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The Division Between Çelebi and Babagan Bektashis
An Analysis of Spiritual and Genealogical Perspectives
(19th-20th Centuries)

Ph.D. Dissertation

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I, Emine Yüksel, hereby affirm that the thesis presented here entitled *The Division Between Çelebi and Babagan Bektashis: An Analysis of Spiritual and Genealogical Perspectives (19th-20th Centuries)* is the result of my own work. All ideas, analyses, and conclusions expressed in this document are exclusively mine, unless otherwise cited. I accept full responsibility for any potential errors.

Emine Yüksel
Szeged, 2024

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Abbreviations

BOA: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi

BOA, A.MKT.MHM: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Sadaret Mektubî Kalemî Mühimme Evrakı

BOA, C.AS: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Cevdet Askeriye

BOA, C. EV: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Cevdet Evkaf

BOA, DH. İD: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Dahiliye Nezareti İdare Evrakı

BOA, EV. MKT: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Evkaf Nezareti Mektubi Kalemî

BOA, HAT: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Hatt-ı Hümayun

BOA, İ. EV: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi İrade Evkaf

BOA, MD: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Mühimme Defteri

BOA, MF.MKT: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Maarif Nezareti Mektubi Kalemî

BOA, Y.EE: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Yıldız Esas Evrakı

BOA, Y.MTV: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Yıldız Mütenevvi Maruzat

BOA, Y.PRK.UM: Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Umumi

TA: Türk Ansiklopedisi

TDV: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı

TDVİA: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi

M.H: Missionary Herald

TKHBVD: Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi

TTK: Türk Tarih Kurumu

INTRODUCTION

In the rich tapestry of Sufi traditions, the Bektashi Order emerges as a distinct and vibrant thread, weaving together spiritual devotion, cultural heritage, and historical significance. At the heart of Bektashism lies the persona of Hacı Bektāş, whose doctrines and teachings served as the cornerstone for the establishment of the Bektashi Order, a notable Sufi tradition with influence extending beyond the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire. From its inception and flourishing to its eventual abolition in the Ottoman Empire, Bektashism has served as both a religious order and a socio-political force, attracting followers from diverse backgrounds and exerting influence across the Ottoman territories.¹

The followers of Hacı Bektāş in Anatolia and Rumelia, mostly *abdāls* and *akıncıs* (frontier warrior)², made notable contributions to the establishment of the Ottoman Empire. They not only added new territories³ and established dervish⁴ lodges in Western Anatolia and Rumelia but also spread the teachings of Hacı Bektāş in these frontier regions. Their antinomian tendencies, renunciatory attitudes and resistance to centralization significantly influenced the doctrinal framework of Bektashism. Prior to the institutionalization of Bektashism under Balım Sulţān and its transition into a fully structured Sufi order in the sixteenth century, *Abdāls of Rūms*⁵ and other

¹ For a general overview about the history and doctrines of Bektashi Order, see, John Kingsley Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes* (London: Luzac, 1937).

² The term "abdal," initially associated with a specific group of saints within the Sufi ranks, evolved over time to refer to a particular category of dervishes starting from the fourteenth century. For abdal see: Mehmet Fuad Köprülü, "Abdal," in *Türk Halk Edebiyatı Ansiklopedisi: Ortaçağ ve Yeniçağ Türklerinin Halk Kültürü Üzerine Coğrafya, Etnoğrafya, Etnoloji, Tarih ve Edebiyat Lûgati* (Istanbul: Burhaneddin Basımevi, 1935), 23-56; Orhan F. Köprülü, "Abdal: Edebiyat," *TDVİA*, vol. 1 (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988), 61-62. For the relationship of abdal, akıncı and Bektashis and their milieu in the medieval Anatolian context see, Rıza Yıldırım, "Abdallar, Akıncılar, Bektaşılık ve Ehli-Beyt Sevgisi: Yemini'nin Muhiti ve Meşrebi Üzerine Notlar." *Belleter* 75/272 (2011): 51–85.

³ For colonizing dervishes and the lodges, they established see, Ömer Lûtfi Barkan, 'Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Bir İskân ve Kolonizatör Metodu Olarak Vakıflar ve Temlikler: I. İstîlâ Devirlerinin Kolonizatör Dervişleri ve Zaviyeleri'. *Vakıflar Dergisi* 2 (1942): 279–386.

⁴ Dervish is a type of Sufi mystic who exercises poverty. For the word dervish and its cultural, social, and religious connotations in various geographies, see, Alexandre Papas, "Dervish," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Gudrun Krämer, et al. (eds.) (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011), 129-135.

⁵ Abdalan-ı Rûm denotes a loosely-affiliated collective of antinomian Sufis who were integral to a nascent renunciatory movement that emerged during the latter stages of the medieval era (circa 600—900/1200-1500) within Islamic territories. For the Abdals of Rum and other renunciatory dervish groups see, Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period 1200-1550* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 61-84; Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Kalenders, Abdāls, Hayderis: The Formation of the Bektāsiye in the 16th Century," in Halil Inalcik and Cemal Kafadar (eds), *Süleymân the Second and His Time* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1993), 121-129. For a recent and comprehensive study focusing on the fundamental aspects of individual works of abdals see, Zeynep Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man in Bektashism and Alevism: Kaygusuz Abdāl's Kitāb-ı Maglağa*, PhD diss., (Université Paris, 2017).

antinomian and itinerant dervish groups, and *akıncıs* within the Ottoman territories gradually diminished in importance due to the Ottoman State's progressive centralization and bureaucratization, eventually becoming the targets of state oppression and persecution. Seeking refuge from such harassment, these groups found sanctuary within Bektashism and gradually integrated into the Bektashi Order.

The Janissaries also shared a close association with the Bektashis⁶. It is accepted that Hacı Bektâş, an eponymous founder of the Order, gave his blessings to them, being their spiritual leader and patron saint. Throughout Ottoman history, the Janissaries adopted various titles indicating their affiliation with the Bektashis. Entrusted with the spiritual upbringing of the Janissaries, a Bektashi baba was present within their ranks. Furthermore, Bektashi sheikhs at Hacı Bektâş conveyed their petitions to the Sulţân through the Janissary Agha, the leader of the Janissary forces. The enduring connection between the Bektashis and the Janissaries persisted until the abolition of the Janissary corps. Following the immediate aftermath of the Janissary abolishment in 1826, Bektashism also faced political and religious suppression, due to Bektashi's strong ties with Janissaries and alleged involvement in their rebellions. Some Bektashi leaders were executed, while others were exiled. Dervish lodges established within the last sixty years were demolished, and the Bektashis became subjects of extensive propaganda by the Ottoman ulema and administrative authorities. Nonetheless, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Bektashis experienced a resurgence, resuming their activities and publishing endeavors. Subsequent to 1826, although never formally recognized, the followers of Bektashi Order continued their activities unofficially, broadening their cultural and religious connections with groups such as the Kızılbaş (Qizilbash), missionaries, and Freemasons.

Bektashism, with this profound spiritual, cultural, and historical significance, has long been a subject of scholarly inquiry. The initial curiosity surrounding Bektashism along with Kızılbaş originated from Western travelers, missionaries, and diplomats who encountered the Bektashi

⁶ For the word Bektashi and its evolving meanings throughout its historical trajectory, see Rıza Yıldırım, "Bektaşî Kime Derler? 'Bektaşî' Kavramının Kapsamı ve Sınırları Üzerine Tarihsel Bir Analiz Denemesi," *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi* 55 (2010): 23–58. For the Janissary and Bektashi relations, For the Bektashi and Janissary relations see, Mustafa Alkan, "Yeniçeriler ve Bektaşılık", *TKHBVD*, 50, (2009): 243-60; Erdal Küçükyalçın, *Turna'nın Kalbi – Yeniçeri Yoldaşlığı ve Bektaşılık* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniv. Yayınları, 2010); Muharrem Varol, *Islahat Siyaset Tarikat: Bektaşiliğin İlgası Sonrasında Osmanlı Devleti'nin Tarikat Politikaları (1826-1866)*, (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2013): 33-38; Fahri Maden, "Yeniçerilik-Bektaşılık ilişkileri ve Yeniçeri isyanlarında Bektaşiler", *TKHBVD*, 23 (2015): 173-202; Gülay Yılmaz, "Bektaşilik ve İstanbul'daki Bektaşî Tekkeleri Üzerine Bir İnceleme" *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, XLV (2015), 97-136.

Order while travelling the Ottoman Empire.⁷ However, their writings frequently offered a prejudiced or narrow portrayal of Bektashism, influenced by their viewpoints and religious biases. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, scholars increasingly explored different facets of Ottoman society, including Sufism and religious groups such as the Bektashis and Alevis. Nonetheless, a significant portion of this early academic work leaned towards description rather than analysis, drawing heavily from primary sources and lacking a robust theoretical framework. At the beginning of twentieth century, with the subsequent nationalization policies, the study of Bektashism and Alevism underwent significant changes. The research on Bektashism and Alevism during this period was largely influenced by state ideologies and focused on preserving Turkish cultural heritage rather than critical inquiry. These works primarily contested two main arguments: firstly, they challenged the prevailing Ottoman view that labeled the Bektashi, along with Kızılbaş, followers as aberrant heretics, and secondly, they countered early Christian authors' writings that highlighted Christian and pagan aspects within Alevi and Bektashi practices. Therefore, the earliest publications aimed to persuade readers about the Turkish and Islamic identity of Kızılbaş- Alevi, and Bektashi adherents.⁸

Baha Said, a Turkish nationalist, was among the early authors who penned articles concerning the Kızılbaş-Alevi, Bektashi, and associated groups, which were published in journals such as *Muhibbân*, *Millî Ta'lim ve Terbiye Mecmû'ası*, *Memleket Gazetesi*, *Meslek Gazetesi*, and *Türk Yurdu*.⁹ Influenced by the discourse found in missionary accounts of the nineteenth century and the political challenges faced by the Ottoman Empire, he developed his own nationalist perspectives regarding the Kızılbaş-Alevi and Bektashi communities. Consequently, he adopted a rhetoric aimed at portraying these communities in a positive light, praising their Turkish identity, and placing exaggerated emphasis on their so-called shamanic origins.

⁷ For the most prominent studies for the Kızılbaş-Alevi in the missionary accounts at the late Ottoman period, see, Hans-Lukas Kieser, 'Some Remarks on Alevi Responses to the Missionaries in Eastern Anatolia (19th – 20th centuries),' In *Altruism and Imperialism: Western Cultural and Religious Missions in the Middle East*, ed. Eleanor H. Tejirian and Reeva Spector Simon, (New York: Middle East Institute, Columbia University, 2002), 120–142; Ayfer Karakaya, 'The Emergence of the Kızılbaş in Western Thought: Missionary Accounts and Aftermath,' in *Archeology, Anthropology and Heritage in the Balkans and Anatolia. The Life and Times of F.W. Hasluck 1878–1892*, (ed) David Shankland, Vol I, (Istanbul: The Issis Press, 2004), 329–353; Markus Dressler, *Writing Religion: The Making of Turkish Alevi Islam*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). Yalçın Çakmak, *Sultanın Kızılbaşları: II. Abdülhamit Dönemi Alevi Algısı ve Siyaseti*, Ankara, İletişim Yayınları, 2020.

⁸ Dressler, *Writing Religion*, 22.

⁹ Baha Said, 'Anadolu'da İçtimâî Zümreler ve Anadolu İçtimâiatı,' In *Baha Said Bey, Türkiye'de Alevî-Bektaşî, Ahî ve Nusayrî Zümreleri*, ed. İsmail Görkem, (Istanbul: Kitabevi 2006 [1918]); Baha Said, 'Tekke Aleviliği-İçtimâî Alevîlik,' *Türk Yurdu*, vol. 11, ed. Murat Şefkatlı, Istanbul: Tutibay, 2001 [1926].

Another significant scholar who contributed to the understanding of Kızılbaş-Alevi, Bektashi, and related groups during the same era was Mehmet Fuat Köprülü. His scholarly work not only served as a foundational model for future studies on these groups within the realms of Islam and Turkish history but also his concepts and ideas have endured as authoritative to the present day. Köprülü's unique approach to situating Kızılbaş-Alevi and Bektashi within a historical context set him apart from his contemporaries. As highlighted by Markus Dressler, Köprülü advocated for the Ottoman Empire's legacy as an integral part of a broader Islamic civilization with a distinct Turkish identity, in contrast to the Kemalist revisionists of the time who viewed the Ottoman period as disconnected from the trajectory of Turkish history. Therefore, he neither marginalized the Ottomans in his works nor regarded the Kızılbaş-Alevi and Bektashi communities as exclusively Turkish.¹⁰

Köprülü's primary objective in his exploration of Turkish history was to demonstrate the expansion and enduring presence of Turkish cultural heritage from its pre-Islamic origins through the Seljuk and Ottoman periods in Anatolia, employing an examination of mystical literature originating from Central Asia. To achieve this goal, Köprülü sought to establish a connection between the legacy of Aḥmed Yesevī from Central Asia and the Bektashi tradition in Anatolia. As asserted by Köprülü, Yesevī dervishes migrated to Anatolia from Central Asia and Khorasan, introducing Central Asian elements, and fostering mysticism in Anatolia. Despite various influences such as Anatolian Christian traditions, Baṭınism, and Ibn Arabi's *Vaḥdet-i Vücūd* philosophy shaping religious evolution, the enduring presence of Central Asian Turkish culture emerged as the prevailing force, notably evident in the poetry of Yunus Emre. Regarding their religious essence, Köprülü regarded Bektashism as syncretic faith stemming from the nomadic Turkish lifestyle, blending elements of Islam with pre-Islamic beliefs, and assimilating influences from Haydarī, Qalandarī, and Ḥurūfī traditions in Anatolia, hinting that they were insufficiently Islamized.¹¹

Following in the footsteps of Köprülü, subsequent scholars adopted his methodology and concepts in their own academic endeavors. One notable figure among them was the French Turcologist Irène Mélikoff. Mélikoff produced several works focusing on Alevi and Bektashi

¹⁰ Dressler, *Writing Religion*, 173.

¹¹ See, Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar*. (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1966).; also see Mehmed Fuad Köprülü. *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*, tr. Gary Leiser and Robert Dankoff. (London-New York : Routledge, 2006).

communities, depicting them as 'Islamized Shamanism'.¹² Like Köprülü and Baha Said, she accentuated the ancient Turkish, largely shamanistic, elements within Alevi and Bektashi faith in her writings. Her research predominantly relied on hagiographic sources to establish the link between these ancient Turkish components and the beliefs of the Alevi and Bektashi traditions. According to Dressler, a key issue with Mélikoff's approach to these communities is her close conceptualization of Alevism and Bektashism, to the extent that she argues Alevism is essentially a form of Bektashism, suggesting they could be viewed as a single 'Alevi-Bektashi' tradition. He critiques her conceptualization as static and essentialist, lacking adequate differentiation between vernacular and scholarly discourses.¹³ In addition to Dressler's critique, Hamid Algar also characterizes Mélikoff's approach to Bektashism as akin to an archaeological endeavor, involving the excavation of successive layers of influence, borrowing, and adaptation.¹⁴

Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, another prominent scholar of Sufism and medieval Anatolia, followed in the footsteps of Köprülü by integrating Batinism, extreme Shia, Bektashism, Turkish shamanism, and Alevism. He authored numerous articles and books on Kızılbaş-Alevi and Bektashi figures and literature.¹⁵ What sets him apart from earlier scholars is his avoidance of nationalism as the central theme in interpreting Kızılbaş-Alevi and Bektashi communities. Instead, he combined theological and historical arguments without prioritizing the dominant Islamic understanding of his era. As stated by Ahmet Karamustafa, although his perspective did not introduce a new outlook on the Islamization of Turks and the role of Sufism in this process, Gölpınarlı was the first to recognize the significance of the Wafāiyya Sufi Order in the history of Islam in Anatolia.¹⁶

¹² See Irène Mélikoff, « Recherches sur les composantes du syncrétisme Bektachi-Alevi, » *Studia Turcologica Memoriae Alexii Bombaci Dicata*, (Napoli : Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1982) ; Irène Mélikoff, *Sur les traces du soufisme turc : Recherches sur l'Islam populaire en Anatolie*. (Istanbul : Éditions Isis, 1992); Irène Mélikoff, *Hadji Bektach: Un Mythe et ses avatars. Genèse et évolution du soufisme populaire en Turquie* (Leiden : Brill, 1998); Irène Mélikoff, *Au Banquet des quarante : Exploration au coeur du Bektachisme-Alevisme*. (Istanbul: Éditions Isis, 2001).

¹³ Dressler, *Writing Religion*, 259.

¹⁴ Hamid Algar, review of "Hadji Bektach: Un mythe et ses avatars. Genèse et évolution du soufisme populaire en Turquie by Irène Mélikoff," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Nov. 2004), 687.

¹⁵ Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Melâmîlik ve Melâmîler* (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931) ; Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Pir Sultân Abdal* (Ankara : Ankara Üniversitesi DTCF, 1943); Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Yunus Emre ve Tasavvuf* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1961); Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Kaygusuz Abdal, Hatayi, Kul Himmət* (Istanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1962) ; Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Alevî-Bektâşî Nefesleri* (Istanbul: İnkılap Kitabevi, 1992).

¹⁶ Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Origins of Anatolian Sufism." in *Sufism and Sufis in Ottoman Society: Sources, Doctrine, Rituals, Turuq, Architecture, Literature and Fine Arts, Modernism*, ed. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, (Ankara:TTK, 2005) 72–73.

Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, another significant scholar in the field of Alevi and Bektashi studies, warrants mention. In contrast to Mélikoff and Köprülü, Ocak dedicated more attention to non-Islamic religious movements such as Buddhism and Manichaeism as integral components of Alevi and Bektashi beliefs. While he acknowledged the presence of shamanistic elements, he questioned their predominant influence on the formation of Alevi and Bektashi doctrines, setting him apart from Köprülü. His methodology primarily relied on hagiographic sources, emphasizing the religious authority derived from charisma, mysticism, and the lineage of saints, rather than legal and scriptural knowledge.¹⁷ In contrast to writers of the late Ottoman and early republican periods, Ocak did not align his narrative with nationalist discourse, nor did he utilize it as an analytical category. One of Ocak's most significant contributions to Alevi and Bektashi studies lies in his exploration of the Wafā'ī Order in Anatolia.¹⁸ Ocak investigated the connections of some Alevi sacred families to the Wafā'ī Order through genealogical analysis, leading to conclusions that challenge Köprülü's Ahmet Yesevī thesis. His findings opened new research areas for the next generation of scholars. Ocak also delved into the Qalandarī and Haydarī dervish groups and their interactions with other dervish groups in Anatolia, employing distinctions between high culture and popular culture.¹⁹

In the works pertaining to the history of Alevi and Bektashi communities during the late Ottoman and early republican periods, scholars adopted prevailing research methodologies of the time, yet exhibited an essentialist, nationalist, and romanticized approach, often emphasizing religious and ethnic origins. The conceptual framework regarding Alevi and Bektashism, largely shaped by the pioneering ideas of Baha Said and Köprülü during the early republican era, has faced criticism from post-nationalist era scholars regarding their methodologies and terminologies. Specifically, Köprülü's theories and perspectives on Islam, Turks, and Sufism, particularly in relation to figures like Ahmet Yesevī, have been subject to scrutiny and refutation with the emergence of new findings. Among these scholars, Devin DeWeese stands out as one of the earliest critics of Köprülü's ideas, offering new insights into Ahmet Yesevī and the Yesevī Order based on fresh sources. In his preface to "Early Mystics," DeWeese critiqued Köprülü's approach to sources, his overly nationalistic tone, and his tendency to view Central Asia through an Anatolian lens rather

¹⁷ See, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Alevi ve Bektāşi İnançlarının İslam Öncesi Temelleri* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003).

¹⁸ See, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "The Wafā'ī tarīqa (Wafā'īyya) during and after the Period of the Seljuks of Turkey: A New Approach to the History of Popular Mysticism in Turkey", *Mésogeios* 25-26, (2005): 209-248.

¹⁹ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Kalenderiler (XIV.-XII. Yüzyıllar)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1992).

than on its own terms and sources. DeWeese also addressed Köprülü's dichotomy between heterodoxy and orthodoxy, suggesting that Köprülü sought to portray a version of Islam tainted with shamanic remnants from pre-Islamic Turkic religion, colored by popular religious inclinations, as the origin of the Yesevî tradition and the religious identity of Central Asian Turks.²⁰ Similarly to DeWeese, several scholars including Ahmet T. Karamustafa²¹, Ayfer Karakaya-Stump²², Rıza Yıldırım²³ and Ayşe Baltacıoğlu-Brammer²⁴ presented their critiques regarding Köprülü's methodology and approach to Kızılbaş-Alevi and Bektashi communities.

In addition to the new theories and approaches, with the emergence of new sources, the perception of Kızılbaş-Alevi, Bektashi, and other dervish groups in Anatolia and adjacent regions underwent gradual transformation. Historians leveraged the sources to question the established theories put forth by late Ottoman and early republican scholars, which portrayed Alevi and Bektashi communities as archaic, unorthodox, and syncretic in nature. The early research conducted on Alevism and Bektashism primarily focused on their ethnic and religious origin, with a predominant reliance on hagiographers as primary sources. Later, the new sources were employed to challenge the prevailing notion that these communities lacked a written tradition, instead relying solely on an oral-based historical narrative. These diverse sources, ranging in style and content, encompassed primarily *buyruk* (commandment) texts²⁵, *icâzetnâme* (authorization

²⁰ Devin DeWeese, "Foreword," In Köprülü, Mehmed Fuad, *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*. Translated with an introduction by Gary Leiser and Robert Dankoff, (London: Routledge, 2006), viii–xxvii.

²¹ See Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Early Sufism in Eastern Anatolia." Leonard Lewisohn (ed), in *Classical Persian Sufism: from its Origins to Rumi* (London: Khaniqahi-Nimetullahi Publications, 1993), 175-198; Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Yesevîlik, Melâmetîlik, Kalenderîlik, Vefâîlik ve Anadolu Tasavvufunun Kökenleri Sorunu," in Ahmet Yaşar Ocak (ed), *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf ve Sufiler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2005), 61-88.

²² See, Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, *The Wafâ'îyya, the Bektashiyye and Genealogies of "Heterodox" Islam in Anatolia: Rethinking the Köprülü Paradigm*. *Turcica* 44 (2012–2013):279-300.

²³ Rıza Yıldırım, "Büyükülüğün Büyümeye Set Çekmesi: Fuat Köprülü'nün Türkiye'de Yesevîlik Araştırmalarına Katkısı Üzerine bir Değerlendirme", in Yahya Kemal Taştan (ed.), *Mehmet Fuat Köprülü*, (Ankara: TC. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2012), 358-398.

²⁴ See Ayşe Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, *Safavid Conversion Propaganda in Ottoman Anatolia and the Ottoman Reaction, 1440s–1630s*, Ph.D. Diss., Ohio State University, 2016.

²⁵For the analysis of buyruk manuscripts, see Anke Otter-Beaujean, "Schriftliche Überlieferung versus Mündliche Tradition: Zum Stellenwert der Buyruk-Handschriften im Alevitum," in *Syncretistic Religious Communities in the Near East*, ed. Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi, Barbara Kellner-Heinkele and Anke Otter-Beaujean (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1997), 213–26; Doğan Kaplan, *Buyruklara Göre Kızılbaşlık*, PhD diss., (Selçuk Üniversitesi, 2008); Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, "Documents and Buyruk Manuscripts in the Private Archives of Alevi Dede Families: An Overview," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37, no. 3 (2010): 273–86; Janina Karolewski, "Discovering Alevi Rituals by Analysing Manuscripts: Buyruk Texts and Individual Notebooks," in *Transmission Processes of Religious Knowledge and Ritual Practice in Alevism between Innovation and Reconstruction*, ed. Johannes Zimmermann, Janina Karolewski, and Robert Langer (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2018); Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash/Alevis In Ottoman Anatolia: Sufism, Politics and Community*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press,

certificates), and *şecere* (genealogical) texts²⁶, as well as *divān and cönks* (poetry collections), *vaqfiyye* (endowment deed), archival documents, memoirs, along with accounts from missionaries and travelers.

Drawing from these sources, extensive research has been undertaken, delving into diverse aspects of Alevism, Bektashism, and various dervish groups from manifold perspectives. Notable among them are Suraiya Faroqhi' s investigations into the economic and social dimensions of distinct Bektashi convents,²⁷ Zeynep Yürekli' s exploration of the interplay between architecture and the politics of patronage surrounding Bektashi shrines,²⁸ Ayfer Karakaya-Stump' s analysis of the relationships between Alevi *sayyid*²⁹ families and Bektashi convents in Karbala, facilitated by the intervention of the *Abdāls of Rūm*.³⁰ Additionally, Rıza Yıldırım' s inquiries into the doctrine of *ghazi, abdāl*, and Bektashi, with a focus on the love of *ahl al-bayt* (People of the House)³¹ along with studies on Alevi and Bektashi oral and written traditions including *buyruks*,³² Ahmet Karamustafa' s research on antinomian dervishes³³, Zeynep Uslu' s examinations of Alevi-Bektashi

2020); Rıza Yıldırım, *Menakıb-ı Evliya (Buyruk) Tarihsel Arka Plan, Metin Analizi, Edisyon Kritik Metin*, (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2020).

²⁶ For the analysis of *icazetname, hilafetname* texts in the context of Alevi documents, see Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, *Vefailik, Bektaşilik, Kızılbaşlık: Alevi Kaynaklarını, Tarihini ve Tarihyazımını Yeniden Düşünmek*, (Istanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2015); Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash/Alevis*; Karakaya-Stump, *Documents and Buyruk Manuscripts*; Karakaya-Stump, *The Wafā' iyya*.

²⁷ See Suraiya Faroqhi, *Der Bektaschi-Orden in Anatolien (vom späten fünfzehnten Jahrhundert bis 1826)*.

(Vienna: Verlag des Institutes für Orientalistik der Universität Wien, 1981); Suraiya Faroqhi, "Conflict, Accommodation and Long-Term Survival: The Bektashi Order and the Ottoman State," in Alexandre Popovic and Gilles Veinstein (eds), *Bektachiyya: Études sur l'ordre mystique des Bektachis et les groupes relevant de Hadji Bektach* (Istanbul: Éditions Isis, 1995), 171-184.

²⁸ See Zeynep Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire: The Politics of Bektashi Shrines in the Classical Age* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012).

²⁹ Sayyids and sharifs are considered as the noble descendants of Prophet Muhammad. The descendants of Muhammad, known as sayyids, trace their lineage back to his grandson Huseyn, whereas the Sharifs trace their lineage back to Hasan. For the sayyids and sharifs, see Kazuo Morimoto (ed.) *Sayyids and Sharifs in Muslim Societies: The Living Links to the Prophet* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017) For the sayyids and sharifs in the Ottoman Empire, see Rüya Kılıç, *Osmanlıda Seyyidler ve Şerifler* (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2005)

³⁰ See footnote 26.

³¹ See Yıldırım, *Abdallar*; Rıza Yıldırım, "Beylikler Dünyasında Kerbela Kültürü ve Ehl-i Beyt Sevgisi: 1362 Yılında Kastamonu' da Yazılan Bir Maktelin Düşündürdükleri," in Halil Çetin (ed), *Kuzey Anadolu' da Beylikler Dönemi Sempozyumu Bildiriler, Çobanoğulları, Candaroğulları, Pervaneoğulları, 3-8 Ekim 2011 Kastamonu-Sinop-Çankırı* (Çankırı: Çankırı Karatekin Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2012), 344-72; Rıza Yıldırım, "Anadolu' da İslamiyet: Gaziler Çağında (XII.-XIV. Asırlar) Türkmen İslam Yorumunun Sünni-Alevi Niteliği Zerine Bazı Değerlendirmeler," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 43 (2014): 93–124.

³² See Yıldırım, *Menakıb-ı Evliya*; Rıza Yıldırım, "Literary Foundations of the Alevi Tradition: Mainstream, Canon, and Orthodoxy" in Benjamin Weineck and Johannes Zimmermann (eds.) *Alevism between Standardisation and Plurality Negotiating Texts, Sources and Cultural Heritage* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2018).

³³ See Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*; Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Antinomian Sufis." in Lloyd Ridgeon (ed). *The Cambridge Companion to Sufism*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 101-124; Ahmet T.

literature, and analyses of the doctrines of *abdāl* and Bektashi dervishes³⁴, collectively contribute to enriching our understanding of the history of Alevism and Bektashism during the medieval and early modern periods.

In scholarly inquiries concerning the Bektashi and Alevi communities from the nineteenth century onward, pertinent to the subject and timeframe of this thesis, Fahri Maden's publications on the closure of Bektashi lodges³⁵ and Ahmet Yılmaz Soyzer's research on nineteenth and twentieth-century Bektashism based on the archival documents and manuscripts³⁶, Yalçın Çakmak's investigations into the Kızılbaş and Bektashis during the reign of Sulṭān Abdulhamid II in the light of the reports of the missionaries and the local officers³⁷. Thierry Zarcone's exploration of Bektashi and Freemasonry affiliations³⁸, Natalie Clayer's examinations of the Bektashis' involvement in Balkan nationalist movements³⁹, Hülya Küçük's analysis of the Bektashis' role during the Ottoman Turkish national⁴⁰, Markus Dressler's study on the historiography of Alevi and Bektashi's origins and identity in the late Ottoman and Early Republican period⁴¹, and recently

Karamustafa, "The Antinomian Dervish as Model Saint." In Hassan Elboudrari (ed). *Modes de Transmission de la Culture Religieuse en Islam* (Cairo, Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire, 1993), 241-260.

³⁴ See Zeynep Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*; Zeynep Oktay, *Mesnevî-i Baba Kaygusuz* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, 2013); Zeynep Oktay, "Historicizing Alevism: The Evolution of Abdal and Bektashi Doctrine." *Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies* Vol. 13 No 3-4 (2020): 425-456.

³⁵ See Fahri Maden, "Hacı Bektaş Velî Tekkesi'nde Nakşî Şeyhler ve Sırrı Paşa'nın Lâyihası". *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi*, sayı 59, (2011): 159-180; Fahri Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması (1826)* (Ankara: TTK. Yayınları, 2013); Fahri Maden, "En Uzun Yüzyılında Bektaşilik ve Bektaşiler" in (ed.) Yalçın Çakmak-İmran Gürtaş, *Kızılbaşlık, Alevilik, Bektaşilik (Tarih-Kimlik-İnanç-Ritüel)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015), 185-213.

³⁶ See A. Yılmaz Soyzer, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşilik* (İstanbul: Frida Yayınları, 2012); A. Yılmaz Soyzer, "19. Yüzyılda Yapılan İki Bektaşî Nasib/ İkrar Ayini," in *Alevilik* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2004), 259-298.

³⁷ Yalçın Çakmak, *Sulṭanın Kızılbaşları: II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Alevi Algısı ve Siyaseti*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2019).

³⁸ See Thierry Zarcone, *Mystiques, philosophes et francs-maçons en Islam : Rıza Tevfik, penseur ottoman (1868-1949), du soufisme à la confrérie* (Paris: Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes d'Istanbul, 1993), 87-175, Thierry Zarcone, *Le Croissant et le compas: Islam et franc-maçonnerie: De la Fascination à la détestation* (Paris: Éditions Dervy, 2015), 151-164.

³⁹ See Nathalie Clayer, "Bektachisme et nationalisme albanais," in Alexandre Popovic and Gilles Veinstein (eds), *Bektachiyya: Études sur l'ordre mystique des Bektachis et les groupes relevant de Hadji Bektach* (Istanbul: Éditions Isis, 1995), 277-308; Nathalie Clayer, *Aux Origines du nationalisme albanais: La Naissance d'une nation majoritairement musulmane en Europe* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2007), 474-493. Regarding Bektashism in Albania in the 20th century, also see Nathalie Clayer, "Autorité locale et autorité supra-locale chez les Bektashis d'Albanie dans l'entre-deux-guerres," in Nathalie Clayer, Alexandre Papas, Benoît Fliche (eds), *L'Autorité religieuse et ses limites en terres d'Islam* (Leiden-Boston : Brill, 2013), 159-193.

⁴⁰ Hülya Küçük, *The Role of the Bektāshīs in Turkey's National Struggle* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2002).

⁴¹ Dressler, *Writing Religion*.

Cem Kara's inquiries into the cultural interrelations of Bektashis with diverse religious cultures⁴² stand noteworthy.

These studies offer valuable insights into Alevism and Bektashism, contributing significantly to scholarly discourse from various aspects. However, many of these typically do not provide a comprehensive study dedicated to the intricate organizational structure within Bektashi Order. Particularly lacking is a study elucidating this organizational framework through the lens of Bektashi and Alevi doctrinal principles. Bektashism bifurcates into two principal branches: the Babagān and the Çelebiyān. The genesis of this dichotomy stems from inquiries into the marital status of Hacı Bektāş. Babagān adherents assert Hacı Bektāş's celibacy, while the Çelebi lineage regards themselves as biological descendants of Hacı Bektāş, thereby positioning themselves as *sayyids* tracing their lineage to the Prophet.⁴³ These groups coexisted together under the Bektashi Order. As widely accepted, while the Babagān faction engages in the affairs pertaining to the *tariqa* (Path) within Hacı Bektāş' lodge, the Çelebi lineage assumes the tekke (dervish lodge) leadership as sheikh, thereby exercising authority over the management of the tekke's *waqf* assets. Furthermore, the Çelebis represents the official interface between the tekke and the Ottoman state in matters related to tekke, such as appointing the sheikhs of other Bektashi lodges, endowment issues, and repairing of structures in tekke.⁴⁴

Scholars argue that the genesis of this dual structure occurred when Bayezid II appointed Balım Sultān as the head of Hacı Bektāş Lodge. They contend that upon Balım Sultān's arrival at the tekke, he formed a group of celibate dervishes, though giving no proper reason for its foundation. Certain authors posit that this dual organization emerged following the reopening of the tekke during the reign of Sultān Suleiman the Magnificent, subsequent to the appointment of Sersem Alī Baba as *postnişin*.⁴⁵

Scholars have largely interpreted the power struggles between the Babagān and Çelebis through attempts to seize control of *waqf* income and leadership of the tekke in the nineteenth century. While these analyses hold merit, the doctrinal and religio-political dimension of the

⁴² Cem Kara, *Grenzen überschreitende Derwische: Kulturbeziehungen des Bektashi-Ordens 1826-1925*, (Brill Deutschland, V&R Göttingen, 2018); For the Turkish translation of the book, see Cem Kara, *Sınırları Aşan Dervişler: Bektaşiliğin Kültürel İlişkileri (1826-1925)* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2023).

⁴³ For various aspects of holy families, see Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen and Alexandre Papas (eds.), *Family Portraits with Saints: Hagiography, Sanctity, and Family in the Muslim World* (Berlin: KS, 2014).

⁴⁴ For general overview of the roles of Babagān and Çelebis in the lodge, see Yıldırım, *Bektaşî Kime Derler*.

⁴⁵ Ahmet Rıfki, *Bektaşî Sırrı: Mudāfa'aya Mukabele*, 129.

struggle is notably missing. Lately, Ayfer Karakaya-Stump suggested that Balim Sultān established the celibate faction to facilitate the integration of *abdāls* into the Bektashi order, prompted by the distinction between *abdāls* and Bektashis regarding world-affirming and world-renouncing ideologies. As stated by Karakaya-Stump, Balim Sultān's reorganization of the order wasn't about splitting it into two; instead, it aimed to bring together under one umbrella two different interpretations of the Hacı Bektāş cult. It would also ease the state control over the undisciplined dervishes who would be also Kızılbaş sympathizers.⁴⁶ Moreover, Yıldırım's claim, based on the hierarchy depicted in the *icāzetnāme* texts between the two groups, reinforces the notion that these factions coexisted peacefully until the nineteenth century⁴⁷. Although Karakaya-Stump's interpretation of the world-renouncing and world-affirming Sufi perspectives in the coexistence between the Babagān and Çelebi branches is very convincing, it fails to fully account for the conflicts that emerged from the nineteenth century onwards. During the intervening centuries the precise nature of the relationship between these two groups remains somewhat obscure; however, it is evident that tensions persisted. In my opinion, the conflicts between these factions transformed into a matter of religious authority during the 19th and early 20th centuries, particularly, at its core lay the question of representatives of which type of religious authority⁴⁸ were entitled to lead the Bektashi community.

This thesis argues the division between the Çelebi and Babagān factions stems from legitimization efforts of two distinct sources of authority: one based on the transmission of knowledge (Babagān) and the other on the transmission of blood (Çelebi) from Hacı Bektāş Veli. The study aims to revisit the division within Bektashism between Çelebi and Babagān, and subsequently the increased influence of the Çelebi family over Alevi *ocaks*, with a particular focus on doctrinal aspects and concepts such as spiritual and biological descent, celibacy, charisma, and prestige. It asserts that, in contrast to prevailing scholarly discourse, which predominantly

⁴⁶ Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash/Alevis*, 166-78.

⁴⁷ Yıldırım, *Bektaşî Kime Derler*, 42-43.

⁴⁸ For the various discussion on different religious authorities and their effects in cultivating Muslim communities, see Devin DeWeese, "Authority," in Jamal J. Elias (ed.) *Key Themes for the Study of Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2010), 26-52; Asma Afsaruddin, "Authority, religious" *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd edition eds., K. Fleet, G. Krämer, D. Matringe, J. Nawas, and E. Rowson, (Leiden: Brill, 2020); Gudrun Krämer, Sabine Schmidtke, *Speaking for Islam: Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies*, (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Francis Robinson, "Crisis of Authority: Crisis of Islam?" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Series 3, 19/3 (2009): 339-54; - Ron Sela, Paolo Sartori, and Devin DeWeese (ed.) *Muslim Religious Authority in Central Eurasia*, (Leiden: Brill, 2022); Ismail Fajrie Alatas, *What Is Religious Authority? Cultivating Islamic Communities in Indonesia* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2021).

emphasizes fiscal matters and the administration of *waqf* (endowment) revenues as the primary catalyst for the division, this study posits that the division also originates from divergent perspectives regarding the foundation of religious authority. Rather than viewing disagreement exclusively through an economic lens, this research contends that two distinct modes of authority, grounded in genealogical and spiritual legitimacy, played pivotal roles in shaping the trajectory of the Bektashi Order. These disparate approaches were already discernible in the ideologies of various dervish groups that aligned with the Bektashi order in the late medieval and early modern period. However, the conflicting viewpoints on legitimacy and authority persisted and materialized during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries amidst the conflicts between these factions. Building upon this premise, the thesis examines how the foundational doctrinal and historical claims underpinning the two branches of the Bektashi tradition resurfaced during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, leveraging Bektashi *risales* (treatise), *icāzet-nāmes* (authorization certificates),⁴⁹ letters, memoirs, missionary reports, and archival materials.

The initial chapter of the study addresses the foundational aspects of the Bektashi Order, beginning with an examination of Hacı Bektāş, an eponymous founder, exploring his religious identity and doctrinal perspectives. It further delves into the process of institutionalization of Bektashism, the pivotal role played by the *Abdāls of Rum*, the most prominent component of the Bektashi Order, and their interactions with the Ottoman Empire. The chapter serves as an introductory overview of the topic based on previous research. Especially, the individual writings of dervishes representing the identities of *abdāl* and Bektashi in the late medieval and early modern eras, along with their understanding of dervish religiosity, are crucial for a deeper understanding of the main reasons behind the conflicts between the two groups discussed in the following sections.

The second chapter commences with the abolition of the Janissary corps and the subsequent decree to close Bektashi tekkes (lodges), tracing the unfolding of events thereafter. It scrutinizes the harshly pejorative propaganda directed towards the Bektashi during this period and examines how the Bektashi responded to this propaganda through their own publications. This chapter

⁴⁹ For general information about Sufi lineages, Ismail Fajrie Alatas “Şūfī Lineages and Families” in Alexandre Papas (ed.) *Sufi Institutions*, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2021), 374-384; Alfrid Bustanov, Shamil Shikhaliev, and Ilona Chmilevskaia, “Building an Archival Persona: The Transformation of Sufi Ijāza Culture in Russia, 1880s–1920s” *Journal of Sufi Studies* 12 (2023) 216–252.

concurrently explores the evolution of the perception of Bektashi image in both political and religious contexts following its suppression. It elucidates how this perception influenced the rhetoric and political discourse concerning Bektashi. Furthermore, it delves into how Bektashis navigated and attempted to overcome the pejorative perceptions cast upon them, striving to emancipate themselves from the negative stereotypes associated with their identity.

The pivotal third chapter, which forms the cornerstone of this thesis and encapsulates its main argument, begins by elucidating the power struggles among three distinct factions that emerged within the Hacı Bektāş tekke: the Naqshbandi sheikhs, the Babagān and the Çelebi family. The conflicts among the groups within the tekke have been meticulously documented by researchers based on archival records. These records suggest that the initiation, cessation, and re-ignition of conflicts between the Babagān and the Çelebis were largely influenced by the appointment or death of Naqshbandi sheikhs within the tekke. The Babagān and the Çelebis formed alliances against the appointed Naqshbandi sheikhs; however, conflicts resumed among themselves when the sheikh's influence diminished or completely disappeared. Subsequently, the chapter extensively delves into the reasons behind the conflicts between the Babagān and the Çelebis, meticulously examining seminal works of the period, Ahmet Rıfkı's *Bektāşī Sırrı* and Cemāleddīn Efendi's *Mudāfa'a*, which perhaps represent the most significant contributions to this subject matter. The treatises of Ahmet Rıfkı from the Babagān Bektashis and Cemāleddīn Efendi from the Çelebis are crucial works that retain significance to this day. They directly engage in discussions concerning whether the Çelebis are descendants of Hacı Bektāş, celibate dervishes, leadership of the tekke, and the rightful inheritor of Hacı Bektāş 's legacy, offering responses to each other's arguments. The arguments are the representative of how two types of religious authorities, knowledge and lineage based, challenge each other under the same religious order.

The equally significant fourth and last chapter, following the upheavals within the Hacı Bektāş tekke resulting from shifting power dynamics, delves into the repercussions of the Çelebis'—particularly Cemāleddīn Çelebi's—alignment with Alevi communities, along with the propaganda they disseminated among them and its consequences. Cemāleddīn Çelebi commenced to notably augment his authority over the Kızılbaş-Alevis in Eastern Anatolia during the nineteenth century, owing to the prestige and charisma associated with his lineage tracing back to Hacı Bektāş. His prestige and charisma allowed him to cultivate new religious communities although harshly challenged by some. It is apparent that the Çelebis endeavored to solidify their authority over Alevi

communities through diverse strategies: by intervening in the sacred ritual implements, known as *tarik* or *erkan*, utilized in the initiation and annual rituals of the Kızılbaş; by issuing *icāzetnāmes* to Alevi *ocaks*; and by initiating the collection of *hakkullah*. This section illustrates how the endeavors of the Çelebis are documented in missionary reports, *icāzetnāmes*, letters, and archival documents, elucidating both their reception and the challenges they posed. In the conclusion section, all these processes will be collectively addressed, highlighting their intertwined nature and broader implications.

CHAPTER 1

THE BEKTASHI ORDER FROM ITS FOUNDATION TO ITS DISSOLUTION

1.1. Hacı Bektāş

The historical and spiritual evidence regarding the life of the Hacı Bektāş, the eponymous founder of the Bektashi Order is notably constrained and fragmented across various sources. The available information regarding him is not only limited and scattered but also concurrently portrays divergent representations of him. Historical anecdotes referencing Hacı Bektāş depict him either as one *meczūb* (ecstatic) dervish without any disciples or as a noteworthy spiritual leader of his era when numerous dervishes adhered to his guidance. Furthermore, these sources offer contradictory evidence concerning Hacı Bektāş's dates of birth and death, his affiliations with different religious entities, his impact on the establishment of the Ottoman Empire, and his relationship with the Janissary corps.

The earliest historical references to Hacı Bektāş are discerned within three *vakfiyyes* (endowment deeds), dated 691 (1291–1292)⁵⁰, 695 (1295–1296)⁵¹, and 697 (1297–1298)⁵² respectively. Within these documents, the term '*el-merhūm*' (late) and the phrase '*Ḳuddisa sirruhu*' (may his mystery be blessed) are employed in association with the saint's name. Scholars interpreted these expressions with the implication of the demise of Hacı Bektāş prior to the dates. This substantiation is further supported by an appended annotation in a manuscript, called *Esrār-ı Hurūfnāme*, found within the collection of the Hacı Bektāş convent.⁵³ According to this annotation, the birth is documented in the year 606 (1209), while his demise is marked in the year 669 (1270). Although these dates may not provide adequate precision in determining the precise dates of birth and death, there exists a consensus among scholars indicating that Hacı Bektāş lived sometimes before 1290.

While endowment deeds do not furnish sufficient information about Hacı Bektāş and his milieu, two significant sources from the fourteenth century offer crucial insights into his life and

⁵⁰ Hilmi Ziya 'Anadolu'da Dini Ruhiyat Muşahedeleri'. *Mihrab Mecmuası* 15–16 (1924): 515–30.; Birge, *The Bektashi Order*.

⁵¹ Birge, *The Bektashi Order*, 41. Regarding this endowment deed Birge refers to an article by Ali Emiri Efendi in *Tarih ve Edebiyat Mecmuası* 20: 670.

⁵² Birge, *The Bektashi Order*, 41.

⁵³ Mark Soileau, *Humanist Mystics: Nationalism, and the Commemoration of Saints in Turkey* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2018), 150; Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash/ Alevi*, 148.

his immediate environment. The first one referring to him is *Menāqibu'l-Ḳudsiyye* by Elvān Çelebi (d. c.760/1358)⁵⁴, which provides a historical narrative that details the lineage of Baba İlyās and his descendants. Notably, within his comprehensive work dedicated to chronicling the narrative of Baba İlyās' uprising and its enduring legacy, Elvān Çelebi cites Ḥacı Bektāş, thus designating him among the few Sufi leaders identified by name in the manuscript. He praises Ḥacı Bektāş for the depth of his spirituality and his enigmatic qualities. His observation suggests that the disciples who gathered around him were not only well-versed in and adherent to the sharī'a (Islamic law) but also demonstrated considerable insight and wisdom in their comprehension and application of the *ṭariqa* (spiritual path).⁵⁵

The additional significant reference to Ḥacı Bektāş from the fourteenth century is Eflākī's (d.1360) *Menāqibu'l-Ārifin*⁵⁶, the hagiography of renowned Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (Mevlānā Celaleddin Rūmī) Here, Ḥacı Bektāş is presented as associated with Baba Resūl (also known as Baba İlyās), (d. 1241), the leader of the Bābā'i rebellion, a religiopolitical revolt among the Turkomans against the Anatolian Seljuqs. Eflākī acknowledges Ḥacı Bektāş as one of the prominent *khalīfes* (deputy) of the Baba İlyās but does not offer any detail about their relationship. The narratives in the *Menāqibu'l-Ārifin*, inherently not designed for the conveyance of biographical details about Ḥacı Bektāş, were rather orchestrated to underscore the superior stature of Mevlana in comparison. As stated by Mark Soileau, given that the text was written during the formative period of the Mawlāwī (Mevlevī) and Bektashi orders, it's probable that the rivalry originally existed among the disciples in the process of forming these *ṭariqas* and was later attributed to their founders.⁵⁷

There are two narratives and in both, the saints don't directly confront each other; instead, an intermediary, who is a disciple, plays a role in the challenge ⁵⁸ In the initial narrative, Ḥacı Bektāş dispatches a disciple to Rūmī in Konya. The account notes that Ḥacı Bektāş, similar to other saints of the time, was filled by jealousy, suspecting that Rūmī might be diverting his followers. Ḥacı Bektāş's disciple finds Rūmī immersed in *samā'* (semah), then he delivers a poem

⁵⁴ Elvan Çelebi, *Menāqibu'l-Ḳudsiyye Fī Menāsibi'l-Ünsiyye: Baba İlyas-ı Horasāni ve Sülālesinin Menkabevi Tarihi*, ed. İsmail F. Erünsal and Ahmet Yaşar Ocak (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995).

⁵⁵ Ibid, 171; Mark Soileau, "Conforming Haji Bektash: A Saint and His Followers between Orthopraxy and Heteropraxy" *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 54, Issue 3/4 (2014): 427.

⁵⁶ Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad Aflākī, *Manāqib al-ārifin*, ed. Tahsin Yazıcı, 2 vols. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1976, 1980).

⁵⁷ Soileau, 'Conforming Haji Bektash', 427.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

so deeply touching to the dervish that he loses his composure. He carefully records the poem along with the date. Upon returning, disciple recounts the experience to Ḥacı Bektāş. The saint acknowledges that on the day of the recitation, Rūmī appeared to him, rebuked him, and seized his throat until he had to implore forgiveness for his impudence. Ḥacı Bektāş then informs to his dervishes that Rūmī's effect surpasses even his own expectations.⁵⁹

The second narrative delves more profoundly into the issue of Ḥacı Bektāş's adherence to *sharī'a*, particularly highlighting his neglect to observe *namāz*. This narrative serves to underscore Rūmī's superiority over Ḥacı Bektāş and concludes with the disciple Nūr al-Dīn relinquishing his admiration for the rival saint. The character called Nūr al-Dīn (Nureddin) begins to tell his experience with Ḥacı Bektāş by highlighting his shortcomings: "He had no concern for appearance, lacked conformity, and neglected to perform *namāz*."⁶⁰ Nūr al-Dīn later describes how he advised Ḥacı Bektāş to complete his *namāz* duties, and was astonished to see Ḥacı Bektāş perform a miracle by transforming the ablution water into blood. Rūmī, in response to Nūr al-Dīn's account, downplays the miracle, suggesting that turning clean water into something impure is not a significant feat.⁶¹

Soileau states that in both narratives, Ḥacı Bektāş is portrayed as diverging from the norms of *sharī'a*, indicating that the earliest accounts of Ḥacı Bektāş's character depict him as heteroprax⁶². According to him, the second story explicitly illustrates this non-conformity, specifically in the aspect of neglecting to perform *namāz*, and notes his indifference to outward appearances, aligning with a *bāṭini* (esoteric) orientation. Eflākī's introducing of Ḥacı Bektāş as 'a man of wise heart and illuminated interior, but not in conformity' also clarifies this situation⁶³.

In unanimous agreement, sources from the fourteenth century affirm that Ḥacı Bektāş was the appointed *khalīfa* of Baba Ilyās or was somehow associated with him, and he resettled in Sulucarahöyük, presently known as the town of Ḥacı Bektāş in Turkey. A humble Sufi lodge is established in his name, which later became the central shrine complex of Bektashi. The sources do not explicitly address whether Ḥacı Bektāş established an organized order during his time.

⁵⁹ Aflākī, *Manāqib al-ārifīn* Vol 1, 381; Soileau, 'Conforming Haji Bektash', 427-28.

⁶⁰ Aflākī, *Manāqib al-ārifīn* Vol 1, 498.

⁶¹ *Ibid*; Soileau, 'Conforming Haji Bektash', 428.

⁶² The term "heteropraxy" is derived from the combination of "hetero" (other) and "praxis" (practice), thus refers to a non-conforming practice.

⁶³ Soileau, 'Conforming Haji Bektash', 428.

Nevertheless, they portray him as a Sufi leader diverging from shari‘a norms, with a dedicated following of disciples.

The fifteenth-century sources present a different portrayal of Hacı Bektāş, and his milieu compared to the depictions found in the fourteenth-century records. The evolution in the depiction aligns seamlessly with the Ottoman *beylik*'s transition from a principality to a full-fledged empire. Distinct groups, perceiving themselves as rightful champions and contributors to the empire's establishment, commenced the authorship of historical accounts and hagiographies in this period.⁶⁴ In this context, Āşıkpaşazāde's Ottoman history, *Tevārīh-i Āl-i Osmān*⁶⁵, is one crucial example of Hacı Bektāş's divergent image. Āşıkpaşazāde's account regarding Hacı Bektāş falls into the conclusion part of the *Tevārīh*, the part that indeed a later addendum. The section is performative, structured such that the author directly engages with the community's inquiries. Here, in response to a question about why he described the dervishes and scholars of Rūm but omitted Hacı Bektāş, he replies as the saint did not associate with anyone from the lineage of the Osman family, and hence, he omitted him from the discussion.⁶⁶ Following his response, Āşıkpaşazāde gives coverage to Hacı Bektāş's connection with the Bābā'is. He states that Hacı Bektāş came from Khorasan with his brother Menteş. They came straight to Sivas and from there, came to Baba Ilyās and then arrived in Kırşehir, and from there to Kayseri. From Kayseri, his brother Menteş went back to Sivas and there he was martyred. Hacı Bektāş came from Kayseri to Karayol (Karahöyük) and his noble grave is there.⁶⁷

The assembly, on this occasion, inquiries about Hacı Bektāş's numerous disciples and admirers, as well as the lineage to which they belonged. Āşıkpaşazāde's response, however, portrays a completely contrasting image, diverging entirely from early period sources. According to him, Hacı Bektāş was, in fact, distinct from the roles of sheikhhood and discipleship; he was a mystic, an ecstatic saint. He asserts that Hacı Bektāş had no disciples, and the secrets of his teachings were trusted to Hatun Ana and, in turn, to Abdāl Mūsā.⁶⁸ Āşıkpaşazāde also denies that

⁶⁴ For the politicization of Sufi and dervish communities in this context, see Zeynep Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography*; Derin Terzioğlu, 'Sufis in the Age of State-building and Confessionalization', in Christine Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2012), 86–102; Karakaya-Stump, *The Kızilbash/Alevis*.

⁶⁵ Ahmed Aşıkpaşazāde, *Menākīb ü tevārīh-i āl-i 'Osmān*. In *Osmanlı Tarihleri I: Osmanlı Tarihinin Anakaynakları Olan Eserlerin, Mütahassıslar Tarafından Hazırlanan Metin, Tercüme veya Sadeleştirilmiş Şekilleri Külliyyatı*, ed. N. Atsız Çiftçioğlu (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1949).

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 237-38.

⁶⁷ *Ibid* 237.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 238.

the *tâc* (lit. crown, headgear) worn by the Janissaries is the same as Hacı Bektâş 's crown, asserting that such a claim is false. He states that the headgear worn by the Janissaries emerged during the time of Orhan Beg.⁶⁹

It is known that Āşıkpaşazāde is the great-grandson of the renowned Baba İlyās, who initiated a Turkmen uprising against the Anatolian Seljuk State in the year 1240-41. One should consider Āşıkpaşazāde's approach to Hacı Bektâş and his legacy in this context. by Halil İnalçık points out that one of Āşıkpaşazāde's main objectives in writing the *Tevārīh* is to prove the significant role played by the leaders of the Bābā'i- Wafā'ī order, particularly Sheikh Edebalī and, most notably, his own family lineage continuing from Baba İlyās, in the establishment of the Ottoman state.⁷⁰ It is discernible, through meticulous examination of both Āşıkpaşazāde's historical narrative and contemporaneously compiled Bektashi hagiographies, that a substantive contest unfolded between these two factions concerning the legitimation of claims pertaining to the foundational origins of the Ottoman State.⁷¹

The most significant source at our disposal regarding Hacı Bektâş and his milieu is *Velāyetnâme*⁷², a hagiographical text that contains his sacred biography, which was completed presumably sometime between the year of 1481 and 1501.⁷³ The objective of the text is to prove Hacı Bektâş's *velāyet* (sainthood) and authority to other saints and ordinary people thus demonstrating the miraculous aspects and acts of the saint in several anecdotes. The *Velāyetnâme* consists of narratives recounted by anonymous storytellers, and the identity of the author or compiler remains undetermined. The text exists in various versions, both in prose and verse. Although some manuscripts credit specific individuals, such as Mūsā, son of Alī (also known as Süfli Derviş) or Firdevsī-i Rūmī, with the compilation and authorship, many copies lack these attributions. This absence of clear identification leads to uncertainty about the actual author of the

⁶⁹ İbid 238.

⁷⁰ Halil İnalçık, "How to Read 'Ashık Pasha-zade's History". *Essays in Ottoman History*. (Istanbul: Eren, 1998), 36.

⁷¹ For a detail analysis of 'Āşıkpaşazāde's approach to Hacı Bektas and the Bektashis, see Rıza Yıldırım, "Hacı Bektaş Velî ve İlk Osmanlılar: Āşıkpaşazade'ye Eleştirel Bir Bakış", *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi*, sayı: 51 (2009): 107-146.

⁷² See Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Vilâyet-Nâme*, (Istanbul, Inkilap, 1995); *Velâyetnâme*, ed. H. Duran (Ankara, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2007); *Manzûm Hacı Bektâş Veli Velâyetnâmesi*, ed. B. Noyan (Istanbul, Can Yayınları, 1996). For an examination of different versions of Velâyet-nâme, see Mark Soileau, 'Vilayetname: Bir Metnin Serüveni', Pibar Ecevitoğlu, et al. (ed.) *Uluslararası Hacı Bektaş Veli Sempozyumu Bildirileri, Hacı Bektaş Veli: Güneşte Zerresinden, Deryada Katresinden*, (Ankara, Dipnot, 2010), 89-96.

⁷³ Gölpınarlı, *Vilâyet-nâme*, xxiii-xxix.

text.⁷⁴ The narratives recorded in the *Velāyetnāme* document the formation of a socio-cultural movement progressing from the cult of saints towards the realm of Sufi orders.

Velāyetnāme depicts Hacı Bektāş as a *sayyid*, through the seventh (Twelver Shi ‘i) imam, Mūsā el- al-Kāzım.⁷⁵ He was born in Nishapur, and his education was placed under the guidance of Loḳmān-ı Perende, a khalīfe of the esteemed Central Asian saint Aḫmed Yesevī (Aḫmad Yasawī). Bektāş received instruction of the Qur’ān from both the Prophet Muḫammad and Alī. The Prophet Muḫammad imparted exoteric (zāhir) knowledge, while Alī provided esoteric (bāṭın) teachings. As a child, Bektāş earned the title “Hacı” (pilgrim) by performing a miracle, in which he delivered a plate of food in an extraordinary manner to his master Loḳmān, who was then engaged in the pilgrimage to Mecca.⁷⁶

Following Bektāş's demonstration of exceptional abilities, Aḫmad Yasawī acknowledged his spiritual excellence and presented him the ceremonial paraphernalia, conferring upon him the title of *Quṭbu’l-aqṭāb* (The Pole of Poles). Subsequently, Aḫmed Yesevī appointed Hacı Bektāş to Rūm, to the village of Ḳarahöyük, granting him spiritual leadership over the *Abdāls of Rūm*.⁷⁷ Initially, despite efforts to impede his arrival in Rūm and resist acknowledging his authority, Hacı Bektāş, through the manifestation of certain miracles, managed to garner *abdāl*'s allegiance, leading them to submit his authority. It was this very community that played a crucial role in forming the initial followership of the Bektashi Sufi order, although it was a gradual and challenging process.

The *Velāyetnāme* is replete with narratives that not only encompass the *Abdāls of Rūm* but also substantiates Hacı Bektāş's authority over other saints in the region. Within these narratives, Hacı Bektāş manifests miracles (*kerāmet*) surpassing those attributed to other saints, thereby compelling their allegiance to him. Notably, encounters with Mevlevī dervishes underscore their acknowledgment of Hacı Bektāş's authority, borne out of the miracles they witness. The compiler

⁷⁴ Soileau, *Humanist Mystics*, 153.

⁷⁵ *Velāyet-nāme*, 60–61, Karakaya-Stump, *The Kızılbaş/ Alevi*, 151; Soileau, *Humanist Mystics*, 155.

⁷⁶ *Velāyet-nāme*, 84–87. Soileau, *Humanist Mystics*, 154.

⁷⁷ *Velāyet-nāme*, 156–65. When Hacı Bektash arrived in Rum, the *Abdals of Rum* have not constituted a distinct group with defining characteristics, yet. In the *Vilayetname*, the group Hacı Bektas claim authority is referred to as *Rum erenleri*, the Saints of Rum. For the discussion of Rum erenleri, see Rıza Yıldırım, *Hacı Bektas Veli'den Balım Sulṭān'a Bektaşılığın Doğuşu* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2019), 137-188. This group formed a specific dervish community in the latter half of the fifteenth and the sixteenth century. For the *Abdāls of Rūm*, see Karamustafa, ‘Ḳalenders, Abdāls, Ḳayderīs, 121–9; Karamustafa, *Vāḫidī's Menākıb-ı Ḳoca-i Cihān ve Netīce-i Cān: Critical Edition and Analysis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, 1993); Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*. For the doctrines of Abdāls of Rūm, see Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*.

of these narratives exhibits awareness of accounts found in Eflaki's *Menāqibu'l 'Ārifin*, predating the *Velāyetnāme*, evident through references made in the later. In light of this, Soileau claims, that the *Velāyetnāme* might be composed as a responsive engagement with the *Menāqibu'l 'Ārifin*.⁷⁸

The text also illustrates various strategies for proving and establishing Ḥacı Bektāş's authority as an acclaimed saint. In addition to demonstrating miracles against other saints, he substantiates his authority over ordinary people through his penetrating gaze (*naẓar*). Using this profound gaze, he rescues individuals from afflictions that befell them after displaying miracles. In this manner, he would attract admirers (*muḥibb*) and disciples (*murīd*) to himself.⁷⁹ As an additional approach, he sends deputies to other regions, through which his ideals and reputation as a great saint spread.

In a comparative analysis between the *Velāyetnāme* and early period sources, it is discernible that the *Velāyetnāme* delineates a more intricate and lively portrayal of Ḥacı Bektāş. Notably, this source diverges from antecedent accounts originating from diverse contexts, offering insights into his persona.

In addition, in the *Velāyetnāme*, a prominent disparity lies in the attribution of Ḥacı Bektāş's spiritual lineage, which is traced back not to the Bābāi' but to Aḥmed Yesevī, a Sufi figure from Central Asia. This thematic matter has been subject to meticulous examination and discourse by scholars specializing in the realms of Sufism and historical inquiry. Mehmet Fuat Köprülü took the lead in this regard. In his work, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar*, Köprülü pointed out initially the chronological implausibility of a master-disciple relationship between the Aḥmed Yesevī and Ḥacı Bektāş, given that Aḥmed Yesevī passed away before Ḥacı Bektāş's birth. Then, he suggested an alternative perspective, proposing that Ḥacı Bektāş would be an ecstatic Qalandarī dervish.⁸⁰ According to him, spiritual genealogies (*silsila*) connecting Ḥacı Bektāş to Aḥmed Yesevī were later fabricated to capitalize on the fame of the renowned Central Asian mystic. Köprülü believed that this mystic's fame was brought into Anatolia by the influx of Yesevī dervishes following the Mongol invasions.⁸¹

One reason troubling Köprülü to accept the validity of the genealogies linking Ḥacı Bektāş to Aḥmed Yesevī was related to reputation of Aḥmad Yesevī as a Sufi master who followed Sharia.

⁷⁸ Soileau, *Humanist Mystics*, 156-57.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 158-159.

⁸⁰ Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash/Alevis*, 152.

⁸¹ Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar*, 48–59, 110–118; Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash/Alevis*, 152.

The traditional view of Aḥmed Yesevī, who adhered to Sharia principles, appeared to clash with the characterization of Ḥacı Bektāş as a successor with nonconformist practices. Köprülü eventually changed his ideas on this issue. Although he was content about the certainty of a historical connection between Aḥmed Yesevī and Ḥacı Bektāş, Köprülü later contended that such portrayal of Aḥmed Yesevī was likely an invention originating from Naqshbandi sources. He posited that Yesevī’s genuine spiritual outlook was actually more aligned with that of Ḥacı Bektāş.⁸²

Nevertheless, recent research has challenged Köprülü’s theories and views on Aḥmed Yesevī, disputing them in light of new evidence that has come to light. Devin DeWeese pioneered challenging Köprülü’s theories. While claiming a possibility of master-disciple relation between Ḥacı Bektāş and Aḥmed Yesevī, he denied the existence of large number of Yesevī dervishes in Anatolia.⁸³ Ahmet Karamustafa, agreeing upon the fact that Ḥacı Bektāş would be an appointee of Aḥmed Yesevī, also denied the larger number of Yesevī presence in Anatolia. He suggested that it is logical to consider that Ḥacı Bektāş, having cultivated his Sufi identity in a shared cultural milieu with Aḥmed Yesevī, might have drawn influence from him. However, it is not rational to attempt to subsume Ḥacı Bektāş's robust Sufi identity, as a formidable personality akin to Aḥmed Yesevī, within the still-developing Yesevī identity. Karamustafa also suggested reconsidering the notion that Ḥacı Bektāş was a ‘disciple’ of Baba Ilyās. The primary support for this argument is found in Eflaki's *Menāqibu'l 'Ārifin*, where Ḥacı Bektāş is mentioned only once as 'the favorite disciple.' However, Āşıkpaşazāde and Elvan Çelebi do not explicitly identify Ḥacı Bektāş as Baba Ilyās's ‘disciple’, even though they themselves are descendants of the latter. Therefore, according to his perspective, Ḥacı Bektāş was not a follower of the Yesevī Order or associated with the Wafā’is or transitioned from being a Yesevī or Ḥaydarī to becoming a Wafā’i.⁸⁴

Ayfer Karakaya-Stump suggest, on the other hand, that the rationale behind the early sources portraying Ḥacı Bektāş initially within the Bābā’i/Wafā’i tradition and subsequently, that of Yesevī, may be the flexible nature of Sufi affiliations. This was especially evident in the thirteenth century, a period when various Sufi traditions were still evolving and had not yet been

⁸² M. Fuad Köprülü, “Ahmed Yesevī”, *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1965); Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash/Alevis*, 153.

⁸³ DeWeese, ‘Foreword’, viii–xxvii.

⁸⁴ Karamustafa, *Origins of Anatolian Sufism*, 82-83.

fully formalized into unique orders.⁸⁵ According to Karakaya-Stump it is entirely possible that Hacı Bektāş came to Anatolia with Yesevī affiliation but received a second initiation from Baba İlyās, or at least intermingled with the Bābā'i/Wafā'i circles in his new milieu. As she states, a thorough examination of the *Velāyetnāme* reveals the presence of Hacı Bektāş within dynamic Sufi communities. Thus, it is rational to interpret the narratives as reflective of Hacı Bektāş's evolving Sufi surroundings, coinciding with his journey from Khorasan to Turkistan and subsequently to Anatolia. The *Velāyetnāme* focuses specifically Hacı Bektāş's interaction with the *Abdāls of Rūm*, one of the many dervish groups in Anatolia. The emphasis placed on this interaction in the narratives suggests that the thirteenth-century western Anatolian frontier context had a more significant formative influence than Hacı Bektāş's likely Central Asian and Yesevī origins in shaping the substance of his tangible or perceived spiritual legacy.⁸⁶

The *Velāyetnāme*, stands as the most comprehensive source elucidating not only Hacı Bektāş's sectarian position but also offering insights into his spiritual character. It is noteworthy to remember that the compilation of the saint's sacred vita aligns with the historical transition from the Ottoman *Beylik* to an empire, marking the onset of centralization, which concurrently reflected itself also in the consolidation of religious authority.⁸⁷ In this context, as elucidated by Mark Soileau, the religious portrayal of Hacı Bektāş in the *Velāyetnāme* diverges from the absolute antinomian and heteroprax dervish profile prevalent in earlier narratives. Instead, it presents an intricate understanding of Hacı Bektāş's religious creed, characterized by nuanced references regarding adherence to or deviation from Sharī'a. Soileau interprets this nuanced situation through the conceptual framework of 'esopraxy' and 'exopraxy', suggesting that, in the *Velāyetnāme*, within a paradigm where the worldview is dichotomized into the esoteric (*bāṭın*) and the exoteric (*zāhir*), Hacı Bektāş's religious characteristic is ambiguous, though it can be interpreted through the secret, hidden and inner praxis.⁸⁸

This ambiguity surrounding Hacı Bektāş's spiritual view and understanding becomes a focal point for various scholars who offer interpretations influenced by their individual political

⁸⁵ Cemal Kafadar uses the term "metadoxy" to mark this period as beyond doxies, in which neither orthodoxy nor heterodoxy was strictly solidified. See Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 71–76.

⁸⁶ Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash/Alevis*, 154–155.

⁸⁷ For this process, see Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography*.

⁸⁸ Soileu, 'Conforming Haji Bektash', 430–31.

and religious perspectives. In this regard, the *Maqālāt*⁸⁹, a text ascribed to Ḥacı Bektāş, warrants specific attention. It is presented as a compilation of concise treatises, purportedly authored either by Ḥacı Bektāş himself or, more plausibly, conveyed orally by him and transcribed by his disciples. The earliest extant prose version dates to the fifteenth century. Its recognition as an authentic portrayal of Ḥacı Bektāş's religious identity as orthopraxy, Sunni, and sharī'a-abiding, particularly within the realm of divinity schools, is underscored by its explicit references to sharī'a, namāz, and fasting.⁹⁰

These two distinct types of portrayals of Ḥacı Bektāş continue to generate controversy among scholars to this day. However, irrespective of his social and sectarian affiliation and religious orientation, one can assert that in the thirteenth century, Ḥacı Bektāş arrived in the dynamic and tumultuous Anatolia, establishing residence in Sulucakarahöyük. He sustained his life there, and his mausoleum is situated in the same locality. Concurrent with the expansion of his shrine complex and the proliferation of his disciples, a cult emerged around his doctrines and personal identity. By the latest in the fifteenth century, his legacy and spiritual tenets were widely recognized across a substantial portion of the Balkans and Anatolia, facilitated by his dervishes or designated legatees. The conveyors of his ideas orchestrated a gradual transformation of Ḥacı Bektāş from a saint cult figure to an eponym of systematized Sufi order.

1.2. Ḥacı Bektāş's Offspring

Ḥacı Bektāş's alleged descent is closely tied to debates concerning whether he was married or had children. Two groups have asserted their claim to the inheritance of Ḥacı Bektāş's legacy, each claiming to be either his biological or spiritual progeny. According to the latter faction, referred to as the Babagān branch of the Bektashi order, Ḥacı Bektāş remained celibate, thereby having solely spiritual heirs. On the other hand, the Dedegān branch of the order, formed under the guidance of the Çelebi family⁹¹, proclaimed to be the saint's biological heirs. The Ottomans officially

⁸⁹ For *Maqalat* see M. Es'ad Cosan, *Hacı Bektâs-i Velî ve Bektâsîlik* (Istanbul: Server İletisim, 2013). For editions of *Makalat* in Turkish see Hacı Bektas-i Veli, *Makâlât*, ed. Esad Cosan (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1996); Hünkâr Hacı Bektâs-i Velî, *Makâlât*, ed. Ali Yılmaz, Mehmet Akkus and Ali Öztürk (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2007); Hacı Bektas Veli, "Makâlât," ed. Ömer Özkan and Malik Bankir in Giyasettin Aytas (ed.), *Hacı Bektas Velî Külliyyati* (Ankara: Gazi Üniversitesi Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektas Veli Arastırma Merkezi, 2010), 473-767.

⁹⁰ For a comprehensive analysis of *Maqālāt* and discussions of its authenticity by modern scholars, see Soileu, 'Conforming Haji Bektash', 449-458.

⁹¹ For Çelebi family, see Yıldırım, *Bektaşiliğin Doğuşu*, 250-261; Rıza Yıldırım, 'The Bektashiyya, The Formative Period 1250-1516', in ed. Lloyd Ridgeon, *Routledge Handbook on Sufism*, (NY: Roudledge, 2021), 223.

acknowledged the Çelebi family's *sayyid* status and being the biological descendants of Hacı Bektâş, granting them recognition as spiritual leaders and entrusting them with the administrative responsibilities of the tekke's endowment (*waqf*) as trustees (*mütevelli*).⁹²

Early records related to the Çelebi family can be found in archival documents. Beldiceanu-Steinherr's research, which relies on tax registers from the fifteenth century, shows that agricultural and nomadic communities affiliated with the waqf were required to allocate half of their taxes to the waqf and the remaining half to members of the Çelebi family. These documents not only demonstrate an administrative and fiscal relationship between the individuals and the Çelebi family but also suggest spiritual and tribal ties.⁹³ People associated with Hacı Bektâş *waqf* were registered as members of the Bektâşlu tribe. As proposed by Beldiceanu-Steinherr, it is probable that members of this tribe were relatives of the Çelebi family.⁹⁴ The recognition by Ottoman authorities of these individuals as dependents of the Hacı Bektâş tekke, and thus as hereditary adherents of the Çelebi family, lends support to this hypothesis.

The Çelebi family was represented by Maḥmūd Çelebi in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century.⁹⁵ Different records indicate that Maḥmūd Çelebi held both the role of sheikh of the tekke and a notable position within the Ottoman administrative-military class, referred to as *askerî*.⁹⁶ Consequently, he functioned both as the sheikh of the tekke and oversaw its waqf administration and also fulfilled tax collection duties, as a member of the administrative-military class.⁹⁷ Same Maḥmūd Çelebi is also mentioned in the hagiography of Otman Baba and 'Āşıkpaşazâde's *Tevâriḥ*. Otman Baba's hagiographer and disciple Köçek Abdâl tells the story of Maḥmūd Çelebi's visit of Otman Baba in İstanbul. Accordingly, Otman Baba regards Maḥmūd Çelebi with disfavor, due to his mode of dress, *turban, and robe*, which do not suit his name, inferring his master's (Hacı Bektâş) antinomian tendencies.⁹⁸ 'Āşıkpaşazâde also mentions him as the son of Resûl Çelebi and descendant of Hacı Bektâş. He also is presented as a sheikh who has myriads of dervishes affiliated with him.⁹⁹

⁹² Yıldırım, 'The Bektashiyya', 223.

⁹³ See, Irene Beldiceanu-Steinherr, 'Osmanlı Tapu-Tahrir Defterleri Işığında Bektaşiler (XV.-XVI. Yüzyıllar),' *Alevilik-Bektaşilik Araştırmaları Dergisi*, sayı: 3, (2010), 130-187; *ibid*, 224.

⁹⁴ Beldiceanu-Steinherr, *Osmanlı Tapu-Tahrir*; Yıldırım, 'The Bektashiyya', 221.

⁹⁵ Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography*, 33-34.

⁹⁶ Yıldırım, 'The Bektashiyya', 224.

⁹⁷ Beldiceanu-Steinherr, 24, 36.

⁹⁸ *Otman Baba Velâyet-nâmesi (Tenkitli Metin)* ed. Filiz Kılıç, Mustafa Arslan, and Tuncay Bülbül, (Ankara: Bahar Kitabevi, 2007), 242-44; Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography*, 72-73.

⁹⁹ 'Āşıkpaşazâde, 206.

According to Rıza Yıldırım's new findings, Maḥmūd Çelebi was also listed in *inamat defterleri* recorded between 1503 and 1527, and received gifts and grants from the royal treasury.¹⁰⁰ Registered as "Maḥmūd Çelebi, son of Ḥacı Bektāş" in this record, he was granted four times between 1504 and 1512, each totaling 2000 *akçe*. Maḥmūd Çelebi's brother, 'Alī Çelebi, and a direct relative İskender Çelebi were also listed in the aforementioned registers, receiving substantial grants multiple times between 1506 and 1512.¹⁰¹

By the latter half of the fifteenth century at the latest, the Çelebi family were acknowledged as the progeny and lawful successors of Ḥacı Bektāş, both as a sheikh family and as one integrated into the Ottoman administrative system. The Çelebi family members, who assumed the role of sheikhs due to the prestige associated with being descendants of Ḥacı Bektāş, were instrumental in the formation of the Bektashi Order. They continued to benefit from these privileges until 1826, the year of the abolition of Janissary corps along with the closure of Bektashi tekkes. Nonetheless, their relationship with the Ottomans continued with ups and downs even after the ban of Bektashism.

1.3. The Bektashis and Abdāls of Rūm

The Bektashis as a distinct dervish group is a rare encounter in early sources. The appearance of the Bektashis as an identifiable group is initially documented in the last part of chronicle of Āşıkpaşazāde, completed circa 1480. In this section, Āşıkpaşazāde challenged the assertion of the that Ḥacı Bektāş was associated with the founding of the Janissary corps. The subsequent mention of the Bektashis is found in a treatise titled as *Menāqıb-ı Ḥoca-i Cihān ve Netīce-i Cān*¹⁰², dated 1522, authored by a Zeyni dervish residing in Bursa who wrote under the pseudonym Vāḥidī. Vāḥidī, in his work, regards Bektashis as one of eight groups of dervishes whom he deems deviant from the authentic Sufī path. Vāḥidī expresses significant criticism towards six groups of antinomian dervishes- Qalandarīs, Abdāls of Rūm, Ḥaydarīs, Cāmīs, Bektashis, Shams-i Tabrīzīs, Edhemīs, and Mevlevīs —while he finds the practices of the last two groups acceptable to a certain extent.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Yıldırım, 'The Bektashiyya', 225.

¹⁰¹ Ibid; Yıldırım, *Bektaşiliğin Doğuşu*, 250-53.

¹⁰² Karamustafa, *Vāḥidī's Menāqıb-ı Ḥoca-i Cihān ve Netīce-i Cān*.

¹⁰³ Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography*, 28.

According to his portrayal, the Bektashis were far from being a Sufi order and not even constituting the largest group among other dervish groups. They shave their head and face, based on the example of Hacı Bektāş, they wore twelve-gored conical caps of white felt, these caps were split in the front and in the back and ornamented with a button made of Seyyid Gāzī stone. The Bektashi cap featured inscriptions of the names of Allāh, Muḥammad, Alī, Ḥasan, Ḥuseyn. They wear the cap as a symbol of allegiance to Hacı Bektāş. The button represents the human head, for the Bektashis are ‘beheaded dead people’ which indeed means that they abandoned the self and worldly desires. They carry drums, tambourines, and banners. They chant hymns and prayers.¹⁰⁴

Vāhidī also provides a detailed portrayal of the *Abdāls of Rūm*. They were entirely unclothed except for a felt garment (*tennūre*) secured by a belt; their heads and faces were shaved, and their feet were bare. They carried leather pouches, a large yellow spoon, and a dervish bowl. Their regular consumption of hashish and evident fondness for food contrasted with their lack of interest in religious rituals. They carried Abu Muslimi hatchets on one shoulder and Şücāi clubs on the other. They had tattoos of Alī’s sword, Dhu’l-fiqār (Zülfikar), and his name on their bodies. They also have portrayals of snakes on their upper arms. They carried lamps, played tambourines, drums and horns. They cherished ‘Alī and Ḥasan, Ḥuseyn and Twelve imams. Their central assembly point was Seyyid Gāzī convent in Eskişehir.¹⁰⁵

The *Velāyetnāme* represents *abdāls* as constituting part of the dervish community in Hacı Bektāş’s circle. When Hacı Bektāş arrived at Rum, there existed already several *abdāls*. Hacı Bektāş was sent with the purpose of assuming leadership of this saints, nevertheless, he faced challenges in asserting his authority over these dervishes. According to the narrative, upon Hacı Bektāş’s arrival at the border of the land of Rūm, he extended spiritual greetings to the *abdāls* from a distance. However, only Fatīma Bacı, a saintly woman, rose in respect to reciprocate his salutation. Alerted by the news of Hacı Bektāş’s arrival, 57,000 *abdāls* attempt to impede his entry into their territory by using their ‘wings of saintliness’ (*velāyet kanadları*). However, Hacı Bektāş swiftly transformed into a dove, soaring over the barrier, and landing on a rock in Sulucakaraöyük, his feet embedded into the rock, imprinting his mark. Hacı Togrul, one of the *abdāls*, metamorphosed into a hawk and took flight towards Sulucakaraöyük to confront the saint. Before Hacı Togrul can overpower him, Hacı Bektāş reverted to his human form, seized the hawk by the

¹⁰⁴ Karamustafa, *God’s Unruly Friends*, 83-84.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 70-78.

neck, and tightened his grip until he lost consciousness. Upon Hacı Togrul's recovery, Hacı Bektâş reproached him, emphasizing that he approached them in the form of the gentlest creature available, while he, in turn, confronted him in the guise of a cruel creature.¹⁰⁶

However, the remaining saints resisted, prompting Hacı Bektâş to take action. Intuiting their defiance, he exhaled, extinguishing their lamps, rendering them unable to relight them for three days and three nights. Additionally, he took their prayer rugs from underneath them. When they eventually decided to visit Hacı Bektâş, they saw their prayer rugs laid out before him. Humbly, they kissed his hand and settled onto their prayer rugs, expressing their reparation. At that moment, a green document validating Hacı Bektâş's authority manifested. He bestowed blessings upon *abdâls*' headgear, and in return, they each offered him ten disciples.¹⁰⁷

The story of Tapduk Emre's declaration of loyalty also demonstrates a consistent motif with the previous encounters of *abdâls* and Hacı Bektâş. Tapduk Emre, the spiritual master of famous poet Yunus Emre¹⁰⁸, does not want to approach Hacı Bektâş, citing that he had not witnessed anyone named Hacı in the *dost divânı* (gathering of companions), where everybody receives their share (*naşîb*). Only after Hacı reveals a green mole on his palm to prove that he is the reincarnation of Alî's mystery (*sırr*), and he is not the receiver but the distributor of the shares, does Tapduk admit to him.¹⁰⁹ Despite this initial conflict, starting with Hacı Togrul, the *abdâls* eventually recognize the superiority of Hacı Bektâş's sanctity and pay homage to him.

These early *abdâls*, who will later evolve into an autonomous group of dervishes, constituted the primary entity that upheld and propagated the cult of Hacı Bektâş. It is evident from the fact that the followers and dervishes associated with his milieu bear the designation of *abdâl* in their names. Among these dervishes Abdâl Mûsâ¹¹⁰ is a well-known figure. He came to

¹⁰⁶ Duran, *Velâyet-nâme*, 174–85; Soileau, *Humanist Mystics*, 155; Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash/Alevis*, 155-156, Yıldırım, *Bektaşiliğin Doğuşu*, 156-59.

¹⁰⁷ Duran *Velâyet-nâme*, 174–85; Soileau, *Humanist Mystics*, 155.

¹⁰⁸ Yunus Emre is acknowledged as one of the pioneering figures using Western Turkish. He is regarded as the foundational figure in Anatolian Turkish mystical and lyric poetry. Oktay Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 98. The earliest known manuscript of Yunus's poetry dates to the year 940 (1540). See Yunus Emre, *Yunus Emre Dîvânî: Tenkitli Metin*, ed. Mustafa Tatcı (Istanbul: H Yayınları, 2008).

¹⁰⁹ Duran, *Velâyet-nâme*, 185–86; Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash/ Alevis*, 156; Soileau, *Humanist Mystics*, 220.

¹¹⁰ On Abdâl Mûsâ, see Ahmed Refik, "Fatih Zamanında Teke-ili, *Türk Tarih Encümeni Mecmuası* 2/79 (1340): 65-76; Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, "Abdal Musa," in *Türk Halk Edebiyatı Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Burhaneddin Basımevi, 1935), 60-64; İlhan Akçay "Abdal Mûsâ Tekkesi," in *VII. Türk Tarih Kongresi: Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler I* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1972), 360-373; M. Baha Tanman, "Abdal Mûsâ Tekkesi," *TDVİA*, vol 1. 1988; *Abdal Musa Velâyetnâmesi*, ed. Abdurrahman Güzel (Ankara : Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1999) ; Murat Korkmaz (ed.), *Abdal Musa ve Erkâm* (Istanbul : Horasan Yayınları, 2006); Ramazan Uçar, *Alevîlik-Bektaşîlik: Abdal Mûsa Tekkesi Üzerine Sosyolojik Bir Araştırma* (Ankara: Berkan Yayınevi, 2012).

Anatolia from Bukhara before the capture of Bursa with other *abdāl* figures. In his own hagiography, he appears to be a disciple of Hacım Sultān¹¹¹, on the other hand, in the sacred vitas of Hacım Sultān and Hacı Bektāş, he is referred as the *khalife* of Hacı Bektāş and disciple of Kadıncık Ana. Ottoman historians, such as Taşköprizāde, ‘Ālī and Hoca Sa‘deddīn mentions him in the context of the conquest of Bursa. It is also known that he had close ties with the antinomian dervish Geyikli Baba.¹¹² Āşıkpaşazāde also refers to him in relation to Bektashis and Janissaries.¹¹³ As stated by Oktay-Uslu insights from Kaygusuz Abdāl’s poems reveal that Abdāl Mūsā carried a club and addressed to his disciples as *abdāls*. His followers adorned themselves with animal hides, carried dervish bowls, and observed blood-shedding practices during Muḥarram.¹¹⁴

Zeynep Yürekli states that the relatively limited involvement of an authorial process in Abdāl Mūsā’s *Velāyetnāme* differs significantly from other Bektashi hagiographies. The *Velāyetnāme* of Abdāl Mūsā appears to have been transcribed directly from an oral narrative. As she indicates, the manuscript published by Abdurrahman Güzel is replete with incomplete sentences, fragmented thoughts, spelling errors, and annotations. Some of these discrepancies could be attributed to the possible influence of intoxicants used ceremonially by both the storyteller and recorder. According to the assertion of Yürekli, historical records of the annual festival of antinomian dervishes at the Seyyid Ğāzi shrine do acknowledge the communal consumption of substances like hashish and opium, in conjunction with the tradition of crafting legends from oral stories and performing them for audiences under the influence of intoxicants.¹¹⁵

Abdāl Mūsā’s disciple Kaygusuz Abdāl is noteworthy not just for being the first *abdāl* to extensively write, but also for being the first known dervish to refer to himself as Bektashi in his literary compositions. Zeynep Oktay’s in-depth analysis on the writings of Kaygusuz Abdāl demonstrates that his work contains several fundamental elements, such as veneration of Ali and doctrines of Muḥammad-Ali, that later form the religious doctrine of the Bektashis and Alevi. Additionally, there are passages elucidating the doctrine and references to the Twelve Imams, as well as the reverence for the *ahl al-bayt*, the family of the Prophet. These doctrines are seen in the

¹¹¹ See *Velāyetnāme-i Hacım Sultān*, (published as) *Das Vilājet-nāme des Hadschim Sultān: Eine türkische Heiligenlegende*, trans. and ed. Rudolf Tschudi, Türkische Bibliothek, 17 (Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1914).

¹¹² For information regarding Geyikli baba, see Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Geyikli Baba,” *TDVİA*, vol. 14, 1996, 45-7.

¹¹³ ‘Āşık Pāşazāde, *Tevārīḥ-i Āl-i ‘Osmān*, 205.

¹¹⁴ Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 20.

¹¹⁵ Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography*, 69.

earliest in Kaygusuz Abdāl's work, which makes him one of the pioneering key figures in Bektashism and Alevism.¹¹⁶

Kaygusuz's connection to Hacı Bektāş (d. ca. 669/1270-71) can be identified through his mentor Abdāl Mūsā, who was a follower (*muhibb*) of Hacı Bektāş's spiritual daughter, Hātūn Ana (also known as Kadıncık Ana).¹¹⁷ Kaygusuz and his mentor hold two seats within the Bektashi *meydān* (ceremonial room), where their roles appear as *naķīb* (*registrar and assistant to the mürşid*) and *ayakçı* (*caretaker of shoes and responsible for domestic tasks like cleaning*).¹¹⁸ Kaygusuz also established a lodge in Egypt, which was one of the four lodges Bektashi recognized with the rank of *khalīfa*.¹¹⁹

Two distinct features, opting to write in Turkish language and having dissenting viewpoint on mainstream Sufism situates Kaygusuz Abdāl within the antinomian Sufi traditions of Anatolia.¹²⁰ His literary works stand as the earliest authoritative evidence of the tenets of the Bektashis and the *Abdālān-ı Rūm*. They offer valuable analysis into various facets of the genesis of Bektashism, encompassing the evolution of the doctrine of Alī, the establishment of the doctrine of the Four Gates (*dört kapı*), and other foundational aspects. Additionally, these writings illuminate the nature of Hürüfî¹²¹ influence and elucidate the teachings that mark both continuity and deviation from the institutionalized Bektashism and *abdāl* thought in subsequent centuries.¹²²

One can find clear antinomian tendencies in his writings. There are references to practices such as semah, begging, and the use of intoxicants. His poems reveal that he shaved his head and face, donned a felt cloak (*kepenek*) and a cap (*börk*), and carried a horn (*nefir*).¹²³ As Oktay-Uslu uncovered, his Sufi teachings, which are different in nature, address both the public, and lodge and

¹¹⁶ Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 13.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 11.

¹¹⁸ Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography*, 38; Birge, *The Bektashi Order*, 178–9.

¹¹⁹ Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 12.

¹²⁰ Karamustafa, "Kaygusuz Abdal: A Medieval Turkish Saint and the Formation of Vernacular Islam in Anatolia" in Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (ed.), *Unity in Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam*, (Leiden- Boston: Brill, 2014), 329- 342; Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 12.

¹²¹ For an overview of Bektashi-Hürüfî relations, see Birge, 148–159; Hamid Algar, "The Hürüfî Influence on Bektashism," in Alexandre Popovic and Gilles Veinstein (eds), *Bektachiyya: Études sur l'ordre mystique des Bektachis et les groupes relevant de Hadji Bektach* (Istanbul: Éditions Isis, 1995); For Hurufism in general, see Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Hurufi Metinleri Kataloğu* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1973); Shahzad Bashir, *Fazlallah Astarabadi and the Hurufis* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005); Fatih Usluer (ed), *Hurufi Metinleri I* (Ankara: Birleşik Yayınları, 2014), Orkhan Mir-Kasimov, *Words of Power, Hürüfî Teachings between Shi'ism and Sufism in Medieval Islam: The Original Doctrine of Faḍl Allāh Astarābādī* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2015).

¹²² Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 12-13.

¹²³ Regarding the attire of Kaygusuz Abdāl, see Abdurrahman Güzel, *Kaygusuz Abdāl Divânı*, (Ankara: MEB, 2010), 358-359.

dervish milieus. The ones for the general public reflect the didactic tone, while the ones for the dervish environments highlight the doctrinal teachings, including esoteric knowledge.¹²⁴ His changing audience and addressing strategies can be attributed to his background as an educated person and the son of the Bey of Ala'ıye.

Following the acquisition of his *icāzetnāme* (spiritual authorization) from his master's tekke in the village of Elmalı, Kaygusuz embarked on a journey to Egypt, and established a dervish lodge using his individual name. References in his poetry to Balkan place names suggest that Kaygusuz either traveled to the Balkans or resided there for a period. His hagiography narrates his pilgrimage to Mecca and the cities he visited upon his return, including sacred places like Kufa, Najaf, and Karbala. His hagiography also provides a detailed account of his journey to Egypt and his meeting with the Egyptian Sulṭān.¹²⁵

Another dervish associated with Abdāl Mūsā, Seyyid Alī Sulṭān (also known as Kızıldeli), stands out as a notable exemplar of the warrior-dervish typology within Bektashi history. Serving as the *khalife* and disciple of Abdāl Mūsā, Seyyid Alī Sulṭān was associated with the Wafā/Bābā'ı milieu and the Khorasan School. He and his dervishes actively participated with Süleyman Paşa, the son of Orhan Bey, in the conquest of Rumelia. Subsequently, Murat I bestowed upon him a designated area in Dimetoka (Didymoteicho), where Kızıldeli established his own lodge. Archival sources unequivocally affirm the existence of the lodge at that location by no later than the year 1402. This lodge stands as one of the lively and central lodges of its era in Rumelia.¹²⁶

The significance of his tekke lies in its pivotal role in nurturing some of the most notable and recognized figures in Abdāl-Bektashi history. One of the most significant among them is Şādık Abdāl, who resided in the lodge, and eyewitnessed to the occurrences within the tekke. His place should be specially valued because, in his poetry from the fifteenth century, he appears as the first abdāl to mention a certain 'Bektashi Path' (*rāh-ı Bektāşi, Bektāşi ıarıqı*) along with the “the tekke of the Bektāşis” (*Bektāşiyanın tekyesi*) and the “Bektāşi crown/cap” (*tāc-ı Bektāşi*).¹²⁷ However, the concepts of *tevellā* (affection for the ahl al-bayt) and *teberrā* (dissociation from the ahl al-

¹²⁴ Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 17.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 18.

¹²⁶ Yıldırım, *Bektaşiliğin Doğuşu*, 115-116, 221-231. Also see Rıza Yıldırım, *Seyyid Ali Sulṭān (Kızıldeli) ve Velāyetnāmesi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2007); Rıza Yıldırım, ‘History Beneath Clouds of Legend: Seyyid Ali Sulṭān and his Place in Early Ottoman History according to Legends, Narratives, and Archival Evidence, *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 15/1-2 (2009) :21-62. Rıza Yıldırım, “Muhabbetten Tariqata: Bektaşî Tariqatı'nın Oluşum Sürecinde Kızıldeli'nin Rolü,” *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi* 53 (2010): 153-190.

¹²⁷ Yıldırım, *Bektaşiliğin Doğuşu*, 126; Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 134; Soileau, *Humanist Mystics*, 161.

bayt's adversaries), common in Shi'ite practices, are not evident in Şādık Abdāl's *Dīvān*. The absence of these concepts, along with the non-inclusion of Hūrūfī doctrine, suggests that these doctrinal elements were not widespread in *abdāl* doctrine during the fifteenth century.¹²⁸ Şādık Abdāl's *Dīvān*¹²⁹ primarily comprises didactic poems designed to enlighten the fundamental principles of the Bektashi path to lay followers and novices. Therefore, while not targeting individuals in the highest spiritual echelons, it is not directed towards society as a whole but specifically addresses those with some connection to the Bektashi environment.¹³⁰

In his poetic works, Şādık Abdāl references figures such as Hacı Bektāş, Abdāl Mūsā, Kaygusuz Abdāl, and Otman Baba (d. 883/1478). Hacı Bektāş, Abdāl Mūsā, and Seyyid Alī Sultān are closely associated in the poetry of Şādık Abdāl. The secret (*sirr*) of Hacı Bektāş was transmitted to Abdāl Mūsā, who, in turn, passed it on to Seyyid Alī Sultān. Following Seyyid Alī Sultān's demise, this secret was transferred to Otman Baba, who assumed the role of the *Qutb* (pole) during that period. However, Şādık Abdāl does not refer to him in another place, implying and signaling us that Otman Baba is not included in 'Bektashi spiritual lineage.'¹³¹

Notably, there is a remarkable lack of mentions to prominent sixteenth century personalities like Balım Sultān or Aқыazılı Sultān within his poetry. Despite the sole extant copy of the *Dīvān* being dated 1155 (1742), the omission of references to noteworthy Bektashi figures who postdate Şādık Abdāl's era serves to illustrate the probable lack of major revisions conducted by the copyist or preceding transcribers.¹³² Şādık Abdāl was undoubtedly highly educated, potentially surpassing the educational level of many of his contemporaneous *abdāls*. The density of Arabic and Persian language in his works serves as substantiation for this assertion.¹³³

One becomes aware of his antinomian inclinations, evident in his frequent criticisms of ascetics and clerics. He censures ascetics for aspiring to attain sanctity through rigorous discipline and ritual worship, accusing them of corruption and being entangled in worldly values. He warns readers to steer clear of those who hypocritically engage in daily prayers. Emphasizing the

¹²⁸ Oktay Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 134.

¹²⁹ See Şādık Abdāl, *Sādık Abdāl Dīvānı*, ed. Dursun Gümüšoğlu (Istanbul: Horasan Yayınları, 2009).

¹³⁰ Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 131-133.

¹³¹ Yıldırım, *Bektaşiliğin Doğuşu*, 127- 129. Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 132.

¹³² Yıldırım, *Muhabbetten Tarikata*, 159; Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 132.

¹³³ Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 133.

significance of discernment, he highlights the need to differentiate false Sufis, sheikhs, and dervishes who merely feign excessive asceticism for public display.¹³⁴

The presence of antinomian tendencies among most *abdāls* and their resistance to institutionalization slowed their integration into a centralized Bektashi order. Despite being in the same Sufi circles as Bektashis, it seems that, as the authentic Bektashi path took shape, a faction of *abdāls* emerged to resist it. This group sought to preserve its creed in the face of the propaganda propagated, most probably, by the Bektashi dervishes. Otman Baba held the leadership of these group of *abdāls*. The *Velāyetnāme* of Otman Baba clearly illustrates a discernible competition between the *abdāls* of Otman Baba and Bektashi dervishes affiliated with the Kızıldeli lodge. Köçek Abdāl, a disciple of Otman Baba and hagiographer of his sacred vita, portrays him as a fearless supporter of antinomian tendencies and a critic of worldly concerns and appearances. Many episodes in his hagiography clearly indicate this. For instance, one day, during a gathering in Vardar Yenicesi, Otman Baba reproaches Bāyezid Baba, refraining from attending a meeting where he has invited all the Hacı Bektāş dervishes in Rumelia. Instead, Otman Baba choses to dress in sheepskin, adopting a more ascetic appearance.¹³⁵ As mentioned before, another episode depicts his confrontational response to Maḥmūd Çelebi, who was the biological descendant of Hacı Bektāş: A gathering of dervishes pays Otman baba a visit in Istanbul, identifying themselves as followers of Hacı Bektāş. Otman Baba declines to meet with the leader of the group, Maḥmūd Çelebi, whom he perceived as a fraud.¹³⁶ He specifically criticized the *turban* and *khaftān* (robe) worn by him, considering it a symbol of an established religious scholar or Sufi with connections to state authority and a focus on material acquisitions. From Otman baba's perspective, such a *hāl* (state) does not suit Çelebi's name and reputation,¹³⁷ which is totally against the antinomian principles of Hacı Bektāş. Maḥmūd Çelebi is the same person appeared as being the brother of Balım Sultān somewhere else and whose adherent criticized by Āşıkpaşazāde for their devilish customs such as the indulgence in intoxicants.¹³⁸

Otman Baba's *Velāyetnāme* distinguishes itself among the hagiographies of the period, not only due to the tensions prevalent between Bektashi and *abdāl* factions but also considering the

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ *Otman Baba Velāyet-nāmesi*, 58-64.

¹³⁶ *ibid*, 242-243.

¹³⁷ *ibid*. 'Başında dülbendine bağı kaftanına bağı ki ol ad u şanına niçe yaraşur'. Kaygusuz Abdal also considers this kind of dress code as hypocrisy when it is deployed as piety. See, Karamustafa, 'Kaygusuz Abdal', 333.

¹³⁸ Aşıkpaşazade, 206.

heightened political discord involving the Ottoman dynasty and its representatives. At the time Otman Baba was brought to Istanbul for interrogation, he scolded a Janissary (*pādiṣāh kulu*) accompanying him for not recognizing the baba's real identity. In an occasion, Otman Baba asks to Janissary about the owner of the sword in his belly and the headgear on his head. Janissary responds that the headgear is the cap of Ḥacı Bektāṣ, and the sword is the sword of Alī. Otman baba says with nerve, 'Look at me, you despicable things, who do you think *this* person sitting here is', hinting that he is the *sırr* of Ḥacı Bektāṣ and Imam Alī.¹³⁹

One of the emphasized aspects in the hagiography of Otman baba is the relationship between Otman Baba and Fātiḥ Sulṭān Mehmed. Otman Baba, attempting to gain influence over Sulṭān Mehmed since his princely years, reportedly introduced himself in a dream claiming to have come to the Rūm lands to make him the emperor. From the expressions of Köçek Abdāl, it is felt that Otman Baba, while acknowledging Sulṭān Mehmed as the ruler, endeavored to emphasize that he himself was the Pole governing the universe and that nothing would happen without his control. Indeed, he considered himself responsible for the deeds of Sulṭān Mehmed, and this understanding marked their relationship more than anything else. For instance, as stated in his hagiography, when Sulṭān Mehmed planned to campaign to Belgrade, Otman Baba advised him against it, predicting failure if he proceeded. Although Sulṭān Mehmed initially reacted strongly to this advice, the campaign ended in failure, and he had to acknowledge Otman Baba's superiority.¹⁴⁰

Otman Baba's conflicts with the authorities did not hinder him from backing Mehmed's military campaigns. According to Yürekli, this is intriguing, because it is evident that neither Otman Baba nor his disciple/hagiographer Köçek Abdāl held Mehmed in high regard. From their perspective, the Sultan was merely fortunate to have the aid of *ghāzīs* and saints. As Yürekli suggested, in fact, Otman baba extended his support not directly to Mehmed but to the *ghāzīs*. He particularly endorsed the actions of the raider commander Mihaloğlu Alī Bey, who, a decade after the completion of the text, spearheaded the reconstruction of Seyyid Ġāzī's mausoleum.¹⁴¹

Yemīnī is a one of the central figures among the dervishes affiliated with the Otman Baba. Most of the information concerning him is derived from his treatise, the *Fazīletnāme*¹⁴². Two other

¹³⁹ *Otman Baba Velāyet-nāmesi*, 202; Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography*, 72.

¹⁴⁰ *Otman Baba Velāyet-nāmesi*, 38-42.

¹⁴¹ Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography*, 73.

¹⁴² Dervîş Muhammed Yemīnī. *Fazīlet-nāme*, ed. Yusuf Tepeli. (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 2002).

works that mention him are the hagiography of Demir Baba¹⁴³ and Vîrânî's *Faqrnâme*.¹⁴⁴ He was known as Dervîş Muḥammad and carried the alias Hâfızoğlu, denoting him as the son of a Qur'ân keeper. Yemînî designates Otman Baba as the pole (kütüb), with Akyazılı Sultân¹⁴⁵ succeeding him in this position. This reveals Yemînî's affiliation with Akyazılı Sultân's *abdâl* circle.¹⁴⁶ Yemînî makes no mention of Hacı Bektâş or Balım Sultân, eventhough it is known that he lived in the mutual circle with the Bektashis.¹⁴⁷ In the hagiography of Demir Baba, a successor to Akyazılı Sultân, Yemînî is acknowledged with titles such as *hâfız-ı kelâm* (the keeper of the divine word) and *efendi*, highlighting his educated status and his role as a guardian of the Qur'ân.¹⁴⁸ According to Yemînî's claim, he translated *Fazîletnâme* from a Persian prose manuscript authored by a figure known as sheikh Rükneddîn. The manuscript delineates the outstanding attributes of Alî across nineteen sections, extolling Alî and the Twelve Imams.¹⁴⁹

In the *Fazîlet-nâme*, Yemînî outlines his audience as those adhering to the sunnah (*ehl-i sünnet*), devotees of the Prophet's family (*muḥibb-i ḥānedān*), and the warriors engaged in *ghazā* in the land of Rūm.¹⁵⁰ The narratives predominantly unfold around supernatural entities, with Alî consistently portrayed as the paramount figure, compelling others to bow before Islam on every occasion. He has more physical strength than all other living creatures combined, is superior to the other three caliphs and some of the earlier prophets, and along with the Twelve Imams is true successor of Prophet Muḥammad. His work also includes narratives about the prophet's ascension and touches on the theme of companionship known as *mūsāhiplik* in Alevism. It also contains concepts such as the light of Muḥammad-Alî, *nubuvvet* (prophethood), and *velāyet* (sainthood).

¹⁴³ See *Demir Baba Velāyetnâmesi: İnceleme -Tenkitli Metin*, Filiz Kılıç and Tuncay Bülbül (ed.) (Ankara: Grafiker Yayınları, 2011); Nevena Gramatikova, The Vilayet-name of Demir Baba as a Source on the History of Unorthodox Islam in North-Eastern Bulgaria, *Folklor/ Edebiyat*, Cilt VIII, Sayı, XXIX, (2002),295-300.; Baha Tanman, 'Demir Baba Tekkesi,' *TDVİA* Vol. 9. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1994), 150-151.

¹⁴⁴ See Vîrânî Abdal, *Faqrnâme*, ed. Fatih Usluer (İstanbul: Revak Yayınları, 2015); Vîrânî Abdal, *Risāle-i Vîrânî Abdāl*, in Fatih Usluer (ed), *Hurufî Metinleri I* (Ankara: Birleşik Yayınları, 2014)

¹⁴⁵ For Akyazılı Sultân and his lodge, see Semavi Eyice, "Varna ile Balçık Arasında Akyazılı Sultân Tekkesi," *TTK Belleten* 31/124 (1967): 551-600; Kamil Dürüst; "Varna'da Akyazılı Sultân Tekkesi," *Vakıflar Dergisi* 20 (1988): 443-452. Semavi Eyice, "Akyazılı Sultân Âsitânesi," *TDVİA*, Vol. 2 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1989), 302-303; Aynur Koçak, "Akyazılı Sultân ve Tekkesine Folklorik Bir Yaklaşım," *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Velî Araştırma Dergisi* 26 (2003): 223-234.

¹⁴⁶ Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 142.

¹⁴⁷ Yıldırım, 'Abdallar', 72; Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 142-143. This circumstance may be interpreted as indicative of the incomplete amalgamation of the Bektashi and Abdal circles at that time.

¹⁴⁸ Yıldırım, 'Abdallar', 54; Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 143.

¹⁴⁹ İbid.

¹⁵⁰ Yemînî, *Fazîlet-nâme*, 108; Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 143; Yıldırım, 'Abdallar', 63-65. While accepting Rıza Yıldırım's assertion regarding the *Faziletname* being intended for ghazi milieu, Oktay-Uslu underscores that the text's audience does not exclusively center around the ghazi circles in the Balkans.

The Shi'ite customs of *tevellā* and *teberrā* are evident in Yemīnī's *Fazīletnāme*, although they aren't explicitly mentioned as terms and aren't emphasized as frequently or deeply as in the work of Vīrānī. Nevertheless, these mentions suggest that Qizilbash communities formed a significant segment of the intended audience for the *Fazīletnāme*. The geographical and temporal context of Yemīnī's life aligns with the expansion of the Qizilbash movement in Anatolia and the Balkans, alongside the institutionalization of Bektashism. The doctrinal elements present in Yemīnī's work suggest a convergence between the Bektashi and Kızılbaş communities. Consequently, it is imperative to contemplate the elements and intended audience of Yemīnī's work within this framework.

One can also observe influence from Ḥurūfī beliefs in Yemīnī's work, though this influence is not frequently highlighted¹⁵¹. Yemīnī makes only one reference to Faḍlallāh Astarābādī (Fazlullah Esterabadi). He states that Faḍlallāh taught him the knowledge of truth and guided him to the right path. The absence of elements, such as the notion that comprehension of Allāh is contingent upon decoding the symbols embedded in the human face, physique, and cosmos, serves as demonstrative evidence of this assertion.¹⁵² The prevalent components of the Ḥurūfī doctrine in his understanding include the *'ilm-i esmā'* (knowledge of names) and the *ehl-i a'rāf* (those knowledgeable about the a'rāf). The latter term refers to individuals who, through Ḥurūfī science, have unraveled the enigmas of creation and achieved a profound understanding of the truth.¹⁵³ The absence of Ḥurūfī elements in the *Fazīletnāme* as densely as in the existing Ḥurūfī literature provided by Ḥurūfī *dā'īs* (summoner) might be attributed to his desire to avoid persecution, given that it was written during a period when tensions between the Safavids and the Ottomans were at their peak.¹⁵⁴

In his work, Yemīnī critiques three distinct groups but puts them under the same category: the dervishes, the proponents of the official religion, and the extremists who deify Alī. His severe portrayal of the *abdāl* of his era provides substantial insights into the characteristics of the *abdāl* community in the early sixteenth century. These characteristics include the complete shaving of facial hair, rigorous ascetic practices such as sleeping on stones, extensive travel, pilgrimages to Karbala and the Ka'ba, and maintaining favorable relationships with wealthy individuals as well

¹⁵¹ Yıldırım, 'Abdallar', 55-59; Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 150.

¹⁵² Yıldırım, *Bektaşiliğin Doğuşu*, 195.

¹⁵³ Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 150.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 145.

as certain scholars and jurists. In the *Faz̄iletnāme*, Yemīnī describes the relationship with scholars and jurists as a form of veneration towards the Umayyads. His direct critique of the jurists focuses on their issuance of fatwas endorsing executions, acceptance of bribes, and pursuit of wealth.¹⁵⁵

Vīrānī, a well-known *abdāl*, Bektashi and Ḥurūfī, also deserves a mention. We can gather information regarding him from his works, *Risāle*, and *Dīvān*, and the hagiography of Demir baba. The hagiography of Demir Baba presents Vīrānī in a notably hostile light, although some aspects of his depiction align with Vīrānī's temperament from his own writings.¹⁵⁶ Vīrānī is depicted as a genuine poet, proficient in Arabic and Persian. His primary flaw is portrayed as his ambition to attain the esteemed position of pole (Qutb), a role reserved for Demir Baba according to the hagiography. On one occasion, during their encounter, Vīrānī attempts to assert his superiority over Demir Baba, initially through a miracle and later through a horse race, both of which end in Demir Baba's victory. Vīrānī displays rudeness towards Demir Baba and derides him for his perceived lack of education. However, Demir Baba also prevails in a challenge where he is tasked with reciting and interpreting a surah from the Qur'ān. He admonishes Vīrānī for yielding to his base desires and relying excessively on intellect.¹⁵⁷ Following a humiliating defeat by Demir Baba, Vīrānī and his followers depart for the lodge of Otman Baba.¹⁵⁸

Vīrānī authored a treatise in Turkish, known by various titles such as the *Risāle-i Vīrānī Baba*, the *Risāle-i Vīrān Abdāl*, and the *Faqrnāme*. He also compiled a Turkish *Dīvān*¹⁵⁹. Within his treatise and poetry, Vīrānī alludes to several figures including Faḍlallāh Astarābādī, Seyyid Baṭṭāl Ġāzī, Ḥacı Bektāş, Seyyid 'Alī Sultān, Ḳayġusuz Abdāl, Kemāl Ümmī, Yemīnī, Şultān Şücā', Abdāl Mūsā, Otman Baba, Aġyazılı Sultān (referred to as Ḳızıl Veli), Balım Sultān, Ḥamza Baba, Beybaba, and Naşīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (Nasreddīn Tusi). Three works mentioned by Vīrānī are Ḥacı Bektāş's *Maġālāt*, Yemīnī's *Faz̄iletnāme*, and Faḍlallāh's *Cāvidānnāme*. Vīrānī frequently identifies himself as "Urūm Abdālī" (*Abdāl of Rūm*) and designates Aġyazılı Sultān as the leader of his group. However, his mentions of Faḍlallāh Astarābādī outnumber references to any other individual mentioned earlier.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 153.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 162.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. Oktay-Uslu suggest that the prevalence of Ḥurūfī numerical calculations in the *Risāle*, along with Vīrānī's descriptions of Perfect Man may justify Demir Baba's criticism of Vīrānī for excessively relying on intellect to convey his spiritual attainment. *ibid*, 168-69.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 161; Kılıç and Bülbül, *Demir Baba Velāyetnāmesi*, 139-150.

¹⁵⁹ See Vīrānī. *Āşık Vīrānī Divanı*, ed. M. Hâlid Bayrı. (Istanbul: Maarif Kitaphanesi, 1959).

¹⁶⁰ Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 162-163.

As Oktay-Uslu stated, considering Vīrānī's professed admiration for Ḥacı Bektāş and Balım Sulţān, it can be asserted that he was affiliated with the abdāls, Ḥurūfīs, and Bektāşīs. The content of his work reflects a blend of these affiliations. Additionally, Vīrānī occasionally refers to himself as Nuşayrī, Caferi, and Qalandar to highlight his various tendencies. His treatise is a meticulously detailed theoretical work that explores various numerical calculations of the Ḥurūfī tradition. From this evidence, Oktay-Uslu suggests that Ḥurūfī doctrines became integrated into Bektashi thought during the sixteenth century.¹⁶¹

In his poetry, Vīrānī occasionally criticizes the şofu (hypocritical Sufi), vā'iz (preacher), zāhid (ascetic), and faqīh (jurist) for their disparagement of the abdāls. He denounces their hypocrisy, self-importance, excessive pride, and hostility towards Alī. At the same time, Vīrānī also directs his criticism towards the abdāls themselves, accusing some of them of lacking understanding of the essential tenets (erkān) of their faith. He argues that the abdāls of his time have failed to detach from the worldly realm of diversity as they should, remaining entangled through their relationships, possessions, and wealth. He asserts that their public declarations of love for Alī and his family are hypocritical, with their genuine devotion instead focused on their own base desires. Vīrānī underscores the importance of renouncing worldly attachments, identifying this failure as the primary shortcoming of the abdāls of his era. He invokes the concept of blame (melāmet) to emphasize the spiritual attainment achieved through enduring reproach and to highlight the blameworthy nature of the worldly realm that true devotees of God have abandoned.¹⁶²

The concepts of *tevellā* and *teberrā* are widely present throughout Vīrānī's *Risāle* and *Dīvān*, with a notable emphasis on the former. In addition to venerating the Twelve Imams, Vīrānī also places emphasis on the *ahl al-'abā* (People of the Mantle) and the Fourteen Pure Innocents (*çārdeh ma'şūm-ı pāk*). In his *Risāle*, while he emphasizes more the unity of the light of Muḥammad and Alī, his *Dīvān* focuses on more the divinity of Alī. This deification is accompanied by an intricate theoretical framework derived from teachings of Ḥurūfī, Shi'ite, and Sufi origins.¹⁶³

As evidenced by the works of the abdāls, they have established their place within Ottoman society through their general opposition to official representatives of authority—whether religious

¹⁶¹ Ibid. See Gölpınarlı, *Hurufi Metinleri Katalođu*, 29; Algar, *The Ḥurūfī Influence*; Birge, *The Bektashi Order*, 148–159.

¹⁶² Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 165.

¹⁶³ Ibid, 172.

or political—and their antinomian tendencies. Their roles as itinerant dervishes and their possession of fluid and multiple identities allowed them to easily integrate Sufi, Shi'ite and Hürüfî beliefs into their religious understanding. This phenomenon became particularly notable during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, a period marked by the emergence of the Safavids as a state and their intense interactions with the Kızılbaş in Anatolia. During this era, Bektashism also began to take shape around the cult of Hacı Bektash and evolved into a Sufi order. The Ottoman State, wary of the Kızılbaş integrating the abdāls into their own sphere of influence, actively encouraged the integration of them into the newly organized Bektashi order. The following section will provide a brief overview of this process.

1.4. The Bektashi Order, Abdāls of Rūm and The Ottomans

The Sufi legacy of Hacı Bektāş started to transition into an established Sufi order from the late fifteenth century onward. At the onset of the sixteenth century, a recognizable faction identified as Bektashi dervishes had surfaced, with the fundamental principles, doctrines, and rituals of the Bektashi path having largely solidified by this period. Both Bektashis and scholars accept that Balım Sulţān (d. 1516), known as *pīr-i sāni* (the second spiritual leader), formalized the Bektashi Sufi order at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Balım Sulţān, at the initiative of Sulţān Bayezid, brought from the tekke of Seyyid 'Alī Sulţān to the tekke of Hacı Bektāş, and have organized the rules of the path, the principles of which were already widely recognized. Therefore, the rituals and practices of the order are referred to by his name, as *Erkānnāme-i Balım Sulţān*.¹⁶⁴

Although he is widely accepted as *pīr-i sāni*, the historical and spiritual personality of Balım Sulţān remain obscure. There are different accounts regarding Balım Sulţān's birth and his appointment to the main convent. Bektashi oral tradition associates him with Seyyid Alī Sulţān. According to accounts, Seyyid Alī Sulţān resided for a period at the tekke of Hacı Bektāş and subsequently journeyed to the Balkans alongside Mürsel Baba. Despite Mürsel Baba's advanced age, he relinquished his celibacy at the behest of Seyyid 'Alī Sulţān, leading to the birth of Balım Sulţān. Balım Sulţān completed his *seyr-i suluk* (spiritual journey), subsequently, with the support of Sulţān Bayezid, was appointed to the tekke of Hacı Bektāş.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ For Erkanname, Dursun Gümüšoğlu, Rıza Yıldırım, *Bektaşî Erkannamesi / 1313 Tarihli Bir Erkanname Metni*, (Istanbul: Horasan Yayınları, 2006).

¹⁶⁵ For differing accounts regarding Balım Sulţān, see Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography*, 32-33; Yıldırım, *Bektaşîliğin Doğuşu*, 265-66.

On the other hand, the inscription on his tomb challenges these allegations. On the inscription, his name is recorded as Hızır Balī. Also, he is depicted here not as the son of Mursel Bāli, but rather as the son of Resul Bāli, who, at the same time, is the father of abovementioned Maḥmūd Çelebi. Furthermore, from the inscription, it is understood that he came from the lineage of Ḥacı Bektāş Veli, hence Çelebi family, and referred to as the *qutbu'l-evliyā* (the pole of the saints).¹⁶⁶

In this rather complex depiction, Rıza Yıldırım's recent findings from the *inamat defterleri* shed light on Balım Sultan's historical persona. Registers record his name as *Derviş Hızır Bāli* and not only refer to him as *çāşnīgīr*, a cook in Bektashi context, but also as *dāmād -ı Ḥacı Bektāş* (Ḥacı Bektāş's son-in-law). Yıldırım solves this complicated and conflicting problem, affirming that Hızır Balī was not a biological descendant of Ḥacı Bektāş, as evidenced by being referred to as a dervish, but the son-in-law of Maḥmūd Çelebi, a sheikh of the tekke of Ḥacı Bektāş at that period. His post as *çāşnīgīr*, the second highest rank in the Bektashi organizational scheme, suggests that he was not an ordinary dervish and was worthy of marrying the daughter of Maḥmūd Çelebi. Thus, as an acclaimed dervish he integrated into the Çelebi family, therefore into the tekke of Ḥacı Bektāş.¹⁶⁷

Balı́m Sulṭān's inclusion within the Bektashi tekke created a dichotomous system within both the tekke and the *ṭarīqa*. On one hand, the head of the Çelebi family kept his title as the sheikh of the tekke and order despite potentially not actively engaging in spiritual practices and progression. The sheikh had authority over legal and financial affairs as trustee of the waqf (pious endowment) and acted as legitimate representative of the Bektashi order before the Ottoman administration. On the other hand, the spiritual aspects of the tekke such as rituals, spiritual practices, and the training of dervishes were the responsibility of Hızır Balī. Namely, he functioned as leader of the tekke in practice. Rıza Yıldırım suggests that to accommodate this arrangement, a novel position, the *dedebaba*, was implemented within the organizational structure,¹⁶⁸ though there is no evidence of this position was created before the nineteenth century. The *dedebaba* having the highest statues of the spiritual path maintain celibacy, based on the belief that Balım Sulṭān himself abstained from marriage. These two roles coexisted within the same institutional framework until

¹⁶⁶ Yıldırım, *Bektaşiliğin Doğuşu*, 269. Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography*, 32-33. For the mausoleum of Balım or House of Balım (Balımevi), see Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography*, 112.

¹⁶⁷ Yıldırım, *Bektaşiliğin Doğuşu*, 270-75; Rıza Yıldırım, 'The Bektashiyya', 226-27.

¹⁶⁸ Yıldırım, 'The Bektashiyya', 227.

the dissolution of the order in 1826. After this date, the dual leadership's borders became rigid and the sheikh and dedebaba started to address different disciple groups. Dervishes residing in tekkes and progressing through the spiritual ranks became followers of the dedebaba, known as Babagān, disciples favor for the hereditary heirs became the disciples of Çelebi family were identified as Dedegān/ Çelebiyān.¹⁶⁹

The formation of this dual structure ensured that, at the latest by the seventeenth century, the itinerant and scattered dervish groups within the Ottoman state were integrated into the Bektashi order. Ayfer Karakaya suggests that when viewed over a longer duration, the creation of a distinct Babagān branch seems to have functioned both as a facilitator and a result of the gradual integration of the *abdāls* into the institutional structure of the Bektashi order.¹⁷⁰ The rise of the Ottoman Empire as a central power led to the marginalization of certain circles, such as *ghazis*, and dervish groups like the *Abdālan-ı Rūm*, which had made significant contributions to its establishment. This situation led these groups to transition from their previous supportive positions to adopting a position of opposition towards the centralization of the Ottoman state and its representatives. Consequently, the central state began to perceive them as disruptive threats to state order.¹⁷¹ In the early sixteenth century, the situation escalated further as the Safavids emerged as a Shiite state, posing a significant threat to the Ottoman Empire. This heightened the danger of the circumstances. Dervish groups in Ottoman territories, particularly the Alīd loyalists such as *Abdālan-ı Rūm* or the *ışıklı*s in official records, came under continuous inspection and control by Ottoman authorities. The Ottomans used two-fold methods to control these groups: persecution and disciplining.¹⁷² Through the leadership of Balım Sulṭān, and the cult of Ḥacı Bektāş, Ottomans aimed to neutralize these loosely affiliated antinomian dervishes by integrating them under the

¹⁶⁹ Yıldırım, *Bektaşiliğin Doğuşu*, 295-296. Yıldırım, 'The Bektashiyya', 227.

¹⁷⁰ Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash/Alevis*, 171.

¹⁷¹ For the marginalization process of these groups, see *ibid*; Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*.

¹⁷² For a detail analysis of the persecutions of dervish and Kizilbash communities, see Ahmet Refik, *Onaltıncı Asırda Rafizilik ve Bektaşilik* (Istanbul: Muallim Ahmet Halit Kütüphanesi, 1932); Colin Imber, "The Persecution of the Ottoman Shi'ites According to the Mühimme Defterleri, 1565-1585," *Der Islam* 56, no. 2 (1979): 245-73; Fariba Zarinebaf-Shahr, "Qizilbash Heresy and Rebellion in Ottoman Anatolia during the Sixteenth Century," *Anatolia Moderna* 7 (Fall 1997): 1-15; Saim Savaş, *XVI. Asırda Anadolu'da Alevilik*, (Ankara: Vadi Yayınları, 2002); Rıza Yıldırım, "Turkomans Between Two Empires: The Origins of The Qizilbash Identity in Anatolia (1447-1514)" PhD diss., (Bilkent University, 2008), 549-65; Ayşe Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, "The Formation of Kızılbaş Communities in Anatolia and Ottoman Responses, 1450s-1630s," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 2, nos. 1&2 (2014): 21-47; Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash/Alevis*, 256-319; Nir Shafir, "How to Read Heresy in the Ottoman World," in Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu (eds.) *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c.1450-c.1750* (Boston: Brill, 2020), 196-232. Birge, *The Bektashi Order*, 147-48.

Bektashi umbrella which in turn made it easier to manage.¹⁷³ The *abdāls*, upon their eventual assimilation, were integrated specifically into the celibate Babagān branch of the Bektashi order.¹⁷⁴

Despite the Balım Sultān's establishment and organization of the main pillars of Bektashi Sufi Order, Ottoman central authorities maintained their skeptical position against these dervish groups. Kalender Çelebi's uprising was a pivotal factor in the sequence of investigations.¹⁷⁵ Kalender Çelebi, a member of Çelebi family and an alleged successor to Balım Sultān, rebelled against Ottomans, which in turn, caused the closure of main convent until its reopening in the 1550s. The Ottoman central administration also investigated the main tekke when the revolt of the alleged Düzmece Shah İsmā'il in 1577 happened. After the revolt, a figure professing to be Safavid Shah İsmā'il underwent a ritual sacrifice, which was conducted at the shrine of Hacı Bektāş.¹⁷⁶ As a result of inquiries carried out by Ottoman officials, it has been documented that there were no supporters of the Safavid cause present in the regions of Hacı Bektāş and Kırşehir.¹⁷⁷ The absence of any evidence depicting organized repression aimed at major Bektashi convents in the administrative records (*muhimme*) from the period between 1560 and 1585, during which a second wave of Kızılbaş persecutions occurred, substantiates the hypothesis that, overall, the Bektashi Order sustained an amicable relation with the Ottoman authorities.¹⁷⁸

However, the situation differed for the tekke of Seyyid Ğāzī, the main hub for *Abdāls of Rūm*. The *abdāls* residing at the convent underwent a severe investigation following Kanuni's final campaign against the Safavids (1553–1555). Consequently, control of the convent was revoked from the *abdāls* and transferred to the administration of a Naqshbandi sheikh, alongside the construction of a madrasa adjacent to it. A record from 1572 in the administrative documents indicates that the *abdāls* were subsequently permitted to reoccupy the convent, albeit under the condition that they cease their antinomian practices. However, the efforts of the Ottoman state seemingly yielded no results, as in 1591, the local judge petitioned the Sultān on behalf of the Muslim community to prohibit the annual festival held at the convent, known as *maḥyā*, where various concrete forms of antinomian tendencies were trackable.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷³ Faroqhi, 'Conflict, Accommodation and Long-Term Survival', 175-79.

¹⁷⁴ Köprülü, 'Abdāl', 384.

¹⁷⁵ For the Kalender Çelebi uprising, see Faruk Sümer, *Safevi Devleti'nin Kuruluşu ve Gelişmesinde Anadolu Türklerinin Rolü*, (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2018), 78.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid*, 130.

¹⁷⁷ Bekir Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İran Siyâsi Münâsebetleri (1578–1612)* (Istanbul: İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, 1993), 11.

¹⁷⁸ Faroqhi, 'Conflict', 173–174.

¹⁷⁹ Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography*, 44-46; Karakaya, *The Kızılbaş/Alevis*, 169.

Evliya Çelebi, who journeyed to Seyyid Ġāzī in the middle of the seventeenth century, depicted it as a Bektashi, asserting that the dervishes dwelling within it adhered closely to Sunni orthodoxy (*ehl-i sünnet ve'l-cemā'at*).¹⁸⁰ It is conceivable that the Bektashis might have superficially embraced a Sunni identity as a tactic of *taqiyya* to evade official scrutiny, a strategy they could have employed during their interactions with Evliya. Evliya's description of abdāls as Bektashi also suggests that numerous abdāls assumed the Bektashi identity during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to evade state persecution.¹⁸¹

As Faroqhi rightfully asserted, the first half of the seventeenth century witnessed the consolidation of Bektashi tekkes under a single roof, as an intentional policy, aiming at the increasing central power over the dervish groups and other Bektashi tekkes in Balkans and Anatolia. As evidenced by the archival document dated to 1610, appointment of the leaders of "those convents commonly referred to by the people with titles such as dervish, baba, dede, abdāl, sultān" were to be appointed based on the recommendation of the contemporary sheikh of the Hacı Bektāş convent, namely the members of Çelebi family. The primary motivation behind this action was to broaden the influence of the organizational structure of the Bektashi convent in Kırşehir by officially incorporating all those communities and tekkes associated with the Hacı Bektāş cult under its umbrella. It is evident that the abdāls were the central concern of this measure¹⁸²

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the petitions from the Bektashi lodge in Kırşehir played a crucial role in the appointment of sheikhs to other Bektashi- including abdāl affiliated-lodges. Examination of the correspondence between the state and the lodge reveals that *qādis* occasionally attempted to interfere with this appointment authority. In response to complaints from the sheikhs, the state consistently reaffirmed the authority of the sheikh of the Hacı Bektāş convent, explicitly ordering that no other state official should intervene in the internal affairs of the order.¹⁸³ The Bektashi sheikhs of the Çelebi family, who were recognized by the Ottoman authorities as legitimate sheikhs and trustees and were granted full religious and financial authority, appear to have maintained and reinforced their authority throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Notably, records related to the Bektashis in the *mühimme* registers from these

¹⁸⁰ Evliya Çelebi b. Derviş Mehmed Zillî, *Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999-2007). vol. 9, 140.

¹⁸¹ Karakaya-Stump, *The Kızılbaş/Alevis*, 170.

¹⁸² Faroqhi, 'Conflict', 175-79; Karakaya-Stump, *The Kızılbaş/Alevis*, 171.

¹⁸³ See Soyger, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşilik*, 41-42.

centuries are virtually nonexistent.¹⁸⁴ Other documents in state archives predominantly concern the appointments of sheikhs. This situation can be regarded as evidence that Çelebi sheikhs consolidated their authority and that Bektashism evolved into a fully established Sufi order. However, there is a notable scarcity of information and research concerning the activities of the Bektashis during these centuries. Consequently, researchers, in constructing the framework of their studies, often address the process of the prohibition of Bektashism in the nineteenth century—an event that marks a significant turning point in Bektashi history—without delving into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This study will follow the same structure. Subsequent chapters will examine the abolition of the Janissary corps in the nineteenth century, which was accompanied by the prohibition of Bektashism. It will also demonstrate how this prohibition led to the revocation of the authority previously held by the Bektashi sheikhs and trustees.

¹⁸⁴ Faroqhi, 'Conflict', 174; Yıldırım, 'Bektaşî Kime Derler', 34.

CHAPTER 2

THE BEKTASHI ORDER AFTER THE ABOLITION OF THE JANISSARY CORPS AND THE CLOSURE OF BEKTASHI LODGES

2.1. The Abolition of Janissary Corps in 1826

During the reign of Sultān Selīm III (1789–1807), the Ottoman Empire experienced various challenges from different interest groups and attempted reforms aimed at modernizing the state.¹⁸⁵ Selīm III was particularly interested in European-style reforms to strengthen the empire's military, administrative, and economic structures. However, his efforts faced opposition from conservative factions within the empire, including the Janissaries, religious leaders, and provincial governors. Especially, the establishment of the *Nizām -ı Cedid* (New Order) army, which replaced the traditional Janissary corps lead to conflicts and resistance. The Janissary corps, once a prestigious military institution within the Ottoman Empire, became increasingly problematic and obstructive to reform efforts by the early nineteenth century. After Selīm III, Sultān Maḥmūd II recognized the urgent need to modernize the Ottoman military and state apparatus, and the abolition of the Janissary corps was a critical step in this process.

In particular, the failures of the Janissaries in suppressing the rebellion in Morea (1821) and the success of the regular military units sent from Egypt by Kavalalı Muhammad Ali Pasha to suppress the rebellion proved that the Janissaries had become ineffective as a fighting force.¹⁸⁶ They were ill-equipped and poorly trained compared to European style armies, and their resistance to modernization rendered them increasingly obsolete in the face of external threats. Abolishing the Janissary corps¹⁸⁷ symbolized the end of the old, established order and the beginning of a new era of modernization and centralization under Maḥmūd II. By eliminating this powerful and

¹⁸⁵ For a general overview of Ottoman modernization period see, Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: a Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993); Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye’de Çağdaşlaşma*, (İstanbul: YKY Yayınları, 2002); Kemal H. Karpat, *Osmanlı Modernleşmesi, Toplum Kurumsal Değişim ve Nüfus* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, 2002); Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of The Late Ottoman Empire*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008); Halil Inalcik, Mehmet Seyitdanlioğlu, *Tanzimat Değişim Sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2011); Şerif Mardin, *Türk Modernleşmesi: Bütün Eserleri 9 Makaleler 4* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012).

¹⁸⁶ For the rebellion and its effect on the state, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, C.XII, 146.

¹⁸⁷ For the abolition of Janissary corps see, Ahmed Lutfi, *Tarih-i Lutfi*, C. I; Howard A. Reed, *The Destruction of the Janissaries by Mahmud II in June 1826*, Ph. D, Diss (Princeton University, 1951); Mehmet Mert Sunar, *Cauldron of Dissent: A Study of Janissary the Corps, 1807-1826*. Unpublished Ph.D. Diss., (New York: SUNNY-Binghamton University, 2006).

entrenched institution, Maḥmūd sought to consolidate his authority and implement his reforms more effectively.

In May 1826, Maḥmūd II formally announced his intention to reform the army by convening a consultation meeting, *Meclis-i Meşveret* (Council of Consultation), which also included prominent members of the Janissaries. In the meeting, a decision was made to establish a disciplined army named the *Eşkinici* with the Janissaries Agas' favorable response. However, just three days after the commencement of training for the new army, the Janissaries rebelled, attempting to assassinate the Janissary Aga. Maḥmūd II decisively suppressed the uprising. During what later became known as the *Vak'a -yı Hayriyye* (Auspicious Incident), the Janissary barracks were bombarded and set ablaze, resulting in the execution of some Janissaries. In another consultation meeting attended by the Grand Vizier, the *Şeyhu'l-İslām*, and members of the *ilmiyye* (religious scholars), the initial decision to reform the Janissary corps was made, but later, it was decided to abolish it and establish a new army named the *Asākir-i Mansūre-yi Muḥammediyye* (The Victorious Soldiers of Muhammad). Maḥmūd's decree announcing the abolition of the Janissary corps¹⁸⁸ was formally disseminated to the public. Subsequently, the Janissary barracks, barber shops, and coffeehouses were demolished, and their assets were seized. Severe penalties were imposed on those who provided assistance to the Janissaries. Efforts were also initiated to gather individuals claiming to be Janissaries in the provinces.

2.2. The Closure of Bektashi Tekkes and *Meclis-i Meşveret*

After the violent suppression of the last Janissary uprising and the subsequent abolition of the Janissary corps, focus shifted to groups with close ties to the Janissaries. The Bektashis were among the leading groups in this regard. Since the establishment of the Janissary corps, a close relationship had existed between the Janissaries and the Bektashis. According to Bektashi tradition, Ḥacı Bektāş blessed the military units established during the time of Orhan Bey. The Janissaries, in turn, considered Ḥacı Bektāş as their *pir*, a revered spiritual leader. Throughout the centuries, the Janissaries were referred to by various names that demonstrated their affiliation with the Bektashi Order. They were called *Dūdmān-ı Bektāşī* (Bektashi unit/lodge), *Ḥacı Bektāş köçekleri* (Bektashi Novices), *tā'ife-yi Bektāşīyye* (Bektashi faction), *gurūh-ı Bektāşīyye* (Bektashi band), *zumre-i Bektāşīyān* (Bektashi groups), *zābiṭ-i Bektāşīyān* (Bektashi officer), and *yamakān-ı*

¹⁸⁸ BOA, C.AS, 696/29209; BOA, HAT, 289/17346.

Bektāşiyye (Bektashi apprentices). The Janissary corps was referred to as *Ḥacı Bektāş Ocağı*, *Ocağ -i Bektāşiyye* (hearths of Bektashi Order), *Neferāt-ı Bektāşiyye* (Bektashi soldiers) and the hierarchical and promotional ladder within the corps was termed as *silsile-i tārık -i Bektāşiyān* (the lineage of Bektashi Order). Furthermore, the Janissary aghas were addressed as *Ağayān -ı Bektāşiyān* (Bektashi aghas), *Şanādid Bektāşiyān* (Bektashi notables), and *ricāl -i dūd mān-ı Bektāşiyye* (Bektashi dignitaries).¹⁸⁹ In the Janissary barracks, there was a Bektashi *baba* to whom the Janissaries' religious education was entrusted. The Janissary Agha occupied an intermediary role in the appointment process of sheikhs for the dervish lodge of Ḥacı Bektāş, as well as in facilitating the transmission of petitions to Sulṭān and the dissemination of decisions to the sheikhs.¹⁹⁰

In spite of this intimate connection, until the nineteenth century, the Bektashis had not engaged in any rebellion against the Ottoman state, with the exception of the *Ḳalender Çelebi* uprising in 1526.¹⁹¹ However, in the course of the abolishing of the Janissary corps, there was notable participation from the Bektashis in the Janissary uprisings. Contemporary chroniclers such as Ahmet Cevdet and Ahmet Lütfi asserted that Bektashi babas played an active role in the *Vak'a -yı Ḥayriyye* rebellion and even encouraged the Janissaries to revolt against the Ottomans.¹⁹² Moreover, in a propaganda works aimed at legitimizing the abolition of the Janissaries and the closure of the Bektashi Order, Esad Efendi portrayed the Bektashis as principal instigators of the dissolution of the Janissary corps.¹⁹³

Following the investigation into the Bektashis' involvement in the Janissary revolts, the central government took measures concerning the Bektashis implicated in the rebellion. The Bektashis who were perceived to have provided support to the Janissaries, were apprehended, and confined in prison. Subsequently, *Meşveret Meclisi* convened on July 8, 1826, at the Bābüssaāde Mosque in the Topkapı Palace to deliberate on the disposition of the Bektashis. The attendees comprised the Sulṭān, the grand vizier, former and current Şeyḫü'l-İslām, one of the Qadiaskers (chief judge) and the Qadi of Medina, alongside representatives from the Naḳşibendī, Mevlevī,

¹⁸⁹ Maden, 'En Uzun Yüzyılında Bektaşilik ve Bektaşiler', 186.

¹⁹⁰ BOA, İE.EV 5707 (1114/1702); Yılmaz, 'Bektaşilik', 108.

¹⁹¹ For Kalender Çelebi uprising see, Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, "Kalender Çelebi", *TA*, XXI, 155-156; Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography*, 35.

¹⁹² Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, C. XII, 181; Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, C.I, 150.

¹⁹³ Esad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer*, Istanbul, 1243, 204.

Celvetî, Halvetî, Kâdirî, Şāzelî, and Sa'dî Sufî orders.¹⁹⁴ There was no representative from the Bektashi Order present.¹⁹⁵

The council started with the speech delivered by Şeyhu'l-İslām. His words were significant as reflecting a microcosm of the attitudes towards the Bektashis held by opponents of Bektashism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Şeyhu'l-İslām asserted that individuals of esteemed stature, such as Hacı Bektāş Velî, and other Sufî sheikhs associated with Alî were dignified and righteous personalities. However, he underscored the necessity for adherents entering these Sufî orders to rigorously uphold the ancient traditions and regulations, faithfully observe religious precepts, and cultivate virtuous conduct while disciplining their souls. He noted “the regrettable tendency of some uninformed individuals to indulge their desires under the guise of Bektashism, disregarding fundamental religious obligations and diminishing the value of worship. Consequently, such individuals were branded as infidels by society and were blamed for fostering corruption”.¹⁹⁶ A similar version of this idea would also later be expressed by some Bektashi writers, who stated that certain individuals who joined the Bektashi Order later and claimed to be Bektashi were disrupting the structure of the order.

Following Şeyhu'l-İslām's speech, he solicited the opinions of other sheikhs in attendance on this matter. The leaders of other orders were reluctant to say anything stigmatizing, stating that they did not have any close interaction with them so that they could not know their true status and behaviors. On the other hand, some religious scholars manifested their ideas about Bektashis clearly and vilified them as ‘people of misguidance’. The hesitant ones argued that it would be inappropriate to pass judgment on the Bektashis' faithfulness without conclusive evidence of their words and actions being contrary to the religion. There was no consensus among the members of the religious scholars, though most of them believed not all Bektashis could be considered as heretics. However, Şeyhu'l-İslām Yāsincizāde suggested that it was permissible to impose penalties on the Bektashis for political reasons (*siyāseten*) and that individual assessment of their words and actions was unnecessary. Following his ambitious address, the decision was rendered

¹⁹⁴ For Sufi Orders in the Ottoman Empire, see Terzioğlu, ‘Sufis in the Age of State-building; for the Halveti order, see Nathalie Clayer, *Mystiques, état et société*; for Naqshbandi order, see Dina Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism Naqshbandis in the Ottoman World, 1450–1700* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005).

¹⁹⁵ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 64-67.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 67.

unfavorable to the Bektashis.¹⁹⁷ Subsequently, Maḥmūd II issued numerous decrees that surrounded the Bektashis from all sides and aimed to erase their visibility.

In the decree issued by Maḥmūd II, he ordered the demolition of tekkes built within the past 60 years, while directing the identification and preservation of older, esteemed ones.¹⁹⁸ He also commanded those dervishes residing in these tekkes, who adhered to Sunni beliefs, should not face disturbance, while those with Rāfīzī beliefs should be relocated to areas with a sufficient presence of religious scholars to rectify their doctrines. This decree initiated the abolition of Bektashism, starting in Istanbul.

Some sheikhs and dervishes were arrested and imprisoned. They underwent a religious interrogation and examination. Although many of the sheikhs and dervishes stated during this interrogation that they had not deviated from the path of religion, this did not prevent their punishment or at least their exile. The answers given by the Bektashis during the interrogation were found unsatisfactory, and it was suspected that they were practicing *taqiyya* (precautionary dissimulation) by appearing to follow the Sunni tradition. Therefore, within a week, Bektashi sheikhs and dervishes were exiled to various regions. Şāliḥ Baba, Kıncı Baba, and İstanbul Āgāsıẓāde Aḥmed Efendi met their demise through execution. Maḥmūd Baba and his seven adherents from the Şehitlik Lodge in Rūmiliḥişārı faced exile to Kayseri. Aḥmed Baba of the Öküz or Paşalimanı lodge, along with Hüseyn Baba and two of their followers from the Kazlıçeşme Lodge, were subjected to exile in Hadim. Mustafa Baba of the Sütlice lodge and another Muştafā Baba from the Karyağdı Lodge in Eyüp, alongside their three dervishes, were exiled to Birgi. Yūsuf Baba, originating from the Karağaç Lodge, underwent exile to Amasya, while ‘Ayntāblı Muştafā Baba was banished to Güzelḥişār. Kıncı's sibling, Mehmed Baba, alongside another Mehmed Baba from the Merdivenköy (Şāhkulu) Lodge, was dispatched to Tire, accompanied by four of his dervishes.¹⁹⁹

Shortly after the abolishing of the Bektashi order, some members of *ulama* and literary men were also banished from Istanbul with the accusation of having Bektashi leanings. The fact was that this group formed a ‘scientific society’ in the suburb of Besiktas²⁰⁰ and used to discuss in

¹⁹⁷İbid 67-72

¹⁹⁸ BOA, HAT; 290/17351.

¹⁹⁹ Maden, *Bektaşi Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 93-94; Soyger, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşılık*, 56.

²⁰⁰ See Kazım Yetiş, “Beşiktaş Cemiyeti İlimiyesi”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 5, (1992), 552-553. Soyger, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşılık*, 63-64.

private such subjects as philosophy, literature, mathematics, and astronomy. The leader of the group, İsmā'īl Ferruḥ Efendi, served for a while as Ottoman ambassador to London during the reign of Sulṭān Selīm III. Another member was the official historiographer at the time, Şānizāde, who was a highly educated man not only in traditional sciences but who seems to have known several European languages, which enabled him to translate certain medical books into Ottoman. As stated by Butrus Abu-Manneh, their exile meant the suppression of 'a trend of thought' which was perhaps a non-conformist one.²⁰¹ Subsequently, the ban on Bektashism spread from the capital to the provinces. The provincial administrators in Anatolia and Rumelia were informed of decisions made in *Meşveret Meclisi*, and the decrees issued by the Sulṭān, serving as the basis for directives. Alongside the initial order, additional decrees and fatwas were sent to local authorities, outlining their responsibilities.

Maḥmūd II not only ordered the closure of Bektashi tekkes and exile of babas and dervishes, but also seized the Bektashi *waqfs* (endowments).²⁰² Due to the possibility of eliciting a substantial response, Maḥmūd II justified his actions by asserting that these tekkes had been forcibly appropriated by the Bektashis, and thus, he sought to reclaim them. As stated in the decrees, the Alevi and Rāfiḏī groups (*gurūh-ı 'Alevī ve revāfiḏ*) took advantage of the power of the Janissaries and forcibly seized tekkes containing titles such as *abdāl*, *dede* and *sulṭān*, which were endowed for *zīkr* (dhikr) and worship purposes in the time of Ottoman conquests. They built their own tekkes on state lands, organizing fictitious endowment deeds to divert the income from these endowments for their own benefit. Maḥmūd II tasked Şeyḫü'l-İslām with issuing fatwas to validate the confiscation, declaring the invalidity of the endowments possessed by the Bektashis. In the aftermath, the officials were directed to conduct investigations, seize properties and belongings held by the Bektashis in provinces, and remove the sheikhs and dervishes from their tekkes. Additionally, they were instructed to convert intact tekkes into mosques, madrasas, and schools. Authorities were ordered that the documents and books found in the tekkes would be collected and examined. The goods seized from the tekkes would be sold, and the revenues obtained would be transferred to the state treasury, to be used for the expenses of the newly established army.²⁰³

²⁰¹ Butrus Abu-Manneh "The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya in the Ottoman Lands in the Early 19th Century" *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, Bd. 22, Nr. 1/4 (1982), 1-36.

²⁰² Faroḫi suggests that the economic functions of Bektashi lodges could potentially be a contributing factor to the dissolution of the Order. See, Suraiya Faroḫi, "The Tekke of Hacı Bektas: Social Position and Economic Activities" *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 7, No. 2, (1976), 183-208.

²⁰³ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 75-77, 84.

The execution, material seizure and exile went hand in hand with the stigmatization of Bektashis as heretics. The decrees issued by Maḥmūd II included religious and political expressions legitimizing the closure of Bektashi tekkes and expulsion of sheikhs and dervishes. Phrases such as *gurūh-ı mekrūha* (despised group), *gurūh-ı melāḥide* (the group of heretics), *gurūh-ı Alevī ve revāfiẓ* (the group of Alevi and rafidhis), *gurūh-ı ibāḥiyye* (the group of Ibahis), *erbāb-ı rıfẓ ve ilḥād* (the owners/masters of rejection and heresy) were commonly used. Also the felonies of the Bektashis were enumerated one by one in the decrees as follows: Not adhering to religious injunctions, being dissenting, abandoning prayers and fasting, speaking ill of the three caliphs, harboring animosity and enmity, having corrupt beliefs and being antagonistic to religion, causing satanic doubts among Muslims, leading certain Muslims astray from the right path and turning them away from the guidance of Ahmadiyya, denying obligatory, recommended, and necessary acts, denying ablution and purification, speaking ill of them, causing religious corruption by interpreting Quranic verses according to one's own desires, speaking falsehoods about 'Alī and preferring them over Quranic verses, completely denying the book and the Sunnah, openly drinking alcohol and breaking fasts during Ramadan in their corrupt and mischief-making tekkes, indulging in all kinds of debauchery and immorality, engaging in gatherings they term as '*ayn-i cem*' on the tenth of Muharram and mourning nights, reciting odes and uttering wicked words about the companions of the Prophet and the caliphs, which render their repentance unacceptable and necessitate their execution²⁰⁴. The language used reflects that of the sixteenth century, employed to describe and justify the persecution and disciplining of the Kızılbaş and 'Rāfiẓī' communities in Anatolia. In the centuries to come, governmental authorities persist in employing these terms and adjectives to characterize both the Bektashis and the Kızılbaş.

Maḥmūd II not only prohibited Bektashism through these decrees but also closely monitored the enforcement of the ban on these communities that he declared heretics. He insisted on the prompt handling of these matters and emphasized the collective endeavor towards the complete eradication of Bektashis from within the adherents of the Sunni tradition. He personally oversaw the prohibition of Bektashism and the enforcement of the decrees. Maḥmūd II admonished his Grand Vizier, the Şeyḫü'l-İslām, and officials on numerous occasions regarding this matter, expressing the necessity for swift resolution. For this matter, he sent *adāletnāmes* to the provincial governors and judges, warning them of the spread of deviance and heresy in

²⁰⁴ *ibid*, 197.

Anatolia. As a preventive measure, he requested the congregation of the five daily prayers in order to uphold peace and security among Muslims.²⁰⁵

2.3. Appointment of Naqshbandi Sheikhs to Bektashi Tekkes

Sultān Maḥmūd didn't solely rely on methods such as exile, execution, imprisonment, confiscation, and the construction of madrasas, mosques, and schools to rid of the Bektashis. He also resorted to the path of correcting the religious beliefs of the Bektashis and disciplining them. As another precaution Maḥmūd II, ordered the appointment of Naqshbandi sheikhs to the remaining Bektashi lodges. There were several reasons for the preference for a sheikh from the Naqshbandi Order. The Ottoman state's socio-political considerations and alliances with influential Naqshbandi leaders might have influenced the decision-making process. Naqshbandi sheikhs had already gained prominence in the state domain, in bureaucratic, cleric and military upper elite circles in the time of Selīm III. Sultān Maḥmūd II also promoted the Naqshbandi Order, although did not favor its mainstream views and influence on the ideological level, to counter the influence of Janissaries and other rebellious factions against the reforms. The onset of the Greek Revolution in the spring of 1821 provided Naqshbandi Order with the opportunity to endeavor to influence public sentiment with their perspectives.²⁰⁶

The Naqshbandi Order's emphasis on strict adherence to Islamic law and its focus on spiritual discipline would be a successful appeal 'to correct' the Bektashi praxis. In addition, some religious scholars claimed that both Bektashi and Naqshbandi orders' *silsila* traced back to Ahmed Yesevī whom they perceived as a Naqshbandi sheikh at that time.²⁰⁷ Indeed, the principles and practices of these two orders were different from each other. It has also been proven by modern researchers that there is no organic connection between the Yesevī Order and Bektashism. Therefore, this attempt has been interpreted by modern scholars as an effort to assimilate Bektashism into Sunni interpretation of Islam and to integrate it within the Naqshbandi Order. Naqshbandi sheikhs were appointed as *turbedār*, caretakers for the mausoleums, in the tekkes where the tombs and tekke buildings were preserved.²⁰⁸ Although Bektashi tekkes were

²⁰⁵ *ibid*, 77-79.

²⁰⁶ Abu-Manneh, *The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya*, 22. For the Naqshbandi influence on Ottoman state apparatus, see. *ibid*.

²⁰⁷ Esad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer*, 199-200, Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam Under the Sultan*, vol 1, (İstanbul: İsis, 2000).

²⁰⁸ BOA, C.EV.268/13680.

demolished, their properties and belongings were not entirely handed over to Naqshbandi sheikhs, instead a humble income granted to them.²⁰⁹

During the demolition of the Bektashi tekkes, the tekke and mausoleum of Hacı Bektāş were spared, as a mark of reverence for the esteemed Sufi figure. Besides, the sheikh of the tekke remained in his position for a while. However, two years later, in March 1827, the then-current sheikh of the tekke, Hamdullāh Çelebi, was banished to Amasya.²¹⁰ This action was justified by allegations of mismanagement of the tekke endowment and incitement of unrest in the town. In his place, his brother Veliyuddīn Efendi assumed the role of sheikh at the tekke, on the condition of conducting Naqshbandi rituals. Additionally, he was entrusted with the administration of the revenue, possessions, and properties of the tekke's endowed villages. Nevertheless, he too faced exile to Sivas in 1834, following the abolition of the "Çelebi" title. As a result, orders were issued prohibiting his offspring and relatives from entering the tekke. Although the exile was ostensibly linked to controversies surrounding tekke management, the underlying motive was to hand over tekke administration to Naqshbandiyya. As will be elaborated in subsequent chapters, this appointment marked the onset of conflicts between the Naqshbandi, Çelebi and the Babagān groups, which persisted within the main tekke for years to come.

The tekke of Hacı Bektāş was not the sole institution where a sheikhh from another Sufi order was appointed as caretaker. The tekke of Abdāl Musa faced a fate akin to that of the tekke of Hacı Bektāş. Initially, although the administration, properties, and endowment of the tekke were entrusted to a Bektashi sheikh, in 1831, it was subsequently transferred to a Naqshbandi sheikh. Afterwards, a Mevlevī sheikh was appointed to the Abdāl Musa tekke, and intermittently intervened in the management of the tekke endowment. Sheikhs from diverse Sufi orders, including the Kādirī Order, were also appointed to Bektashi tekkes alongside Naqshbandi sheikhs. This phenomenon was particularly observable in tekkes named after abdāls, such as Uryān Baba, Geyikli Baba, Koyun Baba, Ca'fer Baba, and Kaşr-ı 'ayn. Furthermore, there were tekkes that transitioned to the Halvetī, Bayrāmī, and Gülşenī Sufi Orders.²¹¹

The belief that the sheikhs assigned to Bektashi tekkes would rectify the beliefs of the dervishes and babas within these establishments, along with the corresponding practices,

²⁰⁹ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 180.

²¹⁰ BOA, HAT, 501/24588-D; BOA, C.EV,236/11793; Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 89.

²¹¹ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*,186-189.

ultimately proved futile. The Bektashis were not fully disciplined and rehabilitated as envisaged by the state through Naqshbandi sheikhs. Instead, numerous issues among the sheikhs themselves and in the management of the tekke endowments preoccupied various tiers of the state throughout the nineteenth century. Despite the Bektashis' persistent efforts to evade scrutiny by affiliating with multiple Sufi orders, they safeguarded themselves through the practice of precaution (*taqiyya*). Certain individuals acquired *icāzetnāme* (authorization certificates) from various Sufi Orders yet remained steadfast in their commitment to Bektashism.

2.4. Propaganda Against Bektashis after Abolition

The appointment of sheikhs from Naqshbandi and other Sufi orders to the tekkes was intended to correct and discipline Bektashi beliefs. The decrees and fatwas dispatched to through the capital and provinces also aimed to justify the ban and inform the local populace, thereby shaping public sentiment. The characterization of Bektashi beliefs as heretical, coupled with the perceived imperative to cleanse them from the ranks of the Muslim community and rectify their doctrinal deviations, found expression not only in formal state decrees but also in a multitude of contemporary literary productions. Predominantly serving propagandistic ends, these writings underscored the perceived threat posed by Bektashism to religious norms and societal stability.²¹² Noteworthy among these works and deserves mention is *Üss-i Zafer*²¹³, authored by Şahhāflar Şeyhizāde Es'ad Efendi, an official state historian, who delivered the proclamation of the dissolution of the Janissary corps at the Sulţān Aĥmed Mosque.

The work of Es'ad Efendi encompasses not only his firsthand testimony of the closure and ban of Bektashism but also includes assertions based on rumors and hearsay.²¹⁴ His writings concerning the Bektashis and the examples he presents serve the purpose of estranging the Bektashis from the Muslim community, covering religious, political, and moral dimensions. For instance, on one occasion, he claimed that officials tasked with closing dervish lodges reported dervishes using Qur'ān pages as bottle seals in the lavatory and asserted that large quantities of

²¹² Regarding the propaganda texts written about the Bektashis after 1826, see Salih Çift, "1826 Sonrasında Bektâşilik ve Bu Alanla İlgili Yayın Faaliyetleri", *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, Cilt: 12, Sayı:1, (2003) s. 249-268.

²¹³ Esad Efendi. *Üss-i Zafer*.

²¹⁴ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*,173.

alcohol were found in the lodges.²¹⁵ He also alleges that the Bektashis do not perform prayers, fast during Ramadan, and deem religiously impermissible things permissible. He characterized the Bektashis as historically rebellious against both religious and state authorities. His assertions regarding the Bektashism include claims of their alignment with Iran against the Ottoman state, purportedly wielding influence across Anatolia over centuries. He points out incidents such as the alender elebi rebellion as evidence. Additionally, he claims that the Bektashis forcibly seized all lodges and tombs that originally belonged to other Sufi orders, such as Naqshbandi and adiri, across Anatolia, Rumelia, and beyond. According to Es'ad Efendi, these establishments were portrayed as hubs of moral decline, leading him to advocate for their complete demolition.²¹⁶

irvanlı Fatih Efendi, who personally witnessed the disbandment of the Janissary corps and later authored a work on the subject titled *Gulzar-ı Futhat* also made disparaging religious remarks about the Bektashis. In his work, he positions the Bektashis in opposition to the Muslim community, declaring them as infidels, thereby legitimizing their executions. He contended that the ban of both the Janissary corps and closure of Bektashi tekkes was a highly justified action due to the fact that the Bektashis constitute an ignorant and superstitious faction, even more vehemently opposed to Islam than infidels. Despite their purported reverence for the *ahl al-bayt* (the family of the Prophet Muammad), he asserted that the truth is quite the contrary. Additionally, he marginalized the Bektashis politically, claiming they have consistently displayed hostile attitudes towards the Ottoman dynasty and statesmen, thus justifying their executions as necessary.²¹⁷

Furthermore, zmirli Hasan Edip Efendi, who played a role in the closure of the lodge of Abdal Musa echoed the depiction of the Bektashi community found in the decrees of Sulan Mamud II and Esad Efendi in his work titled *iyu'd-Dehr ve Cilu'l-'Ar*. Edip Efendi allegedly witnessed firsthand the presence of a winery within the Abdal Musa Tekke, where the production of alcoholic beverages was reportedly observed. From his viewpoint, the Bektashis are perceived as adversaries of both religious and governmental establishments. For this reason, devout Muslims prayed for the Bektashis deemed deviant and non-believers, to abandon their aberrant beliefs, thus

²¹⁵Esad Efendi, *ss-i Zafer*, 177; Maden, *Bektai Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*,173; zkan Karabulut, 'The Rehabilitation of the Bektashi Order (1826-1876)', Unpublished MA Thesis (stanbul, Boazii ni. 2017), 21.

²¹⁶ Esad Efendi, *ss-i Zafer*, 200-210.

²¹⁷ See irvanlı Fatih Efendi, *Gulzar-ı Futhat: Bir Grg Tanıının Kalemyle Yenieri Ocaı'nın Kaldırılıı*, der. Mehmet Ali Beyhan, (stanbul: Kitabevi, 2001), 19-20, 81; Maden, *Bektai Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 175.

seeking to eliminate such deviations within the Islamic domain.²¹⁸ Similarly, Kuşadalı İbrahim Halveti shared comparable views regarding the Bektashis, seeing them as a deviant group. In his perspective, individuals who did not conform to specific religious practices would inevitably resemble the Bektashis.²¹⁹

The allegations and charges directed against the Bektashis in these works, written immediately following the prohibition of Bektashism, proved insufficient to dismantle Bektashism and fully marginalize them from society. As state pressure waned, the Bektashis encountered a more lenient environment. During the reign of Sultān Abdülmecid and Abdülaziz, especially with the reforms of *Tanzimat*, the Bektashis found more fertile ground to publicly reemerge and endeavor publishing activities. The visibility of the Bektashis to such an extent particularly disturbed certain individuals among the religious scholars. The most notable among these individuals, who caused a sensation between the Bektashis and the public with his writings, was İshāk Hoca.²²⁰

Authored by İshāk Hoca in 1874, *Kāşifül Esrār ve Dāfiü'l- Esrār*²²¹ stood out as one of the most contentious works directed towards the Bektashis, representing the inaugural monograph exclusively dedicated to this group. The allegations concerning the Bektashis in this work remained the primary subject matter of Bektashi literature until the prohibition of the order in 1925. Following the publication of *Kāşifül Esrār*, nearly all subsequent Bektashi publications were dedicated to refuting its assertions. The central theme of İshāk Hoca's work revolved around the claim that Bektashism had been infiltrated by Hurufism, resulting in deviations into heresy. In his three-part treatise, he extensively explored Hurufism²²², albeit with weak evidence regarding its relationship with Bektashism. His accusations against Bektashism primarily relied on hearsay and reports from acquaintances.²²³ The initial segment of his work was later translated into German by the orientalist George Jacob, significantly influencing the European perception of Bektashism.²²⁴

İshāk Efendi articulated accusations reminiscent of those voiced by Ottoman scholars in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries against Kızılbaş communities. These are accusations such

²¹⁸ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 175.

²¹⁹ Yaşar Nuri Öztürk, *Kuşadalı İbrahim Halveti*, İstanbul 1982, 103.

²²⁰ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 214-215, Kara, *Sınırları Aşan Dervişler*, 97-99.

²²¹ Harputlu İshak Hoca, *Kaşifu'l Eşrar ve Daifu'l Eşrar*, İstanbul, 1874.

²²² Mustafa Kara, "İshak Efendi, Harputlu", *TDVİA*, vol.22, (2000), 531.

²²³ Karabulut, *The Rehabilitation*, 65; Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 215.

²²⁴ Georg Jacob, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Bektaschis Ordens*, Berlin, 1908.

as not performing prayers, not fasting, consuming alcohol, not adhering to Sharia, and cursing the first three caliphs.²²⁵ Following the abolition of the Janissaries and the closure of Bektashi tekkes, these allegations were reiterated by numerous authors. However, as the Bektashis began to assert themselves more prominently in societal life, these accusations grew more vehement in their repetition.

İshāk Hoca commences his treatise by providing extensive insights into Hürūfīs and Hurufism. He, by trying to prove that there is almost no difference between the Hürūfīs and the Bektashis, emphasizes that one of his primary objectives is to expose Bektashi's profane acts in order to safeguard the righteous Muslim community. The author argues that the Bektashi Order underwent a process of corruption following the era of Hacı Bektāş, attributed to the influence of Hürūfīs within the Order. It is suggested that after the execution of Faḍallāh, his successors visited the tekke of Hacı Bektāş and propagated the teachings of the *Cāvidān*. He convinced dervishes to adopt the belief that Hurufism represented the true spiritual path of Hacı Bektāş, and that these teachings constituted esoteric knowledge exclusive to their tradition.²²⁶

İshāk Hoca states that beliefs such as reincarnation(*tenasüh*) and incarnation(*hulul*) are present in Bektashi doctrine, and that these beliefs are not compatible with Islamic teachings. He asserts that Bektashis worship Fadlallah as embodiment of God and believe Alī, all prophets and saints were incarnation of him. In this way, İshāk Hoca sought to undermine the credibility of the Bektashi babas by recounting anecdotes from acquaintances regarding their interpretation of reincarnation. He accuses the Bektashi babas of charlatanism because they considered themselves sacred.²²⁷

He doesn't hesitate to incorporate into his work the accusation of licentiousness, to declare Bektashis as non-Islamic, a cliché commonly used to discredit such groups. According to him, women do not cover themselves, they pray in the same place as men, engage in sexual relations with dervishes, and dance in the *meydan*, a central space where ritual participants gather.²²⁸ In connection with this cliché, Ishak Hoca also makes harsh accusations about Bektashi rituals. Instead of practicing prayer, he accuses them of showing excessive reverence towards their leaders,

²²⁵ Kara, *Sınırları Aşan Dervişler*, 98; Karabulut, *The Rehabilitation*, 59.

²²⁶ Harputlu Ishak Efendi, *Kaşifü'l Esrar*, 2-5; Karabulut, *The Rehabilitation*, 66; Kara, *Sınırları Aşan Dervişler*, 97.

²²⁷ Harputlu Ishak Efendi, *Kaşifü'l Esrar*, 60-61; Karabulut, *The Rehabilitation*, 68; Kara, *Sınırları Aşan Dervişler*, 98.

²²⁸ Harputlu Ishak Efendi, *Kaşifü'l Esrar*, 28. Karabulut, *The Rehabilitation*, 71.

implying that they venerate them to the extent of prostrating before them.²²⁹ The comments made regarding this topic by him are of such a negative nature that one may consider highly inappropriate to discuss.

İşhāk Efendi engages in another discourse concerning Bektashism and deems it ‘distorted’. He presumes that Bektashis, under the guise of secrecy, engage in actions that contradict Islamic law, such as legitimizing prohibited actions (*ibaha*). Specifically, he cites the consumption of alcohol as one of these transgressions that Bektashis deem permissible.²³⁰ He characterizes the Bektashi lodges of his era as establishments resembling taverns and places of pleasure.²³¹ İşhāk Efendi also categorizes Bektashis as a deviant group, distinct from non-Sufi and non-Shii environments. He asserts that Bektashis, having ties with Hürufi teachings, clearly do not belong to the *ahl al-kitāb* (*the people of the book*). He considers the Bektashis as 'polytheists' whose slaughtered animals are deemed impermissible to consume.²³²

Kaşifü'l Esrar is not the sole publication of İşhāk Efendi regarding Bektashis. He continues his critique of the Bektashis in another work titled *İzāhu'l Esrār*.²³³ This work is written as a refutation of Hurufism and Bektashism as well. He also authored another treatise, *Tezkire-i Ehl-i Beyt*, to counter the arguments presented in *Risāle-i Hüsnīye*,²³⁴ a Shi'a polemical work that holds a significant place in the Alevi and Bektashi religious literature.²³⁵

Even if they don't adopt the same level of severity as İşhāk Efendi, many other Sunni scholars joined him in criticizing Bektashism. One critique, *Muhimmu'l Beyān*, was penned by Hüseyin Azmi Dede in 1893, the sheikh of the *Mevlevihāne* of Gallipoli and Cairo. Hüseyin Azmi Dede's treatise focused on denouncing Bektashism and Freemasonry. He found the connections between Freemasonry and Bektashism to be dangerous, stating that this relationship weakens Islam.²³⁶

²²⁹ Harputlu Ishak Efendi, *Kaşifü'l Esrar*, 70-71, 88, Karabulut, *The Rehabilitation*, 70.

²³⁰ Harputlu Ishak Efendi, *Kaşifü'l Esrar*, 31, Kara, *Sınırları Aşan Dervişler*, 98; Karabulut, *The Rehabilitation*, 70.

²³¹ Harputlu Ishak Efendi, *Kaşifü'l Esrar*, 18; Karabulut, *The Rehabilitation*, 71.

²³² Harputlu Ishak Efendi, *Kaşifü'l Esrar*, 166; Karabulut, *The Rehabilitation*, 70.

²³³ See Muharrem Varol, “Kaşifü'l Esrar'ın İzinde: Harputlu Hoca Ishak Efendi'nin İzahü'l Esrar Adlı Bilinmeyen Bir Risalesi”, *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi*, 78, (2016), 35-80.

²³⁴ For a detailed analysis of *Risale-i Hüsnīye*, see Fatih Usluer, Sıdika Demirsöz, “Risāle-i Hüsnīye,” *Alevilik Araştırmaları Dergisi* 4 (Winter 2012), 67-122; Yusuf Ünal, “More Than Mere Polemic: The Adventure of the Risālah-i Hüsnīyah in the Safavid, Ottoman, and Indian Lands” Unpublished MA thesis (Boğaziçi University, 2016).

²³⁵ Birge, *The Bektashi Order*, 81.

²³⁶ Kara, *Sınırları Aşan Dervişler*, 258.

Another work containing anti-Bektashi discourse, albeit less severe than that of İshāk Hoca was Mehmet Arif Efendi's commentary in the *Binbir Hādis-i Şerif Şerhi*.²³⁷ Mehmet Arif directs his attention to the relationship between the Bektashis and the Shiites, analyzing Shi 'i concepts appear in Bektashi doctrine. He contends that the principle of *tevellā* and *teberrā* among the Bektashis may superficially suggest an affinity with Shia beliefs, yet this assumption is erroneous. By contrasting the beliefs of the Bektashis with those of the Shiites, Mehmet Arif asserts that the Bektashis cannot be considered closely aligned with the Shiites. He observes that while Shia theology is intricate and well-defined, the Bektashis lack such depth of theological understanding. Mehmet Arif also adopts a critical stance towards Bektashi rituals, deeming secretive practices, consumption of alcohol during rituals, reinterpretation of religious tenets, and validation of prohibitions as inappropriate. Another aspect of Mehmet Arif's critique concerning the Bektashis relates to their relationships beyond the Sunni community. He argues that despite adopting an antagonistic stance towards Sunnis, the Bektashis maintain fraternal ties with non-Muslim entities such as Orthodox Christians and Freemasons. He posits that although not constituting a distinct Islamic sect, the Bektashis represent a synthesis incorporating elements of Christianity, Freemasonry, Shiism, Imamiyyah, and Ibahiyah, alongside Islam. He contends that the vulnerabilities within the Islamic realm originate from this internal tumult. Facing the danger posed by Western European nations' attempts to convert specific groups of the Ottoman population to Christianity and promote Western civilization, it becomes essential to foster unity within the Ottoman realm. Arif suggests that rectifying this aberration within the Ottoman state can be achieved through proactive measures devised by the state and concerted efforts by intellectuals.²³⁸

In the early twentieth century, disparaging views against Bektashis persisted in published works. Critiques directed towards them during this era framed their interactions with non-Muslim communities as posing a threat to Islamic solidarity. Within the comprehensive work *Sefīnetü's Sāfi*, spanning eighteen volumes, the Naqshbandi-affiliated Ahmet Safi articulated his perspectives on the Bektashis²³⁹. He scrutinized their associations with Armenians and Greeks, highlighting their sympathies towards these groups. Furthermore, he censured their religious doctrines and practices, noting their affiliations with Hurufism. According to his assessment, the Bektashis were

²³⁷ Mehmet Arif, *Binbir Hadis-i Şerif Şerhi*, 2. baskı, (Kahire, 1907).

²³⁸ İbid, 402-405; Kara, *Sınırları Aşan Dervişler*, 99-100.

²³⁹ Sertap Aktaş, *Ahmet Safi Bey'in 'Sefinetü's Safi' Adlı Eserinde Bektaşilik*, MA. thesis., (İstanbul, Marmara Üniversitesi, 1999).

viewed as an ignorant faction deviating from orthodox Islamic worship, instead engaging in alternative rituals bordering on idolatry and interpreting Quranic verses in a notably Shiite manner. He also perceived Bektashism as a threat to the state, advocating for stricter measures akin to those enforced in 1826 due to the belief that Bektashis harbored intentions to undermine the nation.²⁴⁰ In his book *Sefînetu'l Evliya*, Hüseyin Vassaf, also stressed that Bektashism comprises diverse aberrant doctrines, drawing from İshâk Hoca's previous work.²⁴¹

In the writings of religious scholars, Sufis, and statesmen, the Bektashis have been portrayed as deviant in their beliefs and politically opposed to the state. However, this characterization of the Bektashis is not confined solely to these groups but also extends into literary circles. Notably, the novel *Nür Baba*²⁴² by Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, which attained considerable popularity among the masses, delves into Bektashi beliefs, lifestyle, and social standing, exerting significant influence in its time. This literary work encountered substantial opposition from the Bektashis themselves, who objected to its adaptation into the film *Boğazici Esrarı Nur Baba* and successfully prevented its release.

The story centers on Nür Baba, a revered baba within the Bektashi Order, and his entanglements with beautiful, affluent, and youthful female devotees and lovers. Set against the backdrop of the Bektashi Lodge atop Çamlıca Hill in Istanbul, the novel delves into the organization of entertainment gatherings characterized by musical performances, poetry recitals, and the consumption of alcoholic beverages that extend late into the night. Following the passing of Arif Baba, his adoptive guardian, and the husband of Celile Bacı, Nur baba marries Celile Bacı. Assuming the role of baba after Arif Baba, Nur embarks on amorous pursuits to charm young, attractive females frequenting the lodge premises, resorting to various forms of deception and religious rituals to achieve his desires.

Nür Baba becomes infatuated with Nigâr Hanım, the alluring and wealthy wife of a diplomat, who also happens to be the niece of Zîbâ Hanım, a former love interest of Nür Baba. Determined to incorporate Nigâr Hanım into their community, Nür Baba employs relentless efforts to win her affections. Employing diverse courtship strategies, he ultimately captivates Nigâr

²⁴⁰ Ibid, 152-154; Kara, *Sınırları Aşan Dervişler*, 101.

²⁴¹ See Hüseyin Vassâf, *Sefîne-i Evliyâ*. (der.) Mehmet Akkuş, Ali Yılmaz, vol 5. (İstanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları,2015); Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*,196; Kara, *Sınırları Aşan Dervişler*, 100.

²⁴² Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Nur Baba*. (İstanbul:Remzi Kitabevi,1939).

Hanım's heart, leading her to renounce her familial ties and material wealth in devotion to the lodge's cause.

As the story progresses, Nūr Baba's fascination with Nigār Hanım diminishes, prompting him to redirect his affections towards Süheyla, another attractive devotee of the lodge. Opting to formalize his relationship with Süheyla through marriage, Nūr Baba's decision triggers profound emotional turmoil in Nigār Hanım. Caught between her unresolved feelings for Nūr Baba and her reluctance to depart from the sanctuary of his lodge, Nigār Hanım finds herself torn amidst conflicting loyalties and desires.

While Yakup Kadri maintained that his novel was purely fictional and stressed his avoidance of conventional sexual controversies related to the Bektashis, it can be argued that his narrative perpetuated negative stereotypes about them. The depiction of Nūr Baba, who marries his stepmother and engages in multiple relationships despite his religious position, alongside the portrayal of Bektashi lodges as places of continual alcohol consumption, music, and dancing, provides substantial evidence supporting this assertion. The characters in the novel, including Nūr Baba, are portrayed as straying from the moral teachings of Hacı Bektāş, the order's founder, and deviating from Islamic principles, leading to moral corruption. Consequently, the portrayal of Nūr Baba contributes to the reinforcement of enduring negative perceptions of the Bektashis. In this regard, Nūr Baba's characterization contributes to the perpetuation of negative stereotypes that endure to this day regarding the Bektashis.

The short story of *Bir Genç Kız Bektaşiler Arasında* (A Young Girl Among the Bektashis)²⁴³ written by Peyami Safa under the pseudonym Server Bedi, is also noteworthy for containing derogatory sexual elements regarding Bektashis. The story contains similar themes of alcohol-fueled gatherings in Bektashi lodges and the seduction of women by Bektashi figures. However, the mentioned novel has also incorporated the theme of nudity during rituals into its anecdotes. The story begins with a young girl, Cemile, traveling from Istanbul to Tokat with her family, where she encounters the secrets of the Bektashis. The narrative revolves around Bektashi Fazlı Baba and Cemile. Despite her young age, Cemile is quite intrigued by Fazlı Baba, a man in his forties who captivates her with his gaze and appearance. After learning that he is a Bektashi,

²⁴³ Peyami Safa, *Bir Genç Kız Bektaşiler Arasında*, (İstanbul: Amedi Matbaası,1927). This story has also been published in modern Turkish by Yalçın Çakmak. See Yalçın Çakmak, 'Peyami Safa'nın Server Bedi imzasıyla Kaleme Aldığı Bir Genç Kız Bektaşiler Arasında Başlıklı Hikayesi ve Osmanlıcadan Çevirisi', *Turnalar*, yıl 21, sayı 75, (2019), 12-29.

Cemile becomes eager to understand what Bektashism entails and its secrets. One day, Fażlı Baba brings Cemile to the lodge. There, he feeds her grapes from the clusters with his own hands and then leads her into the lodge, where he recites prayers to her while pressing his lips and chest against hers. He also convinces Cemile to initiate the Bektashi path.

One night, Cemile puts hashish powder, given by the Fażlı baba, into her mother's coffee and goes to the lodge. After undergoing various rituals for initiation, she presents herself in the crowd and kisses the Fażlı baba's hand. Fażlı baba uses a *tarik*, a long stick used in initiation ceremonies and considered sacred and accepts her to the path. However, while she is in the middle of ritual place, *meydān*, the baba tears the shroud wrapped around her body with a dagger. Cemile finds herself naked in front of everyone. While naked, she begins distributing wine to people attending the ritual. The men there look at her with fiery eyes.

After some time, she observes men and women embracing each other. As morning arrives, Fażlı baba takes Cemile to a room and attempts to have intercourse with her. Realizing the situation, Cemile immediately decides to leave. At that moment, the wife of the gendarmerie commander, Nazire Hanım, another love interest of Fażlı baba, arrives, creates turmoil out of jealousy and leaves the lodge. Cemile overhears some dervishes mentioning Nazire Hanım's apparent attempt to throw herself into the well. Hastening home, she vows never to engage with any lodge, baba, and unfamiliar man again.

2.5. Bektashi Publications

The abolition of the Janissaries and the subsequent banning of Bektashism along with negative writings about Bektashis on religious, moral, and political grounds, prompted them to launch a major campaign to refute these accusations. Before the 1870s, Bektashi publications mainly consisted of poetry collections and scholarly works rather than being primarily aimed at public engagement. However, after 1870, influenced by the writings of İřhāk Hoca, most publications focused on rebutting the slanders against Bektashis and their practices. In their publications post-1870, the Bektashis vigorously endeavored to assert the absence of any substantive affiliation with Hurufism. Therefore, post-1870 publications became polemical, interactive, and addressed significant topics that stirred debates in Bektashi history.

The *Vīrānī Risalesi*, published in 1833, was the initial Bektashi text released after the prohibition. This was followed by the emergence of *Hařim Baba Dīvānı* in Istanbul in 1836. In

addition, the *Nesīmī Dīvānı* was published on two separate occasions in 1844. Furthermore, *Risale-i Hüsnıye* was published in Turkish in 1853. Moreover, the *Tahmis* by Azbi Baba, featuring the *Dīvān-ı Niyāzı Mısrī*, was released in 1867.²⁴⁴ Despite being firmly rejected in some Bektashi publications in the subsequent years, the initial works published by the Bektashis include Hürüfî elements. The compositions of Nesīmī, notably those authored by Vīrānī, exhibit a pronounced incorporation of Hürüfî tenets. It is highly probable that what perturbed İshāk Hoca and prompted him to write *Kāşıfu'l Esrār* was primarily the Hürüfî affiliation of the Bektashis' early works. Another contributing factor could be the perspective and milieu represented by these authors. They were affiliated with the *abdāls*, which were assimilated into the Bektashi order during the seventeenth century. Their approach lies within a tradition of critique directed towards Sufi factions entwined with state apparatuses, endeavoring to augment their influence and wealth. Characters such as Hüsnıye and Niyāzı Mısrī also epitomize dissenters against entrenched religious and governmental authorities. Within this framework, the initial publications of the Bektashis after 1826 may be construed as a form of resistance against both the state and the established religious authority patronized by it. According to Cem Kara, the publications released prior to İshak Hoca's work constitute the initial performative responses to the derogatory and discriminatory attitudes of the state and Sunni critics. These responses are fundamentally combative and conflict-ridden.²⁴⁵ After 1870, *Nūru'l Hudā* authored by Karakaşzāde Ömer, Hagiography of Tevfik Baba, *Maqālāt-ı Cafer Sādık* and *Maqālāt-ı Hacı Bektāş Veli* (published under the title *Velāyetnāme*), *Hāşim Baba Dīvānı*, *Budalānāme*, and *Aşknāme*, published- most probably in his printing house- by Müneccim Necib Baba, the post-nisin of the tekke of Karyağdı.²⁴⁶ These publications greatly unsettled Harputlu İshāk Efendî, prompting him to write his work *Kāşıfu'l Esrār* in 1874.

In response to *Kāşıfu'l Esrār*'s highly critical and unspeakably malicious accusations against the Bektashis, it was impossible for Bektashis not to respond. The first response to İshāk Efendî came in the form of a manuscript from the tekke of Şah Kulu, written by Mehmet Ali Hilmi Dede-baba, but it couldn't be printed due to censorship. However, *Mirātu'l-Mekāşid fî def'i'l*

²⁴⁴ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 214-215; Çift, '1826 sonrasında Bektaşilik', 254; Kara, *Sınırları Aşan Dervişler*, 108-109; Karabulut, *The Rehabilitation*, 56-57.

²⁴⁵ Kara, *Sınırları Aşan Dervişler*, 109.

²⁴⁶ Çift, '1826 sonrasında Bektaşilik', 247-58; Kara, *Sınırları Aşan Dervişler*, 109; Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 215; Karabulut, *The Rehabilitation*, 57.

*Mefâsid*²⁴⁷, crafted by Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, a *sayyid*²⁴⁸ and Istanbul-based accountant²⁴⁹, in 1876, to counter the allegations of İshâk, though without direct reference. According to Birge's assertions, the financial underwriting for the publication of this treatise purportedly stemmed from Pertevniyal Valide Sulţân, the mother of Sulţân Abdulaziz and it presented to Murat V.²⁵⁰

While the precise trajectory of Ahmet Rıfat's affiliation with the Bektashi Order remains elusive, textual indicators suggest a nexus. According to Kiper, employing a language replete with Arabic and Persian terminologies, his writing appears tailored for a select audience within the echelons of Ottoman intellectual discourse rather than the general populace. Scrutiny of his source materials unveils a profound engagement with mystical literature, underscoring a scholarly aptitude.²⁵¹

Even though Ahmet Rıfat does not explicitly address to İshâk Hoca, scholars generally agree that his work was aimed at countering *Kâşifu'l Esrâr*. It is evident in Ahmet Rıfat's aim to write his treatise. Ahmet Rıfat explains that he penned *Mirâtu'l-Mekâşid* to expose the fact that certain foreign and errant groups, which appear to be affiliated with the Bektaşî order and Hacı Bektaş Veli, are in reality governed by their own base desires and engage in practices that contravene Sharia through erroneous and spurious interpretations. The treatise aims to demonstrate that these groups are not truly Bektaşîs, but are instead associated with sects such as the Noktavis and, Hurufis, or other similar heretical factions.²⁵² Maintaining a Sunni tone with a strong sense of ahl al-baytism, Ahmet Rıfat's efforts are seen by many as an attempt to align Bektashism with Sunnism.²⁵³ In *Mirâtu'l-Mekâşid*, he primarily emphasizes portraying Bektashis as followers of Sharia law and adherents to Ahl al-Sunna principles. Notably, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi avoids addressing contentious topics such as the cem ritual and female involvement, ban of Bektashism, instead providing alternative interpretations for certain aspects and traditions within the order.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁷Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşîlik (Mir'atül-Mekâşid fî Def'i'il Mefâsid)*, haz: Salih Çift (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2007). Also see, Salih Çift "Modern Anlamda İlk "Bektaşîlik Kitabı" Olarak *Mir'âtü'l-Mekâşid* ve Kaynakları", *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* Cilt: 15, Sayı: 1, (2006) s. 187-212. For a detailed analysis of this work see Metin Kiper, *Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's Mirâtu'l-Mekâşid: The Possibility of A Sunni Bektaşîyye In The Nineteenth Century*, Unpublished MA thesis, (İstanbul: Boğaziçi University, 2022).

²⁴⁸ Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşîlik*, 165.

²⁴⁹ Ibid,15.

²⁵⁰ Birge, *The Bektaşî Order*, 81.

²⁵¹ Kiper, *Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's*, 33; Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşîlik*, 45; Çift, 'Modern Anlamda',199-204; Kara, *Sınırları Aşan Dervişler*, 110; Karabulut, *The Rehabilitation*, 63.

²⁵² Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşîlik*, 274-275; Kiper, *Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's*, 33.

²⁵³ For example, see Kiper, *Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's*; Kara, *Sınırları Aşan Dervişler*, 111.

²⁵⁴ Çift, 'Giriş' 'in *Gerçek Bektaşîlik*, 71-74.

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi continues his treatise with the origins of the Sufi traditions and presents the *silsilas* of Naqshbandi and Bektashi Orders. He regards Bektashism as a legitimate path by tracing the genealogy of Bektashism back to Abu Bakr. As he states, the preeminence lies in the orders that are rooted in Bekri tradition, which is shared by both the Naqshbandiyya and its Hālidi branch, as well as Bektashi order.²⁵⁵ Indeed, according to him, all orders are fundamentally the same, with distinctions arising from variations in the types of dhikrs (invocation) practiced.²⁵⁶ Ahmet Rıfat's portrayal of the Naqshbandiyya and Bektashism as stemming from a common origin and being so closely aligned serves as evidence of his attempt to reconcile and integrate Bektashism with Sunni Islam.

His approach about the caliphs also differs from traditional Bektashi attitude. In the segment where he discusses the early Islamic era caliphs, Ahmet Rıfat refers to all four of them as "rightly guided," commencing with Abu Bakr, and employs highly commendatory language.²⁵⁷ Typically, Bektashis did not hold a favorable view towards the initial three caliphs, and it is common to encounter references to cursing them in Bektashi literature.

Ahmet Rıfat's work provides in-depth information on Bektashi history, ritual forms, traditions, and customs, invocation style, deeds, spirituality, the five daily prayers, fasting, almsgiving, and pilgrimage.²⁵⁸ He also delves into the life of Hacı Bektāş and the Bektashi rituals and Order and the matter of Hūrūfî influence on Bektashism. Here he responds to the harsh criticism against the order. He endeavors to convey that authentic Bektāşîyye adheres to the principles of Sharia and lives a devout life, much like any other religious orders.²⁵⁹ Subsequent sections provide detailed insights into ahl al-bayt, including the twelve Imams, as well as the names of ahl al-bayt members who perished in Karbala.²⁶⁰ Ahmed Rıfat's work also contains theological issues and themes in Islam and madhabs along with their analysis. As Kiper stated, his interpretations likely aim to align Bektāşîyye with Ahl al-Sunna traditions while also integrating the prevalent pro-Alidist inclination within Bektāşîyye. It's evident from, for instance, that he emphasizes the connection between the leaders of ahl al-Bayt and Abu Hanifa, the progenitor of

²⁵⁵Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşilik*, 141; Kiper, *Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's*, 34-35.

²⁵⁶ Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşilik*, 111.

²⁵⁷ İbid, 121.

²⁵⁸ İbid, 161-295.

²⁵⁹ İbid, 293; Kiper, *Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's*, 37-38; Kara, *Sınırları Aşan Dervişler*, 111.

²⁶⁰ Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşilik*, 361.

the Sunni Hanafî school.²⁶¹ He also discusses *tevellâ* and *teberrâ* and the meaning of being Ca‘ferî in the line of *ehl-i sünnet ve’l cemaat*.²⁶²

Unlike Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, Mehmet Alî Hilmi Dedebaba²⁶³ undertakes a direct refutation against *Kāşifu’l Esrâr* in his *Reddiye*, countering the assertions made by İshâk Hoca. Mehmed Alî Hilmi Dedebaba was the most renowned Dedebaba of the Babagân branch during the nineteenth century. He was a keeper of Qur’ân and *hacı* (pilgrim). His father was an imam in the mosque and a member of Naqshbandî Order. After his father, Mehmet Hilmi also fulfilled the role of imam for a period. Mehmet Hilmi’s father and mother later initiated the Bektashi Order. At the age of fourteen, in 1856, Mehmet Alî Hilmi also embraced Bektashism. In 1861, he initiated celibacy, and 1863 was appointed as the *post-nişin* of the Şahkulu Sultân Dergâhı. Upon assuming the post, he revisited the lodge of Hacı Bektâş, where he received the spiritual succession (*hilâfetnâme*) from Selanikli Hacı Hasan Dedebaba. He also served as a *post-nişin* in the lodge of Hacı Bektâş for a period, however later returned to Şahkulu. He embarked on a significant construction project there, transforming the tekke into a grand complex by adding new buildings, a fountain, and sections such as prayer halls. Additionally, he undertook the repair of existing structures. Furthermore, he established a large library on the premises. He turned this place into an authority granting licenses (*icâzetnâme*) to the Bektashi affiliates in the early twentieth century.²⁶⁴

Mehmet Alî Hilmi Dedebaba's work is the first refutation addressed to Hoca İshâk Efendi. However, his *Reddiye* could not be printed and remained in manuscript form in the libraries until recent times. Although there is no date on the manuscript, an archival document dated 1875 shows that permission was not granted for the publication of dedebaba’s work. This situation suggests that his refutation was written before this date and immediately after *Kāşifu’l Esrâr*. One of the reasons why Mehmet Alî Hilmi's work was not permitted for publication was the inclusion of Hoca İshâk's book *Kāşifu’l Esrâr* within its content. It appears that the consequences of *Kāşifu’l Esrâr*’s publication led to the cessation of its dissemination. Concerns were raised that if Mehmet ‘Alî Hilmi Dedebaba's work were to be printed, it would lead to a resurgence of public awareness of *Kāşifu’l Esrâr*, potentially reigniting discord and confusion within the Islamic community.

²⁶¹ Ibid,127; Kiper, *Ahmet Rıfat Efendi’s*, 39.

²⁶² Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşılık*, 396.

²⁶³ For the detail analysis regarding Mehmet Ali Hilmi Dedebaba, his life and religious milieu, see Müfid Yüksel, *Bektaşılık ve Mehmed Ali Hilmi Dedebaba* (İstanbul: Bakış Yayınevi. 2002); Abdullah Uçman, “Mehmet Ali Hilmi Dedebaba (1842-1907)”, C. XVIII, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 2003, s.440; Soyuer, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşılık*, 89-91.

²⁶⁴ Mehmet Ali Hilmi Dedebaba, *Kaşifu’l Esrar Reddiyesi*, haz. Fahri Maden, (Ankara: La Kitap,2021), 15-49.

Furthermore, the presence of some passages within the *Reddiye* deemed inappropriate according to norms of decorum contributed to the refusal of permission for publication.²⁶⁵

Mehmet Alī Hilmi Dedebara explains that his intention to write this treatise stems from the necessity to provide a response to the claims within *Kāşifu'l Esrār*, which he perceives as attempting to discredit all devout brethren of the Sufi path in the eyes of both friends and adversaries.²⁶⁶ Dedebara adopted a style that is often characterized by its simplicity, occasionally adorned with wit and sometimes even satirical elements. In between the lines of his refutation, one can discern Dedebara's distinctive and didactic narrative, complemented by moments of sharp intellect as he responds to his interlocutor.²⁶⁷

Reddiye commences by asserting that the mere existence of certain Hürüfî texts among certain Bektashis and the occasional inclination of individuals towards Hurufism should not be construed as indicative of Bektashism's alignment with Hurufism in its entirety. For this reason, Mehmet Alī Hilmi consistently underscored the absence of any association between Hurufism and Bektashi order, reiterating that the Bektashis engage in prayer, recitation of supplications and hymns, and abstain from alcohol within the confines of their tekkes.

Throughout his refutation, Dedebara frequently intersperses verses and hadiths, alongside references to jurisprudence, theology, and logic. These aspects highlight Dedebara's depth of knowledge and religious expertise, indicating his proficiency not only in Arabic but also in various Islamic disciplines. It is notable that Dedebara frequently uses the term *Hulefâ-ı Rāşidin* (Rightly Guided Caliphs), which is commonly employed by Sunni scholars and historians, to respectfully refer to the first four caliphs. He occasionally refers to Abu Bakr without the honorifics "Hazret," "May Allah be pleased with him," and "Sıddıq" emphasizing his strong reputation among the companions. He addresses Umar with the honorifics *Hazret* and *Faruk* and refers to Osman as 'Zinnūrayn', the possessor of two lights. Additionally, he speaks with reverence and respect for Imam Bukhari, the author of *Sahih al-Bukhari*, a famous collection of hadiths among Sunni Muslims. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that he speaks with respect and admiration for Mevlana Khalid al-Baghdadi, one of the revered figures of the Naqshbandi Sufi order.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ BOA, MF.MKT, 26/94, 22 Mart 1875.

²⁶⁶ Mehmet Ali Hilmi Dedebara, *Kaşifu'l Esrar Reddiyesi*, 70.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 71.

²⁶⁸ Yüksel, *Bektaşilik ve Mehmed Ali Hilmi Dedebara*, 140.

In his refutation, Dedebaba provides evidence from the Qur'ān and Hadith to demonstrate that Bektashism is aligned with Islam and the beliefs of Ahl al-Sunnah. He argues that Bektashis adhere to Hanafī jurisprudence in their actions and Māturidī theology in their beliefs. He emphasizes that they perform prayers in their homes and tekkes for the well-being of the state and the Muslim community, and they do not consume alcohol in their tekkes. In this regard, he asserts that there is no fundamental difference between them and other Sufi orders in terms of adherence to Islam.²⁶⁹ This aspect of his work bears a resemblance to that of Ahmet Rıfat. Dedebaba refutes allegations of polytheism, denial of the Day of Judgment, belief in reincarnation, and other accusations, asserting instead that Bektashis are believers, adherents of monotheism, and followers of Tawhid and Prophet Muḥammad.²⁷⁰ Moreover, he states that Bektashis are committed to religious practices such as prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage, and they strive to fulfill these obligations. He explains that the only difference between Bektashism and other Sufi orders lies in their embrace of the love for the Ahl al-Bayt.

Dedebaba makes an intriguing observation regarding Hoca İshāk Efendi's accusation against Bektashis of not consistently fulfilling religious duties and declaring them irreligious. Dedebaba highlights that despite İshāk Hoca's allegations, he himself, who is known to possess considerable wealth and a penchant for leisure, had not performed the pilgrimage (hajj), a fundamental obligation in Islam.²⁷¹ Throughout his refutation, Dedebaba repeatedly invokes the testimony of faith. This assertion aims to affirm the solidity of his faith and to prove to Hoca İshāk Efendi, who deliberately refuses to acknowledge it, that Bektashis are indeed part of the Muslim community, attesting to the Qur'ān and the Prophet Muḥammad.

He also addressed one of the central tenets of Bektashism, celibacy (*mücerredlik*), which underscores the primary distinction between the Babagān and Dedegan branches of the Bektashi order. He discusses this subject within the framework of İshāk Hoca's assertions regarding the Bektashis, which include the claim that they attract followers from various religions and schools of thought and employ tactics such as the 'on altı kemerbend' (sixteen belt) with the third one attributed to Jesus. For İshāk Hoca, after affiliating with Jesus, these individual pledges allegiance and becomes celibate, forbidding marriage to themselves.²⁷²

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid, 141.

²⁷¹ Mehmet Ali Hilmi Dedebaba, *Kaşifu'l Esrar Reddiyesi*, 72.

²⁷² Ibid, 189.

Mehmet Alī Hilmi Dede Baba asserts that celibacy, deemed as a cherished and diligently pursued state within Bektashism, holds no affiliation with Christianity. He also emphasizes that celibacy within Bektashism does not aim to abandon marriage for the purpose of engaging in sinful and abhorrent acts such as adultery and homosexuality. To prove that dedebaba gives examples from the hadiths. He highlights the exalted status of the Yahya, John the Baptist who also chose not to marry. He also gives examples from the words of the Prophet Muḥammad and Alī regarding marriage. He demonstrates that there are both praises for marriage and celibacy. In his final remarks, he concludes that in cases of conflicting hadiths, Islamic jurisprudential principles (fiqh) do not make judgments regarding the virtues of celibacy or marriage.²⁷³

Mehmet Alī Hilmi Baba implies that it is a matter of personal choice and notes that Hacı Bektāş and some of the Bektashis also subdue their desires and live in the realm of celibacy. Addressing İshāk Hoca, he then elucidates the etiquette and manners of celibacy:

One begins with the intention of celibacy, serving in the dwelling of the lodge of Hacı Bektāş for a period ranging from one day to forty years, purifying oneself from things that distance the heart from God and disciplining the ego. After realizing that one is as pure as a newborn from the mother, they pass through the ceremony and join the community of celibates, receiving a ring in their ear. These individuals reside only in Sufi lodges and, if capable, perform the obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca and visits the holy sites of Najaf, Karbala, and Mashhad. They strive to learn about the world as much as possible and spend the remainder of their life in worship of Allah and praying for the sultān.²⁷⁴

The polemical works of Ahmet Rıfat Efendi and Mehmet Alī Dede Baba, as will be seen in the upcoming chapters including Ahmet Rıfki's *Bektaşî Sırrı*, have aimed to bring Bektashism closer to Sunni Islamic interpretation. Despite being written by Bektashis themselves, the reason for these works having such a Sunni tone is not only to reject the association of Bektashis with Hurufism but also to depict a Bektashism that is in line with the political and religious climate of the Ottoman state. The era of limited freedom under the rule of Abdulmecid and Abdulaziz, alongside the escalating engagements of both local and foreign Christians, coupled with the expanding foreign interference favoring non-Muslims, likely prompted a Muslim response against external influences. Bektashis, previously marginalized within the Muslim sphere, would find themselves increasingly targeted due to their affiliations with missionaries and Freemasons.

²⁷³ Ibid, 184.

²⁷⁴ Ibid, 188.

Consequently, they must have sought to assimilate into the Sunni Muslim fold, emphasizing a deep-seated reverence for the Ahl al-Bayt.

CHAPTER 3

AUTHORITY IN CRISES IN THE LODGE OF HACI BEKTĀŞ

3.1. Naqshbandi Sheiks, the Çelebi Family and Babagān in the Hacı Bektāş Lodge

Following the closure of the Bektashi lodges, various pressures and measures imposed on the Bektashis in economic, religious, and political spheres resulted in conflicts not only between the state and the Bektashis in Istanbul but also within the Hacı Bektaş lodge, which was regarded as the principal center of Bektashi community. Tensions arose between the Naqshbandi sheikhs appointed to the Bektashi lodges and the existing Bektashi dervishes and sheikhs within the dervish lodge. Additionally, disputes developed between the Bektashis themselves. The conflicts among these groups, who vied for control over the administration of the Hacı Bektaş lodge and the leadership of Bektashi, extended through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and continue into the present day.

After the closure of Bektashi lodges, Hacı Bektāş lodge persisted in operation, with no punitive measures taken against Hamdullah Çelebi, the incumbent sheikh, and his family. Indeed, they were allowed to maintain oversight over both the central lodge and the fourteen lodges and endowments surrounding Ankara.²⁷⁵ Nonetheless, in March 1827, Hamdullah Çelebi faced exile to Amasya following allegations of fomenting unrest in the locality and instigating disturbances within the endowments associated with the lodge.²⁷⁶

Subsequent to the exile of Hamdullāh Efendi to Amasya, his brother, Veliyuddīn Çelebi, assumed the role of sheikh, contingent upon conducting Naqshbandi-style rituals at the tekke. However, with the abolition of the title of Çelebi in 1834, Veliyuddīn Çelebi was also exiled to Sivas, accompanied by the directive that he and his kin refrain from entering the tekke premises. While the ostensible reason for Veliyuddīn Efendi's expulsion pertained to internal organizational issues within the tekke, its underlying motivation was the appointment of a Naqshbandi sheikh to

²⁷⁵ Anton Jozef Dierl, *Anadolu Aleviliği*, çev. Fahrettin Yiğit, (İstanbul: Ant,1991) s.71. According to Fahri Maden, the reason for the non-interference with the tekke during these years was attributed to the state's engagement with other issues arising in the region. In these years, the Chieftain of the Pehlivanlı Tribe, Halid, had seized control of the provinces of Nevşehir, Kırşehir, and Bozok, and had even arranged for sacrifices to be made at the Hacı Bektaş Veli shrine in 1833, to which he had incorporated the Ürgüp voivode into his ranks. Furthermore, he appointed commanders and sergeants to the town, akin to the Janissary corps, demanding that they be equipped with excellent weapons upon his arrival. see Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 182.

²⁷⁶ BOA, HAT,501/24588-D; BOA, C.EV, 236/11793; BOA, MD, nr.242 s.231; Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 89.

the institution. Despite Veliyuddīn Efendi's expulsion, Mehmet Nebi Baba, the caretaker of the tekke, remained untouched, placed under the supervision of the newly appointed Naqshbandi sheikh, Kayserili Mehmet Said Efendi.²⁷⁷ The Naqshbandi sheikh was tasked with purging the tekke and the town from heretical and blasphemous Bektashi adherents, and he was entrusted with leadership upon the expulsion of the tekke's former "false sheikhs" (*seyh-i bāṭıl*).²⁷⁸ Alongside the central tekke's activities pertaining to the order, all sorts of economic matters were also entrusted to the Naqshbandi sheikh, aiming to subject the tekke to Naqshbandi supervision in all aspects.

Until his demise in 1842, Said Efendi conducted Naqshbandi rituals in the tekke after the Friday prayers and managed the tekke for eight years.²⁷⁹ Subsequently, Ispartalı Mehmed Nuri Efendi, a Naqshbandi sheikh, was appointed to this position. During this transition of authority, a thorough examination of the endowment of the Hacı Bektāş lodge was conducted by the state. The investigation aimed to ascertain the total revenue of the tekke endowment, with the stipulation that a portion of said revenue, meeting the required sum, be remitted to the treasury, on the condition that the remainder be retained within the tekke. However, subsequent deliberations concluded that the confiscation of endowment proceeds by the treasury was deemed inappropriate. Consequently, these revenues were subdivided into fifteen shares. Four shares were allocated to the incumbent overseeing leadership and spiritual guidance duties, three shares were designated for Hamdullah Efendi, who had been previously relieved of his post as sheikh, four shares were earmarked for the restoration of the Hacı Bektāş Veli shrine and tekke, and the remaining four shares were allocated for the sustenance expenses of the dervishes within the tekke.²⁸⁰

The reason for allocating a share of the tekke's revenues to the former sheikh, Hamdullah Efendi, stemmed from his repeated pleas for amnesty from the government following his exile. Approximately seven years after his banishment, Hamdullah Çelebi penned a petition expressing his plight, stating that he had been unjustly expelled due to false accusations, and highlighting his dire need, even for sustenance, as he could not obtain a share of the endowment revenues.²⁸¹ With the intervention of the governor of Sivas and subsequent pressure from the central government, a

²⁷⁷Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 256.

²⁷⁸ BOA, HAT, 553/27362; *ibid*; 182-83.

²⁷⁹ Said Efendi arranged the marriage of his son to the daughter of a Bektashi dervish, and his grandson Arif, who grew up among the dervishes, received initiation from Mehmet Ali Hilmi Baba and became a Bektashi. Hür Mahmut Yücer, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf 19. Yüzyıl*, (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2003), 487.

²⁸⁰ BOA, A.MKT.MHM, 18/48. Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 185.

²⁸¹ Soyzer, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşîlik*, 78-79.

serious inquiry was initiated regarding Hamdullah Çelebi's potential return to his homeland. However, concerns were raised about the potential reemergence of issues in the tekke and town if the sheikh were to return at that time, leading to a decision against his repatriation. In 1840, upon the request of Aleppo Governor Esad Pasha, an application was submitted for Hamdullah Çelebi's pardon. Subsequently, considering his apparent rehabilitation, contingent on refraining from leadership activities, the sheikh was pardoned, and permission was granted for him to travel to Hacı Bektâş. In 1842, he was allocated three shares from the tekke's endowment. However, Hamdullâh Çelebi did not return to Hacı Bektâş and he passed away in Amasya in 1846.²⁸²

After the allocation of shares from the Hacı Bektâş Veli endowment to the Çelebis in 1842, Alî Celâleddîn Efendi from the Çelebis was recognized as the trustee of this share.²⁸³ With the Çelebis started to increase their influence on the tekke endowment, three distinct authorities emerged in the tekke. One was represented by the incumbent Bektashi baba; the second was the Naqshbandi sheikh, and the third was the Bektashi sheikh represented by the Çelebi family. This circumstance precipitated a multitude of authority crises within the Hacı Bektâş Tekke, persisting until the closure of tekkes and zawiya in the first half of the twentieth century.

Following the reinstatement of the Çelebis as authoritative figures within the tekke and their official recognition by the state as shareholders, a dispute arose between the Naqshbandi sheikh and the Bektashis in the tekke regarding the distribution of endowment revenues. The Naqshbandi sheikh, Nuri Efendi, lodged a complaint in Istanbul. However, due to the unchanging stance of the government, Nuri Efendi did not return to the tekke, and instead, another Naqshbandi sheikh, Nevşehirli Yusuf Ziya Efendi, was appointed temporarily.²⁸⁴ According to Yılmaz Soyzer's claim, following this incident, no Naqshbandi sheikh was able to enter the tekke and they were compelled to reside in a remote corner of the city. Despite the continued appointment of Naqshbandi sheikhs to the tekke, their influence over the tekke diminished after this event.²⁸⁵

The tensions within the tekke were not solely confined to the disputes between the Çelebi family and the Naqshbandi sheikhs. The increasing authority of the Çelebis within the Bektashi tekke had also unsettled the babas. Following the prohibition of *Çelebilik* in 1834 and the exile of Veliyuddîn Çelebi, there were various levels of babas representing Bektashism and Naqshbandi

²⁸²Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 89-92.

²⁸³*Ibid*, 256.

²⁸⁴*Ibid*, 257.

²⁸⁵ Soyzer, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşilik*, 78.

sheikh within the tekke. However, the regulations enacted in 1842 and 1849, which granted shares from the endowment to the Çelebis and exempted them from taxes in 1851, paved the way for their involvement in the affairs of the lodge once again.

In 1849, Turabi Baba, a powerful figure, was appointed as the caretaker of the tekke.²⁸⁶ Holding formally Naqshbandi icazet-nāme, Turabi Baba served as the caretaker until 1868. Following the passing of Turabi Baba in 1868, Selanikli Hasan Baba was appointed as the caretaker of the shrine. Additionally, during the same period, Çelebi Feyzullāh Efendi was also appointed to the vacant position of sheikh in the tekke.²⁸⁷

However, the appointment of Feyzullāh Efendi as the sheikh was met with opposition from the Bektashi babas who supported Selanikli Hasan Baba. In 1873, Feyzullāh Çelebi was forcibly removed and Selanikli Hasan Baba was reinstated to his position. Subsequently, Hasan Baba was brought to Istanbul and exiled to Tripoli on the grounds of allegedly corrupting Sunni beliefs and leading people astray. The expulsion of Hasan Baba and the removal of Feyzullāh Efendi from his position resulted in the emergence of tensions among the babas and the Çelebis in the tekke. Meanwhile, the duties of leadership were restored to Feyzullāh Çelebi once again. Nonetheless, some dervishes did not approve of his post as sheikh, contending that the assumption of the position of sheikh by Feyzullāh Çelebi was contrary to the traditions of the order, prompting calls for his replacement with another individual. In response, the central government appointed Perīṣān baba to the tekke.²⁸⁸ However, Feyzullāh Çelebi persisted in his position as sheikh, and in 1875, he lodged a complaint alleging that the sheikhs of the Merdivenköy and Yedikule tekkes incited their dervishes to rebel against him.²⁸⁹ As a result, in 1877, he was once again appointed as the sheikh of the central tekke, by removing the Perīṣān baba from his position. Meanwhile, some dervishes in the central tekke were actively striving to install Yesārī Baba as the sheikh.²⁹⁰

After the death of his father, Feyzullāh Çelebi, the supporters of Cemāleddīn Çelebi, asserted that this right had been within his family for 600 years and demanded that the leadership be bestowed upon him. Various sheikhs such as Emin Baba of Edirnekapı, Hakkı Baba of Karaağaç, Ahmet Baba of Rumelihisarı, Münir Baba of Karyağdı, Nuri Baba of Büyük Çamlıca,

²⁸⁶ For Hatifi's poem, which details the difficulties experienced by Turabi Baba at Hacı Bektaş convent, see, Vasfi Mahir Kocatürk, *Tekke Şiiri Antolojisi*, (Ankara: Buluş Kitabevi,1955), 494.

²⁸⁷ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 258.

²⁸⁸ İbid, 258-259; Soyzer, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşîlik*, 83-85.

²⁸⁹ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 259; Soyzer, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşîlik*, 84.

²⁹⁰ Soyzer, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşîlik*, 80- 85.

and Hüseyin Resmi Baba of Yedikule lodges declared their support for Cemāleddīn Çelebi's leadership, stating that they would not be subordinate to any other sheikh if he were not appointed.²⁹¹

The support of the babas from Bektashi lodges in Istanbul for Cemāleddīn Çelebi and their desire for him to become the sheikh present an intriguing dynamic. It demonstrates that these two branches, when necessary, coalesce against the possibility of a Naqshbandi sheikh being appointed to the central tekke. This situation suggests that the relationship between the babas and the Çelebi family proves fluid and ambiguous. It is also remarkable that the babas not only support Cemāleddīn's appointment as sheikh but also explicitly state that they will not recognize another sheikh as legitimate should they not be under his authority. This situation may also imply a divergence of perspectives among the babas concerning the status of the Çelebis.

Despite the support for Cemāleddīn Çelebi and his voluntary candidacy for the post as sheikh, the central government appointed another Naqshbandi sheikh, Yahya Efendi, to the tekke. On the other hand, the babas invented the title of "Dedebaba" outside the institution of sheikh, seeking approval from the central government for this title and attempting to install Mehmed Alī Hilmi Baba as *Dedebaba* in the tekke in 1880. However, the central government rejected the Bektashis' initiative by stating that there was no official position associated with the title of "Dedebaba".²⁹² Meanwhile, Mehmet Alī Hilmi Baba gathered support from the sheikhs and dervishes backing him and, without government approval, assumed the position of Hacı Bektāş Velī tekke's leader in practice.²⁹³

The arrivals of Mehmet 'Alī Hilmi Dedebaba and Naqshbandi sheikh Yahya Efendi to the lodge once again unsettled the power dynamics. Mehmet Alī Hilmi Dedebaba's coming particularly perturbed the Çelebis. Meanwhile, Hafız Alī Baba asserted his claim to the post of sheikh, alleging that Mehmet Alī Hilmi Dedebaba had unlawfully usurped the position from him and demanded its restoration. Despite having supporters in the central tekke, he failed in his endeavor. Concurrently, Mehmet Alī Hilmi Baba made significant efforts to remove Perīşān Baba from the tekke. Perīşān Baba withdrew from his position in favor of Mehmet Alī Hilmi Baba in

²⁹¹ BOA, Y.MTV, 2/16; Maden, *Bektaşi Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 259; Soyzer, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşılık*, 86-87.

²⁹² BOA, Ayniyat Meşihat, nr.1413, s.162.

²⁹³ Maden, *Bektaşi Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 260; Yücer, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf (19. Yüzyıl)*, 333; Soyzer, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşılık*, 88. As stated by Soyzer, subsequent to this point, a distinct branch of the Babagān, comprised solely of celibate babas, commenced delineating itself apart from the Çelebis.

1882. A division also emerged between the dervishes of Mehmet ‘Alī Hilmi Baba and those of Perīṣān Baba. To the extent that Perīṣān Baba's disciples declared his demise and erected a tombstone in the garden of the Eyrek Baba tekke. However, Perīṣān Baba returned to the central tekke in 1883 and resumed his duties.²⁹⁴ The matter between Mehmet Alī Hilmi Dedebara and Perīṣān Baba instigated the initial rift among the Babagān Bektashis. Mehmet ‘Alī Hilmi Dedebara maintained an amicable rapport with state authorities and possessed a Naqshbandi background though affiliated with Bektashism. Conversely, Perīṣān Baba harbored discomfort regarding the state's involvement in Bektashism.²⁹⁵

Meanwhile, the Çelebi family, akin to the Babagān, was preoccupied with its own family disputes. Cemāleddīn Çelebi and his siblings, desiring to obtain the entire endowed share allocated to them, initiated a lawsuit claiming that the children of Hamdullāh Efendi would not be entitled to receive any portion of the share from endowment, due to the Hamdullah Efendi's exile after the ban of Bektashism. Although they won the case, Hamdullāh Efendi's daughter, Rahime Hatun, managed to obtain one and a half shares from the waqf, which subsequently passed to her son Hamdullah. Nonetheless, Cemāleddīn Çelebi also filed a lawsuit against this decision, ultimately obtaining the entirety of the shares allocated to the Çelebis.²⁹⁶

On the other hand, the Babagān Bektashis lodged a complaint alleging that the Naqshbandi sheikh Yahya Efendi misappropriated the endowment revenues. In the same year, however, Yahya Efendi filed a lawsuit against Perīṣān Baba and all the dervishes, accusing them of conspiring against him with claims of ‘postnişinlik’ and ‘dedebabalık’ upon Perīṣān Baba's return to the tekke, alleging they had acted with ill intent. In response to these complaints, Sırrı Paşa was dispatched to Hacı Bektāş to resolve the issues and disputes among the parties involved and resided there for some time. Sırrı Paşa later documented his experiences and observations in his work, known as *Mektūbāt*.²⁹⁷ His assessments are notable for providing information about the current state of the lodge of Hacı Bektāş Veli, its administration, the conditions of the dervishes present there, as well as the positions and relationships of the Naqshbandi sheikh Yahya Efendi and Çelebi Cemāleddīn Efendi.

²⁹⁴ BOA, EV. MKT, 1250/30; Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 261.

²⁹⁵ Şevki Koca, *Bektaşîlik ve Bektaşî Dergâhları* (İstanbul: Cem Vakfı Yayınları, 2005), 256.

²⁹⁶ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 261. For conflicts within the families of Cemāleddīn Çelebi and Hamdullah Çelebi, see *Kırşehir Şer’iye Sicili* nr. 8-16.

²⁹⁷ See *Mektubat-ı Sırrı Paşa*, Kitapçı Arakil, İstanbul, 1303, 174-185; Fahri Maden, ‘Hacı Bektaş Veli Tekkesi’nde Nakşî Şeyhler’, 159-180.

Upon reaching the tekke, Sırrı Paşa was welcomed by around forty dervishes before holding discussions with Sheikh Yahya Efendi and Çelebi Efendi. Following the investigation, he forwarded their additional responses along with official documents to the capital. Sırrı Paşa meticulously described the tekke, its internal compartments, and additionally provided detailed depictions of the residences of the Çelebis. He was impressed by the industriousness and cleanliness of the dervishes, as much as he was by the layout of the tekke premises. He also described them as dervishes who devoutly adhered to Sharia, performing the five daily prayers.²⁹⁸ According to his descriptions, during this period, Çelebi Efendi had a rather luxurious mansion in the town of Hacı Bektāş, compared to other houses in the area. Despite being a young man not yet thirty years old, Çelebi Efendi was a scholar spending his time in scholarly pursuits. Following a dispute between Sheikh Yahya Efendi and the dervishes, he ceased to visit the tekke. Çelebi Efendi, being regarded as the son of Hacı Bektāş Veli by many admirers in various provinces of Anatolia, receives great affection due to his lineage. Visitors, especially those coming to pay their respects, often brought him numerous gifts and offerings. Additionally, owing to his inheritance from his father, Çelebi Efendi's financial situation was better than that of the tekke during that period. For this reason, many of the visitors to the tekke would stay as guests in his mansion.²⁹⁹

Sırrı Paşa also investigated Naqshbandi sheikh Yahya Efendi. He confessed that since his appointment to the lodge, he had conducted the Naqshbandi ritual only once or twice, and thereafter did not perform it again nor did he teach any lessons. The dervishes defended themselves, stating, whenever sheikh efendi desired to conduct the Naqshbandi ritual, they were not in attendance, and whenever he aimed to impart teachings, they did not participate. When asked about this situation, Yahya Efendi admitted his fault, stating that he erred in this matter. In fact, he confessed that he personally initiated Bektashi Order and have been informed of their secrets.³⁰⁰ The relationship between Sheikh Yahya and Mehmet Alī Hilmi Dedebara, and later with Perīşān Baba, had already soured. Yahya Efendi also had failed to align with the group of dervishes coming from Rumelia, whom he invited to tekke, in Ramadan, and later entrusted them to Cemāleddīn Çelebi. As Cemāleddīn Çelebi reported that Yahya Efendi requested some advance money and a

²⁹⁸ *Mektubat-ı Sırrı Paşa*, 175-76.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 177.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 178-79

monthly salary of fifteen liras from them to leave his position as sheikh and depart from the tekke. Consequently, the dervishes had to return to Rumelia after being unable to meet his demands.³⁰¹

After listening to all parties involved, Sırrı Pasha formed a commission consisting of Yahya Efendi and the babas in the tekke. A decision was reached on July 19, 1885, outlining how this administrative commission would operate. One copy of the instructions specifying the procedures of the commission would be sent to the office of the Şeyhu'l-İslām, while another copy would be kept in the section of the tekke known as *Meydānevi*.

Yahya Efendi, who holds the post as sheikh in the tekke, would perform the Naqshbandi ritual as part of his duties. Any behavior contrary to Sharia law and Sufi etiquette would not be tolerated in the tekke, and Yahya Efendi would not allow such behavior from anyone. As before, the call to prayer would be recited, and the five daily prayers would be performed in congregation in the tekke. Dervishes would not interfere with matters under the jurisdiction of the *Meşihat*, and Yahya Efendi cannot expel the babas, who have been confirmed to be in good standing, from the tekke unless they persist in behavior contrary to Sharia law and Sufi etiquette, without reporting it to the provincial authorities. To resolve disputes between the leading babas and Yahya Efendi, to achieve serious and genuine goodwill, and to oversee the income and expenses of the tekke in question, a commission consisting of the babas of six houses under Yahya Efendi's leadership would be established, and the tekke would be administered by this commission. Any money obtained from endowment revenues or donations would be placed in a double-locked chest, with one key held by sheikh Efendi and the other by the eldest member of the commission; the chest cannot be opened until both keys are present, and at least half of the babas comprising the commission are present and ready. Any expenditure for the maintenance of the tekke must be approved by the commission, and the members of the commission, led by sheikh Efendi, could not authorize expenditure, or make decisions without his permission and approval. Furthermore, without the consent of at least four members, Sheikh Efendi himself could not spend a single penny anywhere. Sheikh Efendi would not accept any remuneration exceeding the salary determined by the state from the tekke's revenues, and if he does, he must reimburse it. The commission's approval was required for the sale of the tekke's movables, livestock, and other assets, and nothing could be sold without its permission. Two copies of the inventory of the tekke's assets would be prepared and authenticated by the commission, with one copy kept in the tekke and the other submitted to

³⁰¹ Ibid, 180.

the government. These registers would record the items by type and characteristics, indicating which dervishes hold them in which houses. When dervishes leave the tekke for any reason, they must hand over their possessions to their successors, and if lost or damaged, they must be accounted for. Items presented to the tekke as gifts by Sufi adherents would also be added to the register and reported to the government. Both Sheikh Efendi and the dervishes were obliged to comply with these instructions; those who act contrary to the orders and instructions would be warned by the government according to the degree of their opposition, and if they did not reform, they would be expelled from the tekke.³⁰²

After Sırrı Pasha reconciled the dervishes and Sheikh Yahya Efendi, and calm was restored in the tekke, he left Hacı Bektâş. However, the problems between the babas and the Naqshbandi sheikh resurfaced in 1893. After Naqshbandi sheikh's inappropriate behaviors were reported by the people in the town, he was dismissed from his position and a Bektashi, Malatyalı Hacı Mehmet appointed as a sheikh. Yahya Efendi asserted his authority as the sheikh within the Naqshbandi order, claiming it to be himself, and with the support of some of the community, he was reinstated to his position. Upon his return to the tekke, Yahya Efendi immediately ensured the removal of Mehmet Alî Hilmi Dedebara from the tekke³⁰³. Cemâleddîn Çelebi saw this void as an opportunity to intervene in the affairs of the lodge. However, Yahya Efendi filed a lawsuit against him for setting up a farm and doing unlicensed agriculture. Nonetheless, backed by the Çelebi family, and a new mayor with close ties to Çelebi³⁰⁴, Cemâleddîn Çelebi's appointed as the sheikh and trustee of the endowment. In 1896, the Bektashis initiated another lawsuit against Sheikh Yahya due to his offensive words and behaviors. However, in the same year, Yahya Efendi passed away, bringing his twenty-year-long leadership at the tekke to an end.³⁰⁵

The death of Yahya Efendi intensified the conflicts within the tekke. Indeed, this time, the government appointed Hafız Yahya Efendi, a teacher and a Bektashi dervish, to the tekke, further fueling tensions. This appointment from the capital caused discontent at the central lodge. In a meeting held in the *Kilerevi* of the tekke, the Babagân Bektashis decided to inform the central government about their decision; the abolition of the post of Naqshbandi sheikh at the tekke, the retention of the salaries given to these sheikhs from the treasury, and the appointment of Feyzi

³⁰² İbid, 180-85.

³⁰³ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 262.

³⁰⁴ Soyyer, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşîlik*, 88.

³⁰⁵ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 263.

Baba from within their own ranks rather than individuals from outside who bestowed themselves with the Bektashi title. However, the Council of State, *Şûrâ-yı Devlet*, rejected this and, at the beginning of the twentieth century, appointed another Naqshbandi, Sheikh Hamza Efendi to the tekke. However, this sheikh was not admitted to the tekke.³⁰⁶

The exclusion of the Naqshbandi sheikh from the tekke marked again the beginning of conflicts between the Çelebis and Babagân within the tekke. In 1910, the babas in the Hacı Bektâş lodge raised several grievances against Çelebi Cemâleddîn, alleging non-compliance with regulations and attempts to evade taxes. They also objected to the Naqshbandi sheikh receiving a salary despite residing outside the tekke, and they emphasized the financial hardships faced by the dervishes. Being of Albanian descent, Fevzi Baba and his followers informed Bektashi tekkes in Rumelia about the situation and sought assistance.³⁰⁷

Supporters of Cemâleddîn Çelebi and Fevzi Baba sent multiple telegrams to the central authority, each levying accusations against the other. The central government, rather than addressing the matter directly, delegated its resolution to local authorities. Following an investigation led by the Governor of Ankara, it was observed that conflicts between the factions persisted. While acknowledging the potential ramifications of Fevzi Baba's expulsion from the tekke on Rumelia, it was emphasized that control over the tekke should not remain solely in the hands of the Çelebis. Consequently, the proposal was made to appoint a neutral interim sheikh to the tekke.³⁰⁸

After some time, the Naqshbandi sheikh and Cemâleddîn Çelebi, along with the dervishes who supported him, issued a statement expressing their grievances. They alleged that Fevzi Baba had gathered many Albanians around him and viewed Bektashism as purely Albanian, disregarding the presence of many Turks, Kurds, and other ethnicities within the order. This stance had offended members of the Order who belonged to different ethnic backgrounds³⁰⁹. As a result, a thorough investigation was launched against Fevzi Baba and the lodge of Hacı Bektâş.³¹⁰ While this investigation was ongoing, Sheikh Hamza Efendi passed away.

³⁰⁶ Ibid, 256.

³⁰⁷ Ibid; 267.

³⁰⁸ Soyzer, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşılık*, 102. Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 267.

³⁰⁹ BOA, DH. İD, 37-2/2; Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 268.

³¹⁰ Soyzer, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşılık*, 103-106.

Following the demise of the Naqshbandi sheikh, a significant power struggle for the position ensued between the Babagān and the Çelebis within the tekke. Many dervishes and leaders supporting Cemāleddīn Efendi and Fevzi Baba lodged complaint letters with the central authorities.³¹¹ In his report, the *Mutaşarrıf* of Kırşehir, Nafı Bey, criticized the appointment of the Naqshbandi sheikh, deeming it an inadequate solution that contradicted the political landscape of the constitutional era. He highlighted the demand from the people of Kırşehir for the appointment of a Bektashi to the tekke, expressing support for Fevzi Baba. This sentiment was echoed by Bektashi tekkes in Albania.³¹² Nonetheless, the government persisted in appointing a Naqshbandi sheikh to the tekke once more. During the First World War and the Turkish War of Independence, tensions in the tekke somewhat subsided, and majority of Bektashis fostered a close relationship with the government.

As seen in the archival documents, the appointments of sheikhs to the Hacı Bektaş Lodge and the state's stance on this matter led to numerous issues among the groups within the lodge. Although the state officially appointed a Naqshbandi sheikh to the Hacı Bektaş Lodge and formally recognized his position, it also showed recognition of the legitimacy of Bektashism through correspondence with the Çelebis and later with the babas. However, the state's disregard for the Bektashis' requests for their own sheikh resulted in a significant authority problem within the lodge.

The disputes among the various factions within the Hacı Bektaş convent were documented in sources beyond just archival records. These disagreements are also reflected in literary works and treatises authored by the Bektashis themselves. These treatises are of significant importance as they address the issues of leadership within the Hacı Bektaş Lodge and the rightful successor to Hacı Bektaş's legacy, based on the doctrinal foundations of the Bektashi order, presenting perspectives not found in archival documents. Notably, the treatises written by Ahmet Rıfki from the Babagan Bektashis and Cemaledin Çelebi from the Çelebi family have brought to light issues that were once only known within the Bektashi community. These works have made this information public and sparked significant interest in Bektashism. The following sections will

³¹¹ BOA, DH.ID, 37-2/3; *ibid*, 105-107; see Ömer ÖZKAN, “Saraya Gönderilen Şikâyet Telgrafları”, *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi*, cilt: VI, sayı: 14, (2000), 9-13.

³¹² BOA, DH.ID, 37-2/3; Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması*, 270-71.

analyze these treatises in detail, in order to gain a clearer understanding of the divisions between the Babagan and Çelebi Bektashis.

3.2. Ahmet Rıfki's *Bektāşī Sırrı*

Ahmet Rıfki authored his work titled *Bektāşī Sırrı* precisely during the period of heightened conflicts between the Babagān and Çelebi branches at the Hacı Bektāş Lodge. Although his work was initially penned in response to İshāk Hoca' s *Kāşifu'l Esrār*, its primary focus shifts on the position and relationship of Çelebi and Babagān Bektashis, thereby eliciting considerable resonance within the Bektashi community.

As pointed out earlier, the works published by the Bektashis at the last period of the nineteenth century were a response to the derogatory and discriminatory attitude of the state and Sunni scholars' critics. Most of these publications were the works of *abdāls* who distinguish between the outward and inward aspects of religion, preferring the inward over the outward, rejecting ownership of wealth and property, and refusing to worship for flaunt. Although these publications did not embody polemical or performative qualities, their contents and natures inherently possessed the characteristics mentioned above. Works published in the latter half of the nineteenth century, however, took on performative qualities. These works aimed to refute the association between Bektashism and Hurufism, aligning Bektashism more closely with Sunnism and emphasizing the love of the Ahl al-Bayt as a Sufi order. Among these, the most notable were Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's *Mirātu'l Mekāsid* and Mehmet Alī Hilmi Dedebara' s *Reddiye*. Ahmet Rıfki's work *Bektāşī Sırrı* was also characterized by performative qualities, encapsulating profound concepts such as *Vahdet-i vücūd* and other Sufi elements, making it the most important treatise at the outset of the twentieth century.

The key distinctive element of *Bektāşī Sırrı* compared to preceding works is its examination of critical themes such as the representation and legacy of the Bektashi order, which had been largely overlooked previously. This signifies that Ahmet Rıfki, for the first time, brought the issue of religious authority within Bektashism to the forefront and expressed his perspectives through various channels. Spanning three volumes written in 1325, 1327, and 1328 (AD 1909-1911), Ahmet Rıfki's work provides insights into the Bektashi order while also addressing the

claims of Hurufism in the initial two volumes. The third volume serves as a rebuttal to Cemāleddīn Çelebi's work titled *Bektāşī Sırrı Nām Risāleye Mudāfa'a*.³¹³

Ahmet Rıfki,³¹⁴ also known by various names such as Dervīş Rūḥullāh, Baba Rıfki, and Sakallı Rıfki, possessed a notably intriguing character and was a versatile writer. His work *Bektāşī Sırrı* should perhaps be considered his most important work. This work sparked numerous controversies in its wake, and this ongoing wave of debate persists to the present day.

Ahmet Rıfki initiates his discourse by shedding light on the societal intrigue stirred by the enigmatic nature of Bektashi rituals and customs, along with the objections voiced against such secrecy. Among these objections he counts İshāk Hoca' s treatise titled *Kāşifu'l Esrār*. For him, despite attracting significant attention and purchases, İshāk Hoca' s work primarily delves into Hurufism rather than elucidating Bektashism. However, the distinction between Hurufism and Bektashism is paramount: while the latter paves the way towards righteousness and salvation (*hādi*), the former is considered misleading and divergent (*muḍill*) from the righteous path.³¹⁵

He aligns his perspective with contemporaneous writers, asserting that the core tenets of Bektashism can be traced back to figures such as Ḥacı Bektāş, Lokman-ı Perende, and Hoca Aḥmed Yesevī, progressing through Bāyezid-i Bistāmī and ultimately reaching Abu Bakr as-Sıddıq. According to his interpretation, Naqshbandi and Bektashism diverge as distinct branches originating from the teachings of Aḥmed Yesevī. Conversely, he characterizes Hurufism as an

³¹³ These works were previously published by Hür Mahmut Yücer and Dursun Gümüšoğlu in Modern Turkish. In this study, I utilize the original manuscripts obtained from Atatürk Library, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. See, Ahmet Rıfki, *Bektaşī Sırrı I-II*, (der) Hür Mahmut Yücer, (İstanbul, Kesit Yayınları, 2013); Ahmet Rıfki, *Bektaşī Sırrı III-IV* (der) Hür Mahmut Yücer, (İstanbul: Kesit Yayınları, 2015); Ahmet Rıfki, *Bektaşī Sırrı, Sadeleştirilmiş ve Asıl Metin Bir Arada* (der.) Dursun Gümüšoğlu, Cilt 1-4, (İstanbul, Post Yayınevi, 2017).

³¹⁴ As one of the dissenting figures of his era, Ahmet Rıfki received his primary education at home, followed by instruction in Persian and Arabic at the Fatih madrasas. He pursued secondary education (Rüştiye) at a private school in Istanbul Aksaray and completed high school (İdadiye) at Şemsü'l Maarif and St. Benoit. Although he commenced studies in law and medicine, he did not complete his higher education, instead cultivating interests in journalism and literature. He exhibited proficiency in Arabic, Persian, French, and Latin languages. As a member of the *Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası* (Freedom and Accord Party), Ahmet Rıfki initially aligned himself with opposition groups against Abdulhamid while studying at the medical school. Upon the rise of the Young Turks to power, he transitioned to a critical stance, opposing their activities. Throughout his political trajectory, characterized by anti-Union and Progress, he affiliated with two socialist factions, namely the Ottoman Democratic Party and the Ottoman Socialist Party. Between 1913 and 1920, Ahmet Rıfki endured a period of exile in Anatolia, then he relocated to Egypt in 1922 and subsequently to Greece, where he entered marriage. He resided there until demise in 1935. As a member of the *Ṭarīkat-ı Salahiye*, Rıfki was classified among the *Yüzellilikler* group, which included figures such as Rıza Tevfik, known for their opposition to Atatürk and the nationalist-republican movement, consequently being declared enemies of the state. For an in-depth account of the life of Ahmet Rıfki, see, Hayriye Topçuoğlu, 'Bektaşī Ahmet Rıfki, Hayatı ve Eserleri I', *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi*, 19 (2001), 87-142; Hayriye Topçuoğlu, 'Bektaşī Ahmet Rıfki, Hayatı ve Eserleri II', *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi*, 20, (2001), 135-220.

³¹⁵ Ahmet Rıfki, *Bektaşī Sırrı*, C.I, 1325, 6-7.

ideological system propagated by Fazlullah Na'im of Asterabad, associated with spurious sects like Ismailism, devoid of any connection to monotheism or authentic Sufism. Its primary objective, he argues, is to interpret the Qur'ān subjectively and extract erroneous meanings from it. Rıfki defines Bektashism as a path of enlightenment followed by adherents of Sufi orders inspired by the divine light of Muḥammad (*envār-ı Muḥammadiye*).³¹⁶ Like other esteemed Sufi paths, it serves as a spiritual journey for those seeking proximity to the Divine. Bektashis derive their wisdom and guidance from the sacred teachings of Muḥammad 's wisdom and the divine sanctuary.³¹⁷

According to Ahmet Rıfki, the foundational tenets of Bektashism are apprehended through the study of works authored by adherents of the tradition. Foremost among these is the text titled *Velāyetnāme* which expounds upon the miraculous deeds of Ḥacı Bektāş and holds paramount significance within Bektashi circles. Additionally, noteworthy works encompass *Abdālnāme* by Kağıusuz Abdāl, *Huḫbetu'l Beyān* attributed to Alī, *Dīvān* by Seyyid Nesīmī, *Küçük Velāyetnāme* authored by Ḥacı Bektāş, *Risāle* penned by Saatçi 'Alī Dedebara, and the *Divan* of Turābī Alī Dedebara. Rıfki situates these compositions as adjuncts and expositors of the doctrine denominated *Vaḥdet-i Vücūd*, unity of existence, posited as the esoteric teachings of the Prophet, whilst asserting that Bektashism embodies nothing beyond the path pursued by the adherents of Sufism.³¹⁸

Rıfki categorizes religions into two groups. The first comprises those revealed by prophets and transmitted to humanity through divine revelation, while the second includes those formulated by thinkers like Buddha and Confucius through rational means. Despite promoting morality and virtue, the latter are not considered divine religions.³¹⁹ Rıfki further distinguishes among followers of Islam based on their spiritual rank. According to him, while the teachings of Muḥammad 's Sharia (*şeri'at*) apply to the general population, individuals of advanced spiritual attainment possess insight into truth (*ilm-i ḥaqiqat*) and unity (*ilm-i tevḫīd*). The Prophet did not disclose the essence of the Qur'ān, the hidden aspects of religious doctrine, and the intricacies of truth to the masses, but instead shared these teachings exclusively with his chosen companions and those favored with divine grace. The four caliphs also drew inspiration from Muḥammad 's teachings,

³¹⁶ For the concept of the light of Muhammad see, Uri Rubin, "Pre-Existence and Light—Aspects of the Concept of Nūr Muḥammad," *Israel Oriental Studies* 5 (1975), 62-119.

³¹⁷ Rıfki, *Bektaşî Sırrı*, 11-12.

³¹⁸ *Ibid*, 13.

³¹⁹ *Ibid*, 17.

leading to the emergence of two distinct paths: *Ṭarīq-i Havī*, tracing its lineage to Abu Bakr, and *Ṭarīq -i Celī*, based on Ali, who is regarded as the inheritor of the Prophet's knowledge. Within the Bektāşiyye lineage, the esteemed figure of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ensures a connection to *Şah-ı Velāyet*, namely, Alī ibn Abu Talib. Consequently, both Abu Bakr and Alī ultimately lead back to the source of all knowledge in the universe (*menba-ı ulūm-ı kâ'ināt*), Prophet Muḥammad.³²⁰

Following his delineation of the foundation and doctrinal affiliation of the Bektashi order, Rıfki proceeds to expound upon the miracles of Ḥacı Bektāş and elucidate the Bektashi Sufi tradition. When recounting the miracles attributed to Ḥacı Bektāş in the *Velāyetnāme*, he concurrently issues a cautionary message to heedless youths who belittle these miracles and mindlessly emulate the increasingly prevalent materialistic tendencies observed in European societies. According to him, these miracles only manifest in individuals who engage in the study of both exoteric and esoteric knowledge, adorn the depths of their hearts with the divine perception illuminated by the Muhammadan light, and are immersed in spiritual insight. Rıfki's attribution of particular significance to the *Velāyetnāme* becomes evident. He states that this work is quite old and scarce, and furthermore, due to its high price, many dervishes cannot benefit from it. Rıfki criticizes that while works belonging to both the East and the West are being printed in Europe, and many works that are not even available in our libraries are being translated into various languages by them, we are still looking on as distant spectators. He announces that through his personal endeavors, the forthcoming publication of Ḥacı Bektāş 's *Menāqıb* will be disclosed soon.³²¹

Prior to the publication of his work, it is apparent from Ahmet Rıfki's discourse that he engaged in correspondence with members of various Sufi orders on diverse topics, seeking their insights and perspectives, and meticulously verifying the accuracy of the information presented. Ahmet Rıfki's utilization of living individuals, Sufi sheiks, sayyids in this context, and consultation in crafting his work renders it a collective endeavor influenced by the diverse currents of thought. From this perspective, Ahmet Rıfki's work holds considerable significance. On one occasion, Rıfki acknowledges that there was a request for an adjustment regarding his depiction of Ḥacı Bektāş 's Sufi lineage, recognizing the significant impact of intervention by a respected sayyid in completely reshaping the discourse on this matter. Interestingly, Ahmet Rıfki delves into a discussion

³²⁰ibid ,21.

³²¹ibid, 27.

concerning the relationship between Hacı Bektāş and Ahmed Yesevī, a subject that continues to be a focal point of scholarly inquiry in contemporary academia. He contends that the relationship between Hacı Bektāş and Ahmed Yesevī remains incomprehensible, questioning the accuracy of Ahmed Yesevī's documented birth date and noting the intricate information contained in the available *hilāfetnāme* (documents of spiritual succession). He suggests that the resolution of these matters lies in the interpretation of wise individuals. Rıfki demonstrates that Hacı Bektāş's lineage can be traced back to Imam Ali, and the lineage of the order and path can be traced back to the Prophet, based on letters sent by Naqshbandi Sheikh Üsküdarlı Hüseyin Hüsni Efendi and Naili Efendi from the Bektashi Order.

Ahmet Rıfki's work bears a significant influence from Kaygusuz Abdāl, as evidenced by the palpable impact of his writings. Rıfki frequently turns to Kaygusuz Abdāl for elucidating concepts such as *zāhir* (exoteric) and *bāṭın* (esoteric), mind and soul, *farq* and *cem*, *şeri'at* *ṭariqat* *ḥaqiqat*, *insān-ı kāmil*.³²² Following the elucidation of these terms, Ahmet Rıfki transitions to the oppression of the authoritarian era and the injustices inflicted upon the dervishes. According to him, those lacking understanding and enlightenment regarding Sharia have entered Sufi orders and tekkes. As a result of inadequate education in disciplines such as *tefsir* (exegesis) and hadith, which were once sources of mysticism and virtue in the tekkes, these establishments have turned into places of amusement and distraction (*maḥāll-ı ṭarab*) for the dervishes.³²³ With this commentary, Ahmet Rıfki appears to validate the allegations commonly made against Bektashi tekkes.

Ahmet Rıfki places the Bektashis at the level of the people of truth. However, according to him, the advocates of truth have always been confronted with the malicious, unjust criticisms, and insults of their blinded, ill-intentioned contemporaries as it was in İshāk Hoca's *Kāşifu'l Esrār*. For this reason, he published his book to defend the people of truth who have thus far faced rumors and gossip within society. According to his perspective, amidst the contemporary necessity for unity, this particular work has engendered discord and distress among Muslims by fostering differentiation and division. Islamic communities, under the unifying concept of *Tevhid* (the Oneness of God), are not divided by matters seemingly disparate, as these are extraneous to the

³²²ibid, 44. For these terms used by Kaygusuz Abdal in his works and his unique "Four Gate Doctrine," see Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man*.

³²³ Rıfki, *Bektaşî Sırrı*, 50.

fundamental tenets of faith; rather, they pertain to trivialities. Thus, these conflicts are deemed incongruous with the essence of Islam.³²⁴

Ahmet Rıfıkı contends that the transmission of information about Bektashism from external sources is regarded as inappropriate. Particularly, İshāk Hoca's publication lacks substantial content related to Bektashism. Instead, it seems to be based on hearsay prevalent among the general populace, resembling folklore and oral traditions. The lack of fundamental comprehension regarding the principles and doctrines inherent to the Bektashi order is apparent in Hoca's work. He equated Bektashism, a path of righteousness (*Tariq-i Haqq*) with Hurufism, a path of heresy and misguidance (*meslek-i zendekā ve delālet*) without any logical reasoning.³²⁵

Ahmet Rıfıkı persistently addresses allegations concerning the Bektashi Order. He cites Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's work *Mirātu'l Mekāsid* and asserts that the wrongdoing of a few individuals who have joined the order cannot be generalized to the entire order. He suggests that this situation does not diminish the dignity of the Bektashi order.³²⁶ Ahmet Rıfıkı emphasizes that an integral aspect of a Sufi order is an unbroken chain of transmission, reaching back to the Prophet, to authenticate Bektashism as a genuine path. Bektashism unequivocally adheres to a transmission chain leading to the source of truth. The transmission chains and web of *hilāfetnāme* documents illustrate that the Bektashi Order has been continuously transmitted from hand-to-hand manner (*yedden be yed*) from the Pir without interruption. Here, Ahmet Rıfıkı refers to the Babagān lineage, excluding the lineage of Çelebis. He asserts that this lineage reached the Pir through four intermediaries, passing through Balım Sultān, then Sersem Alī Baba, before culminating in the Babagān lineage.³²⁷ In the continuation of the first volume, Ahmet Rıfıkı also touches upon topics such as reincarnation, Malāmatiyya, prostration, and relations with the Janissaries. He responds to many of the accusations made by İshāk Hoca on these topics.

In the second volume of his book, Rıfıkı delves into the history of the Sufi order, particularly focusing on the dynamics between the Babagān and Çelebi families. He initiates his discussion by criticizing the lack of comprehensive documentation of the Bektashi Sufi order's history thus far, emphasizing the insufficient attention given to the narratives of its leaders and the inclusion of numerous fabrications in accounts of their anecdotes and miracles. Consequently, he proceeds to

³²⁴ *ibid.*, 58.

³²⁵ *ibid.*, 60.

³²⁶ *ibid.*, 63-65.

³²⁷ *ibid.*, 72.

outline the evolution of the Bektāşīyye following Pir Hünkār Hacı Bektāş Velī, delineating the roles of spiritual guides (*murşid*) and Babagān based on solid evidence.

Rıfkı initiates his discourse by delving into a pivotal subject of debate within the Bektashi community, namely, the issue surrounding whether Hacı Bektāş had descendants subsequent to his settlement in Sulucakarahöyük. He recounts that upon Hacı Bektāş 's arrival in Sulucakahöyük, Idris Hoca and his wife Kutlu Melek, also known as Kadıncık Ana, demonstrated profound reverence towards Hacı Bektāş and devotedly served him. Despite being relieved of financial concerns, the couple expressed sorrow over their inability to conceive children. Hacı Bektāş then addressed them, foretelling, " The guardian of my homeland shall emerge from you and shall be of your lineage." Consequently, Kadıncık Ana, blessed with pregnancy through the spiritual intervention of Pir, gave birth to three sons successively. While Maḥmūd and Habib, two of these offspring, passed away during Hacı Bektāş 's lifetime, the third son, Hızır Bali, undertook service within the dargah, fulfilling Hacı Bektāş 's prophecy of the guardian of his homeland emerging from this lineage. Thus, the lineage of the Çelebis is traced through Hızır Bali.³²⁸ Rıfkı's claim that the lineage of the Çelebis originates from the spiritual intervention of Hacı Bektāş, impregnating Kadıncık Ana through Idris Hoca, parallels the narrative found in the *Velāyetnāme*. According to the *Velāyetnāme*, one day while Hünkār (Hacı Bektāş) was performing ablution, his nose started bleeding. He said to Kadıncık Ana, "Pour this water where no foot will touch it." Kadıncık Ana lifted the basin and carried it away. She thought, "I have always drunk this pure water; why should I pour it? It must be for a good reason; I should drink it without disgust." She lifted the basin and drank from it, then brought it back to Hünkār. Hünkār looked at Kadıncık's face; he already knew her state. He asked, "Did you also drink this water?" Kadıncık replied " The insights of *erenler* (saints, here Hacı Bektāş) are beyond my grasp. I couldn't find a place to pour even a sip of what's left from *erenler*; all I could find was my stomach." Hünkār said, "Kadıncık, you have received your share from us; two sons will come from you with our name. They will be the sons of our homeland, and when people in our land reach the age of seventy, they should kiss the hands of those who are seven. Even if the world collapses, they should lie down on their backs and not face any trouble." Considering the similarities between Ahmet Rıfkı's narrative and the *Velāyetnāme*, it can be said that Rıfkı relied on the *Velāyetnāme* in this matter.

³²⁸ Ahmet Rıfkı, *Bektāşī Sırrı II*, (Dersaadet: Karabet Matbaası,1328),11-12.

He provides additional details regarding Balım Sultān, also known as the second spiritual leader of the order. According to the narrative, Balım Sultān's father, Mürsel Bali, accompanied Seyyid Alī Sultān³²⁹ on a journey to Rumelia, where he established a Sufi lodge. Despite leading a celibate life, Mürsel Bali, at the age of ninety, decided to marry upon the spiritual counsel of Seyyid Alī Sultān, which led to the birth of Balım Sultān. Upon reaching adolescence, Balım Sultān, once again guided by Seyyid Alī Sultān, traveled to Istanbul, where he received a warm reception from the reigning Sultān. At the request of the Sultān, Balım Sultān proceeded to the dargah in Hacı Bektāş and became involved in spiritual guidance activities there. During his tenure, financial resources were allocated to the Hacı Bektāş lodge.³³⁰ Balım Sultān also played a pivotal role in introducing the practice of celibacy into Bektashism. In his presence, ceremonies for the initiation of novices, the oath-taking rituals of dervishes, and the ear-piercing rite were conducted.

Following the discussion on the celibacy of Hacı Bektāş and Balım Sultān, Rıfki proceeds to examine the continuity of Hacı Bektāş 's lineage up to his own time. Here, he endeavors to clarify whether this lineage, known as the *silsila*, follows the spiritual descent or genealogical one, basing his arguments on correspondence he received and historical sources. He attempts to draw a reasoned inference on this matter by referring to a letter sent by Naili Efendi. Naili Efendi articulates that, according to the knowledgeable, childless individuals in Istanbul receive a rose from the tomb of Sümbül Sinan Hazretleri, while in Üsküdar, they receive a cotton thread from the tomb of Aziz Maḥmūd Efendi. Furthermore, wheat and lentils are obtained from the tomb of the Pir (Hacı Bektāş), believed to aid in conception. As this process is deeply intertwined with prayer and spiritual devotion, children born as a result are considered descendants of the individual interred in the tomb, akin to those of the spiritual lineage (*evlād-ı māneviyye*) rather than biological descent (*evlād-ı şulbī*).³³¹

Rıfki argues that descendants born as a result of the breath of spiritual blessing bestowed upon Kadıncık Ana are considered spiritual heirs of Hacı Bektāş. He also suggests that this lineage was interrupted due to Balım Sultān's commitment to celibacy, as he had attained the level of the 'people of truth' (*erbāb-ı ḥaqiqat*), thus preventing its continuation. Consequently, Rıfki rejects the claim that the Çelebis encountered in the dargah of Hacı Bektāş, who hold the position of *seccāde-*

³²⁹ For the sacred vita of Seyyid Ali Sultan, see Rıza Yıldırım, *Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kızıldeli)*.

³³⁰ Ahmet Rıfki, *Bektaşî Sırrı II*, 13.

³³¹ *ibid*, 14-15.

nişin, are direct descendants of Hacı Bektâş. Therefore, Cemâleddîn Çelebi can solely be considered as Hacı Bektâş 's spiritual successor.³³² In this matter, according to Rıfkı, there is an error discernible in the genealogical lineage delineated by Ahmet Rifat Efendi within *Mirâtu'l Mekâsid*. Following Balım Sultân, Ahmet Rifat enumerates the names of the martyred young Kalender Efendi and Sheikh İskender Efendi. It is conjectured that this lineage may have been intended to trace back to Yusuf Bali, who was the paternal grandfather of Balım Sultân. Additionally, historical documentation, such as that found in *Âlî Tarihi* history, substantiates the ancestral relationship between İskender Çelebi and Resul Bâli. Hacı Bektâş and Balım Sultân refrained from entering marriage voluntarily, a fact acknowledged within circles of spiritual insight (*haqiqat ehli*) Consequently, it is posited that neither the lineage of Hacı Bektâş nor that of Balım Sultân has been perpetuated.

After this introduction, Ahmet Rıfkı announces his intention to delve further into the matter of celibacy. He underscores that this issue is of interest not only to adherents of the Bektashi Order but also to those unaffiliated with it, particularly since the arrival of Cemâleddîn Çelebi in Istanbul declaring, "I am from the lineage of Hacı Bektâş Velî." Rıfkı notes that the question of whether Hacı Bektâş Velî had offspring is intertwined with matters of endowments and personal interests. Interestingly, Rıfkı directly addresses the government and the authorities of endowment administration, urging them to consider historical facts before making decisions regarding endowments, especially given Cemâleddîn Çelebi's claims of descent from Hacı Bektâş Velî and succession to his spiritual legacy.³³³ Rıfkı' s discourse reveals that his target audience includes not only the general public but also governmental authorities and institutional bodies like endowment administrations.

After addressing governmental officials and the endowment administration, Rıfkı proceeds to outline his assertions regarding the Çelebis. Rıfkı' s initial argument centers on the succession dispute between Hüdâdât Çelebi and Kalender Çelebi, both laying claim to descent from the Çelebi family following Balım Sultân's passing. It is reported that Hüdâdât Çelebi assassinated Kalender Çelebi, leading to retaliation from Kalender Çelebi's supporters and resulting in Hüdâdât Çelebi's own demise. Ibrahim Pasha intervened to quell the unrest caused by Kalender Çelebi, albeit at the

³³² *ibid*, 17.

³³³ *ibid*,18.

cost of leaving the Hacı Bektāş Velī dergāh without a spiritual leader for 34 or 36 years, until Sersem Alī Baba assumed the post of celibacy.

Following this assertion, Ahmet Rıfkı contends that, according to a significant document he received, Balım Sulṭān prohibited the entry of the Çelebis into the dergāh due to the turmoil they caused. He suggests that during the era when Shah Ismail disseminated the rituals of the Safavid order in Anatolia, the Çelebis also embraced Safavid sect. Furthermore, he alleges that Çelebi Alī Murtaza Efendi, with the assistance and backing of the Safavids in Istanbul, officially registered the title of *seccādeniṣīn* with the endowment administration in the seventeenth century. Subsequent to the dissolution of Bektashism, during the time when Hamdullāh Çelebi instigated rebellions through various disruptions and was subsequently exiled to Amasya, the title of *seccādeniṣīn* also vanished. On the other hand, Sivaslı Hacı Maḥmūd Nebī Dede-baba, who refrained from involvement in such affairs and instead practiced patience and tolerance, facing his days with reliance on God, encountered no difficulties while holding the position of celibacy. Additionally, when Veliyuddīn Efendi, the brother of Hamdullāh Çelebi, was removed from his position as sheikh and the Sulṭān issued a decree prohibiting the Çelebi family from entering the dargah, Hacı Maḥmūd Nebi Dede-baba remained unaffected. Nonetheless, after Veliyuddīn Efendi's passing, despite such decrees, his son Alī Celāleddīn Efendi revived the Çelebi lineage once again.³³⁴ Ahmet Rıfkı's intention was to demonstrate that the Çelebi family had collaborated with the Safavids, with whom the Ottoman Empire had once engaged in intense conflicts and had rebelled against the state. By doing so, he aimed to prove that the Çelebis were not entitled to benefit from endowments. Interestingly, during the period when Ahmet Rıfkı was composing his work, Cemāleddīn Çelebi's influence over the Kızılbaş-Alevis had grown. Visitors from various regions of Anatolia were making visits to Cemāleddīn Çelebi's residence. Ahmet Rıfkı likely wrote these lines with an awareness of this situation.

According to Ahmet Rıfkı, the presence of an individual still claiming the title of "Çelebi," affirming themselves as "descendants of Hacı Bektāş," and utilizing their influence to resolve longstanding disputes over endowments and other matters upon their arrival in Istanbul remains a bewildering circumstance. However, despite the numerous complaints lodged against the Çelebis in all Bektashi tekkes in Rumelia and the petitions and telegrams advocating for their removal, it is unfathomable why the government extends favor towards them. In the Bektashi Order, the focus

³³⁴ *ibid*, 20-23.

lies not on biological lineage but on spiritual descent. Biological lineage (*silsile-i vücudiyye*) holds no particular favor, while those of the chain of spiritual lineage (*silsile-i tariqat*) are regarded as honorable and legitimate by the practitioners of the order. Because the lineage of the babas traces back to the individual chosen for the position of celibacy after Balım Sultān and has continued to the present day.³³⁵ Ahmet Rıfkı once again subtly highlights that only a lineage that has remained uninterrupted can be deemed legitimate.

At this juncture, Ahmet Rıfkı explores the procedure of appointing a successor after the demise of the celibate baba, who resides within the Pir's lodge under the title of “Dedebaba”. He emphasizes that the selection of the dedebaba or baba is intended to be based on merit and specific criteria. If the baba adheres to celibacy, the successor is typically chosen from competent individuals within the Pir's lodge or from other qualified babas in the vicinity. Conversely, in branches of the Order where celibacy is not practiced, the baba's ‘capable’ sons inherit the position upon his demise. In instances where suitable heirs are lacking, it is customary to designate another individual to assume the role within the lodge.³³⁶ Here, Rıfkı endeavors to demonstrate that only individuals who come through selection and are deserving can hold the post, emphasizing that lineage is not of significance.

Continuing with the subject of genealogy, Ahmet Rıfkı questions the placement of Kälender Çelebi after Balım Sultān in the Çelebi lineage, as it does not make sense to him. Furthermore, İskender Çelebi, who comes after Kälender Çelebi, is neither the successor nor the offspring of Balım Sultān. In fact, it is uncertain which doctrines and path the subsequent Çelebis adhere to. For Rıfkı, although the Çelebis does not hold any affiliation with the Bektashi Order, their behavior, acting as if they were the owners of the lodge, has stirred existing animosities. The punishments meted out by the government to them after Kälender Çelebi illustrate the nature of their inclinations. Even Çelebi Feyzullāh Efendi, who, in 1175, came to Istanbul and fired cannons, declaring "The Hidden Sultān (*bāṭın padişāhi*) has come to Istanbul," was executed by the decree of the Sultān for rebellion against the state.³³⁷

From the standpoint of Rıfkı, the assertion by Cemāleddīn Efendi of his Çelebi status, alongside his persistent claim that the endowments under the jurisdiction of the dargah were solely

³³⁵ *ibid*, 25.

³³⁶ *ibid*, 26.

³³⁷ *ibid*, 29-33.

his, serves as substantial evidence of his underlying motives and personal interests. He asserted that upon his arrival in Istanbul, Cemāleddīn Efendi implemented a highly effective political strategy. Initially, he endeavored to sway public opinion in his favor and establish himself as a descendant of Hacı Bektāş Velī through newspaper announcements bearing his name. For instance, newspapers disseminated reports the day following his meeting with the Grand Vizier, stating, "Yesterday, Çelebi Ahmet Çelebi, a descendant of Hacı Bektāş Velī, visited High Porte and held discussions with the Grand Vizier." Consequently, the populace gradually began to accept the notion of the existence of a Çelebi among the descendants of Hacı Bektāş, a fact previously unknown to anyone.³³⁸

According to Ahmet Rıfkı, Çelebi's purpose in coming to Istanbul was to increase the number of dues given to him due to his alleged needs, to take control of the entire lodge, thereby cutting off the dues of the dervishes, and to diminish the influence of the incumbent dedebaba there. He states that Cemāleddīn Çelebi has no connection with the lodge, resides outside of it, and is not affiliated with any group or organization and holds no authority over anyone. He also notes that the Naqshbandi sheikh in the lodge is very old and incapable of conducting rituals, suggesting that action be taken promptly to address this issue and bring about its removal.³³⁹

Ahmet Rıfkı attributes the closure of Bektashi lodges following the abolition of the Janissary corps to the actions Çelebis. He asserts that the seeds of discord, which subsequently infiltrated the Janissary corps, resulted in inappropriate behavior, uprisings, and conflicts. For Rıfkı, those rebels who claim to be Bektashi do not have any affiliation with the Order. Individuals who do not conduct themselves in accordance with sharia and the *ṭarīqa*, or who are on a deviant path, cannot be considered members of the order. In his eyes, the uprisings instigated by certain ill-intentioned individuals who infiltrated the order and caused discord, particularly starting with Kālander Çelebi and those who referred to themselves as Çelebi and claimed to be descendants of Hacı Bektāş Velī, have led to malicious perceptions against all members of the Bektashi Order.³⁴⁰ Consequently,

Rıfkı attributes the pressures and insults endured by Bektashi dervishes after the dissolution of the Janissary corps to the discord sown by these disgraceful individuals.

³³⁸ *ibid*,32.

³³⁹ *ibid*,32-34.

³⁴⁰ *ibid*, 63-64.

As the second volume approached its conclusion, Rıfkı revealed that, following the publication of his work, he received numerous letters and faced criticism from various individuals. These critiques were likely direct and targeted Ahmet Rıfkı personally. Additionally, he received numerous inquiries about the Order. The letters predominantly inquired about how Hacı Bektâş established the customs and practices of the order, the remarkable spiritual experiences and miracles of its members, and the issue of secrecy within the Order. Rıfkı specifically mentioned being questioned about celibacy, noting its significance as one of the most crucial matters. He indicated his intention to address this issue later, drawing from the perspectives of those versed in the truth (*hakikat ehli*), supported by both rational and traditional evidence.³⁴¹

3.3. Cemâleddîn Çelebi's *Mudâfa'a*

Following Ahmet Rıfkı's exposition on the Çelebis, with particular emphasis on Cemâleddîn Çelebi, Cemâleddîn Çelebi perceived himself as under attack and contended that ethical principles had been disregarded. In retaliation, he penned a work entitled *Bektâşî Sırrı Nâm Risâleye Mudâfa'a*.

Cemâleddîn Çelebi initiates his rebuttal against Ahmet Rıfkı's assertions by addressing two key points: the lineage of Hacı Bektâş and the concept of celibacy. Although Çelebi acknowledges Rıfkı's recognition of the Çelebi family's descent from Hızır Bâli, he finds fault with Rıfkı's challenge to their entitlement to serve the lodge. Çelebi argues that Rıfkı misinterprets celibacy, portraying it as a mandatory requirement for those joining the Order, whereas it is, in fact, a personal choice to remain unmarried for life. According to Çelebi, Hacı Bektâş, who comes from the *sayyid* lineage and has attained the status of sainthood, could not have made statements conflicting with the hadiths commands to marry and multiply and 'There is no monasticism in religion.' Çelebi asserts that attaining the state of sainthood requires strict adherence to divine commandments and the Sunnah, making it improbable that Hacı Bektâş remained unmarried.³⁴²

Cemâleddîn Çelebi draws a completely different portrait of Kadıncık Ana and the Çelebi lineage compared to Ahmet Rıfkı's presentation. According to Çelebi's assertion, Kadıncık Ana was not the spouse of İdris Hoca but rather his daughter. Hacı Bektâş wed Kadıncık Ana, and they

³⁴¹ *ibid*, 146-147.

³⁴² Çelebi Ahmed Cemâleddîn Efendi, *Bektâşî Sırrı Nâm Risâleye Mudâfa'a* (Dersaadet, Manzume-i Efkar Matbaası, 1328), 6.

bore a son named Seyyid Ali, also known as Timurtaş. Seyyid 'Alī fathered two sons named Resul and Mürsel, thereby extending Hacı Bektāş 's lineage through these descendants. This information is documented in the *Tarih-i Selatin-i Osmaniye*, preserved in the library of the Himmetzāde lodge in Üsküdar. It recounts how Hacı Bektāş prayed for the Ottoman military's establishment and proposed a distinctive uniform for soldiers. During the reign of Orhan Gazi, Seyyid 'Alī Timurtaş was consulted regarding military attire, and his input influenced the design of the Janissaries' white caps and uniforms. Furthermore, the treatise *Risāletu't-Tāc* indicates that Seyyid Alī Timurtaş and Emir Şāh Efendi, a descendant of Mevlana, were invited to Bursa to deliberate on the military headgear's design.³⁴³

Cemāleddīn Çelebi subsequently presents documents and records to establish the descent of the Çelebi family from Hacı Bektāş. He asserts that individuals who claim Hacı Bektāş neither married nor had descendants do not demand evidence as per sharia law. However, if those who assert their descent from Hacı Bektāş are asked for proof, official documents such as imperial edicts, official records, and court decisions provide sufficient evidence. At this juncture, Çelebi's sources legitimizing his descent from Hacı Bektāş differ from those of Rıfkı.

Cemāleddīn Çelebi refutes Ahmet Rıfkı's assertion that Hacı Bektāş' s lineage terminated after Balım Sultān by presenting a document from 1288/1763. This document mentions two groups purportedly descended from Hacı Bektāş: the 'Mürselli' and 'Hüdādātli' groups. As per the endowment law, the trustee and sheikh positions of the lodge were to be held by the Mürselli faction. However, initially, these roles were granted to Bektas Çelebi from the Hüdādātli faction. Later, following an appeal, Abdullatif Çelebi from the Mürselli group assumed these positions.³⁴⁴ This document is notable for highlighting internal disputes within the Çelebi family regarding rightful claimants to the sheikh's post. Nonetheless, Cemāleddīn Çelebi interprets it as evidence that his family has rightfully held the trustee and sheikh positions for generations. Subsequent to Abdullatif Çelebi, these roles were passed down to his grandfather Veliyuddīn, his uncle Alī Celāleddīn, and his father Muhammed Feyzullah Çelebi, as confirmed by decrees, diplomas, and judicial records. This substantiates that the notion of the lineage ending after Balım Sultān is baseless, arising from ignorance and ill intentions, which cannot withstand scrutiny. Furthermore, the usage of the term 'sons (*evlād*)' of the late Hacı Bektāş Velī in the Hākānī Records and the

³⁴³ *ibid*, 6-7.

³⁴⁴ *ibid*, 8.

Mecelle also serves as evidence affirming their descent from Hacı Bektāş Velī.³⁴⁵ Cemāleddīn Çelebi's account of the connection between Mürsel Çelebi and Balım Sulṭān also differs from that of Ahmet Rıfki. According to Cemāleddīn Çelebi, Mürsel Bali had several children besides Balım Sulṭān. The fact that Balım Sulṭān died without progeny does not mean the end of Mürsel Bali's lineage. It is commonly understood that neither historical nor contemporary members of the Çelebi family trace their ancestry back to Balım Sulṭān; rather, they are thought to continue the lineage of the Pir through the descendants of Mürsel Bali.³⁴⁶

Çelebi discusses the notion of spiritual descent and provides his perspective on it. He suggests that although being a spiritual descendant is often regarded as lofty and sacred, the Çelebi lineage has historically not embraced this notion of exaggerated sanctity. Instead, they have recognized themselves primarily as biological descendants. In the documents, the term *evlād* specifically denotes biological lineage rather than spiritual descent. Moreover, in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), the term *evlād* does not typically pertain to spiritual descendants.³⁴⁷

Cemāleddīn Çelebi subsequently endeavors to justify Hacı Bektāş 's marriage from a moral standpoint. He contends that neither religious laws nor reason preclude Hacı Bektāş from fathering children. According to him, it would not have been deemed appropriate by the authorities and the society of that era for Hacı Bektāş, who had attained a high level of spiritual mastery and possessed deep knowledge of sharia and tariqa, to remain celibate for almost thirty years while living in Kadıncık Ana's household. Such a scenario would contradict the expected behavior of someone of his stature.³⁴⁸

Subsequently, Çelebi Cemāleddīn proceeds to establish his family's authority over the appointment of sheikhs to other Bektashi tekkes and lodges. He secured this authority through the power granted to him by the Sulṭān, due to his direct biological descent from Hacı Bektāş .The edict stipulates that upon the death of one of the sheikhs of the shrines, tekkes, and lodges bearing the titles of baba, dede, abdāl, dervīş, or Sulṭān within the Ottoman Empire, positions are to be filled by conferring licenses upon appropriate individuals from among the lineage of Hacı Bektāş who hold the position of *seccādenişīn* within their own lodge. The edict makes clear that this authority was not granted to judges or members of the scholarly class, but instead to the Çelebis.

³⁴⁵ *ibid*, 8-9.

³⁴⁶ *ibid*, 10.

³⁴⁷ *ibid*, 11.

³⁴⁸ *ibid*.

Consequently, it is evident that this authority was bestowed upon the Çelebi family. He also mentions other court decisions taken that their biological descent was proven.³⁴⁹

Çelebi contends that Ahmet Rıfkı's claim that 'biological descendants are not favored within the Bektashi order and that only those who adhere to the path are esteemed' constitutes a significant slander against genuine members of the order. He asserts that the true essence and beliefs of the Bektashi order are not as described by Rıfkı. According to Çelebi, sharia law grants inheritance rights to biological descendants rather than to those who follow the path. A person who, in an effort to evade the consequences of their misdeeds—such as being unidentified, ignorant, a highway robber, or committing other sins—dons the attire of the order and claims to be a (spiritual) descendant of Pîr neither conforms to sharia nor to tariqa. It is a widely recognized fact that, among those with equivalent knowledge of sharia, individuals of biological lineage are generally favored over those strangers (*evlâdın ecânibe tercîh olunacağı*)³⁵⁰

Cemâleddîn Çelebi continues to challenge Ahmet Rıfkı's assertions regarding the spiritual lineage of the Çelebis tracing back to Hacı Bektâş. He argues that while the sanctity of saints is acknowledged, the miraculous events attributed to them are ultimately ordained by God. Believing that actions and states are achieved through the spiritual influence of a saint's breath may be considered a superstition (*i'tiqād-ı bâtıl*), and possibly even a form of disbelief (*kufr*). It is inaccurate to suggest that divine creations result from spiritual influence, prayers, or the breath of an individual through the intermediation of a shrine. There is no evidence to support the claim that individuals born under the perceived spiritual influence of a saint have sought entitlements from their endowments, formally or informally. According to sharia law, the legal claims of spiritual descendants are not recognized in courts. No historical records indicate that individuals born under such circumstances have sought or been granted positions of leadership within the order. Cemâleddîn Çelebi argues that Hacı Bektâş 's decision to marry and have children aligns with the principles of the path. Despite the Çelebis receiving numerous royal decrees and official documents over almost seven centuries, disputing their legitimacy would not only oppose the Çelebis themselves but also disregard the legal norms of the time.³⁵¹

³⁴⁹ *ibid*, 14-15.

³⁵⁰ *ibid*, 15-16.

³⁵¹ *ibid*, 17-20.

Cemāleddīn Çelebi firmly denies the accusation that the Çelebis adhered to the sect and rituals of the Safavids, considering it a deliberate defamation. He states that the accusation that the Çelebis joined the Safavids during the time of Shah Ismail is false and he vehemently protests against it. Ahmet Rıfki's claim that Shah Hatayi's poems (*nefes*) were recited in Bektashi lodges and that he pledged allegiance to Balım Sultān is a significant blow to Bektāşiyye. According to Cemāleddīn Efendi, Rıfki's statement, "We do not know what beliefs and path the Çelebis have adopted," proves that Rıfki's treatise was published for personal gain. The content of Rıfki's treatise contains statements that sow seeds of hatred between the descendants of Hacı Bektāş and those who have joined his path. It is known by those with knowledge and understanding that it is filled with nonsensical claims that could deeply damage the foundation of the Bektashi Order.³⁵²

Regarding the title of "Çelebi," Cemāleddīn Çelebi asserts that this title will persist as long as the Çelebi lineage continues, having been passed down from his father to him and subsequently to his offspring. He addresses claims of his lack of connection to the dervish lodge and the foundation by asserting that, should previous explanations and documents not suffice, he is prepared to substantiate his position with the *hilāfetnāme* (decrees of spiritual succession) he possesses. Cemāleddīn Çelebi emphasizes that the *icāzetnāme* and *hilāfetnāme* documents, which have been held by all Bektashi babas and Dedegān, serve as definitive evidence of his authority. The *hilafetname* in his possession demonstrates his affiliation with the Order and his attainment of the rank of *hilāfet*. Cemāleddīn Çelebi argues that the *hilāfet* documents in the hands of the baba and Dedegān demonstrate the customs and traditions of his esteemed lineage. Moreover, he notes that the right to approve *icāzetnāme* documents validates the authority of the Çelebi lineage.³⁵³ His role in approving *icāzetnāme* documents underscores his biologically inherited religious authority, which supersedes the authority of the babas who derive their authority from knowledge and merit.

Cemāleddīn Çelebi proceeds to outline his family's lineage within the Order, citing various imperial decrees, grants, and legal records bestowed upon his lineage. To him, these official documents unequivocally demonstrate a fundamental truth: Hacı Bektāş did not lead a celibate life, and the Çelebi lineage persisted through his marital union. The notion that he remained unmarried by choice holds no weight in either public perception or legal justification. It is

³⁵² *ibid*, 26-29.

³⁵³ *ibid*, 32-33.

indisputable that the Çelebis trace their ancestry back to the Prophet, and the book *Bektāşī Sirri* contains defamatory remarks against Islam, the Order, and humanity, causing grief among the brethren.³⁵⁴

Cemāleddīn Çelebi proceeds to provide insights into the deaths of Kalender Çelebi and Feyzullah Çelebi, as well as the rationale behind referring to them as "martyrs" within the lineage. He dismisses the historical references alleging Kalender Çelebi's involvement in rebellion as entirely baseless. Additionally, the assertion that he was slain by Hüdādāt Çelebi is categorically false, given they lived in different time periods. Concerning Feyzullah Çelebi, Cemāleddīn Çelebi affirms that he peacefully passed away in Merdivenköy, Istanbul, under God's grace, refuting claims of his demise at the hands of the Sulṭān. The idea of a dervish acquiring arms or cannons within the central government is deemed implausible by those exercising rational judgment.³⁵⁵

Cemāleddīn Çelebi also mentions that Rıfkı confuses the Feyzullah Çelebis; the Feyzullah Çelebi referred to as a martyr was actually killed by burglars who broke into his home, and his grave is located in a special section reserved for the Çelebis at the Haji Bektash lodge. The existence of a special section for the Çelebis at the lodge, where only those from the Çelebi lineage are buried, also demonstrates that they are descendants of Haji Bektash. Not origin, but adherence to the true path is of importance," is the perspective espoused by those who outpope the pope. These individuals are motivated by the ambition to usurp the hereditary rights of sheikhhood and endowment management held by the Çelebis, descendants of the Hünkār, for nearly seven centuries. These individuals also exhibit the audacity to disseminate their ideas among the general populace, particularly attempting to mislead government officials with their calumnies. Seeking to achieve their objectives through slander is entirely contrary to both religious law and the principles of the Order.³⁵⁶

According to Cemāleddīn Efendi, it would be inappropriate to reserve the lodge exclusively for celibates. Because, such an approach contradicts the principles of the path, as it goes against both the verse from the Surah An-Nisa that advises marrying women of good character and the hadith that states, "Marriage is my tradition; whoever does not follow my tradition is not of me." At this point, Cemāleddīn Çelebi elucidates his understanding of the concept of celibacy:

³⁵⁴ *ibid*, 67.

³⁵⁵ *ibid*, 68-71.

³⁵⁶ *ibid*, 71-74.

The true meaning of the celibacy referred by the Ehlullah ("people of God") is to avoid worldly desires and purify oneself. Those who are truly noble and celibate remain close to God even in the face of fire or hunger and do not complain about their situation. Abstaining from marriage does not equate to attaining closeness to God, as is often assumed... People are spending time at government offices spreading slanders and falsehoods to unjustly strip the descendants of Haji Bektash Veli of their legitimate inheritance and rights. These behaviors are known to be incompatible with the practices of dervishhood and celibacy, as recognized by those familiar with the path. Their impropriety will become apparent.³⁵⁷

In the concluding part of his defense, Cemāleddīn Çelebi heightens his allegations. He asserts that the Pir indeed had children. He emphasizes the importance of recognizing, believing in, and accepting the existence of perfect masters who have attained the divine secret and serve as exemplary guides. To suggest otherwise, arguing that he was incapable of marriage or that his offspring are merely spiritual heirs (*dem ve nefes evlādı*), would be deemed as *shirk*, which is considered a grave transgression.³⁵⁸

He proceeds by discussing certain babas and dervishes who have corrupted the essence of the Bektashi order. As stated by him, certain irreligious individuals and some ignorant followers have altered the foundational principles of the Bektashi order to implement their own personal interests and hidden agendas. These individuals have introduced false and inaccurate statements such as "our ablution is complete, our prayers have been offered," (*abdestimiz alınmış, namazımız kılınmış*) making nonsensical claims and approving the consumption of things that are *haram* (forbidden) according to our faith. This behavior is entirely contrary to *şeri'at* and *ṭariqat*.³⁵⁹

As an example, Cemāleddīn Çelebi notes that Feyzi Baba, despite lacking official appointment authority, appointed someone named Şaban as sheikh and *postnişin* of the Torbalı Baba lodge in the Thessaly region. Feyzi Baba has never been associated with Islamic law or sheikhhood, not even for a single day. Bektashi dervishes and Bektashi lodges and tekkes within the Ottoman territories in Greece and surrounding areas do not exhibit behavior consistent with Islamic law and the order. This situation has been reported to the Foreign Ministry via the Embassy in Athens. The presence of some unsuitable individuals within the Bektashi order and their seeking refuge in the order prompted the government to take certain measures in a timely manner to prevent the emergence of such religiously and politically inappropriate actions. It is evident that only those

³⁵⁷ *ibid*,76-77.

³⁵⁸ *ibid*, 178.

³⁵⁹ *ibid*,179.

who are descendants of the Pir can be officially appointed as postnişin and sheikh through authorization and formal documentation.³⁶⁰

Cemāleddīn Çelebi rejects the idea of sharing his authority with babas. He states that, historically, the selection and appointment of leaders and officials in the Bektashi lodges were overseen by the Çelebis, who are descendants of Hacı Bektaş. This process was based on recommendations and notifications from the endowment administration, as sanctioned by imperial decrees and laws, until the time of Selanikli Hasan Baba Mehmet Alī Baba. However, Hasan and Mehmet Alī Baba- who needs divine assistance but endeavors to extend it to others³⁶¹- lacking authorization or an official appointment, usurped the Çelebis' authority to appoint officials and sent numerous individuals with the titles of baba and sheikh to many lodges, thus sowing seeds of separation and disruption. Cemāleddīn Çelebi notes that Selanikli Hasan Baba of was exiled, while Mehmet Alī Baba was disgracefully expelled from the lodge by decision. However, certain close associates of the Sulţān in the former government took advantage of the circumstances of the time and placed some individuals in positions out of nepotism. Without possessing a warrant or appointment, Fevzi Baba assumed the titles of dedebaba and *turbedār* at the Pir's lodge, following in the footsteps of Hasan and Mehmet Alī Baba in seizing positions without authorization. Fevzi Baba started sending individuals with the titles of baba and sheikh to Bektashi lodges everywhere. These actions deviate from the practices prescribed by religious and political authorities, and they undermine the laws. There is no doubt that negligence and indifference on the part of the authorities in these matters will lead to worse consequences.³⁶²

Cemāleddīn Çelebi compares certain contemporary Bektashis to the deteriorated state of the Janissaries in later periods. He notes that observing the behavior and words of those who have infiltrated the group later on and are acting contrary to both the *şeri'at* and the *ţarīqat*, and then attributing the same qualities to venerated saints like Hacı Bektaş and Alī is incorrect. He emphasizes that it is important not to misinterpret the virtuous individuals of the order or to judge them in the same manner as others. One must carefully examine their actions to determine whether they are true mystics and must also caution those who are making errors. Those who wear the attire

³⁶⁰ *ibid*, 179-80.

³⁶¹ *Kendisi muhtac-ı himmet bir dede/ nerde kaldı gayriya himmet ede.*

³⁶² *ibid*, 181.

of the Bektashi order and claim to be affiliated with the order resemble the unhealthy condition of the Janissaries in their later days.³⁶³

Cemāleddīn Çelebi characterizes such Bektashis as sinful. He notes that certain individuals who appear to be affiliated with the order have disrupted the long-standing rules of the Bektashi order, causing the endowment's administrative affairs to deteriorate, depleting its income, and reducing it to a pitiful state. Taking advantage of the permissiveness and tolerance of earlier rules, this ignorant group has exploited the situation, lacking authorization and proper warrants.³⁶⁴

Despite not being assigned any tasks by the authorities, they have forcefully prohibited the management of the endowment and the responsibility of serving as sheikhs at the lodge. They have entirely usurped the administration of the lodge and the endowment's income. Not only have they squandered and misused the endowment's income according to their whims, but they have also appropriated four of the fifteen shares allocated for providing food for the needy, visitors, and dervishes. These four shares should have been used for cooking and preparing meals in the soup kitchen under the supervision of the endowment's management and distributing them to those in need. Instead, they have appropriated these resources as payment for their own personal services. Despite having no assigned duties, four babas are receiving these payments in cash. Despite numerous decisions against them, they have seized control of the endowment's income.³⁶⁵

Furthermore, Cemāleddīn Çelebi indicates that the endowment officials are in collusion with the babas, providing them with the money and failing to hold them accountable, thereby benefiting from the laws themselves. The former endowment official in Kırşehir, Ata Efendi, was found to have embezzled funds. None of the funds designated for the endowment's restoration could be found. Some endowment officials, who do not consider divine providence, have funneled the endowment's income, including tithes and sheep tax, into the Treasury of Finance, as they perceived the endowment to be unprotected and without proper supervision. Additionally, the title deeds and trust documents of the endowment have been transferred to the Office of Title Deeds and Land Registration. Despite being a trustee, he complains that he is not permitted to access the endowment's income.³⁶⁶

³⁶³ *ibid*, 183.

³⁶⁴ *ibid*, 187.

³⁶⁵ *ibid*, 188.

³⁶⁶ *ibid*, 189-91.

Cemāleddīn Çelebi concludes his defense by emphasizing the necessity for each endowment to have rightful management in accordance with the law, which serves as the foundation of justice. He expresses hope that in due course, the government will acknowledge the mismanagement and forced appropriation of endowments not abiding by the established rules. He further anticipates that the government will enact and uphold laws consistent with previous rulings.³⁶⁷

3.4. Ahmet Rıfki's *Muqābele* against Cemāleddīn Çelebi's *Mudāfa'a*

Ahmet Rıfki begins the final volume of his treatise by discussing the reactions to the other two volumes of his work. Ahmet Rıfki mentions that his treatise was appreciated by many people affiliated with different spiritual orders, but some individuals objected to his work, and these objections even escalated to threats. Rıfki categorizes those who object to his writings into two distinct groups. The first group comprises individuals who oppose the Bektashi order and adhere to the writings of İshāk Hoca's *Kāşifu'l Esrār*. The second group consists of those who exclusively assert the Bektashi order as their own and do not recognize others outside their immediate circle. In this context, Rıfki references Cemāleddīn Çelebi, interpreting Çelebi's stance of considering himself a Bektashi and portraying others as sinners. Rıfki also categorizes the topics emphasized by his critics and provides an in-depth analysis of these issues in the final volume of his treatise. These topics include the marital status of Hacı Bektāş, the rules of the Order and the legacy of Hacı Bektāş, the bearers of the secrets of truth, and those who are deserving Dargāh-ı Pīr.³⁶⁸

In the preface of his book, Rıfki recounts a meeting held in the garden of a café across from Bābiālī between himself and the lawyer representing Cemāleddīn Çelebi. The lawyer adopts a tone reminiscent of influential political rhetoric, cautioning Rıfki to broaden his knowledge. When Rıfki inquires about his perceived deficiencies, the lawyer presents a collection of historical documents, court rulings, and decrees, urging Rıfki to integrate these materials into his work. The lawyer asserts that Rıfki's writings have not only displeased Cemāleddīn Çelebi but have also offended the entire Çelebi family, who possess a vast following in Anatolia. Consequently, the lawyer requests Rıfki to amend his previous works by directly incorporating these documents. However, Rıfki dismisses this suggestion as unwarranted and declines to comply with the lawyer's

³⁶⁷ ibid, 190-193.

³⁶⁸ Ahmet Rıfki, *Bektaşî Sırrı: Mudāfa'a'ya Mukabele*, (Dersaadet, Asr Matbaası, 1328), 6-7.

demands. This request for Rıfki to include the documents eventually led to the creation of Cemāleddīn Çelebi's own work, titled *Mudāfa 'a*, in response to Rıfki's refusal. Subsequently, Rıfki penned the final volume, *Mudāfa 'a'ya Muqābele*, as a rejoinder to *Mudāfa 'a*.³⁶⁹

Across the expanse of his writings, Ahmet Rıfki revisits the content he previously expounded upon and defended in the initial two volumes, interweaving it with fresh insights into history and Sufism in this latest installment. Rıfki meticulously scrutinizes his sources and confidently asserts his interpretations of historical events throughout various sections of the treatise. Unlike Cemāleddīn Çelebi, he endeavors to trace the lineage of the order's history back to both historical records and Sufi literature, subjecting these texts to his critical analysis as well. Rıfki frequently finds that the narratives detailing the history of the order are steeped in heroic tales and flattering rhetoric, often confined within the bounds of literary embellishment. Conversely, he identifies numerous shortcomings within conventional history texts. He notes that these texts are often authored by government-employed historians, whose impartiality is compromised by their salaried positions. It is essential to take these factors into account when evaluating such sources.³⁷⁰

Following the discussion on the bias in history books and the insufficiency of sources to unveil the true history of the Bektashi Order, Rıfki proceeds with his investigation by delving into the question of whether Hacı Bektāş was married. He evaluates this matter within the framework of whether Hacı Bektāş 's celibacy contradicts the principles of Islamic law. Rıfki asserts that abstaining from marriage does not violate religious precepts. Hacı Bektāş deliberately embraced solitude as a means to adhere to the objectives of his spiritual journey, viewing it as a superior mode of conduct and sidestepping familial obligations. Individuals deeply committed to their spiritual paths and who encounter divine attraction typically exhibit no inclination towards marriage as well.³⁷¹ Authorities in the field affirm that Hacı Bektāş was unmarried upon his arrival in Anatolia. While there's speculation that he might have been married in his youth, it's widely acknowledged that he didn't come to Anatolia with a family, nor did he marry during his 28-year stay in Sulucakarahöyük, nor did he have a son named Timurtaş. His unmarried status didn't

³⁶⁹ *ibid*, 8-11.

³⁷⁰ *ibid*, 14.

³⁷¹ *ibid*, 16.

impede his progress towards elevated spiritual levels. At times, opting not to marry can be the more advantageous choice.³⁷²

Ahmet Rıfkı also touches upon the gradual disappearance of sexual desires over time. He argues that abstaining from sexual activity leads to a natural reduction in these impulses. He notes that this notion is corroborated by historical sources. The esteemed scholar Erzurumlu İbrahim Hakkı explores this subject in depth in his work *Ma'rifetnâme*. Rıfkı also presents a contemporary example of a spiritual adept who has experienced a lack of sexual desire for fifteen to twenty years due to his dedication to *dhikr*, since his youth. This prolonged absence of sexual desire even caused a strain in his marriage and ultimately led to its dissolution. From a rational and scientific standpoint, Rıfkı suggests that eliminating sexual desire can result in either impotence or a complete loss of sexual drive.³⁷³

Ahmet Rıfkı highlights numerous individuals who, despite remaining unmarried, ascended to the esteemed ranks of *velāyet*. Figures such as Sayyid Ahmad al-Badawi al-Fasi, Shams al-Din al-Tabrizi, Hoca Ahmed Yesevī, Sheikh Alī al-Salami, and Sheikh Alī al-Fanai are among them. Rıfkı draws parallels with Qur'ānic praise for those devoted to *taqwa* (piety), using John the Baptist (Yahya) as a prime illustration. Yahya's sanctity, Rıfkı argues, stemmed from his celibacy and withdrawal from worldly affairs. While Rıfkı underscores that his aim isn't to rely solely on the altered and invalidated New Testament, he acknowledges the significance of exploring all available documents, thus incorporating examples from it. According to the New Testament, Yahya remained unmarried, donning garments of camel hair with a leather belt around his waist, subsisting on locusts and wild honey. Additionally, Rıfkı cites a hadith wherein Prophet Muḥammad proclaimed, "Salman is one of us," as evidence that Salman al-Farisi, upon attaining such spiritual stature, also abstained from marriage.³⁷⁴ The instances concerning celibacy in Rıfkı's writing, particularly involving figures such as Yahya and Salman, are also present in Mehmet Alī Hilmi Dedebara's work titled *Reddiye*. This circumstance holds significance in showcasing the intertextuality of the late 19th and early 20th-century polemical works authored by Babagān Bektashis.

³⁷² *ibid*, 17.

³⁷³ *ibid*, 16-17.

³⁷⁴ *ibid*, 20-21.

Continuing the discussion on celibacy, Rıfki elaborates on why dervishes opt not to marry. He stresses that this custom originated not with Hacı Bektāş, but rather with Balım Sultān, and that celibacy was not mandated by Hacı Bektāş. Choosing not to marry symbolizes detachment from worldly desires, with the associated rituals being conducted wisely. According to certain narratives, the four-pronged crown (*tac*) commonly worn by Bektashi order members symbolizes four forms of detachment: renunciation of the world (*terk-i dunyā*) renunciation of the afterlife (*terk-i 'uqbā*), renunciation of the world itself (*terk-i dunyā*), and renunciation of renunciation (*terk-i terk*).

At this point, Rıfki revisits his assertions about the Çelebi family and begins sharing the letters he has received on the topic. Interestingly, most of the letters he received dealt with whether Hacı Bektāş was married and had children, and consequently, whether the Çelebis were descendants of Hacı Bektāş. One of the correspondents was Sheikh Huseyin Hüsnü Efendi from Üsküdar. According to him, Cemāleddīn Çelebi was a descendant of İdris Hoca, who was Hacı Bektāş 's host in Sulucakarahöyük. After the demise of İdris Hoca, the roles of custodian of the shrine and sheikh were passed down from father to son and an endowment established for his children in the status of spiritual children.³⁷⁵

Another letter arrived from Ahmed Usameddin el-Huseyni Efendi, a sincere devotee and member of the order. In this correspondence, several aspects of the work titled *Mudāfa'a* were contested. Usameddin Efendi refutes the assertions made by the Çelebis regarding Hacı Hasan Baba, Mehmet Alī Baba, and Feyzi Baba. He claims that they were expelled from the lodge due to false accusations by the Çelebis. Additionally, Usameddin Efendi rejects the Çelebis' authority to appoint babas and caretakers to all Bektashi lodges. He even questions whether the Bektashi babas who were killed or exiled in 1241/1826 were appointed under their direction. Usameddin Efendi portrays Mehmet Alī Baba as a highly capable individual, mentioning that he was invited to the Council of Sheikhs with the title of dedebaba and was granted an official document (*intiḥāb varaqası*)³⁷⁶ legitimizing his position and title by governmental authorities. Furthermore, he explains that Feyzi Baba served as a caretaker at the Hacı Bektāş lodge, and following Mehmet Alī Baba's demise, he was acknowledged as dedebaba due to his devoted service as a dervish. His continued stay at the lodge was authorized by a government decree.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁵ *ibid*, 23.

³⁷⁶ *ibid*, 27.

³⁷⁷ *ibid*, 28.

Usameddin Efendi underscores the responsibilities of the factions within the Bektashi Order. He explains that the duty of the sheikh, who is chosen from Naqshbandiyya after 1241, is to uphold the order's principles and ensure that all activities within the lodge align with divine will. Conversely, the trustees are tasked with providing sustenance for the needy, residents, and travelers, as well as maintaining the lodge's infrastructure. However, UsameddinEfendi points out that appointing babas to Bektashi lodges is a spiritual matter. This privilege was bestowed by Maḥmūd II upon an individual who was a Naqshbandi sheikh. An administrator of a waqf cannot appoint the sheikh of another lodge.³⁷⁸ With this clarification, Usameddin Efendi not only rejects the authority of the Çelebis but also refrains from acknowledging them as sheikhs. He appears to only recognize the Çelebi family's role as waqf administrators.

Furthermore, he also explains the procedure for appointing sheikhs to the lodges: When one of the Bektashi lodges becomes vacant, a document of good conduct (*ḥusnihāl mazbaṭası*) is prepared with the approval of the order's sheikhs in the area and notable local individuals. After the candidate nominated by the Council of Sheikhs is examined, they are appointed to the position. Prior appointments were made with the Sultān's permission, before the establishment of the office of *Meclis-i Meşāyih* (Council of Sheikhs), and they are no longer in force. Since the establishment of the Council of Sheikhs, the authority for such appointments has resided with it. Bektashi Order, like other orders, is an esteemed path, and its lodges are places of worship like other lodges. These sheikhs can be appointed after their qualifications (ehliyyet) and permissions (icāzetnāme) are recognized by the Council of Sheikhs, which is appointed by the office of the Şeyḫü'l-İslām.³⁷⁹

It is noteworthy that Usameddin Efendi does not legally recognize the appointments of sheikhs made by the Sultān's decree before the establishment of the Council of Sheikhs, specifically those made by the Çelebis. Cemāleddīn Çelebi's attempt to establish his lineage from Ḥacı Bektāş and claim rights in the foundation using ancient edicts holds no legal standing for him. Al-Hüseyni Efendi appears to reject the spiritual authority of the Çelebis and their capacity to provide guidance.

Subsequently, he enumerates the qualities that a sheikh ought to possess. He believes there is a distinction between the roles of sheikh and trustee. Each lodge has its own trustees and descendants, but those occupying the post of *seccādenişīn* should be characterized by prudence

³⁷⁸ *ibid.*, 29.

³⁷⁹ *ibid.*, 29-30.

(*temkīn*), humility(*vaqār*), and the ability to guide others(*irşād*). Hüseyini Efendi objects to Cemāleddīn Çelebi's claim of having the authority to guide. He suggests that instead of making such claims, it would have been preferable if Çelebi had written a work discussing matters such as *evrād* (daily devotions), *ezkār* (remembrances of God), *seyr u sulūk* (spiritual journey), *hırqa* (Sufi robe), *ilqa-yı nisbet* (the connection of spiritual affinity), and the Sufi path (*tariqat*).³⁸⁰ This statement implies that the authority derived from knowledge is considered superior to that which is inherited through lineage, as evidenced by Usameddin al-Hüseyini Efendi's suggestion.

Hüseyini Efendi also provides insights into the topic of celibacy. He reiterates that Cemāleddīn Çelebi vehemently rejects celibacy, accusing its practitioners of ignorance, disbelief, and deviation from religious principles. However, he points out that the tradition of celibacy was established by Balım Sultān, revered as their ancestor. If these practices contradict religious laws and the principles of Sufism, how could Balım Sultān, regarded as *şāhīb -i velāyet*, have endorsed such practices? If these traditions were doctrinally flawed, why did the Çelebis ignore them? Furthermore, why have the Çelebis, who have been leaders for over five centuries, refrained from challenging this celibacy ritual and attempting to abolish it? Additionally, he questions If the present Bektashi ritual is contrary to Islamic law, why did Cemāleddīn Çelebi initiate into the order? How Cemāleddīn Çelebi, along with other influential figures like Turbedār Feyzullah Baba, Asci Hüseyin Baba, and Etmekci Salih Baba, entered the *tarīq-i Bektāşīyye*.³⁸¹ Interestingly, with his remarks, Usameddin Efendi refutes, most probably without noticing, Rıfkı's claim that Cemāleddīn Efendi had no connection with the order. It seems that Cemāleddīn Çelebi was initiated into the order with other babas.

It's interesting to note that Usameddin Efendi' s statement contradicts what he wrote in his second letter. Usameddin al-Hüseyini Efendi followed up his initial letter with another one, contesting the Çelebi family's assertions of being the rightful heirs of Hacı Bektāş 's order through lineage. He stated that neither Cemāleddīn Çelebi nor the Çelebis who lived in the past exhibited any signs of a *tarīqat* in their words and actions, suggesting that the term ' Şōfū Süreği' would be more appropriate for them.³⁸² They have been recognized as the heads of a group divided into several factions, but no one has witnessed any spiritual enthusiasm (*tarīqat neş 'eşi*) similar to that

³⁸⁰ *ibid*, 32.

³⁸¹ *ibid*,31-32.

³⁸² For the usage of term 'Sofu' and its connotations, see, Oktay Uslu, *The Perfect Man*, 52,118,165.

seen among the followers of the *Ṭuruk -ı alıyye*. al-Hüseyni Efendi mentioned that the Çelebis consider themselves to be possessors of gnosis (*irfān şāhibi*). However, he argues that the Çelebis have no knowledge of the truth (*ḥaqīqat*) or esoteric wisdom (*ma'rifet*) let alone the spiritual Path (*ṭarīqat*).³⁸³ Therefore, Hüseyni Efendi must have placed the Çelebis within the first gate, Sharia (*şeri'at*).³⁸⁴ Additionally, Usameddin Efendi's characterization of the Çelebis as "Şōfū Süreği" and depicting them as the leaders of a divided group further emphasizes the closeness of the Çelebis to the Alevis *ocaks*. However, it is evident from Usameddin Efendi's discourse that he views this as a negative development.

Moreover, he criticizes Cemāleddīn Çelebi's claim that the authorities of the time were compelled to intervene in Hacı Bektāş 's presence at Kadıncık Ana's home due to the prevailing values and customs of the era. He argues that it is improper for anyone to intrude upon an elderly guest in someone else's home. Dismissing Hacı Bektāş 's unmarried status and his stay at İdris Hoca's residence as implausible, and presuming that the public would view them negatively, reflects a lamentable misjudgment devoid of substance. The presence of an elder as a guest in a household does not give rise to unwarranted suspicions. If Cemāleddīn Çelebi denies the passion and endeavors of the revered Pir, who journeyed to Rum around the ages of fifty to sixty, that would be a different matter! ... It is highly incongruous to interpret Kadıncık Ana's service to Pir Hünkār as being contrary to *velāyet* and Sharia. Many women dutifully follow the commands of Allah's saints, which in no way hinders their ability to serve. The status of the saints permits such practices.³⁸⁵

After presenting Usameddin Efendi's second letter, Ahmet Rıfki critically analyzes the position of Timurtaş in the Çelebi lineage, drawing from historical sources. He endeavors to demonstrate that Timurtaş was a fictional character.³⁸⁶ Subsequently, he delves into the topic of the Order's heritage. According to Rıfki, the authentic foundation of the order rests in Hacı Bektāş 's spiritual lineage and succession. The superiority of a disciple who progresses through the

³⁸³ Rıfki, *Mudāfa'a'ya Muqabele*, 63.

³⁸⁴For the doctrine of 'Four gates and forty station', see Birge, *The Bektashi Order*, 102–9; Zeynep Oktay-Uslu, "Alevism as Islam: rethinking Shahab Ahmed's conceptualization of Islam through Alevi poetry," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 49, no. 2 (2020); Zeynep Oktay, "Layers of Mystical Meaning and Social Context in the Works of Kaygusuz Abdal," in A.C.S. Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız (ed.) *Literature and Intellectual Life in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Anatolia* (Würzburg, Ergon Verlag, 2016), 73–99; Erdal Gezik, 'How Angel Gabriel Became Our Brother of the Hereafter (On the Question of Ismaili Influence on Alevism)', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no.1 (2016), 63.

³⁸⁵ Rıfki, *Mudāfa'a'ya Muqabele*, 70-71.

³⁸⁶ *ibid*, 72-86.

spiritual path over one who is merely born into the lineage is apparent. There exists no principle dictating that all a father's spiritual knowledge and wisdom automatically transfer to his descendants upon his demise. In no Sufi order does lineage confer the privilege of inheriting all the secrets of the Order. If that were the case, then the descendants of all *qutbs* would also be *qutbs*, and the offspring of saints would all be saints. This would imply that the fathers of all saints are their heirs, a notion that starkly contradicts reality.³⁸⁷

According to Ahmet Rıfki, Cemāleddīn Çelebi seeks to portray the matter as one of material inheritance. The claim to material inheritance is intertwined with the claim to spiritual inheritance. From the perspective of the general tenets of religion, the right of inheritance cannot be given to one who comes from the spiritual path. Çelebi reduces the matter to the level of a material inheritance, from which arises the erroneous assumption that since the material inheritance belongs to him, as he is the offspring of the Pir and the guardian of the land, the spiritual inheritance naturally also belongs to him.³⁸⁸ To counter Çelebi's claims, Rıfki attempts to substantiate the assertion that there is no regard for a child born into the lineage, stating that the true disciple is one who comes from the spiritual path. He supports his argument with examples from the explanations of other orders and scholars, demonstrating how lineage is of minimal significance. Rıfki, by presenting certain verses from Sarı Abdullah Efendi's commentary on the *Mathnawī* (Mesnevi), demonstrates that virtue does not stem from lineage but rather emerges as the result of eternal excellence. According to him, if there were sanctity in lineage, the son of the Prophet Noah would have followed God's command and become a prophet. However, his heart was devoid of Allah's light. Figures such as Isaac, Ishmael, John, Seth³⁸⁹, and Solomon inherited both the outward and inward aspects of the prophets, thus becoming lights upon lights.³⁹⁰ According to him, these lines demonstrate that a person's father's virtue and excellence cannot lend any portion to his child.³⁹¹

³⁸⁷ *ibid*, 89.

³⁸⁸ *ibid*, 89-90.

³⁸⁹ For the figure of Seth as transmitter of Muhammadan light to other prophets, Twelve Imams and Alevi sayyids, see Emine Yüksel, "We are the descendants of Gürüh-ı naci": The notion of Gürüh-ı naci in Alevism and Bektashism, *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, Vol 9, No. 2, (Fall 2022), 307-330.

³⁹⁰ For the transferring of Muhammadian light to the other prophets in different traditions, see, Uri Rubin, *Pre-Existence and Light*; Amir Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 36-43.

³⁹¹ Rıfki, *Mudāfa 'a'ya Muqabele*, 92-94.

Rıfki continues to demonstrate the insignificance of lineage by translating an Arabic passage from Sarı Abdullah's commentary on the *Mesnevi* and presenting it to the readers. This passage, which explains the concept of being part of the Prophet's family, posits that the individual who embodies the commands, knowledge, state, and perspective of the Prophet is considered to be of this family. The individual who encompasses all of these attributes is considered to be a heir to Perfect Human.³⁹² Kinship (*qarābet*) is described in three levels: the first is an apparent kinship through blood relations (*sūrī*); the second encompasses both apparent and spiritual connections (*sūrī ve mānevī*); and the third is solely spiritual kinship (*mānevī*). Whether it pertains to prophets who came before Muḥammad or saints who emerged later, the individual who has sincerely aligned in form (*şūret*) and essence (*ma'nā*) is a *khalife* and imam. Those with genuine spiritual ties are akin to the saints who existed before the Prophet himself. Such individuals are spiritual children of the Prophet. Salman is one example of it.³⁹³

Later, Ahmet Rıfki says that although he does not wish to belittle the high rank that *sādāt* and *şurefā* has attained and their familial bond, however, in the level of truth (*haqiqat mertebesi*), the visible lineage chain (*neseb-i zāhiri*) remains secondary. Rıfki also explains the insignificance of lineage with various events from Islamic history and verses from the Qur'ān. The text continues with examples from the *Mesnevi*, stating the importance of abstinence and piety, and presenting how Satan boasts of being created from fire, yet he is ignorant of the mysteries and devoid of human truth; that in the sight of God, the most distinguished people are those who avoid things that should be avoided, and that superiority in virtue comes from giving up worldly pleasures and avoiding sins.³⁹⁴ Rıfki then continues with the following words:

Take lessons from the story and do not boast about your lineage, whether you are a sheikh's son, a mufti's son, or a noble's son. Do not reject or oppose the pole of the age, who is the manifestation of God, and the Perfect Man. While divine grace has manifested in his heart like a verse, avoid analogy (*qiyās*) and turning towards the path of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) distancing yourself from the esoteric knowledge (*bāṭın ilmi*), and do not, like Iblis, ignore the truths and find yourself in the fire. If you are full of pride and arrogance, to whom do you belong? Your closeness to fire is above all, as in the saying 'everything returns to its origin'³⁹⁵; the result of this is punishment with fire and being deprived of the blessings of paradise. Because the importance of lineage is not to attain spirituality but only to inherit

³⁹² *ibid*, 93.

³⁹³ *ibid*, 93-94.

³⁹⁴ Rıfki, *Mudāfa'a'ya Muqabele*, 95-97.

³⁹⁵ *ibid*, 96-97.

the perishable world. When the trumpet(*şūr*) is blown, the ties of lineage and affiliations will no longer matter, and it is stated that they will not question each other.³⁹⁶

Rıfkı continues with the words of Muḥammad bin Alī Tirmizi and Farisi, who state, in shortly, that what is praiseworthy is not lineage hereafter, but being sincere and genuine in servitude, and having piety.³⁹⁷ At this point, Rıfkı critiques the Çelebi's tendency to boast about their lineage and ancestry:

As we delve into the discussion of truth(*ḥaqīqat*), it becomes evident that our opponent is entirely mistaken in their claim, as they wish to take pride in their lineage and present their lineage as a basis for pride, a rather baseless claim. In the eyes of those who seek truth and knowledge (*ma'rifet*), their arguments show that they are entirely unfamiliar with the principles of the spiritual path (*tarīqat*).³⁹⁸

Ahmet Rıfkı's analysis in this manner reveals an interesting point. In his eye, the Çelebis have not achieved the rank of truth (*ḥaḳīqat*) or knowledge (*ma'rifet*); rather, they even have strayed from the Spiritual Path (*tarīqat*). Furthermore, Rıfkı doesn't specify their exact position within the Order, expressing uncertainty about the rank of Hızır Bali's sons, namely the Çelebis, yet hinting at a tendency to categorize them within the rank of religious law (*şeri'at*).

He mentions that it is against the rules of the order for a father to be a guide to his son, yet among all the Çelebi, the guide role is passed down from father to son. He emphasizes that the most important thing is to connect to a perfect guide (*murşid-i kāmīl*). To enter the path of righteousness, it is not necessary to be connected by lineage or to follow the son of a sheikh or a scholar. However, there is a need for a perfect guide, and it must be sought. Rıfkı, giving examples from *Mesnevi*, emphasizes that those who do not connect to a perfected guide are not on the path to salvation: To escape worldly troubles and ascend to three elevated stations, seek the guidance of a perfect guide, a saint, so that you may reach the Muḥammad an light, progressing from the lowest level (*ev ednā*) to the station of proximity to the Divine (*kābe qavseyn*). For the journey on the straight path of essential unity (*tevḥīd-i zātīyye*) to be successful, it cannot be achieved without the perfect mediation of a messenger, prophet, or God's caliphate.³⁹⁹

Although Rıfkı acknowledges that one cannot achieve guidance through kinship and lineage, it is noted that his respect and love for sayyids (descendants of the Prophet) are

³⁹⁶ Ibid, 97. He refers to the verse 101 in Surah Al-Mu'minun (23: 101).

³⁹⁷ ibid., 98.

³⁹⁸ ibid., 98.

³⁹⁹ ibid., 102-103.

exceptional. He considers sayyidhood as something to be cherished by all. Loving the descendants of Alī is a sign of faith. True faith is demonstrated by loving the sayyids and sharifs, who are the children of the Prophet. However, when it comes to the issues with the Çelebis, the situation changes. Biological children cannot be seen as superior to spiritual children and should not be favored over them.⁴⁰⁰ From Rıfki's approach, it is understood that he recognizes and appreciates those whose sayyid status is certain and has an unbroken chain, but he does not regard the Çelebis in that category.

Rıfki proceeds from this point by indicating that merely descending from a sayyid lineage is insufficient, asserting that specific qualities are necessary to become a sheikh. Rıfki emphasizes that even if we were to assume that Cemāleddīn Çelebi is a descendant of Hacı Bektāş, it would not be appropriate to obey him without him meeting the conditions of the spiritual path and the position of *khalife*. Guide should first possess spiritual evidence (*burhān-ı mānevī*) demonstrating their alignment with the path of truth (*rāh-ı haqiqat*), and they should also have a certificate of authorization that proving that their spiritual chain leads back to the Prophet. (*berāt-ı şahīḥ-i maddiye*) Without this, one cannot attain them. Otherwise, reaching spiritual truths is not possible through the guidance or direction of some imitators:⁴⁰¹

If we were to ask the prominent figures of the Order and the people of truth, "There is someone from our Pir's lineage, should we adhere him?" They would first ask us whether we have examined their manner of guidance and spiritual state.⁴⁰²

Rıfki goes on to explain the conditions of being in the path of a saints (*evliyā*):

The true evidence of being on the path of sainthood is maturity and possessing Muhammadan knowledge. The behaviors required of a person on this path are not hidden to those who can see with the heart's eye. The strongest evidence in the assembly of the people of truth (*meclis-i ehl-i haqq*) are consists of verses, hadiths, and the words of saints and gnostics (*kelām-ı evliyālar ve urefā*). In the past, these *berāts* were given to anyone who desired them, but they cannot serve as evidence in cases, opened for personal gain.⁴⁰³

It appears that Rıfki doesn't regard the state-issued warrants as proof of Cemāleddīn Çelebi's spiritual guidance. These warrants were issued to various individuals and do not indicate

⁴⁰⁰ibid., 104-105.

⁴⁰¹ibid., 107.

⁴⁰²ibid., 108.

⁴⁰³ibid., 108.

spiritual progress, guidance, or adherence to the path of sanctity. Therefore, Rıfki does not consider them as evidence.

For Rıfki, it is not claims but longstanding practices that hold validity in the Sufi order. It is a steadfast rule of the Order that a father cannot train his child and then leave them in his place as a guide. Declaring that they, the Çelebis, possess the spiritual legacy of the Order forever, similar to dividing material inheritance, and claiming the position of a sheikh is a bold endeavor. A sheikh is a person who has withdrawn from worldly affairs, cleansed their heart, and enlightened their soul through inner knowledge (*bāṭın*) and spiritual insight (*keşf*). However, only if the chain of the Order is clear, strong, and unbroken can that guide be considered on the path of God.⁴⁰⁴

Ahmet Rıfki states that the lodges have deteriorated due to the passing of the sheikh post from father to son and the lodges remaining in the hands of unqualified individuals:

The term *şeyh* (sheikh) refers to one who possesses inner knowledge and illuminates the path of truth. A *tekke* (Sufi lodge) is a place where Muhammadan knowledge is taught and where esoteric knowledge is imparted. The introduction of certain customs into the core and foundations of the *Ṭuruq -i Aliyye* is undoubtedly due to the Order falling into the hands of unqualified individuals. These individuals damage whichever branch of the *Ṭuruq-i Aliyye* they join. The problem begins when those who serve in the lodges and retreat, leave their positions to their offspring... Lodges have been significantly harmed by the preference for leaving the position of sheikh to the biological heirs rather than the spiritual heirs upon the death of a perfect sheikh.⁴⁰⁵

Rıfki also claims that the teachings and rituals in the lodges have changed for this reason:

...This has led to additions being made to the previously simple forms of dhikr (remembrance) and changes to the old practices of the lodges. Their primary purposes have been forgotten. Instead of the knowledge of Islamic wisdom, idle chatter and false discourses have taken over, and instead of the utterance of the phrase of oneness (*kelime-yi tevhid*), two-faced behaviors have emerged. Although there have been great saints among us who have thought more about us than we do about ourselves, and reformers (second guides) have emerged to correct and renew the aspects of the order in need of improvement, some untalented and unqualified individuals who occupy certain lodges certainly continue to stray from the true path, persisting in obstinance and ignorance. The most significant factor causing confusion and problems among those who join the exalted path's lodges, according to the methods and principles of the exalted path itself, is the passing of sheikh position from father to son. This practice is known to lead to significant problems.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁴ *ibid.*, 109-110.

⁴⁰⁵ *ibid.*, 114.

⁴⁰⁶ *ibid.*, 114-115.

Ahmet Rıfki also addresses the issue of false sheikhs. After sharing a poem from Molla Cami about the conditions of false sheikhs and *sofus* (hypocrite Sufi), he points out that the imperial warrants and decrees filling the *Mudāfa‘a* from top to bottom provide neither material nor spiritual benefit. This is because the proofs of the people of truth consist of the book (the Qur’ān), the sunnah (traditions of the Prophet), and the words of saints. Additionally, history books and information in the *Velāyetnāmes* (sacred vitas) confirm that Hacı Bektāş was celibate.⁴⁰⁷

Ahmet Rıfki, after giving many explanations of biological descent versus spiritual descent and stating that spiritual descent is more valuable, explains that the legacy of the order passed from Balım Sultān to his devoted disciple, Sersem Alī Baba, and continued from him. This legacy did not pass to Kalender Çelebi after Balım Sultān, for the reasons mentioned earlier. Kalender Sultān was not appointed as Balım Sultān's successor. Although he may have pledged allegiance to him, his errors are evident. Therefore, the chain of the Order shown by Cemāleddīn Efendi was interrupted in the middle. This interruption indicates that his claims regarding spiritual guidance and sheikhdom are unfounded.⁴⁰⁸

Ahmet Rıfki begins the division between the Çelebis and the Babagān in the lodge with Sersem Alī Baba:

Since the lodge was left without a post-nişin after Kalender Çelebi, a celibate baba was appointed. From then on, two groups of people began to emerge in the lodge. The first group consists of those who are loyal to the Çelebis and consider themselves their children. Unfortunately, we have no work or writings from them. It is regrettable that the Çelebis left no works related to the order and Sufis⁴⁰⁹...The second group is the Babagān faction. These are the followers of Balım Sultān who take refuge in the spirituality of the revered Pir Hünkār and follow the practices and rituals he established. Known as the *Ṭariqat-i Bektāşiyye*, this order has continued from the time of Balım Sultān to the present. The Bektashi order, like other orders, is a path of knowledge and wisdom that draws inspiration from the light of the Prophet. The core belief of the Babagān is nothing other than the true path of Islam.⁴¹⁰

Ahmet Rıfki continues with explanations on the *tariqat*, *ma‘rifet*, and *ḥaḳīkat*, as well as with repetitions of the responses he previously provided to the *Mudāfa‘a* and the *Lāyiḥa* of Sırrı Paşa. He notes that his responses to the work *Mudāfa‘a* are not yet complete and informs readers

⁴⁰⁷ *ibid.*, 118-119.

⁴⁰⁸ *ibid.*, 122-123.

⁴⁰⁹ *ibid.*, 128.

⁴¹⁰ *ibid.*, 129.

that the next volume will be partially dedicated to responses and partially to the rules of the Order and *gūlbāngs* (prayers or chants). With this, he concludes this volume.

Throughout the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, the conflicts between the Naqshbandi sheikhs, the Çelebis, and the Babagān occupied the attention of the state, the Bektashi community, and even individuals outside of the Bektashi tradition. The closure of the Bektashi tekkes and the appointment of Naqshbandi sheikhs to those that were not demolished precipitated a significant intensification of divisions among the groups representing Bektashism, which were already characterized by two distinct modes of authority: hereditary and non-hereditary.

The most explicit discussion of the disputes between the Babagān and the Çelebis, centered on the question of whether Hacı Bektaş was married and had offspring, is found in the writings exchanged between Ahmet Rıfki and Cemāleddīn Çelebi. In these writings, Ahmet Rıfki championed initiatic sanctity, whereas Cemāleddīn Çelebi advocated for hereditary sanctity. Particularly in the early twentieth century, these two individuals ignited a substantial debate, which persists to this day, regarding which form of sanctity was more deserving of Hacı Bektaş's spiritual legacy and the leadership of the tekke, therefore the control of the tekke's endowment revenues.

By raising the awareness of their respective audiences, the Babagān Bektashis were able to expand their influence in Istanbul and the Balkans. In contrast, the Çelebis, leveraging their hereditary charisma and *sayyid* status derived from Hacı Bektāş, directed their efforts towards the Kızılbaş-Alevi *ocaks* in Anatolia. The following chapter will elucidate this process, examining the authority the Çelebis sought to establish over the Kızılbaş-Alevis and how their authority was contested by their audience.

CHAPTER 4

AUTORITY EXTENDED AND CHALLENGED

4.1. The Relationship Between Bektashi and Kızılbaş-Alevi Communities

The Kızılbaş, known as the Alevi after the nineteenth century, constituted the largest portion of non-Sunni groups in the Ottoman Empire. The Kızılbaş, can be briefly described as subjects affiliated with the Safavid Order, supporters and devotees of the Safavid Shahs, members of the Safavid military elites and groups harboring deep love for the *ahl al-bayt* and the Prophet's progeny.⁴¹¹

The Safavid Order began to be adopted by the Turkcomans and Kurdish tribes in Anatolia in the second half of the fifteenth century. They played an important role in the establishment phase of the Safavid State, which became fully integrated with Shah Ismail. The emergence of *Kızılbaşlık* was facilitated by the support of the Safavid Order and its alliance with Turcoman and Kurdish tribes, along with various dervish groups across Ottoman territories. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, socio-economic tensions between the Ottoman central powers and rural populations led to a series of Kızılbaş uprisings and they threatened Ottoman dominance in the region throughout the sixteenth century.⁴¹²

Kızılbaş were derogatorily labeled by the religious authorities and administrators of the Ottoman Empire due to their religious beliefs diverging from the Sunni interpretation of Islam, their aspirations tied to Mahdism, and their close socio-religious and economic ties with the Safavids. These characteristics were viewed as a threat to the centralization efforts and the increasing Sunni-centric policies across the Ottoman Empire, resulting in harsh measures taken against the Kızılbaş. Various historical records from different periods depict them as *zındıq* (apostate), *mulhid* (disbeliever), and *rāfiḍī* (heretic)⁴¹³, subjecting them to punishments such as

⁴¹¹ Kızılbaş" is a historical term referring to one of the numerous groups that were classified as Alevi subsequent to the nineteenth century. For the term "Kızılbaş" and its many implications in the early modern era, see Baltacıoğlu Brammer, *One Word, Many Implications*. For the analysis of the term "Alevi" in the late Ottoman and early republican period, see Dressler, *Writing Religion*.

⁴¹² For the history of Kızılbaş in the Ottoman context, see Savaş, *XVI. Asırda Anadolu'da Alevilik*, Rıza Yıldırım, *Turkomans*; Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, 'The Formation'; Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash/Alevis*; Rıza Yıldırım, "The Safavid-Qizilbash Ecumene and the Formation of the Qizilbash-Alevi Community in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1500–c. 1700," *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 52, Nos. 3–4, (2019), 449-483.

⁴¹³ For the detail analysis of these terms in Ottoman context, see Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler: 15.–17. Yüzyıllar*; (İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998).

execution, exile, and seizure of property.⁴¹⁴ The Kızılbaş within the Safavid domain also faced a similar fate due to the intense Shiitization policies of Safavid State. They shifted towards a co-governing elite, along with the slaves of the empire, instead of maintaining allegiance to the original religious hierarchy structured around a military-political nobility, while the Kızılbaş in Anatolia remain true their original Kızılbaş doctrines.⁴¹⁵

The Treaty of Zuhab, also known as Treaty of Qaşr-i Shīrīn, and the Ottoman Empire's eventual recognition of Iran as a Shi'a Muslim state, but not of the Kızılbaş, altered the status of Kızılbaş communities' identity and led to shifts in Ottoman policies towards them within its territories. Following the peace, there was a significant reduction in the use of accusatory religious terminology in the diplomatic relations between the Safavids and Ottomans. As a result, the Ottomans abandoned the notion of viewing the Kızılbaş as a significant threat to their political legitimacy, despite exercising caution. The Anatolian Kızılbaş no longer served as the military arm of the Safavids nor provided substantial financial support. Subsequently, Ottomans began to use the term "Kızılbaş" in a military or geographical context, referring to the forces of the Safavids and the Shah's domain, rather than in a pejorative religious sense.⁴¹⁶ This shift in usage is the primary reason for the scarcity of information on the Kızılbaş in archival documents after the seventeenth century.

On the religious level, after the Safavid shah relinquished his divine status and assumed the role of a worldly ruler, the Kızılbaş in Anatolia, who steadfastly held onto their belief in their *murşid*, found themselves without a leader to champion their cause.⁴¹⁷ Although the Kızılbaş in Anatolia remained largely unaware of the conversion of their revered leader in Iran to Shiism until the latter half of the eighteenth century, the decline in millenarian expectations among Ottoman Kızılbaş likely played a significant role in shaping Ottoman policy changes. As Selim Güngörürler states, based on Hülya Canbakal's study, that it's possible that during the Ottoman state's efforts to promote the prominence of *sayyids* in the seventeenth century, many Kızılbaş leaders were

⁴¹⁴ For accusations of heresy and Ottoman persecution of the Kızılbaş, refer to footnote 172.

⁴¹⁵ For the detailed analysis of this process, see Kathryn Babayan, *The Waning of the Qizilbash: The Temporal and the Spiritual in Seventeenth Century Iran*, PhD. Diss. (Princeton University, 1993); Kathryn Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Selim Güngörürler, "The Qizilbash in Anatolia after the 1630s: Sidelined and Estranged," in Andrew J. Newman (ed.) *Iranian / Persianate Subalterns in the Safavid Period: Their Role and Depiction, Recovering Lost Voices* (Berlin: Gerlach Press, 2022), 83-98.

⁴¹⁶ Güngörürler, 'The Qizilbash', 84.

⁴¹⁷ Yıldırım, 'Bektaşî Kime Derler?', 38.

provided with official genealogies by the government, tracing their lineage back to Prophet Muḥammad 's family.⁴¹⁸

It must have been during this period that Kızılbaş in Ottoman territories started to cultivate a close relationship with the Bektashi Order. One factor contributing to this was the collapse of the Safavid Empire and the disappearance of the Safavid Order's central authority in the mid-eighteenth century. Consequently, the Kızılbaş began to adopt the Bektashi headquarters, the lodge at Karbala in Iraq⁴¹⁹ and Hacı Bektāş in central Anatolia, as the primary sources of authority, validating their lineage and influence over their followers. This situation was also facilitating Kızılbaş-Alevis's oversight and discipline by the state apparatus effectively, through the sheiks of the lodge of Hacı Bektāş who obtained the right to appoint sheikhs of other tekkes in the Ottoman territories by the seventeenth century latest.⁴²⁰

In this period, the Bektashis and the Kızılbaş must have also become closer in terms of doctrine, beliefs and rituals. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, both the Bektashis and the Kızılbaş embraced several shared religious and philosophical concepts. These included the cult of saints, Alid and Shiite views, and the veneration of the Twelve Imams. They also adopted Sufi and antinomian understandings, such as interpreting the world through the dual perspectives of *zāhir* (exoteric) and *bāṭin* (esoteric), recognizing the manifestation of God's light in humans, and acknowledging the significance of human beings. Despite some minor differences in their rites and rituals, both groups were united in their practices, including the adherence to a spiritual guide and the performance of the communal ceremony (*ayn-ı cem*). This commonality in beliefs and practices underscores the deep connections between the two groups during this period.

The fundamental distinguishing factor between the Bektashis and the Kızılbaş was their organizational structures. The Kızılbaş were organized regionally around *sayyid* families known as *ocaks*⁴²¹, with disciples gathering around these familial groups. In contrast, the Bektashis

⁴¹⁸ Hülya Canbakal, "An Exercise in Denominational Geography in Search of Ottoman Alevis." *Turkish Studies* 6, no. 2 (2005), 253-71; Güngörürler, 'The Qizilbash', 86.

⁴¹⁹ See the Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, "The Forgotten Dervishes: The Bektashi Convents in Iraq and Their Kızılbaş Clients," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 16/ 1-2 (2010): 1-24.

⁴²⁰ Suraiya Faroqhi, "XVI.-XVIII. Yüzyıllarda Orta Anadolu'da Şeyh Aileleri", haz. Osman Okyar, in *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi Semineri. Metinler/Tartışmalar.*, (Ankara: Hacetepe Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1975), 213; Suraiya Faroqhi, *Der Bektaschi-Orden in Anatolien* 77,92.

⁴²¹ For the formation of Alevi *ocaks*, see Ahmet Karamustafa, "Anadolu'nun İslamlaşması Bağlamında Aleviliğin Oluşumu," in Yalçın Çakmak, İmran Gürtaş (ed.) *Kızılbaşlık, Alevilik, Bektaşilik: Tarih, Kimlik, İnanç, Ritüel*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2015), 43–54; Karakaya Stump, *Wafâ'ilik, Bektaşilik, Kızılbaşlık*; Robert Langer , et al. (ed.) *Ocak*

functioned as a traditional Sufi order, characterized by their organization around Sufi lodges. Another factor that differentiates Kızılbaş identity from Bektashism is the ethno-religious character of *Kızılbaşlık*. Unlike Bektashism, which emphasizes spiritual progress and hierarchical advancement, Kızılbaşlık does not incorporate such hierarchical elevation based on spiritual development. Instead, *Kızılbaşlık* is hereditary, with its leadership and roles often being passed down through family lines. Hacı Bektash's *sayyid* status and the recognition of him as an exalted saint must be an important factor that brings the Kızılbaş and Bektashi traditions closer together.

The relationship between the Kızılbaş and the Bektāšī increased significantly in the nineteenth century after the abolition of Bektashism and the closure of their tekkes. The dissolution of Bektashism and the ensuing power struggles among the leaders of the Babagān, Çelebis, and Naqshbandi factions within the Hacı Bektāš Tekke resulted in several changes within the Bektashi Order and the communities it addressed. The affiliation of the Çelebis as descendants of Hacı Bektāš, and consequently their claim of descent from the lineage of the Prophet, directed them towards the Kızılbaş-Alevi *ocaks* clustered around the descendants of the Prophet. Especially, the exile of Hamdullah Çelebi to Amasya, followed by the exile of Veliyuddīn Efendi to Sivas, contributed to the establishment of authority and increased respectability of the Çelebis in these regions. Following the ban on Bektashism, the Bektashis who previously operated in Western and Central Anatolia attempted to extend their influence towards the eastern regions through the Çelebis. Particularly, the increasing number of tekkes in these regions and complaints about the Bektāšī activities reflected in state documents indicate the expansion of the Çelebis' sphere of influence. The next sections will demonstrate the strategies of the Çelebi family while increasing their control over their potential religious communities.

4.2. Çelebi's Intervention in the Ritual Paraphernalia

The ritual implement known as *tariq*⁴²² a sacred wooden stick utilized in the initiation ceremony and annual rites of the Kızılbaş community, garnered attention in numerous reports during the

und Dedelik: Institutionen religiösen Spezialistentums bei den Aleviten. Heidelberger Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des modernen Vorderen Orients, 36, (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, Peter. 2013); Ali Yaman, 'Alevilikte Ocak Kavramı: Anlam ve Tarihsel Arka Plan' *TKHBVD*, 60, (2011), 43-64.

⁴²² It is also referred to by names such as *erkân*, *evliyâ*, *erkân-ı evliyâ*, *serdeste*, *dest-çûp*, *alaca değnek*. The typical material for the *tarık* utilized in rituals is wood; however, unlike other instances, within the Dede Garkın lineage, it takes the form of a sword. I visited this sword in Büyükcamlı village, one of the central locations of the Dede Garkın lineage in Çorum, during field research, as part of the TUBITAK project titled "Aleviliğin Ortak

nineteenth century. *Tariq*, purportedly sourced from the Tuba tree of Heaven, embodies a lengthy wooden segment endowed with symbolic significance, emblematic of the fraternal bond between Muḥammad and Ali, and imbued with profound sanctity. However, notwithstanding the pivotal role of *tariq* in Kızılbaş rituals, it would subsequently be construed by governmental authorities and by adherents of the Bektashi order, as emblematic of paganism and cultural regression.

In the reports dispatched from localities to central government in nineteenth century, authorities asserted that the Kızılbaş community worship ‘a desiccated wooden stick’ which stigmatize them as superstitious, ignorant, and culturally backward, thereby necessitating corrective measures. Yalçın Çakmak’s study on these reports provides such examples. Abdulcabbarzâde Osman Bey's report offers notable insights into this ritual among Kızılbaş population situated in the Yozgat province. As he stated, the Kızılbaş demographic was subdivided into three distinct factions: the Hubyarlı, the Harbendelü, and the Erdebillü *cemâ’at*. The Hubyarlıs in this region, for the past several years, rallied under the leadership of a woman named "Ayşe," spouse of Davulcu Veli, who emerged in Acıpınar Village within the Zile District, having been exiled a few years prior, and subsequently pardoned. Conversely, the Harbendelü faction, purportedly tracing its lineage to Hacı Bektâş Veli, adhered to the leadership of an individual named Cemal. Disregarding the authority of the dedes, they conducted the "dernek" ritual through dervishes claiming descent from Hacı Bektâş. Lastly, the Erdebillü group conducted their communal rituals under the guidance of dedes. Even in the presence of a dervish associated with Hacı Bektâş, they refrained from granting him superior status over other dedes, treating him instead as an ordinary member of the congregation until the culmination of the ritual.⁴²³

In his report, Mutaşarrıf Bekir Sıdkı Bey provided additional information regarding the *tariq*. According to his text, there was a wooden stick named *erkân*, which the dedes claimed was bestowed upon them by God. This *erkân*, crafted from a tree, was held by the dedes, facilitating the visits of the Kızılbaş. According to belief, those who passed under the *erkân* and drank its water would not see the face of hell but would directly enter Heaven. The adherents would visit the dedes along with sacrificial animals such as sheep and goats. Especially during the three months of

Referanslarının Belirlenmesi" between 2013 and 2016. For the *tariq* used as a ritual paraphernalia in Safavid Persia, see Alexander H. Morton, "The Chub-ı Tariq and Qizilbash Ritual in Safavid Persia", Jean Calmard (ed.) *Etudes Safavides*, (Paris- Tehran,1993), 226-245.

⁴²³ BOA.Y.PRK.UM. 29/77, 10 Nisan 1310/22 Nisan 1894 cited in Yalçın Çakmak, *II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Osmanlı Devleti'nin Kızılbaş/Alevî Siyaseti (1876-1909)*, PhD. Diss. (Hacettepe Üniversitesi,2018), 159-160.

winter, the dedes would roam among ‘ignorant populace’ (*qavm-i cühelā*’), conducting their gatherings (*cem‘iyyet and dernek*) alongside them.⁴²⁴

The dedes would utter certain words to herald the arrival of the *erkān* and begin preparing the congregation for it. Upon the arrival of the *erkān*, everyone would rise together and show their respect. After the stick was brought in, the dede would pass it over the people present, both men and women, expressing that whoever passed under it and drank the water used to wash the stick would go to heaven, indicating the forgiveness of their sins.⁴²⁵ The water in which the stick was washed, believed to be sanctified by its contact, was both consumed by the crowd and sprinkled upon them with the term *rahmet* (blessing) uttered. Those who received the water on their faces considered themselves fortunate and expressed gratitude, while simultaneously cursing others who were not part of their group. After all the rituals were completed, the stick would be reverently and ceremoniously returned to its place.⁴²⁶ Bekir Sıdkı further notes that during the tenure of Hacı İzzet Bey, who was the governor of Sivas, upon receiving complaints concerning the Kızılbaş, gathered the surrounding tribal leaders and dedes and rectified their beliefs, resulting in the breaking of thirty to forty *erkān*.⁴²⁷

In a report concerning the Kızılbaş in Dersim region, the sacred wooden piece previously referred to as *tariq* and *erkān* appears as the *alaca değneği* (multi-color stick). This sacred wooden rod, used for resolving disputes among the Kızılbaş community, is employed in the ritual of pardoning individuals who have been temporarily ostracized from society and readmitted into the community. According to the report, the trial process commenced with the dervish, an assistant of dede, making both the plaintiff and the defendant kneel before him, seating them, and allowing both parties to speak. Subsequently, the revered *alaca değneği* considered sacred by all Kızılbaş, would be waved towards the parties. It was believed that a snake would emerge from the stick, and whoever the snake landed on was deemed unjust, while the one it avoided was considered innocent. Consequently, the final judgment was determined accordingly, and the trial concluded.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁴ BOA, Y.MTV. 131/109, 23 Cemaziyyevvel 1313/11 Kasım 1895; BOA, Y.EE.132/39, 15 Subat 1314/27 Subat 1899 cited in Çakmak, *II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Osmanlı Devleti'nin Kızılbaş/Alevî Siyaseti (1876-1909)*,162.

⁴²⁵ Çakmak, *II. Abdülhamid Döneminde*,164.

⁴²⁶ *ibid.*

⁴²⁷BOA, Y.MTV. 131/109, 23 Cemaziyyevvel 1313/11 Kasım 1895; BOA, Y.EE. 132/39, 15 Şubat 1314/27 Şubat 1899 cited in Çakmak, *II. Abdülhamid Döneminde*, 168.

⁴²⁸ Enver Behnan Şapolyo, *Mezhepler ve Tarihîyatlar Tarihi* (İstanbul: Milenyum Yayınları, 2013), 318-319; Çakmak, *II. Abdülhamid Döneminde*, 174.

In their reports concerning the beliefs and rituals of the Kızılbaş community, local authorities recommended measures aimed at rectifying their beliefs, including the establishment of schools, construction of mosques, and appointment of imams in Kızılbaş villages. These recommendations were heeded by the state and implemented accordingly.⁴²⁹ However, the endeavor to reform Kızılbaş communities, dissuade them from pagan beliefs, and amend doctrines deemed incompatible with the core tenets of Islam transcended governmental initiatives alone. Notably, Cemāleddīn Çelebi, esteemed among the Bektashi Çelebis, sought to abolish the practice of utilizing the *tariq* in Kızılbaş rituals and introduced the *pençe-i āl-i 'abā* (*the paw/palm of the People of the Cloak*) practice, symbolizing the Prophet and his immediate family. Concurrently, he engaged in propaganda efforts within the Kızılbaş-Alevi communities.

The attempt to remove the *tariq*, a secret wooden stick used during initiation and ceremonies of Kızılbaş was the most visible manifestation of the Çelebis trying to establish their authority among the Kızılbaş *ocaks*. The Çelebis, likewise the state authorities, viewed *tariq* as a pagan symbol and wanted to substitute it with the *pençe*, representing the five exalted members of Prophet's family. Nuri Dersimi's memoirs recount events during World War I when figures like Cemāleddīn Çelebi and Seit (Seyyid) Aziz from the Ağuıçen lineage conducted propaganda activities among the Kızılbaş communities in Dersim.⁴³⁰ These narratives offer significant insights into the perception of *tariq* and *pençe* in these communities and the limits of Cemāleddīn Çelebi's authority on Kızılbaş of Dersim.

Nuri Dersimi' s account begins with the selection of Cemāleddīn Çelebi to persuade the Dersim tribes to join the war effort. In the summer of 1915, during a Russian offensive from the Erzurum front, Enver Pasha attempted to convene with tribal leaders from Dersim. However, they did not respond to the invitation. Eventually, upon the insistence of Governor Sabit Bey, some individuals from the western Dersim tribes met with the Pashas in Elaziz (modern-day Elazığ). They highlighted that the people of Dersim, who identified as Alevis, held great respect for Çelebi Cemāleddīn Efendi. They argued that if he could be persuaded to join the jihad, all of Dersim would be inclined to participate in the war. However, they admitted their inability to sway other Dersim tribes, particularly those influenced by Seyid Rıza.⁴³¹

⁴²⁹ See Çakmak, *Sultanın Kızılbaşları*.

⁴³⁰ Nuri Dersimi, *Kürdistan Tarihinde Dersim*, (Halep: Ani Matbaası, 1952); Nuri Dersimi, *Hatıratım*, (Ankara: Özge Yayınları, 1992).

⁴³¹ Nuri Dersimi, *Kürdistan Tarihinde Dersim*, 95.

Following this, Çelebi Cemāleddīn departs from Kırşehir and reaches Sivas, accompanied by Seit Aziz, who was acknowledged as the spiritual leader (*murşid*) of the Dersim *ocaks*. Together, they endeavor to convince the Koçgiri tribes to participate in the war. However, the Koçgiri members inform Cemāleddīn Efendi that they will join once the Dersim tribes agree to participate. Consequently, Cemāleddīn Efendi heads towards Erzincan. During this time, Nuri Dersimi, an officer stationed in the center of Erzincan, is appointed as an advisor to Cemāleddīn Efendi by military order.

According to Dersimi' s observations, Çelebi was visited by individuals holding prominent positions, including commanders, among whom were German staff officers. While Cemāleddīn Efendi was interacting with influential figures, Seit Aziz continued his religious propaganda within the community. In predominantly Alevi neighborhoods, he held regular meetings conducting guidance activities favoring the *pençe*, opposing the use of *tariq* in ceremonies. As a result of his efforts, the population became divided: some embraced Seit Aziz's beliefs, while others adamantly opposed them, expressing their objections.⁴³²

Nuri Dersimi also discusses Seit Aziz and his activities in his work titled *Hatratım*, in the section related to the Dersim sayyids. According to Nuri Dersimi' s account, Seit Aziz would come once a year to the Dersim region, into the Sığhasanan (Şih Hasan) tribes, to deliver sermons and advice. He would partially resolve disputes among the tribes, receive abundant gifts and money⁴³³, and then return to Sivas. During the ritual, the sayyids would use a piece of wood called *tariq* to guide those entering the order, enabling them to repent and seek forgiveness for their sins and transgressions. Seit Aziz strongly opposes this practice.⁴³⁴

According to Seit Aziz, the *tariq* is nothing more than a piece of wood. It has no miracles associated with it. Worshiping it, sacrificing animals to it, kissing, and embracing it, placing it in high places, and regarding it as a saint are all completely wrong. According to Seit Aziz, if a seyyid comes to a village, someone from the village would greet him within the village. However, if it is said that the sayyid is accompanied by a *tariq*, the whole village would come out, sacrifices would be made, and there would be cries and lamentations, showing great reverence to the *tariq*., People worship the *tariq*, this piece of wood, more than the sayyid himself, regarding it as a saint. He

⁴³² *ibid*, 97.

⁴³³ Hakkullah or *çiralık* refers to the money or goods offered by participants of religious ceremonies to Alevi and Bektashi religious leaders as a token of appreciation for their religious services.

⁴³⁴ Nuri Dersimi, *Hatratım*, 126.

considers worshipping this piece of wood as blasphemy(*kufır*), and he believes that the sayyids who encourage rituals involving it are hypocrites(*munaıııks*). Indeed, the real miracle lies within humans:

The light of the Divine has manifested within humans (*ben-i ādem*). All kinds of miracles and existence are within humans. Respect should be shown to humans. Worship and love should be directed towards humans. Therefore, whatever exists is within humans.⁴³⁵

As Seit Aziz starts, in Alevi rituals, the ritual should be performed with the hand. He bases this on the story of the Prophet's cloak:

Because the "hand" consists of five fingers. Prophet Muııammad Mustafa kept his Ahl al-Bayt under his cloak, who were five souls: Muııammad, Ali, Hasan, Hüseyin, and Fatimah al-Zahra. Prophet Muııammad referred to them as "My Ahl al-Bayt." Therefore, the hand, consisting of five fingers, represents the 'paw of the family of the cloak'. According to this symbol, in the ritual, one should act with the hand, as a reference to the five members of the family.⁴³⁶

Seit Aziz's propaganda concerning the *penıe* against *tariq* has caused the tribal communities in the region to become divided against each other. Nuri Dersimi writes about a very important cem ceremony under the spiritual leadership of Seit Aziz, where his father served as a *dhākir(zakir)*, and renowned figures like Diab Aga were also present. In this event, a group consisting of five old men and women performed the *semah*, and those present worshipped in the presence of the God by killing their own egos. Seit Rıza, who was the spiritual leader known as "Rehber" to the Sighasanan tribe of Western Dersim, learned of this incident, then attempted to attack Seit Aziz with significant force in order to eliminate him. However, this attempt was thwarted by the tribes associated with the symbol of *penıe* and to prevent large-scale conflicts and battles, Seit Aziz left Dersim and went to his village in Sivas.⁴³⁷

Nuri Dersimi not only writes about the ideological reasons behind Seit Aziz's *penıe* propaganda, but also explained how those who used the *tariq* symbol interpreted its meaning. He describes how the seits, who are supporters of the *tariq* without naming them, explain the legitimacy of using *tariq* in rituals as follows:

Indeed, *tariq* is nothing but a tree and a staff. However, many esteemed individuals, personalities, and sayyids have touched this staff. The eyes of many eminent religious scholars of *ıarıqat* have fallen upon it, and numerous congregations have conducted rituals

⁴³⁵ *ibid.*, 127.

⁴³⁶ *ibid.*

⁴³⁷ *ibid.*, 128.

with the same staff, delivering sermons and reciting prayers. Therefore, this staff is a sacred legacy of our people, our elders. This memory is sacred. Respecting it means respecting our people, our ancestors. And performing rituals with this staff is not blasphemy. On the contrary, using the legacy of our ancestors is a religious duty.⁴³⁸

In *Hatıratım*, where Nuri Dersimi delineates Seit Aziz's propagandistic endeavors, there is an absence of reference to Cemāleddīn Çelebi. However, within the discourse provided in *Kürdistan Tarihinde Dersim*, Cemāleddīn Çelebi's role in initiating collaborative guidance activities with Seit Aziz, having brought him from Sivas, is underscored. Furthermore, the influence and encouragement exerted by Cemāleddīn Çelebi upon Seit Aziz regarding the *pençe* symbol are notably evident.

This understanding arises from a dialogue between Nuri Dersimi and Çelebi. Subsequent to assuming the role of advisor to Cemāleddīn Çelebi, Nuri Dersimi becomes cognizant of Seit Aziz's activities through the dialogue exchanged between them. For instance, on a certain occasion, Çelebi Cemāleddīn summons Nuri Dersimi to his side. He tells Dersimi that he had heard of a well-known *tariq* in the region named Kıştım.⁴³⁹ To demonstrate that it holds no miraculous powers, he informed Nuri Dersimi that Seit Aziz would go there and burn this stick, which he described as 'nothing more than a piece of wood'. He wants to assign Nuri Dersimi, along with a platoon, to protect Seit Aziz from the Kurds in that area. However, Nuri Dersimi declines the assignment, explaining to Çelebi Cemāleddīn the reason by recounting an incident he had witnessed firsthand:

Sir, every year at the end of January, the Kurds in this region observe a three-day fast dedicated to Hızır. Last year, during the same season, Balaban tribe leader Gül Ağa invited me and took me to the village of Kistim near Hınzori, his own village. Thousands of Kurds gather in this village every year to hold a large meeting at the house of the saint (*evliyā*) they call Mar. Gül Ağa and I went to the meeting place as well. In a large room, there was a tall, old post with a green cloth-wrapped staff hanging on it, and the part of the staff protruding from the cloth resembled the head of a large snake. Everyone referred to this as Kıştım Marı, or the Kıştım evliyası. The room was so spacious that it could accommodate

⁴³⁸ *ibid.*, 128-29.

⁴³⁹ The initial studies on this *tariq*, also known as Kıştım Marı, were conducted by Vatan Özgül and Rıza Yıldırım. See Vatan Özgül, "Kıştım Marı (Evliyası) ve Tarik-Pençe Kavgası" *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi*, cilt: VII, sayı: 18, (2001): 33-44; Rıza Yıldırım, "Kıştım Marı: Dersim Yöresi Kızılbaş Ocaklarını Hacı Bektaş Evlâdına Bağlama Girişimi Ve Sonuçları", *Tunceli Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, sayı 6, (Yaz 2012):1-19. I visited this village formerly known as Kıştım, now named Avcılar, within the framework of the project titled "Aleviliğin Ortak Referanslarının Belirlenmesi" in 2013-2016. The *tariq* known as Kıştım Marı still preserved within this village. It is housed within a designated room of the family entrusted with its safekeeping, prominently displayed in a high corner, covered with a green cloth. It is imperative to note that the removal of the *tariq* from its designated place, except during ritual practices, is strictly prohibited.

one or two thousand people. The assembled crowd prayed fervently to God and showed devotion to Mar, shedding tears of repentance. A general lamentation ensued, and even I couldn't help but cry amidst this collective emotion and grandeur. As the crowd gathered, a man from the family authorized to unveil Mar emerged, and by saying "Oh Allah", he took the Mar down from the post. Half-standing, half-kneeling, he extended Mar towards the people and induced them to repent their sins. The staff in the sheikh's hand would sometimes extend, sometimes shorten, and sometimes take extraordinary positions, stirring up the crowd, and sometimes even causing its holder to fall to the ground, prompting the sheikh's cries to echo to the skies. At this moment when the spiritual power of thousands of people converged at a single point, I found myself overwhelmed. I held Gül Ağa's hand, swept up in excitement amid the dark night and the intense fire emitting light within the darkness, and the passionate outcry of the people. Hours passed this way, hundreds of sacrifices were made, Mar was placed back in its position, prayers to Allah resumed, and the meeting dispersed. Among the tribes participating in this meeting were many who had come from distant places. The next day, I left Gül Ağa and returned to Erzincan. My explanation shows that breaking and burning the Kıştim Marı would not only cause discord and hostility among the tribes but also incite a major rebellion. And the tribes would hate me; I ask for your understanding.⁴⁴⁰

After listening to these and contemplating deeply, Cemâleddin Çelebi indicates that he will speak with Seit Aziz and come to a decision. Later, we learn that Nuri Dersimi has been relieved of his duties, but the tribes have already heard about this conversation. They had decided that Seit Aziz was the one behind pushing Nuri Dersimi to destroy Kıştim Marı. Çelebi's support for this matter had also shaken the respect bestowed upon him. By this time, the people of Dersim had already realized that the Russian armies were likely to prevail. In order to avoid participating in the war and provoking the wrath of the Russians, they had resorted to presenting excuses to Çelebi Efendi.⁴⁴¹

As understood from Nuri Dersimi's account, Turkish military had big hopes that Çelebi Efendi's intervention would convince the tribes of Dersim to join the war. Therefore, they had sent him to the East with almost the pomp and circumstance of a military commander, granting him extensive powers. The war was being portrayed as a religious battle, and the people of Dersim were constantly receiving telegrams and notifications from Elazığ and Erzincan, calling them to jihad. Seit Rıza, a prominent figure in Dersim, expressed a desire for Çelebi Efendi to visit the Dersim tribes. However, Çelebi Efendi's elaborate carriage was unsuitable for travel in the rugged terrain of the Dersim mountains. Furthermore, Çelebi Efendi's inability to travel even for short

⁴⁴⁰ Nuri Dersimi, *Kürdistan Tarihinde Dersim*, 97-98.

⁴⁴¹ *ibid.*, 98.

distances on horseback made it necessary to send written declarations to Dersim urging the tribes to come to Erzincan. These declarations were written in Turkish, a language unfamiliar to the people of Dersim, rendering them incomprehensible to the local population, who lacked proficiency in Turkish literacy and comprehension.⁴⁴²

However, Baku Ağa, one of the elders of the Kalan tribes, expressed his desire to meet with Çelebi Efendi by coming to the village of Kesmekur in Erzincan. Baku Ağa was the uncle of Nuri Dersimi's father-in-law who was the leader of the Kalan tribes. In the past, Baku Ağa had captured a Russian consul, who had come to Turkey via the Erzurum route, almost causing significant trouble in the relationship between the two countries. He demanded certain rights from the Turkish government, and only released the diplomat when his demands were met. As understood from Nuri Dersimi's narrative, it is apparent that Çelebi Efendi did not personally visit Baku Ağa but instead sent his private secretary, Sıdkı, and Nuri Dersimi to represent him.⁴⁴³

After warmly greeting Sıdkı and Dersimi with a deep and dignified tone, Baku Ağa addresses them in the Zaza language. Referring to telegrams emphasizing religious sentiments sent to the Dersim tribes, he suggests that despite the outward display of religious importance, mosques have been turned into military sites by the Turks, indicating a lack of genuine recognition. Baku Ağa then turns to discussions regarding Çelebi Cemâleddîn. Expressing displeasure with Seit Aziz's introduction of religious and Sufi matters upon arrival with Çelebi Efendi, he criticizes the disruption of the spiritual integrity of the tribes. Moreover, Baku Ağa is uncomfortable with Çelebi Efendi's approval of this course of action. He seeks to discern the true purpose behind Çelebi Efendi's visit. If Çelebi Efendi aims to resolve religious and Sufi matters among the tribes, Baku Ağa expresses resentment. However, if Çelebi Efendi's purpose is related to war, Baku Ağa suggests that religious issues should be set aside initially, and Seit Aziz should be sent back to Sivas. He proposes that Çelebi Efendi should ride his sacred steed and honor Dersim, persuade the tribes, and assure them that their national demands have been acknowledged by the Turks. Baku Ağa underscores that only through recognition of Kurdish national existence can the tribes of Dersim participate in the war.

Baku Ağa also presents the recognition of the national existence of Kurdistan as a prerequisite for religious matters:

⁴⁴² *ibid.*, 98-99.

⁴⁴³ *ibid.*, 99.

Only if these demands are fulfilled and success is achieved in the war, then the sayyids should be gathered. If they decide to choose any Sufi order that conforms to our morals, independence, and traditions, we, the tribes, will submit to the decision like herds of sheep and lambs. If Çelebi Efendi does not accept what I have said, I regretfully inform you that success will not be achieved.⁴⁴⁴

When Nuri Dersimi conveyed these words to Çelebi Cemāleddīn, he inquired about their demands and which Sufi Order they adhered to. While Nuri Dersimi does not delve into specifics in his writings, he indicates that he provided responses to Çelebi's inquiries. Çelebi's remarks in response to this are notably intriguing. According to his idea, the people of Dersim had deviated from the path of the deputies once sent by Hacı Bektāş to Dersim and had invented a new religion by becoming Kurdish:

Centuries ago, my ancestor Hacı Bektāş Veli sent some individuals to the Dersim region to preach and advise, and these people acted within the instructions of my ancestor and tried to connect the Dersim tribes to my ancestor Hacı Bektāş Veli. However, after the death of these individuals, for some reason, their descendants forgot my ancestor, became completely Kurdish, invented a religion outside of reason and logic according to their own opinions and desires, and dragged the people of Dersim into their principles.⁴⁴⁵

Continuing, Cemāleddīn Çelebi attributes his arrival to these regions to a dream he had seen in the garden of the tekke of Hacı Bektāş, stating that he came to guide the people of Dersim and to save them from the dark clouds hovering over their heads.

In our tekke (Hacı Bektāş tekke in Kırşehir), we have a garden, but I can only go up to this garden once a year. The one time I go up, I had a dream. In my dream, my ancestor appeared to me and said, "A dark cloud is looming over my beloved, especially over the Dersim devotees. I command you to go and guide them. There is a danger that the government may harm them in the future. Let them participate in the war to escape from this evil!" So, according to this command, I left my mansion and came here.⁴⁴⁶

Cemāleddīn Çelebi was there not only to prevent the evils befalling the people of Dersim but also to guide them onto the right path religiously:

Now, I want to engage the Dersimis in jihad to save them from the danger they face, and also to reform the Sufi path they have adopted through some ignorant sheikhs and dedes, and to guide themselves to the right path. For this reason, with a few of my devoted followers and admirers under my command, I am going further and even to the front lines

⁴⁴⁴ *ibid.*, 100.

⁴⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 101.

⁴⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 101.

of the war. I invite them according to the inner (*bāṭını*) commands of my ancestors.⁴⁴⁷ I have written to them, so you should write as well, and even go as far as Dersim.⁴⁴⁸

After this speech, Cemāleddīn Çelebi set off for Erzurum. However, Erzurum had fallen in February 1916, and Çelebi Efendi had informed Nuri Dersimi that he was returning to Erzincan. He had requested a lodging be arranged for him via telegram. Since it was not possible to secure another place, Dersimi had accommodated Çelebi Efendi in his own mansion upon his return to Erzincan. Çelebi returned to Sivas a month later and from there to Hacı Bektāş, due to health reasons. He also sends Nuri Dersimi to Dersim to calm the tribes before he left Erzincan. Interestingly, as claimed by Nuri Dersimi, Çelebi expressed satisfaction with the Dersim tribes not participating in or joining the war. He asked Nuri Dersimi to keep this statement confidential and convey it to the most trusted leaders of the tribes. He was also sending Nuri Dersimi to Dersim out of necessity.⁴⁴⁹

According to Nuri Dersimi, it had become apparent that the people of Dersim would not participate in the war, and since Cemāleddīn Efendi, the foremost representative of the Bektashi order, had returned to the Hacı Bektāş district, his efforts had no effect on the tribes. It had become evident in a very clear manner that the Bektashi propaganda had not made any impact on the national customs and affiliations that the Dersim Kurds had preserved for centuries.⁴⁵⁰

The propaganda campaigns of the Çelebis regarding the *tariq* and the resulting hostilities among tribes and Kızılbaş groups, were not only documented in state records and memoirs but also reflected in missionary reports. In 1880, while touring the Kurdish Kızılbaş villages in Sivas, M. Perry witnesses the chaos caused by the *tariq-pençe* issue. In his writings, he identifies those opposed to the *tariq* as Protestants and labeled the pro-*tariq* groups as Reformists, referring them as ‘a nation of pantheist’:

Their religion is a relic of paganism molded by Mohammedan tradition and custom; but to me the special interest about it arises from what I consider to be a fact that, without knowing themselves the grounds on which they stand, they are a nation of pantheists... The Protestantism of the fifty families mentioned pertains rather to themselves than to the doctrine of the Reformers. A new sect which appeared among themselves protested against the use of the Sacred Wood, a relic of paganism, which, when applied to a candidate for

⁴⁴⁷ For dream accounts as authoritative messages from sayyids to the believers see, Kazuo Morimoto “How to behave toward *sayyids* and *sharīfs*: a trans-sectarian tradition of dream accounts” in Kazuo Morimoto (ed.) *Sayyids and Sharīfs in Muslim Societies: Living Links to Prophet* (London-Newyork: Routledge, 2012): 15-37.

⁴⁴⁸ Nuri Dersimi, *Kürdistan Tarihinde Dersim*, 101.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 103.

the office of sheik, is supposed to impart to him the requisite qualifications for that office. Some device of this kind is evidently necessary, for most of the sheiks whom we met, though having a great reputation for wisdom, are unable even to read. These Protestants, by carrying on a warfare against this custom, and in other things also undertaking to be in very deed not only teachers but doers of their doctrine, suffered much persecution, during which two of their leaders were banished for several months; but they carried their point in the end, to the extent that the customs about which they dissented are falling into disuse.⁴⁵¹

M. Perry notes that the situation between these two groups escalated to the point of ostracizing and punishing leaders who opposed the *tariq*, causing them significant suffering. The pro-*tariq* faction was subjected to ostracism, *düşkünlük*, from both material and spiritual aspects, which is a vital component of the Kızılbaş belief system and social order. However, the propaganda of so-called Protestants was so potent that this group staunchly defended their beliefs, resulting in the eventual cessation of the use of the *tariq* in rituals.

Another document regarding the usage of *değnek* has also come from the Gökçeoğulları⁴⁵², who reside in the village of Yellice in the Sivas region, in 1891. This document, found inside a notebook belongs to the family, presumably a letter to Hacı Bektāş lodge, is quite intriguing, in terms of containing many themes and events from Islamic history, including lines about the long-awaited Mahdi, a rare instance in the nineteenth century documents. The document appears to have been produced by someone knowledgeable in Islamic law, Shia, and Sufi sciences, and the audience is presented as the brethren (*ikhvān*), but as understood from the content of the letter, it refers to the Çelebi Bektashis.

The writer initiates his letter by addressing the topic to rectify misconceptions, then delves into the inquiry of who possesses the ability to amend them and establish fresh convictions. For him, among the various factions of humanity, there exist erroneous sects and paths within the quarters of the earth. And the ones who will correct false doctrines are the prophets. The author

⁴⁵¹ M.H. (1880, LXXVI/V: 185).

⁴⁵² The central location of Gökçeoğulları remains in the same village. I visited this village as part of the aforementioned project. Despite certain ambiguities surrounding the name of their *ocak*, it is generally recognized in contemporary times as either the Şeyh Şazı or Molla Yakup Ocağı. For the aforementioned documents in latinized form, see Gökçeoğullarına Ait Diğer El Yazması Belgeler, https://www.alevibektasi.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=692:goekceoullarna-ait-dier-elyazmas-belgeler&catid=53:ariv-belgeleri&Itemid=70. (Last accessed August 27, 2024).

states that within the Islamic religion, the deviant doctrines, and false paths⁴⁵³ are documented in reputable books that everyone accepts, and it is the Mahdi who will correct and change them. He questions why, in this case, people (the ones he addresses) wander aimlessly like unclean crows from branch to branch with their individual wills (*irāde-i cüzziye*) directed towards futile things before the Mahdi emerges. For him, this is evidently due to the scarcity of intellect and capability. According to the writer, if someone were to claim the title of Mahdi without the established sign, and if actions and words arising from his claim led to discord, he would be entirely false, and those who follow him would be followers of Satan. In previous times, when there were sheikhs who were carriers of spiritual breath and postnişin babas in service at the Pîr' s dargah, such matters did not arise within the *Tariq-i Aliyye*. Why have they now emerged? This is deviation from the right path.

The author later expresses words indicating that *tariq*, initially perceived as a piece of wood, actually holds deep meanings and significances:

Oh, my dear! You assert there are no miracles in the tree, making various nonsensical statements. Verily, that is the case. However, the alignment of both outward (*zāhirî;*) and inward (*bātinî;*) affairs is linked to specific instruments. Just as Moses' staff, Solomon's seal, Israfil's trumpet, Azrael's tablet, Ali's sword, and Sani's sun, as well as traveller's berg-i saz, each affair necessitates a particular tool for its settling. For example, within the Sharia law, there exists the legal limit (*hadd-i şer'i*), symbolized by the staff (*değnek*). According to this law, the penalty is enacted based on an individual's transgression. That is, as many strokes as necessary shall be given. Now, with the establishment of prisons, rectification is achieved through them.

Furthermore, the author emphasizes the significant event in Islamic history known as 'Pledge of Tree', *Bey'atür riḍvān*.⁴⁵⁴:

⁴⁵³ For the tradition of sectarian divisions in the historical context of Muslim communities, see Paul E. Walker, "An Isma'ili Version of the Heresiography of the Seventy-two Erring Sects," in Farhad Daftary (ed.) *Medieval Isma'ili History and Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 161–77; Roy P. Mottahedeh, "Pluralism and Islamic Traditions of Sectarian Divisions," in Zulfikar Hirji (ed.) *Diversity and Pluralism in Islam: Historical and Contemporary Discourses Among Muslims* (London-New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 31–42.

⁴⁵⁴ Here, the author alludes to the notable event of the Pledge of Ridvan. Two years before the conquest of Mecca, in the sixth year after the Hijra, the Prophet, along with his companions, intended to perform Umrah in Mecca. However, the Meccans did not allow them entry into the city. Consequently, at a place called Hudaibiyah, the Prophet decided to take the pledge of allegiance (bay'ah) from his companions, affirming that they would not leave until they had engaged in battle with the polytheists. During his stay in Hudaibiyah, he sought shade under a type of desert tree called "semure" (gum arabic or acacia), and there he took the pledge of allegiance from his companions. According to one narration, the pledge was taken with the words "unto death," while another narration suggests it was taken with the commitment "not to flee from battle." See Mustafa Fayda, "Bey'atürriḍvân", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, C.6, 1992,39-40.

For instance, consider the Companions of the Pledge of Rıdvan, who pledged allegiance to the Prophet under the sacred tree, symbolizing their spiritual commitment. There is a verse that reflects this: 'Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you under the tree.'⁴⁵⁵ This encompasses the entirety of humanity; even the tree is subjugated.

The author, indicating that the primary concern is to progress on the right path, desires to set aside propaganda related to ritual instruments.

My dear! By setting aside these issues, and not getting confused about the paraphernalia, it is virtuous for those who seek (*tālib*), to immediately stay steadfast on their right path. These words of mine are the essence of wisdom (*mahz-ı hikmet*) and the reflection of truth (*ayn-ı haqiqat*). Persist in your pledge and commitment (*ahd u iqrār*), and achieve our noble prayers, so that you endeavor not to feel ashamed in the presence of our ancestors.

Another letter belonging to the Gökçeoğulları related to the *tariq* drafted by the Imam of Yellice village and presented to the sheikh of Hacı Bektāş lodge, to Cemāleddīn Çelebi. As this letter was drafted, its delivery to Cemāleddīn Efendi is unknown. Nevertheless, it holds considerable importance in illuminating the discussions concerning the *tariq* and *pençe*, as well as in delineating the geographical extent of Cemāleddīn Çelebi's activities.

As clearly understood from the letter, Cemāleddīn Efendi made unpleasant remarks about the letter's writer on an occasion where spiritual and ritualistic matters were spoken. These remarks have reached the ears of the writer of the letter, greatly angering him. Thus, the author uses harsh language in the letter and has expressed his thoughts sarcastically, by using an angry tone.

According to the letter, a community in the Kars region has experienced disagreement regarding both apparent and spiritual methods (*uşūl-i sūri ve ma'neviyye*), specifically the use of a changed ritual tool (*erkān*), in the name of civilization. This community sought resolution by turning to Cemāleddīn Efendi but did not receive satisfactory answers. Cemāleddīn Efendi encouraged and motivated them to adhere to the principles he had previously established (*qavā'id-i mukhtaria*). Additionally, he used negative expressions concerning the author of the letter.

For the writer, since ancient times, people have had their own beliefs and practices, some of which are deemed legitimate and others not. It is up to individuals to accept and follow these practices as they see fit. However, he accuses Cemāleddīn Efendi of creating a 'new sect and path' (*yeni bir madhab ve meslek*) and inciting and encouraging people to join it. For the author of the

⁴⁵⁵ Surah Al-Fath (48:18).

letter, it is necessary to present the new sect and path created by Cemāleddīn Efendi to the assembly of knowledgeable (*meclis-I ma'ārif*) first, and then, after being discussed and debated among the majority of scholars (*ulemā*), gnostics (*urefā*), intellectuals (*ukelā*), wise men (*fuḍalā*), and jurists (*fuqahā*), and proven to be legitimate, to invite the people of the Ottoman territories and the intellects of other nations to this newly created sect and path that emerged out of nowhere. Thereafter, obedience is observed in accordance with the majority. Otherwise, inviting some irrational or ignorant individuals to this self-governing sect secretly is not appropriate. Author continues furthermore:

And this time, it has become incumbent upon us, that the aforementioned invention and establishment of the sect and path which you have created and founded, we will have it printed in all newspapers, and we will announce it to the Islamic nation and other nations as follows: "Bektāṣī Sheikh Cemāleddīn Efendi nullifies and scrutinizes all religious principles, legal practices, and all existing sects and paths from ancient times within the Islamic nation, and then creates and establishes a new sect and path and invite the people to it!

At this point, the author indicates that Bardakçioğlu is the one responsible for all these matters. The author specifically compares him, particularly with Islam and pro-‘Alī opponents, and more broadly, with the Umayyads: *Indeed, in ancient times, Ibn Sufyan, Ibn Hakem, Ibn Sumayya, and Ibn Ziyad also instigated many things. This fact is well known.*

The person referred as Bardakçioğlu should be Cemal Bardakçı, who was the District Governor (Mutaşarrıf) of Çorum and visited Cemāleddīn Çelebi in Hacıbektaş in 1921, engaging in lengthy conversations with him. According to Cemal Bardakçı's work titled *Alevilik, Ahilik, Bektaşilik*⁴⁵⁶, Çelebi greatly enjoyed talking with him and learned from Bardakçı the true essence of Alevism and Bektashism. In this work, Bardakçı described a cem ritual he attended and documented all the rituals that took place there which he names as 'Kızılbash Ball'. He also witnessed the usage of *tariq* there. He may have had a role in Cemāleddīn Efendi's propaganda regarding this issue, as the author of the letter indicated.

⁴⁵⁶ Cemal Bardakçı, *Alevilik, Ahilik, Bektaşilik*, (Ankara: Türkiye Matbaacılık ve Gazetecilik, 1950).

4.3. Çelebi's Approval of *İcāzetnāmes*

As mentioned in previous chapters, by the seventeenth century, the Çelebis had gained the authority to recommend and appoint the sheiks of other Bektashi tekkes. Even regional judicial authorities and other state officials could not interfere in their authority. This situation came to an end with the dissolution of Bektashism in the nineteenth century, but it did not prevent the expansion of the Çelebis' influence. Although the Çelebis lost the authority to determine the leaders of all Bektashi tekkes located in Ottoman territories, the charisma derived from being descended from the Prophet and being from the lineage of a revered saint, Hacı Bektāş, brought them closer to the Kızılbaş-Alevi communities that rallied around the *sayyid* institution. In the pre-nineteenth century period, the Bektashi lodge in Karbala was confirming the status of religious leaders as *sayyids*. However, following this era, the Hacı Bektāş lodge emerged as a more significant authority. Kızılbaş-Alevi *ocaks* seek authorization (*icāzetnāme*) from the Çelebis to conduct their rituals, by accepting them as a higher authority.⁴⁵⁷

An instance of such authorization was granted to the lineage of Dede Ğarķın⁴⁵⁸. Dede Ğarķın stands out as a significant lineage, holding the esteemed position of *murşid* and having Vefā'i and Ahi connection, within Anatolia.⁴⁵⁹ This *icāzetnāme* was issued by the Çelebis in Hacı Bektāş Dergāh on 1263 /1847 and it was granted to Mehmet Baba Halife from the Dede Ğarķın lineage.⁴⁶⁰ This *icāzetnāme* is important in terms of demonstrating both the Ahi and the Bektashi connections of the lineage of Dede Ğarķın.

The license commences by extending salutations to the lights (*nūr*) of Muḥammad, Ahl-al Bayt, and the Twelve Imams. Subsequently, it incorporates a phrase present in nearly all *icāzetnāme*, believed to have been articulated by Muḥammad to underscore Ali's valor following the Battle of Uhud: “There is no youth like Ali, there is no sword like Zulfiqar.” Then it follows with the praising God and good deeds as well as the reason of the issuance of the *icāzetnāme*.

⁴⁵⁷ Some examples of *icāzetnāme* texts given to Alevi dedes previously published by researchers outside of academia. see H. Dursun Gümüšođlu, “Alevî Dedelerine 1796-1833 Yillari Arasında Verilen İcāzetnāme Örnekleri”, *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi*, Sayı: 82 (2017), 43-70.

⁴⁵⁸ For detail information regarding Dede Garkın, see Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Ortaçağ Anadolu'sunda İki Büyük Yerleşimci/Kolonizatör Derviş Dede Garkın ve Emirci Sultan: Vefaiyye ve Yeseviyye Gerçeđi*, (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2014); Karakaya-Stump, *The Kızılbaş/Alevi*, 114-123; Benjamin Weineck, *Zwischen Verfolgung und Eingliederung: Kızılbaş-Aleviten im osmanischen Staat (16.–18. Jahrhundert) (Kultur, Recht und Politik in muslimischen Gesellschaften)*, (Baden: Ergon, 2021).

⁴⁵⁹ The aforementioned *icāzetname* was published by Mehmet Akkuş. See Mehmet Akkuş “19. Asırda Bir Bektaş İcāzetnamesi”, *Tasavvuf*, sayı:1, (Ağustos 1999), s. 27-39.

⁴⁶⁰ For the other *icāzetnāmes* granted to Dede Garkın lineage see, Karakaya-Stump, *The Kızılbaş/Alevi*, 114-123.

The *icāzetnāme* contains themes from the Sufis literature, reflecting Bektashi beliefs within its lines. It continues with lines praising God and acknowledging His omnipotence, as well as addressing the creation of humans and the distribution of knowledge (*ma'rifet*) among them: God has distributed knowledge to His servants according to their respective levels, whether in abundance or scarcity. For the owners of knowledge (*arif*) He has adorned their eyes spiritually, as a grace and assistance, while for lovers (*āşiq*), He has opened their ears to feel the names of God within themselves and in their words. He has created humans with a unique characteristic not found in anything else. There is no deity except Him.

The *icāzetnāme* also encompasses the prevalent theme of secret (*sırr*), frequently encountered within Bektashism: God knows all hidden and manifest secrets, and He is the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate. His knowledge suffices for all secrets, even those in the farthest corners of the seas and the nature of waves in the oceans. The Prophet is His servant and messenger, and God has made him 'the treasure of knowledge' (*kanz al-ma'rifah*). *İcāzetnāme* does not exclude the gender element. After greetings are sent to the family of the Prophet, his descendants and the noble companions, his wives are also saluted. The proximity of the salutation section to the segment discussing knowledge implies that these individuals hold esteemed positions, receiving insights from both the inward (*bāṭın*) and outward (*zāhir*) knowledge of the Prophet.

Verses from the Qur'ān and hadiths, which are commonly observed in all *icāzetnāme* documents also present in this one. These are in line with the principles and main themes that hold significant importance in Bektashism and Alevism. The first of these is the following hadith of the Prophet: 'My companions are like stars. Whichever of them you follow, you will be rightly guided to salvation.' In Bektashi and Alevi creed, it is necessary to attach oneself to a perfect spiritual guide (*murşid-i kāmīl*) and undergo various stages in order to attain salvation. Indeed, this step is considered the initial and most crucial step to achieve salvation. Including this hadith in the *icāzetnāme* actually signals that it is granted to or granted by such a perfect guide (*murşid*)⁴⁶¹, and it indicates to the audience that salvation can only be attained by adhering to him.

⁴⁶¹ According to the Alevi religious structure, the individual leading the religious ritual must be connected to the lineage of Muhammad. This requirement is supported by the following passage from the Buyruk as follows: " *Evlad -ı Muhammed-Ali' den ola ki pırlığı caiz ola . . .*" [Let him be the descendant of Muhammad- Ali so that his *pirlik* is permissible]. *Buyruk*, ed. Sefer Aytekin (Ankara: Emek Yayınevi, 1958),12.

Another hadith pertains to the thirteenth verse of Surah As-Saff.⁴⁶² This verse is a message of imminent victory and divine assistance for believers, heralding their salvation. In the continuation of the verse, it is stated that God's help will continue indefinitely for those who recognize and aid the needs of their Muslim brothers. The next in line after the verses and hadith attributed to the Prophet are the words of Alī ibn Abi Talib. His words also emphasize the qualities required to be mature and perfect individuals. Accordingly, these individuals behave humbly when they hold positions and status, they forgive when they have power, and when they do good deeds, they do not boast about them.

Because of the deep importance placed on the teachings of the distinguished founder of the Bektāši Order, Hacı Bektāş, his teachings are subsequently highlighted. According to Hacı Bektāş, Knowledge (*ma'rifet*) is better than many deeds, thus he classifies the populace into four distinct groups: The common people (*avāmm*), the elite (*havāşş*), the elite of the elite (*havāşu'l havāşş*), and the saints (*velī*). The courage and generosity of the common people are related to wealth. The courage and generosity of the elite are related to their deeds. However, the courage of the elite of the elite is related to their state (*hāl*) and conduct. As for the courage of the saints, it is attained through reaching spiritual secrets. Another narration states as follows: The sheikhdom of the common people is through perfection (*ikmāl*). The sheikhdom of the elite is through their state (*hāl*). As for the sheikhdom of the elite of the elite, it is attained through reaching the secrets.

The document also includes the theme of spiritual struggle against the ego/self (*nefs*): Struggle with the ego and kill the reproaching self (*nefs-i levvāme*), attain the level of the assured self (*nefs-i muṭma'inne*) with discipline. Then, strive to reach higher degrees and achieve spiritually elevated ranks. Another important component of the document is the theme of contentment (*qanā'at*), virtuous quality and an essential aspect of the Sufī path. Due to the fact that the act of overcoming the ego and practicing contentment goes hand in hand, this matter is subsequently explored in the document. What contentment entails and what it requires are enumerated as follows: Loving hunger and not loving satiety, forsaking whims, and desires; hastening towards righteous and desired deeds, being diligent in worship; entering the ranks of

⁴⁶² Surah As-Saff (61: 13).

*büdelā*⁴⁶³, then attaining the grace and forgiveness of the Generous and Merciful God; if He wills, perishing in Him and being resurrected in Him.

Following various Sufi themes and admonitions, it is now appropriate to turn to the section regarding to whom and for what purpose the *icāzetnāme* bestowed. This *icāzetnāme* granted to Seyyid Hüseyin Baba's son Mehmet Baba Halife, from the lineage of Dede Ğarķın, who is affiliated with the order of Hacı Bektāş -ı Velī, ‘the Sulţān of the Saints of the Path’, ‘the Pole of the Gnostics’, ‘the Servant of the Poor and Needy’. Upon receiving this authorization, the duties and responsibilities that he must fulfill are written in the *icāzetnāme*: to lead the obligatory prayers, pay the alms (*zekāt*), perform the pilgrimage if possible, observe the fast during Ramađan, serve those coming and going, fulfill the prescribed pledge (*ahd*), invocation (*dhikr*), serve the poor and needy, and all other creatures, wear the robe (*hırqa*) of the order and raise its banner (*alem*), illuminate the lodge with candles (*çerāğ*), and hang a *zenbil* with reciting the phrase La ilaha illallah (*tehlīl*) and God is the Greatest (Allahu Akbar).⁴⁶⁴

In the subsequent section, the text delineates the individual from whom the authorized person received authorization and his spiritual lineage. Described in the authorization certificate is es-Seyyid Maħmūd Dede Baba, esteemed as ‘the epitome of righteousness among the virtuous’ and ‘the pride of the venerable’, whose lineage and spiritual standing trace back to the Prophet. He holds the esteemed position of *postnişin* at the Hacı Bektāş Velī lodge. Following his name, the name of the sheik of the time appears as Seyyid Sheikh Alī Celaleddin, alongside titles such as "owner of knowledge of certainty (*ilm al-yaqin*)," "pole of saints" (*kutb al-arifin*) "holder of the Sufi Path (*tariqat*)," and "servant of the poor and needy", emblematic of his spiritual eminence and dedication. Subsequently the list enumerates the names of his biological lineage, reaching Hacı Bektāş and from there to Prophet. The authorization also includes the spiritual lineage of Hacı Bektāş, which present the transmission of spiritual knowledge from Muhammed, the Angel Gabriel, and God.

Following the biological and spiritual lineage, the rationale for the composition of the authorization is elucidated: Mehmet Baba Halife, son of Hüseyin Baba and descendant of Dede Ğarķın, affiliated with the spiritual path of Hacı Bektāş, embraced the path of the saints (*tariqat-ı*

⁴⁶³ One of the ranks in Sufi hierarchy. See, Esad Korkmaz, *Ansiklopedilik Alevi ve Bektaşî Terimleri Sözlüğü*, (Istanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1994),64.

⁴⁶⁴ For the dervish paraphernalia, see Nurhan Atasoy, *Derviş Çeyizi: Türkiye’de Tarikat Giyim Kuşam Tarihi*, (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Kütüphaneler ve Yayımlar Genel Müdürlüğü, 2005).

evliya). He was conferred permission, authorization, and initiation, alongside the paraphernalia of initiation such as *sofra* (ritual meal), *çerāğ* (candle), *seng* (stone) *tiğ* (sword). He was invested with the position of *khalife* and entrusted with duties, accompanied by blessings and spiritual support. The text also enumerates duties such as having disciple (*murīd*) and devotees (*muhibb*) and keeping the path of the saints (*tariqat-ı evliyā*) vibrant. It is stated that the saints of the path (*tariqat erenleri*) should not hinder or repel him. Because it is acted upon with the warrant of the sheik's authorization.

After this section, the names, and the seals of those present during the approval of the authorization are listed. The Bektashi babas are represented with a title of *Khādimu'l fuqarā* 'the servant of the poor' while the Çelebis, who claim to be the biological children of Hacı Bektāş with *ed-Dā'i*, 'propagator of the faith' and 'invoker'. The document reveals that all the babas are in the rank of *khalifa*, and some of them are sayyids. An interesting aspect of this document is that unlike in most licenses, it includes a crowd of names and seals. For example, besides the posts of *postnişin*, *turbedār* (caretaker of a tomb), *Asçı* (cook), *Etmekci* (baker), this license also includes the names of posts of *Mehmāndār* (guide), *Atacı* (chief assistant) and *Naqīb* (chief deputy). Another feature that makes this license important is that the writer of the license is recorded as *muḥarrir-i icāzetnāme* with the title of *ed-Dā'i* and being a *sayyid*, also among the names and seals of the Çelebis.

The arrangement of the *icāzetnāme* in this manner is not random or coincidental. When considering the Dede Baba as the highest religious authority in the lodge capable of conducting the initiation ceremony, it is reasonable to prioritize the dedebaba's name in the certificate of authorization. However, even if the dedebaba holds the title of *sayyid*, the inclusion of the lodge's sheikh, known as the Çelebis, and his lineage up to Hacı Bektāş comes after the dedebaba's name. Following this, Hacı Bektāş 's biological and the spiritual lineage, indicating the source of knowledge transfer are detailed. This scenario allows for various interpretations. Regardless of whether the dedebaba originates from the lineage of another *sayyid*, it is imperative for him to align his affiliation with Hacı Bektāş. The subsequent mention of the Çelebis, the sheikh's name, and their lineage up to Hacı Bektāş following the dedebaba's name suggests an association of dedebaba with Hacı Bektāş 's lineage through Çelebis. However, given that Hacı Bektāş 's spiritual lineage is also documented, it raises the question of dedebaba's inclusion in Hacı Bektāş 's spiritual chain from that standpoint as well. Ultimately, this situation underscores the acceptance of the

Çelebis by their audience in terms of both biological lineage and spiritual lineage, potentially enhancing their credibility.⁴⁶⁵

In the section concerning seals, the order of names appearing from right to left begins with the babas followed by the Çelebis. This can also be interpreted in two ways. As initiation is conducted privately within the Bektashi community, and only the babas are considered eligible witnesses, it is natural for their approval to precede that of the Çelebis in the certificate of authorization, signifying their indispensable role in affirming the certificate. However, the absence of the Çelebis' approval invalidates the document. In conclusion, one may claim, initiation into the Order is performed by the highest authorized baba, dedebaba, in the lodge, with the approval of the Çelebis.⁴⁶⁶ However, the participation of the sheikh in the initiation ceremony and his spiritual function remains unknown. Similarly, the certainty of their undergoing spiritual training, due to their exclusivity via biological descending, remains unclear. In *Mudāfa'a*, Cemāleddīn Çelebi refers to receiving a certificate indicating his rank as *khalifa*⁴⁶⁷. This suggests that certain Çelebis may have undergone spiritual training, but confirmation awaits further research on this issue. Oral testimonies suggest that when Çelebi family members join in an Alevi ritual, they don't claim the position of dede or baba they appointed, and conduct the ritual, instead, they position themselves at the forefront of the circle, holding the esteemed title of Pir. However, this does not give any clue whether they engage the spiritual wayfaring within the Bektashi lodge.

Documents similar in content and format to this icāzetnāme were issued to Alevi *ocaqs* across Anatolia from the nineteenth century onwards with the approval of the Çelebis.⁴⁶⁸ However, this practice faced resistance in some areas. Dede and baba figures who conducted rituals in Alevi villages on behalf of the Çelebis with these authorization documents were derogatorily named. Groups that accepted the authority of the Çelebis and abandoned their old traditions in favor of the

⁴⁶⁵ To understand how claiming both spiritual and biological descent creates family tariqas, see Alatas, *Sufi Lineages and Families*.

⁴⁶⁶ For a detail commentary on the hierarchy between Babagan and Çelebi on icazetname documents see, Yıldırım, 'Bektaşî Kime Derler?'

⁴⁶⁷ Ahmed Cemāleddīn Çelebi, *Bektaşî Sırrı Nam Risaleye Mudāfa'a*, 32.

⁴⁶⁸ See, Dursun Gümüšoğlu, 'Bir Çelebi İcazetnamesi', *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi*, sayı: 59, (2011): 423-442; Gümüšoğlu, *Alevî Dedelerine*; Yıldırım, 'Bektaşî Kime Derler?' One may also find several similar documents in the repository of *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi*.

new ritual forms were labeled with derogatory names such as *dönük*⁴⁶⁹, *purut*⁴⁷⁰ or *sarımsak başlı*.⁴⁷¹

While the tension between the Çelebi Bektashis and the Kızılbaş-Alevis has markedly decreased, the structural development that began in the 19th century persists to the present day. Although the Çelebis have not universally secured their authority over certain well-established Kızılbaş *ocaks*, they have managed to establish the memory of Hacı Bektāş and his biological descendants in some. Beyond their role as a family that grants authorization (*icāzetnāme*) and the introduction of the *pençe* practice, another significant change in rituals pertains to the recitation of *Miraçlama* during the cem ceremony. This situation was identified during a large-scale project, *Aleviliğin Ortak Referanslarının Belirlenmesi*, conducted between 2013 and 2016, involving field research in Alevi villages in Turkey, in which I also participated full-time. As there may be exceptions, in most of the villages affiliated with the Çelebis, during the cem ceremonies, the *dhākir/zahir* (minstrel) recites the *Miraçlama* written by Hacı Bektāş lodge's exiled sheikh, Hamdullah Çelebi. In villages adhering to the Qızılbaş ritual and tradition, however, the *Miraçlama* of Shah Khaṭā'ī (*Hatayī*) the Safavid Shah Ismail I, is recited.

⁴⁶⁹ *Dönük*, in Turkish, refers to the noun form of the verb "dönmek," which means "to turn" or "to convert." It is typically used to describe individuals who have turned away from their former beliefs or traditions.

⁴⁷⁰ *Purut* or *prot* must have been used as an abbreviation for Protestant, referring to those who abandoned their former religious beliefs. See Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı "Kızıl-baş", *İA*, C. 6, 1997, 790.

⁴⁷¹ The term *sarımsak başlı*, garlic-headed, refers to the shape of Bektashi crown. This derogatory term is used in reference to those who accept the authority of the Çelebi lineage and carry out rituals with the babas appointed by the Çelebis. See Baha Said Bey, *Türkiyede Alevi-Bektaşî, Ahi ve Nusayri Zümreleri*, (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2006), 147, 172.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to understand the reasons behind the conflicts between Babagān and Çelebi Bektashis in the lodge of Hacı Bektāş in the nineteenth century and subsequently investigate the strategies of the Çelebis to increase their influence over the Alevis. The thesis argued that the fundamental problem underlying the conflicts between the Babagān and Çelebis was their search for legitimization based on two different mode of authority, spiritual and genealogical, in addition to their different world-affirming and world-renouncing Sufi understandings. The Babagān and the Çelebi family, deriving their legitimacy from these two forms of authority, have adjusted the geographical regions and audiences they address based on the acceptance or rejection of their authority, thereby cultivating their respective communities.

In the early sixteenth century, under the leadership of Balım Sultan, an alternative dervish branch was established alongside the existing Çelebi branch. Balım Sultan initiated this branch with the intention of integrating the abdāls and other itinerant groups, characterized by their adherence to dervish religiosity rooted in antinomian attitudes, poverty, and opposition to the institutionalization of Sufism, into the Bektashi order centered around the cult of Hacı Bektaş. This strategic move by Balım Sultan also aimed to prevent these groups, who shows strong affection for Ali and the ahl al-bayt, from joining the Kızılbaş, deemed a threat to the Ottoman state, thereby facilitating the state's regulation and control over these factions.

Despite fundamental disagreements, particularly concerning whether Hacı Bektāş beget any children, these two groups coexisted harmoniously until the nineteenth century. However, the closure of the Bektashi tekkes in the nineteenth century exacerbated conflicts between the Babagān and Çelebi family and led to their geographical and doctrinal estrangement, despite the earlier harmonious coexistence with different memories of Hacı Bektāş. The fluctuations in discussions concerning the administration of the tekke between the Çelebis and Babagān were closely linked to changes in the positions of Naqshbandi sheikhs within the tekke. The formal void in official authority that arises upon the removal or passing of Naqshbandi sheikhs has consistently fueled the escalation of disagreements between the Çelebis and Babagān.

The group comprised of celibate babas, who endeavor for spiritual progression and aspire to achieve the Godhead in this way, base their claim of spiritual lineage on the authority of spiritual knowledge passed down as a chain from Hacı Bektāş. Conversely, the Çelebis assert their

leadership rights over the tekke, attributing it to genealogical authority derived from the ancestral connection to Hacı Bektāş, tracing it back to the Prophet. Indeed, it was the matter of the source of authority between the two factions has brought forth the question of rightful governance over the tekke, and consequently, the administration of the tekke foundation, as well as being the rightful inheritor of the spiritual legacy of Hacı Bektāş. Namely, the conflict does not primarily revolve around the direct acquisition of economic resources associated with the waqfs. Instead, it pertains to the holy nature of the relationship between the individuals and Hacı Bektāş, spiritual or biological. Then, the question reaches this juncture: Are the spiritual or biological children worthy of governing the waqfs and the spiritual legacy of Hacı Bektāş? The Babagān, refraining from acknowledging the Çelebis as biological progeny of Hacı Bektāş, deem themselves more deserving by underscoring the superiority of Hacı Bektāş 's spiritual offspring. In contrast, the Çelebis, who assert the superiority of Hacı Bektāş 's biological descendants over "outsiders," defend their entitlement to this right.

Although the Babagan do not accept that the Çelebis are the descendants of Hacı Bektāş and therefore their lineage reaching to the Prophet, some Alevi *ocaks* in various parts of Anatolia have accepted the authority of the Çelebis. The prestigious lineage attributed to the Çelebis, stemming from the highly revered saint Hacı Bektāş who is also a *sayyid*, has fostered a closer affinity between them and the Alevis. The interest in Hacı Bektāş and his progeny among Alevi *ocaks*, formed around the concept of sayyidhood, increased after their relations with the Safavids weakened. By the nineteenth century, the beliefs and rituals of these groups also exhibited significant similarities. In addition, the significance of the Hacı Bektāş Lodge increased, and the Çelebis became an authority approving the *icāzetnāme* documents of certain Alevi lodges.

The Alevis displayed significant respect to Cemāleddīn Çelebi, whom they believed to be of Hacı Bektāş 's lineage at that time. Leveraging the prestige derived from his lineage, Cemāleddīn Çelebi endeavored to align Alevi *ocaks* with himself and conducted propaganda activities among them. The propaganda particularly targeted a sacred wood called *tariq*, used in Alevi initiation and annual rituals. Cemāleddīn Çelebi and some Babagan Bektashis viewed this ritual object as a symbol of paganism and attempted to remove it from Alevi rituals. However, this propaganda was only partially effective, and Cemāleddīn Çelebi was accused by some Alevi *ocaks* of attempting to invent a new sect. This situation was significant in demonstrating the limitation of Cemāleddīn Çelebi's authority.

On the other hand, the removal of the ritual object *tariq* and the connection of Alevi *ocaks* to the Çelebis through the charisma associated with Hacı Bektāş 's name was a strategy supported by the state. Throughout the nineteenth century, reports sent from local authorities to the central government contained information about Kızılbas rituals, especially regarding *tariq*. Considering Cemāleddīn Efendi's propaganda, this suggests that Ottoman state saw Cemāleddīn Efendi as an intermediary in the removal of this sacred object, which they perceived as a sign of backwardness and paganism, from rituals. This situation recalls Balım Sultan's formation of the celibate dervish branch to integrate antinomian dervishes into the Bektashi Order within the Ottoman territories. Cemāleddīn Efendi's encouragement of the *pençe* practice over the *tariq* could be read in the same way, that he aims to align Alevi *ocaks* with the Bektashi Order, potentially increasing state control over these groups.

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