



Figure 3.3 Triptych of Imam Ali, Hajji Bektash, and Kemal Ataturk (photo courtesy of author).

Hacibektas and its tomb, which is open to the public as a museum, still attract pilgrims from near and far. Near the shrine is a marketplace that features numerous items reflecting Alevism, its dominant figures including ‘Ali, Husayn, and Hajji Bektash, and, in the case of the triptych shown in figure 3.3, the careful negotiation of Alevi traditions and Kemalism.

As with many traditions that fall under Islamic pilgrimage, the lines between Shi‘i, Sunni, and Sufi are often blurred. The cohabitation of Shi‘ism, local tradition, and Sufism that is evident with both the ‘Alawis and the Alevis is indicative of larger trends in Islamic pilgrimage, which often does not follow sectarian lines. The religious journeys made by Muslims are rarely exclusivist – a fact that is also evident in Sufi pilgrimages, the focus of the next chapter.

4

SUFI AND SHARED PILGRIMAGES: CONTESTATIONS OF IDENTITY

SUFISM OR ISLAM?

“Sufism” is used in Western academia to refer to the wide set of beliefs, attitudes, and practices describing Muslim devotional and contemplative traditions. It is based on the Arabic word *tasawwuf*, which has a complicated etymology. The word has its origins in one of the following three terms – *suf* (wool), *saf* (pure), or *safwa* (elite) – referring to the wool garment early Sufis wore, the purity of their hearts, or the status of Muhammad’s most devoted followers.¹ The word “Sufi” was first “used by and for Mu’tazilites and ascetics with Shi’i tendencies” in the eighth century, when three individuals from Kufa were identified as Sufis, and this was followed by the usage of the word for al-Baghdadi (d. 910) and his students.²

Some two thousand definitions of “Sufi” exist in Islamic works alone.³ Scholars have often defined Sufism incorrectly as a sect alongside Sunni and Shi’i Islam. Sufi orders exist in great variety and may be either Sunni or Shi’i, an identification that is often tenuous. However, even in these cases the sectarian orientation of an order does not always determine which sites pilgrims visit. ‘Abd al-Ghani Nabulisi (d. 1731), who spent time in both the Qadariyya and Naqshbandiyya

orders, made several *ziyarat* journeys that included visiting the companions of the Prophet, 'Alid (Shi'i) martyrs, and Sufi *shaykhs*, suggesting Sufis have little concern for sectarianism when it comes to pilgrimage.⁴ Naqshbandis, who follow a Sunni teacher, often visit sites readily identifiable as Shi'i. These examples and others represent the challenges to scholars, including me, in organizing Islamic pilgrimage into categories that do not risk collapsing under academic scrutiny.

Sufism is typically presented as an Islamic form of "mysticism," a distinct category of religious experience distinct from normative practices. This description is problematic for a number of reasons. For one, Sufism may include a particular devotional expression that is not necessarily distinct from "normative" Islam. The majority of the world's Muslims do "Sufi things" such as reciting extra prayers and visiting graves. Sufis are difficult to identify because Sufism is rarely a self-referential term. Muslims who follow a particular teacher (*shaykh*) or perform certain devotional practices may utilize a Sufi vocabulary, using words like *dhikr* and *ziyarat* frequently, but they would not necessarily call themselves anything but a Muslim.

Despite the continued practice of describing Sufism as a sect or a distinct community of Muslims, it is really more of a set of attitudes and practices. Ahmet Karamustafa describes the central practices of the Sufis of Baghdad in the tenth century as including separate communities, group travel, distinct prayers, the performance of music, the recitation of poetry, initiation practices, and particular sartorial choices such as the wearing of white robes.⁵ This excellent historical description evolved over time to include more practices. By the thirteenth century, the elements of Sufism also included an allegiance to a teacher, devotional rituals such as *sama* (audition) and *dhikr* (remembrance), retreat (*khalwah*), the purification of one's soul (or heart) through prayer, and pilgrimage (*ziyarah*).⁶ Many of these practices were adopted by

Muslims functioning outside of a Sufi order, and today are seen widely in places like Indonesia, where *dhikr* is heard over a loudspeaker in some villages, and in Sri Lanka, where female *shaykhas* offer blessings in home shrines. For these reasons, we must be careful in using Sufism/Sufi in a way that belies or ignores these realities.

Many of these Sufi attitudes and practices are also reflected in Shi'ism. Islam is marked by much cross-pollination between different intellectual traditions, so it is not surprising that the lines between these are often blurry. Sufism is often described as the result of piety movements – a reaction to the empire and wealth that characterized Islam in the first century after the Prophet's death. Shi'ism is also a reaction to the new political reality of this period. The connections between the two movements is most noticeable in the sixth to ninth centuries, but after the eighth Imam Reza there appears to be a separation due in part to the Shi'i participation in political life and the Sufi tendency to disassociate from political life.⁷ This does not mean that Sufi orders are not, at times, politically involved. The Nahdlatul Ulama movement in Indonesia, which has over fifty million members, is aligned with the Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyyah orders.

The belief in *ziyarat* and in the power of the dead is shared by Sufis – including Sunnis – and Shi'i. Sunni orders, those whose members follow a Sunni *madhhab* (law school), may also be closely aligned with Shi'ism. Members of the order led by Habib 'Umar in Yemen often visit the tombs of the Ba 'Alawi family, and many of the religious teachers associated with the order are *sayyids*, illustrating how the devotion for the Prophet's family, seen in many Sufi orders, has deep Shi'i resonances.⁸ The relatives of this family – those relatives of the Prophet who settled in the Hadramawt Valley in southern Yemen – have an extensive cult of saints that reaches all the way to Java, where the descendants act as caretakers (*al-qa'imun bi-l-maqam*) of tombs.⁹ Historically, the tombs of

the *ahl al-bayt* have been frequented by Sunni and Shi'i pilgrims in Damascus, Cairo, and elsewhere. "Commemorating the 'Alid dead did not begin with the Fatimid dynasty," and while the Fatimids promoted pilgrimage to these sites, *ziyarah* was already an established practice.¹⁰

Pilgrimages associated with saints, teachers, and mystics in Islam are often quite large. In Senegal, members of the Mouridiya order visit Touba, the capital of the founder of the *tariqah* (order), in large numbers, over one million a year.¹¹ The members of this order number over four million, nearly half the population of Senegal, suggesting once again that the definition of Sufism as a minority or sectarian orientation is deeply problematic.¹² At the tombs at Tarim in Yemen, pilgrims pray for rain and lay basil at the heads of gravestones, practices that are popular and ongoing.¹³ Konya boasts millions of visits a year, more than *hajj*. All of these examples suggest that Muslims have numerous practices, which may or may not be tied to a Sufi *tariqah*. This is why Sufi identity is a thorny subject, difficult to define, and, as Ahmet Karamustafa argues, "essentialising approaches that postulate an unchanging core to all Sufi phenomena have certainly occupied a prominent place."¹⁴ It may be best simply to describe these phenomena as "Muslim."

Some scholars have suggested that those who do not participate in Sufi traditions or who are hostile to them are alienated from Islam. This argument is based on the idea that Sufism reflects the practice of Islam before wealth, empire, and decadence corrupted the tradition following the first generations after the Prophet's death. This concern for Islam is not new. Ibn Khaldun argued this point in the fourteenth century. "Ibn Khaldun was also of the opinion that the first three generations of Muslims automatically and naturally practiced *tasawwuf*, which, since it was so widespread, did not require a special designation."¹⁵

Using Sufism as a category in this chapter is thus somewhat arbitrary. It is intended to allow the reader to think about *ziyarat* in complex ways while being attentive to the differences among Muslim communities. Sufism pervades Muslim life. The best strategy for dealing with these realities is to remember that Sufism is not a category for Muslims; rather, it is a way for scholars to think about a wide field of traditions and experience. Shahzad Bashir describes it as “an analytical horizon” and reminds us that “it is not, in its origins, an internal term but a descriptor employed by Western observers to refer to a diverse array of intellectual and social phenomena relating to those who have called themselves Sufis.”¹⁶ It is, in many ways, an unsatisfactory category of meaning.

Islam’s focus on sainthood, which has an informal, public process of sanctification, is largely responsible for the huge number of pilgrimage traditions in which we see Muslims participating. As one scholar describes it, “Saints become saints by acclamation.”¹⁷ The term “friend of God” is sometimes used to describe saints in the academic literature, reflecting the intimate relationship that the saint and Allah share. The term *wali*, whose root comes from *wala* (to be near) and *waliya* (to govern), translates to “near, friend, protector, or helper.”¹⁸ The presence of a religious figure or saint at a site, often through his or her body/relic, is important because of *barakah*, the blessing that Allah bestows on the followers of Islam. In the case of *ziyarat* this power “sanctified a location through the presence or apparent presence of a saint and his personal effects, which became devotional or ritual objects.”¹⁹ Pilgrimages to the resting places of these individuals include large tombs, which were sometimes built against the wishes of those they honor. The saint and poet Rumi famously requested to be buried under the blue sky, but was interred in a large tomb, and Shaykh Safi asked to be “buried in a graveyard west of Ardabil,” but was instead interred in his *zawiyah* (place of retreat), which was expanded after his death.²⁰

Sufism is often defined in terms of orders (*turuq*), the organizations through which Sufis claim allegiance to a particular lineage of teachers. These guides are often referred to as *shaykhs* (*shayhkas* for female teachers). Sufis go by a number of terms in languages including Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and Bahasa. They include “*marabūt, darvēsh, faqīr, pīr, walī, murshid, Shaykh, majdhūb, and qalandar*.”²¹ Sufi saints are most often referred to as *awliya*, or the friends of God. Great variety exists within Sufism. In some cases, Sufis are not referred to as one of the *awliya* but by their proper names, or by endearing terms such as *maulana*, “my friend,” the common name for Rumi.

Pilgrimage revolves around *barakah*, the sanctifying powers or blessings associated with a prophet, Sufi teacher, *shaykh*, or saint. Recognizing that someone has this quality, which has been defined as “a supernatural power of divine origins,” is a way of identifying the Sufi with Prophet Muhammad and is often reflected in statements such as he or she “walks in the Prophet’s footsteps” or is a “descendent [*sic*] of the Prophet” (even if the individual is not).²² The line of transmission (*silsilah*) that originates in the family of the Prophet is carried forth in Sufi lineages. There is a mystical quality to this lineage because the gifts of the Sufi teacher, *shaykh*, or saint are a reflection of Prophet Muhammad’s gifts to the world, a reflection of the idea that Allah’s blessings are bestowed upon those associated with the Prophet’s family and his followers. The love for the Prophet’s family can be seen in the love for the Sufi, which is often expressed in performing the same rituals as a *shaykh* did in the past. These acts are not only efficacious (in training the heart to love God) but they show allegiance to the Sufi order. As Nile Green writes, what was done historically is often repeated by successive generations. “In view of the *sajjada nashins*’ role as professional mystics, Shah Sa’id was described by Sabzawari as devoted to the different forms of Sufi meditation (*dhikr, muraqaba*). In the

mid-1770s, Sabzawari also reported that the shrine's *khanaqah* (lodge) was still the residence of a large number of dervishes as well as local notables (*umara*), who would regularly gather to sit in circles repeating the characteristic loud chant (*dhikr-e jahr*) of the Naqshbandiyya."²³

As we have seen, pilgrims often travel to a location other than Mecca. Although major sites like the *ka'bah* are dear to Sufis, other cities, towns, and villages also function as sacred centers. They are linked to the hereafter, often through a tomb or cemetery. The case of Touba in Senegal is one example, and is believed to provide a connection to heaven that transcends the "various compartments of the universe."²⁴ Within Senegal, there are numerous religious centers – Yoff, Cambérène, Tivaouane, Ndiassane, Tiénaba, Médine-Baye, and Médina-Gounas.²⁵ These places often serve as symbolic substitutions for Mecca, especially for those who cannot afford the *hajj*.

An individual embedded in a Sufi order, studying under a teacher, being part of a community, and working on his or her spiritual development, hopes to gain some of the wisdom of his or her teacher. As Tanvir Anjum explains:

The Sufi Shaykhs were considered to be the embodied sources of *barakah*, i.e. (spiritual blessings or sanctifying powers). With the development of the *silsilahs*, the Sufi Shaykhs assumed a central position not only in the *silsilah* in doctrinal terms, or in a *khānqāh* in physical terms, but in the entire process of spiritual development and training of a disciple. The Sufi doctrine of *suhbah* (literally meaning companionship) explains it well. The company of a Sufi Shaykh is considered to be a source of spiritual development of a disciple, and is preferred to seclusion.²⁶

The *khanaqah* where the teacher resided often became part of a pilgrimage site. For example, lodges (which are also called *tekke* in Turkish) are often located next to graves of famous

Sufis. Sufi groups and local saint traditions may be distinct, yet in support of each other. In Yemen, the link is so close that an attack on the one is viewed as an offense to the other.²⁷

In some cases, a Sufi is not part of a *tariqah* but has accrued status due to a genealogical lineage. This is different from the chain of transmission (*silsilah*) that determines the history and leadership of a *tariqah* and instead relies on one's family connections to a particular *shaykh* or other important individual. In Mali, the people known as *ahl Arawan* (the people of Arawan) claim to be descendants of the founding saint of the town, Sidi Ahmad ada Agga, who was a relative of Prophet Muhammad.²⁸ In South Africa, Badsha Peer is only tenuously connected to a line of Sufis and so he was linked to the Chisti line through the celebration of the death of Chisti saints.²⁹ These examples suggest that there is a great variance in the ways in which Sufi identities are formulated and legitimized. This lack of formality may also show itself in ritual, when pilgrims participate in less than idealized ways. These examples of "contextual literacy," where the relationships between pilgrims and texts are more important than the texts themselves, are seen in Java, where pilgrims may not understand the Arabic liturgy but are "familiar with the limited evocational base from which the texts emerged."³⁰ In other words, it is enough that the proper names and a few Arabic words are recognized.³¹ This enables the pilgrim to relate to the saint in community with other Muslims, employing a common religious language that crosses linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Sufi writings often argue that Muslims should develop a heightened attention to the world, seeing signs (*ayat*) in nature, reflections of the Divine in the world that surrounds each of us. For many Muslims, the world is an endless series of signs and messages. Muslim pilgrims often visit shrines and other places connected to a natural feature such as a mountain, river, or tree. In Turkey, small pilgrimages are

often made during Hidrellez, the festival that commemorates Prophet Hizir, to small shrines with sacred springs.³² Islamic cosmology provides an intense reflection on the Islamic ethic of sacredness – that it is everywhere and present at every moment. As Karen Armstrong writes, “mosques can be full of lights; birds can fly around during the communal prayer. The world must be invited inside the mosque, not left outside.”³³ At the same time, certain sites are marked with *barakah*, a quality associated with individuals whose wisdom, visions, and miracles (*karamat*) are known through a variety of texts including hagiographies, poetry, and music.³⁴ In other cases, entire landscapes are believed to be special, imbued with a special sacred quality, such as the area surrounding Damascus known as the Ghuta, which is known as the “place over which God spread the span of Gabriel’s wings.”³⁵ Medieval Syrian pilgrimage guides reference the holiness of al-Sham,³⁶ due to God “commanding His angels to protect it with their wings and His Prophets and righteous saints to watch over it and extol its virtues to the believers.”³⁷

Miracles are often associated with the saints that pilgrims visit. In some cases, these miracles are associated with the saint’s lifetime, often as part of a spiritual state that included “inspirations and illuminations.”³⁸ One Javanese site, Tembayat, is the burial site of Sunan Bayat, who reportedly announced the *adhan* (call to prayer), which, because of his holy qualities, was heard over one hundred miles away.³⁹ In most cases, miracles reflect the traits of a particular saint, functioning as ideological narratives that emphasize the ideal qualities that Muslims should acquire.⁴⁰ Miracles may also be connected to the longevity of a saint, such as Ahmad Yasavi, the twelfth-century Central Asian Sufi who lived in a small pit: “He lived in all 120 years, or some say 133 years, and for the rest of his noble life he never left that honored pit, but remained like those who are in their graves, encumbered with exertions within that narrow enclosure.”⁴¹

Sufi hagiographies contain all kinds of stories about miracles, dreams, and other magical happenings that mark the landscape of pilgrimage. As Nile Green writes, "One important contextual function of such texts therefore seems to be as saintly charters for maintaining the prestige of a given shrine by demonstrating the wisdom and miracles (*karāmāt*) of the saint in question. Sufi hagiography was in such ways also a reflection of local geographies of pilgrimage."⁴² Stories of dreams are common in these texts and in many cases link a Sufi to one or more pilgrimage sites. In some cases, miracles were realized through a saint's appearance in dreams.⁴³

Dreams are also prominent in Shi'i traditions, which presents interesting questions about how we categorize Sufism in relationship to mystical Shi'ism, or for that matter Sunni Islam, which identifies dreams as a form of prophecy.⁴⁴ In Shi'ism, Prophet Muhammad's family often appear in dreams to everyone from a Sufi teacher to a young child. "Members of the Ahl-e Bait often appear to Shia in dreams and as apparitions, providing solace, advice, and information about the future."⁴⁵ Does this mean that all Shi'i are Sufis because they believe in these prophetic dreams, or that Sufism is a category of religion that is impossible to define? Again, these questions suggest that it is extraordinarily difficult to separate Sufi experience from other Muslim traditions.

If we take Sufi pilgrimage to mean those activities that fall outside of *hajj* and *'umrah*, this leaves us with a very broad definition that encompasses the majority of Muslim religious pilgrimage traditions. Numerous scholars have argued this point, stating that Sufism is simply the form of Islam practiced by the vast majority of the world's Muslims. This opinion is supported by historical evidence that documents longstanding pilgrimage traditions outside sites in Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem, as well as devotional practices associated with these early centers of pilgrimage. Muslims often recite extra

supplications, conduct *dhikr*, and perform other rituals in these cities, as we saw in Chapter 1. However, these practices are not necessarily new. Jerusalem has a long association with devotional practices of individuals we would now call Sufi but who were known as *zuhhad*, "whose custom it was to seclude themselves in the environs of Jerusalem (apparently in imitation of Christian hermits)."⁴⁶

The tendency among scholars has been to describe Sufi pilgrimages as supplementary to *hajj*. However, much like the importance placed on Karbala by Shi'i and its ability to be a substitute for *hajj*, Sufi pilgrimages are not simply extra rituals but can serve as substitutes for Mecca. Such is the case of Tembayat in Java, which not only is modeled after the *ka'bah* (one cannot have light in its inner chamber since there is no light in the *ka'bah*) but is a substitute for it.⁴⁷

Since the distance between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia is considerable, one can assume that the majority of Indonesian Muslims will never be able to make the *hajj*. That is why several Indonesian locations are considered to be cosmic centers that possess the same degree of spiritual power as can be encountered in Mecca. For example, Javanese Muslims believe that climbing up and down Mount Ciremai in Kuningan three times contains spiritual strength equal to performing the *hajj*.⁴⁸

Such a tradition is unsurprising given the mixture of religious traditions in Indonesia – Hinduism, Buddhism, animism, Christianity, Islam – and the history of Sufism in the archipelago. While Islam was brought to Indonesia by Muslim merchants, from the thirteenth century onwards it was largely spread through "wandering *sūfis* and scholars" whose ideas contributed to the formation of pilgrimage, for "There were highly intricate crisscrossings of scholars within the networks, by way of both their studies of Islamic sciences, particularly

hadīth, and their adherence to Islamic mystical brotherhoods (*tariqahs*).⁴⁹

VISITING THE FRIENDS OF GOD

Scholars of Islam use “saint” to refer to a wide field of Muslims, including great teachers, famous ascetics, and individuals associated with visions or mystical events. Using the term carries the risk of translating Islam into a Christian tradition. It also glosses over important facts, such as that Muslims do not have a unified system for evaluating sainthood and no singular word refers to a special category of humans who are close to God. Muslims may refer to a saint by their name, by a term of endearment, or by *shaykh*, *pir*, or another title. As Bryan S. Turner argues:

Arabic terms of marabout, darvīsh, sufi, walī cannot be translated into the Christian term ‘saint,’ because the history, institutions and cultural frameworks of these religions are distinctive. The centralized, complex and stringent process of canonization is crucial to the Christian understanding of saintship. Precisely because no such centralized, ecclesiastical machinery exists in Islam, there is no official or homogeneous terminology of maraboutism (sainthood in Islam). When the western anthropologists talk about Islamic saints, they use the term as a shorthand for a diversity of roles.⁵⁰

Sainthood in Islam is a complicated affair. There is no defined process like we find in Catholicism’s institution of canonization. For Muslims, sainthood is determined by numerous agents, including supernatural abilities, institutions of political power, genealogical lineages, mystical knowledge, and great intellect. As Alyson Callan writes, “Legitimization of saintly authority occurs both at the level of the individual and at the

level of a wider power base," and is affected by the saint's uniqueness as well as his or her relation to "globally shared esoteric knowledge," the saint's possession of supernatural abilities, relationship to a lineage, and blood ties to the Prophet and his family.⁵¹

Wali (pl. *awliya*) is one of the words commonly used to refer to saints, or what some scholars call the "friends of God." However, a *wali* may or may not be a Sufi, depending on the definitions being used for the two categories of individuals. A *wali* may perform miracles, or they may not, and as one scholar points out, "In a strictly morphological sense, the *wali* is not necessarily a Sufi."⁵² *Wali* takes on different meanings depending on one's cultural and religious community. In Pakistan, a number of historical and religious individuals are featured in Sufism, and are the focus of pilgrimages, as well as appearing in poster art. They are established by popularity: "A saint, who is recognized and respected as such by *vox populi*, that is to say by public consent, is called *wali* (pl. *awliya*)."⁵³ In Java, *awliya* does not refer to poets and mystics in the tradition of Rumi, Rabi'ah, and Hafiz, but to the nine founders of Islam in Indonesia. These nine individuals are considered the first religious council and are different according to where one is in Java, representing local shifts in tradition that reflect hagiographical differences.⁵⁴ These variations determine some of the variety in pilgrimage traditions we see in Java.

In many places, the concept of sainthood is not situated in Arab-Muslim understandings of Islam, but rather in an indigenous culture far removed from historical centers of Muslim power, such as Cairo, Qom, and Mecca. In Indonesia, the cult of the saints associated with the Yogyakarta sultanate is imbedded in Javanese Islam, resulting in a language that is more Javanese than Muslim, and more animist, Hindu, and local than transnational. Some of the terms commonly used for "Sufis" are not even employed in Indonesia, while in other cases Arabic words exist in Indonesian form. *Kramat* is

the Bahasa word for “the religious attainment of saints” and *kramatan* refers to “a holy grace or shrine,” while *berkah* is a cognate of *barakah*, the Arabic word often used for blessing.⁵⁵ These examples show how complicated the vocabulary of Sufism is.

To illustrate this point further, let us take the example of the *wali*, who is often referred to as a saint. The *awliya Allah* are thought of as companions of God – those individuals who are loved by Allah. The friends may be associated with miracles or visions, and often have the gift of clairvoyance (*firasat*), but they are rarely martyrs. In some cases, a *wali* may be sanctified by his relationship with a political leader, an act that in turn legitimizes his authority or the *tariqah* with which he is associated. Such is the case of Baba Tahir and Sultan Tughril, one of many examples of the cohabitation of Sufism and politics.⁵⁶ The friends of God have great power. As Omid Safi writes, *awliya* may even cause their “ill-wishers to go blind, mute, or drop dead,” as in the case of Ahmad-i Jam who struck one man with muteness, caused another to drop dead, and blinded a woman.⁵⁷

The visitation of *awliya* is the central Sufi practice focused upon in this chapter; thus, it is important to understand how and why certain individuals gain this status. Devotion (*iradat*) is a central part of Sufi practice, and, in pilgrimage, it survives the death of the *wali*. During their lifetime, saints’ religious powers are available to their followers and once the saint dies, this power remains accessible at his or her resting place. Shrine visitation became an important practice for many reasons. Among these is that without the reverence for the bodies of the dead, the power of the *tariqah* would be lost and the saint would be forgotten. In the Chisti context, mystical uses of shrine visitation were common. In one case from the seventeenth century, a graveside meditation (*dhikr-e-kashf-e-qubur*) was capable of revealing a saint’s spiritual states,

and even more casual meetings of Sufis at graves might elicit a mystical experience.⁵⁸

Narratives about the *awliya* are located in Sufi hagiographies and extra-Qur'anic texts that range from poems to biographies. It is often the case that pilgrimages are situated in family histories connected to Prophet Muhammad, or that he is featured in a narrative about a sacred site, appearing in a dream or vision. In other cases, another figure dominates the stories surrounding a *wali* and his or her shrine. Al-Khidr, also known as Khizr or "the green one," is one such figure. Associated with many saints, he is the unnamed companion of Moses cited in the Qur'an (18.59–81) who is at times related to Elijah (Ilyas), St. George, a Hindu figure, and others.⁵⁹ Khidr is often described as the most loyal follower of Allah and is associated with countless Muslim figures, pilgrimages, and sacred places.⁶⁰

Visions of Khidr are very common in Islam and are often attached to sacred sites and saintly figures. In fact, they are so common that sightings of Khidr are believed to be connected to all saintly figures, owing perhaps to the belief that he is active today, "still alive and flying continuously around the earth."⁶¹ As discussed in the previous chapter, Khidr is very popular in the 'Alawi tradition. In these cases, Khidr, who is called Hizir in Turkey, is connected to dreams in which he appears at a wide array of sites ranging from those dedicated to Sunni Imams to 'Alawi saints.⁶² Khidr is referenced in numerous Muslim communities around the world. In Indonesia, the saint Kalijaga is believed to have been initiated into Sufism by Khidr, a point made by Albertus Bagus Laksana: "There is no shrine associated with al-Khadir in Muslim Java, but his role as the teacher *par excellence* of the highest level of Islamic mystical knowledge is secured in various Javanese texts."⁶³

The majority of *awliya* are men. However, there are many cases of female *awliya*. Rabia al-Adawiya is one of the most prominent of these. Like other saints, she is known for her

piety and dedication to the contemplative life, as well as numerous visions and miracles. Among these are the dream of Rabia's father in which Prophet Muhammad announces her religious superiority and the lantern that floated above her head, which emanated a holy radiance.⁶⁴ Her grave was a focus of veneration, as is the case with many Sufis, and survives today.⁶⁵ As Rkia Elaroui Cornell points out in her dissertation, the location of Rabia's grave, which is in Basra, is often confused with another Rabi'a (Rabi'a bint Isma'il of Damascus) who is buried in Jerusalem.⁶⁶

Female saints are not only located in the past. In Sylhet, Bangladesh, living female saints known as *firani* (*fir* is the Sylheti cognate of *pir*, a common word used for male saint) are associated with pilgrimage sites known as *mukams* (shrines), the Bangladeshi version of the Arabic *maqam*, or tomb/shrine.⁶⁷ In Konya, the site of several tombs of female saints, independent Sufi teachers unaligned with Sufi orders run by men serve as *anas*, or mothers, who guide women in *dhikr*, the mystical chanting or meditative practice common among Sufis.⁶⁸ Bangladesh and Turkey are but two examples of the involvement of women in pilgrimage, either as the focus of *ziyarat* or in the role of shrine guides. Iran has a strong shrine culture as well, embedded in a mixture of Shi'ism, Sufism, and local tradition that is, in the words of one scholar, characterized by "a coexistence" that was often the furthest thing from antagonistic, and was part of "the process of reinterpretation and transformation" that marks so much of Islamic history.⁶⁹ In Syria, women known as *'alawiyya* (a female descendant of 'Ali and Fatima) perform rituals and ceremonies and act as go-betweens for the pilgrim and the saint.⁷⁰ These individuals provide special access to the saint.

The determination of who is a saint or Sufi is one complicated by local practices and traditions. Rumi, Hajji Bektash, and other *awliya* are important saints in Turkey. In Iran, Iraq, and Syria, the cult of saints that pilgrimage revolves

around includes the relatives of Prophet Muhammad (the *ahl al-bayt*) as well as others. In Indonesia, saints include Sufi teachers, ancestors, parents, children, and infants. In Java, the descendants of the Ba 'Alawi, the Prophet's relatives, are often connected to pilgrimages, representing the diaspora of his large and extensive family.⁷¹ This "extension" of the cult of saints includes the beliefs that parents, even when dead, serve as mystical guides and that children, who are without sin, are unified with Allah – constituting a sainthood that is completely removed from the institution of *turuq* (Sufi orders) that defines Sufism in most scholarship.⁷² Furthermore, numerous Muslim sites, which are often classified as "Sufi," are related to prophets, not saints. The tombs found in South and Southeast Asia known as *nau-gaz*, which are up to 175 yards long, provide one example of how diverse Sufi pilgrimages are and questions the very definitions of "Sufi" that are often given.⁷³ Given all of these facts, I have chosen to include a wide array of individuals who may be considered saints, Sufis, both, or neither. This provides a way to illustrate the rich culture of pilgrimage among Muslims without being trapped by the amorphous categories I have pointed out thus far.

TOMBS AND MAUSOLEUMS

Pilgrimage to shrines housing relics and the bodies of the relatives of Prophet Muhammad, teachers, *shaykhs*, mystics, political leaders, and others are so common in Islam that it would be impossible to catalogue every site. The popular saying of Egyptian Muslims, "God has forbidden the earth to consume the bodies of the saints," reflects the importance that Muslims place on the dead.⁷⁴ In Iran, followers of Shaykh Safi believed in this so strongly that his son's ablution water was viewed as "imbued by beneficial effect, as *tabarruk*" (blessed).⁷⁵ Many pilgrimages involve visiting a relic of the

Prophet, such as a hair, a piece of clothing, or a sandal (*na' al-nabi*), objects many wished to be buried with and that were believed to emit *barakah*. The veneration of the Prophet's sandal is documented in historical records and other sources in the Maghrib, Egypt, Syria, and Turkey, suggesting that the practice of visiting the Prophet's relics has been widespread for quite some time.⁷⁶

As we have seen, the belief that the body of an individual remains powerful after death is widespread in Islam. This is not a belief restricted to Shi'i or to Muslims who practice traditions associated with Sufism. For many Muslims, the saint, *shaykh*, or other venerated individual is "virtually alive, not only in spirit but in body as well."⁷⁷ And the saint's body is not the only location of power. Numerous sites include a sacred field of space radiating from the grave or tomb that encloses a large landscape with *barakah*. In Bangladesh, even the natural wildlife that surrounds the shrine (often called a *majar*, from the Arabic *mazar*) is considered holy. The black soft-shell turtles attached to the shrine of Sultan-ul-Arefin Bayzid Bostami are special because it is believed "that these turtles were brought and introduced to the Bostami pond by the Sufi himself."⁷⁸

The tradition of constructing tombs is not restricted to saints. In many cases Muslims visit the graves of important teachers and intellectuals, ancestors or companions of the Prophet and his relatives. Damascus alone is the site of the graves of three of Muhammad's wives as well as Bilal ibn Hamama (the first *me'edhdhin* – that is, the first person who gave the call to prayer), Abu al-Darda, Fadala ibn Ubayd, Sahl ibn Hanzaliyya, and other companions of Muhammad.⁷⁹ These tombs are found in many places including graveyards and *madrasahs* that were often, but not always, associated with Sufi *turuq* (orders). The construction of tombs in *madrasahs* was done, in part, to discourage the practice of praying at a grave, out of fear that it might lead to "idolatry of the

dead.”⁸⁰ Of course, Muslims ended up doing this anyway, disregarding the concern of the *ulama* who wanted to regulate prayer and guarantee their position in society through the *madrasah*.⁸¹ The *madrasah* was composed of the *iwan* (an open hall), *khalwah* (lodgings for students and teachers), and the *junayna* (courtyard), but typically had a number of ancillary attachments – a library, a Sufi monastery, an orphan’s school, and a tomb.⁸² As was often the case for places that hosted pilgrims, Syria includes a wide variety of tombs and other structures that suggest just how rich pilgrimage culture has been since the early centuries of Islam. One survey of Hama suggests the incredible diversity of shrines, graves, and tombs that exists:

the maqām of Zayn al-‘Abidīn, the maqām of Ja’far al-Tayyār, the tomb of Jonah in the Hasanayn Mosque, the tomb of Ham the son of Noah, the maqām of David, the tomb of the Emīr Sārim al-Dīn al-Nābulī, the tombs of soldiers who fought with Salāh al-Dīn (Shaykh Muhammad Nahār and Shaykh Suweyd), the tombs of famous Muslim scholars (Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī, Shaykh ‘Alwān Abū Muḥamad ‘Alī b. ‘Atīya, al-Shīrāzī, Shaykh Khallūf, al-Birmawī, al-Sālūsī, al-Muzaffar, Shaykh Ma’rūf, Umayy al-Qaranī, Shaykh ‘Ambar, Abū al-Wafā al-Hawrānī, Shaykh ‘Abash, Sayyida Nafīsa, Shaykh Abū al-‘Adīmīnāt, Shaykh Hasan, Shaykh Mas’ūd, Shaykh Maknūn, and Shaykh Bashīr), the mazār of al-Husayn, and the maqām of ‘Abd al-qādir al-Kīlānī.⁸³

Shrines also function as social centers and places of rest, conversation, and community. In the case of the Tijani *zawiyah* (a space where Muslims do *dhikr*, the ritual remembrance of God) in Fez:

“visiting” Ahmad al-Tijani may mean different things and includes a variety of activities. Some visitors position

themselves in front of the tomb, touching the railing and murmuring prayers, while others sit on the floor in front of the tomb. For some of the women the *zawiya* is a place to meet or take naps in one of the corners. Some of them do not seem to be interested in visiting the saint at all. Instead of going to the tomb, they sit or lie down and chat with other visitors while their children run around and play. Others seem to be just there out of curiosity.⁸⁴

Muslim pilgrims often seek spaces in which they can perform devotional practices, but this is not always the case. Pilgrimage is also a social activity and at times a form of tourism.

In some cases, there is a history of devotional practices, commemorative architecture, and other evidence of a piety movement or contemplative community that is no longer active or has waxed and waned. One example of this is found in Indonesia, where the existence of approximately 1,500 Islamic funerary monuments, or tombstones, suggests that visiting the dead is a part of Muslim-Malay tradition dating back at least several hundred years.⁸⁵ The tombstones, which have more than 400 decorative elements, are found all over the archipelago, and at one point were highly decorated; a selection of the Malaysian ones were gilded and encrusted with precious stones.⁸⁶ The origins of these stones are probably Hindu or/and Buddhist, adopted by Muslims, and, like other traditions in Indonesia, reflect the poly-religious nature of Indonesian Islam. The fact that so much time and expense was dedicated to gravestones suggests that visiting graves is an old and widespread practice, which still exists today. The declining popularity of these stones corresponds with the introduction of more conservative schools of Islamic thought in the seventeenth century that continued with the spread of Wahhabism, whose followers "would oppose grave markers such as *batu Aceh* with their mixture of Islamic and pre-Islamic features and sophisticated decorations."⁸⁷

Many Sufi pilgrimages are focused on visiting a dead body or relic, which are often but not always connected to Prophet Muhammad. The body of the saint is identified with Allah's blessings – *barakat* – as well as with the love of the Prophet and, by extension, his followers. The importance of the body is often linked to Mecca and to the *ka'bah* as the center of the Muslim ritual. The saint's body is typically buried so his or her head is directed toward Mecca, a practice that identifies the *axis mundi* to other Muslims, who are buried in this way. In some cases, the saint's body is also surrounded by flowers, candles, gifts, and other offerings. In one shrine in Pakistan, elaborate rituals are involved with these items:

The grave's head faces west, towards Mecca. It is decorated with flowers and with intricately embroidered *chaddars*. At its foot are two containers of salt. People prostrate themselves at the foot of the grave or its sides, kissing its edge and tasting a pinch of salt. The area around the grave is carpeted. Two *hafiz* recite the Qur'an day and night through a microphone. They arrived when the *pir* was very ill and now reside permanently in the *darbar*, disrupting the deep silence of the valley with their continuous praying.⁸⁸

Pilgrimage sites, which include shrines, tombs, and other structures, often house a relic of Prophet Muhammad. In Kandahar, Afghanistan, pilgrims visit a shrine that houses the Prophet's cloak. In a room adjoining Rumi's grave in Konya, pilgrims line up to see the Prophet's hair, bending down to inhale a sandalwood scent through a small opening, an action that is believed to result in a possible blessing. The footprint of the Prophet is called *Qadam Rusul* and is housed in shrines known as Qadam Sharif or Qadam Rasul Allah.⁸⁹ In India, these shrines are often called *qadamgahs* ("foot spaces") and not only house the footprint of the Prophet, but also may

include the footprint of another Muslim figure like 'Ali, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law.⁹⁰

Shrines containing footprints are quite common in Islam. Often originating in distant lands, the stones containing body prints mark sacred territory far outside of the Mecca-Medina axis.⁹¹ Footprints (and handprints) are found in various locations besides India, including Egypt, Turkey, Sri Lanka, and Iran. Like other relics, they are loci of *barakah*, constituting "commemorative places, such as shrines, portative holy objects, such as copies of the Qur'an and the sandal of the Prophet Muhammad."⁹² The footprints of the Prophet are not only found at shrines, but are also housed in museums (such as the one at Topkapi Palace in Istanbul), serve as the foundations of mosques, and are included in the tombs of sultans and other politicians (Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid I, for example), all of which constitute pilgrimage sites.⁹³

Footprints in Islamic pilgrimage are a widespread phenomenon. In India, numerous copies were made of these footprints and used ritually, suggesting that even a semblance of the original is valued.⁹⁴ Numerous festivals attracting both locals and pilgrims from afar feature a footprint. In India, these occasions include the period before the Prophet's death (*Barah Wafat*), during which the "Blessed Foot" is fanned, as if it were a living member of a royal family, and performance of the sandal ceremony, during which:

A sandalwood paste is placed on a model of the Prophet's steed Buraq which is then carried in procession to the place where the footprint is kept. On reaching the spot where the footprint is kept, the *fatiha* [the opening chapter of the Qur'an] is recited, and each of the devotees rubs a little paste on the footprint. As vows are sworn, offerings are made to the footprint.⁹⁵

For Shi'i Muslims, who believe that Prophet Muhammad's *barakah* is especially powerful in his lineage, the footprints of

the Imams and their relatives also dominate many pilgrimages. At Qadamgah in Shiraz, the footprint of Husayn's brother 'Abbas is the focus of circumambulation, around which pilgrims pray and listen to religious sermons.⁹⁶

Of course, not all relics are related to Prophet Muhammad or his family, even tangentially. One case is the Bangladeshi living saint Shuli Firani, who having had a vision of a stone in her belly that coincided with the miraculous appearance of a stone then built a *makam* (tomb or shrine) to protect it.⁹⁷ The stone, which was placed with other miraculous items that healed the pilgrims who visited the small shrine, became a center of prayer, fasting, and Qur'an recitation.⁹⁸ The focus of pilgrimage is also not necessarily focused on a saint, living or dead. In China, pilgrims visit tombs and graves at important times like *mawlid* (a birthday celebration, usually of the Prophet Muhammad), during the month of Ramadan, and on Fridays after prayer; they offer prayers and also honor the dead in particularly Xinjiang ways such as through practice of the "pole fixation," where a pole is tied with colored flags (*'alam*) to honor the saint and scare away evil spirits.⁹⁹ This region, referred to as *Altishahr* by its people, is full of such sites, as well as larger tombs more reminiscent of a *masjid* or shrine complex.¹⁰⁰ There are also examples of pilgrimages that refer to another place. In Pakistan, "memorial shrines" are far removed from the body or relic. In these cases, pilgrims visit the *dargah* (shrine) in order to pay respects to the individual to which it refers.¹⁰¹

Pilgrimage does not always involve a built structure. Sufi texts often focus on contemplation of the world that surrounds humans – the sky, earth, forests, streams, and fields of flowers. This meditation on the natural world is reflected in pilgrimage practices. In Bosnia, the landscape is sacred, dotted with holy sites that include tombs but also springs, hills, trees, and caves, sites of ritual activity that are "conceived of as sources of personal blessing (*bereket*), fortune and luck (*hair, sreca*),

and the good life.”¹⁰² The Ajvatovica pilgrimage is the site of a miraculous spring attributed to Hajdar-dedo Karic, who spent forty days praying to Allah and on the fortieth day dreamt of two white rams colliding, awaking to find a large rock split in half – behind which was a hidden spring.¹⁰³ In another Bosnian example, outdoor prayers for rain are sometimes held at sacred sites completely unrelated to a *wali*. These ceremonies (*dove za kisu*) are held at sacred nature sites (*doviste*) ranging from hilltops to lime trees.¹⁰⁴

A number of rituals associated with pilgrimage are part of *tasawwuf*, or Sufism. These include *sama* (audition) and *dhikr* (remembrance). *Sama* is often performed at pilgrimage sites, as is *dhikr*, and *khalwah* (retreat) may take place at or near tombs, shrines, and other spaces associated with Sufi teachers and saints. Rituals vary quite a bit. The grave of the Javanese saint Sunan Bayat is often slept upon as part of the pilgrimage, a practice less commonly associated with Islamic pilgrimages than circling the tomb, kissing it, and offering prayers to the dead.¹⁰⁵ The Sufis associated with the Hadramat ‘Alawi of Yemen visit the graves of their ancestors and the tomb of Prophet Hud, among others; however, in other orders, *ziyarat* may involve ancestors and prophets, but also natural sites, such as mountains, rocks, and springs.¹⁰⁶

Sama (also spelled *sema*) is a performative act. The musical tradition known in Turkish as *ilahis* (songs of praise) is associated with Naqshbandi Sufis. For those who participate in it, it is viewed as an audition, or *sama*, for Allah, a way of honoring the love Sufis have for God, the prophets, and saints. The form of *sama* associated with Rumi – a kind of whirling dance – is related to his order and, in particular, with Konya, the city where he is buried. In particular, Sufis believe that Rumi’s teacher Shams taught him the dance, which today serves as the hallmark of his order’s practices and is often identified with the city of Konya. Interestingly, during his lifetime the whirling was strongly criticized. As one scholar notes, “In

fact, some people in Konya complained about Rumi's *sema*, believing that, it was either not permitted in Islam or caused disturbances and noise. Nevertheless, Rumi predicted that the people of Konya would love and need *sema* in the future."¹⁰⁷

Sama is often performed at Sufi shrines during pilgrimage. The large musical performances commonly associated with Sufis in Pakistan and India are one example. These communal gatherings may feature male or female singers and the music performed, such as Qawwali, is immensely popular in South Asia, sold in stores, and even featured in popular music (the late Nusrat Ali Khan was featured in a popular song by the Cranberries, an Irish band). The public type of *sama* seen today is quite different from the tradition that existed four or five hundred years ago, when it was often restricted to practicing Sufis. In these cases, a particular room or space was used, such as the Persian *maydan-i sama*, and only true believers were permitted to participate in the various types of *sama*, such as *tajawud* (*sama* of the body), *wajd* (*sama* of the heart), and *wajud* (*sama* of the spirit).¹⁰⁸ Music was also played, and continues to have a role in these traditions. Sufi poetry, which is often reflected in *ilahis*, can tell stories about the visitation of graves, tombs, and other sites. *Ilahis* and other devotional songs are performed at the site of graves and other holy places, principally by Naqshbandis, whose song lyrics often mention saints and other holy people they wish to visit.

Dhikr is another important Sufi practice that means "remembrance," referring to the remembrance of Allah. Described in various ways – as spiritual exercises, chanting, or contemplative recitation – the practice of *dhikr* constitutes a repetition of words and phrases that are intended to become "part of the utterer's inner constitution."¹⁰⁹ When performed as part of pilgrimage, it is considered especially worthy in the eyes of Allah. Among some Nubian Muslims, *dhikr* is performed often, including at shrines: "In addition, individual Nubians

often went to a shrine in the vicinity and made a vow to the saint to whom they promised a *karāma* (vow fulfillment) in return for favors. This frequently involved a *dhikr* following a communal feast."¹¹⁰ In other cases, Muslims may perform *dhikr* inside the shrine, in a prayer room, or at a graveside, all places that they feel are religiously efficacious.

ZIYARAT

As we have seen, the pilgrims who visit Sufi tombs and other sites are diverse – Sunnis, Shi'i, nonsectarian Muslims, and others. Because Sufism is not a sect but an orientation or set of practices, it is challenging to distinguish these pilgrimages from others. For some, Mecca is considered a Sufi site, along with the other places visited on *hajj*. In fact, the Qur'an suggests that at Muzdalifah, the halfway point between Mina and Arafat, a ritual of *dhikr* is required.¹¹¹ Qur'an 2:200 refers to this tradition. *Dhikr* – the Islamic notion of "remembrance of Allah" – should be in the hearts of the believers during the entire journey, at every step and with every breath. In fact, Muslims often perform the contemplative and pious traditions identified with Sufism while on pilgrimage. Pilgrims visiting Mecca and Medina for the *hajj* might perform supplemental prayers or gather for *dhikr* in a clandestine setting such as a hotel room. These activities are carried on today despite the prohibitions against them that are rooted in the Wahhabi movement of the eighteenth century. As Khaled Abou El Fadl reminds us, the Wahhabis "criminalized all forms of Sufi chants and dances in Mecca and Medina, and eventually in all of Saudi Arabia."¹¹² However, this does not mean that people have not found alternative ways of participating in these traditions.

The tombs and shrines associated with particular orders (*turuq*, sing. *tariqah*) constitute many of the sites associated

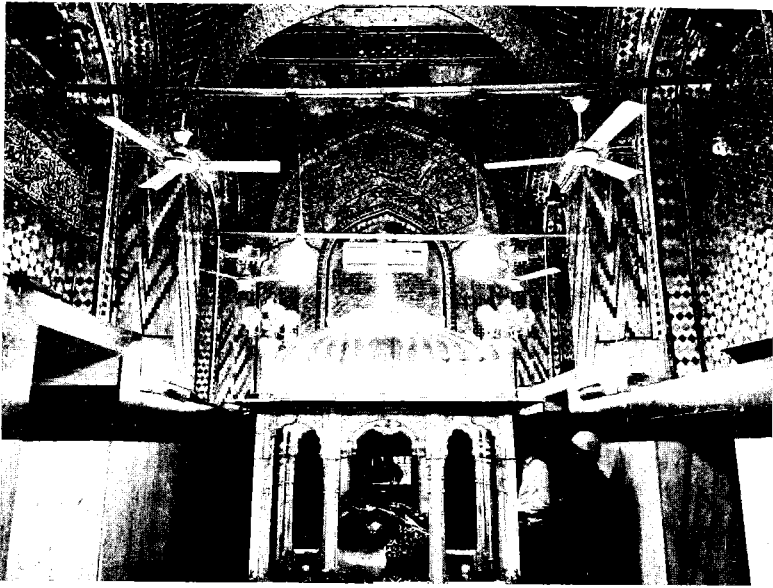


Figure 4.0 Pilgrims at Islamic shrine, Hyderabad, India (photo courtesy of Alex Shams).

with Sufi, or Muslim, pilgrimage. In these cases, the followers of an order often visit a deceased teacher or saint. These places are numerous and diverse, located in Africa, South and Central Asia, China, the Middle East, and Europe.

A dervish in the Naqshbandi order may travel to East Africa to visit a saint's grave associated with another *tariqah*. Mevlevi Sufis typically visit sites far beyond Rumi's great tomb in Konya and indeed far beyond the borders of Turkey. The allegiance to a particular order does not preclude one from visiting the graves of those outside one's immediate community, in part because Sufis often have transnational relationships and in part because they seek guidance and blessings from numerous individuals.

Muslims may visit the graves, tombs, and shrines of the *awliya* (friends of God) at any time but they often make these journeys in order to be present during special occasions, such

as the *'urs* (death anniversary) of the saint, Ramadan, or the Islamic New Year. Many of these pilgrimages are grand affairs with large numbers of people, ceremonies, and distinct rituals that are related to a particular shrine, *tariqah* (Sufi order), or local community. Every year in Konya, thousands of pilgrims attend the *'urs* for Rumi, which is one of the larger examples of such gatherings. Smaller pilgrimages are also common, such as the *hawl* (death anniversaries) in Java that commemorate the death of a holy person or revered scholar.¹¹³ In some cases, "visiting" a place may involve a transitory practice, such as the "drive through" visits common in Uzbekistan, when visitors drive by a cemetery, giving *sadaqa* (charity) to people sitting alongside the road.¹¹⁴

South Asia is populated with Muslim shrines that are visited by Sufis and others, including Hindus. In India, mausoleums, graves, lodges, and other places associated with a Sufi are visited as a part of pilgrimage. In the case of Mu'in al-Din, his mausoleum, meditation center, and places associated with his life are visited – including the place where he died, which is now a *khanaqah*.¹¹⁵ Each year at the shrine of the seventeenth-century poet Shah Husain, an elaborate festival of lamps (*mela chiraghan*) commemorates his death and is attended by a wide segment of people from Lahore and beyond.¹¹⁶ As is the case with many Sufi pilgrimages, the pilgrims to Shah Husain participate in a large variety of activities – prayer, music, dance, and *dhikr*.

At pilgrimage festivities the lines between Sunni and Shi'i are often very blurred, or simply do not matter. At the shrine of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, the drumming is understood as the *azhan*, or call to prayer, and the accompanying dancing is believed to be a performance of 'Ali's circling of the Prophet, who identified him as his successor.¹¹⁷ This does not keep Sunni Muslims from participating, however. In addition to the blurring of sectarian identities, multiple religious traditions are often present at pilgrimage sites. These include numerous

shrines in India where Hindu gods, heroes, springs, and trees were then identified with Muslim saints, providing a way for Islam to encompass sacred spaces that would otherwise be excluded from *ziyarat*.¹¹⁸

As mentioned earlier, Sufi pilgrimages are not always focused on a particular *tariqah*. In many cases multiple Sufi communities, and those outside these communities, visit a tomb of a religious figure who is often an important part of political history. Such is the case of Hajdar-dedo Karic, credited with bringing Islam to the Balkans and identified as a scholar, founder of a mosque, and *wali*.¹¹⁹ Like many Muslim pilgrimage sites, this mosque is associated with healing and miracles. The oldest tomb in the mosque collects water in a pit that is used for healing and blessings and the mosque is reportedly impervious to fire, withstanding several arson attempts during the Second World War.¹²⁰ In Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz visit numerous graves that are not connected to mystics, but to martyrs who defended their land from Mongol soldiers, Qing warriors, and Red Army officers.¹²¹ These pilgrimages are political events that involve Sufi beliefs like the bestowment of blessings (*bereke*) from the dead and the importance of saying prayers (*du'a/pata kyluu*) at shrines (*mazar*).¹²² In these cases, traditions are embedded in national history and in particular in the current social position of the Kyrgyz and their status as ethno-religious outsiders in national politics.

As discussed so far, what pilgrims do at sacred sites varies significantly. This includes liturgical practices. Prayers and supplications exist in great variety in Islam, ranging from the daily *salat* (the prescribed daily prayers) to the recitation of prayers like *du'a kumayl* that Shi'i say on Thursday evenings. In Java, *salat* and *donga* (*du'a*) are important parts of pilgrimage – especially efficacious during nighttime – at shrines, caves, graves, and other sacred sites.¹²³ Prayers may be said in Arabic or the vernacular language, which is most

often Bahasa. *Donga* may be memorized and recited on many occasions, but may also be collected into mystical manuals called *primbon*, which are used for activities ranging from waking up in the morning and starting one's day to more serious events such as asking for forgiveness or undertaking a pilgrimage.¹²⁴

While prayer and supplications, *sama*, and *dhikr* are often part of shrine activity, outside of these rituals there is a vast assortment of ways in which the pilgrim relates to the saint, the body, and the larger social community. For example, at the shrines of female saints in Konya, people light candles, place wishing stones on the tomb, tie beads and cloth pieces to trees, press their bodies against the walls of the building enclosing a tomb, circle a grave, throw money at a tomb, and pray.¹²⁵ At the mosque of Hajdar-dedo Karic in Bosnia, pilgrims recite the Qur'an (*hatma dove*), sing songs (*ilahija*), say prayers for Ottoman and Bosnian martyrs (*tevhid*), and perform *dhikr* (*kijam zikr*).¹²⁶ The burning of candles is a practice that can be found centuries earlier. At Panchakki in India, pilgrims used oil lamps to burn sandalwood, camphor, and myrrh in honor of saints.¹²⁷ At the shrine of Mu'in al-Din Chisti in Ajmer, India, pilgrims rub their forehead at the shrine's entrance.¹²⁸ The inscriptions that surround the tomb not only praise the saint but also relate him to the beauty of the space, praising "the saint as a precious pearl, a reference to the pearl-like quality of the tomb's marble fabric and dome."¹²⁹ Pilgrims prostrate to his tomb and kiss it, throw rose petals over his grave, and tie strings to the pierced-marble screens that surround the tombs that are removed once the prayers are given.¹³⁰ Places associated with other Muslims are also important stops, such as the cave where Mu'in al-Din's friend and fellow Sufi Qutb al-Din did his meditation.¹³¹ In China, pilgrimage traditions include devotional singing, dancing, wrestling, tightrope walking, and a wide assortment of offerings like horse tails, dolls (*qorchaq*), goat horns, and talismans.¹³² For some, these

traditions are considered outside the Islamic tradition because they originated elsewhere. However, for these pilgrims they *are* performing Islam.

SUFI AND SHARED PILGRIMAGES: MUSLIMS AND NON-MUSLIMS

Sufi pilgrimage poses a challenge to scholarly typologies and categories, a point made at the beginning of this book. Javanese pilgrimage is one case that resists categorization. Many of the practices and traditions associated with Java are Islamic, but they are also Hindu, Buddhist, animist, or some combination. Pilgrims may perform a local type of meditation, read the Qur'an, and honor a Javanese ancestor all at once. The Indonesian case suggests that Islamic pilgrimage is fluid, dynamic, and often multi-traditional. In other contexts a Muslim person may be considered a saint by non-Muslims, such as in the case of the hero spirits popular among the Christian Maris and Mordvins of Russia, who both venerate Sultan Keremet.¹³³

In Yogyakarta, the local sultanate constitutes the cult of saints and their state buildings function as shrines that contain religious power. The descendants of the sultans are the former Hindu and early Muslim rulers of Java. Politically and ritually, the power of the sultan is expressed in state ceremonies that release certain amounts of power that are determined to "maintain the stability and prosperity of the kingdom."¹³⁴ In this case, the saint is not a Sufi teacher or mystic like Rumi, but a member of the royal family associated with this region of Java. In this part of Indonesia, the sultan is the representation of "the Divine on earth, expressing God's norm of earthly existence via perfection of the arts, architecture and etiquette in Kraton culture."¹³⁵ The *kraton*, or palace, is the mystical center of this power, a structure that contains heirlooms (*pusaka*)

of the saints but is also a cosmological representation of the universe.¹³⁶

Pilgrimage to the *kraton* is an important and popular tradition for many Javanese Muslims. This is a palace, not a Sufi *tekke* or grave, yet it is believed to be equally sacred – its status tied to the sultan. Pilgrims believe that the power present in the structure is fluid, emanating at different times and places – although Thursday night is considered particularly important.¹³⁷ This is significant because it is the same day that Shi'i and various Sufi traditions gather to pray. In the case of the *kraton*, "On Thursday evenings hundreds of people from all over Java spend the night walking around the palace, hoping to obtain a bit of the power of the sultan."¹³⁸

The indigenous Javanese religious tradition known as *kejawén* is characterized by Muslim practices that have an independent, non-authoritarian flavor. *Kejawén* Muslims pray, but typically not five times a day; they fast, but often not during Ramadan; and they honor specific utilitarian objects, usually swords and daggers, that are believed to be powerful.¹³⁹ Similar to some other Sufi traditions, the followers of *kejawén* often do *ziyarat* at night, believing the nights preceding Tuesday and Friday to be most auspicious.¹⁴⁰ These are, not coincidentally, the same nights that Shi'i Muslims often say their prayers. Thursday nights are traditionally the times when Sufi orders gather to say *dhikr*. What is particular to the Javanese case is the combination of Javanese and Islamic calendars: "When certain days of the Javanese week (that has five days) coincide with the Islamic seven-day week, it will be considered a good time for *ziarah*. In cycles of thirty-five days, certain favorable combinations occur."¹⁴¹

In addition to the Hindu ancestors of the Muslim sultans who rule Yogyakarta and surrounding areas, Buddhist influences can be felt in Java. In the case of Tembayat (Sunan Bayat, also known as the Adipati), the narrative surrounding

the saint mirrors that of the Buddha, with an abandonment of riches, devotion to meditation, and performance of miracles.

After being called to embrace Islam repeatedly, the Adipati left his riches and power behind and devoted himself to prayer, meditation and the preaching of Islam. Already during his lifetime Sunan Bayat became a famous religious teacher who regularly performed miracles. He gathered a great following of students around him, who immediately after his death built him a great tomb, after which Sunan Bayat's fame grew even more.¹⁴²

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the *'urs* (death anniversary) of a saint is often the focus of *ziyarat*. In South Africa, the *'urs* of the nineteenth-century saint Badsha Peer is an occasion for pilgrimage, with attendants ranging from pilgrims to locals seeking entertainment and selling trinkets and souvenirs.¹⁴³ The rituals at a 2002 *'urs* included devotional singing, skin and body piercings, prayers, music (*sama*), the Sundal procession (which includes attendants carrying sandalwood paste and covers for the graves at the shrine), and the laying of an elaborate flower decoration of over 1,500 carnations on the *chadar* (cover) that adorns the grave.¹⁴⁴ These traditions are not South African, but South Asian, part of the Indian communities from the continent that live in the country today. Much like the *hajj*'s pre-Islamic origins, Sufi pilgrimage is often inspired by other traditions. In South Africa, the influence of Hindu dance on performances like *ratieb* and *khalifah* (the striking of the body with sharp instruments) and of Christian rituals (such as candle lighting) on Sufi practices is well documented.¹⁴⁵

Hinduism is seen in many Islamic traditions in India and Pakistan, including those connected to Muslim shrines and pilgrimage. In the case of the Madariya Sufis, the adoption of Hindu practices includes the rubbing of ashes on the body, the wearing of chains to suppress sexual desire, the ingestion of

opium, and other *sannyasi* (Hindu ascetic) practices as well as the actual participation of Hindus in Sufi pilgrimages, something that is seen across India and Pakistan even today.¹⁴⁶ In addition to the influences on Muslim practices, Hindus also share shrines with their Muslim neighbors. Shared pilgrimages can be contentious, even violent, but more typically they illustrate the many ways in which diverse communities come together, even when their religious motivations are different or even antithetical.

In Uzbekistan, Muslims visit tombs, Sufi lodges, cemeteries, and natural sites. Defining the sacred involves a complicated negotiation of different traditions. "While the actual form of the site can vary (e.g. a water source, tree, stone, mosque, mausoleum, the saint's tomb), most sites consist of at least a tree, a water source, and a tomb, all of which are considered sacred because of their affiliation with the site and miracle stories (*karomatlar*) about the interred saint."¹⁴⁷ As the case of Uzbek pilgrimage shows, Islam is influenced by and often embedded in numerous communities. Official Islamic practice is often dictated by the political elite, but it is not necessarily followed by the masses. As one example, many shrines in Turkey are both shared and Sufi. According to one study, "We find out that while Alevis and Sunnis express different reactions toward 'official' Islam and the state's role in propagating such values, Sufi shrines serve as a sectarian melting pot where both Alevi and Sunni women go and pray to the saints."¹⁴⁸ These places are also visited by non-Muslims. As Jens Kreinath has pointed out in his work, the majority of shrines in Hatay, Turkey are visited by Sunnis, Alevis, Orthodox Christians, and Armenian Christians.¹⁴⁹

Pilgrims in the Abrahamic traditions – Jews, Christians, and Muslims – share numerous religious personalities, resulting in sites that are often trans-religious. The hills and mountains surrounding Damascus were part of a sacred landscape filled with caves and other sites associated with Christian figures.

Under the Muslims, it became a large, shared religious space used by Jews, Christians, and Muslims: "For the Muslims and Christians of Damascus, Maghārat al-Dam (the Grotto of Blood) was a pilgrimage, and in Jewish tradition the family of Seth settled on Mt. Qāsiyun, where the family of Cain resided in Damascus, where Cain slew Abel."¹⁵⁰ In some cases, these sites were adopted by Muslims, and in others, already existing geographical features were re-imagined. The 'Umayyads did not have to import a large number of relics because they were already present in churches, sanctuaries, and grottos.¹⁵¹ A cave on Mount Qasiyun was associated with Gabriel, Adam, and the Seven Sleepers, another cave with Khidr, and a third with Moses, while stones and boulders included imprints of the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad and 'Ali, and another stone was believed to be Aisha's mirror.¹⁵²

Religious traditions that predate Islam – Zoroastrianism in Iran, and in Asia Hinduism, Buddhism, and animism – were all present before Muhammad's mission. In Iran, Zoroastrian and Muslim (Shi'i) pilgrimage traditions have a number of striking similarities, but there is also a tradition of shared sites, especially in the Kerman and Yazd provinces such as Seyh-Ali-Baba in Se-Gus and Zeyarat-gah-e Baba-Kamal at Baba Kamal, Sahrestan-e Kerman.¹⁵³ Islamic pilgrimage has adopted many sites that were previously part of another community, then re-named the saint and the tomb as Islamic, often associating it with a famous or important Muslim. The Christian cult of the saints in northern Anatolia is one area rich with the adoption/re-naming of saints:

By the beginning of the fifth century, shrines once dedicated to St. George, St. Theodore, and the Prophet Elijah, and now known as shrines of Khidr, formed a new north-south pilgrimage route between Sinope on the Black Sea, passing through Elbistan to either Aleppo or Mosul. These sites included a Khidr-Ilyās monastery in Sinope, a Khidr

mountain in Merzifon, a *zāwiya* (dervish lodge) near Corum linked to the cult of Khidr and a column in the main mosque of Sivas where people brought sickly children in the hopes of finding a cure.¹⁵⁴

As detailed in Chapter 2, Palestine also contains many places that are pilgrimage sites for Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities. Political changes, appropriation, desacralization, and re-appropriation have an effect on pilgrimage:

Shrines, when not secularized or abandoned, are often simply adopted; they may change their nominal affiliation, the powers they memorialize may be transformed in name and in character, and the population which frequents them may either be distinct from that of the earlier worshippers, or, if the same, have changed sectarian affiliations, but the same places, and often the same buildings, are frequently 'rebranded' and reused.¹⁵⁵

The remainder of this chapter focuses on shared sites that are identified as Islamic but involve other traditions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and others. Defining these sites is a difficult problem. Consider the Javanese site of Tembayat, which includes offerings of flowers and frankincense at a site dominated by Hindu stylistic details, the participation of Christian and Confucian Indonesians, and the inner shrine, modeled on the *ka'bah*.¹⁵⁶ Tembayat and other sites present an important methodological question regarding how scholars think about rituals and traditions that involve different religious actors and whether these cases are syncretic or multi-religious or "Sufi." In at least one case, the Islamic saint Khidr, the mysterious companion to Moses also known as "the green man," is identified as a *version* of St. George.¹⁵⁷ One of the sites associated with these two figures is identified as the place where St. Theodore slew a dragon, a church, a

cult center for Khidr, and the resting place of a Sufi saint.¹⁵⁸ Whether this represents a case of adoption and re-naming of a site, or is a continuation of succession in which Khidr functions as a form of St. George or St. Theodore and later becomes part of a sixteenth-century Sufi saint, is unknown. This makes the question of whether the *zawiyah* of the latter figure is a shared site or a Sufi shrine an open-ended one. One scholar suggests Khidr is a "protean figure," allowing for the adoption of the site by numerous communities.¹⁵⁹

The question of whether these places are "shared" is difficult to answer. In some cases, Muslims have adopted sites and the personality associated with them. At other times the rituals performed at sites are part of Islamic traditions; that is, a community's own practices. They may not be part of *sunnah* – the Prophet's practices – but to a group of Muslims, they *are* Islamic. Western China and Central Asia have many cases of this, such as the numerous Uzbek shrines that contain the horns of mountain goats, which are believed to have protective powers.¹⁶⁰

Pilgrimage sites can be points of contention. At the Muslim shrine of Nizamuddin Auliya, differing beliefs over burial practices have created conflict. The Hindu cremation ground *Samshan ghat* is not only believed to be the residence of "Hindu ghosts" that occupy the site, it also interrupts the saint's powers, which include the blessing available to Muslims buried at the shrine.¹⁶¹ At Adam's Peak in Sri Lanka, Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims all believe that one footprint or another marks the site, a conflict of traditions that results in different paths up the mountain. Muslims often cite Adam's fall from Paradise in reference to the mountain, suggesting that the place marks the spot where Adam fell from heaven, leaving a footprint, but other sources claim it is the place where Adam is buried.¹⁶²

The 'Alawi sites in Turkey can function as points of contention because of history, politics, and identity. One site

is held sacred by the 'Alawis because it is believed to hold the bodies of two Sufis who had healing powers; however, Christians believe it holds two martyrs named Cosmas and Damian.¹⁶³ At another pilgrimage site, Sunni Muslims and 'Alawis contest the ownership and history of the place and the 'Alawi position is that their shrine was literally stolen from them by the more powerful Sunnis.¹⁶⁴

The practice of religious communities visiting shared sites is common. Karbala, an important Islamic site, can be visited by Jews and Christians, as can Mashhad and other shrines in Iran – as long as the inner tomb area is not transgressed. The numerous Sufi shrines in India visited by Muslims and Hindus also are examples of the cohabitation of different religious communities. Jews, Christians, and Muslims share a common ancestor, Abraham, as well as numerous prophetic and religious figures. Historically, these communities have frequently lived together under Islamic rule. Many of the sites visited by Jews, Christians, and Muslims are found in Palestine. In the Middle Ages, these sites were funded and managed by a *waqf* (Islamic charitable foundation) that allowed different pilgrims to visit sites and “perform their ritual practices in their separate as well as their shared heritage spaces.”¹⁶⁵

Medieval Syria also had a rich culture of Jewish-Muslim pilgrimage sites, some of which are active in the contemporary period. Damascus in particular is a city associated with Jews, Christians, and Muslims with a history of adoption, appropriation, and cohabitation of sites going back to ancient times. The Hellenistic temple of the storm god Hadad stood on the site where the Romans erected the Temple of Jupiter, which was later the site of a Christian church and then a congregational mosque.¹⁶⁶ Both Christians and Muslims believe the head of John the Baptist (known in Islam as Yahya b. Zakariya) is buried at the 'Umayyad mosque, along with the heads of several of the martyrs of the Battle of Karbala. In fact, the spot on which John's head was purportedly hung was

then appropriated by the Muslims "as the spot where Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya displayed Husayn's head."¹⁶⁷ When Islamic empires moved into a region they often took over sites as a way of establishing power and ownership over a site, sometimes at places held sacred by other religious communities. The Aya Sofya in Istanbul is an example. In this case, Muslims claimed sightings of Khidr that helped to distinguish it as Islamic, and in one story, "Khidr stuck his finger in one of the pillars of the church and turned the building on its own axis until it was aligned with the *qibla*. Then the Muslim conqueror consecrated the building by performing his ritual prayer there."¹⁶⁸

The cult of Elijah includes numerous shrines in Damascus and Aleppo, as well as in Palestine and Egypt, often associated with places where it is believed the prophet took refuge from Ahab.¹⁶⁹ *Al-Rabwa* (the Hill) in Damascus is associated with many legends and stories, the most important of which is the claim that it is the place where Jesus was born and where he escaped from his prosecutors.¹⁷⁰ The synagogue outside Damascus in Jawbar has survived to the present period and, like many of the sites associated with Elijah, it is also an Islamic pilgrimage site identified with Khidr.¹⁷¹

In Turkey, Iran, and Syria, Christians and Muslims have numerous shared sites, places that offer fluid spaces for the expression of different identities and the practice of distinct rituals. In some cases, pilgrimage sites are a matter of geography and the close proximity, or even cohabitation, of different religious communities. In Antalya (Antioch), the shrine of Habib an-Najjar is also the shrine of a Christian martyr from the first century named Agabus (Acts 11.27–28). Cited in Qur'an 36.13–27, the saint is honored with a small mosque (*mescit*) that is built into a mountain that also is graced by Habib an-Najjar's name.

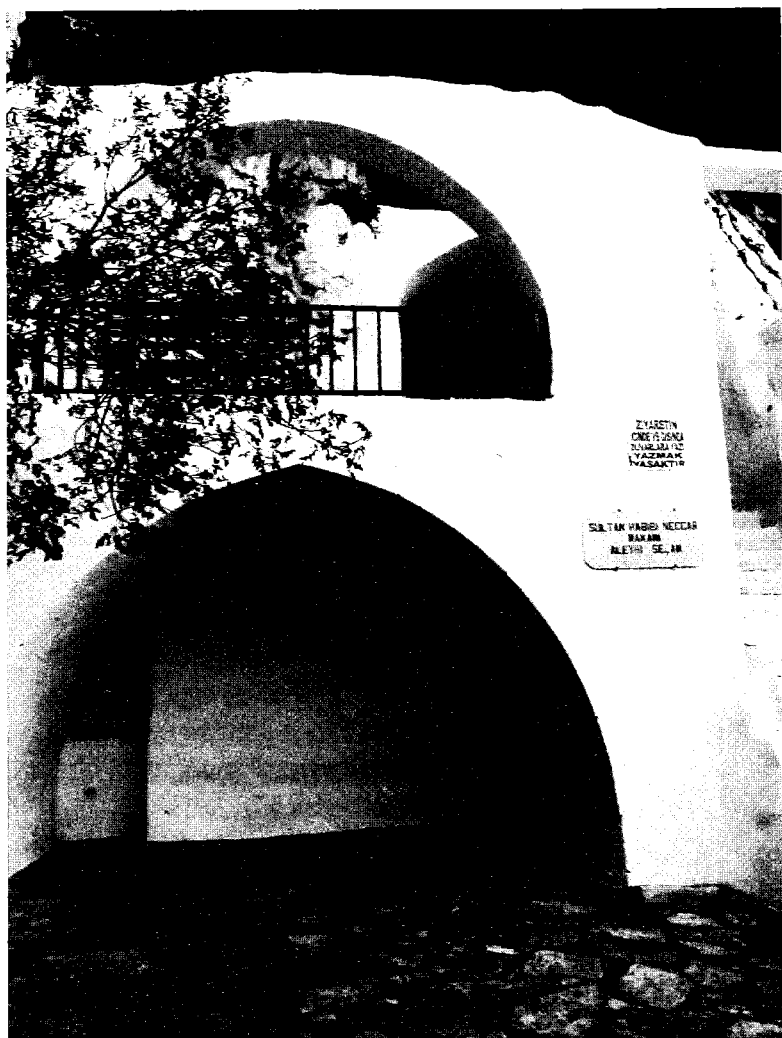


Figure 4.1 Shrine of Habib an-Najjar, Antakya, Turkey (photo courtesy of Scott Alexander).

Accommodation was common in buildings as well as the needs of non-Muslims living under Islamic rule. The Seljuks maintained churches near palaces so that Christians serving the sultan could pray, and myths, legends, and individuals were often adopted by one group or another, such as the Muslim

warrior Seyyit Battal Ghazi, whose monument became a pilgrimage destination "for all who considered themselves of frontier heritage."¹⁷² In addition to cultural heroes like Seyyit Battal Ghazi, Muslims and Christians share a number of other religious figures located in religious texts, resulting in both groups visiting places that honor Biblical–Qur'anic individuals, albeit in different ways. As mentioned above, the story of the head of John the Baptist shows how important Christian practices were to Muslims. When al-Walid ibn 'Abd al-Malik had the Byzantine church that became the 'Umayyad mosque torn down, the "relics of John the Baptist were miraculously discovered in a crypt."¹⁷³ A rather convenient circumstance, the discovery of John's head allowed the Muslims to take over the site while acknowledging its Christian history. It appears that after seeing John venerated by Damascene Christians, the Muslims decided to follow suit. Like many relics, it had miraculous properties; in this case, according to one report, "the face and hair were still intact."¹⁷⁴ Incorporating John into a newly constructed Islamic space made it possible to create a site at which Christians were included, but Muslims were in control.

Mary, known as Maryam in Islam, has inspired numerous pilgrimage sites that are frequented by Christians and Muslims. One is a chapel in Kevlaer, Germany, built in 1642, where visions of Mary have been reported.¹⁷⁵ While predominantly a Christian pilgrimage, of the 800,000 pilgrims who visit the chapel, some are Muslims.¹⁷⁶ At the central town of Fatima in Portugal, where three shepherd children reported visions of Mary in 1917, five million pilgrims visit the shrine annually, a number that includes some Muslims.¹⁷⁷ Muslim pilgrims often report the personal relationship they have with Maryam, whom they turn to much as Catholics do, as a source of "consolation ... for their sufferings."¹⁷⁸ The House of Mary (*Meryem Ana Evi*) near Ephesus in Turkey, a place rich with Christian history, features a Christian minority and many places visited

by both Muslims and Christians. It is said that Mary lived out the remainder of her life in a house there, surrounded by a cedar forest atop Mount Koressos near the sea. She went to this place to find peace after the death of her son: "After Jesus was crucified, St. John, fearing for Virgin Mary's life decided to move her to Anatolia."¹⁷⁹ When one enters the shrine, it appears quite Catholic – a small church with candles that pilgrims can light as they pass through. Pilgrims, both Christian and Muslim, also visit the spring outside the shrine, which is believed to have healing water.¹⁸⁰ One focal point of the shrine is a prayer wall, in which thousands of handwritten notes ask for her intercession.

Mary is also popular with Muslims in Egypt. One of the ways this emerges is in the "collective apparitions" of the Virgin – visions of Mary witnessed by both Christians and Muslims – that are popular, local, and often result in pilgrimages.¹⁸¹ When these visions occur, Christians and Muslims may describe her differently, but the place where the vision takes place, which is often a Christian church, becomes a destination for pilgrimage.¹⁸² It does not matter to Muslim pilgrims that these places are Christian. The case of one Muslim pilgrim who wanted to build two steeples to honor Mary/Maryam suggests that there are a variety of ways to honor her, some involving trans-religious symbols.¹⁸³

In addition to Marian pilgrimages, other sacred places are shared by Christians and Muslims. These include shrines dedicated to St. Anthony of Padua (located in both northern Albania and Istanbul) and the Monastery of St. George in Büyükkada.¹⁸⁴ Mixed iconography is sometimes a part of these traditions, such as at the shrine of Seyyid Gazi, which featured a thirteenth-century brass vessel decorated with figures exhibiting Christian and Muslim themes as well as candle stands decorated with images of the Virgin that adorned the sarcophagus of Seyyid Gazi.¹⁸⁵

In Palestine/Israel, Christians and Muslims share, sometimes quite tensely, a landscape filled with sacred sites.

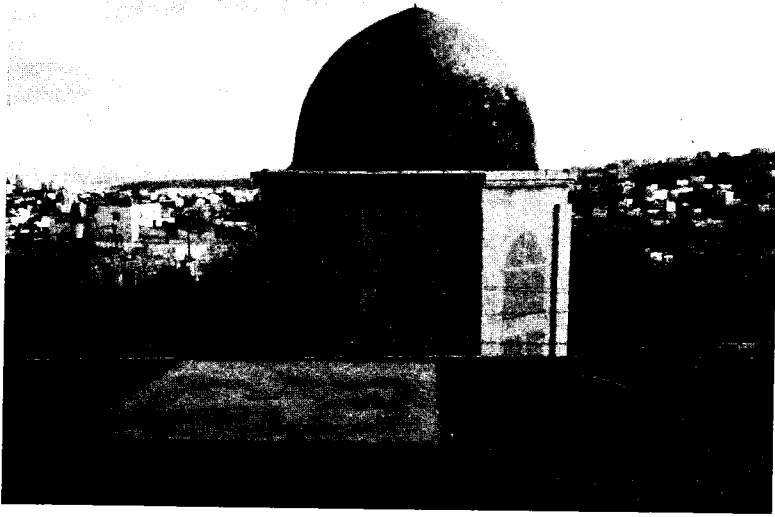


Figure 4.2 Islamic shrine, Mount Qaimiri, Hebron, Palestine/West Bank (photo courtesy of Alex Shams).

A number of Christian sites host Muslim pilgrims, including those associated with Mary, Elijah, and St. George (identified, as we have seen, as Khidr by Muslims), and within these shrines Muslims pray or gather at specific places.¹⁸⁶ Sites shared by Jews, Christians, and Muslims are less common, but do exist. One example is found atop the Mount of Olives, which functions as a shrine for Muslims, but it is known as the tomb of Pelagia for Christians and the tomb of Hulda for Jews.¹⁸⁷

When shared pilgrimage sites are contested, the rituals performed by different religious actors may come into conflict, and the rules surrounding where one can pray or perform other duties can be an issue. In Islam, expectations surrounding the proper use of spaces of prayer have often been a contentious issue, played out in numerous opinions and debates on the subject. As Khalek reminds us, “‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb’s famous refusal to pray in the church of the Holy Sepulcher at the invitation of the Patriarch Sophronius is belied by his

reported willingness to do so at the site of Mary's tomb, in spite of his remorse over the act afterward."¹⁸⁸

In the Chuvash Republic, located in the Middle Volga region of the Russian Federation, Muslim sites are also visited by Chuvash Orthodox Christians. Since the fall of the Soviet Union and the state-sponsored atheism that went along with it, the Mishar Tatars have begun the process of re-sanctifying narratives, customs, and traditions that had long been held in the collective memory of the Muslim community.¹⁸⁹ Chuvash Muslims and Christians have complex ethnic identities and claim to be descendants of the Bolgars. At the Chuvash cemetery of Imenvo, gravestones with epitaphs in Arabic are downplayed by Chuvash scholars who insist true Chuvash remained pagan.¹⁹⁰ This site, like many others, lies at the center of debates about national identity, history, and religion. At the same time, the cult of the saints was shared. As one example, "Many sacred graves (*kiremet*) were named after Bolgar Khans, sheiks and Islamic teachers and located on their supposed burial sites."¹⁹¹

In Turkey, Georgian Christians and Muslims have pilgrimage practices, called *ziyara-ba* and *ziyareti*, that often take place concurrently.¹⁹² In some cases, the Muslims are not even aware of the presence of a Christian saint; in other cases, the collective memory upholds a kind of "reconstructed" and collective notion of "ideal cultural artefacts."¹⁹³ Pilgrimage spaces function as an example of this interaction between memory and activity, "shaped by their participation in the interactions of which they were previously a part and which they mediate in the present."¹⁹⁴

The themes and rituals associated with pilgrimage often involve other communities. India's shrine culture is embedded in its various religious traditions, most notably Hinduism. In many instances, Hindu sites were adopted by Muslims, identifying a Sufi with a Hindu individual who was still revered by the local population. India is a landscape full of sacred sites

not associated with human bodies. Trees, mountains, rocks, springs, and rivers are just some of the sites co-identified as sacred and in many cases visited by both Hindus and Muslims. The shrine of Zinda Pir stands behind a hot sulfur spring, the Muslim saint Sakhi Sarwar is identified with a Hindu god, and the saint Shams al-Din Daryai is associated with a tree spirit.¹⁹⁵ The Muslim figure Khizr (Khidr), associated with Christian saints, is also identified with former Hindu gods and spirits.¹⁹⁶

As this survey shows, Muslim pilgrims often perform rituals that have pre-Islamic or non-Islamic origins and influences. Such is the case of the Javanese meditation practiced on Mount Lawu, where pilgrims immerse themselves neck-deep in a sacred pool and perform one of two types of Javanese meditation (*semedi* and *tapa*) in the hopes of gaining esoteric knowledge (*ngelmu*) and seeking unity with Allah.¹⁹⁷ While some would not classify this pilgrimage as Islamic, the Muslims who visit Mount Lawu certainly would. This is perhaps why it is important to take a long view of pilgrimage in Islam, a subject that includes the participation of various traditions, rituals, and, as the next chapter shows, technologies.