

The Halveti-Jerrahi Order of Dervishes

A Traditional Muslim Sufi Order

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Khalwati order

The **Khalwati order** (also known as **Khalwatiyya**, **Khalwatiya**, or **Halveti**, as it is known in Turkey) is an Islamic Sufi brotherhood (*tariqa*). Along with the Naqshbandi, Qadiri and Shadhili orders, it is among the most famous Sufi orders. The order takes its name from the Arabic word *khalwa*, meaning “method of withdrawal or isolation from the world for mystical purposes.”^[1]

The order was founded by Umar al-Khalwati in the city of Herat in medieval Khorasan (now located in western Afghanistan). However, it was Umar's disciple, Yahya Shirvani, who founded the “Khalwati Way.”^[2] Yahya Shirvani wrote *Wird al-Sattar*, a devotional text read by the members of nearly all the branches of Khalwatiyya.^[3]

The Khalwati order is known for its strict ritual training of its *dervishes* and its emphasis of individualism.^[3] Particularly, the order promoted individual asceticism (*zuhd*) and retreat (*khalwa*), differentiating themselves from other orders at the time.^[3] The order is associated as one of the source schools of many other Sufi orders.

History

14th-17th Century

There were two major historical movements of the Khalwati order. The first one started in the late fourteenth century and ended in the seventeenth century. The first historical movement marks its origins and spread in vast area, now being part of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey.^[1] The second movement began in the late fifteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century mostly focused in Egypt, considered the reform period of the Khalwati order.^[2] The order lost popularity in 1865, but many of its leaders branched off to form different orders to expand Islam throughout Africa. The order resided mostly in large urban areas.^[1]

The origins of the Khalwati order are obscure, but most attribute Umar al-Khalwati as its founder, or the “first *pir*”. However, Umar- Khalwati was considered a mysterious man who did very little to spread the order. Shaykh Yahya Shirvani was considered “the second *pir*” that was responsible for the spread of the Khalwati order.^[1] Yahya Shirvani lived during a time of great political instability in the wake of the Mongol invasion. After the Mongol invasions, Turkish nomads began to gather into urban centers of the Islamic world. All these cities had Sufi *shaykhs* performing miracles for the nomads. Thus, these Turkish nomads were easily converted to mystical Islam when the Sufi *shaykhs* promised them union with Allah.^[1] Yahya Shirvani entered Baku at this time of religious fervor and political instability, and he was able to start a movement. Yahya Shirvani was able to gather ten thousand people to his movement. Yahya had many popular, charismatic disciples to spread the order, including Pir Ilyas.^[1]

The time of greatest popularity for Khalwati order was during the thirty-year reign of “Sufi Bayazid” (1481–1511) in Ottoman Turkey.^[1] During this time, the sultan practiced Sufi rituals, which, without a doubt, brought in many people to the order who wanted to advance their political career. This is the time period where members of the upper class, Ottoman military, and higher ranks of civil services were all involved with the Khalwati order. The Sufi sheikh, Chelebi Khalifa, moved the headquarters of the Khalwati order from Amasya to Istanbul.^[1] Here, they rebuilt a former church into a *tekke*, or Sufi lodge. The *tekke* became known as the Koca Mustafa Pasha Mosque.^[1] These buildings spread throughout the region as Khalwati's popularity grew. The order spread from its origins in the Middle East to the Balkans (especially in southern Greece, Kosovo and Macedonia, to Egypt, Sudan and almost all corners of the Ottoman Empire.

After Chelebi Khalifa's death, the power was passed to his son-in-law, Sunbul Efendi. He was considered a very spiritual man that saved the Koca Mustafa Pasha Mosque.^[1] According to the miraculous account, the new sultan Selim I, was suspicious of the Khalwati order and wanted to destroy its *tekke*. Selim I sent workers to tear down the *tekke*, but an angry Sunbul Efendi turned them away. Hearing this, Selim I went down there himself only to see hundreds of silent dervishes gathered around Shaykh Sunbul dressed with his *khirqa*. Selim was astonished by

Sunbul's spiritual power and canceled the plans to destroy the *tekke*.^[1]

By this time, members of the Khalwati order broke ties with the common people, who they previously aligned themselves so closely. They attempted to rid the order of folk Islam to a more orthodox order.^[1] The Khalwati was very conscious of their public image and wanted the order to become more of an exclusive membership for the upper class. From here, the Khalwati order broke off into many suborders. In 1650s rose one of the most famous Anatolian Khalwati shaykhs, Niyazi al-Misri. Niyazi was famous for his poetry, his spiritual powers, and public opposition to the government.^[1] He was a leader that represented the old Khalwati order, one for the masses.^[1] Niyazi gave the common people and their spiritual aspirations a voice again in the Khalwati order. Niyazi's poetry demonstrates some of the Khalwati's aspects of retreat. He writes in poem:

"I thought that in the world no friend was left for me--
I left myself, and lo, no fiend was left for me"^[4]

18th-19th Century: Khalwati Reform

Most scholars believe that the Khalwati went through a revival during the 18th century when Mustafa Kamal al-Din-al-Bakri was in charge. Al-Bakri was considered a great shaykh who wrote many books, invented Sufi techniques, and was very charismatic.^[1] He travelled throughout Jerusalem, Aleppo, Istanbul, Baghdad, and Basra. Before he died he wrote 220 books, mostly about *adab*.^[2] It is said that he saw the prophet nineteen times and al-Khidr three times. In many cities, people would mob al-Bakri to receive his blessing.^[1] After al-Bakri died, Khalwati dome scholars believe that al-Bakri set "a great Sufi renaissance in motion."^[1] He was considered the reformer who renewed the Khalwati order in the Egypt. The Khalwati order still remains strong in Egypt where the Sufi orders do receive a degree of support from the government. The Khalwati order also remains strong in the Sudan.

However, not all scholars agree with al-Bakri's influence. Frederick de Jong argues in his collected studies that al-Bakri's influence was limited. He argues that many scholars speaks of his influence, but without much detail about what he actually did. Jong argues that al-Bakri's influence was limited to adding a prayer litany to the Khalwati rituals.^[2] He made his disciples read this litany before sunrise and called it the Wird al-sahar. Al-Bakri wrote this prayer litany himself and thought it necessary to add it to the practices of the Khalwati order. Jong argues al-Bakri should not be attributed with the revival of the Sufi order for his limited effect.^[2]

19th Century Political Influence

Members of the Khwalti order were involved in political movements by playing a huge role in the Urabi insurrection in Egypt. The order helped others oppose British occupation in Egypt. The Khalwati groups in Upper Egypt protested British occupation due to high taxes and unpaid labor, which, in addition to drought, made living very hard in the 1870s.^[2] Their protests blended with the large stream nationalist protests that lead up to the Urabi insurrection. It can be said that the Khalwati's fight to improve living conditions eventually lead to the larger nationalist protests.^[2]

Khalwati Tekkes

The Khalwati order had many tekkes in Istanbul, the most famous being the Jerrahi, Ussaki, Sunbuli, Ramazaniyye and Nasuhi. Although the Sufi orders are now abolished in the Republic of Turkey, the above are almost all now mosques and/or places of visitation by Muslims for prayer.

Khalwati sub-orders

- Gulshani
- Jerrahi
- Nasuhi
- Rahmani
- Sunbuli
- Ussaki

notes

- [1] Keddie, Nikki R. (1972). *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis*. Los angeles: University of California Press. pp. 401.
- [2] De Jong, Frederick (2000). *Sufi Orders in Ottoman and Post- Ottoman Egypt and the Middle East*. Istanbul: Isis Press. pp. 274. ISBN 975-428-178-5.
- [3] Crimingham, J. Spencer (1998). *The Sufi Orders in Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 333. ISBN 0-19-512058-2.
- [4] Schimmel, Annemarie (1975). *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press. ISBN 978-0-8078-1223-5.

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- Clayer, Nathalie, Muslim Brotherhood Networks (<http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0159-2011050932>), European History Online], Mainz: Institute of European History, 2011, retrieved: May 23, 2011.

External links

- Home page of the Halveti-Ussaki order (English/Turkish) (<http://www.ussaki.com/>)
- Sub-order page of the Halveti-Ussaki order (Turkish) (<http://www.ipek-yolu.com/>)
- Home page of the Halveti-Jerrahi order (<http://www.jerrahi.org/>)
- Home page of the Halveti-Shabani order (<http://www.halveti.org/>)
- Home page of the Halveti-Sivasi order (<http://www.halvetisivasi.com/>)
- Halveti branches (<http://www.halvetisivasi.com/aclist.asp?conID=175&cMode=S>)
- The Unveiling of Love Sufism and the Remembrance of God By Sheikh Muzaffer Ozak (<http://www.fonsvitae.com/unveilinglove.html>)
- IRSHAD Wisdom of a Sufi Master By Sheikh Muzaffer Ozak Al-Jerrahi (<http://www.fonsvitae.com/irshad.html>)
- Garden of Paradise - Sufi Ceremony of Remembrance - Music CD Sheikh Muzaffer Ozak and the Halveti-Jerrahi Order of Dervishes (<http://www.fonsvitae.com/gardenceremony.html>)
- Lifting the Boundaries: Muzaffer Efendi and the Transmission of Sufism to the West by Gregory Blann (<http://www.fonsvitae.com/halveti-jerrahi-muzaffer.html>)
- A link to numerous articles on Sufism including the Khalwati order. (<http://www.arches.uga.edu/~godlas/Sufism.html>)

Jerrahi

The **Jerrahi** (Turkish: *Cerrahiyye*, *Cerrahilik*) are a Sufi tariqah (order) derived from the Halveti order. Their founder was Muhammad Nureddin al-Jerrahi, who died in Istanbul and is buried at the site of his tekke in Karagumruk - Istanbul. During the late Ottoman period, this order was widespread throughout the Balkans, particularly Macedonia and southern Greece (Morea).

Founded in the 17th century by Muhammad Nuraddin al-Jarrahi, the Halveti-Jerrahi Order of Dervishes is a cultural, educational, and social relief organization with members from diverse professional, ethnic and national backgrounds.

Al-Jarrahi was a direct descendant of Muhammad both from his mother and father. The path he founded is dedicated to the teachings and traditions, through an unbroken chain of spiritual transmission (silsilah), that go directly back to Muhammad.

The head dergah "convention" of the Halveti-Jerrahi order is in Karagumruk - Istanbul. It has branches in some European countries, Australia, South Africa, South America and North America, including New York, Mexico, San Francisco, Toronto and Chicago.

Branches of the Halveti-Jerrahi conduct gatherings where the dervishes perform Sufi remembrance ceremonies (*dhikr*), practice sufi music, serve dinner, pray together and listen to the discourses (sohbets) of their Sufi guides.

This order was brought to western countries by the 19th Grand Sheikh Muzaffer Ozak (also known as "Muzaffer Efendi"), who died in 1985. From 1985 to 2000 the Grand Sheikh was Sefer Dal Efendi. Since 2000 the Grand Sheikh is Tugrul Efendi.



Window to the Mausoleum of the Jerrahi Tekke in Istanbul

References

External links

- Jerrahi order in Manhattan and America (<http://www.nurashkijerrahi.org>)
- Halveti Jerrahi order in New York (<http://www.jerrahi.org>)
- Halveti Jerrahi order in Mexico (<http://www.sufimexico.org>)
- Halveti Jerrahi order in Canada (<http://www.jerrahi.ca>)
- Halveti Jerrahi order in Argentina, Tekke of Hajji Orhan Baba (<http://www.sufismo.org.ar>)
- Halveti Jerrahi order in Argentina (<http://www.jerrahi.org.ar>)
- Halveti Jerrahi in Chicago (<http://www.jerrahimidwest.org>)
- Halveti Jerrahi order in Italy (<http://www.sufijerrahi.it>)
- khalyfa Jerrahi in Italy (<http://www.gabrielemandel.net>)
- tekke Jerrahi in Genoa, Italy (<http://www.puntosufi.it>)
- journal jerrahi Italy (<http://www.rivistasufismo.it>)
- Interview with Sheikh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi (<http://www.wie.org/j18/bayrak.asp?ifr=dt&ifd=85>)
- Interview with Sheikh Ragip al-Jerrahi (<http://www.wie.org/j17/frager.asp?ifr=dt&ifd=85>)
- Interviews with Rabbi David Edelman and Sheikh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi (<http://www.wie.org/j18/embrace.asp?ifr=dt&ifd=85>)
- The Unveiling of Love Sufism and the Remembrance of God By Sheikh Muzaffer Ozak (<http://www.fonsvitae.com/unveilinglove.html>)

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