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# The Ottoman State and Esoteric Sufism

Historical geography creates far-reaching influences in the history of states, kingdoms and the emergence of societies. Thus, arose the saying: that "Man is the son of his environment in which he was born and grew up". In that sense, we point out that the nomadic Turkish tribes, which had migrated from Central Asia to the regions of Anatolia in Asia Minor due to the weight of the Mongol invasion. They were in Asia Minor, which was the first stronghold of Sufism in the Islamic world; and from it came the great Sufis such as the Turkish Sufi Ahmed Al-Yiswi (d. 562 AH / 1167 AD), that to whom attributed the Al-Yiswiya Tariqah, which is a strange amalgamation among Buddhist culture, ancient Shamanism, and al-Maniwah before Islam. It is based on a belief in pantheism, and it shrouded with Islam under the Sufi cover of Qalandari, i.e. by the Qalandari order that has taken abstraction, poverty, beggary and the fall as a slogan for it, in addition to nudity and underestimation of legal obligations and duties, and social norms.

The Turkish Historian Dr. Kobreli has praised "Ahmed Al-Yiswi" by saying, that: "He was not an ordinary Sufi like hundreds of Sufis in the Turkish history, rather, when we mention Ahmad Al-Yiswi, we mention the Turkish people embracing for Islam?! In general, this Tariqah widely spread among the nomadic Turkish tribes in Central Asia, where its surroundings were numerous and overcrowded with various Sufi Tariqahs. From where those tribes migrated and carried such Sufi Tariqahs and orders. Therefore, we can say that Sufism in the Ottoman State is a natural extension of Sufism in Central Asia as the ancestral origin of the Ottomans; besides, it is an extension of Sufism in the Seljuk state of Rum, given that the Ottoman State inherited it along with its widespread Sufi Tariqahs that were existing. So, the era of the Seljuk of Rum can be seen as the actual era of the establishment of Sufi Tariqahs in Anatolia; especially after the Mongol invasion. As many Sufis Sheikhs, writers and poets came to it, so that made the Seljuk cities such as Konya, Caesarea, and Siwas turned into the most known centers of Sufism at that time. Among the most notable of those who came to it were Shihab al-Din Abu al-Futuh al-Suhrawardi (587 AH / 1191 AD), and Muhi al-Din Ibn Arabi (638 AH / 1240 AD); and many more of other well-known Sufism Sheikhs, those who were overflowing Anatolia. Those Sheikhs are who contributed to the increase and wide spread of the Sufi Tariqahs that received more supporters and followers by them. However, Ibn Arabi was the most influential one through his Sufi thought in Ottoman Turkish thought; and by his students who were influenced by him and spread his thought through explanations, literature, writings and investigations of his ideas and books. Perhaps the most prominent of them was Sadr al-Din al-Qunawi (672 AH / 1274 AD). Hence, Turkish Sufi thought began to gradually develop after the Ottomans took control over the Seljuk state's property and territories.

Since the establishment of the Ottoman State, Sufi orders were a major component of Turkish society. Where the Sheikhs of the Tariqahs represented the powerful force over the lives of the followers; in addition to the desire of the State to take advantage of that power to support the presence of the emerging State for the expansion and conquering new territories of borderlands. Accordingly, those Sheikhs were under the care and attention of princes, dignitaries and influential people, those who endowed them with real estate and built Takeyas and prayer rooms for them in various regions of the state. Furthermore, they stressed the need to respect the Sheikhs of the Tariqahs, allocating salaries and financial expenses to them and their Takeyas. Accordingly, the men of the Sufi Tariqahs in the Ottoman State gained a prominent social position and political influence. Any one reads the Ottoman history carefully would find that most of the Sultans were keen to surround themselves with such Sufi Sheikhs; starting from Sultan Osman bin Ertugrul to Sultan Abdul Hamid II, and they formed a kind of direct and indirect influence in the fabric of power and administration in the state.

And after all, the Sufi sects in the Ottoman State were divided into two groups, the first of which is the well-known Sufi sects such as the Naqshbandi Tariqah, the Mawlawi, and the Khulutiyya, which, in turn, attracted the upper classes of the Ottoman society. As for the other group, which was the most dangerous and influential in society and the state, namely: the esoteric Sufi Tariqahs that known as "Malamiyya", as they have secret and esoteric rituals, and their followers are among the wandering derwiches known as Qalandariya, Al-Badal, and Hamzawi, who adopted to live isolated in secret and in hiding. From the Qalandari order, the Bektashiya Tariqah emerged to exist, which is one of the most dangerous of all these Sufi Tariqahs. This Tariqahs is a Shiite Sufi order that originated in the thirteenth Gregorian century, by Haji Bektash Wali (738 AH / 1338 AD) who was from the Turks of Central Asia. That Sheikh was considered as one of the spiritual Sufis, who came to Anatolia and was associated with the perverted Babi Tariqah. He played an active part for his groundless call in the areas where Turkmen tribes and Christian groups that reside there. Further, he established strong relationships with them, relying on the structure of Sufism that was receptive to all religions, by accession to the Bektashi Tariqah while preserving their religion and their original belief, which contributed to the wide spread of this Tariqah in the Balkans.

In fact, the Bektashi Tariqah became one of the most important Sufi Tariqahs; it assimilated so many of other Tariqahs and spread among the classes of the people on a large scale due to its reliance on the simple Turkish language and its focus on the ordinary and simple Turks. Indeed, its danger was when it baseless and with fabrication and forgery pretenses that it is a Sunni order according to the approach of the righteous ancestors of the Sunnis, i. e. the followers of AL Sunna and Al Gamaa, those who are so far from them. Because they agree with Ibn Arabi in the pantheism of existence and the excessive in the love for the family of Ahl al-Bayt, rather the claim of deity to Ali bin Abi Talib; in addition to the doctrine of transmigration of souls; accordingly, they have no relation to the true Islam. It also appeared more dangerous than before when it became supported by the Sultans of the Ottoman State. As they formed the new army of the Ottoman State, i. e. "Ankshari". If we look back at the care of Sultans to this insidious, esoteric group, we would put a big question and exclamation marks of a state that claims to protect Islam.