

Shiite Clerics Social Authority in Late 17th Century Iran as Reflected in Sufi Sources

Dr Kioumars Ghereghlou
Assistant Professor of History
Ferdowsi University of Mashhad

Abstract

The present paper seeks to light on some dimensions of the anti-Sufi polemics prevailed in Safavid Iran during the concluding years of the 17th century. Its main focus is the writings of one of the Sufi authors of this period named Muhammad Mu'min Husayni Tunkabuni, himself a physician attending the court of Shah Suleiman (r. 1666–1694). He wrote two polemical treatises, entitled *Tabsirat al-Mu'minin* and *Futuh al-Mujahidin*, written respectively in 1676 and 1679, to refute the anti-Sufi allegations of Mulla Muhammad Tahir al-Qummi (d. 1689), one of the most prolific and fierce enemies of Sufism in second Safavid century. The aim of this paper is twofold: first, to emphasize the fact that the conflict between the rank and file, *fiqh*-minded clerics within the Safavid religious body and the Sufi-inclined scholars was a social, secular development; and second, to reconstruct the existing, tentative and even distorted picture of al-Qummi's life and achievements as one of the first embodiments of the *faqih* social type which proved to be one the most enduring societal paradigms in post-Safavid Iran.