



## The official "Bektashiyya" of the Ottomans **It sanctioned "polytheism"**

### in identification with modern Islam

The Bektashiyya gained its importance in the Ottoman Empire from the official character that it adopted from the method of the Janissary army, and it became its official patron, as among the ranks of the Janissaries the sheikhs of the method were living, so that even their chief was interested in the coronation of Agha the Janissary. The Bektashiyya also played a major role in the Islam of the Balkan Christians in its own way, which is a method of suspicious beliefs composed of various groups of folk religion in Anatolia, derived from Shamanism, along with many other beliefs of the peoples of Central Asia and the peoples of the Balkans.

This method has many similarities that raise many questions about its esoteric connections, as its first Sheikh, Omar Haji Baktash, was born in Khurasan. He was sent to Anatolia on a missionary mission promoting Sufi thought influenced by Shi'ism. There was no direct recognition of this method as being influenced by Shi'ism, except that its approved tree contains Yaswy Twelver Shi'ism names. Some historians have considered it a branch of the Yaswy Sufi Shi'ism, although its advocates claim that it was an idea that began with the first of the Rashidun Caliph Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (may God be pleased with him) and he is innocent of it. It is not based on scientific evidence or true anecdote.

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**Rituals of Christianity were embraced by the Sultanate's official Sufi method.**  
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Emphasizing the effect of Batinism on the beliefs of many Sufi orders in Anatolia, including the Bektashiyya: The Turkish Muhammad Cobrelly describes the Islam of the Bedouin Turks as not pure Sunni Islam like the Islam of city dwellers, but rather a collection of ancient Turkish pagan beliefs, and the beliefs of the Shiite extremists, were popularly simplified, hidden under a Sufi garment. He confirms that the sheikhs of these Sufis practice rituals contrary to Islamic law, and a decadent life is closer to the life of the ancient Turkish elders, and despite the warnings of the dwellers of the cities, and their fight against their school of thought, they were more organized and controlled the spiritual life in the villages and among the Turkish clans. Cuprieli considered the Bektashiyya one of the ways full of heresy and esoteric beliefs.

Moreover, Bernard Lewis asserts that the Bektashiyya - despite its connection with the Janissaries - was maintaining its extremist popular character, which was a source of concern for many scholars in the Ottoman Empire, and so that the Bektashiyya could not fully control the various spectrums of society. The Ottomans tried to support other Sufi orders, most notably the Mevlevi order, whose followers are called the Whirling Dervishes, and they see it as the closest approach to Sunni Islam.

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**Al- Batiniyy is still present in the Turkish popular memory with its beliefs, visions, and philosophy.**  
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Through a logical analysis of the contradiction between the support of the Ottoman sultans for the Bektashiyya and the esoteric beliefs it passed through, we will notice that they were doing this in order to ensure their control over the Janissary army, which is in complete submission to them. Consequently, any collision between them is considered a direct collision with the Janissaries in the end, and this is what prompted them to support a Sufi method closer to the Sunni sect, to achieve a balance between it and the Bektashiyya closest to the Batin. This official support for the Sufi Mawliyya - which had begun to take on its status and power - was evident at the end of the sixteenth century AD. Based on this support and balance: The Bektashiyya will discover that the Mevlevi has become a strong competitor to it, and it will be an alternative to it before the Sultans in the event of their estrangement with it, but its strength continued with the survival of the Janissaries that did not believe or proclaim loyalty to anybody other than their Bektashiyya elders.

Nonetheless, no matter what the hidden struggle between power and the Bektashiyya remains; however, the sultans' policy had the character of softness and appeasement, seeking to support it, although - according to Turki Inalçık - it had beliefs and rituals that did not fundamentally differ from what the Shiite Qizilbash movement promoted, and it did not insist on performing religious rituals such as prayer and fasting, and it did not prohibit drinking wine. This made it more attractive to the Christians by virtue of the fact that it does not contradict their beliefs much in its strange way of understanding the religion and its rituals, in addition to the presence of the trinity in its belief represented by God, Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him), and Ali (may God be pleased with him), and the rites of confession of sins to their elders. The Qur'anic text has four meanings: the appearance of the text for the common people, the deep meaning of the text for the wise people, the hidden meaning of the text for the saints, and the true meaning of the text for the prophets.

The Christian influence in the Bektashiyya faith deepened through Palm Sultan (922-880 AH / 1516-1475 AD), who was said to be one of the descendants of Haji Baktash, and his fame increased after Bayazid II brought him to the Bektashiyya Tekke in the year 906 AH / 1501 CE, and because he was born to a Christian mother he was able to make an impact on the doctrine of the Tariqa, masking it with the rituals of Christianity, and developing the concept of monasticism in the Dervishes after having added its own rituals to it.

Therefore, many Turkish historians assert that Islam in the Ottoman Empire was characterized by two contradictory forms: heretical and rational, and even what was seen as rational, it suffered several problems by virtue of the Sufi orders that believed in some of what contradicts the pure principles of religion in the Sunni doctrine, and the two forms are both - heretical and rational. They were characterized by Sufism and many beliefs mixed with them in a relative way from one method to another.

The Bektashiyya maintained its power, influence, and control in the Ottoman Empire until the reign of Sultan Mahmud II, who struck it in the death of his abolition of the Janissaries and its military organization in 1241 AH / 1826 AD. Consequently, its tidings were closed as soon as they were eliminated, and Mahmud II did not hesitate to crucify his elders who were freed from religion and the most heretical in front of people. Therefore, the method ended as an organization and strength, but it remained in the memory of the Turkish people, present with many of its beliefs, visions, and philosophy.

#### References:

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