

EKİTAP

# THE SUFI STRUGGLE IN THE CAUCASUS

THE KHĀLIDĪ SHEIKHS AND MURIDISM



Abdulcebbar KAVAK

ilāhiyât



ilāhiyāt 1658

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*The Sufi Struggle In The Caucasus*  
*The Khālīdī Sheikhs And Muridism*

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Editor: Assist Prof. İsmail GÜRLER

E-ISBN 978-625-8731-02-6

1. Baskı: Kasım 2025

Sertifika No: 44396

Mizanpaj ve Uygulama: TAVOOS  
Kapak: TAVOOS

ilāhiyāt

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### **Selected Publications**

Dîvân of Mevlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî (Dîvân-ı Mevlânâ Hâlid-i Bağdâdî), Mevlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî and the Khâlidîyya (Mevlânâ Hâlid-i Bağdâdî ve Hâlidîlik), Sufism in Northern Iraq during the Ottoman Period (17th Century) [Osmanlı Döneminde Kuzey Irak'ta Tasavvuf (17. Yüzyıl)], Ahmad al-Khanî (Ahmed-i Hânî), Sayyid Taha Hakkârî (Seyyid Taha Hakkârî), Sufism in Ağrı in the Republican Period (Cumhuriyet Döneminde Ağrı'da Tasavvuf).

# INTRODUCTION

|                                                                 |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| GLOSSARY FOR THE BOOK .....                                     | 9  |
| FOREWORD .....                                                  | 15 |
| INTRODUCTION .....                                              | 19 |
| A. A Few Words on the Caucasus .....                            | 19 |
| B. Mawlānā Khālīd and the Khālidiyya .....                      | 21 |
| CHAPTER ONE                                                     |    |
| THE EMERGENCE OF THE KHĀLIDIYYA                                 |    |
| IN THE CAUCASUS AND ITS SOCIAL ORGANIZATION .....               | 27 |
| THE EMERGENCE OF THE KHĀLIDIYYA                                 |    |
| IN THE CAUCASUS .....                                           | 27 |
| Sheikh Ismā'īl Shirwānī and the Initial Activities of the       |    |
| Khālidiyya in the Caucasus .....                                | 28 |
| The Khālīdī Branches Formed in the Caucasus After Ismā'īl       |    |
| Shirwānī .....                                                  | 32 |
| THE PERIOD OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION                               |    |
| IN THE CAUCASUS .....                                           | 33 |
| Factors Necessitating Social Organization in the Caucasus ..... | 33 |
| The Khālidiyya's Process of Organizing Caucasian Society .....  | 35 |
| Reasons for the Khālidiyya's Success in Organizing Caucasian    |    |
| Society .....                                                   | 37 |

|                                                                                 |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| The Dynamic and Revivalist (Ihyā'ī) Quality of the Khālidi Sufi Tradition ..... | 37 |
| Their Emphasis on Mosque and Madrasah .....                                     | 38 |
| Their Consideration of Local Dynamics and Social Differences ...                | 39 |
| Their Strong Stance Against Colonialism and Occupation .....                    | 41 |
| Their Development of a Pan-Islamic and Inclusive Understanding .....            | 43 |
| The Center of Activity Shifts from Shirwan to Daghestan .....                   | 45 |
| The Largest Khālidi Center in the Caucasus: The Madrasah of Yukarı Yarağ .....  | 46 |
| From Murid to Mujāhid: The Khālidi Commanders .....                             | 47 |
| The Charismatic Leader of Muridism: Sheikh Shāmil al-Dāghestānī .....           | 48 |

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE TRANSFORMATION FROM A SUFI MOVEMENT

|                                                   |    |
|---------------------------------------------------|----|
| TO AN ISLAMIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE CAUCASUS..... | 51 |
|---------------------------------------------------|----|

|                                                                   |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| THE KHĀLIDI TRADITION: FROM SUFI MOVEMENT TO STATE-BUILDING ..... | 51 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----|

|                                                         |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Muridism (Science and Sufism, Politics and Jihād) ..... | 51 |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----|

|                                                            |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| A Model of an Islamic State Adapted for the Caucasus ..... | 53 |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----|

|                                                         |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Sheikh Shāmil's Relations with the Ottoman Sultan ..... | 56 |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----|

|                                                        |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----|
| The Khālidi Solidarity from Dagestan to Istanbul ..... | 57 |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----|

|                                                                          |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Sheikh Shāmil's Correspondence with Sheikh 'Abd al-Fattāh al-'Akrī ..... | 61 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|

|                                                                                                                      |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Information in the Letters Regarding the Muridist Movement and Sheikh Shāmil's Communication with the Ottoman Empire | 64 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|

|                                                                                                    |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| The Role of 'Abd al-Fattāh al-'Akrī in Sheikh Shāmil's Communication with the Ottoman Empire ..... | 65 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|

## CHAPTER THREE

|                                                 |    |
|-------------------------------------------------|----|
| KHĀLIDI ACTIVITY IN THE SOUTHERN CAUCASUS ..... | 71 |
|-------------------------------------------------|----|

|                                                                     |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| THE KHĀLIDIS IN THE TALISH REGION ON THE CAUCASUS-IRAN BORDER ..... | 71 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----|

|                                                                                                  |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| THE STRENGTHENING KHĀLIDĪ TRADITION IN NORTHERN<br>AZERBAIJAN .....                              | 77 |
| The Sheikhs of Jar-Balakan .....                                                                 | 78 |
| CHAPTER FOUR                                                                                     |    |
| THE DECLINE OF THE KHĀLIDIYYA IN THE CAUCASUS .....                                              | 81 |
| RUSSIA'S MAJOR BLOW TO THE KHĀLIDĪS<br>IN THE CAUCASUS .....                                     | 81 |
| The Beginning of the End for the Muridist Movement: Sheikh<br>Shāmīl's Surrender to Russia ..... | 81 |
| The Forced Migration of the Khālīdī Sheikhs to Anatolia .....                                    | 82 |
| CHAPTER FIVE                                                                                     |    |
| GREAT KHĀLIDĪ SHEIKHS WHO INFLUENCED THE CAUCASUS ..                                             | 85 |
| Sheikh Ismā'īl Shirwānī .....                                                                    | 85 |
| Sheikh 'Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn al-Tawīlī .....                                                      | 87 |
| Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī .....                                                                    | 88 |
| Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī .....                                                                  | 89 |
| Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīqumūqī .....                                                         | 90 |
| REFERENCES .....                                                                                 | 96 |



## GLOSSARY FOR THE BOOK

The glossary for this book is an essential tool for readers, offering clear definitions of specialized terms and concepts related to Sufism, the Khālīdī order, and the historical context of Muridism. By presenting these technical definitions at the beginning of the book, the glossary enables readers to grasp the intricacies of the subject matter more effectively. This foundational knowledge enhances comprehension, allowing for a deeper engagement with the themes and arguments explored in the text.

|                                               |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adab (proper conduct)                         | : | the rules, procedures, and methods specific to something.                                                                                                                                                                       |
| ‘ālim (scholar)                               | : | knowledgeable, learned. Well-informed. Well-read, erudite. Engaged in scholarship. Teacher.                                                                                                                                     |
| Amīr al-mu’minīn (commander of the faithfuls) | : | Muslim title denoting the supreme leader of an Islamic community                                                                                                                                                                |
| ‘aqīda (creed)                                | : | The fundamental principle that is believed and held as a matter of faith. Faith. Creed.                                                                                                                                         |
| ‘ārif (gnostics)                              | : | (From Irfan) Knowledgeable, advanced in knowledge. Familiar, well-informed. Knows the truth, knows it rightfully. Patient and tolerant. Knows and understands what he sees without needing to think too much, without pretense. |

|                                   |   |                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bay'a (the oath of allegiance)    | : | To declare one's allegiance and trust. To accept someone's arbitration or sovereignty. To publicly declare one's allegiance by holding hands. To renew one's allegiance.          |
| Bid'a (reprehensible innovations) | : | Customs that are not part of religion but were introduced into religion later.                                                                                                    |
| Dhikr (remembrance of Allah)      | : | (remembrance, reminder, mention) is a form of Islamic worship in which phrases or prayers are repeatedly recited for the purpose of remembering Allah.                            |
| Dīwān                             | : | A book containing the poems of poets who lived in the past.                                                                                                                       |
| Fiqh (islamic jurisprudence)      | : | Deep and subtle understanding. Knowing something thoroughly, in its entirety. Knowing religious, Islamic rulings concerning relationships between people, with detailed evidence. |
| Firmān (imperial edict)           | : | Order, written command issued by the sultan.                                                                                                                                      |
| Ghazawāt                          | : | The plural of Ghaza. Fighting against infidels for the sake of religion, waging war, targeting the enemy. Fighting.                                                               |
| Ghāzī                             | : | One who fights for the sake of religion, Islam. One who has been wounded or fought in jihad.                                                                                      |
| Halaqa (science circles)          | : | The literal meaning of a halaqah (plural halaqaat) in Arabic is a 'circle'. Often it refers to a religious gathering or an Islamic study circle.                                  |
| Ḥikma (wisdom)                    | : | The secret reason that no one knows. The divine purpose and wisdom in the universe and in creation.                                                                               |
| Iḥyā'ī (revivalist)               | : | To revive. To bring back to life. To animate. To enliven. To awaken.                                                                                                              |

|                            |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ijaza (license)            | : | A certificate, license or diploma issued by a master (teacher) to a student, indicating that the student has completed their training in various fields of knowledge.                                                                                                                           |
| Ikhwān (brethren)          | : | Brothers, friends, members of the same order.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Irshād (guidance)          | : | Showing the right path. Awakening people from heedlessness through rational and heartfelt, convincing and effective works or words, and showing them the path of guidance.                                                                                                                      |
| Iṣlāḥ (the reform)         | : | To discipline, to improve. To restore something that has been damaged to its original state. To reconcile people, to make peace between them                                                                                                                                                    |
| Istiṣāra (consultation)    | : | Consultation exchanging ideas with a reliable person for an important matter.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Jihad                      | : | (From Cehd.) Fighting the enemy. Exerting all one's strength with knowledge and faith, with words, deeds, wealth, and life. Fighting in the way of Allah (SWT). Working for the sake of religion. Any struggle against the self.                                                                |
| Khalīfa (one deputy)       | : | One who takes the place of another. The representative of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the leader of all Muslims on earth.<br>A disciple trained by a Sufi master and entrusted with the task of educating people and training students during his lifetime or after his death. |
| Khilāfa (deputyship)       | : |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Khalwa (spiritual retreat) | : | To mature and progress on the path of Sufism, one must spend a certain period of time in solitude, alone.                                                                                                                                                                                       |

|                                     |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Madhhab (islamic schools of law)    | : | It refers to any school of thought within Islamic jurisprudence. The major Sunni madhhab are Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali.                                                                                                                                                    |
| Madrasa, madrasahs (islamic school) | : | The place where lessons are held. The place where lessons are taught.                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Mufti                               | : | The person responsible for declaring and explaining the rulings of Islamic law on matters related to fiqh.                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Muhtasibs (tax collector)           | : | The muhtasib was a supervisor of bazaars and trade, the inspector of public places and behavior in towns in the Islamic countries.                                                                                                                                                   |
| Mujaddidiyya                        | : | The branch of the Naqshbandiyya order attributed to Imam Rabbani (d. 1034/1624).                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Mullā                               | : | A title, name given to great scholars in the past.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Murīd (disciple)                    | : | One who wills, who desires. One who has joined the order. A disciple or student of the sheikh or spiritual guide.                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Muridism                            | : | It is a special movement affiliated with the Qadiri and Naqshbandi orders that was influential in the Caucasus in the 19th century and thereafter. What makes the movement special is the political role it assumed in the resistance of the Caucasian peoples against the Russians. |
| Murshid (the great guide)           | : | The one who guides, shows the right path, awakens from heedlessness. The successor of the Prophet, the guide. The spiritual master, the sheikh.                                                                                                                                      |
| Mutaşarrif (governor)               | : | Formerly, the highest administrative official of the Sanjak, which was smaller than the province.                                                                                                                                                                                    |

|                             |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nafs (self)                 | : | The human being, the person, the body, self. Spirit, soul, life, principle of life, breath, existence, essence, human, person, whims and desires, blood, body, base desires arising from the body.                                                                                                                                                          |
| Nisba (attributive names)   | : | A name indicating membership or affiliation with a tribe, place, sect, or profession.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Pāye (title)                | : | A term used in the Ottoman Empire to denote the rank given especially to members of the ulema, scholars.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Qāḍī (judge)                | : | A judge is an official appointed by the state to resolve legal disputes and settle lawsuits.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Qalb (the heart)            | : | The heart is the source or vehicle of knowledge and thought in a religious and mystical context.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Rābiṭa (the spiritual link) | : | In Sufism, the seeker's devotion to a perfect guide implies contemplating both his outward appearance and his inner character (both his face and his morals and behavior).                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Sanjak                      | : | In the Ottoman Empire, a region or revenue-generating estate, a administrative division between provinces and districts,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Shāfi'ī                     | : | The jurisprudence doctrine attributed to Imam Shafi'i (d. 204/820), who had the opportunity to closely examine and critique the Medina-centered Hijaz jurisprudence and the Kufa-centered Iraq jurisprudence that emerged in the first two centuries of the Hijri calendar (7th-8th centuries) and achieved an original synthesis between these two trends. |
| Sharī'a                     | : | The literal meaning is "the path to water, the path followed," and as a term, it is generally synonymous with "religion," encompassing all beliefs, morals, and practices determined by revelation.                                                                                                                                                         |

|                                      |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sheikh                               | : | The founder of a religious order, or someone who has reached the highest level within a religious order or one of its branches, a religious leader. The word sheikh, which means “elderly person” in the dictionary (plural: shuyuh, eshah, mashayikh), has been used in various Islamic states and societies to express respect in many ways. |
| Shi‘i                                | : | The collective name for various groups that united around the idea that state governance belonged to Ali and his descendants after the Prophet’s death.                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Silsila (sufi chain of transmission) | : | The word “silsile” is used in Sufism to mean a list containing the names of the sheikhs of a Sufi order who grant authorization to one another.                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Sufi                                 | : | A person who strives to attain closeness to Allah by adopting a Sufi lifestyle.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Sunni                                | : | A term referring to those who follow the path taken by the Prophet and his companions in fundamental matters of religion.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Tariqa                               | : | In Sufism, the method adopted and the path followed to reach Allah.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Ummatī (pan-islamic)                 | : | A term referring to the community formed by those who believe in or are addressed by the religion preached by a prophet.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| ‘urf (customs)                       | : | A term referring to social behavior patterns that are generally accepted in society and have continuous or dominant practice, as well as established usage in language.                                                                                                                                                                        |

## FOREWORD

The Caucasus region possesses a rich diversity in its geographical, ethnic, religious, and cultural characteristics. With the spread of Islam in this region, Muslim communities began to establish stronger relationships with the states in Iran and Anatolia. The political, religious, and social developments occurring in the Islamic world also affected the Caucasus.

The scholarly activities that spread through madrasas opened in the region from the earliest periods were followed by the Sufi activities of the Sufi orders. Tariqas that emerged in Turkistan, Iran, Iraq, and Anatolia, such as the Yasawiyya, Qādiriyya, Naqshbandiyya, Safawiyya, and Khalwatiyya, became known and widespread among the Muslims of the Caucasus. Among these, the Naqshbandiyya order, in particular, stood out for its activities that would leave a mark on the last two centuries of Caucasian history.

The Khālidiyya, the subject of this work, is a dynamic Sufi movement that emerged in West Asia in the first quarter of the nineteenth century as a branch of the Mujaddidiyya branch of the Naqshbandiyya order. Its founder, Mawlānā Khālīd al-Shah-razūrī, produced solutions with a revivalist approach, based on the foundations of traditional science and Sufism, to the politi-

cal, religious, and social problems faced by Muslims in his era. He emphasized efforts that would increase social consciousness and dynamism among Muslims. He centered his activities in the madrasas, where Muslim scholars, artists, and intellectuals were trained, and transformed them into places where personalities who were both scholars (‘ālim) and gnostics (‘ārīf) were cultivated through the simultaneous teaching of Science and Sufism. The students he educated and the deputies (khalīfa) he authorized undertook important missions as pioneering figures who were not only the scholarly and spiritual leaders of their societies but could also assume political and social leadership when necessary. Those who organized the armed Muridism movement against Russia in the Caucasus region in the first half of the nineteenth century were Sheikh Ismā‘īl Sirāj al-Dīn al-Shirwānī, sent to the region by Mawlānā Khālīd, and the mudarris-Sufi (teacher-Sufi) personalities he trained.

This study, titled *The Sufi Struggle in the Caucasus: The Khālīdī Sheikhs and Muridism*, consists of an Introduction and five chapters. The Introduction briefly discusses the Caucasus region and the Khālīdiyya. The first chapter examines the emergence of the Khālīdiyya in the Caucasus and its social organization. The activities initiated by Sheikh Ismā‘īl Sirāj al-Dīn al-Shirwānī and the Khālīdī branches that formed in the Caucasian region are discussed. To ensure a clear understanding of the social organization in the Caucasus, the centers of activity are addressed. Furthermore, the characteristics of the commanders trained in these centers and of Sheikh Shāmīl, the culminating figure of Muridism, are explored.

The second chapter analyzes the process of Muridism’s evolution from a Sufi movement to an Islamic administration and its significant dynamics. The foundational factors upon which Muridism was based—Science and Sufism, politics and jihād—

are examined. The study investigates how this movement transformed into a state model unique to the Caucasus, and Sheikh Shāmīl's relationship as head of state with the Ottoman Empire and as a Khālīdī sheikh with the Khālīdī circles in Istanbul.

The third chapter deals with the Khālīdī activity in the southern region of the Caucasus, extending to the Iranian border. This section scrutinizes the activities in the southern Caucasus of both Sheikh Ismā'īl Sirāj al-Dīn al-Shirwānī and one of Mawlānā Khālīd's Iraqi deputies, Sheikh 'Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn al-Tawīlī.

The fourth chapter, under the title "The Decline of the Khālīdiyya in the Caucasus," discusses the significant events that occurred in the new period beginning with Sheikh Shāmīl's surrender to Russia. This chapter examines the forced migrations from the Caucasus of the Khālīdī sheikhs, who were the spiritual leaders of Muridism, and the cadres who commanded the army with the rank of Imam, and the impact of this on the region and on Anatolia.

The fifth and final chapter briefly discusses the great Khālīdī sheikhs who influenced the Caucasus region.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to my dear friend Buland Muḥammad Shukrī Muftī from the city of Akre in Northern Iraq, who did not withhold his help in providing manuscript copies of two letters belonging to Sheikh Shāmīl and Sheikh 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-'Akrī, and to my esteemed colleague Dr. İbrahim Erol, whom we consulted for his knowledge and views on the Khālīdī sheikhs in the Caucasus.

Abdulcebbar KAVAK  
Karabük-2025



## INTRODUCTION

### A. A Few Words on the Caucasus

The Caucasus is located at a crossroads of trade routes between Asia and Europe. Before the Muslims, the Byzantines, Sasanians, and Khazars were influential in the region's administration and trade. From the sixteenth century onwards, as the Ottoman Empire began to make its presence felt in the Caucasus, the interest of the Russians in this region increased, and they expanded their sphere of influence. Following the Russo-Persian and Russo-Ottoman wars, in the struggle for dominance over the region, all of Dagestan and the Southern Caucasus came under Russian dominion by the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

In the nineteenth century, the Caucasus, administratively consisting of ten provinces and an independent sanjak, was home to numerous nations and communities belonging to three distinct peoples who spoke more than seventy languages. In this region, where the Circassians, Abaza, Chechens, Lezgins, Laz, and Turks, along with this some of the Georgians were

---

<sup>1</sup> Salih Muhammedoğlu Aliyev, "Kafkasya," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2001), 24/158–159.

Muslim, it is recorded that a considerable Christian population also lived.<sup>2</sup>

The Azeri Turks living in Azerbaijan are known for their Shi'î identity, while the Turks and Kurds in Northeastern Anatolia and the Southern Caucasus, the peoples of the Northern Caucasus and Dagestan, the Nogais, Tatars, and Turkmens are known for their Sunni identity.<sup>3</sup> With these religious, social, and cultural differences, the Caucasus presents itself as a remarkably colorful region.

After the institutionalization of Sufism, the Caucasus became home to Sufi orders and their branches, the great majority of which emerged in Central Asia, Iran, and the Southern Caucasus. These are the Yasawiyya, Qādiriyya, Suhrawardiyya—and the Abhariyya and Zāhidiyya which were born from it—the Khalwatiyya, the Safawiyya, and the Naqshbandiyya tariqa. The Khālidiyya, a branch of the Naqshbandiyya, stood out as the most dynamic and influential Sufi movement active in the Caucasus region in the nineteenth century.

The armed struggle initiated by the Naqshbandī sheikh Imam Maṣṣūr (d. 1794) against the Russians in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, known as the Ghazawāt, was revived by the Khālidi sheikhs from the first quarter of the nineteenth century across a wider geography and in a more organized manner. As part of this struggle, the madrasas opened in the region accelerated the spread of the Khālidi Sufi tradition among the Muslims of the Caucasus. It is noted that the Khālidi sheikhs, who profoundly influenced and transformed the religious, political, and social structure of the Caucasus with their activities, were more aristocratic, more intellectual, and were scholars (‘ālim)

<sup>2</sup> Şemseddin Sâmî, *Qâmûs al-A'lâm* (İstanbul: Mihran Matbaası, 1314), 5/3546-3548.

<sup>3</sup> M. Sadık Bilge, *Osmanlı Devleti ve Kafkasya* (İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 2005), 26.

who knew Arabic. The members of the tariqa were also more conscious, disciplined, fully committed to their ideals, and better adapted to open rebellion.<sup>4</sup>

In recent years, we have seen an increase in academic studies that reveal the powerful influence of the Khālidiyya on the scholarly and Sufi life of the region. Nevertheless, despite being among the places where the Khālidiyya was highly influential, it cannot be said that this region has been sufficiently studied.

### B. Mawlānā Khālīd and the Khālidiyya

Mawlānā Khālīd (1779-1827) was educated in Shahrazūr, a city in Iraq known for the numerous madrasahs opened by Kurdish scholars ('ulamā'). This was a region on the Iran-Iraq border where Sunni culture was extremely strong. Mawlānā Khālīd describes Shahrazūr in one of his couplets as follows:

خون شد دلم نسیم صبا! غمکسار شو  
بردشت شهرزور دمی رهگذار شو

O breeze of the morning! My heart is filled with blood. Share my sorrows and, even for a moment, pass through the plain of Shahrazūr (and console me).

Sufi circles in East Asia mostly addressed him with the attributive names (nisba) "Mawlānā Khālīd al-Kurdī" or "Mawlānā Khālīd al-Rūmī." In the Sufi circles of Istanbul and Anatolia, however, he was generally known as "Mawlānā Khālīd al-Baghdādī." Another common nisba found in the sources is "Mawlānā Khālīd al-Shahrazūrī." He continued his madrasah education, which began in Northern Iraq, in Baghdad. The final madrasah where he crowned his studies with

<sup>4</sup> Alexandre Popovic - Gilles Veinstein, *İslam Dünyasında Tarikatlar* (Ankara: Sûf Yayınları, 2004), 75–81; Alexandre Bennigsen - Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejay, *Sûfi ve Komiser Rusya'da İslam Tarikatları* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 1988), 96.

a license (*ijāza*) to teach was the one where Muḥammad Qāsim al-Sanandajī was the head teacher (*mudarris*) in the Iranian city of Sanandaj.

By traveling to the Hijaz and India, Mawlānā Khālīd had the opportunity to visit many centers of science and culture and to see firsthand the scholarly and Sufi heritage that existed in them. He received licenses from more than one scholar and Sufi whom he met. It is possible to see the deep marks these journeys left on Mawlānā Khālīd in his poetic *Dīwān*. The knowledge and experience he gained during these travels would be of great help in establishing the Khālidiyya, which would be named after him, on solid foundations and would play a positive role in its success.

Certain political, religious, and social events of the era he lived in were also influential in the shaping of Mawlānā Khālīd's intellectual world and his plans. For example, during the period when Mawlānā Khālīd began his Sufi activities in Iraq, Wahhābism, a modern Salafi (*Salafiyya*) movement centered in the Hijaz region, had started to influence major centers like Baghdad and Damascus. This movement succeeded in attracting some well-known figures from the scholarly class (*'ulamā'*). Other important developments of this period worth mentioning include innovative Sufi currents like the *Idrīsiyya*, which looked somewhat favorably upon Wahhābism; the reformist (*iṣlāhī*) movement that deemed innovative approaches in religious thought necessary; and the missionary activities that gained momentum with the West's attempts to colonize the Middle East.

The success Mawlānā Khālīd achieved as an Islamic scholar and Sufi in a period of slightly more than a quarter of a century caused him to be mentioned among the most talked-about Muslim personalities during his lifetime and after. Due to his

efforts toward solving political and social problems, he was described as the second greatest Kurdish personality after Salāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, because the Khālidiyya, whose foundations he laid, was represented by more than one hundred deputies (khalīfa) across a very wide geography including the Ottoman lands, he was elevated to a respected position like that of Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, the founder of the largest tariqa in the history of Sufism.<sup>6</sup>

The Khālidiyya, which Mawlānā Khālid bequeathed to the Islamic community, has strongly maintained its existence for nearly two centuries, from the first quarter of the nineteenth century to the present day. This movement was neither an innovative Sufi movement like the Idrīsiyya, which was influential in the Hijaz and Africa, nor was it one that was compliant with colonialists, like the Barelwīs who were active in India. It expressed itself as a dynamic and revivalist movement based on the Sunni Sufi tradition. The matters expressed as the internal regulations of the Khālidiyya Sufi order are collected in the following sixteen articles.<sup>7</sup>

1. The Khālidiyya is a movement that adheres to the general Sufi principles of the Naqshbandiyya and acts according to the fundamental mission of the Mujaddidiyya.

2. Sincere adherence to the Qur’ān and Sunna and avoidance of reprehensible innovations (bid‘a) are essential.

3. The Khālīdīs cannot go outside the creed (‘aqīda) of the Ahl al-Sunna.

<sup>5</sup> Kemal Rauf Muhammed, *Geran Bo Rastî* (Süleymaniye: Çaphâne-i Şivan, 2011), 22.

<sup>6</sup> Clodyos Ceymis Rich, *Rihletu Claidius Rich fi al-Iraq* (Beyrut: al-Dār al-Arabiyya li al-Mevsû‘ât, 1429), 301.

<sup>7</sup> Abdulcebbar Kavak, *Mevlânâ Hâlid-i Nakşibendî ve Hâlidîlik* (İstanbul: Nizamiye Akademi Yayınları, 2016), 210–212.

4. One may follow one of the four Sunni schools of law (madhhab): Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shāfi'ī or Ḥanbalī.

5. Deputyship (khilāfa) cannot be granted to individuals who have not undergone madrasah education, regardless of their social status.

6. One deputy (khalīfa) will be sent to each region; in cases of necessity, a second will be appointed.

7. Each deputy may only carry out spiritual guidance (ir-shād) activities in the region to which he is assigned. No Khālīdī deputy may interfere in the assigned region of another deputy.

8. The deputies will be in constant communication with the great guide (murshid) (Mawlānā Khālīd).

9. Deputies cannot appoint their own deputies without the knowledge and permission of the great guide.

10. Regardless of the place of duty (mosque, madrasa, lodge), scholarly and Sufi activities will be carried out together.

11. The spiritual link (rābiṭa) will be directed only to the great guide. Deputies cannot have the rābiṭa directed to themselves.

12. When accepting the oath of allegiance (bay'at) to the tariqa from men and women, deputies must comply with the established customs of the Naqshbandiyya Sufi order.

13. Women may enter the tariqa. However, they are not given the duty of deputyship (khilāfa).

14. Prayer will be offered for the success of the Ottoman Sultan, who is the caliph of the Muslims, and for the reform (iṣlāh) of local administrators, according to the prescribed method.

15. Nothing material will be requested from administrators while performing duties.

16. Those who show laxity in adhering to the principles written in these regulations will be warned, the duty of guidance will be revoked from those who oppose them, and those who persist will be expelled from the tariqa.

These principles reveal that the Khālidiyya wished to keep Islamic culture and the traditional understanding of Sufism alive in modern society in a sound, sincere, and conscious manner. This planned and organized state is an important characteristic that distinguishes the Khālidiyya from the traditional Sufi orders of its time.



## CHAPTER ONE

# THE EMERGENCE OF THE KHĀLIDIYYA IN THE CAUCASUS AND ITS SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

### THE EMERGENCE OF THE KHĀLIDIYYA IN THE CAUCASUS

The importance given to the people of Sufism during the Seljuk and Ottoman periods<sup>8</sup> resulted in the Caucasus and Turkestan regions hosting numerous Sufi movements. For this reason, the activities of the Naqshbandiyya tariqa were seen in the Caucasus and its surrounding regions even before the nineteenth century. The region of Central Asia, and Bukhara in particular, was the cradle and one of the principal centers of this tariqa. However, from the first quarter of the nineteenth century, these regions once again entered a period of Sufi-centric social mobility, this time with the Khālidiyya branch of the Naqshbandiyya Sufi order, which emerged in the Shahrazūr region of Iraq and achieved great development in Baghdad. The Caucasus is one of the regions where the deputies (khalifa) trained by Mawlānā Khālīd Shahrazūri, who gave his name to this new

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<sup>8</sup> Muhammed Nur Kaplan, *al-Takâyâ ve al-Serâyâ an 'Alâkati al-Mutasavvife bi al-Sulta Inde al-Turk* (Ankara: İlâhiyât Yayınları, 2025), 64–71.

Naqshbandī branch, were active. From the first quarter of the nineteenth century, this region came under the influence of the Khālidiyya and was shaped by the principles and practices of the Khālidiyya for nearly a century. Four important centers of the Khālidiyya in the Caucasus can be mentioned. These are Dagestan in the North Caucasus, and Shirwan, Jar-Balakan, and Talish in the South Caucasus.

### **Sheikh Ismāʿīl Shirwānī and the Initial Activities of the Khālidiyya in the Caucasus**

Sheikh Ismāʿīl of Kürdemir, the first representative of the Khālidiyya in the Caucasus, was born in 1783 in the Kürdemir district of the Shirwan region. He began his madrasah education in the madrasahs of the Shamakhi Khanate. He then went to Anatolia and continued his studies in cities such as Erzinçan, Tokat, and Burdur. Sheikh Ismāʿīl, who went to Baghdad for lessons in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) and philosophy, returned to his homeland and was occupied with teaching (tadrīs) for seven years. He went on the Hajj in 1813. After visiting the holy lands, he stopped in Jerusalem and from there proceeded to Istanbul.<sup>9</sup> Like many teachers (mudarris) of his time, Sheikh Ismāʿīl was inclined towards Sufism and entered a search for a spiritual guide (murshid). For this purpose, he set out to become a disciple of the Naqshbandī-Mujaddidī sheikh Shāh ʿAbdullāh Dihlawī (d. 1824) in India. When he arrived in Basra, he heard that Mawlānā Khālīd, a deputy of Shāh ʿAbdullāh Dihlawī, had begun his work of spiritual guidance (irshād) in Iraq, and he abandoned his journey to India.

The sources written by members of the Khālidiyya are in

<sup>9</sup> Osmānzāde Hüseyin Vassâf, *Sefîne-i Evliyâ*, ed. Mehmet Akkuş- Ali Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2011), 2/360-361.

agreement that Sheikh Ismā'īl became a disciple of Mawlānā Khālid in the city of Sulaymaniyah and joined his circle of conversation.<sup>10</sup> However, in Syria, 'Abd al-Majīd al-Khānī (d. 1897), a member of the al-Khānī family who were among Mawlānā Khālid's greatest supporters, lists Sheikh Ismā'īl Shirwānī among those who became disciples of Mawlānā Khālid in his work *al-Ḥadā'iq al-wardiyya*.<sup>11</sup> In that case, Shirwānī is among those who came from different countries between 1817-1820 to become disciples of Mawlānā Khālid, who had returned to Sulaymaniyah at the request of Maḥmūd Pasha.

Ibrāhīm Faṣīḥ al-Ḥaydarī (d. 1882), a member of the al-Ḥaydarī family who supported Mawlānā Khālid in Baghdad, did not mention Sheikh Ismā'īl in his work *'Unwān al-majd*, where he discusses the Khālidī members in Baghdad. In his work *al-Majd al-tālid*, however, he notes without specifying a date that he entered the service of Mawlānā Khālid in Sulaymaniyah.<sup>12</sup> Here, it must first be stated that it does not seem possible for Sheikh Ismā'īl's discipleship to Mawlānā Khālid to have occurred in 1813 when he went to the holy lands for the Hajj. This is because the days of the Hajj in 1813 correspond to 1-9 Dhū al-Ḥijja 1228, November 25 - December 03, 1813. His visit to Jerusalem after the Hajj and his travel to Istanbul and then back to Basra would have taken until the middle of 1814. In this case, he must have become a disciple of Mawlānā Khālid not in Sulaymaniyah, but in Baghdad in 1814. Because Mawlānā Khālid

<sup>10</sup> Abdülmecid b. Muhammed el-Hânî, *al-Ḥadâiq al-wardiyya fî haqâiqi ecillâ al-Naqshbandiyya* (Erbil: Ârâs, 2009), 315;; İbrahim Faṣīḥ el-Ḥaydarī, *al-Majd al-tālid fî menaqib al-sheikh Khalid* (İstanbul: Matbaatu'l-Âmire, 1292), 59-60;; Hacı Hasan Şükrü, *Menâqib-ı Şems al-Şumûs der Hakk-ı Hazret-i Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Arûs* (Dersaadet: Mahmud Bey Matbaası, 1302), 127;; Şuayb Bâkknî, *Tabaqât al-Khâceğân al-Naqshbandiyya ve Sâdât al-Mashayikh al-Khâlidîyya al-Mahmûdiyya* (Dârü'r-Risâle, 2014), 411;; Abdülkerim Müderris, *Yâd-ı Merdân* (Hevlêr: Çaphâne-i Ârâs, 2011), 1/32.

<sup>11</sup> el-Hânî, *al-Ḥadâiq al-wardiyya fî haqâiqi ecillâ al-Naqshbandiyya*, 315.

<sup>12</sup> el-Ḥaydarī, *al-Majd al-tālid fî menaqib al-sheikh Khalid*, 60.

was forced to leave Sulaymaniyah in 1813 under pressure from the governor (mutaşarrif) of the time, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Pasha (d. 1813), and went to Baghdad. Based on the common information in the sources that the discipleship took place in Sulaymaniyah, two possibilities can be mentioned. First, Sheikh Ismā‘īl went to the holy lands for Hajj not in 1813 but in 1812, and after his journey to Jerusalem-Istanbul and Basra, he entered the service of Mawlānā Khālīd in 1813 before he left Sulaymaniyah. Then he went with him to Baghdad and completed his Sufi education. In 1817, when he returned to Sulaymaniyah, he received permission for guidance (irshād) and was assigned to his homeland of Shirwan. The second possibility is that he joined Mawlānā Khālīd’s circle in Baghdad in 1814, received his Sufi education, and went with him to Sulaymaniyah in 1817. After staying in Sulaymaniyah for a while with scholars from different countries, he went to Shirwan in the same year or early 1818 under Mawlānā Khālīd’s direction. In our opinion, this second possibility seems stronger. Meanwhile, Vassâf, without citing his source, includes the information that Sheikh Ismā‘īl became a disciple of Mawlānā Khālīd in Baghdad, and this information was later included in other works.<sup>13</sup>

Sheikh Ismā‘īl Shirwānī, whom Mawlānā Khālīd referred to as “the source of gnostics (‘ārif) and virtuous people,”<sup>14</sup> received Sufi education for approximately four years between 1814 and 1817, along with numerous Khālīdī members, including the mufti of Baghdad, ‘Ubaydullāh al-Ḥaydarī, and other renowned scholars. Towards 1817, some political events occurred in Bagh-

<sup>13</sup> Butrus Abu Manneh, “The Role of Shaykh Isma‘īl al-Shirwanī in the Khalidī Sub-Order,” *Daghestan and the World of Islam* (Vaajakoski: Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, 2006), 70; İbrahim Erol, *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azerbaycan’da Nakşibendilik-Hâlidilik* (İstanbul: Şamil Yayınları, 2023), 73.

<sup>14</sup> Erol, *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azerbaycan’da Nakşibendilik-Hâlidilik*, 83–84.

dad, and Dāwūd Pasha replaced the then-governor, Saʿīd Pasha (d. 1817).<sup>15</sup> Following the death of Saʿīd Pasha, Maḥmūd Pasha, who was the Emir of Baban and the governor of Sulaymaniyah at the time, came to Baghdad and visited Mawlānā Khālīd. His aim in this visit was to win back Mawlānā Khālīd, whom his father ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Pasha (d. 1813) had previously forced to leave Sulaymaniyah, and to persuade him to return. To expedite this, he had given instructions for a Sufi lodge (tekke) to be built for him in Sulaymaniyah before going to Baghdad. Upon Maḥmūd Pasha's insistent plea, Mawlānā Khālīd returned from Baghdad to his hometown of Sulaymaniyah. Meanwhile, on his way back to Sulaymaniyah, he appointed his disciple Ismāʿīl Shirwānī, who was accompanying him, as his deputy (khalīfa) in the same year, tasked with guidance in the Caucasus.

Sheikh Ismāʿīl began his guidance activities in his homeland of Shirwan in 1817. His conversations and activities here are quite important for the recognition of the Khālīdī Sufi tradition in the Caucasus region. In the approximately ten-year period until the Russian invasion of the region, the deputies he trained ensured that the Khālidiyya became known throughout a large part of the Caucasus, from the south to the north. Some scholars and influential figures he met in Shirwan and its surroundings became his disciples. The discipleship of Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī (d. 1857), who was still a madrasa student in Dagestan in those years, marked the beginning of the Khālidiyya's entry into Dagestan. The discipleship of his teacher, Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī (d. 1830), who came to Shirwan at his encouragement, opened the gates of Dagestan wide to the Khālidiyya.

In the 1820s, under the guidance of Khāṣṣ Muḥammad

<sup>15</sup> Ali Verđi, *Lemehât ictimâ'iyya min târîkh al-Iraq al-Hadîs* (Bağdat: Marbaatu'l-İrşâd, 1971), 1/227-229.

Shirwānī and Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī, many individuals from Dagestan went to Shirwan and became disciples of Sheikh Ismāʿīl. The visit of Ghāzī Muḥammad, Ḥamzat, and Shāmīl from Dagestan in 1822 and their discipleship to Sheikh Ismāʿīl marked the beginning of a new era that would leave its mark on the political and social history of the North Caucasus.

After Sheikh Ismāʿīl Shirwānī, the Khālīdī sheikhs in the Caucasus who should be mentioned by name are: Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī (d. 1857), Sheikh Muḥammad al-Yarāghī (d. 1830), Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīqumūqī (d. 1869), Sheikh Maḥmūd al-Almalī (d. 1876), Sheikh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sughūrī (d. 1882), and his son Ḥajjī Muḥammad al-Sughūrī.

### **The Khālīdī Branches Formed in the Caucasus After Ismāʿīl Shirwānī**

It was Ismāʿīl Shirwānī of Kürdemir (d. 1848) who first introduced the Caucasus to the Naqshbandī-Khālīdī tradition. The first activities of the Khālīdiyya in the Caucasus began in the town of Shirwan, located on the northern border of Azerbaijan in the southern part of the region. Until he left the region in 1826, he himself, and in later years some of the deputies (khalīfa) he left behind, continued the Khālīdī tradition in Shirwan.

The Khālīdī Sufi chain of transmission (silsila) that Sheikh Ismāʿīl established in the Azerbaijan region of the South Caucasus split into three branches outside of the initial center of Shirwan.<sup>16</sup> Thanks to this, the Khālīdiyya began to spread throughout almost all of the Caucasus from the second quarter of the nineteenth century. These branches are, respectively:

1. **Shirwan.** The Center of Guidance (Irshād). Representative: Sheikh Ismāʿīl Shirwānī.

<sup>16</sup> Erol, *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azerbaycan'da Nakşibendilik-Hâlidilik*, 100–130.

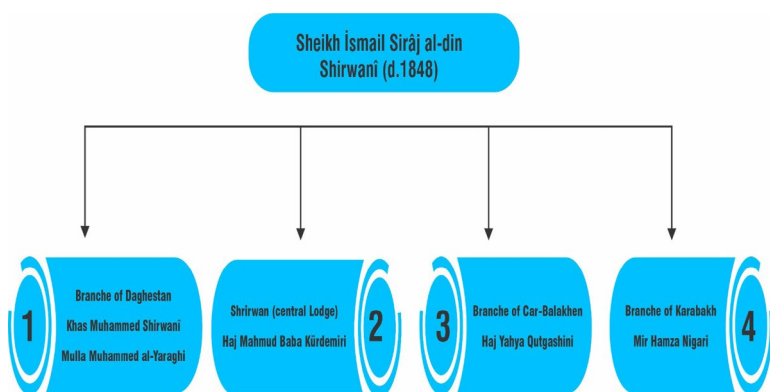
2. **The Dagestan Branch.** Representatives: Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī and Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī.

3. **The Jar-Balakan Branch.** Representative: Ḥajjī Yahyā Qutqashinī.

4. **The Karabakh Branch.** Representative: Ḥamza Nigārī.

The previous literature mention dozens of Caucasian Khālidi sheikhs who belong to these chains (silṣila). The study by İbrahim Erol, prepared as a doctoral thesis and titled *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azerbaycan'da Nakşibendîlik-Hâlidîlik* (Sufism in the Caucasus and Naqshbandism-Khālidiism in Azerbaijan), provides detailed information about these people.

Figure 1. The Khālidi Branches of the Caucasus



## THE PERIOD OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN THE CAUCASUS

### Factors Necessitating Social Organization in the Caucasus

Khālidi sheikhs were renowned for their intellectual nature and their sincere efforts in service to Islam. It is recorded that the members of the Naqshbandiyya, who were called the “Whisperers” in Soviet literature because of their silent remembrance (dhikr), were more aristocratic, more intellectual, and

better adapted to open rebellion, and that the members of the *tariqa* were more conscious and the sheikhs were composed of Arabic-speaking scholars (*‘ālim*).<sup>17</sup>

Three factors were effective and decisive in the success of the Ghazawāt movement, which was revived in the Caucasus region through the initiative of the Khālidi sheikhs. Two of these are related to the Caucasus region, and one is related to the Khālidiyya. As for the factors related to the region, these are Russia's policy towards the Caucasus and the Caucasus's multi-communal and fragmented administrative structure.

Russia did not consent to a region of such strategic importance between Asia and Europe falling under the dominion of the Ottoman Empire or Iran. For this reason, from the sixteenth century onwards, it engaged in wars for the region with both the Ottomans and Iran. The social structure of the Caucasus region, which provided a religious and demographic advantage to the Ottoman and Iranian states, always worried Russia. This anxiety drove Russia to pursue a harsh, ruthless policy that deprived the local Muslim population of their rights. One of the first and most lasting steps of this policy was to tamper with the region's demographic structure. For this purpose, on the one hand, it forced the Muslim communities it saw as enemies and threats to migrate from the Caucasus, while on the other, it settled Russians and Cossacks brought from distant regions into some of the region's strategic and central cities.

Over time, numerous separate local administrations such as Kingdoms, Principalities, Khanates emerged in the Caucasus due to its challenging mountainous geography and its ethnically and culturally diverse structure.<sup>18</sup> This situation attracted

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<sup>17</sup> Popovic - Veinstein, *İslam Dünyasında Tarikatlar*, 75–81.

<sup>18</sup> Bilge, *Osmanlı Devleti ve Kafkasya*, 26–29.

the attention of the great powers that wished to dominate the region and was a factor that encouraged them to seize it. In this sense, the fragmented administrative structure of the Caucasus facilitated the Russians' domination of the region.

The non-homogenous, multi-ethnic, and highly fragmented administrative structure of the Caucasus prevented the region from uniting under a single, strong administration. Consequently, the idea that the only way to escape this situation was to organize within the region and thus establish political unity and a spirit of solidarity gained general acceptance among the region's peoples. The Russian policy of Russification in the Caucasus region also alarmed the local people and made them ready for resistance against the Russians.<sup>19</sup> The Caucasian peoples' idea of resistance against the Russians was put into practice by Imam Maṣṣūr in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. With the support of the Caucasian people behind him, Imam Maṣṣūr began the struggle against the Russians. This struggle, which would last for nearly a century and a half, went down in history as the Ghazawāt and found a place in the hearts of the region's people.

### **The Khālidiyya's Process of Organizing Caucasian Society**

Before delving into the Khālidiyya's process of organizing Caucasian society, it would be appropriate to focus on three concepts that very clearly reveal the codes and character of this organization. These are Imam, Sheikh, and Ghazawāt.

The concept of **Imam**, which contains multiple meanings, signifies political and military leadership for the Muslims of the Caucasus. For this reason, Ghāzī Muḥammad, Ḥamzat, and

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<sup>19</sup> Aliyev Salih Muhammedoğlu, "Kafkasya," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2001), 24/159.

Shāmīl were described as Imams. The concept of **Sheikh**, on the other hand, points to the Sufi character of this organization. It shows that those involved in the process, including the leaders, underwent the training of a spiritual guide (murshid). As for the concept of **Ghazawāt**, this points to the religious character of the organization in the Caucasus. At the same time, it shows that the armed struggle waged by the Prophet Muhammad (ṣallā Allāhu ‘alayhi wa-sallam) against the enemies of Islam was taken as a reference.

The process of organizing Caucasian society can be divided into two periods: pre-Khālidiyya and post-Khālidiyya. The first period lasted for about twelve years, between 1783-1794. Although it was a much shorter time frame than the second, it was the first time that resistance against the Russians in the Caucasus transformed into an organized and armed social movement. During this first organizational process, the people of the Caucasus experienced that they could act together in an orderly fashion when required.

The second period is a very long process that began in the 1820s and, after lasting for a century, its effects have continued to the present day. It is stated that during this period, the Naqshbandiyya tariqa gained immense prestige by holding control over the leadership of the Ghazawāt waged against the Russians, from Imam Manşūr in 1783 to Imam Najm al-Dīn of Gotsso (Gotsinsky) in 1920-1921.<sup>20</sup> The religious-Sufi mobility experienced in the Caucasus and the change and transformation that occurred in the political and social structure during the century between 1820-1920 show that it is not correct to view the Khālidiyya as a traditional Sufi movement. The events that took place in the Caucasus throughout the nineteenth centu-

<sup>20</sup> Bennigsen - Lemerrier-Quelquejay, *Sûfi ve Komiser Rusya'da İslam Tarikatları*, 81.

ry clearly showed that Mawlānā Khālid trained his deputies (khalīfa) with a vision far beyond traditional tariqa concepts and practices, and that these deputies possessed the potential to be teachers (mudarris) in the madrasa, commanders on the battlefield, and strong leaders in government when circumstances required. The fact that similar situations were seen outside the Caucasus in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Anatolia proves that this was not an isolated incident but was related to the dynamic and revivalist character of the Khālidī Sufi tradition.

### **Reasons for the Khālidīyya's Success in Organizing Caucasian Society**

#### **The Dynamic and Revivalist (Iḥyā'ī) Quality of the Khālidī Sufi Tradition**

Mawlānā Khālid never broke off communication with his deputies (khalīfa), each of whom he sent to a different region. He warned the deputies who did not communicate with him for a long time, and by calling those who neglected this duty to Damascus, he demonstrated his seriousness and the importance he attached to the matter. Through this, via letters coming from many parts of the Middle East, various scholarly and Sufi topics were discussed, many questions were answered, and important matters were consulted upon (istiṣāra).

By uniting science and sufism, the Sufi lodge and the madrasah together under the same roof, Mawlānā Khālid thereby provided a simultaneous environment for education and instruction in the same space. In other words, he prepared the ground for the training (tarbiya) of the self (nafs) and the purification (taṣfiya) of the heart (qalb) to be kneaded in the same trough as the acquisition of science. Thus, he brought to the Islamic community personalities who were competent and mature in both science and sufism.

For the revival of the Islamic community, Mawlānā Khālīd wanted to give importance to the written sources of the religion and for its symbolic institutions to be revived. For this purpose, mosque activities aimed at the reading and understanding of the Qur'ān were initiated, and mosque-centric science circles (ḥalaqa) were established. He requested the establishment of conversation circles for the reading and dissemination of Hadith sources. In the science circles he initiated in the Qanawat district of Damascus, emphasis was placed on the readings of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) and Hadith. The renowned scholars and hadith scholars (muḥaddith) of Damascus also participated in these conversation circles.<sup>21</sup> Giving special importance to mosques, Mawlānā Khālīd prioritized the organization of daily work and affairs according to the mosque, the ritual prayer (ṣalāh), and the science circles. The second institutional structure he wanted to be opened after mosques was the madrasa. Mosques and madrasas were revived, and new mosques and madrasas were opened where there were none.

### **Their Emphasis on Mosque and Madrasah**

Mosques are one of the most prominent religious symbols and institutional structures in Islamic society. The descriptions “House of Allah” and “branch of al-Masjid al-Ḥarām” have been made only for mosques. Madrasahs, which played a major role in the formal transmission of Islamic culture and civilization from generation to generation, also continued their existence as the most respected institutions after mosques.

With its revivalist quality, the Khālidiyya played an important role in making mosques and madrasas an inseparable part of daily life once again. This understanding, which became one

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<sup>21</sup> Mūderris, *Yâd-ı Merdân*, 1/42.

of the fundamental qualities of the Khālīdī Sufi tradition, overlaps with the missions of al-Masjid al-Nabawī and the Ṣuffa in the city of Medina, where the first Islamic society was formed. By giving importance to the mosques where Muslims perform their five daily prayers and to the madrasas that played a major role in transmitting the religious heritage to new generations, the Khālīdīs placed themselves at the center of social life.

Mawlānā Khālīd saw Sufism and the Sufi order not as a profession, but as a method and tool for the revival of religion in social life. He met the human resource he needs to achieve his set goal from the madrasas, which were among the most deep-rooted and widespread institutions in the educational field of the Islamic world. According to him, madrasas were the most ideal places for sharīʿa and ṭarīqa education, and the teachers (*muḍarris*) were the most suitable personalities to receive Sufi training and to provide guidance and leadership in this field. With these characteristics, it is necessary to distinguish the Khālīdiyya from other traditional tariqas, and Mawlānā Khālīd from other contemporary Sufis.

### **Their Consideration of Local Dynamics and Social Differences**

One of the factors that made the Khālīdiyya successful in almost every region was its emphasis on local dynamics. While in traditional tariqa branches, guidance (*irshād*) is mostly continued by the sheikh's family members and the authority of representation is not given to outsiders, Mawlānā Khālīd opened his doors to the entire Islamic umma in this regard. He gave the authority to represent the ṭarīqa to every person of science whom he deemed worthy. For this reason, his deputies do not only include Kurds from the Shahrazūr region. He had deputies from a wide geography, from Anatolia to India, from Da-

mascus to Iran, and from Iraq to Afghanistan, and from almost every nation.

When sending a deputy (khalīfa) to a region, Mawlānā Khālīd paid attention to whether he had social and cultural ties to that region. Unless compelled, he did not appoint someone who was foreign to the social structure and customs (‘urf) of that region. Thus, the deputies used the advantage of serving in a region where they were known. On the other hand, in terms of communication with the people, they addressed them in the language and dialect they knew and established science and conversation circles. It is known that many Khālīdī sheikhs were from madrasah circles or from the aristocratic families of the region where they served. This had a positive effect on the affiliation of the local people with the Khālīdiyya.

One of the issues that the Khālīdī sheikhs paid attention to at the local level was conducting conversation and guidance activities in the language spoken by the people. In the Caucasus, the Khālīdī sheikhs, who used the Arabic alphabet in addition to Persian and Turkish,<sup>22</sup> removed language and alphabet as an obstacle in reaching both madrasa circles and the general populace.

Aware of the ethnic and cultural differences of the people in the Caucasus, the Khālīdī sheikhs acted sensitively in this matter when appointing deputies. In the activities in the Caucasus, it is possible to see Khālīdī sheikhs from many nations, from the Avars to the Circassians, from the Azeris to the Chechens. In this respect, it can be readily stated that the Khālīdiyya played an important role in the formation of a common identity for the Circassians and other Muslim communities living

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<sup>22</sup> Bennigsen - Lemerrier-Quelquejay, *Sûfî ve Komiser Rusya'da İslam Tarikatları*, 81.

in the Northeast Caucasus.<sup>23</sup> As a result of this common identity, the Khālīdī tradition has become a complementary part of the political, social, and cultural life in the Caucasus since the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup>

### **Their Strong Stance Against Colonialism and Occupation**

Among the most prominent qualities of the Khālidiyya is their active response against the colonization or occupation of Islamic lands. The Khālīdī sheikhs demonstrated their capability in raising awareness and organizing society against the danger of colonization and occupation in different geographies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

While in India, Mawlānā Khālīd saw firsthand that the British were not only seizing the underground and surface resources of India<sup>25</sup> but were also interfering with the people's faith and culture of life. During the years 1810-1811, when he was in India, he had the opportunity to closely observe the policies pursued by the British in that region. For this reason, when he returned, he did not look favorably upon the British starting to operate across a wide spectrum, including local tribes, through the East India Company they opened in Baghdad. The British company's representative, C. J. Rich, who knew of his attitude, saw Mawlānā Khālīd's presence in Sulaymaniyah as an obstacle to his own work. We surmise that he used the friendship he developed with the governor (mutaşarrıf) of Sulaymaniyah, Maḥmūd Pasha, to exert pressure for Mawlānā Khālīd to leave Sulaymaniyah. Because, interestingly, shortly

<sup>23</sup> Kemal Karpat, *Osmanlıdan Günümüze Etnik Yapılanma ve Göçler* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2010), 164.

<sup>24</sup> Bennigsen - Lemerrier-Quelquejay, *Sûfi ve Komiser Rusya'da İslam Tarikatları*, 82.

<sup>25</sup> M.G.S. Hodgson, *İslamın Serüveni* (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 1995), 3/221.

after Rich's arrival in the city, Maḥmūd Pasha asked Mawlānā Khālīd to leave the city.

This clear stance of Mawlānā Khālīd against Western countries that colonized and occupied Islamic lands is also very clearly seen in his deputies. Sayyid Ṭāhā al-Hakkārī and his son Sheikh 'Ubaydullāh Nehrī, who supported the Ottoman Empire in its struggle against the Russians in Eastern Anatolia and Iranian lands; Sheikh 'Alā' al-Dīn and Sheikh Najm al-Dīn Biyārī, the grandsons of Sheikh 'Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn; 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī, who fought against the French; and Sheikh Shāmīl, the symbolic name of the struggle against the Russians in the Caucasus, are those who demonstrated the best the anti-colonial and anti-occupation reflex of the Khālidiyya.

A letter written by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīqumūqī, one of the most effective Khālīdī sheikhs of the Caucasus region, addressed to the Ottoman Shaykh al-Islām, reveals that the communities residing in the Caucasus region had a freedom-loving, honorable, and brave character, that they bowed to no one, but that they could not gather under a common administration and leadership due to the local political and social fragmentation. As we learn from the letter, Russia, taking advantage of this situation, built fortresses in Dagestan, oppressed the people, and subjected them to taxes. Finally, the people of Dagestan were forced to submit to this situation. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīqumūqī continues his words with the following assessment:

"Then Allah, the Most High, the Greatest, and the Most Powerful, had mercy on us and did not allow us to perish. He gave the warrior Imam Shāmīl Efendi the strength and wisdom to fight the infidels day and night...

Then Imam Shāmīl... established order according to the law of the Sharī'a. He appointed muftis and muḥtasibs (tax collector) with monitoring those who did not obey the rules of the Sharī'a.

He appointed qāḍīs (judges), majors, and captains... Praise be to Allah, the whole country shines with His justice, and the cities and villages radiate with the brilliance of His blessings..."<sup>26</sup>

These words of Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn reveal how the Khālīdī sheikhs transformed fragmented communities in a challenging geography like the North Caucasus into a strong administration and a respected society. With this organized social structure in the Caucasus, the Khālīdīs developed a spirit of struggle against the Russians.

### **Their Development of a Pan-Islamic and Inclusive Understanding**

The Khālīdīs possessed a pan-Islamic (ummatī) understanding on religious and sectarian matters and an inclusive one regarding ethnic and social differences. As a natural consequence of this, the Khālīdī members in the Caucasus region also followed and applied this understanding.

Those who research the Caucasus state that in the nineteenth century, many nations living in the region demonstrated a solidarity of brethren (ikhwān) under the umbrella of the ṭarīqa. They particularly note that the Naqshbandī-Khālīdiyya was accepted by the peoples residing in the region, such as the Avars, Sakhurs, Lezgins, and Ingiloyes, and furthermore, that no conflict occurred among the tribes in the name of religion, sect, or ṭarīqa. On the other hand, they attribute the absence of any conflict and turmoil among the people, despite all these differences, to the encompassing role of Sufism in the region.<sup>27</sup>

The Khālīdīs showed a special sensitivity regarding the sup-

<sup>26</sup> Bennigsen - Lemerrier-Quelquejay, *Sûfi ve Komiser Rusya'da İslam Tarikatları*, 344–345.

<sup>27</sup> Erol, *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azerbaycan'da Nakşibendilik-Hâlidilik*, 305.

port and protection of the institution of the caliphate (khilāfa) for the political unity of Muslims. It is for this reason that loyalty to the Ottoman sultans, who were the religious leaders of the Islamic world with the title of Caliph, has been known as one of the fundamental characteristics of the Khālidiyya. It is noteworthy that Mawlānā Khālīd requested his deputies to pray for the Ottoman Sultan and that he personally wrote and informed them of the format of this prayer. We wish to share a part of this prayer here.

“O Allah! Protect our sultan, who is of great aspiration. Support him with the soldiers of the unseen. Help him to preserve the religion of Islam. As long as the days continue, make successors from his family endure.

Make his armies victorious on land and sea. Reform his viziers, aides, and envoys. Make our sultan and his aides a cause for the prosperity of the lands and the peace of the people, and through them, revive the noble Sunna (sunna al-saniyya). Through them, exalt the signs of the brilliant and clear prophetic law (sharī‘a al-nabawiyya). Since the enemy of the sultan is the enemy of the religion, cut off Your help from the enemies and make them disgraced and shamed...”<sup>28</sup>

In both the Caucasus and other geographies, the Khālīdīs expressed their loyalty to the Ottoman State at every opportunity.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, they put this loyalty into practice by taking the side of the Ottomans in the Russo-Ottoman wars.

<sup>28</sup> Muhammed Es‘ad Sâhib, *Buğyetü al-Vâcid fî Mektûbâtı Hadreti Mevlânâ Khālīd* (Dimâşk: Matbaatu‘t-Terakkî, 1334), 166–171.

<sup>29</sup> Mehmed Arif Bey, *Başımıza Gelenler*, ed. Nihat Yazar (İstanbul: İrfan Yayınevi, 1973), 92–93;; Abdulcebbar Kavak, *Seyyid Taha Hakkârî* (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2017), 61–62.

### **The Center of Activity Shifts from Shirwan to Daghestan**

Shirwan was the first center where the Khālidiyya spread in the Caucasus. The activities of Sheikh Ismā'īl Shirwānī, which intensified here from 1818 onwards, attracted many figures from madrasa circles to Shirwan. Russia, being aware of the influence of the Sufi orders on the public, placed Sheikh Ismā'īl's activities under scrutiny. Considering that Imam Maṣṣūr, who had previously declared jihād against Russia in Daghestan, was also a member of the Naqshbandiyya Sufi order, Russia's apprehension can be considered natural. The Russians, knowing that the Ottoman Empire used the Muslims of the Caucasus as a strong trump card against Russia, tried to neutralize influential figures, especially Sufi leaders, through pressure and exile.

The start of the Russian occupation of Shirwan and its surroundings in 1826 led Sheikh Ismā'īl to leave Shirvan to some of his deputies (khalīfa) and depart. To attend to the affairs of the Shirwan lodge after him, he left in his place one of his deputies, Ḥajjī Maḥmūd Bābā Kürdemiri (d. 1864). Although activities in Shirvan after him were carried out under Russia's constant surveillance and pressure, it could not maintain its former charm and dynamism. In contrast, a significant mobilization began in Daghestan within a few years. It is no coincidence that this mobilization corresponds to the period immediately after Sheikh Ismā'īl's migration to Anatolia in 1828. It is highly probable that Sheikh Ismā'īl instructed his two great deputies in Daghestan, Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī and Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī, to shift the activities to Dagestan, which was safer than Shirwan. Thus, it can be said that after Shirvan, where the foundations of the Khālidiyya in the Caucasus were laid between 1817-1826, undertook an important mission as the first Khālidi center, it handed over this duty to Dagestan from 1828

onwards. It should be noted that, at least until 1860, Daghestan was more active, dominant, and dynamic due to the political and military activities in the North Caucasus.

### **The Largest Khālīdī Center in the Caucasus: The Madrasah of Yukarı Yarağ**

This madrasah, opened by Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī/al-Dāghistānī in the village of Yukarı Yarağ, which was attached to the Kürin Khanate, was just one of many madrasahs operating in Dagestan at the time. The first factor that distinguished the Yukarı Yarağ Madrasah, where the classical madrasah tradition that had continued for centuries in Islamic society was maintained, was the Sufi identity that Mullā Muḥammad acquired in 1825 through his discipleship first to Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī and then to his guide, Sheikh Ismā‘īl Shirwānī. From then on, Mullā Muḥammad would be known not only as “Mullā” but also as “Sheikh.” Thanks to this, the Yukarı Yarağ Madrasah was transformed into a Khālīdī center where madrasah-lodge activities were carried out together.

This profound change in the Yukarı Yarağ Madrasah and the scholar-Sufi (‘ālim-ṣūfī) cadre trained here made it a topic of conversation in high-ranking circles in the Ottoman Empire and Russia. For this madrasa was transformed into a strategic center between 1825 and 1830, where decisions that would affect the political and social destiny of the North Caucasus were made.

The fuse of the movement, called Muridism in the West but more often defined as Ghazawāt by Muslims, was lit by Sheikh Ismā‘īl Shirwānī, whom the Russians forced to leave Shirwan under pressure. While Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī provided the spiritual leadership for the movement, the Yukarı Yarağ Madrasah became the center of the Muridist movement. Ghāzī Muḥammad of Gimry (d. 1832), a student and

disciple (*murīd*) of Mullā Muḥammad, became the first commander of this movement in its new phase. The title (*pāye*) of “Imam” given to him is a much higher rank that also includes army command. For this reason, he became known as Imam Ghāzī Muḥammad.

From 1825, due to the scholarly and Sufi activities conducted there and the political decisions taken, the Yukarı Yarağ Madrasah managed to remain the largest Khālidi center in the Caucasus until the death of Mullā Muḥammad in 1838. In the following years, the Gazikumukh Madrasah would come to the fore, due to Mullā Muḥammad’s deputy Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn who lived in the Ghazi-Kumukh Khanate, and in the Jar-Balakan region, the Almali Madrasah would become prominent, due to Mullā Maḥmūd Efendi Almali, the deputy of Ḥajjī Yūnus Leleli.

### **From Murid to Mujāhid: The Khālidi Commanders**

Almost all the commanders who led Muridism in the Caucasus were figures who were educated in the Khālidi madrasahs of Shirwan, Dagestan, Gazikumukh, and Jar-Balakan, and who drew their motivation from the principles and dynamism of the Khālidiyya. In the madrasah, while they were acquiring science (*‘ilm*) on the one hand, they were also joining the Sufi conversation circles of their teachers, who were teacher-guides (*mudarris-murshid*), on the other. The conversations of the students studying in these Khālidi madrasahs were colored by the excitement of the jihād organized against Russia and the heroism of the mujāhids. For this reason, every student trained here joined the ranks of the Muridist movement, having been cultivated not only with Islamic sciences but also with Sufi ethics and the spirit of jihād. Some among them served personally as commanders of the Muridist movement on the battlefronts.

We can divide the leading cadres of the Muridist movement

into two groups. The first group consists of the spiritual leaders of the movement, the Khālīdī sheikhs whose names are included in the *tariqa*'s chain of transmission (*silsila*). Guides (*murshid*) such as Sheikh Ismā'īl Sirāj al-Dīn al-Shirwānī, Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī, Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī, and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīqumūqī are the Khālīdī members in this group. The second group consists of those who carried out the political and military leadership of the movement with the title of Imam. Imam Ghāzī Muḥammad, Imam Ḥamzat, and Imam Shāmīl were in this second group.

This dual leadership in the Muridist movement continued until Sheikh Shāmīl's surrender to the Russians in 1859. After this date, Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīqumūqī, who was the spiritual leader of Muridism at the time, was also forced to leave the region and migrate to Anatolia. Thus, the Muridist movement in the North Caucasus was deprived of both its spiritual and political leaders, albeit for a short time.

In the Muridist movement, which regrouped in the late 1860s, the spiritual and political leadership previously represented by two separate individuals was consolidated into a single person. In this process, the Khālīdī sheikhs, who were the spiritual leaders of the movement, personally undertook political and military activities as well, commanding the movement as both sheikh and imam. Khālīdī sheikhs such as Ḥajjī 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sughūrī, Imam Najm al-Dīn of Gotso, and Sheikh Uzun Ḥajjī can be cited as examples of this group.

### **The Charismatic Leader of Muridism: Sheikh Shāmīl al-Dāghestānī**

Great and difficult processes also produce the leaders who can manage these processes and the solutions they require. Sheikh Shāmīl was a natural leader who emerged in the nine-

teenth-century Caucasus region as a result of Russia's occupation and oppression. Sheikh Shāmīl acquired his charismatic personality through his affiliation with the Khālidiyya. A similar situation had occurred for another Sufi from the same region, Imam Maṣṣūr, about half a century before Sheikh Shāmīl was chosen as the leader of Muridism in 1834.

Sheikh Shāmīl is described as a more experienced and more persuasive person than the two imams of Muridism before him.<sup>30</sup> Sheikh Shāmīl, who was extremely serious and determined in his letters to rulers, succeeded in solving many problems with his patience and wise (ḥikma) approaches. Sheikh Shāmīl, who was humble enough to call himself "your servant, Muḥammad Shāmīl" to the people of science and sufism, was elevated to a high station in the hearts of the Muslim peoples of the Caucasus due to his sensitivity in religious matters and his uncompromising stance.

Despite his charismatic personality and leadership, he enjoyed the title using for himself was "mujāhid on the path of Allah." With his courageous attitude in the face of great events, and his honorable and upright stance, he earned the respect not only of Muslims but also of Russia and the European states. During the process when he was forced to surrender to the Russians in 1859, Russian officials received him as an honorable commander and respected him. Likewise, when he came to Istanbul in 1869 to go on the Hajj, both Sultan 'Abd al-'Azīz and the scholarly and Sufi circles of the time hosted him with respect.

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<sup>30</sup> Abdullah Saydam, *Kırım ve Kafkas Göçleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1997), 49.



## CHAPTER TWO

### THE TRANSFORMATION FROM A SUFI MOVEMENT TO AN ISLAMIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE CAUCASUS

#### THE KHĀLIDĪ TRADITION: FROM SUFI MOVEMENT TO STATE-BUILDING

##### **Muridism (Science and Sufism, Politics and Jihād)**

Throughout Islamic history, numerous examples can be found of Sufi orders transforming into political movements and, as a next step, into states. The aspects of political and social science will not be mentioned, as it would exceed the limits of this study. However, it is beneficial to mention, at least in a few sentences, the tariqas in different Islamic geographies that transformed from a Sufi movement into a political organization and a state with all its institutions.

One of the most evident examples that can be given in this regard in the history of Sufism is the Safawiyya Sufi order. The Safawiyya, which emerged in the first quarter of the fourteenth century in Iran as a branch of the Zāhidiyya branch of the Suhrawardiyya Sufi order, was a Sunni Sufi order found-

ed by Sheikh Şafī al-Dīn al-Ardabilī (d. 1334). Centered at the Ardabil Lodge in the city of Tabriz, Iran, this tariqa in time expanded beyond the borders of Azerbaijan and became influential over a wide area from Turkestan to Iraq and Anatolia. The Sunni identity of the tariqa was preserved until the beginning of the sixteenth century.

During the period when Sheikh Ismā‘īl Ardabilī (d. 1524) sat on the seat of spiritual guidance, the Safawiyya underwent a profound change and transformation. Sheikh Ismā‘īl Ardabilī seized control of the administration of Iran in 1501 and became the head of state in Tabriz with the title of Shah of Iran. Thus, the Safawiyya Sufi order entered into a political and military organization from being a Sufi movement and finally became a state. Sheikh Ismā‘īl, who united the titles of Sheikh and Shah in his person, also made a radical change in the Sunni identity of the tariqa by adopting Shi‘ism as the official sect in Iran. We encounter a similar formation in the Qādiriyya Sufi order that spread among the Fulani communities in West Africa. One of the most active Sufi leaders of West Africa in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, ‘Uthmān b. Fūdī (d. 1817), founded the Fulani State in Nigeria. He carried out these duties as both a Qādirī sheikh and the head of state for a time, later transferring these duties to his brother ‘Abdullāh b. Fūdī and his son Muḥammad Bello (d. 1837).<sup>31</sup>

It is the Khālidi Sufi tradition that made Muridism, the symbol of the Caucasian Muslims’ struggle against Russia, strong and dynamic. Influenced by the Khālidiyya, this movement embodied four important missions. These are science and sufism, politics and jihād. The Khālidiyya is known as a Sufi movement that stands out for giving extreme importance to the bal-

<sup>31</sup> İsmail Hakkı Göksoy, “Fülânîler,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1996), 13/216.

ance between *sharīʿa* (Islamic law) and *ṭarīqa*. In fact, in this *tariqa*, the conformity of actions and behaviors to the *sharīʿa* is among the indispensable rules. For this reason, the Khālīdīs carried out their activities based on the Qurʾān and Sunna, and centered in mosques and madrasas. The situation in the Caucasus was no different. The place of activity for Sheikh Ismāʿīl Sirāj al-Dīn, who began his guidance activities in Shirvan, was a madrasa. Again, after 1828, the largest center of the Khālīdiyya in the Caucasus was the Yukarı Yarağ Madrasah, located in the Kürin Khanate. During the education and instruction process, science and Sufism were not taught in separate environments but together under the same madrasah.

The Khālīdī sheikhs of the Caucasus acted with an awareness of the geographical and demographic structure of this region. The Muridist movement entered into a process of planning and organization in accordance with these geographical and demographic realities. The ability of many different ethnic and cultural structures like those in the Caucasus to act together could only be possible with a strong political will and a common goal. Muridism constituted the model of religious, Sufi, and political organization where this common political will and common goal were realized. It was the spirit of *jihād* in Islam that provided the motivation for the Muslims of the Caucasus against the Russian occupation of their lands. Thus, while Muridism transformed the peoples of the Caucasus into conscious individuals with high morals and spirituality through science and Sufism, politics and *jihād* enabled them to have the spirit of fighting together under a single leadership.

### **A Model of an Islamic State Adapted for the Caucasus**

Throughout history, one can speak of many states founded by Muslims. However, as a state model founded by a Su-

fi-based movement like Muridism, the Caucasian Islamic State contains some concepts and characteristics peculiar to itself. First of all, the term “Imam” used for the leading figure of Muridism continued to be used for the person who ruled the state. The term Imam gained a political meaning (head of state) in addition to its religious (leader of the Sufi movement) and military (commander of the mujāhids) meanings. Besides this, the religious term *amīr al-muʿminīn* (commander of the faithfuls), used for heads of state in Islamic history, was also employed.

It should be noted that three aspects stood out in the Islamic State established in the North Caucasus. These are;

1. The State’s System of Governance
2. The Education System
3. The Defense System and the Army.

The basis of the system of governance of the state established in the North Caucasus was the Islamic sharīʿa. For this reason, the two written sources (the Holy Qurʾān and the Sunna) were taken as the foundation in administration. Among the fundamental principles followed in the social sphere, the principle of enjoining commanding what is right and forbidding what is wrong (*al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-l-nahy ʿan al-munkar*) was prominent.

Among the institutional structures that formed the state, the Imamate, the office of the deputy (*nāʾib*), the mufti, the *qāḍī* (judge), and the *muḥtasib* were prominent. At the top of the state administration hierarchically was Sheikh Shāmīl, who held the title of Imam and religiously described himself as *amīr al-muʿminīn*. Immediately below him, *nāʾibs* endowed with broad powers served in cities or regions. It should be noted that while they carried out the duties undertaken by modern governors, they possessed broader powers than a governor. As

the power and authority of the state increased, the number of these nā'ibs also increased.<sup>32</sup> At the local level, the practice of a council of elders was not neglected.

It is recorded that Sheikh Shāmīl sought certain qualities in the personalities he appointed as head of state. These are:<sup>33</sup>

1. Piety
2. Justice
3. Having science related to the field of duty
4. Having influence
5. Being courageous
6. Being trustworthy
7. Coming from a noble lineage

These qualities show that Sheikh Shāmīl made appointments to state levels taking into account the harsh conditions of the North Caucasus. Numbers 1, 2, 4, and 7 above, in particular, reveal the care Sheikh Shāmīl took to ensure social acceptance and the smoother conduct of affairs in the North Caucasus, where multiple communities lived.

In social life, the institutions of the mufti and the qāḍī came into play in solving religious problems and hearing legal cases. In terms of the order and security of city life, the institution of the muḥtasib also took its place in daily life as a strong structure.

One of the factors that made the administration in the North Caucasus strong was the education system. The madrasahs that were opened played an important role in transmitting the religious heritage to new generations. The sole function of these madrasahs was not instructional activity. At the same time, moral and spiritual development and inner transformation took place in these madrasahs in accordance with the Khālīdī

<sup>32</sup> DAM RBA, *Şeyh Şamil'in 100 Mektubu* (İstanbul: Şûle Yayınları, 2002), 27.

<sup>33</sup> DAM RBA, *Şeyh Şamil'in 100 Mektubu*, 27.

Sufi tradition. The madrasahs undertook a much greater duty than being an educational institution, also training soldiers for the army to participate in jihād when needed.

One of the most active institutions of the state established in the North Caucasus was undoubtedly the army. It should be noted that Sheikh Shāmīl acted with great meticulousness in the formation of this army, which was of vital importance to the state's defense system. Care was taken with everything from the hierarchy of the army members to the clothes they would wear. Although it was organized like a regular army, it would not be wrong to say that this military structure, shaped on the basis of the Muridist movement, more closely resembled a mobile army model. Imam Shāmīl, the head of state, also served as the commander-in-chief of the army.

### **Sheikh Shāmīl's Relations with the Ottoman Sultan**

The relationship of the Ottoman Empire with the Muslims in the Caucasus region dates back at least four centuries. As mentioned before, the fact that the Caucasus serves as a natural bridge between Turkestan and Anatolia and as a natural fortress due to its mountainous areas made this region important and indispensable for the Ottoman Empire. Sheikh Shāmīl, who became the symbolic figure of the Muridist movement in the second quarter of the nineteenth century and was described as the "Caucasian Eagle" for his determined stance, was in communication with the Ottoman sultans who had the title of caliph of the Muslims. During this time, although he could not go himself, he did not neglect to send his representatives to Istanbul. The information contained in the letters sent by Sheikh Shāmīl to his deputies (nā'ib) in the Caucasus and to the Khalidi sheikhs in Istanbul, along with documents from the Ottoman State archives dating from the same

period, serve as written evidence of his relationship with the Ottoman sultans.

Sheikh Shāmīl's relations with the Ottoman Empire can be divided into two periods. The first period covers the years when the Ottoman Empire was at war with Russia. During this process, relations were open. The Ottoman side did not hide its support for Sheikh Shāmīl and the Muridist movement. The second period covers the years of peace when the Ottoman Empire signed a treaty with Russia. During this process, Sheikh Shāmīl sent his representatives to Istanbul secretly. In these years, the relations between the two sides were realized through intermediary figures, which included some statesmen and the Khālīdī sheikhs living in Istanbul. As Russia was aware of these relations, it had the representatives of Sheikh Shāmīl who were trying to enter Anatolia secretly monitored through its consulates in Trabzon and Erzurum.<sup>34</sup> Russian officials at the Erzurum consulate reported the Muridism members they identified to the Ottoman authorities and demanded their arrest.

### **The Khālīdī Solidarity from Dagestan to Istanbul**

The Khālīdiyya, to which Sheikh Shāmīl belonged, is a branch of the Naqshbandiyya Sufi order that emerged in Iraq in the first quarter of the 19th century. This branch first spread throughout the Ottoman lands and later to the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Far East. Its founder, Mawlānā Khālīd (d. 1827), was well-educated in the religious sciences, knew more than one language, and was known in Iraq and Iran as a determined and enterprising scholar. With the Sufi education he received in India from the Mujaddidī sheikh Shāh 'Abdullāh Dihlawī (d. 1824),<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Cumhurbaşkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, A) MKT MHM 1, 86, 5.

<sup>35</sup> Muhammed b. Süleyman el-Bağdādī, *al-Hadīqa al-Nadiyya fī Ādāb al-Tarīqa al-Naqshbandiyya ve al-Bahja al-Khālidiyya* (Mısır: el-Matbaatu'l-İlmiyye, 1310),

he succeeded in establishing the Naqshbandiyya on a strong and widespread social foundation in West Asia. Multiple reasons can be listed for his success. Among these, the role of the Khālidi Sufi tradition, whose foundations he laid himself, is significant. The Khālidi sheikhs, who aimed to influence statesmen without taking office in state ranks, garnered great interest among the scholarly class ('ulamā') with their goals of reviving the symbols and teachings of Islam, ensuring Islamic unity, supporting the Caliph in Istanbul for this purpose, and their knowledge-based understanding of Sufism.<sup>36</sup> The established Sufi tradition was as important to the success of the Khālidiyya as the political and social developments of the period. Within this Sufi tradition, the understanding that the Khālidi sheikhs assigned to different regions should act as a single body and be in unity and solidarity has kept this Sufi movement strong and dynamic to the present day.

As for Sheikh Shāmil, one of the Khālidi sheikhs of Dagestan, he became known through the Ghazawāt movement that emerged in the North Caucasus. The foundations of this movement were laid in the last quarter of the eighteenth century by another Naqshbandi sheikh, Imam Maṣṣūr (d. 1794). By the first quarter of the nineteenth century, this time Mawlānā Khālidi's appointee in the South Caucasus region, Sheikh Ismā'īl Sirāj al-Dīn Shirwānī (d. 1848), became influential in Dagestan and its surroundings through North Caucasian scholars.<sup>37</sup> The North Caucasian Khālidi sheikhs, including Sheikh Ismā'īl Sirāj al-Dīn's deputies Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī and Sheikh Muḥammad al-Yarāghī, and the latter's deputy Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn al-

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38;; Osman b. Sind en-Necdî, *Aṣṣa al-Mawarid min Silsâli Ahvâl al-Îmam al-Khâlid* (Mısır: el-Matbaatu'l-İlmiyye, 1310), 62.

<sup>36</sup> Kavak, *Mevlânâ Hâlid-i Nakşibendî ve Hâlidîlik*, 196–210.

<sup>37</sup> Erol, *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azerbaycan'da Nakşibendîlik-Hâlidîlik*, 76–77.

Ghāzīqumūqī, trained the leading cadres of the Muridist movement. These Sufi figures provided spiritual support to the largest religious, political, and military movement organized against Russia in the North Caucasus. On the other hand, they undertook an important mission by strengthening the intellectual infrastructure with the madrasas they established in the region, especially in Dagestan. Hamid Algar evaluates these activities as the Khālidiyya's substitution of sharī'a for non-Islamic and customary law and its resistance against Russia in the Caucasus region.<sup>38</sup> Sheikh Shāmīl also joined the ranks of the Muridist Movement during this process. The main factor that brought him to the forefront in the Caucasus was his success in using his qualities as a sheikh, commander, and administrator.

In the sources that mention the Caucasus region in the nineteenth century, Shāmīl al-Dāghestānī was described as both "sheikh" and "imam."<sup>39</sup> The title of Sheikh comes from the Naqshbandiyya-Khālidiyya to which he belonged. He received Sufi training from his father-in-law, Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīqumūqī. The title of "Imam," on the other hand, was given to leaders with commander and administrator qualities in the North Caucasus along with the Muridist Movement. As the president and religious leader of the administration he founded in the North Caucasus, Sheikh Shāmīl also used the epithet "amīr al-mu'minīn" (commander of the

<sup>38</sup> Hamid Algar, *Nakşibendilik* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2013), 104.

<sup>39</sup> Vincent Monteil, *Sovyet Müslümanları* (İstanbul: Pınar Yayınları, 1992), 230; Bilge, *Osmanlı Devleti ve Kafkasya*, 226; Sonia Chesnı, "Hasan Al-Alqadarı: The Last Representative of Traditional Learning in Daghestan," *Daghestan and the World of Islam* (Vaajakoski: Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, 2006), 83; P. İ. Averyanov, *Osmanlı İran Rus Savaşlarında Kürtler* (İstanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 2010), 83; DAM RBA, *Şeyh Şamil'in 100 Mektubu*, 26; Itzhak Weismann, *Nakşibendilik* (İstanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2015), 217-218; Erol, *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azerbaycan'da Nakşibendilik-Hâlidilik*, 106.

faithfuls) for himself.<sup>40</sup> Thus, from the second quarter of the nineteenth century, Sheikh Shāmil undertook a very important duty as the Sufi commander of the Ghazawāt movement that defended the region against Russia and as the president of the state he founded in the North Caucasus. This mission earned him a privileged and respected position in his relations with other Khālīdī sheikhs.

It is known that numerous studies have been conducted on Sheikh Shāmil and the Muridist Movement. On the other hand, there are also some studies regarding Sheikh Shāmil's communication with the Ottoman Empire. In particular, significant information on this matter is found in Mustafa Özsaray's work *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Kafkasya* (The Caucasus in Ottoman Documents)<sup>41</sup> and in the same author's article titled "Şeyh Şamil'in Osmanlı Devleti ile İlişkileri" (Sheikh Shamil's Relations with the Ottoman Empire).<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, a large portion of the letters Sheikh Shāmil sent to his deputies and nā'ibs has been published in a book by DAM RBA titled *Şeyh Şamil'in 100 Mektubu* (100 Letters of Sheikh Shamil). However, no independent academic study on his relationship with the Khālīdī sheikhs in Istanbul has been encountered. But two letters transcribed within a manuscript we found in Northern Iraq a few years ago contain important information about Sheikh Shāmil's relationship with the Khālīdī sheikhs in Istanbul.

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<sup>40</sup> DAM RBA, *Şeyh Şamil'in 100 Mektubu*, 26.

<sup>41</sup> Mustafa Özsaray, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Kafkasya Savaş ve Sürgün 1 1781-1919* (Kafkas Vakfı Yayınları, 2011).

<sup>42</sup> Mustafa Özsaray, "Şeyh Şamil'in Osmanlı Devleti İle İlişkileri," *Tasavvuf İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi*, (2017), 61–90.

### Sheikh Shāmil's Correspondence with Sheikh 'Abd al-Fattāh al-'Akrī

Correspondence stands out as a characteristic of the Khālidi Sufi tradition.<sup>43</sup> Mawlānā Khālīd gave great importance to this issue during his lifetime. In a letter he wrote to one of his deputies while in Damascus, he expresses that he cannot find time to do any other work because of the hundreds of letters he receives. According to Mawlānā Khālīd, correspondence is a requirement of proper conduct (adab).<sup>44</sup> He described the deputies and members who did not abide by this conduct as disloyal. In a letter he sent to a deputy living in the city of Sanandaj (Sine) in Iran, he reproached him by saying, "I send my greetings to the disloyal friends there."<sup>45</sup>

As a Khālidi sheikh, Sheikh Shāmil also continued this tradition of correspondence. The letters he wrote to his nā'ibs, the vast majority of whom were his deputies, were printed in 2002.<sup>46</sup> Although it is known that Sheikh Shāmil also had relationships and corresponded with Khālidi sheikhs outside of Daghestan, no scientific study on these letters has yet been found. In 2023, the manuscript *Majma'u Mihrī* by Muḥammad Sa'īd Mihrī, found in the family archive of the esteemed researcher Bülent Müftü whom we met in Iraq, presented us with two very important letters. These two letters reveal Sheikh Shāmil's relationship with one of the Khālidi sheikhs in Istanbul, 'Abd al-Fattāh al-'Akrī (d. 1864). In terms of the information they contain, these letters are two extremely valuable documents that shed light on that period.

It is not known when the correspondence between Sheikh

<sup>43</sup> Kavak, *Mevlânâ Hâlid-i Nakşibendî ve Hâlidilik*, 203.

<sup>44</sup> Sâhib, *Buğyetü al-Vâcid fî Mektûbâtî Hadreti Mevlânâ Khālīd*, 135.

<sup>45</sup> Müderris, *Yâd-ı Merdân*, 1/196-197.

<sup>46</sup> DAM RBA, *Şeyh Şamil'in 100 Mektubu*, 84-292.

Shāmīl and ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī first began. However, it is understood that Sheikh Shāmīl became aware of ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī in the early 1850s through the representatives he sent to Istanbul. One of Sheikh Shāmīl’s representatives sent to Istanbul in 1853, Mullā Maḥmūd Efendi, whom he referred to as “my son and dear friend,”<sup>47</sup> met ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī, the sheikh of the Alaca Minare Lodge located in the Üsküdar district of Istanbul,<sup>48</sup> attended his conversations, and conveyed the information and impressions he gathered about him to Sheikh Shāmīl upon his return to Dagestan. Therefore, we can say that the first letter he sent to ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī is the letter in our possession dated 6 Shawwāl 1269 / 13 July 1853.<sup>49</sup> Al-‘Akrī also wrote a letter in response to this letter from Sheikh Shāmīl approximately three months later, on 5 or 6 Muḥarram 1270 / 8 or 9 October 1853.<sup>50</sup> Those who delivered this letter to Sheikh Shāmīl were the Daghestani delegation, led by Ḥajjī Ibrāhīm Bey Efendi, from among the Muridism members who were in Istanbul in those days.

Sheikh Shāmīl wrote the letter he sent to al-‘Akrī in Arabic. Al-‘Akrī also responded to the letter in Arabic. Although Khālīdī sheikhs also used the language of the region they lived in, they generally preferred Arabic or Persian in their letters.

At first glance, the letters give the impression of a written communication within the *tariqa* between two Khālīdī sheikhs. However, the carefully chosen words between the lines reveal

<sup>47</sup> Muhammed Said Mīhrī, “Macma’u Mīhrī,” (no date), 66.

<sup>48</sup> Mustafa Özdamar, *Dersâdet Dergâhları* (İstanbul: Kırk Kandil Yayınları, 2007), 375; Ömer Koçyiğit, “Abdülfeṭṭāḥ El-Akrī,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2020), 1/27.

<sup>49</sup> Mīhrī, “Macma’u Mīhrī,” 66–67.

<sup>50</sup> Mīhrī, “Macma’u Mīhrī,” 39–40.

a communication and solidarity that exceeds the bounds of a normal correspondence.

Sheikh Shāmīl used an extremely humble language in his letter relative to his position. He speaks with praise of the successful scholarly and guidance (irshād) activities in Istanbul of ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī,<sup>51</sup> whom he described as “‘Umdat al-‘ulamā’” (Pillar of the Scholars). In the letter, where he introduces himself as “your servant, Muḥammad Afandi from the province of Ghazi-Kumukh,” he expresses his great desire to meet face to face. He asks al-‘Akrī to accept him as a deputy representing him in status and word, and to allow him to benefit from his high knowledge and spirituality.<sup>52</sup> This situation is considered normal among Khālīdī sheikhs. Sometimes, a Khālīdī sheikh could receive a second tariqa license (ijāza) from another Khālīdī sheikh, usually for the sake of blessing (tabarrukan). Sheikh Shāmīl’s request for a license from ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī should also be considered in this sense.

In the letter he sent to Sheikh Shāmīl, ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī stated that he gave him permission for guidance (irshād) and advised him to adhere strictly to the methods of the Naqshbandiyya Sufi order. It is seen that al-‘Akrī described Sheikh Shāmīl as “al-shaykh al-kāmil” (the perfect sheikh) in his letter.<sup>53</sup> Al-‘Akrī concluded his words at the end of the letter with his seal, on which was written the nisba “khādim al-fuqarā’ ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Khālīdī al-Mujaddidī” (the servant of the poor/Sufis, ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ, the Khālīdī, the Mujaddidī).<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Mihri, “Macma’u Mihri,” 66.

<sup>52</sup> Mihri, “Macma’u Mihri,” 66.

<sup>53</sup> Mihri, “Macma’u Mihri,” 39.

<sup>54</sup> Mihri, “Macma’u Mihri,” 40.

### Information in the Letters Regarding the Muridist Movement and Sheikh Shāmīl's Communication with the Ottoman Empire

Although the North Caucasian Muridist Movement began with Imam Maṣṣūr, it reached its most dynamic and powerful period with Sheikh Shāmīl. For this reason, Sheikh Shāmīl's name has become synonymous with Muridism. In the letter written by 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-'Akrī to Sheikh Shāmīl, it is seen that he addresses him as "al-mujāhid fī sabīl Allāh al-Shaykh Muḥammad Shāmīl Efendī" (The Mujāhid on the Path of Allah, Sheikh Muḥammad Shāmīl Afandī).<sup>55</sup> The description "al-Mujāhid" is due to the jihād Sheikh Shāmīl waged against Russia.

In the summer of 1853, Sheikh Shāmīl sent a delegation to Istanbul. The reason for the arrival of this delegation in Istanbul, which included Ḥajjī Ibrāhīm Efendi, Ḥajjī Khalīl Efendi, and Ḥajjī Ḥusayn Efendi, was to secure the political and military support of the Ottoman Empire for the Ghazawāt movement. The fact that the Ottomans were at war with Russia would result in the visiting delegation returning with the support they had hoped for. Ottoman archive documents confirm that this delegation was in Istanbul in 1853 and that they were sent by Sheikh Shāmīl.<sup>56</sup> The names of these individuals are also present in the letter sent by 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-'Akrī to Sheikh Shāmīl. Al-'Akrī, after mentioning the intense meetings of this delegation with Ottoman statesmen, speaks with appreciation of their sincere devotion, love, respect, and praise for Sheikh Shāmīl.<sup>57</sup> The Daghestani delegation succeeded in obtaining an imperial edict (firmān) from Sultan 'Abd al-Majīd that would strengthen Sheikh Shāmīl's hand. After expressing this situation in his

<sup>55</sup> Mihrī, "Macma'u Mihrī," 40.

<sup>56</sup> Cumhuriyet Başbakanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, İDH, 281, 17605.

<sup>57</sup> Mihrī, "Macma'u Mihrī," 39.

letter, al-‘Akrī gives thanks to Allah and offers his gratitude to the sultan who sent the edict. Ottoman archive documents reveal that the sultan did not content himself with just an edict; approximately eight months later, on 18 Ramaḍān 1270 / 14 June 1854, he honored Sheikh Shāmīl with the titles of “vizier and commander-in-chief” (wazīr wa sardār-i akram) and the other leading cadres and commanders with high military ranks.<sup>58</sup> ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī’s reference to Sheikh Shāmīl in his letter as “Mujāhid” and “protector of the lands of Daghestan”<sup>59</sup> shows that a common opinion about Sheikh Shāmīl prevailed among both statesmen and the scholarly (‘ilmiyya) and Sufi (ṣūfiyya) classes.

### **The Role of ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī in Sheikh Shāmīl’s Communication with the Ottoman Empire**

‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī, who stood out among Mawlānā Khālīd’s North Iraqi Kurdish deputies (khalīfa),<sup>60</sup> was born in 1778 in the town of Akrē, northeast of Mosul. For this reason, he was known by the attributive name (nisba) “al-‘Akrī.” What is known about Sheikh ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ, also known as “Kurd Fattah,” before his discipleship to Mawlānā Khālīd is quite limited. After studying in the madrasas of the Bahdīnā region where he was raised, ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī went to Baghdad and took lessons there in the fields of Qur’anic exegesis (tafsīr), Hadīth, and Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh).<sup>61</sup>

‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī became a disciple of Mawlānā Khālīd in Baghdad. He completed his Sufi training with him and joined the ranks of his deputies. Ḥaydarīzāda Ibrāhīm Faṣīḥ (d. 1882)

<sup>58</sup> Cumhurbaşkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, İDH, 301, 19040.

<sup>59</sup> Mīhrī, “Macma’u Mīhrī,” 39.

<sup>60</sup> Mūderris, *Yād-ı Merdān*, 1/67.

<sup>61</sup> Koçyiğit, “Abdülfeṭṭāḥ El-Akrī,” 1/27.

states that ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī was sent to Istanbul twice by Mawlānā Khālīd.<sup>62</sup> Al-‘Akrī, who did not leave Mawlānā Khālīd’s side when he went to Damascus, was among the few deputies whom Mawlānā Khālīd wanted to sit on the seat of spiritual guidance (irshād) after him.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, after the death of Sheikh ‘Abdullāh al-Harātī (d. 1830), ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī sat on the seat of guidance in Damascus.<sup>64</sup> ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī also personally oversaw the madrasa studies and Sufi training of Mawlānā Khālīd’s son, Sheikh Najm al-Dīn (d. 1853).<sup>65</sup>

‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī, who began to go to Istanbul more frequently from the late 1830s, after a while began his guidance activities as the resident sheikh (postnishīn) at the Alaca Minare Lodge, which was allocated to him. Among those who participated in his conversation circle here was Aḥmad Ṣiyā’ al-Dīn Gumushkhanewī (d. 1894), who would later emerge as an active and respected Khālīdī sheikh of Istanbul. Another Khālīdī sheikh who came to Istanbul from Damascus, Aḥmad b. Sulaymān al-Arwādī (d. 1858), was also a guest of ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī at the Alaca Minare Tekke. Aḥmad Ṣiyā’ al-Dīn Gumushkhanewī, who was a regular at the tekke’s conversations, became a disciple of al-Arwādī during this process. Later, he entered into spiritual retreat (khalwa) twice under his sheikh’s supervision at the Mahmudpasha Madrasah, where he was a teacher (mudarris). Before leaving Istanbul, al-Arwādī gave Gumushkhanewī a tariqa license (ijāza). After receiving permission for guidance from Aḥmad b. Sulaymān al-Arwādī, Gu-

<sup>62</sup> el-Haydarī, *al-Majd al-Tālid fī Menākib al-Sheikh Khalid*, 58.

<sup>63</sup> el-Hānī, *al-Hadāiq al-Wardīyya fī Haqāiqi Ecillā al-Naqshbandiyya*, 331.

<sup>64</sup> el-Haydarī, *al-Majd al-Tālid fī Menākib al-Sheikh Khalid*, 58.

<sup>65</sup> Müderris, *Yād-ı Merdān*, 1/48.

mushkhanewī continued to attend the conversations of ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī.<sup>66</sup>

It can be said that ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī, who was engaged in guidance activities in Istanbul for nearly twenty years, gained a respected place both in Khālidi circles and among Ottoman statesmen. Indeed, Aḥmad Ziyā’ al-Dīn Gumushkhanewī continued to attend his conversation circle until al-‘Akrī’s death in 1864. Again, among al-‘Akrī’s disciples were high-level statesmen such as Shaykh al-Islām Meḥmed Refiḳ Efendi. ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī was also in communication with some other Khālidi members in Anatolia. For example, Sheikh Aḥmad Ḥijābī (d. 1889), the son of Sheikh Aḥmad Siyāhī of Kastamonu (d. 1874), completed the Sufi training he had begun with his father at the side of ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī. Ḥijābī, who never left ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī’s conversation circle in Istanbul, returned to his hometown of Kastamonu after receiving permission for guidance from his sheikh.<sup>67</sup>

The two letters, one belonging to Sheikh Shāmīl and the other to ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī,<sup>68</sup> clearly reveal Sheikh Shāmīl’s relationship with the Khālidi circles in Istanbul. This letter of his shows that he was not in a relationship with the Khālidi circle in Istanbul based solely on tariqa affiliation. Sheikh Shāmīl also wanted to benefit from the influence of the Khālidi sheikhs in Istanbul within the scholarly class and before the state.

Truthfully, the imams who led the Ghazawāt Movement before Sheikh Shāmīl were in communication with the Ottoman Empire in one way or another. This communication sometimes took place through Ottoman statesmen sent to the region, and

<sup>66</sup> İrfan Gündüz, *Gümüşhânevi Ahmed Ziyâüddin Hayatı-Eserleri-Tarikat Anlayışı ve Hâlidîyye Tarikatı* (İstanbul: Seçil Ofset), 32–33, 43.

<sup>67</sup> Koçyiğit, “Abdül Fettâh El-Akrî,” 28.

<sup>68</sup> Appendix-1, Appendix-2.

sometimes through the representatives sent to Istanbul by the Ghazawāt leaders. In periods when the Ottoman Empire could not openly support this movement due to the existing treaty with Russia, this communication was provided through the mediation (tavassut) of some respected personalities living in Istanbul. Among these intermediary figures, Khālidī sheikhs like ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī came first and foremost.

It is natural for Sheikh Shāmīl’s representatives to visit the most effective Khālidī sheikh in Istanbul. It is understood that Khālidī members coming from the North Caucasus, like many other visitors, stayed at the Alaca Minare Lodge and even participated in the Sufi conversations of ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī during their time in Istanbul, with some receiving permission for guidance from him. One of Sheikh Shāmīl’s representatives sent to Istanbul, Ḥajjī Mullā Maḥmūd Efendi, also stayed at the Alaca Minare Lodge for a while and conveyed his extremely positive opinions about ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī to Sheikh Shāmīl. Thus, from 1853 until the death of ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī in 1864, the communication and solidarity of two influential Khālidī sheikhs, one in the Caucasus and the other in the capital of the Ottoman Empire, continued. In summary, the following points stand out in this regard:

The Khālidiyya is known as the most active movement representing the Naqshbandiyya Sufi order in West Asia in the nineteenth century. Mawlānā Khālīd, who gave his name to this movement, laid the foundations of a spiritual movement in his sixteen-year Sufi life that would have strong effects in the Islamic geography and leave deep marks in the political, scholarly, and social fields. This movement achieved successful applications in social life. The Khālidī sheikhs continued his path after his death.

Two main arguments have been reached in this chapter. These are:

1. Adhering to the Sufi tradition created by Mawlānā Khālīd, the Khālīdī sheikhs did not neglect to correspond with each other and to show solidarity in political and social events.

The correspondence of the Khālīdī sheikhs with each other is a requirement of the Khālīdī Sufi tradition. This correspondence also brought with it solidarity. The written witness to the solidarity of Sheikh Shāmīl and ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī as Khālīdī sheikhs is the correspondence between them that began in 1853. ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī tried to support Sheikh Shāmīl, who was leading the Ghazawāt movement against Russia in the North Caucasus, from Istanbul. He hosted Sheikh Shāmīl’s representatives sent to Istanbul at the Alaca Minare Lodge where he served and attended to their problems. He put some of these representatives who attended his conversations through Sufi training and gave them permission for guidance. He did not hesitate to use his respected position among statesmen to ensure these figures could meet with the Ottoman sultan. Indeed, ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī’s praise in his letter for the great effort the members of the Daghestani delegation made to meet with the Ottoman sultan shows that he too was actively involved in this effort. The delegation, which was successful in their efforts, received the support of the Ottoman Empire and took delivery of an imperial edict from Sultan ‘Abd al-Majīd to take to Sheikh Shāmīl. Al-‘Akrī’s praise to Allah for Sultan ‘Abd al-Majīd’s edict and his thanks to the sultan stem from the joy of being able to help Sheikh Shāmīl as a fellow Khālīdī sheikh.

2. In its relations with Russia, the Ottoman Empire benefited from the influence of the Khālīdī sheikhs active in the Caucasus region over the people.

The Ottoman Empire, like the Seljuks, Ayyubids, and Mam-

luks, benefited from the influence of Sufis on the public in political and social events. The Ottoman Empire's utilization of the influence of the Khālīdī sheikhs in the North Caucasus to strengthen its hand in relations with Russia is a manifestation of the centuries-long relationship between politics and Sufism. It is understood that the policy the Ottomans pursued in the Caucasus had two main foundations. The first of these is that the Caucasus region was the biggest obstacle to Russia's plan to reach the Mediterranean Sea through Anatolia. Overcoming this obstacle would put the Ottoman Empire in a very difficult position. For this reason, the fortress of the Caucasus needed to remain strong and unbreachable. The second is that this region is a highly strategic geography that serves as a bridge between Anatolia and the Central Asian Turkic societies. For this reason, the Ottoman Empire's relationship with the Sufi circles in the Caucasus began indirectly at the end of the 18th century during the time of Imam Maṣṣūr. It transformed into direct relations with the Ghazawāt movement initiated by the Khālīdī sheikhs.

While at war with Russia, the Ottoman Empire provided both political and military support to the Khālīdī sheikhs who were the leaders of the Muridist Movement. Especially in the 1853-1854 Russo-Ottoman War, in addition to military support, it aimed to increase the authority and prestige of the leading cadres of Muridism among the peoples of the Caucasus by granting them high-level political and military ranks. In these years, the troops commanded by Sheikh Shāmīl inflicted heavy losses on Russia and slowed its invasion of the region. In his letter, 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-'Akrī described Sheikh Shāmīl as the "mujāhid on the path of Allah" and the "protector of Daghestan" for this effort.

## CHAPTER THREE

# KHĀLIDĪ ACTIVITY IN THE SOUTHERN CAUCASUS

### THE KHĀLIDĪS IN THE TALISH REGION ON THE CAUCASUS-IRAN BORDER

Talish or Talishan, which refers to the southwestern part of the Caspian Sea, has been used as the name for both a community and a challenging geography. In 1736, an administrative unit named the Talish Khanate was also established in the region between the Talish mountains, the Caspian Sea, and the Mughan steppe in southeastern Azerbaijan. While the center of this Khanate was initially the city of Astara, it was later moved to the city of Lankaran.<sup>69</sup> From 1955 onwards, the city of Tavalin became the capital of the Khanate. While the Talish people were a community with a Sunni identity, over time there were also those who adopted Shi‘ism. Although ‘Āshūrā’ and mourning ceremonies were not held in Sunni mosques during

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<sup>69</sup> Mustafa Aydın, “Taliş Hanlığı,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2029), EK-2/577-578.

the month of Muḥarram, the Sunni Talish people did not neglect to participate in other programs concerning Ḥusayn.<sup>70</sup>

It is recorded that the Talish people, who preserved their Sunni identity until the beginning of the sixteenth century, were largely adherents of the Shāfiʿī school of law.<sup>71</sup> The transformation of the Safawiyya from a Sufi movement into a dynasty ruling Iran at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the fact that Sheikh Ismāʿīl al-Ardabilī (d. 1524), who sat on the seat of spiritual guidance (irshād) at the time, began to rule the state as the Shah of Iran, deeply affected the Talish people, as it did all the people of Iran. This is because with Shah Ismāʿīl, not only did the administration change, but a major blow was dealt to the Sunni Islamic identity by the acceptance of Shiʿism as the official sect throughout the entire geography of Iran and its surroundings. The Talish people managed to emerge from this blow with the least damage compared to other Sunni communities in Iran. It is noted that the reason for this success lies in the fact that the Safavids did not attach importance to the Talish region because it did not have large and populous cities.<sup>72</sup>

The oppressive policy of the Safavids in forcibly converting the Sunni populace to Shiʿism after they seized power in Iran led the Talish people to seek remedies to preserve their Sunni identity. The most solid remedy they found in this regard was to have their children educated in the madrasas of the Kurds, who were one of the most uncompromising communities in preserving their Sunni identity in Iran. This solution they found brought the Talish people and the Sunni Kurds on the Iran-Iraq

<sup>70</sup> İlham Sovgatov, "Azerbaycan'ın Astara İlinde Yaşayan Talışların Dini Hayatı" (II. International Korkut Ata Scientific Researches Conference Full Text Book, Ankara: IKSAD Publications, 2023), 384.

<sup>71</sup> Algar, *Nakşibendilik*, 307–313.

<sup>72</sup> Algar, *Nakşibendilik*, 311.

border closer together. Although the possibility of Talish having strong ties with Kurdistan even before the Safavids is mentioned,<sup>73</sup> the lack of any information or documents on this matter makes it difficult to comment on this period. Nevertheless, the rapprochement that began in the sixteenth century continued in the first half of the nineteenth century when the Khālidiyya arrived in the region.

No detailed scientific study has yet been encountered regarding which Sufi movements were active in the Talish region before the emergence of the Naqshbandiyya-Khālidiyya in the first half of the nineteenth century. However, Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn, who is buried in the town of Malavan near the city of Astara in Talish, was the spiritual guide (murshid) of the Suhrawardī sheikh Zāhid Gīlānī (d. 1301). On the other hand, the tomb of Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn's son, Sayyid Nikī, is located in the town of Nik near Hashtpar.<sup>74</sup> The fact that many Safawiyya sheikhs, from Sheikh Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ardabilī, who was the deputy of Sheikh Zāhid Gīlānī and the founder of the Safawiyya tariqa, to Sheikh Ismā'īl al-Ardabilī, took refuge in the Talish region from time to time<sup>75</sup> reveals their close ties with this region. All this indicates that the Talish people were in some way connected with the sheikhs of the Suhrawardiyya, Zāhidiyya, and the Safawiyya tariqa, which branched off from it, until the sixteenth century.

Sayyid Haybatullāh al-Tālishī, a student and deputy of the famous Shādhilī and Naqshbandī guide of the Kaku Zakariyya Lodge in the Mariwan region of Iran, Sheikh Shihāb al-Dīn al-Shādhilī (d. 1661), and Mawlānā Ismā'īl, the namesake and deputy of Mawlānā Ismā'īl of Shirwan (d. 1535) who was a mem-

<sup>73</sup> Algar, *Nakṣibendilik*, 313.

<sup>74</sup> Algar, *Nakṣibendilik*, 313.

<sup>75</sup> Algar, *Nakṣibendilik*, 309.

ber of the Aḥrāriyya branch of the Naqshbandiyya, were from this region. These two Sufis from Talish went north to Shirwan and south to Mariwan, respectively, to receive education in science and sufism.

The relationship of the Talish people with the Khālidiyya began when they came for religious studies to the Biyara Madrasah in Northern Iraq, which was described as "Little Azhar." Interestingly, it is recorded that Sheikh 'Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn al-Tawīlī (d. 1866), who was a teacher (mudarris) at the Biyara Madrasah and at the same time a Khālidi sheikh, was a descendant of Sheikh Ni'matullāh-i Kirmānī (d. 1423), the resident sheikh of the Kaku Zakariyya Lodge, where the Talish people had previously gone for madrasa and Sufi education.

Sheikh 'Uthmān's relationship with the Caucasus began with students from the South Caucasus region, which included Talish, coming to the madrasas opened by Sunni Kurds in Iran and Iraq for their religious studies. Sheikh 'Uthmān gave some of his Talish students, who received Sufi training from him at the Biyara Madrasah, permission for guidance (irshād) along with a license in science ('ilm).<sup>76</sup>

Sheikh 'Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn's sphere of guidance (irshād) was limited to the Sunni Kurdish cities on both sides of the Iran-Iraq border. For this reason, he had no direct communication with the Caucasus region. His relationship with the Caucasus took place in the Talish region through his deputies (khalīfa). This region is located in the northwest of Iran, between the north of Gilan and the south of Azerbaijan. That is, part of the Talish lands is in Iran, and the other part is in the South Caucasus (Republic of Azerbaijan). Consequently, the Khālidi sheikhs

<sup>76</sup> Abdülkerim Müderris, *Ulemâuna fî Hidme al-İlm ve al-Dîn* (Bağdat: Dâru'l-Hurriyye, 1983), 376.

active in Talish had to deal with Russia to the north and Iran to the south in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

Interestingly, the first deputy Sheikh ‘Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn sent to Talish, Ḥajjī Maḥmūd Kurdistānī, was not originally from there, as his name suggests. His other three known deputies were chosen from among the Talish students who came to Biyara for madrasa education. These are; Sheikh Shihāb al-Dīn Ṭalishī, Ḥajjī Khalīfa, and Sheikh ‘Alī ‘Anbarānī.

The provinces in the northwest of Iran also received their share of the Shi‘ification policy pursued against the Sunni populace in Iran since the sixteenth century. It is seen that the Talish people, living between the provinces of Gilan and Ardalan and the South Caucasus, interestingly preserved their Sunni identity. The madrasas that the Talish people, who were adherents of the Shāfi‘ī school of law, preferred for their children’s religious education were the Kurdish madrasahs in Iran and Iraq. The adherence of the Kurdish teachers to the Shāfi‘ī-Ash‘arī schools of thought and the fact that the Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) books in the madrasah curriculum were predominantly Shāfi‘ī explain the Shāfi‘ī identity of the Talish people as a school of law. Furthermore, the reason why they came to the Biyara Madrasah, where Sheikh ‘Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn was a teacher, for their education in the nineteenth century is also better understood in this way.

The guidance activities of Sheikh ‘Uthmān’s deputies in Talish began at least a quarter of a century after Sheikh Ismā‘īl of Kürdemir went to Shirwan in 1817. While this situation was expected to facilitate and accelerate the work of the Khālidi sheikhs in Talish, on the contrary, it made it quite difficult. This is because the Russians had suffered heavy losses due to the Ghazawāt organized by the Khālidi sheikhs among the Muslim populace of the North Caucasus with Imam Ghāzī Muḥam-

mad, Imam Ḥamzat, and finally Imam Shāmīl, and their dominance in the region had weakened. The North Caucasians, united under the leadership of Sheikh Shāmīl, had achieved a social foundation that rejected Russian sovereignty over a wide area and a political administration model based on Islamic principles. This situation prompted the Russians to take very harsh measures against the Khālīdī sheikhs. When Sheikh ‘Alī ‘Anbarānī, one of Sheikh ‘Uthmān’s deputies sent to Talish, began to build mosques and open Sufi lodges (*dargāh*) in the towns north of Astara, he was met with Russian intervention and was therefore forced to withdraw to the Iranian side of the border and shift his activities to the village of Kale.<sup>77</sup>

The Iranian authorities, who were closely following the political, military, and social problems the Russians had fallen into due to the activities of the Khālīdī sheikhs, arrested Sheikh ‘Uthmān’s first deputy sent to Talish, Ḥajjī Maḥmūd Kurdistānī, shortly after his arrival in the region, presumably to avoid similar troubles, and took him to Tahrān. Ḥajjī Maḥmūd, who could never return to Talish, passed away in Tahrān.<sup>78</sup> The situation of the other Khālīdī sheikhs was no different from that of Ḥajjī Maḥmūd. Attempts were made to prevent their communication with the Talish people through arrest, exile, or at best, being kept under house arrest. For this reason, although the Khālīdī sheikhs assigned to Talish maintained their presence in this region for nearly two centuries, they were never able to achieve the dynamic structure that the Khālīdī sheikhs in the North Caucasus gained with the Muridist movement against the Russians. It is stated that the support of the Talish people for the activities of the Khālīdī

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<sup>77</sup> Algar, *Nakṣibendīlik*, 318.

<sup>78</sup> Algar, *Nakṣibendīlik*, 316.

sheikhs was influenced by the Shāfi'ī identity they had preserved until the nineteenth century.<sup>79</sup>

### THE STRENGTHENING KHĀLIDĪ TRADITION IN NORTHERN AZERBAIJAN

Although the Khālidiyya began to spread in the Caucasus in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, its influence and rate of expansion were not the same in every city. Between 1818 and 1826, the foundation of the Khālidiyya was laid in Shirvan. The dominant actor of this period was the first deputy (khalifa) of Mawlānā Khālīd al-Naqshbandī in this region, Sheikh Ismā'īl Sirāj al-Dīn of Kürdemir. Between 1828 and 1858, however, the Khālidiyya gained great influence among the societies of the North Caucasus, centered in Dagestan. The prominent names in this process were Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī, Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī, and Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīqumūqī. After 1859, a concentration of Khālīdī activity in the South Caucasus, especially in the north of Azerbaijan, is noteworthy. In this period, corresponding to the third quarter of the nineteenth century, Mīr Ḥamza Nigārī, one of Sheikh Ismā'īl Shirwānī's deputies, was active in Karabakh, while another of Shirwānī's deputies, Ḥajjī Yahyā Qutqashinī, and his deputy, Ḥajjī Yūnus Lelelī, were active in the Jar-Balakan region.<sup>80</sup> The person who left deep marks with his activities in this last region was undoubtedly Sheikh Maḥmūd of Almali (d. 1876).

After Sheikh Shāmil's surrender to Russia in 1859, while the Khālidiyya was weakening in the North Caucasus, it began to strengthen in the South Caucasus through the serious efforts of Sheikh Maḥmūd of Almali. It can be said that Sheikh Maḥmūd

<sup>79</sup> Algar, *Nakşibendilik*, 313.

<sup>80</sup> Erol, *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azerbaycan'da Nakşibendilik-Hâlidilik*, 130–134.

Almali, who also had deputies in the Hājī Tarkhān (Astrakhan) and Kazan regions,<sup>81</sup> was the most influential Khālīdī sheikh in the South Caucasus in the second half of the nineteenth century.

### The Sheikhs of Jar-Balakan

Among the Khālīdī branches in the Caucasus, two stand out in terms of influence and prevalence. The first of these is the Daghestan branch, which was effective in the North Caucasus and partially migrated to Anatolia after 1860. The second is the branch active in the northern provinces of Azerbaijan in the South Caucasus, known as the Jar-Balakan branch.<sup>82</sup> The effects of this second branch crossed the borders of the Caucasus from the 1870s onwards and were also seen to the east in the Turkestan region.

It is recorded that the Jar-Balakan branch was active over a wide area that included the cities of Zakatala, Balakan, and Gakh.<sup>83</sup> The founder of this branch was Hājī Yaḥyā Qutqashinī, originally from an aristocratic and intellectual family from the Shaki Khanate. This individual became a disciple of Sheikh Ismāʿīl Shirwānī and began to provide guidance as his deputy. The contributions of Hājī Yaḥyā Qutqashinī and his deputy, Hājī Yūnus Efendi, to the Khālīdī activity in the Jar-Balakan region were significant. The activities of these two sheikhs formed an important foundation for the recognition and establishment of the Khālidiyya among the societies of northern Azerbaijan. However, the transformation of the Khālidiyya into the most powerful Sufi movement in the Jar-Balakan region was undoubtedly made possible by Maḥmūd Afandi, the deputy whom Hājī Yūnus Efen-

<sup>81</sup> Erol, *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azerbaycan'da Nakşibendilik-Hâlidîlik*, 237–239.

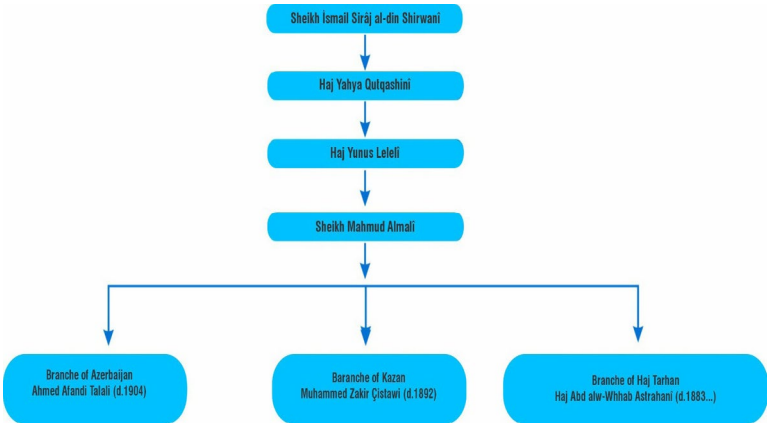
<sup>82</sup> Erol, *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azerbaycan'da Nakşibendilik-Hâlidîlik*, 130.

<sup>83</sup> Erol, *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azerbaycan'da Nakşibendilik-Hâlidîlik*, 130.

di praised by saying, “Outwardly he appears to be under our training, but in reality, we are under his.”<sup>84</sup>

After the death of Hājī Yūnus Afandi in 1860, Sheikh Maḥmūd Afandi’s growing fame in the cities of Zakatala, Jar-Balakan, Gakh, and Shaki, and even among the Khālīdī circles in Daghestan, worried the Russians. Many figures from Dagestan, such as Ḥasan Ḥilmī al-Dāghestānī,<sup>85</sup> joined Sheikh Maḥmūd’s chain of transmission (silsila) in later years. For this reason, due to the ever-increasing influence of Sheikh Maḥmūd Afandi, who had been actively supporting Muridism since 1844, Russian authorities tried to keep him under constant surveillance. He was also exiled from the Caucasus from time to time. When Sheikh Maḥmūd passed away, he left three active deputies: one in Azerbaijan and two in the Turkestan region.

Figure 2. Khālīdī Branches Originating from Sheikh Maḥmūd al-Almalī



<sup>84</sup> Erol, *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azerbaycan'da Nakşibendilik-Hâlidîlik*, 135.

<sup>85</sup> Halim Gül, *Hasan Hilmi Dağıştânî ve Tasavvufî Görüşleri* (Ankara: İlâhiyât Yayınları, 2016), 66.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE DECLINE OF THE KHĀLIDIYYA IN THE CAUCASUS

#### **RUSSIA'S MAJOR BLOW TO THE KHĀLIDĪS IN THE CAUCASUS**

##### **The Beginning of the End for the Muridist Movement: Sheikh Shāmīl's Surrender to Russia**

By the first half of the nineteenth century, the Muslim communities of the Caucasus are seen to have fully embraced the Khālidiyya. Moreover, while they accepted the Khālīdī sheikhs as their spiritual guides (murshid), they also respected many of the personalities they trained as religious and political leaders and fought under their command against the Russians. From this perspective, it can be said that the Khālidiyya had become a value significant enough to leave its mark on the history, culture, and social life of the Caucasus. However, Sheikh Shāmīl's surrender to Russia in 1859 initiated a new process for the Muridist movement, which he had led for 26 years. This process opened the door to a period that was extremely difficult and had heavy costs for the Khālīdī sheikhs and the tens of thousands of Caucasian Muslims who followed them.

Sheikh Shāmīl's surrender to the Russians did not mean

the complete end of the socially accepted Muridism. Perhaps it can be described as the beginning of the end. In the following years, the Muridist movement was continued by the remaining Khālīdī sheikhs and their loyal disciples (*murīd*). It should be noted that in the second half of the nineteenth century, the field of activity of the Khālīdīs, including the Muridist movement in a general sense, had spread to the entire Caucasus, both north and south.

Those who are curious about the state of Muridism in the post-Shāmil Caucasus need only look at the 1877-78 Russo-Ottoman War and the religious, political, and military events that occurred in the Caucasus at the beginning of the twentieth century. During the years of the 1877-78 Russo-Ottoman War, which the Anatolian Turks refer to more as the War of '93, Ḥajjī 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sughūrī, and in the 1880s, Muḥammad Afandī of Usukh, and between 1917-25, the Khālīdī sheikh Najm al-Dīn of Gotso continued the struggle against Russia in the North Caucasus.<sup>86</sup> Even these events show that the influence of Muridism among the Muslims of the Caucasus continued for nearly a century after Sheikh Shāmil.

### **The Forced Migration of the Khālīdī Sheikhs to Anatolia**

The migrations from the Caucasus, which began in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, continued to increase in subsequent years. In the second half of the same century, it transformed into a mass migration, resulting in the formation of a social segment in Anatolia known as the Caucasian immigrants. There are numerous documents in the Ottoman State Archives regarding this migration process, which continued for more than half a century. The migration of the Caucasian

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<sup>86</sup> Monteil, *Sovyet Müslümanları*, 81, 97.

Khālīdīs, or more precisely, the members of Muridism, to Anatolia can be examined in three periods. These are;

1. The migration of Sheikh Ismāʿīl Sirāj al-Dīn Shirwānī, as the founding figure of the Khālidiyya in the Caucasus, to Anatolia.

2. The migration of the leading cadres of Muridism to Anatolia after Sheikh Shāmīl's surrender to Russia in 1859.

3. Mass migration to Anatolia as a result of the pressure established by Russia to make room for its own settlers in the Caucasus.

Mawlānā Khālīd's assignment of Sheikh Ismāʿīl Shirwānī to Azerbaijan was a decision that produced very important results not only for the Khālidiyya but for the entire Caucasus region. Sheikh Ismāʿīl won over numerous scholars to the Khālidiyya. However, due to the greatly increased Russian pressure in 1825, he was forced to go to Akhaltsikhe in 1826. After staying there for about three years, when the city of Akhaltsikhe was ceded to Russia following the treaty the Ottoman Empire reached with Russia in 1828, he left there as well, headed for Anatolia, and settled in the city of Amasya. Sheikh Ismāʿīl, who carried out guidance activities in Amasya between 1828 and 1832, was partially affected by the decision in 1828 to exile the Khālīdī sheikhs in Istanbul to Damascus and Iraq. Perhaps not to Damascus, but he was exiled to the city of Sivas, near Amasya, and stayed there for nine years. The common point in his exile from both the Caucasus and Amasya was his being a Khālīdī sheikh.

The second high-level migration of the Caucasian Khālīdīs to Anatolia corresponds to the year 1859 and after. This decision by Sheikh Shāmīl made it necessary for the spiritual guide (murshid) of Muridism, Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīqumūqī, and some other high-ranking figures close to Sheikh Shāmīl to leave the North Caucasus.

Having Sheikh Shāmīl in their hands and the departure of

the Muridist leadership from the North Caucasus relieved the Russian authorities, albeit for a short time. During this process, the Russian authorities accelerated their efforts to displace the Muslim population in the Caucasus and to settle new Russian colonists in the places they vacated. Caucasians who did not want to be exiled within Russia preferred to migrate to Anatolia. This migration was a mass migration comprising thousands of families.

It is estimated that the number of people driven out of the Caucasus between 1864 and 1870 was two and a half million. It is mentioned that 552,000 people migrated from Circassia alone.<sup>87</sup> The Caucasian immigrants who came to Anatolia were settled in different cities in small groups. Salaries were allocated to the immigrant leaders, and a suitable environment was created for their integration with the local population.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Karpat, *Osmanlıdan Günümüze Etnik Yapılanma ve Göçler*, 167.

<sup>88</sup> Karpat, *Osmanlıdan Günümüze Etnik Yapılanma ve Göçler*, 21.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### GREAT KHĀLIDĪ SHEIKHS WHO INFLUENCED THE CAUCASUS

#### **Sheikh Ismā‘īl Shirwānī**

Sheikh Ismā‘īl Shirwānī was born in 1783 in the village of Kürdemir, attached to the city of Shirvan in Azerbaijan.<sup>89</sup> The region of his birth was administered by the Shamakhi Khanate at that time. Like his peers, he began his religious education in Shamakhi. In the madrasah of Muhammed Nuri Afandi, he studied the sequential Arabic books up to Mullā Jāmī’s commentary on the *Kāfiya*. He went to Anatolia and continued his madrasah education in Erzincan, Tokat, and Burdur. Although he received his license in science (ijāza) from his teacher Muhammed Nuri Afandi of Erzincan, he went to Baghdad to pursue higher-level studies. He took lessons in Hadith and mathematics from great scholars from the Amadiya region of Northern Iraq, such as ‘Allāma Yaḥyā al-Mizūrī and Mullā Muḥammad b. Ādam. Later, he returned to Anatolia, and after staying in Burdur for a while, he returned to his hometown

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<sup>89</sup> Osman Fevzi Olcay, *Amasya Ünlüleri* (Ankara: Amasya Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2002), 62.

of Shirwan and worked as a teacher (mudarris) in the village of Kürdemir. He went on the Hajj in 1812 and came to Istanbul in 1813, staying here for a time. It is recorded that while in Istanbul, Shirwānī turned to Sufism and went as far as the city of Basra to become a disciple of the Indian Mujaddidī sheikh of the time, Shāh ‘Abdullāh Dihlawī, but was spiritually guided to Mawlānā Khālid, who had begun his work of spiritual guidance (irshād) in the city of Sulaymaniyah.

We surmise that Shirwānī met and became a disciple of Mawlānā Khālid between the years 1813-1816 when the latter was in Baghdad. It is understood from the information provided by Müderris that Ismā‘īl Shirwānī did not leave Mawlānā Khālid’s side until he returned to Kürdemir.<sup>90</sup> Shirwānī, who went to Sulaymaniyah with Mawlānā Khālid, was assigned to Shirwan in late 1817. Bennigsen states that Ismā‘īl Shirwānī was the first Khālidī sheikh to be active in the Caucasus region.<sup>91</sup>

Many of the first-generation Khālidī sheikhs carried out scholarly and Sufi activities in vast lands, each of which is governed as a state today. In the great social events that occurred during this process, they took on the leading role in organizing the people politically and militarily. Sheikh Ismā‘īl Shirwānī is a prominent figure in the Caucasus region in these matters we have mentioned. It was Sheikh Ismā‘īl Shirwānī who laid the first foundation stones for the organization of the Muridist movement in the North Caucasus. Although he was forced to migrate to Anatolia in 1828, his deputies whom he had trained — Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī and Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī of Kürin in Daghestan, Ḥamza Nigārī in Karabakh, and Ḥajjī Yahyā Qutqashinī in the Jar-Balakan region — were at the very

<sup>90</sup> Müderris, *Yâd-ı Merdân*, 1/77.

<sup>91</sup> Bennigsen - Lemerrier-Quelquejay, *Sûfi ve Komiser Rusya'da İslam Tarikatları*, 95.

beginning of the Khālīdī Sufi chain of transmission (silsila) that would form. Sheikh Ismā‘īl Shirwānī passed away in Amasya in 1848.

### Sheikh ‘Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn al-Tawālī

Sheikh ‘Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn was born in 1781 in the village of Tawella, located on the Iraq-Iran border. After completing his religious education in the madrasahs of the Shahrazūr region, he went to Baghdad, where many great scholars and Sufis lived. He met Mawlānā Khālīd, who came to Baghdad in 1811, and became his disciple.<sup>92</sup> He was the first person to receive a ṭarīqa license (ijāza) from Mawlānā Khālīd in the city of Sulaymaniyah.<sup>93</sup> In the same year, he returned to Sulaymaniyah with Mawlānā Khālīd and did not leave his conversation circle for ten years. In 1820, when his sheikh left Sulaymaniyah for the second time and went to Baghdad, he began his activities of science and guidance (irshād) with his permission at the Biyara Madrasah, located within the borders of Halabja. Meanwhile, he did not neglect his home village of Tawella. Until 1856, he was present in both Biyara and Tawella. After this date, he began to live entirely in the village of Tawella.

Sheikh ‘Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn, like his guide Mawlānā Khālīd, trained numerous deputies. One of his deputies, Mullā Ḥāmid Bīsārānī (d. 1894), mentions nearly one hundred of his deputies in his Persian work *Riyāḍ al-mushtāqīn*.<sup>94</sup> Dozens of students of science from the regions of Iraq, Iran, Anatolia, Azerbaijan, and Daghestan passed through the tutelage of Sheikh ‘Uthmān at the Biyara Madrasah and returned to their countries after re-

<sup>92</sup> Müderris, *Yâd-ı Merdân*, 1/11.

<sup>93</sup> el-Haydarî, *al-Majd al-Tâlid fî Menâqib al-Sheikh Khalid*, 51.

<sup>94</sup> Hamid Bīsārānî, *Riyâz al-Mushtaqîn fî Menâqib Mevlânâ Khālīd Ziyâ al-dîn* (Irak-Süleymaniye: Muhammed Ali Karadağî Şahsi Kütüphanesi, 1316), 94–108.

ceiving Sufi training. His son Sheikh ‘Umar Z̤iyā’ al-Dīn Biyārī (d. 1900), Mullā Hāmid Bīsārānī, Mullā ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Mawlawī (d. 1883), Muḥammad Khāzin Firsāfi (d. 1890), Mullā Muḥammad Hawlerī known as Sheikh Choli, Sheikh Jawād al-Karkūkī, Mullā Muḥammad al-Diyārbakrī, and Sheikh Shihāb al-Dīn Ṭālīshī are some of his well-known deputies. Sheikh Shahab al-Dīn Ṭālīshī and many others brought the Khālidiyya to Talish while Sheikh ‘Uthmān was still alive. After his death, his children supported Talish from the Biyara Madrasah in Iraq and the Durud Madrasah in Iran.

Sheikh ‘Uthmān Sirāj al-Dīn passed away in 1866 in the village of Tawella and was buried there.<sup>95</sup> One of his deputies, Sheikh ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Mawlawī (d. 1883), composed a chronogram for his death with the phrase “هدأ اضطراب بحر الواحد” (Ha-da’a idṭirāb baḥr al-wāhid), which numerically corresponds to the year 1283 and translates to “The turmoil of the ocean of the One has subsided.”<sup>96</sup>

### **Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī**

Khāṣṣ Muḥammad, like Sheikh Ismā‘īl Sirāj al-Dīn, was of Shirwani origin. For his religious education, he went to Daghestan and was a student for seven years at the madrasah of Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī in the village of Yukarı Yarağ, which was attached to the Kürin Khanate. After his madrasah education, he returned to Shirwan.

In 1823, when Khāṣṣ Muḥammad returned to Shirwan, he met Sheikh Ismā‘īl and became his disciple. Sheikh Ismā‘īl Shirwānī put Khāṣṣ Muḥammad, who had completed his madrasah education, through Sufi training and gave him permis-

<sup>95</sup> Mūderris, *‘Ulemāuna fī Hidme al-‘Ilmi ve al-Dīn*, 379.

<sup>96</sup> Mūderris, *Yâd-ı Merdân*, 2/37.

sion for guidance (irshād). Sheikh Ismāʿīl appointed him as his deputy to Daghestan. His purpose in this must have been the idea that Khāṣṣ Muḥammad knew the madrasah circles in Daghestan well, where he had studied for seven years, and could have new teachers for the Khālidiyya there. Khāṣṣ Muḥammad was busy with teaching (mudarris) and guidance at the Haji Abdullah Madrasah in the town of Al-Qadar, attached to the Kürin Khanate, until the 1850s. When Khāṣṣ Muḥammad went to Al-Qadar, he visited his teacher Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī, who lived in the village of Yukarı Yarağ, and spoke to him about Sheikh Ismāʿīl Sirāj al-Dīn. During this period, Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī embraced the Khālidiyya and became a disciple of his student Khāṣṣ Muḥammad. Later, he went to Shirvan with him and also became a disciple of Sheikh Ismāʿīl Sirāj al-Dīn. It should be noted that this meeting took place shortly before Sheikh Ismāʿīl left Shirvan in 1826.

The tariqa chain of transmission (silsila) of Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī is as follows:

1. Mawlānā Khālīd al-Shahrazūrī
2. Sheikh Ismāʿīl Sirāj al-Dīn al-Kürdemirī
3. Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī

Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī, together with his teacher Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī, played a leading role in the spread of the Khālidiyya in the Daghestan region and in the organization of the Muridist movement. Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī passed away in 1857.<sup>97</sup>

### **Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī**

Mullā Muḥammad was born in 1777 in the village of Yukarı Yarağ, attached to the Kürin Khanate. He is also known as Mullā

<sup>97</sup> Erol, *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azerbaycan'da Nakşibendilik-Hâlidilik*, 101.

Muḥammad al-Dāghestānī. He continued his religious education, which began with his father Mullā Ismā‘īl and one of his first teachers, Mullā Muḥarrem Afandi, in different madrasas located in the Kürin Khanate. After receiving his license in science (ijāza), he came to his village and began teaching at the madrasah there. Many students, not only from the Kürin Khanate but also from surrounding Khanates, came to his madrasa and received their education. The name of Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī is found on the licenses of many prominent scholars and leading figures in Daghestan. Among the students he trained are Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī, Amīr ‘Alī of Tahirjal, ‘Abdullāh al-Alqadarī, Ḥasan al-Alqadarī, Ghāzī Muḥammad of Gimry, and Sheikh Shāmīl.<sup>98</sup>

Mullā Muḥammad’s acquaintance with the Khālidiyya was through his student Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī. Again, through his guidance, he became a disciple of Sheikh Ismā‘īl Sirāj al-Dīn in 1825. The tariqa chain of transmission (silsila) of Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī is as follows:

1. Mawlānā Khālīd al-Shahrazūrī
2. Sheikh Ismā‘īl Sirāj al-Dīn al-Kürdemirī
3. Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī
4. Sheikh Muḥammad al-Yarāghī

Mullā Muḥammad’s contribution to the spread of the Khālidiyya in Daghestan and its surroundings, especially among the Avars, was great. He stood out as the Sufi-mudarris figure who laid the foundations of the Muridist movement in Dagestan. Mullā Muḥammad passed away in Daghestan in 1838.<sup>99</sup>

### Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīqumūqī

<sup>98</sup> Erol, *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azərbaycan’da Nakşibendilik-Hâlidilik*, 101.

<sup>99</sup> Erol, *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azərbaycan’da Nakşibendilik-Hâlidilik*, 103.

Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn was born in the Ghazi-Kumukh Khanate. After his madrasah education, he attracted the attention of the region's administrator, Aslan Khan, with his knowledge and intelligence. Aslan Khan appointed him as his private secretary.

Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn's turn to Sufism began when he became aware of Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī, who was engaged in guidance (irshād) activities in the Kürin Khanate. Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn became a disciple of Mullā Muḥammad and did not leave his conversation circle. After completing his Sufi training, Mullā Muḥammad appointed Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn, who was a good scholar and bureaucrat, to spread the Khālidiyya in Ghazi-Kumukh. Aslan Khan opposed his guidance activities due to his growing influence on the public. For this reason, although he was forced to leave Ghazi-Kumukh for a short time, he returned to his homeland after Aslan Khan's death.

The tariqa chain of transmission (silṣila) of Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīqumūqī is as follows:

1. Mawlānā Khālid al-Shahrazūrī
2. Sheikh Ismā'īl Sirāj al-Dīn al-Kürdemirī
3. Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī
4. Sheikh Muḥammad al-Yarāghī
5. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīqumūqī

After Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī, Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn became known in the North Caucasus as one of the most respected spiritual leaders of the Muridist movement. In his work *al-Ādāb al-marḍiyya fī al-tarīqa al-Naqshbandiyya*, he discussed the fundamental principles of the Khālidiyya. From the 1830s to 1859, Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn played a significant role in the acceptance and support of Muridism by the different masses of people in the region. As Sheikh Shāmīl's guide (murshid) and father-in-law, he gave him all manner of support. After Sheikh

Shāmil's surrender to Russia in 1859, he was forced to migrate to Anatolia. He passed away in Istanbul in 1869.<sup>100</sup>

### Ḥamza Nigārī

Ḥamza Nigārī was born in 1805 in the village of Cicimli in the Bergüşad district, attached to the Karabakh Khanate. He is referred to by the titles Mīr and Sayyid. During his madrasah education, which lasted for about eight years, Ḥamza Nigārī studied under Mullā Maḥmūd Afandi and Shikast 'Abdullāh Afandi, and in the meantime, he learned Arabic and Persian well enough to write poetry. Between 1835 and 1839, he became a disciple of Sheikh Ismā'īl Shirwānī, who was in Sivas, and completed his Sufi training with him. After returning from the Hajj, he began his guidance activities in his homeland of Karabakh from 1841 onwards. Ḥamza Nigārī, who played an active role in connecting many people from Karabakh to Shirvan to the Khālidiyya, was particularly influential among the Karapapakhs Turks.

The tariqa chain of transmission (silsila) of Mīr Ḥamza Nigārī is as follows:

1. Mawlānā Khālīd al-Shahrazūrī
2. Sheikh Ismā'īl Sirāj al-Dīn al-Kürdemirī
3. Sheikh Ḥamza Nigārī/Qarābāghī

Ḥamza Nigārī, who was a good Sufi-poet, also has a Dīwān. Nigārī, who passed away in 1886 while living in exile in Harput, his body was taken to Amasya in accordance with his will.<sup>101</sup>

### Hajjī Yahyā Qutqashinī

Hajjī Yahyā was born into one of the aristocratic families of the Shaki Khanate. Although what is known about his life is limited, it is certain that he received a good madrasa edu-

<sup>100</sup> Erol, *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azərbaycan'da Nakşibendilik-Hâlidilik*, 105–108.

<sup>101</sup> Erol, *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azərbaycan'da Nakşibendilik-Hâlidilik*, 116–122.

cation. Hājji Yahyā first became a disciple of Sheikh Ismā‘īl Shirwānī and then of his deputy in Daghestan, Khāṣṣ Muḥammad Shirwānī. As a deputy of Sheikh Ismā‘īl Shirwānī, he was active in the Jar-Balakan region. He trained numerous Khālidi sheikhs, especially his sons Khalīl Pasha and Ibrāhīm Pasha. Later, he went to the Hijaz, where he met and became a disciple of one of Mawlānā Khālidi’s deputies, ‘Abdullāh al-Makkī. In this way, it is seen that Hājji Yahyā was included in the Khālidi silsila through two branches, both via Sheikh Ismā‘īl Shirwānī and ‘Abdullāh al-Makkī. This also shows that he contributed to Sufi activities in both the Caucasus region and Anatolia.

The first silsila of Hājji Yahyā Qutqashinī is as follows:

1. Mawlānā Khālidi al-Shahrazūrī
2. Sheikh Ismā‘īl Sirāj al-Dīn al-Kürdemirī
3. Hājji Yahyā Qutqashinī

The second silsila of Hājji Yahyā Qutqashinī is as follows:

1. Mawlānā Khālidi al-Shahrazūrī
2. Sheikh ‘Abdullāh al-Makkī
3. Hājji Yahyā Qutqashinī

Hājji Yahyā Qutqashinī passed away in Mecca in 1869.<sup>102</sup>

Hājji Yūnus Leleli

Hājji Yūnus was born in 1803 in the village of Leleli in the city of Gakh. After his madrasah education, he turned to Sufism. Hājji Yūnus received Sufi training from Hājji Yahyā Qutqashinī before the latter went to the Hijaz. As his deputy, he began guidance activities in the north of Azerbaijan. His student, Maḥmūd Afandi Almali, played a major role in the spread of the Khālidiyya in the Jar-Balakan region.

The tariqa chain of transmission (silsila) of Hājji Yūnus Leleli is as follows:

<sup>102</sup> Erol, *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azerbaycan’da Nakşibendilik-Hâlidilik*, 130–133.

1. Mawlānā Khālīd al-Shahrazūrī
2. Sheikh Ismā'īl Sirāj al-Dīn al-Kürdemirī
3. Hājī Yahyā Qutqashinī
4. Hājī Yūnus Leleli

Hājī Yūnus passed away in 1860 in the village of Leleli.<sup>103</sup>

Sheikh Maḥmūd al-Almalī

Sheikh Maḥmūd was born in the nineteenth century in the town of Almalī in the Gakh province of Jar-Balakan, which was part of the Daghestan region. What is known about his life before he became a sufi is limited. The main known facts are that he received a good madrasah education and was a skilled person in matters of oratory, correspondence, and language. For these qualities, Danyal Bey, the ruler of the Ilisu Khanate, appointed him as his private secretary.

Sheikh Maḥmūd, together with the Khan of Ilisu, Danyal Bey, supported the jihād initiated by the Khālīdī sheikhs against Russia. His acquaintance with the Khālīdī sheikh Yūnus Leleli corresponds to these years. Sheikh Maḥmūd, who attended the conversations of Yūnus Afandi, returned to Almalī as his deputy after receiving permission for guidance (irshād) from him. Due to Sheikh Maḥmūd's intense guidance activities, the town of Almalī was transformed into a strong Khālīdī center from the 1850s onwards. With the students he trained and the deputies he appointed, Sheikh Maḥmūd attained a respected position as a Khālīdī sheikh in the provinces of Zakatala, Balakan, Gakh, and Shaki.

The support of Sheikh Maḥmūd as a Khālīdī sheikh and of Danyal Bey politically and militarily for Sheikh Shāmil drew Russia's attention to the region, and this situation resulted in Sheikh Maḥmūd's exile. He was exiled first to Metekhi Cas-

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<sup>103</sup> Erol, *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azerbaycan'da Nakşibendilik-Hālīdīlik*, 134–135.

tle in Tiflis and then to the city of Kazan in Tatarstan. Sheikh Maḥmūd continued his activities in exile. In Kazan, he became a disciple of the Naqshbandī sheikh Hāshim Yamshānī. In 1862, he returned to his hometown of Almali for a short time, but in 1864 he was exiled again, this time to Astrakhan. He spent the last years of his life in Astrakhan.

Sheikh Maḥmūd passed away in 1876, leaving behind strong personalities to continue the Khālidi Sufi tradition in the south of the Caucasus as well as in the Astrakhan and Kazan regions. His grave is in Astrakhan, his final place of exile.<sup>104</sup>

The tariqa chain of transmission (silsila) of Sheikh Maḥmūd Afandi is as follows:

1. Mawlānā Khālidi al-Shahrazūrī
2. Sheikh Ismā‘īl Sirāj al-Dīn al-Kürdemirī
3. Ḥajjī Yaḥyā Qutqashinī
4. Ḥajjī Yūnus Leleli
5. Sheikh Maḥmūd al-Almalī

Sheikh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sughūrī

‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sughūrī, from the Daghestan region of the North Caucasus, was born in the Avar village of the city of Sogratl. His educational life, which began with the Holy Qur’ān, continued with madrasah education. Among his teachers was ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Afandi from Sograt, who was known in the Daghestan region at that time for his lessons in mathematics and astronomy.<sup>105</sup> After his madrasa education, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sughūrī, who turned to Sufism, became a disciple of the Khālidi sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn Afandi, who lived in the Ghazi-Kumukh Khanate. After completing his Sufi training, Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn Efendi sent him to Sogratl as his deputy.

<sup>104</sup> Erol, *Kafkaslarda Tasavvuf ve Azerbaycan’da Nakşibendilik-Hâlidîlik*, 138–145.

<sup>105</sup> Reşat Öngören, “Suğûrî,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2019), 2/522.

Sheikh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sughūrī, who was one of Sheikh Shāmīl’s closest friends, served as an active bureaucrat in the state established in the North Caucasus. In solving administrative and social problems that arose, he sometimes acted as a mediator and often as a civil inspector. It is mentioned that he carried out successful work, especially in resolving problems between Imam Shāmīl, who was at the head of the state, and the deputies (nā’ib) he appointed to different cities.<sup>106</sup>

After Sheikh Shāmīl’s surrender to Russia and the forced migration of the spiritual leader of Muridism, Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn, to Anatolia, he became the prominent figure in the Muridist movement from 1860 onwards. As the most respected Khālīdī sheikh of the North Caucasus, he, along with his son Ḥajjī Muḥammad al-Sughūrī, played a major role in the continuation of the armed struggle against Russia. Due to his advanced age, he appointed his son Ḥajjī Muḥammad as the Imam of the movement.<sup>107</sup> Sheikh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, who was arrested and exiled by the Russians, passed away in 1882.

The Khālīdī tariqa silsila of Sheikh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sughūrī is as follows:

1. Mawlānā Khālīd al-Shahrazūrī
2. Sheikh Ismā‘īl Sirāj al-Dīn Shirwānī
3. Mullā Muḥammad al-Yarāghī
4. Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīqumūqī
5. Sheikh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sughūrī

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<sup>106</sup> Öngören, “Suğūrī,” 2/523.

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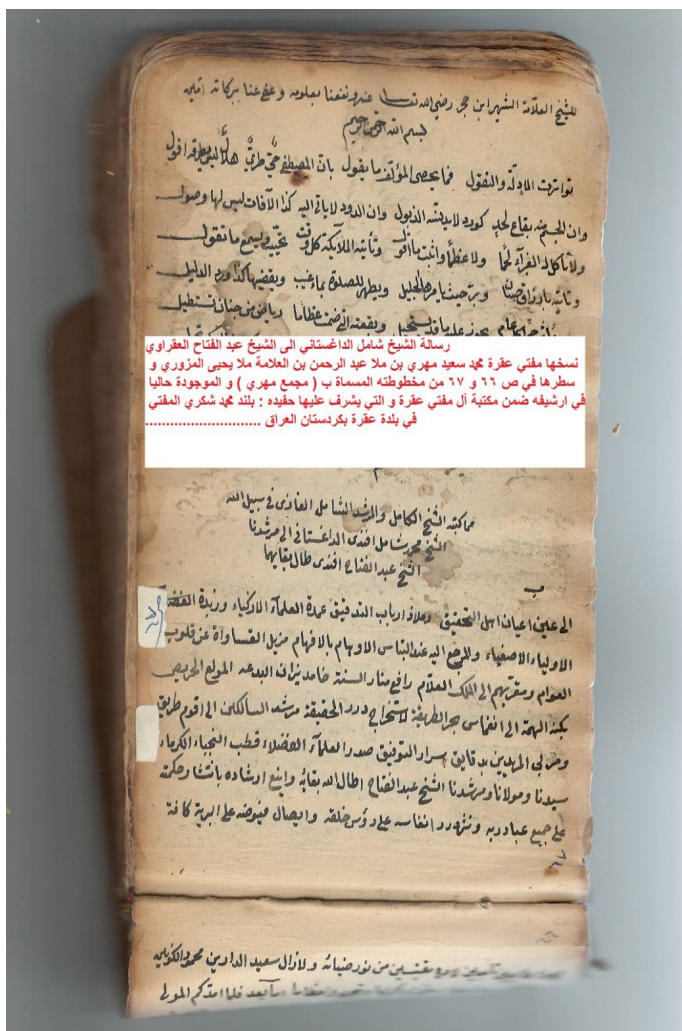
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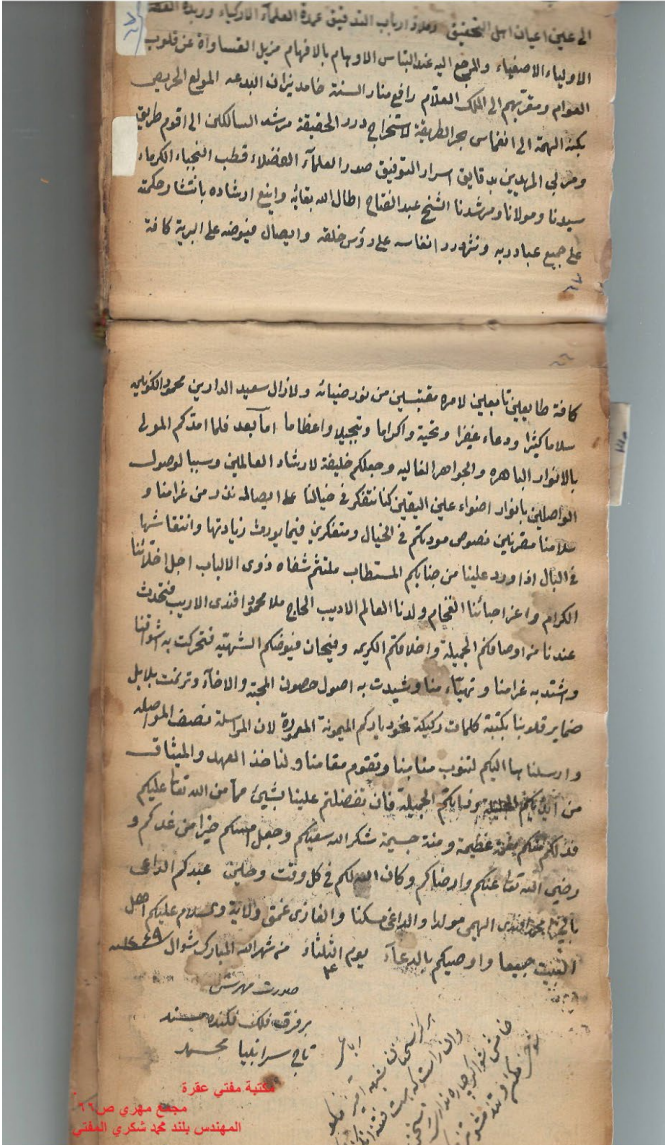
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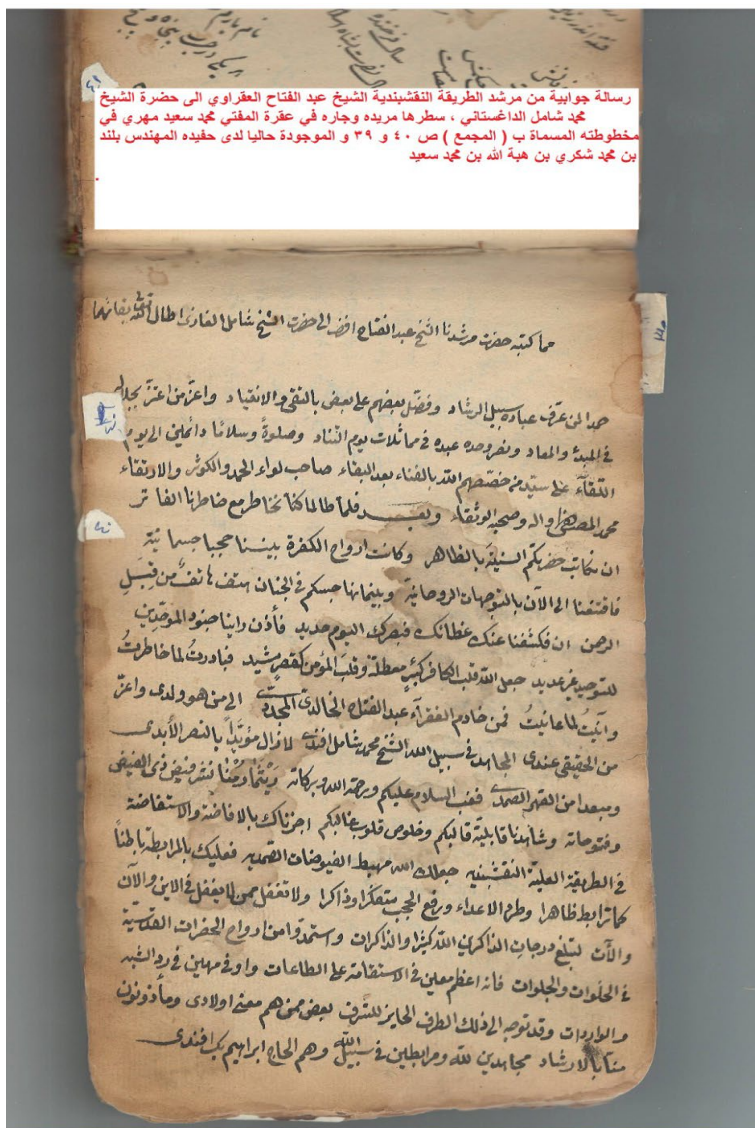
## APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1a: The Letter Written by Sheikh Shāmil  
to Sheikh 'Abd al-Fattāh al-'Akrī

APPENDIX 1b: The Letter Written by Sheikh Shāmil to Sheikh ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-‘Akrī



APPENDIX 2a: The Reply Letter Written by Sheikh 'Abd al-Fattāh al-'Akrī to Sheikh Shāmil





The Caucasus region possesses remarkably rich diversity in terms of its geographical, ethnic, religious, and cultural characteristics. With the spread of Islam in this region, Muslim communities began to establish stronger relations with the states in Iran and Anatolia. The political, religious, and social developments that took place in the Islamic world also affected the Caucasus. From the earliest periods, the scholarly activities that became widespread through the madrasas established in the region were followed by the mystical activities of Sufi orders. Among the Sufi orders that emerged in Turkestan, Iran, Iraq, and Anatolia—such as the Yasawiyya, Qadiriyya, Naqshbandiyya, Safawiyya, and Khalidiyya—several became known and spread among the Muslims of the Caucasus. Among these, in particular, the Khalidiyya branch of the Naqshbandiyya distinguished itself through its activities that left a deep mark on the last two centuries of Caucasian history. Khalidism offered solutions to the political, religious, and social problems faced by Muslims through a revivalist approach grounded in the traditional Islamic sciences and Sufism.

E-ISBN 978-625-8731-02-6



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