

On Mevlevi Organization

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Mevlevi Tarikatı'nın Organizasyonu Üzerine

Öz ■ J. Spencer Trimingham, İslâm dünyasındaki tarikatler hakkında çığır açan araştırmasında tarikatlerin tarihinin toplumsal tarih ile yakından bağlantılı olduğunu ve dört farklı evreden geçtiğini ileri sürmüştü. Bu makalede Trimingham'ın tertibini Mevlevi tarikatına uygulayarak bu tarikatın nasıl da kurucusunun şahsi ruhaniyetinden kaynak alan birinci evreden ikinci evrede ayrı bir ibadet biçimine, sonra da Trimingham'ın onbeşinci yüzyıla yerleştirdiği tam teşekküllü hiyerarşik bir kuruma doğru geliştiğini göstereceğim. Bu noktada, kentsel kolların üstünlüğüyle erken dönemdeki çatallaşma, yani gruplara ayrılma sona ermiş ve Osmanlı hanedanı ile kenetlenme, organizasyon yapısında ve vakıflarda aşikar hale gelmiştir. Son olarak, Sufi tarikatleri ondokuzuncu yüzyılda bir reform döneminden geçmiştir ki, bu dönemde Mevleviler'in devletle yakın ilişkisi çok önemli olmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: Mevlevi tarikatı, Şemsiyye tarikatı, Osmanlı devleti, vakıf, iktisat, Tanzimat

It was over forty years ago that J. Spencer Trimingham undertook a groundbreaking survey of Sufi (or dervish) brotherhoods known in Turkish as *tarikats*.¹ With Trimingham's survey as background, we can see that the now defunct Mevlevi order of dervishes was prototypical of the more conservative *tarikats* with respect to its organization, history and modus vivendi. The Mevlevis represent the classic case in the Ottoman world of eventual symbiosis with government circles. Unfortunately the course of their early development

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1 J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), first published by Clarendon Press, 1971.

can only be described with broad strokes on the basis of research so far, relying mostly on *vakıf* records and *şeyhly berats*.²

According to Trimingham's overall scheme Sufi organizations typically lived through four historic stages: first, the "golden age" of individual piety under the guidance of a spiritual master, generally confined to the first Islamic centuries; second, the *tarikāt* stage of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, during which explicit devotional paths were worked out; third, the establishment of hierarchy, generally beginning in the fifteenth century; and finally the stage in which reforms were attempted, especially the nineteenth century. As shown below, the match between the Trimingham scheme and the actual record of the Mevlevi is very close.

Whereas the charismatic living example of the self-effacing Celaleddin Rumi comprises stage one in the scheme suggested, the rise of the Mevlevi organization as such took place at stage two, "when a center or circle became focused on one director [...] and turned into a school designed to perpetuate his name, type of teaching, mystical exercises, and rule of life."³ We know that it was not Mevlana himself but his son and successor Sultan Veled who was the effective founder of the *tarikāt* named after the father, a slight variation on the model. The essentials of this second stage include the invention of a mythical genealogy (*silsile*), and propagation of the *tarikāt* via branches founded by *şeyhs* who were authorized from the *tarikāt's* center. In these respects the Mevlevi were typical, and probably even served as a model for Trimingham's scheme.

But the Mevlevi also had distinctive features. Their center at Konya, late in the Seljuk period, was an island of Persian cultural influence which stood out dramatically against a rural social milieu dominated by nomadic, or transhumant, Turkmen tribes. Both the Turkmen tribesmen of Anatolia and the Persian (or Persianized) inhabitants of the Seljuk towns were transplanted from further east. The first to arrive were the tribes and their herds. These were soon followed by waves of townsmen from Khorasan especially, where they had been threatened first by the Khwarezmians, then by the Mongols who succeeded the Khwarezmians as masters of the region to the east.

2 Suraiya Faroqhi and Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Zaviye," *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 13 (Istanbul: Millî Eğitim Basımevi, 1986).

3 Trimingham, *Sufi Orders*, 10; Victoria Holbrook, "Diverse Tastes in the Spiritual Life: Textual Play in the Diffusion of Rumi's Order," in *The Heritage of Sufism*, vol. 2: *The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism (1150-1500)*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (Oxford: One-world, 1999), 99-120.

Because of his proficiency with Persian, his personal charisma, and probably also because of his advocacy of the Sunni norms of the Rum Seljuk rulers, Celaleddin Rumi, known as Mevlana (“Our Lord”), and then his successors after his death, had little difficulty in finding material support among a literate and wealthy stratum of Seljuk sponsors, despite the disorder of those times. The elite orientation of the main branch of the emergent brotherhood follows from the literary excellence of Rumi himself, who was second to none among poets who have written in Persian. Further conservative coloration came from the quietist stance of Mevlana and his following with respect to the new Mongol overlords. Consistent with this establishmentarian beginning, the brotherhood eventually won favor among the Ottoman establishment, which they supported in turn when the time came.

The sketch following is far from complete, mostly because of the poverty of written records dealing with this and other Sufi orders. The Mevlevi *tarikat* developed over a period of about seven centuries - from the mid thirteenth to the early twentieth century, a career longer than that of the Ottoman Empire itself. Anyone dealing with the topic must recognize first a debt to the scholar Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı. He was a Sufi himself, arguably not a dervish, since being a Sufi is more a state of mind, being a dervish more a way of life. Gölpınarlı spent a lifetime investigating the history of the order, more a matter of processes, which are always hard to date, than of events. Even though the early Ottoman chronicles contain references to *vakıf* endowments given to dervish lodges, actually Gölpınarlı was faced with a dearth of sources specifically mentioning the emergent Mevlevi during the first three centuries of their existence,⁴ in effect from the time of the hagiographer Aflakî in the 14th century until the period of the would-be Mevlevi historian Sakıb Mustafa Dede (d. 1735).⁵ According to another recent scholar, the custom and rule of this order was not even written down until the mid-sixteenth century.⁶ Yet by the late 18th century, as we know from D’Ohsson, the Whirling Dervishes (Mevlevi) were in favor with the Ottoman elite.⁷

4 Cf. Faroqhi and Ocak, “Zaviye”.

5 Sakıb Mustafa’s treatise - the *Sefîne-i Nefise-i Mevleviyan* - is discussed by Suraiya Faroqhi in “XVI – XVIII. yüzyıllarda Orta Anadolu’da Şeyh Aileleri,” in *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi Semineri, 8-10 Haziran, 1973*, ed. Osman Okyar (Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi, 1975), 200.

6 Holbrook, “Diverse Tastes,” 106.

7 Julian Baldick, *Mystical Islam: An Introduction to Sufism* (London: Tauris Parke, 2000), 134.

A poet with influence

Questions regarding the origins of this *tarikat* might start with the amazing personality of the apparently unintentional founder. Rumi the man has been the focus of much research, and will apparently continue to be. But can his personality ever be recaptured by biographers? How could an already middleaged *medrese* professor have been so smitten, and with such dramatic consequences, by a vagabond dervish? True, Şems el-Tabrîzî the vagabond was not simply an unlettered Kalender, rather a serious thinker who merits study in his own right. But this hardly explains how this asocial wanderer so charmed the well-schooled Hanafi professor so as to cause a revolution in the professor's personality. What could they have been talking about? One wants to know. One recent author, following Nicholson's lead, continues to suggest that their relationship was Socratic, with Şems playing the part of Socrates.⁸ This would make of their dialogue a purely intellectual encounter. But a memoir left behind by Rumi's son and successor Sultan Veled, plus Rumi's own surviving letters to Şems give the impression that theirs was an erotic affair as well.⁹ By way of additional evidence, one may also consult *Makâlât*, a work by Şems that survives at Konya, and that is said to be a record of some conversations between the two, as taken down by a student witness.¹⁰

Rumi was profoundly moved by Şems, this is certain. Whatever the nuances of their talks, and of their relationship, they launched an already mature man on an amazing career as a poet, abandoning his role as a *medrese* professor as suddenly as a butterfly abandons its chrysalis. Today poetry is thought of as mostly the province of the young. Not so with Rumi, whose imagination splashed forth with full power and variety in midlife. Yet he insisted that he was more interested in proselytizing than in poetry and in that respect remained true to his father's profession. He would henceforth teach Islam through poetry, he said, rather than through the *medrese*. A striking fact about Rumi and the Mevlevî *şeyhs* who followed - and which undoubtedly helps to explain their appeal to the establishment - is that they invested traditional Sunni values first into poetry, then into the evolving tradition of

8 Franklin D. Lewis, *Rumi, Past and Present, East and West* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000), 164.

9 Sultan Veled, *İbrîdânâme*, tr. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı (Konya, 2001), 40-41; Mevlana Celaleddin, *Divan-i Kebir*, tr. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı (Ankara, Kültür Bakanlığı, 1992), 7 vols, passim; also Bediuzzaman Fûruzanfer, *Mevlana Celaleddin* (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1963), 85-6.

10 Sultan Veled, *İbrîdânâme*, 121.

the Mevlevi *tarikât*. Perhaps the creative ferment may be attributed to the times. Destruction and disorientation accompanied the Mongols wherever they went. Does all destruction bring with it the possibility of a creative reaction? Perhaps. Rumi was not the only great poet of the Mongol era, and not the only one whose product suggests an intellectual revolution. Among his rivals for posterity we find the poets 'Attar, Sa'di, and Yunus Emre, to name just the most famous. Despite the centuries that have elapsed since, readers still respond deeply to the best poetry of the devastating Mongol years. These poets seem to have an amazingly modern approach - lyrical, self-conscious, sometimes alienated, sometimes ecstatic, and in general filled with inventions drawn from nature and from daily life. Poets of the Mongol century often appear to be freethinkers, even monists; yet they all went through an education in the Islamic sciences as taught in the *medrese*, above all in *fikh*, which trains the student's mind for rational thought. Hence rationality and even reasonableness accompanies outbursts of lyricism and ecstasy.

Rumi began to dictate the *Mesnevi*, his magnum opus, about four years after the fall of the Caliphate at Baghdad. In contrast to his contemporary Sa'di, he did not moan about the event. To judge by Rumi's words in the record of his table talk, *Fihî ma Fihî*, the poet laureate of Konya accepted the Mongols' coming as the result of divine choice (!), which explains his quietist stance:

When the Mongols first came to this country they were naked. Their mounts were oxen, their weapons were of wood. Now they've gotten big, they've had their fill. The finest Arab horses and the finest weapons are theirs. – When their morale was low and they were weak, God helped them and accepted their plans. Now they've gotten big and powerful. The Great God [Tanrı] said: Let them know that it is not by their own powers, their own strength, but with God's help that they have come out on top. Let them know that it was for that reason that they have conquered. [Whereas] even if the people are weak – He still crushes them.

To explain these lines in a satisfying way we must imagine Rumi as having put a distance between himself and the catastrophes he had witnessed or heard about. He seems to recommend joy as the best antidote to despair. But there is contradiction; elsewhere in the same book of ruminations he rebuked the Seljuk *Atabeg* Mu'ineddin Süleyman Pervane for helping the Mongols overthrow the world of their times.¹¹

¹¹ Mevlana Celaladdin Rumi, *Fihî ma Fihî*, ed. and tr. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı (Istanbul, 1959), 54-5.

Rumi's apparently habitual quietism also showed in his negative attitude toward the *Abis* of Konya and their Turkmen allies, who had been roused to revolt in the aftermath of the assassination of the Seljuk Keykubad in 1237, just on the eve of the coming of the Mongols.¹² Perhaps Rumi did not understand or sympathize with the economic and other issues involved, or else he shared the same prejudices against these commoners as did the Seljuk elite of Konya. He continued to align himself against *Abi* artisans and their Turkmen nomad allies when under the succeeding cadet-sultan Keyhusrev the Seljuk army put down the Babai revolt of 1239-40. It has been suggested that Rumi's own circle of followers may have been involved in the arrests of the rebel leader Ahi Evren and of the Turkmen *şeyh* Baba İlyas, which were the events that triggered that revolt.¹³

Rumi's alignment with the Seljuk scion Keyhusrev against the Turkmen and their *Abi* allies may have prepared him psychologically to accept the Mongol line in turn. Conveniently for him, the Mongol representatives inherited the Seljuk hostility towards the rebels. The main point in this is that Rumi's moral support of the Mongols may have established a bias in favor of the status quo that became traditional in the order which was founded in his name.

Some of the followers of Rumi during his lifetime were famously at odds with him in the matter of Şems, blaming the *kalender* for alienating their master from them (though the murder of Şems has lately been disputed). It seems plausible that some of these same followers may also have disagreed with Rumi about his favoring the Mongols, or may even have suspected Şems of being a Mongol agent. Perhaps it was because of a split among his followers along these lines that later on one arm of the Mevlevi order chose a secondary dionysiac path, becoming known as the Şems-i Tabrîzîs.

Besides creating the moral ferment as suggested above, at least one scholar has proposed that the disorder of the times also favored the development and spread of Sufi lodges.¹⁴ Leaderless men are bound to search for leaders. Whatever the truth of it, the Mongols did help set the stage for the emergent *tarikât* by protecting Rumi and his friends from their *Abi* opponents. One

12 Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Türkiye'de Tarihin Saptırılması Sürecinde Türk Süflüğüne Bakışlar* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1996), 96.

13 Neşet Çağatay, *Bir Türk Kurumu olan Ahilik* (Konya: Selçuk Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1981), 58.

14 Ira Lapidus, "Sufism and Ottoman Islamic Society," in *The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art, and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey*, ed. by Raymond Lifchez (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 26.

piece of evidence: after the Mongols had put down the Ahi-Turkmen revolt at Kırşehir in 1261, two Konya lodges belonging to the *Ahis* were turned over to Rumi's deputy Husameddin.

It seems that no part of the Mevlevi story is more intriguing than the story of Mevlana himself. Was Rumi the whirling poet really indifferent to power, as he claimed, or did he in fact enjoy power more than poets are supposed to do? Was he not a master politician as well as a master poet? Certainly he knew very well how to exploit his reputation. He made many introductions and recommendations to benefit his followers. The transfer to Rumi and his followers of properties which were later to become *tekkes* and *zaviyes* is well attested by Aflakî and confirmed by Rumi's own letters.¹⁵ He flattered wealthy donors who could help him to establish *medreses* and *imarets* in which he could accommodate his own nominees (though this is not to say that he intended to set the stage for the emergence of a Sufi order).

The beginnings of organization

Having inherited from his father followers of whom he did not entirely approve, Rumi understandably preferred to deal with them through his deputies (*halifes*). First there was Salaheddin, then Husameddin - each of whom he awarded the flattering title of "kutb" (an equivalent for "axis mundi," the comparable gnostic expression). Discipleship as a lifestyle for those around him was by this time well established, and it may be that the poet recognized in himself a disinclination to discipline others or to bother with most of the day-to-day problems of leadership. If he had in mind any organizational model at all, what may have occurred to him were the serial *medreses* of his itinerant father, or the *hankahs* of his native Khorasan, or the *zaviyes* of Syria, which were already numerous and well developed in this period.¹⁶ The *hankah* of Khorasan was not like the *tarikats* of Trimmingham's second stage, but rather a lodge with a changing roster of inhabitants organized around a teacher, somewhat similar in this respect to the *medrese*. Likewise the endowed *zaviyes* of Syria and Iraq during these earlier centuries also tended to emphasize hospitality, which means that they too had constantly changing residents. In the Rum Seljuk realm similar *zaviyes* were being opened by already extant *tarikats*

15 Lewis, *Rumi*, 295; Mevlânâ Celâleddin, *Mektuplar*, ed. and tr. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı (Istanbul: İnkılap, 1985), passim; Mikail Bayram, *Ahi Evren ve Ahi Teşkilatı'nın Kuruluşu* (Konya: Ömer Faruk Bayram, 1991), 116, 121.

16 Faroqhi and Ocak, "Zaviye."

at such larger towns as Kayseri, Tokat, and Sivas; thus there was no lack of models to follow had Rumi so chosen. As with other *vakıf*-supported *zaviyes* of the period, the proto-Mevlevi would be expected to provide hospitality for wanderers of all sorts, and to provide a kind of legitimacy for their high society sponsors by praying for their success.¹⁷

Rumi's own modest lack of planning extended to his own person. He apparently did not plan or want a tomb for himself. But after the people of Konya had displayed their grief at Rumi's famous public funeral, donors led by the Seljuk minister Pervane, and his Georgian wife, funded the construction of that Green Dome which later became a place of pilgrimage and that still stands at the center of Konya today.

The proto-*tarikāt* and the role of *vakıf*

According to Trimingham's scheme, the second stage of *tarikāt* development ended around 1320 when the teacher - student relationship of the earlier *hankahs* cum *medreses* was replaced by a director-disciple relationship, implying life-long supervision. That he was able to assign a precise date to this development suggests that a movement of historic importance and urgency was taking place. The post-Rumi Mevlevi brotherhood arises just in this transitional period, and so may well have been one of the models considered by Trimingham in forming his typology. While Rumi seems not to have seen the need for a *tarikāt* bearing his name, his immediate successors thought otherwise.

Mevlana may have been an excellent judge of men. Certainly he was wise in his choice of the two men he regarded (puzzlingly) both as his deputies and as his inspirers. One has an impression of both Salaheddin and Husameddin of their having been the kind of supporters who could understand without being told what their *şeyh* really wanted. One of them (Husameddin) acted very effectively and for a long time as Rumi's personal secretary.

Rumi was also remarkably lucky with his eldest son. "Sultan" Veled turned out to be the loyal servant of his father, perhaps a very good poet as well, certainly a prolific one. Veled is credited with having seen the need to organize Rumi's variegated followers into something resembling other emergent *tarikats* of the period. Having succeeded the two deputies just named, neither of whom was related to Rumi by blood, it was this son who initiated

¹⁷ Ibid.

the Mevlevi line of succession so that it descended strictly within the family, reserving for the family line the honorific title of *çelebi* (though Rumi had already also applied it to his first two *halifes*).

Since there was *vakıf* income to be considered following Rumi's death, largely generated by grants from the Seljuk elite, it was inescapable, from a Marxist or at least materialistic point of view, that a dependable succession be guaranteed. Income from grants, usually *vakıf*, had given the nascent organization a means of continuity and even a *raison d'être* aside from Mevlana's own charisma and theosophy. *Vakıf* income guaranteed continuity for Veled and his followers even before there was a *tarikât*. Besides using *vakıf* income to support an inner core of followers, the proto-Mevlevi organization could offer to artisans and other outsiders, including women, the opportunity to participate in the ritual dancing, music, readings and chanting that they all adopted as their common practice, even if casually, without their having to become full-time dervishes. The role played by *vakıf* was not of course limited to the Mevlevi; it also supported the other proto-*tarikats* of the thirteenth century.¹⁸

Sultan Veled extended his father's method of sending out trusted deputies to make use of donated properties. Veled ordered his own deputies to establish *zaviyes* at designated sites. These missionaries were now responsible for attracting new support and new recruits, an effort in which they seem to have been quite successful. There is little doubt that such *zaviyes* were far more effective as centers for propagating Islam among the illiterate villagers and nomads of Anatolia than were the *medreses* of the period. There are thought to have been hundreds of *zaviye*-like shelters of various origins dating from this early period, though since these were usually built using mudbrick or wood, almost nothing remains. Many were probably endowed from the *iktâ'* grants that the Seljuks eventually converted into *vakıf*.¹⁹

The road divides – town and country

Rumi's grandson was in some ways the opposite of his father Veled. This next *çelebi*, known as Ulu 'Ârif (d. 1320), seems to have been quite a carouser,

18 Cf. Trimingham, *Sufi Orders*, 13-14, where a list of other early *tarikats* is offered.

19 Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Ages* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 30 ff.; Bayram, *Abi Evren*, 29; Speros Vryonis, *Studies on Byzantium, Seljuks, and Ottomans* (Malibu: Undena, 1981), 64; Ocak, *Bakışlar*, 38.

but also a good and spontaneous preacher, close to the thinking of country people. He continued Mevlana's quietist approach to the Mongol presence.²⁰ This populist style worked well, and extended the reach of the newly formed *tarikats* far beyond the towns. As we learn in one recent study, the grandson took early forms of the rituals performed by Rumi's followers far afield, while at the same time securing political support at home in Konya.²¹ Among his favorite destinations were the newly organized Turkmen *beyliks* of western Anatolia, the Mentешеoğulları, the Aydınöğulları, the Germiyanoğulları, and the Eşrefoğulları (but not at first the Osmanlı *beylik*, which was apparently still too minor to be of interest). A little later the Mongol overlords are seen deliberately using Mevlevi missionaries, such as Çelebi Abid, to win the support of the *beyliks* for their Anatolian puppet governor Timurtaş. After the defection of Timurtaş to the Mamluks, the Mevlevi built up a similar relationship with the Karamanoğulları of their home region, acting in turn as their emissaries to the western reaches of Anatolia. Since many of the *uç beyis* were of Karaman (or Afshar) origin, rapprochement with them was easily accomplished.²² In the 1330s the Saruhanöğulları began to ally with the Aydınöğulları and thus also came under Mevlevi influence. The chiefs of the targeted *beyliks* needed legitimacy, and were apparently glad to host *tarikats* missionaries who could bolster their own authority.²³ The Mevlevi *zaviye* created by the Saruhanlılar in 1369 offered hospitality to travelers, a commonplace feature of the town-based lodges.²⁴ At Manisa, during the Ottoman period, *şeyhs* were sent out from Konya who were descended from the Mevlevi line.²⁵

Turkmen tribal audiences hearing recitations by the missionary Mevlevi for the first time may not have understood them completely, but they liked the chants and dancing well enough. But it may be that less orthodox and less literary *tarikats* did even better among the illiterate Turkmen.²⁶ Ocak lists 32 *zaviyes* in Anatolia which were visited by the Arab traveler Ibn Battuta. Of

20 Şehabettin Tekindağ, "Karamanlılar," *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 6 (Istanbul: Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1977).

21 Ocak, *Bakışlar*, 153-8.

22 Tekindağ, "Karamanlılar," 317.

23 Feridun M. Emecen, "Saruhanöğulları ve Mevlevilik," in id., *İlk Osmanlılar ve Batı Anadolu Beylikler Dünyası*, (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2001).

24 Ibid., 143.

25 Ibid., 147; also 143 for a discussion of the organization and finances of the Manisa *zaviye*.

26 Ibid., 140.

these twelve had no definite affiliation, except to the *Ahis*. But one was the Mevlevi *zaviye* at Konya.²⁷

Ulu 'Ârif also introduced an alternative style into the Mevlevi ranks, bringing at least some of them closer to the *kalender*-type bands led by wandering Sufi *babas* or *abdals*, who likewise had their roots in Khorasan. Thus while the town Mevlevi represent a Persian tradition, the rural arm represented a Central Asian or Khorasani tradition stemming from Ahmet Yesevi - and to which Yunus Emre also belonged.²⁸ This second arm of the Mevlevi was known as the Şems-i Tabrîzîs, referring to the very *kalender baba* who so famously inspired Mevlana. This famous wanderer is not thought to have deliberately started a spiritual path in his own name, and in this he can be compared to Rumi. These Şemsiyye dervishes were the *baba* wing of the Mevlevi, and destined as a group to survive a long time as the counterpart to the better supported Mevlevi of the towns. Unlike their brethren in the towns, these wanderers did not accept direction from the center at Konya, and presumably did not take an oath of allegiance. The Şems-i Tabrîzîs known from Vahidi (who is perhaps the best source on sixteenth century Sufism in the Ottoman regions) "were none other than the followers of Shams within the Mevleviye."²⁹

According to Holbrook, the mythic genealogy of the order, reaching back to the Caliph Abu Bakr, was established early.³⁰ It would be interesting to know if the wandering wing claimed the same mythic genealogy. One might speculate that the genealogy claimed by *babas* of the Şemsiyye arm would have resembled instead the Bistami genealogy of other *babas*, in contrast to the Junaidi genealogy of the town-centered organization that emerged under Sultan Veled. Typically the local genealogies claimed by semi-independent *halife-şeyhs* might vary, whereas a descent claimed for a *tarikât's* founding figure remained stable once it was established.³¹

Wandering *babas* typically used the full vocabulary of other Sufis and show up as "Abdalan-i Rum" in Aşıkpaşazade.³² Virtually all these *babas* had Alid (but not yet Shiite) sympathies and were redolent of Shamanism with the

27 Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Zaviyeler," *Vakıflar Dergisi* 12 (1978): 247-69.

28 Trimingham, *Sufi Orders*, 54, 59.

29 Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 81-2. These Şems-i Tabrîzîs must not be confused with the Şemsiyye who were followers of Ak Şemseddin, who was a *halife* of Hacı Bayram.

30 Holbrook, "Diverse Tastes," 105.

31 Trimingham, *Sufi Orders*, 55.

32 Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 91.

full panoply of charms and cures. As for the “Ahiyan-i Rum,” who were not wanderers but craftsmen, these drifted into the ranks of the Bektaşis after the Şeyh Bedreddin rebellion of the early 1400s.³³ There they continued to harbor Alid, but not necessarily Shiite ideals.³⁴

We don't know - and will we ever know? - how the wandering arm of the evolving Mevlevi *tarikât* interacted with the sedentary arm during the early centuries. According to Gölpınarlı, both arms were in the early period imbued with Melameti (or Melami) principles; they believed in work, were disdainful of criticism, yet inclined to incur it, and even to disguise the good that they did. Neither wing thought of themselves as Sufis - so says Gölpınarlı!³⁵ It is not at all clear to what extent the wandering Şemsîyyes respected the authority of the Konya *çelebi* during the first three centuries. Probably ritual was not yet so rigid as to cause much friction between the two arms.

No definite forms can be ascertained for the earliest ceremonies. Participants were of course under the influence of Rumi's own spontaneous example, which was hardly uniform. It is certain that music, dancing, readings and chanting were all regular features of the stream of ritual, known as *sema'*. Very likely there was a relaxed attitude regarding wine, perhaps even hallucinogenic substances. These early gatherings were not the strictly formulaic *sema'* rituals of later times, nor had the Mevlevi yet developed the initiation and promotion ceremonies of later times. These last must have been worked out gradually at the central “*asitane*” in Konya, under the direction of the Konya *çelebis*, reflecting the more dignified approach of the urbanized arm, or Mevlevi *ta'îfa*, to use Trimmingham's term. *Ahis* and their craft organizations had great influence on *tarikats* generally, and certainly influenced the Mevlevi, especially when the hierarchical aspect began to predominate.³⁶

Both arms of Mevlevism coexisted until the town establishment finally displaced the rural variety, largely owing to political conditions arising in the late fifteenth century. A story cited by Holbrook suggests that the rural wing still existed at the end of the fifteenth century.³⁷ Gölpınarlı cites a description

33 Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan sonra Mevlevîlik*, second ed. (Istanbul: İnkılap ve Aka Kitabevleri, 1983), 299, 304-5; Irène Mélikoff, *Hadji Bektash: un mythe et ses avatars* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 39, 48; Trimmingham, *Sufi Orders*, 69.

34 Mélikoff, *Hadji Bektash*, 48 ff.

35 Gölpınarlı, *Mevlevîlik*, 306.

36 Trimmingham, *Sufi Orders*, 25.

37 Holbrook, “Diverse Tastes,” 115-18.

of the *baba*-type Mevlevis, dated 1514 and written by Vahidi, which has them wandering in gangs around the countryside under their own banners like other *babas*, wearing white and black robes and open-topped headgear, their eyes made up with kohl, heads and faces shaved, including eyebrows and eyelashes, uncircumcised, wine drinking and given to performing the *sema'*, which was their own version of the whirling/chanting ritual.³⁸ Karamustafa continues in the same vein: "The overvaluation of uncontrolled ecstasy seems to have peaked during the first half of the tenth/sixteenth century - Shamsians were notorious for their open violation of and disregard for the Shari'ah - and were generally noted for their flagrant and unconventional social behavior. ... The Mevleviye continued to harbor the Shamsian trend until modern times."³⁹ All *tarikats* had Alevi tendencies, says Köprülü, and the Mevlevis were no exception. He believed that it "is meaningless to try to establish an absolute connection between the genuine views of Mawlana and later Mawlawism. Mawlawism developed above all in places where Sunni beliefs prevailed."⁴⁰

The exclusion of women Sufis

Women participated fully in the early Mevlevi movement although it is not clear that they actually used the same space at the same time as did the men. Rumi's own example encouraged their participation. This was not necessarily his personal innovation. Ibn Bibi remarked on the participation of unveiled Turkmen women in religious rites.⁴¹ The full involvement of women in social life was in any case the rule among the Turkmen, which was to be inherited by Alevi congregations of later times, and still is a distinguishing feature of Alevi life, at least relatively speaking.

According to Gölpınarlı, the participation of women in the Mevlevi ceremonies continued until the seventeenth century!⁴² But by that century women

38 Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ Celâleddin: Hayatı, Eserleri, Felsefesi, ve Eserlerinden Seçmeler*, fourth ed. (Istanbul: İnkılap, 1985), 103.

39 Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 81-2; this author published an edition of Vahidi: *Menâkıb-i Hvoca-i Cihân ve Netice-i cân: critical edition and analysis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1993). See also Reşat Öngören, *Osmanlılar'da Tasavvuf: Anadolu'da Sûfiler, Devlet ve Ulemâ (XVI. Yüzyıl)* (Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2000).

40 Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, *Islam in Anatolia after the Turkish Invasion* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), 19.

41 Mélikoff, *Hadji Bektash*, 45.

42 Gölpınarlı, *Mevlevîlik*, 279.

were included in Mevlevi rituals only as spectators. The exclusion of women from ceremonies doubtless occurred first in the urban *zaviyes* or *tekkes* of the Ottoman Empire, perhaps as one consequence of their conquest of Syria and Egypt, whereupon Arab norms on many matters were adopted among the Ottomans. From a modern egalitarian point of view this exclusion might be thought to impoverish social relations; however a Moslem apologist might argue that pious individuals are less distracted if sexes are segregated.

Today women again participate in revived Mevlevi rituals at one or more sites, most conspicuously at Galata. This is not the innovation that it might seem to be at first glance, but rather the recovery of that right to participate which Turkmen women enjoyed hundreds of years earlier. A souvenir of the early importance of women in the Mevlevi *tarikât* may still be seen at Konya where the Şemseddin Tabrîzî türbe includes a kiosk for women within a large garden.

The role of saints and tombs

Personal charisma (*bereket*) was always a central value in Sufi life. Whenever charisma was acknowledged in a Sufi of the early Ottoman centuries, the usual outcome was the construction of a tomb (*türbe*) containing a sarcophagus which was supposed to sanctify the *zaviye* or *tekke* he had lead while alive; though perhaps sometimes the sequence was reversed, with *bereket* developing further after the local *şeyh* had died. The sanctified tomb would then become the destination for generations of pilgrims from every class who came to ask for the metaphysical intercession of the deceased Sufi saint (*veli*) for reasons of health, or fertility, etc. As an example, the sophisticated Ottoman historian Mustafa Âli of the late sixteenth century is thought to have visited the tombs of Akşemseddin, Hacı Bayram, Hacı Bektaş and other Anatolian saints in 1596, during a low period in his fortunes.⁴³ Visits to saints' tombs, still common in today's Turkey, was already a widespread practice during the Ottoman centuries, as perhaps it was in all Moslem countries. Holbrook lists events that are typical at *türbes*, or else *tekkes* that contain such tombs.⁴⁴

Tombs and *tarikats* were usually closely linked. The *evliya* cult of saints and tombs borrowed heavily from the *tarikats*, and vice versa.⁴⁵ Naturally Rumi's

43 Cornell Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali, 1541-1600* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 136.

44 Holbrook, "Diverse Tastes," 105, footnote.

45 Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 89; Trimmingham, *Sufi Orders*, 26.

own tomb quickly became and still remains the ultimate spiritual center for his followers. The “Green Dome” was originally well endowed and at one time or another was able to employ many persons and to offer generous largesse to visitors. In Husameddin’s time, says Aflakî, some kind of *sema*‘ was held after Friday prayers, with a reading from the Mesnevi following a reading from the Koran.⁴⁶ Gradual formalization of the final ritual forms is assumed to have been associated in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with the now habitual deference shown to the hereditary *çelebi* presiding at the Konya complex (*asitane*) of the Mevlevi order. Of course the Konya *çelebi*’s own *bereket* supported and enhanced the *bereket* of his subordinates, namely the *şeyhs* he appointed to rule over other Mevlevi *tekkes* far afield.⁴⁷

As in other *tarikats*, surviving Mevlevi *tekkes* away from the center at Konya, where the tomb stands alone, tend to incorporate the tomb of the local founder within their walls, or at least nearby. At the Lefkoşa *tekke* in Cyprus there is a line of 19 sarcophagi, containing one *şeyh* each, located within the *tekke* premises. In general *tekkes* containing tombs such as these were accepted among the people as containing saints (*velis*).

The imperial embrace: A priesthood and a liturgy

Regarding the generation of new lodges (*tekkes*) we will never have a complete picture. Most Mevlevi lodges have by now disappeared. Originally they would have been set up either 1) by a Mevlevi *şeyh* of the *baba* type acting on his own, or 2) by the assignment of a trusted *halife-cum-şeyh* from the Konya *asitane* complex, or from an established lodge in a large town. The new *şeyh* would be expected to set up his new *zaviye*, perhaps no more than a cell, at some promising location and there to cultivate a public response. The eventual outcome was a twofold network, a constellation of *tekkes*, based in towns, and a more numerous network of *zaviyes* in smaller places, often surviving as tombs, most of them quite on their own, supported locally by the contributions of local believers or pilgrims.

Increasing urbanization of the Mevlevi *tarikat*, increasing official acceptance, and an increasing codification of their rituals developed simultaneously in the late fifteenth century. The first *muftis* of Istanbul are known to have had Sufi sympathies. As time passed, the rituals of some of the most important orders, such as the Mevlevis and the Bektâşis, shared many points

46 Holbrook, “Diverse Tastes,” 104.

47 Trimingham, *Sufi Orders*, 71-2.

in common, including the prominence of the kitchen in initiation rituals. The full panoply of Mevlevi ritual continued to develop gradually, eventually featuring lengthy initiation rituals for adepts, lesser rituals for lay adherents, and exercises to induce ecstasy during their regular lodge meetings, such as communal chanting, vigils, and fasts. These rituals were to survive down to the 20th century.⁴⁸

The relative generosity of the Ottomans toward the Mevlevi in the early period contrasts sharply with the harsh treatment shown to their *baba* cousins during the Kızılbaş period of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In that period the Alid sympathies of wandering *babas* brought on their large-scale persecution as potential allies of the Safavid “twelver” *şeyh* who was to become Shah Ismail, political rival to the Ottomans. *Baba*-style dervishes were driven to take shelter in the wide embrace of the Bektāşis, who then evolved some of the style of more urban orders, likewise turning their backs on their long rural past. Though the Mevlevi also harbored Alid sympathies, the political quietism which they had inherited from their founder saved them from being persecuted during the great struggle against the Safavids. As one sign of growing imperial favor, Selim the Grim, persecutor of Kızılbaş and Alevis, is known to have visited Rumi’s tomb at Konya to pay his respects.⁴⁹

The eventual rise of the Mevlevi to full acceptance by Ottoman government was paralleled by a growing acceptance of the Bektāşis in their role as chaplains to the Janissaries. Until then it was the Abdalan-i Rum who had acted as the chaplains (as well as being warriors) for the small Ottoman frontier *beylik*, perhaps evidence of the relative cultural backwardness of this part of the frontier with Byzantium. Not until the second quarter of the fifteenth century, during the reign of Murad II (1421-51), is there evidence of the Mevlevi being at work in the increasingly successful Ottoman mini-state.⁵⁰ Their presence was dignified by Sultan Murad when he constructed a large Mevlevihane in Edirne, the second capital of the Ottomans, on the European side.⁵¹

Yet starting in the fifteenth century, according to Ocak, the wide latitude that most *tekkes* had enjoyed in earlier times began to be downgraded, as

48 Holbrook, “Diverse Tastes,” 101; cf. Trimmingham, *Sufi Orders*, 104. For the fully developed initiation rite of later times, see Gölpınarlı, *Mevlevîlik*, 390.

49 Karamustafa, *God’s Unruly Friends*, 92; Gölpınarlı, *Mevlevîlik*, 270; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. 2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1982), 534.

50 Ocak, *Bakışlar*, 155.

51 *Ibid.*, 156.

controls over them increased under the Ottomans.⁵² In the Fatih Mehmet period some had their *vakıf* endowments confiscated, or annulled.⁵³ Mehmet's son Bayezid II (1481-1512) sought to balance the favor shown the Mevlevi by cultivating Bektāşis as well. On the other hand, Bayezid's son and successor Selim "the Grim" (1512-20) chose to strengthen the financial position of the Konya *asitane* complex as befitted the center of the order, setting a pattern that other sultans were to follow during the course of the sixteenth century.⁵⁴ In retrospect it seems understandable that a state seeking to centralize itself would also seek to centralize the authority of its chief supporters.

Yılmaz interprets the situation differently. He agrees that in the fifteenth century the Mevlevi *tarikāt* was still in formation, but he also assumes that the prestige of the Konya *asitane* began to diminish as the authority of the Konya *çelebi* began to depend more upon financial advantages and less upon moral authority. At Konya residents of the quarter where the *asitane* was located paid no taxes. Everyone involved in the *asitane* complex in any way had a claim on the order's *vakıf* income.⁵⁵ Although by the seventeenth century the Konya *çelebi* still appointed *şeyhs* and *halifes* to various places, some successions were taking place without his approval, suggesting diminished prestige.

Maturation of the order involved other *asitanes* besides Konya taking part in supervising the 1001-day "*çille*" (ordeal) of Mevlevi novices. Besides Konya there were full-fledged *asitanes* at Afyonkarahisar, Manisa, Bursa, Aleppo, Egypt, Crete, Cyprus, Salonica, Edirne, Gelibolu, and also Galata, Yenikapı, Kasımpaşa, and Beşiktaş in Istanbul.⁵⁶ (Manisa earned its *asitane* status during the reign of Selim II, owing to the fact that the young sultan-to-be was stationed at Manisa during his "apprenticeship" period.)⁵⁷ Yılmaz offers a list of second-rank Mevlevi centers, where the *çille* was not performed; these include Tokat, Sivas, Amasya, Karaman, Kütahya, Çorum, Bilecik, Antalya, Diyarbakir, Maraş, Aydın, Muğla, Samsun, Kırşehir, Isparta, Erzincan, İzmir, İzmit, Burdur, Çankırı, Denizli, and Antep.⁵⁸

52 Ibid., 258.

53 Faroqhi and Ocak, "Zaviye."

54 Ocak, *Bakışlar*, 156-7.

55 For details of the Konya *vakıf*'s income, see Necdet Yılmaz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf: Sûfiler, Devlet ve Ulemâ (XVII. Yüzyıl)* (Istanbul: Osmanlı Araştırmaları Vakfı, 2001).

56 Cf. F. Nafiz Uzluk, "Mevlevi Hilafetnameleri," *Vakıflar Dergisi* 9 (1971).

57 Emecen, "Saruhanogulları," 147.

58 Cf. Yılmaz, *Tasavvuf*, 251.

Physical features of the larger lodges (*asitanes*) reflect their multiple functions: invariably a central space for dancing, chanting, enrollment, and promotion rituals, teaching and prayers; small rooms for resident dervishes; other small rooms for guests; a kitchen and storerooms; a *hamam*; and perhaps a stable. *Vakıf* income might be distributed for 1) the upkeep and repair of the *asitane*, 2) food and drink for dervishes and guests, and 3) the salaries of servants. The remainder would be distributed among the *vakıf* shareholders, who might be descendants of the founder. To oversee the *asitane* complex there might be 1) a supervisor (*nazır*), 2) a bookkeeper, and 3) a secretary. In smaller places these functions were of course combined.⁵⁹

Support by Ottoman high society for this relatively sedate and status-quo order continued to be in the form of *vakıf* endowments, just as in Seljuk times. Probably many such documents contained clauses on behalf of the donating families. From the government point of view, a practical justification for supporting the Mevlevi, and other *tarikats* as well, was the utility of these widespread brotherhoods in ministering to the needs of travelers of all sorts. It was probably partly for that reason that all the residents of Mevlevi lodges, and not just the *şeyhs*, enjoyed immunity from extraordinary as well as ordinary taxes in times of trouble.⁶⁰ Not only the residents of these lodges, but also the villages which contributed to their upkeep saw some tax easements. At least this was true at the *asitane* in Konya, as of 1587.⁶¹ Faroqhi's study of the *zaviye* of Sadreddin Konevi in Konya suggests that most of the income of the *vakıf* had been assigned by the Ottoman government early on. This income included three-quarters of the tithe and *örfiye* taxes of the town of Ladik, plus the entire poll tax of the Christian populace! In 1566 this particular *vakıf* employed 24 persons.⁶²

The Mevlevi were not the only favored sect of Ottoman high society by the sixteenth century; and no doubt the balance of favor varied with the century in question. While the Bektaşis were somewhat limited by identification with the Janissary corps, there were other larger rivals for elite favor, such as the Nakşibendi and the Halveti *tarikats*. In a list of jurists from the time of

59 Ocak, "Zaviyeler," 258-65.

60 Faroqhi and Ocak, "Zaviye."

61 Faroqhi, "Şeyh Aileleri," 215, 220.

62 Suraiya Faroqhi, "Vakıf administration in Sixteenth Century Konya: the Zaviye of Sadreddin-Konevi," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 17 (1974), no. 2, 153, 164. Faroqhi also gives details on the *vakıf* income of another great, but non-Mevlevi, *vakıf* in "Seyyid Gazi Revisited: The Foundation as Seen through Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Documents," *Turcica* 13 (1981): 90-122.

Murad III (1574-95), composed in the early seventeenth century, only five of one hundred jurists are shown as having Mevlevi affiliations.⁶³ But we can see from the multiplication of Mevlevi *tekkes* on Cyprus following its late sixteenth century conquest what an importance this *tarikats* had by then achieved. Three of Istanbul's five Mevlevi long term lodges were endowed and built between 1587 and 1632.⁶⁴

As the Mevlevi gradually concentrated in towns, village lodges tended to disappear (or at least disappear from the record), bypassed by the urbanizing tendency or otherwise deprived of support. The inmates of Sufi lodges were regarded neither as *re'aya* nor *askeri*, since they enjoyed immunity from taxes. One supposes that they were believed to serve the common good through prayer and by pious example. By the late sixteenth century affiliation with the Mevlevi or other leading *tarikats* had become normal for families living in urban settings, where a refined cultural elite confirmed the choice of the artisan class. The result was an overlap between the austere Sunni Islam practiced in mosques and the more emotional, fraternal *tarikats*.

Along with this growing social acceptance came a heightened emphasis on ritual. How should this be interpreted? Certainly not all dervishes were equal in piety. Rituals doubtless satisfied the needs of the majority of dervishes, without stifling the ecstasy of a truly pious few. As was pointed out by Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, our pioneering informant on the Mevlevi, even a merely ritual participation in the Mevlevi *tarikats* brought with it a more tolerant view of the world (and was therefore civilizing).

During the Ottoman "time of troubles" in the early seventeenth century the Mevlevi *tarikats* was no longer growing. Bereft of the earlier support in the countryside, Mevlevi lodges now relied more on endowments by politically powerful figures. Besides viziers and other figures in the central establishment, outlying Mevlevi lodges were also often funded by local *beys* and *ağas*. Its tax immunity is evidence that the order had already by this time become a de facto element *within* the Ottoman state system.⁶⁵ But along with this growing official acceptance came interference by local kadis and their surrogates (*naibs*) in the appointment of *şeyhs* in their particular localities.⁶⁶ *Şeyhs* at

63 Faruqi, cited in Baldick, *Mystical Islam*, 115.

64 Klaus Kreiser, *Istanbul und das osmanische Reich: Dervische, Baugeschichte, Inschriftenkunde* (Istanbul: ISIS, 1995), 215; Richard C. Repp, *The Mufti of Istanbul* (London: Ithaca Press, 1986), 174-86; Fleischer, *Bureaucrat*, 20 n.

65 Yılmaz, *Tasavvuf*, 251.

66 Nejat Göyünç, "Osmanlı Devletinde Mevleviler," *Belleten* 55/213 (1991): 351-3.

provincial locations were not always nominated by Konya, but instead might be elected by a local committee in which the influence of the local elite was inevitable. This was even true at the Konya base, where the *çelebis* were nominated by senior dervishes (and by other local figures?), then proposed to the *şeyhulislam*, and finally confirmed by the sultan.⁶⁷ Cases of malfeasance seem in general to have increased in this later period, no doubt as the concomitant of the growing connection with Ottoman men of influence.

Suraiya Faroqhi has given us a look at the problems of the aging *tarikāt* by her study of the *vakıfs* that supported the Mevlevi base at Konya.⁶⁸ Her study follows the Konya complex from its peak of its prosperity at the end of the sixteenth century through a period of falling fortunes, as evident from *vakıf* accounts from the middle of the seventeenth century. The apparent cause for the fall in revenues was a failure of agricultural yields, or even more seriously the contraction of human settlements in Anatolia during the decades plagued by disorder and rebellion. And in the background there is also the still unsettled question as to whether agriculture throughout the entire region may not have been suffering from a long term slump in rainfall, or from falling temperatures, during the so-called “little ice age” of the seventeenth century.

The recognized status of the Mevlevi at this time is symbolized by the number of mausoleums of government figures by then interred within the Mevlevi complex at Konya.⁶⁹ But the contraction in revenues evidenced in the *vakıf* accounts of the mid-seventeenth century meant that the Konya base could no longer afford either to show the openhanded hospitality which it had displayed earlier, nor even to sustain its own rituals in the style to which it had become accustomed in better years. Understandably, the order’s way of handling falling revenues was by cutting down on hospitality or by reducing ceremonial functions in order to preserve a skeleton staff that could somehow still perform the most important functions that were stipulated in original *vakıf* endowment documents. The orchestra of earlier times was just a ghost by the mid-seventeenth century, though these may have been the very worst years. Relative decline was not limited to Konya; something similar happened to the *vakıf* foundations of faraway Edirne during the same period.⁷⁰

67 Yılmaz, *Tasavvuf*, 251; and Ramazan Muslu, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf (18. Yüzyıl)* (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2003), 315.

68 Suraiya Faroqhi, “Agricultural Crisis and the Art of Flute Playing: The Worldly Affairs of the Mevlevi Dervishes (1595-1652),” in *Turcica* 20 (1988): 43-70.

69 Ibid., 45.

70 Ibid. 57, and 62, citing Barkan.

A reaction to Sufism and its resolution⁷¹

It was in the seventeenth century that some of the official clergy of the Ottoman capital became disturbed when they realized that they were suffering by comparison with the alternative clergy represented by the sufi *şeyhs*. Whereas few *ulema* left monuments behind, most sufi *şeyhs* conspicuously did. Their sarcophagi were incorporated into their lodges - whether *zaviye*, *tekke* or *asitane* - and each of these lodges laid claim to a genealogy reaching back to the early years of Islam.⁷² The *şeyhs* of the *tarikats*, whether Mevlevi or others, were offering what imams could not - personal guidance on the path to spiritual development, even metaphysical intercession. Under Sunni rules each worshipper is alone facing God. But being alone facing God must seem to many a formidable proposition, then and now. By contrast to the Islam of the mosques, the hierarchy and the comforting rituals of the typical *tarikat*, like the older *evliya* cult of saints and tombs, offered the Moslem faithful fraternal intermediaries who could help them prepare themselves for the hereafter.

Sufi *şeyhs* lay claim to additional dignities beyond those possessed by Sunni clerics. In "classic" or medieval Islam, *medrese* study culminated with advanced students earning the right to teach particular topics after being awarded a license (the *icaze*). The relationship that Rumi himself had had with his followers was probably this kind of relationship of teacher to student. But later, as the *tarikat* developed, the awarding of the *icaze* was replaced by another ceremony entirely - the initiation of the right to wear the robe (*hırka*), as well as the hat (the *sikke*, or *tac*) of the *tarikat*.⁷³ As for the quality of Sufi education, in the seventeenth or any other century, all depended upon the preparation of the teacher and aptitude of the student in the context of the lodge. In these later centuries there were always some *şeyhs* who were bookish - well prepared, well-read and as able as any imam to teach or to preach.

A description of the Sufi and his *şeyh* as cited in the *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* restates the relationship between the *şeyh* and the Sufi adept in extreme language. The Sufi must render himself to the *şeyh* like a "corpse in the hands of the washer." According to this formulation, the novice must surrender his own will, and accept absolutely the spiritual guidance of the *şeyh*, while following

⁷¹ In addition to Yılmaz, *Tasavvuf*, for the seventeenth and Muslu, *Tasavvuf*, for the eighteenth century, both cited above, see Sezai Küçük, *Mevleviliğin Son Yüzyılı* (Istanbul: Simurg, 2003). Each of these monographs is organized differently and has a different emphasis. Küçük's monograph has a magnificent bibliography.

⁷² M. Baha Tanman, "Settings for the veneration of saints," in *The Dervish Lodge*, 138.

⁷³ Nurhan Atasoy, from a lecture at the Rumi Institute, Lefkoşa, December 2002.

a supervised path of spiritual development.⁷⁴ One assumes that this kind of extreme subjection was only sometimes the case. Not all *şeyhs* were so stellar as to inspire that kind of confidence, nor perhaps even invite it. According to Gölpınarlı, *şeyhs* as a rule handed off the education of the newcomer to their deputies.⁷⁵ Rather than guiding zealous novices along a rigorous personalized path, as the ideal indicates, the rituals worked out during the second half of this *tarikāt*'s history channeled the energies of most participants into the less strenuous path which ritual offered, whether they were year-round residents, or else artisans or others who were merely affiliated with the *tarikāt*. Rituals allowed a satisfying involvement in ceremonies and a pro forma obedience to the *şeyh* or his deputies in spiritual matters without the rigorous guidance offered to the dervish novice. This was surely for the best - a compromise with the human frailties of all parties.

To return to the reaction that developed within the Sunni establishment in the seventeenth century: there had already been occasional face-offs with the *ulema* during the prior century. These had ended harmlessly since so many elite figures took the part of the defenders. Muftis from the time of the taking of Constantinople, later even *şeyhülislams* had belonged to one or another *tarikāt*, following al-Ghazali in not seeing a contradiction in being both Sunni and Sufi. But in the overweening and at times hysterical seventeenth-century atmosphere, a reaction arose among the professional preachers of Istanbul. This so-called Kadızade reaction lasted a whole half century - from the 1630s to the 1680s. In the Ottoman capital the newly risen class of preachers resented competing with the popularity of the Sufi *şeyhs*, or even with other members of the now swollen *ulema* class. The preachers of the capital launched a determined campaign, aiming not just at the *şeyh*-Sufi relationship and at the monism that they suspected was lurking there, but at more visible targets - dervish rituals such as chanting, singing, whirling and dancing, and pilgrimages to Sufi tombs, and the use of wine and other intoxicants. The preachers also objected to the participation at Sufi lodges of members of their own official *ulema* class. The disgruntled preachers won partial victories during the reign of Murad IV, who was persuaded to close many of Istanbul's taverns and coffee shops. Still, Murad did not move directly against the *tarikats*, whose *şeyhs* had after all been involved in mosque services since 1453. Murad himself had ties with them, having been girded by a Celveti *şeyh* upon his accession as sultan. When he had a disagreement over the use of funds with the Mevlevi

74 Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 89.

75 Gölpınarlı, *Mevlevilik*, 398.

celebi at Konya, this sovereign did not execute him as he had so many other troublemakers, but simply had him transplanted to the capital city as a permanent guest. One historian believes that the whirling ritual (*sema*) of the Mevlevis may have reached its final development during this century of strife.⁷⁶ In the end, though the campaign of the preachers continued for decades, it died out in the wake of the awful military defeats of the 1680s, for which the official clergy had to take some blame. The Mevlevi whirling ritual, which had been forbidden for public performance in 1665, reappeared in 1684.

By the eighteenth century membership in *tarikats* had lost all opprobrium, the orders being almost official, and dervish volunteers accompanied every military campaign. Along with other *tarikats*, the Mevlevis achieved a pinnacle of power and influence in this century both in the capital and in towns as far away as Cairo and Tırhala. This does not mean that the Mevlevis were more numerous than others, just better supported, for during the same period the Nakşibendis also flourished.⁷⁷ D'Ohsson, writing in the second half of the 18th century, believed the Mevlevis to be the best endowed *tarikat* in the Empire.⁷⁸ Although a 1784 survey indicates that there were 230 lodges in Istanbul (growing to 300 in the next century), only five of those were Mevlevi.⁷⁹ Whereas the Bektaşis were destined to lose all influence owing to their partnership in this century with the doomed janissaries, the influence of the Mevlevis was still growing.

Amazingly, the two original arms of the Mevlevis - the Velediyye and the Şemsiyye - seem still to have been distinct entities at this late date!⁸⁰ An eighteenth-century lodge might include - besides the *şeyh* and the dervishes - a *virdhan* to read the Koran, a *zakir* to read the *zikr*, a *tevhidhan* to proclaim the

76 The details of this seventeenth century struggle are covered by the chroniclers Râşid, Taşköprüzade, and Atai. Cf. Faroqhi, *Şeyh Aileleri*, 198, 201; Klaus Kreiser, "The Dervish Living," in *The Dervish Lodge*; also Madeline Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman ulema in the postclassical age (1600-1800)* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988), 136, 171, for a full discussion of the Kadızade decades.

77 Uriel Heyd, "The Ottoman 'Ulema and Westernization in the time of Selim III and Mahmud II," in *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization*, ed. Uriel Heyd, *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 9 (1961): 68.

78 Kreiser, *Istanbul*, 213.

79 Ibid., 49; Atilla Çetin, "İstanbul'daki Tekke, Zaviye, ve Hankahlar Hakkında 1199 (1784) Tarihli Önemli Bir Vesika," *Vakıflar Dergisi* 13 (1981): 587; cf. Enver Şapolyo, *Mezhepler ve Tarikatlar Tarihi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1964), 104.

80 George Gawrych, "Şeyh Galib and Selim III: Mevlevism and the Nizam-i Cedid," *Journal of Turkish Studies* 4 (1987-88): 99.

unity of God, a *hatimhan* or holder of the seal, an *aşırhan* or collector of the tithes, an imam, a *müezzin*, and servants, including a cook and helva maker, a *vekilharç* to do the shopping, doormen, chapel attendants (*bevâb*), sweepers (*ferrâş*), and an instructor (*çerağî*). Ocak stresses the general uniformity of life in the lodges. Whereas earlier in its country version dervishes had worked in the fields, in town this was not the case. Wandering dervishes almost invariably stayed at the *zaviye* of their own *tarikat*, with a customary three day limit.⁸¹

Crucial changes took place early in the eighteenth century with regard to lines of authority within the *tarikat*. According to Muslu, the last Istanbul *şeyh* directly appointed from Konya was Naci Ahmet Dede, in 1711. By contrast, Mehmet Dede (d. 1717) of the Kasımpaşa Lodge was the first of the Istanbul *şeyhs* to get his post because of blood ties. The former hierarchical principle centered on Konya was now being replaced by the dynastic principle as *şeyhs*' families began to intermarry. Soon virtually all new *şeyhs* came from the families of *şeyhs*. Though this tendency grew gradually and unevenly, by mid-century a father-son succession had taken place at the Galata *tekke*. To cap this trend Ali Nutki Dede succeeded his father at Istanbul's Yenikapı lodge at the age of thirteen in 1804/5. The advent of such junior *şeyhs* made necessary the appointment of trustees (*vekils*) who could supervise them; but this in turn opened the door to disputes between the trustees and the families of the junior *şeyhs*.⁸²

A study of Balkan lodges confirms that father-son successions became the rule in the eighteenth century.⁸³ The same study illustrates transfers of *şeyhly* authority over long distances about the same time, for instance the third *şeyh* at Serez (Rahmetullah Dede) transferred from there to Skopje (Üsküb), then Gelibolu; and Talibi Hasan Dede (d. 1718) served as *şeyh* at Selanik (Thessaloniki) and Cairo before ending his career at Serez.⁸⁴

Istanbul's lodges developed individual characters related to their positions in the city. The Kasımpaşa lodge was socially lower ranking, being nearer the port and farther from the palace. The Üsküdar lodge tended to be used as a hostel by travelers. In this century Mevlevi lodges based in Istanbul were the

81 Ocak, "Zaviyeler," 265.

82 Küçük, *Mevleviliğin*, 440.

83 Nathalie Clayer, "Trois Centres Mevlevis Balkaniques," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 14 (1994), 13, 17. This volume is devoted to Mevlevi studies.

84 *Ibid.*, 16.

third most numerous after the Halvetis and Nakşibendis measured by the number of appointments of *şeyhs*; but how this correlates with membership remains unsolved.⁸⁵

There was a positive side to the new dynastic tendency in the lodges since in the eighteenth-century *şeyhs* were likely to educate their sons in the Islamic classics (including the Persian classics) so that these meritocratic sons might go on to write their own books of merit. A cultural climax in the influence of the Mevlevi *tarikât* is seen in the late eighteenth century figure Galip, who was *şeyh* at Galata from 1791 to 1799. As the premier poet of his time he wrote the famous verses entitled "Beauty and Love." Galip Dede maintained that the Mevlevi were a major buttress to imperial power; certainly they wanted to be; in this crucial period they became perhaps over-involved in imperial affairs. Galip became advisor to Selim the Third, and with a select circle including some dervishes, would meet at the Sultan's palace to discuss music and literature.⁸⁶ Selim was himself a Mevlevi, and wrote music for the whirling ceremony (*sema*). It was for Galip that Selim undertook the restoration of the famous Galata Mevlevihane, which was the oldest Mevlevi lodge in Istanbul.⁸⁷ He also funded repairs for Mevlevi *tekkes* in the provinces.⁸⁸

Selim's unlucky successor, Mahmud II, was to go still further to cultivate the *tarikats*, and the *ulema* as a whole, in order to get their backing for his own radical reforms. But the attitude of the Konya lodge could not be taken for granted. There the Çelebi Hacı Mehmet had set a long-lived precedent by opposing Selim's Nizam-i Cedid army. Resistance to modernizing reforms thereafter became an enduring tradition at Konya, in contrast to support for them in the Istanbul lodges. Whereas at Konya Mahmud had attempted in vain to quash resistance to his reforms by removing the *çelebi* (this was not carried out), ultimately his will prevailed.⁸⁹ Because his accustomed advisor Halet Efendi insinuated himself so far into the affairs of the Mevlevi as to control proposals made to the *şeyhulislam* for promotion etc., Halet became in effect the intendant (*kethüda*) of the order. When Halet dared to oppose the coming Janissary reform, Mahmut exercised the ancient sultanic privilege by putting him to death (1823).

85 For these eighteenth-century developments, see also Muslu, *Tasavvuf*.

86 Heyd, "Ottoman 'Ulema," 68, 82.

87 Zilfi, *Politics*, 150, 185; Gawrych, "Şeyh Galip," 91, 99.

88 E.J.W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry* (London: Luzac, 1967), vol. IV, 179.

89 Gölpınarlı, *Mevlevilik*, 249.

Sultan Mahmud was able to overlook stiff-necked behavior at Konya because the next *çelebi* there, Hacı Mehmed's son Hemdem Çelebi (who held the post from 1815 to 1858) was an especially able leader who saw the need to compromise.⁹⁰ Probably it was fortunate for the Mevlevi that the Konya center was in good hands when the Bektaşî destruction took place; the Mevlevi easily took their place as military chaplains. Meanwhile all the other *tarikats* were expected to subordinate themselves to their Istanbul centers, and hence to the sultan. Understandably Mahmud did not want these clandestine organizations to be used against him.⁹¹ To make sure of this, following the destruction of the Janissary corps and its Bektaşî allies (1826), this "infidel" (giaour) sultan with his European mannerisms issued a sumptuary regulation (1829) requiring each *tarikat* to wear a distinctive garb, with each dervish carrying an identity card sealed by his *şeyh*, thus bringing about a uniformity that had been lacking before.⁹²

Greater political involvement and its effects on the order

Recent work by Küçük, cited above, has gone a long way to underline the importance of the nineteenth century in the history of this *tarikat*, likewise the importance of the Mevlevi in the history of the Ottoman Empire in its last period. Imperial support despite an overall fall in *ulema* incomes, decentralization of leadership despite continued claims by the center at Konya, temptation to intrigue, and a continuation of the old Veleidian Şemsian bifurcation are some of the main trends in this last century.

Mahmud's campaign to bring the *tarikats* under control was tightened with his 1836 decree, which in addition to controls on dress and membership regularized initiations, forbade *şeyhs* from exercising authority over more than one *tekke*, and forbade the removal from its premises of any of a lodge's symbols, such as its drum, tambourine, or banner. There was a new emphasis on considering credentials during *şeyhly* successions. Mevlevi *şeyhs* and others were put on state salaries, reinforcing the caesaropapist tendencies that had always characterized the Ottomans, as students of the Byzantines. Perhaps the 1836 decree had some connection with the new Mevlevi military role in which their dervishes replaced the Bektaşîs, accompanying the new style

90 Göyünç, "Mevleviler," 35-8; cf. Ekrem Işın, "Mevleviliğin Osmanlı Modernleşmesindeki Yeri ve Şeyh Galib" in *Şeyh Galib Kitabı*, edited by Beşir Ayzazoğlu (Istanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür İşleri Daire Başkanlığı, 1995), 52-3.

91 İrfan Gündüz, *Osmanlılarda Devlet-Tekke Münasebetleri* (Ankara: Seha, 1984).

92 Ibid.

army to the Danube front opposite the Russians in 1828.⁹³ Mahmud's main motive in tightening the reins must have been to reinforce the palace's lagging popularity by supporting (yet controlling) the activities of the more popular dervish institution.⁹⁴ In effect, he was establishing the Mevlevis (and other orders) just one century before they were all dis-established in 1926.

Yet the nineteenth century was far from being a prosperous century for any of the *tarikats*. To reiterate, from the beginning Mevlevi lodges in the towns had owed their material welfare mostly to "perpetual" endowments in the form of *vakıf*. Other kinds of donation were also of importance for the village *tekkes* that existed in the earlier centuries, but as the Mevlevis gradually concentrated in towns the importance of *vakıf* endowments became even more pronounced. With the advantages that regular income from *vakıf* sources brought for *şeyhs* and their followers, there had inevitably risen conflicts over successions. The approval of the Ottoman *şeyhulislam*, and his potential interference in the succession of *çelebis*, along with supervision of their *vakıf* holdings, started around 1574.⁹⁵ Even though the *şeyhulislam*, acting for the central government, interfered only when it was thought to be quite necessary, his potential influence on successions was surely deeply felt thereafter.

Especially from the seventeenth century onwards, conflicts between the *şeyhs* and the trustees of larger *vakıf* endowments (where these were not the same person) became a cause for *şeyhly* reappointments. As we have seen, the hereditary principle, which had always obtained at Konya, became customary in the nineteenth century in the appointment of all *şeyhs* everywhere, while the preferences of inmates became unimportant. In some cases a caretaker family would merge with a *şeyhly* line. Over time virtually all lodges experienced conflicts over their *vakıf* endowments.⁹⁶

Political interference into *vakıf* administration peaked during the Tanzimat era with the creation of an *evkaf* administration (1847), then the creation of a Council of *Şeyhs* (*Meclis-i Meşayih*) in the aftermath of the Crimean War, an administrative body that made it unnecessary for the government to issue further detailed regulations concerning the *tarikats*. The Mevlevi representative on the seven-man council was the Yenikapı *şeyh* Osman Salaheddin. (Favor

93 Küçük, *Mevleviliğin*, 344, 341.

94 *Ibid.*, 355.

95 İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmîye Teşkilatı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1965), 179; Faroqhi, "Şeyh Aileleri," 199.

96 Faroqhi and Ocak, "Zaviye."

shown by Mahmud toward the Yenikapı tekke had been continued by Abdülmecid, and Yenikapı then became the favorite resort of viziers, including the Tanzimat stars Ali and Fuat Pashas, and subsequently Midhat.) The fact that the Mevlevi of the nineteenth century continued to excel in certain arts, particularly music and poetry, made it easier for them to keep the loyalty of elite figures, though Küçük assures us that the order never lost its connection with the artisan class.⁹⁷ After that all *ulema* and *tarikats* allowances, neither more nor less, came directly from the treasury minus the older perquisites they had enjoyed. As one example, the Mevlevi lost control of the salt mines at Sivas in 1863. It was because of this tightening of the *vakıf* regime that the *ulema* as a whole became so much poorer in the nineteenth century, when compared with the eighteenth. Under this later regime, the main lodges (*asitanes*) were forbidden to accept contributions from subordinate lodges (*zaviyes*).⁹⁸

The *evkaf* administration of the nineteenth century undercut further resistance to other Tanzimat reforms.⁹⁹ *Vakıfs* were now used both to sustain and to control the *tarikats* at the same time. This is especially relevant for the Mevlevi, who as the favorites of the elite had been champions of the field in attracting *vakıf* support during the last Ottoman centuries. Typically funding for repairs was long delayed as the lodges lost control of their former revenues. Yet while *vakıf* resources were squeezed by the new *evkaf* administration, causing pain for all the orders, there was a compensatory program backed by all the later sultans of making enough repairs to keep at least some of the Mevlevi happy. Abdülmecid completely rebuilt the Gelibolu *tekke*, and it remains to this day a solid and remarkable building. Abdülaziz carried out repairs at the Konya Mevlevihane, occasionally also at other sites. In 1863 the Egyptian khedive donated large sums to rebuild or repair the Yenikapı *tekke*, obviously because he considered it a good political investment. But overall the condition of the nineteenth-century lodges degenerated, and by the time of their abolition in 1925, many were quite decrepit if they still existed at all. Alongside the physical decline, there was also an institutional decline as lodges lost the personnel who could carry out traditional rites.¹⁰⁰ For an example of a small *tekke* that today somehow still survives on local resources in order to serve the

97 Gündüz, *Devlet-Tekke*, 203; Küçük, *Mevleviliğin*, 348, 438, 436.

98 Gündüz, *Devlet-Tekke*, 194; John Robert Barnes, "The Dervish Orders in the Ottoman Empire", in *The Dervish Lodge*, 42; Kreiser, *Istanbul*, 53; Gölpinarlı, *Mevlevilik*, 262; Heyd, "Ottoman 'Ulema,'" 94.

99 Barnes, "Dervish Orders," 41.

100 Küçük, *Mevleviliğin*, 51, 359, 438, 441, 362.

local population, the reader is referred to the decrepit plank complex on the shore of Lake Eğridir, in the Isparta vicinity.

In 1870 a survey of all the lodges of Istanbul shows 1,826 Sufis residing year round in their cells. Though only 300 of these were Mevlevi, it was the Mevlevi who had the largest *tekke*, the Yenikapı *tekke*, which then housed 139 residents.¹⁰¹ Blue books (*salnames*) for the 1880s and 1890s show up to 60 lesser lodges (*zaviyes/tekkes*) in the Empire, as well as 11 main lodges (*asitanes*). Gölpınarlı counted 91 lodges, of which 76 were smaller *zaviyes*, inferring 15 larger places.¹⁰² There were still some individual cells, potentially important for travelers.

Although there is no way now of making a survey, Gölpınarlı was sure that the old Şemsian tendencies, esoteric Batinism and even antisocial Melamism still existed within this order to the end of its life. The destruction of the Janisaries in 1826 may have brought with it a seepage of Melamis into the Mevlevi lodges; alternatively there may also have been a countertendency present - bringing in Nakşibendi type asceticism. There seems to have been a melding with the Nakşibendis in this late period.¹⁰³ This seems to underline the impossibility of expecting pure doctrine in any period. Perhaps this should not disappoint us since Rumi himself offers an example of extreme latitudinarianism.

Towards the end of the Ottoman period, the potential cost of political involvement was brought home to the Mevlevi by the affiliation of Mehmed Reşad (later enthroned as Mehmed the Fifth) with their *tarikât*. Since the Mevlevi had played an advisory role at the time of Abdülhamid's own succession in 1876, the sultan was well aware of the potential for mischief. Abdülvahid, last of the three Konya *çelebis* during this reign, seems to have been making preparations for a rapprochement with the forbidden Bektâşis. It should be no surprise then that this suspicious sultan kept the heir apparent Reşad and the Mevlevi lodge at Konya under continuous surveillance, as were all other influentials of Ottoman society at that time.¹⁰⁴ Once again the nineteenth-century pattern was support and at the same time control. Meanwhile Abdülhamid gave substantial contributions to Mevlevi lodges in other places.¹⁰⁵

101 Kreiser, *Istanbul*, 51.

102 Cf. Küçük, *Mevleviliğin*, 41-2, 431.

103 Küçük, *Mevleviliğin*, 442.

104 Gölpınarlı, *Mevlevilik*, 271; Küçük, *Mevleviliğin*, 364.

105 *Ibid.*, 374.

When the Union and Progress Party came to power, it ousted the Mevlevi Çelebi Abdülhalim from the Council of *Şeyhs*. He was restored to his place only after a nine year struggle.¹⁰⁶ On the eve of World War I, perhaps one in four men of Istanbul was affiliated with one dervish order or another.¹⁰⁷ But when Mustafa Kemal banned all *tarikats* in 1926 following the Nakşibendiled revolt among the Kurds, the lodges of the Mevlevi were not spared. This left their Sufis in such places as Cyprus and Egypt in an anomalous position. But these latterday *tekkes* were often moribund anyway, so says Gölpınarlı.¹⁰⁸ Continually drawing their recruits from the same protected families, and pressed by governments interested in inheriting their vestigial *vakıfs*, the Mevlevi of the periphery died a natural death.

Postscript

Readers who find the organization theme too narrow may refer to writings characterizing Sufi sects from other points of view starting with the Mevlevi: for instance, William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989); Grace Smith, *The poetry of Yunus Emre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Victoria Holbrook, *The Unreadable shores of Love* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994); Franklin Lewis, *Rumi: Past and Present* (Oxford: One World, 2000); and for an extensive bibliography: Zekeriya Başkal, *Yunus Emre: The Sufi Poet in Love* (New York, Blue Dome Press, 2010).

On Mevlevi Organization

Abstract ■ J. Spencer Trimingham, in his groundbreaking survey of Sufi orders in Islam, proposed the history of Sufi orders was closely bound up with social history in general, leading through four distinct stages. In this article, I apply Trimingham's scheme to the Mevlevi order to demonstrate how it developed from the individual piety of its founder to a distinct form of devotion in the second stage, and to a full-fledged hierarchical organization which Trimingham put at the fifteenth century. At this point the early bifurcation had ended with the dominance of the urban branches, and the symbiosis with the House of Osman was manifest in organizational structure and endowments. Finally, Sufi orders went through a period of reform in the nineteenth century, in which the Mevlevi's close association with the state was crucial.

Key words: Mevlevi order, Şemsiyye order, Ottoman state, vakıf, economy, Tanzimat

106 Gündüz, *Devlet-Tekke*, 213.

107 Kreiser, *Istanbul*, 49.

108 Gölpınarlı, *Mevlevilik*, 260.