take the arrival of Shāh Khāmūsh as the starting point for the arrival of these *darvīshe*s in Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities.

One further point needs to be considered in relation to the problem of how far back we can trace the spread of Ismāʿīlī teaching and the activity of the *daʿwa* in Badakhshan, particularly during the Alamūt and post-Alamūt periods. A lack of historical evidence leaves a gap in our understanding of the evolution of the Ismāʿīlī communities and their *daʿwa* activity in Iran and even beyond. The fall of Alamūt in 654/1256, however, exposed the community to a dangerous environment that led to severe persecution.

The fall of Alamūt in the mid-thirteenth century marks the migration of Ismāʿīlīs to different regions in Iran and to other neighbouring localities. It also represents one of the most obscure phases in Ismāʿīlī history not only in Iran but also in Badakhshan. Although many historians, like Juwaynī (d. 681/1283), maintained that the Ismāʿīlīs were now extinct, the community did survive and developed in a different form, on the periphery of Islamdom. Thus, it becomes apparent that communities like those in Badakhshan, the northern principalities of Pamir as well as in the northern areas of modern Pakistan, in common with other Ismāʿīlī communities in the Middle East and the Indian sub-continent, continued in isolation which allowed each community to develop a distinctive tradition of its own.

The development of distinctive traditions among the separate Ismāʿīlī communities reflects the adoption of various distinctively local components into the Ismāʿīlī teaching. We might mention the widespread adoption of *taqiyya* or precautionary dissimulation, in different forms, by the members of the community. Modern scholars argue that the Ismāʿīlīs widely resorted to the practice of *taqiyya* in times of danger and persecution. Some rulers and even some religious scholars labelled the Ismāʿīlīs in derogatory terms such as *kāfir* (infidel)*, mulḥid* (heretic), and even *ḥashīshī* (in modern parlance, assassin), which led to the Ismāʿīlīs developing ways to secure and safeguard their community.[9] In this respect, the Ismāʿīlīs concealed their true beliefs and religious literature, on the one hand, and started to practise either Sunnī, Ṣūfī, Twelver Shīʿī or Hindū traditions, on the other, which with the passage of time became the backbone of their diverse traditions. In particular, the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan concealed their true religious beliefs on account of persecution by the Sunnī rulers, which led to the amalgamation of various Ṣūfī and Twelver Shīʿī elements within their beliefs and practices.[10]

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[9] For more information on anti-Ismāʿīlī polemics, see: Merchant, *Types and Uses of Argument in Anti-Ismāʿīlī Polemics,* Unpublished M.A. Thesis: McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies, 1991.

[10] Emadi, "Praxis of *Taqiyya:* Perseverance of Pashaye Ismāʿīlī Enclave, Nangarhar, Afghanistan", in *CAS,* vol. 19, no. 2, (2000), pp. 253-264 also his "The End of *Taqiyya",* pp. 103-120.

In other words, the *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* or the tradition of Nāṣir, due to political pressures and the migration of members of the community, on the one hand, and the amalgamation of different Ismāʿīlī and other religious teachings, on the other, took on distinctive local features as Iloliev, in his book, *The Ismāʿīlī Ṣūfī Sage of Pamir*, tells us:

> In practical terms, the *daʿwa* of Nāṣir-i Khusraw was renewed and developed during the course of history by various Ismāʿīlī and sometimes non-Ismāʿīlī *dāʿīs*, most of whom were forced to leave their home places during the Mongol and post-Mongol periods. Their trips, like that of the founder of the *daʿwa* network, whether it was an Ismāʿīlī or non-Ismāʿīlī, were probably motivated by the political situation of the time.[11]

The political circumstances in Mā warā al-nahr and Iran from the time of the Mongol invasion to the downfall of the Nizārī state of Alamūt (first half of the thirteenth century), on the one hand, and from the advent of the Tīmūrid empire to the establishment of Safavid rule in Iran and Shaybānid/Tūqāy-Tīmūrid rule in Mā warā al-nahr in the early sixteenth century, on the other, were followed by severe persecution of all non-Twelver Shīʿī religious movements.[12] In one way or another, Badakhshan and the northern principalities of the Pamirs were also affected by these intolerant policies perpetrated by the rulers mentioned above. For instance, a letter is preserved in an anonymous administrative complication known as *Maktūbāt* which is aimed at waging religious war in the regions of Khuttalān and Badakkhshan.[13] The goal of such punititive expedition seems to have been the extermination of a community that was both marginalised and, at the same time, scattered on the periphery of Islamdom, left them with no choice but to conceal their true religious identity and once again resort to the practice of *taqiyya.* This period of concealment – *dawr al-satr* – in post-Alamūt Ismāʿīlī history lasted for more than a century. The minor non-Ismāʿīlī groups, who were persecuted together with the Ismāʿīlīs, were also displaced, and forced to travel to safer places in order to seek refuge. As a result, many migrants, including Ismāʿīlī *dāʿīs* and Ṣūfī *darvīshes*, sought refuge in places far from their homeland. Badakhshan and the area of the Upper Oxus became a welcoming haven for these migrants.

The period of concealment in the post-Alamūt period marks the amalgamation of Twelver Shīʿī and Ṣūfī teachings and practices with Ismāʿīlī beliefs in Iran and other Persian-

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[11] Iloliev, *The Ismāʿīlī-Ṣūfī Sage of Pamir,* Amherst, 2008, pp. 36-37 also his "Popular Culture and Religious Metaphor: Saints and Shrines in Wakhan Region of Tajikistan," in *CAS,* vol. 27, no. 1 (March 2008), pp. 59-73.

[12] Mukhtorov, "Otnoshenie Dukhovenstvo Mavarennahra k Utverjdeniiŭ Shiizma Ofitsial'noĭ Religieĭ Irana," in *IAN Tadzh SSR:* Seriiâ: *Vostokovedenie, Istoriiâ, Filologiiâ,* no. 4/24, (June 1991), pp. 60-66.

[13] Anonymous, *Maktūbāt,* Ms BL I.O. 1753, ff. 345b-346a. Also quoted in Welsford, *Four Type of Loyalty,* p. 175.

speaking regions.[14] The dissemination of Ṣūfī and Twelver Shīʿī teaching in the small mountain principalities – *mīrigarī*s and *shāhigarī*s – of Badakhshan is directly linked to the migration of both simple believers and religious dignitaries such as *dāʿī*s. This particular phenomenon, then, contributed towards a gradual assimilation of a new religious beliefs and practices into local Ismāʿīlī customs. These newly assimilated practices were logically combined in a single frame known as the *Dīn-i panjtanī* (Chapter 5, pp. 147-149).

6.2. Post-Alamūt Ismāʿīlī Missionaries in Badakhshan

The downfall of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī state in the second half of the thirteenth century (654/1256) was a tragic moment in the history of the community. Ismāʿīlī historians and chroniclers of that period refrained from writing down their history, since they had become a "persecuted minority," that "would have wished to avoid anything that could have drawn attention to its continued existence."[15] It was a period when the *daʿwa* went underground and kept missionary activities to a minimum. The local oral tradition from Badakhshan relates that, after the destruction of Alamūt, a great number of *dāʿī*s and *darvīshe*s found refuge in the Pamir regions. We learn from nineteenth-century sources, like the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* of Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī and the *Taʾrīkh-i Shāhān-i Shughnān* of Pīr Sayyid Farrukh Shāh, and a number of genealogy books, the *Nasab-nāma*s, of the local *mīr*s and *pīr*s that Sayyid Shāh Khāmūsh and Sayyid Shāh Malang migrated to Shughnān in modern Gorno-Badakhshan. The oral tradition also relates that, at some point between the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, two other saints, Shāh Qambar-i Āftāb and Shāh ʿIsām al-Dīn, settled in the region of Wakhān.[16] Undeniably a visit by the *dāʿī*s was more religiously motivated in nature, yet political reasons must also have played a significant role in their visits. In referring to the visit of these *dāʿī*s and *darvīshe*s, our attention is drawn to two important issues: first, where did these *dāʿī*s come from? Second, if they were *dāʿī*s, who commissioned them to visit the region? The oral tradition and the text of the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* indicate that these *dāʿī*s or religious figures, dressed as *darvīshe*s, arrived in the region from Iran. We may assume that they had been sent to Badakhshan and the neighbouring regions from the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* centres in Khurāsān.

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[14] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* pp. 301-463.

[15] Virani, *The Ismāʿīlīs in the Middle Ages,* p. 14.

[16] *Taʾrīkh-i mazāri Shāh Qambar-i Āftāb* (*History of the Tomb of Shāh Qambar-i Āftāb*), Ms. A, f. 2a. A careful examination of the extract from this manuscript and the oral stories about these historic figures reveals that the oral tradition provides the name of Shāh Qambar-i Āftāb and Shāh ʿIsām al-Dīn only. The manuscript, on the other hand, lists the names of 'five dignitaries (*panj tan az buzurgān*)' – who came to Badakhshan to call people to the "summons of truth." Moreover, the manuscript locates the arrival of these "five dignitaries" at some point during the Imamate of Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, which, so far, cannot be proved. See alo: Gornenskiĭ, *Legendy Pamira i Gindukusha,* Moscow, 2000, pp. 115-117.

This would indicate that there were open lines of communication between Ismāʿīlī communities in Iran, greater Khurāsān and Badakhshan and its northern mountain regions. The new migrants also needed to be integrated into the evolving life of their new places of settlement.

Oral narratives from both Tajik and Afghan Badakhshan, collected and partially published by the Tajik scholar Nisor Shakarmamadov (d. 2011), provide a valuable source for local Ismāʿīlī history. An important detail which comes to light through detailed examination and comparison of these oral narratives and the manuscript sources is the similar representation pattern of various stories. Although all of these stories refer to the arrival of new migrants, the oral narratives refer to them by such terms as *dāʿī*s, *darvīshe*s or *qalandar*s. It is important to mention that the term *dāʿī* is mainly used by the Ismāʿīlīs while the terms *darvīsh* and *qalandar* are of Ṣūfī provenance. The use of such terms raises a number of questions pertaining to the religious rather than the ideological identities of these *dāʿī*s, *darvīshe*s or simple migrants. These intricate issues make the religious beliefs and practices of the inhabitants of the region more complex. In order to understand post-Alamūt Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* activity in Badakhshan, these interrelated issues need to be addressed within a broader analytical framework. The cross-referencing and textual analysis of local sources and oral tradition is the key to contextualising certain events in the history of the Ismāʿīlī communities in Badakhshan.

One of the clues to unfolding these stories is found in the inconsistency of representation both in geographical and chronological terms. Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad and Fażlʿalībek Surkhafsar, in their *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*, relate that these *darvīshe*s arrived from Iṣfahān.[17] Qurbān Muḥammadzāda and Muḥabbat Shāhzāda in the early twentieth century *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*, recount that these four brothers, dressed as *darvīshe*s, arrived in the region from Kāshān.[18] Sayyid Ḥaydar Shāh (d. 1936), in his *Taʾrīkh-i Mulk-i Shughnān*, which was composed in the first half of the twentieth century, suggests that these [four] *darvīshe*s came to Badakhshan from Mashhad.[19] As a result, we have three different places of origin

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[17] Iṣfahān is a region in the south-east of Maḥallāt and Kāshān in modern Iran. Lambton, "Iṣfahān," in *EI2,* vol. 4 (1997), pp. 97-105.

[18] According to Qurbān Muḥammadzāda and Muḥabbatshāhzāda's hypothesis these four *darvīshe*s arrived in Badakhshan either from Kāshān or Iṣfahān. See: Qurbān Muḥammadzāda, and Muḥabbatshāhzāda *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* Moscow, 1973, pp. 87-88.

[19] Mashhad is a city of north-eastern Iran, the capital of the present province of Khurāsān. Since medieval times it has had one of the most important shrines of the Shīʿī communities, namely the burial place of the Eighth Twelver Imam ʿAlī al-Riżā. Streack, "Mashhad," in *EI2,* vol. 6 (1991), pp. 713-716; Mubārakshāhāda, Sayyid Ḥaydarsho, *Istoriía Shughnana,* Semenov, (Russian tr.), Tashkent, 1916; See also: Mubārakshāhzāda, Said Ḥaydarsho, *Taʾrīkh-i mulki Shughnon,* Jonboboev, and Mirkhoja, (Tajik ed. and tr.)., Khorugh: Pomir, 1992.

within the same story. It is highly likely that many details of the story, when passed from word of mouth to the written text, were either lost or unintentionally omitted. It may be that either the scribe or the narrator is combining two or probably three or even more different stories. We are left with a complex series of events, which raise more questions than answers.

As we have discussed above, Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities were under the control of semi-independent rulers using the titles *mīr* and *shāh.* There was a close relationship between Badakhshan, Mā warā al-nahr and Iran. We find references to *Khurāsān zamīn* (the land of Khurāsān in a broader context) in the local chronicles, the *Nasab-nāma*s or biographical dictionaries, and the anthology of local poets known as the *Bayāż.* All this might suggest that these four figures, dressed as *darvīshe*s, had been sent to Badakhshan from an Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* centre either in the vicinity of Alamūt or Khurāsān (including Balkh), or from Quhistān.[20] It is plausible to argue that expressions such as "dressed as *darvīshe*s" or "*qalandar*s," terms which are of Ṣūfī origin, are a reference to the practice of *taqiyya.* As has been seen, the practice of precautionary dissimulation was prevalent among the Ismāʿīlīs, particularly in the post-Alamūt period when the community was dispersed and the Imams went into hiding.

The geographical complexity presented in the local sources is a reference to either the localities where the Ismāʿīlīs resided or to the presence of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* in the area broadly designated as Iṣfahān, Khurāsān or Quhistān. We find from the *Taʾrīkh-i Sīstān* (History of Sīstān) that Khurāsān was not an independent centre of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* in the post-Alamūt period; rather, it was supervised from Quhistān.[21] Although the chronological framework is less clear than one would wish, the geographical disposition shows that, following the fall of Alamūt, these regions and those beyond still remained the locus of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* for a certain period of time. Under the severe political pressure and persecution, the location of the *daʿwa*, even if it was working underground, was changed from time to time.

The activity of the *daʿwa* in Badakhshan after the fall of Alamūt, particularly during the Mongol and Tīmūrid periods, is the most obscure phase in the history of Badakhshan and

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[20] Quhistān is a region in south-eastern part of modern Khurāsān. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* pp. 311, 356.

[21] Bahār, Muḥammad Taqī. (ed.)., *Taʾrīkh-i Sistān,* Tehran: Khāwar, 1314, pp. 386-391. *Taʾrīkh-i Sistān*, as we know from the introduction written by Muḥammad Taqī Bahār, was finalised in 725/1324, 68 years after the fall of Alamūt. This indicates that the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa*, despite losing its political power, remained active in the vicinity of Alamūt, in the areas of Iṣfahān and Khurāsān and even beyond.

its Ismāʿīlī communities. Nonetheless, the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* of Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad and Fażlʿalībek Surkhafsar suggests that the religious and political life in the northern mountain regions was under the control of the local *mīr*s and *shāh*s from the progeny of Shāh Khāmūsh and other *darvīshe*s. The treatise provides a genealogical table of the ruling elite, which states:

دیگر پوشیده مباد که میران شغنان و سیدان (و) اشرافان ملک کوهستان هر یک بطرزی سلسله انساب خود را از

آبا و اجداد خود(ها) تا بالآن بتواتر نسب نامه گویان بدفتر قید و ضبط نموده اند . . . و از آنها چند نفری اولاد

مانده اند و هر کدام شیوهٔ اجداد پدران را بجا آورده در بین خلایق خواه بطریق حکومت و ریاست و یا بطریق

شیخیت پیشوای کرده . . .

> Now, know ye that the rulers [viz. *mīr*s] of Shughnān and noble *sayyid*s of the mountain country, each in their [own] way, compiled books that provide uninterrupted "genealogical trees of their ancestry" (*Nasab-nāma*), from their forefathers up until their respective time... Some of them left progeny behind who have respectively continued the work of their forefathers to become either rulers and chiefs or religious leaders of their tribes.[22]

This short passage provides some valuable clues to unravelling the mystery. It emerges that the ruling elite, particularly the *mīr*s and *shāh*s, upon their arrival in Badakhshan and the regions of the Upper Oxus, became domiciled and later took charge of religious affairs in the mountain localities.

We have seen earlier that the founder of the dynasties of the local *mīr*s and *shāh*s, namely Shāh Khāmūsh, arrived in Badakhshan from Iṣfahān. If we are to believe this story, the local *daʿwa* in Badakhshan was active under the guidance of Shāh Khāmūsh. Upon his demise, the activity of the *daʿwa* was maintained by his descendants. Likewise, the descendants of other *qalandar*s and *darvīshe*s also became involved in the religious life of these localities which will be discussed in more detail in chapter 7 (pp. 194-213).

A careful examination of the local sources reveals that the events narrated in these local chronicles lack any chronological timeframe. Equally, it appears that the information provided is fragmented, leaving a lacuna in our understanding. What we know for certain is that there was a close connection between the Ismāʿīlīs in Iran and their co-religionists in greater Khurāsān, Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities in the post-Alamūt period.

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[22] Badakhshī, and Surkhafsar, *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* ff. 118a-b, (Russian tr.), pp. 100-101.

The Ismāʿīlīs in post-Alamūt Iran also faced a new schism resulting in the emergence of two new branches. These will be discussed in the next section.

6.3. A New Schism in the post-Alamūt Period

The fall of Alamūt in Iran initiated "the longest obscure phase in the entire history of Ismāʿīlīs."[23] More than two centuries after the Nizārī-Mustaʿlī split in the Faṭimid realm, the Ismāʿīlīs of Iran faced a new schism, which resulted in the Qāsim-Shāhī – Muḥammad-Shāhī (or Muʾminī) division.[24] It was after the death of the twenty-eighth Ismāʿīlī Imam, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, who died in Āẕarbayjān in 710/1310, that "an obscure dispute over his succession"[25] arose within his family. In 1938, Ivanow brought this obscure schism to the attention of scholars.[26] His discussion is based on a short treatise entitled *Irshād al-ṭālibīn fī ẕikr aʾimmat al-Ismāʿīliyīn* (Guidance for Seekers on the Recollection of Ismāʿīlī Imams). He found this treatise in a manuscript he obtained from Badakhshan, which was transcribed in 929/1523. Analysing the content of this work Ivanow recounts:

> The treatise chiefly deals with the tradition concerning the Imamate according to the Ismāʿīlī theory, and the duties of the faithful followers towards them. Works of this kind are not uncommon; but an extraordinary feature of this opuscule is the most interesting reference to a split in the house of the Nizārī Imams.[27]

Modern scholars concede that the schism is an obscure one as no reference to it is given in early Qāsim-Shāhī sources. Muḥammad-Shāhī (or Muʾminī) sources, particularly from Syria, South Asia and Badakhshan, provide more details about this split rather than about the actual dispute. What is evidently missing from the Muḥammad-Shāhī sources, which I will refer to below, is the *naṣṣ* – the divine appointment. If the *naṣṣ* remained the prerogative of the Qāsim-Shāhī line of the Imamate the schism would have taken on rather political underpinnings, which are neither mentioned in Qāsim-Shāhī nor the Muḥammad-Shāhī sources.

According to the oral tradition of the Muḥammad-Shāhīs of Syria, shown in the table below (Figure 18), the split occurred after the death of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad (son of Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh d. 655/1257), who is considered the twenty-eighth Imam of the Qāsim-Shāhīs and the twenty-fifth Imam of the Muḥammad-Shāhīs. The Syrian

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[23] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 403.

[24] The Syrian Ismāʿīlīs use terms like al-Muʾminiyya and al-Qāsimiyya to refer to this split. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 414.

[25] Daftary, "Shāh Ṭāhir and the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Disguises," in Lawson, (ed.)., *Reason and Inspiration,* p. 397 and his *The Ismāʿīlīs,* pp. 413- 414.

[26] Ivanow, "A Forgotten Branch of the Ismailis," in *JRAS,* 1938, pp. 57-79.

[27] Ibid. p. 64.

Muḥammad-Shāhīs are of the opinion that Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad had three sons: ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muʾmin Shāh, Qāsim Shāh and Kiyā Shāh. The dispute arose between ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn, the elder son of Shams al-Din, and his younger brother – Qāsim Shāh, who, according to the Syrian oral tradition, is considered the *ḥujja* of ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muʾmin Shāh.[28]

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              ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
              │   Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 710/1310)    │
              └─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                  │
         ┌────────────────────────┼──────────────────────────┐
   ┌───────────────┐      ┌───────────────┐                  │
   │  al-Muʾminiyya │      │  al-Qāsimiyya │                  │
   └───────────────┘      └───────────────┘                  │
   ┌───────────────┐   ┌───────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐
   │ ʿAlā al-Dīn   │   │  Qāsim Shāh       │   │   Kiyā Shāh      │
   │ Muʾmin Shāh   │   │  (d. 771/1369)    │   │  (14th century) │
   │ (14th century)│   └───────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘
   └───────────────┘
                   │    Considered to be the Ḥujjat of
                   │    ʿAlā al-Dīn Muʾmin Shāh
   ┌───────────────────────────┐
   │   Muḥammad Shāh           │
   │ (second half of the 14th century) │
   └───────────────────────────┘
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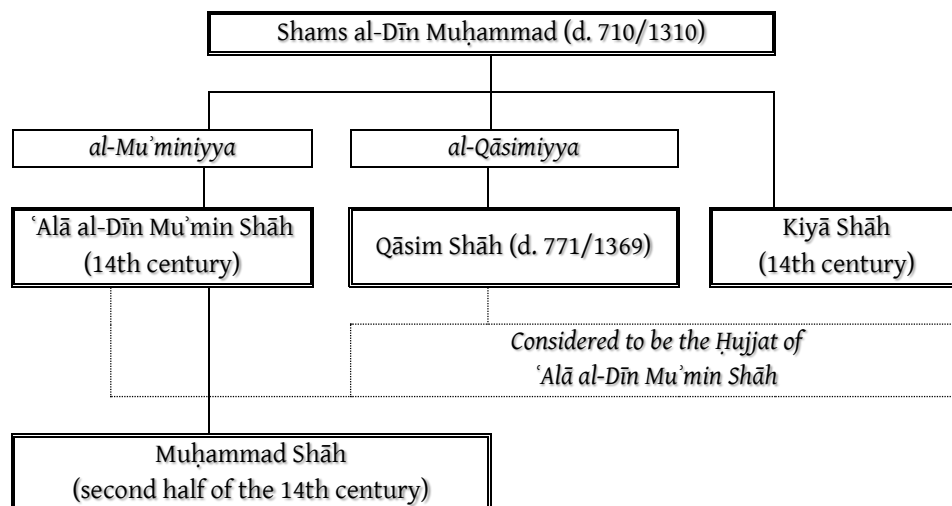
Figure 18: Muḥammad-Shāhī - Qāsim-Shāhī schism after the death of Imam Shams al-Dīn

A different narrative of this schism is presented in the *Irshād al-ṭālibīn fī ẕikr aʾimmat al-Ismāʿīliyīn.* This work was produced in Badakhshan in the first half of the sixteenth century. Ivanow ascribed it to Muḥibb ʿAlī Qunduzī. However, it is possible that this work was produced by Ghiyāth al-Dīn ʿAlī Amīrān Iṣfahānī (Section 6.4.1, pp. 167-169).[29] A similar narrative, according to Daftary, is presented in the *Lamaʿāt al-ṭāhirīn,* a South Asian Muḥammad-Shāhī source, composed in 1110/1698-99, by a certain Ghulām ʿAlī b. Muḥammad. According to these sources the schism occurred after the death of Muʾmin Shāh rather than of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad. The sources from Badakhshan and South Asia present Muʾmin Shāh as the son of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad. Furthermore, we learn from these sources that Muḥammad Shāh and Qāsim Shāh, grandsons of Shams al-Dīn

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[28] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 414.

[29] Ivanow, "Forgotten branch," pp. 64-65 see also his *Ismāʿīlī Literature,* p. 165; Poonawala, *Bibliography,* pp. 270-71; Bertel's, and Baqoev, *Alfavitnyĭ Katalog,* p. 19 (Ms. 3. Accession no. 1963/12e). Discussing the authorship of *Irshād al-ṭālibīn,* Virani says:

> We can be fairly certain, however, that the true author of the treatise was not Muḥibb ʿAlī Qundūzī. In listing the Imams of the Muḥammad-Shāhī line, the author ends with the Imam of his time, Rażī al-Dīn b. ʿIzz al-Dīn Ṭahirshāh. Ivanow based his hypothesis concerning the authorship on the assumption that this figure was still alive in 929/1523 when the manuscript was transcribed. It has since been determined, however, that Rażī al-Dīn died in 915/1509. Had Muḥibb ʿAlī been the true author, it would have been highly unusual for him not to have included in his list Rażī al-Dīn's successor, Shāh Ṭāhir Dakkanī, the most famous son of this line. It is thus unlikely that Qundūzī wrote this treatise, and therefore the author of the 'Guidance for Seekers' remains anonymous'. Virani, *The Ismāʿīlīs in the Middle Ages*, p. 77.

Muḥammad, were brothers who contested the office of the Imamate after the death of their father, Muʾmin Shāh.[30]

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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│      Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad       │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│           Muʾmin Shāh            │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 │
        ┌────────┴────────┐
┌─────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────┐
│  Muḥammad Shāh  │  │   Qāsim Shāh    │
└─────────────────┘  └─────────────────┘
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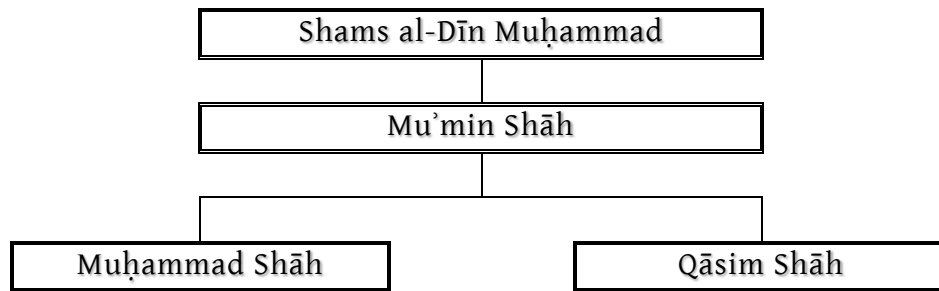
Figure 19: Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad's heir-designate

The earliest Qāsim-Shāhī sources, such as Abū Isḥāq's *Haft bāb* (Seven Chapters) and *Kalām-i pīr* (Sages Discourse; tenth century/sixteenth century), wrongly called *Haft bāb-i Shāh Sayyid Nāṣir*, surprisingly, support the above hypothesis. These Qāsim-Shāhī sources also concede that the split occurred not after the death of Shams al-Dīn but after that of his son Muʾmin Shāh sometime in the mid-fourteenth century.[31] The question becomes more complex due to the absence of Muʾmin Shāh's name in the Qāsim-Shāhīs *shajara* (lit. genealogical table). The schism remains an unsolved puzzle, which awaits further research.

The schism also appears to have brought a degree of disorganisation to the community on a larger scale and was discussed among Qāsim-Shāhī and Muḥammad-Shāhī authors as far as Badakhshan, Syria and South Asia. Although the schism occurred in the fourteenth century in Iran, the new splinter groups attempted to legitimise the claims of the Imams from their respective lines on theoretical grounds continuously until the end of the seventeenth century. Despite the fact that this schism divided the community, the Badakhshanis, as I shall demonstrate, maintained relationships with both lines in Iran, which is clearly seen in the transference and preservation of Ismāʿīlī sources, on the one hand, and in the coming of missionaries and poets to the region, on the other. This trend is more explicitly shown in the arrival of *dāʿīs* and learned figures, like Ghiyāth al-Dīn ʿAlī Amīrān Sayyid al-Ḥusayn al-Iṣfahānī and through the impact of the Persian language on the work of Sayyid Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī and others. As I hope to demonstrate, the above-named figures represented the Qāsim-Shāhī and Muḥammad-Shāhī lines

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[30] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, p. 414.

[31] Ibid. p. 414; Abū Isḥāq, *Haft bāb*, p. 24; Khayrkhwāh, *Kalām-i pīr*, p. 51. See also an undated manuscript Ms 179 - *Shajarah al-Ismaʿīliyah*, f. 3, in the collection of the IIS, London.

respectively. This implies that both of these lines were actively engaged in the religious life in Badakhshan until the Muḥammad-Shāhīs merged with the Qāsim-Shāhīs.

6.4. Muḥammad-Shāhī Ismāʿīlīs in Badakhshan

The post-Alamūt schism discussed above remains a big mystery in Ismāʿīlī history. It must be emphasised that there is no information available on the doctrines and practices of the Muḥammad-Shāhīs. What is known from fragmentary sources is that the Muḥammad-Shāhīs propagated their doctrine under the guise of Twelver Shīʿism. The question that arises from the logical point of view is when and how the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams succeeded in spreading their teaching in Badakhshan. As we know from the previous chapter the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan followed the Faṭimid teaching through the writings of Nāṣir-i Khusraw. Although there were sporadic connections with the Ismāʿīlīs of Iran, they still followed the *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir.* In order to understand the influence of Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārīs in Badakhshan, it will be useful to discuss briefly the biographies of the early Muḥammad-Shāhīs Imams.

Daftary, F. *The Ismāʿīlīs*	Muʿizzī, M. *Ismāʿīlīyān-i Īrān*
Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. ca. 710/1310)	
ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muʾmin Shāh (n/a)	Muḥammad b. Muʾmin Shāh (729-807/1328-1404)
Muḥammad Shāh b. Muʾmin Shāh (d. 838/1434)	Rażī al-Dīn Muḥammad (787-838/1385-1434)
Rażī al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh (d. 868/1463-1464)	Ṭāhir b. Rażī al-Dīn (821-868/1418-1463)
Rażī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir (d. 915/1509)	Rażī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir (858-916/1453-1510)
Shāh Ṭāhir b. Rażī al-Dīn II al-Ḥusaynī Dakkanī (d. ca. 956/1549)	Ṭāhir Shāh b. Rażī al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī [Dakkanī] (878-956/1473-1549)

Figure 20: Modern studies on Muḥammad-Shāhī genealogy

The first of these was Muḥammad b. Muʾmin who was born in Shīrāz in 729/1328. He lived for 76 years, died in 807/1404 and was buried in Sulṭāniyya, which lies south-west of

Qazvīn.[32] Muʿizzī implies that after the schism Muʾmin Shāh migrated from Tabrīz to Shīrāz and then to Sulṭāniyya. The reason for this migration is not provided in any sources. According to Daftary, Muʾmin Shāh had a son Muḥammad Shāh who succeeded his father. Muʿizzī, on the other hand, omits his name and gives the name of Muʾmin Shāh's successor as Rażī al-Dīn Muḥammad, who was born in 787/1385 in Sulṭāniyya. Rażī al-Dīn Muḥammad, according to Muʿizzī, migrated to Syria where he passed away in 837/1434.[33] This marks the spread of Muʾmin-Shāhī Ismāʿīlism into Syria. After his death he was succeeded by Ṭāhir b. Rażī al-Dīn, who was born in 821/1418 in Shīrāz. Muʿizzī relates that he returned from Syria to Shīrāz where he died in 868/1463. There exist no records in either primary or secondary sources of these Imams having had any relationship with Badakhshan. This would indicate that in the early fifteenth century Badakhshan followed the Qāsim-Shāhī lines of the Imamate, a hypothesis which will be discussed below (Section 6.5, pp. 172-184).

Ṭāhir b. Rażī al-Dīn was succeeded by Rażī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir, who, according to Muʿizzī, was born in Sulṭāniyya in 858/1453. The Imamate of Rażī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir, coincides with the advance of the last Tīmūrids into Badakhshan. They had been ousted from Mā warā al-nahr, their '*Parental land*', by the Shaybānids who took Mā warā al-nahr under their control at the turn of the ninth/fifteenth century. It must be emphasised that Rażī al-Dīn is the only high ranking dignitary in the Ismāʿīlī hierarchy who not only lived in Badakhshan but was the active ruler of the region, from 912/1506 to 915/1509-10.[34] It is highly likely that this Muḥammad-Shāhī Imam used religion as a tool to consolidate the local population against both the encroachment of the Uzbeks from Central Asia and the last Tīmūrids descended from the progeny of Abū Saʿīd, and thus relatives of Bābur *pādshāh* (Chapter 3, pp. 67-77). Because the political situation in the region was unsafe for the conducting of religious activities, it is likely that Imam Rażī al-Dīn and his close associates refrained from producing any doctrinal work in support of the Muḥammad-Shāhī line. Rażī al-Dīn was succeeded by his son Ṭāhir Shāh (or Shāh Ṭāhir), whom I shall discuss briefly below in section 6.4.2.[35] (pp. 169-172)

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[32] Muʿizzī, *Ismāʿīlīyān-i Īrān,* Unpublished MA Thesis, Mashhad, 1992, pp. 89-90.

[33] Muʿizzī, *Ismāʿīlīyān-i Īrān,* p. 90; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 510.

[34] Ibid. pp. 91-92; Daftary, "Shāh Ṭāhir and the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Disguises," pp. 401-403.

[35] I will discuss Shāh Ṭāhir's brief biography in section 6.4.2. Prior to this I will discuss briefly the biography of Ghiyāth al-Dīn ʿAlī-i Iṣfahānī, who arrived in Badakhshan in the second half of the fifteenth century, long before the arrival of Rażī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir, the thirtieth Muḥammad-Shāhī Imam according to Daftary's list. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 510.

Although the arrival of Rażī al-Dīn II was the main impetus for the spread of Muḥammad-Shāhī teaching in Badakhshan, it was not the first exposure of the Badakhshani communities to Muḥammad-Shāhī Ismāʿīlism. The Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams had sent their *dāʿīs* to Badakhshan to convert the followers of the *Da'wat-i Nāṣir* – then paying lipservice to the Qāsim-Shāhī line of Imams – to the Muḥammad-Shāhī fold. This is clearly attested by the arrival in Badakhshan of a certain Ghiyāth al-Dīn ʿAlī-i Iṣfahānī, whom I discuss briefly below in section 6.4.1. (pp. 167-169)

It needs to be mentioned that the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams had a large number of followers in Syria, Iran, Transoxiana, Badakhshan and India. Their presence and prominence in India is directly related to the activity of Shāh Ṭāhir Dakkanī (d. ca. 956/1549) and his successors.[36] It seems safe to assume that, at some point in the eighth/sixteenth century, the followers of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams in Badakhshan started to change their allegiance to the Qāsim-Shāhī line of the Imamate. Therefore, the case of Badakhshan can be taken as an example for this transformation and I shall discuss this in detail in sections 6.5 and 6.6 below (pp. 172-192).

6.4.1. Ghiyāth al-Dīn ʿAlī Amīrān Sayyid al-Ḥusaynī al-Iṣfahānī

Ghiyāth al-Dīn Iṣfahānī is a contemporary of Sayyid Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī, who presumably arrived in Badakhshan during the reign of Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad (d. 869/1466), the last ruler of Badakhshan who was sympathetic to or a crypto-Ismāʿīlī. His arrival in Badakhshan would thus coincide with the reign of Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd b. Sulṭān Muḥammad b. Mīrān Shāh, a Tīmūrid ruler (854-873/1451-1469). No precise information is available about his childhood and early education. Similarly, we do not possess any precise or even approximate date for his arrival in Badakhshan.

Ghiyāth al-Dīn, as is evident from his *nisba*, was originally from Iṣfahān, a region in central Iran. It seems plausible to argue that at some point in the tenth/fifteenth century, he either visited or migrated to Badakhshan. We might also speculate that he was sent to the region by the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Imam. However, it is unknown whether he represented the Muḥammad-Shāhī or Qāsim-Shāhī line of the Imamate. As far as can be determined, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Iṣfahānī's visit to Badakhshan must have been motivated not only by his religious affiliation with the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs but also by a political purpose. Such fragmentary information as we possess indicates that, upon his arrival in the region,

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[36] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 414.

Ghiyāth al-Dīn Iṣfahānī lived at the court of the local ruler who was either a Shīʿa/Ismāʿīlī or sympathetic towards the Shīʿīs/Ismāʿīlīs. Hence, we might assume that he had been sent to Badakhshan from the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* centre in Iran. Therefore, we might safely argue that Ghiyāth al-Dīn had been commissioned to propagate the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī doctrine in Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities. In discussing the religious milieu in Badakhshan in the fifteenth century Umed Shohzodamuhammad comes to the conclusion that Ghiyāth al-Dīn was sent to the mountain regions at some point before the mid-fifteenth century.[37] This approximate indication has been retrieved from his own works, particularly his short treatise on astrology – *Nujūm* – which was published in 1995 in Khorūgh.[38] Supporting evidence for this argument can be adduced from the same treatise, in which Ghiyāth al-Dīn informs us that this work was written at the people's request sometime in 866/1461-62, which is considered to be the date for the composition of this work.[39]

According to Bertel's and Baqoev, Ghiyāth al-Dīn was a man of learning. He was a prolific writer and composed several treatises on different subjects. Among other works, he is considered to be the author of hitherto unstudied *Dānishnāma-i jahān* (Encyclopaedia of the World), which was composed in 879/1474. Two copies of this work are preserved in the library of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine in London. It is evident both from the *Dānishnāma-i jahān* and the *Fālgirī* (Fortune Telling), also known as *Asrār al-ḥurūf* (Mystery of Letters), that Ghiyāth al-Dīn Iṣfahānī was well-versed in the study of both *Qurʾān* and *Ḥadīth.* In addition to *Fālgirī* or *Asrār al-ḥurūf*, preserved in the collection of the Saltykov-Shedrin library in St. Petersburg, the manuscript contains an interesting work on the recitation and reading of the *Qurʾān*, entitled *A Short Treatise on Rules of Reading the Qurʾān.*[40]

Ghiyāth al-Dīn's literary and missionary activity coincides with the Imamate of Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī Imam Muḥammad b. Islāmshāh (d. ca. 868/1463). We may infer that Ghiyāth al-Dīn was sent to Badakhshan as part of Ismāʿīlī missionary activity. Umed Shohzodamuhammad tentatively proposes that Ghiyāth al-Dīn was sent to the mountain

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[37] Shohzodamuhammad, "Manba'i Purarzish Roje' ba Barrasii Avzo'i Mazhabii Badakhshon dar Qarni XV," in *Vestnik Khorogskogo Universiteta,* vol. 2, no. 2000, pp. 121-126; Ghiyāth al-Dīn ʿAlī-i Iṣfahānī, *Nujūm,* Shohzodamuhammad, (ed.)., Khorog, 1995, p. 15.

[38] Khorūgh (Russian – Khorog) is the capital of Gorno-Badakhshan Autonmous Oblast' of modern Tajikistan.

[39] Ghiyāth al-Dīn ʿAlī-ī Iṣfahānī, *Nujūm,* Khorog, 1995, p. 15; Bertel's and Bakoev, *Alfavitniĭ Katalog Rukopiseĭ Obnaruzhennykh v Gorno-Badakhshanskoĭ Avtonomnoĭ Oblasti Ekspidiŧsieĭ 1959-1963 gg.,* Moscow, 1967, pp. 69-70.

[40] Kastygova, *Persidskie i Tadzhikskie Rukopisi "Novoĭ Serii" Gosudarstvennoĭ Publichnoĭ Biblioteki imeni M.E. Sal'tykova-Shedrina,* Leningrad, 1988-89, p. 160; See also: Keshavarz, *A Descriptive and Analytical Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the Library of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine*, London, 1986, pp. 386-387; Ivanow, "The Date of the *Dānish-nāma-i jahān,*" in *JRASGBI,* no. 1 (January 1927), pp. 95-96.

regions on the instruction of Imam Muḥammad b. Islāmshāh.[41] This seems unconvincing, as Ghiyāth al-Dīn Iṣfahānī may have written a treatise called *Irshād al-ṭālibīn fī ẕikr aʾimmat al-Ismāʿīliyīn*, which is thematically closer to the Muḥammad-Shāhī rather than Qāsim-Shāhī line of the Imamate. The Muḥammad-Shāhī leaning of the text can be adduced from the content of this treatise.

Historians as well as modern scholars of Ismāʿīlī history in Badakhshan, with the exception of Bertel's and Baqoev, fail to provide any information about Ghiyāth al-Dīn Iṣfahānī and his missionary activities. A striking feature of his literary work and his missionary activity in Badakhshan is that neither Ghiyāth al-Dīn nor Sayyid Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī mentions the other. In referring to this significant point, our attention is drawn again to the geographical disposition of Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities. As a result we may tentatively conclude that Ghiyāth al-Dīn Iṣfahānī visited the southern parts of Badakhshan, while Sayyid Suhrāb Valī may have been residing in the mountain principalities of the Pamirs – such as Shughnān or Wakhān.

There is, however, a point of convergence in modern studies pertaining to these two figures, which is directly linked to the issue of the authorship of the *Ṭuḥfat al-nāẓirīn* or *Ṣaḥīfat al-nāẓirīn*. Despite this, the life and work of these important Ismāʿīlī figures of the ninth/fifteenth century still awaits a critical study.[42]

6.4.2. Shāh Ṭāhir Dakkanī

After the execution of Imam Raẓī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir (Chapter 3, pp. 67-75) his son Shāh Ṭāhir b. Raẓī al-Dīn II al-Ḥusaynī, also known as Shāh Ṭāhir Dakkanī, succeeded him. Shāh Ṭāhir, "the most famous son of this line,"[43] was born in Khūnd, in a village in the province of Qazvīn.[44] Muʿizzī provides his date of birth as 878/1473.[45] We find a relatively detailed account of Shāh Ṭāhir's life in Muḥammad Qāsim Hindū Shāh Astarābādī's *Gulshan-i*

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[41] Shohzodamuhammad, "Manba'i purarzish," pp. 121-126.

[42] To attempt a complete analysis of the authorship of this treatise within the scope of this thesis would be contrary to the very intention of the work. Thus, this discussion will be left for a separate study. However, Shohzodamuhammad and Shokhumorov argue that the *Tuḥfat al-nāẓirīn*, which is also known as *Sī va shish ṣaḥīfa* or *Ṣaḥīfat al-nāẓirīn*, was composed by Ghiyāth al-Dīn Iṣfahānī, rather than by Sayyid Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī. The same hypothesis is also proposed by Bertel's and Baqoev. Shohzodamuhammad, "Manba'i purarzish," pp. 121-126. Shokhumorov, *Razdelenie Badakhshana i Sud'by Ismailizma,* Moscow-Dushanbe, 2008, pp. 26-27; Bertel's, and Baqoev, *Alfavitnyĭ Katalog,* Moscow, 1967, p. 69 (Ms. no. 156, Accession no: 1959/8a).

[43] Virani, *The Ismāʿīlīs in the Middle Ages,* p. 77.

[44] ʿAbd al-Razzāq, Ṣamṣām al-Dawla Shāhnavāz Khān, *Bahāristān-i Sukhan*, Bukharī, (ed.)., Madras, 1958, pp. 403-406; Poonawala, *Bibliography of Ismāʿīlī Literature,* Malibu, 1977, p. 271 also his "Shāh Ṭāhir," in *EI2,* vol. 9 (1997), pp. 200-201.

[45] Muʿizzī, *Ismāʿīlīyān-i Īrān,* pp. 92-96 and 147.

Ibrāhīmī better known as *Taʾrīkh-i Firishta,* which was completed in 1015/1606-07.[46] Although, the *Taʾrīkh-i Firishta* gives a detailed account of Shāh Ṭāhir's life and activities, the process of selecting him as the heir-designate is absent in his narrative. A striking feature present in all the sources on Shāh Ṭāhir furnishes an interesting dimension to this figure in respect of his religious activity. He was proclaimed a *persona non grata* at the Safavid court by Shāh Ismāʿīl (r. 907-930/1502-1524). As a result he left the court and migrated to Kāshān, where "he was granted a permission to teach in religious seminary."[47] In 926/1520 the Safavid ruler issued a second decree, this time for Shāh Ṭāhir's execution, as a result of his both teaching and preaching of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārī doctrine while also being in the service of the Safavid monarch. Likewise, he was also actively preaching this doctrine in Kāshān,[48] which was against the religious policy of the Safavid domain. This time, however, he left Persia and settled in India,[49] first in Goa and then in Aḥmadnagar.[50] Paradoxically, Shāh Ṭāhir started propagating the Twelver Shīʿī doctrine when he was in the service of Burhān al-Dīn Niẓām Shāh (914-961/1508-1554) in Aḥmadnagar. According to Daftary "Shāh Ṭāhir propagated his form of Nizārī (Muḥammad-Shāhī) Ismāʿīlism in the guise of Twelver Shīʿism, which was more suitable for the Muslim rulers of India."[51]

It is important to note that the Islamisation of the Deccan dates back to 695/1296 when Sulṭān ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Khiljī invaded it from Delhi. This was followed by a number of military expeditions to the region.[52] The foundation of the Bahmanid dynasty in 748/1347 by ʿAlāʾ-al-Dīn Ḥasan Bahman Shāh marks the establishment of the first Muslim kingdom in southern India. It is important to mention that the Bahmanids traced their lineage to the Iranian King, Bahman b. Isfandiyār. Khalidi mentions that a number of high dignitaries at the Bahmanid court were either Shīʿī or had strong Shīʿī proclivities, thus facilitating the

[46] Firishta, *Taʾrīkh-i Firishta,* Briggs (ed.)., Bombay, 1832, vol. II, pp. 213-231; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* pp. 452-455 and notes 128 to 131, pp. 656-657.

[47] ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Bahāristān-i Sukhan,* pp. 403-405; Daftary, "Shāh Ṭāhir and the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs Disguises," pp. 401-403.

[48] Kāshān, is a region north of modern Iṣfahān and south of Tehran.

[49] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* pp. 452; Hosain, "Shāh Ṭāhir of the Deccan," in Katre, and Gode, (eds.)., *A Volume of Indian and Iranian Studies: Presented to Sir E. Denison Ross on his 68th Birthday 6th June 1939,* Bombay, 1939, pp. 147-160; Kazimi, "Shāh Ṭāhir-ul-Ḥusaynī," in *Indo-Iranica,* vol. 8, no. 2 (June 1965), pp. 41-44; Basu, "A Chapter on the Reign of ʿAlī Ādil Shāh of Bijapur," Ibid. pp. 1-13. For more recent study on Deccan and Shāh Ṭāhir, see: Roy, *Society, Space, and the State in the Deccan Sultanates, 1565-1636,* Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Chicago University, 2012.

[50] Goa is a region in the south-west of modern India. Aḥmadnagar is the capital of a district that bears the same name, which is in the state of Maharashtra. Aḥmadnagar was built by Aḥmad Niẓām Shāh, the founder of the Niẓām Shāhī dynasty in 899/1494. For more details, see: Roy, *Society, Space and State,* 2012, pp. 38-121 and pp. 179-226.

[51] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 454

[52] Khalidi, "The Shiʿites of the Deccan: An Introduction," in *RDSO,* vol. 54 (1991), pp. 5-8.

diffusion of Shīʿī teaching in the Deccan.[53] In 907/1502 Yūsuf ʿĀdil Shāh (r. 894-916/1489-1510), who had close links to Shāh Ismāʿīl, proclaimed Shīʿism the state religion in Bijapur.[54] In 934/1528, the Bahmanid dynasty, which ruled the region for more than 160 years, split into five Muslim kingdoms: the ʿImādshāhīs of Birār, the Niẓāmshāhīs of Aḥmadnagar, the Barīdshāhīs of Bidar, the ʿĀdilshāhīs of Bijapur, and the Quṭbshāhīs of Golconda (Hyderabad).[55] The last two of these dynasties, namely the ʿĀdilshāhīs and Quṭbshāhīṣ, came under the Shīʿī rulers. The ground for the spread of Shāh Ṭāhir's so-called Ismāʿīlī teaching in the guise of Twelver Shīʿism was prepared much earlier. While the ʿĀdilshāhī and Quṭbshāhī dynasties were already ruled by a Shīʿī, Shāh Ṭāhir also successfully converted the ruler of the Niẓāmshāhis of Aḥmadnagar. It is likely that Shāh Ṭāhir expressed his Muḥammad-Shāhī ideas in a Ṣūfī form and we may note that the authorship of an Ismāʿīlī commentary on the *Gulshan-i rāz* (The Rose-Garden of Mystery) of a famous Ṣūfī mystic Maḥmūd Shabistarī is attributed to him.[56]

The whole story about Shāh Ṭāhir Dakkanī both in Muḥammad-Shāhī as well as Qāsim-Shāhī sources does not even provide a slight clue as to whether he had direct or indirect links with his followers in Badakhshan. Local sources such as the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* of Guharrez valadi Khwāja ʿAbd al-Nabī valadi Khwāja Ṣāliḥ-i Yumgī refer to the remnants of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārī belief, which most probably spread to the region prior to the arrival or even after the death of Imam Raẓī al-Dīn b. Ṭāhir, a matter which invites further study.

Another issue we are left with at this particular stage is the question of whether it was the practice of *taqiyya* that caused Shāh Ṭāhir so strictly to disguise his Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārī association and to express his ideas in a Twelver Shīʿī or a Ṣūfī form or whether it was, on the other hand, that he already adhered either to Imamī Shīʿism or was affiliated with some other Ṣūfī *ṭarīqa*s. A strict practice of *taqiyya* can lead to a diversion from ancestral faith as Virani states:

> The hazards constantly facing the stateless community forced it to make *taqiyya* not just an expedient to be used on occasion, but a way of life. While this held the advantage of deflecting unwanted attention, it also harboured its own risks. Dissimulation through

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[53] Khalidi, "The Shiʿites of the Deccan: An Introduction," in *RDSO,* vol. 54 (1991), pp. 5; Ansari, "Bahmanid Dynasty," in *EIr,* vol. 3 (1989), pp. 494-499.

[54] Ibid. p. 6.

[55] Ansari, "Bahmanid Dynasty," pp. 494-499.

[56] Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity: The Ṣūfī Poetry and Teaching of Maḥmud Shabistarī,* Richmond, 1995. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 453. Bertel's and Baqoev found some copies of the *Gulshan-i rāz* (The Rose Garden of Mystery) in Badakhshan during their expedition in 1959-63. See: Bertel's, and Baqoev, *Alfavitnyĭ Katalog,* p. 83 (Ms. no. 196. Accession no. 1959/27a).

generations was liable to obscure the identity of sections of the community, which would gradually forget their ancestral heritage. Over time, these segments would drift, eventually adopting the identity that had once been nothing more than a cover.[57]

The essential theme of Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārī discourse is, of course, very appealing. However, in the next section we will show that the Ismāʿīlī community in Badakhshan and adjacent areas partially adhered both to the Muḥammad-Shāhī and the Qāsim-Shāhī lines. The strong attachment to the *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir*, the backbone of the Ismāʿīlī tradition in Badakhshan, did not allow the community to be cast adrift and this was expressed in local rituals and practices.

6.5. Qāsim-Shāhī Ismāʿīlīs in Badakhshan

In the previous section we talked about the Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārī, but the question of whether the Nizārīs of Badakhshan unanimously accepted their teaching or opposed it was not clarified. In order to understand this event properly from the Qāsim-Shāhī perspective we will explore sources from Badakhshan as well as those produced in Iran from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries. To do this we shall need to revisit some events discussed in the previous section but with additional details.

The Qāsim-Shāhī Ismāʿīlīs are of the opinion that Qāsim Shāh, the eponymous founder of the Qāsim-Shāhī line of Imams, succeeded his father, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, as the rightful Imam in 710/1310. The schism remains obscure on account of the divergent presentations in Qāsim-Shāhī and Muḥammad-Shāhī sources. The former are also of the opinion that Qāsim Shāh was poisoned sometime in 770/1368. This event is clearly expounded in a *Qaṣīda* emitted by the *dāʿī* Anjudānī (composed possibly in the first half of the sixteenth century).[58] The death of Qāsim Shāh was probably the reason for the split as the members of his family would seem to have been involved in this vicious act. A reference to this mysterious murder is also found in another fifteenth-century Qāsim-Shāhī source, the *Haft nukta* (Seven Aphorisms or Seven Points) which expounds the reason for the division of the family of the Imam. It also refers to the involvement of a member(s) of the Imam's family in the murder of Qāsim Shāh, when it states:

> This is what happened in the time of the lord of the age and caliph of the Merciful, ʿAlāʾ al-Ḥaqq va-al-Dunya va-al-Dīn, Khudawand Qāsimshāh the first, on whose mention be

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[57] Virani, *The Ismāʿīlīs of the Middle Ages,* p. 48.

[58] Dāʿī Anjudānī, *Qaṣida-i Ẕurrīya,* Per. Ms. 15030, f. 6, (IIS, London). Muʿizzī, *Ismāʿīlīyān-i Īrān,* pp. 167-168, n. 76 and her *Taʾrīkh-i Ismāʿīliyya-i Badakhshān,* p. 242; Virani, *Ismāʿīlīs in the Middle Ages,* pp. 86-87. An untitled *Mathnawī* was given to me by Dr. Faquir Hunzai where this poem is also transcribed. Since this manuscript does not have any accession number I will refer to it as: *An Untitled Mathnawī,* Ms. F-2008. In the private collection, London.

prostration, peace and glorification. A group of the accursed who, on the face of things, were among his family members, led several servants in every region, who were soldiers, on the path to hell. Previously, the people of Badakhshan, the fortress of Ẓafar, the realm of Egypt and Narjawān and other places followed the true summons, but at the instigation of that faction they have been drowned in the ocean of iniquity. Now, the foremost duty for the *muʿallims* (teachers) of the present time is to make every possible human effort to guide them (the community) according to the decree (*farmām*).

What beauty or intellect could consider reasonable the imamate of someone who was so immersed and seduced by status in this world that from the height of envy and jealousy, by deadly poison he made sweet life bitter on the palate of his brother and gave his paternal cousin a drink of diamond, cutting off his hope for life? In short, the teachers of Badakhshan and in the other aforementioned places must make great efforts, especially in areas where the dervishes are virtuous.[59]

Two important points emerge from the passage above: first, that Qāsim Shāh b. Shams al-Dīn, the twenty-ninth Qāsim-Shāhī Imam was poisoned by a close relative; and second, that the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan, who followed the true line, were led astray by the Muḥammad-Shāhīs. Equally, we find a reference in an old copy of the *Charāgh-nāma*, that the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan followed the Qāsim-Shāhī line of the Imamate.[60] From this we may surmise that the followers of the *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* only partially adhered to the Muḥammad-Shāhī line of the Imamate.

The political situation in the post-Alamūt period led to the suppression of Ismāʿīlī missionary activity. As a result the direct link between the Imam and his followers in Iran and other regions was lost. Migration and population movement may have resulted in the arrival of some Ismāʿīlīs in Badakhshan. However, there is no clear indication of a direct relationship between the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārīs of Persia and their Badakhshani co-religionists immediately after the split. Likewise, there is no direct indication of the spread of Muḥammad-Shāhī teaching in Badakhshan and its mountain principalities – the *mīrigarī* or *shāhigarī*. The question that arises, at least from the discursive and logical point of view is why the connection was cut between the Qāsim-Shāhī Imams and the *daʿwa* in Badakhshan. A number of factors might have contributed to this phenomenon. The first and simplest one is the remoteness of the region from the *daʿwa* centre, but since this hindrance had been overcome in the past this is an unsatisfactory reason. A second factor is the political situation of the region at large that stifled the activities of the *daʿwa* not only in Iran but also in the areas where the Imam was residing. A third cause is the schism

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[59] [Islām Shāh], *Haft nukta,* Per Ms. 43 (IIS, London); Ms. *Haft nukta,* in private collection, Dushanbe, Tajikistan; Virani, *The Ismāʿīlīs in the Middle Ages,* pp. 86-87.

[60] *Charāgh-nāma* (incomplete), Persian Ms N. This is an undated old manuscript; the only extant copy is in a private collection, Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

that led to rivalry between the Muḥammad-Shāhīs themselves, who used Twelver Shīʿism to propagate their creed. The Qāsim-Shāhīs, on the other hand, resorted to the practice of *taqiyya* and lived clandestinely in Iran. Thus, the missionary activities of the Qāsim-Shāhīs functioned, but only underground, disguised in a Twelver Shīʿa or Ṣūfī form.

The oral tradition was preserved and transmitted orally from generation to generation until Guharrez son of Khwāja ʿAbd al-Nabī son of Khwāja Ṣāliḥ from Yungān collected them. Based on these stories he composed a treatise known as the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz*.[61] What Guharrez did in his work was to put events in a systematic narrative form but without providing any chronological framework. We may note that some of the accounts provided in his narratives are of a mixed nature, which reflect both the paucity of information in oral tradition itself and his limited access to historical sources. Thus, the information provided in the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* needs to be addressed with a certain degree of caution.

The *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* suggests that the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams had a number of people or possibly small communities of followers in Badakhshan. The precise geographic location of these groups remains vague. It is evident from his narration that the influence of the Muḥammad-Shāhīs in the region did not last for a long time. As I demonstrated earlier, one of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams, namely Rażī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir (d. 915/1509), visited the region. Shokhumorov categorically denies the fact that Rażī al-Dīn was the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imam:

> Rażī al-Dīn was the *pīr* of the Ismāʿīlīs of the mountain region of Badakhshan that includes the territories of all principalities situated on the upper reaches of the *Āmū Daryā*.[62]

Shokhumorov's hypothesis here could only have been convincing had the Muḥammad-Shāhī - Qāsim-Shāhī split been repudiated.

The *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz*, on the other hand, attempted to resolve this matter through the genealogical trees of the Imams and their local representatives in Badakhshan. In other words, the representative of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams in Badakhshan knew the genealogy of the Imams in this line. Therefore, in one of the narratives in the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz*, Guharrez reckons:

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[61] I use the short form of *Gawhar-rīz* to refer to the treatise *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz*. I use Guharrez to refer to the author. The full name of the author is given as Guharrez valadi Khwāja ʿAbd al-Nabī valadi Khwāja Ṣāliḥ-i Yumgī.

[62] Shokhumorov, *Razdelenie Badakhshana,* pp. 42-43.

<div dir="rtl">

از مولانا علاء الدین محمد مولانا مؤمن شاه شده و از ایشان مولانا رضی الدین محمد شده . و از سید مهتر سید علی شده و

مؤمنان را هدایت کرد . از رضی الدین احمد مولانا محمد شاه شده و از ایشان مولانا طاهر شده و به تخت امامت قرار

یافت . و از سید علی سید سلمان شد مسند نشینان درویشان کوهستان شد و هدایت کننده بجانب مولانا مؤمن شاه

بود . و از ایشان مولانا شاه سلام شد ـ بر تخت امامت نشست و از سید سلمان ابدال سید درویش محمد شده صاحب

مسند کوهستان شد ، مومنان را دعوت کرد . و هر درویش هر امامی را خدمت کرده ، بدین قیاس باید دانست از مولانا

عبدالسلام ملک السلام شد و از ایشان مولانا مستنصر شد و از ایشان مولانا شاه غریب میرزا شد...

</div>

After Mawlānā ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad, Mawlānā Muʾmin Shāh became [the Imam] and after him Mawlānā Rażī al-Dīn Muḥammad became [the Imam] while from the [local leaders] Sayyid Mehtar was succeeded by Sayyid ʿAlī who became [the local guide] and started to guide the believers. After Rażī al-Dīn Aḥmad,[63] Mawlānā Muḥammad Shāh became [his successor], and after him Mawlānā Ṭāhir became the Imam. After Sayyid ʿAlī, Sayyid Salmām became the guide for the *darvīshe*s from the mountainous regions. He guided [people to] Mawlānā Muʾmin Shāh's teachings. After him Mawlānā Shāh Salām became the Imam. After Sayyid Salmān Abdāl, Sayyid Darvīsh Muḥammad became the guide for the mountainous people and started to summon the believers. [And] each *darvīsh* was serving his Imam; and thus, in the same manner one must understand that after Mawlānā ʿAbd al-Salām, Malik al-Salām became the Imam and he was succeeded by Mawlānā Mustanṣir while after him Mawlānā Shāh Gharīb Mīrzā became the Imam.[64]

The passage above is very intricate but by careful examination we can see that it contains a mix of names of Qāsim-Shāhī and Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams as well as their local leaders which brings about confusion. This task is similar to tackling a jigsaw puzzle requiring a detailed assessment of all parts from the narrative provided in the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* and cross referencing with modern studies.

To demonstrate the Muḥammad-Shāhī - Qāsim-Shāhī relations and rivalry, which are not explicitly referred to in the passage above, I will compare the family tree from the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* with the genealogical tables provided in Farhad Daftary's ground-breaking work, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrine.*

It is apparent from the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* that both the Nizārī branches had their representatives in Badakhshan. In order to differentiate these two lines Guharrez employs a number of terms: the term *hādī* (lit. guide) is used to refer to the Qāsim-Shāhī high-ranking dignitaries while the term *rāhī* (lit. companion) is used in relation to the

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[63] It should be Muḥammad as in the first line.

[64] Guharrez, *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz,* Manuscript G from private collection, ff. 51-52.

Muḥammad-Shāhī dignitaries. Linguistically, the author's (*Silk-i Gawhar-rīz*) argument remains ambigious. It seems safe to assume that Guharrez's mother tongue was not Persian-Darī but possibly Shughnī – a local dialect from the Indo-Iranian language group spoken in Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities. In the light of this we can see that some linguistic constructions such as "*...az Mawlono Alo al-Din Muhammad Mawlano Muʾmin Shoh shud...*" and others are verbatim translations from Shughnī expression such as "*...az Mawlono Alo al-Din Muhammad-and Mawlono Muʾmin Shoh sut...*"[65] The translation of such expressions from the Pamiri languages can be grasped only from the text itself and its internal structure. If a listener or a reader misses a point the whole narrative will create both an ambiguity and at the same time a double meaning. Thus, the expression from the Shughnī language could be translated either as "*...and Mawlānā Muʾmin Shāh was born from Mawlānā ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad...*" or "*...after Mawlānā ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad Mawlānā Muʾmin Shāh became...*" I use the latter expression in the case of my translation.

Silk-i Gawhar-rīz	*Silk-i Gawhar-rīz*	Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*
Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams	Muḥammad-Shāhī *Rāhīs* (Companions)	Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams
a. ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad		1. ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muʾmin Shāh b. Muḥammad
b. Muʾmin Shāh	i. Sayyid Mehtar (Early fifteenth century)	2. Muḥammad Shāh b. Muʾmin Shāh (d. 808/1404)
c. Rażī al-Dīn Muḥammad	ii. Sayyid ʿAlī Chronology not specified	3. Rażī al-Dīn b. Muḥammad Shāh (d. 838/1434)
d. Muḥammad Shāh		4. Ṭāhir b. Rażī al-Dīn (d. 868/1463)
e. Shāh Ṭāhir	iii. Sayyid Salmān Chronology not specified	5. Rażī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir (d. 915/1509)
		6. Shāh Ṭāhir al-Ḥusaynī (d. ca. 956/1549)

Figure 21: Muḥammad-Shāhī genealogy from Badakhshan in comparison with modern studies

Let us examine the passage in more detail. Guharrez starts his narrative with the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imam, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad; this does not accord with Farhad

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[65] In order to differentiate between Persian-Darī and Shughnī expressions, no diacritical marks will be used in *Shughnī* language citations.

Daftary's genealogical chart. Daftary gives the name of the twenty-sixth Muḥammad-Shāhī Imam as ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muʾmin Shāh b. Muḥammad (d. 807/1404) not ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn b. Muḥammad. During this period a certain (i.) Sayyid Mehtar, a local *rāhī* from Badakhshan, called on the Ismāʿīlīs of the *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* to give their allegiance to the Muḥammad-Shāhī line of Imams. He was succeeded by (ii.) Sayyid ʿAlī, who was followed by (iii.) Sayyid Salmān. It is difficult to place these *rāhī*s in any feasible chronological context. However, the text of the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* implies that this situation continues until the first half of the sixteenth century. According to the *Gawhar-rīz* the *rāhī*s (i.e. companions) assisted the *pīr*s in summoning the believers to follow first, Imam ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad. This Imam, again according to the *Gawhar-rīz*, was succeeded in order by (b.) Mūʾmīn Shāh, (c.) Rażī al-Dīn Muḥammad, (d.) Muḥammad Shāh and finally (e.) Imam Ṭāhir.[66] Daftary's genealogical table, by contrast, shows that (1) Imam ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muʾmin Shāh b. Muḥammad was succeeded by (2) Muḥammad Shāh b. Mūʾmīn Shāh, then by (3.) Rażī al-Dīn b. Muḥammad Shāh and (4) Ṭāhir b. Rażī al-Dīn who passed the Imamate to his son (5) Imam Rażī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir[67] who, as I mentioned earlier (Chapter 3, pp. 67-75), was brutally executed in 915/1509-10 in Badakhshan. The account from the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* coincides with the genealogical chart in Daftary's book. Nonetheless, we find that the names are a bit disorganized, which is evident from the Figure 21 above (p. 176).

As far as the Qāsim-Shāhī line is concerned we can see some minor lapses in the narrative of the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz*. Guharrez argues that (b.) Shāh Salām succeeded (a.) Qāsim Shāh, (c.) ʿAbd al-Salām (d.) Malik al-Salām and (e.) Mustanṣir who was followed by (f.) Imam Gharīb Mīrzā.[68] Daftary, in his turn, suggests that Imam Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad was succeeded by Imam (A.) Qāsim Shāh (d. 770/1368), (B.) Islām Shāh, (C.) Muhammad b. Islām Shāh, (D.) Mustanṣir biʾllāh II (d. 885/1480), (E.) ʿAbd al-Salām (d. 899/1493) and then by Imam (F.) Gharīb Mīrzā (d. 904/1498).[69] These names as furnished by the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* are slightly different. One additional point may be noted that due to the practice of *taqiyya* the Ismāʿīlī Imams of that time used different names and in some cases a *takhallus* or *nom de plume* to disguise their true identity.

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[66] Guharrez, *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz,* f. 51-52.

[67] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 510.

[68] Guharrez, *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz,* f. 51-52.

[69] The death dates provided in the text and both tables are from: Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* pp. 509-510; Nanji, and Esmail, "The Ismāʿīlīs in History," in Nasr, (ed.)., *ICIC,* Tehran, 1977, pp. 259-260; Muʿizzī, *Ismāʿīlīyān-i Īrān,* pp. 147-151.

Silk-i Gawhar-rīz	Silk-i Gawhar-rīz	Daftary, The Ismāʿīlīs
Qāsim-Shāhī Imams	Qāsim-Shāhī Hādī (Guide)	Qāsim-Shāhī Imams
a. Qāsim Shah	Sayyid Salmān ʿAbdāl Chronology not specified	A. Qāsim Shāh (d. 770/1368)
b. Shāh Salām		B. Islām Shāh (d. 827/1423)
c. ʿAbd al-Salām	Sayyid Muḥammad Darvīsh Chronology not specified	C. Muḥammad b. Islam Shāh
d. Malik al-Salām		D. Mustanṣir biʾllāh II (d. 885/1480)
e. Mustanṣir Biʾllāh		E. ʿAbd al-Salām (d. 899/1493)
f. Gharīb Mīrzā		F. Gharīb Mīrzā (d. 904/1498)
		Abū Ẕar ʿAlī (d. 915/1510)

Figure 22: Qāsim-Shāhī genealogy from Badakhshan in comparison with modern studies

The *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* makes it clear that the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan partially adhered to the Muḥammad-Shāhī line of Imams even prior to the arrival of Imam Raẓī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir. The suggestive nature of the extract from the *Gawhar-rīz* clearly indicates that after certain period of time the Muḥammad-Shāhīs of Badakhshan reconsidered their allegiance and started returning to the line of the Qāsim-Shāhī Imams. However, the precise date remains obscure.

Shafique Virani in his book refers to a document entitled *Decree of the Imam ʿAbd al-Salām* (*Farmān-i Shāh ʿAbd al-Salām*). Ivanow states that he found this decree in "a chrestomathy (*majmūʿa*) in Kirmān," which "bears the signature of Shāh ʿAbd al-Salām."[70] Furthermore Ivanow himself describes this document as:

> An epistle addressed to the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan and Kābul who followed the Imams of the Muḥammad-Shāhī line, inviting the erring people to reconsider the grounds for their allegiance and return to the fold of the right line of the Imams, that is to say, the Qāsim-Shāhī.[71]

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[70] Virani, *The Ismāʿīlīs in the Middle Ages,* p. 121.

[71] Ivanow, *Ismāʿīlī Literature,* p. 140. Also quoted in Virani, *The Ismāʿīlīs in the Middle Ages,* p. 121.

Although, this decree was issued by Imam ʿAbd al-Salām possibly in 895/1490, it seems safe to adduce that this document may not have reached the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī communities of Badakhshan or it might have reached the region only sometime in the first half of the sixteen century. This argument, however, will need to be re-examined when a copy of the *Decree* becomes available. On the other hand, Imam Rażī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir, a Muḥammad-Shāhī Imam, arrived in Badakhshan, perhaps sometime around 912-913/1506-07. Hence, we may tentatively conclude that this Imam had greater influence among the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan whom he consolidated on religious and political grounds when they opposed the Tīmūrids and the Shaybānids (for more details, see Chapters 2 and 3, pp. 53-97). With the death of Imam Rażī al-Dīn, however, the link between the community and its next leader, the famous Shāh Ṭāhir Dakkanī, seems to have been partially lost. As we mentioned earlier the Muḥammad-Shāhī adherents may have lost contact with their Imam, Shāh Ṭāhir, when he migrated to the Deccan. Consequently, the Muḥammad-Shāhīs of Badakhshan gradually returned to the line of the Qāsim-Shāhīs.

The issue of adherence to the Muḥammad-Shāhī line reflects the contradictory themes among the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan. The striking feature of this contradiction is that doctrinally the Ismāʿīlis in Badakhshan remained Faṭimid while they later accepted the post-Alamūt teaching of Iranian Nizārīs. Thus they succeeded in combining Faṭimid teaching, particularly that of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, with that found in other post-Alamūt treatises. For instance, we might mention a treatise known as the *Kalām-i pīr* (Sage's Discourse), wrongly ascribed to Nāṣir-i Khusraw, the *Haft bāb-i Abū Isḥāq* (Seven Chapters [of/or expounded by] Abū Isḥāq) and the *Haft bāb-i Bābā Sayyidnā* (Seven Chapters of Our Lord). Similarly, we might mention the works of Khayrkhwāh-i Hirātī (d. after 960/1553), which are prevalent in the region. These works were used for composing and delivering sermons and some of his poems were recited during the *madāḥ-khānī* sessions. The repertoire of the local *madāḥ-khān*s include the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century poems of Mullā Imāmqulī (d. after 1055/1645), another Ismāʿīlī poet from Iran, better-known as Khākī-i Khurāsānī. Another author we might mention is a certain Amīr-i Shīrāzī whose work is also preserved in the collection of religious and devotional poetry of the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan, commonly referred to as the *Bayāż.* Amīr-i Shīrāzī, according to Muʿizzī, was indicted on the grounds of his being either an Ismāʿīlī or a Nuqtawī. Eventually, he was blinded and executed in 999/1590.[72] We may thus assume that the Qāsim-Shāhī *daʿwa* was

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[72] Muʿizzi, *Taʾrīkh-i Ismāʿīliyya-i Badakhshān,* pp. 260-67.

active in Badakhshan due to the activity of *dāʿīs* sent to the region from northern Persia. Therefore, we might argue further that the transformation of the Muḥammad-Shāhī into the Qāsim-Shāhī line of the Imamate started to take place sometime in the period between the mid-fifteenth century and first decade of the sixteenth century. The fact that Ismāʿīlī teaching in Badakhshan in the Alamūt and post-Alamūt periods remained Faṭimid is evident from the writing of two authors, namely Sayyid Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī and Shāh Ziyā-i Shughnānī, about whom I shall write briefly in the next sections. The question of whether Sayyid Suhrāb Vali Badakhshānī lived in the eleventh century and was a disciple of Nāṣir-i Khusraw or whether he lived in Badakhshan in the fifteenth century remains open for discussion. Although I take this into consideration, it is the thematic presentation of Sayyid Suhrāb that is more important here.

6.5.1. Sayyid Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī

Sayyid Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī is one of the best-known figures in the history of Badakhshan, in general, and in the history of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī community, in particular. He is one of the Central Asian Nizārī Ismāʿīlī authors who lived in Badakhshan in the fifteenth century. His life, however, is shrouded in mystery. The dates of his birth and death are not recorded in any local or peripheral historical sources. Modern scholars propose a hypothesis according to which he died sometime after 856/1452.[73] This was a period when Badakhshan was still ruled by the local ruler, Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad, son of Shāh Qulī, who was executed by the Tīmūrid Abū Saʿīd in 869/1467 (pp. 57-65).

The local oral tradition, as contained in the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* and the *Baḥr al-akhbār,* relates that Sayyid Suhrāb Valī was a contemporary of Nāṣir-i Khusraw.[74] These stories even reckon that Sayyid Suhrāb Valī was a student of Nāṣir, and lived with him in Yumgān. The same tradition also suggests that Sayyid Suhrāb Valī was trained to be in charge of the local Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* in Badakhshan.[75] This may represent a plausible argument for believing that Sayyid Suhrāb utilised the works of Nāṣir, and that, as a result, he was influenced by Nāṣir's teaching. The question of when and where Sayyid Suhrāb Valī was born and lived remains unanswered. We can surmise that he spent his entire life in the region of Yumgān. The date 856/1452, which appears in his book *Sī va shish ṣaḥīfa,* clearly shows that Sayyid

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[73] Ivanow, "Foreword," in Ujāqī, (ed.)., *Sī va shīsh ṣaḥīfa,* Tehran, 1961, pp. 9-15; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* pp. 408; Daftary, *Ismaili Literature,* London, 2004, p. 110; Daftary, "Badakhshānī, Sayyid Suhrāb-i Walī," in *EIs,* vol. 4 (2013), pp. 60-62; Virani, *The Ismāʿīlīs in the Middle Ages,* p. 119.

[74] Badakhshī, Saidjalāl, *Baḥr al-akhbār,* Khorugh, 1992; Shakarmamadov, *La'li kuhsor,* Khorugh, 2003.

[75] Shakarmamadov, *La'li kuhsor,* pp. 20-32.

Suhrāb was living in Yumgān more than 370 years (1452 minus 1078=374) after the death of Nāṣir-i Khusraw. In other words, here the oral tradition raises some chronological difficulties. The paucity of primary sources does not allow us to substantiate these oral stories and place them in an approximate chronological timeframe.

The *Sī va shish ṣaḥīfa* (Thirty-Six Chapters), also known as the *Ṭuḥfat al-nāẓirīn* (Gift to the Readers) or the *Ṣaḥīfat al-nāẓirīn* (Pages for the Readers), is the only extant work of Sayyid Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī. It explicitly indicates that Sayyid Suhrāb, if not a *dāʿī,* was at least active in the religious affairs of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī community in Badakhshan. On chronological grounds, this particular work nullifies the assumption proposed in the oral tradition that Sayyid Suhrāb was a contemporary of Nāṣir-i Khusraw and was trained to be in charge of the local *daʿwa.* Although we do not possess any clear information about his life, it is evident from the last part of the *Ṭuḥfat al-nāẓirīn* (Gift to the Readers) or *Sī va shish ṣaḥīfa* (Thirty-Six Chapters) that he lived during the mid-fifteenth century. The date of composition of the *Ṭuḥfat al-nāẓirīn* is given as 856/1452,[76] which coincides with the Imamate of Imam Muḥammad b. Islamshāh (d. ca. 868/1463)[77] during the post-Alamūt period. It is also plausible that Sayyid Suhrāb passed away at some point during the Imamate of Imam Mustansir biʾllāh II (d. 885/1480).[78] A critical study of the life and thought of Sayyid Suhrāb remains a *desideratum.*

The content of Sayyid Suhrāb's work shows the influence of Nāṣir-i Khusraw's philosophical teaching. It is, therefore, safe to assume that Sayyid Suhrāb, who was in charge of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* in the region, prepared this work as a manual for the new initiates, particularly those of higher rank such as *Muʿallīm* (i.e. teacher) *Maʾẕūn-i akbar* (i.e. Senior Licentiate) and *Maʿẕūn-i aṣghar* (i.e. Junior Licentiate), as shown in the table below (Figure 23, p. 182).[79] It is safe to assume that Sayyid Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī, as one of the ardent followers of the *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir,* acknowledged the post-Alamūt Qāsim-Shāhī Imams in the fifteenth century. Despite the fact that the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan were persecuted

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[76] Badakhshānī, Sayyid Suhrāb Valī., *Ṣaḥīfat al-nāẓirīn*, Ms. C1704, Institute of Oriental Studies, St. Petersburg, 1918, ff. 96-98. This manuscript is dated to 10 Shaʿbān 1333/23 June 1915. Badakhshānī, Sayyid Suhrāb Valī, *Sī va shish ṣaḥīfa,* Ujaqi, (ed.)., Tehran, 1961. Sayyid Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī, *Tuhfat al-Nāẓirīn,* Beg, (ed.)., Gilgit, 1960, p. 84. Sayyid Suhrāb Valī-i Badakhshānī refers to another of his treatises, entitled *Rawzat al-mutaʿalimīn* (*The Paradise of Apprentices*). See: *Ṭuḥfat al-Nāẓirīn,* p. 55. Also quoted in: Virani, *The Ismāʿīlīs in the Middle Ages,* p. 119.

[77] Farhad Daftary does not provide any death date for the thirty first Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Imam, Muḥammad b. Islām Shāh. The date quoted above appears in the article by Nanji, and Esmail, "The Ismāʿīlīs in History," in Nasr, (ed.)., *Ismaili Contribution to Islamic Culture,* Tehran, 1977, pp. 259-260.

[78] If the *Sī va shish ṣaḥīfa* was composed in 856/1452, this suggests that Sayyid Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī was a well-educated, mature person. He was probably in his mid-forties, which leads us to think that he was born at some point in 809/1407 or 812/1410. However, this is only a tentative hypothesis in need of further refinement.

[79] For the hierarchy of the *Ḥudūd,* see chapter 5 of this thesis, p. 141; Virani, *The Ismāʿīlīs of the Middle Ages,* p. 160.

for their religious beliefs the *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* embedded in the philosophical teaching of Nāṣir-i Khusraw maintained the link between the Imam and his followers through the activities of local *dāʿīs*. Additionally, Ismāʿīlī teaching was simplified and articulated by Sayyid Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī and then further modified a century later by Shāh Ziyāī-i Shughnānī and many others.
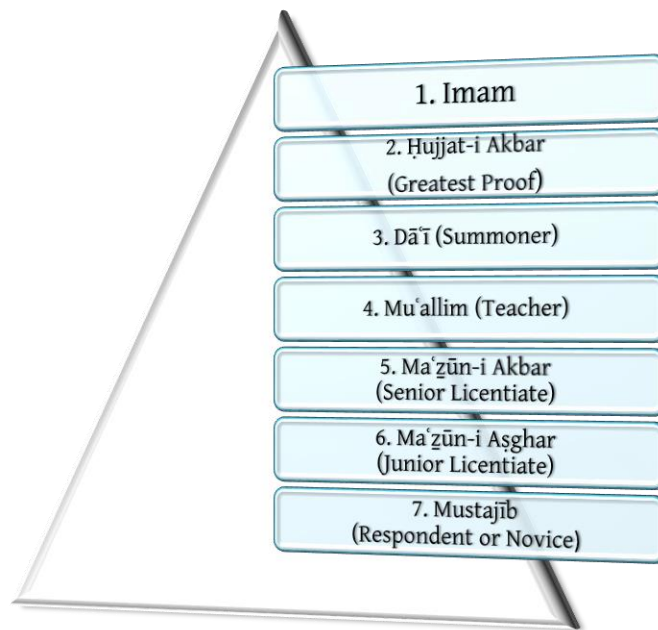
Figure 23 *Ḥudūd al-dīn* in the post-Alamūt period

6.5.2. Shāh Ziyāī-i Shughnānī

Shāh Ziyāī, is yet another Ismāʿīlī luminary from Badakhshan, who lived in the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries, almost a century after Sayyid Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī. In the context of political history he was a contemporary of the last of the Tīmūrids, Sulaymān Mīrzā (d. 997/1589) and his son Ibrāhīm Mīrzā (d. 967/1560), who ruled Badakhshan in the sixteenth century and were replaced by the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids in the fourth quarter of that century. In the religious context, however, he is a contemporary of the Qāsim-Shāhī Imams, Murād Mīrzā (d. 981/1574) and Ẕū al-Faqār ʿAlī (also known as Khalīl Allāh I; d. 1043/1634).[80]

Although he is famous for writing devotional poetry, *Qaṣīda*s, in praise of the Imams from the *Ahl al-bayt* and also in praise of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, his life remains shrouded in mystery. It is difficult even to discuss the details of his life due to the paucity of local historical writing. Habibov argues that he was alive in 1012/1603. He extracts this date from one of

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[80] For the Imamate of Murād Mīrzā and Ẕū al-Faqār ʿAlī, see: Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 509.

Ziyāī's famous *Qaṣīda* in praise of the *Ahl al-bayt*, known as *Panj tan-i pāk,* where in stanza 15, the author talks about the completion of this *Qaṣīda* and uses a (Persianised) Arabic expression "*sabʿa-i ʿarba*", that is 47, to refer to his age at the time of writing the poem.[81] Therefore, it is safe to adduce that he was born sometime in or after 963/1556.[82] In an interview with Gabrielle van den Berg, Sultonnazar Sayyidnazarov (d. 2008), a famous *madāḥ-khān* from the village of Wanqlʿa in the north-west of modern Gorno-Badakhshan, provides his date of birth as 932/1525.[83] The latter date can be dismissed on the grounds that no evidence has yet been produced to support this hypothesis.

Much of what we know about Shāh Ziyāī comes either from his own writing or from the writing of Naẓmī, another Ismāʿīlī poet from Shughnān who lived in the eighteenth century. Shāh Ziyāī refers to himself as "a scion of the local kings of Shughnān." It is important to mention that the local rulers of Shughnān traced their descent to Sayyid Mīr Ḥasan Shāh, better known as Shāh Khāmūsh (Chapter 6, pp. 158-162 and Chapter 7, pp. 196-206). Shāh Ziyāī himself announces:

<div dir="rtl">

به اصل و نسل ز شاهان ملک شغنانم،　　　　چو لعل جای و مکان است در بدخشانم .

</div>

By birth and origin I am the scion of rulers of Shughnān,
Like ruby my place and residence is in Badakhshan.[84]

He was a well-educated man, praised for his poetic talent. He hailed from the mountain region of Shughnān where the Persian language was the *lingua franca* and the language of education for him. It is evident from his poems – *Panj tan-i pāk* (In Praise of the Five Holy Beings – the *Ahl al-bayt*),[85] *Panj ikhwān* (Five Brothers), also known as *Dīhqān-nāma* (The Farmer's Letter)[86] and his *Salām-nāma* (A Letter of Tribute or A Poem of Allegiance)[87] that

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[81] Habibov, *Ganji Badakhshon,* Dushanbe, 1972, p. 156; Van den Berg, *Minstrel Poetry from the Pamir Mountains: A Study of the Songs and Poems of the Ismāʿīlīs of Tajik Badakhshan,* Wiesbaden, 2004, pp. 285-286.

[82] If we deduct the number 47 from 1603 it yields the year 1556, which correspond to 932 in the Islamic calendar (1603-47=1556). The Persian text is as follows:

<div dir="rtl">

ز سال و ماه تو رفت است سبعهٔ عربه،　　　　چو رخ نمود از این سقف گنبد عرفه .

از این قصیده بگوفتیم من از این مطلع،　　　　"به وقت چاشت" بشد ختم، ختم این مقطعه .

</div>

[83] Van den Berg, *Minstrel Poetry*, p. 286.

[84] Ibid. p. 286.

[85] The *Qaṣīda* in praise of the *"Panj tan-i pāk"* was published in Van den Berg, pp. 649-653. See aslo: Amonbekov, *Panj Tani Pok,* Khorugh, 1992, pp. i-iv.

[86] The *Dīhqān-nāma* can be translated as "In Praise of the Agriculturalist" which is a thematic translation rather than a literal one. This *Qaṣīda* is written in the form of *mukhammas* and consists of 18 stanzas. Habibov, *Ganji Badakhshon,* pp. 158-161.

[87] The *Salām-nāma* can be translated as "A Poem of Allegiance." The translation is adduced from the content rather than a verbatim translation. A copy of *Salām-nāma* is preserved in the *Bayāż* of Naẓmī (Anthology of the Poetry of Naẓmī), in

he was well-versed in the *Qurʾān, ḥadith* and the history of Islam, in general and Ismāʿīlī history in particular. His *Salām-nāma,* which consists of 69 verses (138 lines), is written in imitation of one of Nāṣir-i Khusraw's poems in praise of knowledge.[88] In this long *Qaṣīda* Shāh Ziyāī-i Shughnānī expresses allegiance to the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī Imams, who trace their descent through Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq to Imam ʿAlī.[89]

We learn from his *Salām-nāma* and *Panj tan-i pāk* that he travelled to Balkh and it is evident from the *Salām-nāma* that he fell ill there. Talking metaphorically about this period of his life he clearly expounds that "he had no true companion save sorrow"[90] there. No precise information is available about the last years of his life. However, we might infer that he returned to Shughnān where he composed most of his eulogies. The life and work of Shāh Ziyāī also constitutes a topic for a future independent study.

6.6. Transformation and the Return to '*the Right Path*'

After the execution of Rażī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir in 915/1509-10, the Muḥammad-Shāhī and Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārīs of Badakhshan and the mountain principalities of Shughnān and Wakhān faced a severe anti-Ismāʿīlī campaign that led to the imposition of Sunnī Islam. It was also a period during which internal religious issues surfaced because the Imam's contact with the community had been lost. As a result, the followers of the Muḥammad-Shāhī line gradually joined the Qāsim-Shāhī line of the Imamate.

According to Farhad Daftary, the Muḥammad-Shāhī branch of the Nizārīs eventually ended sometime in the second half of the eighteenth century, while the Qāsim-Shāhī line endured until modern times.[91] The overlapping themes in this discourse on transformation do not allow us to mark this phenomenon with a specific date. What seems obvious in this regard is that the transformation was a long and slow process that might have started some years or even a few decades after the death of Imam Rażī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir in the first half of the sixteenth century.

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the library of the Institute of Oriental Studies and Manuscript Foundation in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, Ms. *Salām-nāma,* Accession no: 1, ff. 28-38. I am grateful to Sultobnek Aksakolov for bringing this work to my attention.

[88] Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Dīvān-i ashʿār,* Taqavī, (ed.)., Tehran, 1380 Sh./2001-2002, pp. 13-15; Muḥaqqiq, (ed.)., *Pānzda qaṣīda az Ḥakīm Nāṣir-i Khusraw-i Qubādiyānī,* Tehran, 1961, pp. 9-11.

[89] Shāh Ziyāī-i Shughnānī., Ms. 1 - *Salām-nāma,* ff. 35-36.

[90] Ibid. f. 23.

<div dir="rtl">ز دست و ز پا مانده‌ام مدتی چند،   که جز غم ندارم به کس همدمی را.</div>

[91] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* pp. 451-456.

The *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* (Pearl-Scatterer), composed both in poetry and prose, provides sporadic references to the genealogical tree of the Muḥammad-Shāhī and Qāsim-Shāhī Imams. The list of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams is incomplete. Equally, the names of the local Muḥammad-Shāhī representatives known as *rāhī* (companion) have not been furnished in full. On the contrary, the genealogical table of the Qāsim-Shāhī Imams, even though jumbled, indicates continuity and a connection with the Imam of the Time through the medium of the *dāʿīs* (missionaries) sent to the region from Iran. The *pīrs*[92] and their local representatives such as *hādī* and *khalīfa* for the Qāsim-Shāhīs and *rāhī* and *khalīfa* for the Muḥammad-Shāhī line, remained in charge of collecting and delivering religious dues to the Imam.

The *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* lists the names of both Qāsim-Shāhī and Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams in different narratives. The linguistic devices used in the narrative demonstrate the transition from one line to another. In certain places the author unintentionally combines the two lines of Imams into one but does not provide any explanations. Although no dates are provided in the text, we can safely adduce the approximate chronology of events, the names of any given Imam and his local representatives, particularly when the narratives are juxtaposed with modern studies. In the narrative below, Guharrez, the author of the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz,* demonstrates the change of Imams from the end of the fifteenth century to the second half of the seventeenth century in the following way:

. . . از مولانا شاه غریب الله مولانا بوذر علی امام شد و از ایشان مولانا شاه مراد میرزا اله شده و از ایشان مولانا ذوالفقار

علی بر تخت امامت نشست و از سید نورالدین محمد سید سلمان شده و صاحب مسند سلسله دار کوهستان شد و

خواجه ملک اعلا راهی بوده که بوصف مولانا ذوالفقار گوهرریز فرماید ، نظم:

از ظهور حضرت شاه ذوالفقار .	دین و دنیا جملگی شد بر قرار
اقتدا کردند بدو کل مومنان .	شاه مردان باز آمد در جهان
او اوالامر است امام مستقر .	کل مطیع آن امام نامور
راهنمای کل مخلوق خدا .	بود چندین سال او خود مقتدا

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[92] It should be mentioned that the term *Pīr*, which is of Ṣūfī origin, was used by the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs of the post-Alamūt period. In some texts it is equal to the term *dāʿī* (lit. missionary).

After Mawlānā Shāh Gharīb Ilāh, Mawlānā Bū Ẕar ʿAlī succeeded to the Imamate. After him, Mawlānā Shāh Murād Mīrzā Ilāh became the Imam, who was succeeded by Mawlānā Ẕū al-Faqār ʿAlī, and Sayyid Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad [I] was replaced by Sayyid Salmān [II], who became the head of the order (*silsila*) [of religious teachers or *darvishe*s] in the regions of Badakhshan, while Khwāja Malik Aʿlā [III] was a *rāhī*. [Hence] Guharrez, in eulogy of Mawlānā Ẕū al-Faqār composed the following poetry:

The 'revelatory manifestation [of the divine lights'] of Imam Shāh Ẕū al-Faqār
Established unshakable equilibrium between the
affairs of religion (*dīn*) and world (*dunyā*).
The King of Man returned to the world yet again,
All the believers followed him.
All became obedient to the famous Imam,
He is the Possessor of the Command, the permanent (*mustaqar*) Imam
(a direct descendant of ʿAlī and Fāṭima).
For several years manifest leader, and guide to all of God's created beings.[93]

Silk-i Gawhar-rīz	*Silk-i Gawhar-rīz*	Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*
Qāsim-Shāhī Imams	Qāsim-Shāhī *Pīrs / Rāhīs* (Guides)	Qāsim-Shāhī Imams
a. Mawlānā Shāh Gharīb Ilāh	i. Sayyid Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad (Ca. end of the fifteenth century)	1. Gharīb Mīrzā Mustanṣir biʾllāh III (d. 904/1498)
b. Mawlāna Bū Ẕar ʿAlī		2. Abū Ẕarr ʿAlī (d. ca. 915/1509)
Mawlāna Shāh Murād Mīrzā Ilāh	ii. Sayyid Salman *The head of the silsila of pīr*s Chronology not specified	3. Murād Mīrzā (d. 981/1574)
Mawlāna Ẕu al-Faqār ʿAlī	iii. Khwāja Malik Aʿlā *Rāhī* Chronology not specified	4. Ẕū al-Faqār ʿAlī Khalīl Allāh ʿAli I (d. 1043/1634)

Figure 24: Qāsim-Shāhī Imams from Badakhshanī sources in comparison with modern studies

The list of Imams furnished in the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* coincides with the genealogical table in Farhad Daftary's *The Ismāʿīlīs*, as well as with the list of Imams provided by Aziz Esmail and Azim Nanji in an article published in *The Ismāʿīlī Contribution to Islamic Culture*.[94] Likewise, it coincides with the poetic *Nasab-nāma* written by Khāki Khurāsānī (d. after 1055/1645), and

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[93] Guharrez, *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz,* p. 52.

[94] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* pp. 507-509; Nanji, and Esmail, "The Ismāʿīlīs in History," pp. 259-260.

two other *Qaṣīda*s composed by Fidā'ī Khurāsānī (d. 1342/1923), which were published by Aleksandr Semenov in Tashkent in 1927 and 1928, respectively.[95]

It is an incontestable historical fact that the descent of the Imams passed from father to son with the rule of *naṣṣ* (divine designation) until modern times.[96] The *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* indicates that, with the *manifestation* of the Qāsim-Shāhī Imam Ẕu al-Faqār ʿAlī (d. 1043/1634) in the second half of the sixteenth century, the Muḥammad-Shāhīs of Badakhshan started to join the Qāsim-Shāhī Imams, who are considered the true bearers of the mantle of the Imamate.

It should be mentioned that the term *ẕuhūr* (lit. manifestation or appearance), in this context, denotes an appearance of the Imam emerging from concealment. In other words, the author uses the term "*ẕuhūr*" or "*appearance*" of the Imam who will establish contact with the community through dignitaries in the hierarchy of initiation, *ḥudūd al-dīn.* Hence, all believers became obedient to the *Possessor of the Command,* who is also the Established Imam, *Imāmi mustaqar,* not the Trustee Imam, *Imāmi mustawdaʿ.* These two notions, *mustaqar* and *mustawdaʿ,* are from the *Qurʾān* where it say:

> And it is He who has produced you from a single soul, and then given you a permanent residence (*mustaqar*) and a temporary abode (*mustawdaʿ*). We have detailed our signs for a community that understands. (Qurʾān, 6:98)

Both terms *mustaqar* and *mustawdaʿ* play a significant role in the history of the Shīʿa, in general, and the Ismāʿīlīs, in particular. Although these terms do not have an exact equivalent in the English language, scholars use the term "*Established*" or "*Veritable*" to refer to *mustaqar* and "*Trustee*" or "*Deposition*" in reference to the *mustawdaʿ* Imam.[97] There is also a particular use of the term *mustawdaʿ* in relation to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. A group of early Shīʿīs known as Khashabiyya, a sub-sect of the Zaydī Shīʿīs, the followers of Ṣurkhāb al-Ṭabarī argued that:

> ʿAlī was himself not actually an Imam, that he was instead a *mustawdaʿ*, and that his role was merely to hold the actual Imamate in trust for the grandsons of the Prophet.[98]

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[95] Semenov, "Ismailitskaiā Oda, Posvīashennaiā Voplosheniīam Alīīa-Boga," in *Iran,* no. II (1927), pp. 1-24 and his "Ismailitskiĭ Panegerik Obozhestvlennomu Alīīũ – Fidai Khurasani," in *Iran,* no. III (1928), pp. 51-70.

[96] Imam Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh, also known as the Aga Khan III, was the spiritual leader of the Shīʿa Ismāʿīlī Muslims from 1302/1885 to 1376/1957. As an exception, he made his heir-designate his grandson, Prince Karīm al-Ḥusaynī, known as the Aga Khan IV, who is the present and living Imam and spiritual leader of the Shīʿa Imamī Ismāʿīlī Muslims. For more details, see: Aziz, (ed.)., *Aga Khan: Selected Speeches and Writings of Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah,* London, 2-vols., 1998. Nanji, "Aga Khan," in *OEMIW,* vol. I, pp. 44-45.

[97] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* pp. 97-107; Virani, *The Ismāʿīlīs in the Middle Ages,* pp. 83-86; Walker, "Succession to Rule in the Shiite Caliphate," in *JARCE,* vol. 32 (1995), pp. 243-245.

[98] Walker, "Succession to Rule," p. 245 and his "An Ismāʿīlī Version of the Heresiography of the Seventy-two Erring Sects," in Daftary, (ed.)., *MIHT,* pp. 161-174.

The most famous case of the usage of these terms was in relation to al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn. The difference between these terms is that the function of the Imam *mustawdaʿ*, the "*Depository*" or "*Trustee*" Imam is to hold the office of Imam for the True Imam known as the *mustaqar*, the "*Veritable*" or "*Established*" who "is endowed with all the privileges of the Imamate, and transmits them to his successor."[99] In other words the *mustaqar* Imam is the one whose offspring is meant to succeed him after his demise. The *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* clearly refers to Imam Ẕū al-Faqār ʿAlī, who is the *Possessor of the Command* or the *mustaqar* Imam of his respective time. Hence, the *ẓuhūr* (appearance) of this Imam is marked as the starting point for the unification of the Muḥammad-Shāhīs of Badakhshan with the Qāsim-Shāhīs. The author expounds this hypothesis in a further narrative.

In another passage, the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* narrates the story of Khwāja Maʿṣūm's journey to the court of Ẕu al-Faqār ʿAlī, the thirty-seventh Qāsim-Shāhī Imam, who lived in Anjudān. According to Daftary, "Anjudān, or Anjidān, is situated thirty-seven kilometres east of Arāk (former Sulṭānābād) and about the same distance from Maḥallāt."[100] It is difficult to give the precise date for this visit. However, there is an argument for postulating that this visit took place in the first half of the seventeenth century. Guharrez reckons that Khwāja ʿAbd al-Maʿṣūm was in the company of other dignitaries. He does not provide their names but refers to them as *rāhī* and *pīr*. Although the term *pīr* is of Ṣūfī origin, in the post-Alamūt Ismāʿīlī context it is used as an equivalent of the term *dāʿī*, in this sense summoner or missionary. It is clear from the text of the *Gawhar-rīz* that the term *pīr* indicates a person superior to a *rāhī*, as the precedence of *pīr* above *rāhī*, *hādī* and *khalīfa* is clearly set out in the text. Similarly, it reflects the local hierarchical order of the religious leadership among the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan, known as the *ḥudūd al-dīn*, which permeated to the social structure of the society with the arrival of Ismāʿīlī missionaries in the pre- and post-Alamūt periods.[101] The local religious hierarchy is much simpler and only consists of Persian terms. It seems safe to argue that the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan used both the old hierarchy and its local simplified version. The local version clearly reflects the disposition of the higher ranks and their relationships with the lower ranks of the community (Figure 23, p. 182 and Figure 25, p. 189).

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[99] Khayrkhwāh-i Hirātī, *Faṣl dar bayān-i shinākht-i Imām,* Ivanow, (ed.)., Tehran, 1960, (English tr.), pp. 23-24; *Kalām-i pīr*, (ed.)., p. 75, (Englsih tr.), pp. 70-72; Virani, *The Ismāʿīlīs of the Middle Age,* pp. 83-86.

[100] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 423.

[101] Guharrez, *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz,* pp. 52-53.

The table below clearly depicts the structure of the religious leadership among the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan. Both the Qāsim-Shāhīs and Muhammad-Shāhīs share a common heritage where the Imam holds the highest rank and guides the entire community in matters of religion through his *Farmāns*, or Decrees, which are then passed to the *pīr*s (previously *dāʿī*s). The terms *rāhī* or guide, used by the Muḥammad-Shāhīs, and *hādī*, or companion, by the Qāsīm-Shāhīs, reflects the old structure where knowledge about the Imam is passed from the higher level to the lower in the hierarchy.
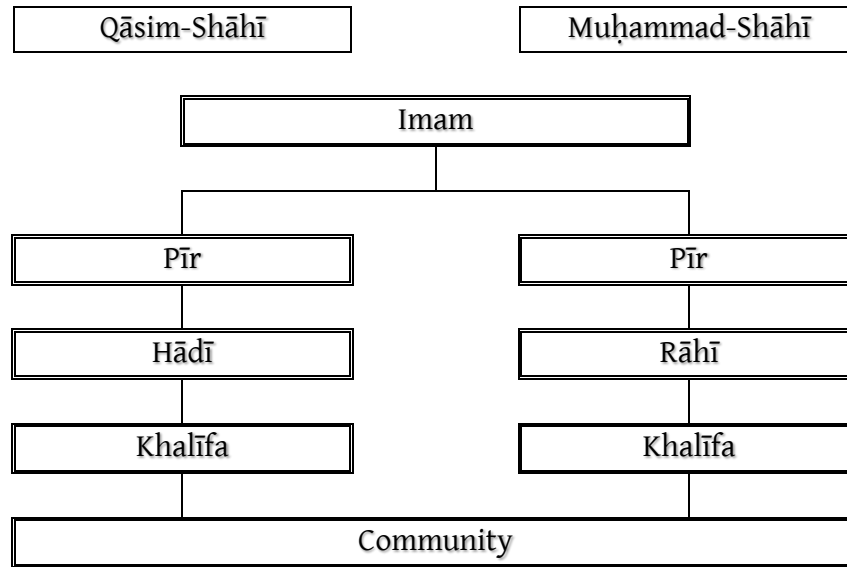
Figure 25: Modified *ḥudūd al-dīn* from Badakhshanī sources

In religious parlance, particularly in Ṣūfī literature, the term *pīr* denotes a spiritual director a *murshid*, who instructs seekers in their search.[102] The term *pīr* was absorbed into the Ismāʿīlī vocabulary during the post-Alamūt period, when the Nizārī Imams and their missionaries used this particular Ṣūfī term as part of the *taqiyya* practice. With the infusion of Ṣūfī expressions into the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī literature, the term *pīr* and its variations spread into different societies while keeping its main meaning intact. Thus, the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz*, where the writing is also influenced by Ṣūfī expressions, the term *pīr* refers to the local representatives of the *daʿwa*. Indeed, it was part of the activity of the Qāsim-Shāhī *pīr*s to consolidate the community through *Farmān*s – the legitimate orders or decrees of the Qāsim-Shāhī Imams. This practice is still prevalent in modern Ismāʿīlī community worldwide.

The Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārīs lost contact with their followers in Iran, Transoxiana, and Badakhshan with the migration of Shāh Ṭāhir Dakkanī to India sometime in the sixteenth

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[102] Bosworth, and Nizami, "Pīr: 1. In the Persian and Turkish Worlds," in *EI2*, vol. 8 (1995), pp. 306; For the term *Pīr* among the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs of South Asia, see: Poonawala, "Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn," and "Pīr Shams or Shams al-Dīn," in *EI2*, vol. 8 (1995), p. 307.

century. It should, however, be mentioned that the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* does give the names of some Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārīs in his narratives. Surprisingly, he inserts the names of Muḥammad-Shāhīs in the midst of the Qāsim-Shāhī Imams and refers to them as the *Imām-i mustawdaʿ* or the *"Trustee Imam,"* which seems quite odd. For example, Guharrez gives the name of Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥaydar in one narrative and argues that he was the *mustawdaʿ* or *"depository"* Imam in the Qāsim-Shāhī line. To unravel this mystery I will compare this sequence with information from modern studies. A comparison of the names from the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* with Daftary's list of Imams, reveals that there is a gap in the transmission in the oral tradition. The author of the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* gives the name of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imam in question as Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥaydar. The correct version of his name as given in the modern study is Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥaydar (d. 1030/1622), who was the son of Ḥaydar b. Shāh Ṭāhir (d. 994/1586). It follows that Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammd, the thirty-third Muḥammad-Shāhī Imam, could not be designated as a *mustawdaʿ* Imam for the Qāsim-Shāhī line. I outline below the grounds for repudiating this hypothesis:

1. Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥaydar was the acting Muḥammad-Shāhī Imam. Hence he cannot be a *mustaqar* Imam for the Muḥammad-Shāhī line and at the same time a *mustawdaʿ* Imam for the Qāsim-Shāhīs.

2. Geographically, Ṣadr al-Dīn was in South Asia while Ẕū al-Faqār ʿAlī was the *mustaqar* Imam of the Qāsim-Shāhī line in Iran. There was no connection between these lines whatsoever.

3. Imam Ẕū al-Faqār ʿAlī succeeded his father Murād Mīrzā in 981/1574 whilst Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥaydar became Imam in 994/1586. Hence, Imam Ẕū al-Faqār ʿĀlī became the *mustaqar* Imam twelve years earlier and died exactly twelve years later than Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad.

Nonetheless, this intriguing narrative alludes to the partial adherence of Badakhshanis to the Muḥammad-Shāhī line of Imams during the Imamates of Murād Mīrzā (d. 981/1574) and Ẕū al-Faqār ʿAlī (d. 1043/1634).[103]

In India, the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams were involved in the political life of their milieu. With the passage of time, the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams lost their political prominence and faced severe persecution from the Mughal emperors of India, particularly during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb (r. 1069-1118/1658-1707). According to Farhad Daftary, at some point during Aurangzeb's reign, the thirty-fifth Muḥammad-Shāhī Imam, ʿAṭiyat Allāh, also known as Khudāybakhsh, may have settled in Badakhshan, where he died in

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[103] Guharrez, *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz,* p. 52.

1074/1663.[104] The precise place of residence of this ʿAṭiyat Allāh remains unknown to us. However, it seems plausible to assume that, had Imam ʿAṭiyat Allāh been living in Badakhshan at that time, he would not have chosen the mountainous regions of this province as his place of abode. Eventually, the Muḥammad-Shāhī branch of the Nizārī Imams disintegrated sometime in the second half of the eighteenth century; the last Imam in this line was Amīr Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. ca. 1179/1765). Surprisingly, only a small Muḥammad-Shāhī community follows this line of Imams; its base is in the vicinity of Maṣyāf and Qadmūs in modern Syria.[105]

The activities of the local *pīr*s and their deputies in the mountainous regions of Badakhshan remained the only connecting link between the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī Imam and his followers. The local *pīr*s, starting from *pīr* Khwāja ʿAbd al-Maʿṣūm or possibly even earlier, started to deliver the religious dues of their communities to the court of the Qāsim-Shāhī Imam in Iran. In this connection, the author of the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* refers to the visit of a certain *pīr* Khwāja Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, a descendant of Sayyid Suhrāb Walī. It relates:

چون می وحدت الهی بدست خواجه محمد صالح قرار یافت چون ذره آفتاب چرخ زنان در طلب خورشید جمال مولانا

بصد جستجو بدان آفتاب عالم افروز خود را رسانیده و می وحدت الهی را از ساغر اصحاب مجلس او چشیده که نام پاك

او شاه دین حسن بود ابن مولانا سید علی...

As the wine of divine unity (*may-i waḥdat-i Ilāhi*) was handed to Khwāja Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, as a whirling particle ascending the rays of sunlight, he began his quest for the sun-face of Mawlānā; and enduring through an untiring search, he finally reached that World-illuminating Sun (Mawlānā Shāh-i Dīn Ḥasan b. Mawlānā Sayyid ʿAlī) and drank the wine of divine unity from the cup of his companions who were intimates of his audience (*majlis*).[106]

Although, the text of the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* is permeated with Ṣūfī expressions, such as "the wine of divine unity" and "the world illuminating Sun", referring to the Qāsim-Shāhī Imam, it clearly gives the name of the Imam as Shāh-i Dīn Ḥasan who was also known as Sayyid Ḥasan Beg, who succeeded to the Imamate after the death of his father Imam Sayyid ʿAlī in 1167/1754.[107]

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[104] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 455.

[105] Daftary, *A Short History of the Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 195 and his *The Ismāʿīlīs,* pp. 451-456.

[106] Guharrez, *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz*, pp. 21-22. Quoted also in: Iloliev, *The Ismāʿīlī-Ṣūfī Sage of Pamir*, p. 38.

[107] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 459. See also the genealogical table on p. 509.

This event has been discussed by a number of modern scholars who propose that this event must have taken place sometime in 1142/1730.[108] However, this proposed date seems unconvincing. The text of the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* clearly indicates that Khwāja Muḥammad Sāliḥ visited the Qāsim-Shāhī Imam "whose pure name was Mawlānā Shāh-i Dīn Ḥasan b. Mawlānā Sayyid ʿAlī" who was the forty-second Qāsim-Shāhī Imam. Consequently, we must recapitulate that this event happened after the death of Imam Ḥasan ʿAlī, and therefore much later than 1167/1754. It follows that the second half of the eighteenth century marks the final unification process of the Qāsim-Shāhīs with the Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārīs. It would appear that the adherence of the Badakhshanī Ismāʿīlīs to the right fold had been completed by the time of the visit of Khwāja Ṣāliḥ to the court of the Imam of the Time in Iran.

Conclusion

Ismāʿīlī missionary activity in Badakhshan in the Alamūt and post-Alamūt periods was, directly or indirectly, controlled by the local *daʿwa*. The arrival of *dāʿī*s in Badakhshan reveals the dynamic of the missionary activity and its relationship with other confessions. After the death of the Imam Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. ca. 710/1310), an obscure schism occurred in the Imam's family, which divided the Ismāʿīlī community into Qāsim-Shāhī and Muḥammad-Shāhī branches. The Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan must have adhered to the Muḥammad-Shāhī line. It is likely that this took place at some point around the end of the fourteenth or the beginning of the fifteenth century when the Ismāʿīlī community of Badakhshan changed their allegiance to the line of Muḥammad-Shāhī Imam. For the local population at that time, the true religion was the one preached on behalf of the Imam from the *Ahl al-bayt*.

The focal point of any Islamic preaching, whether it is Shīʿī or Sunnī, is bound to the authority of the Prophet Muḥammad. Thus, for the local population, it becomes difficult to ascertain whether the preacher is really from the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* headquarters, the local *daʿwa* network or even from the Ṣūfī or Shīʿī fold. Therefore, it is safe to argue that, to implement non-Ismāʿīlī teaching among a community living on the outskirts of the Islamic caliphate, was not a difficult task.

The adherence to the Muḥammad-Shāhī branch became stronger as one of the Imams, namely Imam Rażī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir, arrived in the region and even consolidated the local

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[108] Iloliev, *The Ismāʿīlī-Ṣūfī Sage of Pamir,* pp. 38-39.

population against the Uzbeks and Tīmūrids (Chapter 2 and 3). After his execution, there was no direct relationship with his successor, the famous Muḥammad-Shāhī Imam, Shāh Ṭāhir Dakkanī and so a gradual return of the local Ismāʿīlīs to the Qāsim-Shāhī line of Imams occured. The unification of these two lines started sometime during the first half of the sixteenth century. It clearly emerges from the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* that with the *ẓuhūr* (appearance) of Imam Ẕū al-Faqār ʿAlī in the seventeenth century the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan started to received *Farmān*s (religious decrees) from the Imam in Iran. While the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams preached their doctrine in the guise of Twelver Shīʿas in South Asia, the Qāsim-Shāhīs of post-Alamūt Iran used both Twelver Shīʿism and Ṣūfism to conceal their true identity.

The Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan, ardent followers of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, used his theological and philosophical treatises in their *daʿwa* sermons. Likewise, local authors like Sayyid Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī, in the fifteenth century, and Shāh Ziyāī-i Shughnānī, in the sixteenth-seventeenth century, simplified the religious and philosophical ideas of Nāṣir and passed them on from generation to generation. The production of treatises like the *Salām-nāma* of Shāh Ziyāī-i Shughnānī and the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* of Guhrrez valadi Khwāja ʿAbd al-Nabī valadi Khwāja Ṣāliḥ-i Yumgī are the best examples, though there are many others.

The unification process of the Muḥammad-Shāhīs with the Qāsim-Shāhīs became possible due to the absence of contact with the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams. Equally, it became possible due to the inculcation of the notion of the recognition of the Imam expounded earlier by Nāṣir-i Khusraw in his writing and later modified by local authors and transmitted in sermons – *majlis-i daʿwat* - from generation to generation. While the Muḥammad-Shāhī line became extinct at some point around the end of the eighteenth century, the Qāsim-Shāhī line continues to the present day. Expressing their devotion to Imams from the *Ahl al-bayt,* the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan refer to themselves by means of the expression "the followers of the daʿwat-i Nāṣir" that has strengthened the historical evolution of Ismāʿīlī teaching in the region for more than ten centuries.

CHAPTER 7: THE ROLE OF *PĪRS:* RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY AMONG THE ISMĀʿĪLĪS OF PAMIR

Introduction

As previous chapters have detailed, the second half of the fourteenth and the first half of the fifteenth century saw the migration of the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan to the northern mountain principalities of Shughnān, Wakhān and the areas in foothills of the Pamir and Hindu Kush mountains. These remote regions remained the safe haven for migrants from the central lands of Badakhshan and Khurāsān. The safety of the region constituted the principal reason for this migration, as I have already outlined in previous chapters. A further contributory factor was that these remote regions remained under the control of local semi-independent rulers, who were either Twelver Shīʿas/Ismāʿīlīs or sympathetic towards Shīʿas, in general and Ismāʿīlīs, in particular.

This chapter, therefore, focuses on the Ismāʿīlī communities of the northern principalities of Shughnān, Wakhān and others mountain regions. In previous chapters, I briefly discussed the arrival of a number of *darvīshe*s or *dāʿī*s in Badakhshan and the northern mountain principalities who became known as *mīr*s and *pīr*s. The *mīr* or ruler was in charge of the political realm while the *pīr* (*shaykh*) or religious leader remained in charge of the religious life of these mountain societies. Here I shall briefly discuss the origin of the term *pīr* and its use by the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan. I shall analyse the story of the four *darvīshe*s who arrived in the region either prior to the Mongol invasion of Central Asia or in the subsequent centuries. To discuss the origin of the itinerant migrants, known as *qalandar*s and *darvīshe*s, I shall look closely both at the figure of Shāh Khāmūsh and at other *darvīshe*s, a study that will follow the division of the realm of control between religious leaders and political rulers. I shall discuss briefly the institutional role of the *pīr*s as well as their organisational structure and geographic domain among the Ismāʿīlīs of Pamir.

7.1. The *Pīr*s as Possessors of Religious Authority

The term *pīr*, in its common linguistic context is a reference to an "elder person." Its etymological derivation stems from the Persian language. Its Arabic equivalent is the term *shaykh.* In the religious context, the term *pīr* or *murshid* is of a Ṣūfī provenance denoting a "spiritual director" or "spiritual guide." The term *pīr* in its Ṣūfī context is also used to refer

to the eponymous founder of a Ṣūfī order or *ṭarīqa*.[1] Equally, the term *pīr* may also be used to refer to a spiritual guide who is gifted with spiritual power, which qualifies him to direct and guide a *murīd* on the Ṣūfī path.

No information is available on the use of the term *pīr* in Badakhshan. The employment of this term in relation to Nāṣir-i Khusraw is a complex issue as it raises more questions than it answers. The local oral tradition as recorded in the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* of Guharrez and the *Baḥr al-akhbār* of Saidjalāl Badakhshī demonstrates that Nāṣir-i Khusraw was referred to as Pīr Shāh Nāṣir or even *pīr-i Kuhistān,* despite the fact that he was elevated to the rank of *ḥujjat* (lit. chief *dāʿī*) in the Faṭimid Ismāʿīlī religious hierarchy - *ḥudūd al-dīn.* The employment of the term *pīr* in relation to Nāṣir-i Khusraw seems to be a later phenomenon.

It is important to note that the term *pīr* in the Ismāʿīlī context gives a different meaning from that in the Ṣūfī context. If the Ṣūfī *pīr* is a direct mediator between God and man, the Ismāʿīlī *pīr* is a person appointed to this position with the purpose of guiding and leading the novice *(mustajīb)* to the Imam of the Time.[2] The definition of the term *pīr* furnished by Imam Mustanṣir biʾllāh II (d. 885/1480) in his *Pandiyāt-i jawānmardī* (Advices of Manliness) will suffice to illustrate the point:

و پیر کسی باشد که امام زمان درجهٔ باو عطا کند که اشرف مخلوقات گردد و هر زمانی که پیر تعیین فرمود و بر قرار

نمود معرفت را بتفصیل باید بگوید و باید بتوسط او ﴾ امام او ﴿ امام شناسی را کامل نمائی . . .

> The *pīr* is the figure to whom the Imam of the Time has granted a position, which permits him to realise the rank of the 'noblest creatures' beings (*ashraf al-makhlūqāt*). And whenever the Imam had chosen the *pīr* and appointed him, he (i.e. the *pīr*) must convey spiritual knowledge (*maʿrifat-rā ba-tafṣīl bi-gūyad*) in depth and details to [the masses] and must perfect it with the recognition of the Imam.[3]

The widespread use of the term *pīr* in the Ismāʿīlī context dates back to the post-Alamūt period when the Ismāʿīlīs began to use various Ṣūfī terms as part of the practice of *taqiyya* (precautionary dissimulation). The difficulties encountered in the post-Alamūt period led

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[1] Bosworth, "Pīr: 1. In the Persian and Turkish Worlds," in *EI2*, vol. 8 (1995), p. 306; Trimingham, *The Ṣūfī Orders in Islam*, Oxford, 1998, pp. 172-176; Iloliev, "*Pirship* in Badakhshan: The Role and Significance of the Institute of the Religious Masters (*Pīrs*) in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Wakhan and Shughnan," in *JSIS,* vol. 6 (Spring 2013), pp. 155-176.

[2] For comparison, see: Nizami, "Pīr: 2. In Indo-Muslim Usage" and Poonawala, "Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn" and "Pīr Shams," in *EI2*, vol. 8 (1995), pp. 306-307.

[3] Mustanṣir biʾllāh, *Pandiyāt-i jawānmardī,* Ivanow, (ed.)., Leiden, 1953, (Persian) p. 42; Ivanow's translation appears on page 26 of the same publication. A modified translation of this passage is given in: Virani, *The Ismāʿīlīs in the Middle Ages*, 2007, p. 145.

to the migration of many Ismāʿīlīs, who may have reached those mountain regions of Badakhshan where interchange and conflation of Ṣūfī and Ismāʿīlī terminology took place, as it did throughout much of Iran during the same period. We may safely argue that it was during these difficult periods that the term *pīr* started to infiltrate into the vocabulary of different Nizārī Ismāʿīlī communities in Iran, India and Badakhshan including its mountain principalities.[4]

The passage from the *Pandiyāt-i javānmardī* clearly demonstrates that it is the prerogative of the Imam to bestow the title *pīr* on someone in the religious hierarchy. The *pīr* is the person who leads or calls the community to the Imam. He is also the figure who delivers the message of the Imam to the community. However, we do not possess a clear picture of how *pīr*s were appointed in the peripheral areas. We are able to assert that peripheral *pīr*s can be appointed on behalf of the Imam, particularly by his representatives, such as the *ḥujjat* (lit. chief *dāʿī*) or the *dāʿī* (lit. summoner), in their respective regions. The duty of the *pīr* in the remote regions is identical to that of *pīr*s in other regions, namely leading the novice to the Imam.

7.2. The Story of the Arrivals: Defining Chronological Boundaries

In its initial stage, the story of the arrival reveals the figures of religious mendicants or wandering *darvīshe*s, who left a comparatively prosperous life in Iran (particularly in Khurāsān, Sīstān and Sabzawār[5]) and took up residence in Badakhshan and its isolated mountain principalities. The first question that comes to mind is why these wandering *darvīshe*s did not chose a life in the central lands of Badakhshan, preferring instead to settle in regions as far from the urban centre as the Pamir principalities. The second question we must ask whenever we discuss these religious mendicants, is when (exactly or approximately) how and from where they migrated to this region. Since the local historical sources provide complex and contradictory details concerning the arrival of these *pīr*s, *dāʿī*s or simply wandering religious *darvīshe*s, it is important to locate their arrival within an exact or approximate timeframe. We may assume that the chronological discrepancies in the local sources stem from the absence of historical documents, records

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[4] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* 2007, pp. 465-468.

[5] Unfortunately, the local sources do not provide any details about the location of Sabzawār. However, it is important to note that Sabzawār or Sabzewār was the name of two towns in the eastern Iran. The first Sabzawār was in western Khurāsān and was part of the Bayhaq district. In modern time, the western Sabzawār is a small town 116 kilometres to the west of Nishāpūr. The second Sabzawār was also known as Isfizār and Asfizār was located in eastern Khurāsān. It was located between Sīstān and Herāt. Therefore, it was administratively connected to Sīstān rather than Khurāsān. Bosworth, "Sabzawār," in *EI2,* vol. 8 (1995), pp. 694-695.

and religious decrees. Thus, the spread of the story of these arrivals in the oral tradition created a web of interconnected narratives that, to a certain extent, lacks both logical and chronological consistency. For instance, drawing on stories from the oral tradition, Qurbān Muḥammadzāda and Muḥabbatshāhzāda narrate a beautiful story of the arrivals, which begins:

> It is known from earlier elder people that, from the region of Iṣfahān and the locality of Kāshān, which is in Iran, four wandering *dervishe*s set forth in search of a suitable place to set up a permanent residence. The first was Sayyid Muḥammad Iṣfahānī and was known as Shāh Kāshān, the second was Sayyid Shāh Malang, the third Sayyid Shāh Khāmūsh and the fourth Shāh Burhān Walī. They travelled abroad and eventually came to Shughnān. They took a liking to Shughnān and its natural surroundings.[6]

In order to locate the arrival of these figures in a historical context I shall attempt to deconstruct this story in order to give a detailed analysis. Clearly, this is a complex and challenging task. However, it is important to emphasise that the notes I present in this section have an admittedly sketchy and preliminary character. The appearance of a slight hint in other historical sources and modern studies will be compared in order to provide a tentative timeframe for the arrival of these *darvīshe*s.

The first and foremost contradiction that arises is the fact that the oral tradition places the arrival of all four *darvīshe*s in one historical epoch; that is to say, in the fourth quarter of the sixteenth century. Quite strange and unconvincing, however, is another fact, namely that Soviet scholars place the arrival of these four *darvīshe*s precisely in the year 988-89/1581. Upon examining all the available sources, I have been unable to find this date anywhere in any local as well as peripheral historical source. Pirumshoev, for instance, quotes this date in his article. He gives his source of information the local story - the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* by Qurbān Muḥammadzāda and Muḥabbatshāhzāda.[7] A close reading of the available manuscript (a printed facsimile and its edited text), however, clearly shows that the authors of this particular local historical work do not provide any specific date in relation to the arrival of these four *darvīshe*s. Instead, they use broad generic expressions of the immemorial past, such as *az zamānhā-i qadīm naql shud* or *az ādamān-i qadīm shunīdīm*, which literally translate as *it is known from ancient times* or *it has been narrated by the elders.* These generic expressions, however, cause a chronological

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[6] Qurbān Muḥammadzāda (Ākhūnd Sulaymān) and Muḥabbatshāhzāda (Sayyid Fuṭurshāh), *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* Moscow, 1973, p. 2. Please note that two historical works with an identical title – *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* – are used in writing this chapter. Therefore, the name of the authors will be provided before or after referring to this source.

[7] Pirumshoev, "The Pamirs and Badakhshan," in Adle and Habib, (eds.)., *HCCA*, vol. 5: *Development in Contrast: From the Sixteenth to the Mid-nineteenth Century*, UNESCO, 2003, pp. 228-229.

misrepresentation by stretching the timeframe for the arrival of these figures, retrospectively, from modern times to an unknown date in the early period of the spread of Islam to Badakhshan, which might have happened at some time in the tenth or eleventh centuries. As Aziz Esmail puts it:

> The sense of an immemorial past which we get in mythical narratives – the sense of a 'long time ago,' a 'once upon a time' – is the expression of a distance felt within human condition, in a here and now. The mythical sense of origin is a sense of on-going foundation. Its idea of an ancient lapse stems from the sense of a present infirmity.[8]

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, *Graf* (Count) Bobrinskoĭ (d. 1346/1927), one of the Russian pioneers of Pamiri studies and a scion of the Russian royal family, interviewed some local *pīr*s in Shughnān, Shākhdara and Wakhān. Despite being explicit in his interview with Sayyid Yūsuf ʿAlīshāh (d. 1350/1931), one of the local *pīr*s from Porshive,[9] Bobrinskoĭ was very much concerned with the socio-religious aspects of the life of the Ismāʿīlīs. Evidently, his interest lay in studying the institution of *pīrship* and the authority of *pīr*s over their *murīd*s.[10] Therefore, the chronology remains confined to the same generic expressions used by Pirumshoev and other scholars. Here, logic compels us to conclude that the use of these generic terms in the work of the Soviet scholars stems from interviews with the local religious leaders conducted by British and Tsarist Russian agents like Elias (d. 1315/1897), Gordon (d. 1332/1914), Bobrinskoĭ, Zarubin (d. 1887/1964), Snesarev (d. 1356/1937), Semenov (d. 1378/1958) and many others. Therefore, it is plausible to argue that it was the task of those scholars and travellers, who visited the region and interviewed the elders and the local *pīr*s, to bring forward the issue of, at least, an approximate chronology. Nonetheless, we can also clearly understand from the context of these narratives that it was the interviewee (the descendant of a local *pīr*), who tried to stick to conventional storytelling, which, to employ Aziz Esmail's expression, reflects the sense of an "immemorial past." The sense of an "immemorial past," however, would seem to be deceptive. The interviewers had their own agenda and left the chronological discrepancies in the local sources to those interested in scholarly studies of the history of the region. The chronological gap in treating the local mythical and historical narratives is a common pattern found throughout the mountain principalities. Analysing the similarity in the patterns of these narratives and the use of the broad generic terms,

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[8] Esmail, *A Scent of Sandalwood: Indo-Ismāʿīlī Religious Lyrics,* London, 2002, p. 19.

[9] Porshinev is a place 15 km north of Khorog in modern Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast'.

[10] Bobrinskoĭ, *Sekta Ismailʿīa v Russkikh i Bukharskikh Predelakh Tsentral'noĭ Azii,* Moscow, 1902.

mentioned earlier, encourages us to consider an extract from Bobrinskoĭ's interview with *pīr* Sayyid Yūsuf ʿAlīshāh, where the *pīr* states:

> Once upon a time, with my ancestor [i.e. *pīr* Sayyid Yūsuf ʿAlīshāh's ancestor] – Shāh Malang, from Khurāsān, from the city of Sabzawār, three [other] *pīrs* arrived in the mountainous principalities: [They are] Shāh Burhān, Shāh Khāmūsh and Shāh Kāshān. Shāh Khāmūsh took up residence in Kulāb, where he passed away. The *mīrs* of Shughnān consider him their predecessor. Apart from them [the *mīrs* of Shughnān], this *pīr* left some other descendants, some of whom are living here, in Shughnān, and others are living in Kulāb... Shāh Kāshān also left descendants, but none of them are *pīrs*. Shāh Burhān left no progeny. The largest number of descendants has been left by Shāh Malang and Shāh Kāshān.[11]

This passage evidently shows the recurrent theme in reports by British political agents, notably Elias, recently republished by Martin Ewans in his book, *Britain and Russia in Central Asia, 1880-1907*.[12] A slight variation is, however, revealed in Elias' presentation, which stems from the oral evidence he collected during his visit to the region. A similar pattern emerges from comparing Elias' report with another local source, the *Taʾrīkh-i mulki Shughnān* (*History of the Land of Shughnān*) of Sayyid Ḥaydarshāh Mubārakshāhzāda.[13] It seems safe to assume that Elias collected information in the same manner as Bobrinskoĭ, and later Semenov, namely through dialogue with the local population. As far as can be determined, this approach on the part of political agents contributed to bringing these historical events to the attention of modern scholars. However, detailed studies aimed at unravelling the mystery and secrecy behind the story of the arrivals remain to be performed.

Bahodur Iskandarov (d. 2006), a prominent Tajik historian, approaches this issue with a certain degree of caution. He uses the local primary sources, the oral tradition and the reports of those political agents available to him. Iskandarov proposes two possible hypotheses concerning the arrival of these four religious mendicants. However, he does not disclose his stance explicitly.

The first hypothesis, proposed by him, stems from Qurbān Muḥammadzāda and Muḥabbatshāhzāda's *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* corroborated by a *Shajara* – a family tree of the

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[11] Bobrinskoĭ, *Sekta Ismailʿīa*, pp. 4-5.

[12] Elias, "Report of a Mission to Chinese Turkistan and Badakhshan in 1885-86", in Ewans, (ed.)., *Britain and Russia in Central Asia, 1880-1907*, vol. 5, London, 2008, pp. 17-85.

[13] For comparison, see: Elias, "Report," in Ewans, (ed.)., *Britain and Russia in Central Asia, 1880-1907,* 2008, pp. 17-85 and Mubārakshāzāda, Sayyid Ḥaydarsho, *Istoriîa Shugnana,* Semenov, (Russian tr.), Tashkent, 1916, and its Tajik (Cyrillic) edition and translation by Jonboboev, and Mirkhoja as *Taʾrīkh-i mulk-i Shughnān,* Khorugh: Pomir, 1992.

Shāh Kāshānid *sayyid*s – as well as an historical chronicle entitled *Sarā-i dilrabā*, by Sayyid Farrukh Shāh the son of Shāh Partāwī. From this, he concludes:

> It is evident [from the above sources] that, in approximately 988-89/1581, four brothers dressed as dervishes arrived at Shughnān from Iṣfahān, having passed through Badakhshan and Lake Shīwa.[14]

This hypothesis adds further complexity to the story rather than resolving it, which is due to the fact that neither the poetic chronicle *Sarā-i dilrabā*, known by two other distinct titles – *Taʾrīkh-i shāhān-i Shughnā* and the *Mathnawī* – nor the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* by Qurbān Muḥammadzāda and Muḥabbatshāhzāda, provide any chronology whatsoever. Furthermore, where Bobrinskoĭ, Elias and the other local sources refer to these four wandering religious mendicants as "four *darvīshes*", Iskandarov's first hypothesis makes them four brothers.

The second hypothesis stems from an analysis and comparison of Gordon's report with the books by John Biddulph and Minaev, which are evidently based on local oral tradition and possibly local historical sources. I quote Iskandarov's long and appealing analysis here *in extenso*:

> Gordon once wrote that, according to the traditions of the Shughnanis, the family of their *shāh*s is from Persia. According to their account, five to seven hundred years ago, Shāh Khāmūsh, the forefather of the *shāh*s, *sayyid*s and *faqīr*s (laity) of Shughnān, arrived from Khurāsān. The local population were fire-worshippers and Shāh Khāmūsh started to teach them [the precepts of the] *Qurʾān*. At that time, the population of Darwāz already professed Islam. Many of them migrated to Shughnān and have become vehement followers of Shāh Khāmūsh. With the passage of a decade, quite a large number of the population became Muslim, leading to the outbreak of religious war. This religious war, however, ended with the defeat of the fire-worshipers in Shughnān [and Rushān].
>
> It is worth mentioning that, according to this account, the arrival of these four brother-dervishes relates to the eleventh and twelfth centuries; that is to say, to the early spread of Islam in these regions. Meanwhile, according to other sources, for example, the local chronicles, their arrival is recorded in later times; namely, in the sixteenth century. However, it is obvious that their arrival is linked with the spread of Shīʿism into these regions.[15]

It is clear from the above passage that the second hypothesis is a short analysis of Gordon's and Minaev's accounts followed by a summary of the first hypothesis. Iskandarov combines them and, for some unknown reason, reverses his conclusion to the

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[14] Iskandarov, *SEPAIPK,* 1983, p. 57. Lake Shiva is located in the north-eastern part of Afghan Badakhshan.

[15] Ibid. p. 58; See also: Minaev, *Svedeniīā o Stranakh,* 1879, pp. 155-158.

conventional local narrative story. The first paragraph quoted above relates the account of Gordon and Minaev, which indicates that each attempted to give a detailed analysis of the story. Neither of them placed the arrival of these *darvīshe*s in one historical period; and, moreover, they concentrated on the figure of Shāh Khāmūsh separately. Therefore, their implicit conclusion is that Shāh Khāmūsh arrived in the region much earlier than the other three *darvīshe*s. Iskandarov, on the other hand, explicitly avoids analysing this story. However, the objection might still be made that it was the lack of sources that compelled not only Iskandarov but other Soviet scholars as well simply to describe this particular historical event.

Another account of the arrival of these four religious mendicants is found in the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* of Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad and Fażlʿalībek Surkhafsar. This particular work provides two important historical documents, which were added as "Supplements" to the work. The first document is entitled *Nasab-nāma va silsila-i shāhān-i khiṭṭa-i kūhistān-i mulk-i Shughnān* (lit. The Genealogy of the Mīrs of the Mountain Region of Shughnān) and the second document entitled *Tarjama-i Sayyid Shāh Khāmūsh ki ajdādi mīrān va shāhān-i Shughnān ast* (lit. The Life of Shāh Khāmūsh, who is the Predecessor of the Mīrs and Shāhs of Shughnān).[16] The former appears to be a compilation of famous names where the author furnishes a list of all the prophets together with the Twelver Shīʿī Imams. Admittedly, the confusing part of this *Genealogy* is evident in the absence of any explanatory text, approximate chronology or the sources on which this genealogical chart is based. This type of compilation is still prevalent in the region.

The latter document, when compared to the former, resembles a narrative story, which stems from the local oral tradition. However, Fażlʿalībek Surkhafsar's text gives a hint that his narration is based on the family tree of the local rulers, the *mīr*s and *shāh*s, of Shughnān, known as the *Shajara-i sādāt* (lit. The Genealogy Book of Noble Sayyids). The latter document contained in the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*, provides significant information. The selected excerpt from the *Shajara-i sādāt* quoted in the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* provides some details about the life of Shāh Khāmūsh. Yet even this convoluted story does not provide the true religious identity of Shāh Khāmūsh.

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[16] Badakhshī, and Surkhafsar, *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* 1997, ff. 114b-127b, (Russian tr.), pp. 99-103. According to Boldyrev, a Soviet scholar, Fażlʿalībek Surkhafsar, who wrote the second part of this work, added these appendices to the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*. Boldyrev, "Vvedenie," in *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*, 1997, pp. 8-25. Gordon, *The Roof of the World: Being a Narrative of a Journey over the High Plateau of Tibet to the Russian Frontier and the Oxus Sources on Pamir,* Edinburgh, 1876.

Fażlʿalībek Surkhafsar in his 'Supplement' to the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* tells us that the real name of Shāh Khāmūsh is Sayyid Mīr Ḥasan Shāh and that he was born in Iṣfahān in 459/1065-66. His miraculous abilities started to become apparent at the age of twelve. His father is named as Sayyid Ḥaydar. The "Supplement" in the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* claims a Sayyid descent for Shāh Khāmūsh's father, Sayyid Ḥaydar linking him to the family of Imam Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī (d. 61/680).[17] Until he reached twenty-one, Shāh Khāmūsh studied the science of religion and theology under the guidance of his father. His maternal lineage meant he was an Uwaysī Walī. Furthermore, we learn from the same source that his mother and that of ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī (470-561/1077-1166), both daughters of a certain Sayyid ʿAbdullāh Sawmaʿī, were sisters.

When Shāh Khāmūsh reached the age of twenty-one, he set off on pilgrimage. Prior to his journey to Mecca, he stayed in Baghdād for several years. However, the text does not specify the precise duration of his stay in Baghdād. The strangest part of this journey is his meeting with ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī in Baghdād. The *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* narrates that Shāh Khāmūsh set off for the pilgrimage in the company of ʿAbd al-Qādir.[18] Simple mathematical calculation, however, must repudiate this account on the following grounds: if Shāh Khāmūsh travelled to Baghdād when he was twenty-one, it would mean that this event took place in 479/1086. At this time ʿAbd al-Qādir was only nine years old and could not have travelled to Baghdād on his own. Modern studies demonstrate that ʿAbd al-Qādir was sent to Baghdād in 488/1095, at which time he was eighteen. He travelled to Baghdād to pursue the study of the Ḥanbalite law.[19] This would imply that while ʿAbd al-Qādir was engaged in his studies Shāh Khāmūsh reached the northern mountain region of Shughnān. On these grounds, we may safely argue that the story of Shāh Khāmūsh in the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* is spurious, as the author tends to appropriate the figure of Shāh Khāmūsh and show him as a Ḥanbalī scholar or a Sunnī Ṣūfī. The fact that the story is spurious is shown in another section as well where Junayd al-Baghdādī, a celebrated Ṣūfī of the eighth-ninth century, commands Shāh Khāmūsh to visit Khuttalān (Khatlān) in the company of Shāh Malang, Shāh Kāshān and Bābā ʿUmar-i Yumgī.[20] I argued earlier that Shāh Malang and Shāh Kāshān travelled to Badakhshan sometime at the end of the

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[17] Badakhshī, and Surkhafsar, *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* ff. 120a-120b.

[18] Ibid. ff. 121a-122b.

[19] Lawrence, "ʿAbd al-Qāder Jīlānī," in *EIr,* vol. 1 (1982), pp. 132-133.

[20] Badakhshī, and Surkhafsar, *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* ff. 123b-124a; Gross, "Foundational Legends, Shrines and Ismāʿīlī Identity in Gorno-Badakhshan, Tajikistan," in Cormack, (ed.)., *Muslims and Others in Sacred Space,* Oxford, 2013, p. 169.

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fifteenth or second half of the sixteenth centuries while Junayd al-Baghdādī passed away in 298/910, namely more than 150 years before the likely birth of Shāh Khāmūsh.

Nonetheless, Fażlʿalībek Surkhafsar describes the journey of Shāh Khāmūsh to Shughnān as follows:

> Shāh Khāmūsh set forth in the company of four people and reached the banks of the river Panj, travelling through India, Chitrāl, Dardīstān and passing the Dū Rāha pass. From there, he continued to Shughnān.

> All of the inhabitants of Shughnān became followers of Shāh Khāmūsh and he started to teach the local population the science of theology and the rules of faith. Afterwards, he cured the fourteen-year old daughter of the ruler of Shughnān, who, as a sign of gratitude, offered her to him in marriage. They married in 490/1096. The descendants of Shāh Khāmūsh until today are the great princes and *īshān*s of Kuhistān [a reference to the mountain principalities]. Some of them are occupied with mundane rule, while the others teach [people] religion, as *murshīd*s and *pīr*s.[21]

As argued in Chapter 6, Shāh Khāmūsh was sent to Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities from Iran during the Alamūt period (pp. 152-158). The above passage gives a hint in support of this hypothesis on chronological grounds. However, it repudiates the argument of Pirumshoev and, to a certain extent, the first hypothesis of Iskandarov regarding the arrival of Shāh Khāmūsh in the region at some point in the sixteenth century. However, it does reveal the religious identity of Shāh Khāmūsh. As we learnt earlier, Shāh Khāmūsh was a Ḥusaynid sayyid from his paternal line and an Uwaysī Ṣūfī on his maternal side. This leaves us with several options, namely that Shāh Khāmūsh was either an Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī*, or a Sunnī Ṣūfī or even a Twelver Shīʿī religious scholar (lit. ʿālim). In other words, we cannot prove or deny the possibility that he was an Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* or had an affiliation with other religious confessions.

A number of sources from Badakhshan, such as the *Vathāiq* (Judicial decree) documents from the shrine of Nāṣir-i Khusraw published in 1959 by Khalīlullāh Khalīlī (d. 1987), demonstrate that the figure of Nāṣir-i Khusraw was "transformed" from an Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* to either a Sunnī religious scholar or a Ṣūfī *pīr*.[22] Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that the figure of Shāh Khāmūsh may also have been "transformed" from an Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* into a Twelver Shīʿī or a Ṣūfī *darvīsh*.[23] All of which shows that the religious identity of Shāh

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[21] Badakhshī, and Surkhafsar, *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*, ff. 119a-119b, (Russian tr.), pp. 100-101.

[22] Khalīlī, *Yumgān*, Kabul, 1959; Khalīlī, "Yumgān va Vathāiq-i taʾrīkhī dar bārai Nāṣir-i Khusraw," in *Yaghmā*, vol. 231, no. 8-9 (1346), pp. 438-442 and 472-476.

[23] For more information on the "transformation" and "adaptation" of the Ismāʿīlī *pīr*s in Badakhshan, see: Khalīlī, *Yūmgān*, Kābul, 1959. He discusses the transformation of the figure of Nāṣir-i Khusraw into a Sunnī ʿulamāʾ in detail. For such cases

Khāmūsh remains in a state of flux. The sources from the Sunnī milieu present him as a Sunnī scholar while for the Ismāʿīlīs of the mountain principality of Shughnān he remains an Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* and the founder of the local dynasties of *mīr*s and *pīr*s. The *mīr*s remained in control of the political realm while the *pīr*s were in charge of the religious life in the region until the nineteenth century.

7.3. Ruler or Religious Leader? Defining the Realm of *Pīr*s and *Darvīshe*s

The information provided in both works known as *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān*, together with the *Taʾrīkh-i shāhān-i Shughnān*, *Taʾrīkh-i mulk-i Shughnān* and other sources agree that Shāh Khāmūsh and his descendants chose the political realm of the region. It is, however, clear from the above discussion that, in the early stages after his arrival, Shāh Khāmūsh was preoccupied with religious propaganda and teaching. It was only after his marriage to Bībī Gulshakar, the daughter of the *shāh* of Shughnān, that he became involved in the political life. Thus, we may assume that, during his lifetime in Shughnān, he was the sole sovereign in charge of both the political and religious realms, until his son, Shāh Khudādād, succeeded him.[24]

The domain of religious authority was left to other *pīr*s and *sayyid*s, particularly those from the progeny of Shāh Kāshān and possibly that of Shāh Malang. However, prior to their arrival it was the prerogative of Shāh Khāmūsh and his descendants to control both realms. It is important to note that it was the political ruler who decided which religion should be dominant in his realm. As a result, we can raise a number of questions such as: had Shāh Khāmūsh been a non-Ismāʿīlī ruler of Shughnān, would he have tolerated the presence of a large number of Ismāʿīlīs in his domain? Equally, would he not have attempted to convert the local Ismāʿīlīs to his religion? All the available sources remain silent about vexing questions of this nature. The simple question is: if Shāh Khāmūsh and his descendants were non-Ismāʿīlīs, why then did they make no attempt to convert the local population to Shīʿī or Sunnī Islam?

Although the historical sources do not explicitly confirm the religious affiliation of Shāh Khāmūsh and his descendants, they implicitly assert that he and his descendants, the local *mīr*s and *shāh*s, are the followers of the Ismāʿīlī faith. The local oral tradition maintains that Shāh Khāmūsh was an Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī*, who even succeeded in converting the population

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in the Indian sub-continent, see: Khan, "The Role of the Qadiri Ṣūfīs in the Religious Life of Sind", in Khuhro (ed.)., *Sind Through the Centuries,* Karachi, 1981, pp. 119-129.

[24] Qurbān Muḥammadzāda and Muḥabbatshāhzāda, *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān,* Moscow, 1973, pp. 87-91.

of Muʾminābād[25] to the Ismāʿīlī cause. Shāh Khāmūsh passed away in Kulāb, where a shrine was erected over his tomb.[26] His shrine remains a *ziyāratgāh* – a place of visitation for the local population, while a small number of them continue their adherence to the Ismāʿīlī faith.

Although Shāh Khāmūsh arrived in Badakhshan much earlier than the other three *darvīshe*s, it was the latter religious mendicants who took charge of the religious life of the local Ismāʿīlīs. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, Shāh Khāmūsh was also preoccupied with preaching and teaching religion immediately after his arrival and before gradually taking over the political realm. The pattern of narrative in the wider context of Iran, Central Asia and Badakhshan repeats this version that it was after his marriage to the daughter of the local *shāh* that he became involved in local political affairs. In other words, it was the title *sayyid* that made him a worthy competitor for the local rulership.

The case of the later *pīr*s and even that of the *sayyid*s reflects a totally different development. It seems safe to argue that the later *pīr*s arrived in the region at some point in the mid-sixteenth century or slightly earlier. It is evident from *Graf* Babrinskoĭ's interview with *pīr* Sayyid Yūsuf ʿAlīshāh that his ancestors, namely Sayyid Shāh Malang together with Shāh Kāshān arrived in the Pamir principalities from Khurāsān "twelve generations ago." Twelve generations in a simple mathematical calculation of years represent approximately 350 years. If we now calculate the number of years from the date of *Graf* Babrinskoĭ's interview, which he conducted in 1902 or even somewhat earlier we arrive at an approximate date of sometime in the 960s/1560s, namely the mid-sixteenth century.[27] This would allow us to conclude that Shāh Khāmūsh's arrival occurred at some point in the last quarter of the eleventh century, while the three other religious mendicants or *pīr*s arrived in the region at some time in the mid-sixteenth century or even later.

Modern studies indicate that, with the advent of the Safavid Empire in Iran in 907/1501, the Ismāʿīlī headquarters were moved to Anjudān, which is situated thirty-seven kilometres east of Arāk (former Sulṭānābād) and about the same distance from Maḥallāt.[28] Since we know that Ismāʿīlī *pīr*s visited the Imam in this region, this would indicate that

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[25] Muʾminābād is the name of a village in the region of Khatlān in the southern part of modern Tajikistan.

[26] Ghoibov, "Mazori Shoh Khomush," in Kamol, (ed.)., *Chahordah Mazor,* Dushanbe, 2001, pp. 124-136; Gross, "Foundational Legends," pp. 169-179.

[27] Anthropologically a generation is counted as 28 or sometimes 30 years. I have used 28 years in my calculation.

[28] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs,* p. 423.

the relationship between the Ismāʿīlī Imam and his community in the remote Pamir principalities was only possible through the medium of local *pīr*s. Thus, the *pīr*s maintained the contact between the Imam and his community and preserved the local Ismāʿīlī tradition. This seems to have become possible only through the employment of a structural control over the scattered mountain communities. In other words, the religious authority of the *pīr*s allowed them to control the religious practices in the region through the implementation of the institution of *pīrship*, also known as an institution of social control and organisation. The following section will briefly elaborate on this issue.

7.4. The Institution of the *Pīrship*

In light of the above discussion, it becomes clear that the domain of religious authority is intrinsically bound to the figures of the *pīr*s and *sayyid*s and later to their descendants. It should be emphasised that there are some *sayyid*s in Badakhshan who do not possess the status of *pīr*. The religious affairs of the mountain regions are controlled by the *pīr*, who, as mentioned earlier, arrived in the Pamir principalities at some point in the late fifteenth and first half of the sixteenth centuries. Thus, it was the *pīr* who was in charge of the religious life of a *murīd*.

The arrival of the Ismāʿīlī *pīr*s, directly and indirectly, affected the socio-religious structure of the mountain societies. In order to control the religious practices of the local population, the *pīr*s established a system of religious control that encompassed the socio-economic and, to a certain extent, political domain of the isolated mountain societies. It should, however, be mentioned that the term and concept of the institution of the *pīrship* are modern and its application to sixteenth and seventeenth century Badakhshan will retrospectively reflect the social cohesion within these communities.

The presence of wandering religious *darvīshe*s in the southern parts of Badakhshan from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries shows the existence of various religious confessions. Since the southern parts of Badakhshan had close contact with Iran and Central Asia through Balkh and Herāt as well as with Mughal India through Kābul, this allowed the religious environment to remain dynamic. However, it was not safe for the Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī*s and *pīr*s to disclose their true religious identity which they hid in their necessary practice of *taqiyya*. The reasons for this are firstly that the Sunnī majority considered the Ismāʿīlīs *kāfir* and *mulḥid* and, secondly, that their open appearance in public places would lead to persecution, religious imposition and, in some cases, the extermination of a large number of Ismāʿīlīs.

Local historical sources indicate that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Naqshbandī Ṣūfīs were active in these regions. The *khuṭba* was read in the name of a Sunnī ruler, whose severity and brutality had driven the Ismāʿīlīs to the mountainous corners of the region. The use of *taqiyya* was a common practice among the Ismāʿīlīs of Iran and Central Asia in times of danger. The prevalent use of *taqiyya* led to the amalgamation of the Ismāʿīlīs with the Ṣūfīs, the two esoteric traditions in Islam (Chapter 8, 229-233).[29]

The basic principal of the institution of *pīrship* was based on the religious and socio-economic relationship between the *pīr* and his *murīd*s. The Ismāʿīlī *pīr* was in charge of religious guidance and the spread of the instructions received from the Imam in the form of a *farmān* (lit. religious decree) while the Ṣūfī *pīr* was the one who instructed the novice himself. In other words, the Ṣūfī *pīr* held the same position as the Ismāʿīlī Imam with the only exception that there is only one Imam at a given period.[30] Likewise, it was the duty of the *pīr* to collect and control the delivery of the religious dues (*zakāt* or as it is known among local population, *māli sarkār)*, which was sent to the Imam in Iran.[31]

Local sources, such as the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz*, *Baḥr al-akhbār* and the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* as well as modern studies, indicate that the religious authority of the *pīr*s grew rapidly, a growth which seems to be closely related to the nature of socio-economic relations. With the passage of time, the religious authority of the *pīr*s grew to the extent that they started to play the role of mediator between the local rulers and the laity.[32]

The *pīr*s in Badakhshan in a broader context were appointed by the representative of the Imam or sometimes by the Imam himself. For instance, we learn from Khayrkhwāh-i Herātī's *Risāla* that he was appointed as a *dāʿī* or *ḥujjat* of Khurāsān and Badakhshan after his father's demise, probably during the Imamate of Mustanṣir biʾllāh III (d. 904/1498).[33] This, therefore, leads us to think that Khayrkhwāh might have appointed his local representatives to take charge of both the religious and socio-economic activities in Badakhshan and its adjacent areas. This may also have led to the spread and preservation

[29] The Ismāʿīlī-Ṣūfī relations will be shortly discussed in chapter 8, pp. 228-233. A detailed and in depth analysis of the Ismāʿīlī-Ṣūfī relations remains a *desideratum.* For more details, see: Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy in al-Alandalus: Ibn Masarra, Ibn al-ʿArabī and the Ismāʿīlī Tradition,* Leiden, 2014; Massiges, *A Comparative Study of the Evolution of Sufism and Ismailism in the IXth-XIIth century Middle East,* Unpublished M.A. Thesis, SOAS, University of London, 1990.

[30] For more details, see: Markwith, "The *Imām* and the *Quṭb*: The *Axis Mundi* in Shīʿism and Sufism," in *Sophia Perennis,* no. 2 (Sprint 2009), pp. 25-65;

[31] Iloliev, *The Ismāʿīlī-Ṣūfī Sage of Pamir,* p. 57.

[32] Abaeva, *Malochislennie Narody Pamiro-Gindukushskogo Regiona Afganistana,* Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Tashkent, 1990, pp. 130-237; Stanishevskiĭ, *Sbornik Arkhivnykh Dokumentov po Istorii Pamira i Ismailizmu,* Moscow, 1933, pp. 316-406.

[33] Khayrkhwāh-i Herātī, *Taṣnifāt-i Khayr-khwāh-i Herātī,* Ivanow, (ed.)., Tehran, 1961, pp. 35-40; Daftary, "Khayrkhwāh-i Herātī," in *EI2:* Supplement, (2004), pp. 527-528.

of his works in Badakhshan. In this context we should mention his *Faṣl dar bayān-i shinākht-i Imām* (A Chapter on the Recognition of Imam), which was discovered in 1916 either in Rushān or Shughnān by the Russian ethnographer, Ivan Zarubin, and published by Ivanow in 1922 in Calcutta, India.[34]

The position and authority of the *pīr* and the institution of the *pīrship* became powerful in the region. The Tajik scholar, Elbon Hojibekov, proposes a number of factors to explain this phenomenon: first of all, the religious factor, as the *pīr* was considered the representative of the Imam and thus in charge of religious life of the community; secondly, there was the intermediary role that he played between the laity and the rulers and between the Imam and his followers.[35] Both cases reflect the ability of the *pīr* to play the role of a religious and political leader and mediator.

The religious authority of *pīr*s was the strong linking bond between him and his *murīd*s across a geographically scattered space. The bond stems from the fact that he was the bearer of the title *sayyid* – descendant of the Prophet or the Imams. Moreover, it is his appointment as a *pīr* which, directly or indirectly links him to the Imam of the Time. We must, however, bear in mind that the origin of the term *sayyid* as applying to the progeny of the Prophet Muḥammad remains open to speculation; the available genealogical charts do not seem to provide a reliable answer to this question. Abusaid Shokhumorov is of the opinion that it was part of the Safavid religious ideology to infuse Shīʿī elements into the genealogies of local *pīr*s and other religious clerics, such as the *khalīfa*, *īshān* and *mullā* that linked them to Twelver Shīʿas. Likewise, he refers to some of the genealogical tables of the ruling elites as concocted genealogies.[36] The striking evidence of the infusion of Twelver Shīʿī elements into the local Ismāʿīlī texts is reflected in the text of the *Charāgh-nāma,* which will separately be discussed in the last chapter of this thesis (Chapter 8, pp. 233-236).

7.5. The Structure of the Institution of *Pīrship*

The structure of the institution of the *pīrship* is embedded in its religious, political as well as the socio-economic functions. Although, structurally, it resembles the Ismāʿīlī hierarchy of faith, namely the *ḥudūd al-dīn*, its terminological dimension is defined by the local environment. The Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan are of the opinion that the religious authority

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[34] Khayrkhwāh-i Herātī, "Faṣl dar bayān-i shinākht-i Imām," in Ivanow, (ed.)., *Ismailitica,* Calcutta, 1922.

[35] Hojibekov, *Ismailitskie Dukhovnyee Nastavniki (Piry) i Ikh Rol' v Obshestvenno-Politicheskoĭ i Kul'turnoĭ Zhizni Shughnana,* Unpublished Kandidate Thesis, Dushanbe, 2002, pp. 25-40.

[36] Shokhumorov, *Razdelenie Badakhshana,* pp. 26-33.

of the institution of the *pīrship* is based on the doctrine of the Imamate, as it is the Imam who, directly or indirectly, appoints the *pīr*. However, the difference between the Ismāʿīlī hierarchy of faith and the institution of the *pīrship* is that the population of Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities had had no direct contact with the higher ranks of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* from which it would follow that, in the case of many *pīrs*, their direct appointment by the Imam of the Time, must be baseless, a fact which is evident in all of the local sources. Except for the few *pīrs* who were appointed by the Imam, it is plausible to assert that the rest of the *pīrs* may have been appointed by those representatives of the Imam who were in direct contact with him, such as the *ḥujjat* or *dāʿī*.

The appearance of local *pīrs* and their function is discussed briefly by Guharrez in a prose section of the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz,* which furnishes the names of *pīrs* from the different regions of Badakhshan. Although the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* gives the name of certain *pīrs,* it clearly does not provide any information about their appointment. However, it provides some passing information about their activities and role among the scattered mountain-dwelling Ismāʿīlī communities from the late fifteenth to the early nineteenth centuries. For instance, it gives the name of a certain Sayyid Mehtar, *pīr* Sayyid ʿAlī and *pīr* Sayyid Salmān, who called people to the Muḥammad-Shāhī line of Imams at some time during the first half of the sixteenth century (Figure 21, p. 176). In the Qāsim-Shāhī line, the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz,* names a *pīr* Sayyid Salmān ʿAbdāl and a *pīr* Sayyid Darvīsh Muḥammad (Figure 22, p. 178). Unfortunately, however, the text provides no information about their lives, education or origin. This local treatise also employs several other terms to refer to the retinue of the *pīr*, such as *rāhī* and *hādī*, terms discussed above in Chapter 6. The term *rāhī*, as is evident from the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz*, refers to a travelling "companion" of the Muḥammad-Shāhī *pīrs* when there existed open contact between the local population and the leader of the community. Its counterpart in the Qāsim-Shāhī fold is the term *hādī*, which denotes a "guide".[37] What is not known in relation to these terms is whether they were only employed in the local Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa*. The text of the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* explicitly confirms the use of both terms by the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārīs at some time in the mid-sixteenth century.[38] However, a definition and explanation of these terms is provided neither by Guharrez in his *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* nor in any of the local sources. This is, possibly,

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[37] Guharrez, *Gawhar-rīz,* Ms. G, ff. 51-52.
[38] Ibid. ff. 57-60.

an indication of the unification of these two branches, which seems to have taken place sometime in the first half of the sixteenth century.

The structural composition of the institution of the *pīrship* in the local context consists of seven ranks, as was the case during the Faṭimid and subsequent periods. This seems to have been implemented by Nāṣir-i Khusraw, when he set up a local network of the *daʿwat*. It is important to note that no direct contact existed with the first three ranks of the hierarchy, namely with the *Imam*, *ḥujjat* (lit. proof; chief-*dāʿī*) and *dāʿī* (lit. summoner). A sole exception is the case of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, who in his capacity of *ḥujjat* of Khurāsān and Badakhshan spent the last parts of his life in Badakhshan residing in the region of Yumgān. The other ranks in the hierarchy are *maʿẕūn-i akbar* (lit. the senior licentiate) that corresponds to *pīr*; *maʿẕūn-i aṣghar* (lit. the junior licentiate) who is referred to as *khalīfa* (*pīr*'s deputy). The last two ranks are *mustajīb* and lastly *murīd* (lit. novice).[39]

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                      ┌──────────────┐
                      │    Imam      │
                      └──────────────┘

                      ┌──────────────┐
                      │   Ḥujjat     │
                      └──────────────┘

                      ┌──────────────┐
                      │    Dāʿī      │
                      └──────────────┘

   ┌─────────────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────────────┐
   │   Maʿẕūn-i akbar        │        │         Pīr             │
   │  (the senior licentiate)│        │                         │
   └─────────────────────────┘        └─────────────────────────┘

   ┌─────────────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────────────┐
   │   Maʿẕūn-i aṣghar       │        │       Khalīfa           │
   │  (The junior licentiate)│        │    (Pīr's deputy)       │
   └─────────────────────────┘        └─────────────────────────┘

   ┌─────────────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────────────┐
   │       Mustajīb          │        │         Murīd           │
   └─────────────────────────┘        └─────────────────────────┘
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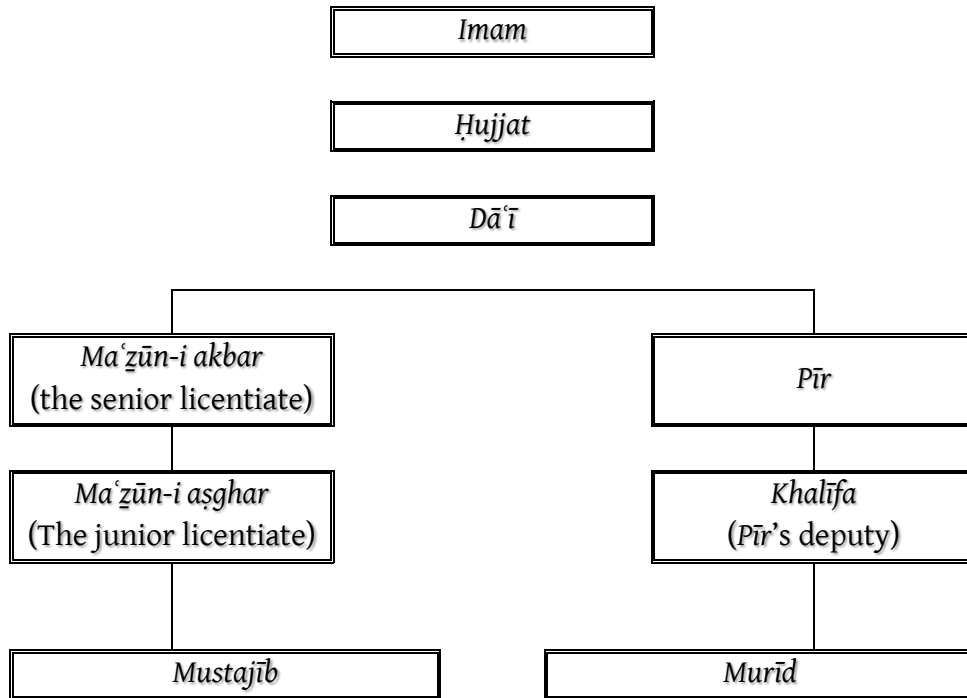
Figure 26: *Ḥudūd al-dīn* from the eighteenth-century Badakhshan

The term *khalīfa* in this hierarchy seems to be a modified version or even a replacement of the terms *hādī* or *rāhī*. Likewise, we can see the local hierarchy consists of six layers rather than seven. As we know from Russian sources, the term *khalīfa* is used to refer to the deputy of the *pīr* in all of his activities. Likewise, the *khalīfa* is the representative of the *pīr* in various localities. According to the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz*, it was the duty of the *khalīfa*, in line with the *rāhī* and *hādī*, to collect the religious dues from the local Ismāʿīlīs.

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[39] Iloliev, *The Ismāʿīlī-Ṣūfī Sage of Pamir,* 2008, p. 56.

The *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* lists the name of several other local *pīr*s, who were active in the seventeenth century, particularly during and after the Imamate of Ẕū al-Faqār ʿAlī (d. 1043/1634). One of the short stories as well as a long *qaṣīda* in the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* narrates a story about a certain *pīr* Khwāja ʿAbd al-Maʿṣūm, who seems to have visited the Imam (Imam Ẕū al-Faqār ʿAlī) sometime in the first half of the seventeenth century. After a meeting with the Imam, *pīr* Khwāja ʿAbd al-Maʿṣūm was given a religious decree, a *Farmān*, and he left the residence of the Imam.[40] There are two important points to note in relation to this narrative: first, Khwāja ʿAbd al-Maʿṣūm seems to have visited the court of the Imam several times as the *hādī* of a previous *pīr*, most probably *pīr* Sayyid Muḥammad Darvīsh or *pīr* Sayyid Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad.[41] As far as we can determine from the text of the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz*, during these visits, *pīr* Khwāja ʿAbd al-Maʿṣūm seems to have been just a *hādī* (Guide) of the *pīr*; moreover, it is evident from the last visit of Khwāja ʿAbd al-Maʿṣūm that he is the only *pīr*, according to the *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz,* who brought a religious decree, a *Farmān*, of the Imam to serve as new guidance for the mountain-dwelling Ismāʿīlīs. Therefore, we must conclude that the term *hādī* here refers to a person who accompanied the *pīr* during his visit to the court of the Imam. However, the holder of this position could not be granted the decree unless he were appointed to the position of *pīr* by the Imam.

Nor should we omit mention in this context the name of Khwāha Mehtar, Khwāja Ibrāhīm Ḥusayn and Khwāja Ṣāliḥ among many others. The *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* explicitly links these figures to the progeny of Sayyid Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī, the author of the *Sī va shish ṣaḥīfa* (Thirty Six Chapters) or *Tuḥfat al-nāẓirīn* (The Gift to the Readers). *Pīr* Khwāja Ṣāliḥ visited the forty second Ismāʿīlī Imam at some time in the first half of the eighteenth century.

The Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan refer to their *pīr*s by terms such as *muʿallim-i ṣādiq* (lit. truthful teacher) and *pīshwā* (lit. guide), who guide the novice on the path to the Imam. Thus, Rubābī, a local eighteenth century poet, in one of his long eulogies (*madḥiya*) refers to Imam Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī (d. 1206/1792) as the "king" and "the seal of religion," while using terms such as "the guide" (*pīshwā*) and "the truthful teacher" (*muʿallim-i ṣādiq*) in relation to *pīr* Shāh Nawā. Based on the authority of the local tradition, Iloliev asserts that Rubābī was a figure in the retinue of *pīr* Shāh Nawā, who was very famous in the regions of Wakhān and Zibāk. Pīr Shāh Nawā survived three Imams and passed away sometime

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[40] Guharrez, *Gawhar-rīz,* Ms. G, ff. 54-56.
[41] Ibid. f. 52.

during the last quarter of the eighteenth century.[42] A quotation from Rubābī's long *qaṣīda* in praise of the Imam Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī (d. 1206/1792) and *pīr* Shāh Nawā is quite apposite here:

<div dir="rtl">

به کام خویش همین شربت شفا دارم .   شـــها بـه درگــه تو روی الــتـجـا دارم،

همین سخن به حقیقت که پیشوا دارم .   منم که به دست به دامان شاه نوا دارم،

نگــین خـاتم سلطان دین ابوالحسن است .   گلی که رونق بـستان خلد نه چمن است،

به یک نفس دل پژمرده مـیکـند زنده .   بـه آن معلم صادق شوم به جان بنده،

رهـان مـــستـجبــان را ز نار سوزنـده .   جهان ز مقدم این اسم گشت زیبنده،

نگــین خـاتم سلطان دین ابوالحسن است .   گلی که رونق بـستان خلد نه چمن است .

</div>

O king! I always seek refuge in your court for protection,
For my palate, this is the only remedial nectar I have.
I am the one, who appeals to Shāh Nawā for help.
This word is certainly the truth that I have a guide.
The flower, which is the glory of the nine meadows of the Eternal Garden,
Is the signet ring's seal of the King of the Faith, Abū al-Ḥasan.

I become a true follower of that truthful teacher,
Who with one breath revives the lifeless heart.
The appearance of this *name*, has made the world seemly and pleasant to be,
Free the novice from the burning fire,
The flower, which is the glory of the nine meadows of the Eternal Garden,
Is the signet ring's seal of the King of the Faith, Abū al-Ḥasan.[43]

The above passage from Rubābī's eulogy indicates that the power and authority of the *pīr* are vested in him by the Imam of the Time. In light of this the *pīr* in the local context becomes an important figure in elucidating religious matters to the novice (*mustajīb*), which is clearly expressed in the second part of the distich. Rubābī clearly demonstrates that in the physical absence of the Imam of the Time, particularly during the period of *satr*, obedience to him is only possible through the medium of the *pīr* in the local context, as

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[42] Iloliev, *The Ismāʿīlī-Ṣūfī Sage of Pamir,* p. 58.

[43] A selection from Rubābī's eulogy *'Shahe ki zīrī nigīnash zamīn-u ham zuman ast'*, which is prevalent in Badakhshan. This passage is typed from a recorded copy, which is preserved in my personal collection. It is important to note that the last two lines starting with *"Gulī ki rawnaq-i bāghi..."* repeated throughout this *Qaṣīda*. The translation in the text is the one proposed by Dr. Leonard Lewisohn for which I am very grateful. My translation of the last two lines are shown below:

The flower that is the boom of the Eternal garden, the paradise, the nine universes,
Abū al-Ḥasan – the seal (pearl) of the ring of the king of religion.

the *pīr* is one of the ranks in the hierarchy of faith and initiation, who is in charge of the preservation and dissemination of religious teaching in the peripheral areas.

7.6. The *Pīr*s: Their Geographic Influence and Lineal Descent

The distribution of the *pīrship* in Badakhshan, in general, and the Pamir principalities, in particular, was based on the socio-political divisions of the region. It was the prerogative of the ruler, who usually divided his political domain into several districts. The religious authority of the *pīr*, however, transcended any geographical boundaries. The local historical sources fail to provide any clear information concerning the geographical division of the *pīr*s' territory. Iloliev is of the opinion that the *mīr*s or *shāh*s divided their political domain into *ṣadda* (lit. one hundred), a territory where one hundred households were living.[44] Evidently, this division reflects the nineteenth century division, which was retrospectively applied to the mid-seventeenth or even earlier centuries in Badakhshan.

The ruler's division encompassed all the people living in one *ṣadda*, while the *pīr*'s followers were to be found living in various districts. For instance, if a *pīr* were living in Shughnān, he could have had followers living in Wakhān, which politically belonged to the *mīr*s of Wakhān or *vice versa*. Hence, one *pīr* could have had more than three deputies, depending on who collected the religious dues for their *pīr*. Although the religious authority of the *pīr* could have been passed to his immediate progeny, the confirmation of his appointment was always sealed with a *Farmān* sent by the Imam to his followers.

Conclusion

The story of the arrival, related to the coming of the four *darvīshe*s, is a repeated theme in the local oral tradition. Although the story is beautifully narrated in the local sources and oral tradition, it raises chronological concerns, regarding which the sources lack precise information. Likewise, it raises some important questions about their identity, which, ironically were not noted by earlier scholars. It is evident from the above discussion that the *darvīshe*s who arrived in Badakhshan and Pamir represented themselves as *Sayyid*s or *Sharīf*s, a title that linked them, directly or indirectly, to the *Ahl al-bayt* of the Prophet. On many occasions, the attempt to trace their linage to the family of the Prophet through local *Nasab-nāma*s (lit. Biographical Dictionary or Family Tree), local and peripheral historical sources has proved in vain. Despite the fact that the term *pīr* is of Ṣūfī origin, it

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[44] Iloliev, *The Ismāʿīlī-Ṣūfī Sage of Pamir,* p. 59

started to appear in the Ismāʿīlī vocabulary of the post-Alamūt period. The term *pīr* in the Ismāʿīlī context was used to refer to a figure who called the novice to follow the Ismāʿīlī Imam.

The present chapter has argued that the four *dervishes,* who later assumed the office of *pīrship*, could not have arrived in the region at the same time. We have proved that Sayyid Shāh Khāmūsh arrived in the region sometime in or after 483/1090, while Shāh Kāshān, Shāh Malang and others arrived at some time in the mid-sixteenth and later centuries.

The local historical sources provide complex narratives pertaining to the identity of Mīr Ḥasan Shāh, better known as Shāh Khāmūsh. We have demonstrated that the "Supplement" added to the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* by Fażlʿalībek Surkhafsar does not constitute an authentic account of Shāh Khāmūsh's life. It is rather an "appropriated" account by the author. A detailed analysis of the story of the arrival shows that the author combined a number of stories into one which caused both chronological and logical complexities. In light of this the identity of Shāh Khāmūsh remains shrouded in mystery.

The later *darvīshe*s who arrived in the region in the sixteenth and later centuries present identical problems. These later *pīr*s prompted the appearance of the institution of *pīrship*, which is evidently a modified version of the religious hierarchy - *ḥudūd al-dīn* - employed by the Ismāʿīlīs. The modification of the hierarchy reflects the socio-linguistic reality of the context where the role of the *pīr* is extended from the religious sphere to the economic and, to a certain extent, the political sphere.

CHAPTER 8: *CHARĀGH-RAWSHAN*: AN ISMĀʿĪLĪ TRADITION FROM BADAKHSHAN

Introduction

In a diary kept by Pīr Sabz ʿAlī in Gujarati on his travels to Central Asia, we find a passage about his stay in Badakhshan. The passage reads:

> We spent the entire night in a *majlis*, a spiritual assembly. Enraptured, those devotees sweetly sang odes to the illustrious missionary, Nāṣir-i Khusraw, and recited his poetry. Words fail me in praising how the night was imbued with splendour by the *majlis*.[1]

Thus, Pīr Sabz ʿAlī describes the *majlis* he attended when visiting the region in 1342/1923 at the request of Imam Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh, Aga Khan III (d. 1377/1957). Two important points from this passage refer to the practice of faith among the local Ismāʿīlīs: the first one is the *majlis* and the second the *singing of odes.* The term *majlis* is possibly being used by Pīr Sabz ʿAlī to refer to three distinct practices, namely the practice of *Charāgh-rawshan*, *daʿwat-i baqā* (also known as *zinda-daʿwat*), and *daʿwat-i fanā.* The *daʿwat-i fanā* is part of the funeral rite and is usually performed on the third night of the *Charāgh-rawshan* (lit. Candle Lighting). The second element, *singing odes*, is known in the region as the practice of *madāḥ-khānī.*

Figure 27: Traditional Pamiri *rubāb*

Charāgh-rawshan and *madāḥ-khānī*[2] are two religious rituals prevalent among the Ismāʿīlī communities in the mountainous regions of Badakhshan and the neighbouring principalities. Local stories narrate that the tradition of *Charāgh-rawshan* and *madāḥ-khānī* arrived in the region with the missionary activity of Nāṣir-i Khusraw. According to the local tradition, the first person who started to sing *madāḥ* was a local ruler, Malik Jahān Shāh (d. 456/1063), who renounced his throne in order to serve the *Ḥujjat* of Khurāsān and Badakhshan. It is

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[1] Virani, "Pīr Sabz ʿAlī," in Landolt, Sheikh, and Kassam, (eds.)., *An Anthology of Ismāʿīlī Literature: A Shīʿī Vision of Islam*, London, 2008, p. 80; Nanji, "Sabz ʿAlī," in *EI2*, vol. 8 (1995), p. 694; For more details on Pīr Sabz ʿAlī's travel to Badakhshan, see: Anvarzod, *Yoddoshthoi Pir Sabzali Ramzon Ali*, Dushanbe, 2003.

[2] *Madāḥ-khānī* is the local version of *madḥiīā-khānī*. The term *madāḥ-khānī* stems from Persian and refers to the singing of religious and didactic poetry. For a detailed study of *madāḥ-khānī*, see: Berg, *Minstrel Poetry from the Pamir Mountains: A Study of the Songs and Poems of the Ismāʿīlīs of Tajik Badakhshan*, Wiesbaden, 2004; Tavakkalov, *Zhanri Madḥiīā dar Folklʾori Badakhshon*, Unpublished Kandidate Thesis, Dushanbe, 2005.

narrated that, in one congregation, Nāṣir gave a *rubāb* (traditional musical instrument) to Malik Jahān Shāh and asked him to sing didactic poetry, namely *madāḥ.* The very first ode Malik Jahān Shāh sang was a marvellous poem in praise of Imam ʿAlī:

دو لب ورد یا علی گوید .   یـك نزبـانـم ثـنـا عـلی گـویـد،

سی و دو دندانـم یا علی گوید .   این سر م سجده کرد با معبود،

My tongue utters praise to ʿAlī,
My two lips unceasingly utter oh ʿAlī.
My head prostrates in worship to the Lord,
My thirty-two teeth invoke oh ʿAlī.[3]

Thus, the local oral tradition passed from generation to generation, carrying the spirit of this tradition. It is evident from the daily life of the local population that Pīr Nāṣir-i Khusraw's thoughts and intellectual tradition still exert a great influence among the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī communities in Iran, Badakhshan and some localities in the region of the Upper Oxus, as well as the northern areas of Pakistan. Although, the local narrative story is mythical in nature, it still raises certain important historical issues related to the figure of Nāṣir-i Khusraw and his missionary activities. Similarly, it draws our attention to the tradition of *madāḥ-khānī,* which was an integral part of religious assemblies. In the light of this, we may conclude from the passage cited above that *madāḥ-khānī* is as old as the tradition of *Charāgh-rawshan* itself and that, in many cases, these two traditions are intimately interconnected.

The term *Charāgh-rawshan* consists of two linguistic elements: the *charāgh* or *chirāgh,* which stems from a Syraic word *shrag* or *shragh*, meaning a lamp, and the Persian term *rawshan* (or *rawshan kardan*), which literally means "to light" or "to kindle." Thus, *Charāgh-rawshan* means "shining" or "a luminous lamp." This practice is one of the oldest surviving Ismāʿīlī religious traditions practised among the local inhabitants of mountainous Badakhshan. It is also a custom prevalent among the Ismāʿīlīs of the northern areas of Pakistan and some parts of modern Afghanistan.

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[3] Tavakalov, *Zhanri Madhiīā,* p. 18 and his "Madhiyasaroi va Hakim Nosir-i Khusraw," in Niyozov, and Nazariev, (eds.), *Nāṣir Khusraw: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow,* Khujand, 2005, pp. 5580-585. This story is drawn from a local narrative story called *"Baḥr al-akhbār,"* a short treatise on the life and activity of Nāṣir-i Khusraw in Badakhshan, which is ascribed to the pen of a certain Saidjalāl Badakhshī. Local tradition narrates that, upon joining the mission of Nāṣir-i Khusraw Malik Jahān Shāh became known as Bābā ʿUmar-ī Yumgī or Sayyid ʿŪmar-i Yumgī. Sayyid Jalāl-i Badakhshī, *Baḥr al-akhār,* Rahmonqulov, (ed.)., Khorugh, 1992. See also: Chapter 2, section 2.1. "A Brief Comment on the Origin of the Mīrs and Shāhs of Badakhshan," pp. 44-50.

The tradition of *Charāgh-rawshan,* which will be analysed here, is a unique tradition among the Ismāʿīlī communities of Badakhshan. The first scholar who published the text of *Charāgh-nāma* was Vladimir Ivanow, the pioneer of modern Ismāʿīlī studies. He was the first scholar to publish the text of the *Charāgh-nāma* in 1379/1959 in the *Revue Iranienne d'Anthropologie.* In the introduction to the published text, Ivanow briefly discusses Ismāʿīlī-Ṣūfī relations, but avoids giving a detailed textual analysis of this short treatise. Expressing his joy at finding this valuable source that allowed him to elaborate his proposed theory of Ismāʿīlī-Ṣūfī relations. Hence, he remarks:

> I was therefore very glad when some pilgrims from Central Asia brought a very interesting document, fully vindicating the proposed theory. It is called *"Charāgh-nāma,"* an opuscule of what may be called the purely *darvīsh* nature. It may be explained that wandering religious mendicants, who go under the general name of *darvīshes* in the Islamic world, vary very much in their ways, habits and traditions.[4]

The following discussion is a detailed analysis of the intricate nature of the text of *Charāgh-nāma.* The text is a unique example of the Ismāʿīlī - Ṣūfī - Twelver Shīʿa relationships in the context of inter-faith discourse in Badakhshan. However, I shall discuss the infiltration of various terminology in the text of the *Charāgh-nāma* practiced by local Ismāʿīlīs.

8.1. What is the *Charāgh-rawshan*?

The *Charāgh-rawshan* is a *majlis* or a gathering of believers, where a lamp is kindled and verses from the *Qurʾān* are recited for the eternal peace of a departed soul. The recitation of the *Qurʾānic* verses is followed by *madāḥ-khānī* until dawn – a time when the ritual of *Charāgh-rawshan* is performed. It is the time when the *khalīfa* reads the text of the *Charāgh-nāma,* the participants chant a choral praise to God, the Prophet Muḥammad and Imams from the *Ahl al-bayt.*

The local tradition informs us that the tradition of *Charāgh-rawshan* consisted of several other religious rituals, namely, *daʿwat-i baqā* and *daʿwat-i fanā.*[5] In some areas, we also find mention of *daʿwat-i ṣafā* and *daʿwat-i riżā,* rituals that are no longer practised in modern times. This chapter will discuss briefly both *daʿwat-i fanā* and *daʿwat-i baqā.*

The tradition of *Charāgh-rawshan,* as one of the rites of the funeral ceremony, is practised on the second or third night. There is a similarity in the practice of *Charāgh-rawshan* among the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan and the northern areas of Pakistan. The core of this tradition

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[4] Ivanow, "Sufism and Ismailism: *Charāgh nāma,*" p. 15.

[5] Najib, "Nazare ba Marāsimi *'Charāgh-rawshan'* dar Āsiyā-i Markazi," in Shozodamuhammad, *Manābīʿ-i Sunnat-i 'Charāgh-rawshan,* Dushanbe, 2009, pp. 77-84. This article was originally published in *Maʿārif-i Islāmī,* Pakistan in 1976.

is intrinsically connected to the *Qurʾānic* notion of light – *Nūr* – which will be further discussed in section 8.3.1. Thus, when the *Charāgh* or lamp is kindled, the religious procession starts, consisting of several inter-related rituals, such as reciting verses from the *Qurʾān* and, reciting some other important religious prayers known as *duʿā*. This is followed by the singing of religious and didactic poetry (*qaṣīda* or ode) in praise of the Prophet Muḥammad and Imams from the *Ahl al-bayt*.

Prior to the lightning of the *Charāgh*, the *khalīfa* prepares the wick (Per. *fatīla*) for the lamp and inserts it in the oil specially prepared from the fat of a sacrificial animal - a ram. Traditionally, a family breeds the ram, known among local population as *daʿwati*, which is slaughtered during the time of *Charāgh-rawshan*. Equally, this ram is slaughtered for the prosperity of the family known as *khudāi* (lit. for the sake of God)[6] among the local population.

8.1.1. The Practice of *Daʿwat-i Fanā*

The term *fanā* literally means, *to pass away*, *to perish* or *to annihilate*.[7] This term is of Ṣūfī provenance, meaning to die in God. In other words, *fanā* is the passing away of the self, which is the essential pre-requisite to the survival (*baqā*) of the selfless divine qualities placed in man by God.[8] The combination of the Ṣūfī term *fanā* and an Ismāʿīlī term *daʿwat* produces a new meaning. As a generic term, *daʿwat-i fanā* refers to a religious rite, which is part of the funeral practice among the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan. The performance of this rite, as a compulsory element of the *daʿwat* ceremony or funerary rites, usually took place on the third night.[9] Traditionally, neighbours bring food for the members of the bereaved family. Ivan Zarubin, the twentieth century Russian ethnographer, provides a long description of this ritual in one of his field diaries, entitled *Shugnanskiaĩa Ėtnografiĩa* (The Ethnography of Shughnān).[10] By contrast, John Biddulph (d. 1340/1921) gives a succinct description of this ritual in his book *Tribes of Hindoo Koosh* where the author describes his encounter in the following way:

> On the evening of the appointed day, a *caliph* [*khalīfa*] comes to the house, and food is cooked and offered to him. He eats a mouthful and places a piece of bread in the mouth of

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[6] Zarubin, *Shugnanskiaĩa Ėtnografiĩa,* F. 12, Op. 1, no: 242, Arkhiv Vostokovedov AN SSR, Moscow, n/d, ff. 123-156.

[7] Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic,* Cowan, (ed.)., Beirut-London, 1980, p. 729.

[8] Wilcox, "The Dual Mystical Concept of *Fanāʾ* and *Baqāʾ* in Early Ṣūfism," in *BJMES,* (April 2011), pp. 95-96.

[9] *Daʿwat-i fanā* or *shab-i daʿwat*, according to the local population, was performed on the third night. In modern times it is performed on the second night.

[10] For complete bibliographic details, see note 6 above.

the dead man's heir, after which the rest of the family partake. The lamp is then lit, from which the ceremony is called *"Chirag-roshan"* and, a six-stringed guitar called *gherba* being produced, singing is kept up for the whole night.[11]

John Biddulph's description clearly shows that *daʿwat-i fanā* or *Charāgh-rawshan* is performed when a member of a family passes away. We can safely adduce that Biddulph only described the third night of the funerary rites.[12]

The Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan are of the opinion that the practice of *Charāgh-rawshan* has a philosophical meaning, which, in one way or another, is linked to the figure of Nāṣir-i Khusraw. Nonetheless, no precise evidence has thus far been produced to prove this assertion.

8.1.2. The Practice of *Daʿwat-i Baqā*

The term *baqā* literally means *to survive* or *to remain*[13] and is used to refer to life. Like the term *fanā*, the term *baqā* is also of Ṣūfī origin and in combination with the term *daʿwat* it refers to the religious rituals and rites practised by the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan. The term *daʿwat-i baqā* is used not in a literal sense but rather in a metaphorical and philosophical sense. Hence, it is a reference to the life of the soul but not the body. The body, according to Ismāʿīlī teaching as well as to the local tradition, is transitory while the soul is eternal. If the ritual of *daʿwat-i fanā* is performed for the soul of a deceased person, on the contrary, a person who is alive performs the ritual of *daʿwat-i baqā*. The Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan use the term *zinda-daʿwat* (lit. an assembly for eternal life) to refer to this practice. *Daʿwat-i baqā*, unlike *daʿwat-i-fanā*, is performed only by the elders of the community or by those who wish to perform it.[14]

Our description of the tradition of *Charāgh-rawshan* raises the question of the relevance of this tradition to the present research. In my defence, however, I should mention that the present study of the *Charāgh-rawshan* will mainly focus on historical and textual analysis rather than on an anthropological study of the tradition. Hence, this chapter seeks to fill the gap in the historical and textual analysis of selected passages from the *Charāgh-nāma.*

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[11] Biddulph, *Tribes of the Hindoo Koosh,* Calcutta, 1880, p. 123. The Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan use *rubāb* – a six-stringed traditional musical instrument during the singing of *madāḥ.* Alidod, "Falsafai Rubob," in *Badakhshon,* no. 8 (June. 2001).

[12] For a detailed analysis of *daʿwat-i fanā*, see: Khan, *Living Tradition of Nāṣir-i Khusraw: A Study of Ismāʿīlī Practices in Afghan Badakhshan,* Unpublished Field Project, IIS, London, 2004; Lashkariev, *Pokhoronno-Paminalnaĩa Obrĩadnost' Bartangĩšev,* Unpublished Thesis: Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Moscow, 2007.

[13] Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic,* p.69.

[14] Khan, *Living Tradition of Nāṣir Khusraw,* Chapter VII: *Living Traditions and Ceremonial Practices,* London, 2004; Hojibekov, "Roje' ba yak Sunnatii Mazhabii Mardumi Badakhshon," in Niyozov, and Nazariev, (eds.)., *Nāṣir Khusraw: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow,* 2005, pp. 605-610.

My brief historical analysis of the text will, hopefully, shed light on the development of Ismāʿīlism in Badakhshan and the Pamir principalities.

8.2. The *Charāgh-nāma:* Reflections on the Texts and Their Authorship

The *Charāgh-nāma* is a text prevalent among the Ismāʿīlīs of Tajik and Afghan Badakhshan, the northern areas of modern Pakistan and Xinjiang province of modern China. A copy of this text can be found in the collection of any *khalīfa* in these regions. The manuscripts of the *Charāgh-nāma* consulted for this study show that the text can be divided into two parts. Part one consists of various prayers and background discussion and Part Two is the text used during the *daʿwat* or *Charāgh-rawshan.* Part One of the text varies in length and in content. For example, the text of the *Charāgh-nāma* collated from various manuscripts by Qudratullāh Beg has a short treatise as an introduction called *Rūḥ-nāma* (A Treatise on the Soul). Although Qudratullāh Beg's compilation is not dated, it is clear that the text is a compilation of the same text from various sources. The total length of the text including the *Rūḥ-nāma* is in excess of 95 folios. By contrast the text of the *Charāgh-nāma* found by Ivan Zarubin in Gorno-Badakhshan consists of 43 folios. This text is dated 1334/1915 and it is evident that it was copied from an older manuscript.

Part Two of the *Charāgh-nāma* consists of 15 or 20 texts, which are *Qurʾānic* verses, various prayers, poems in praise of the Prophet Muḥammad and Imams from the *Ahl al-bayt.* The texts are linked together by an invocation - *ṣalwāt* or *ṣalawāt* (lit. prayer, praise or benediction). When the *khalīfa* performs the ritual of *Charāgh-rawshan,* the participants recite the *ṣalwāt* or *ṣalawāt* together in chorus. The author or authors of these texts remain unknown.

The question of the authorship of the *Charāgh-nāma* opens up a broad spectrum of discourses on the origin of the text as well as of this particular religious rite. The pre-Islamic origin of the text of *Charāgh-nāma* undoubtedly falls beyond the framework of this study, since no written historical sources are available to enable its reconstruction. Thus, we will confine our short discussion to the framework of the Islamic tradition in general and the Ismāʿīlī tradition in particular. We should mention that the tradition of *Charāgh-rawshan* consists of several distinctive inter-related rites - the recitation of *Qurʾānic* verses, *madāḥ-khānī* and the performance of *Charāgh-rawshan* - that are notoriously Islamic in character.

The oral tradition from Badakhshan maintains that the tradition of *Charāgh-rawshan* originated at the time of Nāṣir-i Khusraw. Sources such as the *Hidāyat al-muʾminīn al-ṭālibīn* of Fidāʾī Khurāsānī and *Silk-i Gawhar-rīz* of Guharrez valadi Khwāja ʿAbd al-Nabī valadi Khwāja Ṣāliḥ-i Yumgī narrate that Nāṣir was sent to Khurāsān and Badakhshan to convert the local population to the Ismāʿīlī faith and provide spiritual guidance. Abusaid Shokhumorov asserts that Nāṣir produced a work on "the relation of the body and soul and the survival of the soul after the body's annihilation," entitled *Miṣbāḥ* (lit. The Lamp).[15] The work is mentioned in his *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn* but unfortunately, no copy has come down to us. Shokhumorov apparently based his argument on the authorship of the *Charāgh-nāma* in this particular work but it remains difficult to substantiate such an assertion in the absence of the work itself.

The Ismāʿīlīs of the Nāṣir-i Khusraw tradition argue that Nāṣir-i Khusraw is the author of the text. Similarly, they argue that the philosophical underpinning of the ritual of *Charāgh-rawshan* stems from Nāṣir's works, which were propagated during the *majlis.* The *majlis*, in its turn, could be the initial form of this tradition that incorporated the recitation of *Qurʾānic* verses along with a talk on religious and didactic topics. Singing *madāḥ* in this *majlis* lends a purely mystical essence to the ritual of *Charāgh-rawshan.* This tradition, *par excellence*, is sacred to the local population as, in its spiritual and philosophical dimension it is linked to the figure of Pīr Shāh Nāṣir-i Khusraw.

As I outlined above, the text of the *Charāgh-nāma* is a combination of prose and poetry, "arranged more or less systematically in such a way that the contents may be used for singing."[16] Traditionally, author(s) used to state their name or *nom de plume* in the signature line at the end. The text of the *Charāgh-nāma* consists of a range of poems, where we can see only one (or two) such signature lines. Upon a close reading of the text, we can see that this single signature line is actually a combination of two signature lines with the same rhyming scheme:

گویم قاسمی وار صلوات بر محمد .

اسرار ملک جبّار چون روز و شب به تکرار،

برخوان به نام الله صلوات بر محمد .

خوش گفت نعمت الله رمزیست قُل هو الله،

The secrets of the world of the Almighty like night and day repeatedly,
We say as did Qāsim, blessings [be] upon Muḥammad.

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[15] Shokhumorov, "*Charāgh-rawshankunī,*" in *Masʿalahoi Pomirshinosī,* no. 5 (2003), p. 93.
[16] Ivanow, "Sufism and Ismāʿīlism: *Charāgh-nāma,*" p. 15.

It was well said by Niʿmatullāh, "Say: He is Allāh" is an allusion [to],
Recite in the name of Allāh, blessings [be] upon Muḥammad.[17]

This example alludes to the figure of Qāsim-i Anwār and at the same time to Shāh Niʿmatullāh Walī, which makes it quite odd. The question that presents itself at this point is how a poem can have two signature lines. Surprisingly, this particular case presents a tri-dimensional complexity, the first and second being the relationship of Niʿmatullāh Walī (d. 834/1431) to Qāsim-i Anwār (d. 837/1433) and vice versa, and the third their relationship to the tradition of *Charāgh-rawshan* and the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan. It also raises yet another important issue related to the text transmission process. We are all aware that minor or sometimes even major errors or additions can creep into a text at the time of its transcription, but this intentional or unintentional addition to the text may perhaps be made by the scribe under "an indomitable impulse to seek poetic glory."[18]

Returning to the question of authorship, we should mention that the text of the *Charāgh-nāma* contains only one poem by Shāh Niʿmatullāh Walī, which does not prove that he was the author of the entire text. The question that arises, at least from the discursive and logical point of view, is: if the text of the *Charāgh-nāma* was written neither by Nāṣir-i Khusraw nor by Shāh Niʿmatullāh Walī or any other of the Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī*s or Ṣūfī *pīr*s and *shaykh*s, who then did write it? Unfortunately, we are far from being able to postulate an authorship of the text, as the names of the prophets, imams, saints and Ṣūfī mystics stretch the historical framework of this tradition from the time of Ādam up to Shāh Niʿmatullāh Walī's time.

What can be said with certainty, however, is that the text of *Charāgh-nāma* is of Persian origin, and was written by someone who was well-versed both in the *Qurʾān* and the doctrine of the *Imāmat*, which is shared by both Ismāʿīlī and Twelver Shīʿas. The text of the *Charāgh-nāma* is also heavily infiltrated by Ṣūfī mystical symbolism and expression. The surviving copies of the *Charāgh-nāma* point to the considerable textual evidence that it is a crystallised text dating at least from the end of the fifteenth century.

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[17] *Charāgh-nāma and Namāzi janāza,* Ms. U, ff. 19b; See also: Shozodamuhammad, *Manobeʿ-i Sunnat-i Charogh-rawshan,* 2009, pp. 34-35. The first signature line that quotes the name of *Qāsim-i Anvār* is missing from Shāh Niʿmatullāh Walī's *Dīvān,* which leads us to assume that this particular line was added to the text by another scribe. The signature line in Shāh Niʿmatullāh's *Dīvān* is as follows:

<div dir="rtl">خوش‌گفت نعمت‌الله رمزی زلی مع اله   خوش‌گو بعشق الله صلوات بر محمد .</div>

See: Shāh Niʿmatullāh-i Walī, *Kulliyāt-i Ashʿār-i Shāh Niʿmatullāh-i Walī,* Nurbakhsh, (ed.), Tehran, 1374, p. 638ff.

[18] Roy, *The Islamic Syncretic Tradition in Bengal,* Princeton, 1983, p. 9; Asani, *The "Bujh Niranjan,"* p. 8.

8.3. Textual Analysis of the *Charāgh-nāma*

The text of the *Charāgh-nāma* constitutes the core of a religious rite practised by the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan, the northern areas of Pakistan and some parts of Xinjiang province in China. Reading the text of *Charāgh-nāma* in its historical, cultural and ritualistic contexts brings to the fore various aspects of Islamic history in general and Ismāʿīlī history in particular. It is, however, through analogy and symbolism that these aspects touch the core of the tradition. To understand the text and its symbolic significance, we must explore the context, whether historical or intellectual, in which it was produced. The historical context, in turn, is framed by reference to the various elements of socio-religious interaction. The text clearly reflects the ever changing nature of the milieu and the demands for integration, reformulation and acculturation. These processes, which directly or indirectly influence the text, create a paradigm whereby the text cannot be explained or, most importantly, comprehended without the context or *vice versa*. As George Steiner, a well-known literary critic commented:

> When using a word we take into resonance, as it were, its entire previous history. A text is imbedded in specific historical time; it has what linguists call a diachronic structure. To read fully is to restore all that one can of the immediacies of value in which speech actually occurs.[19]

The "immediacy of value" in the study of the *Charāgh-nāma* as a text highlights a methodological concern. First of all, it is necessary to analyse the content critically in order to understand the entire, or partial, history of the particular ritual through the terms and notions employed within the text. To do this will require a critical methodology in order to move from speculative questioning to a close reading of the text. I therefore propose adopting some inter-related methodologies for a close reading of the text, namely "comparing" and "contrasting" various parts and sections of the text while at the same time "dividing the text into smaller units" in order to comprehend the meaning. Likewise, "simplification" will also be employed, which will allow us to go beyond the context in order to understand the background discussed above.[20]

It should be mentioned that the structural organisation of the various texts, in prose or poetry, presented in the text of *Charāgh-nāma* raises some vexing questions regarding the relationship between them. The principal one that emerges from a close study of various

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[19] Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation,* London: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 24.

[20] Shoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam,* London, 2006; Steiner, *After Babel,* (Particularly Chapters 1 and 3).

sections of the *Charāgh-nāma* is that of co-existence between Ismāʿīlism, Imamī Shīʿism and Ṣūfism. These sects of Islam appear to share certain common ground while directly opposing each other on certain theological and doctrinal issues; moreover, at the same time they share the same geographic and ritualistic space. How can Twelver Shīʿa teaching, which is, ideologically, in opposition to Ismāʿīlism, and Ṣūfism share the same geographical and doctrinal space within the context of the *Charāgh-nāma*? Does it reflect an imposition, which could only have been possible through political intervention? Or is it an unintentional interpolation and addendum to this religious rite and its text? Or, on the other hand, is it simply another form of the practice of *taqiyya* by local Ismāʿīlīs that allowed these teachings to intermingle? Questions about the origin of the work, which I briefly touched on above, also surface once more; this dilemma must await a study on its own. As a consequence, I have divided this section into shorter sub-sections that will allow me to consider certain issues through a closer reading.

One additional point about the text of the *Charāgh-nāma* must be noted at this point, which is its use of language. It contains certain verses from the *Qurʾān* (in Arabic) but is mostly written in Persian, the *lingua franca* of the local population, infused with the religious and mystical symbolism, theological issues as well as ethical teaching of Islam. The structural organisation of the text rotates around the principal of *tawḥīd* (lit. Oneness of God) and the concepts of *nubuwat* (lit. Prophetology) and *Imāmat* (lit. the Imamate), which are the significant elements in Ismāʿīlī teaching.

8.3.1. The *Qurʾānic* Origin of the Text of the *Charāgh-nāma*

The *Qurʾān* is the main scripture in Islam used in the daily life of Muslims. The text of the *Charāgh-nāma* is permeated with verses from the *Holy Qurʾān*. It starts with the glorification of Allāh and professes the Oneness of the Lord - *tawḥīd*. The opening statement used at the beginning of the *Charāgh-nāma* and other traditional religious rites of the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan is:

وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلِيٌّ مِنَ الذُّلِّ وَكَبِّرْهُ تَكْبِيرًا

And say: Praise be to Allah, Who hath not taken unto Himself a son, and Who hath no partner in Sovereignty, nor hath He any protecting friend through dependence. And magnify Him with all magnificence (Qurʾān, 17:111).

It is a common, widespread practice that every text and ritual in Islam, whether in Persian or Arabic, opens with a religious formula, the *basmala,* and "the *Fātiḥa*" (Ar. Ṣurat al-Fātiḥa) the opening verse of the *Qurʾān*, followed by an invocation and glorification (*takbīr*) of the Almighty. Clearly, this standard practice that refers to the source of the ritual in Islamic scripture was maintained in all the manuscripts of the *Charāgh-nāma*. Despite the fact that Bertel's detected the possible origin of the tradition of the ritual of *Charāgh-rawshan* in the Zoroastrian religion, he still asserts that "the source of similitude of *'Charāgh-rawshan'* is the Holy Scripture, particularly the verse of Light – *Nūr'*.[21] The term *Nūr* in the context of the *Qurʾān* evokes one of the Beautiful Names *(Ar. Asmāʾ al-ḥusnāʾ)* of Allāh, imbedded in the *āyat al-nūr* and therefore present in all manuscript copies of the *Charāgh-nāma*. The verse reads:

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مَثَلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ

مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الأَمْثَالَ

لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

Allāh is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a shining star. (This lamp is) kindled from a blessed tree, an olive neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it. Light upon light, Allāh guided unto His light whom He will. And Allāh speaketh to mankind in allegories, for Allāh is Knower of all things (Qurʾān, 24:35).

It becomes evident from the verse above that the three main components of the ritual of *Charāgh-rawshan*, namely *nūr* (light), *ramz/mathal* (allegory/symbol) and *charāgh dān/mishkāt* (niche), are clearly taken directly from the *sūrat al-nūr*. The appearance of *nūr* is reflected in the lighting of the *charāgh* (the lamp), specially made of a *wick* (*fatīla* or *rishta),* which is then placed in a specially made oil. This is the allegory of the *zaitūn* (olive tree).[22] For the local Ismāʿīlīs, however, the *charāgh* or the *nūr* or the *light of the charāgh* symbolises knowledge or attaining the knowledge of Allāh through the recognition of the Imam of the Time. The *fatīla* or the *rīshta,* on the other hand, symbolises the unbroken

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[21] Bertel's, "Nazari Barkhe az 'Urafā..," in *YNK,* p. 117.

[22] The same parable is found in the Old Testament: *"You shall charge the sons of Israel that they bring you clear oil of beaten olives for the light, to make lamp burn continually"* (Exod. 27:20).

chain of the Imamate. In the light of this, it is highly probable that Nāṣir-i Khusraw's use of these *Qurʾ̄anic* notions in his philosophical poetry resembles the text and ritualistic elements of the performance of *Charāgh-rawshan*. For him "lighting the lamp" is the path to wisdom, which is futile without knowledge and action:

> Light the candle of wisdom within your heart,
> And hurry, heart aglow, toward the world of light.
> If you would light a lamp within your heart,
> Make knowledge and action your wick and oil.[23]

The poetic and philosophical language of the Muslim luminaries allowed these notions to spread throughout the Muslim *Umma.* Hence, these notions, expressed in various languages, were accepted. This became possible due to the metaphorical/symbolic expressions from, and similitude to the *Qurʾ̄an,* which have been enshrined in Ismāʿīlī devotion to the Imam, Ṣūfī *ẕikr* (remembrance) as well as in the simple invocation of the Beautiful Names of Allāh by every Muslim. Likewise, it was preached in sermons (*majālis*), such as those pronounced both by Ismāʿīlī *dāʿīs* and preachers from other confessions. The circle is completed since the sources of *ẕikr* and *invocation* stem from the *Qurʾ̄anic* verse where it remarks:

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

> And He taught Adam all the names, then showed them to the angels, saying:
> Inform Me of the names of these, if ye are truthful (*Qurʾ̄an*, 2:31).

This *Qurʾ̄anic* maxim is used in the text of the *Charāgh-nāma* in the sense of *edification* and *teaching.* It is a call to convey religious knowledge to the one who is attending the sermon known as the *daʿwa (daʿwat)* or *majlis.* In other words, it emphasises that "God has no archetype. He knows everything, the esoteric and the exoteric and what is in between. He stretches without end and can comprehend everything."[24]

It should be emphasised that there are other terms in the *Qurʾ̄an*, for example, *miṣbāḥ* and *sirāj* that denote a lamp, *charāgh*. The term *miṣbāḥ* in its plural form occurs twice in the

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[23] Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Divān,* 78:15-16; Hunsberger, *Nāṣir Khusraw, The Ruby of Badakhshan,* London, 2000, p. 78 and p. 85.

شمع خرد بر فروز در دل و بشتاب، با دل روشن به سوی عالم ورشن.

چون به دل اندر چراغ خواهی افروخت، علم و عمل بایدت فتله و روغن.

[24] Jabir ibn Hayyan, *Essai sur l'historie des idees scientifique dans l'Islam,* Kraus, (ed.)., Cairo, 1935, p. 9; Also quoted in: Ghazoul, *Nocturnal Poetics: the Arabian Nights in Comparative Perspective,* Cairo, 1966, p. 36.

Qurʾān.[25] The term *sirāj* in its various forms is also present. One verse in the *Qurʾān* reads, "We have built above you seven strong heavens and have appointed a dazzling lamp" (Qurʾān, 78:12-13),[26] which resembles the hierarchy of initiation in Ismāʿīlī teaching. Therefore, in summoning people to the right path, Allāh refers to the Prophet Muḥammad thus:

$$\text{يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا * وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا *}$$

O Prophet! Lo! We have sent thee as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner;
And as a summoner unto Allah by His permission, and as a lamp that giveth light (Qurʾān, 33:45-46).

The activity of the *daʿwa* of the Prophet Muḥammad in this verse is like the *nūr* that lightens the path to God. At the same time, it is an allusion to the light of *God*, to the light of *Muḥammad* or the doctrine of *nubuwat* and, consequently, of the *Imāmat*.

Literary sources for Islamic history, such as the *Taʾrīkh-i Ṭabarī* (The History of Ṭabarī) by Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī (224-310/838-922), the *Nādir al-miʿrāj* (The Rarity of Ascension) by Shaykh ʿIbād Allāh al-ʿĀlam Akbarābādī, the *Miʿrāj-nāma* by Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), and other similar works, tell appealing stories about the Prophet Muḥammad's *miʿrāj* (night of ascension). An interesting story is preserved in the *Nādir al-miʿrāj* about the secrets and symbolism of the niche (*mishkāt*). It relates how, during the *miʿrāj*, the Prophet Muḥammad reached the valley of Ḥażrat-i Isrāfīl and saw a "shining niche." The Prophet then asked Isrāfīl to tell him the hidden secrets of this niche. The story then continues that the Archangel Isrāfīl told him: "When your body is annihilated in the terrestrial world – *ʿālam-i suflāʾ* (earth) – your soul, leaving your body, will rise towards the world of the spirit and will be placed in this luminous niche". Shaykh ʿIbād Allāh Akbarabādī then eloquently encapsulates this narrative in poetic form:

بدید قندیلی روشنتر از آفتاب .	به ناگاه به جایی رسید آن جناب،
که برگوی احوال قندیل راز .	بپرسید صدر از سَرافیل باز،
کجا نور تو اندر آن بُد نخست .	سَرافیل بد و گفت: قندیل توست،

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[25] It should be noted that the term *miṣbāḥ* in the plural form occurs in the *Qurʾān*, twice, at 41:12 and 67:5. The term *sirāj* occurs in the *Qurʾān* four times, 25:61, 33:46, 71:16 and 78:13.

[26] Qurʾān, 78:12-13.

$$\text{وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا}$$

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دراین پاك قنديلش آرد مكر .   چو روح تو از تن براید دگر،

ز نور محمد مـنور شـود .   ديگر عرش اعظم چون انور شود،

كه كان همه نورها مصطفاست .   كه نور محمد ز نور خداست،

And all of a sudden His Honourable Highness reached a place,

Where he saw a niche much lighter than the sun.

Then, the Prophet asked from Seraph again,

To tell [him] the secret state of this niche.

Seraph told [him] that: This is your niche,

Wherein your light was initially placed.

When your soul leaves the body again,

It will be placed in this pure niche again.

If, then, the High Throne is illuminated

It will be illuminated by Muḥammadan Light.

As the Light of Muḥammad is from the Light of God,

So the source of all other Lights is the Light of Muṣṭafā.[27]

This story ties together similar themes concerning the notion of *nūr* that originates from the *Qurʾān* and links it to the life of the Prophet Muḥammad. The core of the rite of *Charāgh-rawshan* rotates around the notion of the *Light of the Prophet* (*nūr-i Muḥammad*). According to the *Charāgh-nāma* this special light "was sent from the Almighty, and it was sent for the sake of Muḥammad, [which then] was passed on to ʿAlī..."[28] Thus, it becomes clear that one of the main sources of this religious rite is indubitably the Holy *Qurʾān,* particularly the verse of *Nūr*. The core of this light, as the Holy *Qurʾān* puts it, is kindled from the LIGHT that "even no fire touched it" (Qurʾān, 24:35) – it radiates from another Light or *Nūran ʿalā Nūr.*

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[27] Akbarabādī, *Nādir al-miʿrāj (Baḥr al-asrār),* Luknow, 1332/1904, p. 236. Also quoted in: Sherzodshoev, "Sunnatī *'Charogh-rawshankunī'* – Oyini Islomii Ismoʾliyoni Osiyoi Miyona," in Niyazav, and Nazariev, *Nāṣir Khusraw: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow,* Khujand, 2005, p. 589.

[28] *Charāgh-nāma (Incomplete MS)*, Ms. N, f - 2a. This short extract is present in all of the copies of the *Charāgh-nāma* that I have studied. The Persian rendering of the text is as follows:

این چراغ از جبّار عالم آمد از برای مُحَمَّد آمد، از مُحَمَّد به علی آمد...

8.3.2. Elements of Ṣūfism in the Text of the *Charāgh-nāma*

Ṣūfism in Badakhshan must remain a topic for future studies. As in other regions Badakhshan also witnessed the arrival of Ṣūfīs from Iran and Mā warā al-nahr most probably in the second half of fourteenth centuries or even earlier. The life and missionary activities of Sayyid ʿAlī Hamadānī (d. 786/1385), a Kubravī Ṣūfī, who was also known as ʿAlī-i Thānī, may shed new light on the historical development of Ṣūfism in Badakhshan.[29] It is also important to note that Jaʿfar Badakhshānī, his student and biographer, in his work *Khulāsat al-manāqib* depicts the details of his life and activity in the region.[30] The study of *Manqabat al-jawāhir* of a certain Ḥaydar Badakhshī, who was affiliated to the Kubravī-Hamadānī line as well as Khalīlullāh Badakhshānī's *Jāmiʿ al-salāsil*, an unstudied text reflecting a lineage traced to Ḥusai Khwārazmī, remains *desideratum*.[31]

The history of subsequent centuries clearly indicates the presence of Ṣūfī mystical symbolism in the religious literature, likely brought to the region then and, in some cases, possibly even much earlier. The local inhabitants transcribed and preserved these sources in their private collections as the sacred sources of their religion. Although this phenomenon is unique in itself, it raises some thought-provoking questions about Ismāʿīlī-Ṣūfī and Ismāʿīlī-Twelver Shīʿī relations. The first intricate question that arises from the logical perspective is how these ideas found their way to this remote mountainous region. Were the sources brought to the region intentionally or was it an unintentional move by the learned to transcribe and preserve these sources? This phenomenon must remain a topic for a future separate study within the historical and cultural context. It should, however, be emphasise that the relationships of Ismāʿīlīs and Ṣūfīs in the post-Mongol Iran became possible through the amalgamation of Ṣūfī lexicon with the Ismāʿīlī terminology.[32]

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[29] Böwering, "ʿAlī b. Sehāb al-Dīn b. Moḥammad Hamadānī," in *EIr,* vol. 1 (1982), pp. 862-864. For more details, see: DeWeese, "The Eclipse of the Kubravīyah in Central Asia," in *IrS,* vol. 21, no. 1/2 (1988), pp. 45-83; DeWeese, "Sayyid Alī Hamadānī and Kubrawī Hagiographical Traditions," in Lewisohn, (ed.)., *The Heritage of Sufism,* vol. 2: *The Legacy of Mediaeval Persian Sufism (1150-1500),* Oxford, 1999, pp. 121-58; Elias, "A Second ʿAlī: The Making of Sayyid ʿAlī Hamadānī in Popular Imagination," in *The Muslim World* 90, no. 4 (2000): 395-420.

[30] Badakhshī, Nūr al-Dīn Jaʿfar., *Khulāṣat al-manāqib: Dar manāqib-i Mīr Sayyid ʿAlī-i Hamadānī,* Zafar, (ed.)., Islamabad, 1995. For the German translation, see: Badakhshī, Nūr al-Dīn Jaʿfar., *Khulāṣat al-manāqib,* Teufel (German tr.)., as *Eine Lebensbeschreibung des Scheichs Alī-i Hamadānī (gestorben 1385): Die Xulāṣat ul-Manāqib des Maulānā Nūr ud-Dīn Caʿfar-i Badaxšī,* Leiden, 1962.

[31] A copy of *Jāmiʿ al-salāsil* is preserved in Mawlana Azad Library, the Aligarh Muslim University. The second copy is preserved in Ganj Bakhsh Library, Islamabad. I am grateful to Daniel Beben, a Ph.D. student from Indiana University, who made both copies available to me. Unfortunately, I could not incorporate details from these manuscripts in my writing. For more details, see: DeWeese, "Sayyid Alī Hamadānī and Kubrawī Hagiographical Traditions," pp. 121-58;

[32] Lewisohn, "Sufism and Ismāʿīlī Doctrine in the Persian Poetry of Nizārī, in *Iran,* vol. 41 (2003), pp. 229-251. Due to word limit I will not be able to discuss the Ismāʿīlī-Ṣūfī relations in details in the present study.

The present section, therefore, presents only a brief analysis on the level of the theoretical and the speculative. My hypothesis will be supported by examples from the text of the *Charāgh-nāma* and my discussion will be confined to a detailed analysis of selected passages from the work.

The infusion of Ṣūfī terms and terminology throughout the text of *Charāgh-nāma* is very clear and it reflects the technical and terminological spectrum of inter-change between these two esoteric movements. Although the appearance of Ṣūfī terms in the *Charāgh-nāma* is evident, it demonstrates the terminological inter-change between the Ismāʿīlī and Ṣūfī movements within this text. The use of Ṣūfī terms, such as *silsila* (brotherhood), *pīrān-i ṭarīqat* (allusion to masters or saints), *ʿāshiq-i ṣāḥibnaẓar* (insightful lover), *arkān-i ṭarīq* (allusion to the pillars and principals of the path), and *ʿārif* (gnostic), *faqīr* and *darvīsh* (lit. itinerant or Ṣūfī), along with others also provide clear examples of this inter-change.

Although the *Charāgh-nāma* is permeated with Ṣūfī terminology, it does not supply the names of the Ṣūfī mystics since quoting their specific teachings could have changed the general frame of the ritual. It is also impossible clearly to define the historical timeframe or milieu in which the text was produced from the mystical symbolism alone. The clearest example of Ṣūfī influence in the *Charāgh-nāma* is vividly shown in one of the poems of Shāh Niʿmatullāh Walī-i Kirmānī, where he calls upon his followers to praise the Prophet Muḥammad:

<div dir="rtl">

خوش رحمتی ست یاران، صلوات بر محمد،   گویم از دل و جان، صلوات بر محمد .

گویم از دل و جان با عارفان کرمان،   شادی روی یاران، صلوات بر محمد .

</div>

O my friends, it is such a mercy, praise [be] upon Muḥammad,
Let us recite it from our heart, praise [be] upon Muḥammad.
We're reciting from our heart with the Gnostics from Kirmān,
It is a happiness in face of our friends, praise [be] upon Muḥammad.[33]

Comparing the text of this poem in the *Kulliyāt-i Ashʿār-i Shāh Niʿmatullāh-i Walī* with the manuscript of the *Charāgh-nāma* and its recent editions, it becomes clear that the poem of Shāh Niʿmatullāh-i Walī, which initially consisted of eleven distiches, has been tripled in

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[33] *Khushnawīs - Charāgh-nāma,* Ms. Ch.R. N209, ff. 17a-20a; See also: Ivanow, "Ṣūfīsm and Ismāʿīlism: *Charāgh-Nāma,*" in *Revue Iranienne d'Anthropologies,* 3 (1959), pp. 67-68; Shāh Niʿmatullāh-i Walī, *Kulliyāt-i Ashʿār-i Shāh Niʿmatullāh-i Walī,* Tehran, 1374, p. 638. See also a recent edition of the *Charāgh-rawshan* that was prepared by the Ismaili Tariqa and Religious Education Board. The copy that I possess is dated 15 January 2003, pp. 10-11.

length. This raises the question of the role of the scribe. Was it the [poet or] scribe who eloquently reproduced the text or was it the work of an anonymous local poet who combined his own poetry with that of Shāh Niʿmatullāh-i Walī?

A comparison of the text of this poem from all the available sources would indicate that this particular *ghazal* of Shāh Niʿmatullāh-i Walī was used as a base for this specific poetic composition, which, under unknown circumstances, crept into the text of the *Charāgh-nāma*. Some distiches of this poem were incorporated into the text of the *Charāgh-nāma* and, with the passage of time, other new distiches were composed and added to it as well. The theme – *ṣalawāt bar Muḥammad* – which is the core of this poem (*ghazal*), is chanted by the gathering of believers as a chorus during the recitation of the *Charāgh-nāma.* This is the appealing element of this mystical poetry that was absorbed into the Ismāʿīlī ritual. The core of both texts of the poem rotates around the same theme, which represents a general association with a revered wisdom in the figure of the Prophet. Another poem, on the same theme but with different wording, occurs at the beginning of the *Charāgh-nāma* where, instead of *ṣalwāt bar Muḥammad*, the phrase *khūsh gu salawāt Muṣṭafārā* is used. These two expressions are semantically identical and, in the *Charāgh-nāma,* they obviously represent the same recurring theme of veneration for the Prophet of Islam and the *Ahl al-bayt.*

Another passage in the *Charāgh-nāma* provides the names of two famous Ṣūfī mystics, Khwāja Aḥmad Yasawī (d. 562/1166) and Farīd al-Dīn Ganj-i Shakar (d. 5 Muharram 664/17 October 1265), as well as that of the eighth Twelver Shīʿī Imam - Mūsā al-Riżā (151-203/768-818) together with the name of the Faṭimid Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* – Nāṣir-i Khusraw. The passage starts with the praise and glorification of God as follows:

الهی اوَّل یاد کنم بزرگی و عظمت و جلال و جمال پاک تبارک و تعالی را . . . و امامان حق را، . . . و علمای شریعت

را و پیران طریقت و حقیقت و معرفت را، و راه روندگان راه حق را، . . . و اولیاء و انبیاء [و] مقربان بارگاه کبریا را

- یعنی "سر" ترکستان خواجه احمد یسوی را، و "سینه" خراسان امام علی موسی رضا را، "پشت" کوهستان حضرت

سلطان شاه سید ناصر خسرو را، "پای" هندوستان شیخ فرید شکر گنج را...

O Lord, let me [us] remember the greatness and glory and beauty of the Almighty... and the Truthful Imams... and the scholars of the religion and the masters of the *path* and *truth* and *knowledge*, and the followers of the path of truth, and the saints and the prophets and those close companions who are held in honour to the court of Almighty – such as 'the head' of

Turkistān Khwāja Aḥmad-i Yasawī, and 'the chest' of Khurāsān Imām ʿAlī Musā al-Riżā, and 'the back' of Kūhistān Sayyid Shāh Nāṣir-i Khusraw, and the 'feet' of Hindustān Shaykh Farīd-i Shakar Ganj.[34]

This short passage presents the strange combination of the names of two Ṣūfī *pīr*s, a Twelver Shīʿī Imam and the name of Nāṣir-i Khusraw – *ḥujjat of Khurāsān*. It even refers to them as the "head of Turkistān," the "chest of Khurāsān," the "back of Kūhistān" and the "leg of Hindustān," as if they were closely related to each other in terms of their religious affiliation and activity. It is evident from the historical sources that Imam Mūsā al-Riżā was the eighth Twelver Shīʿī Imam, while Khwāja Aḥmad Yasawī was the founder of a Sunnī *darvīsh* order in Mā warā al-nāhr known as Yasawīyya. Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Masʿūd Ganj-i Shakar, on the other hand, was a Chishtī Ṣūfī from South Asia. Although these figures are members of different and, at some points, opposing religious and ideological movements, their names appear with the name of Pīr Nāṣir-i Khusraw. The reference to these figures in the *Charāgh-nāma* seems to be based on a Ṣūfī *Risāla* by an anonymous author, entitled *Bāb dar bayāni ṭarīqat va ḥaqīqat* (A Chapter Explaining the Path and the Truth), which is also known as the *Ṭarīqat-nāma.* This particular treatise contains a list of the names of the Prophets from Ādam to Muḥammad along with those of some well-known Ṣūfī masters and some Ismāʿīlī *pīr*s and *dāʿī*s.[35] It is highly likely that this genealogical chart was compiled by someone who was largely unfamiliar with the nature and history of these movements. Thus, the anonymous *Risāla* seems to be the product of a scribe who tied together whatever seemed appealing to him. It also seems plausible to argue that the Central Asia, Khurāsān and India of this period, to certain extent, shared a similar pattern of popular religion and culture. This was probably due to the fact that travel and migration between these regions created an environment of mutual exchange of spiritual and mystical practices as well as religious learning. Thus, an almost similar common heritage ties these regions together, even though each region also has its own distinctive features.

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[34] Ivanow, "Ṣūfism and Ismāʿīlism: *Charāgh-nāma*," pp. 60-61; Various versions of this particular text are extent in all of the manuscripts. Due to the length of the text, only selected passages are presented here as examples.

[35] Bertel's, and Baqoev, *Alfavitniĭ Katalog,* p. 31; Elchibekov, "Obshie Religiozno-Filosofskie i Folklorno-Mifologicheskie Obosnovaniĭā Ierarkhii Dukhovenstvo v Ismailizme i Ṣūfizme," in *Religiĭā i Obshestvennaĭā Mysl' Stran Vostoka*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 317-319.

The last relevant example is the appearance in the *Charāgh-nāma* of the name of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad of Tabrīz,[36] the well-known guide of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī. The passage, thus, reads:

نام او مقبول حق گشت دم از حق می زند .   هر که نام شمس تبریزی شنید و سجده کرد

Whoever hears the name of Shams-i Tabrīzī and prostrates,

His name becomes well-linked to the Real as he calls of the truth.[37]

The appeal of this passage lies in its double meaning. To the ordinary believer, this passage seems to be a reference to the Ismāʿīlī Imam of the post-Alamūt period also known as Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. ca. 710/1310), who succeeded his father, Imam Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh (d. 655/1257). The esoteric meaning lies once more in the juxtaposition of different professions of faith. Hence, a kind of un-thought coalescence is achieved, which seems to have originated in the local context and requires further scholarly investigation.

8.3.3. Twelver Shīʿī Influence in the *Charāgh-nāma*

Although a split after the death of Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765) divided the Shīʿīs into several rival groups, doctrinally, they still shared much common ground, particularly when it came to the issues of leadership and the Imamate. Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq was the last Imam, recognized equally by the Twelver Shīʿīs and the Ismāʿīlīs. From this point onwards, these communities developed distinctive doctrinal and cultural traditions of their own. The Ismāʿīlīs first established the Faṭimid caliphate in Egypt in 297/909, ruled over by *Imam-caliphs* from the Prophet's progeny through his daughter Fāṭima. Later they established the Nizārī state in Alamūt in the Jibāl region of Iran in 483/1090. The Twelver Shīʿīs, however, never had an opportunity to establish a state to be ruled on behalf of their Hidden Imam. It was only in 907/1501 that the first *pīr* of the Safaviya order, Shāh Ismāʿīl or Ismāʿīl I (d. 930/1524) established a new state, which later became known as the Safavid dynasty.

The coming to power of the Safavid dynasty in Iran heralded the betterment of Shīʿa oriented movements and communities. It did, however, become a totally different movement that condemned and persecuted those who did not comply with its rules. It has

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[36] For biography of Shams of Tabriz, see: Chittick, *Me and Rumi: The Autobiography of Shams-i Tabrizi*, Louisville, Fons Vitae, 2004 and his "The Real Shams-i Tabrīzī," in Rustom, Khalil, and Murata, (eds.)., *In Search of the Lost Heart: Exploration in Islamic Thought*, New York: SUNY Press, 2012, pp. 49-55.

[37] Ivanow, "Sufism and Ismāʿīlism: *Charāgh-nāma*,' p. 69. See also: *Charāgh-nāma* (Incomplete), Ms. N, f. 2b.

even been argued by some modern scholars that some Sunnī oriented Ṣūfī brotherhoods became Shīʿised *ṭarīqas*.[38]

Like any other religious and political regimes, the Safavids also attempted to spread their new religious ideology namely the new form of Twelver Shīʿī Islam to neighbouring countries. Signs of the Safavid religious and political ideology may be observed in Badakhshan and its adjacent principalities. This is particularly evident in the tradition of *madāḥ-khānī*, one of the religious rites performed during *Charāgh-rawshan.*

As I outlined above, an anonymous *qaṣīda, Ākhirzamān-nāma,* attributed to Nāṣir-i Khusraw, is sung during *Charāgh-rawshan.* This *qaṣīda* contains the names of some of the Safavid monarchs. For instance, one verse reads:

<div dir="rtl">

شاه اسماعیل حیدر ورا خوانند خلق،   خاك پایش در نظر اهل جهان خواهد گرفت.

بعد از این شاهی کند فرزند او پنجاه سال،   بعد از آنش فیض رحمت در جهان خواهد گرفت.

</div>

Shāh Ismāʿīl of Ḥaydar's tribe the people call him,
The inhabitants of the world will take the dust of his feet into account.
After him, his son will rule the world for fifty years,
Then the grace of mercy will disseminate and fill the world.[39]

This very *qaṣīda*, which is sung during *Charāgh-rawshan*, talks about Shāh Ismāʿīl b. Ḥaydar (r. 907-930/1501-1524), the first Safavid ruler. It also implicitly denotes the reign of Shāh Tahmāsp, who ruled Iran for fifty-two years – from 930/1524 to 984/1576. At the heart of this apocalyptic *qaṣīda* lies the messianic expectation, which constitutes the core of the Twelver Shīʿī teaching. Rather than explicitly referring to the Twelfth Shīʿī Imam, Muḥammad al-Mahdī, as the saviour of the world, the *qaṣīda* instead portrays the Safavid *shāh*s as the saviours of the world. This position is very strange, implying as it does that the authority of the ruling *shāh*s overrides the rule of the Hidden Shīʿī Imam. We must ask ourselves how such a *qaṣīda* could have entered the Ismāʿīlī religious rite in Badakhshan.

Another element of Twelver Shīʿī doctrine present in the *Charāgh-nāma* is the appearance of the genealogy of Imams from Imam Mūsā al-Kāẓim down to Imam al-Mahdī, who went into *ghayba* (lit. occultation). That this list of Imams is included in the *ghazal* of Shāh

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[38] Pourjavady, and Wilson, "The Descendants of Shāh Niʿmatullāh Walī," in *IC,* (January 1974), pp. 49-57; Graham, "Shāh Niʿmatullāhī Walī: Founder of the Niʿmatullāhī Ṣūfī Order," in Lewisohn, (eds.)., *The Heritage of Sufism,* vol. II: *The legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism (1150-1500),* Oxford, 1999, pp. 173-190.

[39] Berg, "Ismāʿīlī Poetry in Tajik Badakhshan: A Safavid Connection?," in *Persica,* XVII (2001), p. 3.

Niʿmatullāh Walī reflects state of continuous flux of the text of this particular *ghazal* within the *Charāgh-nāma*. It absorbs the recurring changes facing the *daʿwat-i Nāṣir*. The changing nature of the text also reflects the degree of precaution exercised by the members of the local *daʿwa*, particularly with the coming of foreign rule that imposed new elements of belief on the members of the mountain-dwelling communities. The following text shows that these are later interpolations in the text, which logically connects the Ṣūfī text to the Shīʿī doctrine of the Imamate. Hence, the genealogy of the Shīʿī Imams crept into the text of the *Charāgh-nāma* under obscure circumstances but with clear political and ideological intention:

<div dir="rtl">

زین العباد بهتر باقر شناس و جعفر،　　شاهند آن دو سرور صلوات بر محمد .

موسی فلک غلامت شاه رضی به نامت،　　شد عرش حق مقامت صلوات بر محمد .

شاه از تقی چو خوانی نامش عجب بدانی،　　از جان تقی بخوانی صلوات بر محمد .

من همچو یک کمینم خاک ره نقی ام،　　مهتاج عسکریم صلوات بر محمد .

مهدی امام دین است هم قبله هم یقین است،　　سرِّ شه مبین است صلوات بر محمد .

</div>

Know better Zayn al-ʿIbād, Bāqir and then Jaʿfar,
They are both kings these two leaders, praise [be] upon Muḥammad.
O Mūsā the sphere is your slave, the king Riżā is named after you,
Your status has been elevated to the throne of God, praise [be] upon Muḥammad.
If you call Taqī the king, you will know his name,
Then call the name of Taqī from your heart, praise [be] upon Muḥammad.
I am like a slave on the path of Taqī,
I am in need of ʿAskarī, praise [be] upon Muḥammad.
Mahdī is the Imām of the religion, he is the *qibla* and the certainty,
He is the secret of the Manifest King, praise [be] upon Muḥammad.[40]

Prior to this passage, the text presents other addendum to the *Charāgh-nāma*, where the scribe or preacher calls the participants of the *majlis* to the true religion, that is to say, to Twelver Shīʿism. The passage laments:

<div dir="rtl">

دین دینِ دوازده امام است،　　در شرع نبی چو او تمام است .

از شرع برون همه حرام است،　　خوش گو صلوات مصطفی را .

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[40] Shozodamuhammad, *Manobeʿi Sunanti Charāgh-rawshan,* Dushanbe, 2009, pp. 24-25. Umed Shozodamuhammad gives the name of a scribe, a certain Faqral from Badakhshan (possibly Afghan Badakhshan), and the date of transcription as the eighteenth century.

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> The true religion is that of the Twelve Imams,
> It is completed in the divine law of the Prophet.
> Illicit are all those outside the divine law,
> Convey eloquent salutation upon the Chosen One.[41]

Historical sources, such as the *Taʾrīkh-i Badakhshān* of Mīrzā Sangmuḥammad Badakhshī and Faẓlʿalībek Surkhafsar and the *Taʾrīkh-i mulk-i Shughnān* of Said Ḥaydar Shāh Mubārakshāhzāda, show that the region was subjugated by foreign rulers. Since it was the sole region populated by the Ismāʿīlī Shīʿa, the Sunnī rulers attempted to convert them to the "true religion," namely Sunnī Islam. What seems surprising is the fact that elements of Twelver Shīʿa doctrine have been promulgated during the *Charāgh-rawshan* ceremony which was alien even to the Sunnī rulers. The reason for such a phenomenon is difficult to ascertain, particularly as local and peripheral sources do not provide direct or indirect reference to this intermix of religious ideas.

8.3.4. *Charāgh-rawshan*: An Ismāʿīlī Tradition of Badakhshan

As I mentioned above, the text of the *Charāgh-nāma* takes its metaphorical and symbolic expressions from the verse of Light (*sūrat al-Nūr*, 24:35), as interpreted within the context of Ismāʿīlī doctrine. Unfortunately, the author(s) of the text, as I outlined earlier, remain unknown to us; nor do the internal elements of the text provide any clue regarding its authorship.

Although the *Charāgh-nāma* was influenced by both Ṣūfī and Twelver Shīʿa doctrines, its core Ismāʿīlī teaching rotates around the notion of light, conceived in three dimensions, particularly the light of God (*tawḥīd*), the light of the Prophet (*nubuwat*) and the light of the Imamate (*Imāmat*) from the *Ahl al-bayt*. The Ṣūfī terminology used in the text of the *Charāgh-nāma* shows the degree of the interaction between these two esoteric movements within the wider context of Islam.

A close examination of the various copies of the *Charāgh-nāma* at our disposal reveals that they are all crystallized texts that accommodate various mystical teachings mingled with the Ismāʿīlī doctrine. These elements do, however, constitute the core beliefs of the Badakhshani Ismāʿīlīs, which is reflected in their reverence for the figure of Pīr Shāh Nāṣir-i Khusraw, the founder of the Ismāʿīlī communities in Badakhshan and the adjoining areas. Yet, the term *maẕhab-i Nāṣirīya* (the followers of Nāṣir) is also used to refer to the tradition

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[41] Ibid. p. 23.

of Nāṣir-i Khusraw and was probably coined sometime at the end of the fifteenth or first half of the sixteenth century.[42]

Returning to the analysis of our text, our attention is next drawn to the peculiar mix of Ṣūfī terminology and Ismāʿīlī teaching, which overlap each other. For instance, one passage reads:

<div dir="rtl">

ای عاشق صاحب نظر،   در دعوت ناصر درآ .

ای مؤمنی پاکی گوهر،   در دعوت ناصر درآ .

نـاصـر ز اولاد نبی،   حقّاً که فرزند علی .

گر ناصری را طالبی،   در دعوت ناصر درآ .

</div>

O insightful lover, join the mission of Nāṣir!
O pious believer, join the mission of Nāṣir!
Nāṣir is the scion of the Prophet,
He is a true offspring of ʿAlī.
If you're a claimant of Nāṣir's teaching,
Join the mission of Nāṣir.[43]

The above example clearly shows that this is a sermon conducted during the *majlis,* which calls upon an "insightful lover" – a follower of Ṣūfī *ṭarīqa* – as well a "pious believer" – a reference to a Sunnī Muslim – to join Nāṣir-i Khusraw's mission. The context of this and other similar poems evokes the post-Alamūt *taqiyya* theme, which is totally different from Nāṣir-i Khusraw's Ismāʿīlī-Fāṭimid teaching. Surprisingly, the text of *Charāgh-nāma* is used as a bridge to link these two teachings and is designed to "explain the secrets of divine knowledge in prose and poetry"[44] to those joining Nāṣir's mission. It should be emphasized that the expression *dar daʿwat-i Nāṣir darā* encompasses all the inter-related elements of Nāṣir-i Khusraw's tradition. In other words, the practice of *Charāgh-rawshan* is a continuum of the Ismāʿīlī tradition in the local context despite the fact that, during the concealment period, access to the Imam was limited.

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[42] Bertel's, *Nasiri Khusraw i Ismailizm,* Moscow, 1959, p. 182.

[43] *Charāgh-nāma,* Ms. F, ff. 24-25; Iloliev, *The Ismāʿīlī-Ṣūfī Safe of Pamir,* p. 42.

[44] *Charāgh-nāma,* Ms. F, f. 24. The text reads:

<div dir="rtl">

اسـرار عـلـم مـن لـدُن   در نظم و نثرش گوش کن

بشنو ز جان باز این سُخُن   در دعـوت نـاصر درآ

</div>

It is worth mentioning that some poems in the *Charāgh-nāma* are of a double provenance and loyalty. They either discuss the Twelver Shīʿī Imams or present the genealogy of the Ismāʿīlī Imams, as I have shown above.[45] The controversial nature of these poetic compositions is intricate and difficult to explain. Nonetheless, our attention is drawn to an interesting passage quoted in the *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī*, where the author refers to the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imam Shāh Rażī al-Dīn II employing the term *Charāgh kush* (lit. light extinguisher). It seems safe to assume that, due to the practice of *taqiyya*, the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams propagated a "form of Ismāʿīlism in the guise of Twelver Shīʿism." This hypothesis, proposed by Farhad Daftary in relation to Imam Shāh Ṭāhir Dakkanī – the famous Nizārī Muḥammad-Shāhī Imam, seems also to be applicable to the missionary activity of his father, Imam Rażī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir, in the region of Badakhshan. It is highly likely that the new elements that crept into the tradition with the arrival of Imam Rażī al-Dīn II would have caused a certain degree of distrust and disagreement. It may have been on account of this that he was dubbed *Rażī al-Dīn-i Charāgh Kush*.[46]

Although, the text of *Charāgh-nāma* is permeated with Ṣūfī and Twelver Shīʿī elements, its ritualistic, spiritual and other internal textual components keep it distinctively Ismāʿīlī. Quite striking is the fact that, in the post-Tīmūrid period, when the region was under Sunnī rulers, the tradition was still practised, and the local *dāʿī*s openly called "insightful lovers" and "pious believers" to join the tradition or the mission of Nāṣir, who is referred to as "the mercy and proof of Mustanṣir." The text elaborates it in the following way:

<div dir="rtl">

او حجتِ مستنصراست .　　او رحمتِ مستنصراست،

در دعوتِ ناصــر درا .　　او نصرت مستنصراست،

</div>

He is the mercy of Mustanṣir; he is the Proof of Mustanṣir,
He is the victory of Mustanṣir, join the mission of Nāṣir.[47]

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[45] The text of *Charāgh-rawshan* does not provide a complete list of Ismāʿīlī Imams. Nonetheless, some of the texts give a complete list of the Twelver Shīʿī Imams, including Imam al-Mahdī, the Twelfth Imam who went into occultation. The list of Ismāʿīlī Imams given in the text varies. Some copies stop with the name of Imam Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī Biʾllah (d. 322/934) while in others one can find a reference to Imam Qāsim Shāh, the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Imam of the post-Alamūt period.

[46] Ḥaidar, Dughlāt, *Taʾrīkh-i Rashīdī*, p. 146.

[47] *Charāgh-nāma*, Ms. F, f. 25; See also: *Khushnawīs: Charāgh-nāma,* Ms. Ch.R. N209, ff. 16b-17a; Bertel's, "Naẓari Barkhe az ʿUrafā..," in *YNK*, p. 110.

This passage coincidentally also includes certain historic facts. First of all, it confirms that Nāṣir-i Khusraw was a contemporary of the *Imam-caliph* al-Mustanṣir biʾllāh (d. 497/1094) and, secondly, it validates that he was granted one of the highest ranks in the hierarchy of initiation, namely that of *ḥujjat* (chief *dāʿī*), before being sent to Balkh, Khurāsān and Badakhshan. The presence of these elements within the text of *Charāgh-nāma* implicitly shows that the author(s) is well-acquainted with the philosophic teaching of Nāṣir-i Khusraw and the history and doctrines of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs of their respective time. Thus, it is evident from the practice of this rite among the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan that it represented a call to join the mission or to join the tradition of Pīr Shāh Nāṣir-i Khusraw in a wider philosophical context, where discussion beyond the theme of Ismāʿīlī teaching would be of no importance. This particular doctrinal aspect of the ritual is related in the first person. Therefore, we might cautiously suggest that it was a "pious believer" or "an insightful lover" who would have participated in the *daʿwat-i Nāṣir*. While the Ismāʿīlī connection of this first person narrator is never explicitly mentioned in the text the following example shows that the person who engaged with, and participated in the *daʿwat-i Nāṣir* found a spiritual satisfaction in the teaching as the narrator seems to have joined the community. The following apt example from the *Charāgh-nāma* will suffice to illustrate this last point:

<div dir="rtl">

بــستـم کمـر بر هـمّـتـش .   یـک شــب بـودم در دعـوتـش،

بی شک مرادت حاصل است .   اینجا چـراغ نـاصـر اسـت،

اینجا نـگنجد قیل وقـال .   اینجا چراغ است جـای حـال،

</div>

One night I participated in his summons,
I girded my loins up in his service.
This is the place of Nāṣir's spiritual summons,
Undoubtedly your destiny will be fulfilled here.
This is the lamp – a place of real spiritual experience,
Wherein there is no place for idle chatter.[48]

The last point, which deserves our attention, relates to the confluence of Twelver Shīʿī and Ismāʿīlī terminology, particularly that pertaining to the religious hierarchy. The religious hierarchy (*ḥudūd al-dīn*) has been well-known in Ismāʿīlī history since the inception of its *daʿwa* activity. A similar structure and application of religious hierarchy is evidently absent

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[48] *Charāgh-nāma* (Incomplete), Ms. N, f. 4b. The first verse of the poem – *This is the lamp of Nāṣir* – is an allusion to the *daʿwat-i Nāṣir* or *shabi daʿwat*.

from Twelver Shīʿī doctrine, according to which, the Imam does not have a *ḥujjat*, a chief-*dāʿī* (or proof), in the same sense, as the passage below demonstrates. However, the Imam in Twelver Shīʿism is considered the *ḥujjat of Allāh* himself, while the term *ḥujjat* in the passage below has a clear Ismāʿīlī tinge to it:

Figure 28: A Sample Folio from an old copy of the text of *Charāgh-nāma*

حضرت امام زین العابدین علیه السلام – حجت او شاه عبدالله است، امام محمد باقر – حجت او شاه نورالله است، امام

جعفر صادق حجت او شاه فیض است، امام موسی کاظم حجت او شاه چراغ است، امام موسی رضا حجت او شاه

زمان است، امام التّقی حجت او محمد کاس است، امام علی نقی حجت او وید جعفر است، امام حسن عسکری حجت

او محمد زید است امام صاحب الزمان حجت او قاسم شاه .

The *ḥujjat* of *Ḥażrat* Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn was Shāh ʿAbdullāh. The *ḥujjat* of Imam Muḥammad-i Bāqir is Shāh Nūr al-Dīn. The *ḥujjat* of Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq is Shāh Fayż. The *ḥujjat* of Imam Mūsā al-Kāẓim is Shāh-i Charāgh. The *ḥujjat* of Imam Mūsā al-Riżā is Shāh Zamān. The *ḥujjat* of Imam al-Taqī is Muḥammad Kās. The *ḥujjat* of Imam ʿAlī Taqī is Yad-i

Jaʿfar. The *ḥujjat* of Imam Ḥasan-i ʿAskarī is Muḥammad Zayd. The *ḥujjat* of Imām of the Time is Qāsim Shāh.[49]

A close reading of this passage shows that the confluence of Ismāʿīlī religious hierarchy with the genealogy of the Twelver Shīʿī Imams was a conscious conflation. This was due to the fact that the ritual of *Charāgh-rawshan* was a form of *majlis* known as a *daʿwat* in the local context, where the believer was called to join the "right path." Therefore, the passage above was recited in chorus, which had an even greater impact on the local communities. The passage nonetheless makes clear that the Twelver Shīʿa doctrine did not employ such a hierarchy; this is attested by the names of the Imams, which are clearly those of Twelver Shīʿī provenance, while the names of their *ḥujjas* seem to be just the names of local people in charge of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* in Badakhshan. It is highly likely that the persons named as the *ḥujjat* of the Imam were involved in the religious affairs of Badakhshan. Equally, we might argue that the author conflates the names of the Twelver Shīʿī Imams with those of local dignitaries or even with those of Ismāʿīlī Imams. This proposition stems from the fact that, at the time of *taqiyya*, the Nizārī Imams used a *laqab* (lit. pseudonym) or *takhallus* as a religious precaution. A clear example of the authors' (or scribes') attempt to conflate the names of the Twelver Shīʿī with the Ismāʿīlī Imams is evident in the passage cited above, where the *ḥujjat* of the *Imām-i ṣāḥib al-zamān*[50] (the Imam of the Time) is named as Qāsim Shāh. We learn from historical sources and modern studies on Ismāʿīlī history that Qāsim Shāh was the heir designate to the office of the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Imamate after his father, Imam Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. *ca.* 710/1310). Thus, this passage discursively points out two things: first of all, that the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan followed the Nizārī Qāsim-Shāh line of the Imamate and, secondly, that the text of the *Charāgh-nāma* is a crystallised text where various teachings have been consciously intermixed.

Conclusion

The tradition of *Charāgh-rawshan* is an old religious rite practised among the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan. Its symbolic meaning is drawn from the *Qurʾān* while its core rotates around the notion of *Nūr* (light). A house where the lamp is lit alludes to the practice of remembering Allāh's name and offering praise to Him. Yet, in the Ismāʿīlī context, it

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[49] *Charāgh-nāma (Incomplete), Ms. N, ff. 10a-10b.*

[50] It must be emphasised that, according to Ismāʿīlī doctrine, the term *Imām-i ṣāḥib al-zamān* is not a reference to the Hidden Twelfth Shīʿī Imam but to the Imam who occupies the office of the Imamate at the time. See: Ivanow, "Introduction," in Khākī, *An Abbreviated Version of the Diwān of Khākī-i Khorasani,* Bombay, 1933, p. 8.

reflects the three aspects of the notion of light, which correspond to the doctrine of *tawḥīd* (Oneness)*, nubuwat* (Prophethood) and *Imāmat* (Imamate)*.*

The influence of various Islamic teachings, particularly Twelver Shīʿism and Ṣūfism, on the practice of *Charāgh-rawshan* is evident in the changing pattern of the text of the *Charāgh-nāma*. Due to the infusion and amalgamation of various teachings as well as the absence of further sources, the issue of authorship remains open to further research.

The Ṣūfī terminology incorporated in the text of the *Charāgh-nāma* represents the relations between Ṣūfism and Ismāʿīlism in the peripheral context of the Islamic *Umma.* Although Badakhshan was an isolated, semi-independent country, on the periphery of the Islamic *Umma*, the peoples controlling the neighbouring countries, such as the Shaybānids, Safavids and Mughals, influenced its religious landscape. As a result, the purely Ismāʿīlī practice of *Charāgh-rawshan* incorporated certain antagonistic elements from other faiths. What must be counted a really strange phenomenon, however, is the fact that, in the local context of Badakhshan and its mountain principalities of the Pamirs, these antagonistic teachings succeeded in creating a state of equilibrium and peaceful co-existence within Ismāʿīlī religious practice.

The case of *Charāgh-rawshan* and its text represents a unique mixture of Ismāʿīlī, Ṣūfī and Twelver Shīʿī teaching. The prevailing element in the *Charāgh-nāma* is the doctrine of *tawḥīd*, *nubuwat* and *Imāmat*, expressed in the Ismāʿīlī context. The text of *Charāgh-rawshan*, on the other hand, combines the various elements from Ismāʿīlī doctrine with post-Alamūt Nizārī Ismāʿīlī teaching infused with Ṣūfī terminology, expressing the "secrets of hidden knowledge" that kept the light of faith burning in the muddy houses on the periphery of the Islamdom down to the present day.

Afterword

I engraved a note on stone that may last forever,
The one who reads it will be remembered with praise.

Pīr Sayyid Farrukh Shāh[1]

Badakhshan, a land of legends and myth, remained a relatively isolated archipelago in the political map of greater Mā warā al-nahr up to the advent of the nineteenth century's "Great Game". Its isolation was not only geographical but also intellectual and linguistic which contributed to the historical evidence of the region being preserved only in the local oral tradition. The oral tradition was transmitted from one generation to the next and this has created puzzles for modern scholarship. Reflecting on the complexity of the study of the history, religion and culture of Badakhshan and its northern mountain principalities, Ĭuuriĭ Malt͡sev, a Russian scholar, explicitly emphasises the importance of talking to the local population as a form of hermeneutical phenomenological study. He remarks:

> Truly, as people say: it is better to see once rather than to hear a hundred times and, I would add, to read a thousand times. It is better to see with one's own eyes what was written before you across the span of many centuries; to touch with one's own hands the stones that have become grey with the passage of time; to pass with one's own foot over the ancient caravan roads; to see the images of people, flowers and animals, engraved and drawn on the granite cliffs. To stay, bowing quietly in front of inscriptions and epitaphs that were made hundreds and thousands of years ago by unknown painters, [but] most importantly, to talk to the people of Badakhshan [Pamir].[2]

The present study of the political and religious history of Badakhshan allows a division of the history of Badakhshan into the following periods:

1. From ancient times to Nāṣir-i Khusraw (mid-eleventh century).
2. The reign of local rulers from the time of ʿAlī ibn al-Asad, the ruler of Badakhshan and patron of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, to Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad, the last local ruler of Badakhshan who was killed by Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd b. Muḥammad b. Mīrānshāh in 870/1466.
3. The period of turmoil from 873/1469 to 915/1509-10.

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[1] This distich was engraved by Pīr Sayyid Farrukh Shāh on a stone near his house. The original Persian text reads:

سکّه بر سنگ زدم تا به قیامت ماند،　　به دعا یاد کنم هر که مرا این خط خواند.

[2] Malt͡sev, "Vvedenie," in Iskandarov, *Istoriĭā Pamira,* Khorog, 1996, p. v.

4. The rule of the last Tīmūrids starting from Mīrzā Khān (known also as Uways Mīrzā) in 915/1509-10 and ending with control of the region being taken by the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids in 1006/1598.

5. The period from 1006/1598 to 1068/1657-68 is marked as a period of rivalry between the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids and the Mughals of India for control of Badakhshan. This rivalry ended with the rise to power of Mīr Yāribeg Khān, the founder of the Yārid, or Yāribeg Khānid, dynasty.

6. The period from 1068/1567 to 1312/1895 and the rule of the Yārids, or Yāribeg Khānids, which lasted till the advent of Russian and British power in Central Asia and India.

Our study on the history, politics and religion of Badakhshan shows that the destiny of the minority Ismāʿīlī communities of the region was different from those of their co-religionists in Iran. While the barbaric Mongol horde succeeded in bringing an end to the Ismāʿīlī state of Iran in 654/1256, the local [Ismāʿīlī] rulers of Badakhshan remained on relatively good terms with the Mongols, paying them large amount of revenue and thus succeeding in saving their community and preserving its traditions. Likewise, they offered shelter to those migrant Ismāʿīlīs who arrived in the region, disguising their true identity as Ṣūfī darvīshes and wandering qalandars.

History is held to repeat itself and subsequently the Ismāʿīlī rulers of Badakhshan faced the wrath of the Tīmūrids. Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd, who ironically was one of the sons-in-law of the last Ismāʿīlī ruler, Shāh Sulṭān Muḥammad, exterminated the entire ruling family of Badakhshan in 870/1466-67, an event which brought an end to the reign of this local Ismāʿīlī ruling dynasty. Equally, it opened up a new era in the life of the local Ismāʿīlīs who were either forced to convert to Sunnī Islam or who went into hiding, dissimulating their true identity either as Ṣūfī darvīshes or as the followers of Twelver Shīʿa or Sunnī Islam.

The advent of the Safavids in Iran and the Shaybānids in Central Asia turned the region into a battlefield where the last Tīmūrids, first with the assistance of Bābur pādshāh and later his descendants, controlled the region's political and religious realms. This event forced the local Ismāʿīlīs to migrate to the northern principalities of Shughnān, Wakhān and Darwāz, where local Ismāʿīlī daʿwa there was still active.

Earlier than that, the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Imams of Iran tried to re-instate the link between various Ismāʿīlī communities. Thus, Ismāʿīlī written sources in Persian were brought to Badakhshan and other adjacent regions. It is also important to note that the schism in the family of the Ismāʿīlī Imams resulted in a split when communities like those of Badakhshan and Kābul chose to follow the line of the Nizārī Muḥammad Shāhī Imams. Nonetheless, the Nizārī Qāsim Shāhī Imams attempted to send out decrees (Farmāns) and guidance to their

followers, requesting them to return to the true line of Imams. Although unaware of the schism among the Ismāʿīlīs of Iran into Nizārī Qāsim-Shāhī and Muḥammad-Shāhī lines, the Ismāʿīlī communities of Kābul and Badakhshan partially deviated from the line of the true Imams who lived in disguise in various parts of Iran. As a matter of fact, the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan resisted the Tīmūrids under the leadership of one of the Nizārī Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams, Rażī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir (d. *ca.* 915/1509-10). After the death of Imam Rażī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir, control over the region passed to the Tīmūrid Mīrzā Khān, known as Sulṭān Uways, and later his descendants. In the seventeenth century, control was lost to Shaybānids who with their successors ruled from Balkh until the rise of Mīr Yāribeg Khān, who was linked to the prominent Naqshbandī Ṣūfī, Makhdūm-i Aʿẓam of Samarqand. The Yāribeg Khānids ruled the region down to the era of the "Great Game".

The present research work on the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan is an introductory study and an attempt to conceptualise and contextualise it within the broader framework of historical, religious and cultural studies. This will allow it to be conceptualised within the broader framework of Central Asian, Persianate as well as Islamic studies. The complexity of the manuscript sources presents various avenues for future studies, such as the inter-relation of the tradition of Nāṣir-i Khusraw or Badakhshani Ismāʿīlism with Ṣūfism and Twelver Shīʿism as well as the rivalry between Sunnī Islam and the Ismāʿīlī branch of Shīʿa in the context of Badakhshan. Local sources reflect the strange coalescence of the genealogy of the Safavid ruling elite with local religious leaders. Equally, the local sources reflect the ideological and religious discourse between the Ismāʿīlism, Ṣūfism and Twelver Shīʿism, which is clearly reflected in the text of the *Charāgh-nāma.*

The present study attempted to show that the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan became migrants and wandering *darvīshe*s in a land that was historically and *de facto* their homeland. After the death of the last local ruler of Badakhshan, who was either an Ismāʿīlī convert or sympathetic to them, the community became a persecuted minority group. Some of them then migrated to the northern Pamir principalities of Shughnān and Wakhān that were still and were to remain predominantly Ismāʿīlī. Others, who could not migrate, converted, either to Twelver Shīʿa or to Sunnī Islam. Nonetheless, the fact of their survival, in Iran and Badakhshan, was a phenomenon of history and came as a big surprise to modern scholars, such as Wladimir Ivanow, Aleksandr Semenov, Ivan Zarubin and many others. The same sentiment was shared by the political and military agents of Tsarist Russia, such as Lieutenant Colonel Serebrennikov who, on 28 July 1892, wrote in his diary of his

astonishment and surprise "at the continued existence of this persecuted minority"[3] in the remote corner of Badakhshan as follows:

> A nearer acquaintance with the Tajiks, and the study of their customs and manners, forces us to sympathise with this persecuted nation, which has undergone so many trials. Indeed, it is a wonder how it is they have not disappeared from the face of the earth.[4]

Indeed, the question of the survival of the community remains open for future studies. However, it should be mentioned that it was the practice of *taqiyya* by the Ismāʿīlīs as well as the local tradition such as *madāḥ-khānī* and the ritual practice of *Charāgh-rawshan* that protected the community from extinction.

The incontrovertible historical fact that Nāṣir-i Khusraw came to the region remained alive in the tradition which had been founded a thousand years ago by him and that connects the destiny of the Ismāʿīlīs of the region with their '*Present and Living Imam*', Prince Karīm al-Ḥusaynī, the fourth Aga Khan, with the invocation from the old text of *Charāgh-nāma*:

اللّٰهمَّ صَلِّى عَلى سَيِّدَنا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعلىٍ و عَلى آلِ عَلىٍ وَمُحَمَّد صَلوَت بَر مُحَمَّد وَعَلى

ʿallāhumma ṣalī ʿalā sayyidanā Muḥammadin va ʿAlīyin va ʿalā āli ʿAlīyin va Muḥammad ṣalawāt bar Muḥammad va ʿAlī,[5] [O God! Say *ṣalawāt* (blessing) upon our Lord Muḥammad and upon the progeny of ʿAlī and Muḥammad, may *ṣalawāt* be upon Muḥammad and ʿAlī] which as a sign of devotion and dedication to their faith was, is and always will be reiterated by both the young and old of these small mountain communities in Badakhshan.

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[3] Virani, *The Ismāʿīlīs in the Middle Ages,* p. 184.

[4] Serebri͡annikov, "On the Afghan Frontier: A Reconnaissance in Shughnan (Notes from a Russian Officer's Journal)," Markoff, (English tr.)., in *GJ,* vol. 16, no. 6 (December 1900), p. 679.

[5] This particular text of *ṣalwāt* used to be chanted in unison by the people who participate in the *daʿwat-i Nāṣir.* The current text of *Charāgh-nāma* contains a short form of the *ṣalwāt,* which is *Allāhumma ṣalī ʿalā Muḥammadin wa āl-i Muḥammad:*

اللّٰهمَّ صَلِّى عَلى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّد

Glossary of Terms

The selected terms presented here are the one mostly used in the body text of the thesis. The plural form of the terms is given either in the text or in the list of glossary below.

- *ʿālim* – Islamic theologian, jurist, religious teacher. (pl. *ʿulamāʾ*).

- *Aga Khan* – Honorary title granted to Imam Shāh ʿAlī Shāh (d. 1298/1881) by Fatḥ ʿAlī Shāh (d. 1250/1834), the Ruler of Qājār dynasty.

- *Ahl-al bayt* – *"People of the house," "family."* A reference to the five members of the Prophet Muḥammad's family. The term *Panj tanī* is also used to refer to *Ahl al-bayt* in the context of Badakhshan.

- *āstān* – A shrine or a place of worship in Badakhshan.

- *aṭālīq* – Advisor to the khan; also guardian of the khan's sons. Also a governor.

- *bāj* - A special porridge made of grain wheat and meat of sheep.

- *barakat* - Blessing power.

- *Barpanja* or *Barpanja qalʿa* – The name of a castle, located on the left bank of the river Panj, which used to be the residence of *mīr*s and *shāh*s of Shughnān.

- *bāṭin* – The hidden, inner, inward or esoteric. The Ismāʿīlīs and some Ṣūfī groups practice esoteric interpretation of the *Qurʾān*.

- *bayʿat* or *bayʿa* - A vow of spiritual allegiance to an Imam or a *pīr*.

- *be-pīrī* - A state where the *pīr* is absent.

- *Charāgh-rawshan* – A ritual practice of the Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan. Performed on the third night of funeral ceremony. Known also as *shab-i daʿwat* or *daʿwat-i Pir Shāh Nāṣir*. *Charāgh-rawshan* is also known as *Tsirow pithid* in the Pamiri languages.

- *Charāgh-nāma* – A text written in prose and poetry that is read on the third night of the funeral ceremony known as *shab-i daʿwat, daʿwat-i Pīr Shāh Nāṣir*. *Charāgh-nāma* is also referred to as *Qandīl-nāma*.

- *chashma-i Nāṣir* – A spring-well located in the village of Mithenshār in Porshinev, GBAO.

- *dāʿī* - A summoner. In the Ismāʿīlī context one of the ranks in the religious hierarchy or *ḥudūd al-dīn*.

- *daʿwat* – A summon or call. A term used to refer to Ismāʿīlī missionary organisation.

- *daʿwat-i baqā* – A religious rite performed for the person, who is still alive. Also known as *zinda daʿwat*.

- *Daʿwat-i fanā* – A religious rite performed for the soul of bereft person. Also known as *shab-i daʿwat* and *Charāgh-rawshan.* In the Pamiri languages, it is also known as *Tsirow pithid*.

- *Daʿwat-i Nāṣir* – lit. A sermon supervised by Nāṣir-i Khusraw. In a broader context, this term is used to refer to the tradition of Nāṣir-i Khusraw.

- *faqīr* – A term used to refer to religious mendicants, ascetics in the Muslim context.

- *farmān* – Religious instruction, decree or guidance. Also imperial proclamation in relation to ruling elite. In the Ismāʿīlī context *farmān* is given by the Imam for his followers. The plural form of *farmān* is *farāmīn*.

- *Silk-i Gawhar-riz* - Pearl Scatterer. An eighteenth century local source on the Ismāʿīlī history in Badakhshan composed by Guharrez valadi Khwāja ʿAbd al-Nabī valadi Khwāja Ṣāliḥ-i Yumgī.

- *ginān* – Devotional poetry of *Khoja* Ismāʿīlī community of South Asia.

- *gumbad* or *gumbaz*- A tomb or a shrine of a *pīr* or sage.

- *ḥadīth* – A report or tradition related to the Prophet Muḥammad or Shīʿī Imams.

- *hijrat* – Migration. A reference to the Prophet Muḥammad's migration from Mecca to Medina.

- *ḥudūd al-dīn* – Ranks of faith. A reference to the esoteric hierarchy in Ismāʿīlism that consists of seven ranks.

- *Imam* – Religious leader. The highest rank in Ismāʿīlī hierarchy of faith. In Sunnī Islam used to refer to the person, who leads prayers in the mosque. (pl. *aʾimma*)

- *Ithnā ʿasharī* – A term used to refer to one of the branches in Shīʿa Islam – the Twelver Shīʿīs.

- *jamāʿat* – A term used to refer to the community.

- *kāfir* – Infidel. A term used to refer to unbeliever.

- *khalīfa* – is used to refer to local religious leader. In a broader Islamic context it denotes the head of the state or *khilāfat*.

- *khuṭba* – Call to prayer. Also a Friday address in a mosque during, which a prayer is offered in the name of the ruler. The change of name in the *khuṭba* is an indication of a change of ruler or dynasty.

- *khwāja* – A term used to refer to scholar, teacher and also merchants in India.

- *Khoja* – The term Khoja is used in reference to Nizārī Ismāʿīlī communities of South Asia. This term is derived from the Persian term *khwāja* meaning master.

- *Mā warā al-nahr* – Lit. Beyond the River. The term is used to refer to the vast land in Central Asia.

- *maʿẕūn* – This term literary means licentiate, which is used in reference to the lower ranks in the Ismāʿīlī hierarchy. There are two *maʿẕūn*s in the Ismāʿīlī *ḥudūd al-dīn* known as *maʿẕūn-i akbar* and *maʿẕūn-i aṣghar*.

- *madāḥ* – Eulogy. A form of devotional poetry prevalent in Badakhshan. The term *madāḥ* is derived from the word *madḥ* which meaning praise, commendation and applause.

- *madāḥ-khānī* or *madḥiya-khānī* - The singing of didactic or devotional poetry.

- *madāḥ-khān* or *madḥ-khwān* – lit. Eulogist. This term is used in reference to a person who sings *madāḥ*.

- *makhdūm* – A learned religious man.

- *Makhdūm-i aʿẓam* – "The Great Master." A term used to refer to Khwājagān Aḥmad b. Jalāl al-Dīn Kāsānī (866-949/1461-15542), a famous successor of Khwāja Aḥrār and a disciple of the Naqshbandī *pīr* Muḥammad Qāżī b. Burhān al-Dīn (d. 921/1515-16).

- *māl-i sarkār* or *zakāt* – Religious dues.

- *mastūrīn* – The Hidden one. Used to refer to the hidden Imam in the Shīʿa Islam.

- *mawlā* – Lord and master. The term that used to apply to Ismāʿīlī Imams as well.

- *may-i waḥdat* – "The wine of divine unity." A Ṣūfī term that indicates the meeting or the beatific vision granted by Imam to his followers - *murīd.*

- *mīr* – A short form of the title *amīr.* This term is used to refer to local ruler.

- *mīrigarī* –A term that denotes the geographic domain of a *mīr.* Its English equivalent is "princedom" or "principality." These three terms are used interchangeably in this research work.

- *murīd* – Disciple, follower or a student of a Ṣūfī *pīr.* In the Ismāʿīlī context it refers to the follower of the Imam.

- *murshīd* – Spiritual guide. A Ṣūfī term employed in Ismāʿīlī context in reference to Imam.

- *mustaqar* – A term to refer to a permanent Imam. This term is translated as *Established* or *Veritable* Imam.

- *mustawdaʿ* – A term to refer to a temporary Imam. This term is translated as *Temporary* or *Deposition.*

- *naṣṣ* – An explicit designation of a successor by his predecessor. This concept is used by the Shīʿīs when an Imam under divine guidance designates his successor.

- *pādshāh* - Emperor, king. Also spelled as *bādshāh. Shāh* is its short form.

- *Panj-tanī* – A term used by Ismāʿīlīs of Badakhshan to refer to their faith. Also used to refer to those who revere "The Five Pure Bodies" or "Five Holy Members" from the Prophet Muḥammad's Household or *the Ahl al-bayt.*

- *pīr* - A spiritual guide or a religious preceptor. Also denotes the head of the institution of *pīrship.*

- *Qandīl-nāma* – A term used to refer to the text of *Charāgh-nāma.*

- *qaṣīda* - An ode or panegyric. A poetic genre.

- *Qurʾān* - The Holy Scripture in Islam.

- *quṭb* - The pole. This is a Ṣūfī term used to refer to the Ismāʿīlī Imam.

- *rāhī* - A guide. A term employed among the Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārīs of Badakhshan.

- *Safavids* – A Twelver Shīʿī dynasty that ruled Persia from 907/1501 to 1135/1722.

- *ṣalawāt* or *ṣalwāt* – A prayer or praise.

- *satr* – Concealment. Used to refer to a specific period in the Ismāʿīlī history when the Imams is in hiding.

- *sayyid* - Descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad. (pl. *sādāt).* Also a honorary title given to the descendants of al-Ḥusayn, sons of the Prophet's nephew.

- *shāh* – A term to refer to local ruler. A short form of the term *pādshāh.*

- *Shāhigarī* – An area under the control of the *shāh* is referred to as *shāhigarī.*

- *Sharīʿa* – Islamic religious law.

- *Shīʿa* – A term used to refer to those Muslims, who regards ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and his descendants as the only legitimate leaders of the Muslim community after the Prophet's death.

- *Shughnān* – A mountain principality in the northern part of Badakhshan divided between Afghan and Tajik Badakhshan.

- *Shughnī* – A local dialect in the mountainous Badakhshan.

- *silsila* – Ṣūfī order or brotherhood.

- *Ṣūfī* – Islamic mystic or a follower of a particular Ṣūfī order.

- *Sunnī* – A term that used to refer to the orthodox Islam.

- *Taʿlīm* – lit. literacy or teaching, spiritual guidance. Also refer to the famous doctrine propounding the way of conveying religious teaching to the lower ranks in the Ismāʿīlī hierarchy.

- *Taʾwīl* – lit. to take something back to its origin. Used to refer to esoteric interpretation of the divine revelation.

- *tanga* – Basic coin or a silver coin.

- *taqiyya* – Precautionary dissimulation of one's true religious belief in time of danger.

- *tawḥīd* – The doctrine of Divine Unity, in which God is perceived to be without qualities or attributes.

- *taẕkīra* – Biographical work recording the lives and works of famous figures in Islamic history.

- *Wakhān* – Geographic location in south-east Gorno-Badakhshan.

- *walī* – Saint or sage.

- *zāhir* – The apparent, outward, exoteric.

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