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## **A Survey of the Evolution of the Futuwwa (Knight-errant, Chivalry) Doctrine in Iran from the 3-8 A.H. / 8-14 A.D. Century**

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### **Abstract**

In the history of Iran, the doctrine of manliness and chivalry can be studied from many aspects due to its various socio-political functions from the ancient history to the present. Given their situation and requirements, different people and groups take benefit from the doctrines and mottos of manliness to present a humane and religious view of their craft. Moreover, different socio-political conditions have given rise to particular manifestations of manliness; sometimes manliness has taken an errantry aspect while some other times its religious and Sufi aspect is more highlighted. The current study, using an analytical-descriptive method, aims to present different aspects of manliness from the 3-8 AH / 8-14 AD century and show the revolutionary process of this doctrine.

**Keywords:** Knight-errant, Chivalry, the chivalrous people, Sufism, Malamatiyya, Akhi (brother).

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## Introduction

The idea of chivalry (knight-errant) is a concept that runs throughout Iranian history especially in the area of Khorasan in various manifestations and it is necessary to study the topic in detail since the term chivalry and its derivatives do not yield a unique interpretation in various resources; plus, the theme of chivalry has been the center of attention for different social classes and guilds. Therefore, given their character and personality, each class has provided different theoretical and functional interpretations of the topic.

Many researchers, however, have addressed only one aspect of this doctrine in their studies; Nafisi, for example, has studied the signs of anti-oppression in this doctrine thereby considering chivalry as a movement by the Persian wars against Arabs and the dominance of the rich and oppressors (Nafisi, 1342: 150-172). Moreover, other researchers have paid more attention to its martial and chivalrous aspects (Hakemi, 1389: 20-50). Notably, these researchers have focused on explicit and objective activities of the *fityān* (literally young men) and they have not examined the manliness of other social groups; however, the doctrine of manliness encompasses a number of functions and features within various social layers.

Calude Cahen, more than other researchers, looks at the social aspect of *Futuwwa* (manliness) interpreting it in association with civilization and society. Cahen considers *Futuwwa* (manliness) in terms of “civilized and urban prejudices” (Cahen, 1991: 964). *Futuwwa* is studied by Cahen as a social phenomenon the rudiments of which give rise to unity among different social groups. Therefore, people maintain unity and conformity among themselves by adhering to this doctrine. Later Cahen associated the social movements of Iran primarily with *Futuwwa* (ibid: 965).

Another difficulty associated with researches on *Futuwwa* concerns various number of terms used in this area. For example, we come across the terms *fetyān*, *javānmard*, *Ayyār* and *Shāṭīran*, which carry different meanings in time and context. However, these terms are used synonymously in some resources thereby making interpretation of the sources difficult for the researcher. By having a cursory look at the usage of these terms, one can say that all Sufis and scholars who mentioned this topic until the 6<sup>th</sup> century AH, were more engaged with the martial and heroic aspects of the terms whenever using *Ayyar* and *Shāṭīr*; for instance, many references to this term for fighters in Baghdad in the first centuries AD (Masoudi, 1369: 404/2) or some references to *Ya'qub ibn al-Layth al-Saffar*, as can be found in some sources. It should be mentioned that *Futuwwa* (manliness) in Khorasan and Sistan was not restricted to activities of such warriors as *Ya'qub*, rather a number of other figures promoted the ethical aspect of *futuwwa* by being attracted to Sufism, such as *Abul-Hassan Kharaqāni* (died 425 Hijri) and *Fozail Ayyaz* (died 187 Hijri).

The current article aims to examine *Futuwwa* (the doctrine of manliness) from various aspects as well as its semantic and functional evolution from the 3<sup>rd</sup> until the 8<sup>th</sup> century AH. This article tries to examine different aspects of this doctrine in Khorasan, moreover, some references will be made on the situation of this doctrine in the center of western territories of Islamic caliphate, i.e. Baghdad.

## Meaning of the term *Futuwwa* (Knight-errant, chivalry) and its historical development

The term *Futuwwa* (manliness) undoubtedly derives from the Arabic *fata* which means brave and manly (Javad, 1958: 5-7). This term occurs in the Qu'ran: 12:30, 18:60 and 21:60; and in the plural forms *fetya* and *fetyān*: 12:36, 12:62, 18:10 and 18:13. It seems that the term is used to refer to “the people of the cave” (*ashab al-Kahf*). Besides, it is certain that the term *futuwwa* was sometimes used in pre-Islamic Arabia to designate values such as generosity, hospitality, and courage (Zakeri, 2008: 594). *Hatim al-Tai* symbolizes *fata* among Arabs and *Ali (a.s.)* was a symbol of courage and generosity during the Islamic period. After expansion of *fetyan* activities during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AH, the term *futuwwa* also occurred in Islamic

community (Cahen, 1191: 964). The term *fatā* among Arabs was used as an equivalent for the term *murawat* (generous) which was a good quality among Arabs and was praised by many people (Javad, 1958: 8).

There exists two important sources to better understand the term *futuwwa*. First, *futowwatnameh* by Abdol Rahman al-Sulami Nīshābūri (died 412 Hijri) which is considered to be the first account in this field. The writer explains the principles of this doctrine from the Sufi viewpoint. Based on this book, *futuwwa* is a series of ethical values such as honesty, altruism, sacrifice, and such (Solami, 1372: 422-436). However, Solami does not point to their militant spirit in this book. Seemingly, the writer has examined *futuwwa* from its Sufi aspect which is equal to the Sufi *futuwwa* prevalent in Khorasan in the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

Another important book in this area is *Qabus nama* by Kaykāvūs ibn Iskandar ibn Qābūs Ziarid. Chapter 44 of this book is entitled “Knight-Errantry”. Based on this book, the code of *futuwwa* has always been respected by different classes of society such as *Ayyāran*, militants, unions and the Sufis, all of whom have been inspired by and interpreted it according to their beliefs (Unşor-al-Ma’āli, 1345: 243-261). This book has been considered as a “*futowwatnameh*” by some researchers since it illuminates different aspects of *futuwwa* (the doctrine of manliness) (Golpinarli, 1379: 99).

Institution of *futuwwa* with its organizational implication is closely associated with a socio-ethical institution and refers to an institution closely related to professions (Sviri, 1993: 600). Accordingly, some researchers hold this idea believing that the function of *futuwwa* is to place different people and social groups next to each other (Zarrinkoub, 1357: 349).

### **Development of the terms *ayyār* and *javānmard***

The terms *ayyār* and *javānmard* in their pre-Islamic Iranian roots, especially in Sassanid dynasty, referred to those groups and individuals neatly organized serving the Sassanid army. They developed their own martial arts and considered the defense of the oppressed against the oppressors and the rich to be their main task (Zakeri: 1995: 99). *Ayyāran* called their way the code of *javānmardi*. This code was quite similar to Arabian *futuwwa*, but in Iran nobles children joined that. In other words; unlike Arabs whose *javānmardi* had a rural origin prevalent among the nomadic tribes, the code of *javānmardi* in Iran had an urban nature.

After the Arab conquest of Iran, the tradition of *javānmardi* was not lost rather it was integrated with *futuwwa* in the early centuries of Islam; therefore, such terms as “*javānmardi*” and “*futuwwa*” as well as “*fetyān*” and “*javānmardn*” were used synonymously by historians in post-Islamic sources. Both *Ayyāran* and *fetyān* call their conduct *futuwwa*. Should we distinguish between these two terms, historically speaking, one can say that *Ayyāran* were the social groups whose common feature was using military arts in their activities who were also affiliated with the code of *futuwwa*, the term *fetyān*, however, denoted a more widespread group including both *Ayyāran* and Sufis and unions who also considered themselves a member of *futuwwa*.

Some researchers have not clearly differentiated between *futuwwa* in eastern Iran particularly Khorasan with *futuwwa* in Baghdad (Taeschner, 1991: 966-969). Other researchers have a Sufi look at *fetyān* and *Ayyāran* mainly inspired by poetry (Carbon, 1363: 3-12). Such viewpoints are consistent with just some of the historical data and our paper cannot explain all developments of this doctrine; for example, these researches consider *fetyān* and *Ayyāran* as a guild always making trouble for the rich who doubled their activities during political vacuum (Cahen, 1989: 159). Moreover, *fetyān* and *Ayyāran* cannot be interpreted only in terms of the poor and dissatisfied citizens of the middle age society (Goharin, 1331: 86-91), since different sources associate them with different classes. Furthermore, *Ayyār* can be found with positive or negative connotations attached to it in some writings (Cahen, 1989: 159). Also, *fetyān* and even *Ayyāran* were not limited to ordinary and illiterate people; rather many Sufis and educated devotees belonged to

this group, such groups as armies, unions and others considered themselves to be a follower of futuwwa and interpreted this code based on their own desire.

From the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century onward, one should consider the link between the Sufis and Ayyāran. Along with spread of Sufism, futuwwa took on Sufi aspects which have been reflected in all futuwwatnamehs. Many Iranian socio-economic institutions in the middle age were directly or indirectly influenced by Sufism (Nasr, 1387:396). This connection has been mutual, and considering such deep connection between Sufism and futuwwa, some researchers introduce futuwwa as the social aspect of Sufism (Ibrahim, 1387: 510).

### **Historical background of futuwwa**

As mentioned earlier, the virtue of Javanmardi (Muruwwa in Arabic) has a long history in pre-Islamic Iran. During the Sasanian period, Javanmards formed the core of Iranian riders. They were elite riders and skillful archers who were in charge of safeguarding King's palace and were regarded as brave warrior among people (Zakeri, 1995: 99). Another groups among the Iranian Javanmard during the Sasanid era were "Ashkouhan" and also "ayyārān" who followed special rules among themselves, who robbed the rich to pay the poor (ibid).

These groups were suspected and even despised by the clerics and official authorities; Azarbad Mehrspandan, the great priest of Shapur II, for example, considered them as one of the five disasters of his day (Daryae, 1383: 168).

Some researchers of the Sasanian era provided some reasons for emergence of ayyārān and the spread of traits of Javanmardi and the tradition of Javanmardi in general, such as the gap between rich and poor as well as the rise of Mazdakian opinions on distribution of the rich wealth among the poor (ibid: 199). The chivalrous riders were highly respected among peasants, artisans and merchants. Therefore, the latter groups took the Javanmardan (chivalrous) as their role model (Bahar, 1320: 111). Based on historical books, many Iranian riders settled in Kufa and Basra after the Arab conquest of Iran, and since they had combat skills, the Arabs employed them to conquest the infidels of eastern Islamic world (Belazari, 1367: 202).

The region of Khorasan, especially in the first two centuries AH, due to proximity to Dar al-Harb on the one hand, and neighborhood with one of the active territories of Khawarij on the other, had been witness to the presence of "warriors" and "Motava'eh". Moreover, one should mention the presence of devotees and Sufis who took part in war against the infidels in the hope of heavenly reward (Zarinkoub, 1383: 80).

In literary and historical sources, Ayyāran were more known for the trait of Javanmardi than other groups. Many stories and anecdotes emerged in literature about their behavioral characteristics; among their positive characteristics, however, their robbery has also been mentioned. Ayyāran were among the first group calling themselves fetyān, and they are sometimes referred to as "picaros" by some historians (Tarikh-e Sistan (History of Sīstān), 1354: 24).

### **Tradition of Ayyāri in Iran before the Mongol Invasion**

For many reasons, the region of Khorasan was one of the main centers of Ayyāran activities; thereby many historical developments about this group should be rooted out in this region. Based on historical sources, especially stories and narratives such as Abū Muslim'nāmah, Samak-E 'Ayyar and Hamzeh' nāmah, Khorasan had been the center of combatant-ship and chivalry of Ayyāran. These folk tales reflect the mentality of Iranians about these groups during history; but many historical sources look down on them (Esfandiar Katib, 1346: 335). Therefore, these tales provide a ground for a better and logical understanding of Ayyāran history. As mentioned: "they include a display of historical events in connection with evangelical beliefs" (Kia, 1375: 78). In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AH, the region of Khorasan, especially the city of Marv, became the activity

center of Ayyāran and “javānmardan due to political and economic reasons. For this reason, opponents of the Umayyad dynasty, especially Abbasids, extended their invitation mission there. Life story of Abū Moslem Khorasani, as narrated in historical sources and folk tales, is a proof to this claim; since the people of Khorasan imagined the “portrait of an Iranian javānmard based on the narratives about Abū Moslem (Zarinkub, 1357: 349). Not only ordinary people, but also ahl e futuwwa (the chivalrous) considered Abū Moslem to be the true javānmard, an idea which remained until new ages. Abū Moslem is one of the main figures in futuwwa of Nāṣir al-Dīn Allah. It seems that the news of Abū Moslem was interesting for authorities and the masses even during Ghaznavian period (Bayhaqi, 1342: 486). Abū Moslem has a high rank in futuwwatnamehs. He has a lower rank than Ibrahim and constantly carries an ax in imitation of prophet’s iconoclasm (Kashefi Sabzevari, 1350: 387). In Abū Muslemnameh Ṭarsūsī, Abū Muslim was among a group of industry leaders who was obeyed by others. These leaders are characterized by fetyān and are often called Ayyār or akhi (brother) (Ṭarsūsī, 1380: 49, 1).

Islamhood of adjacent territories of Khorasan made Ghazian and other volunteers who wanted to fight with infidels turn back from abuttals to cities. Some people affiliated to these groups got back to normal way of life after finding a profession; but some other preserved their warfare-ship identity in terms of safeguarding convoy of pilgrims, helping sheriffs and restoring order, and sending rulers’ message to distant lands and such. Accordingly, in Islamic lands especially Khorasan, a group with a military nature was always prepared to provide military services to those who needed it; among these groups, however, there were those individuals who lived their lives by robbing caravans. Moreover, some rogue armies who rebelled against the ruler and gathered a group were also called Ayyār; notably, for example, the insurgence of Rafi ibn Leis, the grandson of Nasr ibn Sayyar, who was a “reputed hero of Khorasan” and was among the leaders of Hārūn Ar-Rašīd, occurred during the caliphate of al-Ma'mūn (Awfi, 1374: 287).

Sufi relations was not very expanded among different social groups until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century Hijri, since Sufism was not yet deeply embedded in different urban groups, but, as evidence shows, Ayyāran and fetyān were in contact with Sufis especially in Khorasan and Sistan, and they had strong religious motives in their practices due to this connection (Tarikh-e Sistan, 1345, 24).

The tradition of javānmardi in Khorasan, also possessed some principles of Islamic piety despite having some features of Ayyāri and combatant-ship, and the story of robberies of Al-Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iyāḍ and then his joining to Sufis imply how they have been influenced by Sufi teachings (Ansari Heravi, 1362: 32). The sources provide random data on biographical details of Ayyāran, but historical reports provide abundant data on Ayyāran and Shāṭīran, which are a valuable source for getting useful information on the topic. Based on these sources, Ayyāran and Shāṭīran enjoyed great strength and especial culture in many neighborhoods of Baghdad from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century to the era of Naser al-Din Shah (1831-1896).

One important difference can be seen in Ayyāri in Khorasan with Ayyāri in Baghdad and Arabic lands, that is, the tradition of javānmardi in Baghdad is influenced by martial spirit, robbery and jollity thereby Sufi orientation and morality are less seen in them. Tabari presents a full description of battles of Ayyāran in Baghdad against Tahir armies in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AH which clarifies their martial spirit and robbery (Tabari, 1354: 5539-5533/13). Ibn al-Athir also reports the corruption of Ayyāran and their act of setting some parts of Baghdad on fire by Ayyāran (Ibn al-Athir, 1351: 1551/15).

However, the activities of Ayyāran and fetyān are not limited to what has been mentioned so far; rather rulers and sultans benefited from their ability and talents in various fields, for example in sending of rulers’ messages and letters which was referred to as Shāṭīri (mailmanship). Shāṭīri or letter mailing was considered to be an important task; the person in charge of sending the letter was supposed to manifest strength and dexterity and gain trust of the rulers. “Qibah the Wrestler” was one of the Ayyāran in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AH, who was the special mailman of Arslan II, the Saljuqi King (Kermani, 1366: 473-474). In the 6<sup>th</sup> century, some

of the Ayyāran were constantly serving the rulers and sultans and accompanied them in wars and hardship. The sayings of Atâ-Malek Juvayni about kashtakin and Sardar Muhammad Khwarazm-Shah as well as Ilchi Pahlavanm, close to Sultan Jalâl ad-Dîn Khwârazmshâh, are notable in this regard (Juvayni, 1388: 183-184/1).

In Seljukian period, in light of establishing relative safety and authority of this dynasty, the ground of many robberies and uprisings was eliminated thereby the cities enjoyed relative peace. At this time, many of Ayyāran either voluntarily served the state or were employed as a Shāṭir (mailman) or custodian. Ahmad Kharbanda and Ali ibn Sahl are among the Ayyāran and vegrants of Seljuk period who were both Shāṭirs and bulwarks of Castle of Bam (Kermani, 1366: 91). In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, as one source reports, some of the Ayyāran gained the position of a custodian or a Muhtasib (Al-dilami, 1955: 77). Notably, a group of fetyān appeared in Sham in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, most famous of which was Ihdath of the city of Aleppo. Ihdath is the plural of hadith meaning feta (chivalrous) (Dehkhoda, 1377: 16975).

In the late Seljuk period, which was a witness to conditions of permanent chaos and turmoil, Ayyāran emerged once more to establish peace and safety in the absence of official representatives of this dynasty or increase their authority. The bulwark of Castle of Bam, who was a well-reputed vagrant and Ayyār of this period, is a good example of how Ayyāran gained power in this period such that even Atabak Muhammad IlattGiz asked for his support (Kermani, 1366: 90).

In the 6<sup>th</sup> A.D. Hijri and during Kharazmshahian period, some of the champions and Ayyāran always accompanied the kings and emirs. The sayings of Keshtegin Generar to Muhammad Kharazmshah and a certain Ilchi the pahlavan, two of the closest persons to Sultan Jalal al-din Kharazmshah in this regard are notable (Juvayni, 1388: 212-463).

### **Tradition of Ayyāri in Iran during Il-Khanid dynasty**

Concerning the consequences of Mongol invasion (617 Hijri) on Khorasan and its inhabitants, many reports and stories are cited in historical sources which are not mentioned in the current paper. Under new circumstances following Mongol invasion in many regions of Khorasan, only those institutions survived which were neither financially nor structurally affiliated with Khwarezmshahian, or were so little affiliated not leading to their fall. Ayyāran who were called Pahlivan (hero) during the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, were quite active in all cities of Khorasan at the beginning of Mongol invasion. The author of Tabaghate Naseri, who was a close witness to their encounter with this aggressive people, provides many reports on their courage and tact (Menhaj Seraj, 1362: 11-130/1). Although this group had close ties with the state in the later life of the Khwarezmian Empire, it survived despite the fall of this empire due to the fact that Ayyāran and Pahlivanan (heroes) were not completely affiliated with Khwarezmian Empire, rather they enjoyed a better ground for their socio-political engagement under the new circumstances.

By having a look at the sources of this period, one comes to realize that the approach to historical sources to this group of society has changed. This new approach is characterized by gracious titles and qualities and such offensive words as robber are no longer used to describe them. Moreover, Ayyāran and Pahlivanan (heroes) are in the same rank as old classes and groups such as nobles and clerics which is abundantly seen especially in the 8<sup>th</sup> century Hijri.

One important note understood from historical sources is that Ayyāran of Khorasan tried to organize people and avoid dispersion and fragmentation under critical circumstances of Mongol invasion, thereby they assigned one person as “superior” or “headman” to lead them. The person in charge of such task possessed a personality which provided the ground for Ayyāran to completely obey him, so not everyone could gain this position. Some elders of Ayyāran were also respected by other groups due to their religious knowledge,

for example, Sharaf al-din Khatib who was called the grand Ayyār in Khorasan by the author of *Tarikh-nameh-ye Harat*, was highly respected among people and even Mongols for his knowledge and culture (Seifi Heravi, 1383: 159).

As many social groups such as clerics, officialdoms, merchants, and such have no other choice than work in the framework of goals and planning of the conquerors after the Mongols consolidated their power, Ayyāran, despite initial resistance, also served them with their ability. Gradually, they managed to gain important positions in Iran's political system such as accompanying and escorting sultan, bulwarking castles, commanding cities, world championship, commandership and marshal-ship. By having a look at reports of this period, we can see the extent and diversity of Pahlivanan's (heroes') activities.

Ilkhans and emirs were always accompanied by one or more Pahlivans (hero), who were responsible for keeping Ilkhans safe and safeguarding them, moreover, they were ready to obey their orders. When Ahmed Tekuder turned into an Ilkhante (680 Hijri), he sent Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi and Atabek e Pahlivan to Egyptian Mamluks to inform them that he had converted to Islam (Vesaf, 1269:78). The fact that a Pahlivan accompanied a great religious figure suggests the high rank of Pahlivan at the time. Pahlivan Malik was in constant attendance on Ghāzān Khān who was involved in murder of Sadre Jahan in 697 Hijri (Kashani, 1384: 12). It seems that Pahlivanan accompanied emirs even in courts dependent on Ilkhans. Pahlivan Muzaffar Yazdi was in constant attendance on Atābak Rukn al-din Yusef from Atābakān-e-Yazd to execute his orders. He was also marshal of Atābak (Shabankarei, 1363: 213).

Ali Sorkh Khafi, known as Abu Muslim, was Abu Sa'eed's favorite Pahlivan, who was unrivaled in arching and wrestling. He was Ilkhan's marshal, also he was so popular that he could assign one of his relatives called Akhi (brother) Shoja al-din for bulwark of Castle of Bam (Khandemir, 1380: 356 and Shabankarei, 1363: 344). Ashraf Chupani, who was a famous emir and claimed independence in Azerbaijan after Abu Sa'eed's death, was always accompanied by such commanders as Akhi Shah Malik and Akhi Joq (Mistufi, 1373: 37).

One of the important difference between Ayyāran of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries with Pahlivanan of the 8<sup>th</sup> century is in their position and job; since as we know, such figures as Ya'qūb-i Layth and other Ayyāran had lower positions and were of lower classes of society; however, a major part of Ayyāran and Pahlivanan of the 8<sup>th</sup> century were rich and famous, and historical sources, unlike previous periods, looked up on them; for example, Shams al-Din Muhammad Muzaffar, the first emir of Āl-e Muzaffar dynasty, was one of the heroes of his day, who was called "the unique personality of the time" in many of martial arts such as swordsmanship, arching, spearman and wrestling (Moein al-Din Yazdi, 1336: 103). Moreover, we should mention Sarbadars Molouk who had a deeper bond with tradition of Pahlivani and Ayyāri. Amir Abdul Razzaq was the first emir of Sarbadars and one of the famous heroes of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the son of Khaje Fazlullah - one of the greatest nobles and varlets of King Juvain, whose "properties in the region of Bayhaq" was unexampled (Dowlatshah Samarqandi, 1380: 208).

One of the issues reflected in association with the history of heroes and Ayyāran in the historical sources of the 8<sup>th</sup> century is their rebellion against kings and emirs. Although before this period, the rebellions against the kings and emirs were supported by noble families and armies, heroes and Ayyāran were more known for their rebellions in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The main reason could be attributed to high status of this group in military and even governmental institutions of local dynasties. The rebellion of Pahlavan Asad Khorasani against Shah Shuja Muzaffari (775 Hijri) can be one example. Pahlavan Asad leading a group of heroes in Khorasan tried to take Kerman's government under control, and prepared the ground for such decision by arranging wrestling game between two persons from Khorasan and Kerman. During the race, Makhdum Shah — Shah Shoja's mother, took Kermani's side and Pahlavan Asad advocated his side. Following defeat of the Kermani wrestler, Pahlavan Asad and his advocates took the Kermani wrestler to different parts of

Khorasan to show their power to Al e Muzaffar, then Shah Shoja's mother left the city and Pahlavan Asad claimed independence (Katbi, 1335: 861-91).

Local and urban interests widely seen among many groups and classes during the middle Islamic period and causing many of their movements and deeds, were also the origin of deeds of Ayyāran and Pahlivanan of this period. Collection of such urban interests or "Asabiat (Fanaticism)" is considered as one of the most important motivations of this group for their actions. Such fanaticism is clearly understood from the name of cities that the heroes were called with; such as Pahlivan Hasan Damghani, Pahlivan Majd Kalivani, Pahlivan Nasrollah Bashtini, etc.

Based on reports of historical sources, duties of the heroes were various during this period; other than what has been mentioned, they were entrusted with preparing security for the pilgrims and merchants of many regions. Sometimes the Central Court, for example, asked them to safeguard caravans and merchants with the help of their forces (Hindushah Nakhjavani, 1971: 386/1).

Moreover, the tomb of some of the heroes was considered a respected place for people; the tomb of Pahlavan Ali Shams in Shiraz, for example, was a holy place for people where they made many vows, and even Shah Nematollah Vali visited this place during his stays in Shiraz (Shirazi, 1382:494/3).

During these centuries, Ayyāran and Pahlivanan were in many cases closely related with devotees and Sufies, and they were guided by those having religious knowledge and high religious status. Besides, many of the heroes and Ayyāran were considered as the constant advocates or disciples of the great Sufis; for example, such heroes as Haji Abu Bakar Pahlavan, Ahmad e Koshtigir (Ahlamd the wrestler), Pahlavan Haddad Ardabili, Haji Pahlavan Safi were all disciples of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili enjoying his advice and executed his orders in many cases (Ibn Bazzaz, 1376: 146 & 215).

Watching wrestling performances of the heroes, as mentioned about Pahlavan Asad Khorasani, was one of the interests of people during the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the skill of wrestling was praised as an important talent and ability; due to its high place among the people, futuwatnamehs also presented a mystical and religious image of wrestling.

### **Futuwwa and Sufism**

As the tradition of Ayyāri and young-manliness was widely expanded in the region of Khorasan among different groups of the society, Sufism also became widespread gaining popularity in this region. Many of the early Iranian Sufi elders such as Ibrahim Adham (died 162 Hijri), Shafiq Balkhi (deied 165 Hijri), Fazil Ayyaz (died 185 Hijri), Bayazid Bastami (died 261 Hijri), Jonaid Baqdadi (died 297 Hijri), Hallaj (died 309 Hijri) and many other elders of this tradition were either from Khorasan or lived there. The role of Khorasan's Sufis was so significant in developing Sufism such that the school of Sufism in Khorasan became widely known in historical sources as opposed to Sufism in Baghdad. Bayazid Bastami was the greatest figure of this school whose "ecstatic" (sukr) school of Sufism was famous as opposed to Baghdad's sahv (mystical sobriety) Sufism. Sufi leaders were very popular among people who couldn't be ignored by the ruling classes; thereby they showed their support by building رباط (Lambton, 1995: 30).

From the 3<sup>rd</sup> century onward, Sufism gained important bases in Khorasan, particularly in the city of Nīshābūr. Therefore, books of Sufism mainly deal with popularity of Khorasan's Sufis during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries onward. Not only did Sufism attract many of the noble and important cultural figures of Khorasan, but the generality of people and subaltern part of the society were attracted to this school, and each group showed his practical attachment in his own way. Asceticism and retreat of Sufis made them look very high among people and even the rulers such that they were highly respected in each region and city and were called for their advice by people. Gradually, the holy aspect of Sufis raised and they were attributed miracles

and extraordinary acts by the disciples who were being attracted to them more and more. Along with the establishment of monasteries, the Sufis found more advocates and Sufism started flourishing more than before.

One reason for emergence of Sufism and its influence was tendency of masses and particularly poor classes of society towards Sufism. Such tendency had its root in the way Sufis interacted with people of different regions, since Sufis never showed prejudice and egotism in their deeds and never looked down upon people heritage. In Khorasan, Sufis sought to benefit from the old tradition of Ayyāri and young-manliness known as Futuwwa in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century thereby developing Sufi Futuwwa (Shafei Kadkani, 1385: 40-50).

In order to have a correct and deep understanding of Sufi Futuwwa, it is necessary to examine the works of Abu 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sulamī Nīshābūri (died 421 Hijri), the greatest historian of Sufism. Sulamī as a prolific writer has authored tens of books which contributed the most insight to Sufism, such as *Rasa'il al-Futuwwa*, *Resālat al-malāmatīya*, also known as *Oṣūl al-malāmatīya* and *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfīya*, to name a few. *Rasa'il al-Futuwwa* deals with the moral characters and manners of Ahl e Futuwwa, that is the doctrines to which fetyan should adhere; moreover, he added hadiths and sayings of Sufi elders for the strength of his words by mentioning their narrators. The most important principles of futuwwa from Sulamī's viewpoint include: kindness with brothers and make effort to solve their problems, maintenance of piety and chastity, no animosity against brothers because of worldly matters, acknowledgement of men's position, loyalty and such (Sulamī, 1377: 2, 328). Abundance of such terms as *ayyār*, *fati* (chivalrous), and *futuwwa* in literary sources and Sufi writings accounts for the influence of the tradition of young-manliness, futuwwa and Ayyāri in Sufism. Aṭṭār Nīshābūri addresses Fazil as "Ayyar e Tarighat", Ahmad Khezruye as "Javanmard e rah" and "Sihab e Futuwwa", Shah Shoja Kermani as "Ayyar e Tarighat", Abulabbas Ghasab as "Padish e futuwwa", Abulhasan Kharghani and Abusaeid Abulkheir as "Javanmard", and Abuali Rudbari as "sarhang e Javanmardan" (Aṭṭār Nīshābūri, 1360: 74-75).

Based on writings on Sufi futuwwa, the tradition of futuwwa was not restricted to men, women could also enter this tradition providing that they followed the principles of *javānmardi*. However, it was not possible in tradition of Ayyāri. Fateme Balkhi, Ahmad Khezruye's wife, was one of the women introduced as *javānmard* and *Sahib e Futuwwa* in Sufi sources, who proposed to Ahamd, unlike usual costumes of the time (Hajviri, 1336: 149).

Meanwhile, a special group of Sufis was widely influenced by the tradition of *javānmardi*, who were called *Malāmatīyya* (*Malāmatīs*). The root word of *Malāmatīyya* is "lawm"- which appears several times in the Qu'ran, meaning "blame" or "self-blame" (Afifi, 1376: 344). The *Malāmatīyya* believed in the value of self-blame, saying that *nafs* is the source of all human evil. They stressed the avoiding of outward display of acts of piety and made sure that their faults would be known. *Malāmatīyya* or the people of blame were dressed as *Ayyāran*, each of them had special profession, and they concealed their praise of God from the public eye (Sulamī, 1372: 46/1). With their actions, *Malāmatīyya* laid the foundation for Sufi futuwwa and materialized the social aspects of Sufism by turning to union-ship (*Craft*) and being interwoven into codes of *Ayyāran*. As a result of their actions, futuwwa officially became one order of Sufism (Razi, n.d.: 144).

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Nīshābūr was the center of religious schools and movements, one of which was *Malāmatīyya*. Another sect which became widespread in Nīshābūr and other cities of Khorasan gaining many advocates because of its piety was *Keramiyya* founded by Mohammed Ibn Keram (died 225 Hijri). His followers, known as the *Keramians*, found many advocates among weavers in Nīshābūr and other groups of this city, and for the first time established monasteries for worship (Basorth, 1382: 187/1).

As it appears in Sufi sources, particularly in works of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the Sufis addressed each other by the term *Akhi* (brother). The writer of *Tuhfat al-ikhwan*, who is one of the greatest Sufis and religious scholars of the early 8<sup>th</sup> century, introduces the path of "brotherhood" as the best path for goodwill of people's

world and religion (Kashi, 1352: 38). Moreover, in another futuwatnameh, the qualities of an akhi (brother) are introduced. Based on these qualities, an akhi (brother) is a person highly committed to safeguarding people's interests while avoiding such immoralities as adultery and other sins and practicing such principles as humility, generosity and almsgiving to the poor (Sohrevardi, 1352: 97-98). After the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the word "akhi" was transferred from its original position, i.e. monasteries, into fetyan and Javanmardan's تكيه ها in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries (Shafei Kadkani, 1386: 368).

During the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, the codes of Sufism gradually fused with social aspects and tradition of chivalry (futuwwa); an issue which could be understood from having a look at various aspects of the Sufism. The term "akhi", which was at first a general title for Sufis, started to be applied for Ayyāran and Javanmardan, who were known for their generosity and courage. Besides, it was applied for the elders who were in command of the army and also for qualities of generosity and hospitality, which were sometimes ostentatious, such that Akhi Shah Malik and Akhijuq, who were among the attendants of Ashraf Chupani, possessed such qualities and had a great influence (Mostowfi, 1372: 37). The term "akhi" also appeared in texts of Anatolia- Turkish futuwwa, which will not be discussed here.

## Conclusion

The tradition of Futuwwa has a long history in Iran, and its roots can be traced back to before the advent of Islam. This tradition has taken different forms based on socio-political developments of the time. Therefore, each period needs an independent analysis. In the early Islamic era, futuwwa was more associated with martial concepts, but it gradually fused with Sufism gaining Sufi and ascetic aspects thereby losing its martial aspects. After Mongol invasion and the resulted chaos, fetyan took the chance to hold governmental position and managed to gain power in this way. Thus during this period, we can see the name of Pahivanan (heroes) alongside kings, and as mentioned earlier, some of them established independent dynasties. Some legacies of futuwwa including generosity, courage, responsibility for safeguarding the honor of people and such have been preserved in all periods among all traditions of futuwwa. After the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the tradition of futuwwa lost its previous importance in Iran; in Anatolia, however, socio-political conditions laid the foundation for its growth.

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