



Through the Political Sufism Ottoman "Darkness" Lasted Centuries of History

One cannot pursue the intellectual life in Anatolia - before, during and after the Ottoman State - and pose religion question or thought without linking them to the belief of Sufism. So no matter how many feel about the Sufism of the Ottoman State and its Sultans, this matter remains as a historically proven fact. This is if we discuss Sufism in its Sunni context that does not spare from an aberrant and anomaly intellectual by a lot of people belonging to it. Thus, it must be emphasized that it is clearly incompatible with Sunni Islam.

Since Osman the founder, Ottomans found themselves in the arms of Sufis. That is because of the culture of tikkiye was where Othman was raised by his Sheikh and his wife's father, Edde Bali al-Kirmanî (726 - 644 AH / 1326 - 1246 AD). That Sheikh who was a follower of the Tariqah, i. e. way of Sufi Wafaeiya. At the same time, he was presiding over the organization of Al Ikhwa, i. e. fraternity in Anatolia, and it was called Akhia, i. e. brotherhood that was founded on the recommendations of El Hadji Baktash.

From Osman until the end of the Ottoman State, Sultans were associated with Sufism and its Tariqahs, i. e. ways. They received logistical support from Sufi Tariqahs, and in return the Sufis received official confessions, support and assistance to enable them wide spread. The Sultans' associations with several Sufi Tariqahs passed through different phases. At every stage and with each Sultan, while one Tariqah dominated, the other Tariqahs were undermined, and so on. So sometimes the Ottoman State stood in the face of some of the Sufi Tariqahs was about to rebound against it and cause it to fall, in particular the revolution during the reign of Bayezid Yıldırım in 819 AH / 1416 AD; during the reign of Selim after the Mahdia revolution in 925 AH / 1519 AD; and during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent in the year 933 AH / 1527 AD. These revolutions were followed and preceded by a series of Sufi revolutions throughout the history of the Ottoman State.

In order to understand the cause of these revolutions, despite the support of the Sultans and their association with the Sufism, we must know that Sufism contains different, contradictory and sometimes inconsistent Tariqahs, yet at the same time, they believe - even at their best circumstances - in ideas and visions that run counter to the religious serenity of Islam, due to their different philosophies.

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Each Sultan has his own aberrant spiritual inclination.
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The rivalry of the Sufi Tariqahs for power formed and fueled their revolutions. Therefore, the Sufi Tariqah that succeeded in gaining the support of the Sultan and the Ottoman court, it found that the power gained from this situation as a reason and justification to counter other competitors. Thus, revolutions can be seen as an episode of intellectual conflict among the Sufis. The State was attracted and interacted with its closest one during the period of its revolution. In so doing, it naturally became an enemy of the remaining Tariqahs.

So we should not wonder when we find selectivity by Sultans in their proximity to different, sometimes contradictory and conflicting Sufi Tariqahs. For instance, Murad I (762 791 - AH / 1389-1361 AD) was associated with and influenced by **Jalal al-Din Rumi**. Thus, it was known that he had ordered a hat to be sewn from clothes that were said to be belong to Rumi. It was sewed with golden threads and made a crown for him. Bayezid I (804 - 791 AH / 1402 - 1389 AD) was associated with the **Zinnia Tariqah** which was dominant during his era. Murad II (855 - 824 AH / 1451-1421 AD), whose era coincided with the spread of Mawaliyah and **Permian Tariqahs**. He exempted their derwishes from tax in support of their wide spread. Suleiman the Magnificent (973 - 926 AH / 1566 - 1520 AD) was explicitly affiliated with Al-Mawaliyah, he also received a leverage from the **(Naqshbandi)** and a prestige from **(Khuluthiyyah)**. Hence, we find that he was closely related in more than one Tariqah. However, it was said that Mustafa I (1032 - 1026 AH / 1623 - 1617 AD) had joined the derwish according to the Khuluthiyyah Tariqah, and he was called Al-Wali, i. e. the saint. As for Othman I (1170 - 1167 AH / 1757 - 1754 AD) who his strong association with the music-hating Sufis led him to expel the musicians Sufis, Despite the association of his predecessors Sultans with them. As for Mustafa III (1188 - 1170 AH / 1774- 1757 AD) was affiliated with **Al-Jarahiah Tariqah** which Mahmoud II also joined it and was attending the meetings of Mawaliyah. As well as Muhammad Rashad V (1336 - 1327 AH / 1918 - 1909 AD) was also affiliated with the Mawaliyah, and participated in the opening ceremony of one of its Tikiyyes during his reign.

The fact that the Sultans belong to a Tariqah was not mean that they are not associated with others. Because the Sufi Tariqahs were an important part of the power of the Ottoman State and they were some strong popular supporters of it among its subjects. Especially in Anatolia and among the Muslims of the Ottoman regions in Europe.

The benefit was mutual between the Sultans and the Sheikhs and followers of the Sufi Tariqahs. In return for the support that the Sultans received from the Sheikhs of Tariqahs, the Sheikhs enjoyed a high social status and a strong political influence in court. The greater influence the Sheikhs had, the more followers and supporters from several segments of society would they have. On the one hand, the cycle of benefits was thus linked to each other among Sultans, Sheikhs, and the members of society; and on the other hand, the support and social status. This was what made Sufism strongly present in Ottoman history.

Jalal al-Din al-Rumi

672 - 604 AH / 1273 - 1207 AD

Mohammed bin Mohammed bin Hussein Al-Balkhi, he was called Jalal al-Din Rumi, the Mawlawiyah Tariqah was attributed to him. He was known for his poetry and he had written many books, the most known of them was Masnawi. He had views supporting existentialism; some called them Rumi's ideas of existentialism.

Reference:
Mustafa Ghaleb, Jalal al-Din al-Rumi (Beirut: The Ezzedine Foundation, 1982).

Zinnia Tariqah

It was one of the influential Sufi Tariqahs during one of the intermediate periods of Ottoman history in Anatolia. It was Founded by Zain Al-Din Al-Khawafi (died: 838 AH / 1435 AD), born in Khurasan, and he wrote a number of books, most notably: The Message of the Divine Commandments, the Zennia Wirds, the approach of Rashad, i. e. the right way.

Reference:
Ronnie Ellie Alpha, Encyclopedia of Philosophers (Beirut: Dar al Kotob al ilmiyah, 1991).

Permian Tariqah

It was one of the Sufi Tariqahs that appeared in Anatolia during the period of general unrest in 804 AH / 1402 AD, while Tamerlane invaded and overthrow the Ottomans for a period of time. It was founded by Haji Bayram (died: 833 AH / 1430 AD) near Ankara. As during he was calling for his Tariqah, the state questioned him. Therefore, he was asked to appear before Murad II, who pardoned him after he reassured that his call and his Tariqah. As well as some of Perm's students were exempted from taxes by Murad II to help him expanding the Tariqah. His followers were divided into two groups: The first one preserved Sunni Islam through Sufism, and among the Sheikhs of this group was Aqa Shams al-Din, the professor of Muhammad al-Fatih and his closest Sheikh, and the second group radicalized its views that were closest to Shiism and unity of existence.

Reference:
Khalil Inalcik, History of the Ottoman State (Beirut: Dar al-Madar al-Islami, 2002).

Naqshbandi Tariqah

It came out of Central Asia and moved to Anatolia in the late fifteenth Georgian century. It is affiliated with Muhammad Bahaa al-Din Naqshband. It entered into Anatolia in two times, first one was through one of Bukhara Sheikhs, and then the second one according to the radical Indian Tariqah. It is one of the closest Sufi Tariqahs to the beliefs of Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a, i. e. the Sunnis; since its followers are among the most devoted Sufis to preserve the religious duties of prayer and fasting, unlike some other Sufi Tariqahs.

Reference:
Bernard Lewis, Istanbul and the Islamic Caliphate Civilization, translated by: Sayed Radwan, 2nd edition (Riyadh: Saudi Publishing House, 1982).

Khuluthiyya Tariqah

It was founded by Akhiy Youssef Al-khuluthi in the late thirteenth Georgian century. It was one of the Tariqahs that were preserving the appearances of Sunnis, like some other Tariqahs.

Reference:
Muhammad Cobrieli, The Establishment of the Ottoman State, translated by: Ahmed Al-Saeed (Cairo: Dar AlKatib Al Arabi, 1967).

Al-Jarahiah Tariqah

It was called Helvetia, and It was said that it branched off from khuluthiyya Tariqah. It was founded by Nur al-Din al-Jarahi (1133 - 1089 AH / 1721 - 1678 AD) in Anatolia, in addition to that it is one of the most widespread Sufi Tariqahs in the West Counties.

Reference:
Aziz Idrissi, Sufism in the United States of America (Beirut: Dar al Kotob al ilmiyah, 2013).

Based on evidence of Sultan support, it is difficult to discuss Ottoman history independently of Sufi belief in its intellectual aspects. as Sufism constituted a major part for many of the pagan and esoteric beliefs that were embraced by the Turks. Sufism received indirect support from the Sultans, whether with their knowledge and awareness or due to their ignorance and lack of understanding of the aberrant ideas, which was found and established among the Turks with the support of the State.

Some people might think that the Sufi and esoteric thought of the Ottoman State is an intimidation marred by some falsification of history; they argue that matters are relative, and sometimes they may not amount to what some sources and references classify them as ideas, rituals and irrational superstition in the Turkish popular Islam. But either way, we will find that the Ottoman State - whether it was knowing that or not - had suffered from a serious intellectual malaise. This is because of the contradiction among its stages and periods were about ideas that were supported and then were fought; and methods that were dominant and others came to replace them afterwards. Sufi thought was wide spread in its various Tariqahs. All confirm and highlight the malaise and confusion that prevailed at that time.

While the Bektashia Tariqah dominated during a long period in the history of the Ottoman State, its situation was strong for a long time and it was able to adopt ideas that misrepresented and offended some Islamic symbols such as Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, may God be pleased with him, with the intention of passing the esoteric effect as its first start. This situation demonstrates and proves those malaise and confusion; and it makes the State balance without a scale for the intellectual aspects, considering the lack of clarity. That is why we sometimes wonder about some of the behavior of Sultans and men of court because they sometimes resort to the Sheikhs of the Tariqahs and bring them closer to the court; furthermore, the Sheikhdom of Islam headed by some Sufis, those who sometimes claim that their ability to legislate is a gift that was given to them for a vision that they saw whether of dream or real.

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By deception, they invoked Islamic symbols to justify their deviations.
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To summarize: Sufi thought in that form that we studied in the Ottoman State supports that, based on its delusions and its daring to interpret, explicitly and implicitly. Not to mention the aberrant philosophies that many of these Tariqahs believe in.

References:
1) Ahmed Shemshergil, History of Bani Othman, translated by: Mahtab Muhammad (Abu Dhabi: Thaqafa for Publishing and Distribution, 2016).
2) Bernard Lewis, Istanbul and the Islamic Caliphate Civilization, translated by: Sayed Radwan, 2nd edition (Riyadh: Saudi Publishing House, 1982).
3) Hanan El-Maabadi, Sufism and its Effects in Turkey during the Ottoman Era - Presentation and criticism (PhD thesis, Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah Al-Mukarramah, 1429 AH).
4) Mustafa Armgan, The Secret History of the Ottoman Empire, translated by: Mustafa Hamza (Beirut: Arab Science House Publishers, 2014).

