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Jalal Matini

Bijan Namvar

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Zahra Taheri

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Abstracts of Persian Articles*

The Cost of National Unity and Territorial Integrity

Jalal Matini

The rise of Shah Esma'il I, founder of the Safavid Dynasty (1502-1736), is significant in several respects. This is because it put an end to the dynastic and internecine strife that had been raging for nine centuries and established what is termed today "political unity" in the country. Thus, if we speak today of political unity and territorial integrity in Iran, we owe it to Shah Esma'il I.

Scholars have written a great deal on Shah Esma'il I and the significance of the Safavids. Readers can refer to those works for a full picture of the period: this article briefly studies how political unity came about in Iran.

In the introduction, the writer mentions the following: the political conditions in Iran from the Arab invasion until the rise of Esma'il I; Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili, the eponymous founder of the Safavids, emphasizing the fact that he was Iranian, Azeri-speaking and Sunni, not a Turk or a Turkish speaker; one man of this family said he saw the ninth Shiite Imam in a dream; the Safavids' gravitation from Sunnism to Shiism; their uprisings in the time of Juneyd and Heydar, respectively Esma'il I's grandfather and father, aided by Shiite zealots of Asia Minor, Syria and Anatolia who desired to establish an independent Shii state.

Esma'il I had a miserable childhood and adolescence. He was a tool

* All translations, unless otherwise stated, are by Paul Sprachman.

then extracts the "Tale of the Prophet's Wives" from the story of the king who had six sons. The king asks his sons what they wish for so that he can make their wishes come true. The "Tale of the Prophet's Wives" comes up in the father's talk with his third son. The story goes that one day the Prophet's wives came to him and together asked which of them he loved best. The Prophet told them that he would tell them the next day. Then he took his wives aside and gave each of them a ring, warning them not to speak to the other wives about the gift. The next day the wives asked him the same question, and he replied that he loved the wife to whom he gave a ring the most. This delighted the women, when, in fact, the Prophet loved Ayesha the most. She was the one wife who understood the Prophet's ruse.

The author analyzes this tale in detail. He feels that it calls basic beliefs in Islam under question, because if the Prophet was the messenger of God and the Qur'an the word of God, then he would have been completely truthful. For the Prophet it wasn't enough to refrain from telling an untruth, but it was also incumbent on him to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth. At the end of his detailed article, the author raises the question: How could a Sufi like Attar, in a story that contains many examples of fabrication and falsity, reduce the status of a personage like the Prophet to that of a negotiator and no one until now has objected to this portrayal?

Women and Instruction in Mysticism in the Rumi Order (4)

Zahra Taheri

In the fourth and last installment of this article, the following topics are covered: In the Rumi order not only did women have the right to an education in mystical practice, but they also could succeed the learned Sheikhs and become keepers of the Sufi lodges.

Then the writer turns to the subject of women in *sama'*, the ceremonial singing and dance among Sufis. She delves into the various ideas about music and dancing in Sufi texts. She refers, for example, the meeting Jalal al-Din Rumi had with a female musician called Tavus, saying that it is said that he often associated with women who, from a doctrinal or customary point of view, would not be acceptable. Rumi referred to such women using the word *khatun*, a term of the utmost

respect. In addition, the author points out, women would stage *sama'* sessions for Rumi. As the texts indicate, women would participate in these sessions by singing and playing musical instruments, and this is the first instance of an explicit reference to such things in the Sufi literature.

The author identifies three periods in the participation of women in the Rumi order:

1. Women in the life of Rumi until the succession of Amir Aref.
2. From the time of the succession to 11th century, a period in which women's presence was much like that in the first period.
3. From the 11th to the 13th century when, because of the growing wealth of the order through endowments and the influence of Sheikhs, the presence of women became less pronounced.

The Negative Role of the Turbaned Class in the Constitutional Movement

Mehra Maleki

Because the majority of histories of the Constitutional Movement in Iran speak of the important role played by two influential members of the clergy in the genesis of that movement (Seyyed Abdollah Behbehani and Seyyed Mohammad Tabataba'i), the Islamic Republic has claimed it as their own; and by this very act demolished it. The purpose of this article is to show that the two clergymen in the movement were in favor of government based on the *shari'ah* rather than a constitutional form of government based on civil law.

By way of introduction the author mentions that every powerful clergyman had a number of thugs and zealot seminarians at his disposal to carry out his orders and advance his agendas. The two clergymen mentioned above were active in the Constitutional movement because they sought the power to resolve a financial dispute they had with Sheikh Fazlollah Nuri, a prominent clergyman and member of Mohammad Ali Shah's government. It appears that the Sheikh had incurred a large debt and asked a member of the government for the funds to repay it. When he refused, the Sheikh attached himself the two clergymen mentioned above. Coincidentally at this time, the Russians wanted to build a bank in Tehran and needed a plot of land for it. The Sheikh sold the Russians a school and a graveyard for a considerable amount of money, but because he had had a falling out with the two